



# The experiences and preferences of young people and their intermediaries regarding use of Labour Market Information (LMI) to support good career guidance

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A report to the Gatsby Foundation

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**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

1. This research aimed to provide greater insight into how Labour Market Information (LMI) is used by young people, their careers staff and their parents<sup>1</sup>. It focused on gathering their views on the LMI they use and what would improve their experiences, as well their preferences regarding types of LMI, sources, key features and the required balance of national and local information.

### **Methodology**

2. The methodology involved selecting a broadly representative sample of schools and colleges across England. With the support of The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC), a representative group of Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas were chosen within which schools and colleges were selected, using school characteristic data to ensure a representative sample of schools. The same characteristic data was unavailable for colleges, meaning the selection of colleges was balanced according to geography and provider type only. A mixed method approach was used to gather the views of the three participant groups during the period November 2021 to February 2022:
  - Careers staff in schools and colleges (online interviews with 42 staff).
  - Students (16 online focus groups with 102 individuals).
  - Parents (276 respondents to the e-survey and 47 telephone interviews).
3. Interactive methods were used in interviews and focus groups to share examples of online LMI resources.
4. Some adaptations to the method were required as the Omicron variant of the coronavirus (COVID-19) erupted between December and January 2022. This caused some schools and colleges to delay or cancel planned research, due to staff or student absences and the need to prioritise catch-up curriculum work.

### **School and college approaches to using LMI**

5. Regarding terminology, very few careers staff were aware of the distinction, highlighted in research by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER)<sup>2</sup>, between Labour Market Information (LMI) and Labour Market Intelligence (LMI+). The Warwick research defines LMI as “information or data on the economy, labour market and labour force that would support an understanding of its operation, as well as labour supply and demand”, whilst defining LMI+ as referring to “the interpretation of hard labour market data for different purposes.”

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<sup>1</sup> When referring to parents throughout this report, this includes parents, carers and guardians.

<sup>2</sup> Barnes, S-A., and Bimrose, J. (2021). *Labour market information and its use to inform career guidance of young people. An overview of the Labour Market Information System for Careers Guidance in England*. Coventry: Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick. Retrieved from: [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmicareerguidanceofyoungpeople/ier\\_gatsby\\_lmis\\_landscape\\_2021\\_final.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmicareerguidanceofyoungpeople/ier_gatsby_lmis_landscape_2021_final.pdf)

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6. When asked about their awareness of this distinction, some careers staff had heard of the term Labour Market Intelligence but could not offer a definition, whilst most had not come across the term at all.
7. Almost all careers staff mentioned the use of job profiles – a summary of key information about a given job - in a variety of different contexts, from lessons and 1:1 guidance sessions to careers newsletters and displays. Other types of LMI mentioned by careers staff included:
  - Sector growth and decline, including for relevant local sectors.
  - Sector employment figures, including data broken down to the local level.
  - Average salaries for different jobs.
  - Routes into careers, including skills and qualifications needed.
  - Descriptions of what a job is like day-to-day, including videos of people talking about their jobs
8. The most common sources of national and general LMI mentioned by careers staff were:
  - **National Careers Service:** the website of the government’s careers service providing careers information, advice and guidance to adults and young people aged 13 and over in England.
  - **Unifrog:** a paid-for careers platform run by the private company Unifrog Education Ltd.
  - **Start Profile:** a careers platform run by the private company U-Explore Ltd. The platform is available for free or with optional, paid-for institutional data analytic functions for practitioners.
  - **iCould:** run by the charity Education & Employers, iCould is a website providing videos of people talking about their jobs alongside related hard LMI.
9. School and college approaches to the use of LMI within the careers programme tended to centre around three key areas:
  - Personal development curriculum, including Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, citizenship and tutor period – mainly through guided use of an online careers platform.
  - Subject-based curriculum – LMI not widely used.
  - Promotion of LMI to staff, students and parents – links to sites providing LMI on the careers page of the school or college website, typically with some signposting to students and staff but not parents.
10. **LMI use within 1:1 careers guidance sessions.** All Careers Advisers saw value in using LMI within guidance sessions, and most reported having the time to do so during the 30-40 minutes they typically have with students. Advisers took three main approaches, used interchangeably:
  - Verbally and on an ad hoc basis during the conversation.

- Supporting students with careers research.
- Signposting students to relevant sources of LMI, during and/or after the session.

### **Student engagement with LMI**

11. Around half of all students reported having used online sources of LMI. Whether students accessed these sources of LMI independently or during a lesson differed between the key stages. Of the 60% of older students (KS5) who reported using online sources of LMI, most said they had done so independently, although typically these were websites signposted by their school or college. For the 45% of younger students (KS3 & KS4) who said they had used online sources of LMI, roughly equal proportions reported using LMI during a lesson compared with using it independently.
12. Students in KS5 mostly reported using the National Careers Service website and Prospects. Many students in KS3 and KS4 also reported using the National Careers Service website whilst also commonly highlighting BBC Bitesize Careers as a website they had used<sup>3</sup>. Some students also commented that they had used careers platforms such as Unifrog and FastTomato during tutor period or lessons.

### **Types of LMI used**

13. Of the students who had previously accessed careers websites (either independently or during a lesson), most described viewing information about average salaries and the skills and qualifications needed for a given role.
14. Aside from average salaries, it seems that most of the information accessed by students is soft LMI, such as descriptions of what different jobs involve and the routes into different careers. Only a small number of students reported looking up hard LMI that was not salary related, such as information about the demand for and availability of certain jobs.

### **Careers staff views on student engagement**

15. Some staff found it hard to comment on the extent to which students engage with LMI independently. This was particularly the case for Careers Advisers, many of whom only meet with students once, meaning they found it difficult to gauge whether students had accessed any of the resources shared after the session. Of those careers staff who were able to comment, many reported that, whilst a minority of students may access LMI sources independently, most will need support to access and understand LMI, through dedicated lessons and 1:1 careers guidance. However, given that over half of KS5 students reported accessing LMI independently, it may be that careers staff are underestimating how much students are accessing LMI in their own time, particularly older students.

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<sup>3</sup> During the focus groups we made sure to clarify if students were referring to the BBC Bitesize Careers website or the BBC Bitesize revision website.

## **Parent engagement with LMI**

16. Of the parent sample (which showed a skew towards higher household income compared with national data), most were generally not aware of the term LMI. Of these parents, some showed an understanding of what the term meant through offering suggestions of types of information they might consider LMI. However, most parents (just over half of all those interviewed), commented that they did not have an understanding of what LMI was or that they had only come across the term through the e-survey completed prior to the interview.
17. Those who offered suggestions for the types of information they thought the term LMI referred to typically cited things like sector employment figures, information about skills gaps and the qualifications needed for certain roles. A few of these parents also made reference to the information being available both locally and nationally.

## **Confidence offering advice and finding information**

18. Most parents (69%) agreed or strongly agreed that they feel confident offering their child careers advice, however, a smaller proportion of parents (44%) feel they have enough information to help their child with career decisions.
19. In terms of parents' knowledge of where to find different types of information, over half of parents reported knowing where to get more information about the skills and qualifications their child might need for a future job/career (56%) and post-16 and post-18 options for education, training or employment (53%). In contrast, 44% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they know where to get information about different employment sectors.
20. From their responses to these five questions, parents were given a 'confidence score'. The sample of parents responding to the survey clearly skews towards those with mid (47%) to high (40%) confidence levels, with only 13% of parents in the low confidence group.
21. Parents were also asked what sources of information they tend to draw on when having conversations with their child about what they might like to do in the future. Parents were most likely to draw on their own (89%) and friends' and family's (64%) knowledge and experience of qualifications and work. They were less likely to draw on online information not provided by their child's school or college (45%) and least likely to draw on information provided by their child's school or college (25%). Notably, those who were more confident were more likely to use each of the sources, with those in the low confidence group tending to draw on a narrower range of sources.
22. In addition, whilst only 25% of parents indicated that they drew on information provided by their child's school or college, when asked if the school or college had shared information with them in the last year about careers and education options, 53% said yes and 32% said no. Notably, 63% of parents who had received careers information from their child's school or college did not report drawing on this

information during discussions with their child. Interviews with parents provided limited evidence to explain why this might be the case.

### **Parents' awareness of LMI use at school/college**

23. Most parents commented that they had no knowledge of their child using LMI at school or college, although a majority of these parents commented that their child may have accessed it at some point but had not mentioned this to them. A few parents were confident in saying their child had not accessed LMI at school or college. These tended to be parents of younger students, often commenting that they were hopeful their child would access more information in future years.

### **LMI preferences**

#### **Types of LMI**

24. Most students expressed a clear preference for information about individual jobs and career pathways over sector level information. When asked to choose what type of information would be most useful when thinking about their future, a third of students (33%) selected 'skills and qualifications needed to do a particular job', whilst a quarter (26%) selected 'information about what a job is like day to day' and a fifth (19%) chose 'qualification entry requirements'. This suggests that for 78% of students, the most useful types of LMI are those related to specific careers and career pathways. In contrast, only 11% of students felt that information such as predicted skills demand or sector employment figures would be most useful to them.
25. Students who selected either 'skills and qualifications needed to do a particular job' or 'qualification entry requirements' generally commented that it was important for them to understand the steps they will need to take when pursuing a given career pathway. When discussing their reasons for selecting 'how many jobs are available in different sectors' as the least useful type of LMI, many students expressed the view that knowing how many jobs were available in different sectors would not influence their decision making.

#### **Salary and information about what a job is like day-to-day**

26. Students who felt that salary information was the least useful type of LMI mostly commented that their potential enjoyment of a given job was a more important factor in their decision making than the amount they would be paid. In contrast, the small number of students who selected 'typical rates of pay' as their most important type of LMI either stated that salary was a key motivator for them when choosing a career or suggested it was important information because of how salary would influence the kind of lifestyle they could afford.

#### **Types of LMI most important to parents**

27. As part of the e-survey, parents were asked to select three types of LMI that would be most important for them when having conversations with their child about their future. On this question, parents' views were very similar to those of students, with

the two most commonly selected options being ‘skills and qualifications needed to do a particular job’ (84%) and ‘information about what a job is like day-to-day’ (54%).

28. Much like the students, few parents selected information unrelated to a specific job, such as employment figures for different sectors (14%) or the types of jobs available in their area (15%), as types of LMI that were important to them. The exception to this was regarding ‘the skills and qualifications in high demand now, or in the future’, which 38% of parents selected as one of their top three types of LMI.

### **Sector-level LMI**

29. Whilst only a minority of parents completing the e-survey selected sector-level information as one of their top three most important types of LMI, when shown an example website displaying information about the creative and digital sector in the Humber region, most parents commented that the information would be helpful when supporting their child with career decision making.
30. Some parents felt that employment figures for different sectors at a local and regional level, both in their own area and elsewhere in the country, would be useful.

### **Satisfaction with LMI**

#### **Availability**

31. Careers staff generally reported being satisfied with the availability of national LMI, however, many expressed a need for greater availability of local LMI. Of those parents who indicated they had previously used sources of LMI, most were satisfied with the information available.

#### **Features**

32. Students, staff and parents all expressed largely positive views of the LMI sources they referenced and the example websites they were shown during interviews and focus groups. Comments related to specific features of these sources typically centred around three key areas: the use of job profiles to present information about specific jobs; the extent to which LMI is personalised to students; the accessibility of the LMI source for both young people and staff.

#### **Improvements – sources of LMI**

33. Some careers staff and parents suggested potential areas of improvement for the sources of LMI they highlighted during interviews, most commonly relating to making websites visually appealing, with the information shown easy to understand and navigate.
34. In addition, some careers staff and parents commented that, whilst the National Careers Service website contains useful information, it is not very visually appealing for young people. Parents also commonly suggested that personal testimonies and



‘real-life experiences’ of people working in the role would be a useful addition to the job profiles.

### **Balance of national and local LMI**

35. The majority of careers staff felt that giving students insight into the local labour market was more important than providing national LMI. Most staff commented that this was because many students typically stay in the local area after they finish school or college. Some staff also highlighted that the labour market in their region is characterised by employment in specific, key sectors, and it is therefore important that students are aware of this.
36. Challenges related to the use of local LMI with students included difficulties they often face in striking a balance between presenting a realistic picture of the local labour market and encouraging students to make aspirational choices.
37. Most students felt that a mix of local and national LMI would be helpful, but when pushed to choose, most showed a preference towards national information. A quarter of students (25%) felt that local LMI would be more helpful. The reasons students gave for their preferences were largely related to the extent to which they saw themselves moving away from their local area in the future.
38. Just under a third of parents completing the survey (31%) expressed a preference for LMI about ‘their area of the country’ compared to a similar proportion (29%) of parents expressing a preference for national LMI. The most common response, however, was parents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement related to local and national LMI (40%), suggesting that these parents felt a balance between the two types of information would be most appropriate.

### **Availability of national and local LMI**

39. Careers staff do not appear to face significant challenges in finding national LMI, although some noted challenges around finding the right information across a wide range of sources.
40. In contrast, careers staff presented more of a mixed picture regarding the availability of local LMI, with some highlighting sources of local LMI that they use but most stating that they would like to see a greater availability of LMI at the local level.

### **Conclusions**

41. Careers staff indicated that students require guidance and support when accessing LMI. In supporting the careers programme at their school or college, Careers Leaders play a key role in sourcing, interpreting and disseminating LMI, especially at schools and colleges where LMI is integrated into the curriculum and/or actively promoted to staff, students and parents. Careers staff are generally satisfied with the sources of LMI available to them, although it is worth noting that over half of the schools and colleges in the research used a paid-for careers platform as a key source of LMI.

42. Where students report using LMI, they are typically accessing soft LMI such as role descriptions and information about career pathways, alongside salary information, with both students and parents showing a preference for these types of LMI.
43. Parents report having regular conversations with their child about careers, yet most tend to draw only on their own or friends' and family's knowledge and experience of work. This is despite a majority of parents reporting that they have received information about careers and education options from their child's school or college, although this mostly appears to be information about education options rather than LMI. Parents' conversations with their children seem to typically centre around education pathways, as well as fostering an awareness of their child's personal interests as a way to inform career decisions. Where parents do engage with online sources of LMI, this typically involves accessing information about qualifications and education routes related to higher education.
44. Across all three participant groups, preferences about the balance of local and national LMI are largely dependent on expectations of students moving or staying in the local area after leaving school or college. However, there was a strong message from careers staff about the need for greater availability of local LMI at the level of town or county; provision of LMI at this level was considered patchy. In addition, amongst those who expect to move elsewhere (or expect their child to), there was a desire for local-level LMI that provides insight into the labour market in other areas of the country.

## **Recommendations**

45. The findings from the research and conclusions outlined above suggest the following issues require further consideration:
  - Organisations supporting Careers Leaders (Careers Hubs and The Careers & Enterprise Company) should develop guidance for navigating the landscape of free and paid-for LMI platforms and sources, including both government and private or charitably owned sources.
  - All LEAs/Careers Hubs should provide local LMI resources in a useful format(s) for schools and colleges in their area, such as a bulletin/newsletter or a local LMI website.
  - An England-wide regional LMI source should be produced that enables users to compare regional and local LMI, with a mechanism to allow two or more of these regions to be compared or visualised in relation to one another.
  - Schools and colleges should develop consistent LMI provision for parents, shared in a way that maximises parental engagement. Linked to the above recommendation, there is a role for LEAs/Careers Hubs to support this through the development of good quality and easily shareable resources, something which is clearly valued by careers staff where it is already happening.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In England, the last decade has seen significant policy reforms in careers education, information, advice and guidance aimed at helping young people to better prepare for their working lives<sup>4</sup>. In 2012, and following the Education Act 2011<sup>5</sup>, the Government introduced a systemic change in policy which devolved responsibilities for providing career guidance and support from local authorities<sup>6</sup> to schools and colleges.
- 1.2 This change led to concerns about the variable quality and consistency of careers guidance<sup>7</sup>. As a response to these concerns, the Gatsby Foundation published the report *Good Career Guidance*<sup>8</sup> in 2014. The report provided an evidence-informed and practical definition of what constituted good careers provision and outlined a framework of eight benchmarks that schools and colleges could use to develop and improve their careers guidance system. In January 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) published statutory guidance for schools and guidance for colleges<sup>9</sup> outlining how to meet the Benchmarks and stating an expectation for every school and college to work towards achieving all eight Benchmarks.
- 1.3 To fully achieve Gatsby Benchmark 2 - learning from career and Labour Market Information – schools and colleges must meet the following criteria:
- By the age of 14, all pupils should have accessed and used information about career paths and the labour market to inform their own decisions on study options.
  - Parents should be encouraged to access and use information about labour markets and future study options to inform their support to their children.
- 1.4 The Careers & Enterprise Company's (CEC) 'Careers education in England's schools and colleges 2020' report<sup>10</sup> shows that, as of March 2020, 56% of 3,296 schools and

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<sup>4</sup>Andrews, David, and Tristram Hooley. "Careers leadership in practice: a study of 27 careers leaders in English secondary schools." *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling* 47, no. 5 (2019): 556-568.

<sup>5</sup> Department for Education. (2011). Education Act 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/contents/enacted>

<sup>6</sup> Under the Education Act 2011, local authorities retain their duty to encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training. They are required to assist the most vulnerable young people and those at risk of disengaging with education or work. See:

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/14140/1/statutory%20guidance%20for%20schools%20on%20careers%20guidance.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Andrews, David. (2016) "New strategy to transform the quality of careers education, advice and guidance for young people."

<sup>8</sup> Gatsby Charitable Foundation. (2014). *Good Career Guidance*. London: Gatsby Charitable. Retrieved from: [www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/assets/file?filePath=/the-Benchmarks/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf](http://www.goodcareerguidance.org.uk/assets/file?filePath=/the-Benchmarks/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> DfE. (2018). *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers: statutory guidance for schools and guidance for further education colleges and sixth form colleges*. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-provision-for-young-people-in-schools>

<sup>10</sup> The Careers & Enterprise Company. *Careers education in England's schools and colleges 2020: Working together for young people's futures*. (2020). Retrieved from: [https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244\\_careers\\_ed\\_2020\\_report18\\_0.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244_careers_ed_2020_report18_0.pdf)

colleges were fully achieving Benchmark 2, with a further 42% of schools and colleges partially achieving this Benchmark.

- 1.5 The Gatsby Good Career Guidance report stresses the importance of access to good quality LMI for improving social mobility and challenging stereotypical assumptions about the types of career pathways a young person is suited to. In addition, the report highlights that young people's understanding of the labour market is often limited, meaning that despite high aspirations, young people are often unaware of the steps needed to realise their ambitions.
- 1.6 Recent research by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research (IER), commissioned by Gatsby, provides insight on the LMI system for careers guidance in England<sup>11</sup>. The research mapped the complex landscape of LMI provision and identified 57 sources of LMI aimed at young people. Conclusions referred to the need for more support for young people and their intermediaries to successfully navigate the LMI system. Also highlighted were the views of stakeholders with expertise in LMI and careers, who identified local vacancies and soft LMI (qualitative, descriptive information) as the types of information most needed by those working with young people.
- 1.7 The report also drew a distinction between Labour Market Information (LMI) and Labour Market Intelligence (LMI+), defining the terms as follows:
  - Labour market information (LMI): "refers broadly to information or data on the economy, labour market and labour force that would support an understanding of its operation, as well as labour supply and demand. This is generally raw data; data that has no interpretation, context or explanation."
  - Labour market intelligence (LMI+): "refers to the interpretation of hard labour market data for different purposes..."
- 1.8 As is discussed later in this report, very few careers staff were aware of this distinction and no respondents used the term LMI+ unprompted. To reflect this, we therefore only use the term LMI throughout the discussion of research findings.

## **Purpose of the research**

- 1.9 This research aimed to build on the research outlined above through providing greater insight into how LMI is used by young people and their intermediaries - careers staff and parents. The research also sought to gather the views of these groups on the LMI they use and what would improve their experiences, as well their preferences regarding types of LMI, sources, key features and the required balance of national and local information.

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<sup>11</sup> Barnes, S-A., and Bimrose, J. (2021). *Labour market information and its use to inform career guidance of young people. An overview of the Labour Market Information System for Careers Guidance in England*. Coventry: Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick. Retrieved from: [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmicareerguidanceofyoungpeople/ier\\_gatsby\\_lmis\\_landscape\\_2021\\_final.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmicareerguidanceofyoungpeople/ier_gatsby_lmis_landscape_2021_final.pdf)

1.10 Key questions the research aimed to answer were:

- How, if at all, do young people use LMI/LMI+ and what do they use it for?
- How, if at all, do parents use LMI/LMI+ when talking with their children about their future career or study choices?
- How do Careers Leaders use LMI/LMI+ as part of their careers programmes and how do they use it with students?
- What LMI and LMI+ sources are schools, colleges, young people and parents using?
- How satisfied are they with current sources of LMI/LMI+? Of all the possible features, which do they find most useful?
- What do young people most value from LMI/LMI+?
- What do careers staff and parents think young people most value from LMI/LMI+? How have they come to make this judgement?
- What would an ideal source of LMI/LMI+ look like? What would it enable young people to do?
- What would be the ideal balance between local and national LMI?

1.11 The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2** outlines the research methodology, including the research design, sampling approach and development of the research tools.
- **Chapter 3** describes key characteristics of the research samples, at the school and college level as well as careers staff, students, and parents.
- **Chapter 4** summarises school and college approaches to using LMI and approaches used by Careers Advisers.
- **Chapter 5** highlights student and parent engagement with LMI, as described by students and parents themselves as well as careers staff.
- **Chapter 6** details the preferences of careers staff, students and parents regarding types and sources of LMI.
- **Chapter 7** discusses preferences and issues related to the balance of local and national LMI.
- **Chapter 8** draws together key conclusions from the research and suggests issues for further consideration.

1.12 Case studies illustrating examples of school and college practice relating to the use of LMI are included at the end of Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

## **Quantifiers**

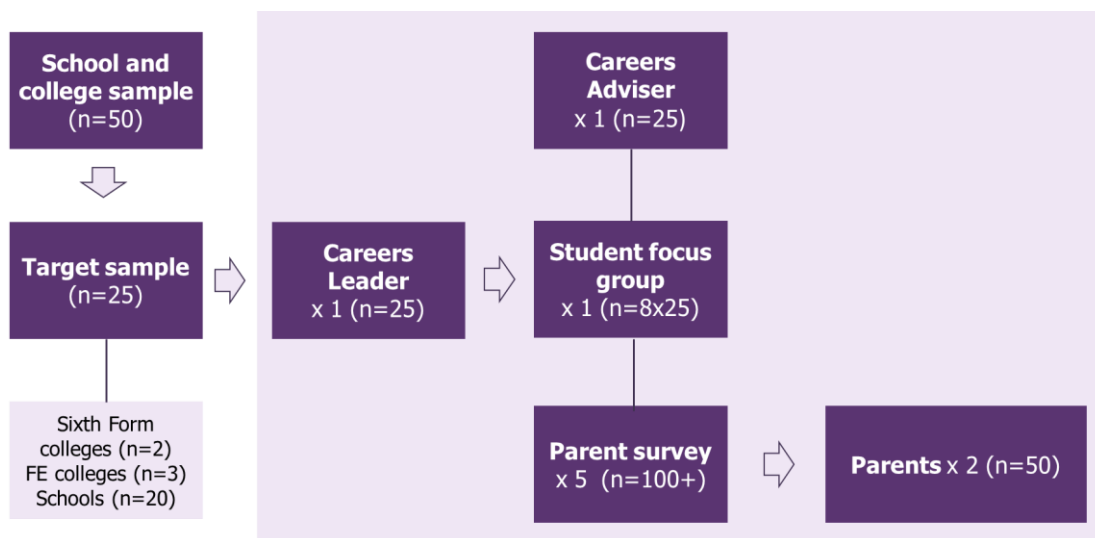
1.13 Throughout the report, when discussing the balance of views expressed by participants across the qualitative research findings, the following quantifiers are used to refer to the respective proportions of respondents:

- A few – less than a quarter
- Some – between a quarter and a half
- Around a half
- Most – between a half to three-quarters
- Almost all – over three-quarters.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The research took place between October 2021 and March 2022, with the fieldwork at participating schools and colleges running between December 2021 and March 2022.
- 2.2 Fieldwork was completed with three participant groups:
- Careers staff in schools and colleges (online interviews).
  - Students (online focus groups).
  - Parents (e-survey and telephone interviews).
- 2.3 As shown in Figure 2.1, the research design used a school and college-based approach to sampling and recruitment. We sought a total of 50 careers staff (Careers Leaders and Advisers) to participate in the research, along with 200 students and 50 parents participating in a telephone interview.
- 2.4 We aimed to reach research participants through 25 schools and colleges, recruited via regional contacts at the CEC.

**Figure 2.1: Research design**



- 2.5 Institutional and geographical data, as well as aggregated CEC data, was used to ensure a balanced sample of schools and colleges across the following variables: region, geographical designation (urban, rural, coastal), and percentage of schools and colleges within the LEP area fully achieving Benchmark 2. School size and the proportion of students at the school eligible for Free School Meals were also used to ensure the school sample was representative of the national distribution of these variables.

- 2.6 Research tools for each participant group were developed between the research team and Gatsby. These were:
- Interview topic guides for Careers Leaders and Careers Advisers.
  - Focus group topic guides and accompanying PowerPoint resources for online student focus groups.
  - Interview topic guides and accompanying example sources of LMI for parent telephone interviews.
  - An online parent questionnaire.
  - Parent and student focus group consent forms.
  - Communication templates such as draft emails.
- 2.7 The careers staff, parent and student topic guides were initially piloted and refined at a sixth form college prior to commencing fieldwork.
- 2.8 The research tools listed above are provided in Appendix C. A fuller version of this methodology can be found in Appendix A.



### **3 ABOUT THE RESEARCH SAMPLE**

- 3.1 This chapter outlines the key characteristics of the samples of schools and colleges, careers staff, students and parents. Further details about the research samples, including data tables, are included in Appendix B.

#### **Schools and colleges**

- 3.2 A total of 22 schools and colleges participated in the research with four provider types identified. Of the 18 participating schools, nine were schools with a sixth form and nine were without a sixth form. The four colleges within the research were made up of two sixth form colleges and two further education colleges. Of the 22 participating schools and colleges, 21 were recruited via the sampling approach detailed in the methodology (Appendix A), with one college recruited via purposive sampling to pilot the research tools.
- 3.3 Participating schools and colleges covered all regions of England. Against the national distribution of schools by proportion of students eligible for Free School Meals, the sample was broadly representative, with a slight under-representation of schools with very low proportions of Free School Meal eligibility.
- 3.4 When comparing the distribution of schools within the sample to the national distribution according to school size, there was a slight under-representation of smaller schools (fewer than 600 students) and a small over-representation of larger schools (with between 1200-1800 students).
- 3.5 Of the 22 participating schools and colleges, 18 shared their Gatsby Benchmark 2 score. All scores shared were 80% or higher, with two-thirds of institutions fully achieving Benchmark 2. This is slightly higher than the 56% of schools and colleges in England that were fully achieving Benchmark 2 as of March 2020<sup>12</sup>.

#### **Careers Leaders, Careers Advisers and other school staff**

- 3.6 Almost half of those interviewed named 'Careers Leader' as a job role. These individuals commonly held other roles within the school, including teacher and senior leader, with a small number also undertaking careers advice roles. Of the 20 Careers Leaders, seven did not identify any additional roles. A few other careers staff identified their role as Careers Co-ordinator.
- 3.7 Other main job roles identified included administration and employability roles, senior leaders with oversight of careers and individuals involved in college and university applications.
- 3.8 A total of ten individuals with Careers Adviser as their main role were interviewed with an even split between those employed by the school or college and external advisers, with all stating no formal additional responsibilities.

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<sup>12</sup> CEC (2020) Careers education in England's schools and colleges 2020: working together for young people's futures. Here: [https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244\\_careers\\_ed\\_2020\\_report18\\_0.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244_careers_ed_2020_report18_0.pdf)

## **Students**

- 3.9 The focus group sample included students from the 16 schools and colleges that participated in this aspect of the research. Participating students covered year groups from Key Stage 3 through to Key Stage 5. The largest number of students involved were from Year 9 and Year 12. A smaller number were from Years 10, 11 and 13, as staff were generally more reluctant for students in examination years (such as for GCSEs) to take part in the research during lesson time.
- 3.10 Some demographic characteristics were gathered relating to the students involved in the focus groups. The sample of participants were within five percentage points of the national averages regarding gender and the proportion of ethnic minority students. Almost one-quarter (23%) of the sample were identified as Pupil Premium, or eligible for sixth form or college bursaries, similar to the national average of 27%.

## **Parents**

- 3.11 Respondents to the parent survey included parents of students in Years 8 – 13, with interviewees including parents of students in Years 9 – 13. The largest proportions of parent respondents and interviewees related to students in Year 9 and Year 10, accounting for over two-thirds of survey respondents and three-quarters of the interviews.
- 3.12 The pre-tax distribution of household income of survey respondents and parents interviewed shows a clear skew towards the higher household income bands compared with the national data. The parental survey respondents and interviewees also covered all regions.

## **Delivery challenges**

- 3.13 The ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic appeared to impact recruitment, particularly the rapid increase in infections seen in January due to the Omicron variant. Many of the schools and colleges contacted in early January who declined to participate cited COVID-19 staff absences as the key reason. In addition, several schools who declined to participate stated they were prioritising catch-up curriculum lessons and activities for students.
- 3.14 In terms of difficulties faced in completing all the research elements:
- Two Careers Leaders who initially agreed to participate were unable to take part due to a lack of capacity.
  - Six Careers Leaders who took part in an initial interview did not have the capacity to arrange a student focus group or share the parent survey.
  - Some student focus groups had fewer students participating than originally planned due to student absences.

## **4 SCHOOL AND COLLEGE APPROACHES TO USING LMI**

- 4.1 The following chapter discusses findings from interviews with 42 careers staff across the 22 participating schools and colleges. Issues covered include the types and sources of LMI used by careers staff, key approaches to using LMI within the school or college careers programme, and the ways in which Careers Advisers use LMI within 1:1 careers guidance sessions.

### **Types of LMI**

- 4.2 When asked, very few careers staff were aware of the distinction between Labour Market Information (LMI) and Labour Market Intelligence (LMI+). Some had heard of the term Labour Market Intelligence but could not offer a definition, whilst most had not come across the term at all. With a few exceptions, staff therefore only used the term LMI during interviews, even when referring to information that we would class as LMI+.
- 4.3 Table 4.1 provides a summary of the types of LMI typically mentioned by careers staff during interviews. The designation of types of LMI as hard or soft is our own interpretation rather than being descriptors that were used routinely by careers staff. Although some did occasionally use the terms, staff generally referred to specific types of LMI rather than using general categories such as hard and soft. Hard LMI typically refers to quantitative LMI such as average salaries or sector employment figures, whilst soft LMI generally refers to qualitative information such as role descriptions.
- 4.4 Almost all careers staff mentioned the use of job profiles – a summary of key information about a given job – in a variety of different contexts, from lessons and 1:1 guidance sessions to careers newsletters and displays. Such job profiles typically contain mostly soft LMI such as the skills and qualifications required for the role and what the job involves. Hard LMI featured in these job profiles is usually limited to providing an average salary range, however, some Careers Leaders noted that on certain careers platforms, other hard LMI is shown such as predicted growth or decline for the job role and job vacancies by region.

**Table 4.1: Types of LMI mentioned by careers staff**

	Hard	Soft
More frequently mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job profiles (often including the types of LMI listed in the row below)</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector growth and decline, including local sectors</li> <li>• Sector employment figures, including local sectors</li> <li>• Average salaries for different jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routes into careers, including skills and qualifications needed</li> <li>• Descriptions of what a job is like day-to-day</li> <li>• Videos of people talking about their jobs</li> </ul>
Less frequently mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand for skills and qualifications, at present and in the future</li> <li>• Local apprenticeship availability</li> <li>• Sector employment figures by demographics such as gender and ethnicity</li> <li>• Vacancy trends</li> <li>• Graduate destinations from particular higher education courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about the work that local employers do</li> <li>• Skills needs of local employers</li> </ul>

*Source: YCL interview data 2021-22: 42 careers staff.*

## Sources of LMI

4.6 As shown in Table 4.2, the most common sources of national and general LMI that careers staff mentioned they used with students were:

- **National Careers Service:** the website of the government’s careers service providing careers information, advice and guidance to adults and young people aged 13 and over in England. Careers staff typically mentioned the job profiles featured on the website, highlighting in particular the information about what the job entails, the skills and qualifications needed and average salary. A few careers staff also mentioned the information on current vacancies and apprenticeship opportunities relevant to the role, as well as the site’s skills assessment quiz, which generates personalised job profile suggestions.
- **Unifrog:** a paid-for careers platform run by the private company Unifrog Education Ltd. Students log into the platform, where they can create their own profile. Careers staff typically mentioned the information about education pathways on the platform, including apprenticeships, as well as

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information contained in Unifrog’s job profiles such as role descriptions, average salaries and predicted demand for the role shown.

- **Start Profile:** a platform run by the private company U-Explore Ltd. Students log onto the platform, where they can create their own profile. The platform is available for free or with optional, paid-for institutional data analytic functions for practitioners. Careers staff highlighted the job profiles on the platform, with a few mentioning that these include the predicted growth or decline of the sector relevant to the role.
- **iCould:** run by the charity Education & Employers, iCould is a website featuring videos of people talking about their jobs. Careers staff commonly mentioned the website’s ‘Buzz quiz’, which students can complete to receive personalised video suggestions.

**Table 4.2: Source of LMI mentioned by careers staff**

	National/general	Local
More frequently mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Careers Service</li> <li>• Unifrog (£)</li> <li>• Start Profile (free/£)</li> <li>• iCould</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LMI updates from the LEP/Careers Hub</li> </ul>
Less frequently mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LMI for All</li> <li>• BBC Bitesize Careers</li> <li>• Careerpilot</li> <li>• Prospects</li> <li>• Office for National Statistics</li> <li>• Morrisby/Fast Tomato (£)</li> <li>• Kudos (£)</li> <li>• ASK Apprenticeships</li> <li>• CEC resource directory</li> <li>• Job boards (Indeed, Total Jobs)</li> <li>• Nomis</li> <li>• Emsi Burning Glass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Own knowledge of the area</li> <li>• Local LMI booklet<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• Local LMI website<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• Local LMI bulletin from a careers or education organisation<sup>15</sup></li> <li>• Updates/newsletters from a local business network</li> <li>• LEP industry days</li> </ul>

*Source: YCL interviews with careers staff 2021-2022. Sources of LMI within each cell listed in order of how commonly they were mentioned.*

4.7 Some careers staff also highlighted different sources of local LMI, the most common being LMI updates or newsletters provided by their LEP/Careers Hub. A small number of careers staff reported using physical sources of LMI (such as careers booklets provided by their local council), mostly with students during 1:1 guidance

<sup>13</sup> Example here: <https://www.hepp.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FINALCareers-South-Yorkshire2019web.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Example here: <https://lmihumber.co.uk/>

<sup>15</sup> Example bulletin here (school publishing the bulletin is not part of the research): <https://www.southmoorschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/LMI-Bulletin-North-East-Sept-2021.pdf>

sessions. Such careers booklets were either provided for free or bought in by the school, with students each given a copy to take home.

- 4.8 Sources of LMI mentioned by fewer careers staff included paid-for career platforms such as Kudos and Morrisby as well as the careers platform and website Careerpilot. Not all careers staff highlighting paid-for careers platforms were able to comment on the cost, but for those that did, cost of institutional subscription to the platform ranged between £500 - £1500 per year.
- 4.9 Some staff, typically those working with A-level students, reported using the Prospects graduate careers website with students.
- 4.10 For the few staff members who reported using Emsi Burning Glass, Nomis or the Office for National Statistics, these sources of LMI were typically used to update their own knowledge and/or to find LMI to share with staff, rather than using these websites directly with students. It is also worth noting that these careers staff all highlighted that they were comfortable accessing and interpreting data on these websites, either because of their teaching background (in geography, sociology or maths) or because they had received training from Emsi Burning Glass on how to use the website.
- 4.11 The views of careers staff on the above sources of LMI are discussed in Chapter 6.

### **LMI use within the school/college careers programme**

- 4.12 School and college approaches to the use of LMI within the careers programme tended to centre around three key areas:
- The ‘personal development curriculum’<sup>16</sup>, including Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, citizenship and tutor period.
  - The subject-based curriculum.
  - Promotion of LMI to staff, students and parents.
- 4.13 In addition to the three areas above, many Careers Leaders highlighted that employer engagement activities often provided students with useful insight into certain roles, as well as an awareness of specific local employers.
- 4.14 Within these three areas, some approaches appear more common than others. Table 4.3 summarises the more commonly reported approaches to the use of LMI and those reported less frequently by Careers Leaders, which are detailed further in the following sections.

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<sup>16</sup> Terminology varies across schools and colleges as to how this type of curriculum is described. During interviews with careers staff, this aspect of education was variously described as: Personal, Social, Health, Economic (PSHE) education, citizenship, and society and ethics, as well as including activities delivered during tutor period. For brevity, we will use the term ‘personal development curriculum’ to describe these areas of education.

**Table 4.3: Summary of school/college approaches to using LMI within the careers programme**

	<b>Personal development</b>	<b>Subject-based</b>	<b>Promotion</b>
<b>Most common</b> <i>(over half of institutions)</i>	Guided use of an online careers platform	LMI not widely used within subject-based curriculum (or college Careers Leaders not aware of if/how this is done)	Links to sites providing LMI on the careers page of the school/college website
<b>Less common</b> <i>(around a third of institutions or fewer)</i>	Dedicated lesson or assembly on LMI	LMI integrated into some subject lessons	Regular careers newsletter or bulletin includes LMI
Employer engagement			

#### **LMI use within the personal development curriculum**

- 4.15 Most Careers Leaders reported that the main way in which students access LMI is through the use of an online careers platform within the personal development curriculum. Such careers platforms typically feature job profiles and information about education pathways, and usually require students to log in. Examples of careers platforms used by participating schools and colleges include Unifrog, Start Profile and Careerpilot.
- 4.16 For most schools and colleges, introduction to the careers platform typically takes place over a series of guided sessions, delivered either through personal development lessons or tutor periods, or both, in the case of a few schools (Table 4.3). Careers Leaders at schools typically reported that students are introduced to the careers platform during KS3, with colleges introducing students to the platform in Year 12.

**Table 4.4: Guided use of career platforms**

	<b>No. of schools/colleges</b>
Personal development lesson	7
Tutor period	7
Both	4
Careers platform not used	4

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 22 schools/colleges.*

- 4.17 During these sessions, students will typically use the platform to research different career and education pathways. Careers staff stated that this often involves doing a

quiz or creating a personal profile on the platform, after which the students will usually research job profiles and qualification options they are interested in. The teacher leading the session will normally use a lesson plan provided by the careers platform, although some Careers Leaders commented that they often adapt these resources before sharing them with teachers.

- 4.18 Discussion about the types of LMI provided on these platforms and key features is detailed in Chapter 6.

#### One-off LMI lessons or assemblies

- 4.19 A few Careers Leaders described using LMI within the personal development curriculum in other ways, either in addition to or instead of the approach described above. This mostly included one-off lessons or assemblies focused on LMI, with the Careers Leader or Careers Adviser typically creating resources to support other staff in delivering these sessions. Whereas the above use of careers platforms appears to generally involve students looking at specific job profiles and researching education pathways, these one-off LMI sessions were typically described as being more focussed on sector level information and providing students with insight into the local labour market.

#### Challenges

- 4.20 Some careers staff highlighted challenges related to using LMI within the personal development curriculum. These included:
- The range of topics now required to be covered (due to changes in Department for Education guidance) in the PSHE curriculum, resulting in less time for careers education.
  - Difficulties in ensuring students have access to computers during sessions where they need to use an online careers platform.
  - A lack of funding to pay for a subscription to an online careers platform. (However, it is worth noting that several schools and colleges reported using free careers platforms, so this possibly indicates that those careers staff who mentioned funding pressures were unaware of the availability of some free platforms.)
  - Variations in the engagement, motivation and confidence of tutors when delivering personal development lessons involving LMI.
  - The impact of COVID-19 on delivery of personal development lessons involving LMI, for example, one Careers Leaders described careers lessons as “sporadic” during the pandemic.

*“There are more and more things that need to be covered in PSHE now, careers seems to get pushed out.” (School Careers Leader)*



### **LMI use within the subject-based curriculum**

- 4.21 Careers Leaders in schools generally had a greater awareness of how LMI was used within the subject-based curriculum compared to those in colleges. Whilst Careers Leaders in colleges reported that LMI was integrated into subject lessons, it was harder for them to comment on what this looked like in practice as it was often something that faculty or department heads were responsible for. In contrast, Careers Leaders in schools were more aware of how, if at all, LMI was integrated into the subject-based curriculum.
- 4.22 Where college Careers Leaders did comment on LMI use within the subject-based curriculum, they highlighted that, due to the industry experience of many technical and vocational subject teachers, LMI was likely integrated into lessons in a somewhat informal or ad hoc way. However, it is unclear whether this means these teachers draw solely on their own, anecdotal experiences or draw on their knowledge of verified sources of LMI.
- 4.23 For two-thirds of the participating schools, LMI was not typically used within the subject-based curriculum, however, a few of these Careers Leaders commented that this was something they would like to do more of.
- 4.24 Of the schools where LMI was used within the subject-based curriculum, there was no consistent pattern in how Careers Leaders described the way in which this was done. Approaches included:
- Integrating LMI within a series of subject lessons on a particular topic, for example, a half term's worth of lessons in geography on renewable energy (a key sector in the school's region).
  - Subject lessons showcasing what types of careers the subject can lead to, with a lesson template created by the Careers Leader.
  - During National Careers Week, each subject delivering one lesson about job sectors relevant to the subject.
  - A 'Careers Champion' in each department taking responsibility for planning subject-specific careers lessons, including sourcing the relevant LMI.
- 4.25 To facilitate the above use of LMI within subject lessons (with the exception of the last bullet-point), the school Careers Leader or Careers Adviser will usually source relevant LMI from the websites listed in Table 4.2 and share this with teachers. This suggests that careers staff play a key role in collating and disseminating LMI to other staff within schools.

### **Challenges**

- 4.26 A few careers staff highlighted challenges related to using LMI within the subject-based curriculum, including:
- Certain subjects like geography and science, in the staff member's opinion, lending themselves better to using LMI than others, such as maths.

- The decentralised approach used by colleges making it challenging and time-consuming to find out how LMI is being used within each subject department.
- Finding it challenging to decide, out of varied sources and types of LMI, which information is most useful for different departments and where it should fit within the curriculum.
- Challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic making the use of LMI within the curriculum less of a priority.

*“We had made a good start embedding LMI within faculties, but this became less of a priority during the pandemic.” (College Careers Leader)*

### **Employer engagement**

- 4.27 When asked about LMI use within the careers programme at their school or college, around half of Careers Leaders mentioned that employer engagement activities (such as employee talks and/or careers fairs) could often be a useful source of LMI, particularly in terms of giving students an insight into the local labour market and local employers. Whilst not using the terms themselves, it seems that these Careers Leaders viewed activities like employer talks as providing a soft (albeit anecdotal) form of LMI, giving students qualitative insight into a particular role or employer. For example, it was highlighted that employees delivering talks will often describe what their job is like day-to-day and the route they took into their particular career.
- 4.28 In addition, some Careers Leaders reported ways in which they routinely integrate other types of LMI into their employer engagement activities. For example, asking guest speakers delivering a talk about their job to highlight the size of their sector and availability of jobs locally, or asking them to mention specific pieces of information related to their role, such as typical salary and qualifications required.

### **Promotion of LMI**

- 4.29 Careers staff described how LMI was promoted to students and parents, with the most common approach being to have relevant links provided on the school or college website.
- 4.30 Almost all careers staff reported having links to careers websites providing LMI available on their school or college website. In most cases, these are located on a webpage containing general careers resources, although some schools and colleges have webpages or sections specifically dedicated to LMI.
- 4.31 Some Careers Leaders highlighted ways in which these websites were actively promoted to students, including via Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams, or signposted to students during careers lessons and tutor periods.
- 4.32 In terms of promoting LMI to parents, most Careers Leaders commented that they have links available on the school or college website, but that they do not actively promote these to parents. However, some Careers Leaders did report routinely sharing LMI with parents and signposting them to LMI websites, typically through a weekly or monthly email newsletter. These tend to be general careers newsletters

rather than being specifically dedicated to LMI, containing relevant opportunities and careers information as well as things like job profiles or information about local growth sectors and employers.

### Challenges

- 4.33 Parental engagement was commonly cited as a key challenge by Careers Leaders when discussing the promotion of LMI. Whilst the information and resources were available on the school or college website, Careers Leaders generally suspected that very few parents actively engaged with these, whilst acknowledging there was often no way of them knowing whether this was the case. The exception to this was a few schools and colleges that used social media or an online newsletter service, which provided some data on how many people had viewed certain information.
- 4.34 In addition, a few Careers Leaders commented that compiling and sharing a careers newsletter with students, staff and parents, for example, to provide a 'snapshot' of the local labour market, was something they would like to do but did not have the time or capacity for.

### **LMI use within 1:1 careers guidance sessions**

- 4.35 The findings below are based on interviews with 15 Careers Advisers, some of whom were also Careers Leaders or Careers Coordinators.
- 4.36 All Careers Advisers saw value in using LMI within guidance sessions, and almost all reported having the time to do so during the 30-40 minutes they typically have with students. Most commonly, Advisers seem to use LMI to gently challenge students' perceptions or assumptions about certain jobs or sectors and/or to find specific information about a job or career pathway that the student has expressed an interest in.
- 4.37 Overall, Advisers appear to take three main approaches to using LMI within 1:1 careers guidance sessions:
- Verbally and on an ad hoc basis during the conversation.
  - Supporting students with careers research.
  - Signposting students to relevant sources of LMI, during and/or after the session.
- 4.38 Advisers did not report using one approach exclusively, rather, they tend to tailor their approach depending on the needs of the student and may use more than one approach within a given guidance session.

### **Verbally and ad hoc**

- 4.39 Advisers spoke of introducing LMI into the discussion where relevant, often as a way of gently challenging students' perceptions or addressing misconceptions. For example, one adviser talked about asking a student to guess how many accountants worked in England. The student guessed in the hundreds, which led to a discussion

about the many different organisations that require accountancy services and the numbers of accountancy jobs available.

- 4.40 Typically, Advisers would describe recalling information from memory, such as information about growth sectors or specific local employers. A few advisers highlighted that their knowledge about local sectors and employers came from living in the area a long time, whilst others described gaining local insight from other sources, such as LMI shared by their LEP.

*"It's about fostering an awareness of different industries rather than getting them to research a specific career in detail." (Careers Adviser)*

### **Guided research**

- 4.41 Many Advisers described looking at LMI with students during guidance sessions, where it was relevant to the discussion about their career interests, to support them in researching career and education options. This guided research could also be used for the purpose of challenging misconceptions, as described above.

- 4.42 Examples of ways in which Careers Advisers reported doing guided research with students included:

- Viewing a National Careers Service job profile together; explaining what the information shows and looking at local vacancies to develop awareness of local employers.
- Searching job boards such as Indeed to show students what jobs are available locally and to view 'real life' job descriptions to develop an understanding of the skills needed for different roles.
- Showing students 'a day-in-the-life' type videos of people working in certain jobs, then showing links to local employers if the student is interested.
- Using Prospects, university web pages and websites of relevant professional associations to find out about qualifications needed for certain careers and qualification entry requirements.
- Introducing students to a physical careers and LMI booklet that they take away with them after the session.

*"We like to treat them as individuals rather than as a process. One size doesn't fit all so you can't just use one website." (Careers Adviser)*

*[On using online LMI to help students think realistically about their options]*

*"You don't want them to be on a pathway where there isn't a job at the end." (Careers Adviser)*

- 4.43 Some Advisers also reported routinely using career quizzes during 1:1 sessions to guide students to relevant job profiles, especially when a student seems unsure of their career interests. Others described sharing a link to a relevant quiz as part of the students' action plans, commenting that there is not enough time for the student to complete a quiz during the session.

## **Signposting**

- 4.44 Most Advisers commented that they routinely signpost students to sources of LMI during or after a guidance session, often by sharing relevant links as part of an action plan developed with the student during the session. Examples of this included:
- Sharing links to National Careers Service or Prospects job profiles for roles a student expressed interest in during the session.
  - Adding links to websites discussed during the session to the action plan, which often includes a link to the area's local LMI website.
  - The Adviser's action plan template including links to LMI for All, Nomis and Prospects, alongside key questions students should be thinking about when researching, such as "Is this a growth sector and are new jobs predicted in the future?"

## Challenges

- 4.45 A few Careers Advisers commented that they often do not have enough time to share LMI with students during guidance sessions. For example, one Adviser described only having time to discuss applications to post-16 education or training during the 30 minutes she has with each Year 11 student. Another suggested that there is not enough time during the session to do guided online research with the students.

## A report to the Gatsby Foundation:

### The experiences and preferences of young people and their intermediaries regarding use of Labour Market Information (LMI) to support good career guidance

#### Case study 1

Located in a coastal city in the North of England, the school has 1,500 students on roll across Years 7 - 11 and a below average proportion of students receiving free school meals. The school currently holds an Ofsted rating of Good and has a Gatsby Benchmark 2 score of 100%.

#### Use of LMI within the careers programme

##### Personal development curriculum

- In Year 8, students have a dedicated lesson introducing mainly local LMI. The resources for this lesson were purchased from an external organisation not local to the area, with the Careers Leader adapting the lessons by adding information from the area's local LMI website.
- In Year 9, students are introduced to Start Profile during PSHE.
- One PSHE lesson in Year 10 involves students reviewing example job profiles and then creating a CV, applying their own skills and experience to the job description.

##### Subject based curriculum

- The Careers Leader shares LMI with staff for use in subject-based lessons. For example, a half-term of Geography lessons on renewable energy includes LMI in each lesson.

##### Employer engagement

- The school recently took part in the BBC Bitesize roadshow, where students were introduced to key growth sectors in the area, such as digital and renewable energy, and heard from young people working in these industries.
- Guest speakers from local employers are regularly invited to the school to talk about the work they do and who they employ.
- A careers fair with around 30 organisations, including local employers, gives students the opportunity to gain insight into the local labour market "from the source."

##### Promotion of LMI

- Display boards around the school show job profiles, including a summary of entry requirements, salary and routes into the role.
- A careers newsletter, shared with students, staff and parents, includes information about local employers.
- The school website has links to websites providing LMI, including the area's local LMI website.

##### 1:1 guidance

- The Careers Adviser (from the Local Authority Connexions service) has a subscription to the Kudos careers platform and students will often complete the platform's career quiz during the session.

*"Students tend to engage more with local information especially from guest speakers and businesses from the local area. Students find this more relevant - they can relate more to them" (Careers Leader)*

*"We did a lesson where we did a quiz which recommended us jobs that we might be interested in. You could look at things like salary, and the skills you'll need. I found this very helpful, it was what got me thinking about wanting to be a writer."*  
(Student)

#### Key facilitators

- **Senior leadership buy in:** Senior leaders understand the importance of LMI and support the Careers Leader by generating interest and buy-in from Heads of Faculty.
- **Access to local sources:** Having access to local sources of LMI, including a dedicated local LMI website and local LMI newsletters shared by the council, supports the use and promotion of LMI at the school.
- **Resourcing:** The school employs a Careers Leader who works four days per week to plan and deliver the careers programme.

## **5 Student and parent engagement with LMI**

- 5.1 This chapter draws on data from student focus groups, careers staff interviews and parent survey responses and interviews to discuss student and parent engagement with LMI, including the types and sources of LMI most commonly used.
- 5.2 During parent interviews and student focus groups, example sources of LMI were used to prompt discussion. These included an example National Careers Service job profile<sup>17</sup> and a sector overview page from the website LMI Humber<sup>18</sup>. Screenshots of these example sources of LMI can be found in Appendix C.

### **Student engagement with LMI**

- 5.3 Around half of students reported having accessed online sources of LMI, either independently or during a lesson. Older students were somewhat more likely to report accessing online sources of LMI, with almost 60% of KS5 students doing so compared to around 45% of KS3 and KS4 students.
- 5.4 Whether students accessed these sources of LMI independently or during a lesson differed between the key stages. Of the 60% of older students (KS5) who reported accessing online sources of LMI, most said they had done so independently, although typically these were websites signposted by their school or college. For the 45% of younger students (KS3 & KS4) who said they had accessed online sources of LMI, roughly equal proportions reported accessing LMI during a lesson compared with using it independently.
- 5.5 In terms of specific sources used, students in KS5 mostly reported using the National Careers Service website and Prospects. Many students in KS3 and KS4 also reported using the National Careers Service website whilst also commonly highlighting BBC Bitesize Careers as a website they had used<sup>19</sup>. Some students also commented that they had used career platforms such as Unifrog and FastTomato during tutor periods or lessons. In addition, a small number of students reported using websites such as Indeed or LinkedIn to view live job opportunities.

*“I used the National Careers Service... I just looked at different jobs in subjects that interested me, and how much you can make on average.”  
(Year 10 student)*

- 5.6 Several students in the South and East of England also highlighted Careerpilot as a website they had used<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Example source of LMI (job profile): <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/web-designer>

<sup>18</sup> Example source of LMI (sector overview): <https://lmihumber.co.uk/creative-and-digital/>

<sup>19</sup> During the focus groups we made sure to clarify if students were referring to the BBC Bitesize Careers website or the BBC Bitesize revision website.

<sup>20</sup> Careerpilot is a website developed by the Western Vocational Progression Consortium (WVPC), a consortium of universities and colleges in the South of England. A version of the website is available for free across the UK, with additional content available on a subscription basis. Schools and colleges in the South West and some parts of the South East receive a free subscription to the whole website.

- 5.7 Almost all of the older students (KS5) who said they had used online sources of LMI reported doing so independently, although typically these were websites signposted by their school or college. Students in KS3 and 4 who reported using online sources of LMI presented more of a mixed picture, with around half describing accessing websites in their own time and an equal proportion having used them during lessons.

### **Types of LMI used**

- 5.8 Of the students who had previously accessed careers websites (either independently or during a lesson), most described viewing information about average salaries and the skills and qualifications needed for particular roles. Some students had also looked at information about what different jobs involve, either through reading a description on a job profile or watching a video of someone talking about their job.
- 5.9 It appears that these types of LMI are mostly used by students to make connections between subjects and qualifications (either those they are currently studying or that they hope to study in the future) and potential career pathways they are interested in. For example, some students commented that they had used information about salaries and required qualifications for particular jobs to inform education decisions such as GCSE or A-level choices.

*“When I was picking my GCSEs I looked at qualifications needed for jobs I was interested in.” (Year 9 student)*

- 5.10 Aside from average salaries, it seems that most of the information accessed by students is soft LMI, such as descriptions of what different jobs involve and the routes into different careers. Only a small number of students reported looking up hard LMI that was not salary related, such as information about the demand for and availability of certain jobs. This aligns with staff comments about students engaging less with hard LMI, particularly when it comes to things like growth sectors.

### **Careers staff views on student engagement**

- 5.11 Some staff found it hard to comment on the extent to which students engage with LMI independently. This was particularly the case for Careers Advisers, many of whom only meet with students once, meaning they found it difficult to gauge whether students had accessed any of the resources shared after the session. Of those careers staff who were able to comment, many reported that, whilst a minority of students may access LMI sources independently, most will need support to access and understand LMI, through dedicated lessons and 1:1 careers guidance.

*“Generally, unless a young person is very capable, they would need guidance to access and understand LMI.” (Careers Adviser)*

- 5.12 Whilst these comments from careers staff somewhat contradict the experiences of older students, over half of whom at KS5 reported accessing LMI independently, this may simply reflect a slight skew in our KS5 sample towards more engaged



students. It is also worth noting that around a third of students reported using LMI in school or college, and typically, the LMI sources students reported using independently were those which had been signposted by their school or college. These findings therefore support the points made by careers staff about students requiring support and guidance, particularly when first introducing them to LMI.

- 5.13 In terms of types of LMI, careers staff commonly cited salary information as the type of LMI that many students appear to engage with the most.

*“They will suddenly show interest if you start talking about salary. Talking about growth markets is tougher, unless it’s a sector they’re interested in.”  
(College Careers Leader)*

*“The students like to know how much they’re going to earn.” (School  
Careers Coordinator/Adviser)*

- 5.14 A few careers staff also felt that students engaged well with information about what a job is like day-to-day, whether included in an online job profile, video of someone talking about their job or through an employer talk at the school or college.
- 5.15 Some careers staff also commented that students often do not understand how certain types of LMI are relevant to them, particularly things like sector employment figures or information about sector growth and decline, and as a result tend to ‘switch off’ when presented with this information. In addition, a few careers staff felt that hard LMI was often quite challenging for students to understand, especially those who struggle with numeracy.
- 5.16 To a certain extent, these comments about the types of LMI students engage with more or less aligns with how students described engaging with LMI themselves. Whilst students did not specifically highlight challenges related to understanding hard LMI, aside from salary information, they mostly reported engaging with soft LMI.

### **Parent engagement with LMI**

- 5.17 Most parents were generally not aware of the term LMI and what it refers to. When asked about their familiarity with LMI, half of parents interviewed did not have an understanding of what LMI was or had only come across the term through the e-survey completed prior to the interview. Parents with no awareness of LMI were found in all confidence level groups<sup>21</sup>.
- 5.18 Some parents showed an understanding of LMI as a term and were able to identify certain types, mostly sector employment figures, information about skills gaps and the qualifications needed for certain roles. A few of these parents made links to the information being available both locally and nationally.

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<sup>21</sup> As described in the methodology, in the e-survey parents were asked to rate their level of agreement to five questions related to their confidence supporting their child and knowledge of where to find information (shown in Figure 5.1). From the responses to these questions, parents were given a ‘confidence score’ between 0-20.

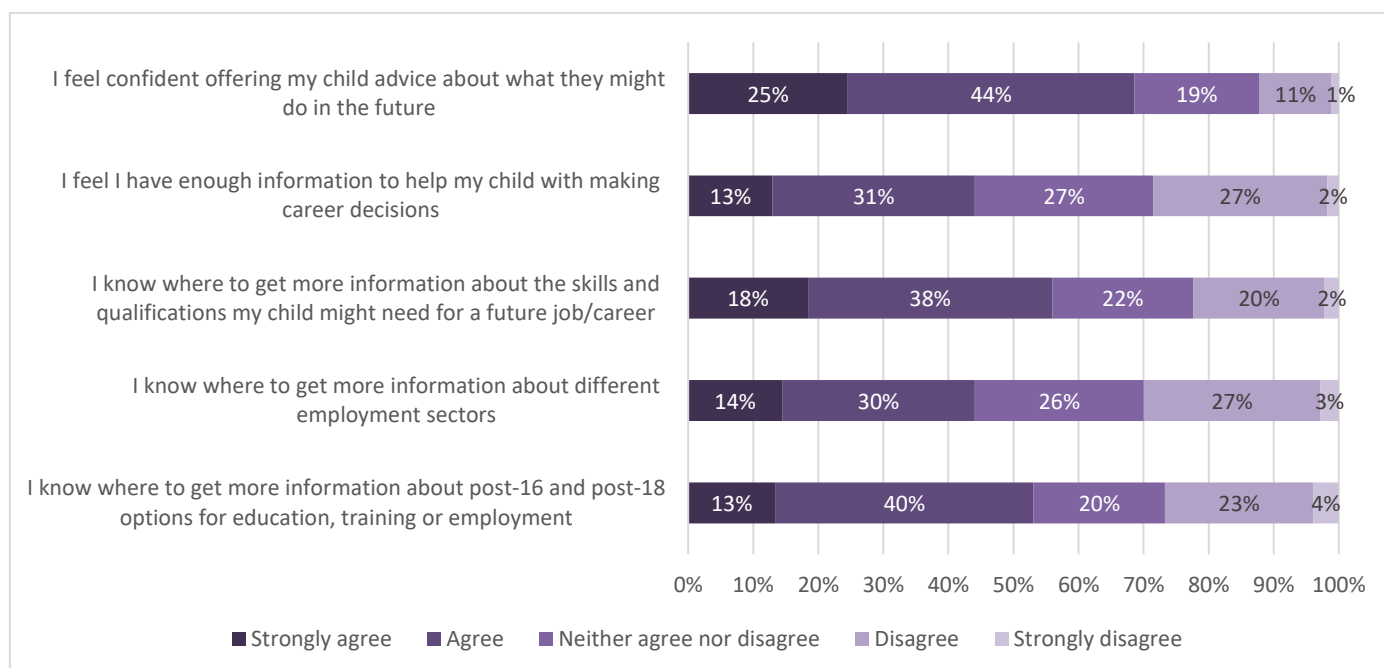
5.19 A few parents were able to demonstrate a good understanding of the term LMI, using examples. These parents commented that they have an understanding of LMI through their work in areas such as human resources, education and recruitment. Parents with a good understanding of LMI had mid or high overall confidence scores.

### Confidence offering advice and finding information

5.20 As shown in Figure 4.1, most parents (69%) agree or strongly agree that they feel confident offering their child advice, however, a smaller proportion of parents (44%) feel they have enough information to help their child with career decisions.

5.21 In terms of parents' knowledge of where to find different types of information, over half of parents reported knowing where to get more information about the skills and qualifications their child might need for a future job/career (56%) and post-16 and post-18 options for education, training or employment (53%). In contrast, 44% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they know where to get information about different employment sectors.

**Figure 4.1: Parents' confidence offering advice and finding information to support their child.**



*Source: YCL survey data 2021-22. Base: 276 parents.*

5.22 From their responses to these five questions, parents were given a 'confidence score'. Table 4.5 shows the distribution of parents responding to the survey across confidence scores, grouped at three levels: high, mid and low. The sample of parents responding to the survey clearly skews towards those with mid to high confidence levels, with only 13% of parents in the low confidence group. The most likely reason for this is that parents with greater confidence in supporting their child

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and engaging with careers information are more likely to complete a survey about careers information shared by their child’s school or college.

- 5.23 Analysis of the relationship between parents’ income and confidence scores showed no correlation between these two variables.

**Table 4.5: Parents’ confidence level**

Confidence level	% of parents
High (14-20)	40%
Mid (7-13)	47%
Low (0-6)	13%

*Source: YCL survey data 2021-22. Bases – high: 112, mid: 128, low: 36. Total: 276*

- 5.24 Parents were also asked what sources of information they tend to draw on when having conversations with their child about what they might like to do in the future. Table 4.6 shows the percentage of parents selecting each option across the overall survey sample and across low, mid and high confidence groups.
- 5.25 Parents were most likely to draw on sources 1 and 2 - their own and friends’ and family’s knowledge and experience of qualifications and work - and least likely to draw on source 3 – information provided by their child’s school or college.
- 5.26 Notably, those who were more confident were more likely to use each of the sources. For example, 58% of high confidence parents reported using online information not provided by their child’s school or college, compared to 40% of mid confidence parents and 25% of low confidence parents. More confident parents were also more likely to report using information shared by their child’s school or college. Of those who had received information from their child’s school or college, 47% of high confidence parents said they had drawn on this information during conversations with their child, compared to 30% of mid confidence parents and fewer than 7% of low confidence parents.

**Table 4.6: Sources parents draw upon when having discussions with their child about what they might like to do in the future.**

	1. Your own knowledge and experience of qualifications and work	2. Friends’ and family’s knowledge and experience of qualifications and work	3. Information provided by your child’s school/college	4. Online information not provided by your child’s school/college
High	90%	70%	39%	58%
Mid	90%	60%	19%	40%
Low	81%	58%	6%	25%
Total	89%	64%	25%	45%

*Source: YCL survey data 2021-22. Bases – high: 112, mid: 128, low: 36. Total: 276.*

- 5.27 In addition, parents with low and mid confidence levels generally selected fewer options overall when answering this question, with the options most commonly selected by these groups being sources 1 and 2. This suggests that parents with low and mid confidence levels generally gather information from a narrower range of

sources than higher confidence parents, and that personal experiences and those of friends and family tend to dominate as sources of information more so than with higher confidence parents.

- 5.28 Whilst only 25% of all parent respondents indicated that they drew on information provided by their child's school or college when having career discussions with their child, when asked if the school or college had shared information with them in the last year about careers and education options, 53% said yes and 32% said no.
- 5.29 Notably, of those who said yes, only 37% then went on to select option 3 shown in Table 4.6, meaning that 63% of parents who had received careers information from their child's school or college do not report drawing on this information during discussions. Interviews with parents provided limited evidence to explain this, as many of those interviewed had either not received any information or were not able to offer much comment on the information that had been shared. We therefore cannot infer whether parents do not tend to draw on this information because they do not find it useful, or if there are other reasons, such as time constraints.
- 5.30 Nonetheless, of the few parents who were able to comment on the information shared by their child's school or college, these included parents:
- mentioning that they tend to pass the information onto their child, although they were unsure how much their child engaged with it.
  - highlighting events, such as university webinars and careers fairs, that their child had attended after information about them was shared by the school or college.
  - stating they are aware that links to careers websites are provided on the school or college website but that they had not looked at them. These were mainly parents of Year 9 or 10 students who felt that the information would not be relevant to their child yet.
  - suggesting the information did not seem relevant to their child's career interests.
  - expressing that too much information was shared and that they did not have time look through it all.
- 5.31 It is also worth noting that across the 53% of parents who reported receiving information about careers and education options, all of the 14 schools and colleges that had shared the parent survey were represented.
- 5.32 In terms of the types of information parents report that schools or colleges share with them, Table 4.7 shows that this tends to mainly be information about education options (75%), with just under a third (31%) of parents reporting receiving LMI such as information about employment sectors or the skills and qualifications required for certain jobs or careers.

**Table 4.7: Types of information parents report their child’s school or college has shared with them in the past year**

Type of information shared	% parents selecting option
1. Information about education options	75%
2. Information about different employment sectors	31%
3. Information about skills and qualifications needed for future jobs/careers	31%
4. Links to careers websites	44%
5. Advice on how to support your child with career decision making	39%

*Source: YCL survey data 2021-22. Base: 146 parents (those who selected ‘yes’ when asked in their child’s school or college shared information with them about career or education options.) Respondents could select all that applied.*

### **Parents’ use of LMI when supporting their child**

5.33 Regarding the use of LMI during conversations with their child about what they might like to do in the future, parents’ responses during interviews largely mirrored the survey findings, with responses generally split between those reporting not using any LMI, and those who could name websites and sources they had drawn upon. However, some parents mentioned that they drew on their own knowledge and experience of work when having career discussions with their child, without drawing on online sources of information. Some also made reference to the use of their personal networks, friends and family to provide insight into careers they were not familiar with.

*“None, I draw on my own knowledge if needed but as conversations are very brief it is not needed as she does not have a particular interest at the moment.” (Parent – Year 9)*

*“I draw on information from friends and family. A friend mentioned that it would be good for him to join army cadets so we have done some research into that.” (Parent – Year 9)*

5.34 The majority of parents with low overall confidence ratings tended to report drawing upon their own knowledge or that of friends and family during these discussions, echoing findings from the survey detailed in Table 4.6.

5.35 Around a third of parents interviewed reported that they had not looked online for any sources of LMI, either because their child did not have a specific career interest to conduct online research about or because their child’s age meant they felt it best to have conversations about general interests rather than look at information about specific careers or sectors. A few parents also stated that accessing sources of LMI with their child could be off-putting for them.

*“If she wants to do something, I’d want to encourage her to do it and not worry about whether there aren’t that many jobs available. I don’t want to put doubts in her head. Once that’s in her mind, she’ll think ‘well I might as well not do it’.” (Parent – Year 12)*

*“I don’t ever sit down with him to do things like online research, that would make it a much more formal conversation and he would then switch off.”  
(Parent – Year 10)*

- 5.36 Almost half of parents named sources of information they had used at home to aid with careers conversations. Of these, most parents described looking at university websites to gain information about entry requirements and qualifications needed for certain careers. Notably, this was not limited to parents of KS5 students, with parents of Year 9 students also mentioning using these sources. A few parents also mentioned the use of the National Careers Service website and websites for professional associations such as the Law Society and the Royal College of Speech and Language.
- 5.37 A few parents described searching Google to find certain pieces of information whilst not being able to recall which websites they had looked at. A similar proportion commented that they had encouraged their child to do independent careers research but were unsure which websites their child had accessed.
- 5.38 Parents with higher confidence scores were more likely to mention specific online sources used during conversations in addition to their own knowledge, however, it is worth noting that there were also a few parents with high confidence scores that had not accessed any online sources of LMI.

#### **Parents’ awareness of LMI use at school/college**

- 5.39 Most parents commented that they had no knowledge of their child using LMI at school or college, although a majority of these parents suggested that their child may have accessed it at some point but had not mentioned this to them. A few parents were confident in saying their child had not accessed LMI at school or college. These tended to be parents of younger students, often commenting that they were hopeful their child would access more information in future years.

*“No, my daughter hasn’t accessed this at school. I think it may pick up in Year 10 and 11.” (Parent – Year 9)*

- 5.40 A few parents were able to identify times when their child had accessed LMI at school or college. Most commonly, parents mentioned careers fairs and students accessing information on pathways linking education options with careers. The use of career quizzes in PSHE lessons, sharing of careers websites by the school and conversations with careers advisers were also mentioned.

*“The college shared information on career pathways and examples of what former students have done. My daughter has mentioned PSE lessons about careers... they look at different types of jobs, what qualifications you need, salary...” (Parent – Year 12)*

### Staff views on parental engagement

5.41 As mentioned previously, most staff found it hard to comment on parents’ engagement with LMI, whilst some commented that parental engagement was generally a challenge not just for careers but across the school.

*“Parents aren’t beating down to the door asking for this kind of information.” (School Careers Leader)*

5.42 A few Careers Leaders mentioned that gathering the views of parents and sharing information with them was something they would like to do more of.

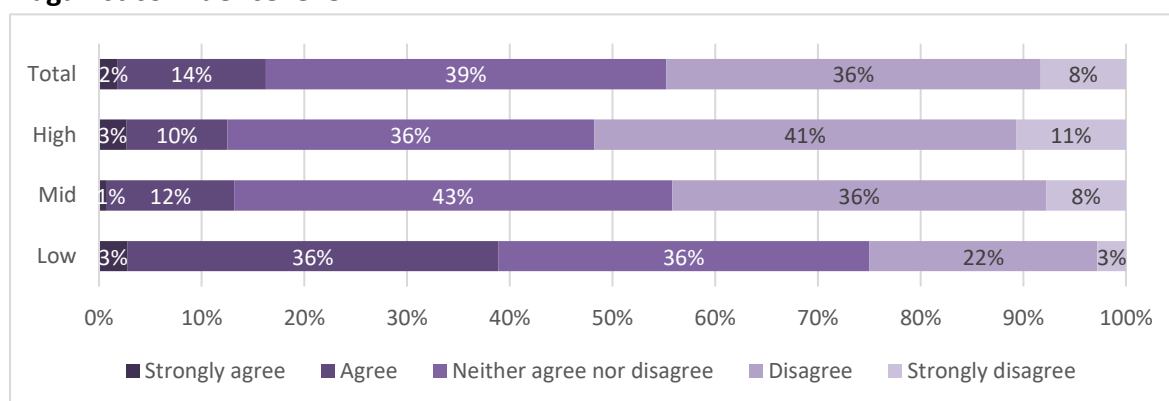
5.43 Careers staff who were able to offer some comment on parental engagement with LMI highlighted that parents’ attendance at careers fairs and progression evenings is usually good, and that on these occasions parents typically ask for information about qualifications and education pathways.

5.44 A few staff highlighted challenges related to parental engagement, including:

- Some families having limited access to the internet and technology, making it hard for parents to access online LMI.
- The impression that parents feel careers is solely the responsibility of the school or college.

5.45 Findings from the parent survey found some evidence to support the latter point. Whilst overall, only 16% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Responsibility to explore information about the labour market lies more with my child’s school/college than with me”, parents with lower confidence levels were more likely to agree with the statement than those with higher confidence. Figure 4.2 shows that, amongst parents with low confidence levels, 39% agree or strongly agree with the statement, compared to 13% of those with mid or high confidence levels.

**Figure 4.2: Parent responses to the statement “Responsibility to explore information about the labour market lies more with my child’s school/college than with me” against confidence level.**



*Source: YCL survey data 2021-22. Bases – high: 112, mid: 128, low: 36. Total: 276*

## Case study 2

Located in a city in the West Midlands, the school has around 1500 students on roll across years 7 – 13 and has a below average percentage of students receiving Free School Meals. The sixth form offers A-level and level 3 technical courses and some level 2 technical courses are offered alongside GCSEs at Year 11. The school currently holds an Ofsted rating of Good and is fully meeting Gatsby Benchmark 2.

## Use of LMI within the careers programme

### Personal development curriculum

- Students are introduced to Unifrog in Year 9, where they create a profile on the platform and research career and education pathways over the course of six careers focused PSHE lessons.
- Year 11, 12 and 13 students regularly use Unifrog in PSHE and tutor period for careers and education research.
- The school's two Careers Advisers/Coordinators create resources and develop lesson plans for tutors to deliver LMI-based activities. For example, they created a quiz about sectors that are growing and declining.
- Year 8 and 9 students each have an assembly on future jobs and skills needs and Year 13 students have a dedicated LMI assembly, with the LMI and resources for these assemblies sourced by the Careers Coordinator.

*"Unifrog provides them with an awful lot of LMI. Each job profile has LMI about local vacancy rates and predictions of whether jobs availability will increase or decrease for the role in the future." (Careers Coordinator)*

*"We were told about BBC Bitesize Careers and the National Careers Service in assembly... I looked on the National Careers Service website to look at average salaries for teachers." (Year 10 student)*

*"I assume he does [accesses LMI at school] because he seems to have a good understanding of sectors where there are skills shortages." (Parent)*

### Employer engagement

- Regular employer talks are arranged for every year group, normally taking place during assembly. Each guest speaker is asked to comment on whether they think their job role is increasing in availability or declining.
- A careers fair featuring local employers is organised each year, which all students attend.

### Promotion of LMI

- A weekly careers newsletter, shared with staff, parents and students, contains information on relevant Higher Education opportunities, work experience and apprenticeship vacancies. The newsletter is shared with students each week via PowerPoint during tutor period and shared on the careers department's Instagram and Twitter accounts.

*"I was really pleased with the information that was shared by the school for my daughter in sixth form, it was very targeted i.e. 'your daughter has expressed an interest in x so here is some information and opportunities.'" (Parent)*

## Use of LMI during 1:1 guidance

The Careers Adviser regularly uses job boards such as Indeed during guidance sessions, to give students an idea about the availability of certain jobs, especially in the local area. The Adviser also shows students 'live' job descriptions to help them understand the types of skills needed for jobs they are interested in.

*"You don't want them to be on a pathway where there isn't a job at the end." (Careers Adviser/Coordinator)*

## Key facilitators

**Resourcing:** The school employs two part-time careers staff who work with the Careers Leader (a member of SLT) to deliver the careers programme and provide 1:1 careers advice and guidance. This means that over 5 days per week of staff time is dedicated to careers, enabling the production of the weekly careers newsletter, LMI lesson resources and promotion of LMI via Instagram and Twitter.



## 6 LMI PREFERENCES

6.1 This chapter discusses staff, student and parent preferences regarding different types and sources of LMI, including key features and views on the availability of LMI.

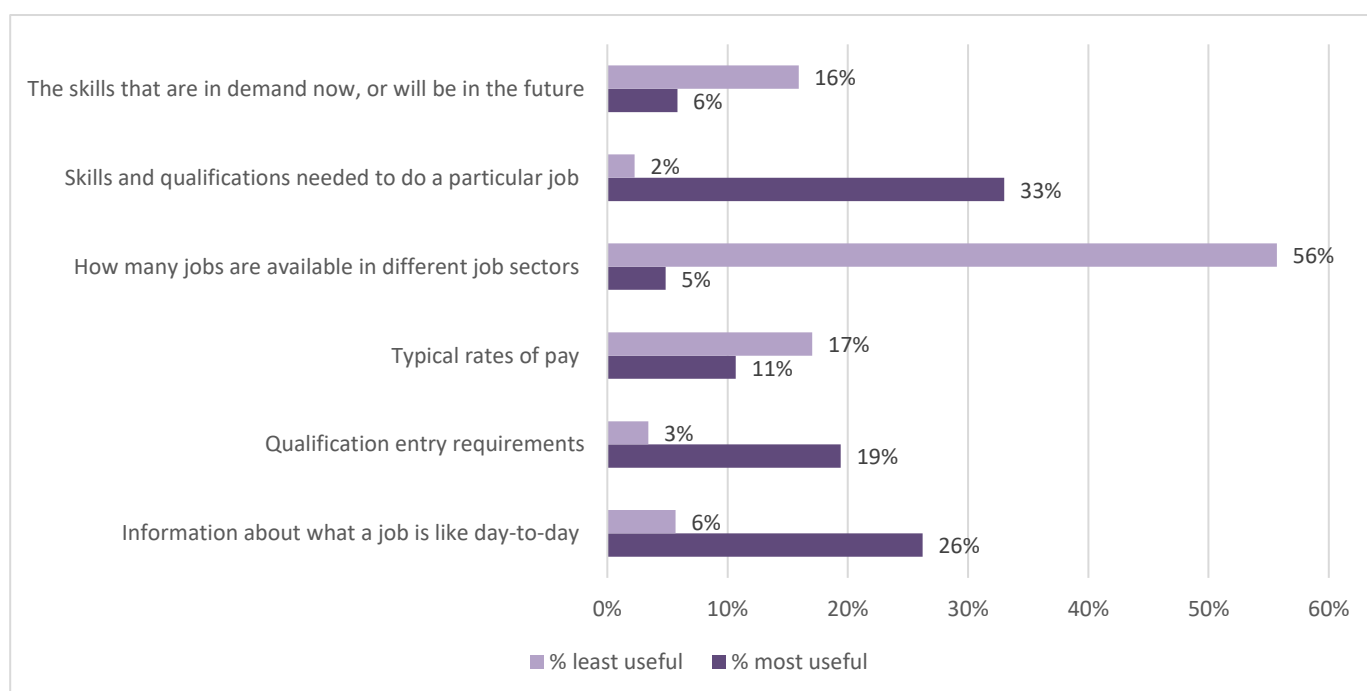
### Types of LMI

6.2 Supporting the findings outlined in the previous section about the types of LMI students reported engaging with, most students expressed a clear preference for information about individual jobs and career pathways over sector level information.

6.3 As shown in Figure 4.3, when asked to choose what type of information would be most useful when thinking about their future, a third of students (33%) selected ‘skills and qualifications needed to do a particular job’, whilst a quarter (26%) selected ‘information about what a job is like day to day’ and a fifth (19%) chose ‘qualification entry requirements’.

6.4 Overall, this suggests that for 78% of students, the most useful types of LMI are those related to specific careers and career pathways. In contrast, only 11% of students felt that information such as predicted skills demand or sector employment figures would be most useful to them. In addition, when asked to select what they felt was the least useful type of LMI, over half of students (56%) selected ‘how many jobs are available in different job sectors’.

**Figure 4.3: Student preferences for different types of LMI**



*Source: YCL focus group data 2022. Base: 102 students.*

6.5 Those who felt that ‘information about what a job is like day-to-day’ was the most useful typically gave one of the following reasons for their choice:

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- Job satisfaction, or whether the job is enjoyable, being a key factor influencing their career decision making, therefore requiring an understanding of what the job would be like.
  - Viewing information about what the job involves as a ‘starting point’, after which they may look for other information such as the skills and qualifications required for the job.
  - Understanding what the job is like on a day-to-day basis to inform decisions about whether they are capable of doing the job or if it would fit their desired lifestyle.
- 6.6 Students who selected either ‘skills and qualifications needed to do a particular job’ or ‘qualification entry requirements’ generally commented that it was important for them to understand the steps they will need to take when pursuing a given career pathway.
- 6.7 When discussing their reasons for selecting ‘how many jobs are available in different sectors’ as the least useful type of LMI, many students expressed the view that knowing how many jobs were available in different sectors would not influence their decision making. They felt that even if there were few jobs available or if competition was high, they would still be able to get the job they wanted if they worked hard enough. A few students even commented that having information about the low numbers of jobs available in the sector could be demotivating, so they would prefer not to know.
- 6.8 When shown two example sources of LMI – an example job profile<sup>22</sup> from the National Careers Service website and examples of sector level information from LMI Humber<sup>23</sup> – students’ preferences generally aligned with what they had stated previously, in terms of finding information about specific careers more useful than sector-level information.
- 6.9 However, compared to when they were shown the six example types of LMI and asked to select which would be most/least useful, when discussing the LMI Humber sector-level LMI example, more students articulated reasons why the information shown could be useful for them. This suggests that, whilst many students may not initially think of this information as something they would need, when presented with sector-level LMI, some students can see its relevance for their career decision making.
- 6.10 Table 4.8 provides a selection of student quotes made whilst discussing the relative merits of the two different types of information.

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<sup>22</sup> Web designer profile, showing average salary range, typical hours, how to get into the role, skills and qualifications needed, what the job involves, career path and progression opportunities, current vacancies and similar roles. Here: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/web-designer>

<sup>23</sup> LMI Humber. Showing the numbers of people employed in the creative and digital sector in the region, what percentage of the total jobs in the region this constitutes, and the percentage the sector is expected to grow by 2024. Here: <https://lmihumber.co.uk/creative-and-digital/>

**Table 4.8: student views on job profile compared with the sector level LMI**

Job profile	Sector-level
<i>"I think having information about the role would be better as I don't really care what other people might be doing. If I wanted to pursue a specific career pathway, I would go for it regardless of where I am as one vacancy is enough." (Year 9)</i>	<i>"Having this... knowing the job market is growing is useful, it can inform what qualifications to get, whether those qualifications are high in demand or low. Usually if a job is high in demand, it can tell you about wages... it gives you an indication of how much you'll get paid. (Year 9)</i>
<i>"If there's many jobs in a specific sector, if you don't get one, you can get another similar one, so finding out about different job profiles is helpful." (Year 12)</i>	<i>"It gives you a wider range [knowing about the sector], instead of just knowing about one job, it gives you more options. (Year 9)</i>
<i>"Statistics don't give you an idea of what your day-to-day life might be like." (Year 12)</i>	<i>"I'd find it quite useful because you can see if you want to do a certain job, how many people do it, and how competitive it is and how much the job is needed." (Year 9)</i>
<i>"I see what they're saying about it being useful, but I think it doesn't matter how many are doing it, you just have to work hard to get that job." (Year 9)</i>	<i>"It would be helpful because if there aren't as many jobs in one sector it means it's more competitive." (Year 9)</i>
<i>"I don't think it matters if you've got a job in mind. I'd rather not follow which jobs are in demand compared to what I want to do and am interested in." (Year 9)</i>	<i>"It's worth understanding what the need is going to be like in the future and which sectors may be more relevant in the future." (Year 11)</i>

### **Salary and information about what a job is like day-to-day**

- 6.11 Students who felt that salary information was the least useful type of LMI (17%) mostly commented that their potential enjoyment of a given job was a more important factor in their decision making than the amount they would be paid. In contrast, the small number of students (11%) who selected 'typical rates of pay' as their most important type of LMI either stated that salary was a key motivator for them when choosing a career or suggested it was important information because of how salary can influence the kind of lifestyle one can afford. Notably, some of these students highlighted concerns over the rising cost of living as a key reason why salary is an important factor in their career decision making.
- 6.12 In addition, when shown an example job profile from the National Careers Service, some students felt that the information shown about the average salary range for the job and the indication of typical hours would be particularly helpful.
- 6.13 Some parents echoed the views of students in this regard, stating that their child would be particularly interested in salary information. A few commented that their

child would find this helpful to understand whether they would have enough money to live in a certain region or have a certain lifestyle.

- 6.14 However, a small number of parents expressed concern that their child did not yet have enough of a grasp on the cost of living to fully understand the salary information shown on the example job profile.

*“My son is very interested in salary at the minute – but he is still at the age where he thinks £50 is a lot of money.” (Parent – Year 9)*

- 6.15 Other parents shared concerns that the salary range shown on the example job profile may be misleading as it does not highlight what experience or qualifications a person may need to achieve the upper salary range, or whether higher paid roles are only available in certain regions such as London.

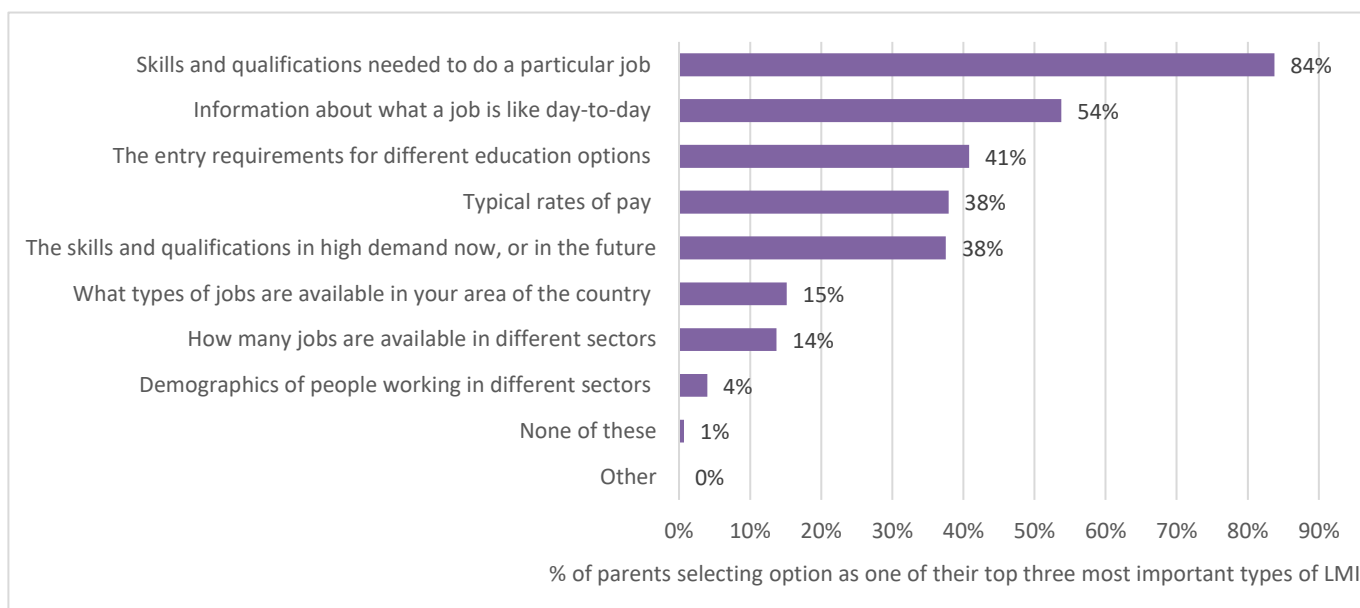
- 6.16 Alongside comments about their child being interested in salary information, many parents highlighted that their child would be interested in information about what a job is like day-to-day. These parents commonly made reference to wanting their child to enjoy their job, meaning it would be important for them to know how they would be spending their time day-to-day.

*“My son would like to know about the day-to-day information as he knows he needs to enjoy his job.” (Parent – Year 9)*

#### **Types of LMI most important to parents**

- 6.17 As part of the e-survey, parents were asked to select three types of LMI that would be most important for them when having conversations with their child about their future. On this question, parents’ views were very similar to those of students (as shown in Figure 4.4), with the two most commonly selected options being ‘skills and qualifications needed to do a particular job’ (84%) and ‘information about what a job is like day-to-day’ (54%).
- 6.18 Much like the students, few parents selected sector-level information such as employment figures for different sectors (14%) or the types of jobs available in their area (15%) as types of LMI that were important to them. The exception to this was regarding ‘the skills and qualifications in high demand now, or in the future’, which 38% of parents selected as one of their top three types of LMI.

**Figure 4.4: Types of LMI most important for parents when talking to their child about what they might like to do in the future**



*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 276 parents.*

6.19 During interviews, parents highlighted why they felt that information about routes into careers, including the skills and qualifications needed, was the most important type of LMI for supporting their child. Parents commented that this was the type of information most needed at this stage in their child’s life, as it would help them understand what they needed to do to get the job or career they wanted.

*“That’s the guidance she needs at the moment, what are the keys she needs to get there.” (Parent – Year 10)*

*“That’s kind of the point at this stage, it’s the main intention for looking at this info.” (Parent – Year 10)*

*“It’s good to know exactly what you need to do to get into that job to start with.” (Parent – Year 11)*

6.20 When discussing the ‘how to become’ section of the example job profile, some parents also commented on how they liked that there was information about non-university-based routes into the role.

6.21 Parents who felt that information about what the job would be like day-to-day suggested that this type of information would help their child decide whether the job was right for them; whether they would enjoy the work and have the necessary skills. Some parents suggested, much like students in the focus group did, that this information would be a good starting point for making career decisions. A few parents also highlighted that this information would help broaden their own awareness of what different jobs entail.

*“There’s no point suggesting it as an option if they’re not interested in what it involves or don’t have the skills.” (Parent – Year 10)*

*“Young people often don't have a good sense of what different jobs actually involve.” (Parent – Year 12)*

*[On information about what a job is like day-to-day] “That's where you've got to start.” (Parent – Year 13)*

*“Often the job title doesn't really tell you what the job entails, so this would be good information to have.” (Parent – Year 10)*

- 6.22 Some parents also felt the ‘current opportunities’ section of the job profile, showing information about apprenticeships and courses relevant to the role as well as a link to the government’s job vacancy search service - would be helpful. These parents typically commented that it would be important for them to know whether there are current opportunities available in the role and where these may be. Some even expressed that they would like to see more information about the availability of different jobs regionally, either to explore job availability in their area or to understand differences between regions.

*“There's no point thinking I'm going to do X if there's not jobs available.”  
(Parent – Year 10)*

### **Sector-level LMI**

- 6.23 Whilst only a minority of parents completing the e-survey selected sector-level information as one of their top three most important types of LMI, when shown an example website displaying information about the creative and digital sector in the Humber region, most parents commented that the information would be helpful when supporting their child with career decision making.
- 6.24 Some parents suggested that employment figures for different sectors at a local and regional level, both in their own area and elsewhere in the country, would be useful and may inform their child’s career decision making. (Further discussion about parents’ preferences regarding local LMI is outlined in Chapter 7.)
- 6.25 A few parents also suggested that sector-level information could be helpful for young people who had not found a job they were interested in yet, as this could be used to find a sector of interest before then moving to specific job role information.

*“It's better to have a wide overview of a whole sector, especially if they're unsure about what they want to do.” (Parent – Year 13)*

- 6.26 Other parents made reference to specific pieces of information on the site that looked useful, most commonly the information regarding risk of automation.

*“Useful to know whether a job is at risk of automation...you don't want to get replaced by a robot.” (Parent – Year 9)*

- 6.27 Much like in the student focus groups, it appears that, whilst initially parents do not see things like sector employment figures as important, when shown examples of such information, many can see how it could be helpful. In fact, a few parents explicitly commented that the sector-level LMI shown was not something they

would have thought about before, but that they could see how it would be useful when supporting their child.

*“This kind of information I would know a lot less about. I wouldn't have thought about it as something to look for - if you'd have asked me the kinds of things I wanted to know I would have listed everything on the previous website [the job profile]- but I can see how this would be useful.” (Parent – Year 10)*

- 6.28 However, despite being able to see the value in it, some parents nonetheless felt that the information shown on the example job profile would, on balance, be of more use than the sector-level information when discussing careers with their child. Others felt that both types of information would be equally useful. A few parents also expressed scepticism about the information shown or suggested that their child would not engage well with it.

*“Definitely helpful for parents but not sure whether my daughter would engage much with it, too many numbers. Saying there's 8,500 jobs in a certain sector locally wouldn't mean anything to her. The job profile would be more useful, it gives you more specific info about wages and hours.” (Parent – Year 9)*

*“It's hard to know what's behind those figures [8,500 creative and digital jobs]. Those jobs could be zero or minimal hour contracts. It feels like 'government speak'... wanting to make a few headline points that look fantastic, to show that there are 'lots of jobs available.’” (Parent – Year 9)*

### **Staff**

- 6.29 Staff were not asked explicitly about the types of LMI they found most useful, although their comments on the types of LMI students engage most with could be interpreted as such (discussed in Chapter 5).
- 6.30 When describing their satisfaction with the sources of LMI they use, careers staff highlighted various types of LMI featured that they felt were particularly useful, including:
- Job profiles (often including some of the types of LMI listed below)
  - Sector growth and decline - actual and projections, local and/or national
  - Where in the UK certain jobs are particularly clustered
  - Skills needed for different jobs
  - Salary information
  - Routes into different careers
  - Transferable skills
  - Current job opportunities
  - Sector descriptions

- Descriptions of what ‘a day in life’ of a given job looks like
- Information about who the key local employers are
- Types of jobs available locally.

### **Satisfaction with LMI**

- 6.31 This section discusses student, staff and parent comments on the availability of LMI as well as preferred features and potential areas for improvement related to different sources of LMI.

#### **Availability**

- 6.32 Careers staff generally reported being satisfied with the availability of national LMI, however, many expressed a need for greater availability of local LMI. This issue, along with staff, student and parent preferences regarding local and national LMI, is discussed further in Chapter 7.
- 6.33 Of those parents who indicated they had previously used sources of LMI, most were satisfied with the information available. These parents tended to report looking on university websites, with some mention of careers websites such as BBC Bitesize Careers and the National Careers Service, which were all viewed as ‘trustworthy’ sources.

*“I’m never 100% certain whether to trust websites that come up when looking on Google, unless it is a government or university website.” (Parent – Year 10)*

- 6.34 Most of these parents were also confident they would know where to look for further information. However, a few parents highlighted that this may change as their child gets older and approaches post-16 or post-18 transition points, or if their child chooses a pathway they are less familiar with, such as doing an apprenticeship.

*“I’d be pretty confident if he chose to go down a ‘traditional’ route – A-levels... university... a profession. But if he chose a more vocational route, I’d probably need more information.” (Parent – Year 10)*

- 6.35 Of those who felt they did not have enough information, some parents commented that they would like LMI sources to be shared by their child’s school or college. It is notable that 53% of parents responding to the e-survey reported receiving information from their school or college, but this may not have taken the form of LMI source(s) and so may not have satisfied parents’ needs in this regard. In particular, it was felt that being guided towards trusted websites would give parents a place to start when doing research.

#### **Features**

- 6.36 Students, staff and parents all expressed largely positive views of the LMI sources they referenced and the example websites they were shown during interviews and



focus groups. Comments related to specific features of these sources typically centred around three key areas:

- The use of job profiles to present information about specific jobs.
- The extent to which LMI is personalised to students.
- The accessibility of the LMI source for both young people and staff.

#### Job profiles

6.37 As mentioned previously, it seems that viewing job profiles, often on a careers platform, is one of the main ways in which students access LMI at school or college. Almost all careers staff mentioned job profiles when discussing the use of LMI, both within the school or college careers programme and during 1:1 guidance sessions. Careers staff frequently mentioned the National Careers Service job profiles, but other websites featuring job profiles were also mentioned, including Careerpivot, Start Profile and Unifrog.

6.38 Careers staff clearly value these job profiles as a way for students to access LMI, commenting that they give students a good overview of a given role and that the range of profiles available provides insight into a wide variety of different jobs.

*“They give relevant information without overloading students.” (School  
Careers Leader)*

*“The profiles touch on lots of important things.” (Careers Adviser)*

*“They help to show students the variety of different roles out there; that  
there’s more than one type of engineer.” (Careers Adviser)*

6.39 Parents echoed these comments, generally expressing positive views when shown an example job profile from the National Careers Service website. For example, when asked which aspects of the profile they would find most helpful when supporting their child, many parents commented that all of the information shown looked useful.

*“This looks really good, I might have a look at this for myself!” (Parent –  
Year 12)*

*“It all seems quite useful really.” (Parent – Year 10)*

6.40 During focus groups, students generally commented on the types of LMI shown (discussed earlier in the chapter) on the example National Careers Service job profile rather than specific features. However, the few that did comment on specific features liked the way the brief role description and information about salary and typical hours was highlighted at the top of the page.

*“I really like the overall design of the website and the way it is set up with  
the three pieces of information on top.” (Year 12 student)*

6.41 A few careers staff highlighted that having similar roles alongside the job profile was helpful, which is a feature that a number of students and parents also liked.

*“I find ‘related careers’ really helpful so if I find a job I like most of but not all of, I can see what is also like it.” (Year 10 student)*

*“The related careers on the right-hand side – at this stage, it's better to get a wide knowledge of different roles than specific info about one role. It's important not to close off options.” (Parent – Year 10)*

6.42 In addition, a few careers staff commented that having information such as the growth or decline of the relevant sector alongside the job profile was particularly useful for students.

6.43 Despite these positive comments about job profiles generally, some careers staff and parents provided specific feedback about aspects of the National Careers Service job profiles. This included suggestion that the design of the site is too “black and white” and not engaging for young people, with comments that the site looks too much like a government website.

*“In terms of design, it looks pretty awful. There's something about government websites that makes you feel like you're being talked down to.”  
(Parent – Year 13)*

*“My daughter wouldn't stay very long on the site, it looks too much like a government website. It's the same format as the site you go on to look at covid stats. I'm pretty old and even I think it looks boring.” (Parent – Year 10)*

*“It could be a bit jazzier – it's a bit dry.” (Careers Adviser)*

### Personalisation

6.44 As highlighted in the previous section, many careers staff commented that students engage well with career quizzes that show particular job roles, which contain LMI, based on students' interests and skills. It was felt that these provided a good “starting point”, especially for students who are unsure about what they want to do, and that the results can help to give students ideas they had not previously thought of.

6.45 However, a few careers staff noted that sometimes, the suggestions provided by such quizzes do not seem very relevant to the student. For example, one Careers Adviser questioned how the suggestions are generated as she has occasionally seen students get similar results despite having very different interests.

6.46 Examples of other personalisation features that careers staff spoke positively of included:

- Start Profile updating automatically as students get older, so they see the most relevant information about education and career pathways.
- On Unifrog, the feature that allows students to filter information based on several different factors, such as the type of work they are interested in, subject choice, location and qualification type.

- The LMI for All widget that enables users to compare information on two different roles.
- 6.47 In addition, a few careers staff mentioned that young students or those with SEN tend to engage particularly well with the iCould Buzz quiz<sup>24</sup>.
- 6.48 When asked what they thought of career quizzes, students' views were split between those finding them helpful and those who would prefer to navigate and search for information a different way.
- 6.49 Those who felt career quizzes could be useful typically echoed the comments of careers staff, suggesting that they can be a useful starting point, especially for those who do not have many ideas of what they might like to do. Others suggested that quizzes can help to narrow down and filter the information based on their personal interests.
- 6.50 Those who did not see the career quizzes as useful generally gave one of the following reasons:
- They already know what they want to do or have an idea of what sectors they are interested in, so would prefer to look for a specific job profile or search job profiles within a given sector.
  - They want the opportunity to explore a broad range of roles rather than personalised suggestions.
  - From previous experience, they have found these types of quizzes do not give helpful suggestions, either because they are not relevant to their interests or because they are too vague.
- 6.51 Some students highlighted other personalisation features that they liked, including the ability to filter information based on things like location, subject choice, and the qualifications they have or are hoping to gain.
- "It would be helpful to be able to put in what qualifications you have and it give you job suggestions, but also the other way around, so putting in a job you're interested in and it showing you what qualifications you need." (Year 9 student)*
- 6.52 A few students also suggested that a careers app which tailors the information shown based on what the user had previously viewed might also be helpful.
- 6.53 Only a few parents mentioned personalisation features such as quizzes. Amongst those that did, views were mixed and largely echoed the comments made by staff and students.

### Accessibility

- 6.54 When speaking positively about a source of LMI, careers staff would often make reference to the information shown not being overly detailed and presented in simple language that is accessible to a range of abilities. Some highlighted that

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<sup>24</sup> iCould Buzz quiz - <https://icould.com/buzz-quiz/>

students often engage well with video content, and a few staff commented that they prefer to use interactive sources of LMI, as students tend to engage better with the information this way.

*“Anything that is short, sharp and punchy whilst also being very interactive.” (School Careers Leader)*

- 6.55 In contrast, a few careers staff highlighted that LMI provided on websites such as the Office for National Statistics or Nomis is too complex for students (and sometimes staff) to understand.

*“The ONS is too academic for students to access.” (Careers Adviser)*

*“If it’s not ready to share it’s not easily accessible to teachers.” (Deputy Headteacher)*

- 6.56 Whilst careers staff mostly referred to online sources of LMI, a small number mentioned that physical careers and LMI booklets were also helpful, especially for students and parents who they felt were unlikely to do their own online research. Of the three schools that reported giving physical careers and LMI booklets to students, two schools had purchased the booklets whilst one school had been given the booklets for free by the local council. It was noted that for these to be of value, the information needs to be updated at least annually.

- 6.57 Some careers staff also valued local LMI bulletins they had received that provided a short “snapshot” of the local labour market, suggesting they were easy for other staff to understand. (Further discussion on sources of local LMI is outlined in Chapter 7.)

- 6.58 Students largely echoed staff comments about the need for LMI to be presented in simple language without too much text, using a mix of formats. A few KS3 students highlighted BBC Bitesize Careers as providing a good balance of video and text, commenting that the website was easy to use.

- 6.59 On the use of videos, students generally commented that they would find videos of people talking about their job useful. However, some students also recognised the limitations of this as a source of information. They highlighted that it would only be one person’s perspective and that factual information (for example, the information shown in the example job profile) would be equally, if not more, helpful, as well as allowing them to view the information at their own pace.

*[On the example graphic designer video] “Her experience won’t necessarily be the same in terms of how she got there as what our experience might be.” (Year 9 student)*

*“I’d watch the video first and if I’m interested I’d go back and look at the [job profile] information.” (Year 9 student)*

*“With the video, you have to follow along, but with the info [job profile], you can find the information you need like salary, hours, future employment.” (Year 9 student)*

*“I have seen a few videos online. I think it’s helpful as it gives you a more personal account of a job rather than a general view.” (Year 10 student)*

- 6.60 Parents’ views on the accessibility of LMI typically aligned with the views of staff and students. When shown the example LMI Humber website, parents often suggested that the infographics and videos would be engaging for young people. It was felt that videos of people talking about their experiences of a job would be of interest to teenagers, giving them greater insight into a role than just a job profile on its own.

*“Would be good to have some additional resources with insight from real people alongside the job profile, about what their job is like day-to-day, how they got into the role, their stories. Videos would be good. Brings it to life.” (Parent – Year 10)*

*“The TikTok generation...their life is through videos.” (Parent – Year 10)*

#### Other useful features

- 6.61 Some careers staff highlighted other features of the careers platform their school or college uses that they viewed as particularly valuable. These included the careers platform:
- Being available for free.
  - Having analytic functions, to understand the types of information students are viewing and whether parents are accessing the platform.
  - Providing a range of information and resources alongside LMI, such as information about education pathways, careers advice, quizzes, links to useful websites and lesson plans. For example, Unifrog was described positively by one Careers Leader as a “one stop shop” for everything careers related.
  - Being accessible and relevant to students across Years 7 – 13, to ensure maximum value for money.
- 6.62 Some careers staff cited the above features as key reasons that the school or college chose the careers platform.

#### **Improvements – sources of LMI**

- 6.63 Some careers staff and parents suggested potential areas of improvement for the sources of LMI they highlighted during interviews. (Comments on improvements to the availability of LMI are discussed in Chapter 7.)
- 6.64 As previously highlighted, some careers staff and parents commented that, whilst the National Careers Service website contains useful information, it is not very visually appealing for young people. Parents also commonly suggested that personal testimonies and ‘real-life experiences’ of people working in the role would be a useful addition to the job profile.
- 6.65 Other potential areas for improvement highlighted by a few careers staff included:

**A report to the Gatsby Foundation:  
The experiences and preferences of young people and their intermediaries regarding use of Labour  
Market Information (LMI) to support good career guidance**

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- Recency – physical sources of LMI can become out of date quite quickly and it is sometimes unclear how old the information is for online sources of LMI.
- Relevance – future predictions about the labour market are not always relevant to young people as, depending on what year group they are in and whether they go to university, they may not enter the labour market for another 5-8 years.

6.66 During focus groups, students were asked what they would want a ‘perfect’ careers website or app to look like, particularly regarding the types of information shown, key features and the format they would like the information to be presented in. This provided an indication both of what students valued in the LMI sources they already used and potential improvements or additions they would like to see made to these sources. A summary of suggestions made by students is shown in Table 6.2.

**Table 4.9: Students’ suggestions for the ‘perfect’ careers website or app**

	Features	Types of LMI	Format
Commonly suggested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quizzes offering job recommendations through asking about interests and personality traits</li> <li>• The ability to filter information based on things like location and qualifications needed for a role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about what the day-to-day routine would be like in particular jobs</li> <li>• Salary information</li> <li>• Working hours</li> <li>• Skills and qualifications needed for different roles</li> <li>• Videos giving first-hand experience of different jobs</li> <li>• What types of jobs certain qualifications can lead to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mix of videos and text</li> <li>• Clearly written and laid out information.</li> <li>• Keep it short and simple</li> </ul>
Suggestions made in one or two focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instant messaging platform or call service to ask questions of employees and get careers advice</li> <li>• Feature that enables the user to compare information on two different jobs</li> <li>• A ‘jobs near you’ function, to better understand potential commuting times</li> <li>• A website that personalises the information shown based on what the user has previously viewed</li> <li>• A ‘heat map’ of the UK showing where there are greater/fewer jobs in certain sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anonymous reviews of jobs and employers</li> <li>• Hearing from students and young people in work</li> <li>• Information on how roles change, for example, promotion opportunities</li> <li>• Information about careers abroad</li> <li>• Examples of companies working in different sectors</li> <li>• Information about popular jobs or jobs that are in high demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infographics and pictures</li> <li>• Avoid technical language and acronyms</li> </ul>

## A report to the Gatsby Foundation:

### The experiences and preferences of young people and their intermediaries regarding use of Labour Market Information (LMI) to support good career guidance

#### Case study 3

Located in a city on the south coast, the school has around 1200 students on roll across Years 7 – 11 and a slightly higher than average proportion of students receiving free school meals. The school currently holds an Ofsted rating of Good and is fully achieving Gatsby Benchmark 2. The Careers Leader coordinates the careers programme alongside teaching responsibilities.

#### Use of LMI within the careers programme

##### Personal development curriculum

- One tutor period every fortnight is focussed on careers.
- Students are introduced to the Start careers platform in Year 7, when they create a profile with information about themselves and their interests.
- Start suggests job profiles they might be interested in, which includes information about availability of the job locally. It also has information about some large local employers and apprenticeship opportunities.
- To support the use of Start during tutor period, the Careers Leader adapts the lesson resources provided on the Start website before sharing with tutors.

*“Start provides a good foundation and is the main source of LMI that students engage with.” (Careers Leader)*

*“Creating the careers lesson resources for tutors helps to ensure consistency across tutor groups.” (Careers Leader)*

##### Subject-based curriculum

During careers week students have one careers focused lesson per subject. The Careers Leader supports this by sharing information with teachers to incorporate into these lessons. This often includes local LMI, often in the form of “useful infographics”, sent by the Education Business Partnership, such as:

- Qualification demographic profile of the city.
- Large employers in the region.
- Which jobs are in high demand and which sectors are seeing growth in the region.

##### Employer engagement

The school runs an employer engagement programme, with each student receiving employer talks and going on visits to local employers linked to their GCSE options choices. These employer talks and visits provide students with insight into the routes into different roles and what certain jobs are like day-to-day, as well as developing an awareness of similar businesses operating in the local area.

*“The students need to have that local insight because many of them won’t leave the area once they finish school.” (Careers Leader)*

##### Promotion of LMI

When students first use Start in Year 7, parents receive a letter introducing them to the platform and providing them with their own, parent log in details.

#### Key facilitators

**Free careers platform:** Use of Start profile as the main source of LMI that students access was identified as a key facilitator in the school fully achieving Benchmark 2.

*“Start provides personalised information about education and career pathways all in one place and, crucially, it’s free.” (Careers Leader)*



## **7 BALANCE OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL LMI**

- 7.1 This chapter discusses student, staff and parent preferences regarding the balance of national and local LMI, along with the views of careers staff on the availability of national and local LMI.

### **Preferences**

- 7.2 The majority of careers staff felt that giving students insight into the local labour market was more important than providing national LMI. This was particularly the case for coastal towns and cities, with staff at schools and colleges in these areas consistently stressing the importance of local LMI.
- 7.3 Most staff expressing a preference for local LMI commented that this was because many students typically stay in the local area after they finish school or college. Some staff also highlighted that the labour market in their region is characterised by employment in specific, key sectors, and it is therefore important that students are aware of this.
- 7.4 Generally, when careers staff expressed a preference for local LMI, it was apparent that 'local' meant at the level of the town or city, or in the case of rural areas, the county. As an illustrative example, one Careers Adviser expressed doubt about the usefulness of a recent employer talk from a company based in a town 10 miles away, as she felt that many of the students would not consider travelling that far for work. A Careers Leader at a school in the same coastal city emphasised this point:

*“Some students will rarely go into the city centre let alone going outside of the city.” (School Careers Leader)*

- 7.5 Another Careers Leader from a rural area in the South West highlighted that regional LMI is often too broad, given the differences in the labour market across areas in the South West, suggesting county level LMI was more helpful.
- 7.6 A smaller number of careers staff felt a balanced approach between local and national LMI was more appropriate for students at their school, often because they expected many of their students to move to other areas of the country for university. These tended to be staff from schools and colleges in London, the East Midlands (urban location), and the South East (specifically, a non-coastal county; careers staff at schools in two cities on the south coast expressed a preference for local LMI).
- 7.7 A few careers staff also highlighted the value in local LMI helping to make careers information relevant to students through putting it in a context they are familiar with, for example, through mentioning local employers they may already be aware of.

### **Challenges**

- 7.8 Challenges related to the use of local LMI with students were highlighted by some careers staff. Staff commented on the difficulties they often face in striking a

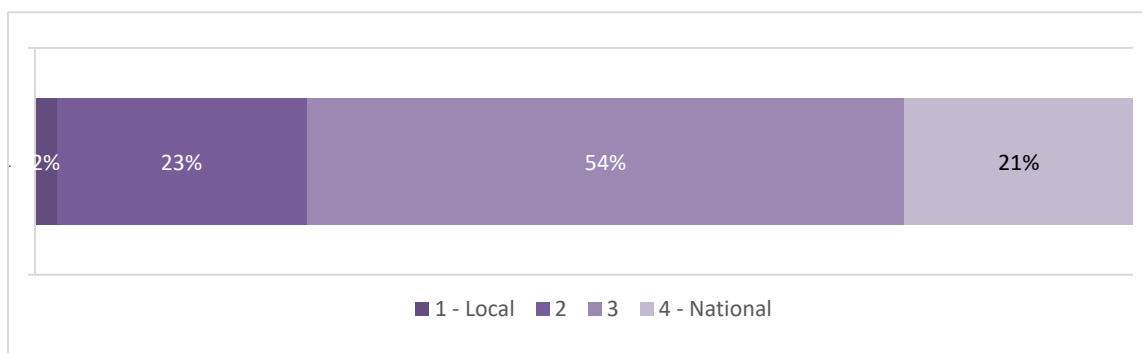
balance between presenting a realistic picture of the local labour market and encouraging students to make aspirational choices. For example, one Careers Adviser spoke of not wanting to “crush dreams” by highlighting to students that there are few jobs available locally in the sector they are interested in. These concerns tended to be shared by careers staff in areas where certain key sectors dominate the economy or where there are sectors in decline, such as coastal towns or rural areas, and where many students typically stay living in the area after school or college.

*“I don’t like to share too much LMI, especially with younger students. I don’t want to suggest this job or that job aren’t needed in the future as they are declining sectors, or these jobs aren’t available in our area. At such a young age, you should be motivating them.” (School Careers Leader)*

### Students

- 7.9 During focus groups, students were presented with a scale numbered one to four, with one representing information about the labour market in ‘their area of the country’ and four representing information about the national labour market. They were asked to choose a number based on what type of information they felt would be most helpful for them when making career decisions.
- 7.10 Most students felt that a mix of local and national LMI would be helpful, but when pushed to choose between numbers two and three, most showed a preference towards national information by choosing number three. A quarter of students (25%) felt that local LMI would be more helpful, although it is worth noting that most of these students still selected number two, suggesting that they would still find it helpful to have some information about the national labour market.

**Figure 7.1: Student views – which is more useful, information about the labour market in their area of the country, or information about the national labour market**



*Source: YCL focus group data 2022. Base: 103 students.*

- 7.11 The reasons students gave for their preferences were largely related to the extent to which they saw themselves moving away from their local area in the future.
- 7.12 Perhaps unsurprisingly, students who expected to stay living in their area after school or college, or who wanted to attend a nearby university, expressed a preference for local LMI. Not all of these students gave an indication as to how they

had interpreted what ‘their area of the country’ or ‘local’ meant. For those that did, responses ranged from students referring to jobs within their hometown or city to those expressing a willingness to commute to other towns or areas, suggesting the latter group of students interpret ‘local’ as referring to a wider area than the former group.

- 7.13 Students expressing a preference for national LMI (through selecting options three or four) typically commented that this would give them an awareness of a wider range of opportunities than if LMI was limited to their area. Some of these students expressed a willingness to move areas to find the ‘best’ opportunity for them or to find a job that was aligned with their interests and aspirations. Some students also highlighted that they planned to move elsewhere for university, so an understanding of the labour market in other areas of the country would be beneficial.
- 7.14 Whilst students’ comments on this issue appear to somewhat contradict the views of staff, many of whom suggested that students do not typically want to move away from the area after school or college, this may simply indicate that the sample of students we spoke to was more skewed towards those who aspired to leave their area than the overall student body at their school or college.
- 7.15 A selection of students’ comments on their reasons for their number selection is shown in Table 7.1.

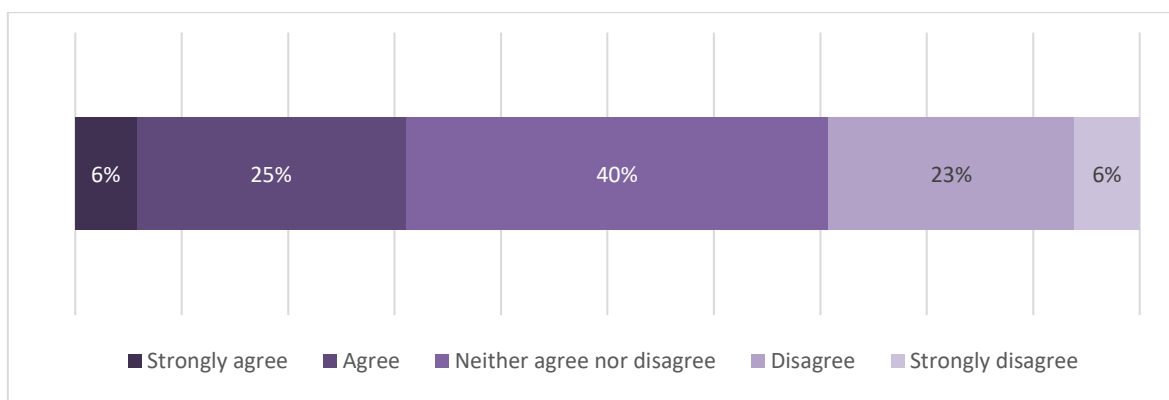
**Table 7.1: Student comments on their preferred balance of local and national LMI**

One/two	Three	Four
<p>[No. 2] “Nationally longer term is more important but locally is more important now for part time jobs.” (Y10)</p> <p>[No. 2] “As I want to stay in the area and potentially move into the inner London area, I think I’d prefer having information that is London based. Though there are other things to consider as you would need lots of money to move and consider family nearby.” (Y9)</p> <p>[No. 1] “Stay local – I’m not looking at moving very far.” (Y11)</p> <p>[No. 2] “Right now, the cost of living is too much, so if I can develop my skills and gain qualifications locally, I can then look for opportunities more nationally in the future.” (Y12)</p> <p>[No. 2] Because there might be a job you like so you look around other towns more.” (Y9)</p> <p>[No. 2] “I’d rather know what the local area is like locally first, so I can go and see the job, if I need to widen it I would then look nationally.” (Y10)</p> <p>[No. 1] “I’m the most comfortable in my hometown.” (Y9)</p> <p>[No. 2] “Personally, I’d want a job that’s closer to you, so you’re not spending as much travelling, but with number 2 you’d still know about jobs in England.” (Y9)</p>	<p>“It may be easier to find a job here, but if there are better opportunities nationally, I’d be willing to change. There are other factors in life... friends...community. If you do move, you’ll be starting over but also learning about new people and places... if you stay you might be more comfortable.” (Y9)</p> <p>“I’m not aware of many local opportunities, so I would like to look for more options and wider opportunities in other areas.” (Y13)</p> <p>“I think a lot of us are going or planning to move out to universities in other cities, so it would be useful to be aware and look for which jobs are available.” (Y12)</p> <p>“There are a lot of local companies that come into college, but sometimes it’s harder to find out what’s available more widely.” (Y12)</p> <p>“Further away, as you’re happy to move away when doing your A-levels or at university, so it makes sense to look at jobs nationally as your job may not be available locally.” (Y9)</p> <p>“Jobs in the local area are important but you need to know all about the country so you get the best job for you.” (Y9)</p> <p>“[Town] is quite small compared to other places... not as many jobs as in big cities.” (Y10)</p> <p>“I would like to still know the job market nationally... but maybe closer to the area, the region maybe.” (Y12)</p>	<p>“I want to see what is outside of the area I’m living in and want to move to explore the jobs available across the national market and decide where in the UK I can move to.” (Y9)</p> <p>“Other areas may offer better jobs than your area alone.” (Y13)</p> <p>“You might not want to stay in the area you live. And you might learn things about your area by looking at the national picture anyway.” (Y9)</p> <p>“If you look nationally, you can have more chance of getting a good job. Also, more people can work from home now, so you can work anywhere. You can work somewhere with cheaper housing to where your job is based.” (Y10)</p> <p>“I don’t want to stay here in this area and wouldn’t be interested in any of the local popular job sectors.” (Y12)</p> <p>“I would also like to work internationally... not limiting to a certain country.” (Y12)</p>

## Parents

- 7.16 As shown in Figure 7.2, just under a third of parents completing the survey (31%) expressed a preference for LMI about ‘their area of the country’ compared to a similar proportion (29%) of parents expressing a preference for national LMI. The most common response, however, was parents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the below statement (40%), suggesting that these parents felt a balance between the two types of information would be most appropriate.
- 7.17 Whilst these findings cannot be directly compared to the findings on students’ preferences for local and national LMI, especially given parents were able to select a middle option whereas students were not, it is notable that a similar proportion of parents indicated a preference for local LMI to students.

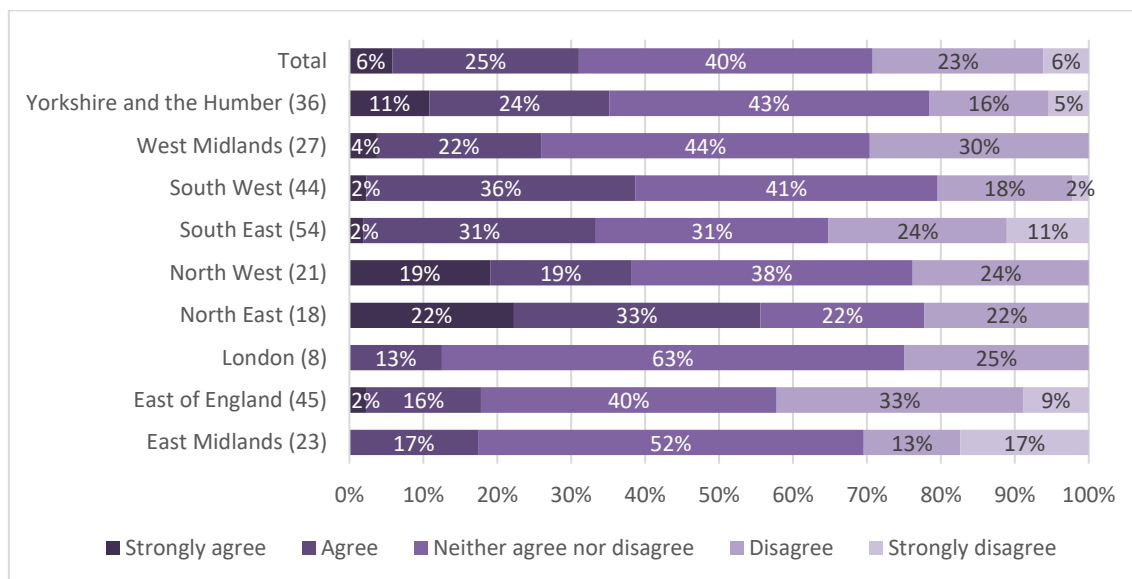
**Figure 7.2: Parent views - “When supporting my child, it is more important for me to know about the labour market in my area of the country than about the national labour market”**



*Source: YCL survey data 2021-22. Base: 276 parents.*

- 7.18 Some regional differences can be observed between parent responses to this question (Figure 7.3). London, the East Midlands and East of England have the lowest proportion of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing that local information is more important (between 13% and 19%), compared to a majority of parents in the North East (56%). However, these differences are only indicative as sample sizes are small per region.
- 7.19 Comparison between parent preferences and comments from careers staff about the preferred balance of national and local LMI presents a mixed picture. Careers staff in the North East, North West, South West, Yorkshire and the Humber and the East of England most consistently emphasised the need for local LMI. This appears to be somewhat aligned with parents’ views, for example, in the North East, where 22% of parents strongly agreed and 33% agreed that local information was more important when supporting their child. In other regions, alignment between parents and careers staff views is less clear cut. For example, only 16% of parents in the East of England stated a preference for local information despite careers staff in this region viewing it as more important than national LMI.

**Figure 7.3: “When supporting my child, it is more important for me to know about the labour market in my area of the country than about the national labour market” – parent views by region**



*Source: YCL survey data 2021-22. Base: 276 parents (bases for each region shown in brackets).*

7.20 Comments from parents during interviews provide insight into the preferences expressed through the survey responses. A majority of the parents interviewed felt that local level LMI was important, however, many of these parents also commented that they would like to see LMI at the local or regional level for other areas of the country as well as their own. They felt that this would be helpful for showing young people where in the country different types of jobs are available and where greater job opportunities may lie. These parents suggested that this could help their child decide whether their chosen career could be pursued locally or whether they would need to move.

*“I think it would be handy to see this for all regions as I think it is important to see where the jobs are, if there aren’t any in East Anglia. They can see where they may end up so it would be good to go to university there to get used to the local area and form links with those employers more easily.”  
 (Parent – Year 9)*

7.21 Some parents also commented that local LMI is important to develop young people’s understanding of the opportunities available in their area, with a few suggestions that this could help challenge common assumptions that certain jobs are only available in London.

*“Local information is definitely useful. My eldest son would find this helpful, he’s looking at media jobs but doesn’t want to move to London as it’s too expensive. It would be good for him to find out about the sector in this region or in other regions.” (Parent – Year 12)*

*“It [local LMI] might stop people drifting to London.” (Parent – Year 10)*

*“It could be especially helpful for children who don't want to go to university to be able to see what their local area has to offer as it may be a lot more than what they know.” (Parent -Year 10)*

- 7.22 Other parents who felt that LMI about their area would be important commented that this was because they did not expect their child to move away from their town or county.

*“Where they're brought up is usually where they find their first step on the career ladder.” (Parent – Year 13)*

*“The local focus is important – my daughter will mostly be looking for jobs in the area, she wants to stay fairly close by.” (Parent – Year 12)*

- 7.23 In contrast, a few parents suggested that they were generally happy for their child to move away from home and did not want to limit their options to their local area, so would be more interested in national LMI.

*“He has more options to go do what he wants, so would be less interested in locally specific information.” (Parent – Year 10)*

### **Availability of national and local LMI**

- 7.24 Careers staff do not appear to face significant challenges in finding national LMI, although some noted challenges around finding the right information across a wide range of sources.

*“Generally, I can find what I need, the challenge sometimes is to see the wood for the trees.” (School Careers Leader)*

- 7.25 In contrast, careers staff presented more of a mixed picture regarding the availability of local LMI, with some highlighting sources of local LMI that they use but most stating that they would like to see a greater availability of LMI at the local level.

- 7.26 Of the staff highlighting sources of local LMI available to them, these included:

- Local LMI shared by their LEP/Enterprise Coordinator on an ad hoc basis or when requested by the Careers Leader.
- Monthly LMI bulletins for the North East and Cumbria produced by the Education Development Trust (EDT)<sup>25</sup>, a charity and prime contractor for the National Careers Service.
- An annual LMI bulletin for schools and colleges featuring LMI for the South East region produced by the Education Business Partnership (EBP), a charity working with schools in Hampshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire.
- A dedicated LMI website for the sub-region (either a collection of counties or local authorities).

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<sup>25</sup> Example bulletin here (school publishing the bulletin is not part of the research):  
<https://www.southmoorschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/LMI-Bulletin-North-East-Sept-2021.pdf>

7.27 Most of these careers staff found this local LMI useful. For example, one Careers Leader described the LMI bulletin from the EBP as a “lovely resource” which contains helpful infographics that are easy for staff to integrate into lessons. Another Careers Leader mentioned that LMI shared by the LEP had developed her understanding of key local employers. In addition, careers staff at schools and colleges with access to the dedicated sub-regional LMI website commented that it is helpful for updating their knowledge of the local labour market and finding information to share with students and staff.

7.28 However, many careers staff (including some who highlighted they had access to one of the above sources of local LMI), expressed a need for there to be greater availability of local LMI.

*“For Relationships & Sex Education, I can easily find local statistics about teenage pregnancy, but local LMI seems much harder to find.” (School Curriculum Lead)*

7.29 In terms of how careers staff would want this information shared, views were split between those who felt:

- It would be helpful for their LEP/Careers Hub to share LMI with them.
- A dedicated local website would be the best way to access the information.

7.30 Careers staff stressed the importance of information being accessible and in “easy to share” formats, particularly regarding any information shared by the LEP/Careers Hub. A few staff highlighted examples of local LMI briefing sheets that they had previously received from the LEP, and those previously produced by the National Careers Service. These were thought to be useful snapshots of the local labour market that they would not have the time to compile themselves. However, it was noted that, unfortunately, these resources are no longer produced.

*[On the NCS local LMI sheet] “I don’t have the ability or capacity to replicate that.” (School Careers Leader)*

*“Teachers love that sort of thing, something they can pick up and read in 5 minutes.” (School Careers Leader)*

7.31 To reiterate the point made above, many careers staff reported constraints on their time as a key challenge in using LMI. Staff commented that finding, evaluating and collating information, particularly local LMI, is not something they regularly have the time to do.

7.32 Whilst only a few careers staff specified the type of local LMI they would like greater access to, those that did comment on this suggested information about:

- Key local sectors.
- Sector growth and decline, including specific roles in demand locally.
- Local employers, including Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs).



**A report to the Gatsby Foundation:  
The experiences and preferences of young people and their intermediaries regarding use of Labour  
Market Information (LMI) to support good career guidance**

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*“It’s all well and good saying there are jobs being created, but we need to  
know where these jobs are.” (Careers Adviser)*

- 7.33 As previously mentioned, in terms of granularity, it seems that the level of the town or city (or county, for those in rural areas) is what careers staff typically mean when they say they would like there to be greater availability of local LMI.

## A report to the Gatsby Foundation:

### The experiences and preferences of young people and their intermediaries regarding use of Labour Market Information (LMI) to support good career guidance

#### Case study 4

The Further Education college, located in a coastal town in the North of England, has approximately 5000 students, with around 1000 of these being 16-19 students. The college currently holds an Ofsted rating of Good and is fully achieving Gatsby Benchmark 2. The careers team at the college includes a Careers Leader, Careers Advisers and other support staff.

#### Use of LMI within the careers programme

##### Personal development curriculum

- The college Principal delivers annual LMI assemblies as part of Careers Week, where he presents LEP-wide LMI and discusses local employer skills needs.
- Throughout the year tutors can book the careers team to deliver workshops on employability skills and progression routes or sessions on particular sectors, which often include signposting to job vacancies, apprenticeships and further study options.

##### Subject-based curriculum

- The college largely delivers technical and vocational subjects and many of the staff members delivering these courses have industry expertise that they will integrate within subject lessons and tutorials.

##### Employer engagement

- LMI is integrated into the employer engagement activities delivered by the college, including information about local skills needs and the types of jobs available locally.

##### Promotion of LMI

- Digital information boards and posters around the college feature LMI, including information about live job opportunities.
- The college has developed posters for each subject area listing the types of jobs the subject can lead to, qualification progression routes, desired skills and links to relevant careers websites.
- A dedicated LMI page on the college website provides links to websites providing LMI, including the sub-regional LMI website for the area.
- A monthly careers newsletter is circulated to all staff which highlights subject specific LMI.

##### 1:1 guidance

- The Careers Adviser interviewed for this research spoke of using online sources of LMI during discussions where relevant to the student's career interests. For example, she may look at a National Careers Service job profile with the student and explain the information shown. The Adviser may also use the job profile to help the student find local apprenticeship and training options relevant to the role.
- The Adviser often uses career quizzes with students as she feels the job and career suggestions they provide can often be a good starting point for students, but also because they can support students in understanding their strengths and interests.

*"I used the National Careers Service website to look up information about going to university... they had a lot of information on apprenticeships as well." (Student)*

#### Key facilitators

- **Senior leadership buy in:** the college Principal understands the importance of LMI and is actively involved in college careers activities, delivering assemblies on LMI and sharing information with staff.
- **Sources of LMI:** Information provided to students during the careers activities outlined above is drawn from a range of sources, such as Emsi Burning Glass and the sub-regional LMI website for the area. The college has also conducted primary research with local employers about their views on local skills needs.

## **8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Amongst careers staff taking part in the research, there is a clear view that students require guidance and support when accessing LMI. It is therefore unsurprising that the main way in which students access LMI is through the guided use of a careers platform within the personal development curriculum, either during a lesson or tutor period. The types of LMI on these platforms are mostly soft LMI about specific roles and career pathways alongside a small amount of hard LMI, typically information about salary and working hours, although it was highlighted that some platforms feature other types of hard LMI such as data on predicted growth and decline for a job role or sector. Encouragingly, careers staff are generally satisfied with these as sources of LMI.
- 8.2 In supporting the careers programme at their school or college, it is clear that Careers Leaders play a key role in sourcing, interpreting and disseminating LMI, especially at schools and colleges where LMI is integrated into the curriculum and/or actively promoted to staff, students and parents. However, time pressures and a lack of capacity were identified as barriers to doing this role well. In light of this, careers staff expressed a desire for external support and signposting to LMI resources that could be easily shared with students, staff or parents without requiring too much interpretation and adaptation. This seems to be already happening in some areas, with just under half of the schools and colleges in the research receiving some form of LMI bulletin or newsletter from their LEP, council or a careers organisation, with staff mostly satisfied with these resources where they were in place.
- 8.3 Careers Advisers appear to use LMI quite dynamically during 1:1 guidance sessions, recalling certain information from memory or looking at and signposting to online sources of LMI where relevant. Advisers tend to draw on a variety of sources and tailor their approach to using LMI depending on the needs of the students. Most commonly, Advisers seem to use LMI to gently challenge students' perceptions or assumptions about certain jobs or sectors and/or to find specific information about a job or career pathway that the student has expressed interest in. Many Advisers also direct students to LMI sources for them to explore after guidance sessions, but due to their limited contact time it is often not possible for them follow up with students about this.
- 8.4 Where students report using LMI, they are typically accessing soft LMI such as descriptions of roles and career pathways, which often contain little hard LMI beyond salary information. Both students and parents generally showed a preference for these types of LMI. Despite many students viewing other types of hard LMI (such as sector employment figures) as not particularly useful for them when making career decisions, many were able to articulate how this information could be useful when shown real examples. This supports what careers staff say about students requiring support and guidance to understand LMI and see its relevance, particularly hard LMI that is not salary information.

- 8.5 Parents report having regular conversations with their child about careers, yet most tend to draw only on their own or friends' and family's knowledge and experience of work. This is despite a majority of parents reporting that they have received information about careers and education options from their child's school or college, although this mostly appears to be information about education options rather than LMI.
- 8.6 Parents' conversations with their children seem to typically centre around education pathways, as well as fostering an awareness of their child's personal interests as a way to inform career decisions. Where parents do engage with online sources of LMI, this typically involves accessing information about qualifications and education routes related to higher education, for example, looking on university websites. Regarding online sources of LMI, comments from parents, students and careers staff all suggest that these groups value information that is presented clearly and simply, with appealing visual design and a mix of formats such as text and video.
- 8.7 This focus on enjoyment of a job and alignment of personal interests was a key theme amongst students and parents when discussing the types of LMI they felt were most important. It appears to be a key factor influencing career decision making and as such, LMI specific to a given role, particularly descriptions of what the job involves, was seen as important. It seems that information about specific roles, typically dominated by soft LMI, is often associated with making career decisions based on internal factors such as personal interests, whereas information at the sector or regional level, typically dominated by hard LMI such as employment figures or vacancy information, is associated with making decisions based on external factors, with a clear preference for the former from both students and parents.
- 8.8 This contrast between internal and external factors influencing choices was also apparent when careers staff discussed challenges in using LMI with students, whereby the information presented about the labour market can sometimes conflict with the students' personal aspirations, particularly in regions where certain sectors dominate the labour market or are in decline. Whilst some staff felt presenting LMI often helped students think more realistically about their options, it suggests a possible barrier to staff engagement with LMI if certain types of information are viewed as having the potential to stifle some students' aspirations. Evidence from focus groups indicates that student attitudes to unfavourable LMI related to a job of interest are mixed – some thought such information would be demotivating, while others appeared to be unswayed by it – citing the need for hard work and competition to get the job they wanted.
- 8.9 Across all three participant groups, preferences about the balance of local and national LMI, perhaps unsurprisingly, seem largely dependent on expectations of students moving or staying in the local area after school or college. However, there was a strong message from careers staff about the need for greater availability of local LMI at the level of town or county, with provision of LMI at this level clearly patchy. In addition, amongst those who expect to move elsewhere (or expect their

child to), there was still a desire for local-level LMI that could allow comparisons between different areas of the country.

## **Recommendations**

- 8.10 The findings from the research and conclusions outlined above suggest the following issues require further consideration.
- 8.11 **Organisations supporting Careers Leaders (Careers Hubs and The Careers & Enterprise Company) should develop guidance for navigating the landscape of free and paid-for LMI platforms and sources, including both government and private or charitably owned sources.**
- 8.12 Careers staff were generally satisfied with the availability of national-level LMI, although some found the wealth of sources difficult to navigate, and different schools and colleges reported using a variety of different LMI websites and platforms in their careers programmes. Careers Leaders, especially those newer to the role and those with the least time to devote to their role, should be supported to navigate this landscape and know which sources are most popular with different Careers Leaders, the reasons why, and any associated costs. Guidance should make reference to Warwick IER's matrix of LMI sources as part of its overview of the LMI System for Career Guidance in England<sup>26</sup>, as well as the sources most commonly cited by Careers Leaders.
- 8.13 **All LEPs/Careers Hubs should provide local LMI resources in a useful format(s) for schools and colleges in their area, such as a bulletin/newsletter or a local LMI website.**
- 8.14 Whilst it is evident that several LEPs/Careers Hubs already share local LMI with schools and colleges, comments from other careers staff as well as students indicating that they would find local LMI useful suggest there would be significant appetite for this in other areas. In terms of format, a bulletin or newsletter providing a snapshot of the local labour market was suggested, although some careers staff also expressed a desire for a local LMI website that they could navigate themselves. It is therefore worth considering whether more LEPs/Careers Hubs could dedicate resourcing towards producing local LMI resources for schools and colleges in their areas. This would require consideration as to whether such resources contain LMI taken from national sources and refined down to the LEP/Careers Hub area, or whether data should be collected at the LEP/Careers Hub level.
- 8.15 **An England-wide regional LMI source should be developed that enables users to compare regional and local LMI, with a mechanism to allow two or more of these regions to be compared or visualised in relation to one another.**

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<sup>26</sup> Barnes, S-A., and Bimrose, J. (2021). *Labour market information and its use to inform career guidance of young people. An overview of the Labour Market Information System for Careers Guidance in England*. Coventry: Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick. Retrieved from: [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmicareerguidanceofyoungpeople/ier\\_gatsby\\_lmils\\_landscape\\_2021\\_final.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmicareerguidanceofyoungpeople/ier_gatsby_lmils_landscape_2021_final.pdf)

- 8.16 Amongst research participants there was appetite for a source of LMI that enables users to compare regional LMI from across England. It is therefore necessary to have national LMI datasets that can be broken down to a regional level, and a mechanism to allow two or more of these regions to be compared or visualised in relation to one another. In particular, the ability to view where in the country there are more job opportunities within certain sectors was suggested as a useful possible feature.
- 8.17 **Schools and colleges should develop consistent LMI provision for parents, shared in a way that maximises parental engagement.**
- 8.18 Parents indicated that they largely draw on their own experiences when discussing careers with their child, despite a majority also reporting that they have received some careers information from their child's school or college. This suggests that, whilst sharing information (such as links to reliable online sources or resources produced by school or college) with parents would help to add greater context to these conversations, consideration must be given to how information can be shared most effectively with parents. This could include consideration of the timing and dissemination method for such information, and how parents are supported to understand and use it. Events held in school or college aimed at sharing information sources and giving them the opportunity to ask questions could help ensure parents engage with the material and feel confident using it effectively. Linked to the second recommendation, there is a role for LEPs/Careers Hubs to support school and college LMI provision through the development of good quality and easily shareable resources, something which is clearly valued by careers staff where it is already happening.

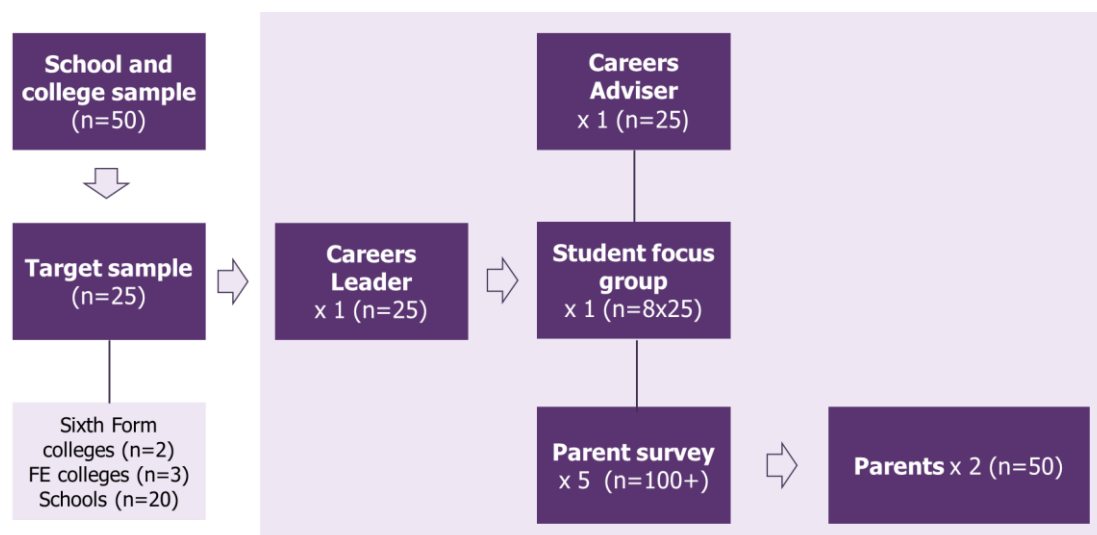
## **APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY**

- A.1 To generate robust findings to answer the research questions outlined in the previous section, key features of the research methodology included a multi-stage approach to sampling and recruitment and careful design of research tools tailored to each participant group.
- A.2 The research took place between October 2021 and March 2022, with the fieldwork at participating schools and colleges running between December 2021 and March 2022.

### **Research design**

- A.3 Fieldwork was completed with three participant groups:
- Careers staff in schools and colleges (online interviews).
  - Students (online focus groups).
  - Parents (e-survey and telephone interviews).
- A.4 The research design used a school and college-based approach to sampling and recruitment. This approach was used to both address the key research questions related to school and college use of LMI and in recognition of the way in which schools and colleges are key gatekeepers that can provide access to students and parents. The research therefore aimed to conduct fieldwork with 25 schools and colleges across England, with students and parents recruited through these institutions.
- A.5 As shown in Figure A.1, the research design involved an initial interview with the Careers Leader at the school or college. This interview provided opportunity not only to discuss the key research questions but also to arrange the other elements of the research, which were:
- An interview with a second careers staff member (usually a Careers Adviser).
  - Dissemination of the parent survey to a selection of parents.
  - A student focus group.
- A.6 Recruitment of parents to take part in a telephone interview was done through the e-survey (further details below).

**Figure A.1: Research design**



## Sampling

- A.7 A multi-stage approach was used to select schools and colleges to include in the sample. The first stage involved selecting a LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) from each of England’s nine regions, after which a Local Authority area from each LEP was selected. The second stage involved creating a sampling frame of schools and colleges from within the selected Local Authority (LA) areas, from which schools and colleges were randomly selected for inclusion in the sample.

### LEP and LA sampling

- A.8 The initial sample of LEP areas was generated by purposively selecting LEPs from each of the nine regions to ensure representation from geographical areas across England and to provide a mix of LEP areas across urban, rural and costal geographies. Two LEPs were selected from the South East region.
- A.9 The LEPs were then cross referenced with national Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) data on the percentage of schools and colleges within LEP areas achieving Gatsby Benchmark 2, to ensure that the selected LEPs were representative of the national distribution in this regard. As a result of this cross referencing, one LEP area in the South East was replaced with another in the same region. The range for the percentage of schools and colleges in a LEP area achieving Gatsby Benchmark 2 was 44% - 87%, with an inter-quartile range of 55% - 74% and a median of 62%<sup>27</sup>. The resulting LEP sample had a broadly even distribution of LEPs across each quartile in this range.
- A.10 The census rural-urban classification was used to categorise the LAs within each of the selected LEP areas<sup>28</sup>. One LA was then selected from each LEP, ensuring a balance of rural, urban and costal geographic designations across the sample of 10 LAs.

<sup>27</sup> Source: CEC data.

<sup>28</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Census 2011, Population by Output Areas (OAs)



### **School and college sampling**

- A.11 The sampling frame of schools and colleges was generated using government establishment data<sup>29</sup>. Schools and colleges were included in the sampling frame if they met the following criteria:
- Located within one of the selected LAs.
  - Status – open.
  - Ofsted rating - Good or Outstanding.
  - Phase of education - secondary, 16-plus, all through.
  - Type - academies, local authority maintained schools, free schools, colleges.
- A.12 The sampling criteria included Ofsted rating as it was felt that schools and colleges rated Requires Improvement or Inadequate would likely not have the capacity to take part in the research. The selection of a balanced distribution of LEP areas according to the proportion of schools and colleges fully achieving Benchmark 2 was in part to off-set this skew towards higher-performing institutions.
- A.13 Using the criteria listed above, a sampling frame of 151 schools and colleges was generated.
- A.14 Up to five schools and one college were then randomly selected<sup>30</sup> from each LA to create a final sample of 45 schools and 5 colleges<sup>31</sup>. After this initial sample was selected, the schools in the sample were compared against the national distribution of schools by size and the percentage of students receiving Free School Meals (FSM). This resulted in 20 schools from the initial sample being removed and replaced with new selections, to ensure the sample was representative of the national picture regarding these two variables.
- A.15 From the sample of 50 schools and colleges, a response rate of 50% was anticipated (in terms of agreement to participate in the research), which would provide the target sample of 25 schools and colleges.

### **Careers & Enterprise Company involvement**

- A.16 The CEC supported recruitment by making initial contact with the selected 50 schools and colleges. Enterprise Coordinators in most of the LEP areas, connected to schools and colleges through their involvement with the Enterprise Adviser Network, emailed invitations to take part to the selected schools and colleges.
- A.17 This approach was taken as it was felt that response rates would be improved by YCL researchers having an introduction to schools and colleges from a familiar contact, rather than the alternative of researchers cold calling/emailing schools and colleges.

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<sup>29</sup> Department for Education. Get information about schools. Here: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Downloads> Accessed 20/10/21.

<sup>30</sup> Random selection was done using a random number generator.

<sup>31</sup> In some LAs, fewer than five schools met the sampling criteria.

### Additional sampling

- A.18 Due to initial low response rates and to meet the required sample of 25 schools and colleges, a second sample of 43 schools and colleges was selected using the following approach:
- Selecting 23 additional schools and colleges from the five LAs where the fewest positive responses had been received. Institutions were selected to achieve a representative distribution of % FSM eligibility, school size and provider type.
  - The inclusion of 10 schools and colleges from an additional LA within one of the selected South East LEPs, so as to take advantage of positive engagement from the Enterprise Coordinator in this area, who was keen to support the research.
  - The addition of 10 schools and colleges in an additional LEP area in the South West, who in the cascaded communication between the CEC and Enterprise Coordinators were initially sent the invitation to participate in error but were invited to participate in light of the circumstances explained above.
- A.19 The 43 schools and colleges in the second sample were contacted either in mid-December 2021 or early January 2022.
- A.20 Therefore, across the two samples, a total of 93 schools and colleges were contacted about the research, with 21 agreeing to participate.
- A.21 Despite the second round of sampling deviating from our intended sampling approach, the overall sample of 93 schools and colleges was broadly representative against England-wide school data according to FSM eligibility and school size, with slight over-representation of schools with 20-30% FSM eligibility and an under-representation of smaller schools (fewer than 600 students).
- A.22 The sample of 93 schools and colleges was less balanced than the original sample of 50 when it came to region. Unsurprisingly due to reasons given above, the final sample saw a greater proportion of schools and colleges from the South East and South West included.
- A.23 Inviting a larger number of schools and colleges to participate in the research may have also led to an increased likelihood of self-selection bias compared to if the target sample of 25 had been reached by contacting only the initial sample of 50. Schools and colleges more engaged with the use of LMI may have been more likely to agree to participate in the research, meaning the greater the number of institutions invited to take part the greater the potential for the sample to be skewed towards those more engaged with LMI. One indication of this was that, out of the 18 schools and colleges that provided their latest Benchmark 2 score, all had a score of over 80% and two-thirds were fully achieving the Benchmark.

### **Sample of parents to interview**

- A.24 The sample of parents to interview was generated using the e-survey shared by participating schools and colleges. Researchers asked the Careers Leader to share

the link to the e-survey with parents of students in one year group, usually the same year group as the students taking part in the focus group.

- A.25 A question in the parent e-survey (shared by the participating school or college) invited parents to take part in a 30-minute follow-up telephone interview. To maximise response rates to the survey, respondents were offered the opportunity to enter into a prize draw to win a £50 Amazon voucher. In addition, as an incentive to take part in a follow-up interview, parents were offered a £10 Amazon voucher for taking part.
- A.26 The e-survey included questions related to household income, region, and parents' confidence in supporting their child with career decision making and knowledge of where to find careers information. The intention was that this would allow researchers to purposively select the sample of parents to be invited to take part in a follow-up interview, ensuring a sample that is evenly distributed across these variables. However, purposive sampling was not possible in practice, as to meet the target sample of 50 parents, all those who indicated in the survey that they were happy to take part in a follow-up interview were contacted. Nonetheless, this data enabled an assessment of the makeup of the sample of parents interviewed across these variables (further detailed in Appendix B).

### **Students**

- A.27 In arranging the student focus groups, Careers Leaders were asked to select eight students from a given year group. The intention was to generate a sample with an even distribution of students across Key Stages. Therefore, as fieldwork with schools and colleges progressed, the numbers of focus groups with students from each Key Stage was monitored and this informed which year group Careers Leaders were asked to select students from.
- A.28 When discussing the selection of students for the focus group, it was suggested that Careers Leaders select a group of students that was broadly representative of students at their school, particularly across the following factors: Pupil Premium/16-19 bursary eligibility, ethnicity and gender. After the focus group, Careers Leaders indicated the numbers of students who took part who were eligible for Pupil Premium/16-19 bursary and/or were from an ethnic minority background, as well as the gender balance of the group. This data enabled an assessment of whether the overall sample of students was representative of young people in England across these demographic factors.

### **Research tools**

- A.29 Different approaches to designing the research tools were developed for each participant group, in recognition of the differing levels of understanding and familiarity with LMI that would likely exist amongst participant groups, as well as the differing roles played as a consumer or intermediary of LMI for young people's career guidance.
- A.30 The resources described below are provided in full in Appendix C.

### **Definition of LMI**

A.31 A key priority when developing the research tools was ensuring a shared understanding of what was meant by LMI. Therefore, included within all research tools was a definition of LMI, worded appropriately for the relevant audience, along with example types of LMI. For example, Figure A.2 shows how LMI was defined for parents at the beginning of the e-survey. A very similar definition and list of examples was shown to students at the start of the focus groups.

#### **Figure A.2: Parent survey: LMI definition and examples**

*When we use the term Labour Market Information (LMI), we mean reliable data that helps people better understand the jobs market and the routes into different career sectors.*

*This could include information about:*

- What types of jobs are available in your area of the country.
- Information about what a job is like day-to-day.
- How many jobs are available in different job sectors.
- The skills that are in high demand now, or will be in the future.
- Typical rates of pay.
- The skills and qualifications needed to do a particular job.

*Source: YCL parent survey.*

A.32 When speaking with careers staff, the researchers outlined similar examples at the start of the interview, to ensure that careers staff understood that soft LMI such as a description of what a job involves was within the scope of the research along with hard LMI such as sector-employment figures.

A.33 When asking careers staff about their familiarity with the term Labour Market Intelligence, a definition was also given, drawing on the definition outlined in the Warwick Institute for Employment Research's report on the LMI system for careers guidance in England<sup>32</sup>. The report defined the terms as follows:

- Labour market information (LMI): "refers broadly to information or data on the economy, labour market and labour force that would support an understanding of its operation, as well as labour supply and demand. This is generally raw data; data that has no interpretation, context or explanation."
- Labour market intelligence (LMI+): "refers to the interpretation of hard labour market data for different purposes..."

A.34 As such, when defining the term LMI+ to careers staff, researchers generally described it as "Labour Market Information that has been interpreted and analysed before being presented to the public."

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<sup>32</sup> Barnes, S-A., and Bimrose, J. (2021). *Labour market information and its use to inform career guidance of young people. An overview of the Labour Market Information System for Careers Guidance in England*. Coventry: Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick. Retrieved from: [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmicareerguidanceofyoungpeople/ier\\_gatsby\\_lmis\\_landscape\\_2021\\_final.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/lmicareerguidanceofyoungpeople/ier_gatsby_lmis_landscape_2021_final.pdf)

### **Career staff interviews**

A.35 For Careers Leaders and Careers Advisers, a standard interview format was used, with topic guides featuring questions on:

- [For Careers Leaders] Use of LMI within the careers programme at the school or college, including sources and types used.
- [For Careers Advisers] Use of LMI within 1:1 careers guidance sessions, including sources and types used.
- Preferences regarding LMI sources; key features, types of LMI and the balance of local and national LMI.
- Student and parent engagement with LMI.

### **Student focus groups**

A.36 Focus group topic guides and accompanying resources were designed to ensure that students were able give a view on the subject matter even if they had no prior experience of using LMI. This was mainly achieved through developing PowerPoint resources to accompany the focus group topic guide that included definitions and example types of LMI, along with images of example sources of LMI that students were asked to comment on.

A.37 Questions in the focus group topic guide included:

- Students choosing what they felt were the most and least useful types of information from a list of six types of LMI<sup>33</sup>.
- Choosing a number on a scale between 1-4 to indicate their preferred balance of local and national LMI, where 1 represents information about the labour market in their area of the county and 4 represents information about the national labour market.
- Showing students a screenshot of a National Careers Service job profile and asking them to comment on the information they might find useful.
- Showing students examples of sector-level information from LMI Humber<sup>34</sup> and asking if they would find the information more or less useful than the previous job profile.
- Asking students to compare different features such as quizzes and navigation tools, as well as different information formats, such as videos and job profiles, in terms of how useful they would find them.
- Asking students to imagine what their 'perfect' careers website or app would look like, including the format and type of information shown and any key features.

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<sup>33</sup> The six types listed were: 1. Information about what a job is like day-to-day. 2. Qualification entry requirements. 3. Typical rates of pay. 4. How many jobs are available in different job sectors. 5. The skills and qualifications needed to do a particular job. 6. The skills that are in high demand now, or will be in the future.

<sup>34</sup> LMI Humber - creative and digital sector: <https://lmihumber.co.uk/creative-and-digital/> and LMI Humber – Hull area: <https://lmihumber.co.uk/humber-profile/hull-area/>

- A.38 There were slight differences between the PowerPoints used for KS3 students compared to KS4 and KS5 students, largely relating to the example sources of LMI used. For example, KS3 students were shown a job profile from Careerpilot<sup>35</sup> whereas older students were shown a profile from the National Careers Service<sup>36</sup>, as the former was felt to be more appropriate for younger age groups.
- A.39 Findings from the CEC Future Skills Questionnaire pilot<sup>37</sup> informed how certain questions were worded. For example, the pilot found young people tend to interpret the term 'local' inconsistently and suggests using the phrase 'your area of the country' instead. This phrasing was therefore used in questions related to the preferred balance of national and local LMI for both the student and parent research tools.
- A.40 Parental consent was sought as a prerequisite for students in KS3 and KS4 taking part in the research. For KS5 students, researchers discussed with the Careers Leader whether parental consent was necessary or whether the students could consent to the research themselves. Researchers drafted parental and student consent forms, along with an age-appropriate research information sheet, to support this process.

### **Parent e-survey**

- A.41 The purpose of the parent e-survey was twofold: collecting data about parents' experiences supporting their child and their preferences related to LMI, and operating as an interview recruitment tool, with a question at the end of the e-survey asking if parents would like to take part in a follow-up telephone interview. This survey question therefore generated a sampling frame from which to select parents to contact for a follow-up interview.
- A.42 The e-survey collected the following demographic information: region, child's year group, household income and employment status. Gathering data on these factors was important both for trying to ensure a representative sample of parents to interview and for assessing potential differences in parents' views across these variables.
- A.43 Another variable of interest was parents' confidence in offering advice and finding information to support their child's career decision making. To measure this, parents were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following statements<sup>38</sup>:
- I feel confident offering my child advice about what they might do in the future.
  - I feel I have enough information to help my child with making career decisions.

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<sup>35</sup> Graphic designer job profile: <https://www.careerpilot.org.uk/job-sectors/design/job-profile/graphic-designer>

<sup>36</sup> Web designer job profile: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/web-designer>

<sup>37</sup> Careers & Enterprise Company. Future Skills Questionnaire: the development of a tool to measure young people's career-related learning and skills. Here:

[https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/cmrkm4xc/1448\\_fsqdevelopmentreport\\_v7.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/cmrkm4xc/1448_fsqdevelopmentreport_v7.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> The response options were a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

- I know where to get more information about the skills and qualifications my child might need for a future job/career.
- I know where to get more information about different employment sectors.
- I know where to get more information about post-16 and post-18 options for education, training or employment.

A.44 Based on their level of agreement with these statements, parents were given a score between 0 and 20, with 0 indicating a low confidence score (answering strongly disagree to all statements) and 20 indicating a high confidence score (answering strongly agree to all statements).

A.45 The e-survey was scripted using SNAP software and shared as a weblink by schools and colleges. A template email and SMS message was provided to support schools and colleges in sharing the e-survey link, which included information about the prize draw to win a £50 Amazon voucher for those completing the e-survey.

### **Parent interviews**

A.46 The design of the parent interview topic guide recognised that many parents may not have accessed sources of LMI before and would therefore not be able to offer opinions on their preferences or satisfaction with available LMI. In a similar way to the student focus groups, the parent interview topic guide therefore included general questions about the parent's use of LMI when discussing careers with their child, as well as questions related to some example sources of LMI.

A.47 General questions from the parent interview topic guide included:

- The types of career discussions they have with their child.
- The extent to which LMI is used during these discussions, including whether online sources are used.
- If sources of LMI are used, how satisfied are they with these.
- Whether they feel they have enough information to support their child and what information they feel they are missing.

A.48 Alongside these questions, parents were also shown examples of two sources of LMI, both of which were also used in the KS5 student focus group. These were an example job profile from the National Careers Service website and a page from LMI Humber giving information about the creative and digital sector in the region. These example websites were shared with parents prior to the interview so that they could be viewed on a phone or computer during the call. Parents were asked what aspects of the information shown would be most important for them when discussing careers with their child. Based on these example websites, questions were also asked regarding what additional information might be useful and what their preferred balance between local and national LMI would be.

### **Piloting the research tools**

A.49 The careers staff, parent and student topic guides were piloted at a Sixth Form College. The pilot college was recruited from the researchers' own network, and

data generated from the pilot research was included in the final sample as part of the data analysed for this report, giving a total school and college sample of 22.

- A.50 Piloting of the careers staff, parent and student topic guides involved conducting the interview or focus group and reflecting on the respondents' interpretation of the questions.
- A.51 Cognitive testing of the parent e-survey was conducted with two parents to check comprehension and interpretation. Parents were asked to paraphrase each question, give their response and describe how they arrived at their answer.
- A.52 Some changes to the wording of questions in the parent survey and student and parent topic guides were made as a result of the pilot.



## APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

- B.1 This chapter outlines the key characteristics of the samples of schools and colleges, careers staff, students and parents.

### Schools and colleges

- B.2 A total of 22 schools and colleges participated in the research with four provider types identified. A total of 18 schools and 4 colleges were involved in the research, including 21 schools and colleges recruited via the sampling approach detailed in Appendix A and one sixth form college recruited via purposive sampling, initially to pilot the research tools.

**Table B.1 Number of participating schools and colleges by provider type**

Provider type	No. of establishments
School with sixth form	9
School without sixth form	9
Sixth form college	2
Further education college	2
Total	22

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 22 schools/colleges*

- B.3 Participating schools and colleges covered all regions of England, with a higher proportion from Yorkshire and the Humber and the East of England. Excluding the North East region, all regions covered providers from Key Stage 3 through to Key Stage 5.

**Table B.2 Number of participating schools and colleges by provider type and region**

Region	Schools		Colleges		Total
	With sixth form	Without sixth form	Sixth form	Further education	
East Midlands	2	1	0	0	3
East of England	2	1	0	1	4
London	0	1	1	0	2
North East	0	0	0	1	1
North West	1	0	0	0	1
South East	1	2	0	0	3
South West	2	1	0	0	3
West Midlands	1	0	0	0	1
Yorkshire & the Humber	0	3	1	0	4
Total	9	9	2	2	22

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 22 schools/colleges*

- B.4 Table B.3 shows the national distribution of schools by proportion of students eligible for Free School Meals. This has been compared to our research sample size, discounting sixth form and FE colleges, to show a representative number for a sample size of 18. Those schools participating in the research fell into similar

categories to the national average with the numbers falling within one of the representative sample size, other than schools with less than 10% of Free School Meal eligibility where the research sample size was half of the representative number. Schools with the lowest Free School Meal eligibility were therefore under-represented within the sample, with a slight corresponding over-representation of schools with 30-50% of students eligible for Free School Meals.

**Table B.3 Participating schools Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility and national average**

% FSM	% of schools nationally <sup>39</sup>	Representative no. schools	Actual no. of schools - sample
<10	20%	4	2
10 - 20	36%	7	7
20 - 30	24%	4	4
30 - 40	13%	2	3
40 - 50	6%	1	2
50 - 60	1%	0	0
60+	0%	0	0
Total	100%	18	18

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 18 schools. GOV.UK Get information about schools*

B.5 The population size of the schools was also compared to the national average, shown in Table B.4. The number of schools in the sample matched that of a representative sample for schools in the categories of 600-1200 students and more than 1800 students. The sample deviated from the national picture regarding small schools with fewer than 600 students as the research sample included only one school of this size, whereas a representative number would have been three. In addition, a greater number of schools with 1200-1800 students were involved in the research than that of a representative sample.

**Table B.4 Participating schools population size and national average**

School size	% of schools - national <sup>40</sup>	Representative no. of schools - sample	No. of schools - sample
<600	16%	3	1
600 - 1200	52%	9	9
1200 - 1800	28%	5	7
1800+	4%	1	1
Total	100%	18	18

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 18 schools. GOV.UK Get information about schools*

B.6 A total of 18 schools and colleges participating shared their Gatsby Benchmark 2 scores as shown in Table B.5. The remaining four schools and colleges were unable to share their scores due to a variety of reasons, including staff members being new

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<sup>39</sup> GOV.UK (2021) Get information about schools. All establishment data. Accessed October 2021. Retrieved from: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Downloads>

<sup>40</sup> GOV.UK (2021) Get information about schools. All establishment data. Accessed October 2021. Retrieved from: <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Downloads>

to the role and having not yet completed the Compass tool yet. All scores shared were 80% or higher, with two-thirds of these institutions fully achieving Benchmark 2. This is slightly higher than the 56% of schools and colleges nationally who were fully achieving Benchmark 2 as of March 2020<sup>41</sup>.

**Table B.5 Schools and colleges Gatsby Benchmark 2 score**

Gatsby Benchmark 2 Score	No. schools
80-90%	6
100%	12
Total	18

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 18 schools/colleges*

### **Careers Leaders, Careers Advisers and other school staff**

- B.7 The job roles and responsibilities of the 42 school and college staff interviewed is shown in Table B.6.
- B.8 Almost half of those interviewed named ‘Careers Leader’ as a job role, with many outlining that this involved oversight of the careers curriculum and careers-related activities in the school or college. These individuals commonly held other roles within the school, including teacher and senior leader, with a small number also undertaking careers advice roles. Seven out of the twenty Careers Leaders did not identify any additional roles.
- B.9 A smaller number identified their role as Careers Coordinator. These individuals most commonly mentioned this role involving organisation of careers activities such as work experience, further education applications and careers fairs. Most Careers Coordinators held other roles in the school such as Careers Advisers or supporting students with additional needs.
- B.10 Other main job roles identified included administration and employability support staff, senior leaders with oversight of careers or individuals involved in college and university applications.
- B.11 A total of ten individuals with Careers Adviser as their main role were interviewed, with an even split between those employed internally by the school or college and those external Advisers, with all stating no formal additional responsibilities.

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<sup>41</sup> CEC (2020) Careers education in England’s school’s and colleges 2020: working together for young people’s futures. Here: [https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244\\_careers\\_ed\\_2020\\_report18\\_0.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/osbd2av3/1244_careers_ed_2020_report18_0.pdf)

**Table B.6 Job roles and responsibilities of school and college staff interviewed**

Main responsibility		Additional responsibilities				
	Count	Senior Leader	Teacher	Careers Adviser	Other	No additional
Careers Leader	20	4	7	2	0	7
Careers Co-ordinator	5	1	0	2	1	1
Other	7	0	5	0	0	2
		Internal			External	
Careers Adviser	10	5			5	
Total	42					

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 42 careers staff*

## Students

- B.12 The focus group sample includes students from the 16 schools and colleges who participated in this aspect of the research. Participating students covered year groups from Key Stage 3 through to Key Stage 5, shown in Table B.7. The largest number of students involved were from Year 9 and Year 12. A smaller number were from Years 10, 11 and 13 as careers staff were more reluctant for students in GCSE, A-level or other qualification years to take part, especially considering the disruption to learning they had already encountered due to COVID-19.

**Table B.7 Focus group sample by year group**

Year group	Focus group sample (%)
Year 9	37 (36%)
Year 10	16 (16%)
Year 11	3 (3%)
Year 12	30 (29%)
Year 13	16 (16%)
Total	102 (100%)

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 102 students*

- B.13 The 16 schools and colleges involved in focus groups also covered all nine regions of England, with each region involving between five and 22 students, shown in Table B.8. The regions with the smallest number of participants related to those regions with only one participating school or college.

**Table B.8 Focus group sample by region**

Region	Number of schools/colleges	Focus group sample (%)
East Midlands	3	10 (14%)
East of England	2	15 (15%)
London	2	12 (12%)
North East	1	8 (8%)
North West	1	6 (6%)
South East	2	12 (12%)
South West	3	22 (22%)
West Midlands	1	8 (8%)
Yorkshire & The Humber	1	9 (9%)
Total	16	102 (100%)

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 102 students. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

- B.14 Some demographic characteristics were gathered relating to the students involved in the focus groups. The sample of participants were within five percentage points of the national averages regarding ethnic minority and gender. Almost one-quarter (23%) of the sample were identified as Pupil Premium, or eligible for sixth form or college bursaries, similar to the national average of 27%.

**Table B.9 Focus groups - student characteristics**

Student characteristics	National (%)	Focus group sample (%)
Pupil Premium	27% <sup>42</sup>	23 (23%)
Ethnic Minority	32% <sup>43</sup>	29 (28%)
Male	50%	47 (46%)
Female	50%	55 (54%)

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 102 students, <sup>1</sup>GOV.UK National Local Authority Tables, <sup>2</sup>GOV.UK Schools, students and their characteristics.*

## Parents

- B.15 Of the 22 schools and colleges that participated in the research, 14 institutions shared the link to the parent survey, with responses received from parents at all 14 institutions.
- B.16 The number and proportion of parents responding to the survey and those participating in a follow-up interview is shown in Table B.10, separated by year group. The largest proportions of respondents and interviewees related to students in Year 9 and Year 10, accounting for over two-thirds of survey respondents and three-quarters of interviews. Interviews were conducted about students in Years 9 to 13 with no interviews taking place with parents of those in Year 8.

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<sup>42</sup> GOV.UK (2021) National LA PC Tables

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1041140/2021-22\\_PP\\_National\\_LA\\_PC\\_Tables\\_-\\_Nov\\_21\\_-\\_v2\\_-\\_suppressed.xlsx](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1041140/2021-22_PP_National_LA_PC_Tables_-_Nov_21_-_v2_-_suppressed.xlsx)

<sup>43</sup> GOV.UK (2021) Schools, students and their characteristics, Academic year 2020/21 <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-students-and-their-characteristics>

B.17 Of the 76 parent respondents relating to Key Stage 5 students, 41 attended a school sixth form, 18 attended an FE college, and 17 a stand-alone sixth form college. Those participating in the follow-up interview included four parents with a child at a sixth form college, three with a child at a school sixth form and three at an FE college.

**Table B.10 Parent survey and interview participants by year group**

Student year group	Survey sample (%)	Parent interviews (%)
Year 8	4 (1%)	0 (0%)
Year 9	87 (32%)	16 (34%)
Year 10	98 (36%)	20 (43%)
Year 11	11 (4%)	1 (2%)
Year 12	44 (16%)	5 (11%)
Year 13	32 (12%)	5 (11%)
Total	276 (100%)	47 (100%)

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 276 survey respondents and 47 parent interviews. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

B.18 The pre-tax distribution of household income of survey respondents shows a clear skew towards the higher household income bands compared with the national data (albeit using slightly dated experimental household income data). The spread of parents interviewed is in line with the survey sample distribution.

**Table B.11 Parent survey and interviews by annual household income**

Annual pre-tax household income	National %	Survey sample (%)	Parent interviews (%)
Up to £10,000 a year	8%	11 (4%)	2 (4%)
£10,001 to £20,000 a year	20%	16 (6%)	3 (6%)
£20,001 to £30,000 a year	23%	33 (12%)	6 (13%)
£30,001 to £40,000 a year	18%	27 (10%)	5 (11%)
£40,001 to £60,000 a year	18%	55 (20%)	7 (15%)
Over £60,001 a year	13%	98 (36%)	23 (49%)
Prefer not to say	-	36 (13%)	1 (2%)
Total	100%	276 (100%)	47 (100%)

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 276 survey respondents and 47 parent interviews. National data based on ONS Experimental admin-based income statistics (ABIS) for households in 2016, derived from decile ranges. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

B.19 The parental survey respondents and interviewees also covered all regions, with a greater proportion from the South East, South West and East of England completing the survey. The number of those interviewed showed a smaller variance with three to eight interviewees participating from each region.

**Table B.12 Parent survey and interview participants by region**

Region	Survey sample (%)	Parent interviews (%)
East Midlands	23 (8%)	7 (15%)
East of England	45 (16%)	5 (11%)
London	8 (3%)	4 (9%)
North East	18 (7%)	3 (6%)
North West	21 (8%)	3 (6%)
South East	54 (20%)	7 (15%)
South West	44 (16%)	8 (17%)
West Midlands	27 (10%)	4 (9%)
Yorkshire and the Humber	36 (13%)	6 (13%)
Total	276 (100%)	47 (100%)

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 276 survey respondents and 47 parent interviews. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

B.20 Survey respondents were asked to select their employment status from the categories shown in Table B.13. Similar proportions for each employment category were found in the survey sample and parent interview sample. Over half of survey respondents and those participating in the follow-up interviews were working full-time, with smaller proportions working part-time or out of work for a variety of reasons. Those selecting ‘other’ commonly referred to being stay-at-home parents. At around 85%, the proportion of parents employed (in either full or part time work) across both samples was higher than the proportion of people employed nationally (76%)<sup>44</sup>, with a corresponding under-representation across both samples of those who were unemployed or economically inactive.

**Table B.13 Parent survey and interview participants by employment status**

Employment status	Survey sample (%)	Parent interviews (%)	UK %
Working full-time (30 or more hours)	152 (55%)	28 (60%)	75%
Working part-time (8 – 29 hours)	84 (30%)	11 (23%)	
Working part-time (Less than 8 hours)	6 (2%)	1 (2%)	
Full-time carer	5 (2%)	2 (4%)	21%
Retired	3 (1%)	1 (2%)	
Not able to work	10 (4%)	2 (4%)	
Unemployed	4 (1%)	1 (2%)	4%
Other	12 (4%)	1 (2%)	
Total	276 (100%)	47 (100%)	100%

*Source: YCL data 2021-22. Base: 276 survey respondents and 47 parent interviews. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.*

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<sup>44</sup> Nomis. (2022) Labour Market Supply – Great Britain. Here: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/gor/2092957698/report.aspx>