National Review:

Mapping the coverage and cold spots in the university information, advice and guidance provided in schools and colleges across England

March 2019

UniTasterDays   In collaboration with HELOA

Acknowledgements

This is version 1 of the report detailing the results of the research. This was first published on March 14 2019.

Contents

1.0 Executive summary

UniTasterDays.com, in collaboration with HELOA, launched a national survey with the purpose of mapping the coverage of university information, advice and guidance (IAG) provided in secondary schools and colleges across England.

This report maps the variation in practice and cold spots relating to school university IAG nationally, regionally, and by school and college type. The findings will be of interest to schools and colleges, career advisors, higher education (HE) outreach and recruitment professionals, National Collaborative Outreach Programme (NCOP) consortia, HELOA members, local and national government (including the Department For Education, Office For Students and Ofsted), the Student Loans Company, Universities UK, HELOA, NEON and a number of other stakeholders.

The research is very timely. It follows the launch of the Careers Strategy in December 2017, including the eight Gatsby Benchmarks; the December 2018 announcement regarding the extension of NCOP funding - and subsequent introduction of outreach hubs; and the strategic priority for the Office For Students (OfS) to map outreach activity and identify where there are potential cold spots in coverage. This research supports these strategic priorities by providing a starting point to support schools, colleges, universities, NCOP consortia and the OfS to benchmark current university IAG provision and identify cold spots at a national and regional level.

In total, 745 school and college professionals completed the survey. This represents approximately 18% of secondary schools and colleges in England. The national responses are highly representative with a confidence level of 90% and margin of error of 3%. All regions fall within a 90% confidence level and a 6% to 10% margin of error. The headline results from the research are summarised below, and are explored by institution type, region, and in greater context throughout this report. The main themes that emerged from the survey include:

Schools and colleges are becoming aware of the higher education aspects of the Gatsby Benchmarks

83% of respondents indicated they had an awareness of the higher education elements of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Of these, **68%** of respondents were 'aware' or 'very aware'. Significant regional variations were identified. For example, schools and colleges in the **North West** and **North East** had the greatest understanding of the higher education aspects of the Gatsby Benchmarks, whilst in **Yorkshire and the Humber**, only **54%** of respondents stated their understanding was above 'fairly aware'.

University engagement is generally starting in school's between Years 7 and 9

59% of respondents stated their School started university engagement between Years 7 and 9. **Year 9** was found to be the most common year group where university engagement activity was starting. However, **39%** of schools do not engage in these activities until their students reach Year 10 or above, and after students would have made their GCSE option choices. As a result, **39%** of schools may be restricting future university choices for students by not offering suitable university support when these option choices were made.

Schools and colleges report positively on the quality of university engagement that is offered

84% of respondents rated the university information, advice and guidance provided to students at their School or College to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

Schools and colleges are confident in their university expertise to effectively support students

85% of respondents indicated that they had confidence in the ability of their School or College to advise students relating to university opportunities.

Finance is considered to be the greatest barrier to both university participation and engagement

Finance is the greatest barrier to university visits for schools and colleges. Transport costs for visits were the most significant barrier **(58%)**, followed by the costs relating to booking events through external organisations **(41%)**. Additionally, **one-third** of respondents reported that a significant barrier was lack of staff time to organise university activities.

Further to this, **University Fees and Finance** is considered by schools and colleges to be the largest barrier to university for their students. Almost **half** of the respondents reported that they considered the greatest barrier to university related to the cost of tuition fees. The concern was most prominent in the **North West (60%)** and **South West (56%)**. A further **14%** of respondents expressed the greatest barrier to university for their students related to the cost of living at university. This was stated as the second most significant barrier across six of the nine regions. It was most prominently a concern in the **North East (30%).**

2.0 Introduction

UniTasterDays.com, in collaboration with HELOA, launched a national survey with the purpose of mapping the coverage and cold spots of university information, advice and guidance (IAG) provided in secondary schools and colleges in England.

The survey explored the year groups where university IAG and engagement was starting, what provision there is (and who provides it), the quality of the provision offered, what gaps and barriers there are in accessing IAG provision, and what schools consider to be the most significant barriers to the higher education progression of students.

Crucially this report maps the variation in practice and cold spots relating to school university IAG nationally, regionally and by school and college type.

This report provides results which will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders in the education sector. This includes, but is not limited to:

1] Schools and colleges, particularly in-school and external careers colleagues and staff with a higher education remit.

2] Universities and higher education institutions, particularly HELOA members and colleagues in NCOP, outreach, widening participation, school and college liaison and student recruitment roles.

3] Local and national government, particularly the Department for Education, the Office for Students and Ofsted.

4] A wide range of external stakeholders including, but not limited to, The Student Loans Company, Universities UK, HELOA and NEON.

The research is very timely. It follows the launch of the Careers Strategy in December 2017, including the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, and the December 2018 announcement regarding the extension of National Collaborative Outreach Funding. Additionally, in February 2019, the Office for Students priorities for 2019-20 were outlined in a letter from the Secretary of State for Education, which emphasised the importance of evidence and evaluation to support university outreach activities - such as the very information which is included in this report.

From August 2019, NCOP programmes will also be responsible for managing outreach hubs, acting as a single point of contact for schools and colleges to access information about the local availability of university activities. These outreach hubs are expected to use local knowledge to map and identify gaps in local provision.

This research also supports Access and Participation Guidance (February 2018) which sets a strategic priority for the OfS to map the coverage of outreach activity across the country to identify where there are potential cold spots in the coverage, building on any existing activities that have mapped such provision.

The term 'cold spots' is used regularly in this report, this is a term which concerns gaps in university information, advice and guidance across geographical areas or by school or college type.

This research supports the strategic priorities outlined above by providing a starting point to support schools / colleges, universities, NCOP outreach hubs and the OfS to benchmark current university IAG provision and identify cold spots at a national and regional level. In turn, this will support how schools, colleges, universities and other interested parties can improve the university IAG offered to students in the future.

3.0 Method

3.1 Design

The survey consisted of 22 questions which were mainly closed question items. It took respondents around 10-15 minutes to complete, and the survey was open from November 2018 until February 2019.

3.2 Sampling

The survey was initially disseminated to secondary schools and colleges in the United Kingdom. This included state-maintained schools, academy trusts, colleges, and independent schools. It was targeted at school and college staff, specifically careers colleagues, members of the senior leadership team, teachers, and non-teaching support staff who had a good understanding of the provision of higher education information, advice, and guidance within their organisation.

The survey did not collect the name of each respondent or their institution name. Such information was omitted to ensure respondents were comfortable providing sensitive information, where their feedback would not be associated with the school or college, or the respondent personally.

Due to response rates across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland not reaching levels to allow for representative reporting, the survey subsequently focused on regions in England only, where representative regional data was collected.

In order to ensure responses were provided from relevant sector colleagues, respondents were asked prior to completing the survey to confirm they met at least one of the below criteria:

(a) They were a provider of university advice and guidance for their school or college

(b) They had an awareness of the university guidance provided, or

(c) They considered themselves to be the most relevant person to comment on the university advice and guidance which was offered by their institution.

If potential respondents did not meet this criteria, they were asked to pass the survey website link to the most relevant person in the organisation who would be able to do so.

Only complete data was recorded by Typeform, the online survey software used for the collection of responses. Data was not saved for part-completions, to allow for a comprehensive data set whilst reporting.

To encourage responses, participants were advised that they would be entered into a prize draw to win an Amazon Kindle. The prize was issued to the winning recipient in February 2019.

3.3 Circulation

The online survey was disseminated through email and social media (including a focus on targeting specific teaching roles on LinkedIn). It was also distributed through key professional bodies and universities UK-wide through the collaborative relationship with HELOA for this project.

Email promotion included campaigns to a database of over 60,000 named secondary school colleagues, which included two emails sent to the UniTasterDays school database and an email campaign booked through an external education provider. This targeted broader teaching roles, and encouraged details to be sent to an appropriate contact in their school or college.

The dissemination of the survey was also supported by members of the HELOA steering group, National Collaborative Outreach Programme colleagues, other HELOA members, and staff working in higher education institutions and the careers sector throughout the UK. Additionally, it was circulated by the Career Development Institute, Careers England and Action on Access (amongst others).

3.4 Additional context to the results

This is social research, and it is important to be transparent on the limitations of this – so we would ask you to consider the following when you review the report and results:

1] It is possible that using networks of university contacts may have biased results to an extent, as they may have disseminated the survey to schools and colleges who are more engaged in higher education information, advice and guidance activity due to the very nature of their relationship with them.

2] Schools and Colleges with a lack of higher education engagement may not have anyone suitable in the school to complete the survey - and hence may not have been able to supply their data.

3] The survey did not collect the name of the school or college or the name of the individual completing the survey. This decision was taken because some of the questions were of a sensitive nature, particularly a respondent rating their institution in terms of the quality of the higher education information, advice and guidance provision.

The results therefore provide an approximation of schools and colleges in England which have completed the survey. The response rates in terms of percentage will be lower - as some larger schools or colleges may have more than one member of staff who will have a higher education remit, who subsequently may have also completed the survey.

4] Some results have been supressed if response rates are below five in accordance with Data Protection Regulations.

4.0 Response rates by region

Figure 1.0 summarises the proportion of schools and colleges that completed the survey within each region. A total of 745 complete responses were received from schools and colleges in England.

If we equate responses to individual schools and colleges (noting the comment in Section 3.4, regarding completions, where there is potential for more than one person from a School or College to complete it); this would represent responses from 18.4% of schools and colleges in England*

Figure 1.0 Response Rates by Region
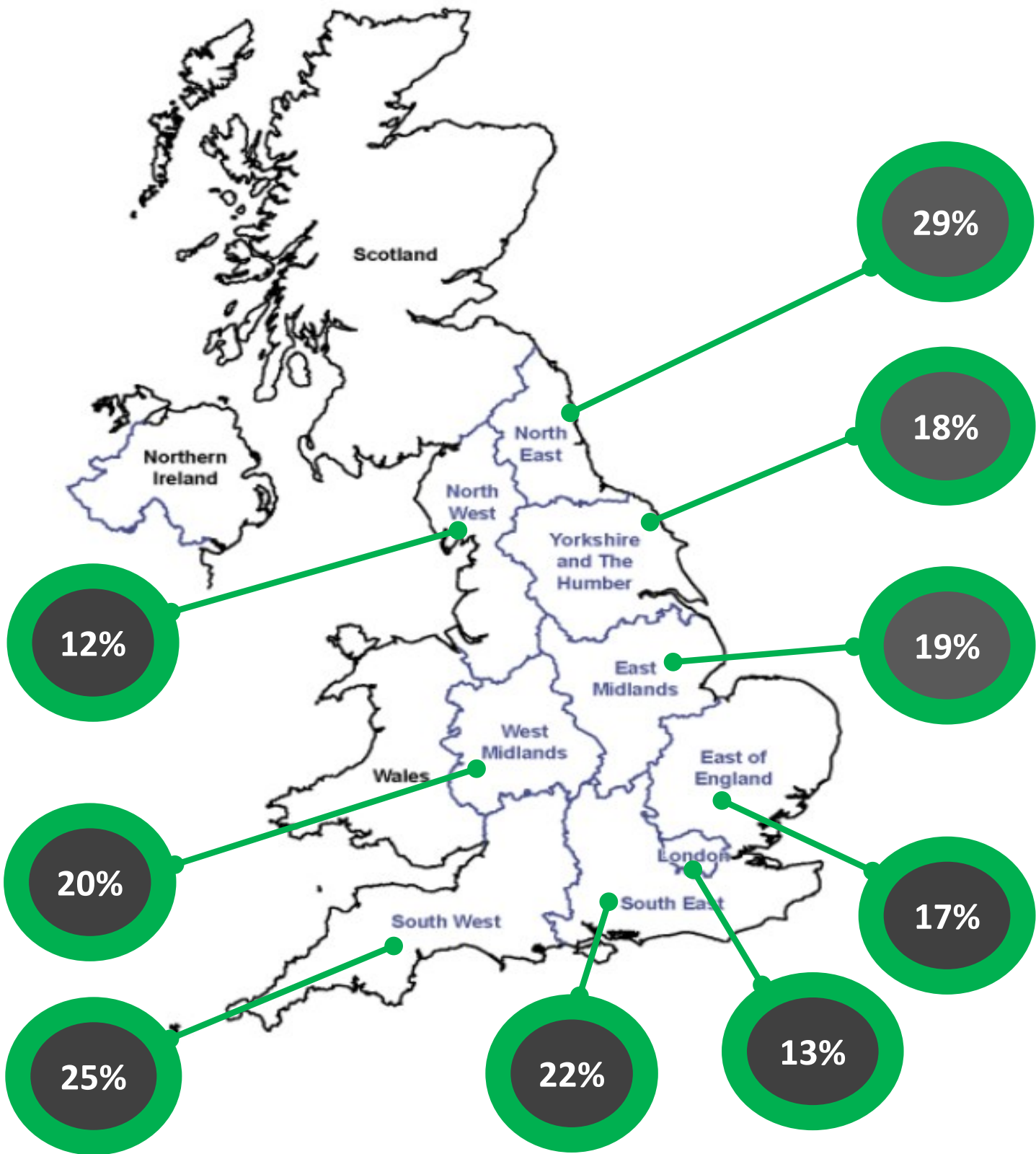
*Response rates are highly representative when applying a confidence level of 90%. Across England there is a 3% margin of error. Regionally the margin of error is 6% for the South East, 7% for the West Midlands and South West, 8% for London, 9% for the North West East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands and 10% for the North East.

4.1 Response rates by school type

Table 1.0 details the responses in England from each type of School and College, along with the proportion of each institution type which completed the survey. The margin of error calculation shows that, in a similar way to the regional samples, all response rates are representative.

Table 1.0: Response Rates by School Type*

School / college type	# schools / colleges *	% of schools / colleges completed survey	**Margin of error + or -
LA Maintained Schools	902	**14.5%**	**7%**
Academies , Free schools and UTC's	2434	**15.2%**	**4%**
Colleges	286	**53.8%**	**4%**
Independent Schools	420	**21.7%**	**8%**
England	**4042**	**18.4%**	**3%**

*# schools / colleges in England based on DFE data. Includes secondary schools, middle deemed secondary, 6th forms, FE Colleges (all open). Excludes special schools/colleges.**Confidence level 90%

4.2 Response rates by staff role

Table 1.1 provides details of the responses in England from specific staff roles. This shows that approaching 50% of survey completions came from careers colleagues working in school and colleges.

Table 1.1: Response Rates by Staff Role

School / college type	# responses	% responses
Senior Management or SLT	161	**21.6%**
Careers Staff	369	**49.5%**
Teacher	138	**18.5%**
Non-teaching support staff	77	**10.3%**
Total response	**745**	**100.0%**

5.0 Results

Data themes will be explored by mapping current engagement and gaps in university IAG across England, by each region and by school / college type. Some results have been supressed and/or rounded to the nearest 10% if response rates are below five - in accordance with Data Protection regulations.

5.1 The Higher Education aspects of the Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Benchmarks are aimed to define world-class career guidance, and were a key part of the Department for Education Careers Strategy (December 2017). There is an expectation that all schools will meet the eight Gatsby benchmarks by 2020.

The survey broadly asked for schools and colleges (excluding independent schools who are not part of the statutory guidance) to rate their understanding of the Gatsby benchmarks, and how they relate to university. This is particularly relevant as Gatsby Benchmark 7 specifically addresses *'Encounters with further and higher education'*. The guidance includes the text, *'all students should understand the full range of learning opportunities that are available to them'* .

Figure 2.0 illustrates the school and college familiarity with the higher education aspects of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

83% of respondents were 'fairly aware', 'aware' or 'very aware' of the Gatsby Benchmarks and how they relate to university. Of these, 68% of respondents were 'aware' or 'very aware'.

Figure 2.0 - Understanding of the Gatsby benchmarks - and how they relate to university
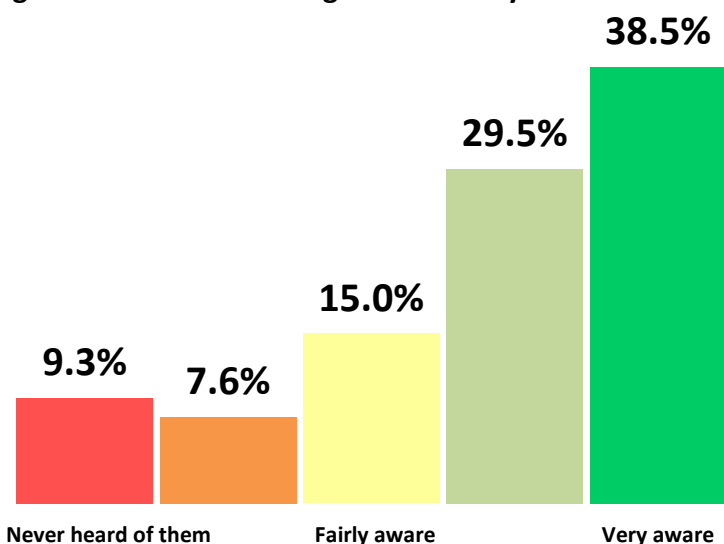
5.2 Gatsby Benchmarks (by school type)

When the understanding of the Gatsby benchmarks is explored by school and college type, the results are fairly consistent. There appears to be a greater understanding in maintained schools relating to the higher education aspects of the Gatsby benchmarks, but the percentage point difference for each type of institution in all areas is under 10%.

Table 2.1 - Understanding of the Gatsby Benchmarks and how they relate to university (by school type)

School type	Never heard of them		Fairly aware		Very aware
	1	2	3	4	5
LA Maintained Schools	8.4%	6.9%	13.0%	27.5%	44.3%
Academies, Free schools & UTC's	11.7%	7.6%	14.6%	28.5%	37.7%
Colleges	4.5%	8.4%	17.5%	33.8%	35.7%

5.3 Gatsby Benchmarks (by region)

In Section 5.1, the Gatsby benchmarks were explored nationally, and in section 5.2, they were explored by institution type. In Section 5.3 they are explored on a regional level.

Figure 3.0 shows there is a large regional variation in practice relating to the understanding of the Gatsby Benchmarks in schools and colleges, and how they relate to higher education. By region, the level of good understanding ('aware' or 'very aware') ranges from 54% to 78%.

Schools and Colleges in the North West and North East were reported to have the greatest understanding of the higher education aspects of the Gatsby Benchmarks, whilst in Yorkshire and the Humber, only 54% of respondents stated their understanding was above 'fairly aware'.

Figure 3.0 - Regional awareness of the Higher Education elements of the Gatsby benchmarks (Aware or Very Aware)
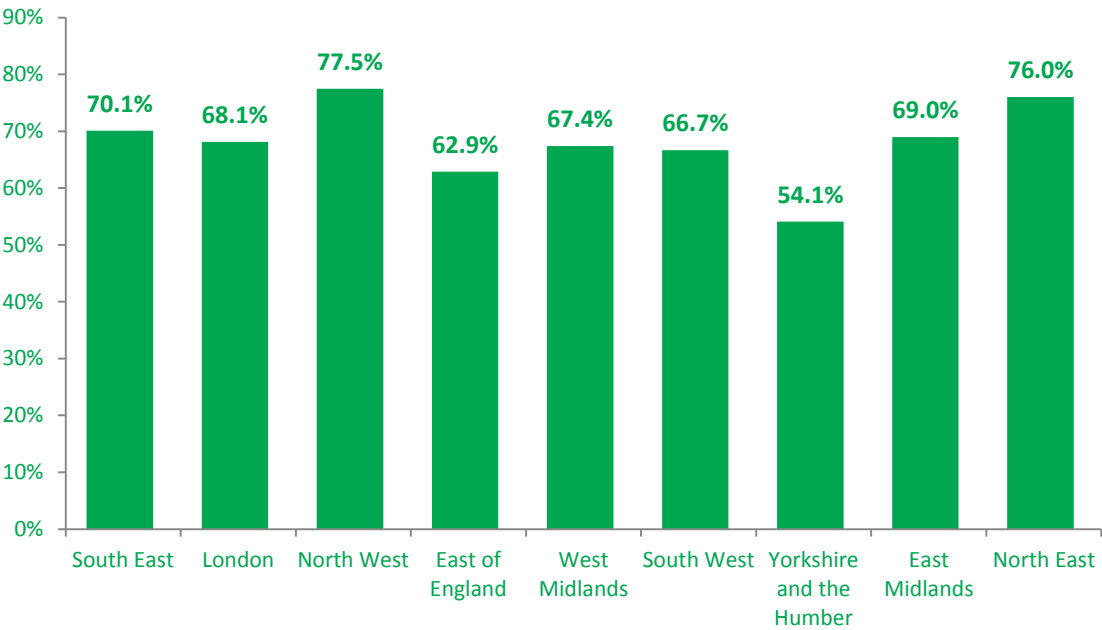
6.0 School and College knowledge and understanding of higher education

Table 2.2 highlights that across England, 85% of schools and colleges felt they have the in-house expertise to effectively advise students on their university opportunities.

Whilst 15% stated they did not feel confident in the in-house university expertise at their institution, it should be considered that Section 9.0 of this report indicates that approaching 50% of schools and colleges believe the key provider of university guidance should be an external organisation or a higher education institution, which may provide context to the difference in the level of expertise reported.

Table 2.2 – Do you feel confident that your school or college has the in-house expertise to effectively advise students on their university opportunities? By school and college type and region.
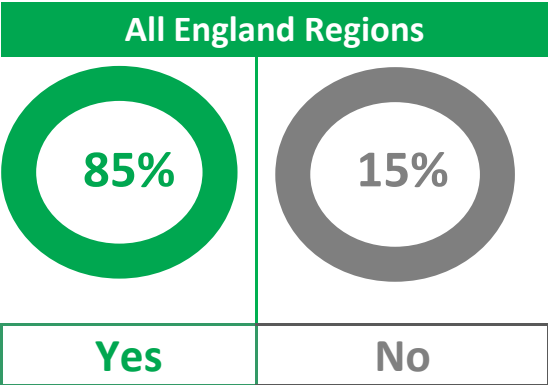
By school type	Yes	No
LA Maintained Schools	83.7%	16.3%
Academies , Free schools and UTC's	81.4%	18.6%
Colleges	91.6%	8.4%
Independent Schools	93.4%	6.6%

By Region	Yes	No
South East	84.2%	15.8%
London	85.7%	14.3%
North West	93.0%	7.0%
East of England	81.7%	18.3%
West Midlands	85.9%	14.1%
South West	84.0%	16.0%
Yorkshire and the Humber	77.9%	22.1%
East Midlands	83.6%	16.4%
North East*	90.0%	<10%

Some data has been supressed and rounded to nearest 10% where responses are less than 5.

7.0 When is university engagement in schools starting?

Section 7.0 of the research explores when university engagement in schools is starting.

This is an important area to explore following recent reports stating university guidance should commence in primary schools, and Gatsby Benchmark 7 (which is explored in section 5.0 of this report) specifying that:

1] *By the age of 16, every pupil should have had a meaningful encounter with a provider of the full range of learning opportunities.*

2] *By the age of 18, all students who are considering applying for university should have had at least two visits to universities to meet staff and students.*

Colleges were not included within this analysis, due to many Colleges only providing post-16 provision. They may have been unaware of the higher education provision a student was previously offered - and as a result, this would have impacted on the result accuracy.

Figure 4.0 indicates when schools stated their university engagement started. The data shows that 59% of schools commence their university engagement between Year 7 and Year 9, with Year 9 being the most common year group where university engagement activity was beginning.

In the context of when engagement was starting, it should be considered that the career pathway of a student will be in part determined by the subject options choices made. Often students are required to make option choices in Year 8 and Year 9, and these choices can restrict the subjects they take at a post-16 level and for future educational pathways (e.g. HE subject choices). In turn, it is important that students are fully aware of the qualifications required for different careers and HE routes before these option choices are made.

The findings suggest that over half of students are being provided with university IAG to make these option choices. However, approaching 40% of students do not receive university IAG until years 10 or above - which may impact on their subsequent university choices and participation.

Figure 4.0 - When do you think university engagement starts for your school?

	59.4%
	of schools suggest that student HE engagement starts in years 7 to 9

Before year 7: 1.5%
Year 7: 21.3%
Year 8: 11.3%
Year 9: 26.8%
Year 10: 16.1%
Year 11: 12.0%
Year 12+: 11.0%
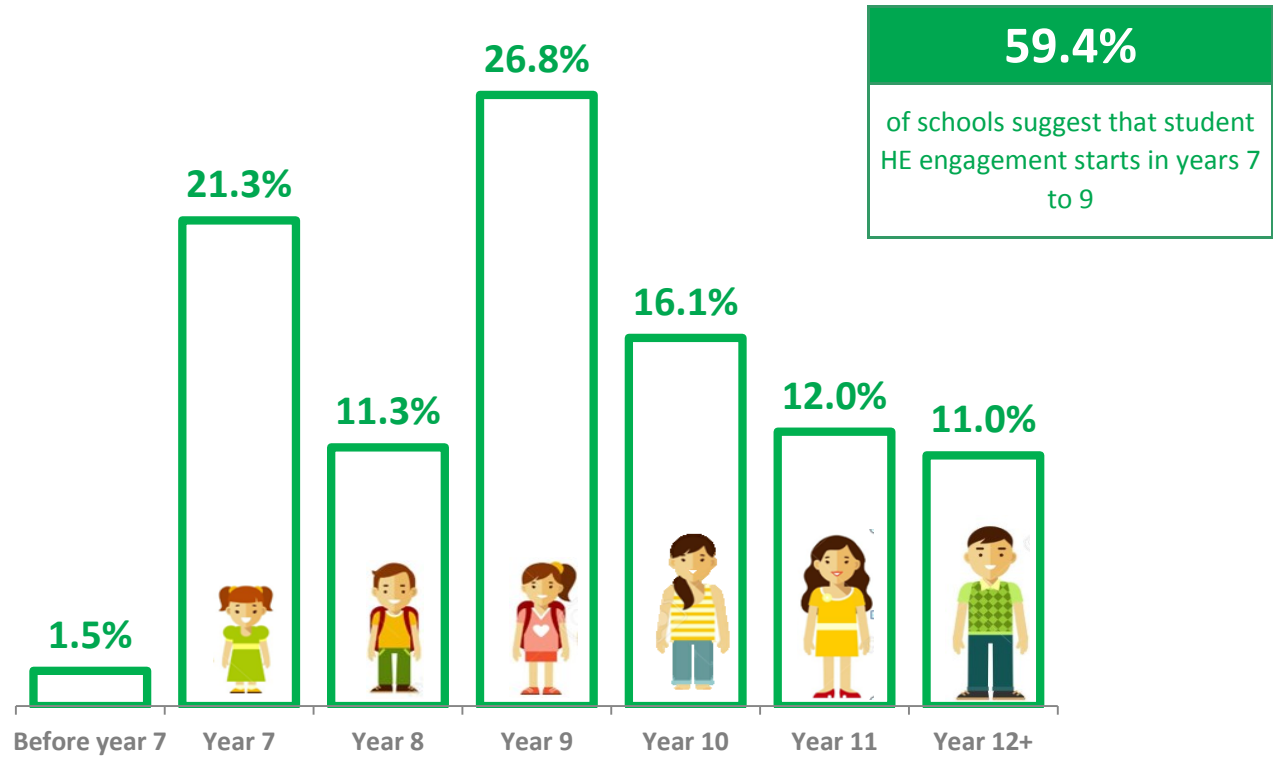
> *It would be great if our nearest higher education provider offered stuff before Year 10, but they have cut back on all bespoke provision. It's their way or the highway.*

> *I would like our local and some more distant universities to help me inspire the younger students to want to achieve, give them a real goal, show them that university is a place for everyone who wants it. Unfortunately, most are only interested in our post-16 students and, in my opinion, this is much too late!*

> *There should be more involvement from universities from the early years … starting from year 6 to raise aspirations and inspire students to move on to university.*

7.1 When is university engagement starting? By School Type

In Section 7.1, university engagement is explored by school type. The data is relatively consistent between the types of institution, although it is of interest that independent schools were reported to start their university engagement later than maintained schools and academies.

Table 2.3 - When do you think university engagement starts for your school or college? By School Type

School type	Year 7 or earlier	Years 8 or 9	Years 10 or 11	Year 12+
LA Maintained Schools	24.8%	41.1%	26.4%	7.8%
Academies, Free schools & UTC's	25.8%	37.9%	25.3%	11.0%
Independent Schools	7.8%	34.4%	42.2%	15.6%

7.2 When is university engagement starting? By Region

Table 2.4* explores when university engagement was starting by region. The results indicate that engagement appears to begin earlier in the North (Yorkshire and the Humber and North East) and East Midlands than in other parts of England.

Table 2.4 When do you think university engagement starts for your school or college? By Region.

Region	Year 7 or earlier	Years 8 or 9	Years 10 or 11	Year 12+
South East	23.1%	26.4%	37.2%	13.2%
London	20.3%	36.5%	33.8%	9.5%
North West	22.0%	51.2%	14.6%	12.2%
East of England	17.5%	36.8%	29.8%	15.8%
West Midlands	17.1%	47.4%	23.7%	11.8%
South West	16.9%	46.8%	27.3%	9.1%
Yorkshire and the Humber	33.3%	43.1%	13.7%	9.8%
East Midlands*	30.0%	20.0%	40.0%	<8.2%
North East*	30.0%	40.0%	20.0%	<9.4%

Some data has been supressed where responses are less than five.

7.3 Should university guidance start earlier than it does? By school type

In Section 7.3, the opinion of schools on when their higher education guidance **should** begin is explored. The majority of schools in England (77%) considered that is was being provided at the right time by their institution, with 22% indicating it was provided too late.

This is summarised by school type in Table 2.5 and by region in Table 2.6. The results are relatively consistent between the type of institution and each region. However, notably within the West Midlands a slightly greater proportion of respondents felt that engagement was starting too late in the student journey. However, as figures are rounded within the table, this finding is suppressed.

Table 2.5* – Do you think your university guidance starting is…. (1) About the right time, (2) Too late in the student journey or (3) Too early in the student journey. By School Type

Response	School Type	%
About the right time in the student journey	LA Maintained Schools	75.6%
	Academies, Free schools & UTC's	74.8%
	Independent Schools	80.2%
Too late in the student journey	LA Maintained Schools	19.8%
	Academies, Free schools & UTC's	22.8%
	Independent Schools	17.6%
Too early in the student journey	LA Maintained Schools*	<3.8%
	Academies, Free schools & UTC's	1.6%
	Independent Schools*	<5.5%

Some data has been supressed where responses are less than five.

7.4 Should university guidance start earlier than it does? By Region

Table 2.6* – Do you think your university guidance starting is…. (1) About the right time, (2) Too late in the student journey or (3) Too early in the student journey. By Region.

Region	About the right time in the student journey	Too late in the student journey	Too early in the student journey
South East	70.0%	20.0%	<3.5%
London	70.0%	30.0%	<6%
North West	70.0%	30.0%	<6.8%
East of England	70.0%	30.0%	<6.9%
West Midlands	60.0%	30.0%	<5%
South West	70.0%	20.0%	<5.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber	80.0%	20.0%	<7.2%
East Midlands	80.0%	20.0%	<8.2%
North East	80.0%	20.0%	<9.4%

results have been rounded to nearest 10% or supressed where responses were less than five.

8.0 Who provides university guidance in schools and colleges?

Schools and colleges were asked who provided university guidance for their institution. This is reported in Section 8.0. Respondents could select multiple options from the choices outlined in Table 2.7.

Across England, and the different school types, the results indicated that most of the university guidance is provided in school by teachers and career advisers, and universities within 50 miles of their institution.

Independent schools offered the greatest level of in-school guidance, through careers staff or teachers. The full comparison by school and college type is outlined below.

Table 2.7 - Who provides university information for your school? Including by School and College type.

Response	% England	School Type	%
A teacher in the school or college	66%	LA Maintained Schools	55.0%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	68.0%
		Colleges	61.7%
		Independent Schools	84.6%
An in-school or college careers adviser	75%	LA Maintained Schools	67.9%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	69.6%
		Colleges	91.6%
		Independent Schools	78.0%
A careers adviser from outside the school or college	37%	LA Maintained Schools	42.7%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	40.7%
		Colleges	20.8%
		Independent Schools	39.6%
A university within 50 miles or so	74%	LA Maintained Schools	73.3%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	76.4%
		Colleges	68.2%
		Independent Schools	71.4%
A university based 50 miles or more away	36%	LA Maintained Schools	25.2%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	31.2%
		Colleges	40.9%
		Independent Schools	59.3%
A further education college	19%	LA Maintained Schools	21.4%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	22.8%
		Colleges	12.3%
		Independent Schools	7.7%
An NCOP network (National Collaborative Outreach Project)	31%	LA Maintained Schools	34.4%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	29.8%
		Colleges	46.8%
		Independent Schools	2.2%
An organisation offering independent university talks and events	23%	LA Maintained Schools	15.3%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	23.6%
		Colleges	22.1%
		Independent Schools	33.0%

Some data has been supressed where responses were less than five.

8.1 Who provides university information in schools and colleges? By region.

In Section 8.1, the provision of university guidance in schools and colleges is explored by region. The findings suggest that there is consistency between most regions.

The most significant variation regionally relates to National Collaborative Outreach Project networks working with schools and colleges. In the context of these results, it should be considered that this may be reflected by the volume of NCOP networks circulating the survey in certain regions, rather than for any other reason. For example, if a NCOP network for a specific region circulated the survey more actively than another, to schools and colleges where they have greater engagement, it would be expected that more schools and colleges in that region would specify NCOP activity as a result. This variation could also be due to a variation in the number of schools and colleges in each region meeting NCOP criteria.

Table 2.8 - Who provides university information for your school? By Region

Response Options	South East	London	North West	East of England	West Midlands	South West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	North East
A teacher in the school or college	70.7%	72.6%	61.6%	73.2%	59.0%	64.9%	69.6%	59.0%	64.2%
An in-school or college careers adviser	72.9%	71.4%	74.0%	67.6%	81.0%	73.4%	84.1%	67.2%	84.9%
A careers adviser from outside the school or college	42.1%	41.7%	31.5%	38.0%	29.0%	39.4%	36.2%	45.9%	20.8%
A university within 50 miles or so	72.9%	59.5%	75.3%	70.4%	76.0%	72.3%	79.7%	80.3%	81.1%
A university based 50 miles or more away	30.7%	36.9%	43.8%	35.2%	34.0%	37.2%	39.1%	23.0%	45.3%
A further education college	15.0%	10.7%	11.0%	15.5%	12.0%	34.0%	29.0%	14.8%	30.2%
An NCOP network (National Collaborative Outreach Project)	15.7%	<6%	32.9%	29.6%	38.0%	39.4%	47.8%	41.0%	47.2%
An organisation offering independent university talks and events	23.6%	26.2%	24.7%	15.5%	17.0%	24.5%	36.2%	14.8%	24.5%

Some data has been supressed where responses were less than five.

9.0 Who should be the main source of university information in schools and colleges?

In Section 9.0, we build on the information provided on the current provision in Section 8.0, to report on who schools and colleges believe **should** be the main source of university information, advice and guidance for their institution.

Table 2.9 outlines that in England, approaching 54% of respondents considered the main guidance should be provided internally – by teachers, career advisers and support staff, rather than universities or external impartial organisations.

Table 2.9 - Who do you think should be the main source of university information, advice and guidance for your school?

Response	#	%
A university (or a network of more than one university working together)	178	24.8%
Information provided in school by teachers, career advisers or support staff	386	53.8%
Impartial organisations (who are not affiliated to a university or further education organisation)	153	21.3%
Total Responses	717	

10.0 How do schools and colleges rate the university information, advice and guidance provided to students?

In Section 10, schools and colleges were asked to rate the university IAG offered to students.

Schools and colleges reported generally positively on the university information, advice and guidance provided to their students. The results are provided in Figure 5.0, with approaching 84% of respondents indicating the university guidance was 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

There is evidently variation in practice relating to the provision of university guidance though, with 16% indicating the guidance was 'fair' or lower.

Figure 5.0 - How would you rate the university information, advice, guidance and opportunities provided to students at your school or college?

83.9%
of respondents rated university IAG opportunities provided to students in their school / college as good or outstanding

Poor	Below Av.	Fair	Good	Outstanding
<1%	2.4%	13.4%	56.8%	27.1%
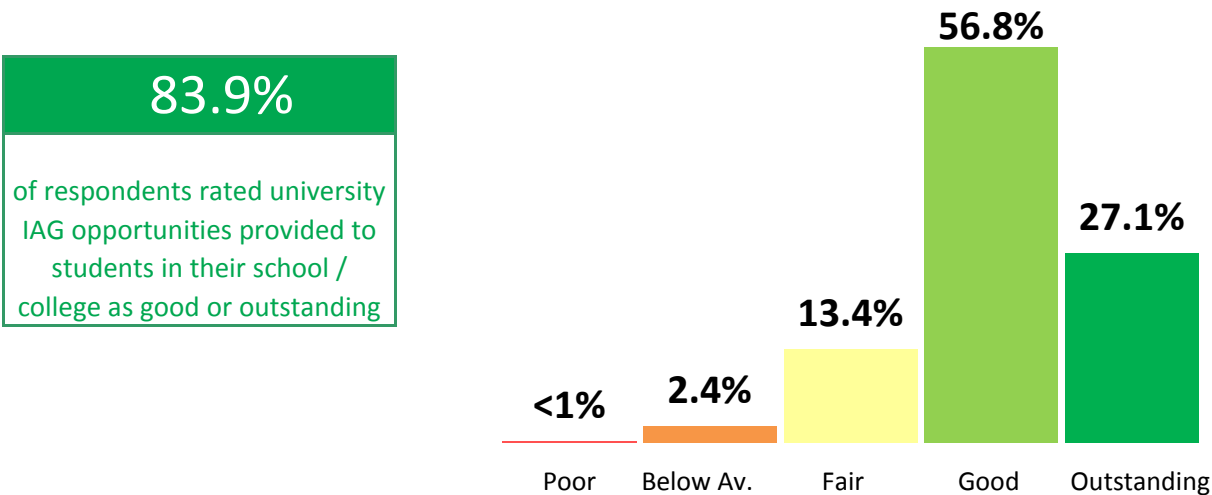
> **"** *We have excellent partnership links with a variety of universities. I feel very supported by the higher education sector in my role.* **"**

> **"** *Broaden the spectrum of course information offered - it tends to all be humanities, science or business type courses from local universities.* **"**

> **"** *Getting the students on campus and meeting current undergraduates is a great way to inspire and raise aspirations.* **"**

10.1 The quality of university information, advice and guidance in schools and colleges (by school type)

Table 3.0 indicates how respondents rated the quality of university guidance, based on their School or College type. Approaching 95% of independent schools stated they provided a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' level of university guidance for students, compared to 79% of maintained schools, 84% of academies, free schools and UTC's and 82% of colleges.

There is a wealth of research to indicate independent schools provide a greater level of university preparation for students, and this is reflected in these results. Colleges having a greater quality rating, relating to their university guidance may also be expected in comparison to maintained schools, as the IAG requirements of students at Level 3 would be greater with subsequent university applications and personal statement support being required.

Academies, free schools and UTC's stating their university provision was 5% higher than maintained schools, and higher than colleges is of interest.

Table 3.0 – How would you rate the university information, advice, guidance and opportunities provided to students at your school or college (by school type)?

By school type	% with good / outstanding IAG
LA Maintained Schools	79.4%
Academies, Free schools & UTC's	83.7%
Colleges	81.8%
Independent Schools	94.5%

10.2 The quality of university IAG in schools and colleges (by region)

When the quality of the higher education provision is explored by region in Table 3.1, the results show a large variation in practice across schools and colleges in England.

By region, between 78% and 92% of respondents rated student higher education information, advice and guidance provision as 'good' or 'outstanding'.

The results indicate that in London and the North East, university guidance offered to students is considered to be of higher quality, with approaching 92% and 91% rating these opportunities as 'good' or 'outstanding'.

The results show that 82% or fewer schools and colleges in Yorkshire and the Humber, the East of England and the South West rated their university provision offered to students as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

It should be considered that this is not an assessment of the provision, the survey asked how schools and colleges rated their university guidance and opportunities – and one schools outstanding, may be reflected in a different way by another.

Table 3.1 – How would you rate the university information, advice, guidance and opportunities provided to students at your school or college (by region)?

By Region	% with good / outstanding HE IAG
South East	82.1%
London	91.7%
North West	83.6%
East of England	78.9%
West Midlands	83.0%
South West	81.9%
Yorkshire and the Humber	78.3%
East Midlands	88.5%
North East	90.6%

11.0 School and college barriers to accessing university events

Section 11 explores the barriers faced by schools and colleges in accessing university IAG. These findings, along with Section 12.0 which explores what teachers consider to be the greatest student barriers will be of particular interest to the OfS and NCOP outreach hubs when mapping and identifying cold spots in university outreach provision.

This research supports these strategic priorities by providing a starting point to support schools and colleges, universities, NCOP consortia and the OfS to benchmark current university IAG provision and identify cold spots at a national and regional level. In turn, this will support how schools, colleges, universities and other interested parties can improve the university IAG offered to students.

A large part of the research explored barriers relating to the higher education provision offered by schools and colleges. Respondents were provided with ten general barriers to higher education engagement - and asked to select any which applied to them (where they could select multiple barriers, as appropriate). The ten choices were:

1] Senior Leadership may not support activities during curriculum time.
2] No one in the school is responsible for arranging university events.
3] There is no time for staff members to organise university activities.
4] There is a lack of funds to cover transport costs for university visits.
5] There is a lack of funds to book external organisations to deliver events.
6] There is a lack of university outreach activities in our area.
7] They would not know how to organise a university event.
8] There is a lack of information on the university opportunities available.
9] Too few students are likely to have the grades to progress to university.
10] Too few students have an interest in progressing to university.

The results highlight that the barriers identified across England were mainly of a financial context. This strengthens the case for additional funding being required to support an increase in university engagement in schools and colleges.

57.6% stated a barrier was a lack of funds to cover transport costs for university visits

40.5% stated a barrier was a lack of funds to book external organisations to deliver events

32.9% stated a barrier was a lack of staff time to organise university activities

30.2% stated a barrier was SLT not supporting activities during curriculum time

Finances were raised as the greatest barrier to university visits, with approaching 58% of respondents seeing transport costs as being a barrier to university visits, and over 40% not being able to procure external support due to a lack of school funds. These concerns formed a large part of the free text comments too. Although it should also be considered that approximately 5% of free text comments stated that no barriers were experienced at all.

Concerns about staff resource were also raised, with approaching 33% of respondents indicating a lack of staff time was a barrier. This is despite the Careers Strategy stating that a named Careers Leader should lead the careers programme in every school and college from September 2018 - and again highlights resource issues.

Additionally, over 30% of respondents raised a barrier that Senior Leadership Teams may not support activities during curriculum time, which may infer that in some institutions school priorities may not include university guidance as prominently as other curriculum areas. The full results across England and institution types are summarised within Table 3.2 in the following section.

An open question was included within this part of the survey and asked respondents to provide additional feedback. The main themes that emerged were a lack of parental engagement, a lack of pre-16 event provision offered by universities, that certain events were not accessible in independent schools, and concerns regarding how higher education is considered in their community, which subsequently makes higher education engagement more difficult. A selection of comments are presented below:

> **There is a limit to how many days a student can take off school / miss lessons to attend outreach events.**

> **I think there should be more events for younger pupils to inspire them at an earlier age – post-16 is too late.**

> **Many university events are not open to the independent sector due to funding for outreach - which is acceptable, but it would be good to have the option to attend and pay.**

> **We have asked BUT universities are concentrating on certain group of students based on their targets.**

> **The main barrier is making university relevant to our community.**

> **There is a lack of parental support driven by media reports on value for money / fees etc.**

> *Finance is definitely a barrier to visits. We approached four universities to see if they would fund the transport for a university visit and only one offered to fund the trip.*

> *One of the biggest problems is getting the staff covered, and paying for that cover for the staff who have to accompany any trips out.*

> *Greater funding to give staff the release time to do this properly - the Gatsby benchmarks come with NO additional funding for schools which is ludicrous and just adds to staff workload again.*

> *Often it is the cost of a coach fare that stops us going out as often as we do.*

> *Just the opportunity to do more university visits as the transport is costly and a year group contains up to 210 students which is essentially four coaches at around £350 pounds.*

11.1 School and college barriers to accessing university events (by school and college type)

When exploring barriers to higher education engagement by school type, there were some significant differences between independent schools, compared to state schools and academies.

Whilst time and finance is the most significant barrier in state schools, academies and colleges, this is not reported as being the case in independent schools. The findings are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2* – Does your school or college experience any of the following barriers in accessing university events? By School and College Type.

Response	% England	School Type	%
Senior leadership may not support activities during curriculum time	**30.2%**	LA Maintained Schools	26.0%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	30.6%
		Colleges	29.2%
		Independent Schools	36.3%
No one in the school is responsible for arranging university events	**7.0%**	LA Maintained Schools	9.9%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	7.0%
		Colleges	7.8%
		Independent Schools*	<5.5%
There is no time for staff members to organise university activities	**32.9%**	LA Maintained Schools	36.6%
		Academies. Free schools & UTC's	35.8%
		Colleges	32.5%
		Independent Schools	16.5%
There is a lack of funds to cover transport costs for university visits	**57.6%**	LA Maintained Schools	68.7%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	62.9%
		Colleges	62.3%
		Independent Schools	12.1%
There is a lack of funds to book external organisations to deliver events	**40.5%**	LA Maintained Schools	48.9%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	45.0%
		Colleges	37.0%
		Independent Schools	16.5%
There is a lack of university outreach activities in our area	**8.6%**	LA Maintained Schools	9.2%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	9.5%
		Colleges	7.8%
		Independent Schools	5.5%
I would not know how to organise a university event	**2.7%**	LA Maintained Schools	3.8%
		Academies. Free schools & UTC's	3.0%
		Colleges*	<3.2%
		Independent Schools*	<5.5%
There is a lack of information on the university opportunities available	**6.8%**	LA Maintained Schools	8.4%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	6.0%
		Colleges	8.4%
		Independent Schools	5.5%
Too few students are likely to have the grades required to progress to university	**<0.7%**	LA Maintained Schools*	<3.8%
		Academies. Free schools & UTC's*	<1.4%
		Colleges*	<3.2%
		Independent Schools*	<5.5%
Too few students have an interest in progressing to university	**<0.7%**	LA Maintained Schools*	<3.8%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's*	<1.4%
		Colleges	<3.2%
		Independent Schools*	<5.5%

Some data has been supressed where responses were less than five.

11.2 School and college barriers to accessing university events (by region)

In every region, the most common barrier to university visits concerned a lack of funds to cover transport costs. Outside this, the same main themes in terms of barriers across England are reflected within each region, with some variance in their severity. The results are summarised in Table 3.3*.

In summary findings (rounded) show that:

Lack of funds to cover transport costs for university visits:

This barrier was more prominent within the Northern and Midlands regions. When rounded, 73% of respondents from the West Midlands cited this was the most significant barrier, followed by 64% of respondents in the East Midlands, 62% of respondents in the North West and 58% of respondents in Yorkshire and the Humber. Transport costs were the most common barrier for every region.

Lack of funds to book external organisations to deliver events

This barrier was more significant in the West Midlands (53%), followed by the South East (49%).

Lack of staff time to organise university activities

This barrier was more prominent across the South West (43%) and the South East (37%).

Senior leadership may not support activities during curriculum time

This barrier was more prominent across the North East (42%) and the East Midlands (36%).

The full results are shown in Table 3.3 on the following page.

Table 3.3 School and college barriers to accessing university events (by region)

Response Options	South East	London	North West	East of England	West Midlands	South West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	North East
Senior leadership may not support activities during curriculum time	22.9%	28.6%	27.4%	25.4%	34.0%	31.9%	33.3%	36.1%	41.5%
No one in the school is responsible for arranging university events	10.0%	<6%	11.0%	11.3%	7.0%	5.3%	<7.2%	<8.2%	<9%
There is no time for staff members to organise university activities	37.1%	23.8%	24.7%	33.8%	34.0%	42.6%	30.4%	31.1%	32.1%
There is a lack of funds to cover transport costs for university visits	55.7%	46.4%	61.6%	54.9%	73.0%	54.3%	58.0%	63.9%	47.2%
There is a lack of funds to book external organisations to deliver events	49.3%	28.6%	37.0%	39.4%	53.0%	38.3%	39.1%	37.7%	28.3%
There is a lack of university outreach activities in our area	10.7%	<6%	<6.8%	11.3%	7.0%	14.9%	10.1%	8.2%	<9.4%
I would not know how to organise a university event	3.6%	<6%	6.8%	<6.9%	<5%	<5.3%	<7.2%	<8.2%	<9.4%
There is a lack of information on the university opportunities available	7.1%	7.1%	9.6%	7.0%	6.0%	7.4%	7.2%	8.2%	<9.4%
We do not engage in outreach activities as too few students are likely to have the grades required to progress to university	<3.5%	<6%	<6.8%	<6.9%	<5%	<5.3%	<7.2%	<8.2%	<9.4%
We do not engage in outreach activities as too few students have an interest in progressing to university	<3.5%	<6%	<6.8%	<6.9%	<5%	<5.3%	<7.2%	<8.2%	<9.4%

*Some data has been supressed as responses are less than 5.

12.0 Student barriers to university progression (from a school and college perspective)

In Section 12, respondents were asked what they considered to be the greatest barrier to the university participation of their students.

They were provided with eight common barriers to university for students, and were asked to rank what they considered to be the greatest barrier of the choices provided to them. The choice of barriers they could select are listed below, and respondents had to select one:

1] Concerns relating to the cost of university tuition fees for their students.
2] Concerns relating to the cost of living for students whilst at university.
3] Concerns relating to the academic ability of their students.
4] The family of the student having no experience of university.
5] A lack of university information for their students to make informed choices.
6] University not being required for the future career choices of their students.
7] A lack of aspiration for their students to progress to university.
8] A feeling that university may not be for their students (e.g. they may not fit in).

Data is summarised in Table 3.4 in the following section, alongside the school data summary. In summary, findings show that approaching half of the respondents (49%) reported that they considered the greatest barrier to university for students related to the cost of their tuition fees. However, this does not address all concerns about student finance for students. A further 14% of respondents expressed that the greatest barrier to higher education participation of their students were concerns relating to the cost of living at university.

It seems clear that student finance is considered by schools and colleges to be asignificant barrier in the higher education progression of students. This appears to be consistent with other research published in the sector by UCAS, NEON, The Office for Students, The Sutton Trust and Aimhigher West Midlands.

It should also be considered that data presented later in Section 13.0 of this report suggests that university fee and finance IAG is the most prominent activity accessed by students relating to the university guidance offered in schools and colleges. Despite this, student fees and finance was still raised as the greatest barrier in the survey results, which indicates the barrier relates to the cost itself, rather than the guidance relating to it (assuming the guidance provided is fit for purpose).

There is research outside of this report which indicates student finance is commonly misunderstood by students. It may therefore be that the cost of university is not the greatest problem, rather, it may be a lack of understanding of the student loan repayments system – and the more positive messages, such as student loan repayments starting for salaries of £25,000+ and being subject to a 30-year repayment period are not being understood as well as they could be. This barrier could also be explained by students understanding the system, but having concerns about the student debt they may accumulate when they graduate.

A review of student finance is ongoing - and a lack of effective student finance information in schools has been raised by UniTasterDays Ltd and a number of other organisations as an issue which requires greater attention in schools and colleges.

12.1 Student barriers to university progression (by school or college type)

In Section 12.1, when the barriers to university are explored by school and college type, the results are relatively consistent. The greatest difference relates to student fees and finance in independent schools, where staff reported a significantly lower proportion of students were concerned about tuition fees and university living costs.

Respondents had to select at least one barrier for this question, so where independent schools did not see finance as significant an issue as other types of school and college, the results show barriers relating to academic ability are more prominent. This may relate to entry requirements at institutions with greater tariff requirements.

Table 3.4 – When speaking to students, what do you consider to be the biggest barrier to their university participation? (by school or college type)?

Response Options	% England	School Type	%
A feeling that university is not for them (e.g. they will not fit in)	4.4%	LA Maintained Schools*	<3.8%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	4.1%
		Colleges	3.9%
		Independent Schools	8.8%
A lack of aspiration to progress to university	7.8%	LA Maintained Schools	4.6%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	8.1%
		Colleges	12.3%
		Independent Schools*	<5.5%
A lack of university information is provided to make informed choices	2.0%	LA Maintained Schools*	<3.8%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	2.7%
		Colleges*	<3.2%
		Independent Schools*	<5.5%
Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university	13.8%	LA Maintained Schools	13.7%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	13.3%
		Colleges	18.8%
		Independent Schools	7.7%
Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees	48.6%	LA Maintained Schools	57.3%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	53.4%
		Colleges	43.5%
		Independent Schools	25.3%
Concerns relating to their academic ability	9.7%	LA Maintained Schools	6.9%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	4.6%
		Colleges	8.4%
		Independent Schools	36.3%
University not being required for their future career choices	9.4%	LA Maintained Schools	10.7%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	10.6%
		Colleges	9.7%
		Independent Schools*	<5.5%
Their family has no experience of university	4.3%	LA Maintained Schools*	<3.8%
		Academies, Free schools & UTC's	3.3%
		Colleges*	<3.2%
		Independent Schools	14.3%

*Data has been supressed as responses are less than 5.

12.2 Student barriers to university progression (by region)

As noted in Sections 12.0 and 12.1, tuition fees were the most significant barrier to university of the choices provided for students, across all regions. Between 40% and 60% of all regions expressed that concerns relating to the cost of university tuition fees were the most significant barrier to university for their students. The concern was most prominent in the North West (60%) and South West (56%).

The second most prominent barrier to university were concerns about living costs at university. This was stated as the second most significant barrier across six of the nine regions. It was most prominently a concern in the North East (30%).

A summary of the main concerns by region is provided below. Responses to all questions can be seen in appendix 1.

Table 3.5 – When speaking to students, what do you consider to be the biggest barrier to their university participation? (by region)

South East		London	
45.0%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees	45.2%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees
13.6%	Concerns relating to their academic ability	16.7%	Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university
14.3%	Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university	13.1%	Concerns relating to their academic ability

North West		East of England	
60.3%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees	50.7%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees
15.1%	Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university	11.3%	Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university

West Midlands		South West	
43.0%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees	56.4%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees
15.0%	Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university	10.6%	Concerns relating to their academic ability
13.0%	Their family has no experience of university		
10.0%	A lack of aspiration to progress to university		

Yorkshire and the Humber		East Midlands	
44.9%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees	50.8%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees
17.4%	Their family has no experience of university	13.1%	Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university
17.4%	A lack of aspiration to progress to university	11.5%	Their family has no experience of university

North East	
43.4%	Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees
30.2%	Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university

13.0 Which higher education activities does your school or college provide to students?

In Section 13.0, the higher education activities undertaken by schools and colleges are explored. It is pleasing to report that almost all respondents (99%) in England indicated that their school or college provided information to students about university opportunities.

Table 3.6 explores the provision offered further, and the rounded figures indicate most schools and colleges in England host a careers fair (77%), visit a university campus (83%) and receive information relating to all key information, advice and guidance areas the survey explored.

This question did not explore the volume of activity undertaken, and at what age, but it shows schools and colleges appear to be already making significant progress towards meeting their Gatsby Benchmark 7 higher education obligations.

Table 3.6 – Higher education activities and guidance

Response	This is currently offered to students	We don't provide this but I think we should	We don't provide this and I don't think it is necessary
	%	%	%
Host a university / careers fair	76.8%	14.4%	8.8%

Student visit to a:			
large university careers fair e.g. a UCAS convention	72.2%	16.3%	11.5%
university campus	82.7%	12.7%	4.7%

Students receive IAG information relating to:			
student life at university	84.5%	14.1%	1.5%
university fees and finance	90.1%	8.5%	1.4%
degree apprenticeships or higher apprenticeships	86.8%	12.6%	0.7%
the benefits of university participation	88.6%	10.2%	1.2%
how subject option choices impact on their future university applications	86.2%	12.8%	1.1%
about how to apply to university - including writing personal statements	88.2%	5.2%	6.7%

13.0 Which higher education activities does your school or college provide to students? By School Type and Region

When university information, advice and guidance is explored by school and college type and region, there is consistency in the results as outlined in Tables 3.7 and 3.8.

Independent schools stated they provided the most amount of guidance. This is consistent with Section 10.1 of this report, which explores the quality university guidance provided by school and college type.

Table 3.7 outlines provision offered by school type, followed by Table 3.8 on the following page which outlines provision by region.

Table 3.7* – What university provision and engagement does your school or college offer students (by school and college type)

School / College	This is currently offered to students	We don't provide this but I think we should	We don't provide this and I don't think it is necessary
	%	%	%
Host a university / careers fair			
LA Maintained Schools	76.7%	13.2%	10.1%
Academies, Free schools &	71.9%	18.9%	9.2%
Colleges	87.9%	7.4%	4.7%
Independent Schools	77.8%	10.0%	12.2%
Student visit to a large university careers fair e.g. a UCAS convention			
LA Maintained Schools	70.0%	18.5%	11.5%
Academies, Free schools &	72.9%	18.2%	8.9%
Colleges	74.8%	15.9%	9.3%
Independent Schools	68.1%	6.6%	25.3%
Student visit to a university campus			
LA Maintained Schools	86.0%	10.1%	3.9%
Academies, Free schools &	83.8%	12.0%	4.2%
Colleges*	80.0%	20.0%	<3.2%
Independent Schools	76.9%	11.0%	12.1%
Students receive IAG information relating to student life at university			
LA Maintained Schools*	80.0%	20.0%	<3.8%
Academies, Free schools &	84.4%	13.7%	1.9%
Colleges*	80.0%	20.0%	<3.2%
Independent Schools*	90.0%	10.0%	<5.5
Students receive IAG information relating to university fees and finance			
LA Maintained Schools*	90.0%	10.0%	<3.8%
Academies, Free schools &	87.4%	10.4%	2.2%
Colleges*	100.0%	<4%	<3.2%
Independent Schools*	90.0%	10.0%	<5.5%
Students receive IAG information relating to degree apprenticeships or higher apprenticeships			
LA Maintained Schools*	90.0%	10.0%	<3.8%
Academies, Free schools &	90.0%	10.0%	<1.4%
Colleges*	80.0%	20.0%	<3.2%
Independent Schools*	90.0%	10.0%	<5.5%

Students receive IAG information relating to the benefits of university participation

LA Maintained Schools*	90.0%	10.0%	<3.8%
Academies, Free schools &	90.0%	10.0%	<1.4%
Colleges*	90.0%	10.0%	<3.2%
Independent Schools*	90.0%	<5.5%	<5.5%

Students receive IAG information relating to how subject option choices impact on their future university applications

LA Maintained Schools*	80.0%	20.0%	<3.8%
Academies, Free schools &	85.2%	13.5%	1.4%
Colleges*	80.0%	10.0%	<3.2%
Independent Schools*	100.0%	<4.5%	<5.5%

Students receive IAG information relating about how to apply to university - including writing personal statements

LA Maintained Schools	79.1%	6.2%	14.7%
Academies, Free schools &	84.6%	7.4%	8.0%
Colleges*	100.0%	<3.2%	<3.2%
Independent Schools*	100.0%	<5.5%	<5.5%

*some results have been rounded to nearest 10% or supressed when responses were less than 5.

Table 3.8* – What university provision and engagement does your school or college offer students (by region)

Region	This is currently offered to	We don't provide this but I think we should	We don't provide this and I don't think it is
	%	%	%

Host a university / careers fair

South East	73.7%	15.3%	10.9%
London	65.4%	19.8%	14.8%
North West*	80.0%	10.0%	<6.8%
East of England	72.9%	15.7%	11.4%
West Midlands	80.6%	10.2%	9.2%
South West	75.8%	15.4%	8.8%
Yorkshire and the Humber*	80.0%	10.0%	<7.2%
East Midlands	72.1%	19.7%	8.2%
North East*	90.0%	10.0%	<8.2%

Student visit to a large university careers fair e.g. a UCAS convention

South East	67.9%	15.3%	16.8%
London	79.0%	11.1%	9.9%
North West	70.8%	18.1%	11.1%
East of England	74.3%	12.9%	12.9%
West Midlands	68.7%	23.2%	8.1%
South West	73.9%	17.4%	8.7%
Yorkshire and the Humber	68.2%	19.7%	12.1%
East Midlands	68.3%	20.0%	11.7%
North East*	80.0%	<8.2%	10.0%

Student visit to a university campus

South East*	82.5%	10.2%	7.3%
London*	90.0%	10.0%	<6%
North West*	80.0%	10.0%	<6.8%
East of England*	80.0%	10.0%	<6.9%
West Midlands*	80.0%	20.0%	<5%
South West*	80.0%	20.0%	<5.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber*	90.0%	10.0%	<7.2%
East Midlands	78.3%	13.3%	8.3%
North East*	90.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%

Students receive IAG information relating to student life at university

South East	82.6%	13.8%	3.6%
London*	90.0%	10.0%	<6%
North West*	80.0%	20.0%	<6.8%
East of England*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.9%
West Midlands*	90.0%	10.0%	<5%
South West*	80.0%	20.0%	<5.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber*	90.0%	10.0%	<7.2%
East Midlands*	90.0%	10.0%	<8.2%
North East*	90.0%	10.0%	<8.2%

Students receive IAG information relating to university fees and finance

South East*	90.0%	10.0%	<3.5%
London*	90.0%	10.0%	<6%
North West*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.8%
East of England*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.9%
West Midlands*	90.0%	10.0%	<5%
South West*	90.0%	10.0%	<5.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber*	90.0%	<7.2%	<7.2%
East Midlands*	100.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%
North East*	100.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%

Students receive IAG information relating to degree apprenticeships or higher apprenticeships

South East*	90.0%	10.0%	<3.5%
London*	90.0%	10.0%	<6%
North West*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.8%
East of England*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.9%
West Midlands*	90.0%	10.0%	<5%
South West*	80.0%	20.0%	<5.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber*	80.0%	20.0%	<7.2%
East Midlands*	100.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%
North East*	90.0%	10.0%	<8.2%

Students receive IAG information relating to the benefits of university participation

South East*	90.0%	10.0%	<3.5%
London*	90.0%	10.0%	<6%
North West*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.8%
East of England*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.9%
West Midlands*	90.0%	10.0%	<5%
South West*	80.0%	20.0%	<5.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber*	90.0%	10.0%	<7.2%
East Midlands*	90.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%
North East*	90.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%

Students receive IAG information relating to how subject option choices impact on their future university applications?

South East*	90.0%	10.0%	<3.5%
London*	90.0%	10.0%	<6%
North West*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.8%
East of England	80.0%	10.0%	<6.9%
West Midlands*	80.0%	20.0%	<5%
South West*	80.0%	20.0%	<5.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber*	90.0%	10.0%	<7.2%
East Midlands*	90.0%	10.0%	<8.2%
North East*	100.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%

Students receive IAG information relating about how to apply to university - including writing personal statements

South East*	90.0%	<3.5%	10.0%
London*	100.0%	<6%	<6%
North West	83.1%	8.5%	8.5%
East of England*	90.0%	10.0%	<6.9%
West Midlands*	90.0%	<5%	10.0%
South West	83.9%	8.6%	7.5%
Yorkshire and the Humber	76.8%	10.1%	13.0%
East Midlands*	90.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%
North East*	100.0%	<8.2%	<8.2%

*some results have been rounded to nearest 10% or supressed when responses were less than 5.

Section 14.0 Conclusion and discussion points

The results presented within this report provide insights into university IAG by region and school type. As well as the variation in practice and cold spots in university IAG provision across England.

The results will be of interest to stakeholders including schools and colleges, universities, and local and national Government organisations. They are particularly relevant following the introduction of the Careers Strategy and the new Gatsby Benchmarks (Department for Education, 2017); and the October 2018 announcement from the Office for Students regarding the extension of National Collaborative Outreach Funding and the subsequent introduction of outreach hubs.

Findings, following feedback from approaching 750 members of school staff provide a representative sample of secondary schools and colleges in England. They include:

1] University fees and finance is considered by schools and colleges to be the largest barrier to university participation for their students, with **63%** of respondents indicating that tuition fees **(49%)** and living expenses **(14%)** are the most significant barriers experienced by students.

2] Finance was also cited as the main barrier to arranging university visits for schools and colleges, with transport costs raised as a barrier by **58%** of respondents - followed by the cost of booking events through external organisations **(41%)**.

3] **59%** of schools are starting their university engagement between Years 7 and 9. However, **39%** of schools do not engage in these activities until they students reach Year 10 or above, and after their GCSE option choices.

4] **84%** of schools and colleges rated the university information, advice and guidance provided to students, as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.

5] **85%** of respondents indicated that they had confidence in their School or College ability to advise students relating to university opportunities.

Whilst it is no surprise to see that student fees and finance are again cited as a key barrier to university for students, it is interesting that schools and colleges also have their own internal financial barriers to arranging university visits in order to meet their statutory obligations relating to university engagement as well.

Whilst many aspects of the results are positive regarding the relationship between schools and universities, there is evident variation in practice which is a cause for concern. For example, as demonstrated in the headline results above, whilst it is positive that there is an **85%** confidence in school expertise, in **15%** of schools and colleges this is lacking. In a similar way, whilst **84%** of schools and colleges ranked their university guidance to be Good or better, **16%** ranked this key area to be fair or worse.

Discussion points

1] Multiple reports, including this one, cite that one of the greatest barriers to university for students relates to university fees and finance. Further to this, nine out of ten schools and colleges reported that student finance IAG was the most common type of university activity provided for students. Guidance appears to be provided - but that is not addressing the barrier, which indicates the barrier is the system in place.

For some students this could be a misunderstanding of student fees and the repayments system. It is therefore important that organisations across the sector continue to address any misconceptions through informative IAG, supported by a robust evidence base in terms of 'what works'.

2] There is an expectation that schools will meet the eight Gatsby Benchmarks by 2020. Yet, findings within this report suggest that transport costs for university events are a key barrier to university visits across all regions.

It is important that all university outreach programmes look at ways of addressing barriers such as transport costs across schools in England.

3] Findings within this report suggest that almost 4 out of 10 schools do not engage in university IAG until students reach year 10 or above and 22% of institutions felt that engagement started too late. A lack of information about university at this key stage (before GCSE option choices) may result in a student not making option choices to match their university aspirations.

This may impact on university courses in the future (e.g. medicine programmes). Some schools also commented that university outreach focuses on post-16 students and there is a need for a greater focus on younger students.

On the other hand barriers were also internal, as almost one third of schools and colleges expressed that staff lacked the time to organise events and senior leadership teams did not support such activities during curriculum time. It is important that both schools and universities work in partnership to address these barriers and employ a lifecycle approach by engaging younger students in a progressive programme of university IAG, to support informed decision making.

4] This research provides insights into school and college practitioners' views of the provision and gaps in university IAG across regions in England.

Currently a similar research project is being conducted by the three leading university outreach tracking databases (Aimhigher West Midlands, EMWPREP and HEAT). This has involved mapping school and college engagement within university widening participation outreach activities across England. This analysis and the findings within the current report can serve to inform both the OfS and NCOP outreach hubs in terms of the gaps in university outreach and regional variations in provision across England.

Appendix 1. Student barriers to accessing university IAG (by region)

Response Options	South East	London	North West	East of England	West Midlands	South West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	North East
A feeling that university is not for them (e.g. they will not fit in)	6.4%	<6%	<9.4%	<6.9%	5.0%	<5.3%	<7.2%	<8.2%	<9.4%
A lack of aspiration to progress to university	7.9%	<6%	<9.4%	8.5%	10.0%	7.4%	17.4%	<8.2%	9.4%
A lack of university information is provided to make informed choices	4.3%	<6%	<9.4%	<6.9%	<5%	<5.3%	<7.2%	<8.2%	<9.4%
Concerns relating to the cost of living whilst at university	14.3%	16.7%	15.1%	11.3%	15.0%	7.4%	<7.2%	13.1%	30.2%
Concerns relating to the cost of their university tuition fees	45.0%	45.2%	60.3%	50.7%	43.0%	56.4%	44.9%	50.8%	43.4%
Concerns relating to their academic ability	13.6%	13.1%	6.8%	8.5%	9.0%	10.6%	<7.2%	8.2%	<9.4%
University not being required for their future career choices	3.6%	7.1%	<9.4%	<6.9%	5.0%	<5.3%	<7.2%	<8.2%	<9.4%
Their family has no experience of university	5.0%	8.3%	9.6%	9.9%	13.0%	7.4%	17.4%	11.5%	<9.4%