Royal Society
Broad and Balanced research- phase 2
Presentation
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May 2021

Our legal entity is “Kantar UK Ltd.” and Kantar Public is the operating brand that specialize in government and social issues.
1 Research aims
The main aim of the research =
To understand parents’ views about a broader 14-18 curriculum

- Gauge awareness, understanding and perceptions of the curriculum now
  in terms of engagement, satisfaction with the status quo of post-16 options, and what drives this

- Understand attitudes towards maths and science learning up to age 18
  in terms of the link to future earnings/employability, the intrinsic value of these subjects, and whether these are subjects that are ‘open to all’

- Explore parents’ reactions to the idea of curriculum breadth
  and the idea of including a broader mix of qualifications and subjects in the post-16 UK education system

- Explore the impact of COVID-19 on parents’ views
  in terms of how the current education system sets children up for the future, and the impact it may have on the choices young people make

- Understand how views differ
  by parents’ socio-economic background, the age and gender of their child, ethnicity, and their own educational / professional background
Methodology and sample
Quantitative methodology

• This research is effectively a repeat of a study done in November 2018
  o Same method as phase 1 to ensure comparability
• 1,000 interviews with parents of 11-24s completed in April 2021
• 29 questions, 10-minute survey
• Parents screened from Kantar’s Profiles panel (high quality online panel)
• Data weighted to Office of National Statistics Labour Force Survey population statistics
• In 2018 we had 24 triads completed in October-November 2018. Fieldwork took place in Greater London, Newcastle, Manchester, and Birmingham

Breakdown of respondents (Phase 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of child*</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key stage of children*</th>
<th>Key Stage 3</th>
<th>Key stage 4-5</th>
<th>Age 18-24</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>53%</td>
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</table>

* Percentages add up to more than 100% as some respondents have more than one child
3

Main findings
Knowledge of and attitudes towards current secondary education
Parents’ overall knowledge of the secondary education system has remained consistent since 2018

- How well informed parents felt about their child's secondary education broadly stayed the same between phase 1 and phase 2, with around 7 in ten respondents saying they were well informed.

- Consistent with phase 1, male parents were more likely to agree that they were well informed. Our 2018 triads revealed that whilst male parents were actually less informed in their children's education system than women, they were more likely to report higher levels of confidence.

- Respondents from higher socio economic grades, were also more likely to report being well informed (77% compared to 69%).

### PHASE 1 PHASE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Level</th>
<th>PHASE 1</th>
<th>PHASE 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very well informed</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite well informed</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very well informed</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not well informed</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</table>

Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave.
A majority of parents think the education system prepares children for adult life very or quite well

- Respondents were significantly more positive in phase 2 of this research, with 65% agreeing that the education system well prepared children for adult life, compared to 57% in 2018.
- Parents of key stage 3 children were more likely to agree that it prepared children “very well” (17%) than those with older children aged 18+ (11%).
- BAME parents were more positive than White parents, with 72% agreeing that children were well prepared, compared to 61% of White parents.
- Parents from lower socio economic grades were also more likely to say that the current education system does not prepare children for adult life well (39%) than those from the highest grades (30%).
5
Parental attitudes towards level of choice
This wave parents have been less likely to talk to their children ‘a lot’ about their GCSE choices and post-GCSE options

How much have you talked or did you talk with your children about …

Q_Y10 ‘How much have you talked or did you talk with your children about their choice of GCSE subjects?’ All respondents phase 1(1000), All respondents phase 2 (1000). Q_Y12 ‘How much have you talked or did you talk with your children about what they might do when they finish(ed) their GCSEs?’ All respondents phase 1(1000), All respondents phase 2 (1000).
There remains some concern that young people do not know enough about how their choices in subjects may affect their future career paths.

Q._choice_attitude_7 How much do you agree or disagree : Young people should not have complete control over the subjects they can drop. All respondents phase 1 (1000), All respondents phase 2 (1000). Q._choice_attitude_5 How much do you agree or disagree : Most young people don't know enough about how their subject choices may affect their possible career paths. All respondents phase 1 (1000), All respondents phase 2 (1000).

Most young people don't know enough about how their subject choices may affect their possible career paths.

Young people should not have complete control over the subjects they can drop.

Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave.
Most parents trust young people to make decisions that are right for them

• Parents views on if young people are capable of making informed decisions about the subjects they should carry on studying has stayed consistent

• In the 2018 qualitative research, parents in the triads supported the idea of young people making their own choices. Parents believed in individual skills sets, aptitudes and interests, and wanted their child to do what they enjoyed

• In the triads, parents with more than one child often spoke about different pathways based on their child’s ability or personality

Q. choice_attitude_4 How much do you agree or disagree :Most young people are capable of making informed decisions about the subjects they should carry on studying.

All respondents (1000).

PHASE 1

- Strongly agree: 14%
- Slightly agree: 50%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 25%
- Slightly disagree: 12%
- Strongly disagree: 1%

PHASE 2

- Strongly agree: 16%
- Slightly agree: 21%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 21%
- Slightly disagree: 11%
- Strongly disagree: 2%

Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave.
Most parents see positives in allowing young people to drop subjects

- This wave, parents were more likely to agree that it is a good thing that young people can drop subjects and focus on what they enjoy (74% compared to 71% in phase 1)

- Parents who thought they were well informed in their child's secondary school education were more likely to agree with this statement

- Consistent with wave 1, three quarters of parents (75%) agreed that it is a good thing that young people can drop subjects and focus on what they get good grades in

- Interestingly, parents with children in key stages 3-5 were significantly more likely to agree with this statement, whilst parents of children aged 18-24 were more likely to disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Slightly agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Slightly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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It is a good thing that young people can drop subjects and focus on what they enjoy

It is a good thing that young people can drop subjects and focus on what they get good grades

Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave
While parents like the idea of choice in education – four in ten felt that total freedom of choice should not come until at least 17

- Parents views on the age young people should have total freedom to choose what they learn has shifted slightly, with a decrease in parents saying the age should be 17

- Parents who were degree educated or higher were more likely to say that total freedom of choice should not occur until young people are 18 or older

- BAME parents also more likely to say that young people should not have total freedom in choosing what they learn until 18 or older (45%) compared to White parents (26%)

Q_age_choice. At what age do you think young people should have total freedom to choose what they learn? All respondents (1000)
More than half of parents agree that young people should be encouraged to study a broader range of subjects than they currently do

- Parents’ opinions have stayed consistent between waves, with around a seventh (14%) of parents disagreeing with the statement. This shows that parents are open to young people studying a broader range of subjects they currently do.
- Parents from high socio-economic grades (AB) were more likely than parents from other grades to agree with this statement.
- BAME parents were also more likely to agree with this statement than White parents.
- Parents with children in key stage 4 or older were more likely to disagree with this statement than parents with children in key stage 3.
Parental views on a new curriculum
Parents were introduced to the concept of a new curriculum with this text

… We are interested in parents’ views on introducing a new type of secondary education in this country. Young people would still have choice over what they learn and be able to specialise in areas they enjoy or excel in. However, they would need to continue a wider range of subjects and learning experiences to ensure they develop a broad range of skills up to age 18. This might include compulsory work experience, elements of numeracy, practical maths and problem solving, languages, IT, or science and technology. The overall number of tests and assessments and the total amount of study time would be kept to the same level as it is now - they would not be doing more work overall.
Parents had some concerns about what this type of curriculum might lead to, and compared to phase 1 views have become more biased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Put too much pressure on young people to study subjects they do not enjoy</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop young people from achieving the best exam results they could</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop young people from enjoying education</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Q._BroadSupport1_6 How much do you agree or disagree : Put too much pressure on young people to study subjects they do not enjoy All respondents phase 1 (1000), All respondents phase 2(1000). Q._BroadSupport1_7 How much do you agree or disagree : Stop young people from achieving the best exam results they could enjoy All respondents phase 1 (1000), All respondents phase 2(1000). Q._BroadSupport1_8 How much do you agree or disagree : Stop young people from enjoying education All respondents phase 1 (1000), All respondents phase 2(1000).
Whilst parents are ambivalent about whether it might restrict ability to specialise

We have again seen increases in the proportion of parents who strongly disagree, indicating that parents may not necessarily pre-occupied by specialisation.

Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave

Q_BroadSupport1_9. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? This type of new secondary education would Stop young people from studying subjects in more depth All respondents phase 1 (1,000), All respondents phase 2 (1000). Q_BroadSupport1_10. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? This type of new secondary education would stop young people from being able to specialise for a particular career. All respondents phase 1 (1,000), All respondents phase 2 (1000).
Parents see the benefits of the proposed changes in improving job prospects and positivity has increased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide young people with skills and knowledge they can use across a wide range of jobs and industries</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help young people to develop better skills which would help them to find jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46%</td>
<td>51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make young people more employable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1</th>
<th>Phase 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>54%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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**Broad Support 1_1** How much do you agree or disagree: This new type of secondary education will help young people to develop better skills which will help them to find jobs. All respondents phase 1 (1000), All respondents phase 2(1000).

**Broad Support 1_2** How much do you agree or disagree: This new type of secondary education will make young people more employable. All respondents phase 1 (1000), All respondents phase 2(1000).

**Broad Support 1_3** How much do you agree or disagree: This new type of secondary education will provide young people with skills and knowledge they can use across a wide range of jobs and industries. All respondents phase 1 (1000), All respondents phase 2(1000).
Parents also see the benefits of the proposed changes in widening options and positivity has increased.

- **Give young people more options for paid jobs and careers after they leave school**:
  - Phase 1: 5% Strongly agree, 26% Slightly agree, 50% Neither agree nor disagree, 26% Slightly disagree, 19% Strongly disagree.
  - Phase 2: 3% Strongly agree, 25% Slightly agree, 44% Neither agree nor disagree, 26% Slightly disagree, 26% Strongly disagree.

- **Give young people more options in further training or education after they leave school or college**:
  - Phase 1: 4% Strongly agree, 21% Slightly agree, 49% Neither agree nor disagree, 21% Slightly disagree, 20% Strongly disagree.
  - Phase 2: 2% Strongly agree, 26% Slightly agree, 44% Neither agree nor disagree, 26% Slightly disagree, 20% Strongly disagree.

*Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave.*
7
What parents would value in a new curriculum
Consistent with previous research, parents continue to want the curriculum to focus on a work experience placement.

If secondary education was changed in this way, which of the following things would you most like to see all 16-18 year olds doing? Top three choice:

- A work experience placement: 54% (54%)
- Numeracy skills or practical maths skills: 42% (43%)
- Information technology or computer skills: 45% (43%)
- Literacy or practical English skills: 32% (35%)
- Science and investigative skills: 29% (28%)
- Modern Foreign Languages: 20% (17%)
- Community service: 19% (15%)
- None of these: 10% (8%)
- Don't know: 4% (4%)
- Something else: 5% (4%)

Phase 1: 54%, 42%, 45%, 32%, 29%, 20%, 19%, 10%, 4%, 5%
Phase 2: 54%, 43%, 45%, 35%, 28%, 29%, 20%, 17%, 4%, 4%
Fifth of parents are now more positive for their child to continue to study the sciences post-16 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but for most views unchanged

- Parents from higher socio economic grades were more likely to be more positive for their children to continue to study the sciences post-16 than they were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic

Q. SCIENCE Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic has your opinion on your child studying the sciences post-16 changed? Parents of children aged 11-18 (671)
Impacts of COVID-19
38% of parents felt more informed about their child’s education as a result of remote learning

- Seven in ten (71%) parents have had at least one of their children learn remotely due to school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
- BAME parents were more likely to say that they were much more informed (22%) than White parents (10%)
Pandemic not impacted parents overall views on whether the education system gives children skills they need to get a good job

- Parents of children in key stages 3-5 were significantly more likely to be more positive about this statement than parents with older children (29% compared to 21%)

- Parents from a higher socio economic grades were also more likely to be more positive that the education system gives children skills they need to get a good job (33% compared to 24%)

- Those who were not well informed on their children’s secondary school education system were more likely to disagree with the statement (43% compared to 16% who were informed)

- Parents who had at least one of their children be required to learn remotely as a result of the pandemic, were also more likely to be negative about this statement (25% compared to 18%)

Q._OPINION_1 Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic are you more or less positive: The education system gives children skills they need to get a good job. All respondents phase 2 (1000)
A third of parents were now more positive that the education system builds resilience in children, so they are better able to deal with challenges.

- Parents of children in key stages 4-5 (37%) were significantly more likely to be more positive about this statement than parents with older children (30%).
- Male parents were also more likely to be positive (36%) than females (30%).
- White parents were more negative (21%) than BAME parents (12%).
Third of parents also now more likely to feel the education system gives children skills that enable them to interpret information that affects their lives

• Parents of children in key stage 3 (36%) were significantly more likely to be more positive about this statement than parents with older children (29%)

• Parents from the highest socio economic grades, were more positive that the education system gives children skills that enable them to interpret information that affects their lives (40%) than those from the lowest socio economic group (28%)

• Parents with a highest level of qualification of an A-level or above, were more negative than parents with qualifications of below 5 GCSEs (A*-C) (19% compared to 9%)
Views about whether the education system allows children to gain strong science skills remains balanced

- Parents of children in key stage 3 (31%) were significantly more likely to be more positive about this statement than parents with older children (21%)
- Parents with sons were likely to say they were more positive (29%) than parents with daughters (24%)
- BAME parents were also more positive than White parents (39% compared to 24%)
- Parents who were more positive on their children studying the sciences post-16 were more positive about this statement
A third of parents were more positive since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that the education system allows students to understand global issues.

- Opinions were broadly consistent across all subgroups.
- Parents who agreed they were informed on their child's secondary education were more likely to agree with this statement (39% compared to 15%).
68% of parents had spoken with their children about the current education/post-education choices; half these conversations were influenced by the pandemic

- Of those parents 52% agreed that their conversations had been influenced by experiences during the pandemic
- Parents of children in key stages 4-5 were more likely to have had their conversations influenced by the pandemic
- Conversations most commonly about how pandemic influenced current experiences or future choices, but some impact on mental health

Subjects discussed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiences at university/school</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future career paths/jobs</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation whilst in a pandemic</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts of COVID-19</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics about the future</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General positive conversations</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping with child’s anxiety/fear</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts on mental health</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of education/living for…</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/none</td>
<td>7%</td>
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