



for disabled children and young people
and their parent carers

Report from Speak Up Speak Out event

Amaze attended the East Sussex youth voice event, 'Speak Up Speak Out' on March 21st 2019. This was co-produced by the East Sussex disabled young people's voice group TAG (The Able Group) and ESCC children's services (ISEND and Equality and Participation team at Sussex ISEND) in which young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) were invited to have fun and give their views on things which were important to them. 58 young people with SEND (from school year 8 – year 13) attended from a range of 13 mainstream and special schools.

Amaze's consultation activities were spaced across a series of tables and designed to be inclusive and accessible to all young people. The young people came to the tables often with staff support, and one of the four Amaze workers talked to them, explained each consultation and then led them through the consultation activities. At the end of these, students were offered an Amaze sticker.

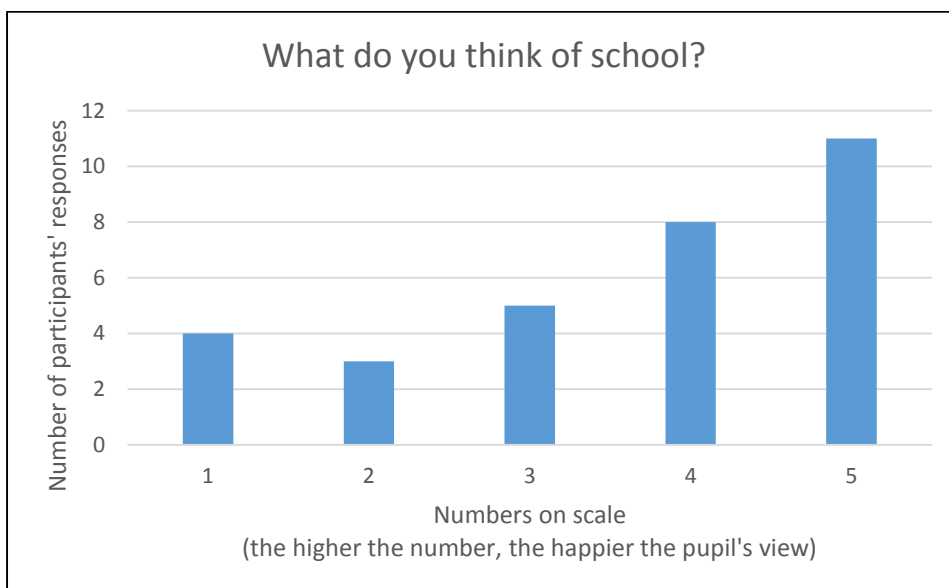
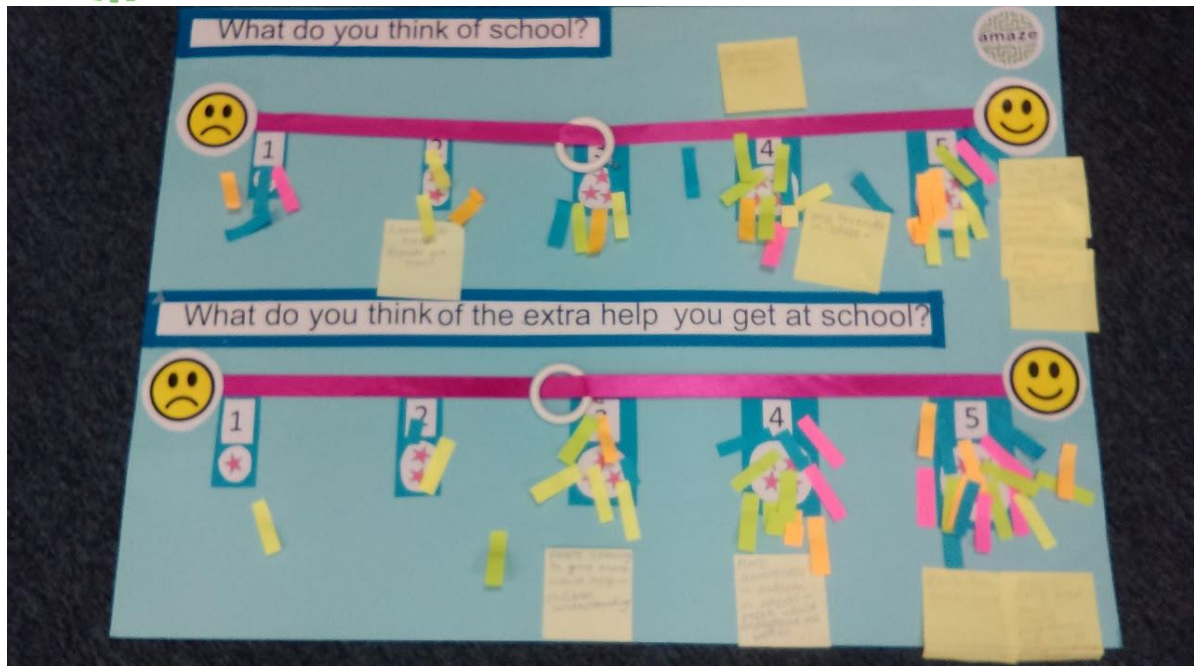
Amaze also set up an area for young people to be able to simply relax and create art. This was well attended and enjoyed by young people throughout the day. The young people at the 'Speak Up event' enjoyed participating in the Amaze consultations, and being asked what they think. One young man said of the Amaze activities that "I'm really enjoying this, it's really fun".

This report describes the activity, the results of the consultation and any notable findings from this. The young people are described here as 'pupils', 'young people' or 'participants'.

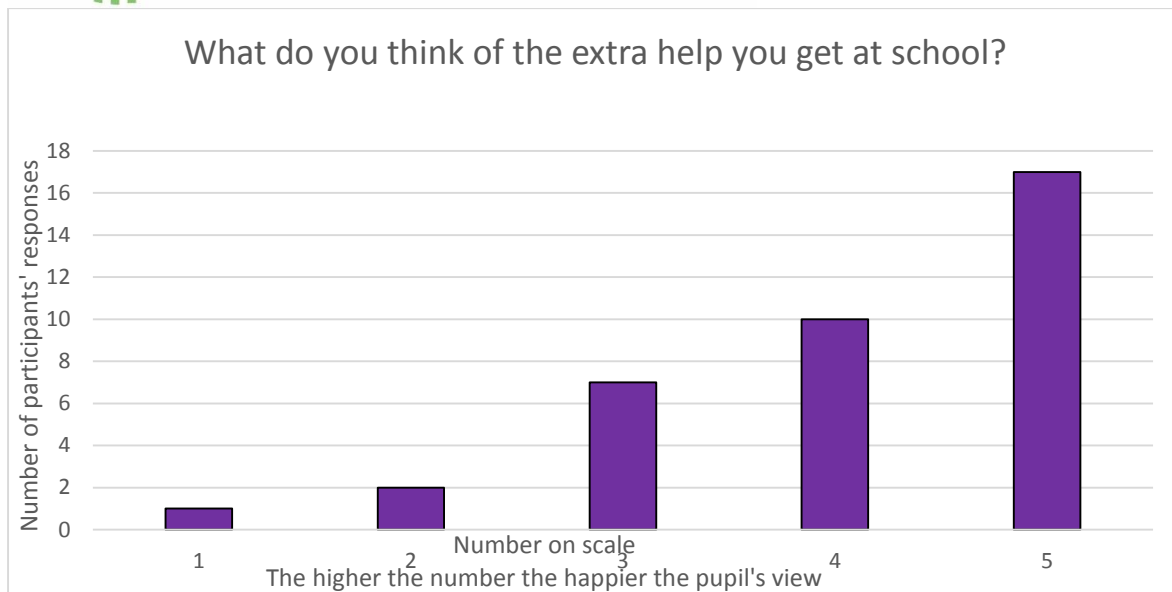
1. Views of school:

1.1 'What do you think of school? What do you think of the extra help at school?'

Young people were asked what they thought of school. They could move a wooden ring along a scale which was numbered 1 to 5, with 1 representing feeling very unhappy as shown with an unhappy face image, and 5 being a happy face. They then placed a post-it note under the number which reflected their views. A few spoke their reasons for their choice and an Amaze worker wrote these down on larger post-it notes.



Of the 31 students who participated, 19 of these said that they felt positively of school. Verbal reasons for choosing a '5' were "secondary school is better than primary school", "my friends in class" and "being with XXXXX, my helper". Seven students felt that they thought school was a '1 or a 2'. One student gave the reason for their choice of a '2' as "learning is hard, friends are hard", and another student said that "people are rude – they use autism as a rude thing". Another said that "socialisation at school is difficult".



Of the 37 participants, 27 gave a positive response to the extra help that they receive (either a '4' or '5'). One said that "Sensory circuits programme helps me lots, lots of catching balls". Another pupil said that they "have fun, good help". One young person who had placed their post-it on a '4' said that the reason that this was not a '5' was that they would like "more awareness in autism – people would understand me better". Three other pupils from separate schools who then saw this note written down said that they agreed with this, and added ticks to the note. Under the '3', one pupil said that "people listening to me more would help – children understanding me". Only 3 gave responses of a negative '1' or a '2'.

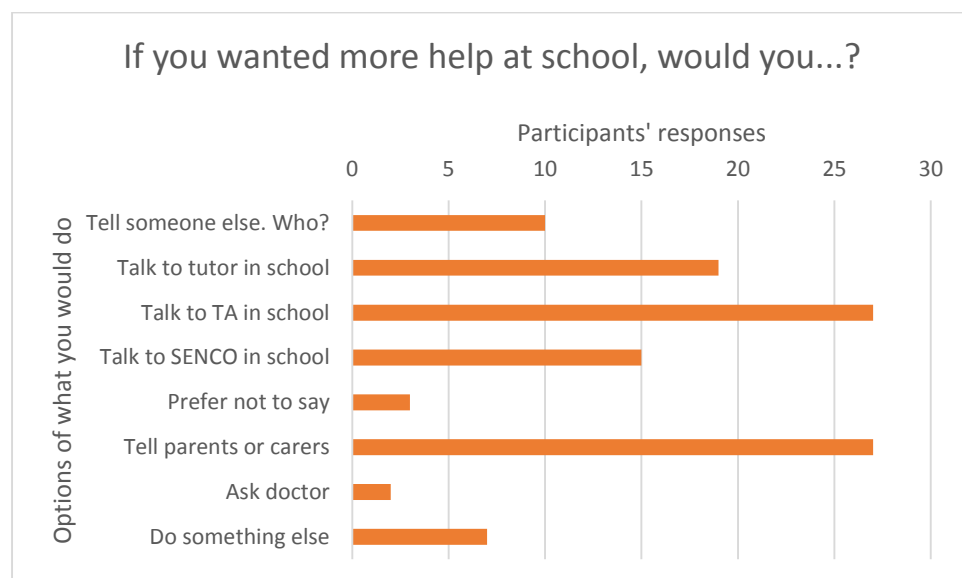
Learning from this activity

Young people's recognition of the positive impact of additional support.

Importance of raising awareness of SEND in school communities.

1.2 If you wanted more help at school, would you...?

Asked what they would do if they wanted more help at school, participants dropped counters into any of the jars that reflected what they would do. The number of the counters in each jar was then counted.





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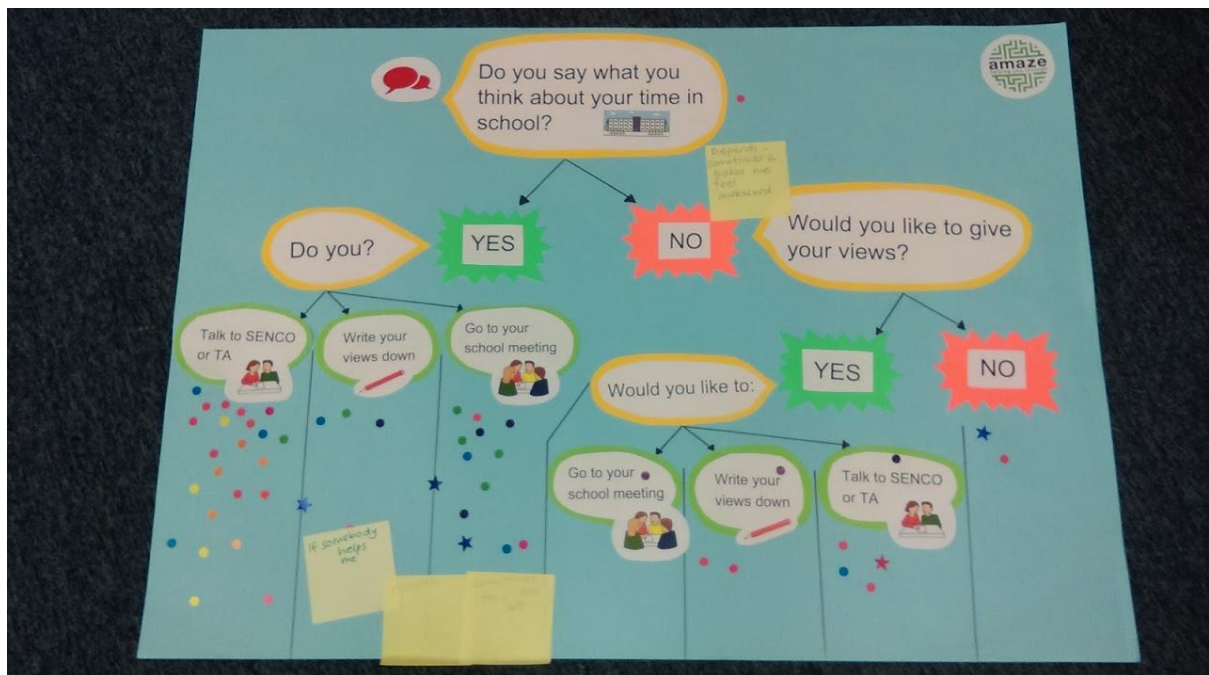
The results from this consultation shows that the majority of young people would tell either their parent carers and, or their teaching assistant in school if they wanted more support at school. Only 3 pupils would prefer not to say anything.

Learning from this activity

The importance of having developed a relationship with a named person in school so that school-based issues can be raised.

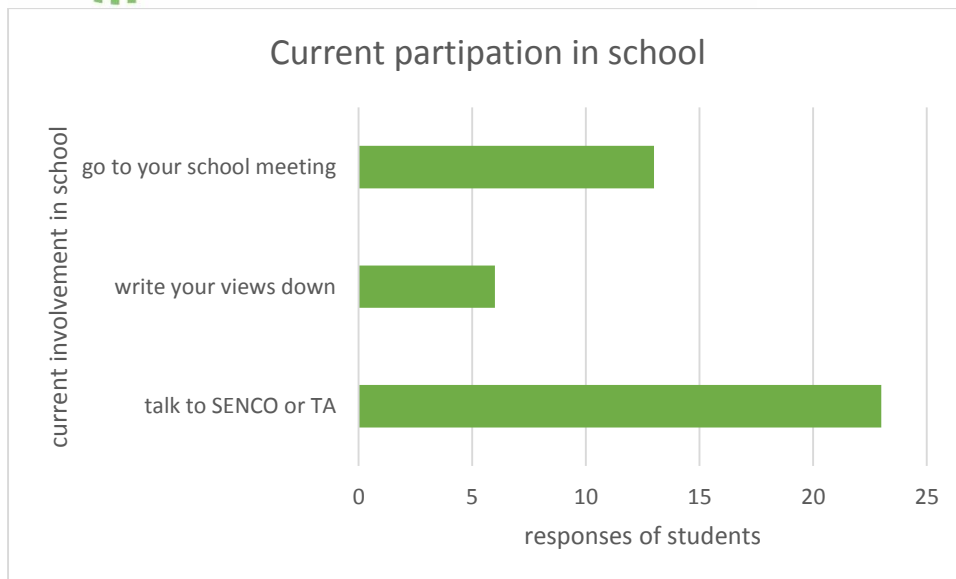
2. Participation in school

2.1 'Do you say what you think about your time in school?'



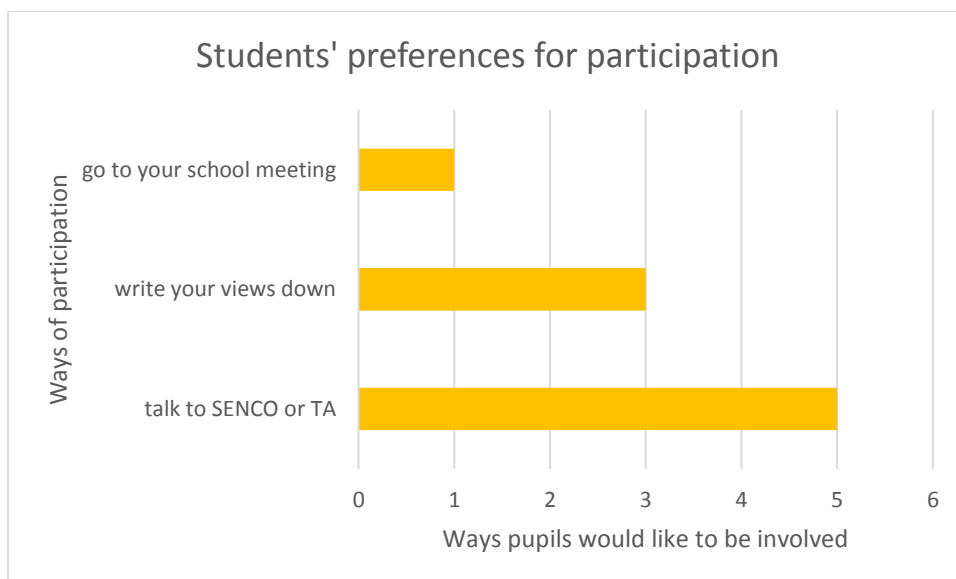
This activity involved a flow chart. Pupils were asked whether they expressed what they thought about their time in school. The choice was between yes or no. One student responded that “it depends, sometimes it makes me feel awkward”.

If participants replied **yes**, they were then asked which of the following they did: talk to the SENCO, or TA; write their views down; go to their school meeting, and marked this with a coloured sticker.



Of the pupils who responded 'yes', all of them said that they talked to a member of staff at school (23). Only 6 pupils said that they wrote their views down. One said that they did "if someone helps me". 13 participants said that they went to their school meeting. However, on closer questioning, the pupils said that they were members of the school council and so went to the school council meeting. It is therefore inconclusive how many are involved in meetings about their own progress, support and annual reviews, which was what our question had intended to find out. One pupil said that they went to their annual review meeting "sometimes for a little bit".

7 young people said that they did not say what they think about their time in school. They were then asked whether they would like to do this, and in which ways: talk to the SENCO or TA; write their views down; go to their school meeting.



All five of those who wished to give their views, said that they would like to talk to the SENCO or their TA, three wished to write their views down and one student wanted to attend their school meeting.



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Two pupils said that they did not want to give their views about their time at school.

Learning from this activity

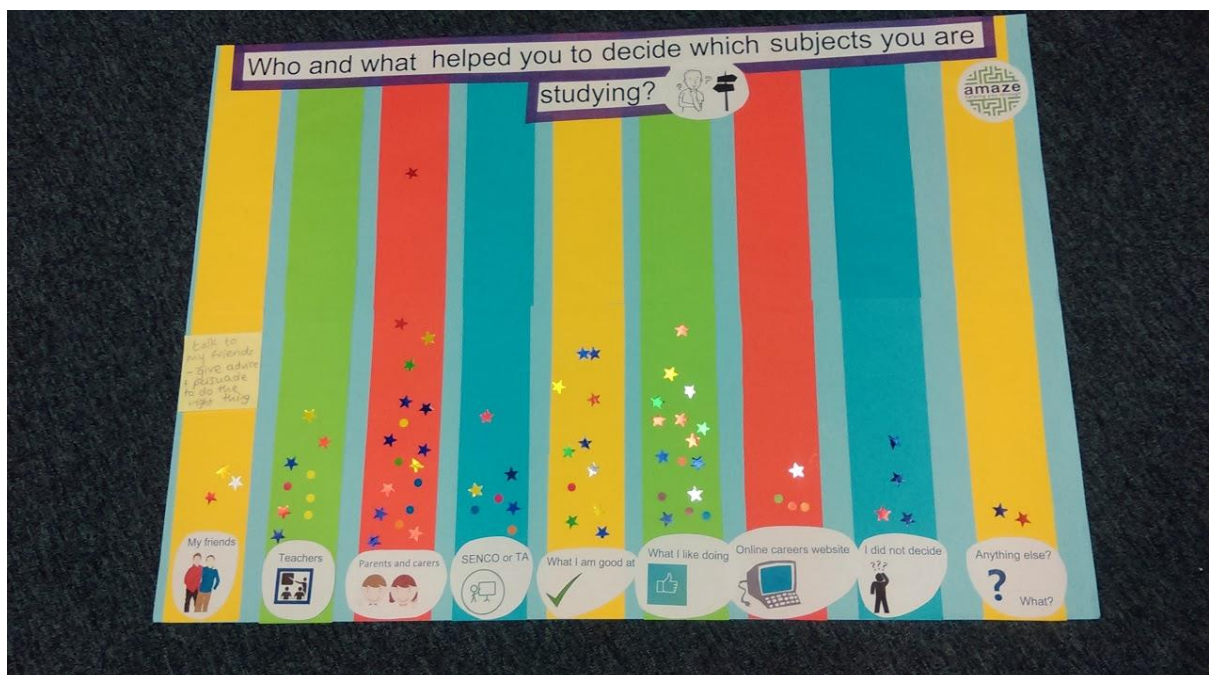
The importance of accurately capturing in writing the verbally-presented views of young people.

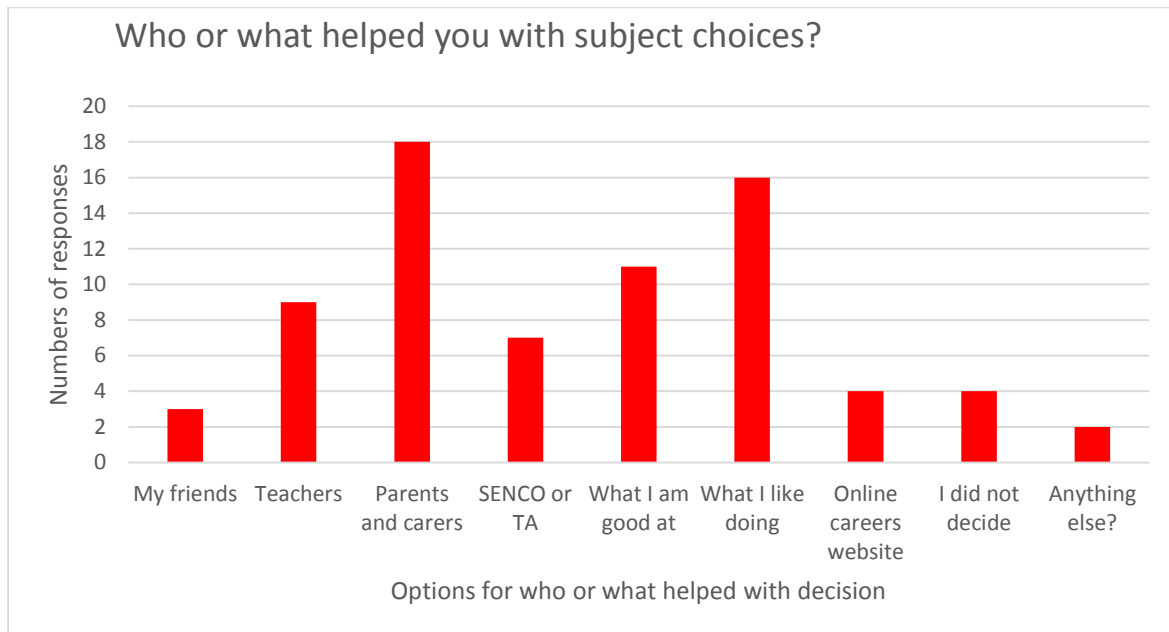
Develop young people's understanding of the importance of their 'voice' and identification of opportunities to express their views.

3. Participation in decisions

3.1 'Who and what helped you to decide which subjects you are studying?'

Pupils in year 9, 10 and 11 were asked who or what helped them to decide which subjects they are studying. They looked at the choices and used a coloured sticker or star to select all those which had helped them.





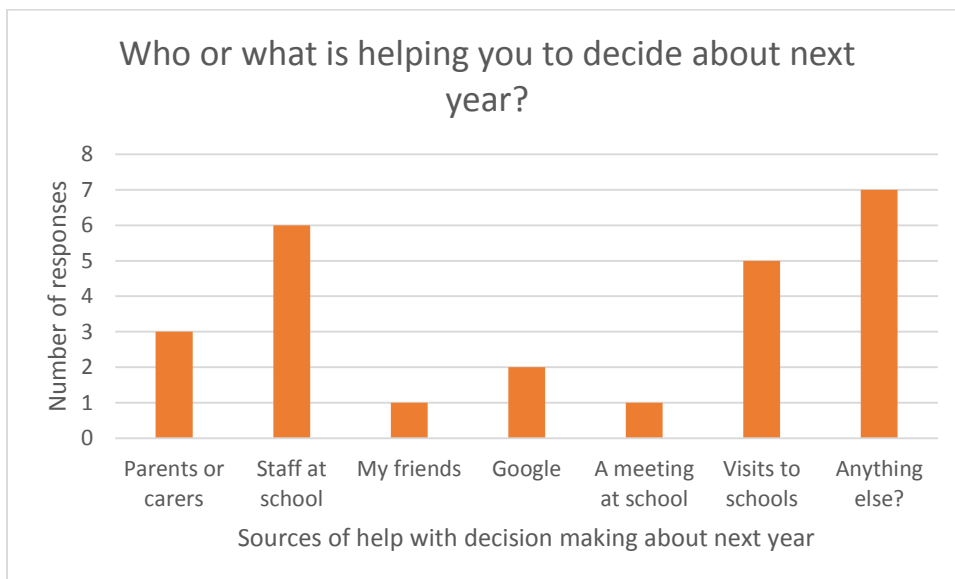
Participants said that it is their parents and carers who have helped most with their decisions (18), as well as what they enjoy doing (16). Other influential factors include what they are good at (11), and their teachers (9). One young person who said that friends helped them said that they “talk to their friends – they give advice and persuade them to do the right thing”.

Learning from this activity

Young people’s choices are supported by their parents and carers, and what they enjoy doing, and what they believe that they are good at. Their choices may not be linked to long-term career planning when making their options.

3.2 ‘Who or what is helping you to decide about next year?’

This activity was for year 11 pupils, or above, so there are fewer responses. It aimed to ask about the people or activities which are helping them to make decisions about what they are going to do in the next academic year. Pupils were asked to put a sticker in the circle of any which are helping them. Any verbal responses were written down on post-its.



Year 11 and older pupils said that staff at school are very helpful in making decisions.

In the 'Anything else' hoop, two pupils said that they had not decided yet. Another two said that 'I have already decided on what I want to do'. Another young person wrote 'watching a TV program about what I like and make a choice by myself'.

Learning from this activity

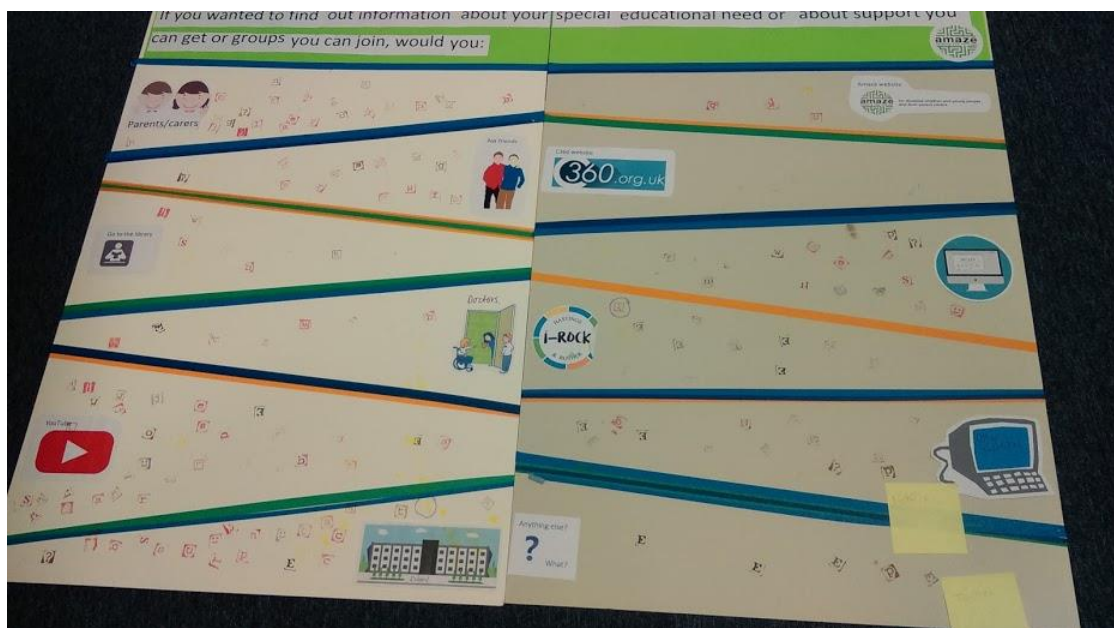
In planning for the next step after school, year 11 and older said that the greatest influences are school staff and visiting possible new schools which help them to decide where they wanted to go, and what they wanted to do.

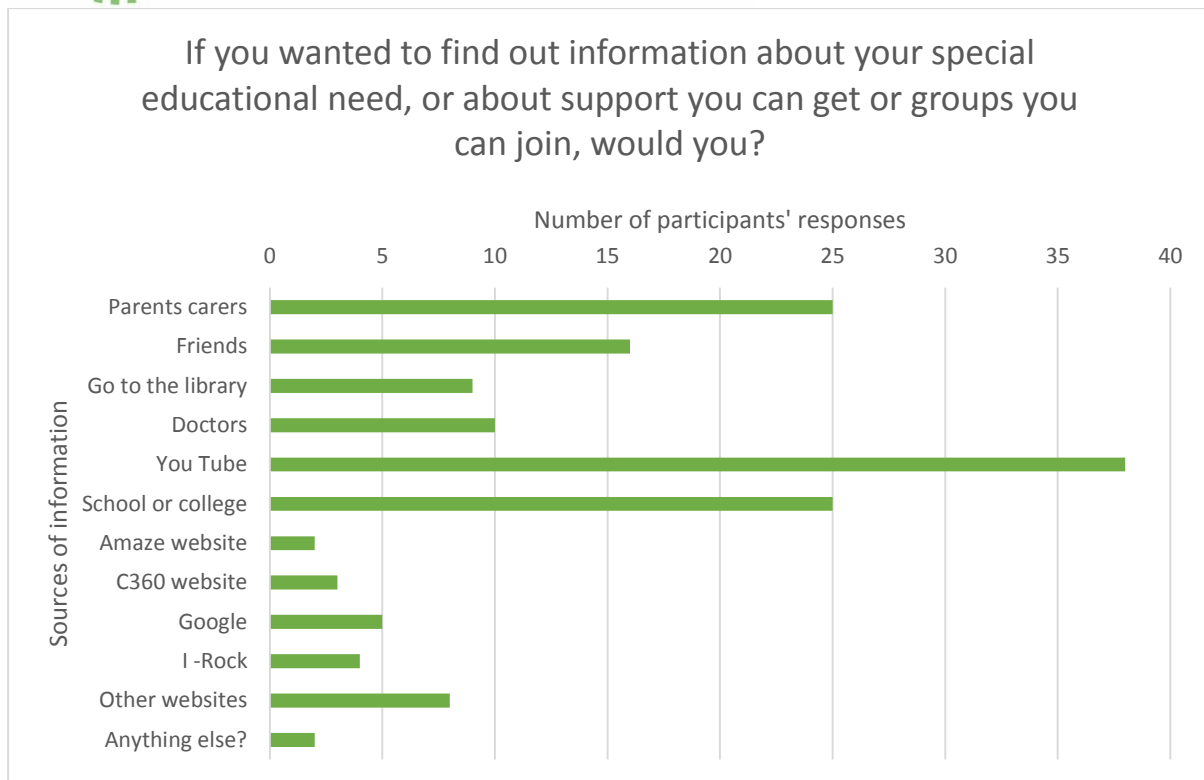


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3.3 If you wanted to find out information about your special educational need or about support you can get or groups you can join, would you ...?

Participants stamped their initials or choice of stamp onto any of the sources of information who they would ask, or go to. We were aware that young people may enjoy this activity which could lead to skewed results, but we monitored this, and tried to avoid counting repeated responses where possible.





YouTube proved to be a highly popular way of finding out information, and indicates that Amaze should develop its use of YouTube as a way of meeting young people's need for information. Parents and carers and staff at school are also seen as extremely useful sources of information.

When asked for 'Anything else?' one young man said that he uses Twitter, and another said Netflix.

The activity was a useful way of introducing the young people to Amaze, and our service. One young person talked about her own family situation, and an Amaze advisor was able to suggest that their mum called the Amaze Helpline, and gave them the leaflet.

Learning from this activity

The importance of identifying sources of information that are reliable and can adapt to the changing demands of young people.



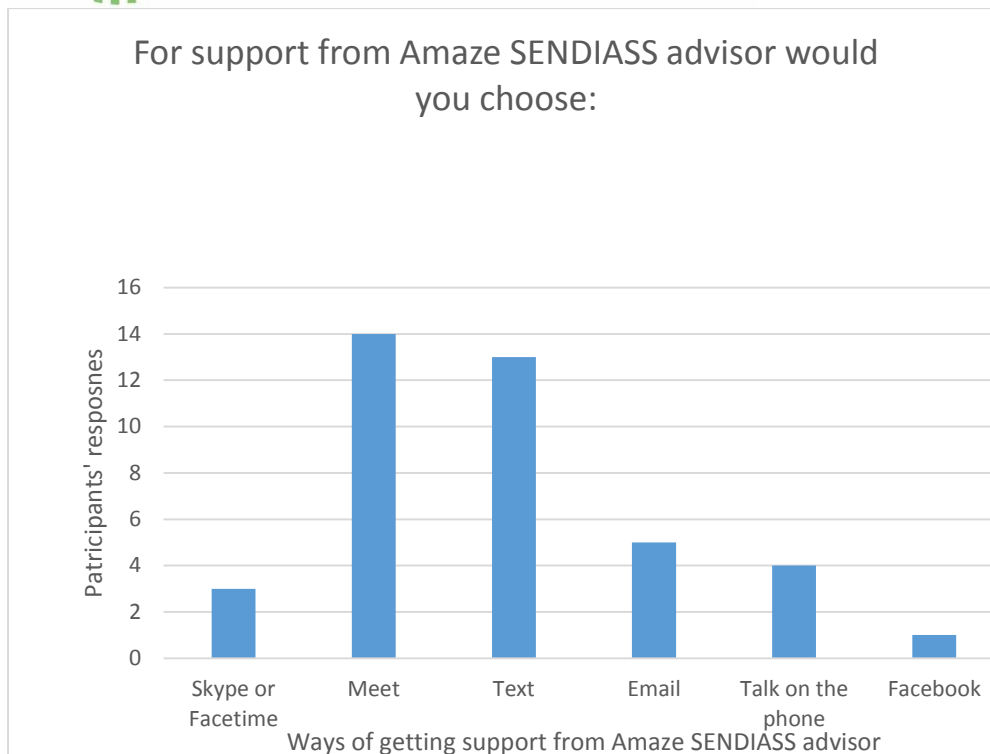
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4. Amaze SENDIASS:

4.1 You can have support from an advisor to help you and your family. Would you choose to:

Prior to this activity, an Amaze worker explained the Amaze Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support service (SENDIASS) which they can access. They were firstly asked how they would choose to communicate with an advisor. They marked their choices by drawing ticks, or stamping their letters.





The most popular method of getting information, advice and support from an Amaze SENDIASS advisor was to meet in person. One young person said that “it feels easier to see in person”. Another said that “writing is hard so I’d like to meet and talk”. Also popular was the option to text the advisor.

Other ways, such as Skype or FaceTime, talking on the phone and Facebook were much less popular. One pupil said that they “wouldn’t want to” Skype or Face time the advisor. Another pupil said that they wouldn’t “because it’s not safe.” Another pupil said that they are not allowed to, “as it’s not safe.”

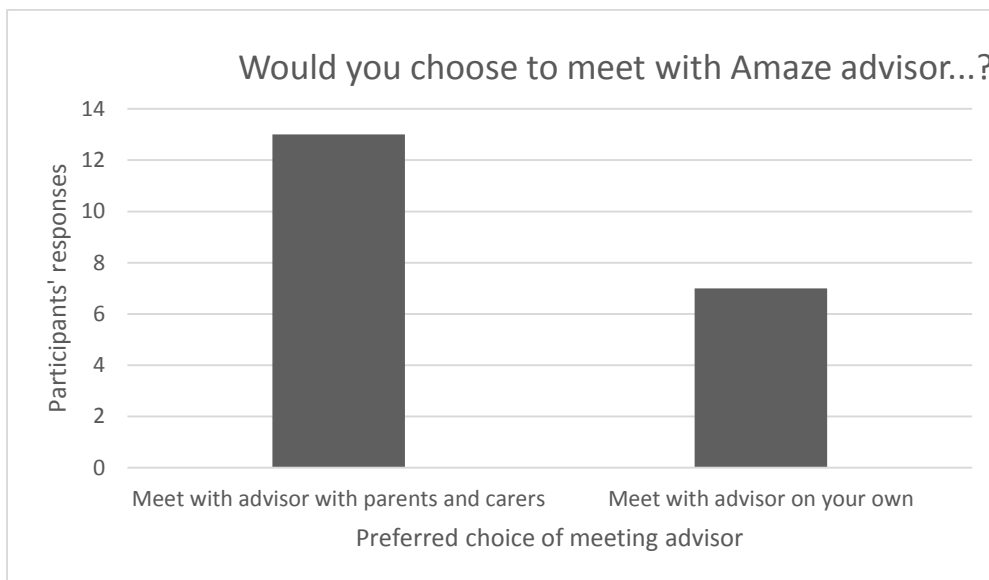
There was not an option for those to respond who did not want to have support from an advisor. One young person said that “I wouldn’t want to”, and another said that “I would not do that...because I would just tell my carers”. Another said that “I wouldn’t do that, I would tell my parents”, and “meet with (*teaching assistant*) or someone at college”. One said that “my mum would go to my doctor or other members of my family”.

Learning from this activity

The importance of face-to-face contact for young people seeking information.

Importance of developing a protocol to use with young people to assure them of the identity of the advisor they are texting.

4.2 For those who had responded that they would like to meet, they were then asked whether they would like to meet the advisor with or without parents or carers present.



65% of participants said that they would prefer to meet with an advisor with their parents or carers. “My mum knows me and helps”, “My dad would want to know all about me” and “My mum would go with me” were some verbal responses to the reasons to prefer meeting with their parents.

35% responded that they would like to meet the advisor on their own. One pupil wrote on a post-it “on my own because I don’t need anyone to help”. It was noticeable that the majority of these were 14-16-year-old girls who said that they want to meet alone with the advisor or communicate by text.

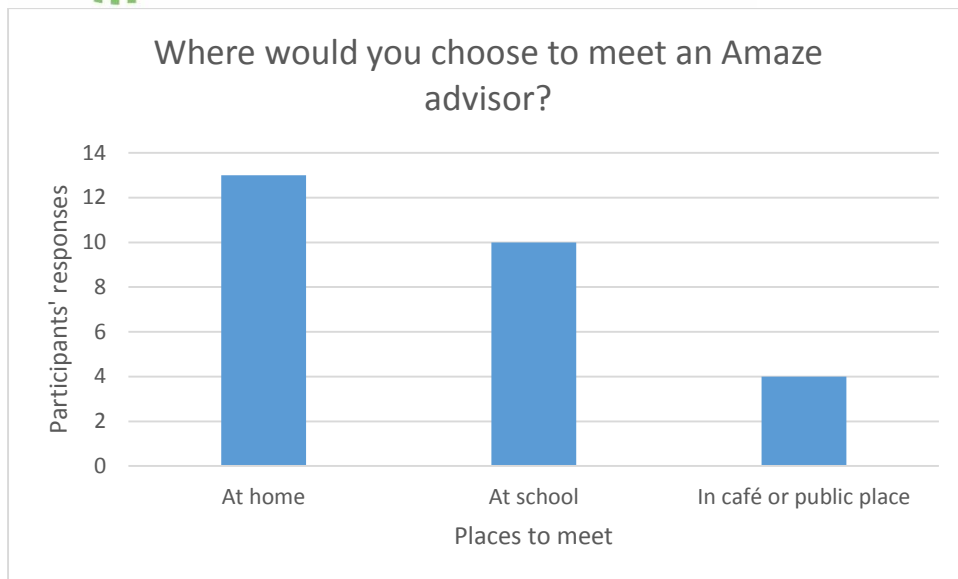
All participants who had responded that they wished to meet with an advisor, were asked where they would like to meet the advisor: at home, at school or in a café or public place.

Learning from this activity

The importance of using a person-centred approach in work with young people whilst acknowledging the importance of involving parent carers where requested by a young person.



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The most popular was that they would like to meet the advisor at their home (13). One pupil said that it is “more informal and easier to meet”. 10 participants also said that they would like to meet at school. One said that “there’s a safer place where people wouldn’t hear us”. A much fewer number said that they would like to meet in a café or public place. “Wouldn’t be able to talk about personal things in a public place” was the reason which one pupil gave for why this was not what they would choose.

Learning from this activity

Work conducted with young people needs to be delivered with the same level of confidentiality as parent carers.