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COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Panel

July findings Report

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Executive Summary

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned the COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Panel (PPP) to collect robust and quick turnaround research in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The PPP aims to help DfE make evidence-based policy decisions, monitor the impact of the COVID-19 / post-COVID-19 situation, and see how views and experiences of parents and pupils change over time. To date the research has included:

- The recruitment wave (August 2020) invited pupils in years 6-13 and parents of pupils in reception to year 10 in the 2019/20 academic year to take part in a 15-minute online survey and join the PPP. 1 Panel members were sampled from the National Pupil Database (NPD) and contacted by letter, inviting them to take part in an online survey (push-to-web approach).
- Subsequent waves have involved inviting panel members to take part in regular 5-minute online surveys. There have been ten subsequent survey waves between September 2020 and July 2021.

This report discusses the findings from the final wave conducted in July 2021.

For each question, subgroup differences by pupil year group, sex, ethnic group, eligibility for free school meals (FSMs), and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) status were explored and statistically significant differences (at the 95% level of confidence) have been highlighted in the text, whereas differences that are not statistically significant are not discussed.^{2 3} Occasionally, other relevant subgroup differences are explored for specific questions (such as region).

Where tracker questions have been asked across two or more waves of the survey, additional analysis has been carried out to test for statistically significant changes in responses between the survey waves, and significant changes over time have been highlighted in the text.

School attendance

In July 2021, parents and pupils were asked about school attendance in the past two weeks (covering the period 30th June to 5th July 2021). Overall, reported attendance in July 2021 had decreased substantially compared to May 2021. This was in part due to

¹ The term 'pupils' is used throughout this report to describe those in all years reported. The term 'students' has not been used, even for older pupils, as this is understood to mean those studying at Higher Education (HE).

² Eligibility for FSMs is used as a proxy for socioeconomic status, with those pupils eligible for FSMs considered to be living in greater socioeconomic deprivation than those pupils who were not eligible for FSMs.

³ See [Glossary](#) for full definitions.

the school term coming to an end for some secondary pupils, but also due to an increase in COVID-19 related absence.

Six-in-ten (59%) secondary pupils said that they had attended every weekday in the last two weeks, a reduction compared to May 2021 (84%). There was a reduction in the proportion attending every day in years 7-10 (90% in May vs. 74% in July 2021), but a more pronounced reduction among years 11-13 (74% in May vs. 32% in July 2021).

Similarly, parents reported reduced attendance; 64% of secondary parents and 85% of primary parents reported their child attended every day in the last two weeks compared to 90% of secondary parents and 93% of primary parents in May 2021.

Pupils in exam years were more likely than those in years 7-10 to report they had not attended school at all in the last two weeks (72% of pupils in year 11 and 79% in year 13, compared to 10% of those in year 12 and just 3% in years 7-10). Parents of those in year 11 were also more likely to say this of their child, (70%) a large increase compared to the 2% of year 11 parents who said this in May 2021.

Reasons for non-attendance

While some of the increase in the proportion of pupils not attending school every day in the last two weeks compared to May 2021 can be explained by school coming to an end for many pupils in exam years, there was also an increase in reasons directly related to COVID-19.

Pupils and parents whose child had not attended every day in the last two weeks were asked why. The most common reasons were directly COVID-19 related (59% secondary pupils, 63% secondary parents, 66% primary parents). This represented an increase compared to May 2021 for all audiences (35% secondary pupils, 25% secondary parents, 22% primary parents). A significant increase could be seen in the proportion who were self-isolating due to symptoms or possible contact with COVID-19 (36% of secondary pupils, 45% of secondary parents and 44% of primary parents in July, compared to 7%, 20% and 17% respectively in May 2021). It is worth noting that the increases in the proportion of responses outlined between May and July were also accompanied by an increase in the number of pupils not attending school every day and giving reasons directly related to COVID-19.

Pupils and parents whose child had not attended *at all* in the last two weeks were also asked why this was the case. The majority of these secondary pupils and parents said this was because school had finished for them (83% of secondary pupils and 82% secondary parents, all of whom were parents of Year 11 pupils).

Rapid asymptomatic testing

Secondary pupils and parents were asked if they had taken *any* COVID-19 tests in the last seven days, either in school/college, at home, or elsewhere (e.g. a testing centre).

Three-quarters (76%) of secondary pupils had taken *any* type of COVID-19 test in the last seven days.⁴ Among secondary pupils this represents a steady decrease in test-taking over time, from 85% in May 2021 and 91% in March 2021. The proportion taking tests in school/college was stable between July 2021 and May 2021 (9% vs. 8%)⁵, but the proportion taking tests at home had reduced (81% in July vs. 72% in May). The proportion taking a test elsewhere had increased (4% in July vs. 1% in May).

The pattern was very similar among secondary parents. Four-in-five (79%) said their child had taken *any* type of COVID-19 test in the last seven days, a decrease from May 2021 (88%) and March 2021 (92%). Home-testing had decreased (75% in July vs. 85% in May), testing at secondary schools/colleges was in line with May 2021 (7%), and testing elsewhere had increased (3% in July vs. <1% in May).

Secondary pupils and parents who reported they/their child had taken *any* type of COVID-19 test at *home* in the previous seven days were asked a follow up question on how many rapid lateral flow tests they had taken at home in this time. Compared to May 2021, not only were pupils taking tests less frequently in July 2021, but they were also taking fewer of them. It was most common for two tests to have been taken: this was reported by 57% of secondary pupils who took tests at home and 63% of secondary parents, down from 68% and 76% respectively in May 2021.

The proportion that said they did not report the result had also increased for both secondary parents and pupils compared to May 2021 (16% pupils and parents in May 2021, rising to 23% pupils and parents in July 2021).

Behaviour on the most recent day pupils attended school or college

In line with findings from the start of the academic year (September/October 2020) and the May 2021 survey, in July 2021 almost seven in ten (69%) of secondary pupils reported experiencing at least some disruptive behaviour in lessons on the most recent day they had attended, with 9% reporting *lots of* disruptive behaviour. Pupils in year 12 and 13 were much less likely to report any disruptive behaviour (29%) than pupils in

⁴ Pupils were asked "During the last 7 days, have you taken any test(s) to see if you have COVID-19/coronavirus?. Available answer options were 'Yes – taken at school/college', 'Yes – taken at home', 'Yes – taken somewhere else (e.g. testing centre). 'No' and 'Prefer not to say' were also available as exclusive answer codes.

⁵ In line with wider [policy context](#).

years 7 to 10 (84%) and year 11 (57%). The most commonly reported disruptive behaviour was pupils chatting when they are not supposed to (reported by 87% of pupils saying disruptive behaviour took place) followed by pupils shouting out (69%), but both of these figures have reduced since May 2021 when 91% of pupils reported chatting when not supposed to and 73% reported shouting out.

Extending the school day

In July 2021, parents were asked how they would feel about additional time being added on to their child's school week, and whether they would support additional time for:

- Academic learning
- Enrichment activities e.g. art, sport, drama, music; and/or
- Student wellbeing activities e.g. mental health and wellbeing support.

The majority (69%) of parents reported they would support additional time for at least one of the listed reasons, most commonly additional time for academic learning (supported by 49% of parents).

Catching up on missed learning

In July 2021, pupils in year 11, 12 and 13 were asked how concerned they were about the impact of COVID-19 disruption on four different aspects of their education; impact on exam test or assessment results, being behind on their learning, finding it difficult to focus on learning and not being able to move to the next stage of education. The most common cause of concern for pupils was the impact of COVID-19 disruption on their exam, test or assessment results; 68% were *at least fairly* concerned about this, with 30% *very* concerned. Year 13 pupils were most likely to be concerned about the impact on their exam, test or assessment results, with 76% of year 13 pupils *at least fairly* concerned and 40% *very* concerned.

Pupils in year 11, 12 and 13 were also asked whether they think they are currently ahead, behind, or about where they should be with their learning. Around half (51%) felt they were about where they should be or ahead, while 42% of year 11, 12 and 13 pupils felt they were behind with their learning. Pupils in year 11 to 13 were also asked what support, if any, would help them to catch up on missed learning due to COVID-19 disruption: over a third (36%) felt they would benefit from extra in-person teaching such as extra in-person classes or workshop time.

Support for pupils with SEND

In the July 2021 wave, 17% of parents considered their child to have a special educational need or disability. Parents of pupils with SEND most commonly felt their child needed support from a SEND coordinator (SENCO); two-thirds (67%) reported their child needed SENCO support, though 15% of parents of pupils with SEND were unable to access this support.

Where parents of pupils with SEND were unable to access support for their child, it was typically because support staff were not available (33%) or because they were in the process of being assessed / awaiting a referral (24%). One-in-four (24%) did not know why their child was currently unable to access the support they needed.

Mental health and wellbeing

Parents' views on pupil happiness and anxiousness

In July 2021, the happiness levels of pupils as reported by parents showed limited movement from May (8.2 vs. 8.0), remaining consistent with March 2021 (8.1), and was higher than in February 2021 (7.4) (during the time of the third national lockdown when schools were not open to the majority of pupils).

Parents gave broadly consistent scores for pupil anxiousness in July 2021 compared with March and May 2021 (2.4 vs. 2.2 and 2.3). Primary and secondary parents followed a similar pattern to all parents over time, although at different levels (primary parents have consistently reported higher levels of pupil happiness and lower anxiousness).

Pupils' views on their own wellbeing

Pupil views of their happiness, life satisfaction and worthwhileness scores have all remained stable between March and July 2021 (happiness: 6.8 in both March and July; life satisfaction: 6.6 in March vs. 6.7 in July; and worthwhileness: 6.6 in March vs. 6.7 in July).

Pupils' reasons for feeling anxious

Pupils' anxiousness scores remained stable between March and July 2021 (3.6 vs. 3.4) however, they remain higher than pre-December levels (2.9 in late October 2020).

Among the 26% of pupils who gave a high anxiousness score (6-10), uncertainty over grades remained the most common reason for pupils feeling anxious (59%), although this was at significantly lower levels than in May 2021 (68%). Uncertainty over the future remained the second most common reason for pupils feeling anxious (54%). Two-in-five

(41%) pupils who were anxious said this was because of keeping up with work at school, down from three-in-five (60%) in May 2021. Reflecting the rise in COVID-19 cases, pupils were more likely in July 2021 than in May to report feeling anxious because of school closures because of another lockdown (19% vs. 10%) and not being able to attend school because of people in their bubble testing positive (12% vs. 7%).

Bullying

Just under one-in-five (18%) parents and 15% of secondary pupils reported that their child / they had been the victim of bullying in the past 12 months. Consistent with late November 2020, parents and pupils most commonly reported that they thought their child / they had been bullied because of the way they look (24% and 36%). However, both were more likely (in July) to report that it was because of something else not listed (56% of parents and 48% of pupils). One-in-five (20%) parents reported that they did not know the reason their child had experienced bullying.

Online bullying

One-in-twenty (5%) parents reported that their child had been bullied online. Parents of secondary pupils were three times as likely than those of primary pupils to report their child had experienced online bullying (9% vs. 3%). Just over one-in-twenty (6%) pupils reported they had experienced online bullying in the last 12 months.

How well schools prevent and address bullying

Around three-in-five secondary pupils (58%) and secondary parents (60%) felt that their / their child's school acted well to prevent bullying take place. However, secondary pupils were also twice as likely as secondary parents to say the school did not act well to prevent bullying (30% vs. 14%). Two-in-three (66%) primary parents reported that their child's school acts well to prevent bullying. One-in-five primary parents (21%) and one-in-four (26%) secondary parents did not know how well their child's school acted to prevent bullying.

Just over half of parents (54% of primary and 52% of secondary) and pupils (51%) felt that their / their child's school dealt with incidents of bullying well. However, secondary pupils were more than twice as likely as secondary parents to say they did not deal with incidents of bullying well (28% vs. 13%). One-in-five (21%) secondary parents and 16% of primary parents reported that they did not know how well their child's school dealt with incidents of bullying. It is worth noting that pupils who had been the victim of bullying and parents of these pupils were more likely than those who had not to feel their / their child's school did not act well to prevent bullying or address incidents of bullying (47% vs. 23% for pupils and 36% vs. 9% for parents).

Post 16 education and training programmes

Awareness of A Levels was almost universal amongst year 9 and 10 pupils (97%) and parents of year 9 and 10 pupils (98%). The vast majority of both pupils and parents were also aware of apprenticeships (93% and 96%). There was substantially lower awareness of traineeships (23% and 37%), or the new T Levels (14% and 16%). Year 10 pupils were three times more likely to have heard of T Levels (21%) than year 9 pupils (7%).

Pupils and parents were also most likely to know a lot about A Levels (44% of pupils and 69% of parents who had heard of them). In comparison knowledge of traineeships and T Levels was considerably lower (no more than 10% of parents or pupils who had heard of either felt they knew a lot about them).

A Levels were by far the most likely post-16 programme considered by pupils (75%) and encouraged by parents (84%). For each of the other programmes, no more than two-fifths of pupils felt they would consider that particular programme, though almost two-thirds of parents (64%) would be likely to encourage apprenticeships.

Post-18 education and training programmes

When considering the following findings, it is helpful to consider the composition of year 11 and year 12 pupils on the panel. All year 11 pupils and an estimated half of year 12 pupils, were studying at school. However, the other half of those in year 12 are estimated to have been studying at other institutions e.g. a sixth form that is part of a college or a further education (FE) college. This report uses the term 'pupils' to cover those studying in all settings, including in an FE setting.

Awareness of apprenticeships was widespread (91% of year 11 and 12 pupils and 92% of parents of year 11 pupils had heard of them).⁶ Over three-quarter of pupils (78%) and parents (80%) had heard of 'bachelor's or undergraduate degrees'. The majority had also heard of Degree apprenticeships (65% of pupils, 59% of parents). Seven-in-ten parents had heard of Level 4 and 5 qualifications compared to half of pupils (71% vs. 51%).

Knowledge levels of post-18 training and education options and the activities they involve were mixed, and only a minority of pupils indicated that they 'knew a lot about and were very familiar with' any of the options listed. Pupils were most likely to be 'very familiar' with apprenticeships (40% of those who had heard of them). Around a quarter of pupils who were aware of undergraduate degrees or Degree apprenticeships felt they knew a lot about them (27% and 24% respectively). Parents however felt most secure in their

⁶ Parents of year 12 pupils are not included as the initial panel only covered parents of pupils up to year 10. Children who were in year 10 when initially recruited had progressed to year 11 by the time of this research so their parents are included, but there no parents of those currently in year 12.

knowledge of undergraduate degrees (49% of those aware felt they knew a lot, compared to 35% reporting this about apprenticeships).

Going to university or studying for a Higher Education (HE) qualification was by far the most likely education or training option to be considered after year 13: over half (56%) of year 11 and 12 pupils who had heard of this option were very likely to consider it. This is more than four times the proportion very likely to consider any other option listed that they had heard of. Apprenticeships were very likely to be considered by 11% of pupils aware of them.

An undergraduate degree was also the most likely option to be encouraged by parents (75% of those aware of them). All other options listed were around twice as likely to be encouraged by parents as to be considered by pupils.

Future plans

When considering the following findings, it is helpful to consider the composition of year 12 and year 13 on the panel. Year 11 pupils in August 2020 moved into year 12 in the 2020/21 academic year; it is estimated that around half of those who moved from year 11 to year 12 left school, with many of them moving to FE and sixth form colleges. As such, findings for year 12 likely represent all year 12 students, not just those in school sixth forms. Year 12 pupils in August 2020 who moved into year 13 in the 2020/21 academic year are only representative of those in school sixth forms. This report uses the term 'pupils' to cover those studying in all settings, including in an FE setting.

Two-fifths (40%) of year 12 and 13 pupils felt there would be sufficient support and opportunity to study for a HE qualification flexibly (i.e. over a number of years, and not the usual three years all at once).

A wide range of factors were important to year 12 and 13 pupils when deciding about future education or training routes. The factors most likely to be very important were related to future employability (for 77% it being a route to a good job and for 65% it being valued by employers), and practical considerations of costs (for 64%) and location (for 60%). Flexible options were very important to around a quarter.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of year 13 pupils planned to go to university or study for an HE qualification in September 2021. One-in-nine (11%) planned to start an Apprenticeship. Very small proportions planned to take up other FE options or continue at school. Seven percent of pupils had no plans to take up any education or training options.

Introduction

Following the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting school closures, the Department for Education (DfE) wanted to conduct robust, quick turnaround research to assess the on-going views and experiences of parents and pupils from the start of the 2020/21 academic year. The research aimed to help DfE make evidence-based policy decisions, monitor the impact of the COVID-19 / post COVID-19 situation, and see how views and experiences of parents and pupils change over time. The research has been structured into two broad phases:

Recruitment Wave

In August 2020, pupils who were in year 6 - 13 and parents of pupils who were in reception to year 10 in the 2019/20 academic year were invited to take part in a 15-minute online survey via invitation letters sent to their home address. Both parents and pupils were sampled (by year group) from the National Pupil Database (NPD), and by completing the survey became part of the COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Panel (PPP). The PPP comprised of 7,191 parents (of primary and secondary pupils) and 5,327 secondary pupils who took part in the first 'COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Panel' survey.⁷

Subsequent Waves

Between the recruitment wave and the first subsequent wave all pupils moved up a year group. Pupils that had moved into years 7-13 and parents of pupils who had moved into year 1 to year 11 in the 2020/21 academic year were invited to take part in up to six subsequent short online surveys (each lasting around five minutes) during the 2020/21 academic year, between September 2020 and February 2021. Parents and pupils were asked to re-consent to take part in further waves of the panel, until Summer 2021.

This report presents the findings from the July 2021 wave, the tenth and final wave that has taken place following the initial recruitment wave. Comparisons to previous waves are made where relevant.

⁷ For more demographic information on panellists see the August – October findings report or Technical Report.

Methodology

This report covers PPP wave 10 which was conducted between 30th June and 5th July 2021.

Parents and pupils who had originally signed up for the PPP in August 2020 had only consented to take part in up to seven waves until February 2021. As a result, all panellists were contacted ahead of wave 8 in March 2021 to ask them whether or not they would be happy to remain on the panel, and continue to be invited to future surveys. Table 1 shows the number of parents and pupils who consented to remain on the panel.

Table 1. Number of parents and pupils on the original and new PPP panel

Year Group in academic year 2020/21	All parents		Secondary pupils	
	Original panel	New panel for wave 8 onwards	Original panel	New panel for wave 8 onwards
Year 1	573	408	-	-
Year 2	595	436	-	-
Year 3	616	444	-	-
Year 4	573	423	-	-
Year 5	594	452	-	-
Year 6	584	425	-	-
Year 7	668	484	325	208
Year 8	785	587	376	231
Year 9	740	520	367	236
Year 10	714	515	656	418
Year 11	749	531	697	440
Year 12	-	-	667	375
Year 13	-	-	669	427
School leavers	-	-	1,570	756
Total	7,191	5,225	3,757	2,335

As with all previous waves, results from wave 10 have been weighted to be representative of the pupil population.

For wave 10, an exercise was undertaken to encourage panellists who have been less likely to participate in previous waves to take part, namely parents of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) pupils and male pupils.⁸ These groups were invited 24 hours ahead of all other parents and pupils on the panel for wave 10. There was an increase in the response rates for both groups compared to previous waves.

The number of achieved surveys by key demographics for respondents at wave 10 is shown in Table 2. The overall number of achieved surveys was slightly lower than the targets (1,537 for pupils and 3,084 for parents), which is likely in part due to the term coming to an end for some year groups.

More information about the methodology of the panel, including participant characteristics can be found in the Technical Report.

⁸ See [Glossary](#) for full definition

Table 2. Unweighted demographic profile of wave 10 respondents⁹

	Number of parents	% of all parents	Number of pupils	% of all pupils
All	3,080	100%	1,511	100%
Primary	1,537	50%	-	-
Secondary	1,543	50%	1,511	100%
PUPIL: FSM	470	15%	279	18%
PUPIL: SEND	451	15%	208	14%
PUPIL: Child in need (CIN) ¹⁰	2,544	83%	14	1%
Ethnicity: White	60	2%	1,121	74%
Ethnicity: Asian	311	10%	183	12%
Ethnicity: Black	65	2%	60	4%
Ethnicity: Mixed	60	2%	74	5%
Ethnicity: Other	54	2%	21	1%
Gender (of pupil): Male	1,575	51%	599	40%
Gender (of pupil): Female	1,505	49%	912	60%
Region: East Midlands	290	9%	165	11%
Region: East of England	381	12%	170	11%
Region: London	323	10%	199	13%
Region: North East	149	5%	70	5%
Region: North West	377	12%	181	12%
Region: South East	558	18%	248	16%
Region: South West	360	12%	156	10%
Region: West Midlands	336	11%	167	11%
Region: Yorkshire and Humber	306	10%	155	10%

Source: Pupil information (year group, FSM, SEND, CIN, Ethnicity, Gender, Region) sourced from information held on the National Pupil Database. Parental ethnicity and gender sourced from survey responses on the recruitment wave survey.

It is worth noting that the secondary parents and secondary pupil groups refer to pupils in slightly different year groups. The secondary parents group reflects the views of parents

⁹ Note percentages do not always sum to 100% due to some respondents not providing demographic data, or demographic data not being held on the NPD.

¹⁰ See [Glossary](#) for full definition.

with pupils in years 7-11 in the 2020/21 academic year, while the secondary pupils group includes the views of pupils in years 7-13 in the 2020/21 academic year. The inclusion of more senior pupils (years 12-13) in the pupil group may help to explain some of the disparities between secondary pupils and secondary parents in this report.

At the recruitment wave pupils were sampled from those in years 6 – 13 in the 2019/20 academic year. Pupils moved up a year level between the recruitment wave in August 2020 (during the 2019/20 academic year) and the first follow-up pupil survey conducted in September/October 2020 (in the first term of the 2020/21 academic year). Throughout the report we refer to pupils by the year group that they were in during the academic year of the wave in discussion. For example, a year 6 pupil that was recruited in the August 2020 wave is referred to as a year 6 pupil in the August 2020 wave, but a year 7 pupil from the September/October 2020 wave onwards.

Year 11 pupils in August 2020 moved into year 12 in the 2020/21 academic year; it is estimated that around half of those who moved from year 11 to year 12 left school, with many of them moving to FE and sixth form colleges. As such, findings for year 12 likely represent all year 12 students, not just those in school sixth forms. Year 12 pupils in August 2020 who moved into year 13 in the 2020/21 academic year are only representative of those in school sixth forms.

A breakdown of pupils by school year at wave 10 is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Breakdown of wave 10 pupil respondents by year group

Year Group 2019/20	Year Group 2020/21	Number invited to take part in wave 10	Response rate¹¹	Number who took part in wave 10
Year 6	Year 7	208	71%	147
Year 7	Year 8	231	67%	155
Year 8	Year 9	236	64%	152
Year 9	Year 10	418	64%	269
Year 10	Year 11	440	61%	269
Year 11	Year 12	375	67%	250
Year 12	Year 13	427	63%	269
Year 13	'School Leavers'	-	-	-

¹¹ Response rates were capped using quotas per year group and so the response rate under-estimate the number of parents and pupils who would have completed the survey.

School attendance

In July 2021, parents and pupils were asked about school attendance in the last two weeks (covering the period 30th June to 5th July 2021). Schools were able to open to all pupils and attendance continued to be mandatory. Clinically extremely vulnerable children were advised to continue to attend school. For pupils in Years 11 and 13 where a normal period of study leave might not apply, schools were instead encouraged to maximise opportunities to meet the progression needs of these young people.

Attendance in the past two weeks (July 2021)

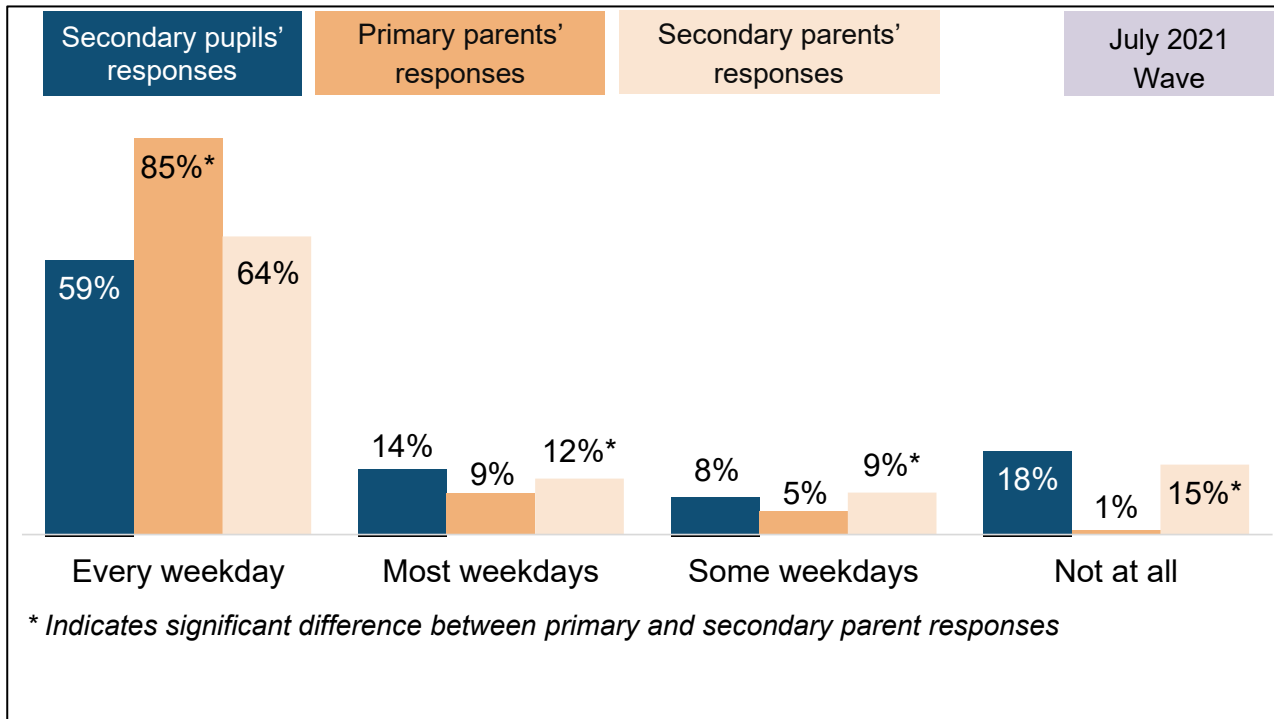
Overall, reported attendance in July 2021 had decreased substantially compared to May 2021. This was in part due to the school term coming to an end for some secondary pupils, but also due to an increase in the proportion reporting COVID-19 related absence, as explained below.

As shown in Figure 1, six-in-ten (59%) secondary pupils said that they had attended school or college every week day in the last two weeks covering a period between 16th June and 5th July¹²), down from 84% in May 2021. There was a reduction in the proportion attending every day in years 7-10 (90% in May vs. 74% in July 2021), but a more pronounced reduction among exam years: year 11 (87% attended every day in May vs. 21% in July 2021) and year 13 (71% attended every day in May compared to 12% in July 2021). Similarly, attendance reported by parents had reduced: 64% of secondary parents and 85% of primary parents reported their child attended every day in the last two weeks, down from 90% of secondary parents and 93% of primary parents who said this in May 2021.

Almost one-in-five secondary pupils (18%) and one-in-seven (15%) parents of secondary pupils had not attended at all, a large increase compared to 1% for both in May 2021. In comparison, just 1% of primary parents reported their child had not attended at all in the past two weeks, unchanged from May 2021.

¹² Fieldwork period was 30th June to 5th July 2021.

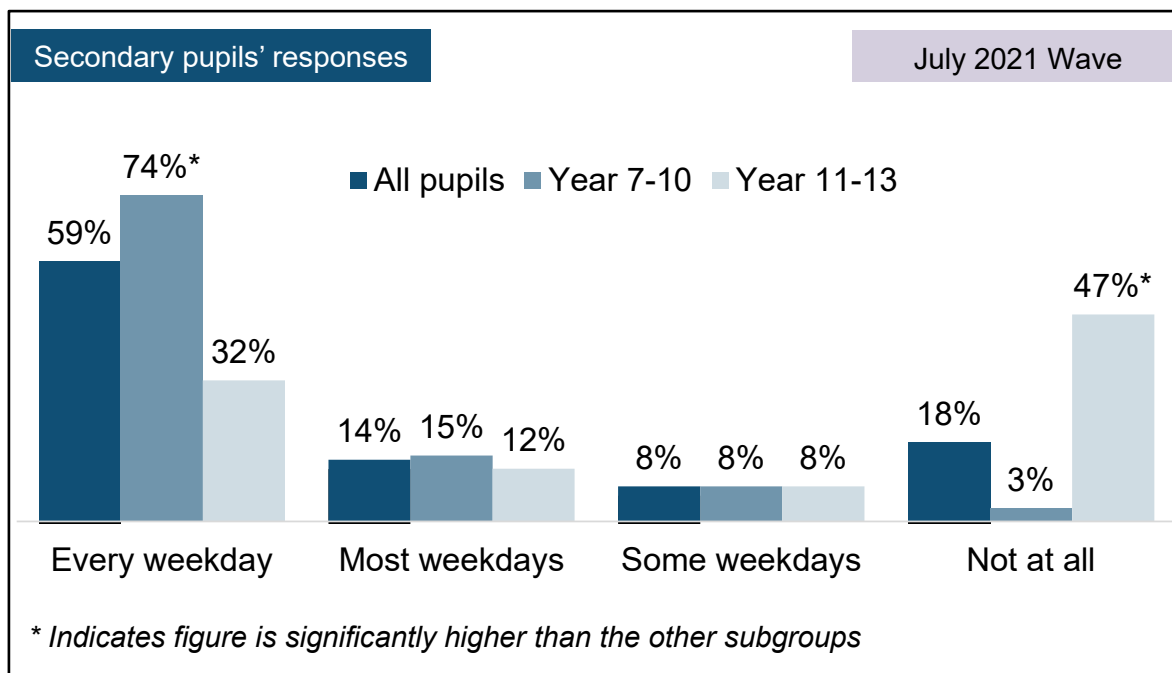
Figure 1. School attendance in the last two weeks (July 2021)



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave L16A/L16B_P2W10. "How often, if at all, have you physically attended school or college in the past two weeks of term time?" All pupils (n=1,511), Primary parents (n=1,537), Secondary parents (n=1,543)

Pupils in exam years were more likely than those in years 7-10 to have not attended at all in the last two weeks (72% of pupils in year 11 and 79% in year 13, compared to 10% of those in year 12 and just 3% in years 7-10). Parents of those in year 11 were also more likely to say this of their child (70%), a large increase compared to the 2% of year 11 parents who said this in May 2021.

Figure 2. Attendance in the last two weeks by pupil year group (July 2021)



Source: PPP July 2021 L16B_P2W10. “How often, if at all, have you physically attended school or college in the past two weeks of term time?” All pupils (n=1,511) Year 7-10 (n=732) Year 11-13 (n=788)

The following groups of pupils were also less likely to have attended school every day in the last two weeks:

- Female pupils compared to male pupils (55% vs. 63%). This was also the case in May 2021.
- White pupils compared to BAME pupils (57% vs. 67%).
- Pupils who rated their current happiness as low or medium, compared to those who rated their happiness as high (48% and 49% respectively vs. 66%).¹³
- Pupils who rated their current life satisfaction as low or medium, compared to those who rated their life satisfaction as high (52% and 50% respectively vs. 65%)

The following groups of parents were less likely to say their child had attended school every day in the last two weeks:

- Parents of secondary pupils compared to primary pupils (64% vs. 85%)
- Parents of White pupils compared to BAME pupils (74% vs. 82%)

¹³ See [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) chapter for information on how pupil happiness, life satisfaction and anxiousness are determined.

- Parents of pupils eligible for FSM compared to those not (73% vs. 77%). This was also the case in March 2021.
- Parents of pupils with SEND compared to those without (69% compared to 77%).

Reasons for non-attendance (July 2021)

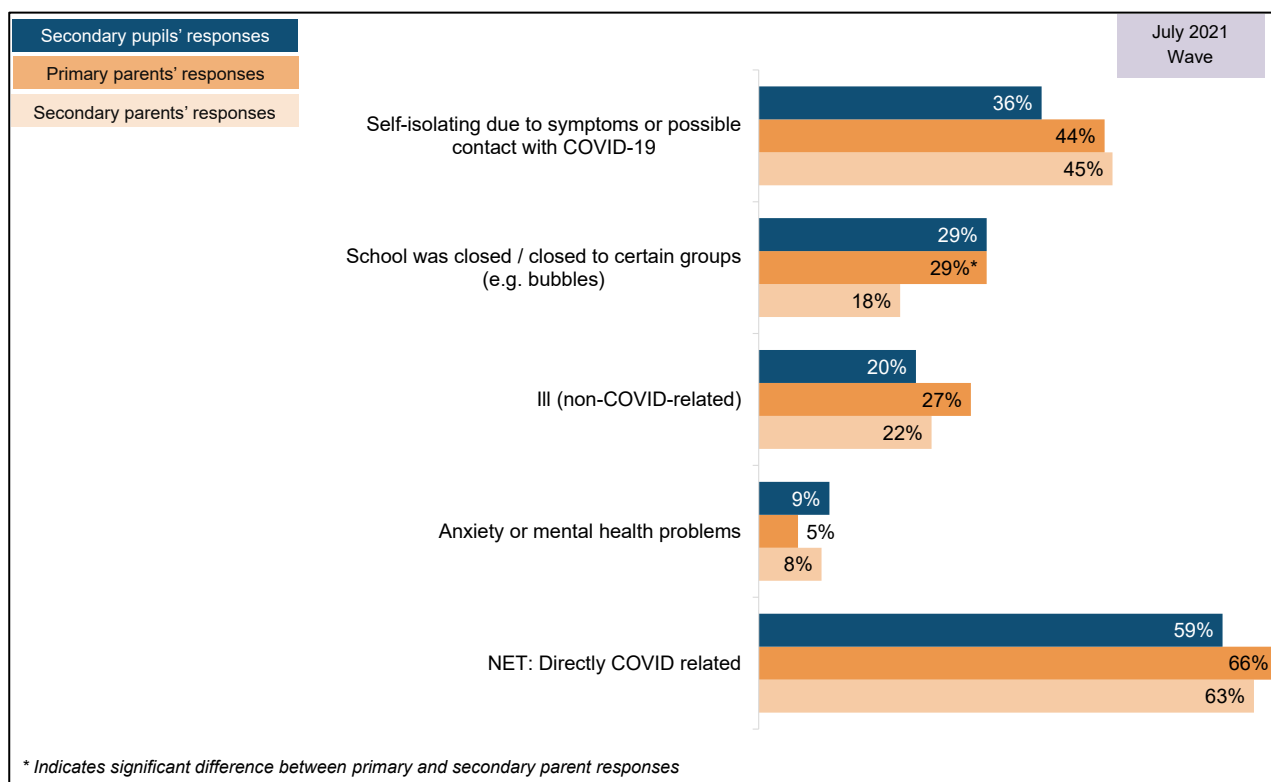
As mentioned, the overall proportion of non-attendance increased since May 2021. While some of this is explained by non-attendance due to school coming to an end for many pupils in exam years, there was also an increase in reasons directly related to COVID-19.¹⁴

Pupils and parents of pupils who had not attended every day in the last two weeks were asked why. As shown in Figure 3, the most common reasons were directly COVID-19 related (59% secondary pupils, 63% secondary parents, 66% primary parents). These reasons were more likely to be given in July 2021 than in May 2021 for all audiences (35% secondary pupils, 25% secondary parents, 22% primary parents).

There was a significant increase in the proportion who had not attended every day who were self-isolating due to possible contact with COVID-19, a factor mentioned by 36% of secondary pupils who had not attended every day (vs. 7% in May), 45% of secondary parents (vs. 20% in May) and 44% of primary parents (vs. 17% in May). There was also an increase in those who had received a positive COVID-19 test among secondary pupils (3% vs <1%) and secondary parents (4% vs 0%).

¹⁴ COVID-19 related reasons include reasons like 'I am self-isolating due to symptoms or possible contact with COVID-19' and 'My school is not open every day to all year groups / school was closed for me / closed to certain groups due to COVID-19 (e.g. bubbles)' or 'positive COVID-19 test'.

Figure 3. Main reasons for not attending school every day in the last two weeks among those attending at least some days



Source: PPP June/July 2021 Wave: L29/L28-P2W10 “Why has [PUPILNAME] not physically attended school every day?” Parents of pupils who attended school 'some' or 'most' days in the last two weeks (primary parents (n=222), secondary parents (n=320)). Pupils who have attended school some or most days in the last two weeks (n=319). Answer options selected by 5% or less of parents not shown in chart. ‘NET: Directly COVID-19 related’ includes anyone who selected: self-isolating due to symptoms or possible contact with COVID-19, school was closed to certain groups, quarantining from travel and a positive COVID-19 test.

The proportion who had attended some but not every day in the last two weeks that said this was due to anxiety or mental health had decreased compared to May 2021 (9% vs. 17% of secondary pupils; 5% vs. 10% amongst primary parents; 8% vs. 20% among secondary parents). It should be noted that the *number* reporting absence due to mental health remained broadly level between May and July, but the *percentage* has decreased due to an increased proportion reporting they were absent for other reasons (such as self-isolating or, commonly for exam year pupils, because school had finished for them).

Pupils and parents whose child had not attended *at all* in the last two weeks were also asked why this was the case. The majority of these secondary pupils and parents said this was because school had finished for them (83% of secondary pupils and 82% secondary parents, all of whom were parents of Year 11 pupils).

Rapid asymptomatic testing

As part of the strategy for the re-opening of schools, the government requested that schools helped to implement a programme of rapid testing for secondary pupils.

As part of the return to face-to-face education on 8th March 2021, schools were asked to facilitate testing three times for each secondary pupil at an on-site (school) Asymptomatic Testing Site before transitioning to twice-weekly testing at home. In March 2021, May 2021 and July 2021, pupils and parents were asked about their experiences and views of COVID-19 testing.

Participation in rapid asymptomatic testing amongst secondary pupils

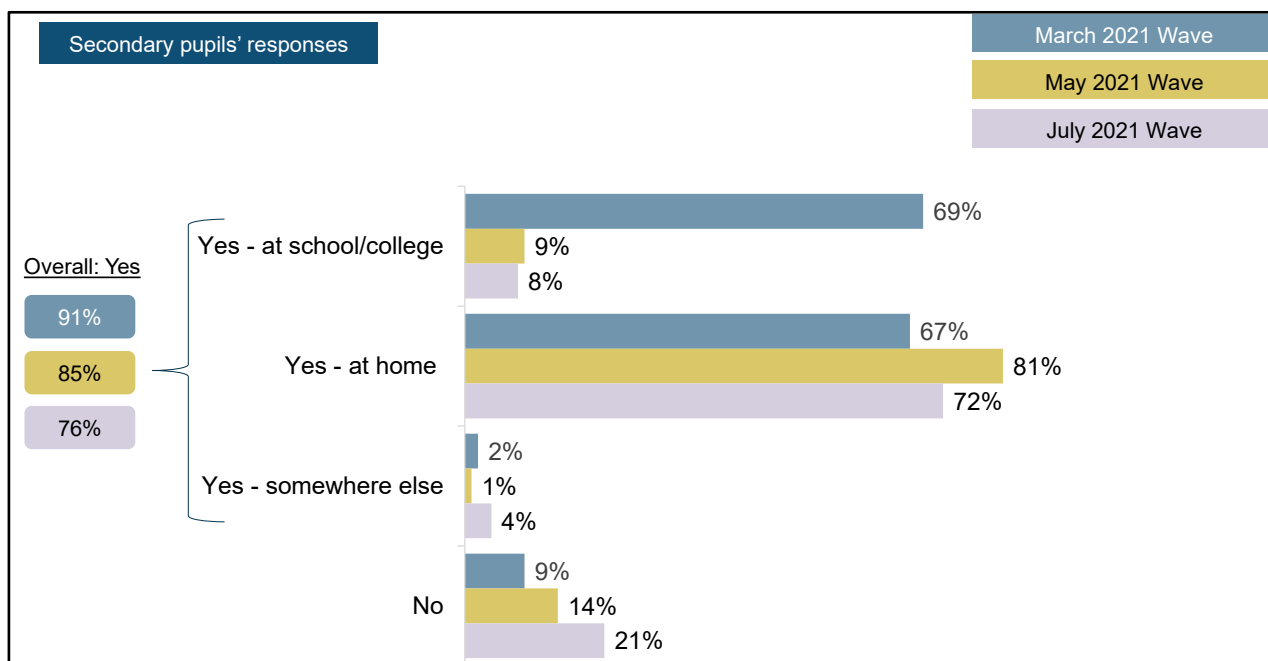
Secondary pupils' participation in rapid asymptomatic testing

Secondary pupils were asked if they had taken any COVID-19 tests in the last seven days, either in school/college, at home, or elsewhere (e.g. a testing centre).¹⁵ As shown in Figure 4, three-quarters (76%) of secondary pupils had taken a COVID-19 test in the last seven days. This represents a steady decrease in test-taking among secondary pupils compared to both May 2021 (85%) and March 2021 (91%).

The proportion taking tests in school/college was stable between July and May 2021 (8% in July vs. 9% in May), but the proportion taking tests at home had reduced (72% in July vs. 81% in May). The proportion taking a test elsewhere had increased (4% in July vs. 1% in May).

¹⁵ Secondary pupils were surveyed between 30th June and 5th July 2021, between 12th May and 17th May 2021, and between 22nd March and 26th March 2021.

Figure 4. Whether secondary pupils had taken a COVID-19 test in the last 7 days, by location



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave 10: AD12 “During the last 7 days, have you taken any test(s) to see if you have COVID-19 / coronavirus? (Please tick all that apply)” All pupils in March 2021/May 2021/July 2021 (n=1,531/n=1,537, n=1,511).

Differences between groups of pupils remained roughly the same in July 2021 as reported in May and March 2021, with the following groups less likely to have taken a test in the last seven days:

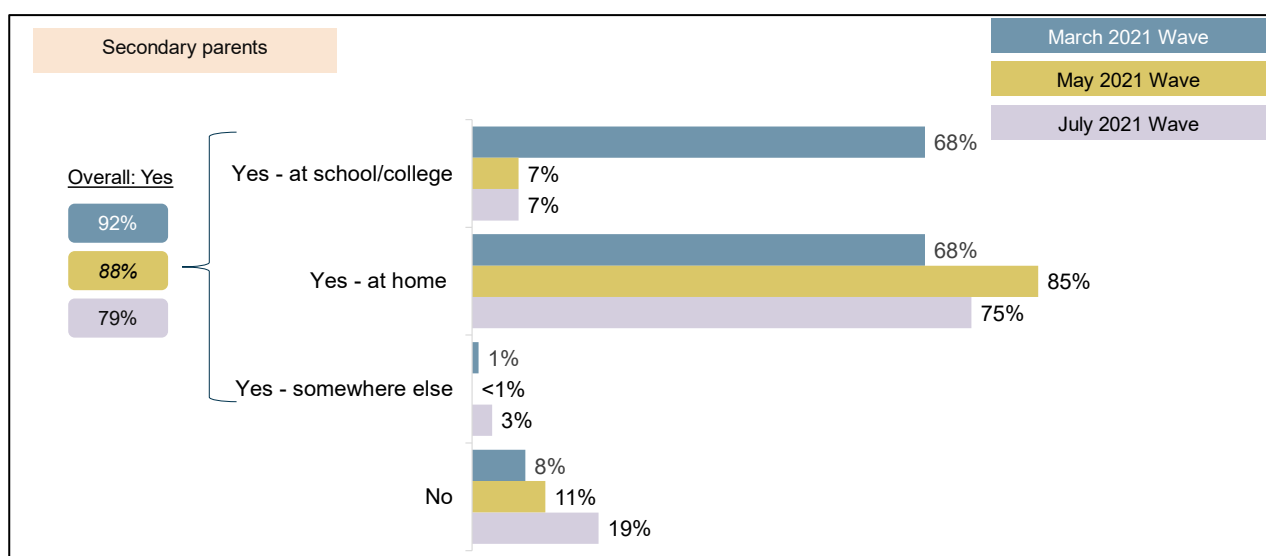
- Older pupils in year 11-13 (62% vs. 84% of younger pupils in year 7-10).
- BAME pupils (68% vs. 80% among White pupils).
- Pupils eligible for FSM (68% vs. 78% among non-FSM pupils). However, FSM pupils were more likely to have taken a test at school/college than non-FSM pupils (11% vs. 7%).
- Pupils in the East of England were the most likely to have taken a test in the last seven days (82%) while those in London were least likely (66%).

Secondary parents report of their child’s participation in rapid asymptomatic testing

Parents of secondary pupils were asked if their child had taken any COVID-19 tests in the last seven days, either at school/college, at home or somewhere else (e.g. a testing centre).¹⁶ Four-in-five (79%) secondary parents said their child had taken a COVID-19 test in the last seven days, a decrease from May 2021 (88%) and March 2021 (92%), as shown in Figure 5.

Overall, 7% of secondary parents reported that their child had taken a test at school/college in the last seven days, unchanged from May 2021. Home-testing had decreased compared to May 2021 (75% vs. 85%), though testing somewhere else (e.g. a testing centre) had increased (3% vs. <1%).

Figure 5. Whether secondary pupils had taken a COVID-19 test in the last 7 days, by location, as reported by secondary parents



Source: PPP May/June/July 2021 Wave 10: AD17 “During the last 7 days, has [PUPILNAME] taken any test(s) to see if they have COVID-19 / coronavirus?” All secondary parents in March 2021 / May 2021 / July 2021 (n=1,547 / n=1,540 / n=1,543).

Parents of the following groups of pupils were more likely to report their child taking a COVID-19 test in the last seven days:

- Female pupils (82% vs. 77% of male pupils)
- White pupils (82% vs. 72% of BAME pupils)

¹⁶ Secondary parents were surveyed between 30th June and 5th July, between 12th May and 17th May 2021, and between 22nd March and 23rd March 2021.

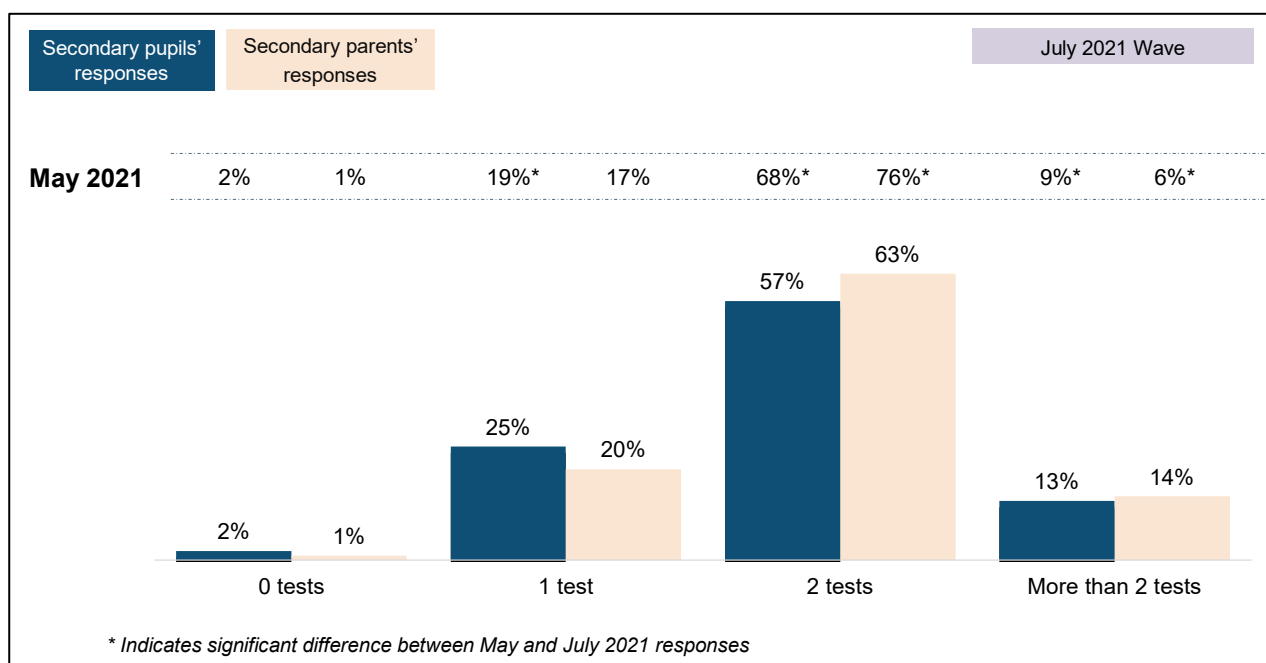
- Parents of non-FSM pupils (81% vs. 70% of FSM-pupils).

As was the case in May 2021, secondary parents in the East of England and the South East were the most likely to report their child having taken a COVID-19 test in the last seven days (87% and 82% respectively), with those in London the least likely (73%). Again, secondary parents in the North-West were more likely to report their child had taken a COVID-19 test in school compared to average (21% vs. 7%), with parents in the East of England less likely than average to report this (2%).

Quantity of rapid asymptomatic testing carried out at home amongst secondary pupils

Secondary pupils and parents who reported they/their child had taken a COVID-19 test at home in the previous seven days were asked how many rapid lateral flow tests they had taken at home in that period. Results show that compared to May 2021, not only were pupils taking tests less frequently in July 2021, but they were also taking fewer overall. As shown in Figure 6, it was most common for both secondary pupils (57%) and secondary parents (63%) to report they/their child had taken two tests at home in that time period.

Figure 6. Number of rapid lateral flow tests taken at home by secondary pupils in the last 7 days



Source: PPP May/June/July 2021 Wave 10: AD21/AD18_P2W10. "During the last 7 days, how many rapid lateral flow tests have you taken at home to see if you have COVID-19/ coronavirus?" All pupils who took a Covid-19 test in the last 7 days at home / All parents who said yes to home testing July 2021 (n=1,038 / n=1,180). May 2021 (n=1,239 / n=1,345)

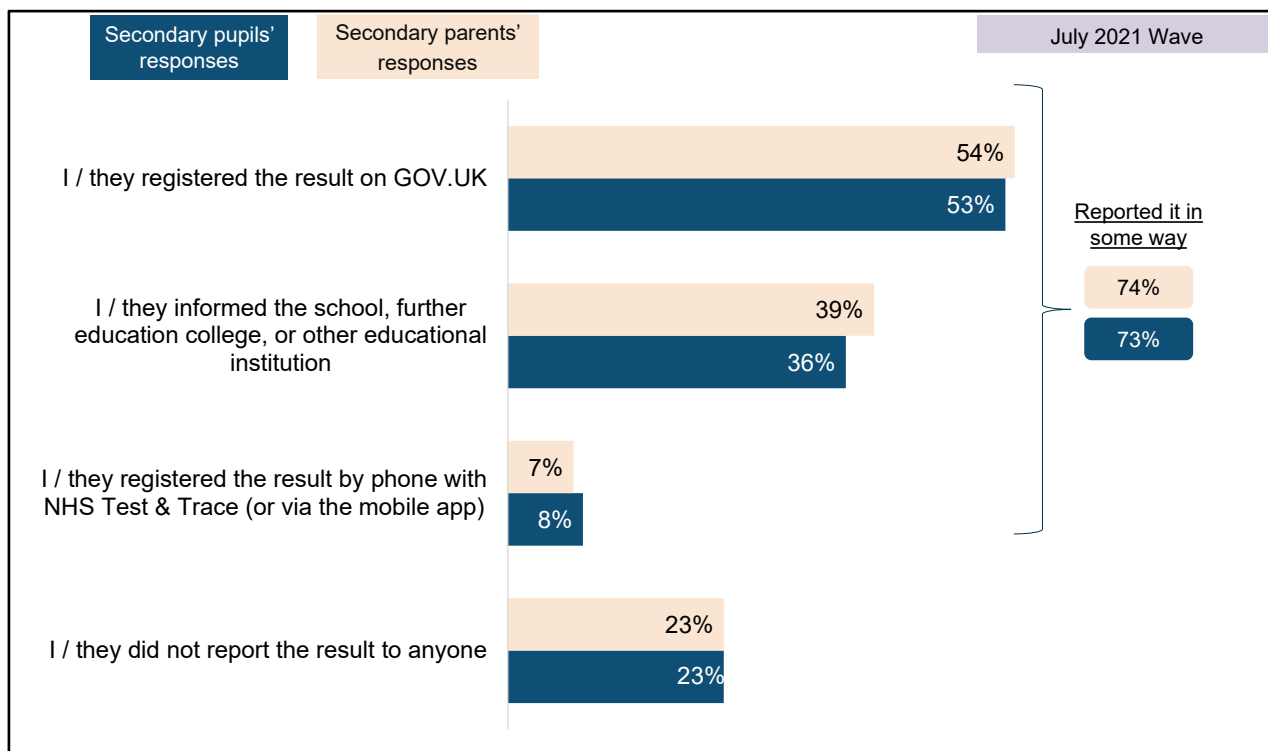
A small proportion reported having no rapid flow tests at home in the previous seven days, despite having said they/their child had taken a COVID-19 test at home in that time. This suggests they may have taken another (non-rapid) form of COVID-19 test at home.

Reporting of asymptomatic testing results carried out at home amongst secondary pupils

Secondary pupils and parents who reported they/their child had taken at least one rapid lateral flow COVID-19 test at home in the previous seven days were asked whether they reported the result of the COVID-19 test(s).

As shown in Figure 7, around three-quarters of secondary pupils (73%) and secondary parents (74%) said that they had reported the result in some way. This was a reduction compared to May 2021 (81% secondary pupils; 82% secondary parents). Parents and pupils most commonly reported the result on GOV.UK (53% secondary pupils, 54% secondary parents), followed by informing the school/college/other education institution (36% secondary pupils, 39% secondary parents). The proportion that said they did not report the result had increased for both parents and pupils compared to May 2021 (16% for both pupils and parents in May 2021 vs. 23% for both pupils and parents in July 2021).

Figure 7. Methods of reporting rapid lateral flow test results



Source: PPP June/July 2021 Wave 10: AD22_P2W9. “How, if at all, did you report the result of your rapid lateral flow test(s) taken at home?” All pupils who took a lateral flow test in the last 7 days at home / All parents whose child has taken one or more rapid lateral flow test (n=994 / n=1,160)

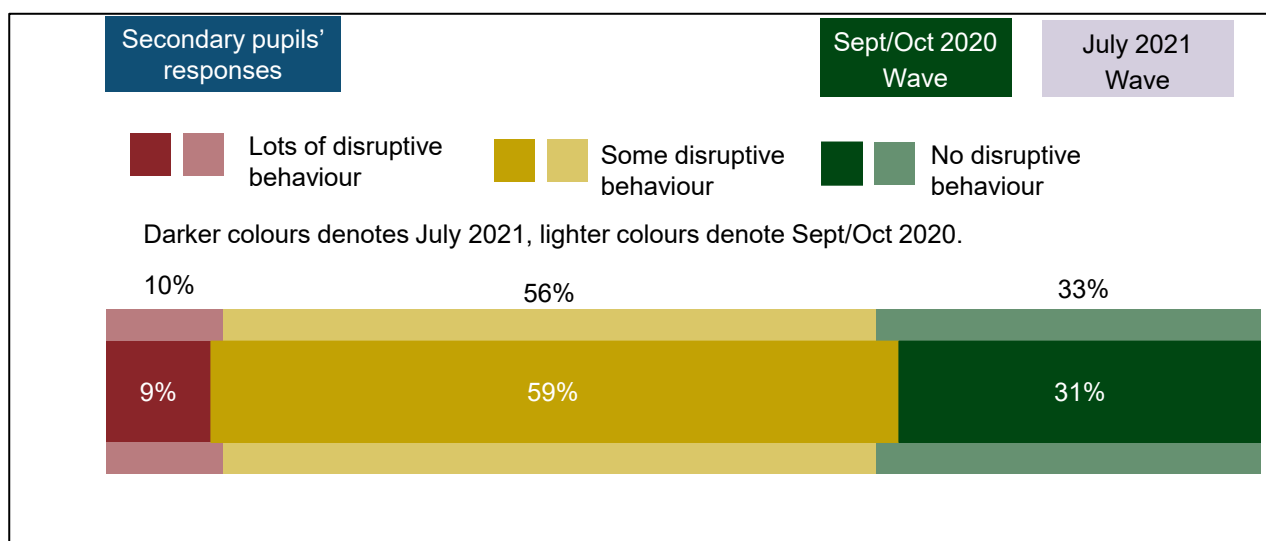
The following subgroups of pupils were less likely to report their COVID-19 at home rapid lateral flow test result to anyone:

- Older pupils in year 11-13 (30%, and rising to 35% of year 13 pupils, compared to 21% among year 7-10s).
- BAME pupils compared to White pupils (34% vs. 20%)
- Pupils eligible for FSM (29% compared to 22% of non-eligible FSM pupils).

Behaviour on the most recent day pupils attended school or college

Secondary pupils were asked about the level of disruptive behaviour from other pupils in class on the most recent day they were physically in school or college.¹⁷ Results in July 2021 remained very similar to when the question was first asked in the September / October 2020 wave and the more recent May 2021 wave, with 69% of pupils reporting disruptive behaviour, including 9% who reported *lots of* disruptive behaviour.

Figure 8. Level of disruptive behaviour amongst other students in class



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave L47_P2W10. "Thinking about other students' behaviour in class, would you say there was..." All pupils excluding those who are permanently home-schooled (n=1,506)

In line with previous waves, pupils in year 12 and 13 were much less likely to report any disruptive behaviour on the most recent day they attended (29%) than those in years 7 to 10 (84%) and year 11 (57%), with 3% of year 12 and 4% of year 13 pupils reported 'lots of disruptive behaviour'.

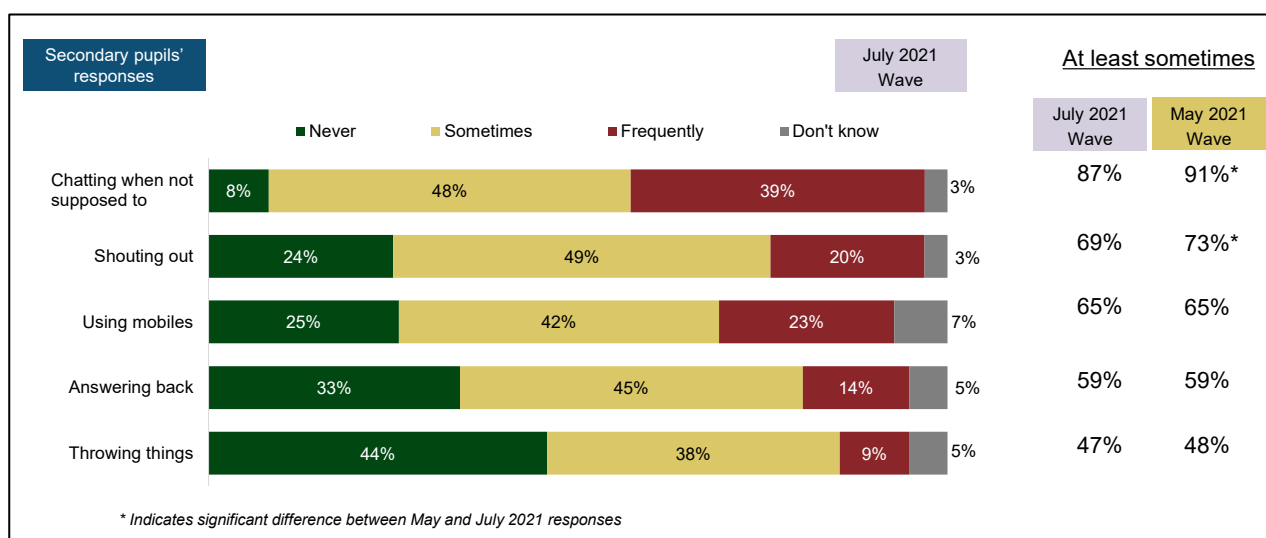
Pupils were also asked how often the following behaviours occurred in classes attended on the most recent day they were in school or college: pupil(s) chatting when not supposed to, pupil(s) shouting out, pupil(s) throwing things (non-aggressive), pupil(s) answering back or challenging instructions, and pupil(s) using mobile devices when they are not supposed to.

In line with findings from the May 2021 survey, a majority reported four of the five behaviours occurred at least sometimes on the most recent day they attended, with the

¹⁷ Disruptive behaviour was defined as any behaviour that distracts teachers and other pupils from learning including low level disruption.

exception being pupils throwing things. As shown in Figure 9, the most commonly experienced behaviour was pupils chatting when they are not supposed to, reported by 87% of pupils (a significant reduction from 91% in May). The percentage of pupils reporting shouting out has also reduced between May and July from 73% to 69% respectively.

Figure 9. How often disruptive behaviours occurred on the most recent day pupils attended school or college



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave L47A_P2W10. "How often, if at all, did the following occur?" All pupils excluding those who are permanently home-schooled (n=1,506) *Indicates a statistically significant difference between July 2021 and May 2021.

Year 12 and 13 were much less likely than other year groups to report four of the five behaviours occurring *at least sometimes*:

- Pupils chatting when they are not supposed to (71% year 12, 68% year 13 vs. 91% year 7 - 11).
- Pupils shouting out (32% year 12, 37% year 13 vs. 79% year 7 – 11).
- Pupils throwing things (15% year 12, 13% year 13 vs. 55% year 7 – 11).
- Pupils answering back or challenging instructions (19% year 12 vs. 34% year 13 vs. 69% year 7 – 11). This was the only behaviour on which there was a significant difference between year 12 and 13.

Year 13 were also less likely than year 7-11 to report pupils using mobile devices when not supposed to (57% vs 65%), but pupils in year 12 (63%) were broadly in line with those in years 7-11.

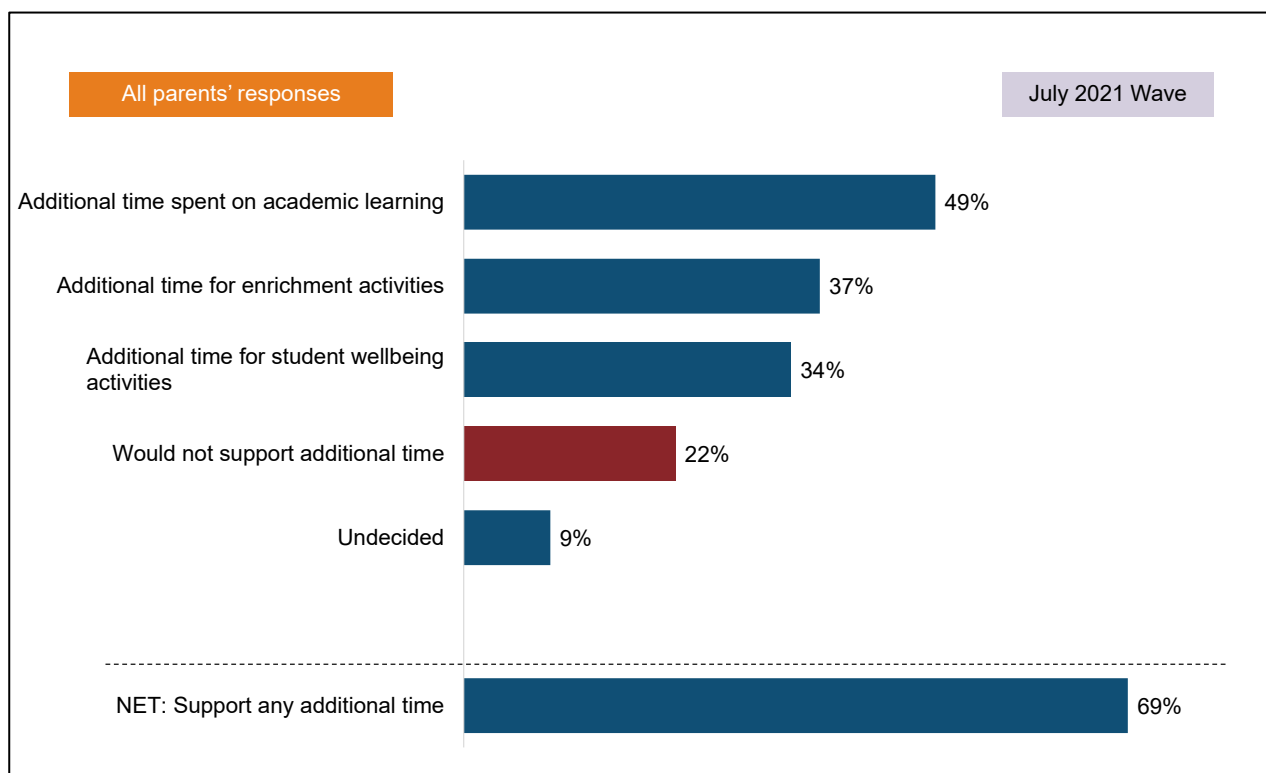
Extending the school day

Over the last year, pupils have had to adjust to different learning environments as a result of the pandemic. The Department for Education are considering all options to address lost learning, including time in education, to ensure the impact of the pandemic is addressed as comprehensively as possible for all pupils. In July 2021, parents were asked how they would feel about additional time being added on to their child's school week. They were asked to indicate if they would support additional time for:

- Academic learning
- Enrichment activities e.g. art, sport, drama, music; and/or
- Student wellbeing activities e.g. mental health and wellbeing support.

As shown in Figure 10, the majority (69%) would support additional time for at least one of the listed reasons, with a further 9% currently undecided. Parents most commonly supported additional time which would be spent on academic learning (49%), followed by enrichment activities (37%).

Figure 10. Reasons parents would support additional time being added on to the school day



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave X6_P2W10. "How would you feel about additional time being added onto PUPILNAME's school week?" All parents (n=3,080)

Primary parents were more likely than secondary parents to support any additional time for enrichment activities (42% vs. 31%) and for student wellbeing (37% vs. 31%). There was no significant difference between primary and secondary parents in supporting additional time for academic learning (50% vs. 47%).

Male parents were more likely than female parents to support additional time for academic learning (55% vs. 47%), whereas female parents were more likely than male to support additional time for student wellbeing activities (36% vs. 29% of males) or to say they would not support any additional time at all (23% vs. 17% of males).

Parents working full-time were more likely than any other working status to support additional hours for at least one of the listed reasons (74% vs. 69% overall). In addition, those who indicated they were working all hours from home in August 2020¹⁸ were the most likely to support additional time (76% vs. 69% overall).

Differences also existed by region, with parents in London and the West Midlands more likely to support additional time for at least one of the listed reasons (76% and 75% respectively vs. 69% overall).

¹⁸ The recruitment survey carried out in August 2020 is the most recently collected data on working from home status.

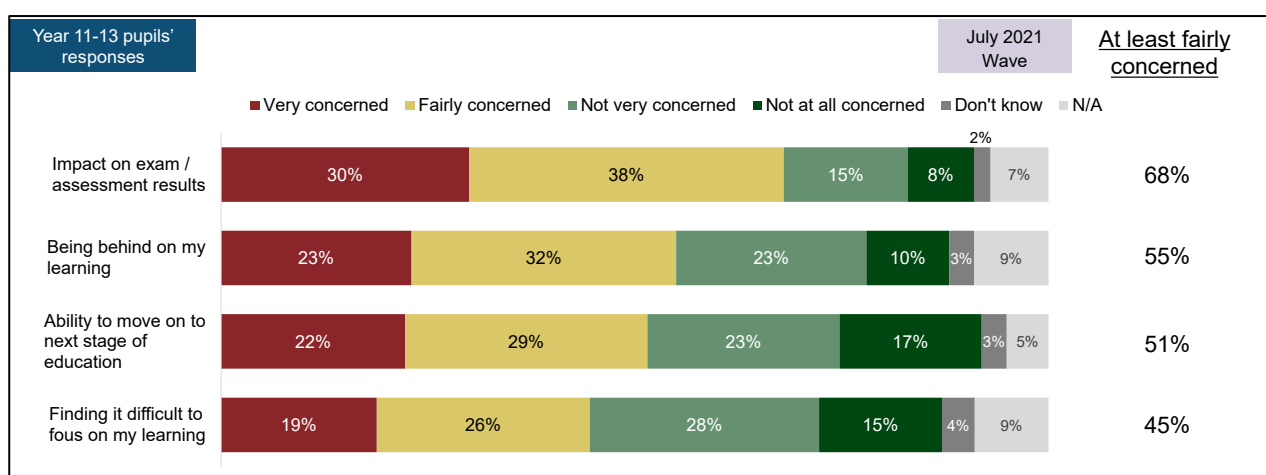
Catching up on missed learning

The Department recognises the importance of supporting learners aged 16-19 whose learning was disrupted due to school and college closures during the pandemic, as they have the least time left before progressing into the labour market or Further / Higher Education. To support ongoing work in this area in July 2021, pupils in year 11, 12 and 13 were asked how concerned they were about the impact of COVID-19 disruption on four different aspects of their education (shown below), whether they felt they were ahead, behind or where they should be with their learning, and what support would aid them to catch up on any missed learning:

- Impact on exam / assessment results
- Being behind on my learning
- Ability to move on to the next stage of education
- Finding it difficult to focus on my learning.

As shown in Figure 11, the most common cause of concern for pupils was the impact of COVID-19 disruption on their exam, test or assessment results: 68% were *at least fairly* concerned about this, with 30% *very* concerned. In addition to this, over half of pupils reported were *at least fairly* concerned about being behind on their education (55%) and their ability to move on to the next stage of education due to COVID-19 (51%).

Figure 11. Pupil concern about the impact of COVID-19 disruption on aspects of education



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave X2_P2W10. "How concerned, if at all, are you about the impact of COVID-19 disruption on these aspects of your education?" All year 11, 12 and 13 pupils (n=788)

Year 13 pupils were more likely than pupils in year 11 and 12 to be *at least fairly* concerned about the impact of COVID-19 disruption on exam, test or assessment results

(76% vs. 68% overall), with 40% *very* concerned about this (vs. 30% overall). Year 13 pupils were also the year group most concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their ability to move on to the next stage of education (62% vs. 51% overall), with 31% of year 13 pupils very concerned about this (vs. 22% overall).

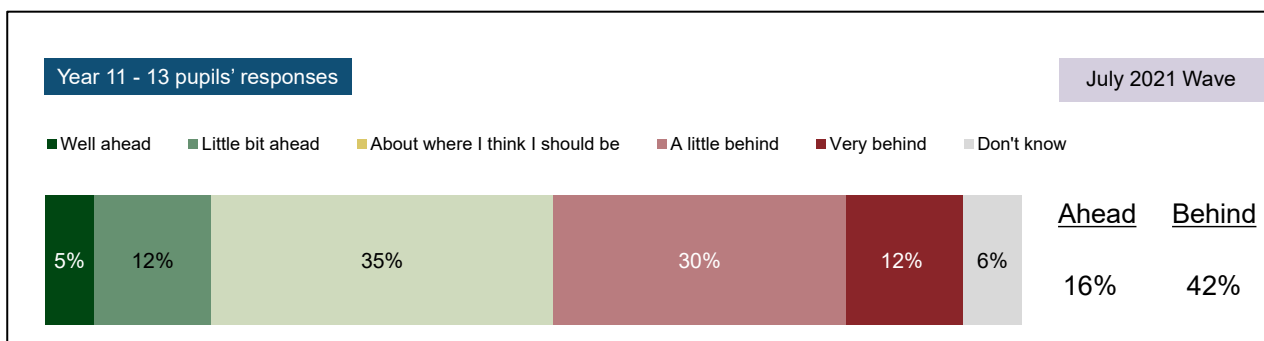
Female pupils were more likely than male pupils to be *at least fairly* concerned about each of the four aspects listed:

- Impact on exam, test or assessment results (75% vs. 60% among male pupils)
- Being behind on my learning (61% vs. 48%)
- Being able to move on to the next stage of education (57% vs. 44%)
- Finding it difficult to focus on my learning (49% vs. 39%).

Pupils with SEND were more likely than those without SEND to report concern about being able to focus on their learning (54% vs. 43%).

All pupils in year 11, 12 and 13 were asked whether they think they are currently ahead, behind, or about where they think they should be with their learning. As shown in Figure 12, just over half (51%) of pupils felt they were about where they should be or ahead, while 42% of pupils felt they were a little (30%) or very behind (12%).

Figure 12. Whether pupils think they are ahead, behind or where they should be with their learning



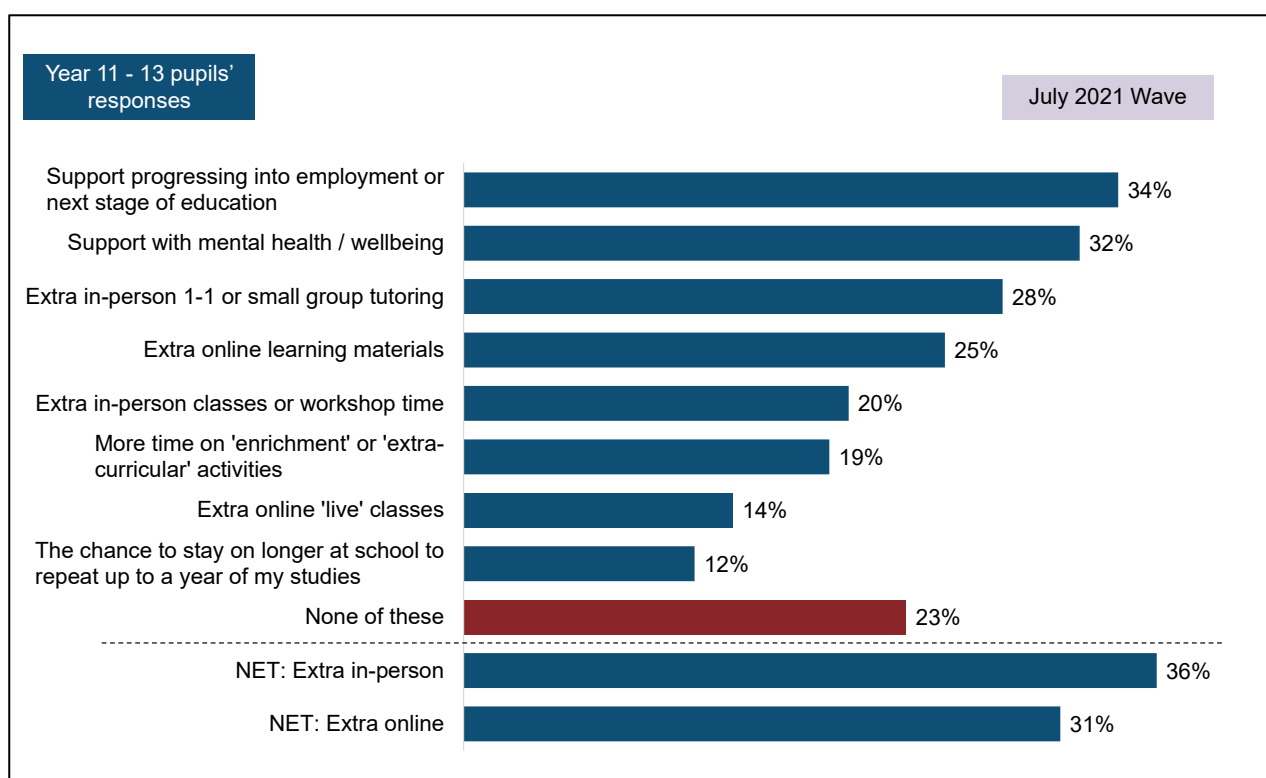
Source: PPP July 2021 Wave X4_P2W10. "In your opinion, do you think you are currently ahead, behind or about where you think you should be with your learning?" All year 11, 12 and 13 pupils (n=788)

Pupils in year 12 were the most likely to feel they were a little or very behind in their learning (52% vs. 35% year 11, 37% year 13). In line with previously discussed increased levels of concern about COVID-19 disruption, female pupils were also more likely to feel they were behind where they should be with their learning (47% vs. 37% males).

Support to catch up on missed learning

Pupils in year 11, 12 and 13 were asked what support, if any, would help them to catch up on missed learning due to COVID-19 disruption in the academic year 2020/21. Over three-quarters (77%) indicated that at least one of the listed support options would be useful. As shown in Figure 13, 36% of year 11, 12 and 13 pupils felt they would benefit from extra in-person teaching (such as extra in-person classes or workshop time or extra in-person one-to-one or small group tutoring) and 31% felt extra online learning (such as online 'live' classes or learning materials) would be useful. Over a third (34%) also felt that support with progressing into employment or the next stage of education would be valuable to help them catch up with missed learning, followed closely by support with mental health, wellbeing and resilience (32%).

Figure 13. Support which would aid catch up on missed learning



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave X5_P2W10. "Which of the following, if any, would you find useful to help you catch up on missed learning due to COVID-19 disruption this year?" All year 11, 12 and 13 pupils (n=788)

Female pupils were more likely than male pupils to say that at least one of these support options would help (82% vs. 70%). Pupils who were BAME were also more likely than those who were White to say that at least one of the support options would help (85% vs. 74%), as were pupils who were eligible for FSM (83% vs. 75% of pupils who were not eligible).

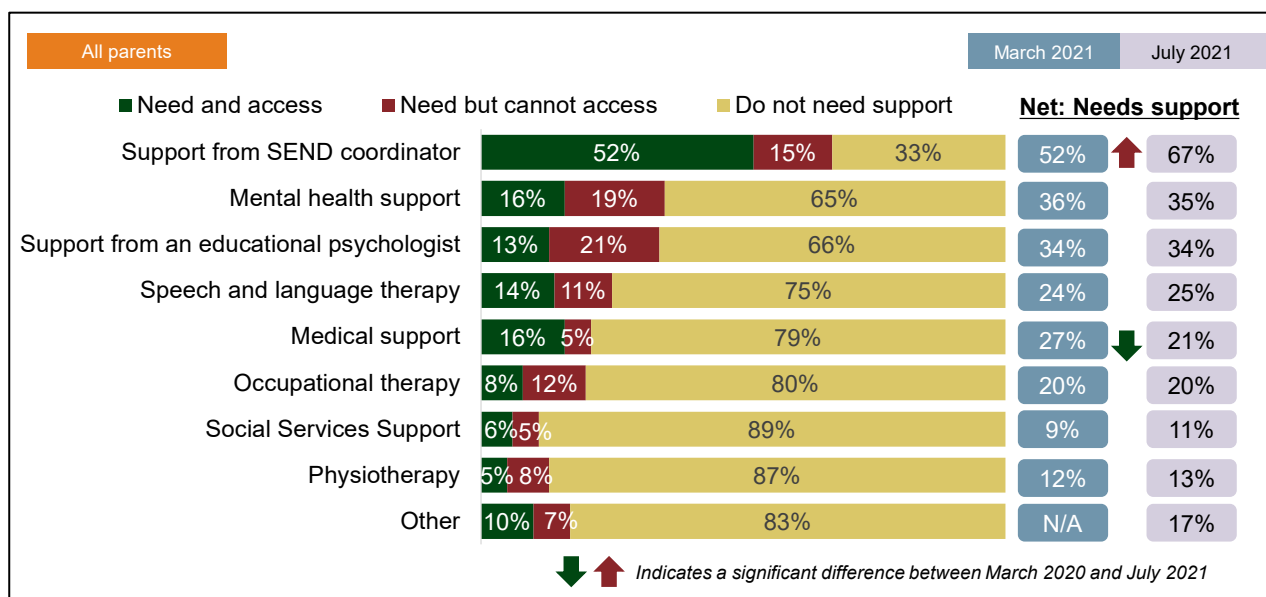
Support for pupils with SEND

Specific questions were asked about the specialist support pupils require and can access, and these questions have been repeated over several iterations of the panel survey. This is to support the Department’s understanding of the impact of the pandemic on the specialist support services needed by pupils with SEND, and the progress of recovery over time.

In the July 2021 wave, 17% of parents considered their child to have a special educational need or disability. These parents were asked if they currently receive certain types of specialist support and, if they were unable to access it, why they were unable to do so.

As shown in Figure 14 support from a SEND coordinator (SENCO) was the most common type of support parents of pupils with SEND felt their child needed (67%). This had increased from 52% in March 2021, however, it is worth noting that this answer option was presented as “phone calls from SEND coordinator” in March 2021. In July 2021, parents of pupils with SEND were most likely to report needing but not being able to access: support from an education psychologist (21%), mental health support (19%) or support from a SEND coordinator (15%).

Figure 14. Modes of support needed and accessed by pupils with SEND as reported by parents



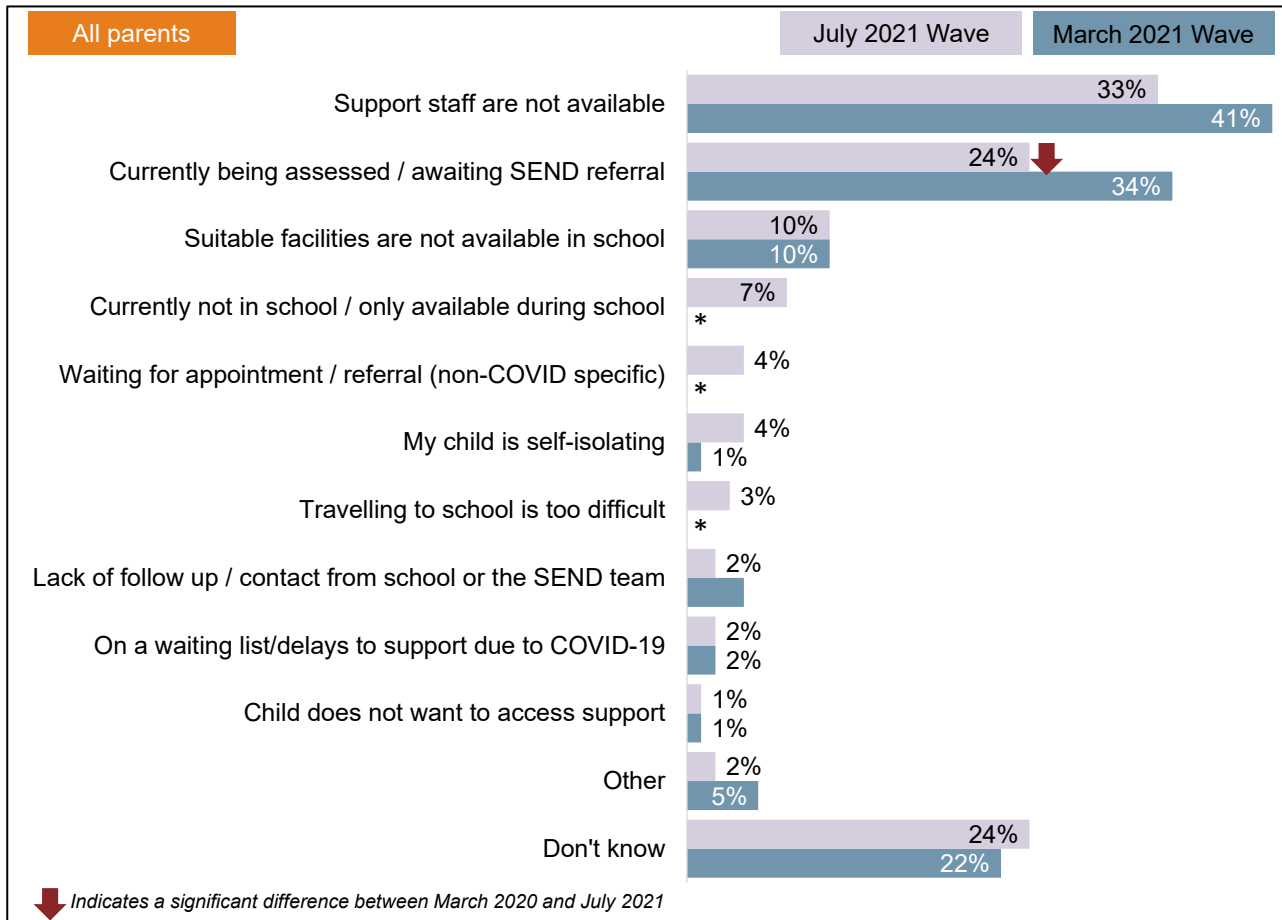
Source: PPP Phase 2 Wave 10, N10: “Is your child currently receiving...” Parents who consider their child to have SEND (n=540) *This code differed in March 2021, where it was “Phone calls from SEND coordinator”

The following differences existed among different groups of parents:

- Consistent with March 2021, parents of primary pupils with SEND were more likely than secondary parents to report that their child needed support from occupational therapy (24% vs. 15% of secondary parents) and speech and language therapy (35% vs. 13% of secondary parents). In July 2021, they were also more likely to report needing support from an educational psychologist (38% vs. 30% of secondary parents) and a SENCO (72% vs. 60%). However, neither group of parents was more likely than one another to report needing, but not being able to access, any type of support.
- Parents of male pupils were more likely to need but be unable to access physiotherapy (10% vs. 4% of parents of female pupils) and occupational therapy (15% vs. 6%). Parents of male pupils were also more likely to report that their child was currently receiving support from a SENCO (59% vs. 42%). This was a deviation from March 2021 when the only differences by pupil gender were that parents of female pupils were more likely than those of male pupils to report that their child needed social support services (12% vs. 7%) and physiotherapy (14% vs. 2%).
- Consistent with March 2021, parents of BAME pupils were more likely to need but be unable to access physiotherapy (17% vs. 6% of parents of White pupils). In July 2021 they were also more likely to need but be unable to access support from an education psychologist (31% vs. 19% of parents of White pupils).
- Parents of FSM-eligible pupils were more likely than parents of non-FSM eligible pupils to need support from an educational psychologist (48% vs. 28%) and also to be unable to access this support (28% vs. 18%). This was also true of medical support (30% vs. 17% needing it, and 9% vs. 4% unable to access it); mental health support (48% vs. 29% needing it, and 26% vs. 17% unable to access it); and physiotherapy (20% vs. 10% needing it, and 12% vs. 6% unable to access it). These differences were all present in March 2021.

Overall 40% of parents of pupils with SEND were unable to access some support they felt their child needed. The main reasons why they felt they were unable to access support were because support staff were not available (33%) or because they were in the process of being assessed / awaiting a referral (24%). However, a quarter of parents (24%) did not know why their child was currently unable to access the support they needed. As shown in Figure 15, these were the same top three reasons for not being able to access support as parents gave in March 2021.

Figure 15. Reasons why pupils with SEND are currently unable to access support



Source: PPP Phase 2 Wave 10, N11: "Why is your child currently unable to access this support?" Parents of children who need specialist support but cannot access it (n=217). *Code not included in March 2021 question.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Pupil mental health and wellbeing is an ongoing priority for the DfE. The pandemic and associated lockdown measures are affecting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing in a variety of ways. Being in school is thought to be beneficial for children and young people, while being away from school will likely have had some negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

At each wave of the PPP, parents and pupils were asked a series of ONS-validated questions about personal wellbeing, including how happy they felt yesterday, their life satisfaction, the extent to which they feel the things they do in life were worthwhile, and their anxiousness levels. DfE is tracking these questions over time to understand how young people and their families are coping with the pandemic.

The questions in this series are asked in a similar way, using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely'. The questions ask pupils 'overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?', 'overall, how satisfied are you with your life?', 'overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?' and 'overall how anxious did you feel yesterday?'. Parents are asked the same questions in relation to their child for both happiness and anxiousness.

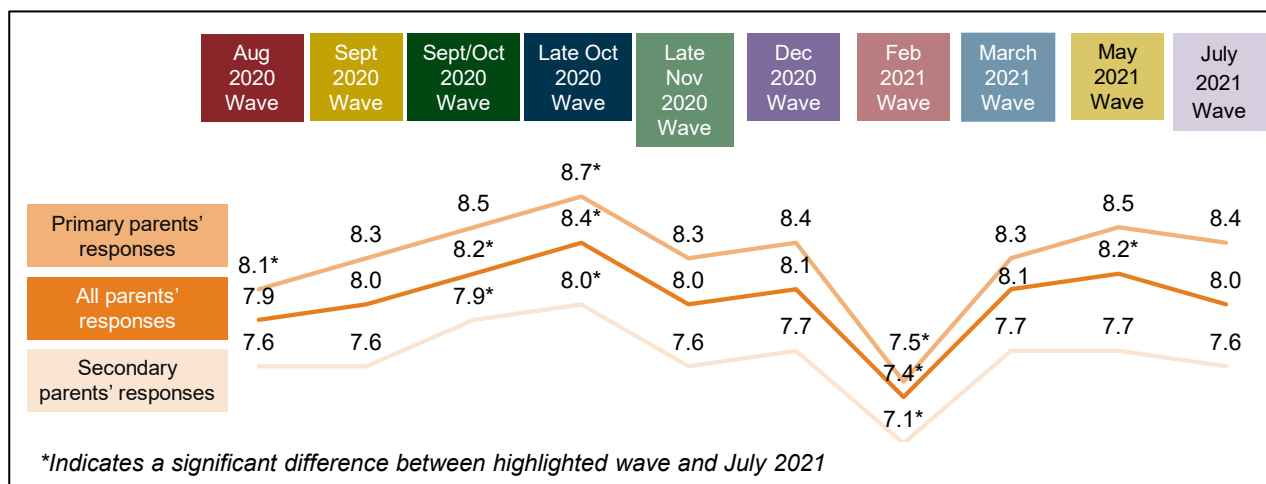
It is important to note that for the first three measures, a high score of 7-10 is a positive score as it suggests high levels of happiness, life satisfaction and worthwhileness, whereas for the anxiousness measure a low score of 0-3 is a positive score as it represents low levels of anxiousness and a high score (6-10) is a negative score for those who were considered anxious.

Pupil wellbeing

Parents' views on pupil happiness

In July 2021, happiness levels of pupils, as reported by all parents, showed limited movement from May levels (8.2 vs. 8.0), as shown in Figure 16. This is following an increase in May 2021 and March 2021, and following a sharp decrease in February 2021, during the time of the third national lockdown when schools were not open to the majority of pupils. Although at different levels, primary and secondary parents have largely followed the same trend in this period.

Figure 16. Parents' views on pupil's happiness (mean scores)



Source: PPP waves between August 2020 and July 2021, O1: “Overall, how happy did Pupil appear yesterday, where 0 is 'not at all happy' and 10 is 'completely happy'?” All parents (n=7,191 / n=4,005 / n=3,491 / n=3,542 / n=3,388 / n=3,237 / n=3,082 / n=3,084 / n=3,084 / n=3,080), primary parents (n=4,203 / n=1,987 / n=1,712 / n=1,771 / n=1,697 / n=1,618 / n=1,541 / n=1,537 / n=1,544 / 1,537), secondary parents (n=2,988 / n=2,018 / n=1,779 / n=1,771 / n=1,691 / n=1,619 / n=1,541 / n=1,541 / n=1,540 / n=1,543).

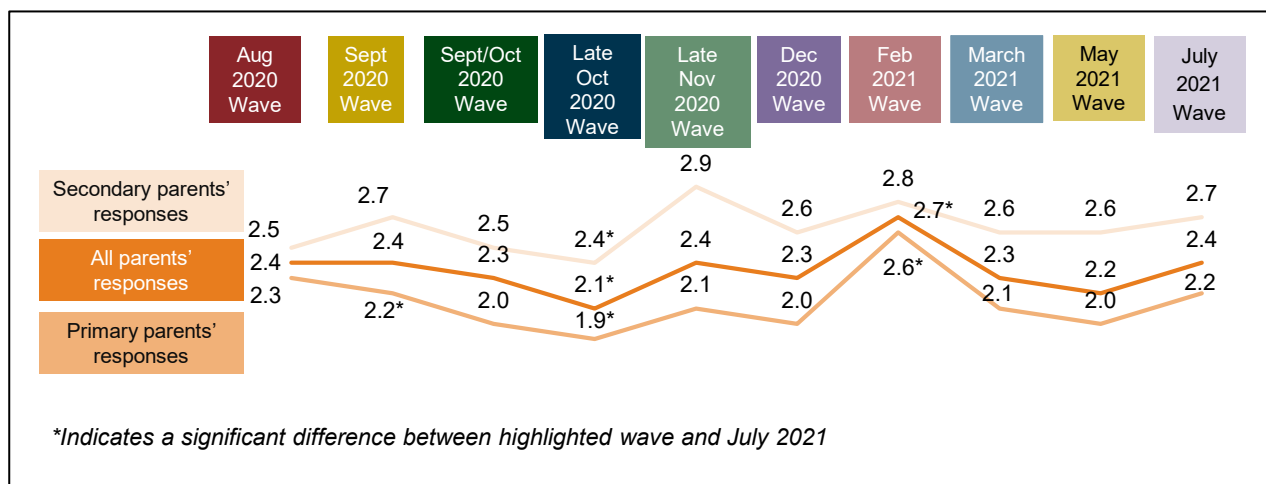
Consistent with earlier waves, lower happiness scores for their children were reported by the following parents:

- Secondary parents compared to primary parents (7.6 vs. 8.4).
- Parents whose child is eligible for FSM compared to those not (7.8 vs. 8.1).
- Parents whose child is considered to have SEND compared to those whose child isn't (6.9 vs. 8.3).
- Parents of pupils who physically attended school most or some days in the past two weeks compared to those who attended every day (7.1 and 7.0 vs. 8.3).

Parents' views on pupil anxiousness

Parents gave broadly consistent scores for anxiousness in July 2021 compared with March and May 2021, with the slight increase not being a significant change, as shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17. Parents' views on pupil's anxiousness (mean scores)



Source: PPP waves between August 2020 and July 2021, O2: “On a scale where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious', overall, how anxious did Pupil appear yesterday?” All parents (n=7,191 / n=4,005 / n=3,491 / n=3,542 / n=3,388 / n=3,237 / n=3,082 / n=3,084 / n=3,084 / n=3,080), primary parents (n=4,203 / n=1,987 / n=1,712 / n=1,771 / n=1,697 / n=1,618 / n=1,541 / n=1,544 / 1,537), secondary parents (n=2,988 / n=2,018 / n=1,779 / n=1,771 / n=1,691 / n=1,619 / n= 1,541 / n=1,541 / n=1,540 / n=1,543).

Broadly consistent with the findings in previous survey waves, higher mean scores of anxiousness for their children were more likely amongst the following parent groups:

- Secondary parents compared to primary parents (2.7 vs. 2.2).
- Parents whose child is eligible for FSM compared to those not (2.7 vs. 2.3).
- Parents whose child is considered to have SEND compared to those whose child isn't (3.9 vs. 2.1).
- Parents of pupils who physically attended school most or some days in the past two weeks compared to those who attended every day (3.2 and 2.7 vs. 2.2).

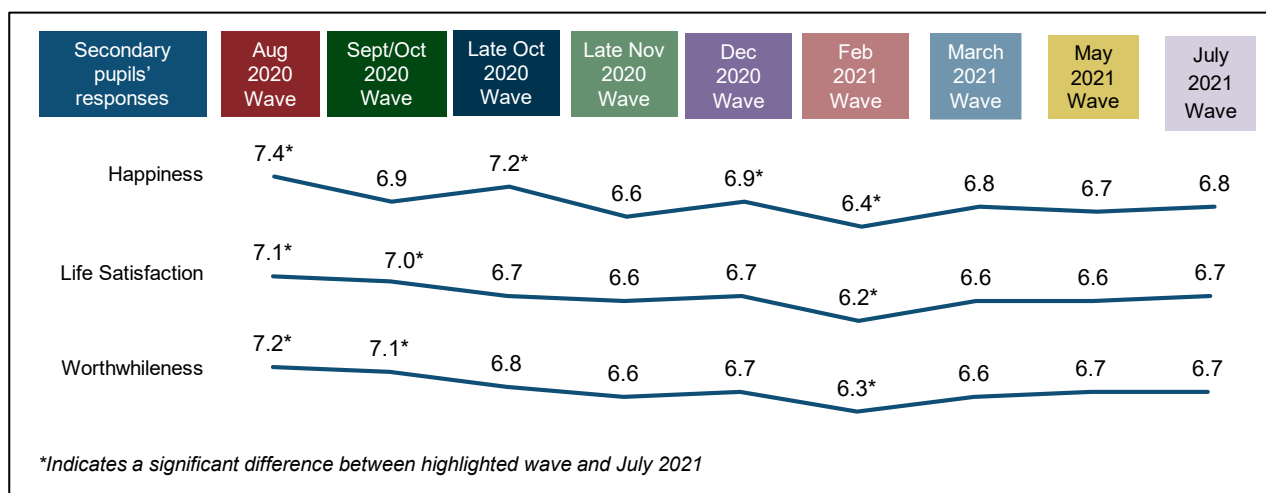
Pupils' views on their own wellbeing

Secondary pupils were asked about their own levels of happiness, life satisfaction, the extent to which they feel the things they do in life were worthwhile, and their feelings of anxiousness.

Pupils' views on their own happiness, life satisfaction and worthwhileness

As shown in Figure 18, happiness, life satisfaction and worthwhileness scores have all remained stable between March and July 2021, following an increase between February and March. Mean scores for all measures remain lower than in summer 2020 and life satisfaction and worthwhileness remain below the start of the 2020/2021 academic year.

Figure 18. Pupils' views of their own happiness, life satisfaction and worthwhileness (mean scores)



Source: PPP waves between August 2020 and July 2021, B5: "Rating of each measure on scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely" Secondary pupils (n=5,327 / n=1,780 / n=1,661 / n=1,612 / n=1,555 / n=1,537 / n=1,531 / n=1,537 / n=1,511).

Consistent with previous waves, older pupils (years 11-13) reported lower scores compared to younger pupils (years 7-10) across all three measures:

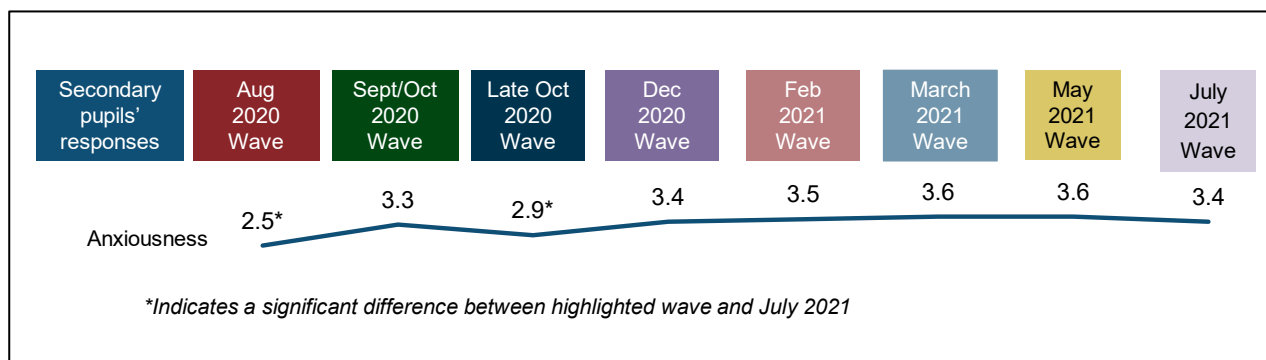
- Happiness: 7.1 for younger pupils vs. 6.4 for older pupils.
- Life satisfaction: 7.1 for younger pupils vs. 5.9 for older pupils.
- Worthwhileness: 7.1 for younger pupils vs. 5.9 for older pupils.

Since August 2020, female pupils have continued to report poorer wellbeing scores than their male counterparts for all three of these measures. In July 2021, female pupils had significantly lower mean scores for happiness (6.3 vs. 7.4), life satisfaction (6.1 vs. 7.2), and worthwhileness (6.1 vs. 7.1) compared to their male counterparts.

Pupils' views on their own anxiousness

As with pupil views on their happiness, life satisfaction and worthwhileness, pupils' anxiousness scores remained stable between March and July 2021. However, they remained higher than pre-December levels, as shown in Figure 19.

Figure 19. Pupils' views of their own anxiousness (mean scores)



Source: PPP waves between August 2020 and July 2021, B6: “Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday, where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely’” Secondary pupils (n=5,327 / n=1,780 / n=1,661 / n=1,555 / n=1,537 / n =1,531 / n=1,537 / n=1,511).

Anxiousness scores were higher amongst the following pupils (patterns also seen across previous waves):

- Older pupils (years 11-13) compared to younger pupils (years 7-10) (3.9 vs. 3.1).
- Female pupils compared to male pupils (4.2 vs. 2.6).

However, in July 2021 pupils with SEND were in line with those not with SEND for their anxiousness scores (both 3.4), whereas in previous waves they had reported higher scores.

Pupils' reasons for feeling anxious

The 26% of secondary pupils who gave a high anxiousness score (6-10) were asked a follow up question asking what in the last two weeks has made them feel anxious.¹⁹

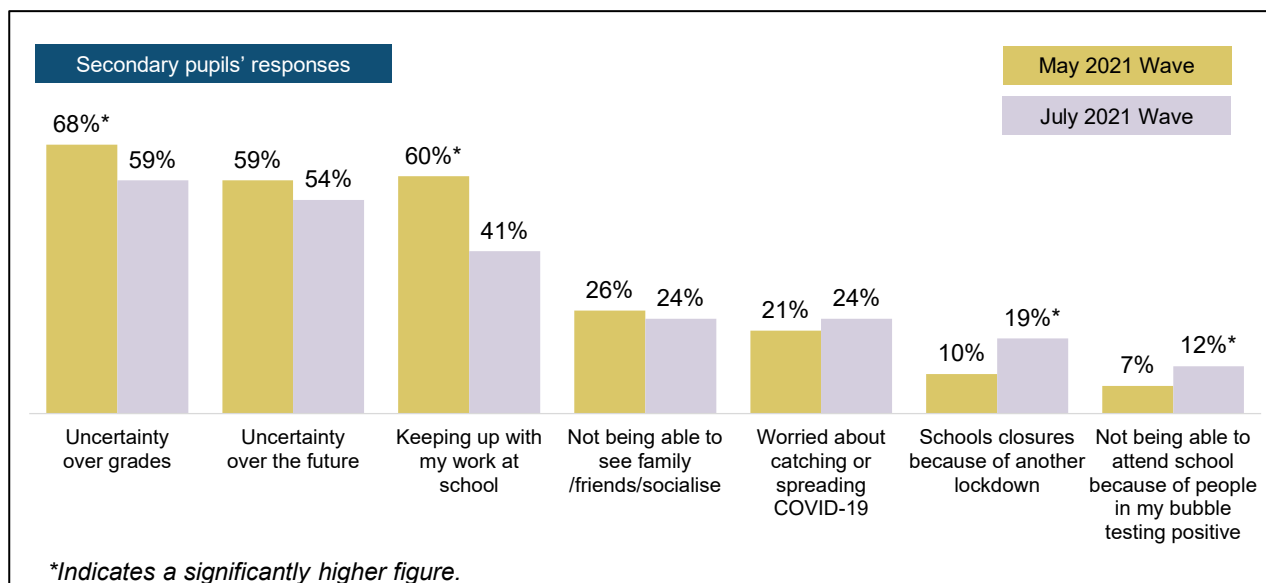
As shown in Figure 20, uncertainty over grades remained the most common reason for pupils feeling anxious, although this was at significantly lower levels than in May 2021. Uncertainty over the future remained the second most common reason for pupils feeling anxious.

Two-in-five (41%) pupils thought that keeping up with work at school made them anxious, down from three-in-five (60%) in May 2021. This decrease possibly reflects that many pupils will have had their teacher assessed grades submitted between May and July 2021.

¹⁹ The reported two weeks that pupils will have been thinking about would fall between 16th and 21st June 2021.

Reflecting the rise in COVID-19 cases, pupils were more likely in July 2021 than in May to report feeling anxious because of school closures because of another lockdown (19% vs. 10%) and not being able to attend school because of people in their bubble testing positive (12% vs. 7%).

Figure 20. Reasons why pupils with high anxiousness were feeling anxious



Source: PPP May 2021 and July 2021 waves, B24C: “Thinking about the last two weeks, what do you think has made you anxious?” Secondary pupils who said they had high feelings of anxiousness (n=550 / 443). Answer options <5% not shown.²⁰

In July 2021, pupils in years 11-13 were more likely than those in year 7-10 to be anxious because of uncertainty over grades (64% vs. 54%) and uncertainty over the future (65% vs. 46%). This was similar to the pattern seen in May 2021. However, unlike in May 2021, younger pupils were more likely than older pupils to report keeping up with their work at school as a source of anxiousness (49% vs. 31%), where previously they had been broadly in line. This also might reflect the reduction in workload as teacher assessed grades are submitted for older years.

Loneliness

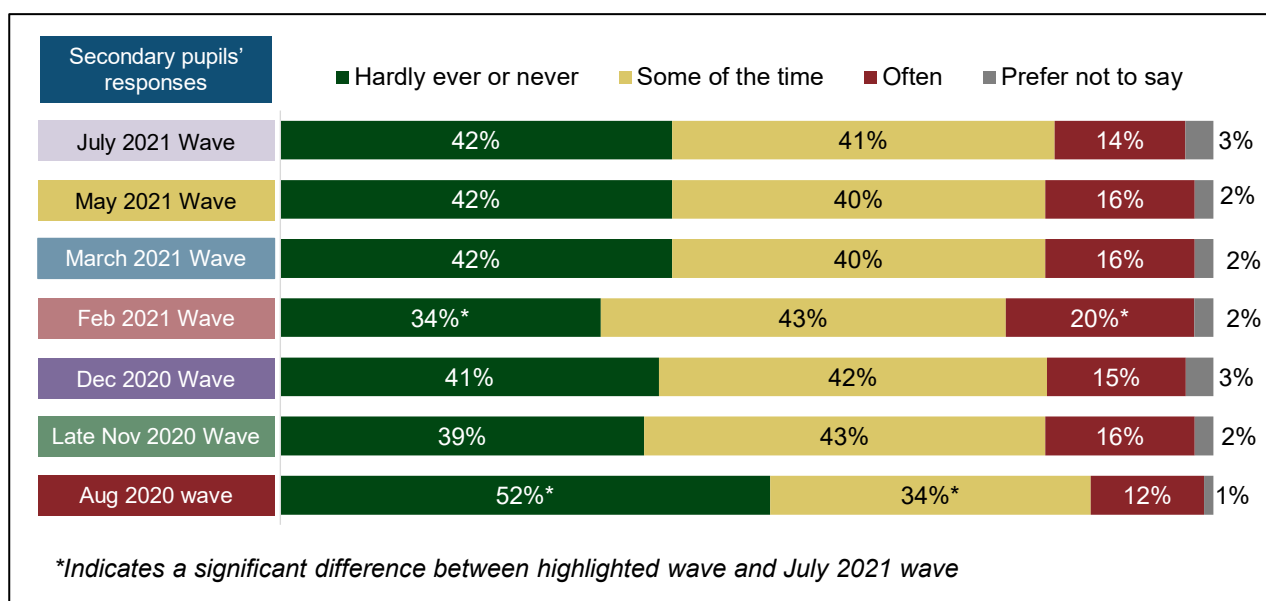
Loneliness is a key risk factor for poor mental health in children and young people, as well as adults. Social distancing measures and school closures for most pupils throughout the past year will likely have affected parents’ and pupils alike.

²⁰ Personal issues e.g. death/illness in the family, Exams / assessments, Anxiety / depression / mental health issues, Worried about socialising in large groups again, Nothing, Other, Don't know, Prefer not to say

Pupils' Loneliness

In July 2021, 42% of pupils reported feeling lonely hardly ever or never, the same proportion as May and March 2021. As shown in Figure 21, reported levels of loneliness were lower compared with February 2021 (during the time of the third national lockdown, and when schools were not open to the majority of pupils), but remained higher than August 2020 levels.

Figure 21. Percentage of secondary pupils who felt lonely



Source: PPP waves between August 2020 and July 2021, B12: "How often do you feel lonely?"
Secondary pupils (n=5,327 / n=1,612 / n=1,555 / n=1,537 / n=1,531 / n=1,537 / n=1,511).

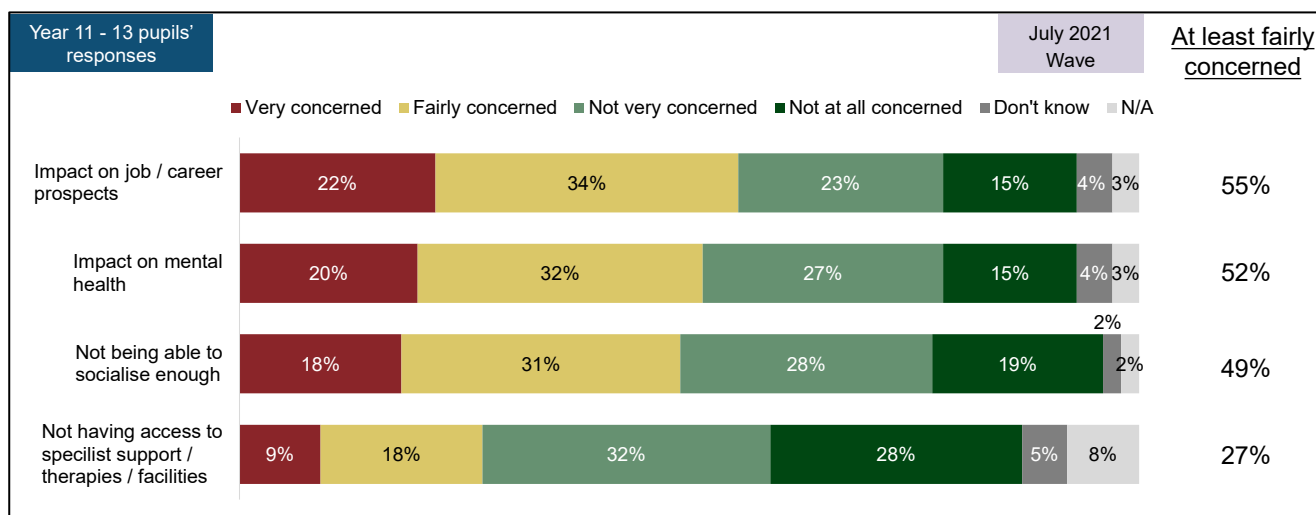
Similarly, to previous waves:

- Year 11-13 pupils were more likely to have felt lonely at least some of the time (68%, particularly year 12 (71%) and 13 pupils (79%), vs. year 7-10s (48%).
- Female pupils were more likely than male pupils to often feel lonely (19% vs. 9%).

The impact of COVID-19 on other areas of life

Having discussed concerns of COVID-19 disruption on education, pupils in year 11, 12 and 13 were also asked how concerned they were about the impact of COVID-19 disruption on four different areas of their life. As shown in Figure 22, pupils were most commonly concerned about the impact on their job or career prospects; over half (55%) were at *least fairly* concerned about this, with 22% *very* concerned.

Figure 22. Pupil concern about COVID-19 disruption on different areas of life



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave X3_P2W10. "How concerned, if at all, are you about the impact of COVID-19 disruption on other areas of your life?" All year 11, 12 and 13 pupils (n=788)

Year 13 were more likely than pupils in year 11 and 12 to be at least fairly concerned about all four areas of life listed:

- Impact on job / careers prospects (63% vs. 55% overall)
- Impact on mental health (60% vs. 52% overall)
- Not being able to socialise enough (61% vs. 49% overall)
- Not having access to specialist support, therapies or facilities (34% vs. 27% overall).

In addition to this, female pupils were more likely than male pupils to report they were at least fairly concerned about the impact on their job and career prospects (59% vs. 51%) the impact on their mental health (62% vs. 40%) and not being able to socialise enough (53% vs. 44%).

Pupils with SEND were more likely to be concerned about access to specialist support (37% vs. 26% of those without SEND), as were pupils eligible for FSM (35% vs. 26% of

those not eligible). Pupils eligible for FSM were also more likely than those not eligible to be worried about the impact on job / career prospects (62% vs. 54%).

Correlation could clearly be seen between ONS measures of wellbeing and concern about the impacts of COVID-19. For example, pupils with 'high or very high' levels of anxiousness were more likely than those with 'low' levels of anxiousness²¹ to report they were concerned about:

- Impact on job / careers prospects (65% high or very high anxiousness vs. 46% low anxiousness)
- Impact on mental health (71% high or very high anxiousness vs. 34% low anxiousness)
- Not being able to socialise enough (61% high or very high anxiousness vs. 37% low anxiousness)
- Not having access to specialist support, therapies or facilities (44% high or very high anxiousness vs. 14% low anxiousness).

²¹ Anxiety levels as self-reported in July 2021 wave. On a 0-10 scale, ratings of 0-3 are classed as 'low' levels of anxiety, ratings of 6-10 are classed as high or very high levels of anxiety. Further details on July 2021 wellbeing measures can be later in the report under the heading Mental Health and Wellbeing.

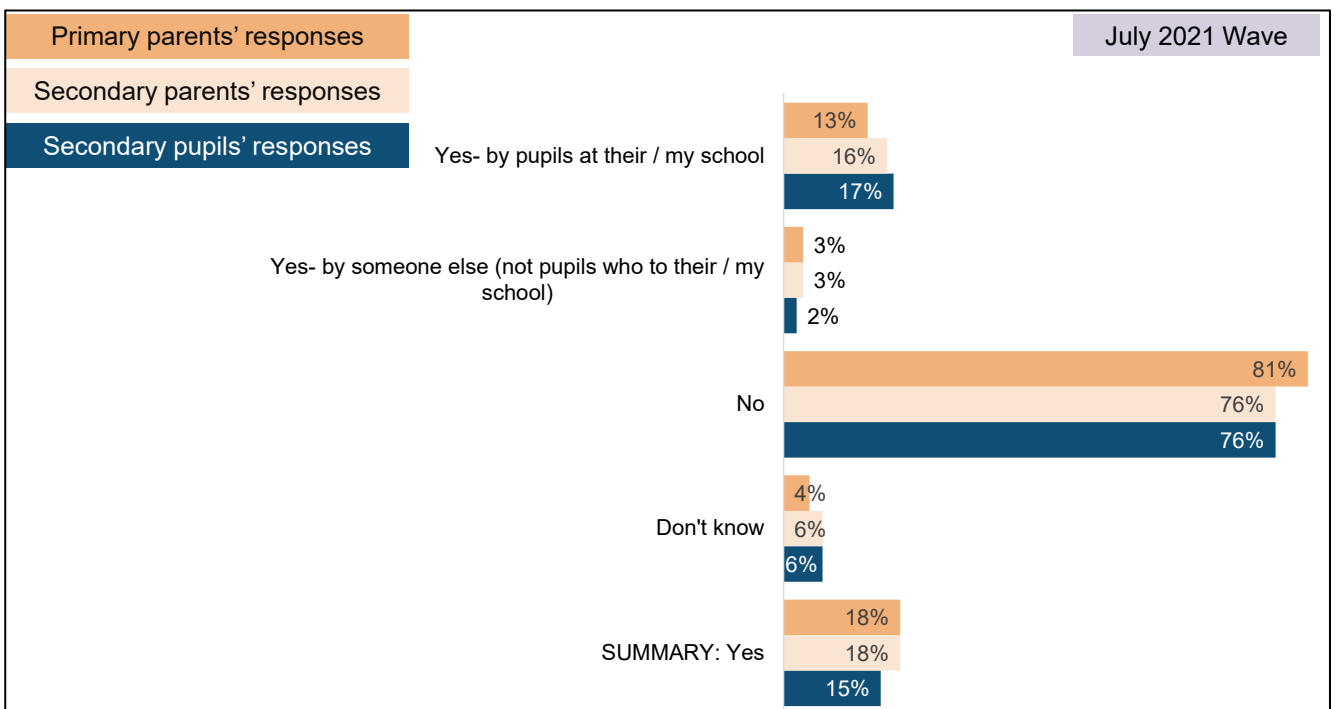
Bullying

The Government has sent a clear message to schools that bullying, including cyberbullying, for whatever reason, is unacceptable. It can have a devastating effect on individuals, harm their education and have serious and lasting consequences for their mental health and wellbeing. All schools are legally required to have a behaviour policy with measures to prevent all forms of bullying. They have the freedom to develop their own anti-bullying strategies appropriate to their environment and are held to account by Ofsted.

In July 2021 pupils and parents were asked a series of questions relating to their experiences of bullying. Both audiences were asked if they, or their child, had been the victim of bullying in the past 12 months. Those that indicated they had been, were then asked why they thought they had been the victim of bullying and whether any of the bullying took place online, with pupils asked which platform the online bullying had occurred on. Finally, all parents and pupils were asked how well they felt their child’s school acted to prevent bullying and to address incidents of bullying.

Under one-in-five (18%) of parents, both primary and secondary, and 15% of secondary pupils reported that their child /they had been the victim of bullying in the past 12 months.

Figure 23. Whether pupils have been the victim of bullying in the past 12 months



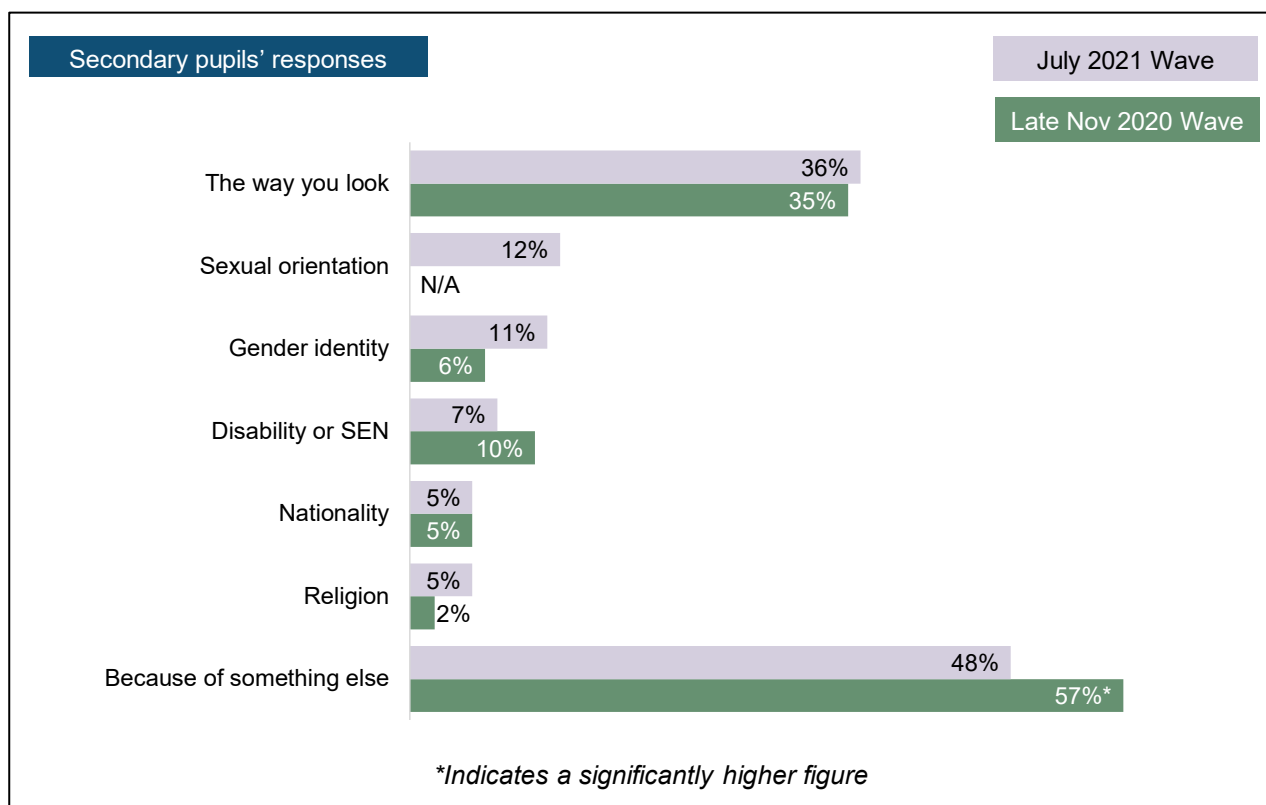
Source: PPP July 2021 wave, B22 / B23 “In the past 12 months have you / has your child been a victim of bullying for any reason?” All pupils / all parents (n=1,511 / n=3,080)

The following groups of pupils and parents were more likely to report that they / their child had been the victim of bullying:

- Pupils in year 7-10 (18% vs.10% of those in year 11-13).
- Parents of FSM-eligible pupils (25% vs. 17% of parents of non-eligible FSM pupils). This difference was not present among pupils.
- White pupils (17% vs. 8% of BAME pupils). Parents of White and BAME pupils showed no significant difference.
- Pupils with SEND (21% vs. 14% of those without). This difference was more pronounced among parents of pupils with SEND (30% vs. 16% of parents of pupils not with SEND).
- Pupils who reported low scores, versus those who reported a high score for happiness (22% vs. 11%), life satisfaction (20% vs. 13%) and worthwhileness (19% vs. 13%) as well as pupils with high scores for anxiousness (21% vs. 12% who reported low anxiousness). This pattern was also present in all parents reporting these wellbeing scores for pupils.

Consistent with late November 2020, pupils most commonly reported that they thought they had experienced bullying because of the way they look, as shown in Figure 24. Almost half (48%) reported that it was because of something else not listed, which was a decrease from late November 2020 (57%).

Figure 24. Reasons why pupils think they have experienced bullying in the past 12 months



Source: PPP Waves Late November 2020 and July 2021 wave, B22A “Which of the following reasons, if any, do you think is a reason you have experienced being bullied in the past 12 months” Pupils who have been bullied in the last 12 months (n= 145 / n=209). Sexual orientation was added in July 2021. Answer options <5% not shown.²²

The following differences among pupil groups emerged:

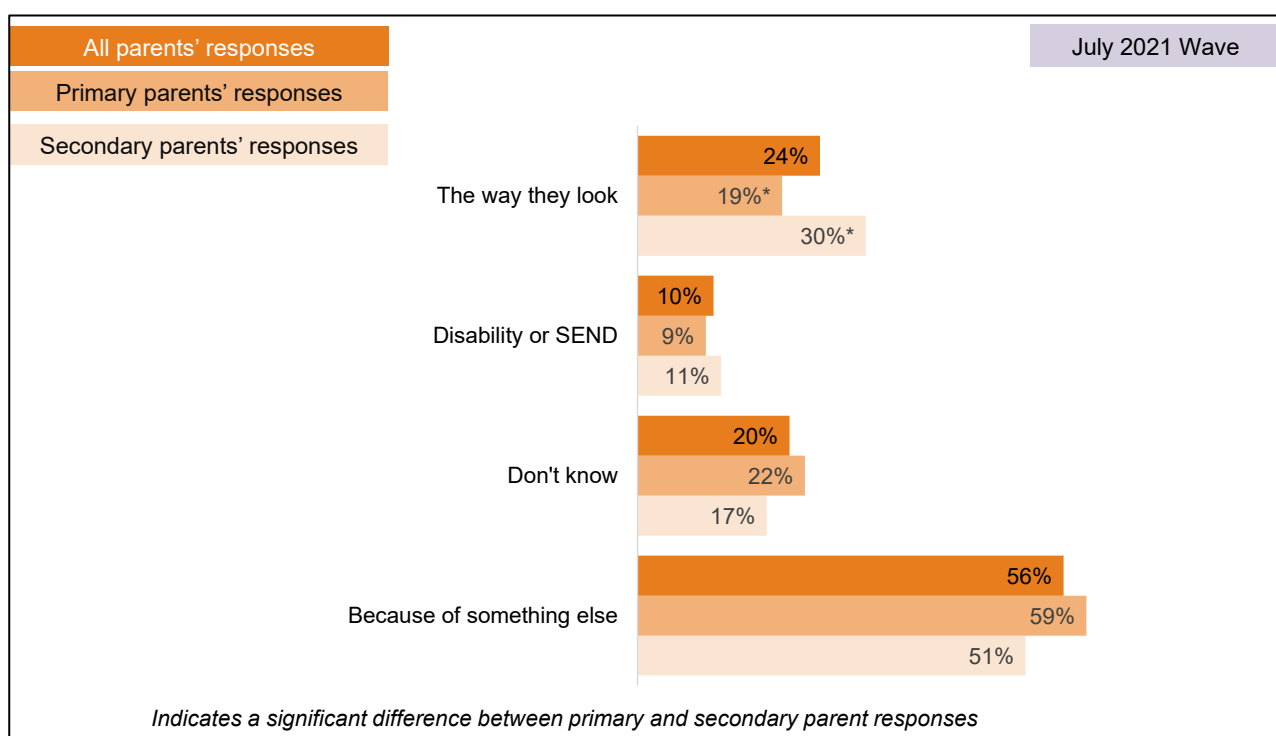
- Consistent with late November 2020, pupils in year 11-13 were more likely than those in year 7-10 to think their gender identity (19% vs. 8%) was the reason they had experienced bullying. In July 2021 older pupils were also more likely than younger to think their sexual orientation (21% vs. 8%) was the reason they had experienced bullying.
- Female pupils were more than three times as likely as male pupils to report that their sexual orientation (18% vs. 5%) was the reason they had experienced bullying and were ten times as likely to report that their gender identity (20% vs. 2%) was the reason. In late November 2020 there was no significant difference between proportion of male and female pupils that reported they had been bullied because of their gender identity. One-in-four pupils (24%) with SEND reported that they were bullied because of a disability or special education need, compared with 3% of those not with SEND. This difference was also present in late November 2020. Pupils were not asked if they thought their sexual orientation was a reason

²² Race or ethnicity, prefer not to say.

they experienced bullying in November 2020.

Parents were less confident than pupils about the reasons why their child had experienced bullying, with one-in-five (20%) reporting that they did not know. As shown in Figure 25, the way they look was the specific reason parents most commonly reported, with secondary parents more likely than primary to do so (30% vs. 19%). However, more than half of parents (56%), including both primary (59%) and secondary (51%) taken independently, reported that it was because of something else not listed.

Figure 25. Reasons why parents think their child has experienced bullying in the last 12 months



Source: PPP July 2021 wave, B23A “Which of the following reasons, if any, do you think is a reason your child has experienced being bullied in the past 12 months” Parents of pupils who have been bullied in the past 12 months (n=565). Answer options <5% not shown.²³

The following differences among parent groups emerged:

- Parents of male pupils were more likely to report that their child had experienced bullying because of a disability or SEND (13% vs. 7% of parents of female pupils).
- Parents of pupils with SEND were far more likely than those not with SEND to report that their child had been bullied because of a disability or SEND (35% vs. >1%).
- Parents of BAME pupils were twice as likely as those of White pupils to report that

²³ Sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, prefer not to say.

it was because of the way their child looked (40% vs. 20%).

- Parents from rural areas were more likely than those in urban areas to report that they did not know the reason their child had been bullied (26% vs. 18%).

Online bullying

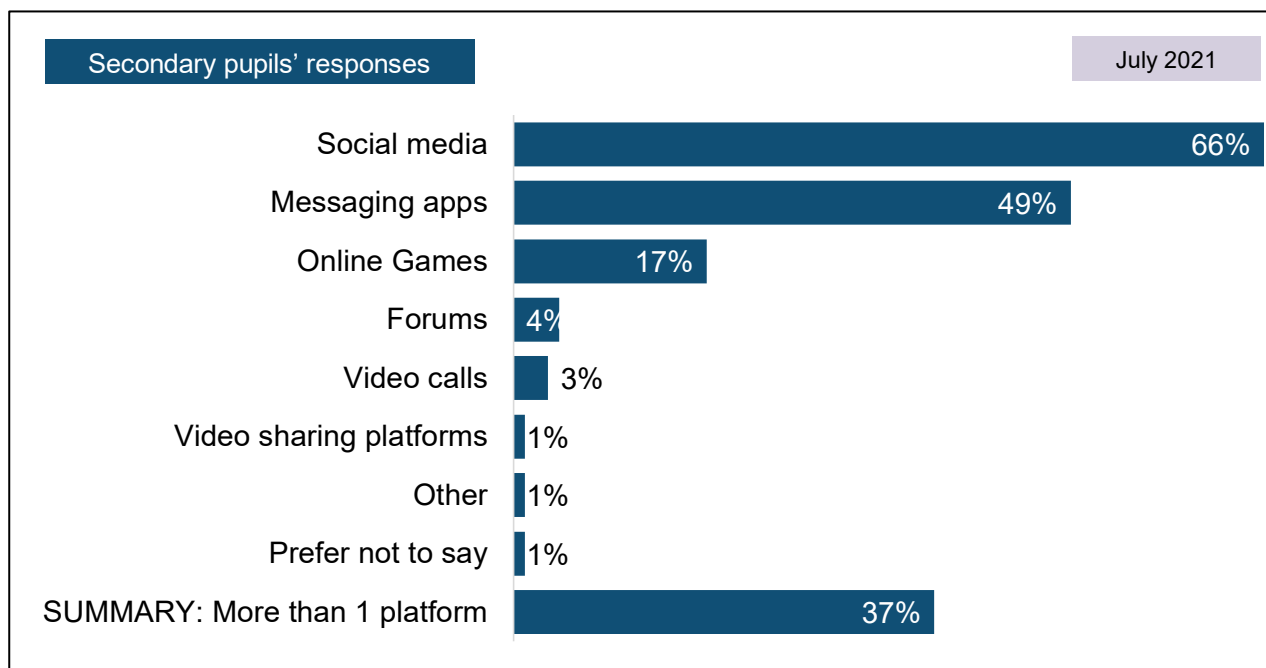
One-in-twenty (5%) parents reported that their child had been bullied online, with 18% reporting that their child had experienced *any* bullying in the last 12 months. Parents of secondary pupils were three times as likely as those of primary pupils to report that their child had experienced online bullying (9% vs. 3%). Just under two-in-five (37%) pupils who had been bullied in the past year reported that some of it had been online.

The following groups of parents and pupils were more likely to report that they / their child had experienced online bullying:

- Parents of female pupils (7% vs. 2% of parents of male pupils).
- FSM-eligible pupils (9% vs. 5% of non-eligible FSM pupils).
- Parents of pupils with SEND (8% vs. 5% of parents of pupils not with SEND).
- Parents in a single parent household (8% vs. 5% of those not in a single parent household).

Pupils who had experienced online bullying most commonly reported that it took place on social media or messaging apps, as shown in Figure 26. More than one-in-three (37%) reported that it had taken place on more than one platform.

Figure 26. Platforms pupils experienced online bullying on in the last 12 months

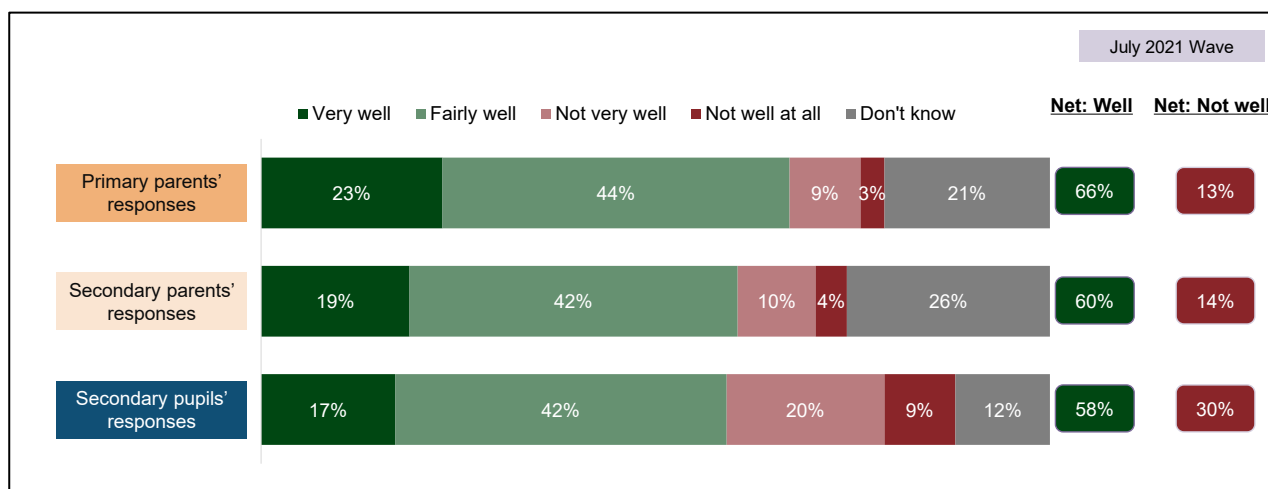


Source: PPP July 2021 wave, B22C “On which platform(s) did this bullying occur?” Pupils who have been bullied online in the last 12 months (n=81)

How well schools prevent and address bullying

As shown in Figure 27, around two-in-three secondary pupils (58%) and secondary parents (60%) felt that their / their child’s school acted well to prevent bullying from taking place. However, secondary pupils were also twice as likely as secondary parents to say they did not act well (30% vs. 14%). Two-in-three (66%) primary parents reported that their child’s school acts well to prevent bullying. One-in-five primary parents (21%) and one-in-four (26%) secondary parents did not know how well their child’s school acted to prevent bullying.

Figure 27. Parent and pupil views on how well their / their child’s school acts to prevent bullying from taking place



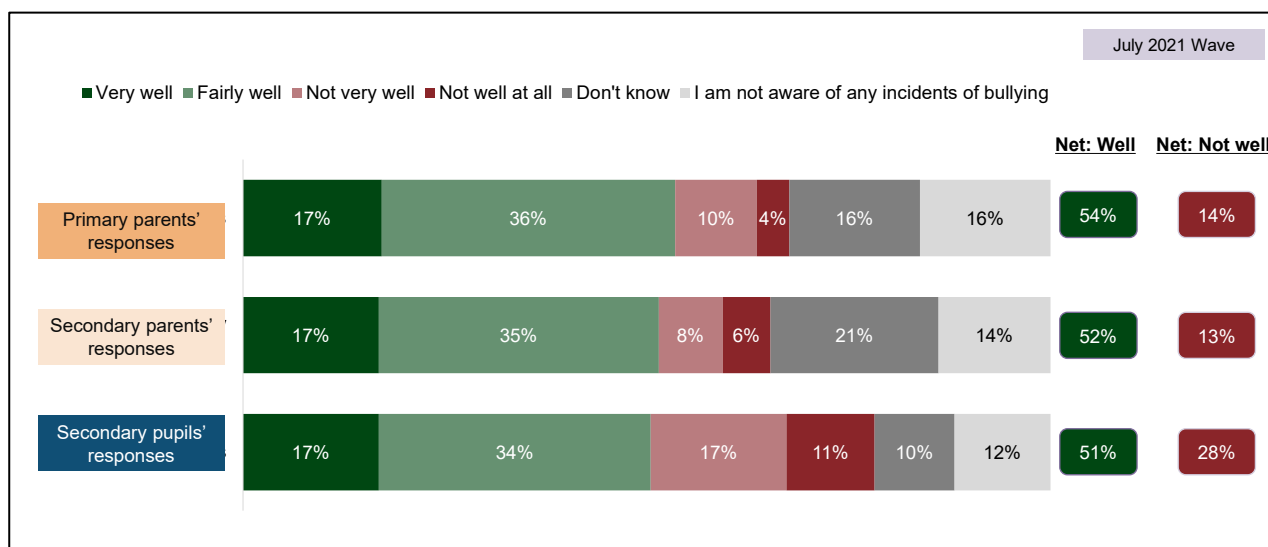
Source: PPP July 2021 wave, B22D / B23C “How well would you say your / your child’s school acts to prevent bullying from taking place?” All pupils / All parents (n=1,511 / n=3,080)

The following parent and pupil groups were more likely to report that their / their child’s school did not act well to prevent bullying:

- Pupils in year 11-13 (36% vs. 26% of those in year 7-10).
- Female pupils (35% vs. 25% among male pupils).
- FSM-eligible pupils (35% vs. 29% of non-eligible FSM pupils) and parents of FSM-eligible pupils (18% vs. 12% of non-eligible FSM pupils).
- White pupils (31% vs. 25% of BAME pupils).
- Parents of pupils with SEND (20% vs. 12% of those not with SEND).
- Pupils who had been a victim of bullying (49% vs. 25% of those who had not), in particular those who had been bullied by someone from outside of their school (62%) or who had been bullied online (58%). This was also true for the parents of pupils who had been a victim of bullying (33% vs. 3% of those who had not), although this was more pronounced among parents whose child had been bullied by pupils at their school (35%) as well as those who had been bullied online (42%).

As shown in Figure 28, over half of parents and pupils felt that their / their child’s school dealt with incidents of bullying well. However, secondary pupils were more than twice as likely as secondary parents to say their school did not deal with incidents of bullying well (28% vs. 13%). One-in-five (21%) secondary parents and 16% of primary parents reported that they did not know how well their child’s school dealt with incidents of bullying.

Figure 28. Parent and pupil views on how well their / their child’s school deals with incidents of bullying



Source: PPP July 2021 wave, B22E / B23D “How well would you say your / your child’s school deals with incidents of bullying??” All pupils / All parents (n=1,511 / n=3,080)

The following groups of parents and pupils were more likely to report that their / their child’s school did not deal with incidents of bullying well:

- Pupils in year 11 and year 13 (36% and 35% vs. 20% in year 12 and 27% in year 7-10).
- Female pupils (33% vs. 23% of male).
- FSM- eligible pupils (33% vs. 27% of non-eligible FSM pupils) and parents of FSM-eligible pupils (20% vs. 13% of parents of non-eligible FSM pupils).
- Parents of pupils with SEND (23% vs. 12% of those not with SEND).
- Pupils who had been the victim of bullying (47% vs. 23% of those who had not), in particular those who had been bullied online (56%), and parents of pupils who had been the victim of bullying (36% vs. 9% who had not), with those whose child had been bullied online also notably high (44%).

Post 16 education and training programmes

In July 2021 pupils (and parents of pupils) who were coming to the end of years 9 and 10 were asked about their knowledge of certain post 16 programmes. The awareness questions tested whether the respondent reports to have heard of the name of the programme and did not test their understanding of the term. Pupils were also asked which they were likely to consider undertaking after their GCSEs whilst parents were asked which they were likely to encourage their children to consider.

Pupils were asked about their level of awareness for A Levels, apprenticeships, traineeships, as well as the new T Levels and the T Level Transition Programme²⁴. T Levels are two-year courses equivalent to three A levels.²⁵

These questions look at pupils who will, within the next couple of years, have started making decisions about what they want to do after their GCSEs. Awareness of a range of post-16 options, both on academic and technical pathways, is important for young people to be able to decide what route is right for them. Evidence gathered here will also allow us to track awareness of new programmes, like T Levels, as they expand and roll out more widely.

Awareness of post 16 programmes

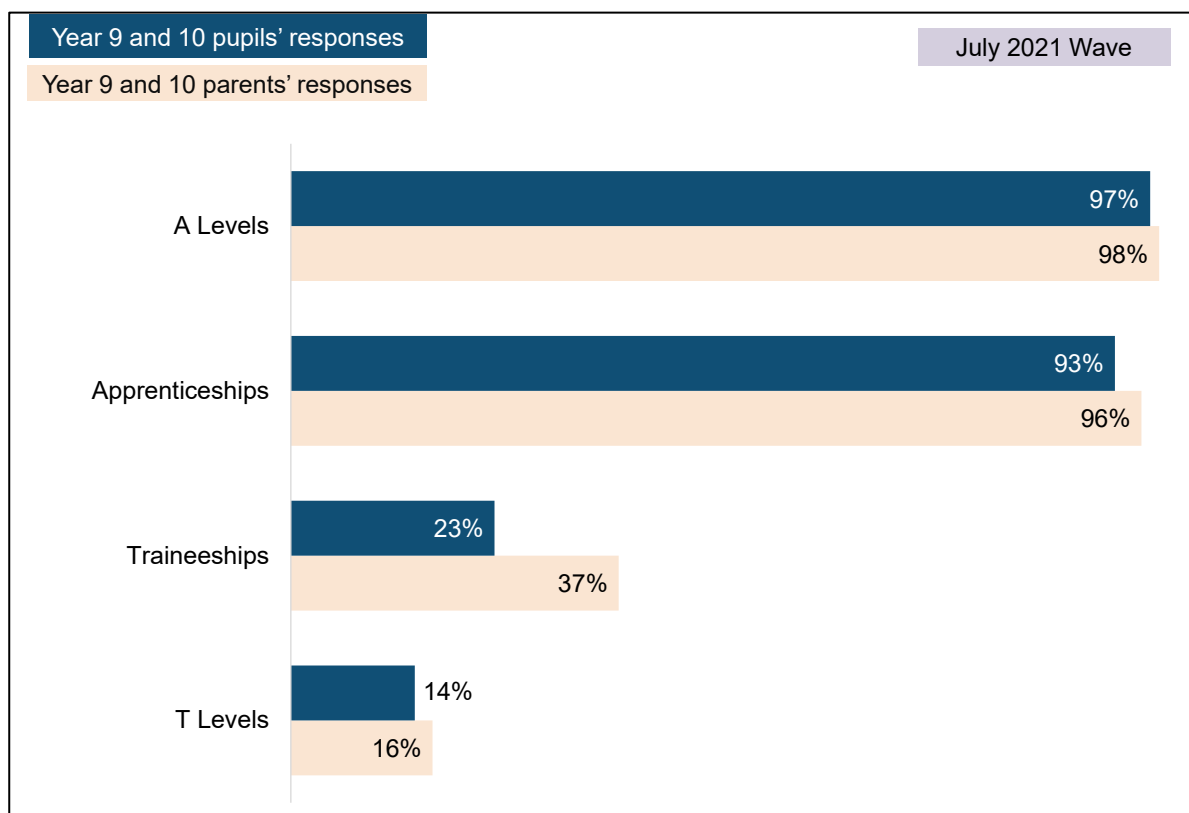
Awareness of A Levels was almost universal amongst year 9 and 10 pupils (97%), and the vast majority (93%) were also aware of apprenticeships as shown in Figure 29 below. Less than a quarter (23%) had heard of traineeships and around one-in-seven had heard of the new T Levels (14%).

Awareness of post 16 programmes amongst parents of pupils in years 9 and 10 mirrored that of pupils. Virtually all parents had heard of A Levels (98%) and apprenticeships (96%). Awareness of traineeships was lower (37%) and less than one-in-six (16%) had heard of the new T Levels.

²⁴ Three T Levels were rolled out in September 2020 to 44 providers, with roll out set to increase significantly in future years. See [T Level Action Plan 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92421/t-level-action-plan-2020.pdf)

²⁵ [Introduction of T Levels - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/introduction-of-t-levels)

Figure 29. Awareness of post 16 programmes amongst year 9 and 10 pupils and parents



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave: T8/T8A-P2W10 “Which, if any, of the following qualifications have you heard of?” Year 9 and 10 pupils (n=421). Parents of pupils in year 9 and 10 (n=619).

There were some differences in awareness, especially of apprenticeships and T Levels, between sub-groups:

- Whilst awareness of A Levels, apprenticeships and traineeships was similar in both year groups, year 10 pupils were three times more likely to have heard of T Levels (21% vs. 7% of year 9 pupils). This may reflect higher exposure to new information on post 16 options for those closer to year 12.
- Parents whose children were eligible for FSM were half as likely to have heard of T Levels than those whose children were not eligible (9% vs. 18%).
- Pupils with SEND were less likely to have heard of the new T Levels (4% vs. 15% of those not with SEND).
- Female pupils were less likely to be aware of apprenticeships (90% vs. 96% of male).
- Pupils in London were less likely to be aware of apprenticeships (84% vs. 95% in the rest of the country, not including London).

- BAME pupils were less likely to be aware of apprenticeships (88% vs. 94% of White pupils).

There were some indications of a link between parental education and employment and their awareness of post 16 programmes:

- Parents with a low household income of under £15,000 were less likely to have heard of A Levels (95% vs. 99% of those earning more) and / or apprenticeships (91% vs. 97%).
- Parents whose own highest qualification was GCSE or equivalent were less likely to be aware of A Levels (96% vs. 99% of those with A Levels or above) and / or apprenticeships (92% vs. 98%).
- Those who were full time parents or homemakers were less likely than those who were employed to have heard of A Levels (95% vs. 98%) and / or apprenticeships (90% vs. 96%).

Amongst pupils who had heard of T Levels around a quarter (23%) reported they had heard of the T Level Transition Programme when it was outlined to them. Similarly, of parents who were aware of T Levels, a fifth (20%) reported they had heard of the T Level Transition Programme.

Knowledge of post 16 programmes

Year 9 and 10 pupils were asked how much they knew about each post 16 qualification they had heard of. Knowledge levels were mixed, with only a minority of pupils indicating they 'knew a lot about and were very familiar with' any post 16 qualification and the activities they involve.

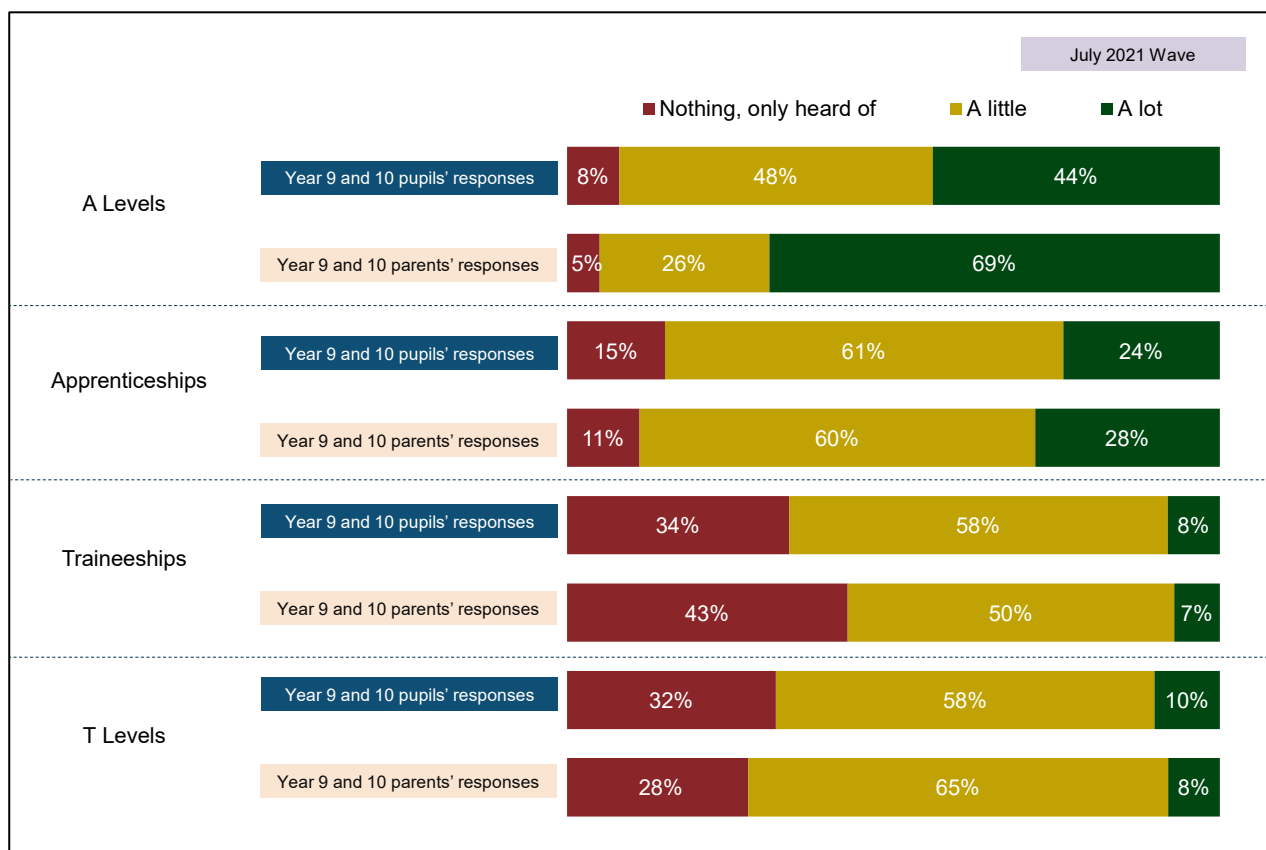
Pupils were most likely to be very familiar with A Levels; 44% of those who had heard of them felt they knew a lot, as shown in Figure 30 below. However, around a quarter of pupils who were aware of apprenticeships felt they knew a lot about them (24%).

Knowledge of traineeships and T Levels was much lower; 8% of those aware of traineeships and 10% of those aware of T Levels knew a lot about them. Of the pupils who had heard of traineeships and T Levels around a third (34% and 32%) knew nothing about them.

Parents also felt most secure in their knowledge of A Levels, 69% who had heard of them reported they 'knew a lot, were very familiar with them and the activities they involve', as shown in Figure 30 below. Parents were markedly more likely to report they knew a lot about A Levels than pupils were (69% vs. 44%).

Reflecting pupil's knowledge, parents also felt less familiar with the other post 16 programmes; 28% of those who had heard of apprenticeships felt they knew a lot about them, 7% who had heard of traineeships felt they knew a lot about them and 8% who had heard of T Levels felt they knew a lot about them.

Figure 30. Knowledge of post 16 programmes amongst year 9 and 10 pupils and parents who had heard of each



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave: T9/T9A-P2W10 "How much do you know about [qualification heard of]?" Year 9 and 10 pupils aware of A Levels (n=409), aware of Apprenticeships (n=393), aware of traineeships (n=101) aware of T Levels (n=69). Parents of pupils in year 9 and 10 aware of A Levels (n=605), aware of Apprenticeships (n=594), aware of traineeships (n=239) aware of T Levels (n=108).

Amongst those who had heard of A Levels and apprenticeships there were some differences in knowledge between sub-groups:

- Year 10 pupils were more likely to feel they knew a lot about apprenticeships than year 9 pupils (29% vs. 19%).
- Female pupils were more likely to feel they knew a lot about A Levels than male pupils (51% vs. 36%).
- Parents of pupils eligible for FSM were less likely to feel they knew a lot about A Levels (53% vs. 72% of those with children who were not eligible).

- Pupils eligible for FSM were more likely to know nothing (beyond having heard of it) about Apprenticeships (23% vs. 13% of those not eligible).
- Pupils with SEND were less likely to feel they knew a lot about A Levels than pupils not with SEND (22% vs. 47%). Similarly, parents of pupils with SEND were more likely to not know anything (beyond having heard of it) about A Levels, 11% vs. 4% of those not with SEND.

Building on the findings about awareness reported above, there were some indications of a link between parental education and employment and their knowledge of post 16 programmes:

- Parents who had heard of A Levels but whose own highest qualification was GCSE or equivalent were much less likely to feel they knew a lot about A Levels, 47% compared to 82% of those who held at least an A Level or equivalent qualification themselves.
- Half (50%) of parents with a low household income of under £15,000 who had heard of A Levels felt they knew a lot about them compared to two thirds (67%) of those with household incomes between £15,000 and £45,000 and 85% of those with household incomes over £45,000.
- Parents who had heard of apprenticeships and who held vocational qualifications themselves were particularly likely to feel they knew a lot about apprenticeships (42% vs. 28% overall and 20% of those with a bachelor's degree or equivalent).

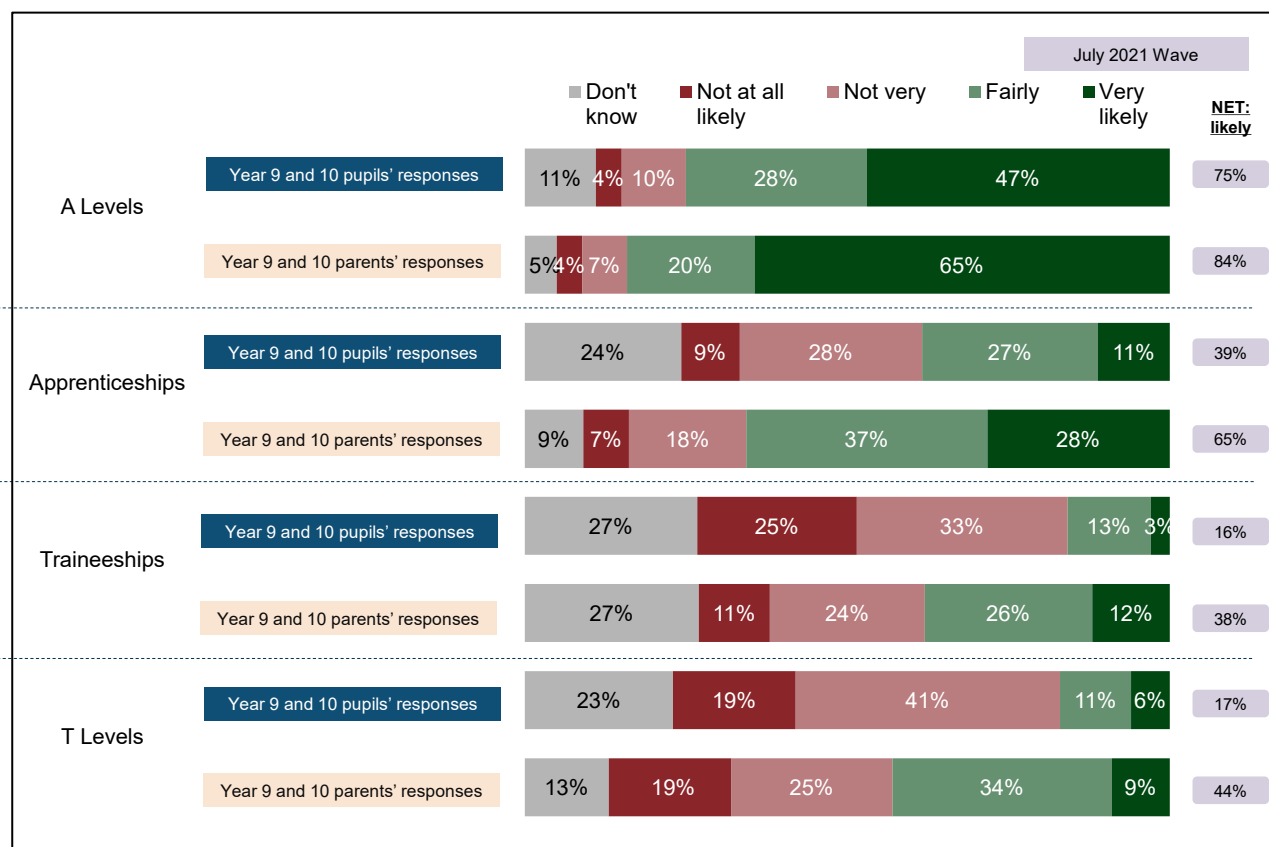
There was no evidence that pupils who had attended less regularly due to COVID-19, or parents of pupils who had done so, had lower levels of awareness or knowledge of post 16 qualifications.

Consideration of post 16 programmes

Year 9 and 10 pupils were asked how likely they were to consider undertaking each post 16 programme they had heard of. A Levels were by far the most likely to be considered, by 75% of those aware of them with almost half (47%) very likely to consider them, as shown in Figure 31 below.

Apprenticeships were likely to be considered by two fifths (39%) of pupils aware of them, with 11% very likely. Less than a fifth of those aware of traineeships (16%) and / or T Levels (17%) were likely to consider them.

Figure 31. Likelihood of consideration (or encouragement of consideration) of post 16 qualifications amongst year 9 and 10 pupils and parents aware of each



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave: T11/T11A-P2W10 “How likely would you be to consider / to encourage your child to consider... [qualification heard of]?” Year 9 and 10 pupils aware of A Levels (n=409), aware of apprenticeships (n=393), aware of traineeships (n=101) aware of T Levels (n=69). Parents of pupils in year 9 and 10 aware of A Levels (n=605), aware of apprenticeships (n=594), aware of traineeships (n=239) aware of T Levels (n=108).

There was notable evidence of uncertainty, with around a quarter of pupils who had heard of apprenticeships (24%), traineeships (27%) and / or T Levels (23%) unsure how likely they would be to consider them.

Parents of year 9 and 10 pupils were asked how likely they were to consider encouraging their child to undertake each post 16 qualification they had heard of. All qualifications listed were more likely to be encouraged by parents than considered by pupils, though there was a smaller disparity with A Levels which were likely to be considered by most pupils and parents.

A Levels were by far the most likely to be encouraged, by 84% of parents aware of them with two thirds (65%) very likely to do so, as shown in Figure 31 above.

Apprenticeships were likely to be encouraged by almost two thirds (65%) of parents aware of them, with 28% very likely to do so. Around two fifths of parents aware of traineeships (38%) and / or T Levels (44%) were likely to encourage them.

There was less evidence of uncertainty amongst parents than seen amongst pupils though still over a quarter of those who had heard of traineeships (27%) were unsure how likely they would be to encourage them, as were 13% of those who had heard of T Levels.

There were some differences in interest in A Levels and apprenticeships between sub-groups (amongst those who had heard of them):

- Year 9 pupils were more likely to be uncertain about apprenticeships (32% vs. 17% of year 10 pupils).
- Over half (55%) of female pupils were very likely to consider A Levels compared to 38% of male pupils. Similarly parents whose child was female were more likely to encourage A Levels (70% vs. 59% with a male child). Parents own gender appears not to influence this with male parents more likely to encourage A Levels than female (76% vs. 63%).
- Male pupils were more likely to consider apprenticeships than female pupils (44% vs. 33%). Female parents themselves were slightly more likely to encourage apprenticeships than male (67% vs. 62%), but there was little difference between parents with male or female children.
- Parents of those eligible for FSM were less likely to encourage A Levels (72% vs. 87% of parents of those not eligible). Parents of those *not* eligible for FSM were more unlikely to encourage apprenticeships (29% unlikely vs. 10% of parents of pupils who were FSM eligible) and / or traineeships (38% not likely to encourage traineeships vs. 17% of parents of pupils who were FSM eligible).
- Over three-in-five BAME pupils were very likely to consider A Levels compared to two-in-five White pupils (64% vs. 41%). This difference was seen to a greater extent amongst parents with almost four-in-five BAME parents very likely to encourage A Levels compared to just over three-in-five White parents (78% vs. 62%).
- A quarter (25%) of parents of BAME pupils who were aware of traineeships would be very likely to encourage them, compared to 9% of parents of White pupils.
- Less than a quarter of pupils with SEND were likely to consider A Levels compared to half of pupils not with SEND (53% vs. 78%). Similarly, parents of those with SEND were less likely to encourage A Levels (61% vs. 90% of other parents). However, these parents of SEND pupils were more likely to encourage Apprenticeships (77% vs. 62% of other parents) and / or traineeships (64% vs. 31% of other parents).
- Pupils in London were also particularly likely to consider A Levels (62% very likely

vs. 47% overall).

- Half of pupils in rural areas who were aware of apprenticeships were unlikely to consider them (50% vs. 35% of those in urban areas).

Factors linked to parental social mobility appear to influence their likelihood to encourage particular programmes:

- Likelihood to encourage A Levels rose with the highest qualification held by parents (from 76% of those qualified to GCSE or equivalent level, to 82% of those qualified to A Level and 93% of those with a Masters, PhD or equivalent).
- Likelihood to encourage A Levels rose with parents' household income, from 73% of those with an income under £15,000 to 79% of those earning £25,000 - £44,999 and 100% of those earning £100,000 or more.
- Likelihood to encourage apprenticeships *fell* with parents' household income, from 80% of those with an income under £15,000 to 66% of those earning £25,000 - £44,999 and 47% of those earning £100,000 or more.
- Likelihood to encourage apprenticeships *fell* with the highest qualification held by parents (from 84% of those qualified to GCSE or equivalent level, 75% of those with vocational qualifications to 54% of those with a Masters, PhD or equivalent).

There was little indication that pupils who had attended less regularly due to COVID-19, or parents of pupils who had done so, were less likely to consider or encourage consideration of post 16 qualifications.

Post-18 education and training options

In July 2021 pupils who were coming to the end of years 11 and 12 were asked about their knowledge of post 18 qualifications, as were parents of children in year 11.²⁶ The awareness questions tested whether the respondent reports to have heard of the name of the programme and did not test their understanding of the term. Pupils were asked which, if any, they were likely to consider undertaking whilst parents were asked which, if any, they were likely to encourage their children to consider.

These questions give us insight into school pupils who will, within the next couple of years, have started making decisions about what they want to do after age 18. Awareness of a range of options, both academic and technical, is important for young people to make the right decisions for them. These questions will also be able to track interest in level 4 and 5 qualifications, such as [Higher Technical Qualifications](#) which will start rolling out in 2022. Higher Technical Qualifications will be specific level 4 or 5 qualifications that have been quality marked by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to indicate alignment to employer-led occupational standards. The first Higher Technical Qualifications will be taught from September 2022.

When considering the following findings, it is helpful to consider the composition of year 11 and year 12 pupils on the panel. All year 11 pupils and an estimated half of those in year 12 pupils, were studying at school. However, the other half of those in year 12 are estimated to have been studying at other institutions e.g. a sixth form that is part of a college or a further education (FE) college. This report uses the term 'pupils' to cover those studying in all settings, including in an FE setting.

Awareness of post 18 education and training options

Apprenticeships and bachelor's or undergraduate degrees were the post 18 education and training options with highest awareness levels. Higher Technical Qualifications and traineeships were less well known, especially amongst pupils themselves.

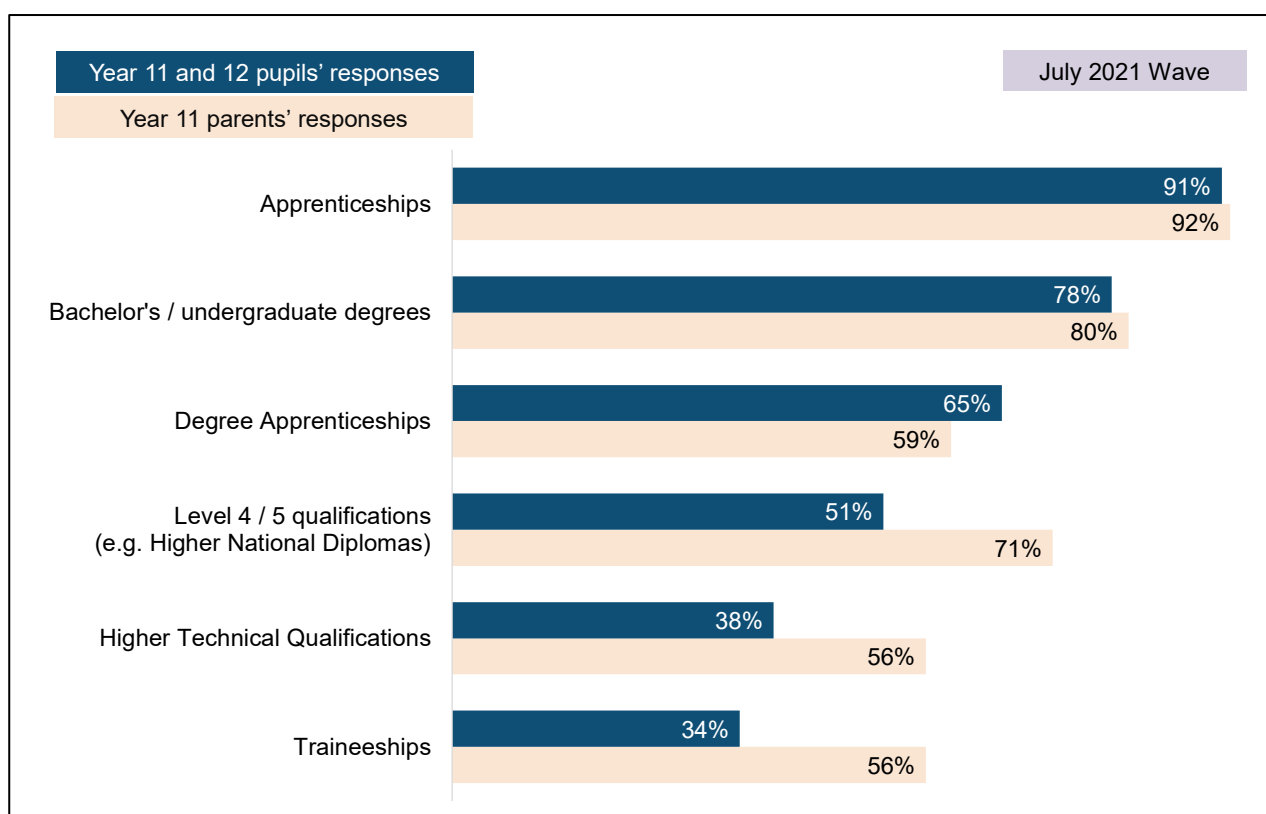
Awareness of apprenticeships was widespread (91% of year 11 and 12 pupils and 92% of parents of year 11 pupils had heard of them). Awareness of bachelor's or undergraduate degrees was lower (78% of pupils and 80% of parents). Degree apprenticeships were less well known, with 65% of pupils and 59% of parents aware of them.

²⁶ Parents of year 12 pupils are not covered as the initial panel only covered parents of pupils up to year 10. Children who were in year 10 when initially recruited had progressed to year 11 by the time of this research so their parents are included, but there no parents of those currently in year 12.

Awareness of Level 4 and 5 qualifications (e.g. Higher National Diplomas) was notably higher amongst parents (71%) than pupils (51% aware). Similarly Higher Technical Qualifications and traineeships had both been heard of by a slim majority of parents (56% each) but by a smaller proportion of pupils (38% aware of Higher Technical Qualifications and 34% of traineeships).

Awareness of traineeships was higher amongst these older pupils, and parents of older pupils, than reported amongst year 9 and 10 pupils and parents in the previous section. Most notably parental awareness had jumped from 37% to 56%.

Figure 32. Awareness of post 18 education and training options amongst year 11 and 12 school pupils and parents of year 11 pupils



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave: T12/T12A-P2W10 “Which, if any, of the following education and training options have you heard of?” Year 11 and 12 pupils (n=519). Parents of pupils in year 11 (n=308).

There were some differences in awareness, especially of apprenticeships and T Levels, between sub-groups:

- Awareness of undergraduate degrees was higher amongst year 12 pupils (87% vs. 69% of year 11 pupils), as was awareness of Degree apprenticeships (74% vs. 57%).
- Parents of female year 11 pupils were more likely to be aware of apprenticeships

(96% vs. 87% of parents of male pupils). Male pupils were more likely to have heard of Higher Technical Qualifications (44% vs. 32% of female).

- Pupils with SEND were more likely than those not to be aware of traineeships (48% vs. 32%) and / or Higher Technical Qualifications (49% vs. 36%). They were less likely to have heard of undergraduate degrees (68% vs. 80%).

There were some indications of a link between parental education and employment and their awareness of post 18 options:

- Parents with a lower household income of under £25,000 were less likely to have heard of undergraduate degrees (64% vs. 91% of those earning more), apprenticeships (83% vs. 98%), and / or Degree apprenticeships (45% vs. 70%).
- Parents whose own highest qualification was GCSE or equivalent were less likely to be aware of undergraduate degrees (66% vs. 84% of those with A-Levels and 94% of those with degrees or higher themselves), this reflects their lower awareness of A Levels reported in the previous section.
- Unemployed parents were less likely than employed to have heard of undergraduate degrees (68% vs 85%) and / or apprenticeships (80% vs 96%).

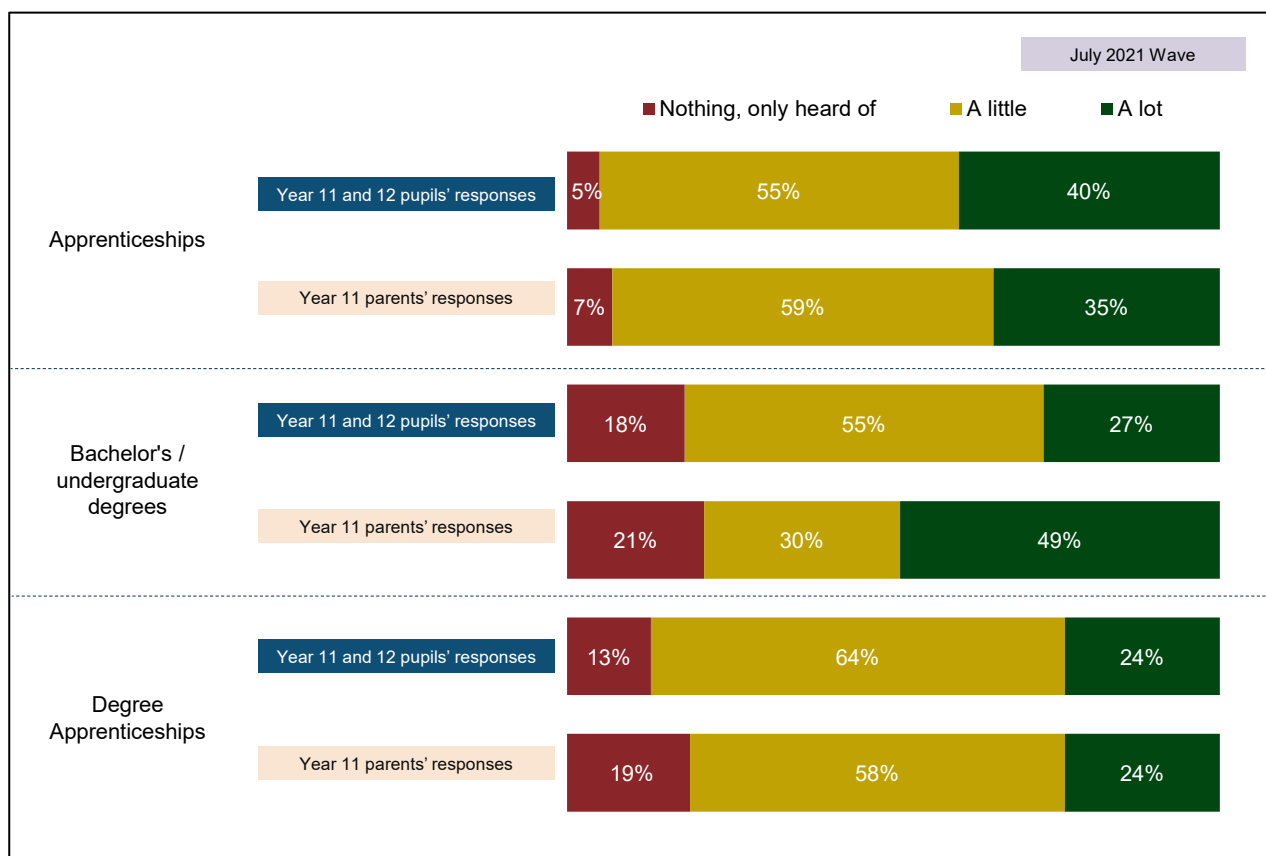
Knowledge of post 18 education and training options

Year 11 and year 12 pupils were asked how much they knew about each post 18 education and training option they had heard of. Knowledge levels were mixed, with only a minority of pupils indicating they 'knew a lot about and were very familiar with' any post 18 options and the activities they involve.

Pupils were most likely to be very familiar with Apprenticeships, 40% of those who had heard of them felt they knew a lot, as shown in Figure 33 below. Around a quarter of pupils who were aware of undergraduate degrees or Degree apprenticeships felt they knew a lot about them (27% and 24% respectively).

Parents however felt most secure in their knowledge of undergraduate degrees, 49% who had heard of them reported they 'knew a lot, were very familiar with them and the activities they involve' compared to 35% reporting this about Apprenticeships. Parents were markedly more likely to report they knew a lot about undergraduate degrees than pupils were (49% vs. 27%). As seen in the previous section with A Level knowledge, for some this may reflect their own experience or experience of having other children who have recently studied undergraduate degrees. Parents knowledge of Degree apprenticeships was in line with pupils, 24% felt they knew a lot.

Figure 33. Knowledge of post 18 education and training options amongst year 11 and 12 pupils and parents of year 11 pupils aware of each (1)

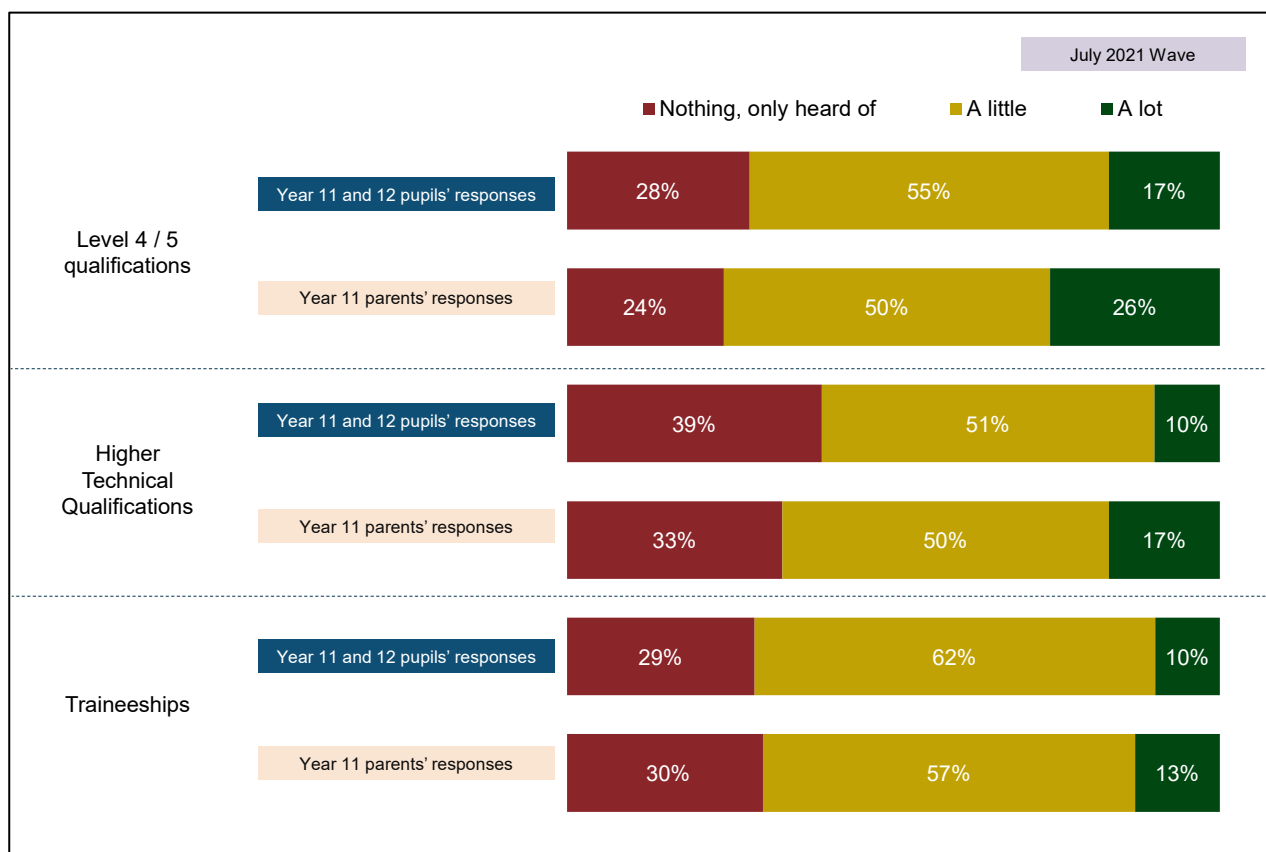


Source: PPP July 2021 Wave: T13/T13A-P2W10 “How much do you know about [qualification heard of]?” Year 11 and 12 pupils aware of apprenticeships (n=475), aware of Bachelor's / undergraduate degrees (n=404), aware of Degree apprenticeships (n=331). Parents of pupils in year 11 aware of apprenticeships (n=290), aware of Bachelor's / undergraduate degrees (n=253), aware of Degree apprenticeships (n=186).

Knowledge of Level 4/5 qualifications, Higher Technical qualifications and traineeships were lower, with respectively 17%, 10% and 10% of pupils aware of each feeling they knew a lot about them and at least 28% in each group knowing nothing more than the name, as shown in Figure 34 below.

Reflecting pupils' knowledge levels, parents also felt less familiar with the other post 18 programmes; 26% of those who had heard of Level 4 or 5 qualifications felt they knew a lot about them, 17% who had heard of Higher Technical Qualifications knew a lot about them and 13% who had heard of traineeships knew a lot about them as shown in Figure 34 below.

Figure 34. Knowledge of post 18 education and training options amongst year 11 and 12 pupils and parents of year 11 pupils who had heard of each (2)



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave: T13/T13A-P2W10 “How much do you know about [qualification heard of]?” Year 11 and 12 pupils aware of Level 4 / 5 qualifications (n=270), aware of Higher Technical Qualifications (n=190), aware of traineeships (n=171). Parents of pupils in year 11 pupils aware of Level 4 / 5 qualifications (n=220), aware of Higher Technical Qualifications (n=179), aware of traineeships (n=179).

These older pupils in years 11 and 12 and parents of older pupils in year 11 had higher levels of knowledge about apprenticeships and traineeships than parents of year 9 and 10 pupils reported in the previous section.

Amongst those who had heard of the listed options there were some differences in knowledge between sub-groups:

- Year 12 pupils were more likely to know a lot about undergraduate degrees (34% vs. 18% of year 11), though they were more likely to know nothing about traineeships (36% vs. 21% of year 11). Year 11 pupils were more likely to know nothing about Degree apprenticeships (17% vs. 9%).
- Female pupils were more likely to know nothing about undergraduate degrees (22% vs. 12% of male) and Degree apprenticeships (18% vs. 6% of male pupils). Male pupils were more likely to report knowing a lot about Higher Technical Qualifications (14% vs. 5% of female).

- Male parents were more likely to think they knew a lot about degrees (68% vs. 44%), apprenticeships (48% vs. 32% of female), traineeships (25% vs. 10% of female), and Level 4 and 5 qualifications (39% vs. 22% of female).
- Parents of female children were more likely to think they knew nothing about Higher Technical Qualifications (40% vs. 25% of parents with male children) and Degree apprenticeships (25% vs. 10% of parents with male children).
- BAME pupils were more likely to feel they knew a lot about undergraduate degrees (36% vs. 24% of White pupils). There were no other significant differences by ethnicity, this is partly as awareness was lower amongst BAME parents and pupils (as reported above), leaving smaller sub-groups with which to make comparisons.

Building on the findings about awareness reported above, there were some indications of a link between parental education and employment and their knowledge of post 18 options:

- Parents who had heard of undergraduate degrees but whose own highest qualification was GCSE or equivalent were much less likely to feel they knew a lot about degrees (14% vs. 33% of those who held an A Level or equivalent qualification themselves and 77% of those more highly qualified).²⁷ Apprenticeships were also less likely to be very familiar to those with only GCSE level qualifications (24% vs. 39% of those with higher level qualifications). Similar patterns were evident for knowledge of other options though small base sizes make findings only indicative.
- Two-in-five (40%) of parents with a household income of under £45,000 who had heard of undergraduate degrees felt they knew a lot about them compared to three-in-five (61%) of those with household incomes of at least £45,000. For other post 18 options there were not clear patterns by income, at least partly due to low base sizes.

Consideration or encouragement of post 18 education and training options

Likelihood of parents to encourage pupils to consider post 18 education and training options

Parents of year 11 pupils were asked how likely they were to consider encouraging their child to undertake each post 18 education and training option they had heard of. As shown in Figure 35, an undergraduate degree was the most likely to be encouraged (75%), with over half (53%) reporting they are 'very likely' to encourage this option.

²⁷ The unweighted for parents of year 11 pupils who had heard of undergraduate degrees but whose own highest qualification was GCSE or equivalent is 43, so this finding should be treated as indicative and with caution.

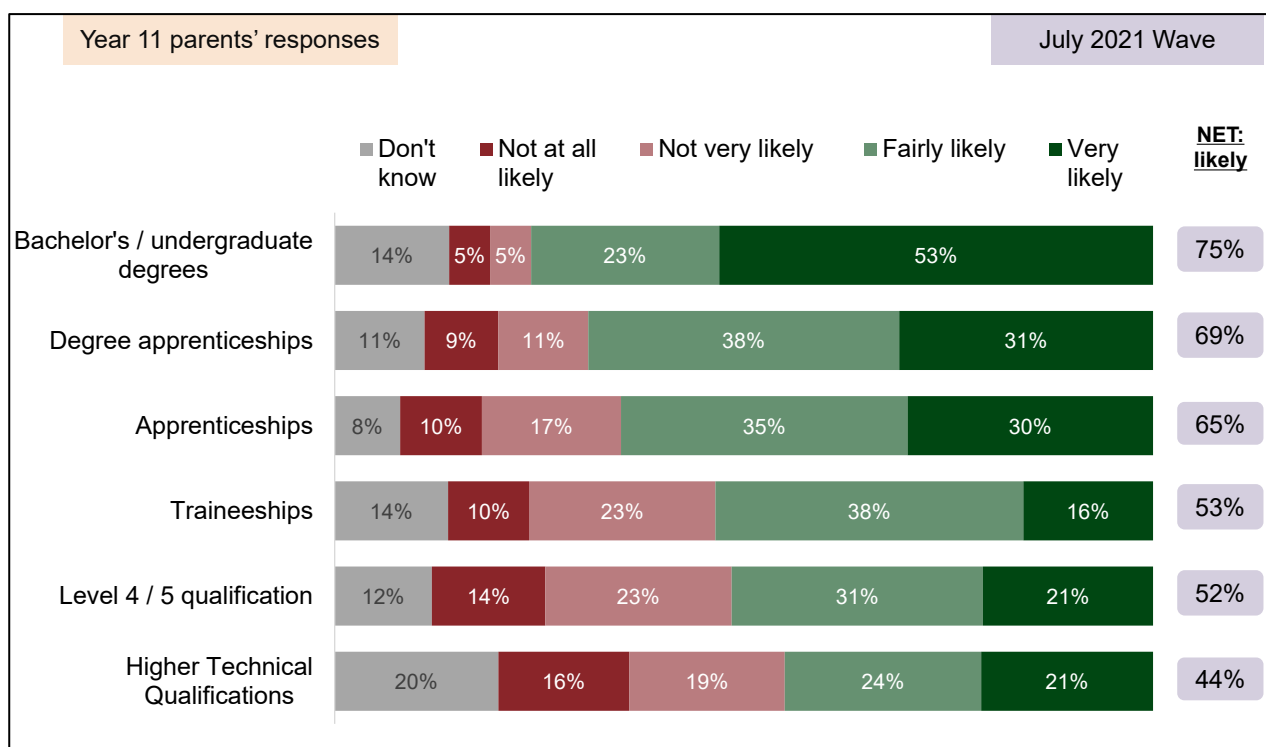
Although this reflects their popularity amongst pupils too, there is more evidence of parents also being open to encouraging other options.

Apprenticeships were likely to be encouraged by two-thirds (65%) of parents aware of them, with 30% very likely to do so. A slightly higher proportion (69%) were likely to encourage Degree apprenticeships with 31% very likely to do so.

Just over half of parents aware of traineeships and Level 4 and 5 qualifications (such as Higher National Diplomas) were likely to consider encouraging them after year 13 (53% and 52%). A fifth (21%) of those aware of Level 4 and 5 qualifications were very likely to consider encouraging them and 16% of those aware of traineeships were very likely to do so.

Encouragement of Higher Technical Qualifications was only a little less likely, 44% were likely to encourage them, with 21% very likely to do so. Parents were most likely to be uncertain about these, with 20% who had heard of them unsure if they would encourage them.

Figure 35. Likelihood of encouragement of consideration of post 18 education and training options



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave: T14A-P2W10 "How likely would you be to encourage your child to consider [qualification heard of]?" Parents of pupils in year 11 aware of: Bachelor's / undergraduate degrees (n=253), Degree apprenticeships (n=186), apprenticeships (n=290), traineeships (n=179), Level 4/5 qualification (n=220), Higher Technical Qualifications (n=179).

Likelihood of pupils to consider post 18 education and training options

Year 11 and 12 pupils were asked how likely they were to consider continuing at school, undertaking each post 18 education or training option they had heard of and / or any other learning at a Further Education (FE) college or other training provider.²⁸

As with year 11 parents, going to university or studying for a Higher Education (HE) qualification was by far the most likely to be considered, by 84% of those aware of undergraduate degrees. Over half (56%) were very likely to consider this, as shown in, more than four times the proportion very likely to consider any other option listed.

Apprenticeships were likely to be considered by a third (32%) of pupils aware of them, with 11% very likely to consider them. A slightly lower proportion (28%) were likely to consider Degree apprenticeships with 7% very likely to do so.

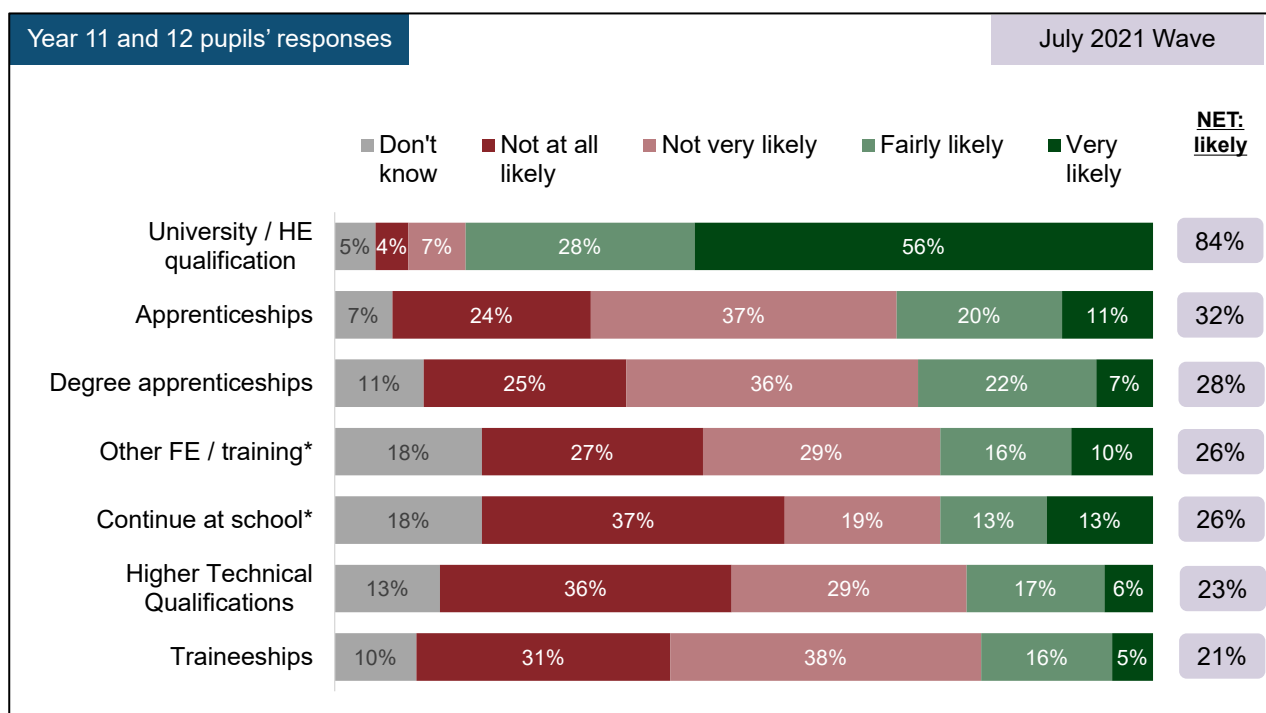
Just over a fifth of pupils aware of traineeships (21%) and / or Higher Technical Qualifications (23%) were likely to consider undertaking them after year 13, with 5% and 6% respectively very likely to do so.

All year 11 and 12 pupils were asked how likely they would be to consider any other learning at an FE college or other training provider or continuing at school, around a quarter would be likely to consider each (both 26%).²⁹ This makes these options similarly common to other specific options listed, though much less than university or HE. There was notable uncertainty amongst pupils around these options with 18% unsure how likely they would be to consider each.

²⁸ Whilst most year 11 and 12 pupils are at school, around half of year 12 pupils are estimated to be studying at other institutions e.g. sixth form and FE colleges.

²⁹ Pupils were asked about plans 'after year 13', but some may have mis-interpreted the question and been considering their shorter-term plans in the next academic year (i.e. in year 12 or 13) to continue at school.

Figure 36. Likelihood of consideration of post 18 education and training options



Source: PPP July 2021 Wave: T14-P2W10 “How likely would you be to consider [qualification heard of]?” Year 11 and 12 pupils aware of: University / HE qualification (n=404), apprenticeships (n=475), Degree apprenticeships (n=331), Other FE / training (n=519), Continue at school (n=519), Higher Technical Qualifications (n=190), traineeships (n=171). *Other FE college/training and continue at school asked to all year 11 and 12 pupils, not just those who had heard of route.

There were some differences in likelihood to consider options after year 13 between sub-groups (amongst those who had heard of them):

- Year 11 pupils were more likely than year 12 pupils to consider a traineeship (28% vs. 15%), a Higher Technical Qualification (35% vs. 13%), other learning at an FE college or other training provider (34% vs. 18%) and / or to continue at school (32% vs. 20%). This possibly reflects that the majority of year 12 pupils were further on in their decision making and had ruled out more options.
- Female pupils were more likely to consider university or studying for a HE qualification (87% vs. 80% of male).
- Male pupils were more likely to consider an apprenticeship (38% vs. 26% of female). Female pupils were more likely to consider staying at school (31% vs. 21%).
- Over a fifth (22%) of parents of male children were very likely to encourage traineeships compared to a tenth (10%) of parents of female children. They were also more likely to encourage Higher Technical Qualifications (54% compared to 37% of parents of female pupils).

- Pupils eligible for FSM were more likely to consider an apprenticeship compared to those not eligible (47% vs. 29%), a Degree apprenticeship (43% vs. 26%), a Higher Technical Qualification (41% vs. 19%) and / or other learning at an FE college or other training provider (37% vs. 24%). They were also more likely to be 'very likely' to consider a traineeship (14% vs. 4% pupils not eligible for FSM).³⁰
- Seven-in-ten BAME pupils (70%) were very likely to consider university or study for a HE qualification compared to half of White pupils (51%). The same difference was seen amongst parents of BAME pupils with 70% very likely to encourage an undergraduate degree compared to 48% of parents of White pupils.³¹
- BAME pupils were also more likely to be very likely to consider staying at school (20% vs. 11% of White pupils). A third (34%) of BAME pupils were very *unlikely* to consider other learning at an FE college or other training provider compared to a quarter (24%) of White pupils.
- Pupils with SEND were more likely to consider an Apprenticeship (53% vs. 28% of pupils not with SEND) and / or a Degree Apprenticeship (44% vs. 26%).³² A fifth (21%) of these pupils were very likely to consider other learning at an FE college or other training provider compared to 9% of pupils not with SEND. They were less likely to consider university or study for a HE qualification (72% vs. 85%).

³⁰ This finding should be treated with caution due to low base sizes (FSM eligible pupils who had heard of traineeships n=39).

³¹ This finding should be treated with caution due to low base sizes (BAME pupils who had heard of undergraduate degrees n=35).

³² This finding should be treated with caution due to low base sizes (Pupils considered to have SEND who had heard of degree apprenticeships n=37).

Future Plans

In July 2021 when this research was conducted, many year 13 school pupils would have already started planning for the following academic year but would not have known their grades. They were asked about their future education or training plans and the factors which influenced these decisions, including their perceptions about the possibility of studying HE in a more flexible manner than the traditional three year degree.

Year 12 pupils were also asked about the factors influencing their future decisions.

When considering the following findings, it is helpful to consider the composition of year 12 and year 13 on the panel. Year 11 pupils in August 2020 moved into year 12 in the 2020/21 academic year; it is estimated that around half of those who moved from year 11 to year 12 left school, with many of them moving to FE and sixth form colleges. As such, findings for year 12 likely represent all year 12 students, not just those in school sixth forms. Year 12 pupils in August 2020 who moved into year 13 in the 2020/21 academic year are only representative of those in school sixth forms. This report uses the term 'pupils' to cover those studying in all settings, including in an FE setting.

Perceptions of support and opportunities for flexible HE study

Year 12 and 13 pupils were asked whether they felt there would be sufficient support and opportunity to study for a HE qualification flexibly (i.e. over a number of years, and not the usual three or more years all at once).

Two fifths (40%) of pupils did think there would be enough support, 28% did not. There was notable uncertainty with 32% unsure. There were some differences in perceptions between sub-groups:

- Year 13 pupils were more likely to think the support would not be sufficient (40% vs. 23% of year 12 pupils). Year 12 pupils were more likely to not know (36% vs. 22%).
- BAME pupils were less likely than White pupils to think there would be sufficient support and opportunity (34% vs. 43%).

Factors influencing choice of education or training route

Year 12 and 13 pupils were asked to rate the importance of a list of factors on their decisions about training or education routes after year 13. Analysis is of their relative importance as all factors listed were thought important to some degree by all pupils. No pupils responded that any listed factor was 'not very' or 'not at all' important, or that they did not know.

Picking a route which would allow them to get a good job was the most likely to be thought very important, by 77% of pupils, as shown in Figure 37 below. Similarly, 65% thought whether it was highly valued by employers was very important.

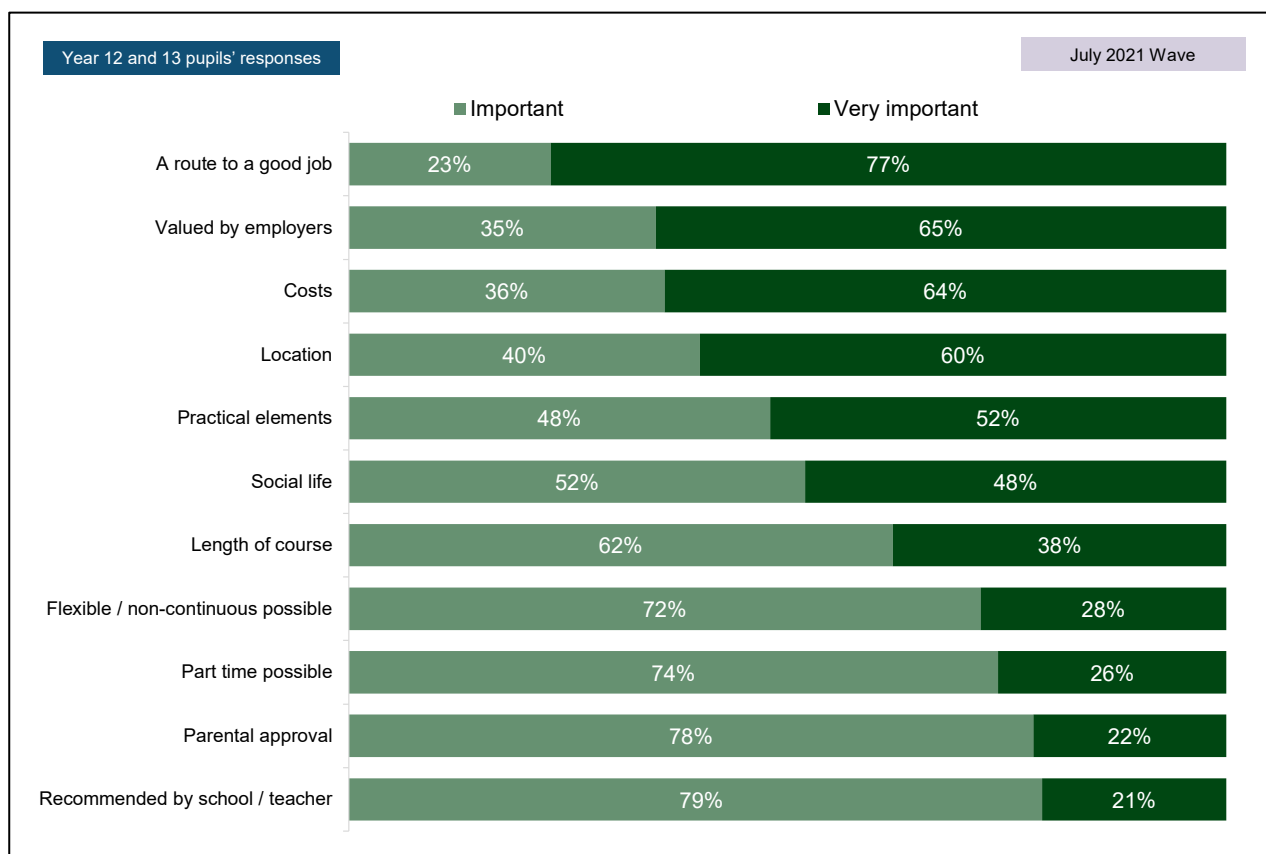
Cost was a very important factor for almost two thirds (64%), and location (which may influence living costs) was very important for a similar proportion (60%). Quality of social life was very important for half of pupils (48%).

The course having a practical element (for example laboratory work or fieldwork) was very important for around half of pupils (52%). This might include those considering medicine, teaching or other routes involving extended work experience.

The overall length of the course (i.e. how many years of study or training) was very important for 38% of pupils. Being able to study flexibly or non-continuously (e.g. completing a number of HE short courses over time which together make up a degree or other HE qualification) was very important for 28% and being able to study part time for 26%.

Recommendations or approval from others were less likely to be deciding factors, choosing a route that parents approved was very important for 22% and whether it was recommended by my school/teachers was very important for 21%.

Figure 37. Importance of factors in deciding future education or training route amongst year 12 and 13 pupils



There were some differences in the relative importance of particular factors between sub-groups:

- Year 12 pupils were more likely to think location would be a very important factor (64% vs. 52% of year 13) and were also more likely to think being able to study part time was very important (29% vs. 17%).
- Female pupils were more likely than male to think the following factors were very important; it being a route to a good job (80% vs. 73%), location (65% vs. 54%) and / or the course including practical elements (57% vs. 46%).
- Pupils eligible for FSM were less likely to think being able to study part time was a very important factor (17% vs. 27% of those not eligible).
- BAME pupils were more likely than White pupils to consider the following very important factors; it being a route to a good job (83% vs. 74%), the length of the course (48% vs. 33%) and / or parental approval (28% vs. 19%).
- Pupils with SEND were less likely to think the route being highly valued by

employers was very important (54% vs. 67% of those not with SEND). They were also less likely to think there being a practical element was very important (41% vs. 54%).

- Those in London were more likely to think employability factors very important (83% that it would lead to a good job vs. 77% overall) and that employers would value it (72% vs. 65% overall). Cost was more likely to be a very important factors for those in urban areas (68% vs. 50% in rural).

Plans for 2021/2022

In July 2021 and in the previous wave in May 2021 year 13 pupils were asked about their plans for the following September. Their answers are presented combined.³³

By far the most common plan, amongst 73% was to go to university or study for a HE qualification, as shown in Figure 38 below. A further 8% planned to defer a university or other HE offer.

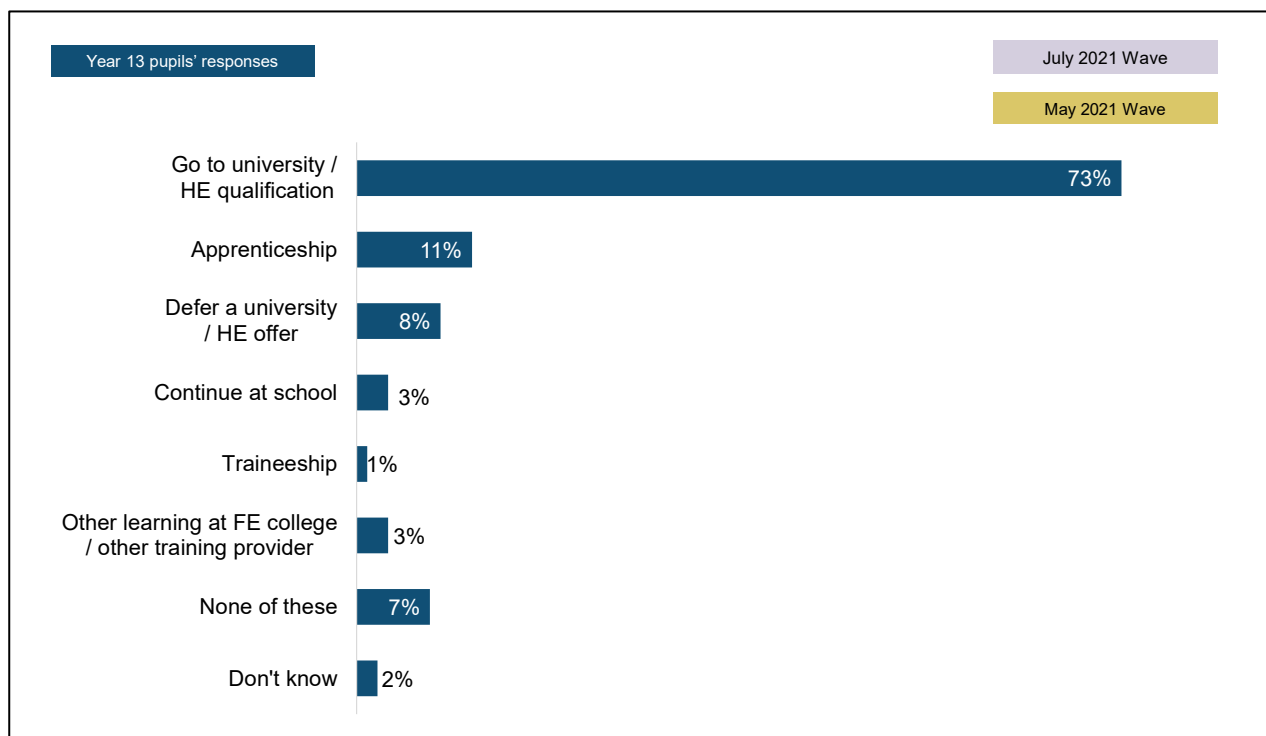
A tenth (11%) planned to start an Apprenticeship and 1% a traineeship. A small proportion (3%) planned to take up other learning at an FE college or other training provider.

A small proportion (3%) planned to continue at school.

Seven per cent of pupils had no plans to take up any of the education or training options, and 2% were unsure.

³³ In the May 2021 wave of research pupils were able to give multiple responses (which around 10% did), but in the July 2021 wave they were only able to give one response. This does not appear to have made a notable difference to any figures, the largest difference was four percentage points in the proportion planning to defer.

Figure 38. Plans for September 2021 amongst year 13 pupils



Source: PPP May 2021 / July 2021 Waves combined: G1-P2W9&W10 “Are you planning on doing any of the following in September this year? Year 13 pupils (n=269).

There were some differences in plans between sub-groups:

- Female pupils were more likely to be planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification (79% vs. 64% of male). Male pupils were twice as likely to be planning to start an Apprenticeship (16% vs. 8% of female).
- BAME pupils were more likely to be planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification (82% vs. 68% of White pupils).
- Pupils with SEND were more likely to be planning to start other learning at a FE college or other training provider (13% vs. 2% of pupils not with SEND) and / or continue at school (12% vs. 2% of others). They were less likely to be planning to go to university or study for a HE qualification (54% vs. 75% of those not with SEND).³⁴

³⁴ This finding should be treated with caution due to low base sizes (year 13 pupils considered to have SEND n=46).

Glossary

BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. Includes all ethnicities other than White and Unclassified.

CIN – Children in Need. This is a broad definition spanning a wide range of children and adolescents, in need of varying types of support and intervention, for a variety of reasons. A child is defined as ‘in need’ under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, where:

- They are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for them of services by a local authority.
- Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for them of such services; or
- They are disabled.

EHC Plan – Education Health and Care plan. This is a legal document that describes a child or young person’s special educational, health and social care needs and explains the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support the child or young person.

FSM – Free School Meal. Eligibility for FSMs is used as a proxy for socioeconomic status. Pupils eligible for FSMs were considered to be living in greater socioeconomic deprivation than those pupils who were not eligible for FSMs.

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disability. A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Many children and young people who have SEND may also have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision, they will also be covered by the SEND definition.

For more detail, please see the [SEND Code of Practice](#).



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