

# Coronavirus and Students Survey: Higher Education Sector Results

**April 2020**

NUS Insight

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# Project overview

## Objectives

NUS Insight conducted a survey alongside One Voice Digital who run the TOTUM product for students, and NUS member students' unions to understand more about how students feel about the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

## Explanation of weighting

For the HE Sector we achieved an original sample of **7262** students. We have weighted the data to reflect the student population of the HE Sector resulting in **7307** responses.

## Methodology

A sample of **9872** was achieved overall and in the HE sector we achieved **7262** responses.

Respondents were given a chance to win £500 to encourage response.

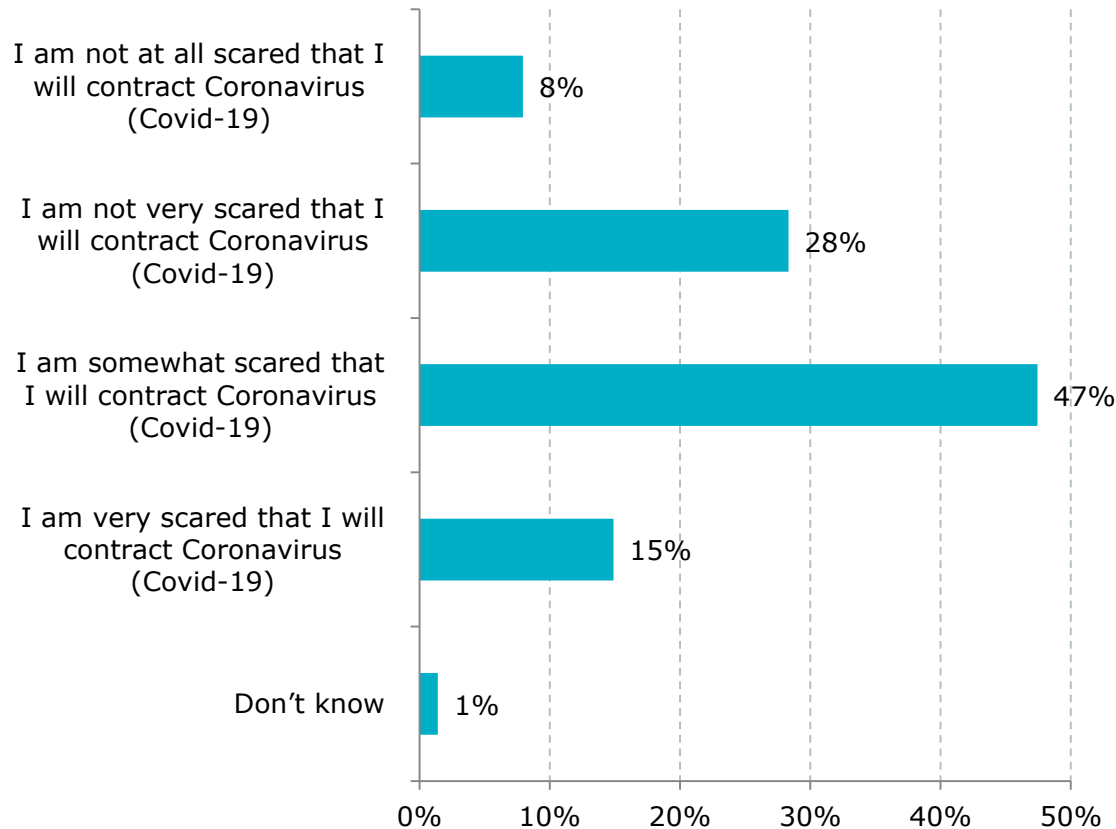
The survey was promoted via the NUS Student database, the TOTUM database, through social media & via NUS' member unions at the end of March 2020.

The survey took 20 **minutes** to complete & was in field from Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March until Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April.

# Health, wellbeing and welfare

Just under one in ten students in Higher Education are not scared at all about getting Covid-19.

### Feelings towards contracting the Coronavirus (Covid-19)

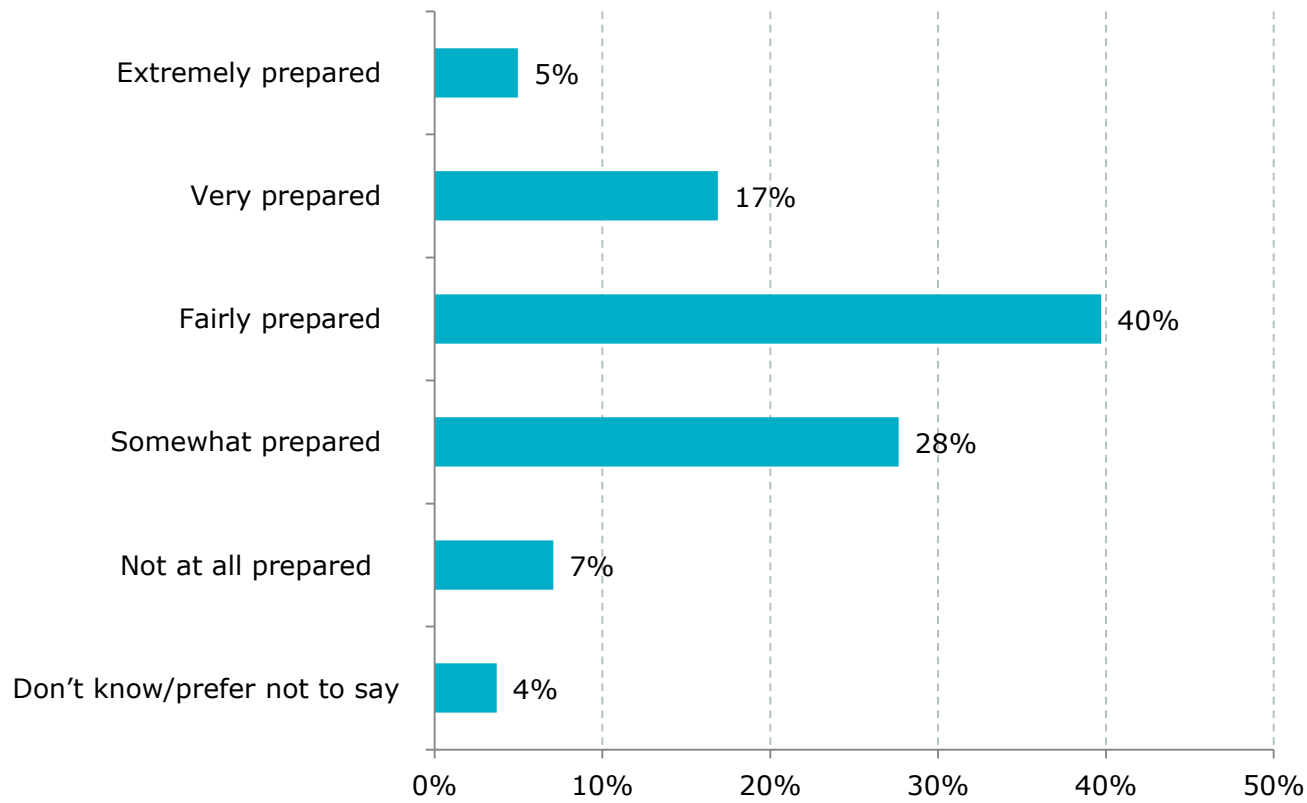


Weighted Base: 7305 respondents. Balance: no response

**B1. Which, if any, of the following statements best describes your feelings towards contracting the Coronavirus (Covid-19)?**

One in five students in Higher Education claim to feel 'extremely' or 'very' prepared to manage any health conditions they have should they contract Covid-19.

### Preparedness to manage health conditions if contract Coronavirus (Covid-19)

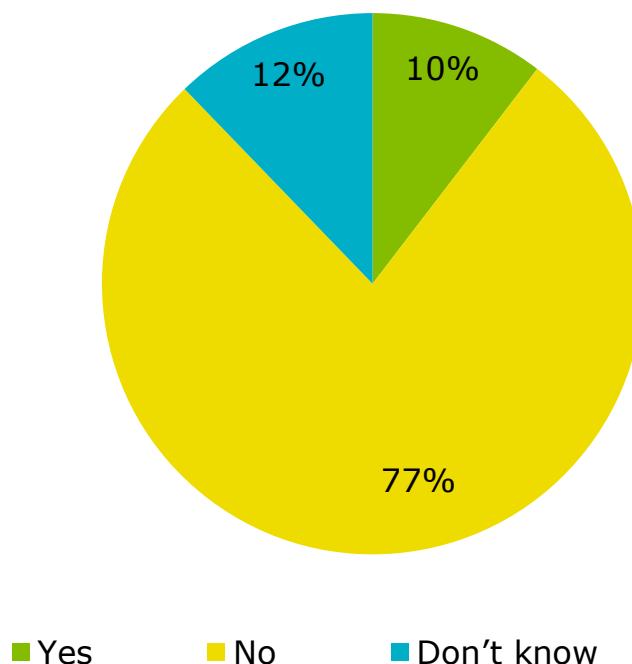


Weighted Base: 7298 respondents. Balance: no response

**B2. How prepared are you personally to manage any health conditions you have should you contract Coronavirus (Covid-19)?**

Only one in ten of disabled students have been asked to confirm or declare any impairments that may relate specifically to Covid-19 and their ability to study.

### Declaration of any impairments



■ Yes

■ No

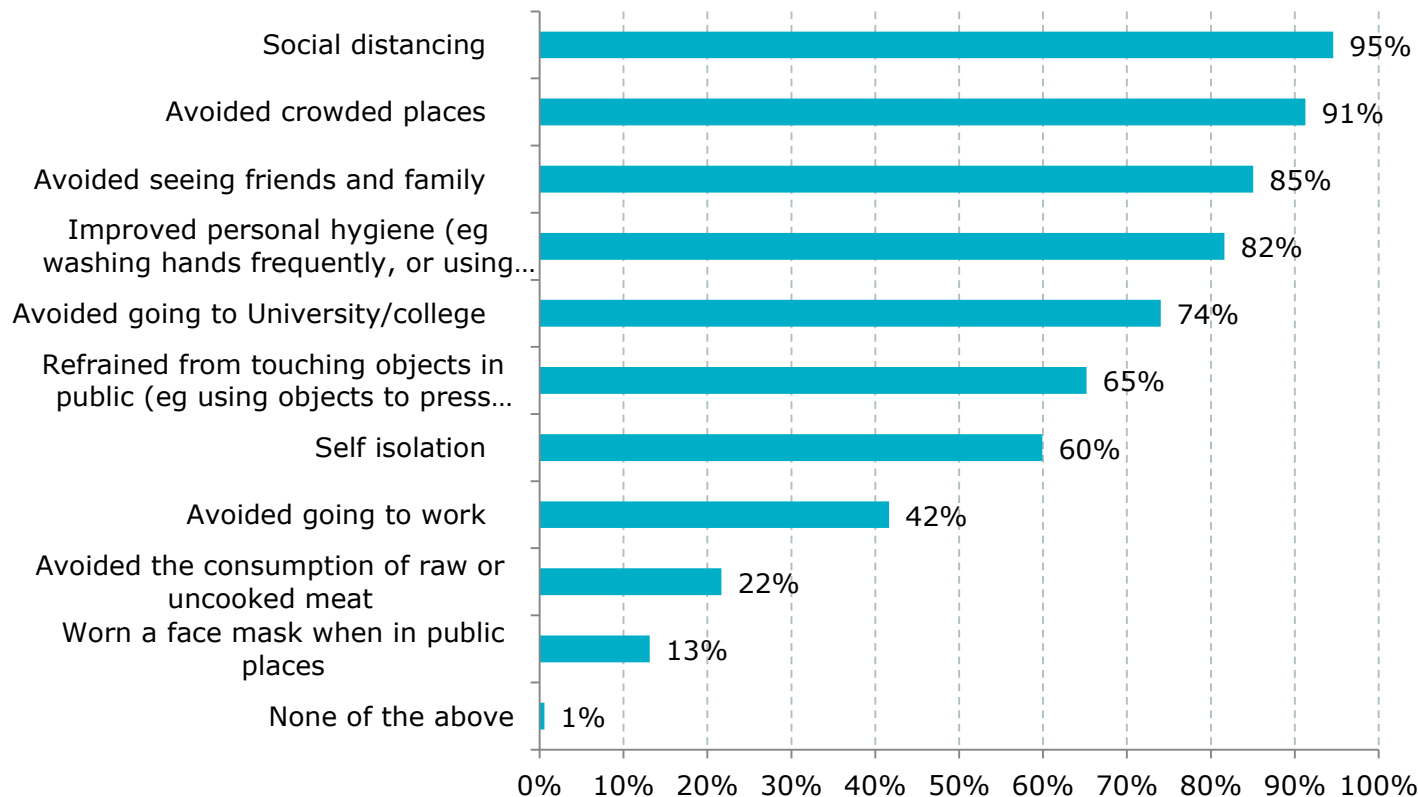
■ Don't know

Weighted Base: 2242 respondents. Balance: those with no known disability, impairment or long term health condition, no response

**B3. Have you been asked to confirm or declare any impairments that may relate specifically to Coronavirus (Covid-19) and your ability to study?**

The majority of students in Higher Education have practiced social distancing and have avoided crowded places in the two weeks before taking the survey. Four in five have avoided seeing friends and family or improved their personal hygiene. Three quarters have avoided going to University/College.

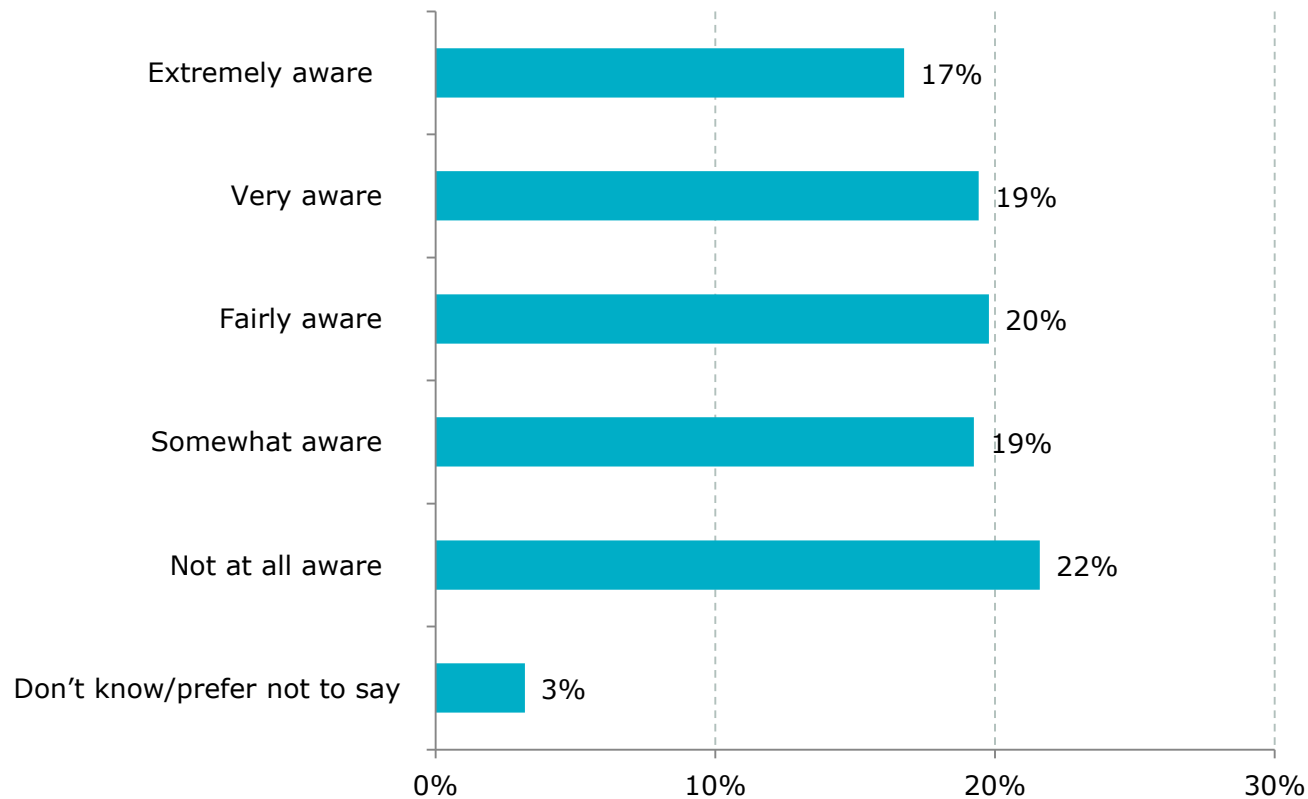
**Measures taken in the past 2 weeks specifically to protect yourself from the Coronavirus (Covid-19)**





Encouragingly three in four students are aware to some extent of the public health guidance on living in shared accommodation in relation to Covid-19. And over one in three claim to be 'very' or 'extremely' aware.

**Awareness of the public health guidance on living in shared accommodation in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

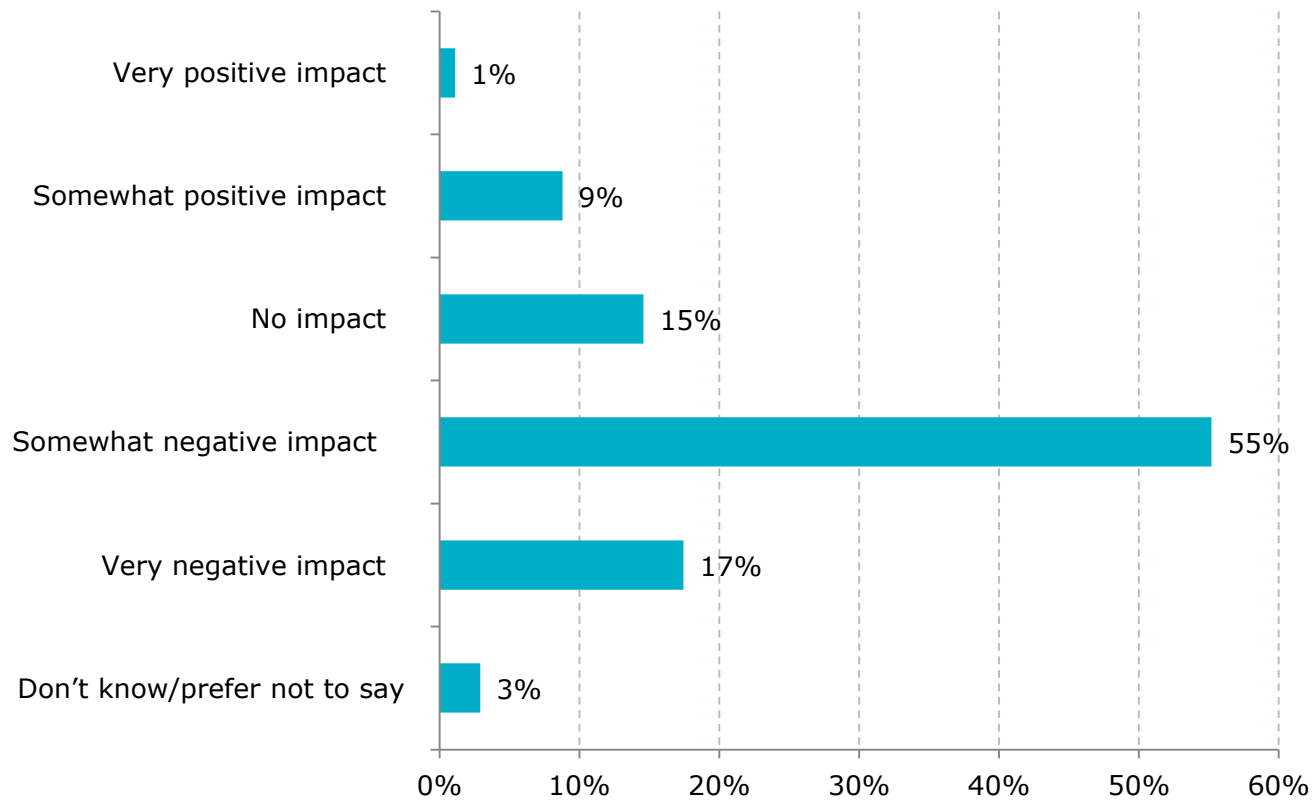


Weighted Base: 7285 respondents. Balance no response

**B5. Are you aware of the public health guidance on living in shared accommodation in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19)?**

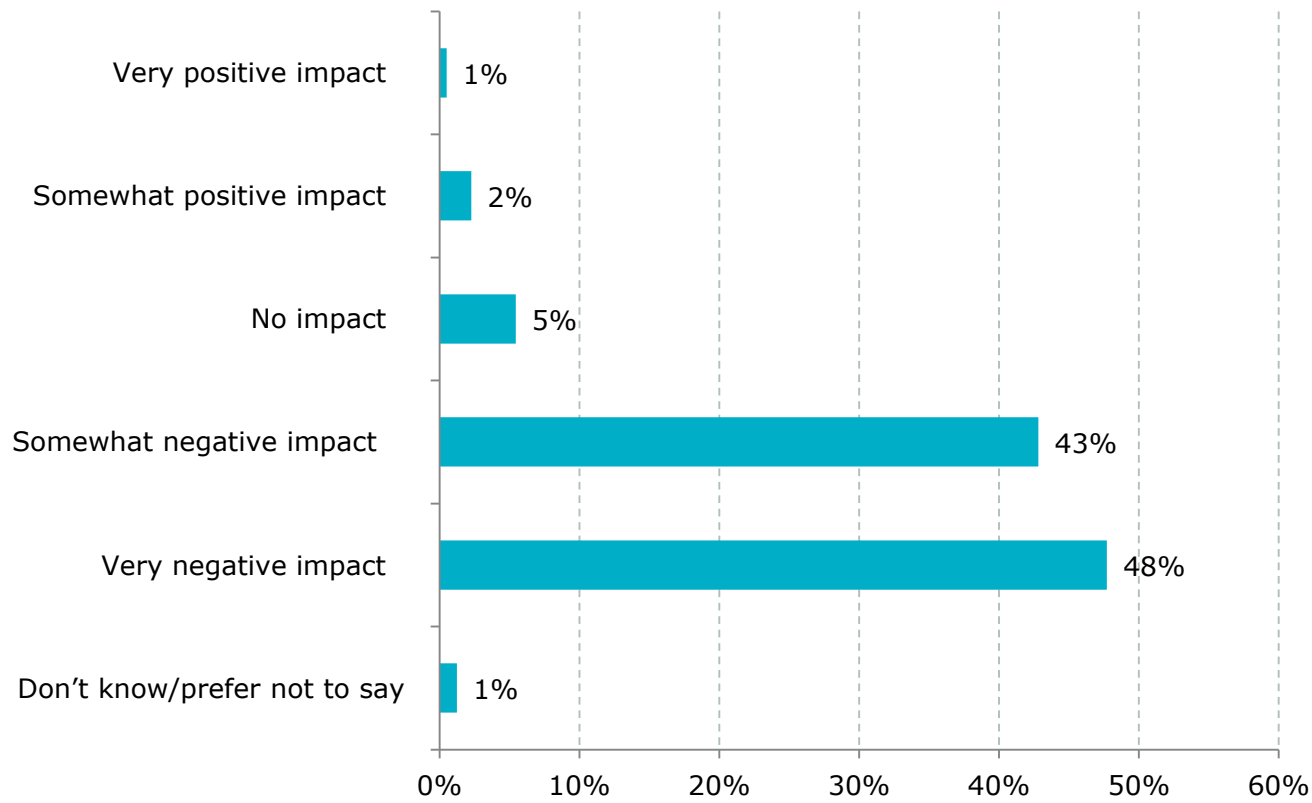
One in six Higher Education students say that Covid-19 has had a very negative impact on their family life. A further half say it has had a somewhat negative impact.

### Impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on family life



The majority of students say that Covid-19 has had a negative impact on their friends and social life.

### Impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on friends and social life

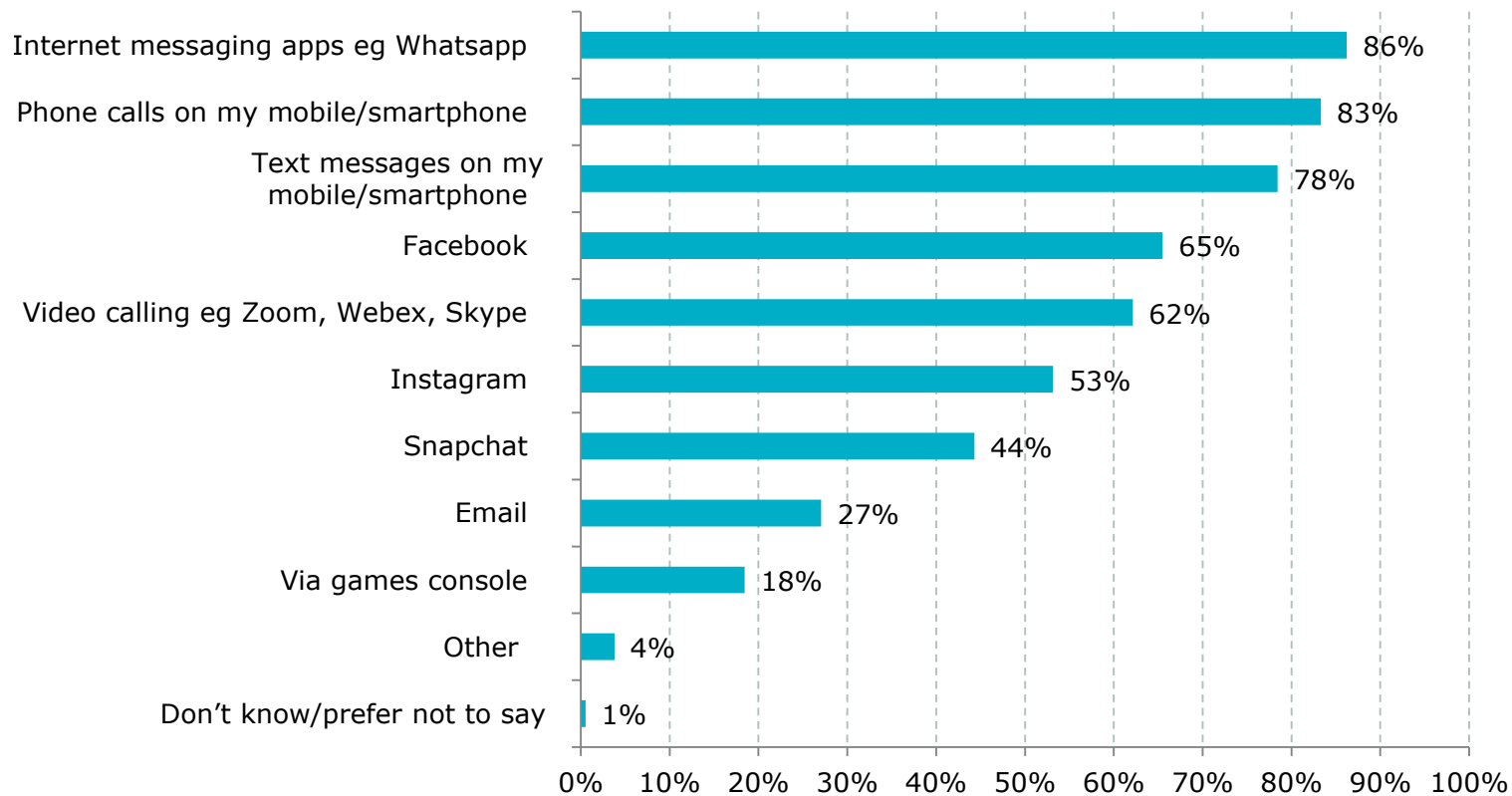


Weighted Base: 7292 respondents. Balance: no response

**B7. And, what has been the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on your friends and social life?**

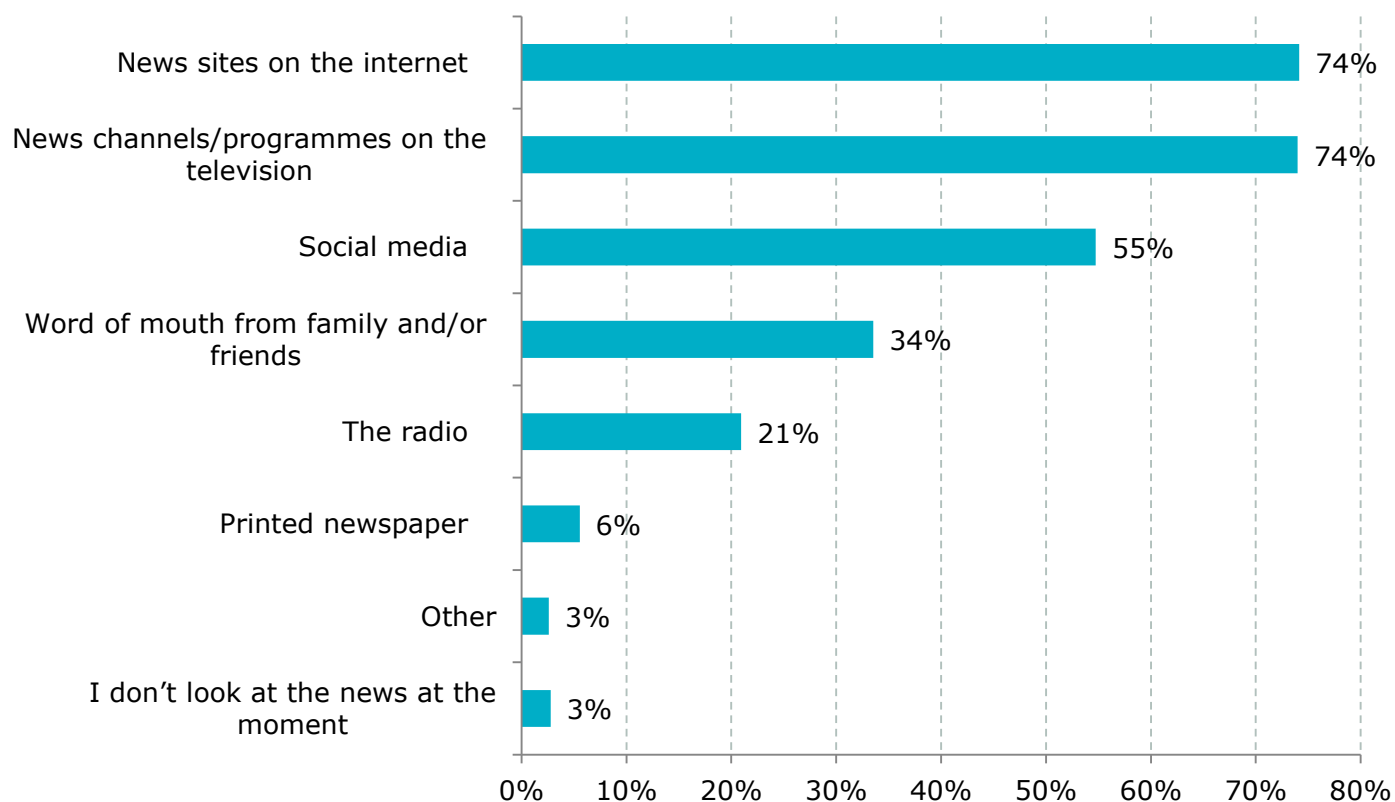
HE students are most likely to be keeping in touch with friends and family via internet messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp), phone calls and text messaging. Video calling is a popular option for three in five.

### How students are staying in touch with friends and family



Students are most likely to be keeping up to date with developments or latest government advice via news outlets on online or TV. Just over half use social media.

### How students are keeping up to date with developments or latest government advice on the Coronavirus (Covid-19)



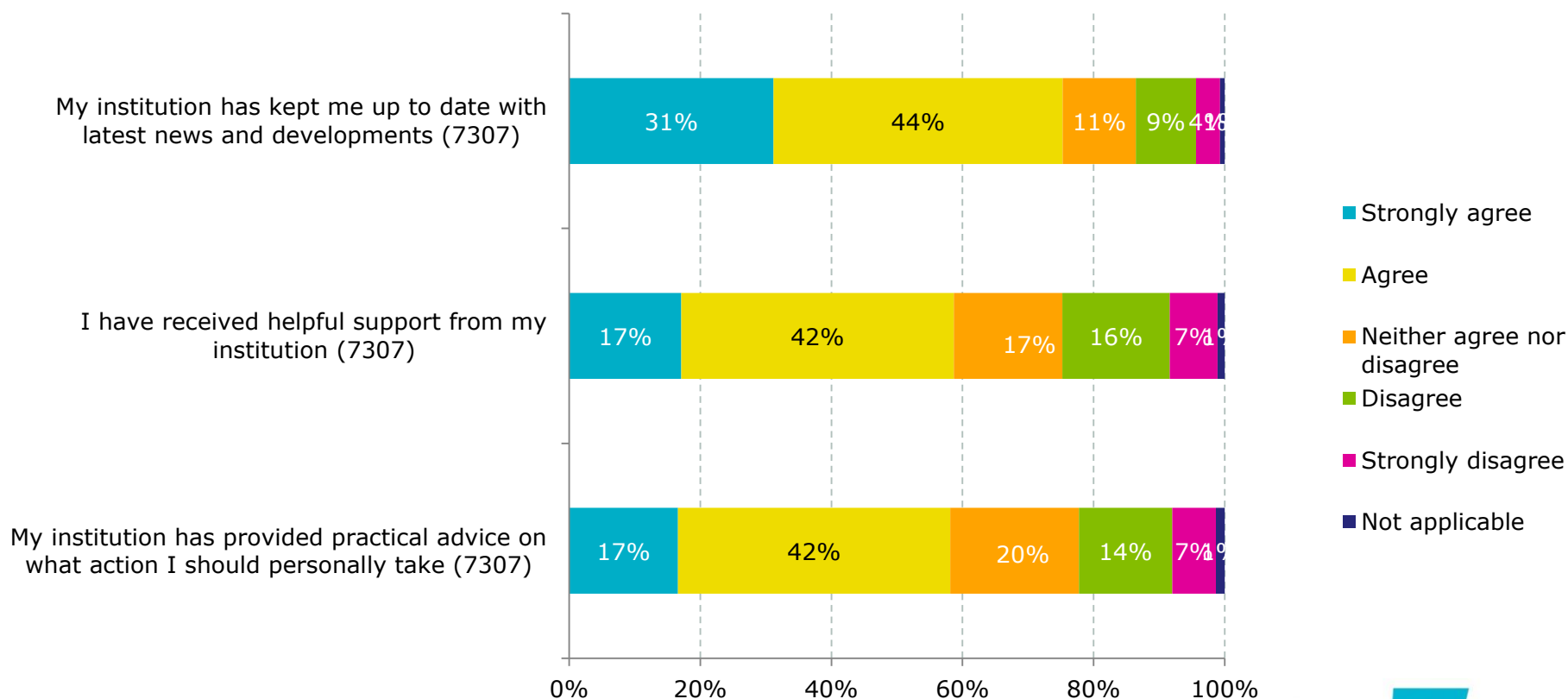
Weighted Base: 7305 respondents. Balance: no response

**B9. Which of the below do you use to keep up to date with developments or latest government advice on the Coronavirus (Covid-19)?**

# Support received from institutions about Coronavirus (Covid-19)

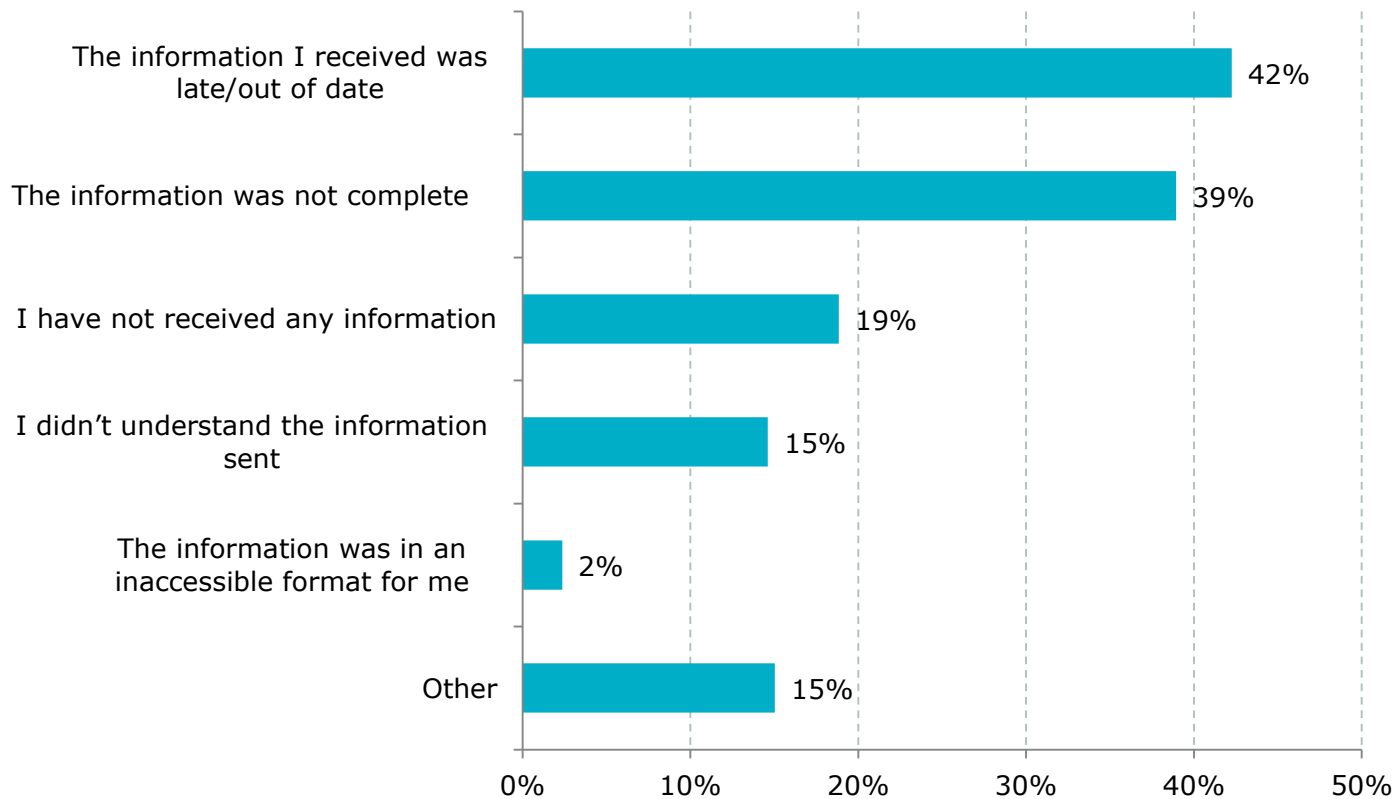
On the whole students in Higher Education are more likely to agree that their institution has provided up to date news/developments, helpful support and practical advice on what action to take compared to their students union.

### Agreement with statements



Where students disagreed that their institution kept them up to date with the latest news/developments this was largely down to receiving information that was late or out of date or incomplete information. One in five said they hadn't received any information.

**Reasons for disagreement that institution has kept you up to date with latest news and developments**



**13%  
disagreed**

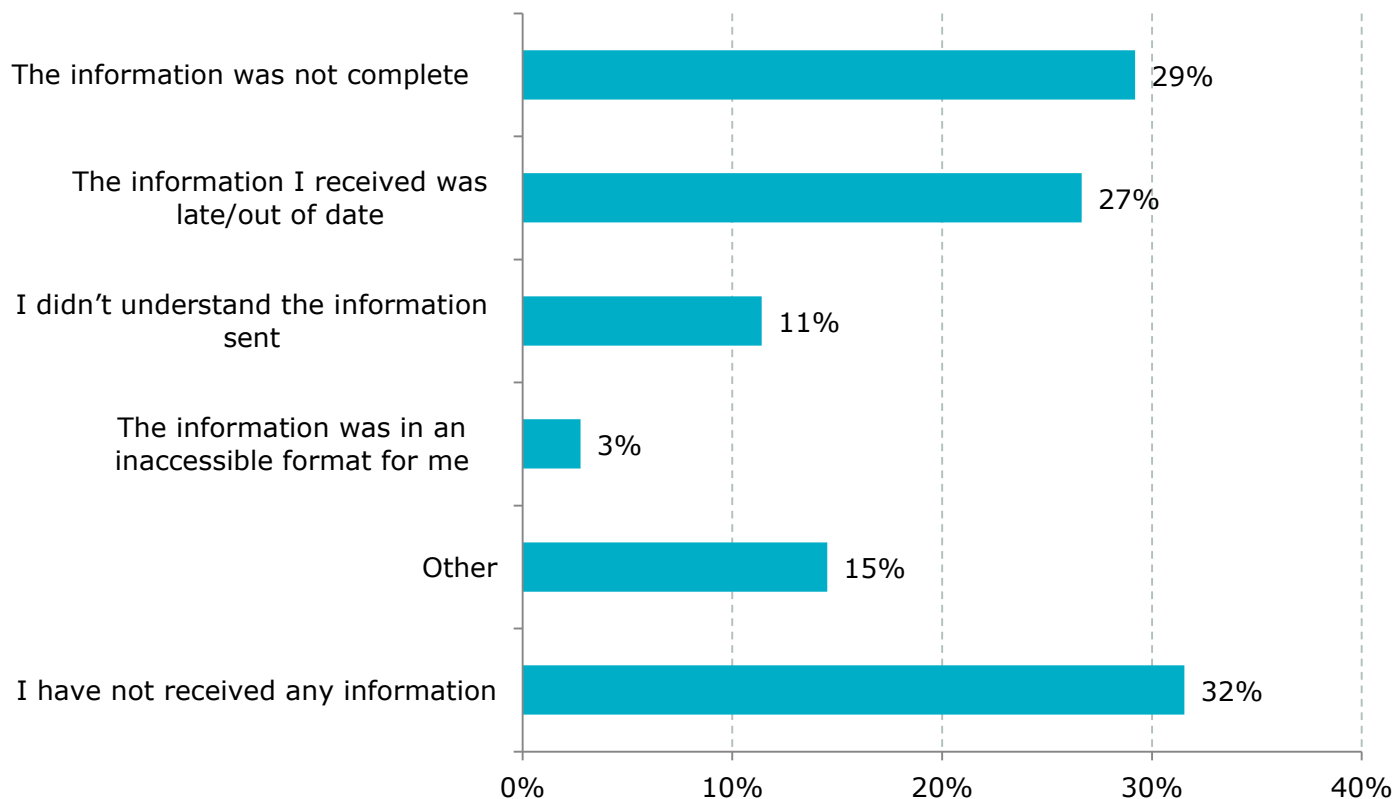
Weighted Base: 927 respondents. Balance: those who agreed that their institution had kept them up to date with latest news and developments, no response

**C2. You've told us that you don't agree that your institution has kept you up to date with latest news and developments, why is that?**



Where students disagreed that their institution had provided them with practical advice on what action to take, this was largely down to receiving incomplete or out of date information or not having received any information at all.

**Reasons for disagreement that institution has provided you with practical advice on what action you should personally take**



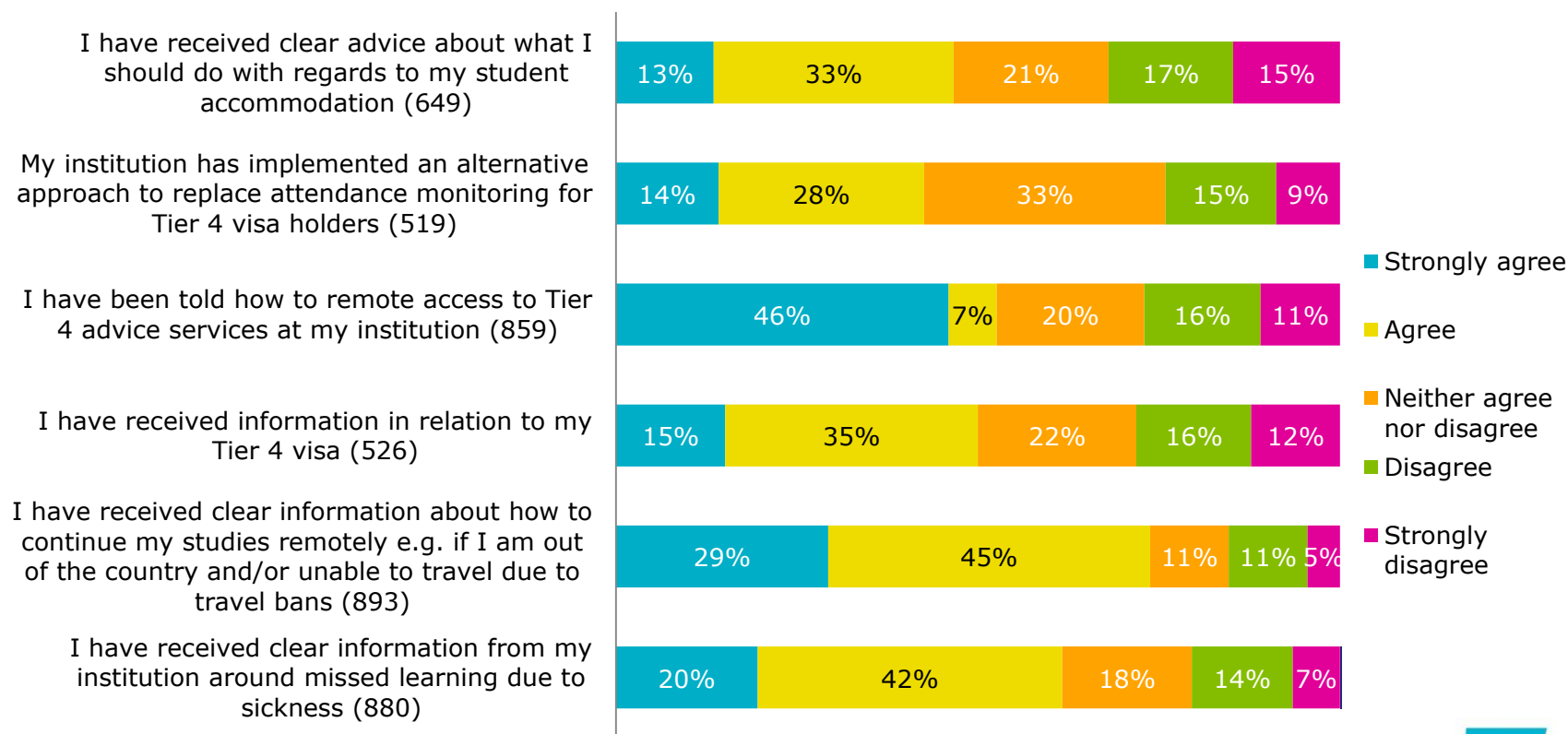
**21%  
disagreed**

Weighted Base: 1498 respondents. Balance: those who agreed that their institution had provided practical advice on what action they should personally take, no response

**C3. You've told us that you don't agree that your institution has provided you with practical advice on what action you should personally take, why is that?**

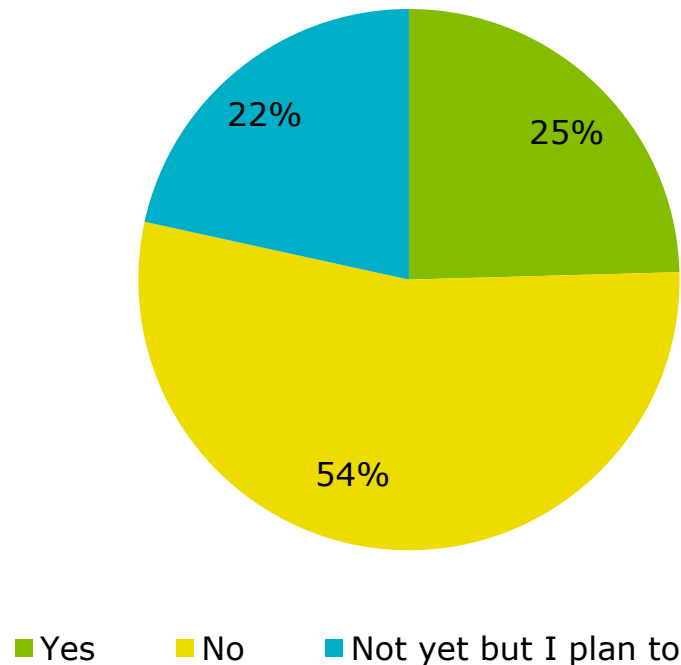
Encouragingly nearly three in four international students feel that they have received clear information about how to continue studies remotely. Three in five feel they have received clear information from their institution around missed learning due to sickness.

### International Students agreement with statements



One in four Higher Education students have already volunteered to help those within the community who are vulnerable or who may self isolating since the outbreak of Covid-19. A further one in four say they plan to volunteer in such a way.

**Volunteered within community to help those who are more vulnerable or those who may be self isolating since the outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19)**



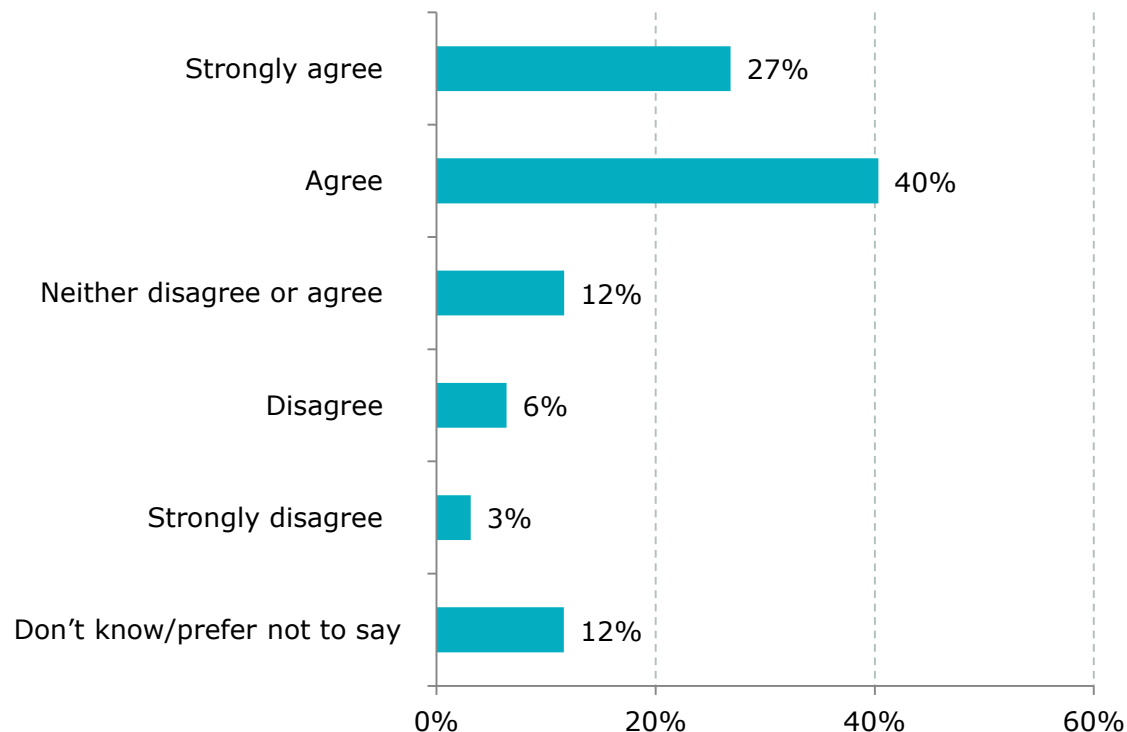
■ Yes    ■ No    ■ Not yet but I plan to

Weighted Base: 7290 respondents. Balance: no response

**C7. Since the outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19) have you volunteered within your community to help those who are more vulnerable or those who may be self isolating?**

Two in three agree that people at their institution are adhering to the Government advice and guidance on social distancing and self isolation. Encouragingly less than one in ten disagreed with this statement.

**Agreement that people at your institution are adhering to the Government advice and guidance on social distancing and self isolation**



Weighted Base: 7292 respondents. Balance: no response

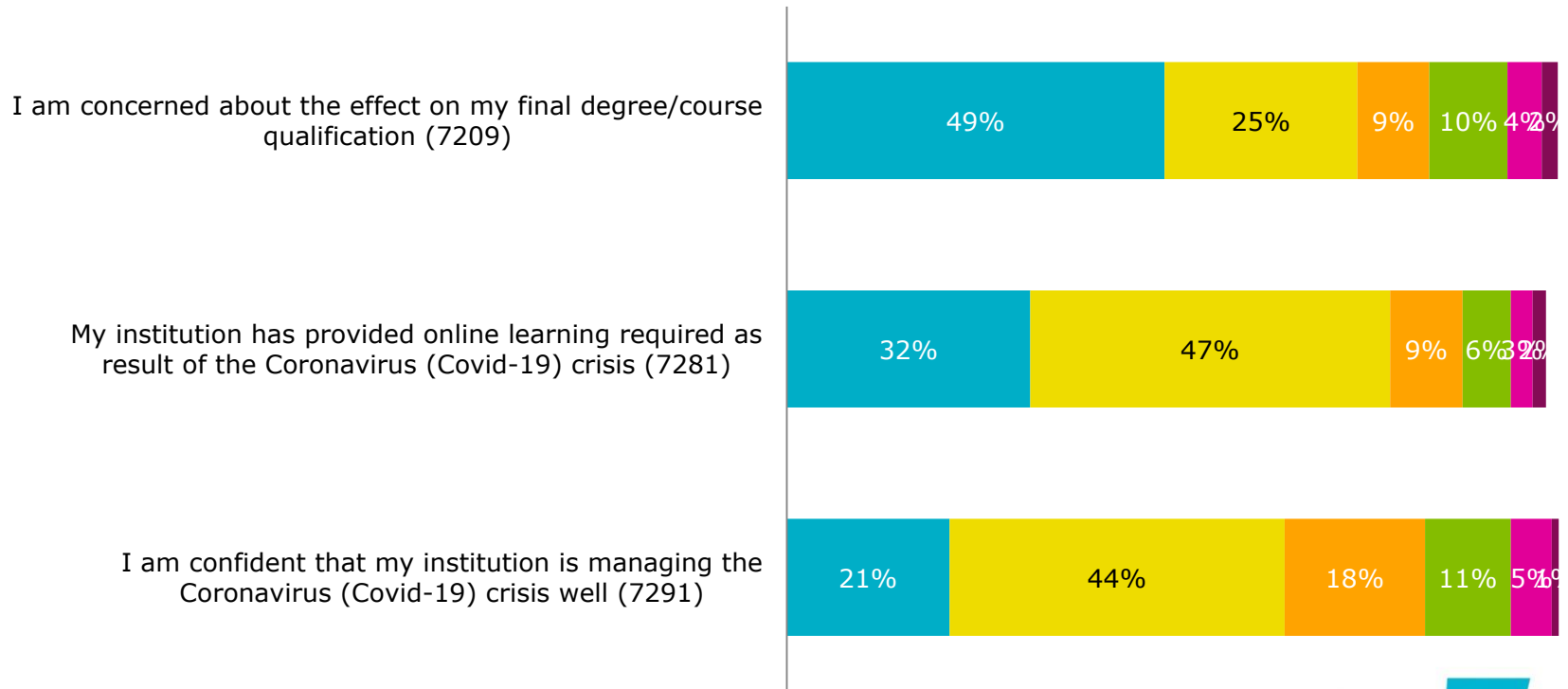
**C8. To what extent do you agree that people at your institution are adhering to the Government advice and guidance on social distancing and self isolation?**

Education: teaching and learning  
experience and academic success

Three quarters of students in Higher Education are concerned about the effect of Covid-19 on their final degree/course qualification. Just under four in five agree that their institution has provided online learning required as a result of the Covid-19 crisis and two in three are confident that their institution is managing the crisis well.

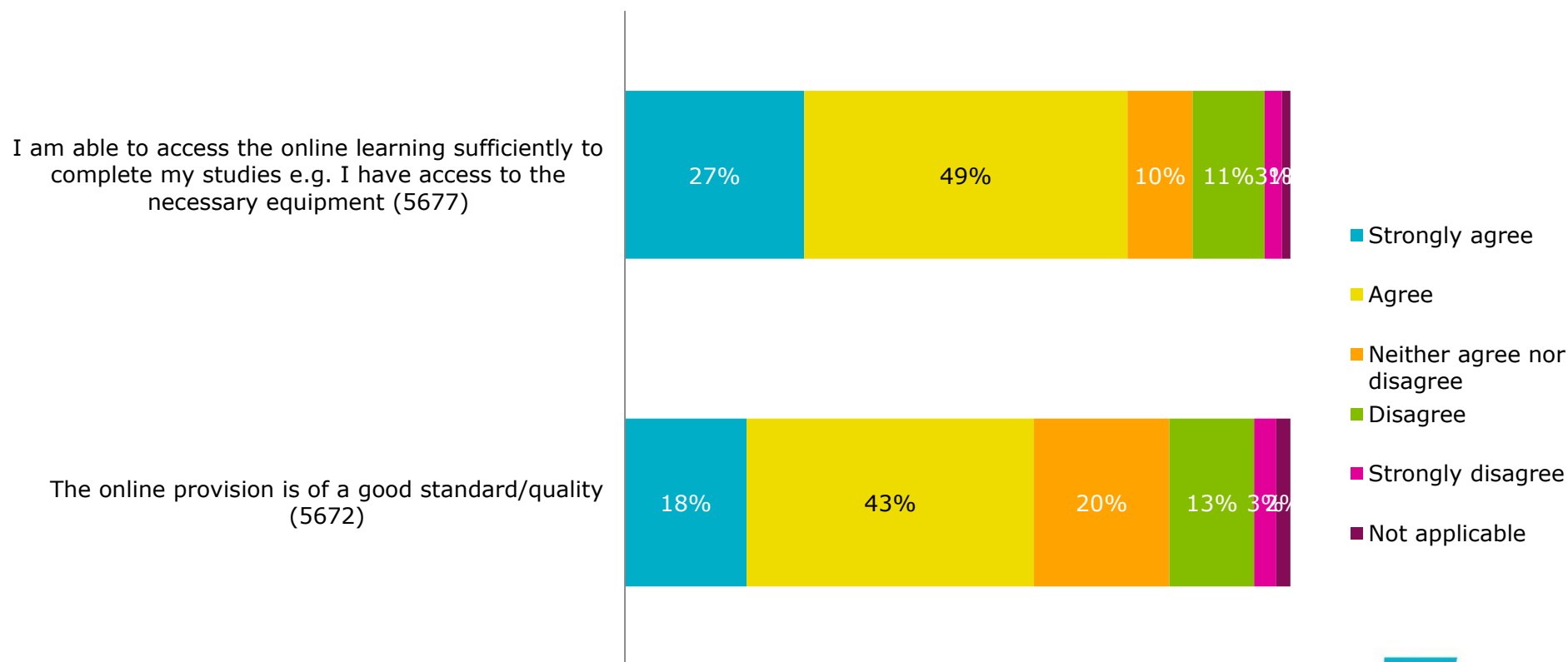
### Agreement with statements

■ Strongly agree 
 ■ Agree 
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree 
 ■ Disagree 
 ■ Strongly disagree 
 ■ Not applicable



Of the students who have had online learning provided by their institution, three in four agree that they are able to access the online learning sufficiently to complete their studies and two in three agree the online provision is a good standard/quality.

### Agreement with statements – online learning has been provided

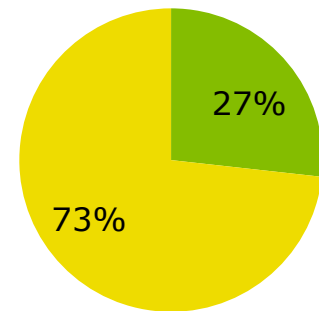


Weighted Base: (in brackets). Balance: those whose institution has not provided online learning in response to Coronavirus (Covid-19), no response

**D2. You mentioned that your institution has provided online learning in response to the Coronavirus (Covid-19). How far do you agree with the following statements?**

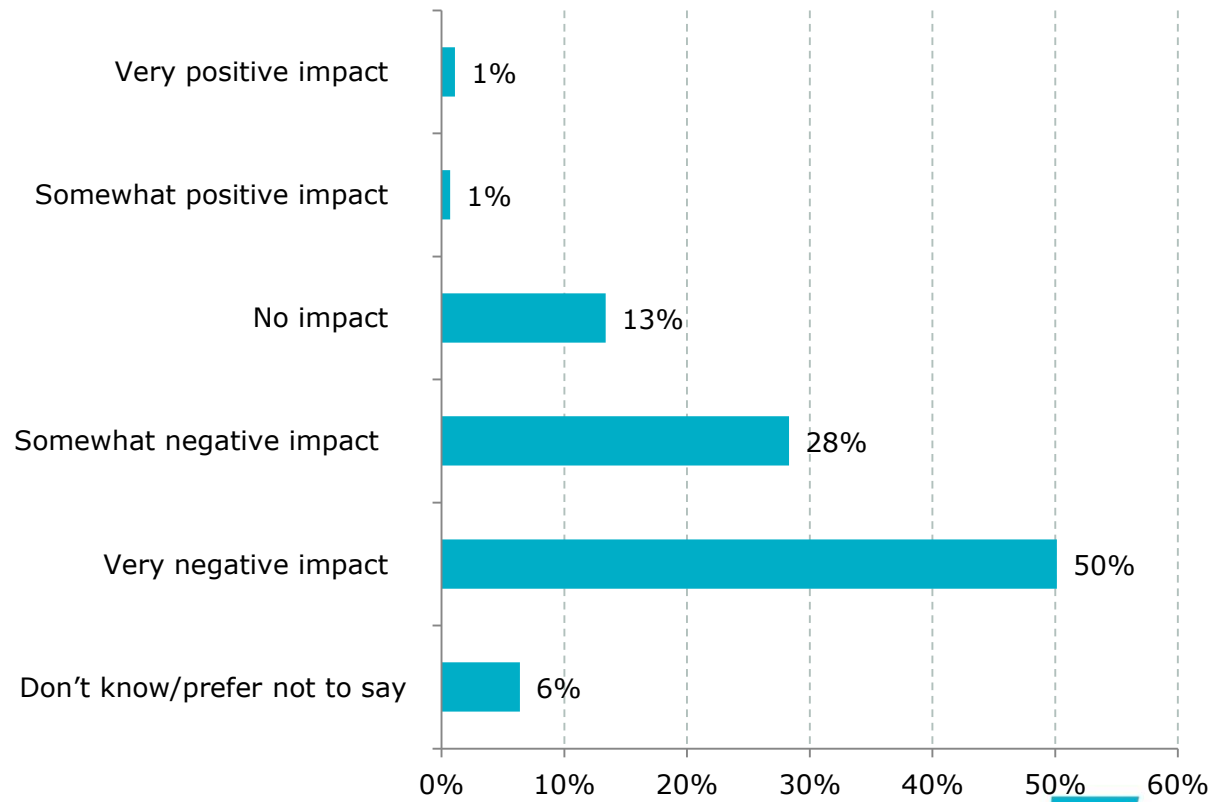
One in four Higher Education Students have a placement as part of their course. Of these, (just under one in three) just over three in four believe the current Covid-19 outbreak will have a negative impact on their ability to complete their placement.

### Placement as part of course



■ Yes ■ No

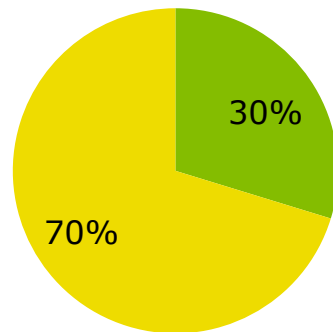
### Impact you think Coronavirus (Covid-19) will have on your ability to complete your placement





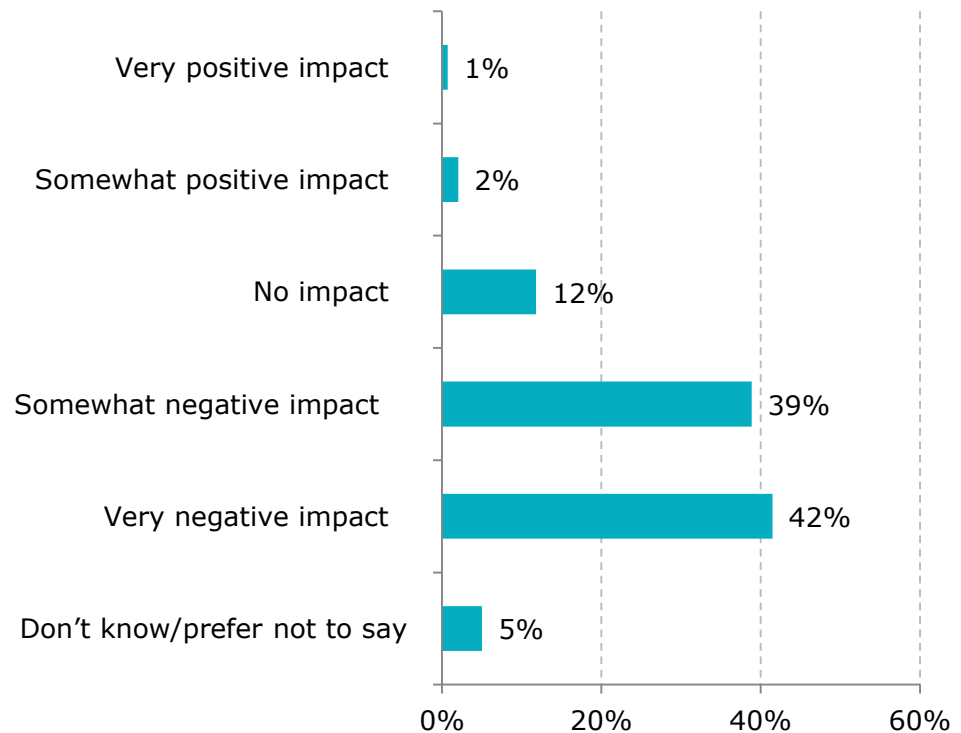
Three in ten Higher Education students have a vocational component to their course. Of these (over a third), the majority believe the Covid-19 outbreak will have a negative impact on the vocational element of their course.

### Vocational / vocational component



■ Yes ■ No

### Impact you think Coronavirus (Covid-19) will have on the vocational element of your course

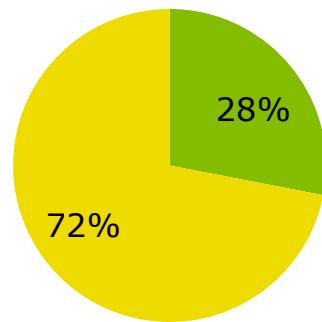


Weighted base: 2160 respondents. Balance: those who do not have a vocational element to their course

D5, D6. What impact, if any, do you think Coronavirus (Covid-19) will have on the vocational element of your course?

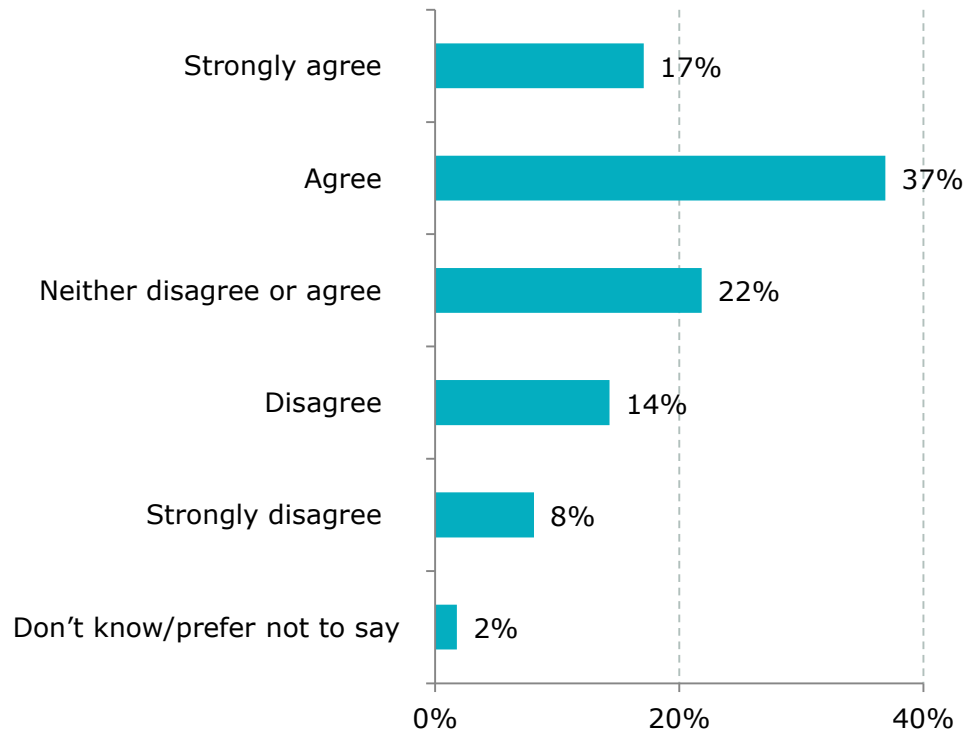
Of those who receive learning support from their institution, over half feel they have received adequate support to enable them to continue their work to the best of their ability throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Learning support



■ Yes ■ No

### Agreement that you have received adequate support from your institution to enable best ability

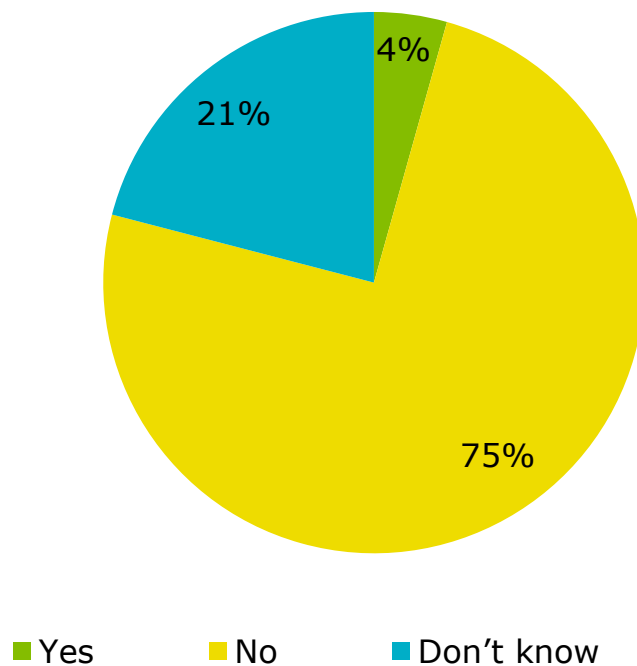


Weighted base: 2037 respondents. Balance: those who do not receive learning support from their institution

**D7, D8. How far do you agree or disagree that you have received adequate support from your institution to enable you to continue to work to your best ability throughout the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Only a small percentage have themselves or known of someone who has been disciplined for non-attendance as an attempt to minimise social interaction since the covid-19 outbreak.

**Have you, or anyone you know been disciplined for non-attendance as an attempt to minimise social interaction since the outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19)?**



■ Yes

■ No

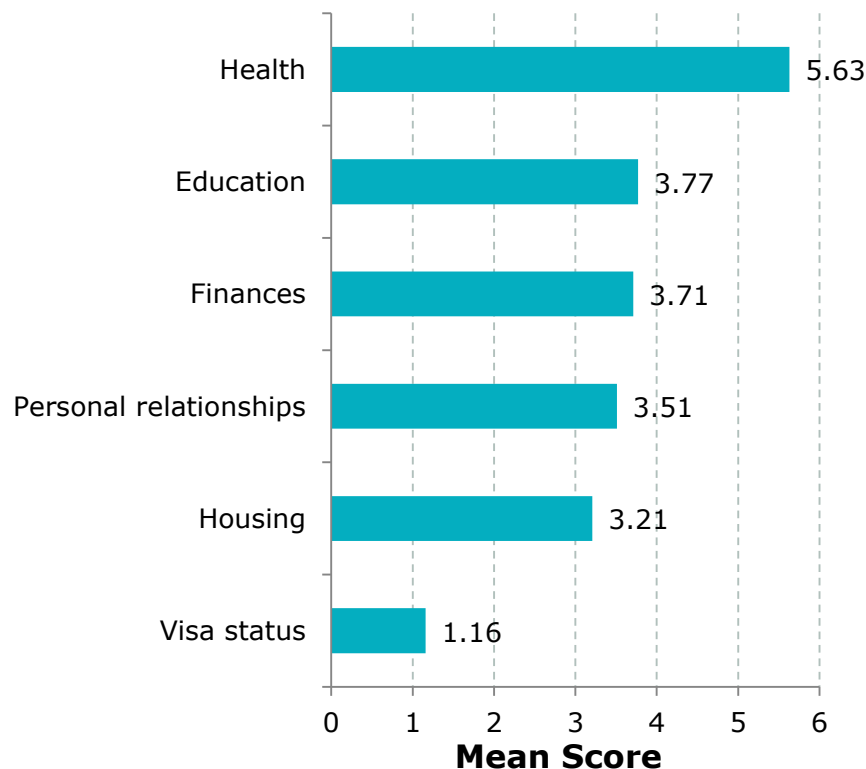
■ Don't know

Weighted Base: 7279 respondents. Balance: no response

**D9. Have you, or anyone you know been disciplined for non-attendance as an attempt to minimise social interaction since the outbreak of Coronavirus (Covid-19)?**

Unsurprisingly more than four in five students in HE ranked their health as the number 1 priority during the Covid-19 outbreak, Education was most likely to be ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important concern, followed by finances, personal relationships, housing, and then Visa status (which is only relevant for certain international students)

### Ranking of importance for yourself during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak



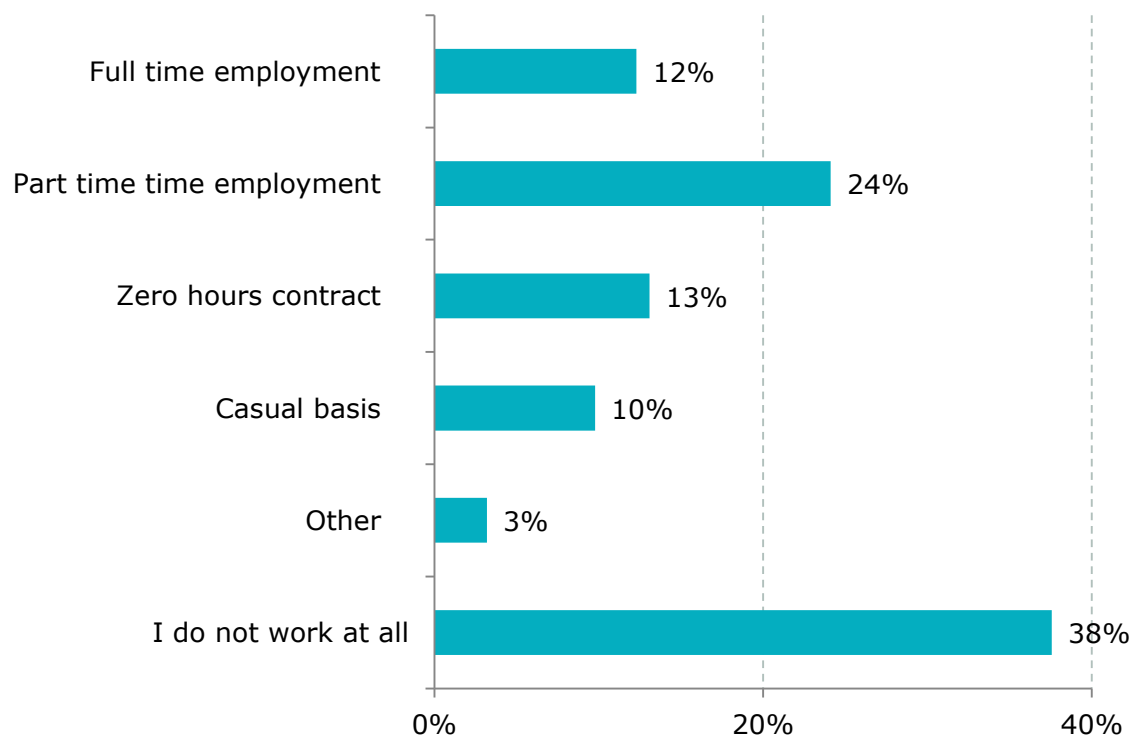
Weighted base: 6568 respondents Balance: no response

**D10. Please rank the following in order of importance for yourself during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, where 6 is the most important.**

# Income and Financial Circumstances

Over a third of students in HE are in either full or part time employment. One in seven have a zero hours contract. Almost two in five do not work at all.

### Job(s) held alongside studies

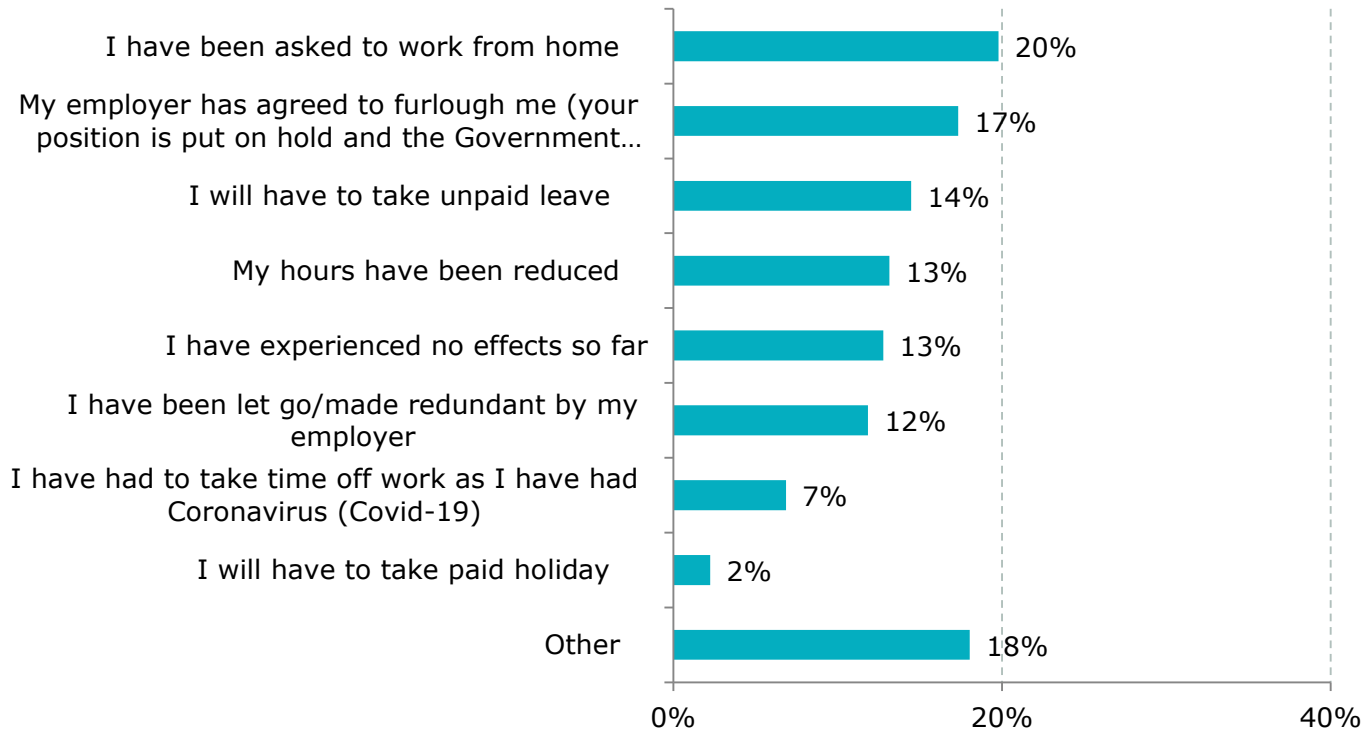


Weighted Base: 7300 respondents.

**E1. Do you have a job alongside your study? If you have several jobs, please choose your main one.**

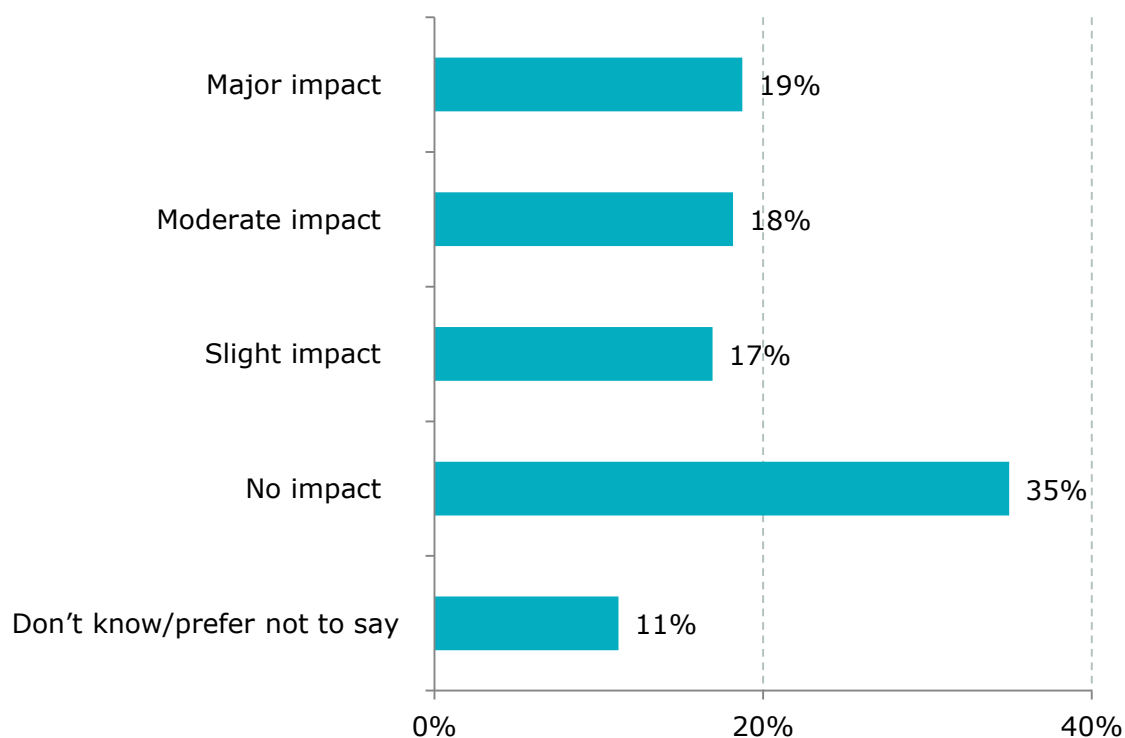
Of those students who currently work, one in six have been furloughed and one in eight have lost their jobs. One in six say they have not been affected.

### How work has been affected by Coronavirus (Covid-19)



Over half of Higher Education students say that the income of someone who supports them financially has been impacted by Covid-19, with one in five saying it has had a major impact.

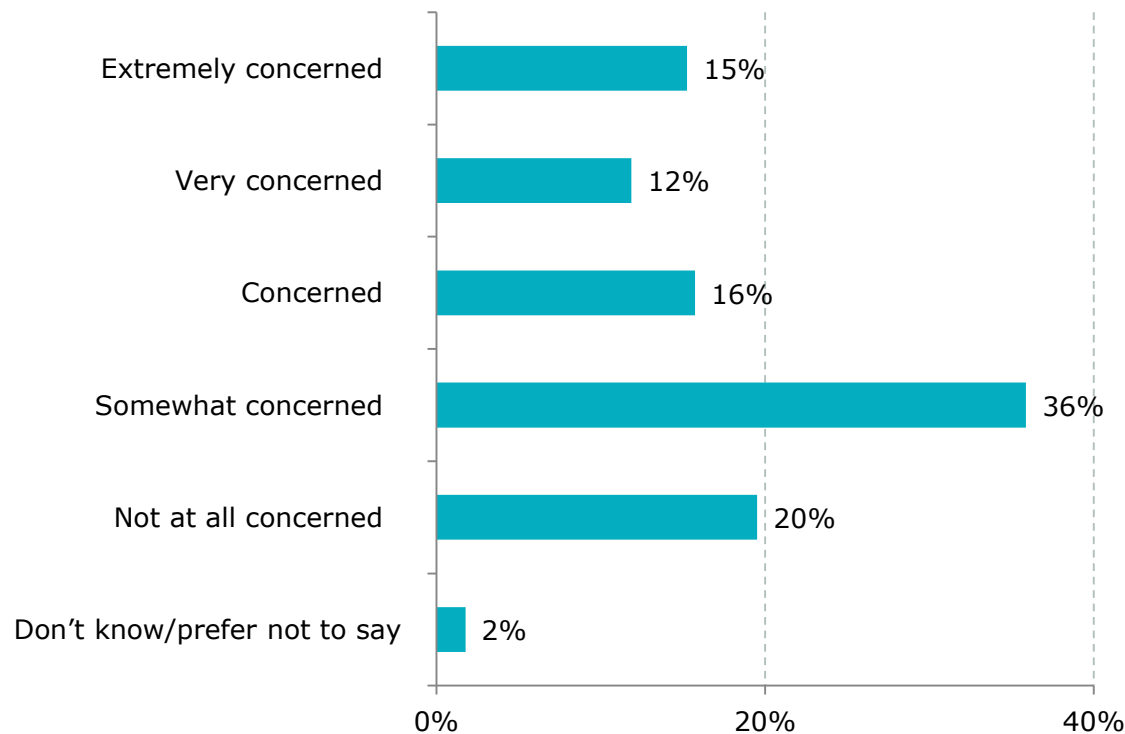
**Has the income of someone who helps support you financially been impacted by Coronavirus (Covid-19)?**





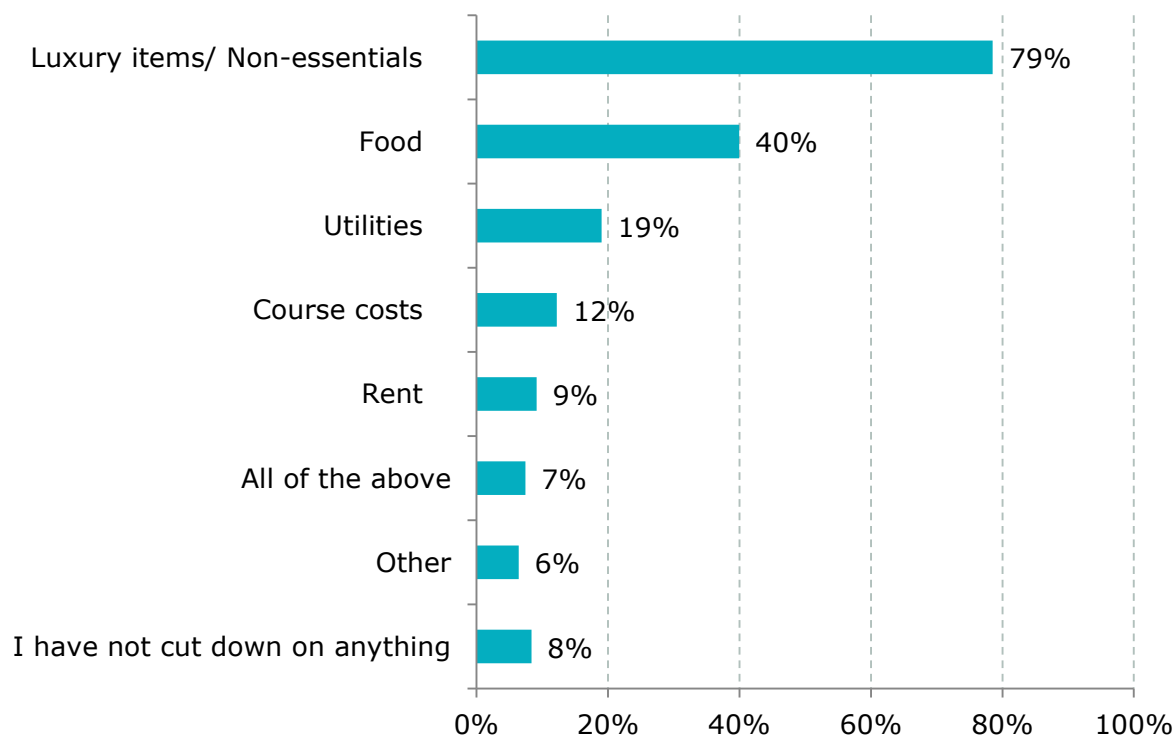
Four in five students are concerned about their ability to manage financially during the Covid-19 outbreak. Just over one in four are 'very' or 'extremely' concerned.

### Concern about ability to manage financially during outbreak



Almost four in five Higher Education students have cut back on luxury/non-essential items since the Covid-19 outbreak. Two in five have also cut back on food expenditure and around a fifth have cut back on utilities.

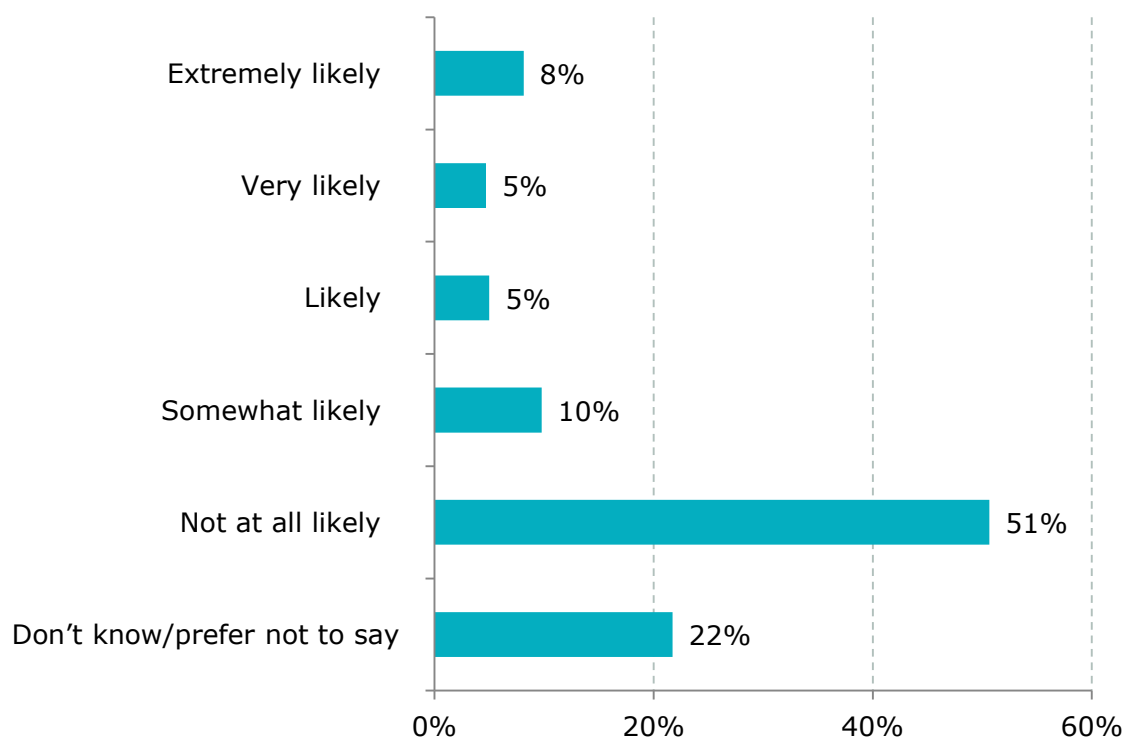
### Cutting back in terms of spending since Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak



# Accommodation

Over one in four students who are living in privately rented accommodation/owned halls of residence say there is some likelihood that they will need to stay in their current property beyond the original planned contract date.

### Likelihood of remaining in current property beyond original planned contract data

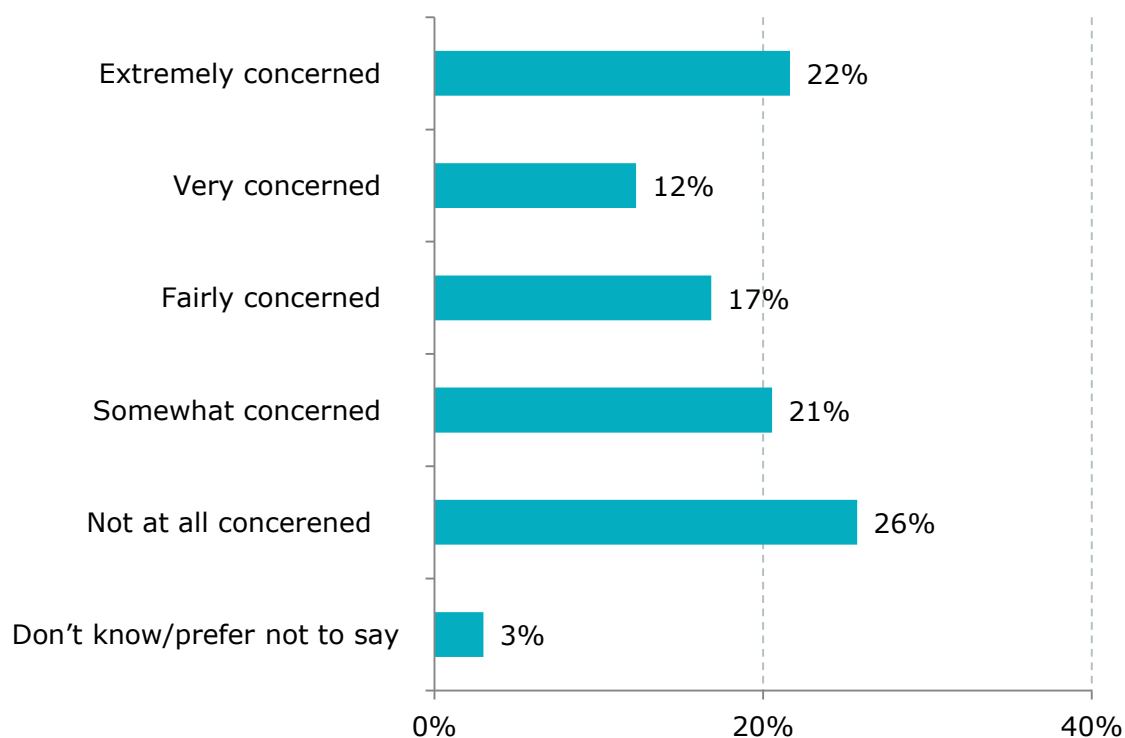


Weighted Base: 3923 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or owned halls of residence

**F1. How likely is it, if at all that you will need to remain in your current property beyond the originally planned contract date as a result of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak?**

Almost three in four are concerned to some extent about their ability to pay rent as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. One in three are 'very' or 'extremely' concerned.

### Level of concern about financial impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on ability to pay rent

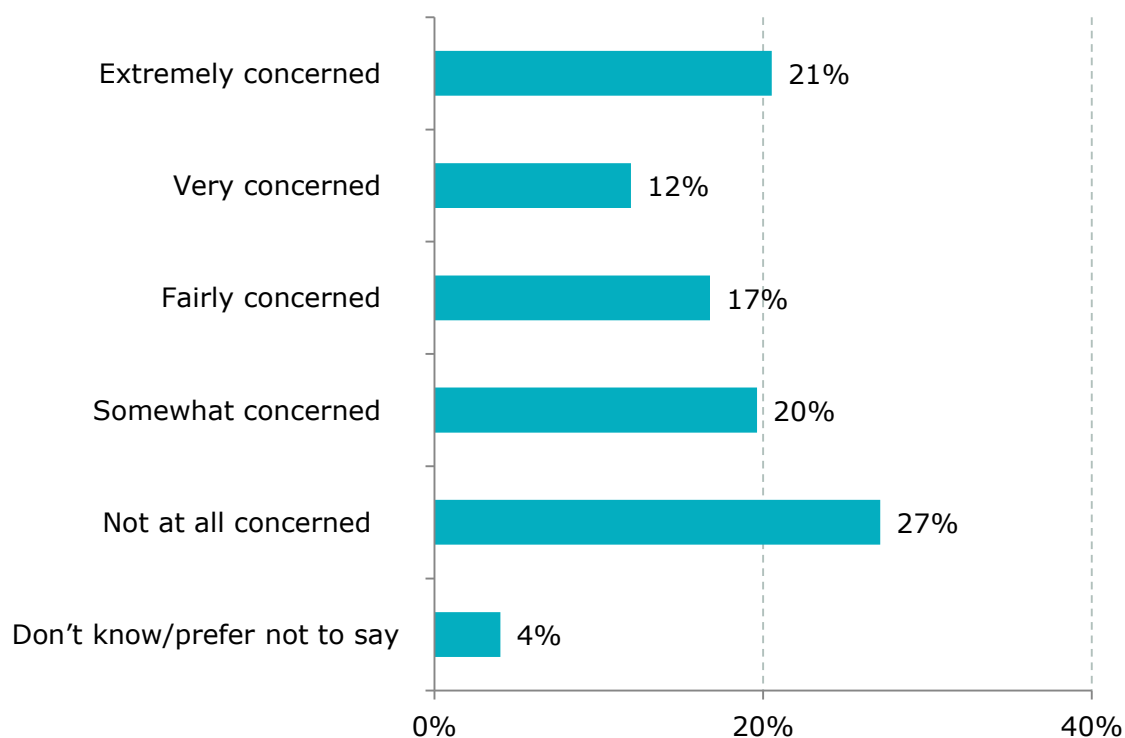


Weighted Base: 3922 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or owned halls of residence

**F3. How concerned are you, if at all, about the financial impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on your ability to pay rent?**

Seven in ten Higher Education students are concerned to some extent about their ability to pay their bills as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Again one in three are either 'very' or 'extremely' concerned.

### Level of concern about financial impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on ability to pay bills

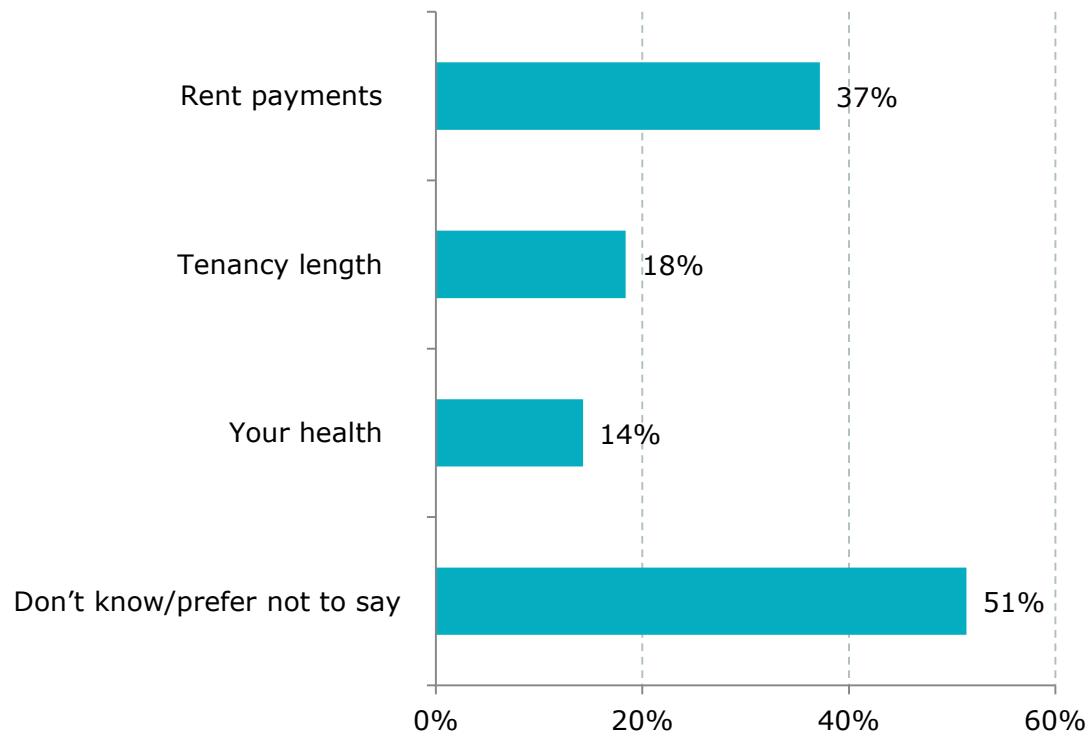


Weighted Base: 3920 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or owned halls of residence

**F4. How concerned are you, if at all, about the financial impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on your ability to pay bills?**

Over three in ten students have communicated with their landlord about rent payments, but fewer than one in five have communicated about their tenancy length or health.

### Have you spoken to your landlord about these issues?

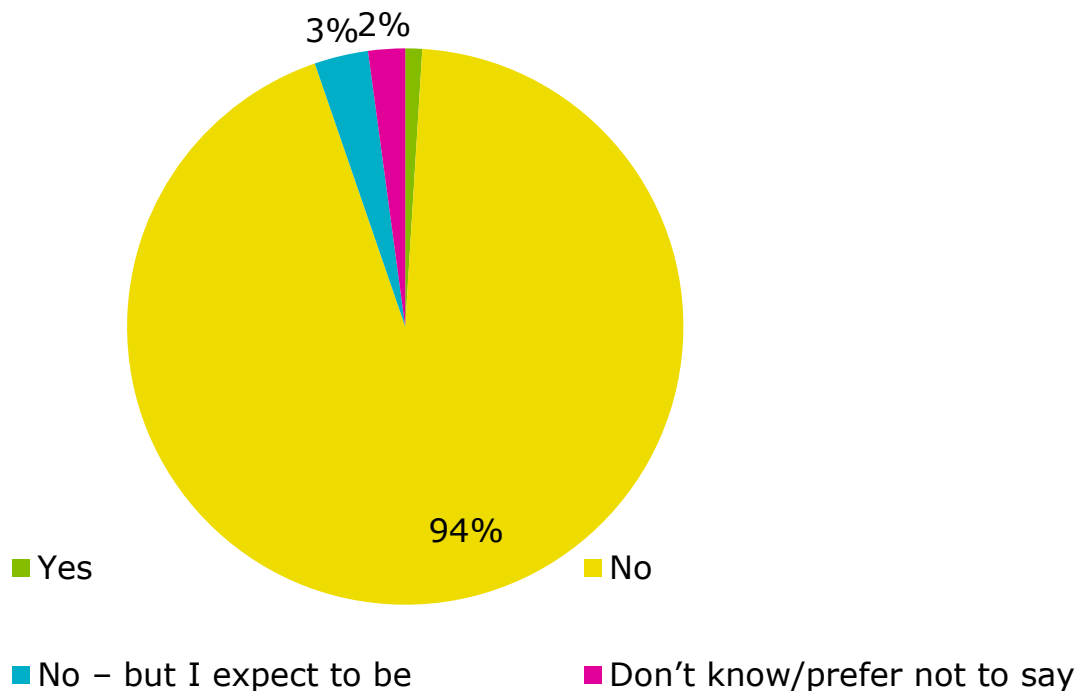


Weighted Base: 3389 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or privately owned halls of residence

**F5 and F6. Have you discussed or had any communication with your landlord/accommodation provider on any of the following issues during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Encouragingly the majority of students in private rented accommodation/owned halls of residence have not been issued with an eviction notice.

**Have you been issued with an eviction notice?**



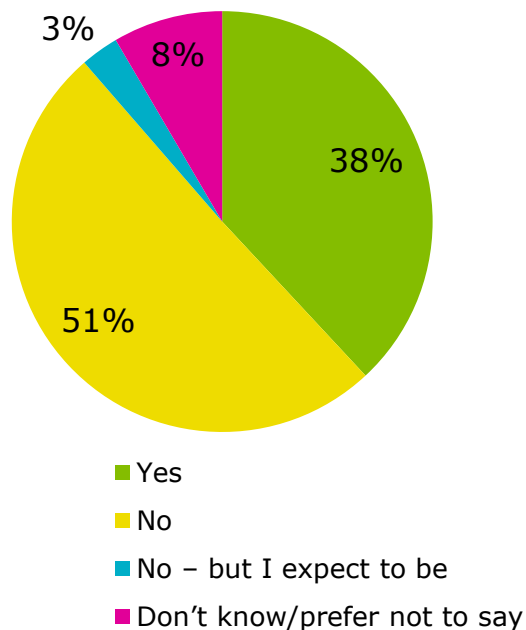
Weighted Base: 3921 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or privately owned halls of residence

**F7. Have you been issued with an eviction notice?**



Just over one in three students would like to be released early from their rental obligations. The main reason given for this preference is the fact that learning has now moved online. The desire to be with their family is also a key reason for two in three students saying they would like to be released early from their contracts.

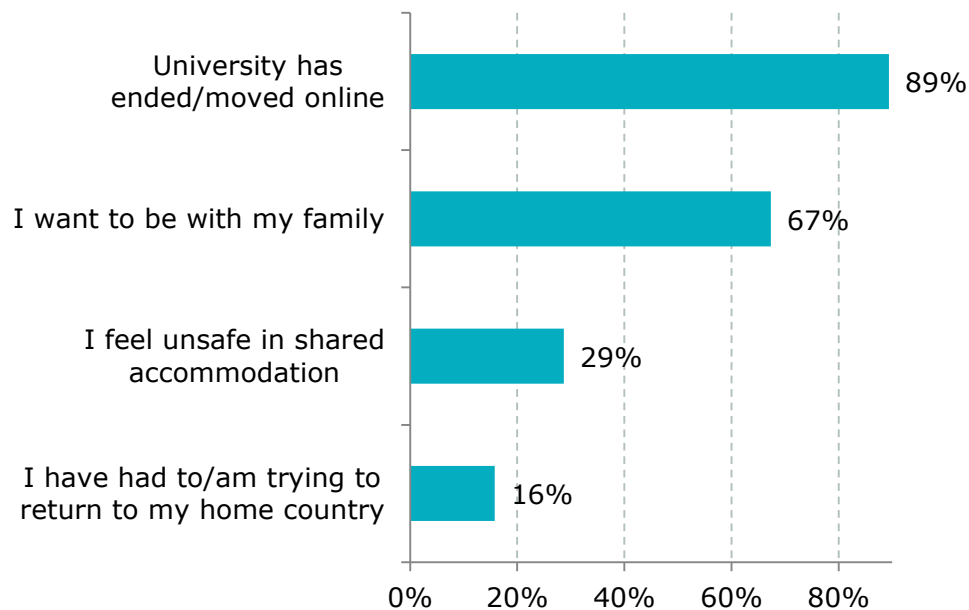
### Preference for being released from rental early?



Weighted Base: 3869 respondents. Balance : those who have been issued with an eviction notice

**F8. As a result of Coronavirus, would you like to be released from your current tenancy contract/rent obligations early and move out?**

### Why do you want to be released from your contract?

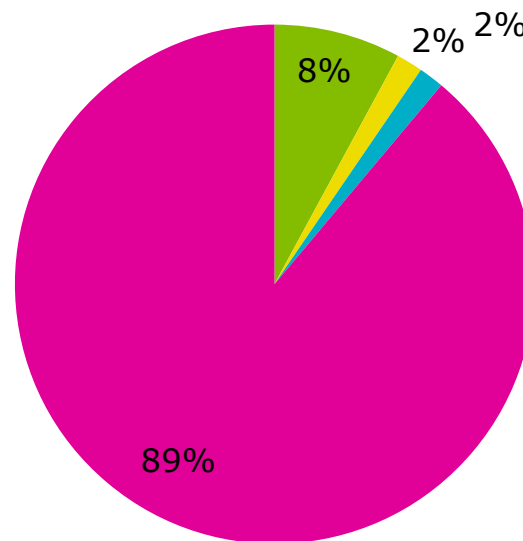


Weighted Base: 1464 respondents. Balance : those who do not want to be released from their contract

**F9. Why do you want to be released from your contract?**

However, just over one in ten have been given the opportunity to be released early from their tenancy/rental obligations.

**Has your landlord given you the option to release early from your current contract?**



■ Yes ■ Yes, but with a fee ■ Yes, but not as early as I would like ■ No

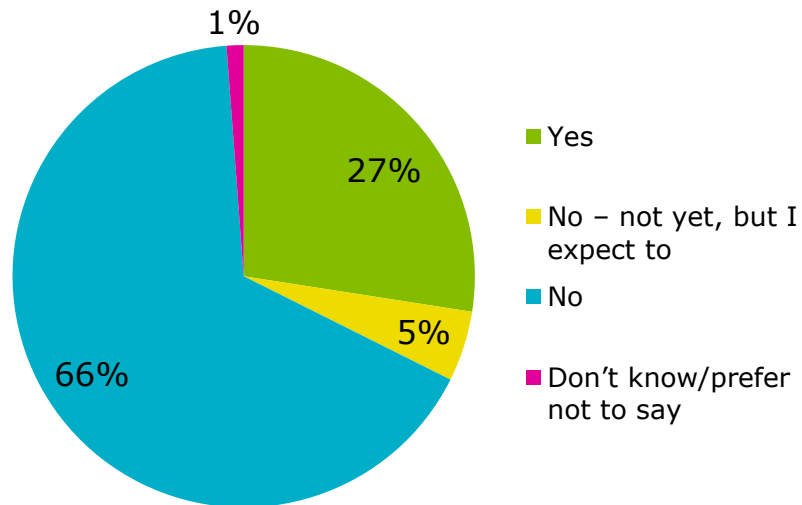
Weighted Base: 3927 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or privately owned halls of residence

**F10. Has your landlord/accommodation provider offered you the opportunity to be released early from your current tenancy/rent obligations as a result of Coronavirus?**

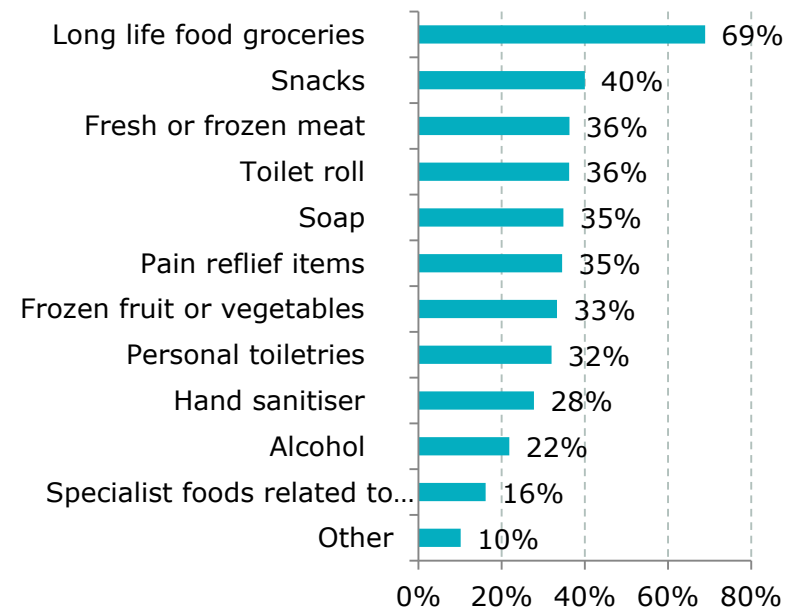
# Consumption/Goods and Purchases

Just over one in four Higher Education students say they have purchased something more than usual. In the main this has related to long life groceries. Snacks, fresh or frozen meat and toilet roll were also mentioned by over one in three as items that they have purchased more of than usual.

### Have you purchased more of anything than usual?



### What items have you bought/are considering buying more of in the last 3 weeks?

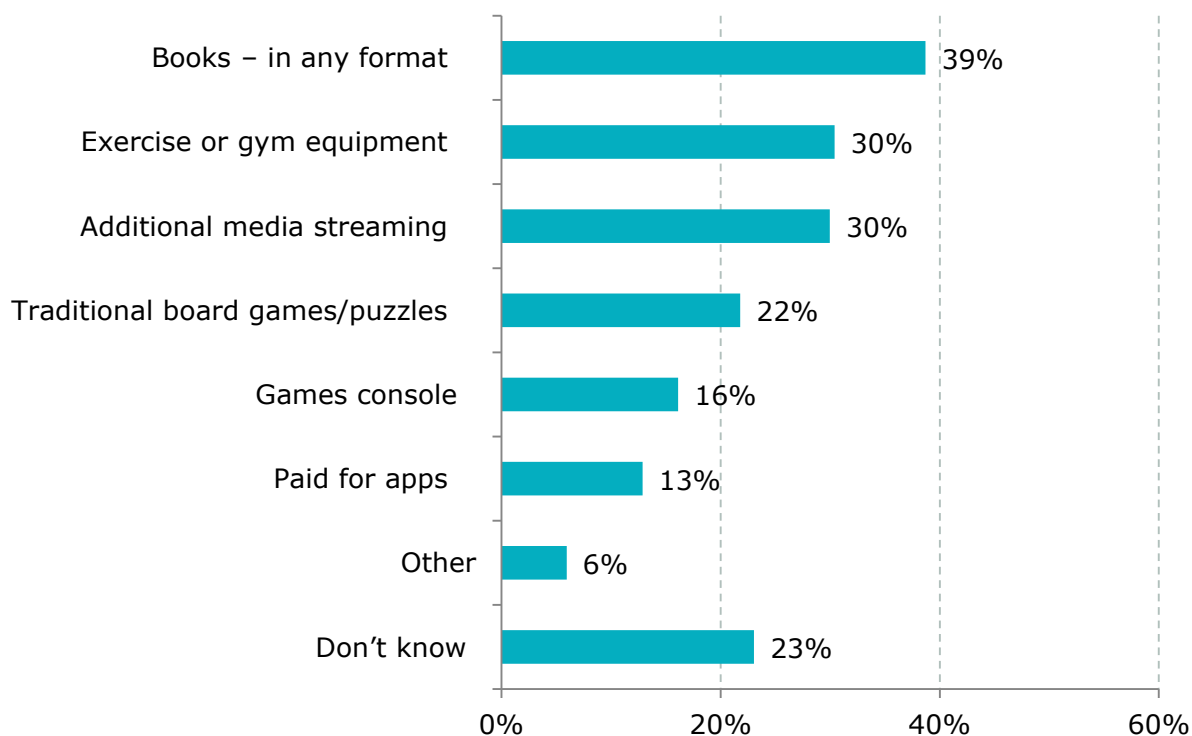


Weighted Base: 2353 respondents. Balance : those who have not bought/don not expect to buy more than usual

**G2. Please tell us what items you have bought more of in the past 3 weeks, or are considering buying?**

In an attempt to manage self-isolation and movement restrictions students are most likely to be buying books, equipment to aid exercise or additional media streaming.

**What have you/are you considering buying to manage self isolation or movement restrictions?**



Weighted Base: 6656 respondents. Balance: no response

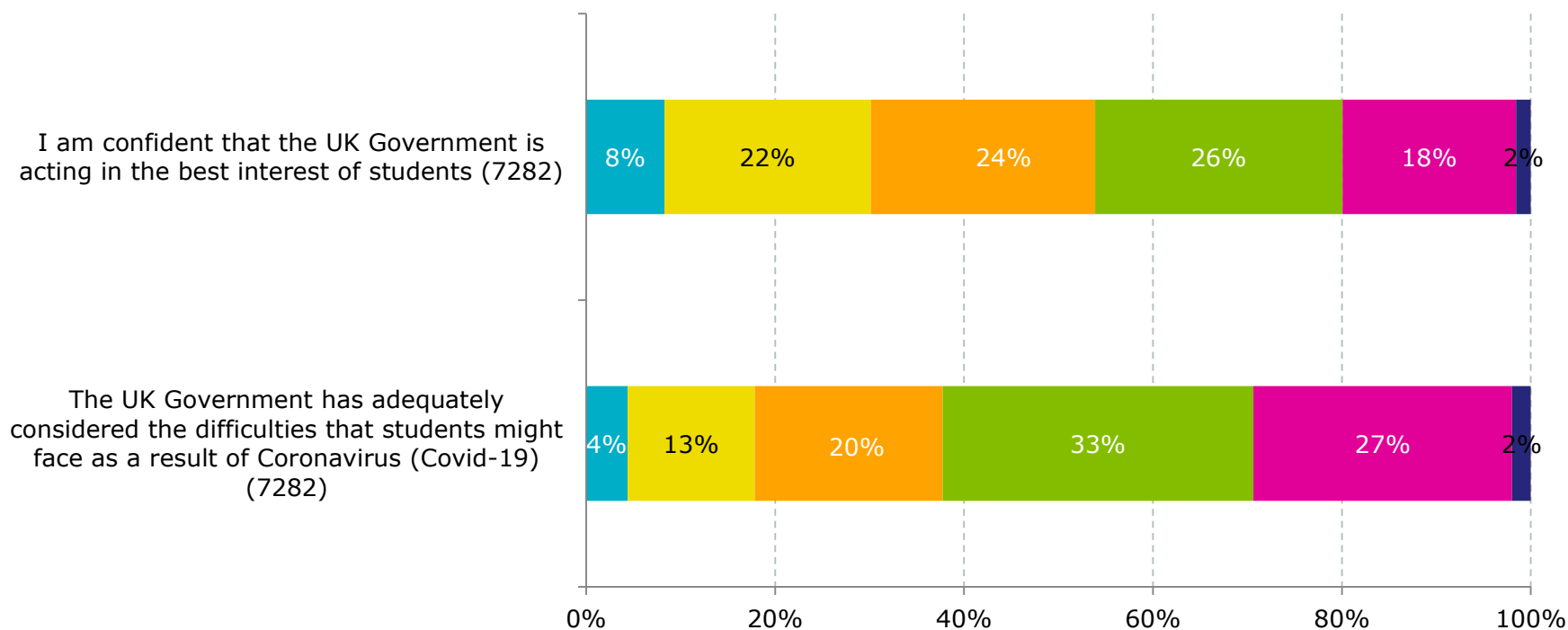
**G3. Have you, or are you considering buying any of the below to manage either self isolation or the newly announced movement restrictions?**

# Government actions

More students (two in five) disagree than agree (one on three) that the UK Government is acting in the best interests of students. Almost two in three however disagree that the UK Government has adequately considered the difficulties students face as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

### Agreement with statements – UK Government

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know/Not applicable

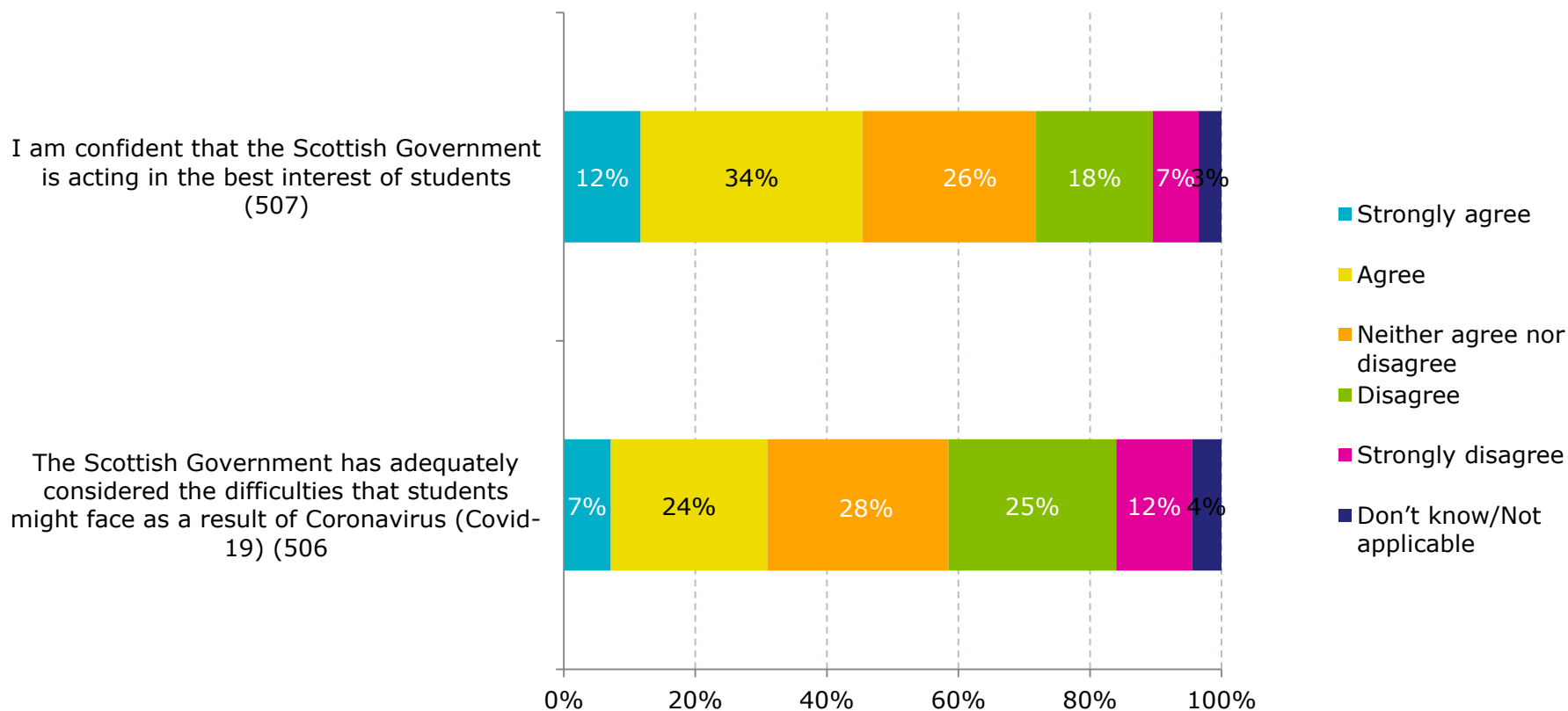


Weighted Base: (in brackets). Balance: no response

**H1. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Just over two in five Higher Education students studying in Scotland agree they are confident the Scottish Government is acting in the best interest of students. Fewer agree that the Scottish Government is adequately considering the difficulties students are facing as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

### Agreement with statements – Scottish Government



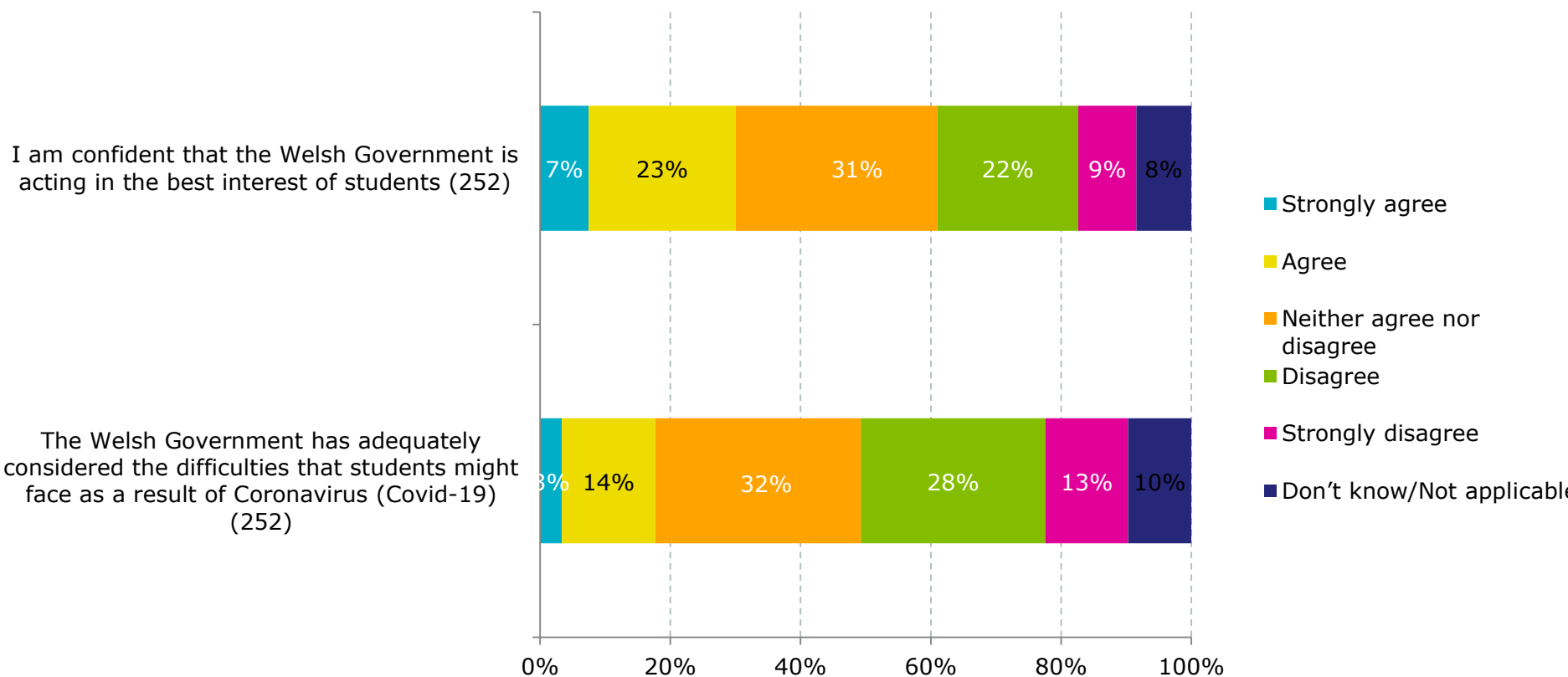
Base: (in brackets). Balance: students not studying in Scotland

**H2. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**



Only three in ten of Higher Education students studying in Wales agree that the Welsh Government is acting in the best interests of students. Even fewer agree that the Welsh Government is adequately considering the difficulties students are facing as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

### Agreement with statements – Welsh Government



Base: (in brackets). Balance: students not studying in Wales

**H3. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Less than 20 of 126 Higher Education students studying in Northern Ireland agree that the NI Executive are acting in the best interests of students. Fewer agree that the NI Executive are adequately considering the difficulties students are facing as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

### Agreement with statements – Northern Ireland Executive

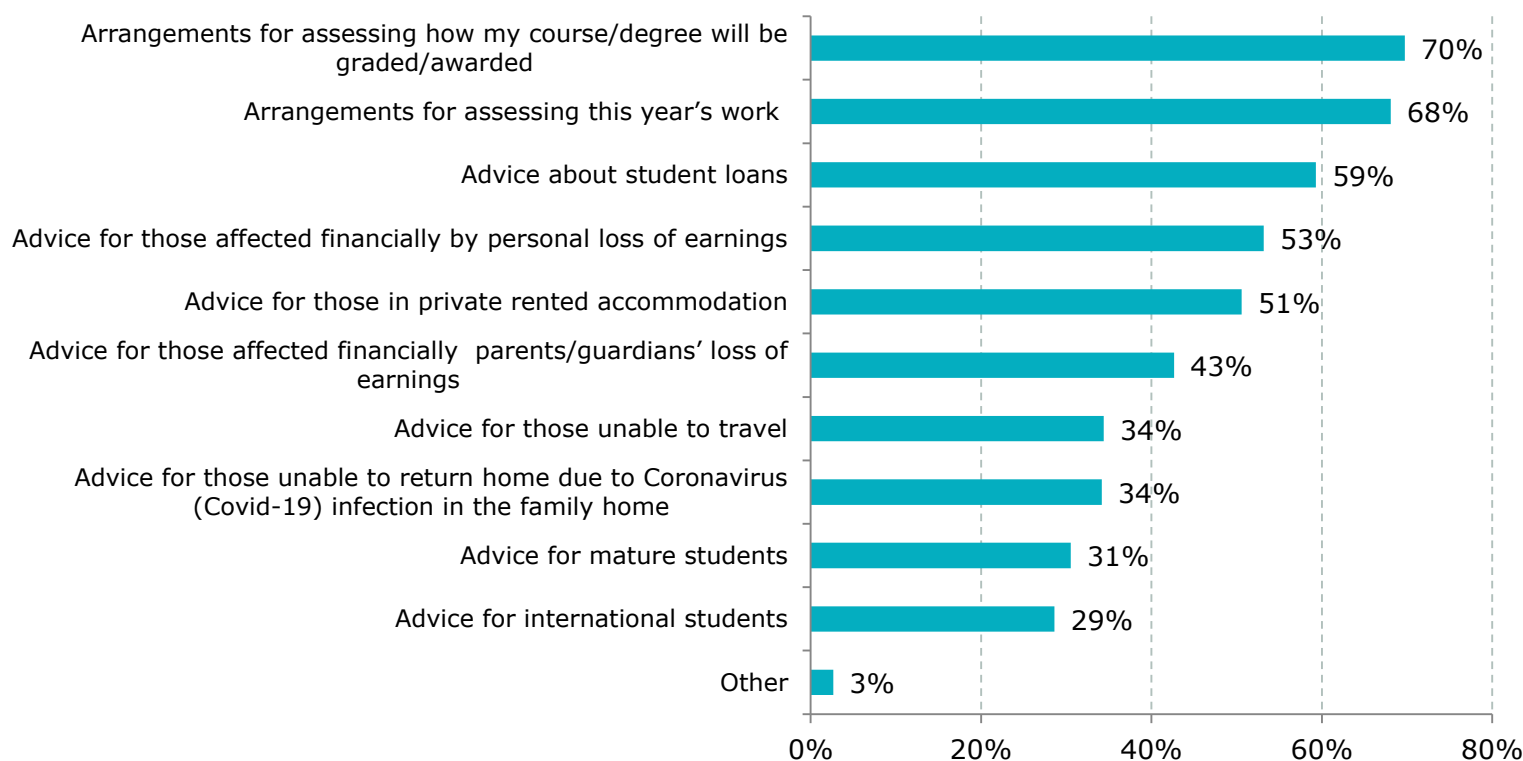


Base: (in brackets). Balance: students not studying in Northern Ireland

**H4. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Seven in ten Higher Education students would like further info/guidance from governments on how their course/degree will be graded/awarded. Similar numbers would like further info/guidance on how this year's work will be assessed.

### Other information/guidance would like from governments

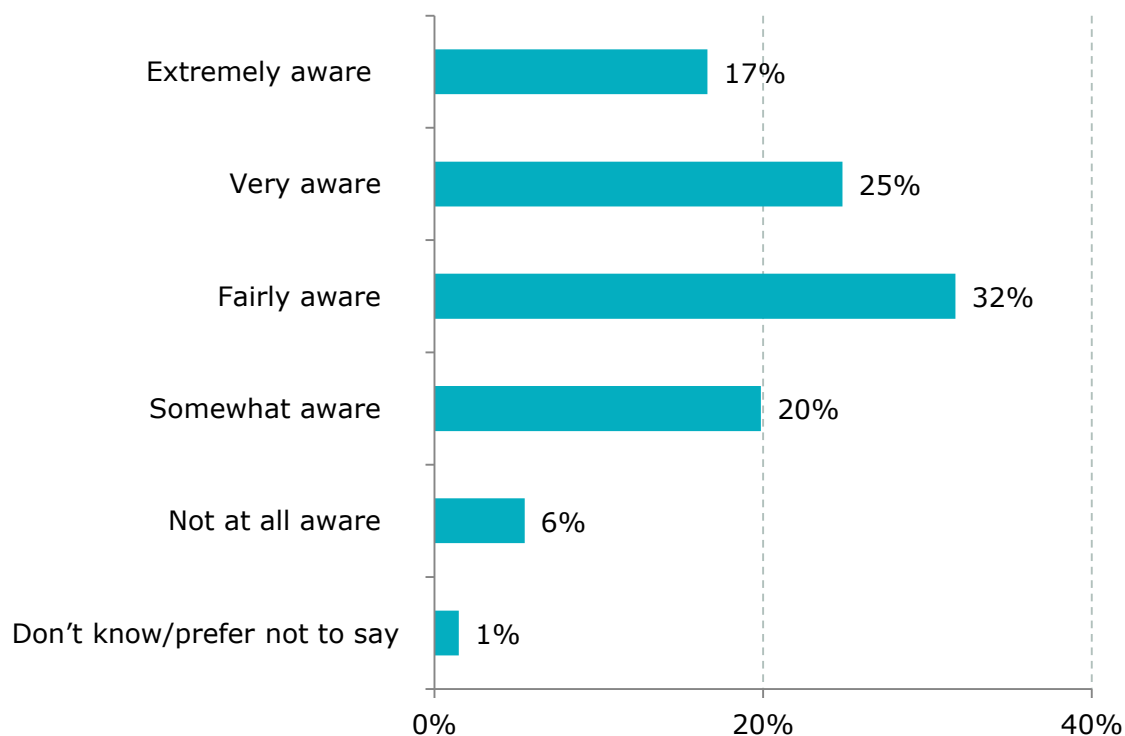


Weighted Base: 7096 respondents. Balance: no response

**H5. What further information or guidance would you like the relevant Governments (UK, Scottish, Welsh and NI) to issue for students?**

The vast majority of students are aware to some extent of the measures the governments are taking so far to combat the economic impacts of the Covid-19. Two in five are either 'very' or 'extremely' aware.

### Awareness of Government measures to combat economic impacts



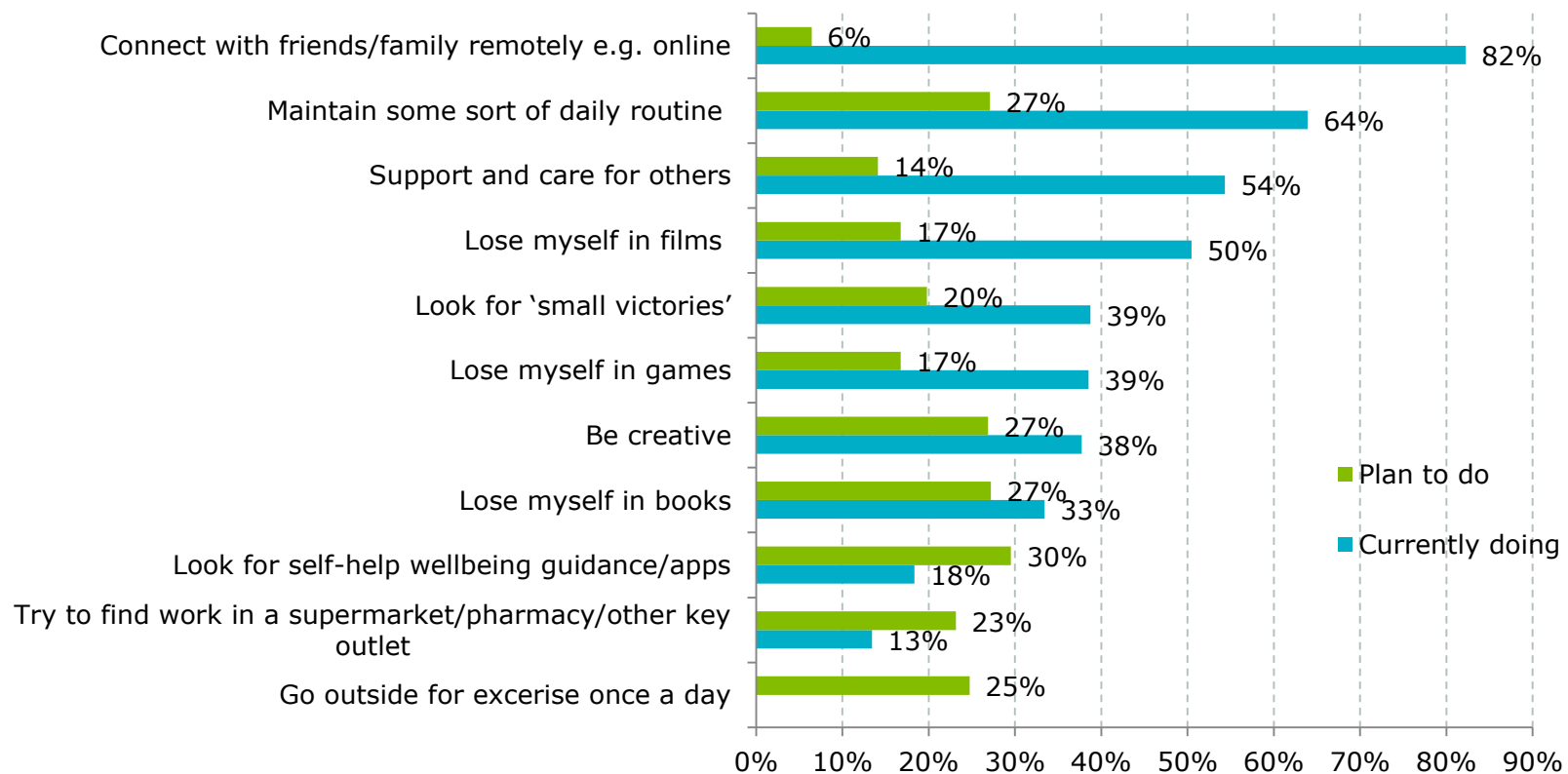
Weighted Base: 7278 respondents. Balance: no response

**H6. How aware are you, if at all, of the measures that the relevant Governments (UK, Scottish, Welsh and NI) have taken so far to combat the economic impacts of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

# Self isolating/your health/movement restrictions

The vast majority of respondents currently connect with friends and family online. They are less likely to look for self help, or work in a supermarket.

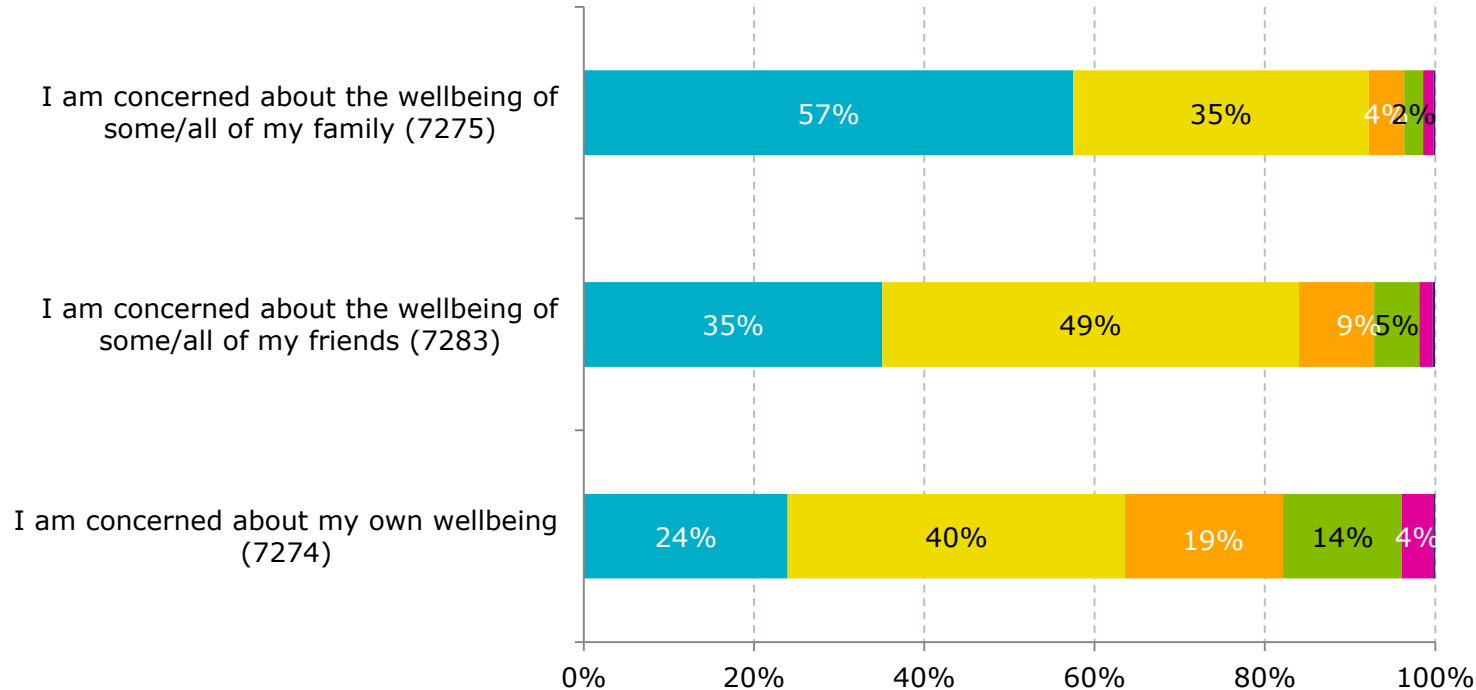
### What are you currently doing/plan to do to support your well being?



Respondents are more likely to be concerned about the wellbeing of their family than of themselves or their friends

### Agreement with statements

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know/Not applicable



Weighted Base: (in brackets). Balance no response

12. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements as a result of Coronavirus (Covid-19)?

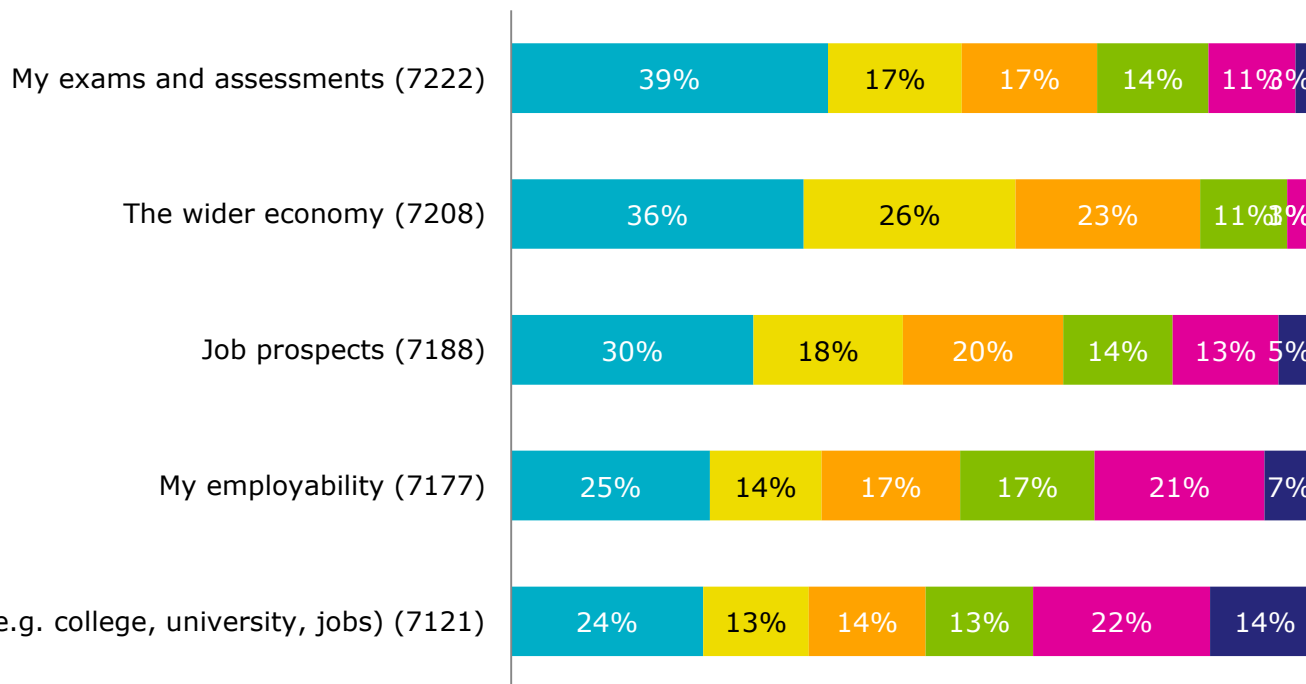
# The future



Students are most likely to show a high level of concern for their exams and assessment, closely followed by the wider economy

### Levels of concern about impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19)

■ Extremely concerned    ■ Very concerned    ■ Concerned  
■ Somewhat concerned    ■ Not at all concerned    ■ Don't know/Not applicable



Weighted Base: (in brackets) respondents. Balance: no response

**J1. How concerned are you about the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on the following?**

Students are concerned about the impact of the virus on so many aspects of their studies and student life. These are just the main areas highlighted

### Key themes:

- **Completion of assessments**
- **Lack of time** to prepare / meeting deadlines
- Having to **work / submit online**
- Grades and **grade prediction**
- Lack of **motivation / focus / concentration**
- **Impact on stress and health**

*"Not having enough time to submit assessments during these difficult and challenging times. Think all assignments should be put in hold"*

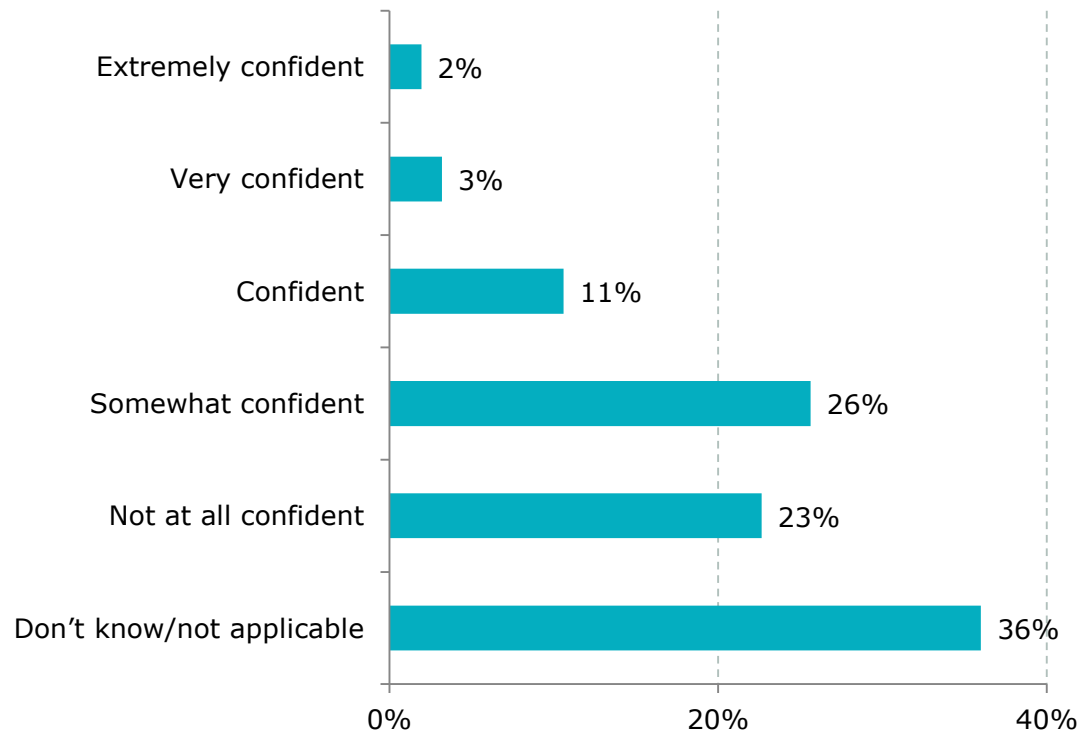
*"The fact that the unis are trying to give alternative assessment but there's so many unknowns and changes on a higher gov level."*

*"It's an art course so the fact that it is now online for my final assessment is not what I paid for and no final show."*

*"Have not yet been informed how grades will be calculated/what we will do instead of an exam."*

Over a third of students simply don't know whether enrolment for next years studies will take place in person on campus or remotely.

**Confidence that next year of study enrolment will take place in person on campus**

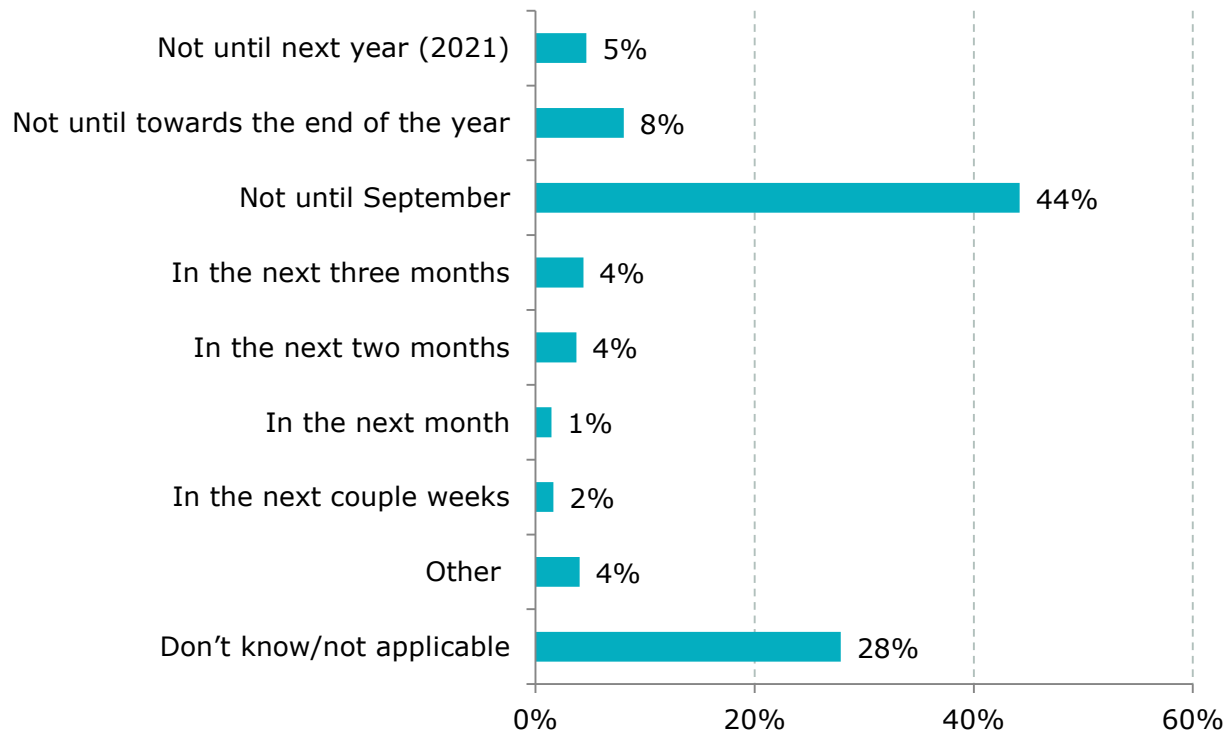


Weighted Base: 7260 respondents. Balance: no response

**J3. Thinking ahead to your next year of study, how confident are you that enrolment will take place in person on campus as opposed to remotely?**

Students most commonly believe that they will return to study in September.

### When expect to return to studying?

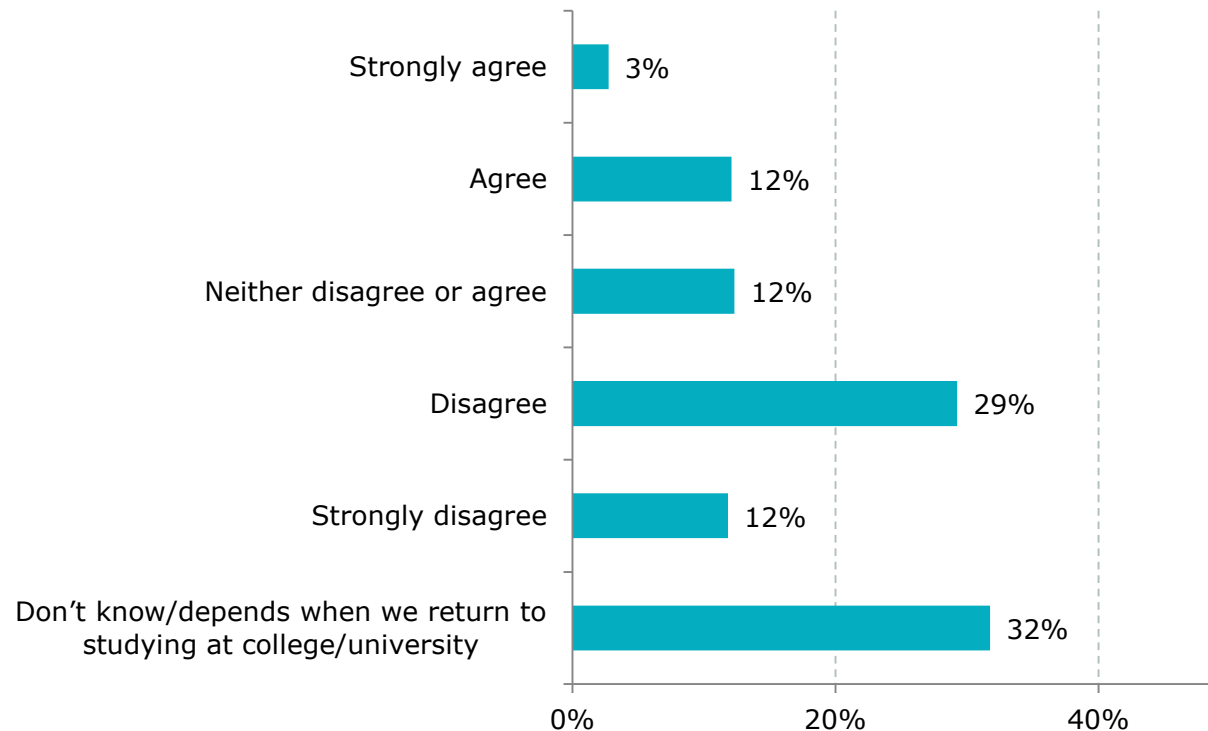


Weighted Base: 7297 respondents.

**J4. When do you expect to return to studying at your college/university?**

Almost two in five do not expect that they will return to 'business as usual' when they recommence their studies. Around a third are unsure and believe it will be down to when they actually return to their course

### Expectation that when you return to studying it will be 'business as usual'



Weighted Base: 7254 respondents. Balance: no response

**J5. When you return to studying at your college/university how far do you agree or disagree that it will be 'business as usual' e.g. Fresher's Fairs taking place, Clubs & Societies running as normal, large scale events happening etc.**

# Demographics

# Key demographics (weighted base)

## Gender



Women 54%

Men 44%

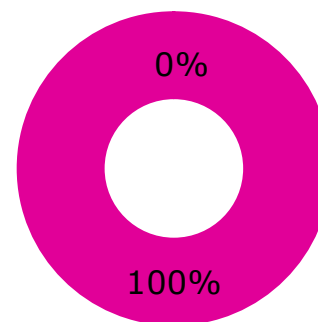
## Age



## Level of study

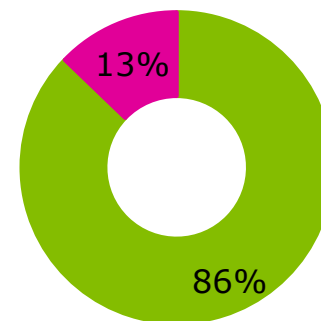
■ FE

■ HE



■ I am a UK citizen studying in the UK

■ I am an international student from within the EU studying in the UK



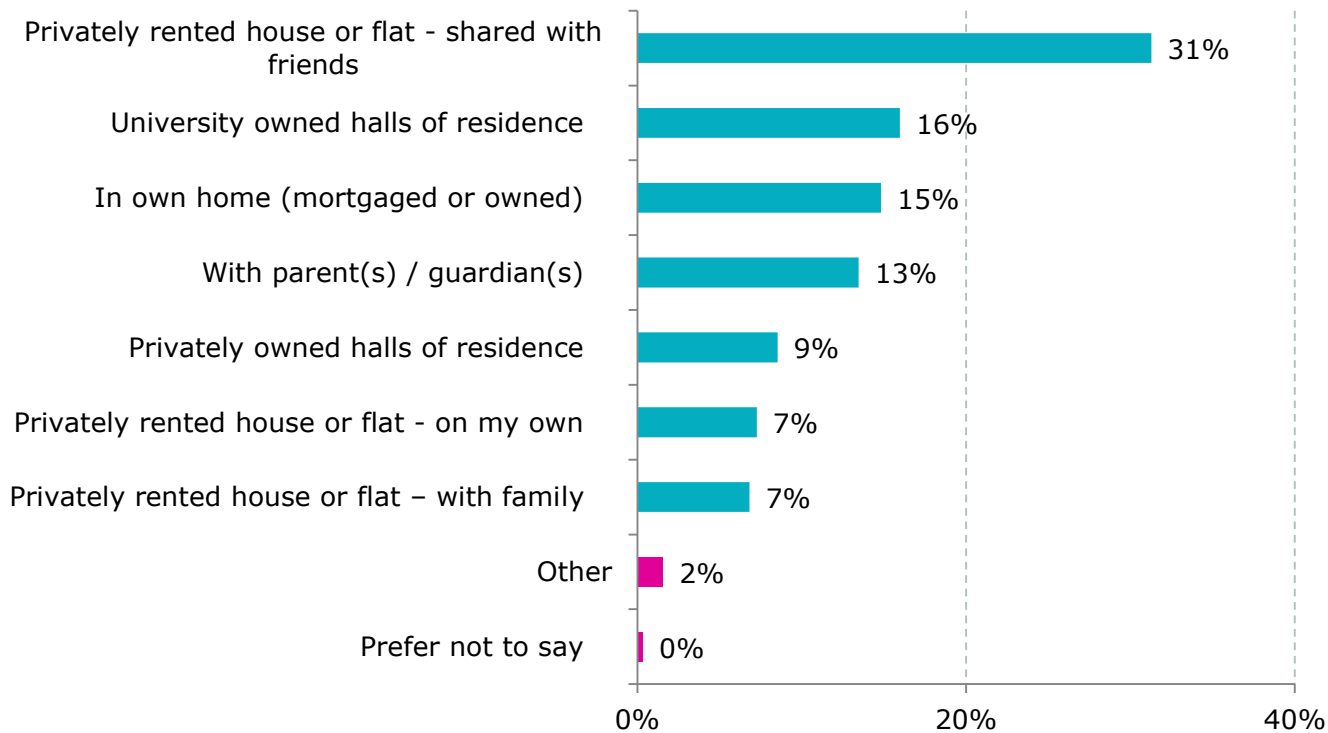
**Full time: 83%**

**Part time: 12%**

**Distance learner: 8%**

# Demographics

## Usual term time living circumstances before the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak



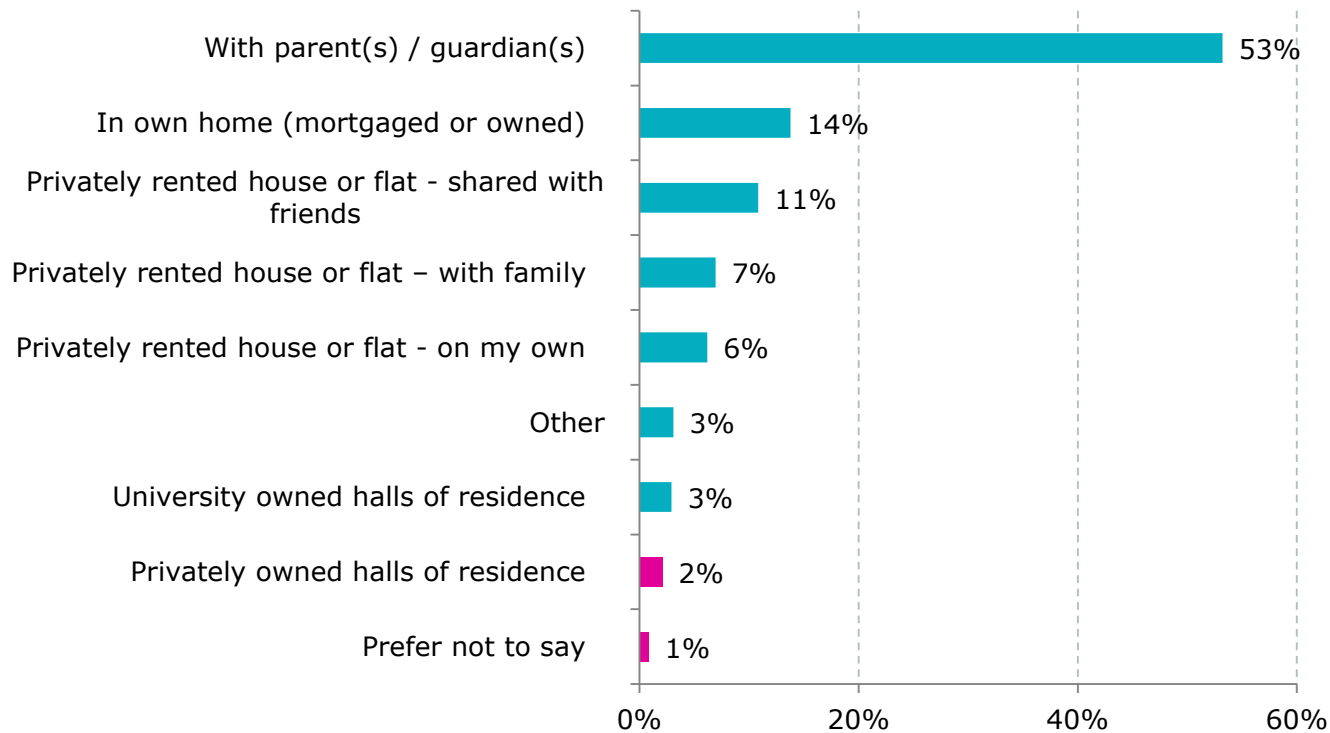
Weighted Base: 7307 respondents

**A3. Which of the following statements best describes your usual term time living circumstances before the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak?**



# Demographics

## Current living circumstances

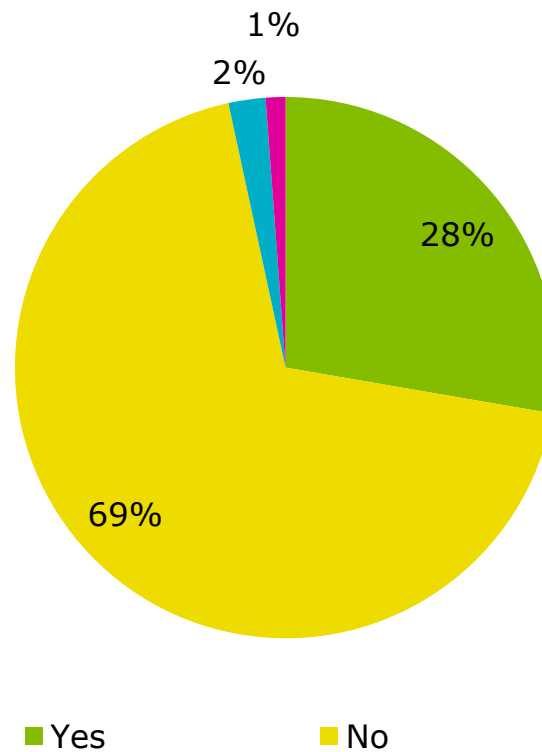


Weighted Base: 6662 respondents Balance : circumstances not changed, no response

**A4. If your living circumstances have recently changed as a result of Coronavirus (Covid-19), please select the option which best reflects where you now are.**

# Demographics

## Disability, impairment or long term health condition

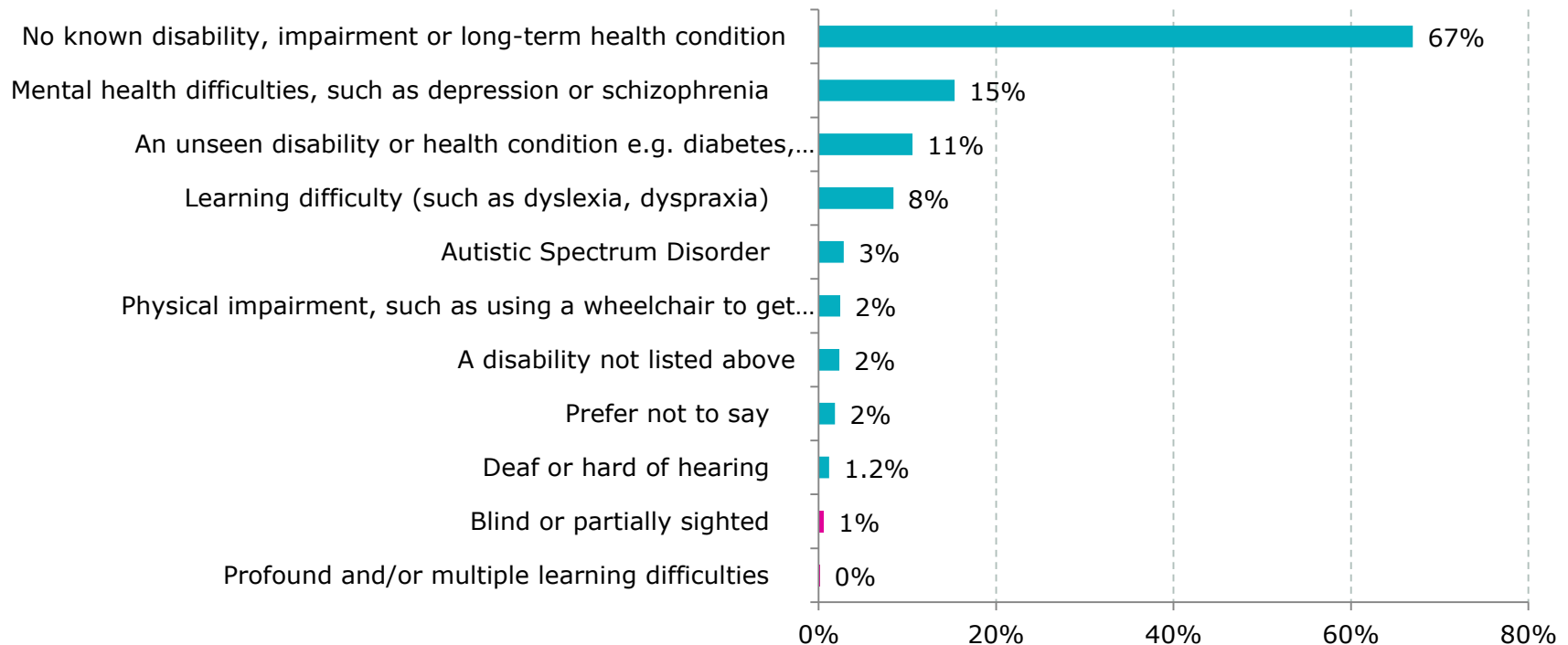


Weighted Base: 7307 respondents.

**A6. Do you consider yourself to have a specific learning disability, other disability, impairment or long-term health condition?**

# Demographics

## Disability, impairment or long term health condition

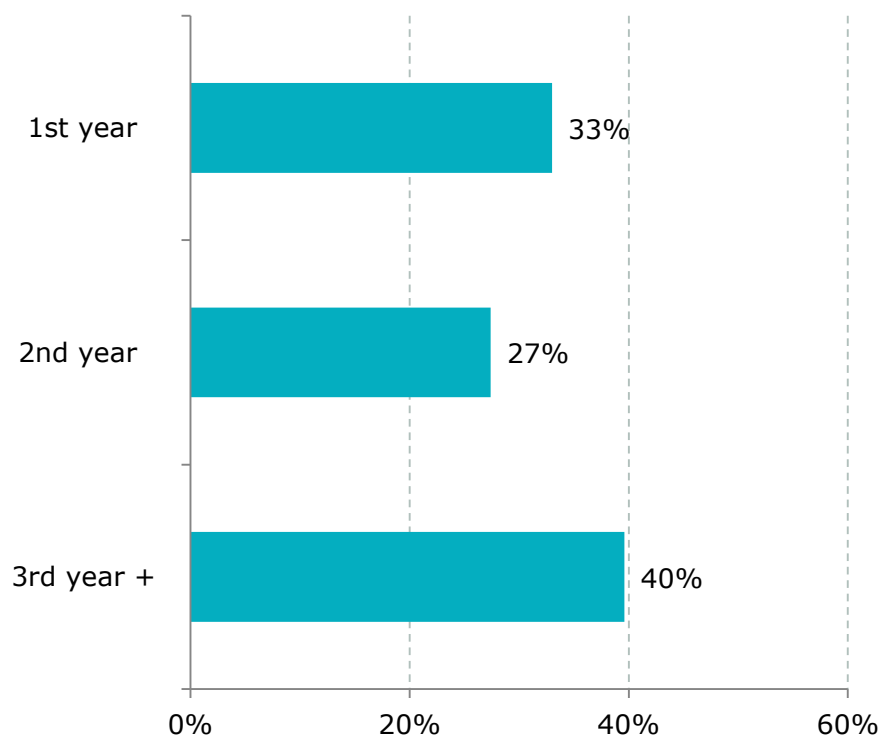


Weighted Base: 7307 respondents

**A7. Please describe your disability, impairment or long-term health condition**

# Demographics

## HE Year of study

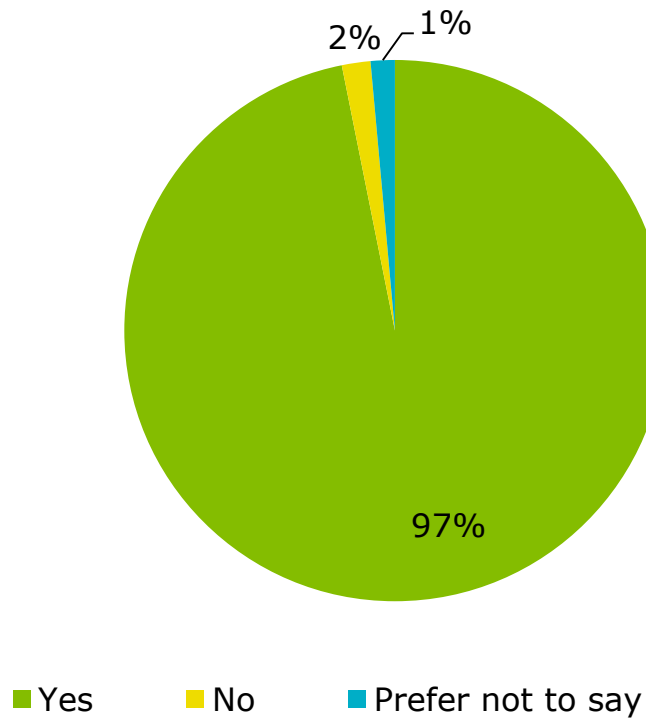


Weighted Base: 5691 respondents Balance : no response

**L1. And what year of study are you in?**

# Demographics

**Does your gender identity match the gender you were assigned at birth?**

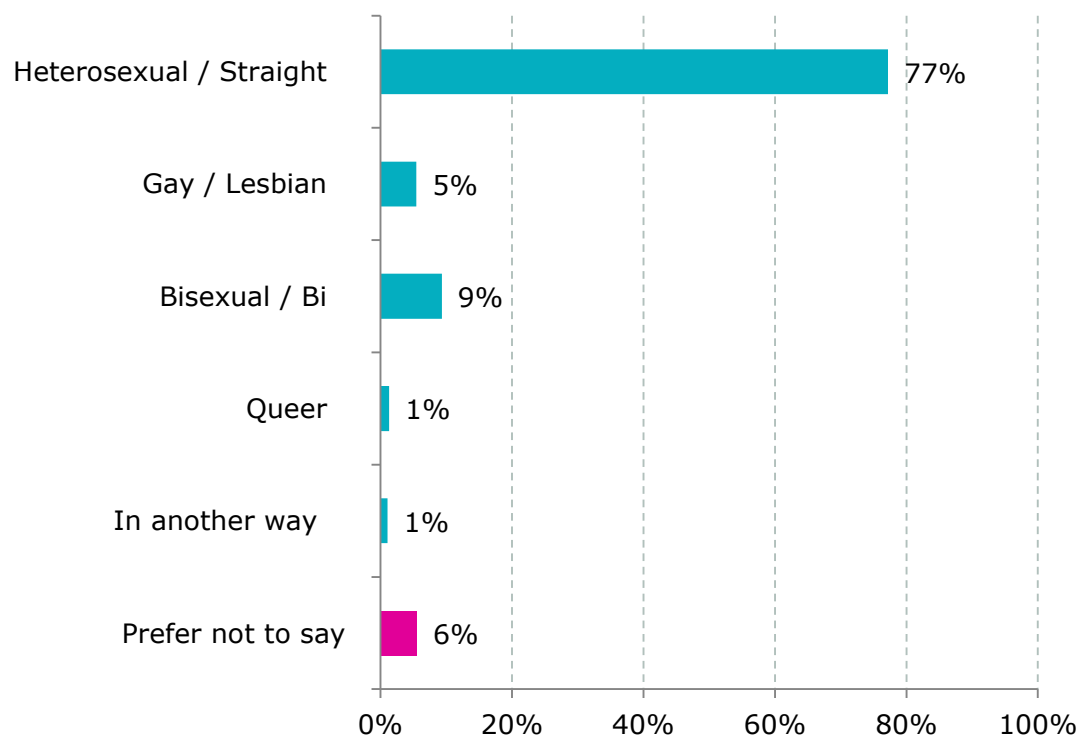


Weighted Base: 7307 respondents.

**L5. Does your gender identity match the gender you were assigned at birth?**

# Demographics

## Sexual orientation/preference

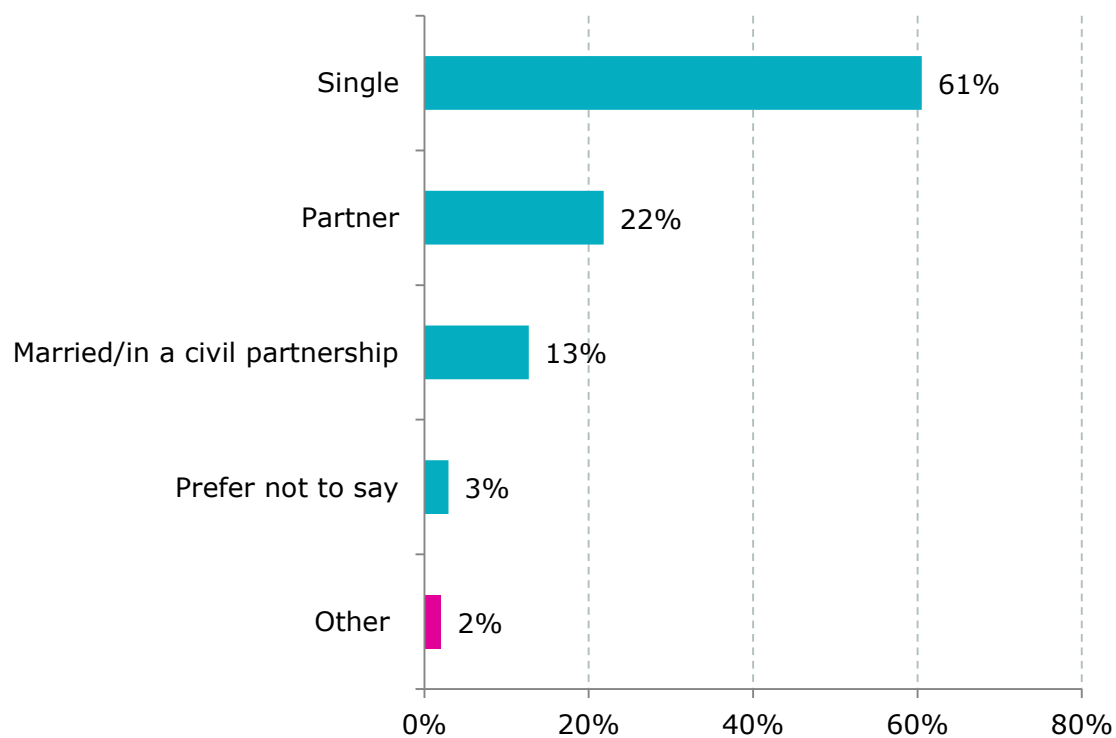


Weighted Base: 7307 respondents.

**L6. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation/preference?**

# Demographics

## Marital status

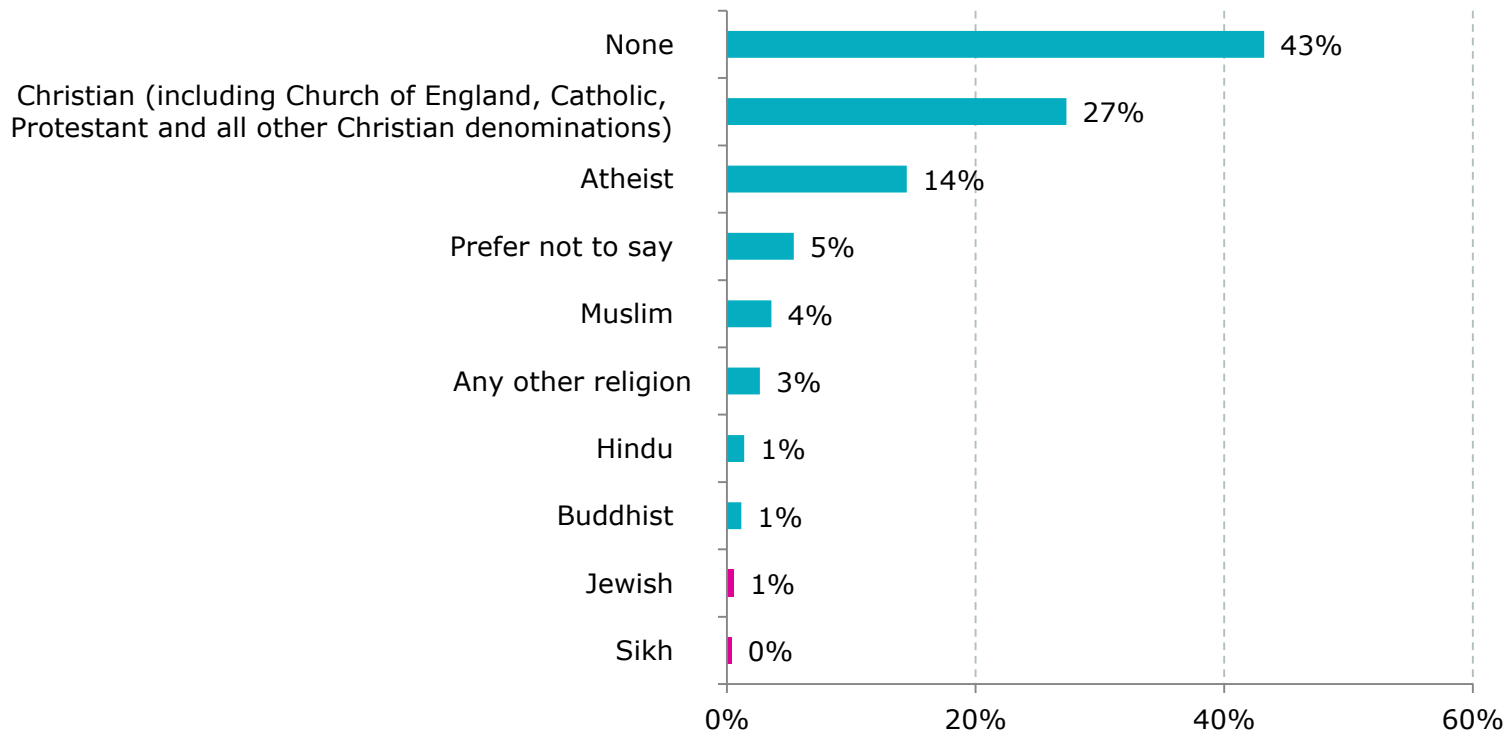


Weighted Base: 7307 respondents.

**L7. Which of the following best describe your marital status?**

# Demographics

## Religion, faith or belief



Weighted Base: 7307 respondents.

**L9. What is your religion, faith or belief?**



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**April 2020**

NUS Insight