



Secondary School and College leadership views on the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Careers Guidance

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1. Introduction

The Novel Coronavirus – commonly termed Covid-19 – struck the UK in early 2020. A full lock-down was ordered by the Government in late March and was gradually relaxed in England from mid-May onwards.

The impact of the pandemic and lockdown on business was severe (leading to a 20% fall in GDP in the second quarter of 2020) but the effects of the virus on the education sector were also significant. Almost all pupils and students were sent home from schools and colleges and face-to-face teaching continued for only very small groups of the children whose parents were classified as essential workers.

Many schools and colleges found that they needed to take a pragmatic approach to covering the curriculum, with prioritisation of selected subjects and particular groups of learners.¹

The virus affected ongoing teaching but it also impacted upon examinations and on career guidance (defined as those elements described by the Gatsby Benchmarks²) of critical age cohorts – particularly those about to leave school for whom careers guidance is acutely important.

In June 2020, this unprecedented situation prompted the Gatsby Charitable Foundation to commission Pye Tait Consulting to explore the perspectives of school and college leadership on career guidance during this challenging time. A (telephone and online) survey was therefore carried out in June/July 2020 with 369 senior leaders (and their representatives) of colleges, secondary schools, and special schools in England.

2. Executive summary

2.1 Views on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on careers guidance for academic year – 2019-2020:

Looking back at the final months of the academic year 2019-2020 at the height of the outbreak of the pandemic in England, 72% of schools and colleges indicated that career guidance provision had become even more important during that time. With 99% of respondents stating the Gatsby Benchmarks remained a useful framework for career guidance.

The impact of Covid-19 saw a continuation of career guidance provision with efforts focussed on translating career guidance to virtual, email and telephonic formats. The most common themes mentioned were virtual and online working, virtual work experience and remote careers interviews. However, around a fifth said they put career guidance activities on hold during that time.

The survey examined the immediate effect of Covid-19 on budgets, pupil/student time and staff allocations in the academic year 2019-2020. One of the most important changes noted was that, in

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/adapting-the-curriculum-for-remote-education>

² <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

just under half (49%) of institutions, there had been a reduction in the time learners were spending on careers guidance activities. Conversely, the broad view is that budgets and staff allocations have remained largely stable.

The amount of time different staff members had dedicated to career guidance varied. Over half (51.5%) of Heads/Principals stated that the time Careers Leaders had spent on career guidance programmes had increased.

Head/Principals' time showed a less consistent picture with around a quarter (23%) saying it had increased and 29% saying it had decreased. In turn, 35% of respondents stated that 1:1 time with pupils/students by careers professionals had decreased.

Respondents indicated that the main impact overall of Covid-19 in the academic year 2019-2020 fell into two main themes:

- 1) the lack of face to face contact, and
- 2) the cancelling of work experience.

Many respondents mentioned the perceived difficulties of “engaging” with young people over the telephone or through Teams or similar, emphasising that “face-to-face” contact is essential.

2.2 Views on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on careers guidance in the Academic year – 2020-2021:

In looking forward and gathering a sense of prioritisation among those planning their career guidance delivery for 2020-2021 the survey asked about potential impact on budget and student time as well as staff allocations. Other questions focussed on formal involvement of governors and the role of parents/carers/guardians in careers guidance, as well as major concerns in terms of the continuing impact of Covid-19.

Over 90% of institutions have already begun planning for the next academic year, and almost three quarters (72%) of respondents said that careers guidance was a high priority in the 2020 - 2021 academic year.

Although many participants stated that career guidance was a high priority there was no reported increase in allocated budget. The vast majority of Heads/Principals (73%) stated budgets would remain the same as last year, with only 10% stating there would be an increase. This could be due to budget-setting in schools and colleges often taking place far in advance of the start of a new academic year.

There was less agreement about how the pandemic will affect the time that learners will spend on careers guidance in the coming year. Half of respondents think it will be the same as for this year, a fifth believe it will increase. 70% of colleges believe that there will be no change in time spent on career guidance, compared to just under half (48%) of schools. A small proportion (14%) believe it will decrease.

There was clear agreement across all respondents that support for KS4 and KS5/16+ is likely to increase in the academic year 2020-2021 with over 40% of respondents believing this will be the case. Respondents also identified that, in particular, students in year 11 and year 13 would be prioritised.

Overall, over half of all respondents (and over two-thirds of Heads/Principals) say that governors have been formally involved in careers guidance planning.

Positively, around a third (29%) of schools and colleges believe that parents, carers and guardians will have a more influential role in career guidance discussions going forward, and a similar proportion (30%) believe their relationships with parents, carers and guardians in relation to career guidance will be improved going forward.

The major concern about the provision of career guidance identified by respondents for the 2020-2021 academic year, regardless of staff type and institution, was access to employers to support experiences and encounters of work, for example at careers fairs or through visits.

In priority order schools and colleges are most concerned about:

1. Access to work experience.
2. Gaining sufficient employer encounters.
3. Acquiring up-to-date and informative labour market information.
4. Supporting in-need groups of learners.
5. Delivering sufficient 1:1 guidance.

Schools and colleges' reflections on the ways they would value support ranged from help with access to employers, funding engagement activities, improved access to labour market information, ways to share good practice and help with apprenticeships.

3. Methodology

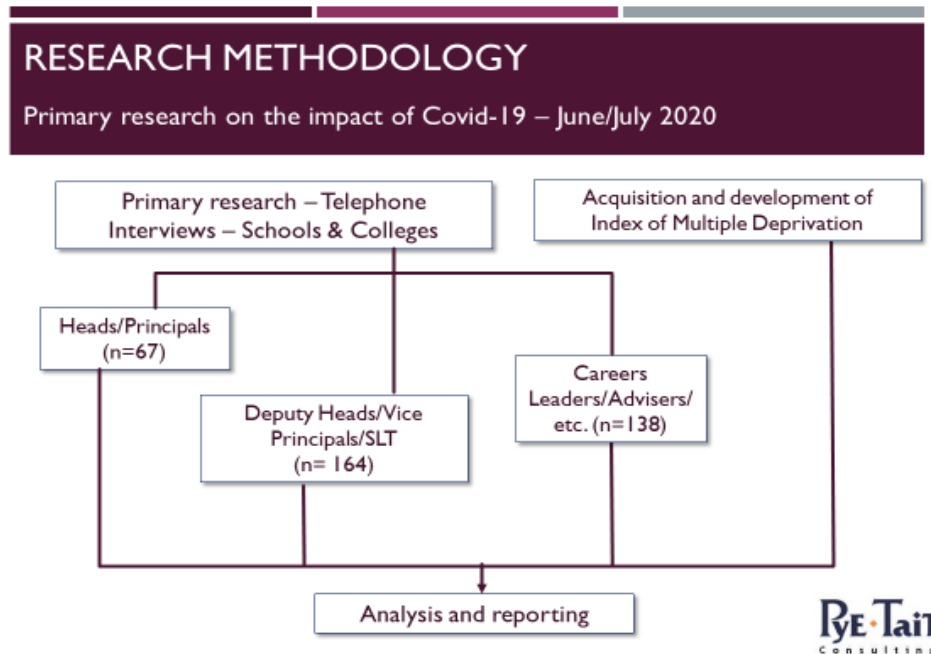
A telephone survey, along with an option to complete online, ran between the end of June until the end of the academic year 2019-2020. It was primarily aimed at Headteachers/Principals and the Senior Leadership Team of secondary schools and colleges. The purpose was to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on career guidance activities in 2019-2020 and gain a sense of prioritisation and perspective of those reflecting and planning career guidance delivery for 2020-2021.

The survey achieved 369 responses – two thirds Heads and Principals/Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and a third by Careers Leaders/Advisors - from a range of institutions of which 62 were colleges and sixth forms. It was broadly representative in terms of region and type of institution.

The main features of the method undertaken are explained below:

- We adopted a mixed methodology through parallel online and telephone responses to ensure sufficient reach and sample size in a short sampling window. The thirty-question survey consisted of a mix of mainly closed and some open response questions.
- The sample was randomised rather than stratified. The vast majority of completions were by telephone interview, through contacting schools and colleges directly, utilising named contacts from a standard resource/database.
- Interview booking was made with the named senior leadership team contact. In around a third of appointments referral was made by the Head/Principal – on occasion even during the interview – to Careers staff. In those instances, the interview was completed by Careers Leaders/Advisors.
- To boost responses in recognition of the tightness of the schedule, 800 school and college Heads and Principals, identified through a reputable schools database, were alerted by email to the existence of the online survey.
- Completions by institution type, geographical region and across age groups were monitored via a web-based portal enabling the creation of a real time dashboard of achievement of quotas and quality control.

Figure 1: Method and Approach



For the purposes of the analysis, we completed:

- a) a broad analysis of all responses across all 30 questions by all respondents supported by manual thematic analysis of the open questions.
- b) an analysis of the responses separately cross-tabulated against
 - i) two “types” of staff: “Heads/Principals/SLT” and “Careers Leaders, etc.”;
 - ii) by type of institution: “Schools” and “Colleges” ; and
 - iii) by level of multiple deprivation (see below).
- c) statistical tests between results for types of staff, institution and level of multiple level of deprivation were undertaken in order to determine any statistical difference at the 95% or 90% confidence levels. The results of these tests are provided in the text where appropriate.

3.1 Sample

The research involved a survey of 369 senior leaders (and their representatives) of colleges, secondary schools, and special schools in England with responses from two “types” of staff: “Heads/Principals/SLT” and “Careers Leaders, Careers Advisers, etc.”.

Although the intention was for the survey to be completed by Heads/Principals/SLT, around a third were from the Careers team. Contact with Heads/Principals/SLT were asked for in the first instance,

but around one in three occasions referrals were made from those Heads/Principals/SLT to their Careers Leaders or similar, in other words they were asked to complete the survey by the SLT on their behalf. In all cases the Head/Principal/Senior Leader recommended the Careers Leader or other senior careers professional as being more able to answer the questions with sufficient background and detail.

Throughout the report we use the phrase Heads/Principals when referring to Heads/Principals/SLT, and Careers staff when referring to Careers Leaders/Advisers /Head of Careers.

Multiple Deprivation Index

Respondents were classified by their postcode area which enabled us to analyse the responses at an extremely focused six-figure postcode level.

The most recent Index of Multiple Deprivation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was selected because it combines 39 separate indicators of deprivation. It calculates an index for each of over 35,000 small geographical areas of England which, if necessary, can then be combined into larger ones for analysis.

Areas are segmented into “deciles” each of which includes 10% of the areas by deprivation index. In this analysis we have opted to work with a segmentation which takes the most deprived two deciles and compares them with the least deprived two deciles; that is the lower 20% of England to compare with the upper 20%.

Comparison

In 2018 Pye Tait Consulting was commissioned by the Gatsby Foundation to investigate the views and activity of senior school staff and Governors with respect to careers guidance. The work involved interviews with 141 Heads/Principals and 116 Governors and some of the 2018 results about prioritisation are used for comparative purposes in section 6.2.

4. Survey Coverage

The telephone survey was restricted to England and was broadly representative in terms of geographical spread and types of institution.

It returned around 30% of responses from the south east and London – an inexact but broadly representative reflection of the population profile (around 40% in those two regions). Representation of the other English regions is broadly similar to population profile.

We compared the returns in regional form to the spread of deprived areas in England (Multiple Deprivation Index), which exercise found that here was a statistically significant higher proportion of “Most deprived areas” in the north west and north east, and of “Least deprived areas” in the South East. This conforms exactly to the density of deprived areas for England as a whole.

4.1 Region of England

The sample of schools and colleges was approximately representative by English region.

Figure 2: Sample by English Region (all respondents)

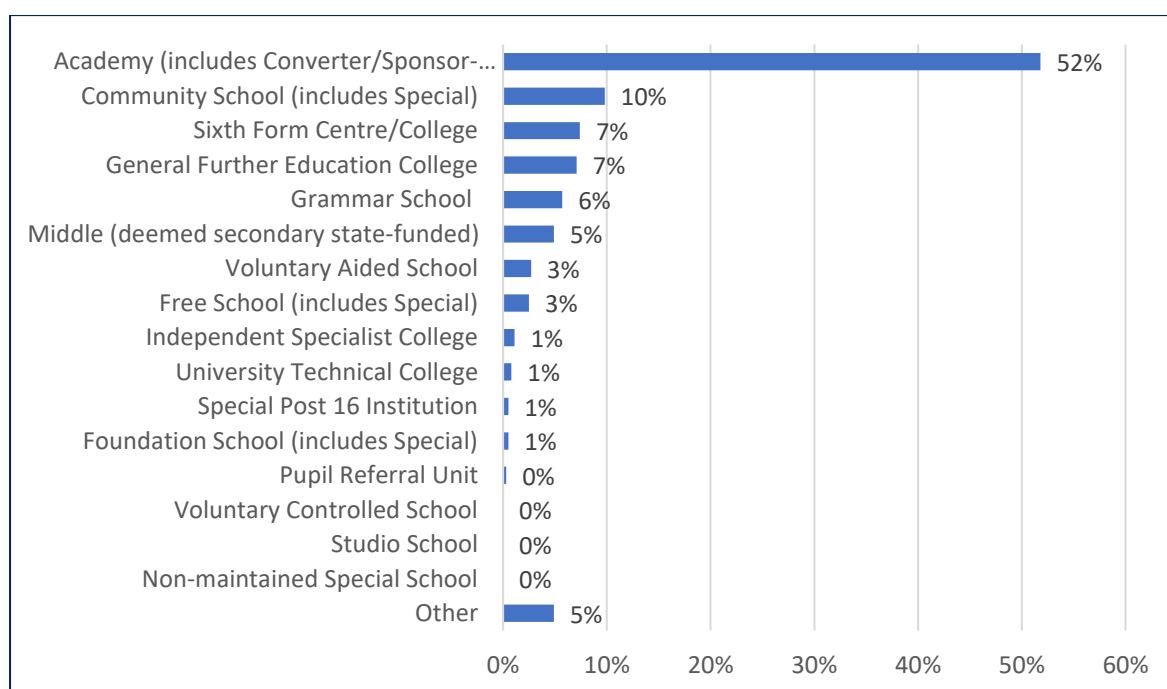


Base: 369 respondents

4.2 Type of Institution

The returned sample broadly represents the national mix of schools and colleges by number and type, with academies representing over fifty percent of the sample and colleges some 16%. The sample over-represents college by number but this was agreed in order to acquire statistically reliable data without compromising the sample of schools as a whole (84%).

Figure 3: Sample by Type of Institution (all respondents)



Base: 369 respondents

4.3 Respondent Role

Respondents fell into two clear staff groups: senior, non-careers staff (Heads/Principals, Deputies and members of the Senior Leadership Team – SLT), and Senior Careers staff (Careers Leaders and Advisers). For the purposes of analysis throughout this report, in the main, the responses of these two groups have been compared.

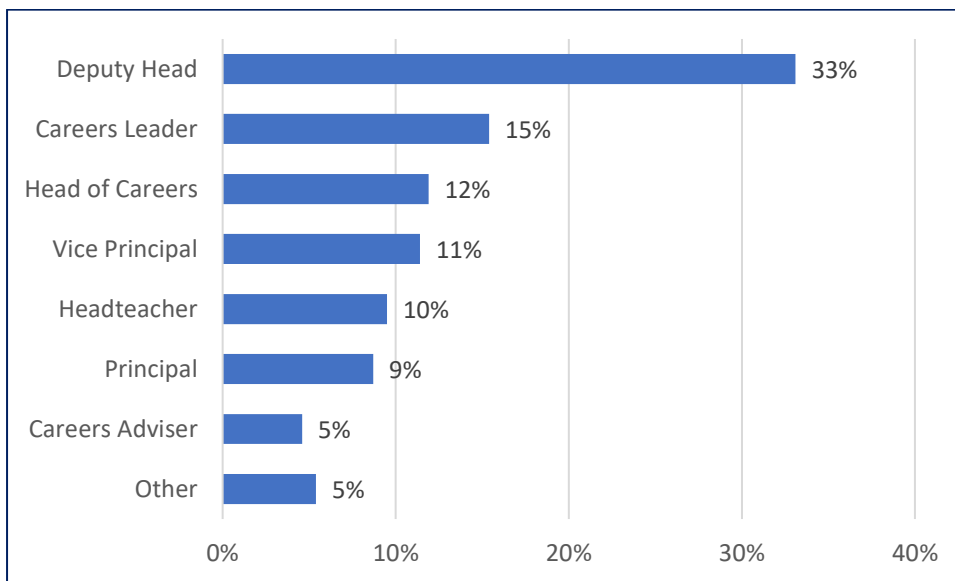
In the course of the research we found that senior staff – particularly Heads, Deputy Heads, Principals and Vice-Principals were focussed on a variety of ongoing communications with government and the need to organise staff and the teaching of essential worker children (among much else). In some cases they felt unable to respond to the survey and passed us on to senior Careers staff (either Careers Leaders, Heads of Careers, or Careers Advisers).

- Heads, Deputies, Principals, Vice-Principals accounted for **63%** of respondents.
- Career Leaders/Heads/Advisers made up **32%**.

Some 5% of respondents had bespoke titles or left their role off but were staff from a variety of institutions such as special schools, free-schools, pupil referral units, and a variety of academy. In the analysis by type of role the 5% were excluded but included in all other outputs.

In all cases contact was first made with the Head/Principal/Deputy/SLT and those who were classed as “Careers Leaders and Advisers, etc.” were asked to speak to us by those initial leadership contacts.

Figure 4: Respondents by Role (all respondents)

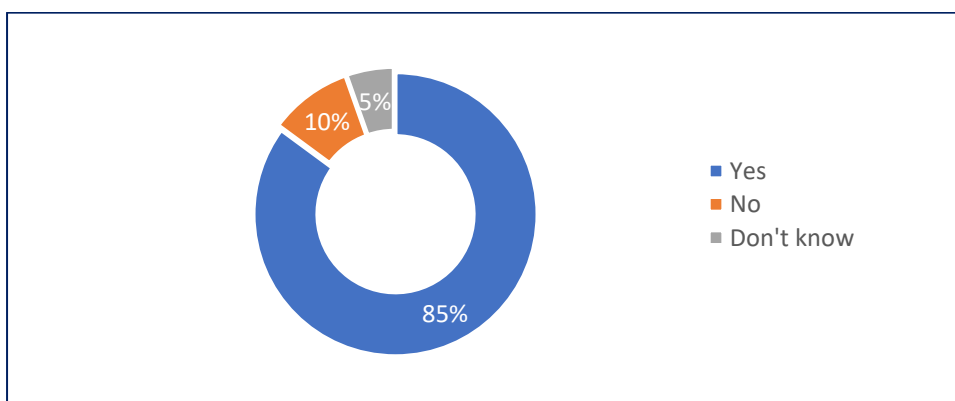


Base: 369 respondents

4.4 Part of CEC Network

Almost nine out of ten (85%) of the institutions we contacted identified themselves as part of the CEC network. There was no statistical difference between the responses by type of institution.

Figure 5: Participation in CEC (all respondents)



Base: 369 respondents

4.5 Awareness and continuing value of the Gatsby Benchmarks

There is almost universal awareness (99%) of the Gatsby benchmarks.

There is also universal agreement that the benchmarks continue to be a useful framework with 99% agreeing. There was a small significant difference between schools (99.7%) and colleges (93%).

5. The impact of Covid-19 on Career Guidance in Academic Year: 2019-2020

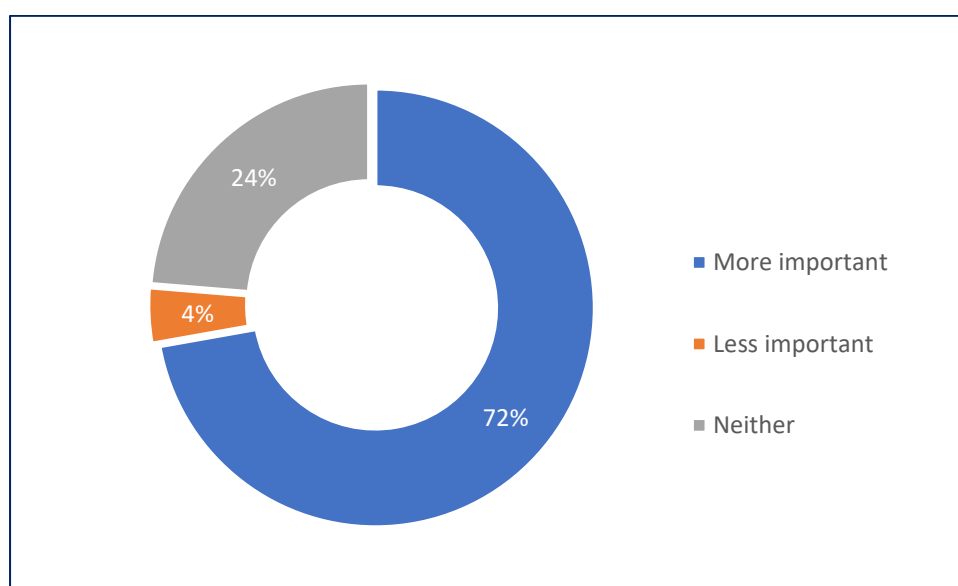
The survey asked a number of initial questions aimed at understanding how the Covid-19 pandemic had affected careers guidance activities in the 2019-2020 academic year.

5.1 Impact of Covid-19 on career guidance in academic year 2019-2020

A high proportion of respondents – almost three quarters – believe that Covid-19 has made career guidance more important. This was the case regardless of type of staff - 71.3% of Heads/Principals and 73.7% of Careers staff or type of institution.

Around a quarter of respondents believe that the pandemic has not changed the importance of careers guidance.

Figure 6: Impact of Covid-19 on Careers Guidance in academic year 2019-2020 (all staff)



Base: 367 respondents: *Has Covid-19 made career guidance more or less important or neither?*

Institutions in the most and least deprived areas tend to see the importance as having changed in the same directions. There is no statistical difference in these results with the exception that the difference between areas of deprivation was statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval with respect to careers guidance having become slightly less important in the most deprived areas. None of the institutions in the least deprived areas believe that careers guidance has become less important but 9% of those in the most deprived areas so believe (Table 1).

Table 1: Impact on Careers Guidance Importance by Deprivation for academic year 2019-2020

	Most deprived		Least deprived
	129	55	74
More important	76.00%	78.20%	74.30%
Less important	3.90%	9.10%	-
Neither	20.20%	12.70%	25.70%

Base 129.

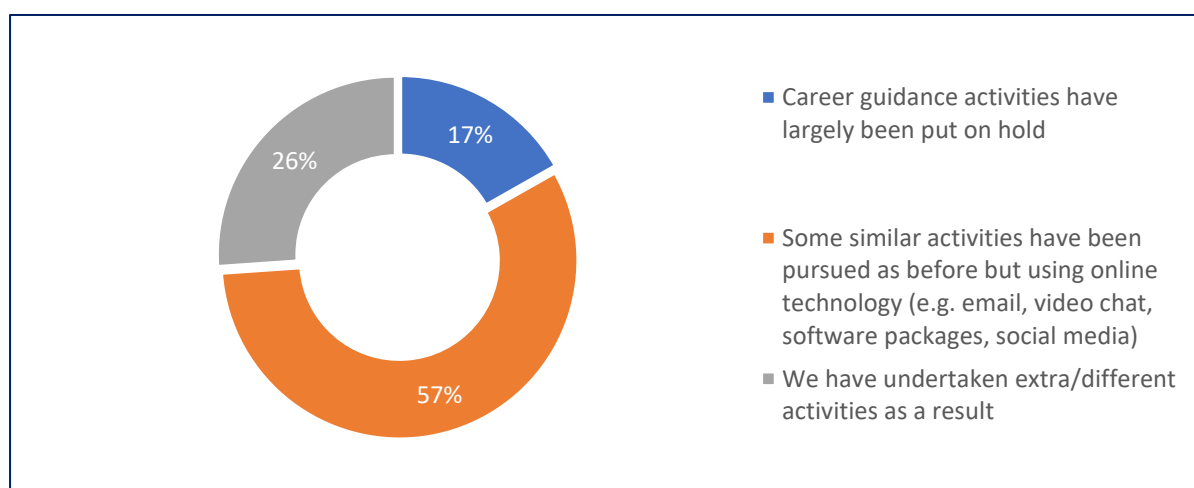
5.2 Effect on the provision of career guidance in academic year 2019-2020

With respect to the impact of the pandemic on provision, the picture is more complex. Around a fifth (17%) of respondents said that career guidance activities had been put on hold during the 2019-2020 academic year. For the majority, however, the impact has been focused on translating some activities to virtual, email and telephonic formats.

There was agreement between the two types of staff (Heads/Principals and Careers staff) on these issues but cross tabs by broad type of institution show that schools have been statistically more likely to place activities on hold while colleges have been more likely to adopt different approaches (but the differences are not great where the latter is concerned).

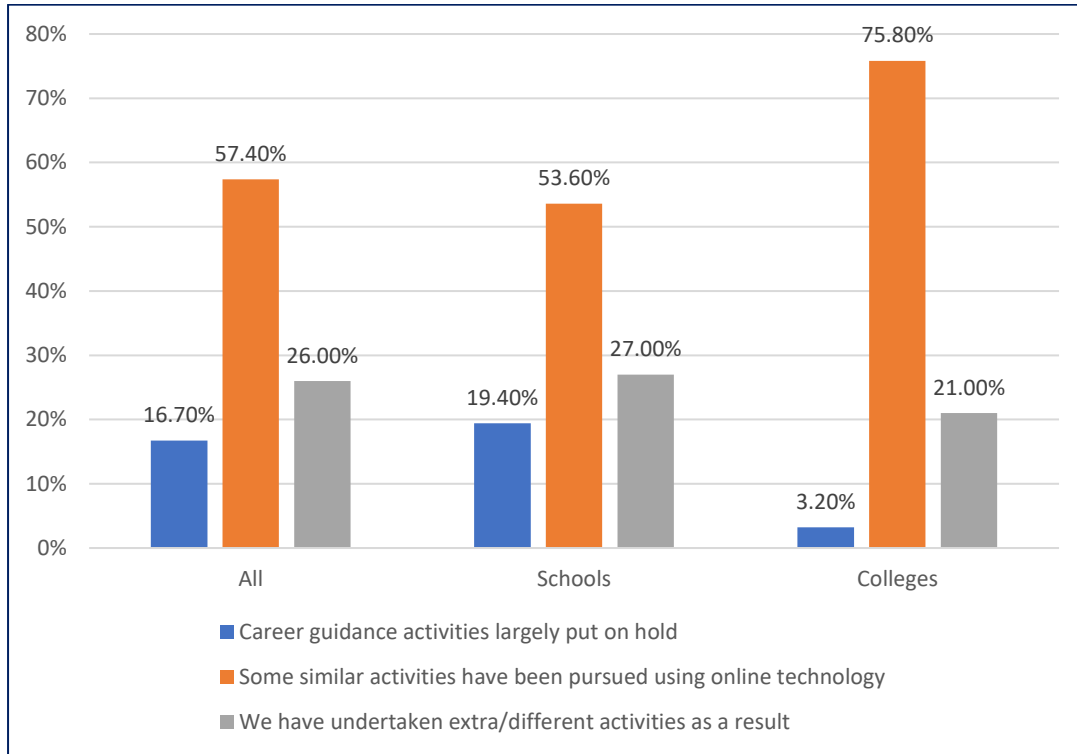
The most commonly mentioned changes have been the use of virtual work experience and remote interviews and chats. Several respondents mentioned the use of virtual FE tours.

Figure 7: Impact of Covid-19 on the provision of Careers Guidance in 2019-20 academic year (all staff)



Base: 368 respondents: *In broad terms, we would like to understand how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected your institution's provision of career guidance during the current period of school and colleges closures.*

Figure 8: Impact of Covid-19 on the provision of Careers Guidance in 2019-2020 academic year (by type of institution)



N: All=366, Schools= 304, Colleges=62

Some 96 respondents provided more detail in qualitative terms for this question.

The most common themes on the issue of changes in provision were virtual and online working. Use of technology included for example: Google hangouts for IAG delivery.

Twenty-one respondents mentioned the fact that they had used virtual work experience for learners (mainly for Years 10 and 11).

We anticipate that respondents used the term 'virtual work experience' to mean a variety of activities, encounters and experiences with employers and employees, for example: the provision of a platform for students to discover more about an employer and its work, view pre-recorded videos on what it's like to work with the organisation, go on virtual tours and possibly take part in some live Q&A sessions to requiring a student go through an application process and have regular online meetings with a supervisor, individual project work, networking sessions, training opportunities and video tutorials.

We have missed out on a lot of employer encounters We are now introducing virtual work experience activities for students - key stage group 2/3

Introduced virtual work experience activities and additional web-seminars

Helping year 10 into career and work opportunities; Investing time and effort into virtual work experience activities

Others mentioned remote careers interviews and other virtual activities connected to careers:

Remote 1:1 careers interviews; Virtual careers activities with outside agencies

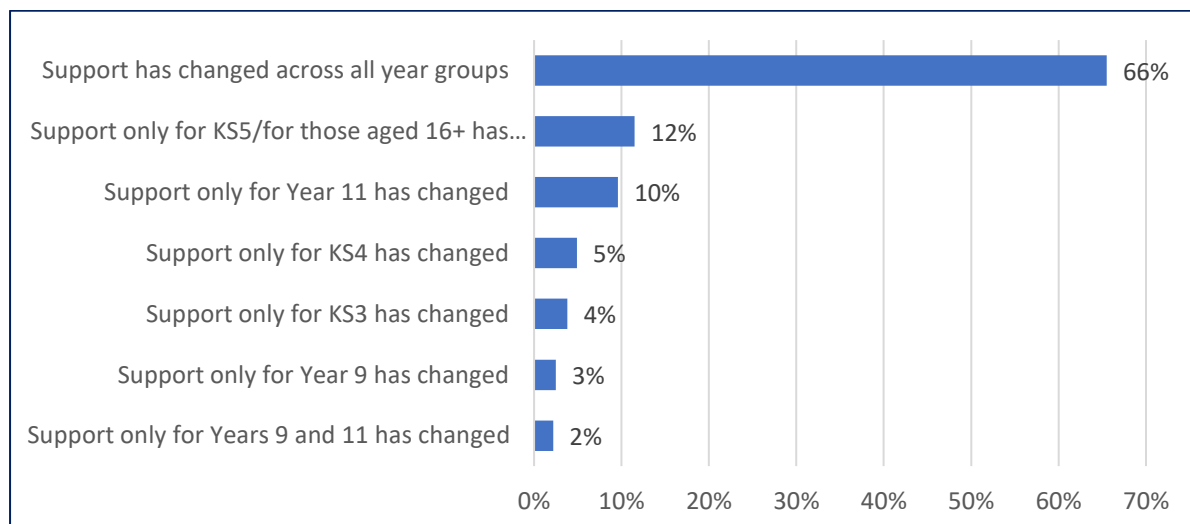
Some mentioned telephone careers interviews, virtual careers “drop in” sessions, and even virtual college tours.

We have continued with the planned provision as much as possible but also sought out opportunities for students to engage in virtual activities such as FE tours and open days, LiveChat events, virtual work experience programmes and regular online careers resources have been distributed to all students.

5.3 Changes undertaken by Key Stage and Year Group in academic year 2019-2020

Two thirds of respondents agreed that career guidance had changed as a result of the pandemic across all the year groups. The rest pointed to changes only for specific age groups – most for year 11 and KS5/post 16.

Figure 9: Impact of Covid-19 on year groups and key stages in 2019-2020 academic year (all staff)



Base: 365 respondents: *Have these changes differed across the Key Stages and year groups?*

With respect to career guidance for key stages and year groups, there was almost no statistically significant difference between institutions in the most and least deprived areas of England. It was slightly more likely that the least deprived areas will have changed support for KS4 only – but this was not a strong difference.

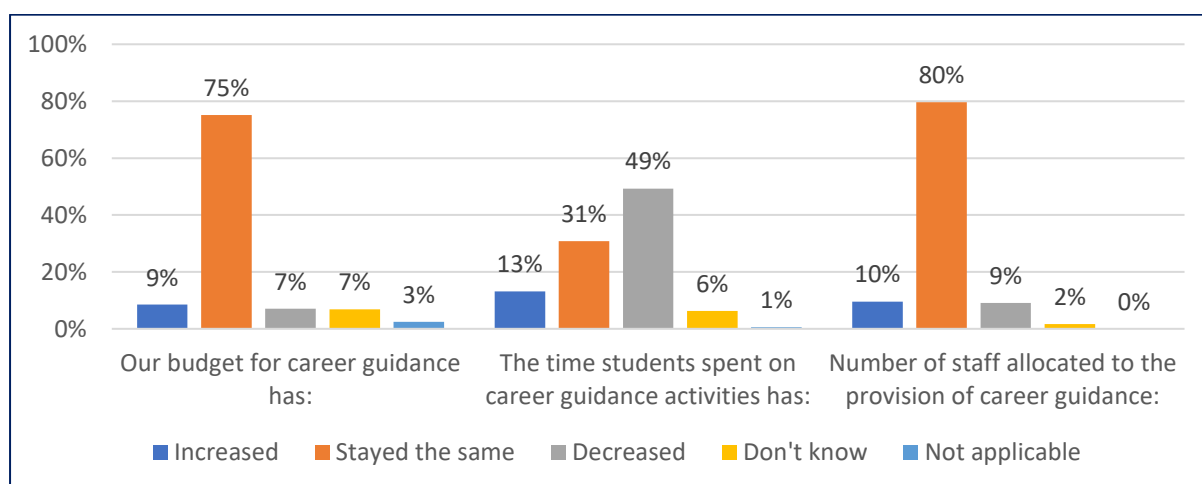
5.4 Changes in career guidance budget, student time and staff allocations in academic year 2019-2020 due to Covid-19

The strongest outcome on this issue is that almost half of respondents (49%) say that the time learners were spending on careers has decreased as a result of the pandemic.

Conversely, the broad view is that budgets and staff allocations have remained largely stable. Only around ten percent say that these areas have increased.

The answers were broadly similar by type of staff, type of institution, and area of deprivation (i.e. there were no statistically significant differences between different types within these variables).

Figure 10: Changes in Career Guidance Budget, Staff Time, and Staff Allocations in 2019-2020 academic year due to Covid-19



Base: 368 respondents: *Please select the most appropriate statement for each one of these below.*

5.5 Changes in time by those providing careers guidance to students in 2019-2020 academic year due to Covid-19

Participants were asked whether the time spent on all aspects of careers guidance [developing a strategy, discussions with students about different education and career options, setting up employer engagement events, and so on] had increased, decreased or remained the same through the lockdown.

The “increase” balance - the difference between “increase” and “decrease” - was positive only for career leaders (Table 2).

Table 2: The differential between 'increased' and 'decreased' time spent on careers guidance by different types of staff in academic year 2019-2020 due to Covid-19

	Increase / Decrease	Differential	Stayed the same
Career Leaders	46% increase / 11% decrease	+35%	42%
Heads/Principals	23% / 29%	-6%	40%
Senior Leadership (SLT)	20% / 25%	-5%	50%
Professionals spent on 1:1 interviews	18% / 35%	-17%	45%
Non-SLT time	14% / 28%	-14%	52%

Base: 368 respondents

Time spent by each type of staff on careers provision is discussed separately below.

5.5.1 Career Leaders' Time

Almost half of respondents see the time that Careers Leaders spend on careers activities as having increased (46%).

There was no statistically significant difference between the views of schools and colleges on careers leaders' time. But there was a major statistically significant difference between the opinions of Heads/Principals and Careers staff respondents.

With respect to Careers Leaders' time to focus on careers over half of Heads/Principals (51.5%) feel that it has increased, while 37% of Careers staff feel it has increased. There was also a statistically significant difference in relation to deprivation. Career Leaders' time had increased in the most deprived areas and is more likely to have stayed the same in the least deprived areas.

5.5.2 Headteacher/Principals' time

Around four in ten (40%) of all respondents say that Heads/Principal's time spent on careers has stayed the same. Around a quarter (23%) say that it has increased and 29% that it has decreased.

Where schools and colleges are concerned there is a statistically significant difference between them with respect to whether Heads/Principals' time had increased/decreased with a third of schools thinking it had decreased (schools 32%/colleges 13%) and over half of colleges (colleges 57%/schools 36%) thinking that it had stayed the same.

5.5.3 SLT time

About a quarter of all respondents believe that SLT time on careers has decreased but colleges were much less likely to say this (11% of colleges compared to 27% of schools).

5.5.4 Career professionals' time spent on 1:1 interviews

Just over a third (35%) of respondents stated that 1:1 time from careers professionals had decreased. There was a strong agreement across the board between both Heads/Principals (30%) and Careers staff (43%) that this was the case.

The reduction in the 1:1 guidance may be due to the approach for delivering personal guidance. For example, anecdotal reports suggest that 1:1 guidance staff employed directly by the school/college have been able to continue, but external providers of 1:1 guidance (that schools and colleges commission) have potentially not been available due to for example staff being furloughed.

Well over a third of schools (37%) believe the time to have decreased, compared to around a quarter (23%) of colleges - a statistically significant difference.

5.5.5 Involvement of non-SLT staff

Over half of all respondents (52%) believe that the involvement of non-SLT staff in career guidance has remained the same but 28% think it has decreased.

There was a statistically significant difference between the views of the two staff groups on the issue of whether non-SLT staff had increased or decreased their involvement in career discussions with learners. A much higher proportion of Heads/Principals (60%) feel that the time has stayed the same while only around a third (36.5%) of Careers staff would agree. Similarly, less than a quarter of Heads/Principals (23.3%) think this involvement has decreased compared to 35% of Careers staff.

Almost a third of schools' responses (30.8%) say that non-SLT involvement has decreased compared to 13% of colleges.

5.6 Main impact on career guidance as a result of Covid-19 in academic year 2019-2020

Respondents were asked to explain their views on the main impacts of the pandemic. The major themes which were discussed were:

- 1) the lack of face to face contact, and
- 2) the cancelling of work experience.

Many respondents mentioned the perceived difficulties of "engaging" with young people over the telephone or through Teams or similar software, most arguing that "face-to-face" contact is essential.

However, a few mentioned that Covid-19 may have positive impacts:

Funnily I think Covid-19 has been a positive to careers as students have seen how fragile jobs are as some of their parents have lost their jobs therefore they have a greater understanding of the importance of career discussions. Covid-19 has focused peoples' minds to have a sense of where they are going.

And there were one or two more detailed appreciations of the issues involved.

The reorganisation of careers services. We have already planned our career advice activities for next year - such as talks with employers - and it is likely that none of these will be able to go ahead, because we will not be able to safeguard the kids. All advice will need to be given virtually and set through My Homework platform.

Also, it makes a big difference not being on site and not having your door open for a child to pop in and ask a question. If everything is organised virtually, kids are not going to ask.

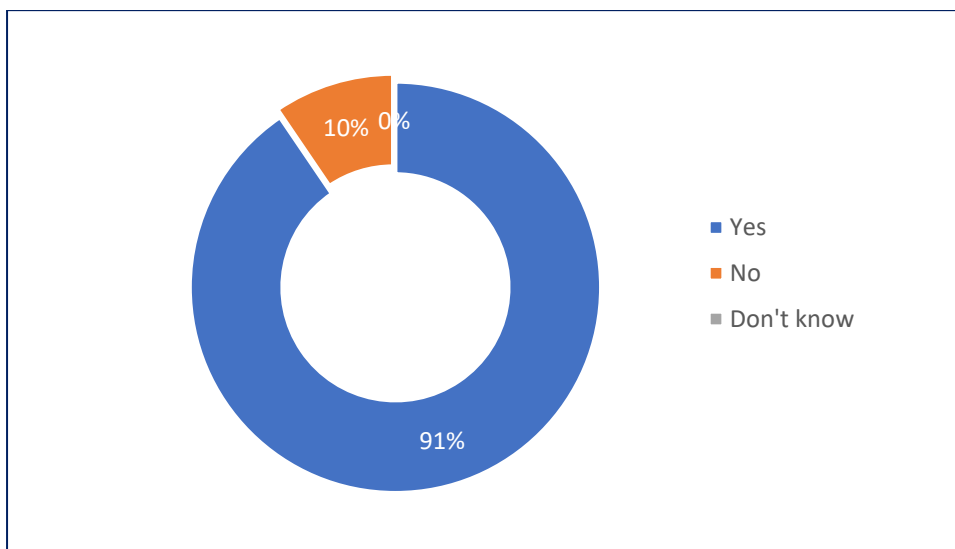
6. Impact of Covid-19 on preparations for Career Guidance in Academic Year: 2020-2021

6.1 Career guidance planning for academic year 2020-2021

Respondents were asked whether they had begun planning how career guidance will be delivered in the forthcoming academic year. Over 90% of institutions have already begun planning for the next academic year. However, there is a significant proportion of institutions that replied in the negative. Ten percent, if scaled up to the national school and college population, could represent almost 400 institutions that had not started to plan careers guidance activities at the time of the survey in July 2020.

There was a small but statistically significant difference between schools (89.2%) and colleges (100%) – with the latter more likely to answer that they had started their planning.

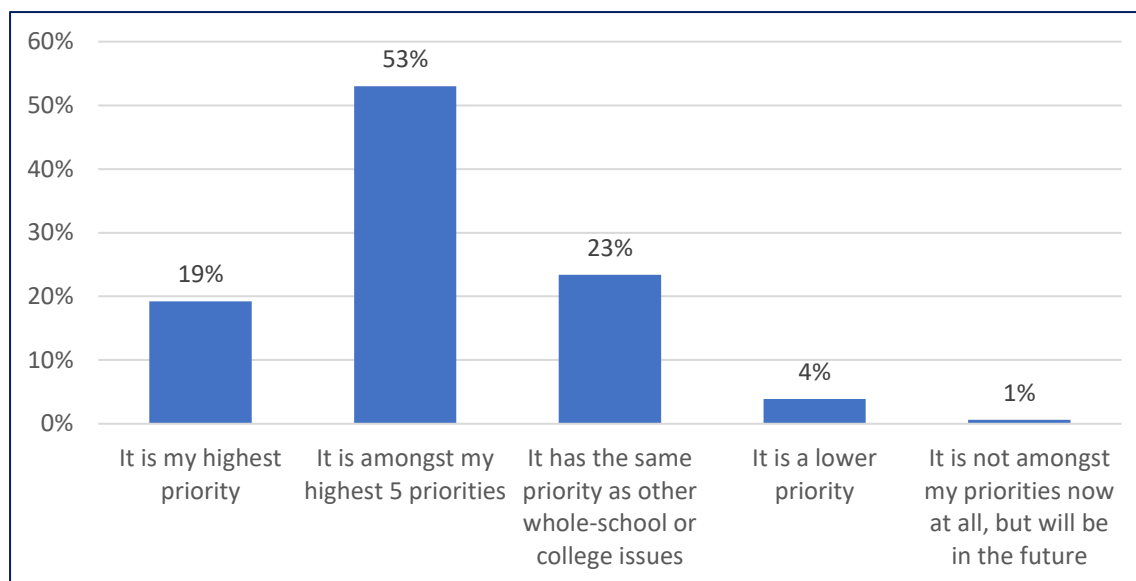
Figure 11: Planning of Careers Guidance provision for the academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)



Base: 369 respondents: *Have you, or your team, started planning how career guidance will be delivered next academic year?*

6.2 Changes in prioritisation of career guidance due to Covid-19 for the next academic year 2020-2021

Figure 12: Changes in prioritisation of Career Guidance due to Covid-19 for the next academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)



Base: 334 respondents: *How, if at all, has your prioritisation of career guidance for the next academic year changed relative to other priorities?*

Almost three quarters of respondents said that careers guidance was either their top priority (19%) or among their top five priorities for the coming year (53%).

Heads/Principals are more likely to place in it their 'top five priorities' (61%), than Careers staff (39.7%), the latter are understandably more likely to say it is their 'highest priority' (31%) than Heads/Principals (12%).

Table 3: Changes in prioritisation of Career Guidance due to Covid-19 for the next academic year 2020-2021 (by type of role)

	All	Heads/Principals	Careers staff
	334	208	126
It is my highest priority	19.20%	12.00%	31.00%
Amongst my highest 5 priorities	53.00%	61.10%	39.70%
Same priority as other whole-school or college issues	23.40%	24.00%	22.20%
A lower priority	3.90%	2.40%	6.30%
Not currently a priority but will be in future	0.60%	0.50%	0.80%

Base: 334 respondents

There was a statistically significant difference between the answers of schools and colleges on the matter where two thirds of colleges (compared to half of schools) said that the issue was in the top five priorities (Table 4).

Table 4: Changes in prioritisation of career guidance due to Covid-19 for the next academic year 2020-2021 (by type of institution)

	All	Schools	Colleges
	334	272	62
It is my highest priority	19.20%	19.50%	17.70%
Amongst my highest 5 priorities	53.00%	50.00%	66.10%
Same priority as other whole-school or college issues	23.40%	25.00%	16.10%
A lower priority	3.90%	4.80%	-
Not currently a priority but will be in future	0.60%	0.70%	-

Base: 334 respondents

In 2018 Headteachers³ were placing careers guidance high on their list of priorities and the progress towards adherence to the Gatsby Benchmarks was good (as measured by take up and interest in the relevant resources of the Gatsby website). Heads believed that the importance of careers had increased relative to other activities over the academic year 2017-18.

Roughly eight out of ten schools and colleges in 2018 said at that time that careers guidance was one of their top five priorities (11% saying that it was their top priority and 70% saying that it was among their top five priorities) indicating that Covid-19 has led to a slight shift downward from 2018/2019 to 2020/2021 from 'top five priorities' by Heads/Principals.

6.3 Plans to change the budget for the next academic year 2020-2021

Over two thirds (68%) of respondents say that careers budgets will stay the same for next year. Ten percent say that they will increase, just 6% say they will decrease and almost a fifth of respondents did not know.

Three quarters of Heads/Principals said that (73%) budgets would remain as for this year compared to 60% of Careers staff – a significant difference. Colleges (79%) are slightly more likely to say that the budgets will stay the same than schools (66%) which is a small statistical difference.

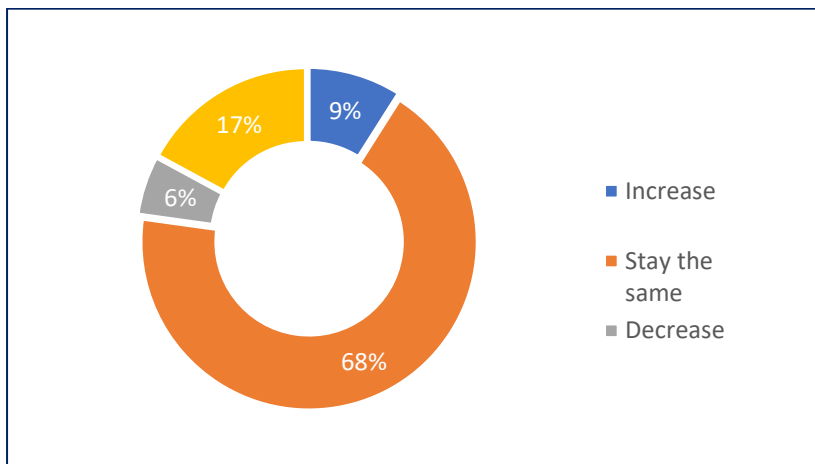
In the text-responses some focused on the fact that there is no ring-fenced budget in their institutions for careers activities or guidance. Several respondents said that they feared that the budget would be reduced. Several respondents requested more resources for 1:1 guidance and to enable them to catch up on backlogs of students needing interviews.

All 1:1 careers guidance with advisers stopped as safeguarding didn't allow for phone or virtual guidance. Email guidance is still possible with me as Head of Careers (also a qualified adviser) but (I) need to catch up on about 150 guidance appointments in the autumn term.

³ See section 1.2 on methodology for a brief explanation on the work conducted by Gatsby in 2018.

More funding has been allocated to make this happen and time for a new adviser has been bought in for the autumn term.

Figure 13: Plans to change Careers Guidance Budgets for the next academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)

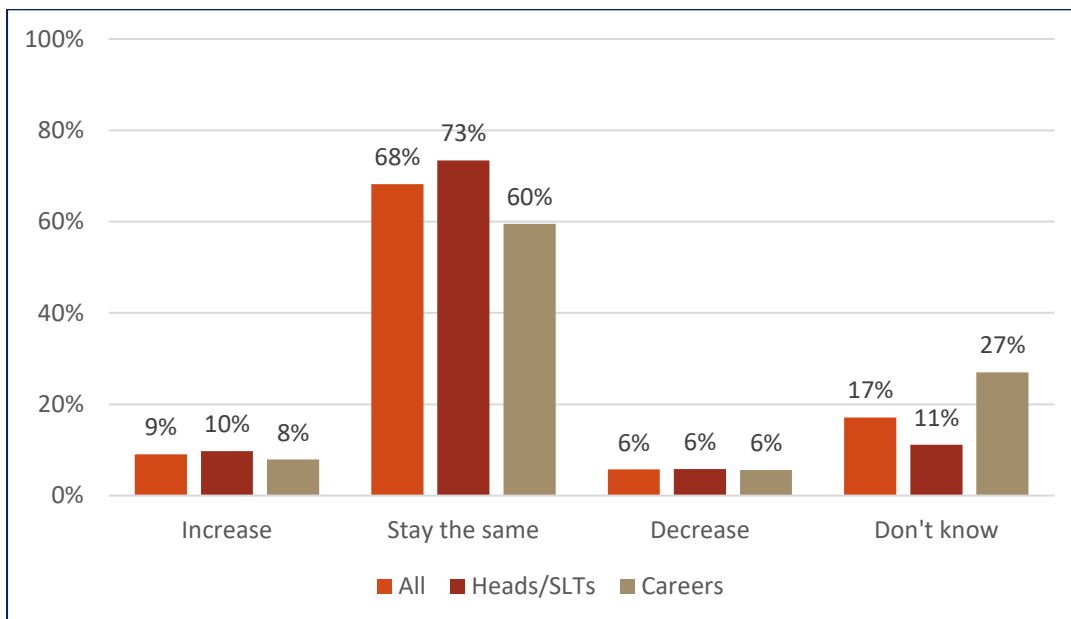


Base: 333 respondents: Our budget for career guidance relative to other areas of school or college activity, compared with this time last year (2019) will:

The data indicate a small degree of positivity in the sense that the balance between increase and decrease – at between +2% and +4% - was positive for both types of staff with Heads/Principals being slightly more positive about increases in budget than Careers staff.

There was no statistical difference on this issue between areas of most and least deprivation.

Figure 14: Plans to change Careers Guidance Budgets in academic year 2020-2021 (by staff type)



Base: 333 respondents: N: all: 333, Heads/Principals: 207, Careers staff: 126.

Although many participants stated that career guidance was a high priority this has not translated into an increased budget. This could be due to the fact that budget-setting in schools and colleges often takes place far in advance of the academic year. Additionally, a high proportion of the budget is usually spent on staffing and it is unlikely that this will have changed significantly at short notice.

Qualitative responses for this question from those few who expect the budget to decrease tended to focus on either the complete absence of a dedicated budget for careers or a reduction in it.

In line with the rest of the subject departments in the school, there is no longer a specific budget for Careers. Any expenditure for Careers now needs to be requested through SMT who will take a whole school approach to any requested expenditure.

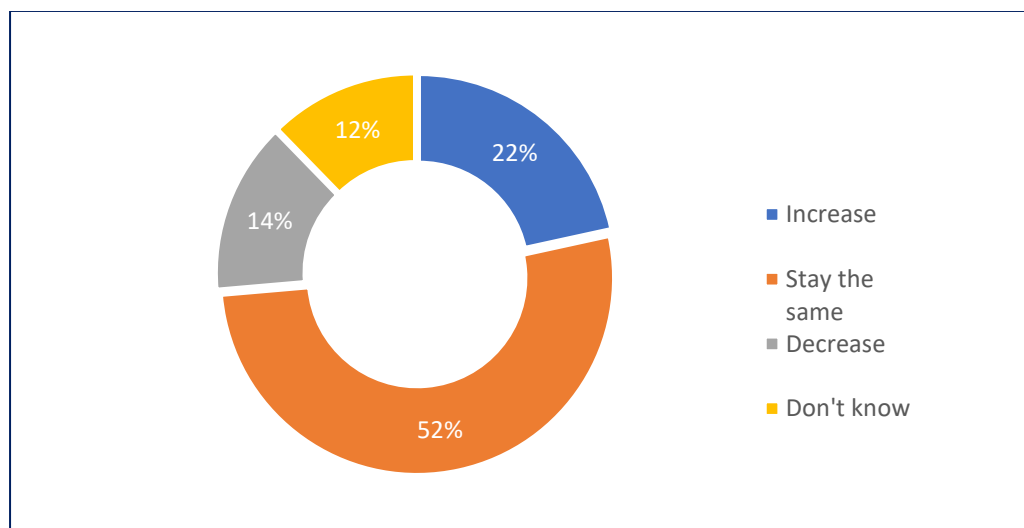
Need to catch up on careers guidance appointments. This service is bought in, therefore, to deliver more than usual in autumn term we have had to find an additional £4000.

Qualitative responses from those who expect the budget to increase explained (in order of most frequent to least) this is due to an increase in Careers staff, support in the form of Government funding to an increase in the numbers of pupils and accompanying funding (particularly in year 11).

6.4 Plans to change pupil/student time on career guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021

There was less agreement about how the pandemic will affect the time that learners will spend on careers guidance in the coming year. Half of respondents think it will be the same as for this year, a fifth believe it will increase.

Figure 15: Change in pupil/student time for the next academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)



Base: 334 respondents: *The time students will spend on career guidance activities (e.g. talking to and meeting employers, having 1:1 discussions with career guidance specialists, exploring HE and FE options) in 2020-2021 relative to other areas of school or college activity, compared with this time last year (2019) will:*

Quite a high proportion (14%) noted their anticipation that student time on career guidance will decrease.

However, almost 70% of colleges believe that there will be no change in time on careers, compared to just under half (48%) of schools thinking that their pupils will spend the same amount of time on careers guidance.

Table 5: Plans to change pupil/student time for the next academic year 2020-2021 by type of institution

	All	Schools	Colleges
	334	272	62
Increase	21.60%	22.10%	19.40%
Stay the same	52.10%	48.20%	69.40%
Decrease	14.10%	15.80%	6.50%
Don't Know	12.30%	14.00%	4.80%

Base: 334 respondents

Respondents were largely concerned about the uncertainty of school re-opening and the rules regarding Covid-19 for the future and impacts on time and resources – particularly in terms of learners being able to physically meet employers or to engage in what one respondent termed “meaningful” careers guidance activities.

Not having things happening since March. Putting stuff in place and plugging gaps so that in the event of a second lock down we are ready to engage.

The students will have less opportunity to meet with potential employers; if indeed they have an opportunity at all in the current Covid-19 circumstances.

Social distancing measures in place, staff are furloughed, made redundant and careers and interactions with our students isn't their main priority. For a number of our businesses we engage with (who are SME) their main concern is keeping their business operational. 1-1's will be offered still to all and this can be done either face to face (socially distanced) or via Teams etc. but not all students want to engage this way plus we have changed the timetable to ensure not all students are in at the same time, thus impacting on the ability to offer all we would normally.

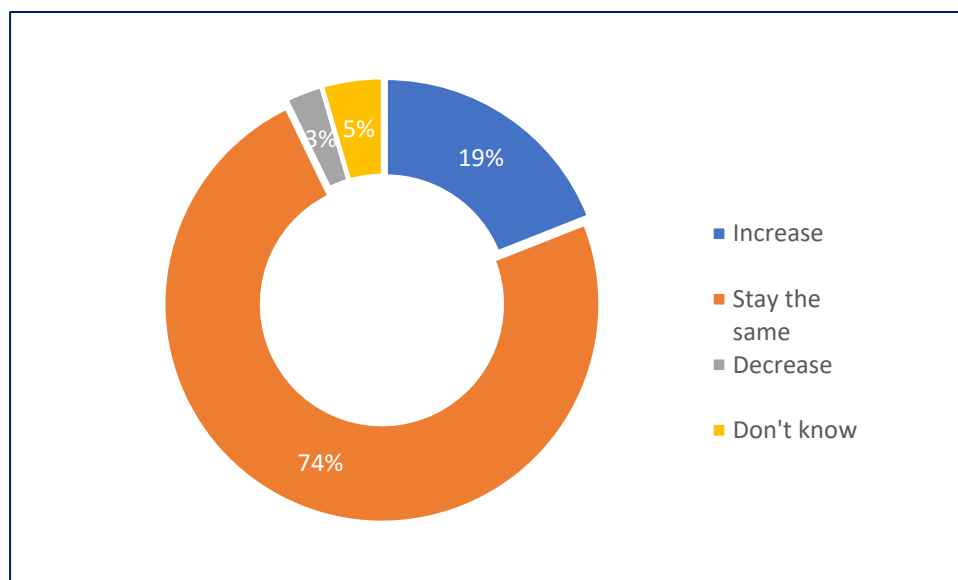
Some respondents mentioned they are concerned about the impact on careers due to learners needing to catch up on a great deal of missed work in almost every subject.

6.5 Plans to change staff time allocated to career guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021

Three quarters of respondents believe that staff time for careers will remain the same but almost a fifth (19%) think it will increase. Of those, nearly two thirds indicated that for them career guidance is a top priority or among the top 5 priorities.

As mentioned before, budgets and curriculum planning/timetabling take place many months beforehand and so decisions on allocations of staff including careers leaders to teaching responsibilities may be an explanation for this viewpoint.

Figure 16: Change in staff time allocated to careers for the academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)



Base: 332 respondents: Staff time allocated to the provision of career guidance in 2020-2021 relative to other areas of school or college activity compared with this time last year (2019) will:

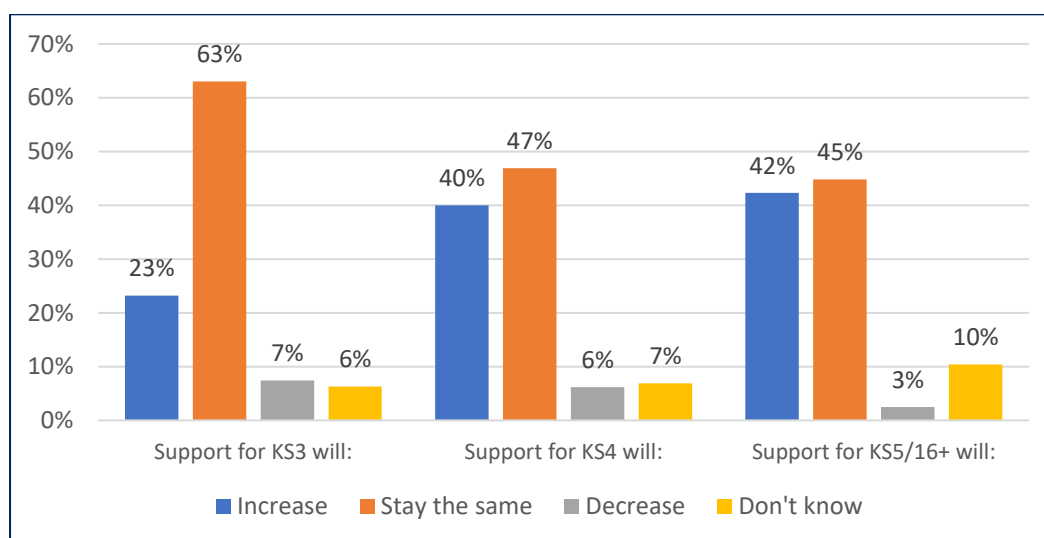
There were a number of responses to the qualitative element of this question with most of them repeating some of the drivers and needs that had been mentioned in response to other questions – e.g. a perceived lack of resources and the need for or impact of virtual approaches (pros and cons).

The issue of resources for careers was discussed but there appears to be little agreement as to whether the concern is that they will expand or contract. A few respondents took the opportunity to link the subject of staff time to the way in which careers guidance is handled in their school, for example the interaction with PSHE and integration across subject lessons.

6.6 Change in careers support across key stages for the next academic year 2020-2021

There was clear agreement across all respondents that support for KS4 and KS5/16+ is likely to increase. Over 40% of respondents believe that this will be the case. Heads/Principals were slightly more likely to predict that support for KS5/16+ will increase. There was no major difference between schools and colleges on this subject.

Figure 17: Change in careers support across Key Stages for the next academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)



Base: 284 respondents: How do you see your career support in 2020-2021 changing across the key stages (as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic)?

A statistically significant higher proportion of Heads/Principals said that support for KS5/16+ would increase in the coming year.

Table 6: Change in support for KS5/16+ (by type of staff)

	All	Heads/Principals	Careers staff
	279	171	108
Increase	42.30%	47.40%	34.30%
Stay the same	44.80%	41.50%	50.00%
Decrease	2.50%	1.80%	4.70%
Don't know	10.40%	9.40%	12.00%

Base: 284 respondents

There was no statistical difference between most and least deprived areas with respect to any of the elements of this question on support for key stages and year groups. The results for KS5/16+ are provided below as an example.

Table 7: Change in support for KS5/16+ (by area of deprivation)

	All	Most deprived	Least deprived
	96	43	53
Increase	47.90%	48.80%	47.20%
Stay the same	41.70%	44.20%	39.60%
Decrease	2.10%	-	4.80%
Don't know	8.30%	7.00%	9.40%

Base: 284 respondents

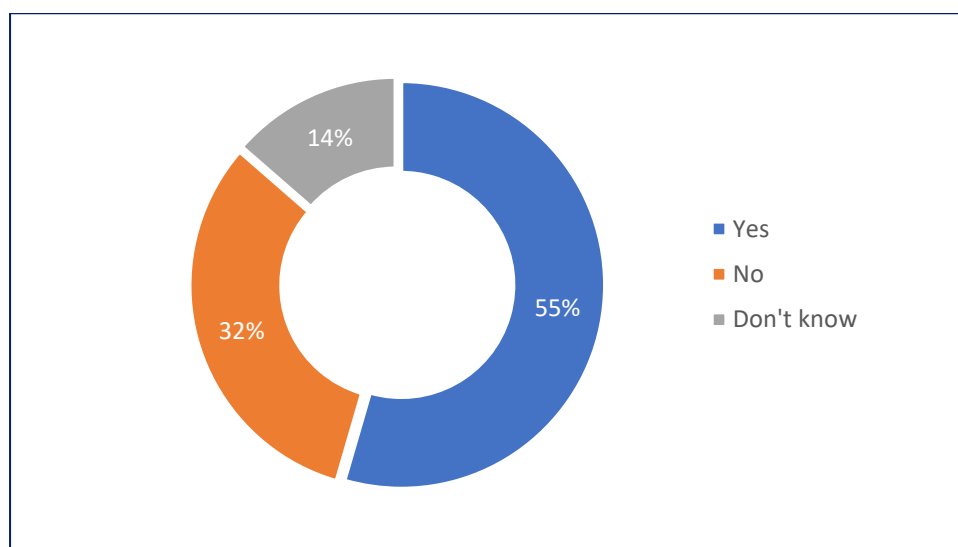
6.7 Formal involvement of governors on career guidance planning for academic year 2020-2021 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic

Overall, over half (55%) of all respondents say that governors have been formally involved in careers guidance planning. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Heads/Principals said that this was the case.

A significantly higher proportion of Careers staff did not know.

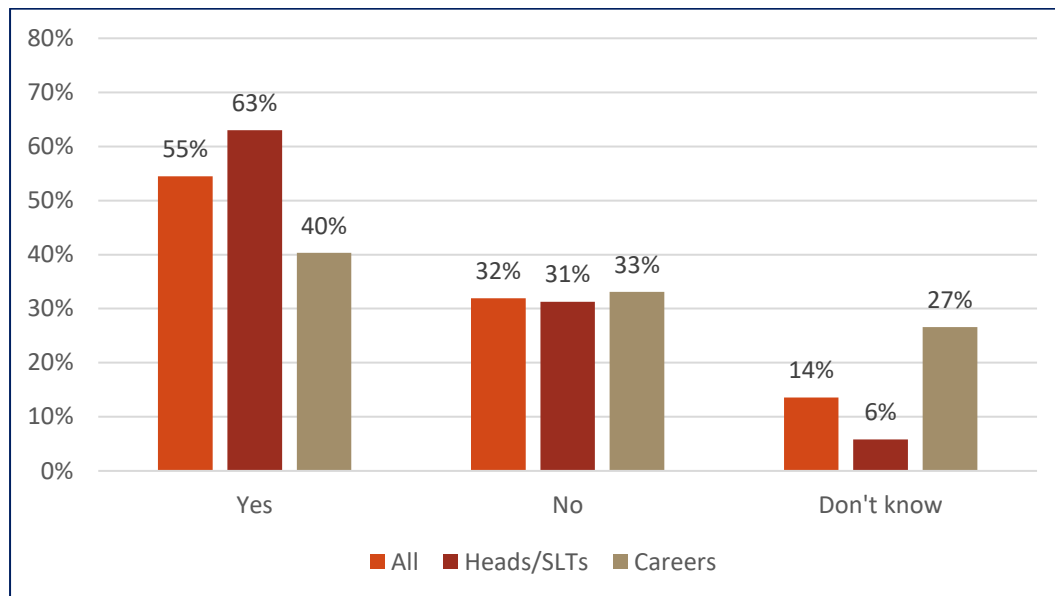
There was a small difference between schools and colleges with the latter being more likely to have formally involved governors (51% of schools / 66% of colleges).

Figure 18: Formal involvement of governors in Career Guidance planning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (all staff)



Base: 332 respondents: Have governors been formally involved in discussions about career guidance planning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (for example supporting decisions about transitions for school/college leavers)?

Figure 19: Formal involvement of governors in Career Guidance planning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (by staff type)



Base: 332 respondents N: all 332, Heads/Principals 208, Careers Staff 124

Although only at the lower level of significance there was a statistical difference between top and bottom areas of deprivation with respect to whether governors have been involved.

Respondents in the most deprived areas were slightly more likely to say that they had formally involved Governors while those from least deprived areas were more likely to say that they had not.

Table 8: Formal involvement of governors in Career Guidance planning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (by most/least deprived areas)

	All	Most deprived	Least deprived
	115	50	65
Yes	55.70%	64.00%	49.20%
No	32.20%	32.00%	32.30%
Don't know	10.40%	12.00%	9.20%

Base 115 respondents

6.8 Plans to prioritise certain groups of learners for career guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021

Respondents were asked to provide a qualitative answer to a question on whether and how they might be planning to prioritise specific groups of learners for career guidance in the coming year.

Years 11 and 13 were by far the most commonly mentioned priorities with several respondents mentioning online platforms, such as UniFrog⁴, as an important resource.

A few respondents mentioned their focus on special needs learners.

Year 11, post 16 - Careers fairs will be on hold. Mock interviews, interactive employer events and business and enterprise schemes will be on-going

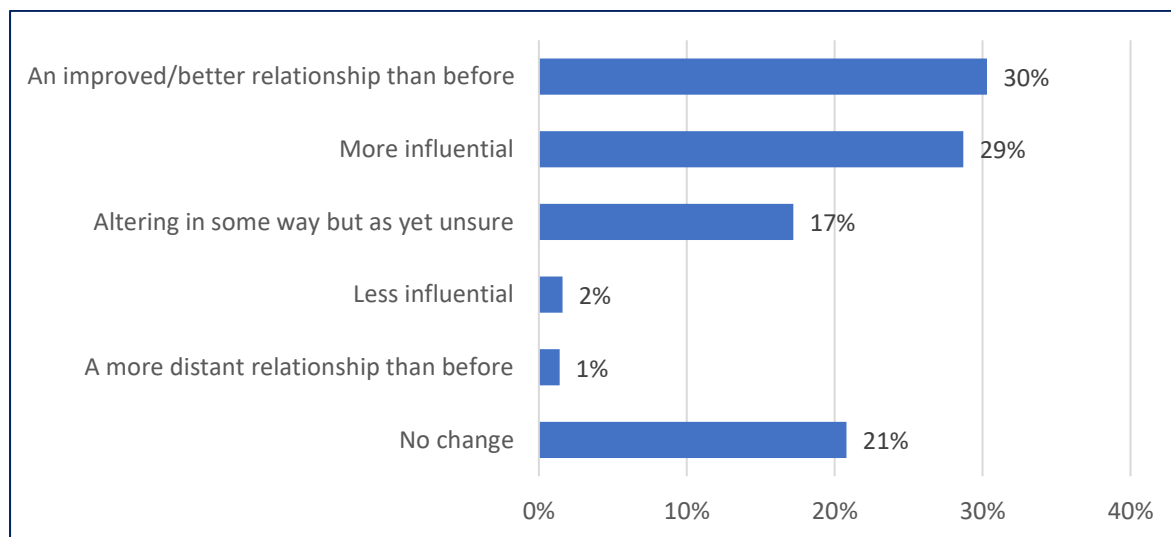
Year 11 starting point - 1-1 counselling to widen spring term. Year 9 disadvantaged students - UniFrog preparation for university application. Mock interviews with school staff

KS4 students will also take part in a Work Ready Programme which will include remote talks by employers and Further & Higher Education establishments.

6.9 Change in parent/carer/guardian involvement

Positively, around a third (29%) of schools and colleges believe that parents, carers and guardians will have a more influential role in career guidance discussions going forward, and a similar proportion (30%) believe their relationships with parents, carers and guardians in relation to career guidance will be improved in the future.

Figure 20: Change in parent/guardian involvement in relation to Career Guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)



Base: 366 respondents: *Do you see parent/carer/guardian involvement in the 2020-2021 academic year career guidance discussions becoming...*

⁴ Unifrog is a web-database which is offered on subscription to schools and colleges and bills itself as the “One stop shop for destinations”.

There was a statistically significant difference between the answers of the two staff groups in that Careers staff were more likely to say that there would be change but that they were as yet unsure.

Table 9: Change in parent/guardian involvement in career guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021 (by type of staff)

	All	Heads/Principals	Careers staff
	366	228	138
More influential	28.70%	29.40%	27.50%
Less influential	1.60%	1.30%	2.20%
An improved/better relationship than before	30.30%	33.30%	25.40%
A more distant relationship than before	1.40%	1.30%	1.40%
Altering in some way but as yet unsure	17.20%	12.70%	24.60%
No change	20.80%	21.90%	18.80%

Base 366 respondents

The finding that schools appear to be less sure of future alterations is statistically significant.

Table 10: Change in parent/guardian involvement in career guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021 (by type of institution)

	All	Schools	College
	364	303	61
More influential	28.80%	28.40%	31.10%
Less influential	1.60%	2.00%	-
An improved/better relationship than before	30.50%	29.70%	34.40%
A more distant relationship than before	1.40%	1.00%	3.30%
Altering in some way but as yet unsure	16.80%	18.80%	6.60%
No change	20.90%	20.10%	24.60%

Base 364 respondents

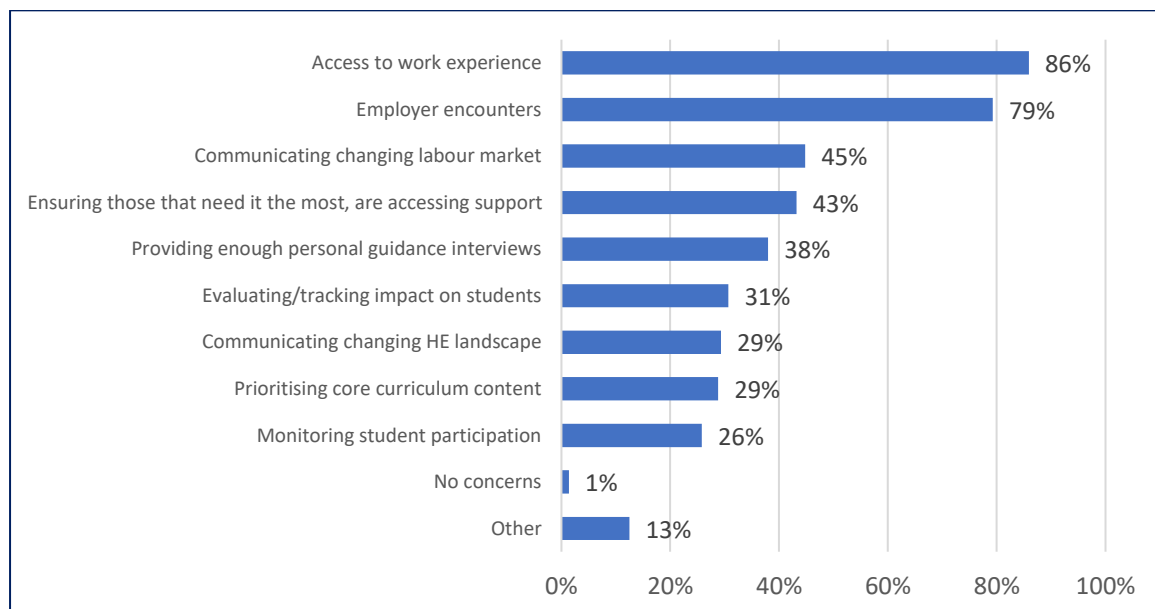
There was no statistically significant difference in responses based on levels of deprivation

6.10 Significant concerns about career guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021

Respondents were asked two questions on their career guidance concerns. The first asked generally which issues concerned them.

Regardless of staff type and institution, the most frequently stated concerns for all respondents were access to work experience and gaining sufficient employer encounters.

Figure 21: Significant concerns about Career Guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)

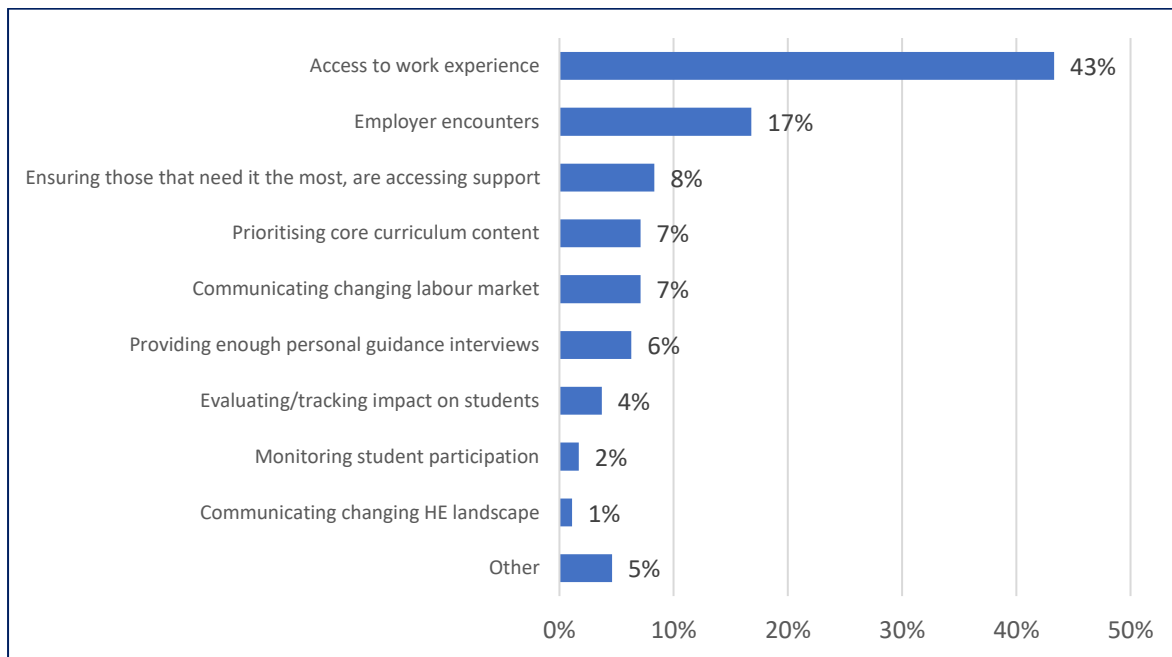


Base 369: Which of the following, if any, are significant concerns in relation to career guidance in the next academic year?- multi-response.

Colleges were statistically more likely to regard as important the issues of communicating the new labour market (60%/42%) and changes in Higher Education to learners (41%/26.9%) than schools. Evaluating and tracking the impact of guidance on students was a statistically higher priority for Careers staff than for Heads/Principals (38% compared to 26%).

Participants were then asked to identify the single **most important concern**.

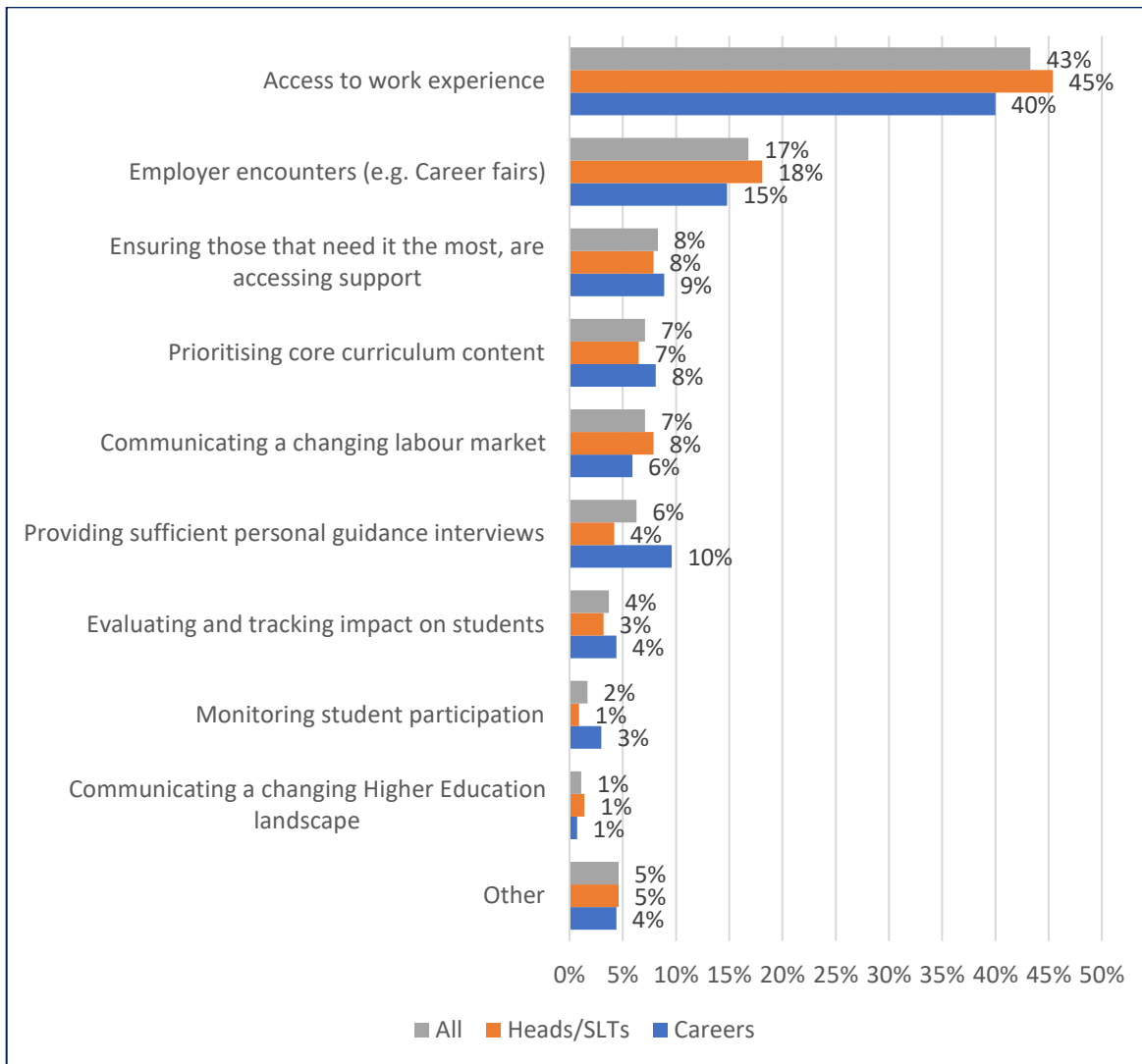
Figure 22: Most significant concern about Career Guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021 (all staff)



Base: 368 respondents: (single response) *And of these, which is the most significant concern in relation to career guidance in the next academic year?*

The ordering of priorities was almost identical for both Heads/Principals and Careers staff. The sole exception was that providing sufficient careers guidance interviews was the third most important for Careers staff. Acquiring up-to-date and informative labour market information was the third most important for senior leaders.

Figure 23: Most significant concern about Career Guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021 by staff type



Base: 368 respondents: N: All respondents: 368, Heads/Principals: 230, Careers Staff 138

Respondents that selected “other” mentioned an extremely wide variety of concerns ranging from the possible dropping of core subjects from the curriculum and the problems of re-opening schools, to delays in qualifying careers tutors, problems with examination results and university entry, and apprenticeships availability.

One respondent from a college gave a lengthy list:

Concerns about the effects on new starters as we are all getting used to different ways of working - worried they may lose out as a result of us trying different ideas. - The possible 'lag' from this year as I expect a larger number of students will take a gap year to see how things pan out and may request help from us which will add pressure to the dept. - Destinations gathering is bound to be more tricky as students may change their minds about HE and it is

more difficult to find apprenticeships so potentially we could have more NEETs. We have been able to have speakers from HE, training companies, employers etc in college delivering talks every week but I imagine this won't be possible. We need to look at alternatives. -Some universities seem to have decided they won't hold actual open days - the online versions are good but not the same. It may mean students are less sure about what they are applying for and need more careers guidance to help decide. We offer mock interviews for students but really don't know how/if these will be possible next year. Our lack of IT systems in place and knowledge to use what is there limits us.

6.11 Ways in which schools and colleges would like to be supported to deliver career guidance for the next academic year 2020-2021

Finally, nearly all (90%) of respondents provided a suggestion when asked how organisations, such as Gatsby and other agencies, could support schools and colleges deliver career guidance in the next academic year (2020-2021).

The comments were extremely diverse and the strongest themes related to the provision of financial support for a wide range of activities, and indirect support through web-portals and other interventions e.g. with employers.

The following list summarises - with examples - the open text responses, from the most common theme to least common theme, the ways in which schools and colleges would like to be supported to deliver career guidance in the 2020-2021 academic year. In their responses they mentioned aspects of work experience three times as often as any other major topic, specifically, Heads/Principals requested assistance in finding work experience. There were many requests for lists or databases of employers willing to provide such experience for different key stages.

Access to employers

Have alternatives where students would still get the experience with employers, without compromising their health, more employers coming to the building in a safe way, still go in and do talks about profession in smaller groups, students will be more likely to answer questions.

More incentives for employers to get involved in careers and work placements.

By providing online work placement tours that could be incorporated into either careers lessons or used within subject lessons to reinforce the importance of those subjects. Also providing information/videos about jobs that not many people have heard of to allow students to realise what is actually out there instead of just what they see day to day.

Offer a platform where companies could offer virtual work experience, it will be very hard to get the kids out of school. Would be good if could have 30 mins with HR and 30mins with finance or something. Maybe on a Saturday so that it does not clash with school work.

Funding

Funding for guest speakers and careers fairs would be really beneficial.

Our biggest problem is that we have companies willing to give us work experience however, their insurance will not cover 20 pupils, maybe some help there to make it easier would be good.

Labour Market Information

Provide an honest and accurate appraisal of the labour market and how it will change, what jobs and trades will disappear and have no future so that students can make a realistic decision about choices.

Ensuring parents (key influence) are aware of the new opportunities and challenges of the changing labour market and that some assumptions and misconceptions are addressed.

Another big concern is the changing face of apprenticeships as an option and if somebody could actually address the nightmare application process for apprenticeships at all levels, and the availability, given what the labour market is going to look like, that would be hugely appreciated.

Sharing good practice

A means to share good practice and ideas with other institutions. For example we designed our own web platform but there are other institutions with probably more focussed IT resources and an "off the shelf" set up would be more effective and of course available immediately.

Provide us with a virtual series of careers lessons that are correctly sequenced through looking at the CDI framework. Lots of schools are duplicating, there are sharing platforms and the hubs but there is nothing sequenced. Big tool and timesaver to offer virtually would be online careers lessons development. Forming a careers learning journey through KS3 and 4 on an online platform.

There was little difference between Heads/Principals and Careers staff, they had a similar breadth of responses, with access to employers being particularly important.

7. Conclusions

In June/July 2020 a survey of 369 respondents was carried out with secondary school and college senior leaders (and their representatives) in England to explore the perspectives on career guidance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

7.1 Key findings - academic year 2019-2020

1. Almost three quarters (72%) of schools and colleges indicated that career guidance provision had become even more important during Covid-19. The most deprived areas were slightly more likely to regard the importance of careers guidance as increasing.
2. There was universal agreement (99% of respondents) that the Gatsby Benchmarks remained a useful framework for career guidance.
3. Over half of respondents (52%) said they continued with largely the same career guidance activities during the 2019-2020 academic year but utilised online technology to help them do so. However, a fifth (17%) of institutions did put activities on hold. Schools were statistically more likely to place activities on hold while colleges have been more likely to adopt different approaches. The most common approaches to adapting activities included virtual and online working, virtual work experience and remote careers interviews.
4. Just under half of respondents (49%) said that the time learners spent on careers guidance during lockdown had decreased.
5. The amount of time different staff members had dedicated to career guidance varied. Over half (51%) of Heads/Principals stated that the time Careers Leaders had spent on career guidance programmes had increased. The amount of Head/Principals time dedicated to careers showed a less consistent picture, with around a quarter of respondents (23%) saying it had increased and 29% saying it had decreased. In addition, 35% of respondents stated that 1:1 time from careers professionals had decreased.
6. Careers Leader time had increased in the most deprived areas and is more likely to have stayed the same in the least deprived areas.
7. Respondents indicated that the main impacts of Covid-19 on career guidance in the academic year 2019-2020 fell into two main themes: issues caused by the lack of face to face contact, and the cancelling of work experience.

7.2 Key findings - academic year 2020-2021

8. Over 90% of institutions have already begun planning for the next academic year. There was a small but statistically significant difference between schools and colleges – with the latter more likely to answer in the affirmative.
9. Over half of all respondents say that governors have been formally involved in careers guidance planning.
10. Almost three quarters of respondents said that careers guidance was either their top priority (19%) or among their top five priorities for the coming year (53%).
11. Most Heads/Principals (73%) stated budgets would remain the same as last year, with only 10% stating there would be an increase. On the time learners will spend on careers guidance in the coming year: half of respondents think it will be the same as for this year but a fifth believe it will increase. A small proportion (14%) believe it will decrease.
12. Three quarters of respondents believe that staff time for careers will remain the same but almost a fifth think it will increase.
13. There was clear agreement across all respondents that support for KS4 and KS5/16+ is likely to increase in the academic year 2020-2021 with over 40% of respondents believing this will be the case particularly for year 11 and year 13 students.
14. Just under a third (29%) of schools and colleges believe that parents, carers and guardians will have a more influential role in career guidance discussions going forward, and a similar proportion (30%) believe their relationships with parents, carers and guardians, with respect to career guidance conversations, will be improved.
15. The most frequently listed concerns for the upcoming academic year included: access to employers, communicating a changing labour market, ensuring the groups in most need are supported, and providing sufficient personal guidance. Work experience was by far the most significant concern followed by gaining sufficient employer encounters.
16. Respondents said they would value a wide range of support including help accessing employers, funding for engagement activities, improved access to labour market information, platforms to share good practice and help with accessing apprenticeships.