

***Into the Future:***  
**Young people's and teachers' views on careers advice**

**The majority of young people find the careers advice they receive in schools useful, according to research conducted by the National Youth Agency.**

Eight-out-of-ten respondents to a nationwide survey of 900 14 and 15 year olds said the careers information they received from teachers and school careers advisers was useful, leaving a small minority – just under a fifth – who did not find it useful. The respondents rated parents and carers as the most useful sources of advice on career choices, closely followed by school. The study found that group settings at school and talking to parents and carers are the most common ways that young people of 14 and 15 experience career advice.

The young people who said they find career advice delivered in class settings useful view it as a good way of getting the basics. But many feel there should also be the offer of more personalised advice in smaller groups or one-to-one. In particular, young people who aren't sure about what they want to do in the future say they want the opportunity to have a personalised discussion with a trusted adult who knows them well.

Around two-thirds of young people feel the advice they receive in school covers the options they are most interested in. However, opinion was divided as to whether it gives them all the information they needed (52% agree; 48% disagree) and whether it is personalised and relevant to them (50% agree; 50% disagree).

Young people are focused on financial issues, particularly how much it will cost to go to university, and whether this will be a good investment for their future. They want to know earning potential, costs, and availability of jobs in different careers so they can weigh up the investment.

Young people are aware that the employment market is fast moving and are concerned that the information they get can be out of date. Whilst valuing the relationship with trusted teachers, they want the person advising them to have up to date knowledge of the world of work. They also want to meet people actually working in the career they are interested in, preferably current employers and other young people who have recently entered that career so they can ask for their story.

The research found that young people anticipating at least 10 GCSEs (Grade A\* to C) or equivalent are more likely to have experienced a teacher talking to the class about educational options and career choices, or a local employer coming in to school, than those young people anticipating fewer than five GCSEs or equivalent at this level.

Conversely, young people anticipating at least 10 GCSEs (Grade A\* to C) or equivalent are less likely to have received advice about vocational options such as apprenticeships, whilst those anticipating fewer than five GCSEs (Grade A\* to C) or equivalent are more likely to have received advice about vocational options. Young people feel that all students should receive information about possible options, regardless of their background at school.

Around half of young people use the internet to search for advice on careers and training. Young people say that internet sites are a useful for background knowledge, but not a replacement for face to face advice.

## **Background**

In September 2010 the National Youth Agency published research from a small qualitative study conducted in London and the south-west of England into the provision of information, advice and guidance for young people. This report found that young people prefer to access advice and guidance on problems through a well-developed relationship with a trusted adult, whether this be a parent, family member, teacher or youth worker.

Research for this 'Into the Future' study also found that young people prefer to talk through career options with someone who allows them an opportunity to explore different ideas and receive personalised information. Preferably this is with someone they already know and have a good relationship with, and they feel they can talk to and be open with.

## **Teachers' views**

The research also interviewed 500 teachers across the country on their experience of giving career advice. Only a fifth of teachers say they have received training to support them in the provision of careers-related advice, and less than half of teachers feel well supported with regards to providing advice. The teachers that do feel well supported receive their support from Connexions and colleagues at school.

Despite this, two-thirds (68%) of teachers are confident about providing advice, whilst 14% are not confident. Confidence is higher about providing advice on academic options, such as A-Levels, (84%) but much lower for vocational courses such as NVQs (49%).

Whilst four-fifths (82%) of teachers are confident that the advice they provide is impartial, in the small scale qualitative focus groups with young people, there was a perception from students that the advice they receive about career and educational options was not impartial. Students voiced concern that teachers push them into taking their own subjects as option choices, and that they are 'biased' towards academic options.

## **Methodology**

This report presents the views of around 900 young people (aged 14 and 15 years) and around 500 teachers from across the country gathered through an online survey in October 2010.

To explore the findings in more depth, four online focus groups were held with young people in January 2011. The focus groups were convened with young people of 14 and 15 years living in the South East, North West and Yorkshire. 30 young people were involved.

Additionally, four face to face focus groups were convened with young people of 14-18 years. Two were held in FE Colleges in the Midlands and North East, one was held in a youth group setting in the North East, and one was held in Connexions in the Midlands. 39 young people were involved.