

Barriers to participation in education and training

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National Foundation for Educational
Research

This research report was written before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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ISBN: 978-1-84775-709-8

March 2010

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the research teams at both QA Research and Triangle. We are grateful to Angela Browne and Kerry Watson at QA Research for the coordination and administration of the telephone survey of the main sample of young people. We are also grateful for their work in coordinating the interviews with the young people in the teenage parent, JWT and NEET sub-groups. We would also like to thank Lisa Craig at Triangle who coordinated the interviews of the young people with LDD and their parents for the sub-groups, and who made it possible for young people with differing needs in this group to have their views heard.

The research team would like to express their sincere thanks to the six local authorities who agreed to participate in the research and who gave generously of their time. We would also like to thank all of the young people and the group of parents who agreed to participate in the surveys. This report could not have been completed without their cooperation and assistance. We would also like to express our gratitude to the DCSF steering group, who have provided valuable information, support and guidance, especially Vikki McAuley. Finally, the research team would like to thank colleagues across NFER who have been involved in the project. In particular we would like to thank Sagina Khan for her excellent administrative support.

Executive summary

Background

This summary presents key findings from research commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) aimed at exploring the barriers and constraints young people currently face when deciding what to do at the end of their compulsory schooling in Year 11. The study conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), working in partnership with Triangle and QA Research, included a survey of **2029 young people** who completed Year 11 in either 2008 or 2009 conducted between August and October 2009. This survey was supplemented by interviews with booster samples of **519 young people** across specific sub-groups and **102 parent interviews**.

Key findings

- The study shows that the majority of young people completing Year 11 (86 per cent) do not experience any barriers that stop them from participating in their choice of learning post-16
- However, a notable minority of young people (14 per cent) are prevented from doing what they want to do, while 63 per cent report experiencing at least one barrier or constraint
- The main barriers and constraints experienced by young people relate to finance, transport, availability of provision and their knowledge and awareness of the post-16 options available to them
- Young people who live in rural areas have significantly increased odds of experiencing transport as a barrier or constraint than similar young people who do not live in rural areas
- Finance is significantly more likely to be experienced as a barrier or constraint by young people who are NEET, those in JWT and teenage parents
- The study suggests that there is an issue around the amount and nature of IAG available to some young people. A substantial minority of young people, particularly those with LDD, teenage parents, and young people in JWT or who are NEET feel that they have not received enough support and information, and do not feel prepared for their future when completing Year 11.

Aims and objectives

The main aim of this study was to explore the relative impacts of the barriers and constraints young people currently face when deciding what to do at the end of their compulsory schooling in Year 11. There were several objectives underlying this main aim of the study. The main ones included exploring:

- the extent to which young people face multiple barriers and constraints and how these interact and influence their post-16 choices – *barriers* include problems which stop young people pursuing a particular option or route, while *constraints*

do not stop them from doing what they want to do but are problems that they have to overcome

- the extent to which it is possible to distinguish barriers and constraints reported by young people depending on geographical location, in particular in relation to urban and rural areas
- the particular impacts of transport- and finance-related barriers on young people's choices
- the experiences of young people aged 16-25 with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) in relation to choosing and accessing different learning options in their area
- the adequacy of Care To Learn payments to enable teenage parents to participate in learning, especially in high childcare cost areas
- what support and other strategies are needed to help overcome barriers and constraints faced by different groups of young people to help them all engage in education or training until they reach the age of 18.

Summary of research methods

In order to address the main aims and objective outlined above, a survey was conducted including **a representative sample of 2029 young people**, who were chosen to be representative of young people aged 16 and 17 in terms of their gender and attainment, of incidence of LDD and destination in the September after leaving Year 11. This was supplemented by a combination of telephone and face-to-face interviews with **303 young people** with LDD aged 16-25, **102 parents** of young people with LDD, **65 young people** in a job without training (JWT) aged 16 or 17, **75 young people** who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) aged 16 or 17 and **76 teenage parents** aged 16-18. This was supplemented by an analysis of the adequacy of the **Care to Learn allowance** for young parents to access a range of post-16 options.

How well are young people prepared to make the transition at 16?

Although most young people find the decision about what to do after Year 11 easy and most are satisfied with what they have done post-16, almost a fifth of young people find the decision-making process difficult and seven per cent end up dissatisfied with the choice they make. In addition, almost a quarter of young people participating in education or training post-16 say that they would have done something different if they had been aware of all of the courses they could have done.

The study suggests that there is an issue around the amount and nature of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) available to some young people. A substantial minority of young people, particularly those with LDD, teenage parents, and young people in JWT or who were NEET feel that they have not received enough support and information, and do not feel prepared for their future. There also appears to be a core group of young people who, when leaving school, feel undecided about what to do, and it is important that they are provided with IAG which is presented in engaging and accessible forms to aid a real understanding of the opportunities available to them.

What are the main barriers or constraints experienced by young people?

Even though the majority of young people (86 per cent) do not face any **barriers that stop them** from doing what they want to do at the end of Year 11, there are a notable proportion of young people (14 per cent) who do face such barriers. Furthermore, some of these barriers are particularly acute in relation to particular sub-groups of young people, including teenage parents, young people with LDD, and those who are NEET or in JWT. Many young people in these groups report that lack of availability and awareness of courses they want to do when completing Year 11 stops them from doing what they want to do. Young people in JWT in particular and others also frequently cite financial barriers as reasons for not participating or not doing what they want to do post-16.

Otherwise, a large proportion of young people (63 per cent) face one or more **constraints** at the end of Year 11, but for most these constraints do not become barriers that stop them from doing what they want to do.

To what extent is transport a barrier or constraint for young people?

Overall, very few people report that **the availability** of transport is a barrier that stops them from doing what they want to do after Year 11. This includes most young people who are NEET or in JWT who rarely identify this as a barrier. Instead, young people are more likely to identify **the cost** of transport as a barrier or constraint on their choices. Indeed, around a third of young people who are NEET or in JWT after completing Year 11 think that they would have chosen to participate in education or training if they had received more money to cover the cost of transport.

Young people living in rural areas and those who rate the public transport facilities in their areas as 'bad' or 'very bad' are significantly more likely to report transport as a barrier or constraint than other young people. This suggests that transport initiatives need to identify areas with limited existing transport facilities, including rural areas, to enable all young people to access the post-16 learning of their choice.

Interviews with young people also revealed that a sizeable proportion find it difficult to work out the times of buses and trains. This is particularly the case for young people with LDD, who are less likely to say than young people overall that they feel confident and safe using public transport and working out the times of buses and trains. Furthermore, only 17 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD and 38 per cent of those aged 18-25 are aware of Independent Travel Training schemes in their areas which aim to overcome such issues.

To what extent is finance a barrier or constraint for young people?

Around a quarter of young people view finance as a constraint when deciding what to do after Year 11, although it only stops a minority (four per cent) from doing what they want to do after leaving school. However, young people who are NEET, those in JWT and teenage parents have increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint. In particular, one quarter of young people in JWT say that having to pay their parents rent is a barrier or constraint when deciding what to do post-16. Furthermore, around a third of young people who do not participate in learning after leaving school think that they would have done some education or training if they had received more financial support. Otherwise, finance is more likely to be experienced as a barrier or constraint when deciding what to do by those who feel it is important

to earn money straight away and those who subsequently receive or apply for an Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) or hardship funding.

However, only 12 per cent of young people overall receiving an EMA believe that they would not have participated in the courses they are doing if they had not received an EMA. This contrasts with much higher proportions of young people with LDD who say that they would not have participated in learning without this support. Together these findings suggest the need for financial support to be increasingly targeted at those most at need.

What are the relative factors that encourage or discourage young people from participating in learning?

While the majority of young people are motivated by future progression and, therefore, choose to stay in education or training, there is a minority of young people who do not. These young people are less motivated by qualifications and more by immediate financial gain. This appears to be the case particularly among young people who are NEET or in JWT. Young people with a good knowledge of Apprenticeships were also significantly more likely not to participate than young people with lower awareness. This seems to confirm the findings of other research that some young people who cannot access an Apprenticeship choose JWT or become NEET instead.

Teenage parents are more likely to experience finance as a barrier or constraint than other young people and many of them believe that they would participate in education or training if they received more financial support. However, many of them are not well informed about the financial support available to them, including Care to Learn and EMA. Even though other research (Vaid *et al.*, 2009) found that 92 per cent of learners in receipt of Care to Learn said that it was easy to find out about this funding, two-fifths of the 86 teenage parents interviewed as part of this study were not aware of Care to Learn. This is particularly an issue given the fact that the analysis of the funding provided by Care to Learn conducted as part of this study revealed that it is sufficient to cover additional childcare or transport costs incurred by teenage parents to access most types of post-16 courses. However, some teenage parents do not consider re-engaging in education or training at all as they prefer to stay at home and care for their children instead, although those aged 16 will be required to participate once the participation age is raised to 17 in 2013.

Otherwise, many young people who do not participate in learning after Year 11 believe that increased awareness of the options available to them would have encouraged them to engage in education or training when leaving school. However, it is important to ensure that young people are not given too much information, because, as the study suggests, young people who consider many different options are actually less likely to participate in education or training.

What are the policy implications of the research?

Specific policy recommendations relating to the support and other strategies needed to help overcome barriers and constraints faced by different groups of young people in order to help them all engage in education or training until they reach the age of 18 are provided below.

- **Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)**

The study shows that there is scope to further improve IAG for all young people, but in particular for young people with LDD, teenage parents and those who are NEET or in JWT. Furthermore, the IAG needs to be presented in engaging and accessible forms to aid young people's real understanding of the opportunities available to them. This needs to be accompanied by personal support to ensure young people receive the advice and support suitable to their particular needs, interests and circumstances.

- **Financial support**

It is important to ensure that all young people are aware of the financial support available to them in order to minimise any constraints on their choices of what to do post-16. In particular, it is important to ensure that information and financial support is targeted at vulnerable groups of young people, including teenage parents and those who are NEET or in JWT, who are more likely to identify financial issues as a reason for not engaging in learning.

The study showed that there was limited awareness of Care to Learn among teenage parents, which analysis revealed covers the additional transport and childcare costs needed to enable participating in most courses and for young people in most areas of the country. This suggests a need for additional or more targeted marketing strategies aimed at raising teenage parents' awareness of Care to Learn funding and increasing the maximum amount paid in specific areas to enable and encourage more teenage parents to access learning.

- **Transport**

It appears that strategies to ensure the availability of a transport infrastructure that enables young people to participate in learning should examine closely the availability of transport in rural areas in particular as there appears to be a greater level of need in such areas.

The study also suggested that strategies should be targeted at young people who feel less at ease with using public transport, in particular young people with LDD. This should include encouraging all local authorities to provide, and raise the awareness among young people of the availability of, Independent Travel Training schemes in their areas.

Financial support to cover the cost of transport needs to be targeted at those young people most in need, including those in rural areas and young people who choose a job without training due to financial considerations.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The decisions young people make at 16 after leaving compulsory education have a major impact on their future prospects. This is confirmed by research carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2007 exploring the likely benefits of increasing the participation age to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015 onwards (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2007). It showed, for example, that those who remain in education or training are more likely to be in employment at a later date and to benefit from significantly improved earnings over their lifetime.

Currently, the large majority of young people aged 16-18 continue in learning – in 2008, almost 80 per cent of them were engaged in education or training. This means that a relatively small minority of this age group currently are either not in education, employment or training (NEET) or in jobs without training (JWT). Nevertheless, addressing this issue is high on the political agenda and the Government is committed to making sure that all young people continue in some form of education or training by providing them with the necessary support to help them participate in an optimal way. As the *New Opportunities* White Paper argues this is a key policy objective of the Government with the aim both of ensuring ‘social mobility and ... that our businesses and economy have the skilled workforce we will need in the future’ (HM Government, 2009, p.55).

Recently published research by NFER highlights the characteristics of those young people who are either NEET or in JWT (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009). It suggests that they can be divided into six segments with different characteristics, likelihood of re-engaging in learning, and varying levels of personal and structural barriers preventing them from participating in education or training. In particular, around a third of those either NEET or in JWT face, among other things, significant personal and structural barriers. However, this study was not able to quantify the relative importance of particular barriers and how these differed depending on young people’s wider personal circumstances. It also was not able to explore the extent to which young people’s non-participation was affected by local restrictions on choice and more localised barriers such as transport restrictions.

Several previous studies have highlighted the ways in which transport and finance can act as barriers to engagement. However, in most cases, these are found to affect only a minority of young people. A systematic review of studies dating from 1993 to 2002 concluded, for example, that for most young people **finance** is not a major barrier that **prevents** them from participating: ‘For those currently in learning, the direct or indirect and opportunity costs associated with learning are, by definition, not a barrier, although many see them as a cause of hardship’ (Fletcher *et al.*, 2005, p.6). However, it found that for a minority of students, finance can be a factor, although often not the only factor that acts a barrier to participation. Further, evaluation of Activity Agreements found that ‘financial incentives are an effective tool for engaging young people and retaining their participation’ (Hillage *et al.*, 2008, p.34).

Recent studies have reached very similar conclusions with regard to **transport**. One study, which examined the experiences of young people in a mixture of urban and rural areas, concluded, for example, that transport is 'not a major factor whether [young people] will continue in education. Irrespective of its availability or cost, the majority of students value continuing in education, and see this as a price to be paid' (Coleman and Thornthwaite, 2003, p.5). However, for a significant minority the cost and/or availability of transport was found to be a serious disincentive, particularly for those young people who are not very motivated to engaged in education or training in the first place. This was confirmed by another study, using focus groups with young people aged 16-19 in rural England across three areas, which reported that: 'the limited availability, and cost, of public transport exacerbated the difficulties of young people who may already be lacking motivation, and so would be more easily deterred from continuing a training course if they had to undertake a long and difficult journey in order to attend' (Midgley and Bradshaw, 2006, p.19). The authors concluded that participation rates are often lower in rural areas because young people do not have access to the education and training opportunities they need and want.

Previous studies have also identified specific groups as more likely to face these and other barriers that prevent them, or at least discourage them, from participating in education or training. This includes teenage parents and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). A recent study (Dench *et al.*, 2007), exploring the barriers **teenage parents** face to engage in education or training, found that there are many different reasons for low participation rates among this group of young people. This includes cultural influences and a general lack of aspirations, the desire to be a good mother, previous educational experiences, lack of access to appropriate advice about education and training and financial constraints. However, the report was not able to identify the relative impact of these influences and barriers.

A recent research study (Knapp *et al.*, 2008), based on analysis of the 1970 Birth Cohort dataset showed that **young people with LDD** 'with complex needs at age 10 were found to have significantly higher probability of being in a low-income household at age 30 ... than other young people, adjusting for other factors' (p.6). Similarly, another study revealed that, though the aspirations of disabled young people are very similar to non-disabled people at 16, their achievements diverge after that. The research found that: 'Three-fifths of non-disabled young people reported that they got the education or training place or job they wanted after finishing compulsory education, whereas just over half of disabled youngsters said the same' (Burchardt, 2005, p.1). However, these studies again were not able to identify the **relative impact** of different factors on this outcome.

The lack of such detailed knowledge of the relative impact of the barriers and constraints young people currently face means that it is difficult to identify the support strategies needed to help all young people to participate in the learning most suited to their aspirations and abilities. Such knowledge is crucial to support the Government's policy that from 2015 all young people should engage in some form of education or training until they reach the age of 18.

1.2 Objectives

This study aimed to fill this gap and had several objectives. These included exploring:

- the extent to which young people face multiple barriers and constraints and how these interact and influence their post-16 choices – *barriers* include problems which stop young people pursuing a particular option or route, while *constraints* do not stop them from doing what they want to do but are problems that they have to overcome
- the weighting of the identified barriers and constraints for different groups of young people
- the extent to which it is possible to distinguish barriers and constraints reported by young people depending on geographical location, in particular in relation to urban and rural areas
- the particular impacts of transport- and finance-related barriers on young people's choices
- the experiences of young people aged 16-25 with LDD in relation to choosing and accessing different learning options in their area
- the experiences of parents/carers of young people with LDD of the transition process and any barriers and constraints faced by their children
- the adequacy of Care To Learn payments to enable teenage parents to participate in learning, especially in high childcare cost areas
- what support and other strategies are needed to help overcome barriers and constraints faced by different groups of young people to help them all engage in education or training until they reach the age of 18.

1.3 Research methods

This report presents the main findings of a survey conducted by NFER as part of this study, working in partnership with Triangle and QA Research, of **2029 young people** who completed Year 11 in either 2008 or 2009. This survey was supplemented by interviews with booster samples of particular sub-groups, consisting of the following:

- face-to-face interviews with 303 young people with LDD aged either 16 or 17 or between 18 to 25
- face-to-face interviews with 102 parents of young people aged 18 to 25 with LDD
- telephone interviews with 65 young people in JWT aged 16 or 17
- telephone or face-to-face interviews with 75 young people who were NEET aged 16 or 17
- face-to-face interviews with 76 teenage parents aged 16 to 18.

The interviews were conducted between August and October 2009 and followed a structured questionnaire comprising closed and open-ended questions that were coded

so that comparisons could be made between the responses of respondents in the main sample and the sub-groups.

The findings in this report are based mainly on the responding sample of 2029 young people, who were chosen to be representative of young people aged 16 and 17 in terms of their gender and attainment (this is referred to in the report as 'the main sample'). The sample was also representative of incidence of LDD and destination in the September after leaving Year 11, in terms of young people being in education and training, in JWT or NEET (further details of the sample are provided in Appendix A). The sample was chosen to include young people living in urban and rural areas.

The research was undertaken in six local authorities, which were selected to be broadly representative in terms of type of authority (county, unitary, metropolitan and London Borough), rural/urban authority (predominantly urban, significantly rural and predominantly rural), level of deprivation and proportion of young people who were NEET.

The findings of the surveys of each of the booster sample sub-groups are also presented in each chapter. These sub-groups include all those who were interviewed face-to-face as part of the 'booster' samples together with all those with the characteristics of the sub-group who were interviewed as part of the main representative sample. Consequently, the numbers of respondents within these sub-groups exceed those detailed above. In considering the findings from the booster samples, it is worth noting that, while the young people who were interviewed had a range of characteristics and were from each of the six local authority areas, they cannot be said to be representative of the views of young people who have LDD or are teenage parents, are NEET or in JWT. Rather, their views provide an indicative insight into the experiences of those with these characteristics and provide a comparison for the representative sample of young people.

This report also presents the results of multi-level regression analysis, which was carried out using the survey responses of all 2371 young people who completed Year 11 in 2008 or 2009 – this includes the 2029 young people contacted as part of the telephone survey as well as interviewees aged 16 and 17 from the booster samples of young people (further details of the samples and analysis carried out with them are provided in Appendices A, B and C).

2. How well are young people prepared to make the transition at 16?

Key messages

- Although young people feel they know about the routes available to them in general terms, almost half do not know what Apprenticeships are available in their area.
- The areas that young people feel they know the most about include factual aspects of post-16 provision such as availability of transport and courses. Fewer know about what studying post-16 is like and the types of support available (including financial support).
- Although the majority of young people find the decision about what to do post-16 easy, almost a fifth of young people find the decision-making process difficult and seven per cent end up dissatisfied with the choice they make.
- Almost a quarter of young people participating in education or training would do something different if they had been aware of all of the courses they could have done.
- Availability of clear and accessible information about the full range of possible pathways is of continued importance to young people when considering their post-16 options.
- Young people feel more prepared for their future if they find the decision about their post-16 activity easy, are confident and have good levels of knowledge and awareness of the different pathways and support available post-16. Young people who are NEET or in JWT feel less prepared for their future.
- On the whole, young people who are teenage parents, with LDD, are NEET, or in JWT had a lower level of knowledge about factors such as finance, transport and available qualifications than other young people, which may affect their decision about what to do after Year 11.

Policy implications

- There appears to be scope to improve information, advice and guidance (IAG) for all young people, but in particular for young people with LDD, teenage parents and those who are NEET or in JWT. In addition, the information for parents of young people with LDD could also be improved.
- IAG needs to be presented in engaging and accessible forms to aid young people's real understanding of the opportunities available to them. This needs to be accompanied by personal support to ensure young people receive the advice and support suitable to their particular needs, interests and circumstances.

This chapter explores how prepared young people felt to make the transition at 16. Factors that may affect the decision made by young people are considered, including their knowledge about post-16 pathways, and the support and information they had received. In addition, this chapter looks at how easy young people found it to make the decision about what to do after leaving Year 11, and how satisfied they felt with their choice. At the end of the chapter, the experiences of each of the sub-groups of young people, including those with LDD, teenage parents, young people who were NEET and young people who were in JWT, are discussed in relation to these topics.

2.1 How much do young people know about what is available to them post-16?

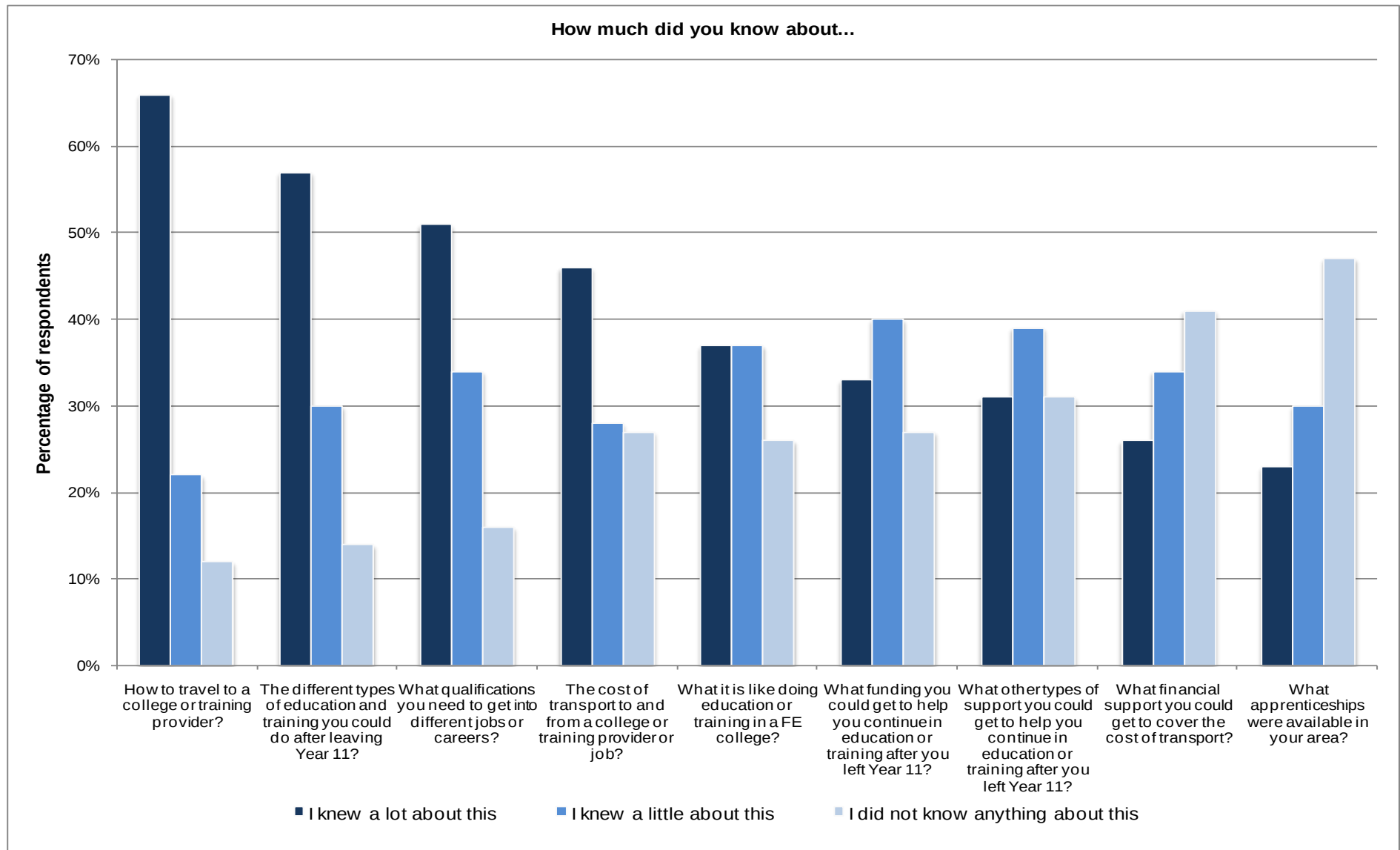
Most young people knew what transport was available and how much it cost, however their level of knowledge about the financial support available to cover the cost of transport was considerably lower (see Figure 2.1). Indeed, 41 per cent of young people said that, when they were deciding what to do after Year 11, they *did not know anything* about the financial support available to cover the cost of transport.

As can be seen in Figure 2.1, young people appeared to understand the concrete aspects of post-16 study such as the qualifications available and the type of training available, but they were less confident that they knew what it was like to study at a further education college.

In addition, awareness of the support that could be accessed when continuing to study post-16 was mixed. Almost a third said that they did not know anything about the funding and other types of support available to post-16 students, while a similar proportion said that they knew ‘a lot’ about this.

In contrast to the relatively high level of knowledge of the different types of education and training available post-16, almost half of young people surveyed said that they did not know what Apprenticeships were available in their area. Moreover, of those listed, this was the post-16 route which the smallest proportion of young people reported that they knew a lot about. This is particularly worth noting given that, previous research has shown (see Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009) that many young people who do not participate are often motivated to engage in work-based learning and might therefore consider an Apprenticeship if they were more aware of this option.

Exploring young people’s awareness of Apprenticeships in relation to their level of achievement revealed that slightly fewer young people who achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C (51 per cent) knew about Apprenticeships compared with young people who had achieved less than five GCSEs at grades A*-C (56 per cent). Although the difference is relatively small, it does suggest that the option of taking an Apprenticeship is more frequently explored by those with lower levels of achievement.

Figure 2.1: Level of knowledge about aspects of education and training post-16

2.3 How easy do young people find the decision about what to do post-16?

The majority of young people found it 'easy' or 'very easy' to decide what to do after leaving Year 11 (73 per cent). However, a notable minority found the decision a difficult one to make. Almost a fifth (19 per cent) described the decision of what to choose post-16 as 'difficult' or 'very difficult'. Nine per cent expressed mixed views.

The most common reason given by young people of why they found the decision easy was that they already knew what they wanted to do (64 per cent of those who found the decision easy or very easy); for example, they knew they wanted to study A levels, or that they wanted to go to university. Another common reason, cited by 15 per cent of young people who found the decision easy, was because of the support and advice they had received from sources such as their school, teachers or relatives.

Young people studying a Level 3 course were more likely to have found the decision about what to do post-16 easy. Thus, almost eight in ten young people studying a Level 3 course said they found the decision easy or very easy (79 per cent) compared with two-thirds of young people studying a course at Level 2 or below (66 per cent). It appears that for many young people the next, logical step was to move onto a Level 3 course, to build on their study at Level 2 during Key Stage 4. Indeed, only 36 per cent of all young people had considered an alternative to the activity they chose to do after Year 11 and many of the young people who did not consider an alternative did not do so because they already knew what they wanted to do (see Section 3.2 for more detail).

On the other hand, half of the young people who found the decision difficult or who had mixed views said that the decision was not easy because they could not make up their mind and had trouble deciding between a range of options (50 per cent). More than a fifth of the 556 young people who found the decision hard said that they simply did not know what they wanted to do and that they kept changing their mind (22 per cent). In particular, there appeared to be two types of young people. This included:

- those who had decided to stay in education or training, but who had found the decision about which course to take difficult
- those who could not decide between a course and a work-based route.

Different types of IAG and support is needed by these two groups in order to help them make an informed decision about what each of the pathways they are considering can offer them in the future.

It is worth noting that previous research (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009) that explored the views of those not participating in education identified a segment of young people who are NEET who find it difficult to make up their minds about what option to choose post-16. Many of these young people frequently feel overwhelmed by the information available to them and have a tendency to change routes or courses post-16.

IAG and support emerged as an issue for several of the young people who had found the decision a difficult one. For example, one in ten young people who said that the decision was difficult reported that this was because they found the range of choices was too wide and two per cent of young people said that there was too much information to absorb. It appears that these young people did not have as much

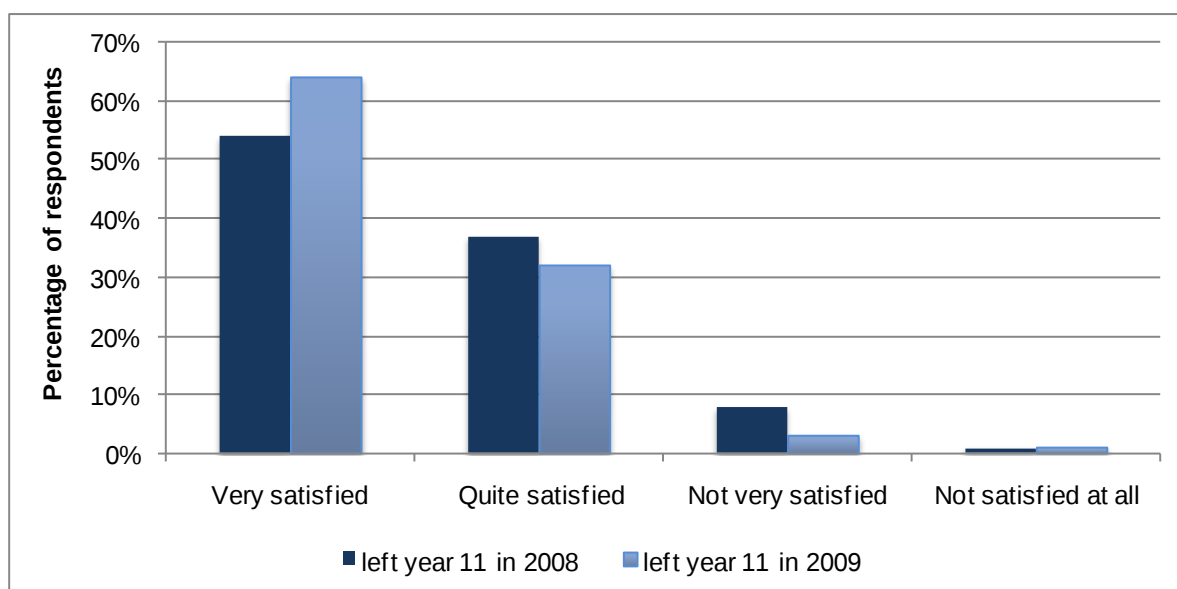
support and advice about the options available as perhaps they might have needed. Furthermore, some young people who found the decision a difficult one also mentioned that they did not have as much support, information or careers advice as they wanted; this is explored in further detail in Section 2.5.

Some young people who had found the decision difficult said that this was related to concerns about whether they would be accepted for their chosen pathway. For example, six per cent said they did not achieve the grades they needed for the pathway they had planned for and four per cent were unsure if they would be accepted.

2.4 How satisfied are young people with their decision?

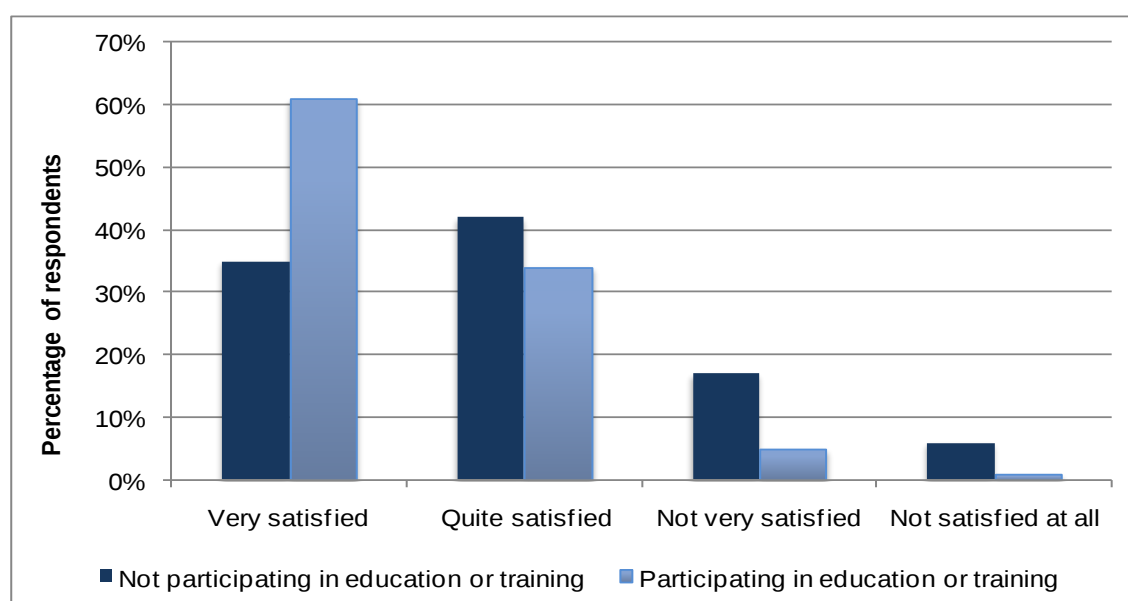
Once the decision about what to do after Year 11 had been made, the majority of young people were satisfied with that decision. However, seven per cent of those surveyed said that they were not satisfied. Further, it appears that young people who left compulsory education in 2008 were more likely to be dissatisfied than those who left in 2009 (see Figure 2.2). This may imply that some of the issues with the transition that lead to dissatisfaction only become apparent some time after the transition has been made.

Figure 2.2: How satisfied are you with what you decided to do after leaving Year 11?



There was a difference in young people's satisfaction with their decision about their post-16 activity according to whether they participated in education or training immediately after leaving Year 11 or not. On the whole, there were higher levels of satisfaction in the young people who *did participate* in some form of education or training post-16, than those who did not, as shown in Figure 2.3. Almost a quarter of young people who did not take a course or training post-16 said they were *not satisfied* to some extent (23 per cent), compared with only five per cent of those who did participate. Reasons for dissatisfaction were not explored in this survey; however it is possible that some of the dissatisfaction was related to not continuing in formal learning or not being able to access the provision they wanted. The factors that might encourage some young people who were NEET or in JWT back into education or training are explored in Section 6.1.

Figure 2.3: Differences in satisfaction in young people who did or did not participate in education or training after leaving Year 11



2.5 Do young people feel that they have received enough support and information when making their decision?

The majority of young people felt that they had received enough *support* in planning their future (80 per cent) and that they had enough *information* to plan their future education and work (72 per cent). However, almost a quarter did not feel they had enough *information* to plan their future education and employment (23 per cent) and only slightly fewer did not feel satisfied with the level of *support* they had received (16 per cent). This suggests that, for a notable minority of young people, further information and support in making their choices is required.

Young people's level of awareness of the range of options available to them post-16 seems to have an impact on whether they choose to participate in education or training. Specifically, 47 per cent of the 144 young people who did not continue into education or training after Year 11 thought they would have participated in learning if they had been aware of all their options. In addition, although most of the young people surveyed chose to participate, it appears that not all of them were fully informed about the pathways available to them: 24 per cent of the 1885 young people who went into education or training after Year 11 said that they would have decided to do something different if they had been aware of all the education or training courses they could have done.

The importance of having information about the different pathways available to young people is corroborated by the finding that almost a quarter (23 per cent) of young people reported 'not knowing all of the options available to you' as a constraint, although only four per cent said that it stopped them from doing what they wanted to do. Previous research (see McCrone *et al.*, 2009) has shown that young people value unbiased, available information on future pathways and that many want this information, alongside well-informed careers education, at a younger age. Therefore, one of the key factors in ensuring that young people are adequately prepared to make the transition at 16 is the provision of clear, independent and accessible IAG to support them in making decisions about their future.

2.6 What are the characteristics of those who are most likely to feel prepared to make the transition after year 11?

Analysis showed that young people's confidence about their future, and their views on the amount of support and information they had received to help them plan their future, all correlate highly with each other. These three factors were combined into one measure to provide an indicator of how prepared young people felt about their future. Multi-level regression analyses were carried out to explore which characteristics were associated with the new measure of how prepared young people felt about their future. The variables accounted for in the model included student-level variables and LA-level variables (see Appendix C for further details of the variables included in the analysis).

Young people who felt more prepared for their future were more likely to:

- have found the decision about what to do after leaving Year 11 easy
- be confident (in relation to a number of factors – see Appendix B)
- feel knowledgeable about the types of qualifications they need to do different jobs and about the types of education and training available after Year 11
- think that the public transport in their area was good or very good
- feel knowledgeable about the Apprenticeships available in their area
- have LDD
- feel knowledgeable about the financial support available to them
- feel at ease with using public transport (in relation to a number of factors – see Appendix B)
- have academic aspirations (in relation to a number of factors – see Appendix B).

Young people who were either NEET or in JWT were less likely to feel prepared for their future than similar young people in education or training. In addition, girls were more likely to say that they did not feel prepared compared with boys.

Other variables, such as achievement, whether they lived in a rural or urban area or whether they were a teenage parent, were not associated with how prepared the young people felt about their future.

The model demonstrates the links between young people's **confidence and knowledge and awareness** about the transition and education post-16 with **how prepared** young people feel to make decisions about their future. As a result, in order to ensure that young people feel adequately prepared for their future, it is important that all young people have access to information about pathways, finance and transport. Ensuring that all young people have access to such support is also likely to aid the decision making process, which is also linked to how prepared young people feel about their future. As discussed in Section 2.3, IAG and support appeared to be a particular issue for the young people who found the decision about what to do after Year 11 difficult.

The finding that young people who were NEET or in JWT felt less prepared than their peers will be explored in more detail in Sections 2.9 and 2.10. However, this link between how prepared young people feel about their future and whether they go on to participate post-16 is an important one. Ensuring that young people are well supported and knowledgeable about their options (in terms of pathways, funding and

transport) prior to the transition may help some young people to remain in a education or training after Year 11 who would otherwise not do so.

2.7 How well are teenage parents prepared to make the transition at 16?

Fewer teenage parents tended to know about post-16 learning opportunities including Apprenticeships and about the funding available to continue in education or training after Year 11, than the main sample of all young people. Furthermore, compared to young people overall, more teenage parents felt that they had not received adequate information and support. Teenage parents also tended to be less satisfied with what they had decided to do after Year 11 than the main sample.

As reported in Section 2.6, the multi-level regression analysis did not show that teenage parents were significantly more likely to feel less prepared than young people overall. At the same time however, higher proportions of the 93 teenage parents interviewed (as part of the main and booster samples) said that they did not know anything about a list of aspects of post-16 learning compared with the main sample of all young people.

- 58 per cent of teenage parents did not know anything about the financial support available to cover the cost of transport (compared with 41 per cent of young people in the main sample).
- 41 per cent of teenage parents said that they did not know anything about the funding they could get to help them continue in education or training after leaving Year 11 (compared with 26 per cent of young people in the main sample)
- 32 per cent of teenage parents said that they did not know anything about the cost of transport (compared with 27 per cent of the main sample).

Furthermore, higher proportions of teenage parents said they did not know what support (other than financial) was available to them (45 per cent compared with 31 per cent of young people in the main sample). Issues relating to transport and finance will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5 including teenage parents' awareness of Care to Learn funding, which covers the cost of childcare, as well as transport in some cases (see also Appendix D for an exploration of the adequacy of Care to Learn to cover the cost of childcare in a variety of areas).

Teenage parents' knowledge of the opportunities available to them was also more limited compared with young people in the main sample:

- 56 per cent of teenage parents did not know anything about Apprenticeships available in their area, compared with 47 per cent of the main sample of all young people
- 30 per cent of teenage parents did not know anything about the different types of education and training available in their area, compared with 13 per cent of the main sample of all young people
- 26 per cent of teenage parents did not know anything about the qualifications they needed to get into different jobs or careers, compared with 16 per cent of the main sample of all young people.

This was corroborated by teenage parents' responses to statements about the support and advice that they had received, which revealed that they felt less informed

than their peers who were not teenage parents. Just over half of teenage parents (54 per cent) agreed that they had received enough information to plan their future, compared with 80 per cent of the main sample. Similarly, while almost three quarters of the main sample (72 per cent) agreed that they had enough information to plan their future education and work, only 61 per cent of teenage parents agreed with the same. Indeed, when asked if not knowing all of the information available to them had affected their decision about what to do after Year 11, 18 per cent of teenage parents said that it **stopped** them from doing what they wanted to do (compared with only four per cent of the main sample). Therefore, the evidence suggests that IAG about future pathways and careers needs to be better targeted at teenage parents to ensure that they receive appropriate support to make decisions about their future. However, given the range of priorities and concerns for young parents, careful consideration needs to be given to how the information is communicated so that teenage parents are able to understand and engage with the information without feeling overwhelmed.

In terms of overall satisfaction with what they decided to do after leaving Year 11, teenage parents tended to be less satisfied than the main sample of all young people. While almost all young people in the main sample expressed some level of satisfaction with their decision (59 per cent very satisfied, 34 per cent quite satisfied), only around three-quarters of teenage parents felt satisfied with their decision (29 per cent were very satisfied and 44 per cent quite satisfied).

2.8 How well are young people with LDD prepared to make the transition at 16?

Young people with LDD felt more prepared for their future than the main sample of all young people. However, on the whole, their level of knowledge about post-16 provision and the support available was less than that of the main sample. Both young people with LDD and their parents reported that they needed more information and support to plan their future.

As reported in Section 2.6, the modelling showed that young people with LDD (those in the 16-17 age group) felt more prepared for their future compared with similar young people without LDD. There were also some differences between the responses of young people with LDD and the responses of the main sample of all young people in terms of their knowledge about accessing education and training after Year 11, as shown below.

A smaller proportion of the group of young people with LDD said that they knew about the funding that they could get to help them continue in education or training after leaving Year 11 compared with the main sample of all young people (60 per cent of 18-25 year olds with LDD and 45 per cent of 16-17 year-olds with LDD said that they did not know anything about this, compared with only 26 per cent of young people in the main sample). Parents of young people with LDD reported a similar level of knowledge as the young people with LDD; 44 per cent of the parents did not know anything about the funding available to support young people to continue in education or training. There appears to be scope, therefore, to enhance the information about funding for learning post-16 among young people with LDD and their parents.

The young people with LDD tended to have lower levels of knowledge about aspects of transport, including the financial side of travelling to potential education and training providers.

- 49 per cent of 18-25 year olds with LDD and 40 per cent of 16-17 year olds with LDD said that they did not know anything about the cost of transport to a college or training provider compared with only 27 per cent of the main sample of all young people
- 52 per cent of 18-25 year olds with LDD and 48 per cent of 16-17 year olds with LDD said that they did not know anything about the financial support they could get to cover the cost of transport compared with 41 per cent of the main sample of all young people
- 29 per cent of 18-25 year olds with LDD and 18 per cent of 16-17 year olds with LDD said that they did not know anything about how to travel to a college or training provider compared with 12 per cent of the main sample of all young people.

Typically, a smaller proportion of young people with LDD reported that they knew a lot or a little about the different pathways available after Year 11 than the young people in the main sample of all young people.

- While 85 per cent of young people in the main sample said they knew at least a little about the qualifications they needed to get into different jobs or careers, only 70 per cent of young people aged 16-17 with LDD and 52 per cent of young people aged 18-25 with LDD said the same
- More than half of the main sample said they knew at least a little about the Apprenticeships available in their area (53 per cent), however 43 per cent of young people with LDD aged 16-17 and only 27 per cent of young people aged 18-25 with LDD said the same
- The majority of young people in the main sample said they knew at least a little about the different types of education and training they could do after leaving Year 11 (87 per cent). In contrast, only 70 per cent of young people with LDD aged 16-17 and 49 per cent of young people with LDD aged between 18 and 25 knew at least a little about the different pathways available post-16.

Generally, the older group of young people with LDD appeared to be less aware of the key facts related to provision after Year 11 and related funding and transport than their younger counterparts. This could be because the older group have moved on and, therefore, knowledge about these aspects are no longer relevant to them, or that they cannot recall leaving Year 11 well enough to be able to answer these questions.

On the whole, fewer young people with LDD, in both age groups, knew about the support available (including financial), the transport and the pathways available than the main sample of all young people. Furthermore, parents of young people with LDD had a similar level of knowledge to the young people with LDD. This was backed up by the finding that young people with LDD felt that they did not have enough information and support for planning their future. Thus, when asked about the support and information they had received, young people with LDD aged 16-17 were slightly less positive than those young people in the main sample. The amount of information they had received appeared to be a particular issue – only 53 per cent of young people with LDD aged 16-17 agreed that they had enough information to plan their future education and work compared with 72 per cent of young people in the

main sample. The amount of support received was also highlighted as a concern, albeit to a lower level – 70 per cent of young people with LDD aged 16-17 agreed they had received enough support in planning their future compared with 80 per cent of young people overall. This suggests that there is room for improvement in the provision of IAG to young people with LDD and their families.

In terms of how easy young people found the decision about what to do after Year 11, fewer young people with LDD said that it was an easy decision compared with the main sample of young people. In particular, 72 per cent of the main sample said the decision was very easy or quite easy, compared with 58 per cent of young people with LDD aged 16-17 and 60 per cent of young people with LDD aged 18-25. Although more young people with LDD appeared to find the decision difficult, the level of satisfaction with what they decided to do after leaving Year 11 was similar to that of the main sample:

- 91 per cent of young people with LDD aged 16-17 and 83 per cent of young people with LDD aged 18-25 said they were very or quite satisfied, compared with 93 per cent of the main sample.

The slightly lower level of satisfaction in the older age group of young people with LDD could be because they have more experience since making the decision, and as a result have a better understanding of how that decision affected their future.

2.9 How well are young people who were NEET prepared to make the transition at 16?

Young people who were NEET tended to have a similar level of knowledge about their post-16 options as the main sample; however they were less confident about the support available to help them continue in education or training. Almost half of this group found the decision about what to do after Year 11 difficult, mainly because they could not decide what to do, or because the range of routes was too broad. Indeed, many young people who were NEET felt that they did not have enough information, advice or guidance to plan their future.

The multi-level regression analysis showed that young people who were not in education or training (comprising those either NEET or in JWT) were more likely to have felt underprepared for the future than young people who were participating in learning.

Although young people who were NEET tended to have a similar level of knowledge about what it is like to participate in education and training as the main sample of all young people (71 per cent compared with 74 per cent respectively said they knew at least a little about this), and about the different types of education and training available after leaving Year 11 (83 per cent compared with 87 per cent respectively said they knew at least a little about this), fewer knew about the **support** that was available to them when studying after Year 11:

- 50 per cent of young people who were NEET did not know anything about the financial support available to cover the cost of transport compared with 41 per cent of the main sample of all young people
- 40 per cent of young people who were NEET did not know anything about the support available (other than funding) compared with 31 per cent of the main sample of all young people

- 33 per cent of young people who were NEET did not know anything about the funding they could get to help them to continue in education or training after leaving Year 11 compared with 26 per cent of the main sample of all young people.

A slightly higher proportion of young people who were NEET said that they did not know anything about the Apprenticeships that were available in their area than the main sample (54 per cent compared with 47 per cent respectively). Improving Year 11 students' awareness of Apprenticeships available locally might encourage more young people to participate because it offers work-based learning which, as previous research has shown (see Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009) appeals to young people who do not participate in formal learning.

As might be expected, considering that young people who were NEET were not engaged in any activity, a higher proportion of young people who were NEET said that they found the decision about what to do after Year 11 quite difficult or very difficult (43 per cent) compared with the main sample of all young people (18 per cent). Indeed, out of all of the sub-groups, more young people who were NEET said that they found the decision difficult. The reasons for finding the decision difficult, given by young people who were NEET, were mainly related to difficulties in making up their mind, or that the range of routes was too broad. This reflects the experience of the 'undecided NEET' segment in the recent research by Spielhofer *et al.* (2009) as discussed in Section 2.3.

In addition it appears that IAG to support young people making this decision may have been lacking for this group of young people, with only 53 per cent of young people who were NEET agreeing that they had received enough support in planning their future, compared with 80 per cent of the main sample of all young people. Furthermore, fewer than half of young people who were NEET agreed that they had enough information to plan their future (49 per cent compared with 72 per cent of the main sample).

Perhaps most illustrative of the issue of the importance of IAG for young people is that almost one in five young people who were NEET said that not knowing all of the options available to them had **stopped them** from doing what they wanted to do (19 per cent, compared with only four per cent of the main sample of all young people). When asked if more information about the courses that were available would encourage them to do some education or training, 59 per cent of young people who were NEET said that it would. The perceived lack of clear and accessible IAG appears to have, therefore, had an impact on young people who were NEET, so it is important to ensure that flexible and accessible support, presented in a way that appeals and interests young people, is available to help them make an informed decision about their future.

Almost half of young people who were NEET said that they were not satisfied with what they decided to do after leaving Year 11 (32 per cent were not very satisfied and 12 per cent were not satisfied at all) – this compares with only six per cent of the main sample of all young people (five per cent were not very satisfied and one per cent was not satisfied at all). It appears that in all, many young people who were NEET subsequently felt that they would have preferred to do something else after leaving Year 11 although they did not have the information that they needed to embark on the alternative; more than half (54 per cent) of the young people who were NEET said that they would have done a course or training after leaving Year 11 if they had been aware of all of the education and training courses open to them.

2.10 How well are young people in JWT prepared to make the transition at 16?

Fewer young people in JWT knew about the support available to them to continue in education or training compared with the main sample of all young people. Although many young people in JWT knew about Apprenticeships, they ended up in a job *without* training; it appears that this group of young people are most likely to be engaged via the work-based route. Almost three in ten young people in JWT found the decision about what to do after Year 11 difficult, and the most common reason for this was a difficulty in choosing between continuing in education or getting a job. More young people in JWT felt that they had not received enough IAG compared with young people in the main sample, and almost one in six young people in JWT said that not knowing all of the options open to them had stopped them from doing what they wanted to do.

As explained at the start of the previous section about young people who were NEET, the multi-level regression analysis showed that young people who were not in education or training (comprising those either NEET or in JWT) were more likely to have felt underprepared for the future than young people who were participating in learning.

Although the young people in JWT tended to have a similar level of knowledge about what it is like to continue in education or training as the main sample of all young people (70 per cent compared with 74 per cent respectively said they knew at least a little about this), fewer knew about the **support** that was available when studying after Year 11:

- 44 per cent of young people in JWT did not know anything about the support available (other than funding) compared with 31 per cent of the main sample of all young people
- 35 per cent of young people in JWT did not know anything about the funding they could get to help them to continue in education or training after leaving Year 11 compared with 26 per cent of the main sample of all young people
- 48 per cent of young people in JWT did not know anything about the financial support available to cover the cost of transport compared with 41 per cent of the main sample of all young people

Two thirds of the young people in JWT knew ‘a bit’ or ‘a lot’ about Apprenticeships (67 per cent) – this was more than any other group of young people in the sub-groups or the main sample. This could indicate that although these young people ended up taking a job *without* training, they were at least aware of the option of taking a job *with* training that would lead to a qualification, indicating that the work-based route particularly appealed to this group of young people. Although many of them had explored the option of Apprenticeships, they were unable to pursue this route and preferred to take a work-based route *without* training rather than a course-based route. Converting the interest expressed by this group of young people into taking up of Apprenticeships through awareness raising and ensuring the local availability of Apprenticeships on offer should, therefore, continue to be a focus for the future.

More young people in JWT found the decision about what to do after leaving Year 11 difficult than the main sample of all young people:

- 28 per cent of young people in JWT found the decision quite or very difficult compared with 18 per cent of young people in the main sample.

The most common reason why the decision was difficult given by the young people in JWT was that they found it difficult to choose between continuing their education and getting a job (given by 14 out of the 54 young people in JWT who found the decision quite or very difficult or who had mixed views).

A smaller proportion of young people in JWT agreed that they had received enough support in planning their future (63 per cent) compared with the main sample of all young people (80 per cent). Similarly, while 72 per cent of the main sample of young people agreed that they had enough information to plan their future, only 63 per cent of the young people in JWT agreed with this statement. Although the level of agreement in the JWT booster group was lower than the main sample, it remained higher than that of the young people who were NEET (of whom 53 per cent agreed they had received enough support and 49 per cent agreed they had enough information).

Along with the teenage parents and the young people who were NEET, not knowing all of the options available to them was also an issue for the young people in JWT. Almost one in six young people in JWT (15 per cent) said that not knowing all of the options available to them **stopped them** from doing what they wanted to do. A further 30 per cent said that it was a problem for them, although they coped with it. Providing young people with information about all of the available options is an important factor in enabling them to make an informed decision about what to do after leaving Year 11. For example, not knowing about the local availability of Apprenticeships, or other training opportunities as part of a paid job, might prevent some young people who prioritise wanting or needing to earn money above remaining in education from continuing to gain qualifications after achieving their GCSEs.

On the whole, most young people in JWT (84 per cent) were quite or very satisfied with what they decided to do after leaving Year 11. This is slightly lower than the level of satisfaction of the main sample of all young people (93 per cent), but it does perhaps provide an indication that generally young people in JWT were satisfied that they had entered the world of work. Almost half of the young people in the JWT booster group that did not do a course or training after leaving Year 11 said that they would have taken a course or training if they had been aware of all of the courses they could have done, again supporting the need for IAG for all young people prior to the post-16 transition.

2.11 Summary

Although most young people find the decision about what to do after Year 11 easy and most are satisfied with what they have done post-16, almost a fifth of young people find the decision-making process difficult and seven per cent end up dissatisfied with the choice they make. Furthermore, a substantial minority of young people, particularly those with LDD, teenage parents, and young people in JWT or who were NEET feel that they have not received enough support and information, and do not feel well prepared for their future. There also appears to be a core group of young people who are undecided about their future, and it is important that they are provided with IAG which is presented in engaging and accessible forms to provide them with a real understanding of the opportunities available to them. This needs to be accompanied by personal support to ensure young people receive the advice and support suitable to their particular needs, interests and circumstances.

3. What are the main barriers or constraints experienced by young people?

Key messages

- Overall, 86 per cent of young people do not face any barriers at 16 that **stop them** from doing what they want to do
- A large proportion of young people (63 per cent) face one or more **constraints** (that do not stop them from doing what they want to do but are problems that they have to overcome) at the end of Year 11, but for only about one in seven (14 per cent) these constraints become a barrier that stop them from doing what they want to do
- The most common barriers identified by young people relate to lack of availability of certain courses or training in their area, not having enough money to participate in learning and not knowing all of the options available to them
- However, each of these barriers are only identified by relatively small proportions of young people as having stopped them (between four and six per cent)
- Young people in the sub-groups are more likely to report many of the barriers or constraints than those in the main sample.
- Teenage parents, young people with LDD and those who are NEET are all particularly likely to experience the lack of availability of particular courses in their areas as a barrier which stops them from doing what they want to do post-16.
- The main barriers preventing young people in JWT from participating relate to not having enough money and other financial issues.

Policy implications

- There is a need for targeted specialist support at the 14 per cent of young people who experience barriers that stop them from doing what they want to do. In particular, this includes raising their awareness of the options available to them, ensuring provision is available that meets their needs and that they can access the financial support needed to participate.

This chapter presents the main barriers and constraints faced when deciding about what to do after Year 11 by young people overall and by teenage parents, young people with LDD, and those who were NEET or in JWT.

3.1 What are the main barriers or constraints?

Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of young people said that they had experienced at least one of a series of possible issues or barriers presented to them as part of a closed question. However, only 14 per cent (287) said that such barriers had actually **stopped them** from doing what they wanted to do. All the other interviewees who experienced an issue said that even though they had encountered a problem, they had **coped with it** and it had not stopped them from doing what they wanted to do. Overall, therefore, 86 per cent of young people had not encountered a barrier that had stopped them from doing what they wanted to do.

Most of the 287 young people who had encountered a barrier that had stopped them from doing something, only identified one such barrier (63 per cent); 17 per cent identified two barriers, while 21 per cent of these had encountered three or more barriers.

Analysis of the characteristics of those young people who had encountered a barrier showed that they are **more likely**:

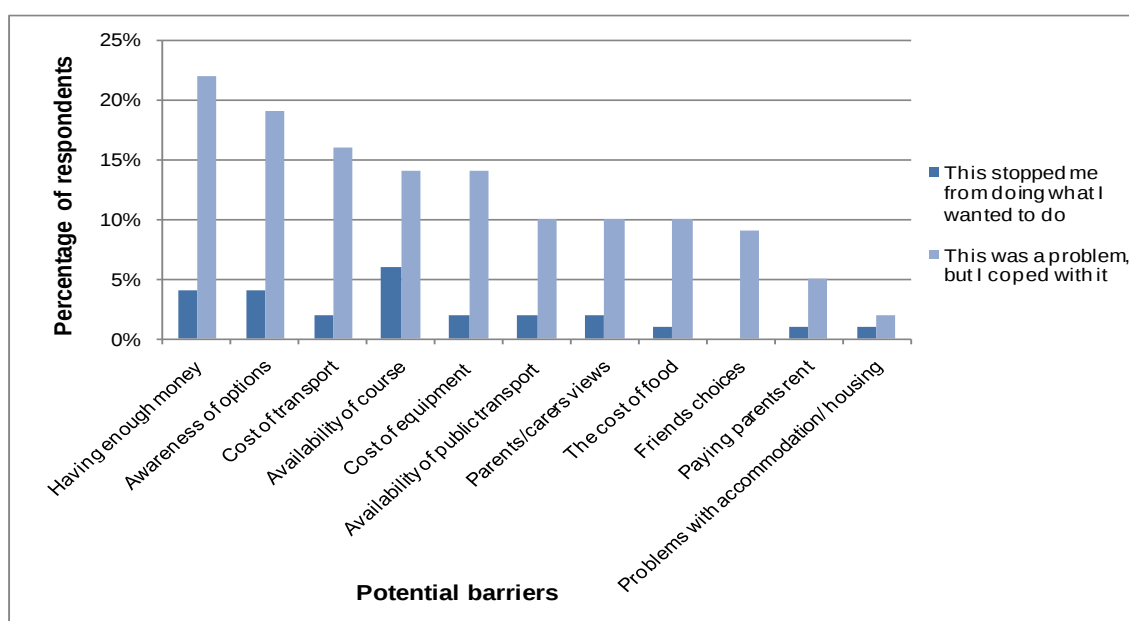
- to have **achieved less than five GCSEs at grades A*-C** (21 per cent of these had faced a barrier compared with 11 per cent of those with five GCSEs or more at grades A*-C)
- to **have a LDD** (27 per cent of young people with a LDD said they had faced a barrier compared with 13 per cent of those without)
- to **have parents who did not go to university** (15 per cent of these said they had faced a barrier compared with 11 per cent of those with at least one parent who went to university)
- to **live in an urban area** (15 per cent of young people living in an urban area compared with 11 per cent of those living in a rural area).

Furthermore, young people with these characteristics were also more likely to report multiple barriers. Thus, 50 per cent of young people with a LDD had experienced more than one barrier compared with 36 per cent of those with no LDD. Similarly, while 45 per cent of those who had achieved less than five GCSEs at grades A*-C had experienced multiple barriers, this was only the case for 32 per cent of those with five GCSEs or more at grades A*-C.

No differences were identified in relation to young people's gender or ethnicity in relation to experiencing barriers.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the extent to which young people had encountered the different types of barriers and constraints they were asked about in the survey.

Figure 3.1: Barriers and constraints affecting young people's decisions at the end of year 11



This indicates that few young people identified individual barriers that **had stopped them** from doing something they wanted to do. Where they did, the most common ones were:

- a course or training not been available in their area (six per cent of young people)
- not having enough money (four per cent)
- not knowing all of the options available to them (four per cent).

These three barriers were also among the constraints most commonly experienced but with which young people said that they coped. However, it is notable that the cost of transport and equipment were among the most commonly noted problems that young people coped with, but were less often identified as barriers that stopped young people.

3.2 To what extent do such barriers or constraints influence young people's choice of post-16 options?

Just over a third of all young people (36 per cent) said that they had considered doing something different from their actual post-16 destinations. The majority of the 63 per cent who did not consider any alternatives said that this was because they had a very clear idea of what they wanted to do, in terms of doing a particular course, subject or attending a specific type of provider. Similarly, the main reason stated by the 36 per cent who had considered at least one other option for not pursuing it was that their actual destination was more interesting or what they really wanted to do.

Very few of the 729 young people who had considered doing something different, identified a particular barrier or constraint as the main reason for not pursuing it. This included:

- seven per cent who said they had not done it because of a lack of qualifications or skills
- five per cent who had not done it due to the course not being available in the area or not being able to find a work placement with an employer
- two per cent due to transport issues (distance or not wanting to use public transport)
- one per cent because of financial issues.

The following sections focus on any differences in barriers or constraints experienced by the different sub-groups of young people surveyed as part of this research.

3.3 What are the main barriers or constraints experienced by teenage parents?

All teenage parents interviewed experienced at least one barrier or constraint when deciding what to do after Year 11. The most common reported barrier related to **a course not being available to them in their area**, while many of them also reported that **finance** and **not knowing all of the options available to them** were barriers or constraints.

As will be discussed in Section 5.4, multi-level regression analysis showed that teenage parents had increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint. This was reflected in teenage parents' responses relating to the extent to which they experienced particular barrier or constraint. Thus, only around one-third (38 per cent) of the 93 teenage parents interviewed said that finance had not been a problem for them when making their decision. In contrast, 15 per cent said it had been a barrier that had stopped them from doing what they wanted to do, while 46 per cent said that it had been a constraint when making their decision. This compares with four per cent of young people in the main sample who identified finance as a barrier and 22 per cent who said it was a constraint and suggests that teenage parents are more likely to be prevented from pursuing their preferred post-16 route due to financial issues. Teenage parents were also more likely to identify other finance-related barriers than young people in the main sample, but not to the same degree of difference. Thus, for example, five per cent of teenage parents said that having to pay their parents rent was a barrier compared with one per cent of young people in the main sample.

Furthermore, 20 per cent of teenage parents said that lack of availability of a particular course in their area had stopped them from doing what they wanted, while 18 per cent said that not knowing all of the options open to them had been a barrier to them. Both of these were again noticeably higher than for young people in the main sample.

3.4 What are the main barriers or constraints experienced by young people with LDD?

Young people with LDD (and their parents) were noticeably more likely to report that a **lack of availability of courses** was one of the main barriers stopping them from doing what they wanted to do post-16 compared with young people in the main sample. Otherwise, there were very few noticeable differences between the samples in terms of barriers experienced, although young people with LDD and/or their parents were more likely to report that they faced certain other constraints, including access to and the cost of public transport and financial issues in general.

More than three-quarters (27 per cent) of the 102 parents interviewed said that their children (with LDD) had been stopped from doing what they wanted to do as a result of a course or training not being available to them in their area. The young people, themselves, were less likely to identify this as a barrier, although they reported this more often than those in the main sample. Thus, 12 per cent of young people aged 18-25 with LDD said this was a barrier and ten per cent of those aged 16-17 – compared with six per cent of young people in the main sample.

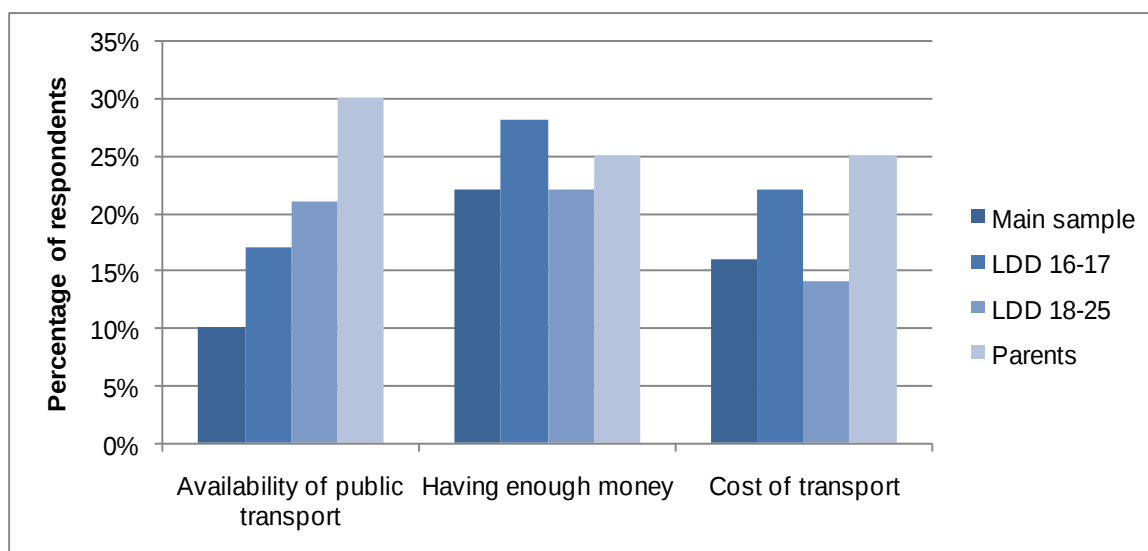
Otherwise, there were very few noticeable differences between young people with LDD and those in the main sample, although the former were slightly more likely to report that not knowing all of the options available to them had been a barrier (seven per cent of young people aged 18-25 with LDD said this was a barrier and six per cent of those aged 16-17 – compared with four per cent of young people in the main sample).

Furthermore, there were also some differences in the extent to which young people with LDD aged 16-17 in particular and their parents reported experiencing constraints, which did not actually stop them from doing what they wanted to do, but

were an issue they had to overcome. In particular, as shown in Figure 3.1, these related to:

- availability of public transport
- having enough money
- the cost of transport.

Figure 3.2: Barriers and constraints experienced by young people with LDD



3.5 What are the main barriers or constraints experienced by young people who were NEET?

All young people who were NEET experienced at least one barrier when deciding what to do after Year 11. The main barrier reported by almost a quarter of those interviewed related to **a course they wanted to do not being available to them in their area**. Otherwise, young people often also identified **finance** and **not knowing all of the options available to them** as barriers which stopped them from doing what they wanted to do post-16.

Four out of ten of young people who were NEET said that lack of availability of courses or training options had been a barrier or constraint, when deciding what to do at the end of Year 11.

- 23 per cent of them said this was a barrier that stopped them doing what they wanted to do (compared with six per cent of young people in the main sample)
- 16 per cent said it was a problem, but they had coped with it (compared with 14 per cent of young people in the main sample).

This correlates fairly closely with the proportion of interviewees who said that not knowing all of the options available to them had been a barrier – 19 per cent of the 140 young people interviewed who were NEET. This suggests that for some young people lack of suitable provision as well as awareness of the options available to them are preventing them from participating in education or training or doing what they want to do.

Otherwise, as will be discussed in Section 5.4, multi-level regression analysis showed that young people who were NEET had increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint. More specifically, among those 140 young people interviewed who were NEET:

- 14 per cent said that not having enough money had been a barrier (compared with four per cent of young people in the main sample)
- seven per cent reported that the cost of equipment needed to do a course had been a barrier (compared with two per cent of young people in the main sample)
- six per cent said the cost of transport was a barrier (compared with two per cent of young people in the main sample)
- five per cent identified having to pay their parents rent as a barrier (compared with one per cent of young people in the main sample).

One other noticeable difference related to the fact that ten per cent of young people who were NEET said that a barrier was that their parents wanted them to do something different from what they wanted to do. This was much higher than for young people in the main sample.

These findings show that young people who are NEET are more likely than other young people to experience certain issues as barriers that prevent them from participating in learning or from doing what they want to do. In particular, the availability of courses as well as financial issues both seem to be of particular concern for this group of young people.

3.6 What are the main barriers or constraints experienced by young people in JWT?

The main barriers identified by young people in JWT related to not having enough money and other financial issues, as well as not knowing all of the options available to them. Otherwise, their responses resembled those of young people who were NEET in many ways even though they were less likely to say that **a course they wanted to do not being available to them in their area** was a barrier for them, although they were still a lot more likely to say this than young people in the main sample.

As will be discussed in Section 5.4, multi-level regression analysis showed that young people in JWT had increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint. Of those 130 interviewed, only half (50 per cent) said that finance had not been a problem for them when making their decision. In contrast, 16 per cent said it had been a barrier that had stopped them from doing what they wanted to do, while 34 per cent indicated that it had been a constraint when making their decision.

Young people who were in JWT identified finance as a barrier in relation to:

- the cost of transport (eight per cent compared with two per cent of young people in the main sample)
- having to pay their parents rent (eight per cent compared with one per cent of young people in the main sample)
- the cost of equipment needed to do a course (six per cent compared with two per cent of young people in the main sample).

Otherwise, 15 per cent of young people in JWT said that not knowing all of the options available to them had been a barrier and 30 per cent identified this as a constraint. This contrasts with a total of 23 per cent of the main sample who reported that this was either a barrier or constraint.

Finally, even though the responses of young people in JWT resembled those of young people who were NEET in many ways, they were less likely to identify lack of availability of a course or training as a barrier. In particular, 12 per cent of them said this was a barrier compared with 23 of young people who were NEET (compared with six per cent of young people in the main sample).

3.7 Summary

Even though the majority of young people do not face any barriers that stop them from doing what they want to do at the end of Year 11, there are a sizeable number of young people (14 per cent) who do face such barriers. Furthermore, some of these barriers are particularly acute in relation to particular sub-groups of young people, including teenage parents, young people with LDD, and those who are NEET or in JWT. Many young people in these groups report that lack of availability and awareness of courses they want to do when completing Year 11 stops them from doing what they want to do. This suggests that policy should be focused at ensuring that sufficient provision is made available in all areas, which caters to their interests and needs, and that young people are fully informed of the options available to them. Young people in JWT and others also frequently cite financial barriers as reasons for not participating or not doing what they want to do post-16. This suggests a need for targeted financial support, coupled with the provision of sufficient Apprenticeship placement opportunities to enable such young people to earn while learning.

4. To what extent is transport a barrier or constraint for young people?

Key messages

- Young people living in rural areas are significantly more likely to report transport as a barrier or constraint than those living in urban areas
- Even though just over one in ten young people rate public transport in their area as being 'bad' or 'very bad', only two per cent say that lack of availability of transport stops them from doing what they want to do when leaving school
- However, young people who rate transport facilities as 'bad' or 'very bad' are significantly more likely to report that transport is a barrier or constraint when deciding what to do after Year 11
- More young people identify the cost rather than the availability of transport as a barrier or constraint. Indeed, around a third of young people who did not go on to learning at the end of Year 11 think that they would have done so if they had more money to cover the cost of transport
- Young people are less likely to regard transport as a barrier or constraint if they feel at ease with using public transport
- Only 17 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD and 38 per cent of those aged 18-25 with LDD were aware of Independent Travel Training schemes in their areas.

Policy implications

- Increasing young people's confidence in using public transport could reduce the negative effects of living in rural areas or areas with less adequate transport facilities
- More needs to be done raise the awareness of young people with LDD of Independent Travel Training schemes in their areas to help them feel more at ease with using public transport to access learning.

The next two sections present young people's views of the quality of transport in their areas and the extent to which transport acted as a barrier (which stopped them from doing what they wanted to do) or constraint (which did not stop them but was a problem they had to overcome) when deciding what to do after completing Year 11. They also present the findings of multi-level regression analysis, which provides a consideration of the characteristics of those most likely to encounter transport-related barriers or constraints. This is followed by separate sections exploring the extent to which transport was experienced a barrier or constraint by teenage parents, young people with LDD, and those who were NEET or in JWT.

4.1 What do young people think of the quality of public transport in their areas?

The availability of public transport to get to their place of learning is an important consideration for the majority of young people – more important than being able to get to there by foot or using a wheelchair. Thus, 70 per cent of young people said that being able to get to where they wanted to work or study by public transport was very or quite important. This contrasts with 44 per cent who said that being able to get there by foot or wheelchair was very or quite important. These proportions are not surprising given the number of young people using public transport and other forms of transport to get to their place of learning post-16. As can be seen in Figure 4.1, only 30 per cent of all young people went to their main place of learning by foot, while most others used some form of transport to get there. Furthermore, young people in rural areas were even more dependent on public and school/college transport – only eight per cent accessed their place of learning by foot, while 70 per cent used either public transport or a school/college bus.

Figure 4.1: How young people get to their main place of learning

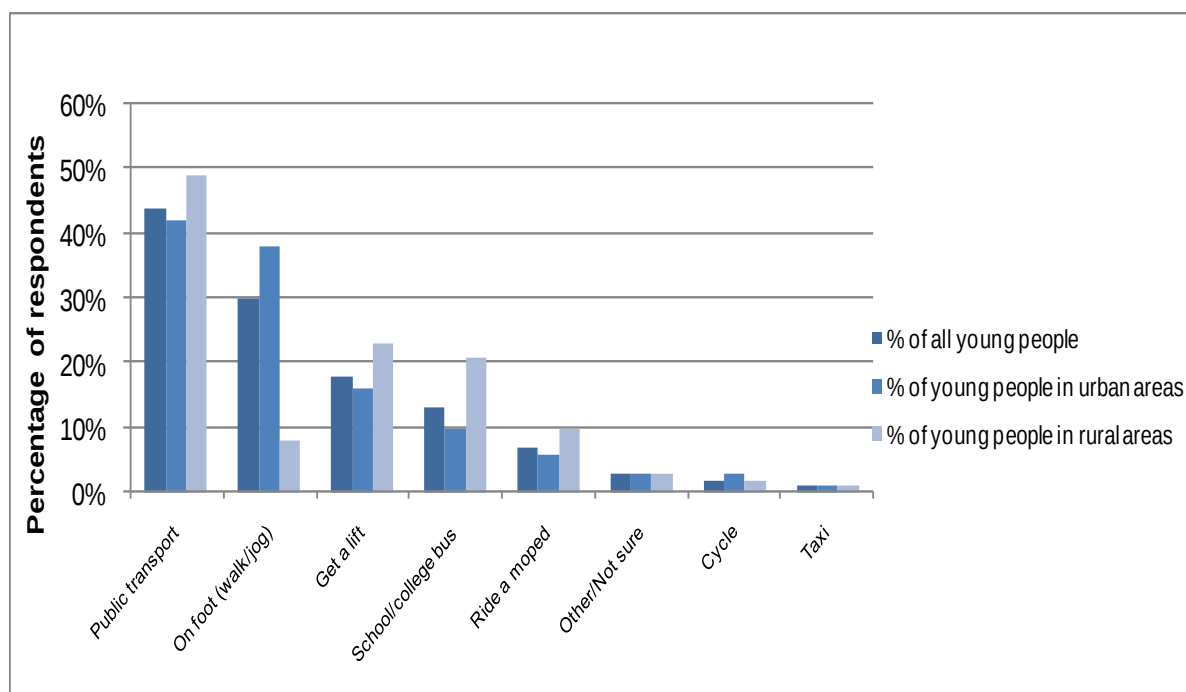
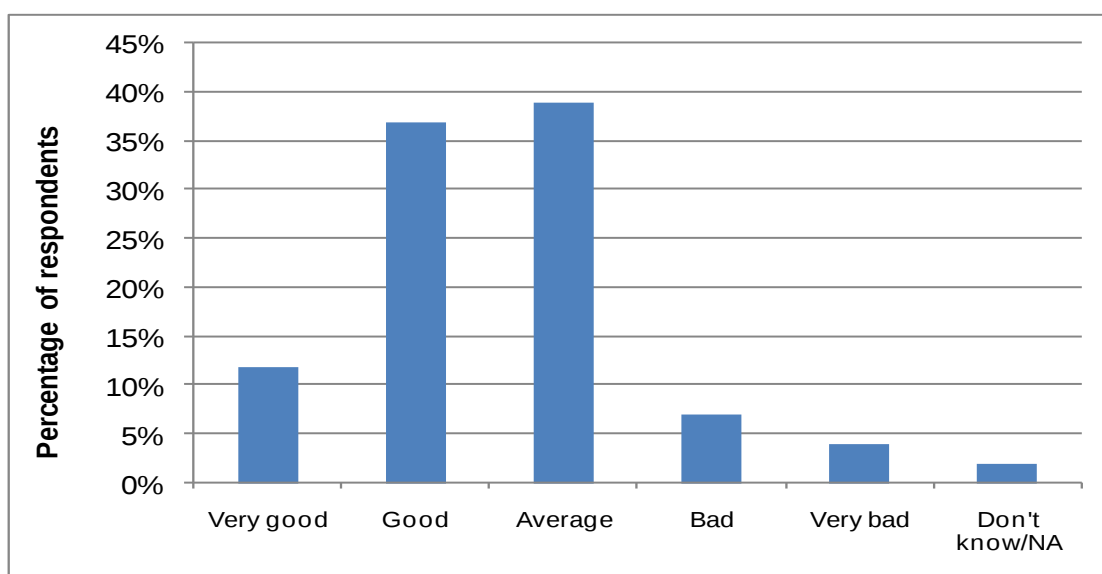


Figure 4.2 shows that just over one in ten young people (11 per cent) rated the public transport facilities they could use in their area to get them to sixth form, college or training as 'very bad' or 'bad'. In contrast, exactly half (50 per cent) thought they were 'good' or 'very good', while 39 per cent said they were 'average'. Analysis of responses of those actually using public transport facilities to get to their place of learning showed no noticeable differences in their rating of these facilities from young people overall.

Figure 4.2: Young people's rating of public transport in their areas

Only a minority of young people (four per cent) reported that they had previously been asked about their views of transport facilities in their areas – a quarter of them said that sharing their views had made a difference. In most cases, young people reported that they had been asked their views either by their learning provider or by someone from a local transport company.

4.2 What proportion of young people experience transport as a barrier or constraint?

Table 4.1 presents the results of a series of questions asked to determine the extent to which young people felt at ease with using transport facilities in their areas. It shows that more than nine in ten felt confident about using public transport and the same proportion felt safe travelling on public transport in their areas. Young people were more likely to express concerns in relation to working out the times of buses and trains.

Table 4.1: Did young people feel at ease with using public transport facilities?

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
I find it easy to work out the times of buses and trains	81%	2%	17%
I feel confident using the public transport in my area	92%	1%	7%
I feel safe travelling on public transport in my area	92%	2%	6%

N=2029

Most of the young people said that transport had not been a barrier when deciding what to do after Year 11. Indeed, only two per cent of them reported that the lack of availability of public transport had stopped them from doing what they wanted to do after completing Year 11, while ten per cent said that even though it had been a problem, they had coped with it.

The survey suggests that the **cost** of transport rather than **availability** is more of an issue for young people – 18 per cent identified the cost of transport as a barrier or constraint (again only two per cent said it had stopped them doing what they wanted to do, while 16 per cent said that it had been a problem but they had coped with it). Furthermore, young people in rural areas were significantly more likely to report cost of transport as a barrier or constraint – 22 per cent – compared with young people in urban areas (17 per cent). In addition, even though young people receiving an EMA were slightly more likely to identify the cost of transport as a barrier or constraint (19 per cent), this was not statistically significant.

It is also worth noting that a third (34 per cent) of the 144 young people who did not go on to education or training after Year 11 (either NEET or in JWT) said that they would have done so if they had received more money to cover the cost of transport.

Within this context, it is worth noting that 17 per cent of those young people participating in education or training after Year 11 said that they had received help or support with their travel costs from their training provider or local authority. The three types of support received most commonly mentioned by these 319 young people included:

- a free bus pass (33 per cent of young people)
- reduced/concessionary fares (27 per cent)
- a free bus service (11 per cent).

4.3 Who is most likely to experience transport as a barrier or constraint?

Multi-level regression analysis was used to explore the association between young people's characteristics and the likelihood of experiencing transport as a barrier (which stopped them from doing what they wanted to do) or constraint (which did not stop them) in relation both to availability or cost (see Appendix C for more details of this analysis).

The most important factor associated with reporting transport as a barrier/constraint was young people's **rating of public transport facilities** in their areas. Indeed, young people who thought that it was good were only about half as likely to identify transport as a barrier/constraint than those less satisfied with provision. Related to this, young people **living in rural areas** were one and a half times more likely to report experiencing transport as a barrier/constraint than their peers living in urban areas.

As can be expected, public transport was also significantly more likely to be experienced as a barrier/constraint by young people who reported that the availability of **public transport was an important consideration** when deciding what to do after Year 11.

Multi-level regression analysis also showed that young people were significantly less likely to identify transport as a barrier/constraint who:

- had found the decision about what to do after Year 11 easy
- felt well prepared for the future (in relation to a number of factors – see Appendix B)
- felt at ease with using public transport (in relation to the factors listed in Table 4.1).

The last point may suggest that increasing young people's confidence of using public transport, for example by helping them to work out the times of buses and trains, could potentially reduce the negative effect of living in a rural area and/or in an area with transport facilities judged to be 'bad' or 'very bad' from the young person's perspective.

Finally, it is worth noting that no significant association was measured between young people's gender, age, attainment and ethnicity and their likelihood of experiencing transport as a barrier or constraint.

4.4 In what way is transport experienced as a barrier or constraint by teenage parents?

The majority of teenage parents said that availability of public transport to get to their place of work or study was an important consideration when deciding what to do at end of Year 11. However, there is very little evidence to suggest that teenage parents experience transport as a barrier or constraint any more than other young people surveyed, although they are slightly more likely to identify **transport costs as a barrier**.

Four in five (80 per cent) of the 93 teenage parents interviewed (as part of the main and booster sample) said that being able to get to where they wanted to work or study by public transport was a very (58 per cent) or quite important (22 per cent) consideration when deciding what to do after Year 11. This is higher than for young people in the main sample (70 per cent said it was very or quite important). There was no noticeable difference, though, in the importance attached to being able to access their place of learning or work by foot or wheelchair between teenage parents and young people overall.

Similarly, teenage parents' responses to most of the other questions relating to transport were very similar to those of young people in the main sample. This included the extent to which:

- they had experienced the availability of public transport as a barrier or constraint
- they felt at ease travelling on public transport
- they felt confident using public transport in their areas
- they found it easy to work out the times of buses and trains.

Teenage parents were slightly more likely to rate the transport facilities in their area as 'bad' (12 per cent) or 'very bad' (five per cent) compared with young people in the main sample (among which seven per cent and four per cent rated the transport facilities as bad and very bad respectively). A slightly higher proportion of teenage parents (five per cent) also said that the cost of transport had been a barrier that stopped them from doing what they wanted to do (compared with two per cent of young people in the main sample).

4.5 In what way is transport experienced as a barrier or constraint by young people with LDD?

Young people with LDD were noticeably less likely than other young people to have **confidence in using public transport** and **working out the times of buses and trains**. They were also less likely to **feel safe travelling on public transport** in their areas than others. At the same time, many young people with LDD, especially those aged 16-17, were **not aware of the travel training** support which aims to overcome such issues.

There was no noticeable difference in the importance attached to being able to access their place of learning or work on foot or by wheel chair or public transport between young people with LDD aged 16-17 and 18-25 and young people overall. Similar proportions of those in learning among these groups were also found to use public transport to get there – around four in ten of those interviewed. Furthermore, very few young people with LDD and parents of young people with LDD identified the availability of public transport as a barrier that stopped them from doing what they wanted to do post-16. This was the case for five per cent of young people with LDD aged 16-17 and those aged 18-25 (compared with two per cent of young people in the main sample). However, larger proportions reported that this had been a constraint they had coped with.

- 17 per cent of 16-17 year olds with LDD said that availability of transport had been a constraint
- 21 per cent of 18-25 year olds with LDD said it had been a constraint
- 30 per cent of parents of young people with LDD identified availability as a constraint.

The ratings given by young people with LDD aged 16-17 and 18-25 of the public transport facilities available to them to access learning were also very similar to those of young people in the main sample – in fact, they were slightly more likely to rate it as ‘very good’ than young people overall. However, more than a quarter of the 102 parents of young people with LDD interviewed said that public transport in their areas was either ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’. This contrasts with only 11 per cent of young people in the main sample, 12 per cent of young people aged 16-17 and 13 per cent of those aged 18-25.

There was also no noticeable difference between young people with LDD and those in the main sample in the extent to which transport costs were regarded as a barrier. However, young people with LDD aged 16-17 (28 per cent) and parents of young people with LDD (37 per cent) were more likely to identify it as a constraint than young people in the main sample and those aged 18-25 (both 22 per cent).

These relatively small differences – and similarities in responses between those aged 18-25 with LDD and young people in the main sample with regard to transport costs in particular – could be explained by the fact that young people with LDD were noticeably more likely to have received help with their travel costs to access learning than young people overall. This was particularly the case among those young people aged 18-25 with LDD of which 41 per cent said that they had received such support, compared with 28 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD (and 17 per cent among young people in the main sample). This was more likely to include the receipt of a free bus pass for young people aged 16-17 (43 per cent) and those aged 18-25 (47 per cent) than for young people overall (33 per cent).

Even though relatively small proportions of young people with LDD (and their parents) said that availability of transport had been a barrier that stopped them from doing what they wanted to do at the end of Year 11, they were noticeably less confident in using public transport than young people overall. As can be seen in Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4, young people with LDD in both age groups (16-17 and 18-25) were less likely to feel confident using public transport and working out travel timetables and also felt less safe travelling on public transport than young people in the main sample.

Table 4.2: Did young people find it easy to work out the times of buses or trains?

I find it easy to work out the times of buses or trains	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	N=
Young people in the main sample	81%	2%	17%	2029
Young people aged 16-17 with LDD	61%	11%	27%	310
Young people aged 18-25 with LDD	53%	22%	24%	156

Table 4.3: Did young people feel confident using the public transport in their area?

I feel confident using the public transport in my area	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	N=
Young people in the main sample	92%	1%	7%	2029
Young people aged 16-17 with LDD	74%	7%	17%	310
Young people aged 18-25 with LDD	63%	15%	21%	156

Table 4.4: Did young people feel safe travelling on public transport in their area?

I feel safe travelling on public transport in my area	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	N=
Young people in the main sample	92%	2%	6%	2029
Young people aged 16-17 with LDD	75%	11%	14%	310
Young people aged 18-25 with LDD	64%	18%	17%	156

Independent Travel Training schemes, which aim to help young people with LDD to overcome such obstacles and to enable them to use public transport by themselves to access learning opportunities, were available in all six of the local authorities included in the study. However, awareness of these schemes was relatively low among those interviewed, especially among those aged 16-17. Only 17 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD and 38 per cent of those aged 18-25 were aware of such schemes in their areas. However:

- of those who were aware of it, around three-fifths had used travel training (63 per cent of those aged 16-17 who were aware of it and 59 per cent of those aged 18-25)
- almost all who had used it thought that it was useful (27 of the 34 young people aged 16-17 and 30 of the 35 young people aged 18-25 with LDD).

Among those who either were not aware of it at the time of the interview or had not used it:

- 41 per cent of those aged 18-25 thought it would be useful
- 28 per cent of those aged 16-17 thought it would be useful.

This suggests that young people aged 16-17 with LDD, in particular, are both largely unaware of Independent Travel Training schemes and not convinced that they would be useful to them. Given the relatively low levels of confidence in using public transport, this suggests that more could be done to raise levels of awareness and convince young people with LDD of how such training could help them.

It is also worth noting that awareness-levels of Independent Travel Training schemes was also fairly low among parents of young people with LDD – 36 of the 93 parents interviewed were aware of such schemes and only 11 said that their children had used one. Of these 11, four thought that it had been useful. However, 34 of the 77 parents who had either not heard of Independent Travel Training schemes or had not used one yet at the time of the interview thought that such training would be useful for their children.

4.6 In what way is transport experienced as a barrier or constraint by young people who were NEET?

There is very little evidence to suggest that young people who are NEET experience transport as a barrier or constraint any more than other young people, although they are slightly more likely to identify **transport costs as a barrier** and to say that they do not feel safe travelling on public transport in their areas.

Most of the responses of young people who were NEET relating to transport were very similar to those of young people in the main sample. This included the extent to which:

- they rated the public transport facilities to access learning in their areas as good or bad
- they had experienced the availability of public transport as a barrier or constraint
- they felt confident using public transport in their areas

They were more likely to identify the cost of transport (six per cent) as a barrier than young people overall (two per cent) and felt more confident that they could work out the times of buses and trains than young people in the main sample (11 per cent of young people who were NEET said they did not find it easy compared with 17 per cent of young people in the main sample). However, they were noticeably less likely to agree with the statement that they felt safe travelling on public transport in their areas (81 per cent agreed) compared with young people in the main sample (92 per cent agreed).

4.7 In what way is transport experienced as a barrier or constraint by young people in JWT?

Young people in JWT were more likely to identify transport costs as a barrier which stopped them from doing what they wanted to do post-16 than other young people. They also rated the transport facilities in their areas a bit lower than young people in the main sample and were slightly more likely to identify the availability of transport as a barrier. Otherwise, their responses were very similar to young people who were NEET and those in the main sample.

As discussed in Section 3.6, many young people in JWT experienced not having enough money and other financial issues as a barrier that stopped them from doing what they wanted to do post-16. It is, therefore, not surprising that this group of young people were more likely than young people in the main sample to say that the cost of transport had been a barrier for them, although the difference was not as large as for other finance-related questions reported. Thus, eight per cent of young people in JWT said that the cost of transport had been a barrier and 22 per cent said it had been a constraint (compared with two per cent and 16 per cent of young people in the main sample respectively). Furthermore, 39 per cent of those in JWT after completing Year 11 said that they would have considered participating in learning if they had received more money to cover the cost of transport (compared with 34 per cent of young people not in learning post-16 in the main sample).

Young people in JWT also rated the transport facilities in their areas less highly than young people in the main sample. Thus, 16 per cent of those in JWT said that they were 'bad' or 'very bad' compared with 11 per cent of young people overall. They were also slightly more likely to identify the lack of availability of transport as a barrier (five per cent compared with two per cent of young people in the main sample).

In other respects, their responses were very similar to young people who were NEET and those in the main sample, although like the former they were noticeably less likely to disagree with the statement that they found it easy to work out the times of buses and trains (11 per cent disagreed with this statement) than young people in the main sample (17 per cent disagreed). However, unlike young people who were NEET, almost all of those in JWT (89 per cent) felt safe using public transport in their area (compared with 81 per cent of those who were NEET and 91 per cent of young people in the main sample).

4.8 Summary

Overall, very few people report that **the availability of transport** is a barrier that stops them from doing what they want to do after Year 11. This includes most young people who are NEET or in JWT who rarely identify this as such a barrier. Instead, young people are more likely to identify **the cost of transport** as a barrier or constraint on their choices. Indeed, around a third of young people who are NEET or in JWT after completing Year 11 think that they would have chosen to participate in education or training if they had received more money to cover the cost of transport.

The availability of public transport was significantly more likely to be reported as a barrier or constraint by those living in rural locations and those who rated the public transport facilities in their areas as 'bad' or 'very bad'. This suggests that transport initiatives need to identify areas with limited existing transport facilities, including rural areas, to enable all young people to access the post-16 learning of their choice.

Interviews with young people also revealed that a sizeable proportion find it difficult to work out the times of buses and trains. This is particularly the case for young people with LDD, who are less likely to say than young people overall that they feel confident and safe using public transport and working out the times of buses and trains. Furthermore, only 17 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD and 38 per cent of those aged 18-25 are aware of Independent Travel Training schemes in their areas which aim to overcome such issues. This points to the need for more to be done to raise the levels of awareness and use among young people with LDD of such schemes, but also to support other young people to become more confident in using public transport in their areas.

5. To what extent is finance a barrier or constraint for young people?

Key messages

- Around a quarter of young people view finance as a constraint when deciding what to do after Year 11, although it only stops a minority (four per cent) from doing what they want to do after leaving school
- Young people are most concerned about the cost of transport and the costs of books and equipment when considering what to do after leaving school
- Young people in JWT are more likely to have issues with paying their parents rent when considering what to do after leaving school, and teenage parents are more likely to have issues in particular with the cost of books and equipment
- Around a third of young people who do not participate in learning after leaving school think that they would have done some education or training if they had received more financial support and this was particularly the case for teenage parents
- Young people who are NEET, in JWT or teenage parents are more likely to report experiencing financial barriers or constraints
- Otherwise, finance is more likely to be reported as a barrier or constraint by those who feel it is important to earn money straight away and those who receive or apply for an EMA or hardship funding after completing Year 11. This may suggest that the provision of such support can minimise the impact of finance as a barrier or constraint on some young people
- However, only 12 per cent of all young people receiving an EMA say that they would not have done the education or training course if they had not received this support.

Policy implications

- It is important to increase awareness of existing financial support among all young people, especially among teenage parents and those with LDD
- It may be beneficial to target funding at parents and young people facing particular hardship in order to reduce issues with paying parents rent and moving into JWT rather than continuing in education or training
- Books and equipment costs could be included in the Care to Learn funding
- EMAs should be targeted at those young people who feel that they cannot continue in learning without financial support.

The next four sections cover the financial barriers young people experienced when making their post-16 decision and the financial support available to them. They also present the findings of multi-level regression analysis, which provides a consideration of the characteristics of those most likely to encounter financial barriers or constraints. This analysis is followed by separate sections exploring the financial barriers and constraints experienced by teenage parents, young people with LDD, and those who were NEET or in JWT.

5.1 How much did young people know about financial support?

When making their decision about what to do after Year 11, one third (33 per cent) of young people thought they knew a lot and an additional 40 per cent said they knew a little about what funding they could get to help them continue in education or training after they left Year 11. However, when asked more specifically, the majority (96 per cent) of young people were aware of what an EMA was and many (43 per cent) of those aware were receiving EMA funding. Of those young people who received an EMA, 12 per cent said that they could not have done the course or training they had done if they had not received an EMA.

Fewer young people (11 per cent) were aware of hardship funds or discretionary support funds for continuing in education or training after Year 11 and, of those aware of the funds, only 12 per cent said that they were receiving money from such a fund.

5.2 What were the main financial barriers or constraints experienced by young people?

Most of the young people surveyed indicated that they valued achieving qualifications more highly than earning money straight away. Thus, only around one in seven young people (14 per cent) agreed with the statement that earning money was more important to them than achieving qualifications, while 94 per cent agreed that it is important to achieve qualifications to get on in life. However, over two-fifths of young people (43 per cent) felt that when making their post-16 decision it was either very or quite important to earn money straight away.

Even though 26 per cent of young people said that not having enough money was a barrier or constraint in deciding what to do after leaving school, most of these said that they had coped with this issue. Indeed, only four per cent of young people said that it had stopped them from doing what they wanted to do. Having enough money in general was more frequently identified as an issue than the cost of buying specific items (see Figure 3.1).

- 18 per cent said that 'the cost of transport' had been a barrier or constraint
- 15 per cent identified 'the cost of equipment needed to do a course' as a barrier or constraint
- 11 per cent said that 'the cost of buying food/lunch while doing a course' was a barrier or constraint
- six per cent said that 'having to pay my parents rent' was a barrier or constraint.

Interestingly, nearly half (44 per cent) of young people who either did not know anything about the funding they could get to help them continue in education or training after they left Year 11, or were not aware of what an EMA was, felt financial factors were either a problem that they coped with or a problem that stopped them doing what they wanted to do. This suggests that **lack of awareness of existing funding support** may be related to some young people experiencing finance as a constraint and that increasing awareness of the funding already available might encourage some young people to participate in learning.

5.3 To what extent do those participating in education or training experience financial barriers or constraints?

Of those in education or training, young people reported that they would have done a **different** education or training course post-16 if:

- they had received more money to cover the cost of transport (13 per cent)
- they had received more money to cover the cost of books or equipment (13 per cent)
- they had received more money to cover the cost of food at college, school or sixth form (nine per cent).

Overall, nearly one-fifth of young people (18 per cent) reported that they would have done a different course or training if they had received more money to cover any of these aspects (transport, books or equipment, or food). This suggests that, although financial circumstances may not be preventing these young people from continuing in education or training, it is preventing nearly a fifth of young people from studying the education or training course of their preference. It is not possible to tell from the data the course they would have chosen otherwise.

Over two-thirds (69 per cent) of the young people doing a full-time or a part-time course reported that they had, or were planning to take, a part-time paid job while doing their course. In general, most of these young people were not doing it to enable them to remain in learning. Instead, the most popular reasons given were to have extra spending money and money for going out. However, 15 per cent of those young people with a part-time job said that they were working in order to enable them to continue in learning.

Six per cent of the 1921 young people planning to be in education or training in September/October 2009 anticipated that there might be problems that could stop them from completing their course or training. Nearly one-fifth (22) of these 115 young people provided at least one financial reason for possible non-completion. The most cited financial reason (given by 13 respondents) was the expense of doing the course and/or buying equipment. Overall, these findings show that for some young people financial issues can continue to act as a constraint, or become a barrier, even after starting on an education or training course.

5.4 Who is most likely to experience financial constraints?

Multi-level regression analyses were carried out to explore which factors appeared to be associated with young people experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint. The variables accounted for in the model included student-level variables and LA-level variables (see Appendix C for further details of the variables included in the analysis).

There was an increase in the odds that young people would experience finance as a barrier or constraint in deciding what to do post-16, where:

- they felt it was very or quite important to earn money straight away
- they had a child
- they were NEET, in JWT, taking a break, unemployed, looking after their home or family or had no plan

- they were receiving an EMA or a hardship fund
- they were female.

There was a decrease in the odds that young people would experience finance as a barrier or constraint in deciding what to do post-16, where:

- the public transport was rated to be good by the young people
- they were prepared for the future (in relation to a number of factors – see Appendix B)
- they found it easy to make the decision of what to do after finishing Year 11
- they felt it was very important or quite important to them whether they could get money from the Government if they started a course or training
- they were of Asian origin compared with of white British origin
- they felt self-confident (in relation to a number of factors – see Appendix B).

Other variables, such as age or whether their parents had been to university, were not associated with reporting finance as a barrier or constraint.

It appears, therefore, that it would be beneficial to target financial support at vulnerable groups, such as teenage parents and young people who have become NEET or are in JWT. It is also worth noting that young people receiving an EMA or a hardship fund were more likely to experience finance as a barrier or constraint. However, this may be because the model included young people who experienced financial problems when leaving school, but reported that they coped with them, perhaps because of this external funding.

The analysis showed that those who felt prepared for the future, and those who felt it was easy to make their post-16 decision, showed decreased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraints. As discussed in Chapter 2, this finding suggests the importance of providing sufficient information, advice and guidance to support young people in planning their future education and work to enable all young people to participate in learning.

5.5 In what way is finance experienced as a barrier or constraint by teenage parents?

Teenage parents were more likely to experience finance as a barrier or constraint than other young people and many of them said that they would have participated in education or learning if they had received more financial support. However, many of them were not well informed about the financial support available to them, including Care to Learn and EMAs, which suggests a need to raise teenage parents awareness of the financial support available to them, while at the same time encouraging them to see the value of learning.

This section explores the extent to which finance was experienced as a barrier or constraint by teenage parents and is based on analysis of 93 young people who were teenage parents and the main carer of their child (interviewed as part of the main or booster sample). As reported in Section 5.4, teenage parents had increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint in deciding what to do after Year 11. In particular, 61 per cent of teenage parents reported that not having enough money

was an issue compared with 26 per cent of young people in the main sample. Otherwise, 30 per cent said that the cost of buying equipment and 24 per cent the cost of buying food/lunch were a barrier or constraints (compared with 15 per cent and 11 per cent respectively for young people in the main sample). Similarly, many of those 48 teenage parents not participating in education or training **after completing year 11** said that they would have done a course or training if they had received money to cover the cost of:

- books and equipment (20 teenage parents)
- transport (18 teenage parents)
- food at school/college or sixth form (13 teenage parents).

Otherwise, about one third (28) of the 74 teenage parents **not participating in learning at the time of the interview** said that they would be encouraged to do some education or training by more financial support to cover the cost of transport. A similar number (29) said that more affordable childcare would encourage them to participate in education or training. This is not surprising given the costs associated with childcare.

However, the survey showed that a large proportion of teenage parents are not aware of Care to Learn¹ funding, which covers the cost of childcare, as well as transport in some cases (see Appendix D). Teenage parents were also less aware of other types of financial support available to them than young people in the main sample. Thus, less than two thirds (59 per cent) indicated that they knew about the funding they could receive to help them continue in education or training after leaving Year 11 (compared with 73 per cent of young people in the main sample). Otherwise:

- 42 per cent of teenage parents said they knew either a lot or a little about the financial support available to cover the cost of transport (compared with 73 per cent of young people in the main sample)
- 77 per cent of teenage parents were aware of what an EMA is (compared with 94 per cent of young people in the main sample).

However, there was little difference in the proportion of teenage parents and those in the representative sample of all young people who were aware of hardship or discretionary funds.

The survey focussed specifically on teenage parents not receiving Care to Learn funding – however, it included a minority of seven parents receiving Care to Learn contacted as part of the main sample. Of the 86 teenage parents not receiving such funding, less than half (36) were aware of Care to Learn. Among these:

- 17 had decided not to apply for Care to Learn
- eight had recently applied to receive this support
- six had thought about it but not yet applied
- five were not sure whether they would apply.

The main reasons stated by those who had not/not yet applied for Care to Learn included:

¹ Care to Learn funding helps young parents continue in, or return to, education or training by providing financial help with childcare costs and travel.

- preferring to stay at home and caring for their child (five teenage parents)
- that they never considered it very seriously (four teenage parents)
- that they were not interested in learning at this time (three teenage parents).

Of the 15 teenage parents who were not in education or training and who were not aware of Care to learn, about half (nine) reported that the availability of such support might encourage them to engage in education or training in the future.

These findings suggest a need to raise teenage parents' awareness of Care to Learn alongside initiatives aimed at encouraging them to see the value of participating in learning. The finding that such a high proportion of teenage parents would have participated in education or training if they had received funding to cover the cost of books and equipment is important in light of the lack of funding currently available to cover such expenses through Care to Learn (see Appendix D).

The importance of financial support for teenage parents is confirmed by the fact that they were more likely than young people in the main sample to place importance on what support they could receive when making their decision. Thus, 57 per cent said it was an important whether would get money from the Government if they started a course or some training (compared with 40 per cent of young people in the main sample). Moreover, when making their decision, nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of the teenage parents felt it was either very important (54 per cent) or quite important (ten per cent) whether they could afford childcare.

Furthermore, six of the 18 teenage parents receiving an EMA agreed that they could not have the education or training course if they had not received this funding (compared with only 12 per cent of young people in the main sample). This suggests that, in order to increase participation it may be beneficial to target the EMA payment at groups of young people in particular need of financial support.

5.6 In what way is finance experienced as a barrier or constraint by young people with LDD?

Young people with LDD are not significantly more likely to experience finance as a barrier or constraint than other young people. However, receiving financial support was very important for this group of young people when deciding what to do post-16 and they were more likely to be receiving such support than young people overall. At the same time, many young people with LDD were not aware of the financial support available to them, which suggests a need to make sure that all young people in this group are aware of all the support available to them to help them engage in learning.

Multi-level regression analysis suggested that young people with LDD are not significantly more likely to experience finance as a barrier or constraint than other young people in the main sample. However, there were a few differences. In particular, those aged 16-17 and parents of young people with LDD tended to view having enough money in general and the cost of transport more often as a barrier or constraint than young people overall. Thus, over a quarter (26 per cent) of the younger LDD group reported the cost of transport was either a barrier or constraint compared with 18 per cent of young people in the main sample. Similarly, a higher proportion of parents reported that having enough money was an issue for their child (40 per cent) compared with 28 per cent of young people aged 18-25 with LDD and 34 per cent of the younger LDD group.

Overall, young people with LDD did not place a higher value on earning money after leaving Year 11 than the main sample of young people. In contrast, they were more likely to believe that it was **important to receive financial support** from the Government to help them participate in learning after Year 11.

- 47 per cent of the younger LDD group, 34 per cent of the older LDD group and 18 per cent of the parents with a child with LDD reported that it was important to them that they/their child earned money straight away (compared with 43 per cent of young people in the main sample)
- 56 per cent of the younger LDD group, 55 per cent of the older LDD group and 59 per cent of the parents with a child with LDD reported it was important to them whether they/their child got money from the Government if they started a course (compared with 40 per cent of young people in the main sample).

Despite this greater emphasis on the need for financial support, there was evidence that young people with LDD were **less aware of the support** they could receive. However, those young people with LDD who were aware of the financial support available to them were **more likely to be receiving** such support than young people in the main sample.

More specifically, a lower proportion of young people with LDD said they knew either 'a lot' or 'a little' about the funding they could get to help them continue in education or training after they left Year 11 (54 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD and 37 per cent of those aged 18-25 with LDD compared with 74 per cent of young people in the main sample).

- As mentioned in Section 2.8, both the younger and older LDD groups reported that they knew less about the cost of transport to access learning and the funding available to cover these costs.
- A lower proportion of young people with LDD (particularly the older LDD group) were aware of what an EMA is (69 per cent young people aged 18-25 with LDD and 90 per cent of those aged 16-17 compared with 96 per cent of young people overall).

However, of those young people with LDD who were aware of EMAs, 50 per cent of young people aged 18-25 with LDD and 57 per cent of those aged 16-17 had received an EMA (compared with only 43 per cent of young people in the main sample). This may explain why only relatively small proportions of young people with LDD reported finance as a barrier that stopped them from doing what they wanted to do post-16.

There was little difference in the proportion of young people with LDD and the main sample with regard to awareness of hardship and discretionary support funds. However, once again, a higher proportion of young people reported receiving such funds than young people overall (29 per cent of the older LDD group and 21 per cent of the younger LDD group compared with 12 per cent of young people in the main sample). This may indicate that such funds are targeted at young people with LDD and their financial needs are, therefore, being recognised by learning providers. The **importance of funding** for this group of young people is highlighted by the finding that about a quarter of the younger LDD group and two fifths of the older LDD group who were receiving an EMA, said that they would not have done a course or training if they had not received this support. This is a much higher proportion than the main sample (12 per cent) and suggests that the funding the young people with LDD receive is important to keep them engaged.

Interviews with parents suggested that the majority of them were aware of EMAs, but there was much lower awareness with regard to other forms of funding to support young people to continue in education or training.

- 85 per cent of parents reported they were aware of what an EMA is
- 57 per cent of parents reported they knew about the financial support available for young people to cover the cost of transport
- 55 per cent of parents said they knew about the funding available to help young people continue in education or training.

As was the case among young people in the main sample, a proportion of young people with LDD in education or training said that they would have done **a different course or training** if they had received more money to cover the cost of transport, books or equipment, or food at their place of learning. More specifically, after leaving Year 11 young people reported they would have done a different education or training course if:

- they had received more money to cover the cost of transport (18 per cent of those aged 18-25 with LDD and 17 per cent of those aged 16-17 compared with 13 per cent of the main sample)
- they had received more money to cover the cost of books or equipment (15 per cent of the older LDD group and 18 per cent of the younger LDD group compared with 13 per cent of the main sample)
- they had received more money to cover the cost of food at school, college or sixth form (14 per cent of the older LDD group and 16 per cent of the younger LDD group compared with nine per cent of the main sample).

A much lower percentage of parents believed that their child would have done a different course or training if they had received funding to cover the cost of transport (12 per cent), books and equipment (two per cent) and food (four per cent).

These findings correspond with those for the main sample of young people and suggest that financial issues are preventing some young people with LDD from studying the course or training course of their preference.

Moreover, there was some evidence that financial barriers were preventing some young people with LDD from participating in education or training. Around half of the 21 young people with LDD aged 16-17 and a similar proportion of those aged 18-25 indicated that they would have engaged in learning if they had received more money to cover the cost transport, books or equipment and food at college, school or college. Although several young people considered that they would have participated if they had received such financial support, none of the parents who were interviewed felt this to be the case.

Many of those aged 16-17 with LDD (43 per cent) and 17 per cent of those aged 18-25 currently in education or training reported working part-time. However, for most of them this was not seen as a financial necessity to enable them to stay in learning, but instead as an opportunity to earn more spending money. This suggests that most young people with LDD who are participating in learning and are aware of the financial support available to them are able to receive the help they need to keep them in learning. However, it possible that some of those currently not participating would benefit from targeted support to raise their awareness of the financial support available to them.

5.7 In what way is finance experienced as a barrier or constraint by young people who were NEET?

Overall, young people who were NEET placed a lot of importance on financial considerations when deciding what to do post-16 and were significantly more likely to experience finance as a barrier or constraint. Given the fact that young people who were NEET were generally aware of the financial support available to them, it may be that they feel it is not sufficient to engage them in education or training.

As reported in Section 5.4, the multi-level regression analysis revealed that young people who are NEET had increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint in deciding what to do after Year 11.

The evidence suggests that financial considerations were very important to young people who were NEET when deciding what to do in Year 11 and a key reason for not participating in learning post-16. Compared with young people in the main sample a noticeably higher proportion of young people who were NEET:

- agreed that earning money was more important to them than achieving qualifications (44 per cent compared with 14 per cent of the main sample of young people)
- said that was important to them to earn money straight away (77 per cent compared with 43 per cent of young people in the main sample)
- said that was important to them whether they would get money from the Government if they started a course or some training after Year 11 (63 per cent compared with 40 per cent of young people in the main sample).

This reflects the findings of the multi-level regression analysis, which found that young people were significantly less likely to participate in education or training if they placed importance on immediate monetary gain.

However, it is worth noting that there was no evidence that young people who were NEET were less likely to be aware of the financial support available to them compared with young people overall. Indeed, there was very little difference between young people who were NEET and the main sample of all young people in relation to awareness of EMAs or hardship/discretionary funds. Given that young people who were NEET were encouraged by financial factors and knew about the financial support available, it may be that these young people feel that the current funding is insufficient to engage them in learning when compared with the amount they could earn through employment without training.

This is supported by the finding that many of those young people who were NEET said that they would have engaged in education or training after Year 11 if:

- they had received **more money** to cover the cost of transport (29 per cent)
- they had received **more money** to cover the cost of books and equipment (27 per cent)
- they had received **more money** to cover the cost of food (21 per cent).

Furthermore, when asked what would encourage them to participate in education or training at the time of the interview almost half said that they would have done so if:

- there was cheaper public transport in their area (47 per cent)
- they received financial support to cover the cost of transport (48 per cent).

These findings highlight the need for targeted financial support for those at risk of becoming NEET, for example, those who place more importance on immediate financial gain than achieving qualifications post-16. Additionally, it suggests that there is a need for there to be appropriate work-based routes for some young people that provide them with the opportunity to combine learning with earning a sufficient amount.

5.8 In what way is finance experienced as a barrier or constraint by young people in JWT?

Young people in JWT expressed similar attitudes towards the importance of financial considerations when considering what to do post-16 as those who were NEET, although they were more likely to identify lack of money in general and other financial issues as barrier or constraints. In particular, a quarter of young people in JWT said that having to pay their parents rent was a barrier or constraint. Given that most of these young people were generally aware of the financial support available to them, there is a need to consider other incentives or more targeted support to ensure that all these young people participate in learning.

As outlined in Section 5.4, the multi-level model revealed that like young people who were NEET, those in JWT had increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint in deciding what to do after Year 11 than young people overall. However, young people in JWT were more likely to identify financial barrier or constraints than those who were NEET.

- 50 per cent of young people in JWT said that having enough had been a barrier or constraint (compared with 42 per cent of those who were NEET and 25 per cent of young people overall)
- 25 per cent of young people in JWT said that having to pay their parents rent was a barrier or constraint (compared with 14 per cent of those who were NEET and six per cent of young people overall).

The high incidence of reporting the need for paying rent to their parents among this group suggests a need for targeted support at young people living in such households.

Otherwise, young people in JWT shared similar attitudes towards the importance of financial considerations when thinking about what to do post 16 with young people who were in need.

- 44 per cent of those in JWT agreed that earning money was more important to them than achieving qualifications when thinking about what to do post-16 (compared with 14 per cent of young people in the main sample)
- 81 per cent of those in JWT said that it was important to earn money straight away after completing Year 11 (compared with 43 per cent in the main sample)
- 52 per cent said that it was important whether they would get money from the Government if they started a course or some training post-16 (compared with 40 per cent of young people overall).

Like young people who were NEET, those in JWT were no less likely to be aware of the financial support available to them, including EMAs and hardship/discretionary funds, compared with young people overall. This again suggests that young people who were JWT felt that the current financial support available to them is insufficient to engage them in learning and, as was noted previously in relation to young people who are NEET, these young people need a work-based route that enables them to combine learning with earning a sufficient amount.

This is supported by the finding that many of those young people who were in JWT said that they would have engaged in education or training after Year 11 if:

- they had received **more money** to cover the cost of transport (39 per cent)
- they had received **more money** to cover the cost of books and equipment (33 per cent)
- they had received **more money** to cover the cost of food (26 per cent).

Furthermore, when asked what would encourage them to participate in education or training at the time of the interview around a third said that they would have done so if:

- there was cheaper public transport in their area (38 per cent)
- they received financial support to cover the cost of transport (36 per cent).

5.9 Summary

Overall, although finance is an issue for some young people, the majority of young people do not experience finance as a barrier. However, young people who are NEET, those in JWT and teenage parents have increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier or constraint. In particular, one quarter of young people in JWT say that having to pay their parents rent is a barrier or constraint when deciding what to do post-16. Furthermore, around a third of young people who do not participate in learning after leaving school think that they would have done some education or training if they had received more financial support. Otherwise, finance is more likely to be experienced as a barrier or constraint when deciding what to do by those who feel it is important to earn money straight away and those who subsequently receive or apply for an EMA or hardship funding.

However, only 12 per cent of young people overall receiving an EMA believe that they would not have participated in the courses they are doing if they had not received one. This contrasts with much higher proportions of young people with LDD who say that they would not have participated in learning without this support. Together these findings suggest the need for financial support to be increasingly targeted at those most at need.

Although the majority of young people report they are aware of what an EMA is when asked about it specifically, many young people feel that they are not aware of other financial support available to help them continue in education or training. Moreover, those who feel well prepared and those who feel it was easy to make a decision about what to do post-16 are less likely to experience finance as an issue. Increasing awareness of other types of existing funding is therefore important, as well as providing suitable guidance on accessing this support.

6. What are the relative factors that encourage or discourage young people from participating in learning?

Key messages

- Most of young people's decisions about what to do after leaving Year 11 are influenced by wanting to do something that will help them achieve the qualifications they need either to get into university or into a job or career of their choice
- The availability of transport, even though not as important as future aspirations, is still an important consideration for a substantial proportion of young people when deciding what to do after leaving school
- Young people are more likely not to participate in learning if they believe it is important to earn money straight away or face specific barriers that stop them from doing what they want to do
- Good knowledge of Apprenticeships is also a significant factor associated with non-participation. This seems to confirm the findings of other research that some young people who cannot access an Apprenticeship choose a job without training or become NEET instead
- Young people are significantly more likely to participate in learning if they have high post-16 aspirations, including wanting to achieve qualifications and go on to higher education. They are also more likely to participate if they find the decision of what to do after Year 11 easy to make and leave school feeling well-prepared for the future
- There are some teenage parents who do not consider re-engaging in education as they prefer to stay at home and care for their children instead.

Policy implications

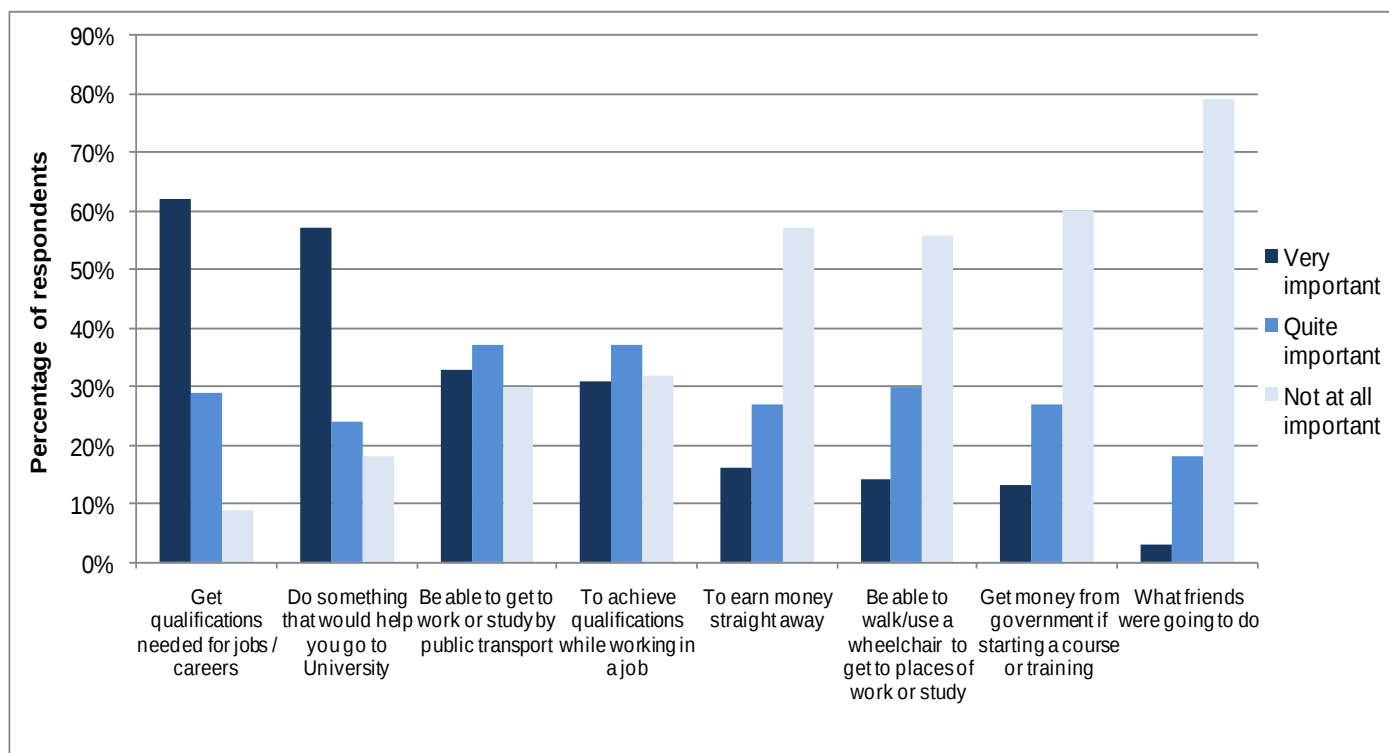
- Many young people who do not participate in learning after Year 11 believe that greater awareness of the options available to them would have encouraged them to engage in education or training when leaving school. This underlines the importance of providing high quality information, advice and guidance to all young people to ensure that they are aware of all post-16 options and routes open to them
- Other strategies need to be considered to ensure that all teenage parents are aware of the availability of Care to Learn to cover any childcare costs incurred when participating in learning
- Improved access to work-based learning, such as Apprenticeships may encourage young people who are NEET or in JWT to participate in learning post-16.

This chapter explores the factors that encourage young people to engage in education or training and those that discourage participation or stop young people from continuing in learning. Further discussion, using multi-level regression analysis, provides a consideration of the characteristics and circumstances of those young people who appear more likely to not engage in learning post-16. There are also separate sections that explore differences in the factors that encourage or discourage teenage parents, learners with LDD, young people who were NEET or those in JWT to participate in education or training.

6.1 What factors encourage participation?

As can be seen in Figure 6.1, getting the qualifications they needed for different jobs or careers was a very important influencing factor for almost two-thirds of young people when deciding what to do after Year 11. Similarly, 57 per cent felt it was very important to do something that would help them get into Higher Education in the future.

Figure 6.1: Importance of influencing factors on choices after year 11



Other factors that were very important for around a third of young people included:

- being able to get to the place of learning by public transport (33 per cent)
- being able to achieve qualifications while working in a job (31 per cent).

As can be seen in Figure 6.1, specific financial considerations, such as 'earning money straight away', were identified as very important by much smaller proportions of young people. Furthermore, personal influences, such as what their friends were doing, were said to be very important by only a minority of young people (three per cent).

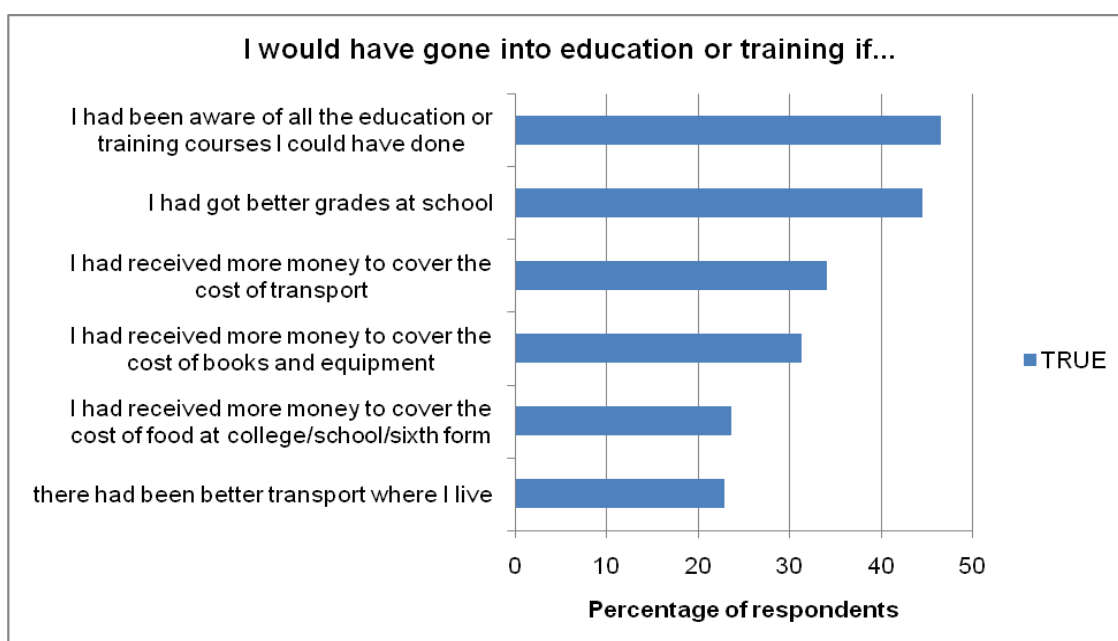
Ranking by young people of those factors rated by them as either very or quite important provided an indication of the **relative importance** of the different factors. This confirmed the importance of achieving qualifications to help young people get to where they want to be in the future. Thus, 41 per cent said that doing something that would help them get into Higher Education was the most important factor when deciding what to do in Year 11, while 26 per cent said that getting more qualifications needed to get into different jobs or careers was the most important factor for them.

It is also worth noting that even though only six per cent of young people said that the availability of transport was the most important factor when deciding what to do at the end of Year 11, 14 per cent ranked this as the second, and 25 per cent as the third

most important factor (among those who provided three ranked responses). This suggests that it is one of the most important factors for many young people after the need to do something that will either help them get into university or into a job of their choice.

The sample included 144 young people who did not progress into education or training after leaving school. Figure 6.2 identifies the main factors that, according to these young people, might have encouraged them to participate in learning.

Figure 6.2: Factors that might have encouraged non-participants to engage in learning



This shows that almost half of these young people believed that greater awareness of the options available to them would have encouraged them to participate in learning, which was influential for a greater proportion of young people than achieving better grades at school. It therefore appears that awareness of opportunities, and having the necessary attainment to access these, were greater priorities for these young people than other financial or logistical factors and underlines the importance of finding ways of communicating high quality IAG effectively to all young people.

Over half (58 per cent) of young people who were not engaged in learning at the time of the interview stated that the ability to get a qualification whilst working in a job would encourage them to re-engage in education or training, while just over a quarter (27 per cent) said that this would make the biggest difference. This confirms previous research (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009) which found that many young people who are NEET are motivated to engage in work-based learning, but are sometimes prevented due to lack of available Apprenticeship placement opportunities.

Otherwise, around half of young people who were NEET or in JWT stated that more information on the availability of courses would encourage them to re-engage in learning, which again highlights the importance of good quality and clear IAG for these groups of young people.

6.2 What factors discourage participation?

Of the 221 young people who were *currently* NEET or in JWT at the time of the interview (between August and September 2009), just over a third (37 per cent) had thought about starting a course or training in September or October 2009, whereas nearly half (45 per cent) had not considered a course or training at all. As can be seen from previous research (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009), this aversion to education can often be the result of previous negative experiences of learning. This implies that the factors stopping some young people who are not participating from re-engaging in learning may be related to personal barriers rather than practical or logistical barriers. This was highlighted in the open responses explaining what had stopped them from engaging, which included:

- still thinking about their options (31 young people)
- a lack of interest in learning (27 young people)
- financial barriers (17 young people)
- a lack of available education or training (eight young people)
- family issues preventing them from engaging (six young people).

Around two-fifths (42 per cent) of the young people interviewed who had been on a course or training after leaving Year 11 but subsequently left, did so because they had completed their course. The most common other reasons given for dropping out of learning included:

- the decision to do a different course (12 per cent)
- they found the learning boring or too easy (11 per cent)
- the learning was not what they expected (nine per cent).

For those young people who will be engaged in education or training from September or October 2009, six per cent (106 young people) anticipated problems in the future which they thought might stop them from completing their course or training. Just over a fifth of those anticipating difficulties (24 learners) believed that the difficult nature of their course might prevent them from completing their learning.

As noted in Chapter 5, finance was a potential barrier to completing a course for a minority of learners. Indeed, 13 learners stated that the expense of the course or of buying equipment may lead them to leave before completing their course or training. Furthermore, six young people noted the cost of transport to their place of study may stop them completing their learning. This implies that finance can remain an ongoing issue for a minority of learners which can potentially discourage their continued engagement with education or training.

6.3 Who is most likely not to participate in education or training?

Multi-level regression analyses were carried out in order to explore the factors that influence non-participation in education or training post-16. This model included both learner-level variables and LA-level variables (see Appendix C for further details of the variables included in the analysis).

There was a relative increase in the odds that young people would not participate in education or training post-16, where:

- they felt it was very or quite important to earn money straight away
- they had encountered a barrier that had stopped them from choosing an option post-16
- they were a teenage parent
- they had considered many different options about what to do post-16
- they knew a lot about Apprenticeships
- they felt it was very or quite important to receive government money if they started a course or training.

There was a decrease in the odds that young people would not participate in education or training post-16, where:

- they felt it was very important or quite important to do something that would help them get into higher education
- they had academic aspirations (in relation to a number of factors – see Appendix B)
- they found the decision of what to do after Year 11 easy to make
- they felt it was very important or quite important to get more qualifications
- they believed they were prepared for the future (in relation to a number of factors – see Appendix B).

Other variables, such as young people's age or gender, were not significantly associated with not participating in education or training. For example, regardless of their gender, a young person who reported that they had encountered a barrier that stopped them choosing a certain option after leaving school was almost two and a half times more likely to not participate than someone without such a barrier. This suggests that young people who cannot do their preferred option due to a barrier, such as transport or finance, are significantly more likely not to participate in education or training.

Good knowledge of Apprenticeships is also a significant factor associated with non-participation. This seems to confirm the findings of other research (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009) that some young people who cannot get access to an Apprenticeship choose a job without training or become NEET instead.

The analysis also suggests that young people who place more importance on qualifications and academic achievement are more likely to participate in learning post-16, whereas those who place more importance on immediate monetary gain are more likely to become non-learners after leaving Year 11.

6.4 Are there any differences in the factors that encourage participation in education or training among teenage parents?

Practical barriers such as financial constraints or affordability of childcare were the main reasons given by teenage parents for not engaging in education or training post-16. Additionally, teenage parents felt that improvements to the affordability of childcare, in particular, and the availability of childcare would encourage them to participate. There were a notable proportion of teenage parents who said they would not consider education or training due to their parental responsibilities.

As reported in Section 5.4, multi-level regression analysis showed that teenage parents had increased odds of not participating in education or training after leaving Year 11 than young people overall.

Finance was seen to be much more of an important consideration for teenage parents in helping them decide what they wanted to do post-16 compared with the main sample of all young people. For example, over half of teenage parents (54 per cent) said that it was very important that there was affordable childcare when considering what to do after Year 11. More details on the importance of finance to teenage parents are provided in Section 5.5.

A similar proportion (53 per cent) emphasised the availability of childcare as an important factor when deciding what to do after Year 11. This factor was the second most important influence on teenage parents' decisions, after earning money to support their family, with 23 per cent of teenage parents rating the availability of childcare as the most important influencing factor. However it should be noted that this was not deemed important for almost a fifth of teenage parents (19 per cent).

Around half of teenage parents said that greater awareness of their post-16 options (54 per cent) and getting better grades at school (48 per cent of teenage parents) would have encouraged them to continue in education or training after Year 11. Asked what would encourage them to re-engage in learning at the time of the interview, around half of the 74 teenage parents who were NEET or in JWT said that more or better childcare, as well as more affordable childcare, might encourage them to re-engage in education or training. However, more affordable childcare was more frequently identified as the most important factor that would encourage them to re-engage (17 teenage parents out of 74 identified this as the most important factor). Teenage parents' awareness and use of Care to Learn payments are further explored in Section 5.5 (see also Appendix D for an exploration of the adequacy of Care to Learn payments).

Overall 45 per cent of the teenage parents not in education or training were not considering doing a course or training at the time of the interview. This is the same proportion as was the case among those young people who were NEET in the main sample. With regards to the factors that discourage participation in education or training, practical barriers, such as financial or logistical were more likely to affect teenage parents compared with young people overall. This is highlighted in the open responses provided by teenage parents explaining why they had not considered engaging in education or training from at the time of the interview:

- 35 teenage parents were looking after their children
- 12 were currently pregnant
- five could not find childcare
- five could not afford childcare
- four could not afford to undertake a course.

Looking after their children was the most important reason, when ranked, that teenage parents gave for not considering education or training from September or October 2009. This may imply a lack of knowledge regarding the childcare support available for young parents to help them return to education or training or an unwillingness to participate in learning while their children are young as found in a previous study (Dench *et al.*, 2007).

6.5 Are there any differences in the factors that encourage participation in education or training among young people with LDD?

While the majority of young people with LDD were engaged in education and training, there was a small group who were not participating. Many of them felt that better information on their education or training options would encourage them to participate or re-engage in learning.

As discussed in Section 5.4, having a LDD was not significantly associated with increasing the likelihood of young people not participating in education or training. Indeed, the majority of young people with LDD aged 16-17 and those aged 18-25 were engaged in some form of education or training.

- 90 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD said they were in some form of education after leaving compulsory education, with 63 per cent being in full-time education
- 91 per cent of young people with LDD aged 18-25 said they were in some form of education or training after Year 11, with 65 per cent being in full time courses.

While the majority of young people with LDD went into some form of education or training after Year 11, there were differences in the level of qualification they were studying towards when compared with young people in the main sample. For example, a much smaller proportion of young people with LDD were studying for a Level 3 qualification than the main sample (22 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD and ten per cent for the older LLD group compared with 65 per cent of young people in the main sample). It should be noted that almost half (45 per cent) of the young people in the older LLD group did not know the level of qualification they were working towards.

In terms of what influences the post-16 destinations of young people with LDD, it appears that the young people themselves are motivated by gaining more qualifications whereas parents of those with LDD are more concerned with the support needs of their children. For example, 59 per cent of the younger LDD sample and 56 per cent of the older LDD sample felt that it was very important 'to get more qualifications needed to get into different jobs or careers', which is similar to the main sample of young people (62 per cent). In contrast, a lower proportion (47 per cent) of parents of young people with LDD stated that this was very important.

In addition, while support for care and communication needs were seen as relatively important for young people with LDD, parents were more likely to view them as very important. For example:

- 84 per cent of parents rated whether their child could get enough support with communication needs as very important compared with 32 per cent of the younger LDD group and 43 per cent of the older LDD
- 78 per cent of parents rated whether their child could get enough support for care needs as very important compared with 39 per cent of the younger LDD and 58 per cent of the older LDD group.

Transport also emerged as an important factor, in particular the ability to get to where they need by public transport, with 42 per cent of those aged 16-17 with LDD and 51 per cent of those aged 18-25 rating this as very important (compared with 33 per cent

of the main sample). More detail on the importance of transport in encouraging young people with LDD into education or training is provided in Section 4.5.

While the majority of the young people with LDD were in education or training after finishing compulsory education, a minority were not participating in any form of education or training. This included, 15 out of the 156 young people aged 18-25 with LDD and 31 out of the 310 young people aged 16-17. As the numbers are small it is difficult to draw conclusions from this group, however it appears that, as with the main sample of young people, greater awareness of the options available to them and achieving better grades at school would have encouraged many of these young people to stay in education or training.

Of those 92 young people with LDD (including 46 among both those aged 16-17 and those aged 18-25) who were not participating in education or training **at the time of the interview**, information and support were stated by both young people with LDD and the parents of those with LDD as important factors to encourage them to re-engage in learning. In particular, the majority of young people with LDD wanted more information about courses available (26 of the younger LLD group and 20 of the older LDD group) and information on courses suitable to their needs (14 of the younger young people with LDD and 19 of the older LDD group).

A proportion of young people with LDD stated that they would be encouraged to re-engage with education or training if they had access to additional support to cater for their needs. This was particularly in relation to:

- supporting them to understand (18 of the older group and 13 of the younger group)
- having a key person that they can speak to regarding problems (17 of the older group and 13 of the younger group)
- having a key person that can speak out on their behalf (17 of the older group and 13 of the younger group).

This suggests that some young people with LDD are reluctant to participate due to fears that they will not be given the necessary additional support to help overcome some of the learning difficulties or disabilities. This suggests a need to ensure that all young people with LDD are made aware of the additional support they can receive when participating in education or training and that all young people needing such support are able to receive it.

6.6 Are there any differences in the factors that encourage participation in education or training among young people who were NEET?

Finance appeared to be an important factor, both in terms of potentially encouraging young people who were NEET to stay in education or training and also discouraging them from choosing this option. Low achievement pre-16 and a lack of interest in learning also contributed to discouraging these young people from participating in education or training.

Young people who were NEET were more likely to be influenced by immediate financial gain at the age of 16 compared with the main sample, and less likely to focus on long-term career goals compared with young people overall (as highlighted in Section 5.7). In particular:

- only half of the young people who were NEET believed that it was important to do something that would help them go to higher education in the future compared with over three-quarters of the main sample (50 per cent compared with 82 per cent).
- a slightly lower percentage of young people who were NEET believed that it was important to gain more qualifications to help them get into jobs or careers (84 per cent compared with 91 per cent of the main sample)

Furthermore, for many of those who were NEET their achievement at school pre-16 appeared to have impacted on their post-16 destinations, with over half (55 per cent) stating that they would have been encouraged to stay in education or training if they had achieved better grades at school. A similar proportion stated that they would have done a course or training if they had been aware of all the education or training courses available to them. This implies that there may be a proportion of young people who were NEET who may benefit from a greater awareness of their options post-16.

Otherwise, around three in five young people (63 per cent) who were NEET at the time of the interview said that being able to gain a qualification was working might encourage them to re-engage in learning (compared with 59 per cent of the main sample). This was ranked by those who were NEET as the factor that would make the biggest difference in terms of encouraging them to enter education or training. Furthermore, almost half of the young people who were NEET stated they would be encouraged to re-engage if they received more financial support (48 per cent). As discussed in Section 5.7, this is not surprising given the importance attached to financial considerations by young people who were NEET.

6.7 Are there any differences in the factors that encourage participation in education or training among young people in JWT?

Young people in JWT expressed very similar views relating to what would encourage them to participate in learning as those who were NEET, which may reflect the tendency of young people to move between being NEET and in JWT. However, young people in JWT seemed to be more influenced by financial considerations than those who were NEET, suggesting that some young people choose to go into work as a result of financial pressures.

As with those young people who were NEET, young people in JWT were more likely to be influenced by immediate financial gains and less likely to be influenced by long term career aspirations than the representative main sample of young people. For example:

- A higher proportion of those in JWT felt it was important to earn money straight away (81 per cent compared with 43 per cent of the main sample)
- A lower proportion of those in JWT felt that it was important to do something that would help them go to higher education (52 per cent compared with 82 per cent of the main sample).

Half of those in JWT believed that they would have been encouraged to enter education or training after completing Year 11 if they had received better grades at school, implying that their prior attainment may have influenced their decisions post-16. However, it can be seen that finance was more of an influencing factor on those

who were in JWT than those who were NEET. For example, a higher proportion of those in JWT said that they would have been encouraged into education or training after leaving Year 11 if they had received more money to cover the cost of transport (39 per cent of those in JWT compared with 29 per cent of those who were NEET).

As with those who were NEET, increasing the awareness of options for young people post-16 would have encouraged more young people in JWT to stay in education or training, according to 46 per cent of the respondents.

Factors discouraging young people who were JWT to engage in education or training were similar to those who were NEET, with a lack of interest being the most commonly cited reason for not wanting to participate (41 young people). Again, finance is a barrier to participation with 18 young people stating that they had not considered education or training due to financial reasons.

6.8 Summary

While the majority of young people are motivated by future progression and, therefore, choose to stay in education or training, there is a minority of young people who do not. These young people are less motivated by qualifications and more by immediate financial gain. This appears to be the case particularly among young people who are NEET or in JWT. This suggests a need either for more financial support to encourage such young people to engage in learning or to allow more such young people to access work-based learning opportunities which allow them to earn money while achieving qualifications.

Otherwise, many young people who do not participate in learning after Year 11 believe that greater awareness of the options available to them would have encouraged them to engage in education or training when leaving school. This underlines the importance of providing high quality IAG to all young people to ensure that they are aware of all post-16 options and routes open to them. However, it is important to ensure that young people are not given too much information because, as the study suggests, young people who consider many different options are actually less likely to participate in education or training. This suggests that information needs to be supported by clear and appropriate advice and guidance tailored to young people's needs.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

The research has revealed that the majority of young people (86 per cent) did not experience any barriers that stopped them from participating in their choice of learning post-16. Nevertheless, for some there are such barriers, that prevent them from progressing, while others experience constraints that inhibit or affect their choices and their ability to participate in education or training and which vary in relation to different characteristics and circumstances of young people. This chapter provides an overview of these issues and concludes by presenting recommendations for policy makers to inform the review of financial support for 16-19 year olds.

7.1 What is the relative weighting of barriers and constraints for young people and to what extent do they face multiple barriers?

It was evident that young people could experience a barrier that stopped them from pursuing their preferred route at 16 and/or a constraint that they were able to cope with. Young people were more likely to experience constraints than barriers and, overall, a notable minority of the sampled young people (14 per cent) had been stopped completely from doing what they wanted to do by a barrier while a greater proportion (63 per cent) had experienced some form of barrier or constraint. While these constraints may be issues with which young people cope, they can still impact on whether a young person makes the right choice for them and whether they subsequently complete their education or training. This is indicated by the evidence that 24 per cent of young people said that they would have pursued an alternative route if they had been aware of all the education and training options available to them.

Lack of sufficient finance was the most commonly identified constraint on young people's choices when deciding what to do after completing Year 11. It was also one of the three main barriers that stopped young people from pursuing their chosen route and four per cent of young people were affected in this way. The third most commonly reported constraint, the cost of transport, also related to financial concerns, although this constraint rarely stopped young people from making the choice they wanted.

In addition to finance, the other issue that constrained young people, and stopped a minority, were the linked issues of lack of availability of appropriate courses and lack of knowledge of all of the options potentially available to them. These two issues had stopped six per cent and four per cent of young people respectively from pursuing their preferred choices.

While some young people appear to experience one constraint or barrier, and indeed 37 per cent experienced no constraints or barriers when making their choices, it is evident that five per cent experienced multiple barriers. Young people with lower levels of achievement (less than five GCSEs at grades A*-C) and those with LDD were more likely to experience a barrier at all and to have multiple barriers than young people overall. Such young people may require additional support and guidance to help overcome these barriers.

Overall, the research has found that the main barriers and constraints for young people relate to finance, transport and availability of provision, and to their knowledge and awareness of this provision. While these are the issues for most young people, it

is evident that there are differences in the extent to which these impact on young people with different characteristics.

7.2 What are the impacts of transport-related barriers and constraints?

While for some young people (12 per cent) the availability of transport was a barrier or constraint, for more (18 per cent) the cost of transport was the main concern and, arguably, this constraint is more one of finance than transport itself. Indeed, only a minority (ten per cent) of young people considered that the transport in their area was 'bad' or 'very bad'. Nevertheless, as the most common mode of travelling to a place of learning was by public transport, which was used by 44 per cent of young people, it is apparent that any financial constraints need to be overcome in order for all young people to continue to participate in learning until they are 17 or 18. The importance of this was supported by the fact that 34 per cent of the 144 young people who were NEET or in JWT after completing Year 11 said that they would have gone into education or training if they had received more money to cover the cost of transport.

The impact of transport-related barriers was greatest in rural areas. Young people who lived in such areas had significantly increased odds of stating that transport had been a barrier or constraint than similar young people who do not live in rural areas. This suggests that, in order to reduce the impact of this constraint on young people in the context of raising the participation age, there would be value in exploring how to enhance the transport facilities in rural areas and to ensure the affordability of these facilities to young people.

While cost was the main transport-related issue, followed by availability, it was evident that confidence in accessing and using public transport was also an issue for some young people. Some young people (17 per cent) said that they found it difficult to work out the times of buses and trains while others did not feel confident (seven per cent) or safe (six per cent) using public transport. While this may indicate a need for young people in general to be provided with support in understanding timetables and gaining confidence in using public transport, it was particularly the case for young people with LDD. Although Independent Travel Training schemes exist in each of the six areas to support those with LDD in building their confidence in using public transport, most young people with LDD were not aware of the schemes and there would be value in further raising awareness of this potential support among young people with LDD.

7.3 What are the impacts of finance-related barriers and constraints?

Although lack of finance was the most commonly identified constraint, it was not a barrier or a constraint for the majority of young people in considering their choices at 16. However, it was for a minority and it was noticeably more so for vulnerable groups including young people who are NEET, those in JWT and teenage parents. Young people in each of these groups had increased odds of experiencing finance as a barrier to participation over other young people. While the reasons for young people being NEET or in JWT are varied and complex, as previous research has shown, it could be argued that one impact of finance-related barriers is that they could lead to a young person not participating in education or training. This suggests that funding should be targeted at vulnerable groups of young people.

The impact of financial constraints seems to be particularly notable for young people in JWT. The evidence suggests that such young people are more likely to have the financial priority of having to pay their parents rent. Additionally, they appear to be more motivated by a work-based route and the opportunity to earn. Young people in JWT were more likely to have known about Apprenticeships than other young people and, as they were not currently in an Apprenticeship, perhaps because they had not been able to access one, they had still chosen employment in preference over a course-based route. As young people in JWT were as aware of the EMA as other young people, providing financial support alone may not be sufficient to engage such young people in learning. The implementation of the raising the participation age policy needs to ensure that there is provision of viable and appropriate work-based routes for those young people who prefer this, which are able to provide similar financial rewards as jobs without training.

Finance-related barriers and constraints do not only relate to whether young people feel that they can afford to continue in learning, they also relate to whether they are aware of the financial support available to them. Although the majority of young people were aware of the EMA, they were less likely to say that they were aware of financial support in general. It may be that young people perceive the EMA as an entitlement or as an incentive, rather than as financial support. This suggests that young people would benefit from enhanced awareness of existing funding, including other forms of financial supports such as hardship funds, together with guidance on how to access these, to minimise the impact of financial constraints on young people's participation.

7.4 What are the implications for Information, Advice and Guidance?

The extent to which young people felt that they were aware of all of the options available to them was identified as one of the main constraints and barriers for young people in making their choices at 16. This was a common issue and some young people of all characteristics said that, in retrospect, they might have taken an alternative route had they been more aware of the full range of options. Moreover, many young people felt that it was still the case that they did not have all the information they needed as they progressed into their future in learning and employment. In addition to lack of awareness of opportunities, a lack of knowledge of financial and other support that might enable them to access opportunities was another key area where IAG could be enhanced in order to better prepare young people, for the future.

The evidence suggests that there is a need to enhance the IAG that is provided for young people, in particular in readiness for raising the participation age in 2013. This will increase the probability that young people make the right choice for them and do not simply pursue a route from an apparently limited range of options, that may or may not be appropriate. However, in providing IAG, a balance is needed between ensuring that young people have enough information and the risk of overwhelming them or confusing them. The research found, as other research has previously, that some young people reported that they found the decision of what to do at 16 difficult because there were too many options. This suggests that, in addition to raising awareness, there is a need to enhance young people's ability to interrogate and assess the information they have in order to make an informed choice. Overall, in order to minimise constraints in the context of raising the participation age, it appears that young people need someone to help mediate the information that they have, while providing guidance, to ensure that they have both awareness and a real understanding of the options available to them. This could be enhanced through

access to taster sessions and direct contact with individuals from a variety of learning environments. Such an approach would be aligned with the new strategy: 'Quality, Choice and Aspiration – A strategy for young people's information, advice and guidance' (DCSF and HM Government, 2009) which includes the need to provide excellent, personalised and impartial IAG support for parents to help their children to make the right decisions.

7.5 Do barriers and constraints differ for young people with LDD?

For young people with LDD the particular barriers or constraints were as follows.

- **Confidence with transport** – young people with LDD were less likely to feel confident using transport. Although the travel training programme exists to support such young people with travelling, not all young people with LDD were aware of this support and there would be value in further raising awareness of young people and their parents or carers of this option.
- **Finance** – lack of finance did not emerge as a particular issue for young people with LDD. However, although they did not tend to report it as a barrier or constraint, they did say that receiving financial support was important. Indeed, those who received an EMA were more likely to say that they would not have taken the course had they not received the EMA.
- **Additional support** – some young people with LDD who were not participating said that they would be encourage to re-engage in learning if they were provided with additional support. This suggests that young people with LDD may not be made aware of all the additional support they can receive when participating in learning or that support is not always made available to those most needing it.

7.6 Do barriers and constraints differ for young people who are NEET?

For young people who were NEET the following barriers and constraints emerged.

- **Finance** – young people who were NEET, along with those in JWT, tended to prioritise finance over achieving qualifications and were not willing to engage in learning without receiving sufficient support to cover their expenses, including the cost of buying books and equipment and transport costs.
- **IAG and availability of appropriate provision** – young people who were NEET were more likely to have found the decision of what to do after completing Year 11 difficult and were more likely to have been stopped or constrained from doing what they wanted to do after Year 11 by not knowing what options were available and also that what they wanted to do was not available. It seems that young people who become NEET would benefit from improved IAG to raise their awareness and broaden their horizons, and to be offered provision, including work-based learning options at Entry Level and Level 1, which better meets their needs.

7.7 Do barriers and constraints differ for young people who are in JWT?

Young people in JWT particularly experienced the following constraints or barriers.

- **Finance** – finance was a key priority for young people in JWT. Half of those interviewed said that lack of finance was a barrier or constraint and it was notable that this was often for necessities – such as paying rent to their parents. Targeting financial support at young people and their parents suffering particular financial hardship might assist in persuading them to engage in learning.
- **IAG and availability of appropriate provision** – young people in JWT were more likely than others to know about Apprenticeships, but, overall, they tended to feel that not knowing all of the options available to them was a constraint. This suggests a need for improved IAG that assists young people in understanding all of the potential routes post-16, including the work-based route. There is also a need to ensure that all such young people wanting to pursue a work-based route are able to access such provision.

7.8 Do barriers and constraints differ for young people who are teenage parents?

Teenage parents had a particular priority in raising their child and this is reflected in the specific barriers and constraints for this group.

- **Other priorities** – some of the teenage parents preferred not to be engaged in learning because their current priority was caring for their children.
- **Awareness of provision and support** – there was a perceived lack of affordable childcare among some teenage parents and, coupled with this, a lack of awareness of Care to Learn, which might assist them in addressing the affordability of childcare. Overall, other than those teenage parents that preferred not to be in learning, teenage parents were interested in qualifications, but felt constrained by the lack of finance and suitable provision. There would, therefore, be value in further enhancing support and information targeted at this group.

7.9 Recommendations

- This study shows that nearly two-thirds of young people experience some constraints on their choices and that these are often related to the availability of appropriate courses and Apprenticeships and lack of awareness of the full range of options available. Moreover, this is more likely to be the case among those who are NEET or in JWT.

Recommendation

It may be that further and improved IAG on all options available to young people post-16, including enhanced support for those at risk of not participating post-16, could reduce the numbers of young people for whom these issues are felt to be constraints. It is also important to ensure that all suitably qualified young people who want to do so are able to access Apprenticeships and other appropriate courses in their areas.

- Finance is only experienced as a barrier that stops young people from doing what they want to do by a small minority of young people leaving school at 16. Even though 26 per cent reported that it was either a barrier or a constraint, the majority of these continue in learning, which suggests that finance is a constraint with which most young people cope in the current system. Finance does affect the type of course or training a young person engages in as 18 per cent say that they would have done something different if they had received more money to cover the cost of transport, books and equipment or food.

Recommendation

There may be value, therefore, in ensuring that all young people are aware of the financial support that is available to them in order to minimise any constraints on their choices of what to do post-16.

- It is notable that young people who were NEET, in JWT or teenage parents were more likely to experience financial constraints. Indeed, teenage parents were less aware of the financial support available to them including EMA compared with young people overall.

Recommendation

There is a need of finding new ways to raise awareness of the available financial support among such vulnerable groups and for continued targeted funding for those most in need. It is also important to ensure that any funding is supported by appropriate and appealing provision for all young people tailored to their preferred learning routes and styles.

- There was limited awareness of Care to Learn among teenage parents, even though it was evident that they viewed financial support as an important factor in their decision-making about whether to participate in learning. Analysis of the Care to Learn funding also revealed that even though it covers the additional transport and childcare costs needed to enable participating in most courses, it may not fully cover the costs of particular courses with higher guided learning hours and the childcare costs in some areas of the country, specifically the South East, South of England and South West.

Recommendation

Additional or more targeted strategies to raise teenage parents' awareness of Care to Learn funding and increasing the maximum amount paid in specific areas would be of value to enable and encourage more teenage parents to access learning.

- The study showed that young people who were more confident and felt prepared for their future had decreased odds of experiencing financial constraints.

Recommendation

This finding suggests that ensuring young people are confident and well-prepared for post-16 progression through high quality IAG, including information on the financial support available to them, could help to minimise the likelihood that they will experience financial constraints to participation.

- Transport was experienced as a barrier or constraint by only relatively few young people. However, young people who lived in rural areas and those who rated the public transport facilities in their areas as 'bad' or 'very bad' were significantly more likely to report transport as a barrier or constraint than other young people.

Recommendation

It appears that strategies to ensure the availability of a transport infrastructure that enables young people to participate in learning should examine closely the availability of transport in rural areas in particular as there appears to be a greater level of need in such areas.

- The study also suggested that young people who felt more at ease with using public transport were less likely to report it as a constraint.

Recommendation

This suggests a need to ensure that all young people are equipped with the skills to access the transport facilities in their area.

- Young people with LDD were more likely than other young people to report that they were not confident accessing and using public transport. Those young people who had accessed an Independent Travel Training scheme in their area, found it valuable.

Recommendation

Strategies to raise awareness among young people with LDD, and their parents or carers, of Independent Travel Training schemes, as well as ensuring that such schemes are made available in all areas would be of value.

- Transport costs were found to be a barrier or constraint for around one in five young people, although it was more likely to be experienced as such by those living in rural areas. Furthermore, 34 per cent of those young people who did not participate in learning post-16 indicated that they would have done so if they had received more support to cover the cost of transport.

Recommendation

Financial support to cover the cost of transport needs to be targeted at those young people most in need, including those in rural areas and young people who choose a job without training due to financial considerations.

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Appendix A: Profile of the sample of respondents and comparison with the overall population

The data sources:

There are a number of different sources of information it is possible to draw on in order to compare the characteristics of the achieved sample with the national population of 16 and 17 year olds in England. The main resource used for comparison was data obtained from the national CCIS dataset. The data in the 'highest achievement' field and the 'current activity' and 'intended destination' fields on CCIS were incomplete. As a result, respondents' self-reported:

- achievement data was compared with data obtained from the statistical first release produced by DCSF and National Statistics
- intended/actual activities after leaving Year 11 were compared with published statistics from DCSF.

The research team was also provided with individual-level CCIS local data by the local authorities involved in this study. This allowed comparison of the profile of the achieved sample with the national picture from the national CCIS dataset for a number of important variables.

Comparisons of variables:

The following variables were considered when we examined if the sample was representative nationally, and if the data needed weighting for analysis:

- attainment
- gender
- whether a young person was registered as having a learning difficulty or disability (LDD) or not
- their main activity in the September after leaving Year 11.

As shown in Table A1, the achieved sample was **representative of the national profile** of young people aged 16 and 17 in England for these four key characteristics.

One point of interest is that although the local and national CCIS data on young people with LDD is comparable, there is a slight discrepancy between these figures and the self-reported responses. One of the reasons for this difference could be that some people do not view themselves as having a disability or learning difficulty although they might be classified as such.

In addition, when the two cohorts (2008 and 2009 leavers) are considered separately, they remain representative of the national data. However, it should be noted that based on the national CCIS data there is a higher reported incidence of LDD in the 2009 cohort than in the 2008 cohort (13 per cent compared with six per cent).

Table A1: Summary of achieved sample by key characteristics compared with national data

	Self reported %	CCIS local data %	National dataset ² %
Gender			
Male	50	50	51
Female	50	50	49
Achievement³			
5+ A*-C	69	n/a	68
LDD			
Has LDD	6	9	10
Does not have LDD	94	91	90
Activity in the September after leaving year 11⁴			
Education or training	93	n/a	93
JWT	4	n/a	2
NEET	3	n/a	5

Self-reported background characteristics of respondents

Other background characteristics of the achieved sample, obtained through questions asked in the survey, were as follows:

- almost all young people responding to the survey said that they lived with at least one of their parents at the end of Year 11 (98 per cent)
- one per cent (18 individuals) of young people responding said that they had at least one child and almost all of these (17 individuals) said that they were the main carer of the child.
- most respondents said that their mother had not been to university (83 per cent). The same proportion said that their father had not been to university. Overall, 76 per cent of respondents said that neither of their parents had been to university while for 21 per cent of respondents, at least one parent had progressed to higher education.
- most of the young people interviewed (73 per cent) said that they lived either in an urban area, including a city or a town (including suburbs). Almost a quarter (24 per cent) reported living in a village, while three per cent said that they lived in the countryside (a total of 27 per cent classified as living in rural areas therefore). This is likely to reflect the fact that even in more rural Local Authorities communities are focused around market towns, as well as villages.
- as shown in Table A2, the majority of young people interviewed described themselves as being of white ethnic background (91 per cent). The majority of these were white British (90 per cent of the sample).

² National CCIS dataset unless specified otherwise.

³ Achievement national data is taken from the statistical first release – see DCSF (2009a).

⁴ The national data on activity in September is taken from statistical first release - see DCSF (2009b) (provisional 2008 figures for 16 year olds at the end of the calendar year).

Table A2: Ethnicity of survey respondents

Ethnicity	%
Asian	4
Black	2
Mixed	2
Other	1
White	91
Prefer not to say	<1
N=2029	

Post-16 destinations

The majority of the young people who responded to the survey were in education, employment or training after leaving Year 11.

- 93 per cent were participating in a full-time or part-time course or a job with training to a recognised Level 2 qualification
- seven per cent (144 individuals) were in a job without training, taking a break, looking for work, looking after the family or currently had no plan
- of those who were pursuing some further learning, most were working towards a qualification at Level 3 (65 per cent) or Level 2 (22 per cent). Fewer were pursuing Entry Level or Level 1 courses (nine per cent).

Appendix B: Factor analysis

Factor analysis is a statistical technique for identifying patterns in responses. In the present work, it was used to identify groups of questions which have been answered in a related way. The 'factors' (otherwise known as groups of related questions) which were identified as a result were then used in further analysis (multi-level modelling) to identify variables which were related to the three main outcomes of interest. Factor analysis was done on questions that felt might be associated significantly with the outcomes. Using factors in a model, rather than responses to individual questions, is often preferable since it avoids the problem of including highly correlated variables in the model. Including highly correlated variables can lead to spurious results being observed.

Two factor analyses were run and the results are summarised in Tables B1 and B2. Factors are listed along the top and their constituent questions below. Where a response loaded negatively on the factor, the cell is shaded.

Table B1: Characteristics and attitudes factors

Confident and self-sufficient	At ease with public transport	Academic aspirational learners	Prepared for the future
I am confident when telling someone else about my ideas	I find it easy to work out the times of buses or trains	I have received enough support in planning my future	I have enough information to plan my future education and work
I am good at organising my own work	I feel confident using the public transport in my area	Earning money is more important to me than achieving qualifications	I am confident about my future
I am good at solving problems	I feel safe travelling on public transport in my area	I prefer practical work to lots of writing	I have received enough support in planning my future
I find it difficult to make decisions		It is important to achieve qualifications to get on in life	
I am good at using books to look for information		I want to do more education or training in the future	
I am good at using computers to look for information			
I find it easy to set targets for myself			

Table B2: Knowledge factors

Financial knowledge	Transport knowledge	Knowledge of post-16 options	Knowledge of reality of post-16 learning	Knowledge of what Apprenticeships were available in your area
Funding you could get to help you continue in education or training after you left Year 11	The cost of transport to and from a college or training provider or job	Qualifications you need to get into different jobs or careers	Other types of support you could get to help you continue in education or training after you left Year 11	What Apprenticeships were available in your area
Financial support you could get to cover the cost of transport	How to travel to a college or training provider	The different types of education and training you could do after leaving Year 11	What it is like doing education or training in a further education college	

Appendix C: Multi-level models

Multi-level modelling is a development of a common statistical technique known as regression analysis. This is a technique for finding a straight-line relationship which allows us to predict the values of some measure of interest ('dependent variable') given the values of one or more related measures. In the same way, it allows us to measure the association between a series of background variables and any change in the dependent variable.

Multi-level modelling takes account of data which is grouped into similar clusters at different levels. In the present analysis, individual learners are grouped into local authorities (LAs). There may be more in common between pupils within the same LA than with those in other LAs. Multi-level modelling allows us to take account of this hierarchical structure of the data and produce more accurate predictions, as well as estimates of the differences between learners and between LAs.

Three of the models reported here (see Table C1) are examples of logistic regression. Logistic regression is a form of regression analysis in which the outcome of interest is binary, i.e. just takes two values; for example, experiencing transport as a barrier or not. A set of background variables can be used to predict the probabilities of the binary outcome, as in conventional regression analysis, but the coefficients relate to increasing or decreasing the probability that an outcome occurs.

Logistic regression deals with the relative *odds* associated with an event, which are equal to:

$$\frac{\text{Probability of event occurring}}{\text{Probability of event not occurring}}$$

The procedure gives an *odds ratio*, which compares the odds of an event (e.g. experiencing transport as a barrier) associated with one group of students, with the odds for another group. An odds ratio close to one shows there is little difference between two groups, whereas an odds ratio significantly greater or less than one indicates a difference in the extent to which the two groups experience transport as a barrier.

The remaining model is of a continuous variable; the factor 'Prepared for the future' as described in Table B1. In this case the model coefficients are easier to interpret. The value of each coefficient corresponds to the change in the outcome variable that is associated with a change of one unit in the background variable.

Variables used in the four models presented in this report are in Table C1. As with all regression analysis, any significant relationships as seen from the models are associations and do not necessarily imply a causal relationship.

Table C1: Variables included in the models

	Experienced transport as a barrier	Experienced finance as a barrier	Not participating in education or training	Prepared for the future
Model Type	Logistic	Logistic	Logistic	Continuous
Variable Name:	Variable included in model?			
LA	Y	Y	Y	Y
Learner ID	Y	Y	Y	Y
Constant	Y	Y	Y	Y
Experience transport as a barrier	Y			
Experience finance as a barrier		Y		
NET	Y	Y	Y	Y
Female	Y	Y	Y	Y
Low achiever	Y	Y	Y	Y
LDD	Y	Y	Y	Y
Care leaver	Y	Y	Y	
Teenage parent	Y	Y	Y	Y
At least one parent was in HE	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ethnicity – white other	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ethnicity – black	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ethnicity – mixed	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ethnicity – asian	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ethnicity – other	Y	Y	Y	Y
Rural	Y	Y	Y	Y
Received EMA or hardship fund (not used)	Y	Y		Y
Aware of EMA			Y	
Barrier stopped them			Y	
Alternative considered			Y	
Transport quality of LA	Y	Y	Y	Y
Significantly rural LA	Y	Y	Y	Y
Predominantly rural LA	Y	Y	Y	Y
Age	Y	Y	Y	Y
Public transport important	Y			
Government money important		Y	Y	
Earning money important		Y	Y	
Achieving quals while in job important			Y	
What friends do important			Y	
Get more quals important			Y	
Help get into HE important			Y	Y
Decision easy	Y	Y	Y	Y
Good rating of public transport	Y			Y
Ofsted rating of FE qual for LA	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR confident	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR at ease with public transport	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR academic aspirational learners	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR prepared for the future	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR financial knowledge	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR transport knowledge	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR post-16 options knowledge	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR post-16 reality knowledge	Y	Y	Y	Y
FACTOR Apprenticeships knowledge	Y	Y	Y	Y

Appendix D: The adequacy of the Care to Learn allowance to enable teenage parents to access a variety of post-16 learning options

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Care to Learn helps young parents continue in, or return to, education or training by providing financial help with childcare costs and travel.

Previous research has found that Care to Learn has had a strong positive impact on teenage parents undertaking learning. For example, Vaid *et al.* (2009) found that 59 per cent of young people in receipt of Care to Learn completed their courses, while 73 per cent of those surveyed stated that they could not have gone on to do their course without the help of the funding.

Young people in receipt of Care to Learn get £160 per child per week (£175 in London). This allowance has been held constant since 2007, despite evidence revealed in a survey conducted in 2009 (Daycare Trust, 2009) that the price of childcare continues to rise above the rate of inflation. Within this context, the DCSF has commissioned the NFER to calculate whether the Care to Learn allowance remains adequate.

1.2 Aims

Our aim was to assess the adequacy of the Care to Learn allowance for young parents to access a range of post-16 options.

In order to answer this main aim, a number of key questions were addressed first:

- 1.** What is the average number of guided learning hours (GLH) a week for a range of Level 2 and 3 qualifications?
- 2.** What is the average cost of childcare in a variety of settings for the Government Office Regions?
- 3.** What financial support does Care to Learn provide?
- 4.** What is the average cost of travel for the learner, including the time taken in childcare costs, between their home and either the childcare or learning provider, depending on their situation?
- 5.** What other costs are there for the learner?

2. Methods

2.1 Variables considered

We have taken account of a number of factors in order to estimate the amount of funding that would be needed for two different types of scenarios:

- an **“average scenario”** – where the learner has an average number of guided learning hours
- a **“high GLH scenario”** – where the learner has a very high number of guided learning hours

Number of hours at the learning provider each week:

Using data from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC, 2009), which contains details for each course, we have derived the number of guided learning hours (GLH) per week, for a range of Level 2 and 3 courses. The assumption was used that all courses take one year to complete, and that there are 33 weeks in an academic year (based on searching a number of school and college websites). This was calculated for the average scenario and the high GLH scenario:

- For the **average scenario** we have used the mode for each course type to provide an estimate of the number of GLH it would normally take to complete.
- For the **high GLH scenario** we have used the 90th percentile⁵ to provide an estimate of the number of guided learning hours needed to complete high contact courses.

Table 2.1 shows the qualification types included in the analysis, alongside their *average weekly GLH* and the *90th percentile weekly GLH* for high contact courses.

Table 2.1: The mode GLHs and 90th percentile GLHs for each course type

	Qualification type	Mode GLH	90 th percentile GLH
Level 2	GCSEs	14.54	27.27
	NVQ	13.64	13.64
	Key and Functional Skills	1.09	1.52
	All other courses ⁶	10.3	10.3
Level 3	AS or A Levels	14.64	15.91
	NVQ	13.63	13.64
	Access courses	13.63	16.91
	Key Skills	1.09	2.13
	All other courses ⁷	13.09	26.18

⁵ The 90th percentile is the point below which 90 per cent of all the courses fall. It was calculated by sorting the courses (for each type) into ascending order according to number of GLHs and taking the GLH of the course which fell at the 90 per cent mark.

⁶ We grouped all Level 2 courses that were not GCSEs, NVQs or Key and Functional Skills courses as “all other courses” at Level 2. These “all other courses” included for example a BTEC award in fashion in clothing, a Certificate in photography and a National Award in ICT.

⁷ We categorised all Level 3 courses that were not AS or A levels, NVQs, Access courses or Key Skills as ‘All other courses’ at Level 3’. These ‘All other courses’ included, for example, a BTEC National Diploma in Beauty Therapy Sciences, a Diploma for Music Practitioners and a Certificate in Management.

Interestingly, a number of the courses with the highest GLH (above the 90th percentile), were some of the most popular courses, indicated by the number of enrolments reported by the LSC (2009). For example, NVQ Level 2 qualifications that were above the 90th percentile included Hairdressing, Beauty Therapy and Professional Cookery. This was also the case for Level 3 courses, for example AS level qualifications that were above the 90th percentile included the subjects Biology, Sociology and Psychology (certain assessment boards only). This demonstrates that high contact courses include some very popular courses, and, thus, it can be assumed that the 90th percentile GLH scenario is likely to be common among some young parents.

Assumptions

- The number of actual GLH listed on the LSC database are a realistic reflection of time spent by learners in schools/colleges
- There are 33 weeks in an academic year in most schools and colleges (based on a review of a number of school/college websites)
- All types of qualifications take one year to complete⁸

Cost of childcare per hour:

The cost of childcare was obtained from the Childcare Costs Survey 2009 (Daycare Trust, 2009), which provides the cost of childcare per week for a range of childcare settings in the nine Government Office Regions (with Inner and Outer London being considered separately). We used this information to calculate the hourly rate of childcare for infants under 2 years in the ten geographical areas.

Assumptions

- Childcare providers charge an hourly flat rate (that there is no discount depending on number of hours used – so that hourly rate can be determined from weekly rate)
- Childcare can be claimed on an hourly basis and can therefore be claimed for half days or less. However, for many childcare providers this may not be possible and learners would have to pay the full day or half day.

Travel:

We considered urban and rural areas separately as costs are likely to differ because of the potentially longer distances travelled in rural areas. In addition, we considered two different travel scenarios:

- **Travel Option A:** Learners can choose a childcare provider near their home; they would therefore not incur any travel costs travelling to the childcare provider, but Care to Learn would need to cover the cost of childcare while the learner travels to the learning provider.

Using data from the British Transport Survey (Department for Transport, 2008), we calculated an estimate for the average length of time it takes to travel to and from a

⁸ A levels were divided into AS level and A2 level courses.

learning provider⁹. These estimates were used to calculate the amount of money that would be needed to cover the childcare costs while the learner is travelling.

- **Travel Option B:** Learners can choose a childcare provider near their learning provider, so the cost of travel to the childcare provider would be covered by Care to Learn (travel costs cannot be claimed if the childcare provider is on the same site or very near to the learning provider)

In order to estimate the cost of travel, we looked at the post-16 travel strategies for a range of rural and urban local authorities. This provided us with an assessment of the types of travel assistance and support available to post-16 learners, as well as the price of weekly travel in a range of areas. Alongside this information we searched a number of bus company websites to find out the price of a weekly bus pass in a range of urban and rural areas. Using this information we estimated that learners in urban areas would need to spend about £15 a week on travel and learners in rural areas would need to spend about £18 a week.

Assumptions

- **Travel Option A:** Learners can choose a childcare provider near their home: their travel costs would then not be covered by Care to Learn, but it would need to cover the cost of childcare while the learner travels to the learning provider; **OR**
- **Travel Option B:** Learners can choose a childcare provider near the learning provider: the cost of travel to the childcare provider would be covered by Care to Learn
- Other options (for example, where the childcare provider is mid-way between the home and learning provider, or onsite provision) have not been considered in the analysis
- Average travel times and distances for secondary schools in urban and rural areas can be used as a proxy to estimate average travel times to post-16 providers – we assume it is 40 minutes per day in urban and 1.5 hours per day in rural areas

Additional costs

We estimate that young people spend about 6.5 hours at the learning provider each week for lunch and break times. This was accounted for in the equation.

Assumption

- Young people spend about 1 hour 15 minutes a day at the learning provider for lunch and other breaks.

⁹ We divided the average travel times of secondary school pupils by the average distance travelled to estimate the average time taken to travel one mile (7.18 minutes). This result was used to calculate average travel times in large urban and rural areas, using average home to school travel distances in urban (2.6 miles) and rural areas (6.1 miles). These figures were used to estimate average weekly travel times rounded up to 3.33 hours per week in urban areas and 7.5 hours per week in rural areas.

2.2 Equations calculated

Taking the above factors into consideration, we were able to build an equation to calculate both an average scenario and a high GLH scenario for both Travel Options A and B:

Travel option A equation:

Total cost = Childcare costs per hour x (number of weekly guided learning hours + weekly travel time + weekly time spent for lunch and breaks)

Travel option B equation:

Total cost = Childcare costs per hour x (number of weekly guided learning hours + weekly time spent for lunch and breaks) + weekly cost of travel to the childcare provider

In order to calculate a scenario where the learner has a high number of guided learning hours, the same equations were used, but the average GLH for each type of course were replaced with the number of GLHs on the 90th percentile.

All the scenarios have been calculated and provided separately to the DCSF.

3. Findings

Key findings:

- For many young parents Care to Learn appears to be adequate; all of the average scenarios are fully covered by the existing rate, as well as the large majority of scenarios with a high number of guided learning hours
- In a number of scenarios the allowance is only just adequate, suggesting it could easily become inadequate, if, for example, transport costs or childcare costs are above average.
- The two areas where the payment is most likely to be inadequate are the South East and Inner London. This is particularly the case for recipients who choose nurseries instead of childminders.
- The course types that seem most likely to exceed the Care to Learn threshold are GCSEs and Level 3 courses classified as 'all other courses' for the purpose of this analysis.
- A number of learners, especially in the South East and Inner London, would not be able to use Care to Learn to cover the cost of any additional private study
- Overall, it is more expensive to opt for a nursery place compared with a childminder, and this difference is largest in the South East and London.

Average scenario:

All the average scenarios calculated were well within the Care to Learn allowance. It can, therefore, be assumed in a large number of cases that Care to Learn will be adequate. Care to Learn recipients can also claim childcare costs for time spent doing private study, as long as costs do not exceed the maximum payment. Looking at **average scenarios**, it is clear that all recipients regardless of region, childcare option or course choice would be able to use Care to Learn to cover the costs of additional private study. This is because there is a surplus of at least £47.41 in all the scenarios, which would be enough to pay for nearly 12 hours of private study assuming an average rate of nursery childcare in this region.

High GLH scenario:

The table below has been colour coded to show situations in which the Care to Learn allowance may be inadequate, as follows:

- where the Care to Learn allowance would not have covered the costs (coloured in pink)
- where totals costs are between £25 and £0 below the Care to Learn allowance (coloured in orange).

Looking at the data generated using the **high number of GLH scenario**, it is clear that in the majority of areas the allowance would still be adequate.

The payment was inadequate in only one case: where GCSEs were being studied in a rural area in the South East, where the recipient has chosen a nursery and costs are calculated under Travel Option A (where recipients are claiming childcare costs for their travel time) – see Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The potential inadequacy of Care to Learn for learners taking GCSEs in the rural South East opting for a nursery placement using Travel Option A

	Total Costs (£)	C2L allowance minus Total Costs (£)
NVQ L2	109.01	50.99
5 GCSEs	163.26	-3.26
NVQ L3	109.01	50.99
3 AS or A2 levels	118.05	41.95
Access courses	122.03	37.97
All other L2 courses	95.72	64.28
All other L3 courses	158.92	1.08
Key and functional skills L2	6.05	153.95
Key Skills L3	8.44	151.56

In the situation above, Level 3 courses classified by us as ‘All other L3 courses’ were near to exceeding the Care to Learn threshold. As Table 2.1 reveals, there is only a surplus of £1.08, suggesting the allowance may not be enough for some learners, if they face any additional costs not factored into the equation. All scenarios in the

South East area, with nursery childcare, followed this pattern, where learners taking GCSEs and 'All other L3 courses' would face costs very close to the Care to Learn allowance. Similarly, learners in Inner London opting for nursery childcare are likely to have costs only just below the Care to Learn allowance.

Interestingly, none of the scenarios in Outer London showed a surplus of less than £25, suggesting the higher London rate was adequate to cover the higher rate of childcare prices.

In rural areas in the South West and East of England, there were scenarios with a surplus of less than £25. It could be that in certain rural areas, where recipients are claiming childcare costs when they travel (Travel Option A) the payment could become inadequate.

In these scenarios where Care to Learn is only just adequate (i.e. the Care to Learn allowance exceeds total costs by less than £25), a number of young people might find it does not cover additional costs. In particular, if one or more of the following factors were the case it would probably render the allowance inadequate:

- where travel costs exceed what we consider "average" costs, for example the learner may opt for a childcare provider in the opposite direction to the learning provider or where the most appropriate travel option is by taxi.
- childcare costs exceed the average for that geographical area and/or additional costs (for lunch or private study) are more than the 6.25 hours assumed in the model
- a course where the number of GLH are above the 90th percentile for that course type, for example NVQ Level 2 hairdressing
- a course at a learning provider where the GLH are spread across the week; for example, where a learner has a lesson at the beginning and end of the day, each day of the week and, thus, they would need to claim childcare costs for the whole week
- in cases where the childcare provider does not provide an hourly service, but provides a full-day or half-day service only. This would prevent learners from accessing such services for shorter time periods only (for example, only 2 hours for one day of the week), which could greatly increase the costs.

It is clear that any of these factors could result in the costs exceeding the Care to Learn allowance threshold, particularly in those scenarios in which the allowance was calculated to be close to the threshold (i.e. within around £25 or £35 of the Care to Learn allowance). Further research may be needed to determine the likelihood of one or more of these factors occurring; however, the finding that 25 per cent of learners claim near the maximum payable suggest this is a likely scenario.

Furthermore, given that claims for private study must be included within the maximum payment, those in scenarios where Care to Learn is only just adequate would not be able to use the allowance to cover private study. This means that a number of recipients studying GCSEs or other Level 3 qualifications, particularly in the South East and Inner London, are unlikely to be able to use Care to Learn to cover the costs of additional private study.

Analysis also shows that in the majority of cases, nursery costs were more expensive than childminder costs. This was particularly the case in the South East and Inner London, where nursery childcare was over 50 pence more expensive per hour

compared with using a childminder. This suggests that those who chose to use a nursery to care for their children in these areas are even less likely to stay within the Care to Learn allowance, or are at least, less able to use Care to Learn to cover the costs of private study than young parents who opt for using childminders.

In the majority of cases there is little consistent difference between the costs associated with Travel Option A (where learners claim childcare costs for time spent travelling) and Travel Option B (claiming the costs of the travel). However, in some rural areas, often where nursery is chosen over childminders, Option A is more costly.

4. Recommendation

The research suggests that although the Care to Learn funding will be sufficient in the majority of cases, there are a number of scenarios where it would be insufficient. For example, where a course has a high number of guided learning hours or where a learner has more expensive childcare. It may, therefore, be beneficial **to increase the maximum funding threshold** to enable teenage parents to be able to choose the course and childcare option of their preference, regardless of the area they live in, and to still have funding available for private study.

Ref: DFE-RR009

ISBN: 978-1-84775-765-4

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**Published by the Department for
Children, Schools and Families**

Registered Charity no. 313392