

# Coronavirus and Students Survey: Northern Ireland 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 Northern Ireland we achieved an original sample of **345** students. We have weighted the data to reflect the student population of Northern Ireland resulting in 360 responses.

## Methodology

A sample of **9872** was achieved overall and in Northern Ireland we achieved **360** responses.

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

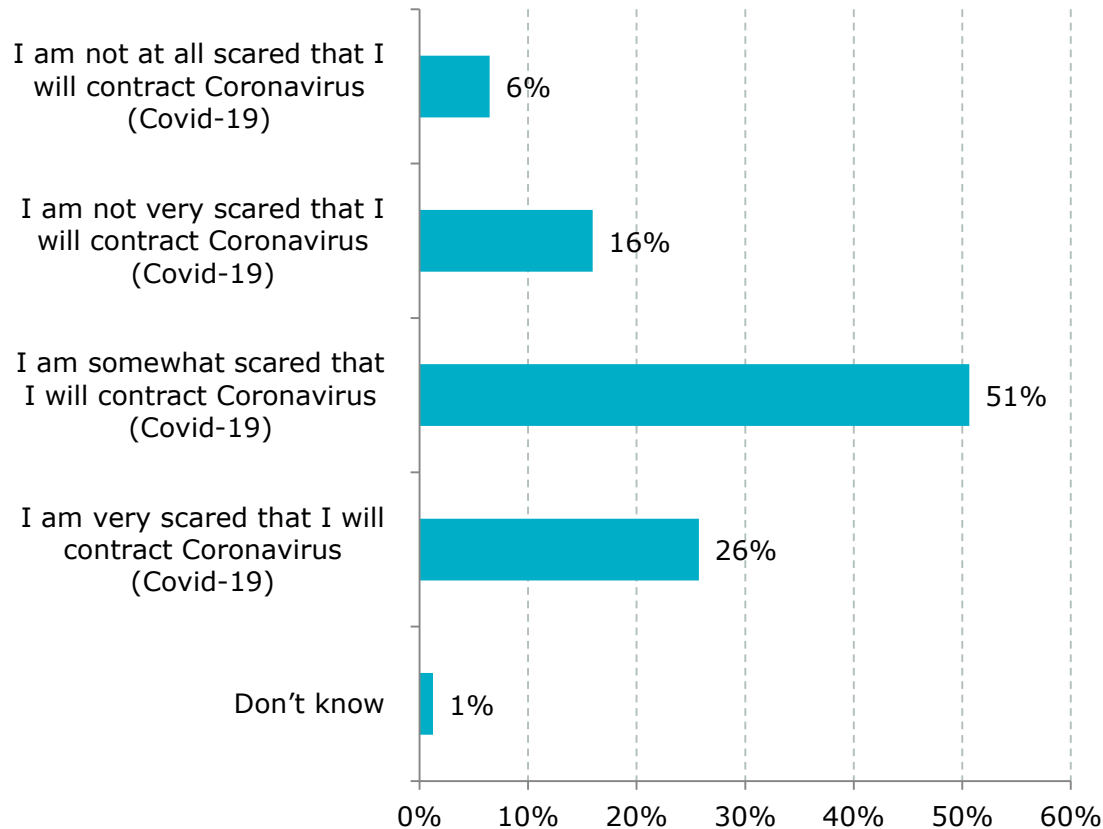
The survey was promoted via the NUS Student database, the TOTUM database, through social media & via NUS' member unions at the end of March 2020.

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

Around three quarters of students in Northern Ireland are concerned to some extent about getting Covid-19.

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

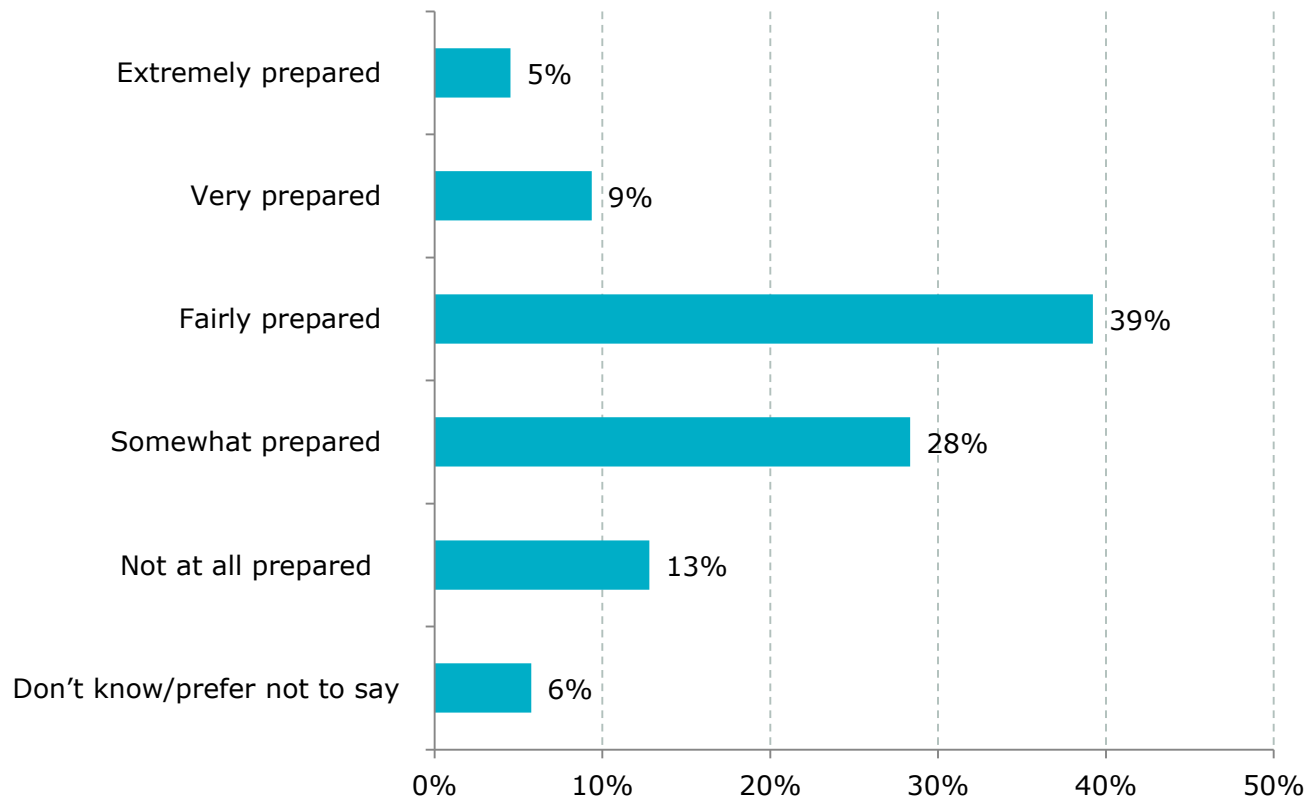


Weighted Base: 360 respondents.

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

Two in three students in Northern Ireland claim to feel 'somewhat' or 'fairly' prepared to manage any health conditions they have should they contract Covid-19. Slightly more in Northern Ireland than overall say they feel 'not at all prepared' (13% compared to 7%).

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

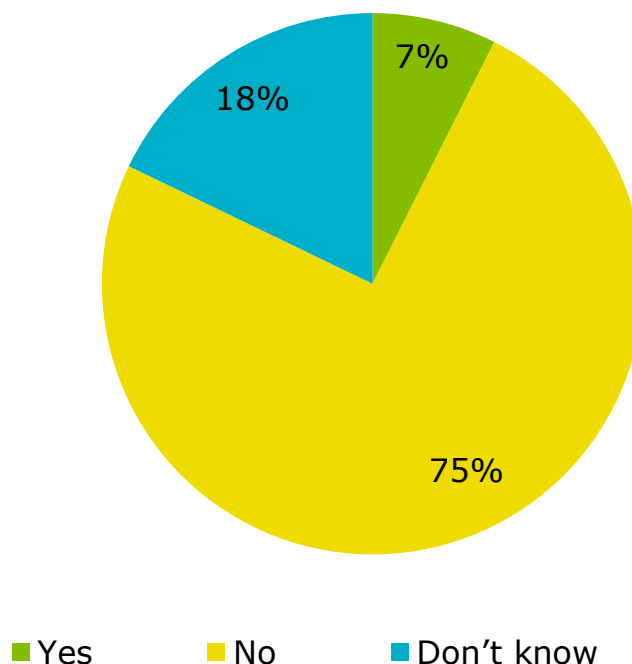


Weighted Base: 359 respondents. Balance: no response

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

Less than 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

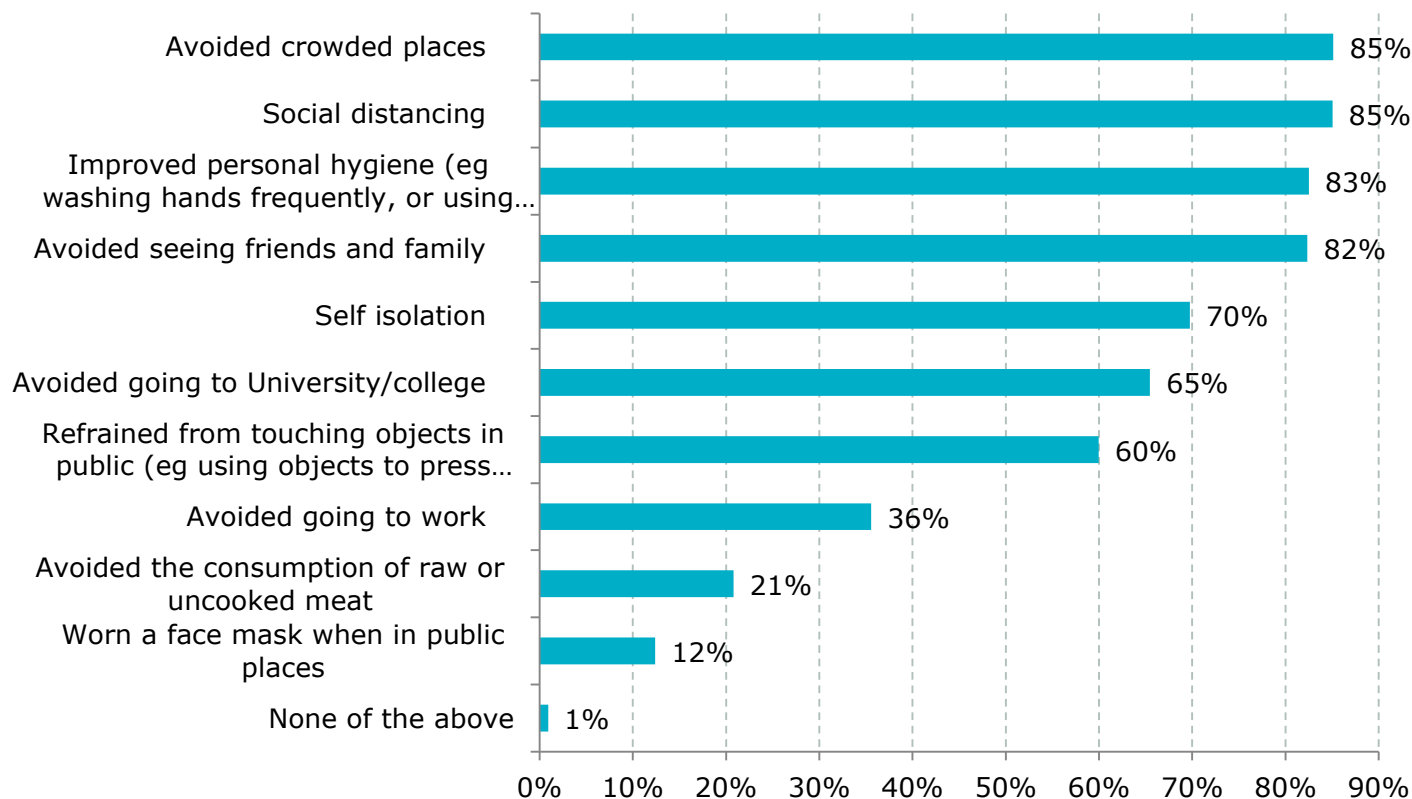
■ Don't know

Weighted Base: 123 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 Northern Ireland have practiced social distancing and have avoided crowded places in the past two weeks. Four in five have improved their personal hygiene or avoided seeing friends and family. Two in three have avoided going to University/College.

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

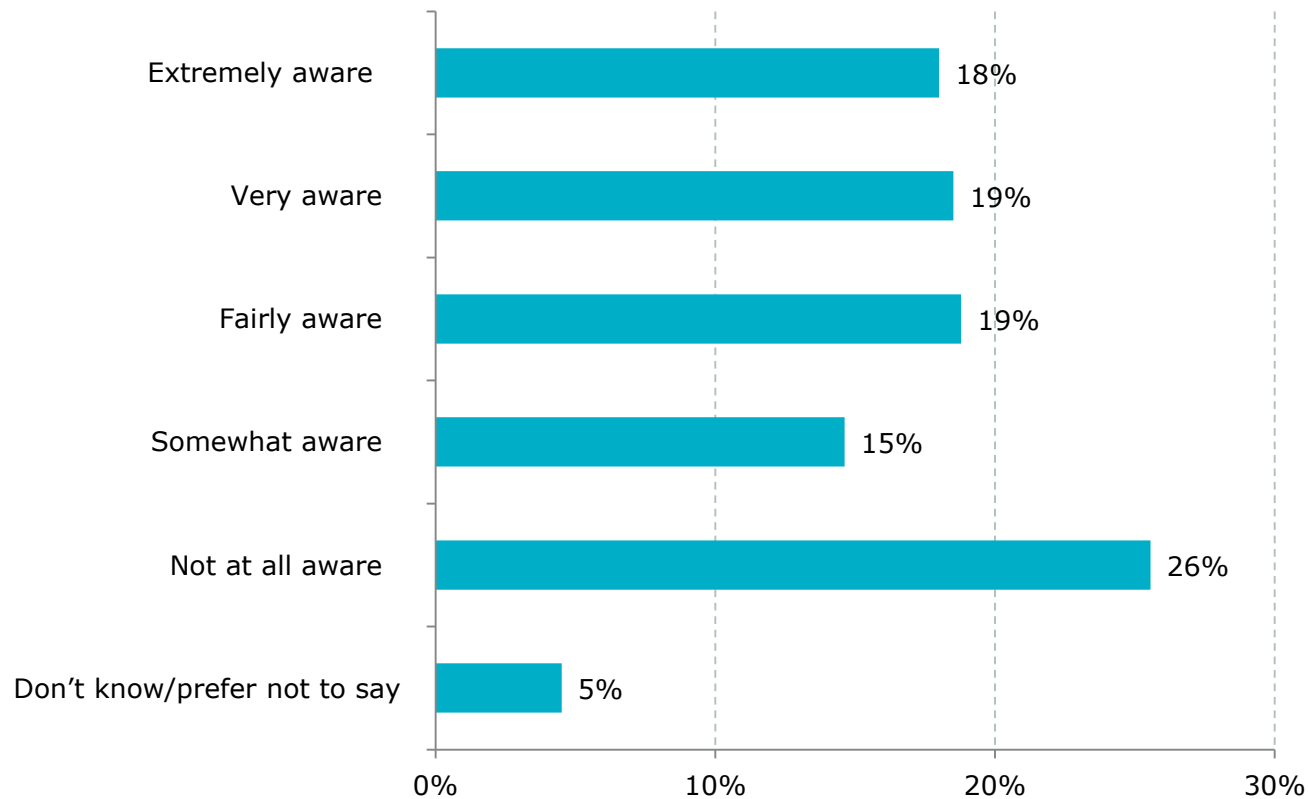


Weighted Base: 360 respondents. Balance: no response



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)**

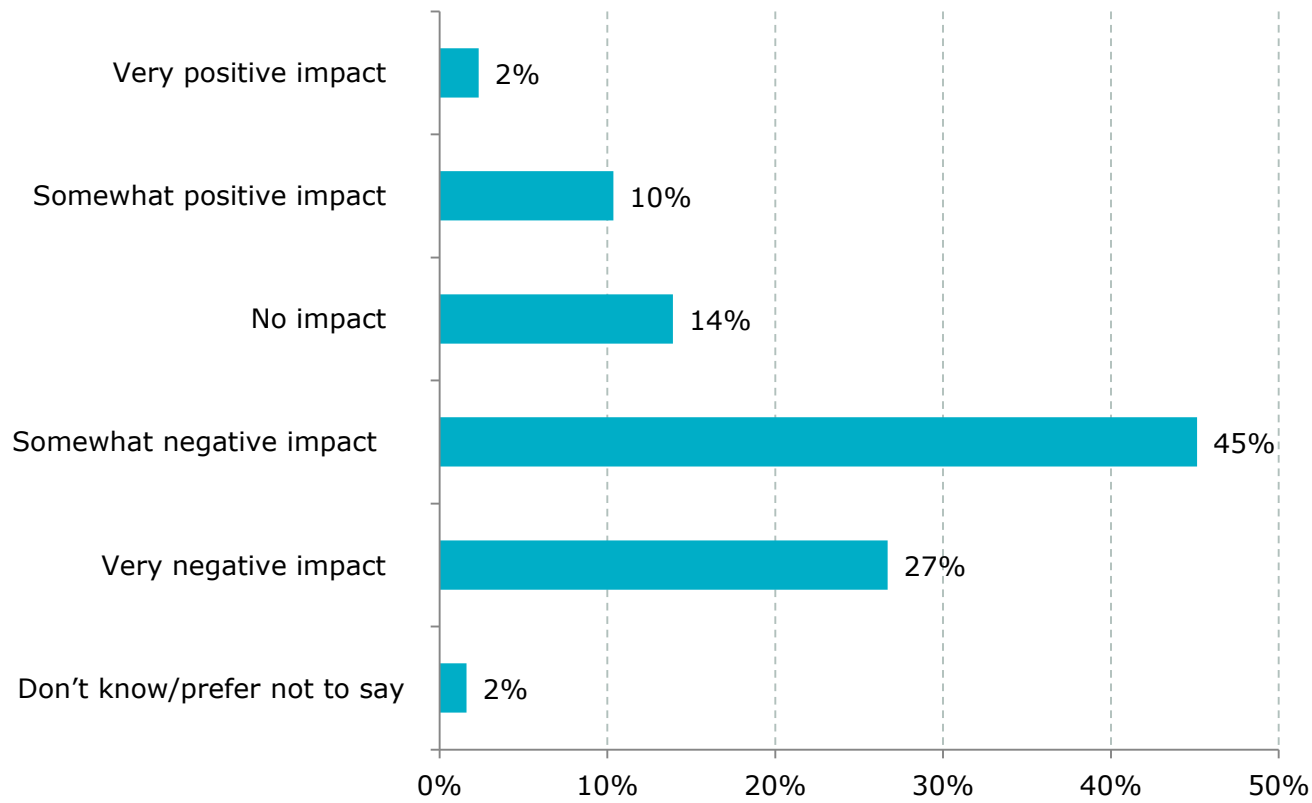


Weighted Base: 360 respondents.

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

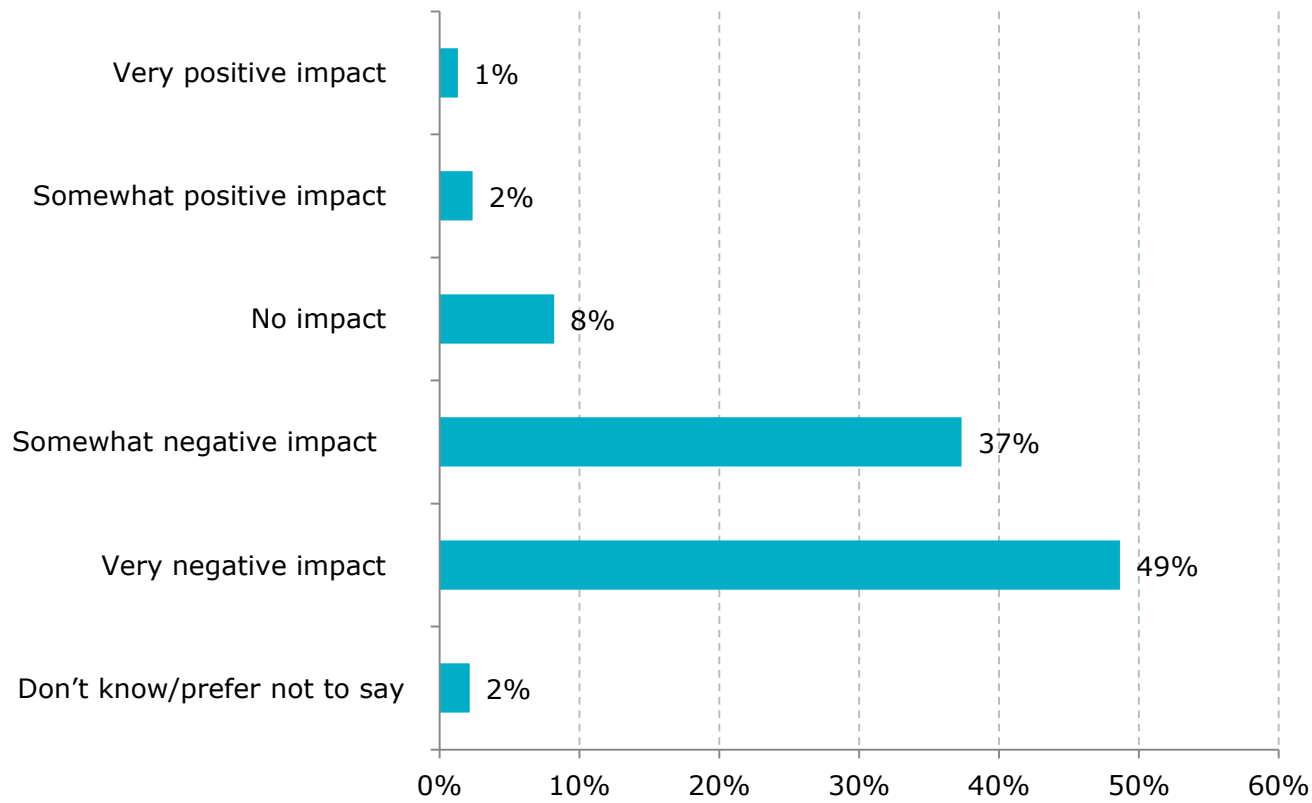
One in four Northern Ireland students say that Covid-19 has had a very negative impact on their family life; this is significantly higher than the overall results showed. A further half say it has had a somewhat negative impact.

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



Over four in five 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

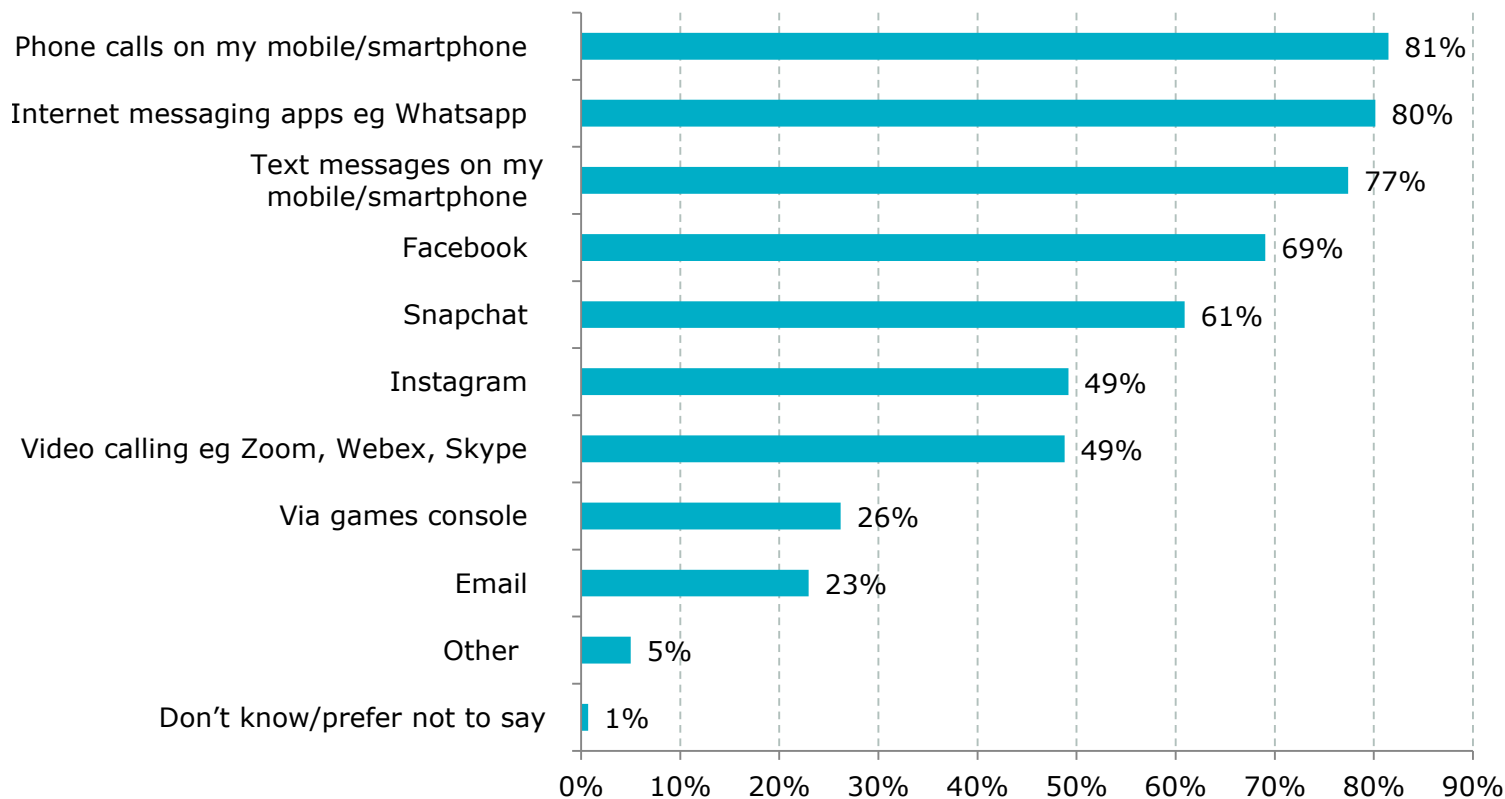


Weighted Base: 360 respondents. Balance: no response

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

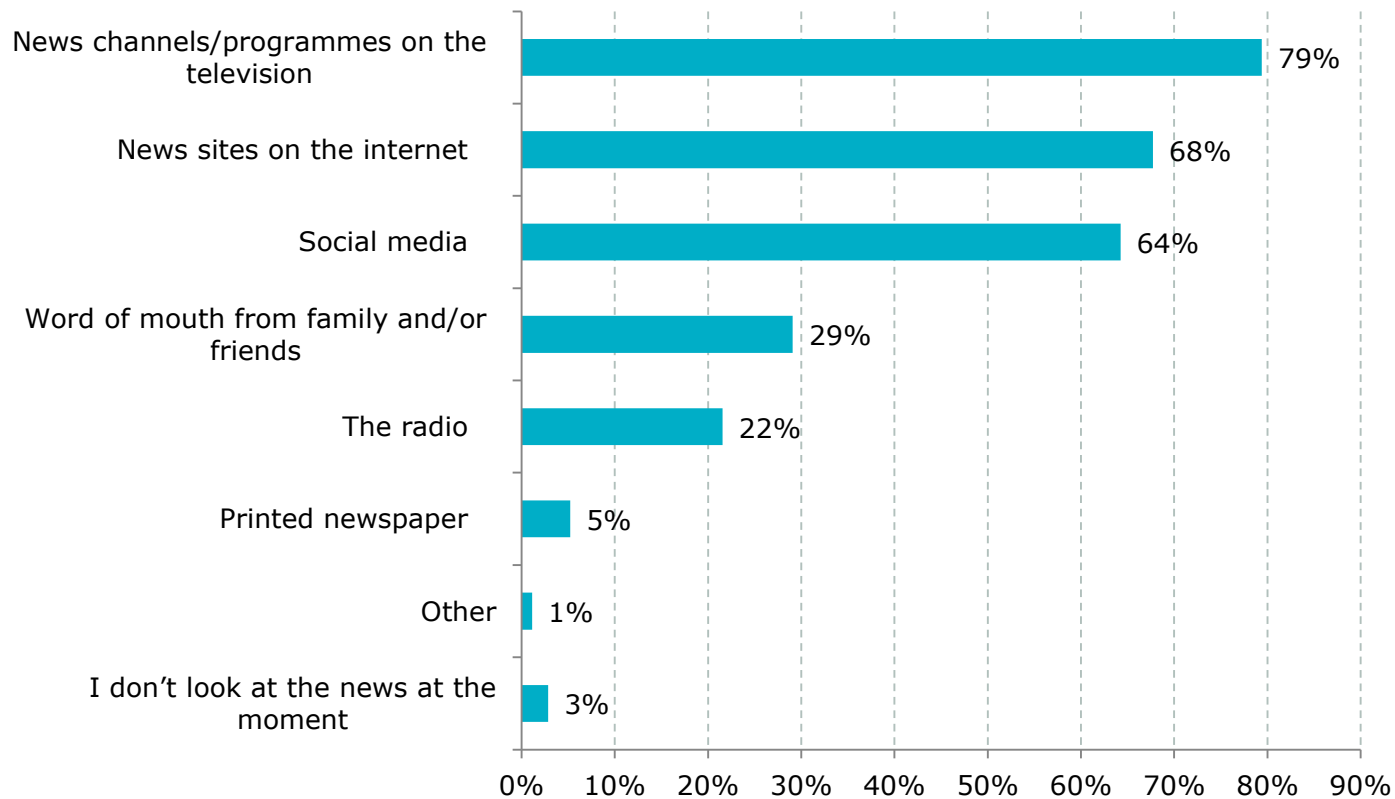
Students are most likely to be keeping in touch with friends and family via phone calls, internet messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp) and text messaging. Facebook is a popular option for seven in ten with Snapchat being of significantly more importance amongst Northern Ireland students with six in ten using this compared to 46% overall.

### 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 TV or online. Northern Ireland students are significantly more likely than students overall to use social media (64% compared to 55% overall).

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



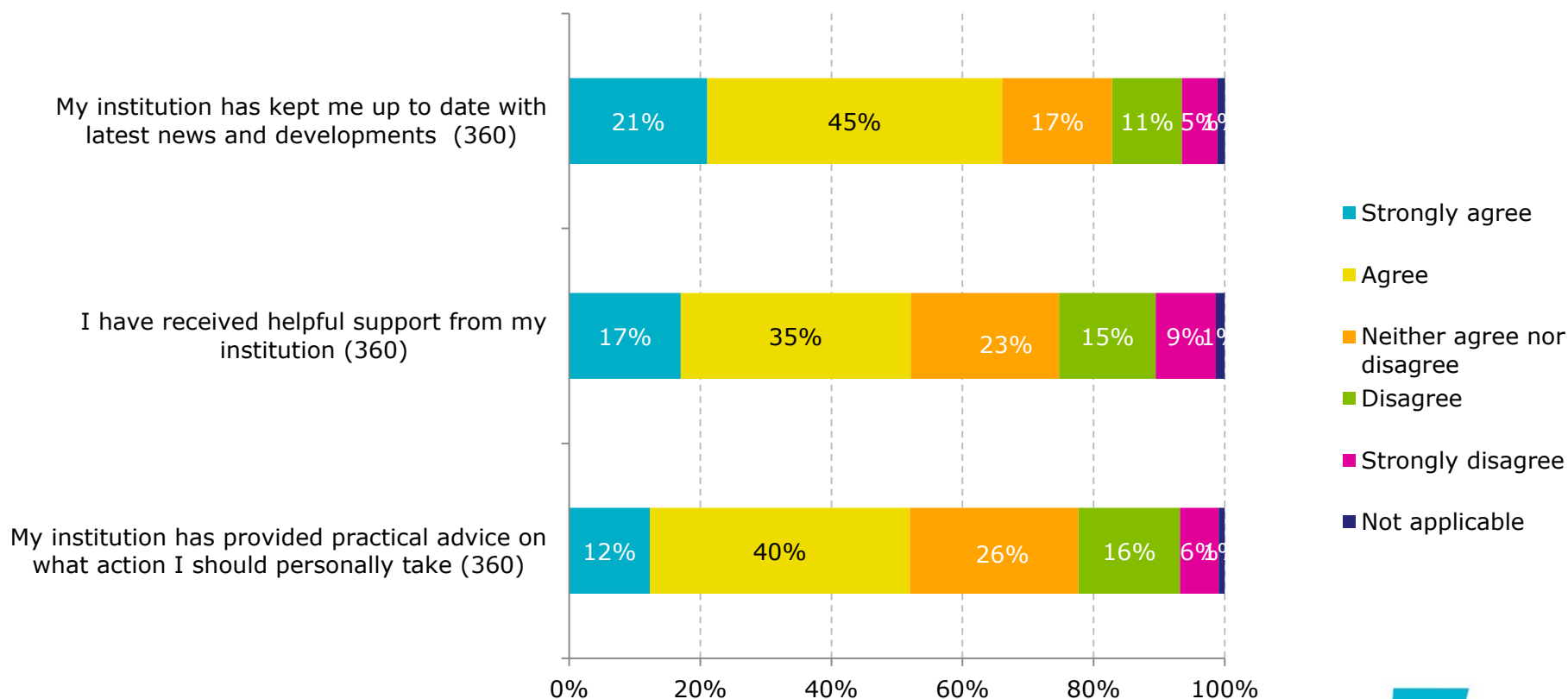
Weighted Base: 360 respondents. Balance: no response

**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 agree that their institution has provided up to date news/developments, helpful support and practical advice on what action to take.

### Agreement with statements

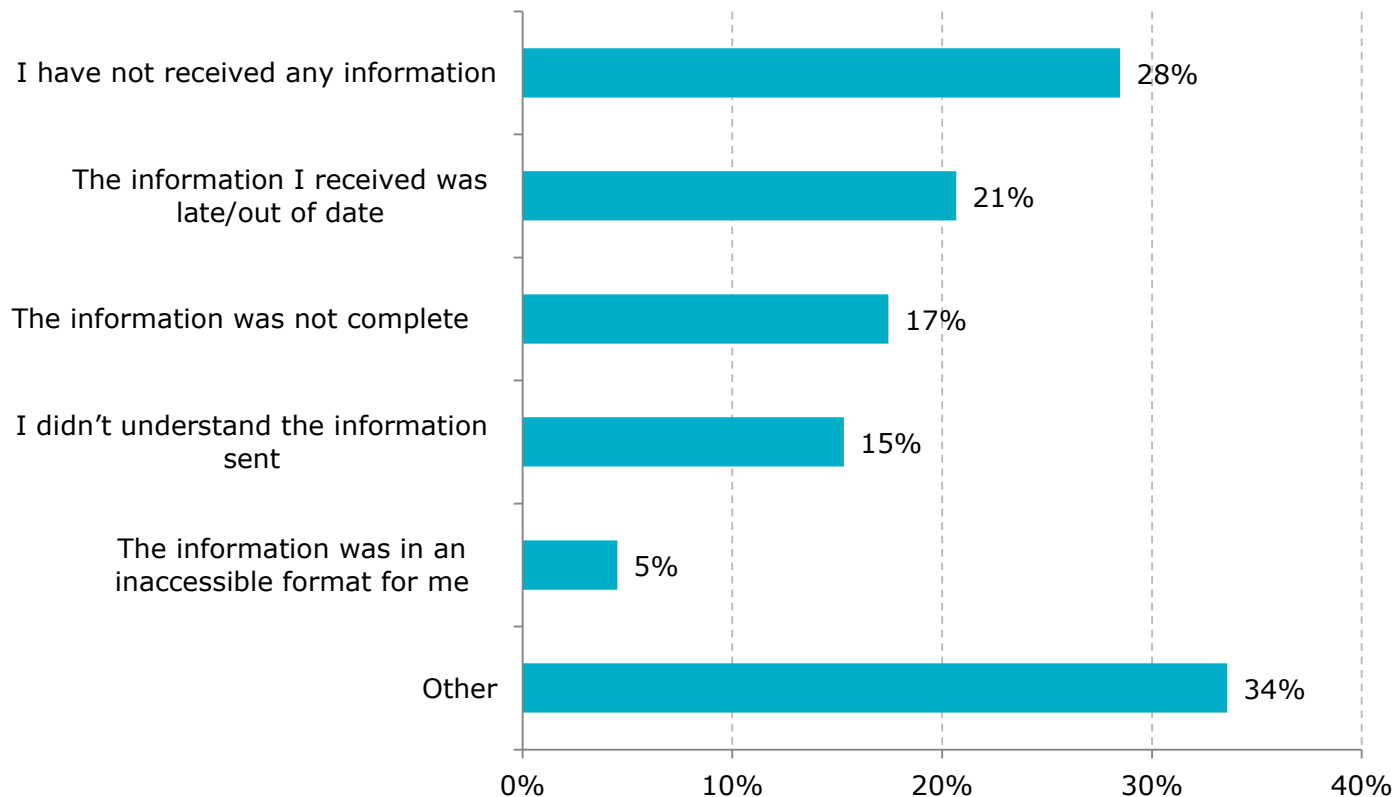


Weighted Base: (in brackets).

C1. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below?

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, A third said they hadn't received any information.

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



**16%  
disagreed**

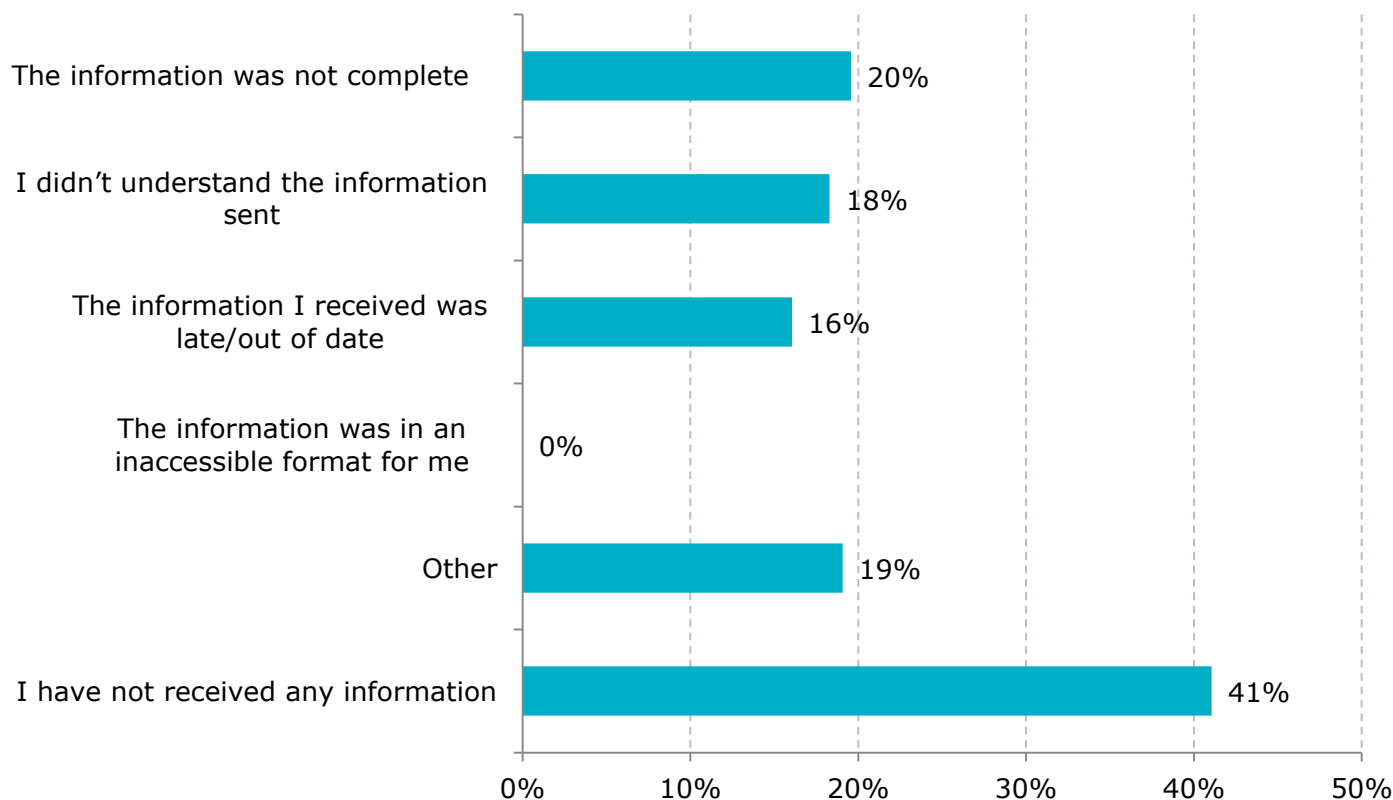
Weighted Base: 57 respondents. Balance: those who agreed that their institution had kept them up to date with latest news and developments, no response

**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 simply not having received any information at all, or receiving incomplete information. One in five said they didn't understand the information they were sent.

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



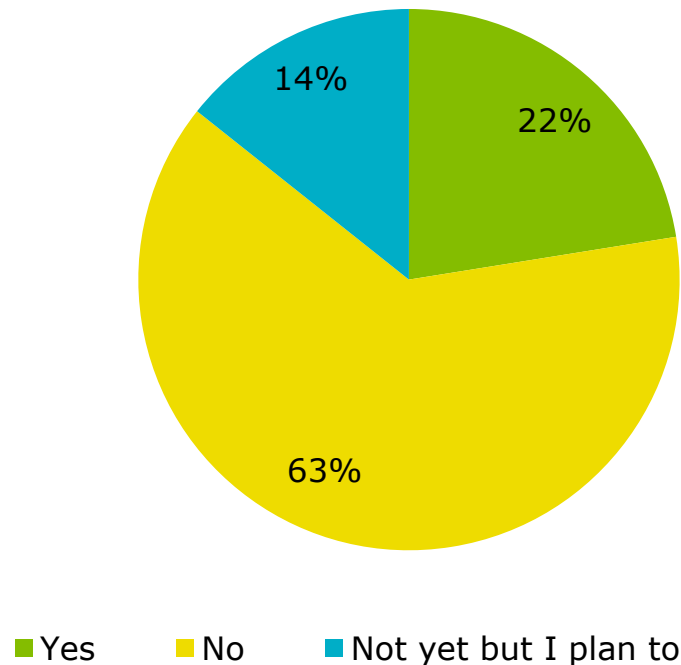
**21%  
disagreed**

Weighted Base: 74 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?**

One in four students in Northern Ireland 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 seven 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)**



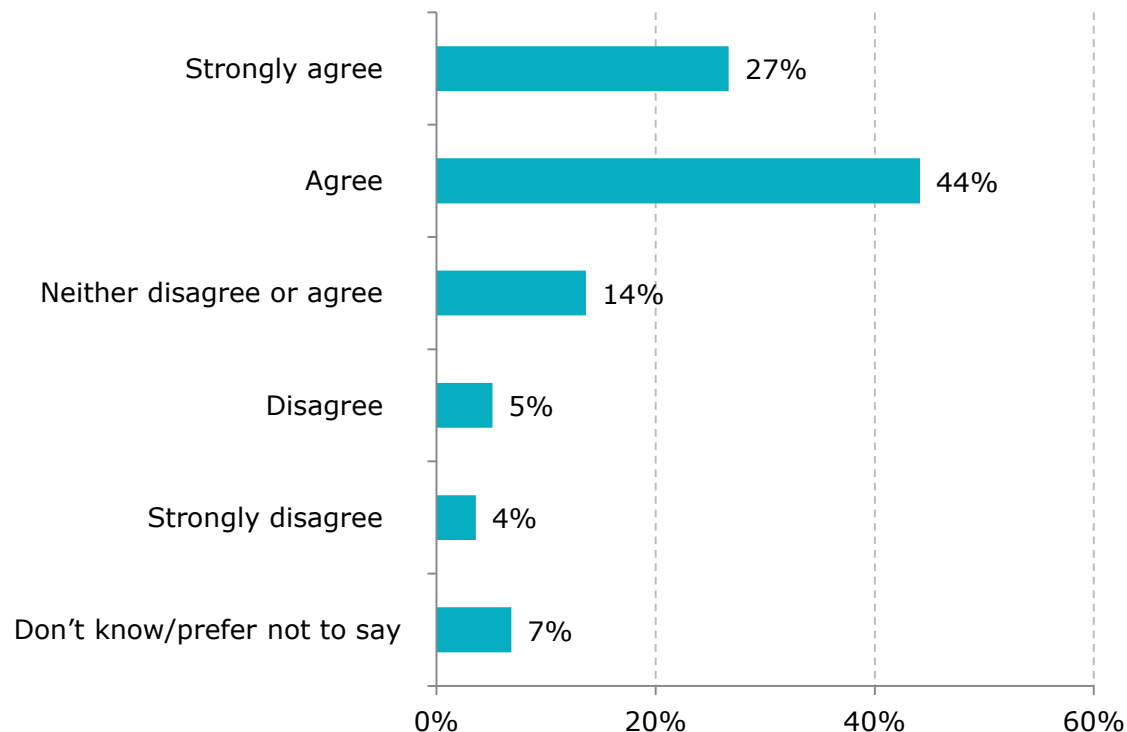
■ Yes    ■ No    ■ Not yet but I plan to

Weighted Base: 358 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?**

Seven in ten agree that people at their institution are adhering to the Government advice and guidance on social distancing and self isolation. Encouragingly only 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: 359 respondents. Balance: no response

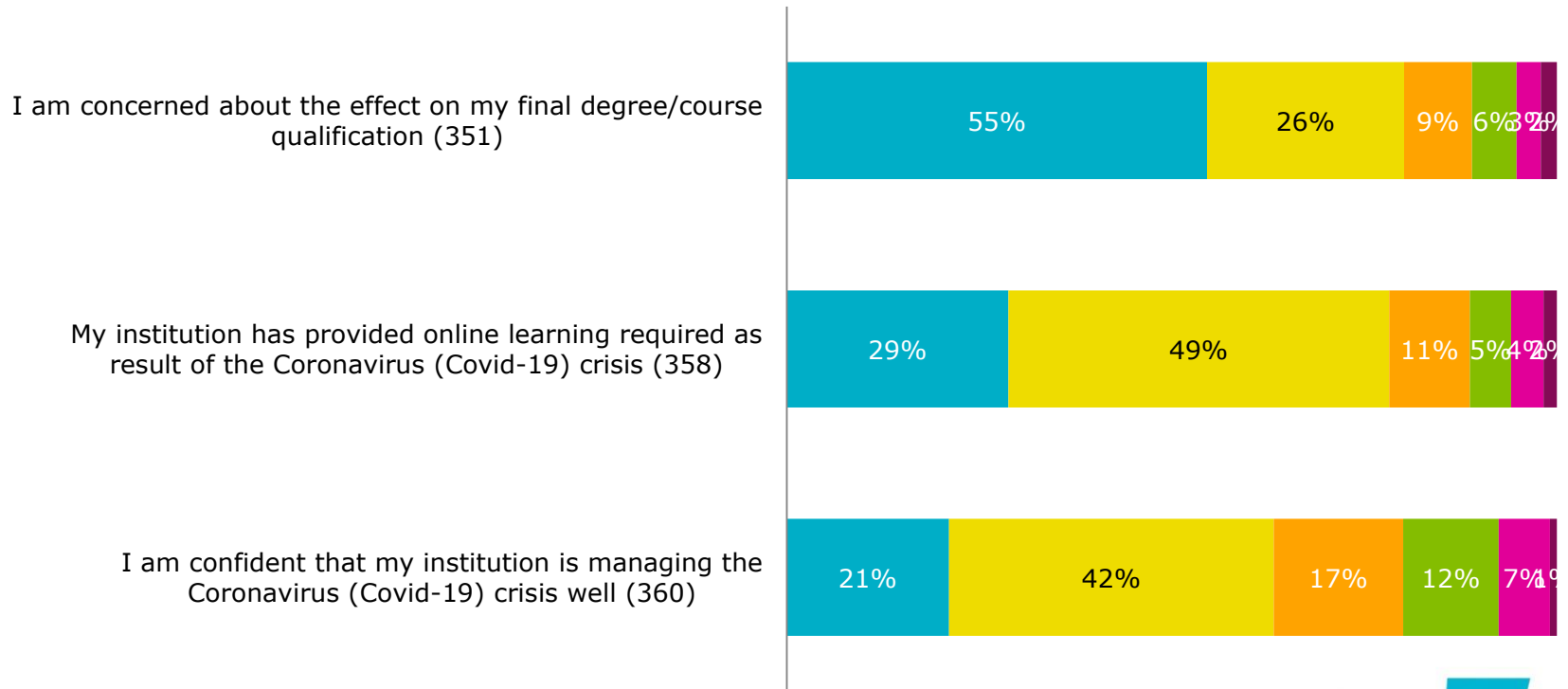
**C8. To what extent do you agree that people at your institution are adhering to the Government advice and guidance on social distancing and self isolation?**

Education: teaching and learning  
experience and academic success

Eight in ten students in Northern Ireland are concerned about the effect of Covid-19 on their final degree/course qualification. Just over three in four 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.

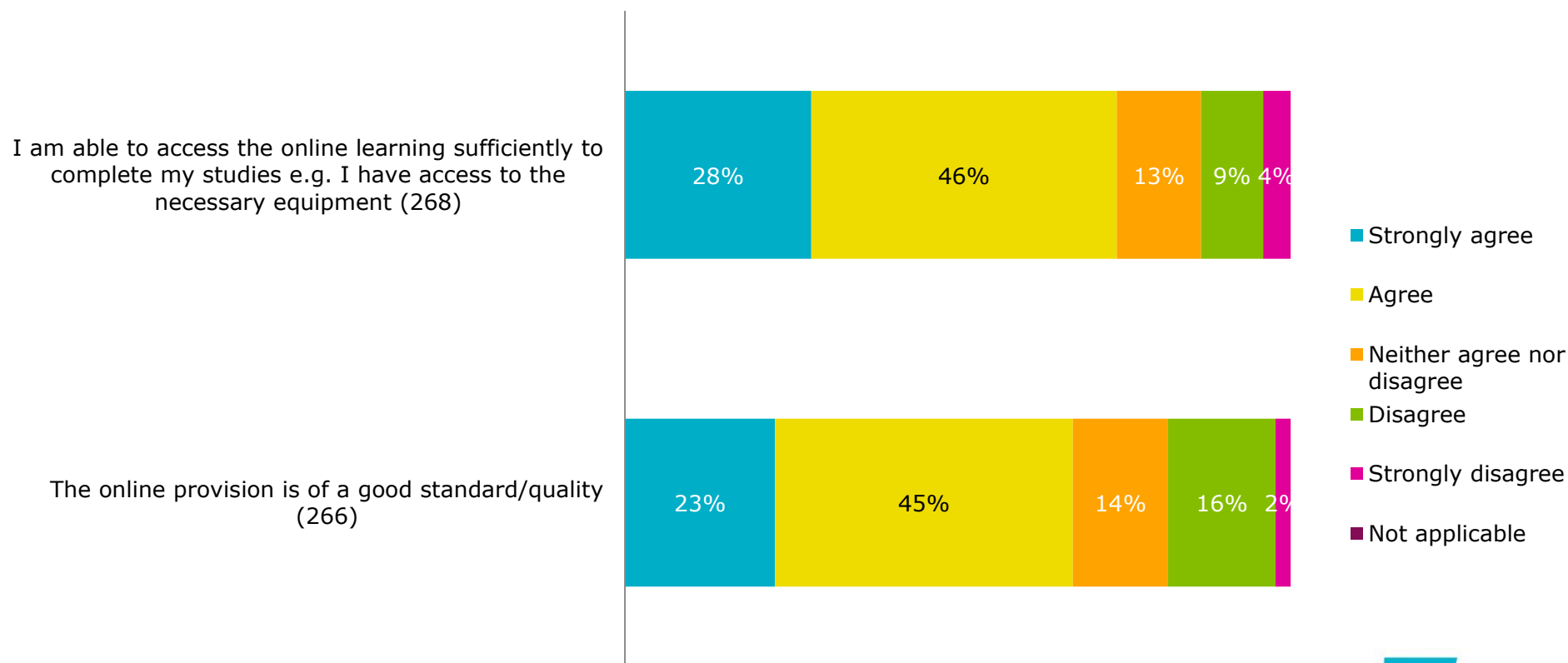
### Agreement with statements

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



Of the students who have had online learning provided by their institution, over 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

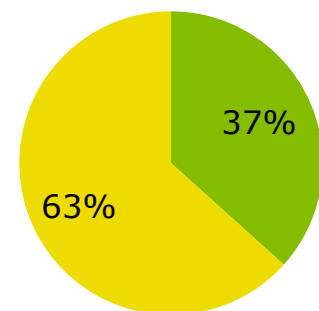


Weighted Base: (in brackets). Balance: those whose institution has not provided online learning in response to Coronavirus (Covid-19), no response

**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?**

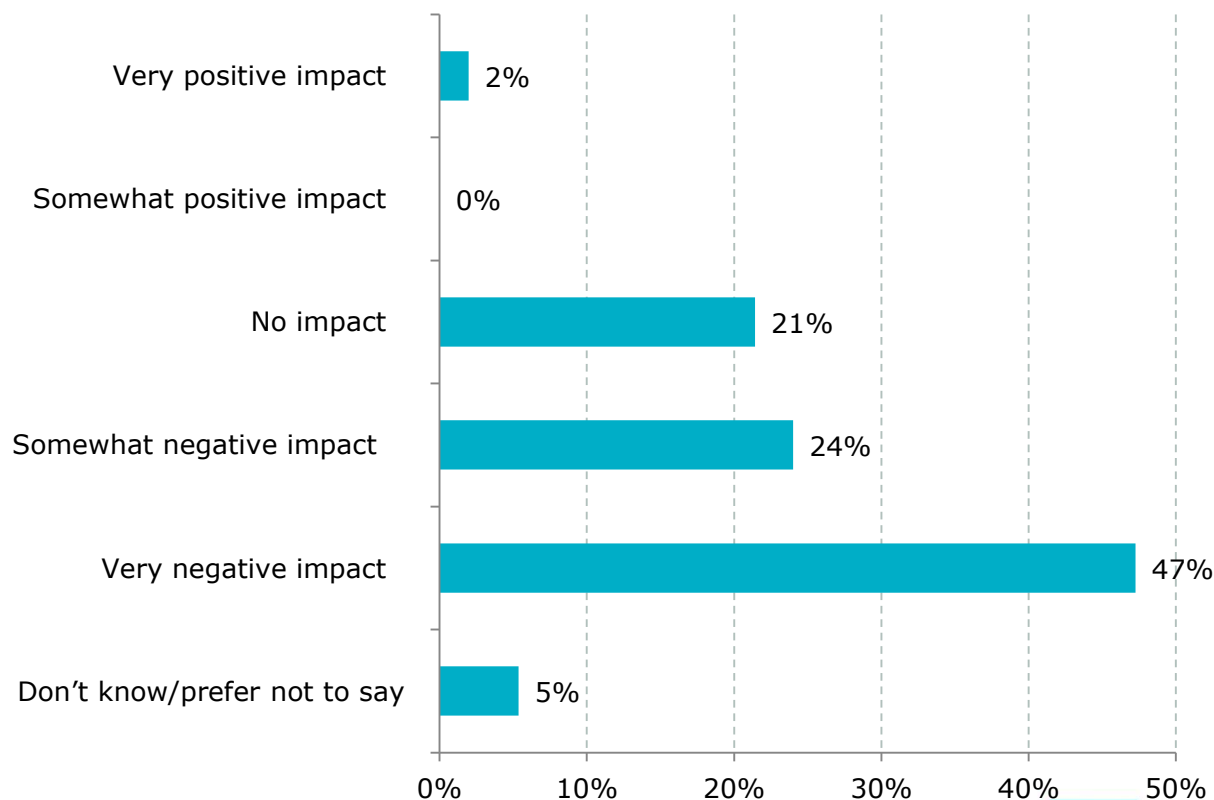
Students studying in Northern Ireland are significantly more likely than average to have a placement as part of their course. Of these (just over a third), almost three in four believe the current Covid-19 outbreak will have a negative impact on their ability to complete their placement.

### Placement as part of course



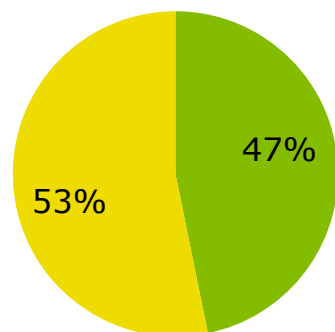
■ Yes ■ No

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



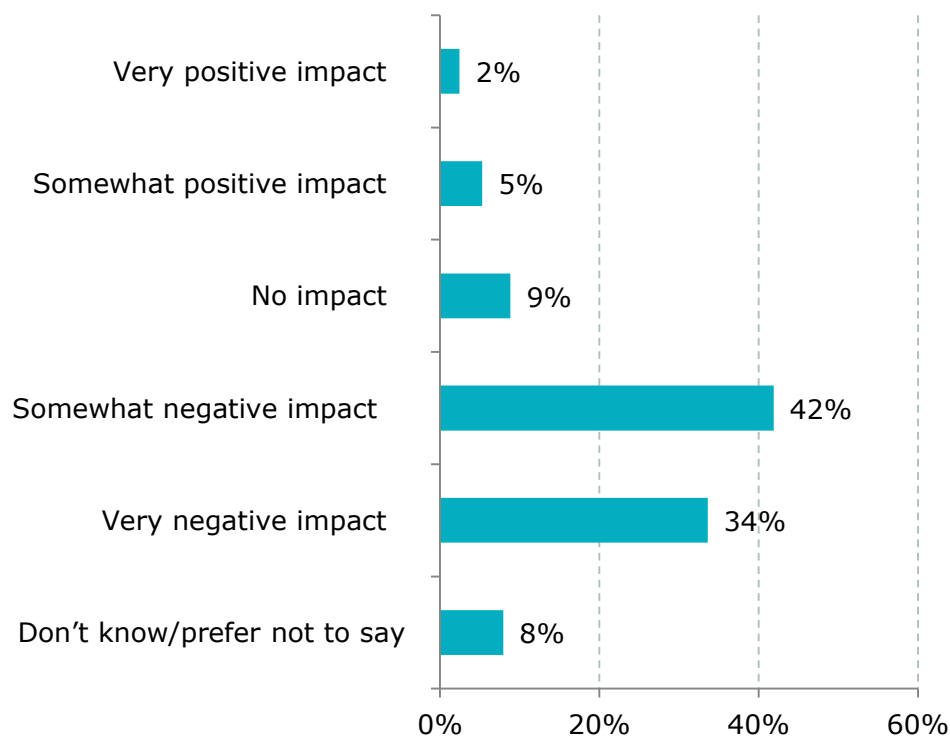
Students studying in Northern Ireland are significantly more likely than average to have a vocational component to their course. Of these (almost half), three in four believe the Covid-19 outbreak will have a negative impact on the vocational element of their course.

### Vocational / vocational component



■ Yes ■ No

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



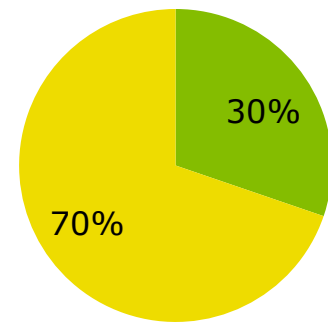
Weighted base: 167 respondents. Balance: those who do not have a vocational element to their course

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



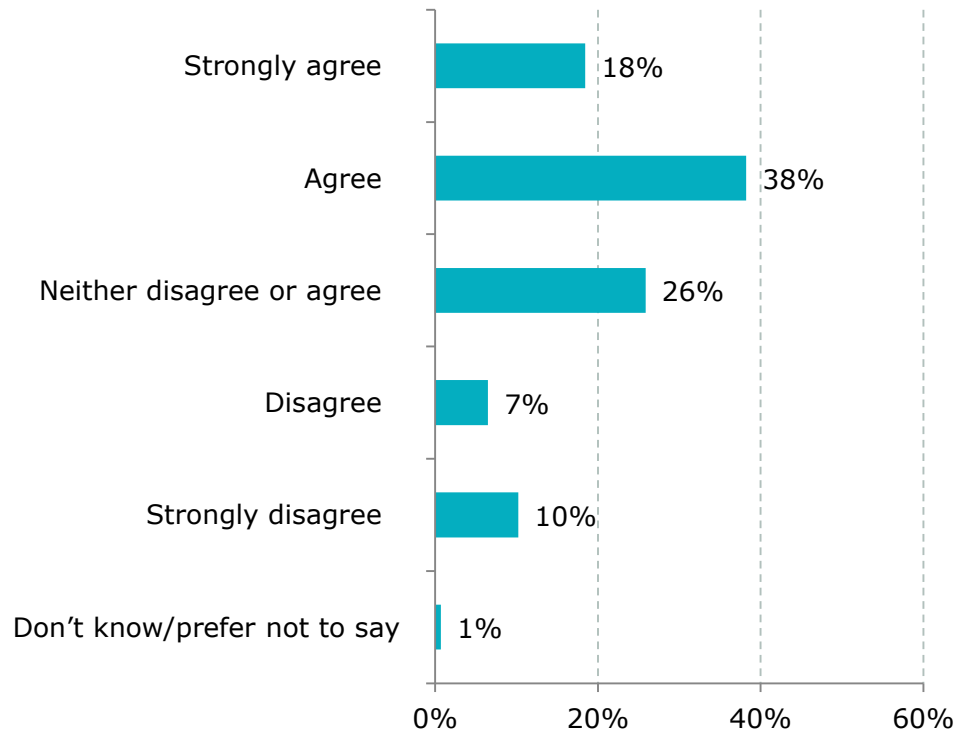
Of those who receive learning support from their institution, just over half feel they have received adequate support to enable them to continue their work to the best of their ability throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Learning support



■ Yes ■ No

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

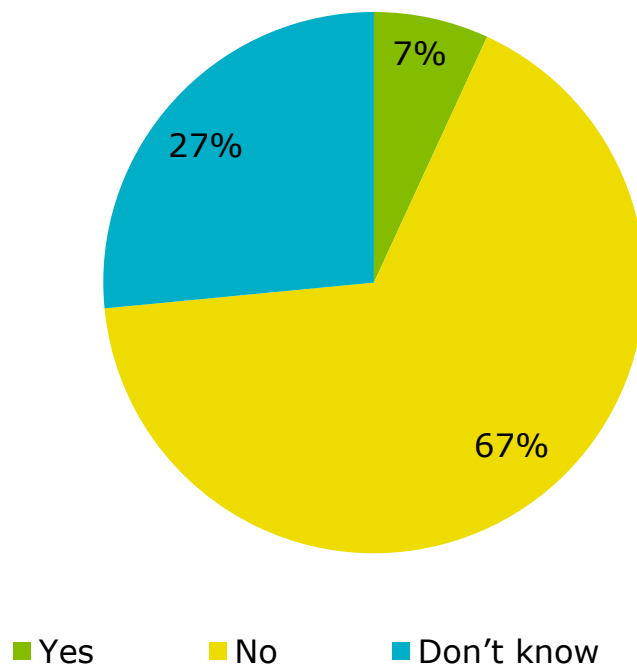


Weighted base: 108 respondents. Balance: those who do not receive learning support from their institution

**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 7% 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

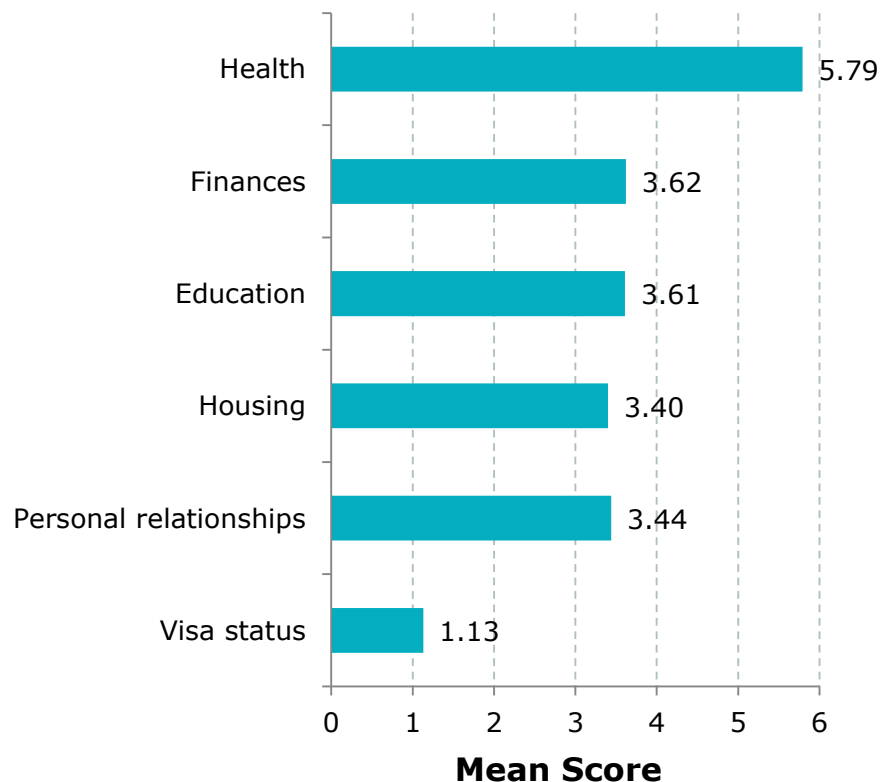
■ Don't know

Weighted Base: 360 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 Northern Ireland ranked their health as the number 1 priority during the Covid-19 outbreak. Finances was most likely to be ranked the 2<sup>nd</sup> most important concern, followed education, housing, personal relationships and then Visa status (which is only relevant for certain international students)

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



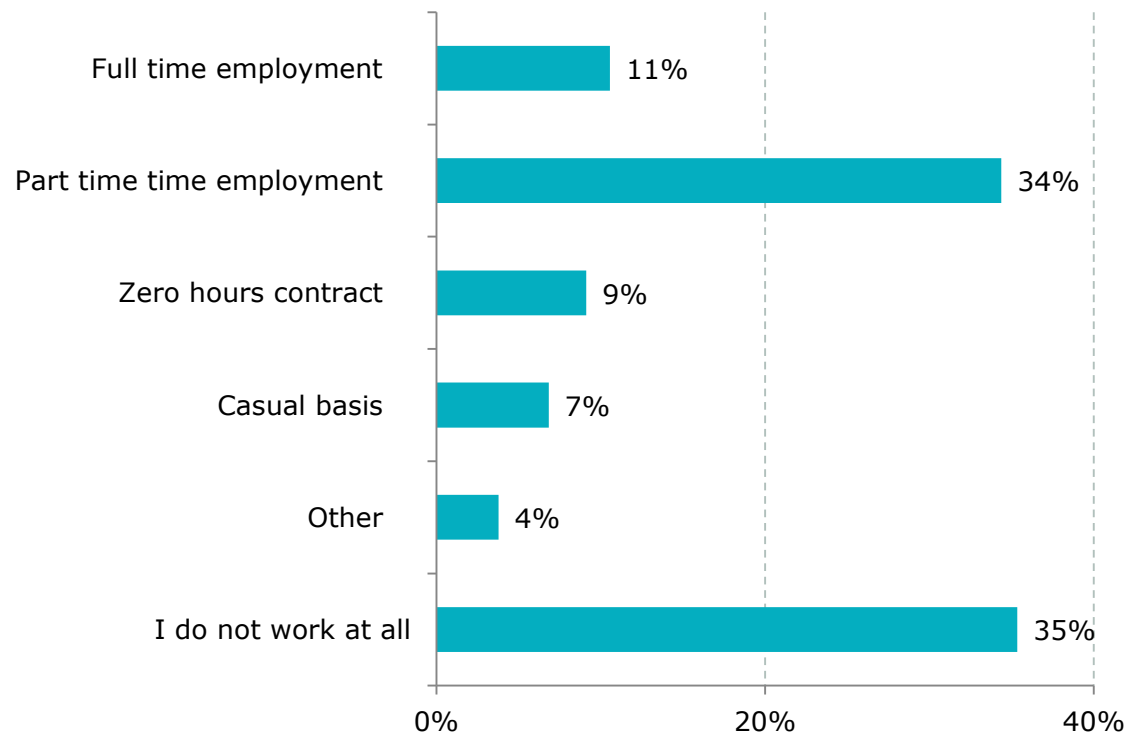
Weighted base: 338 respondents Balance: no response

**D10. Please rank the following in order of importance for yourself during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, where 1 is the most important and 6 is the least important.**

# Income and Financial Circumstances

Nearly half of students are in either full or part time employment. One in ten have a zero hours contract. A third do not work at all.

### Job(s) held alongside studies

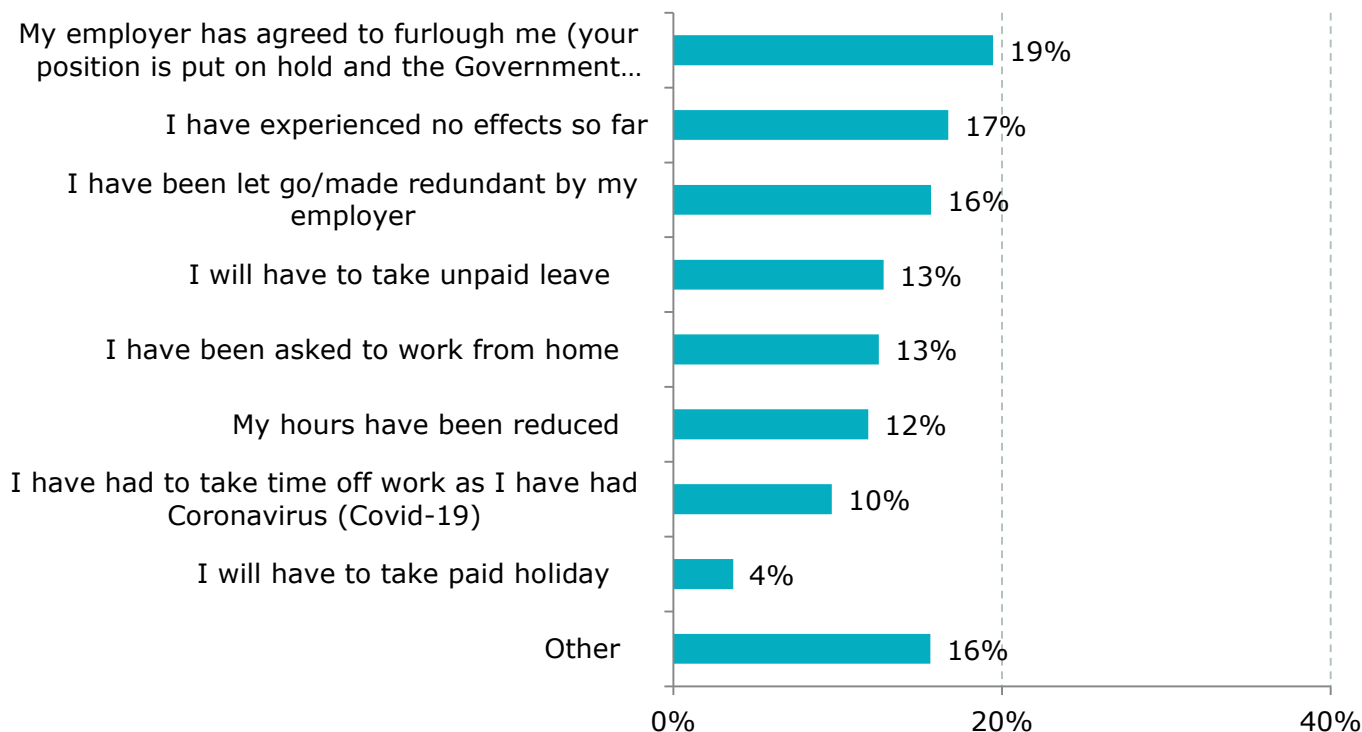


Weighted Base: 360 respondents.

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

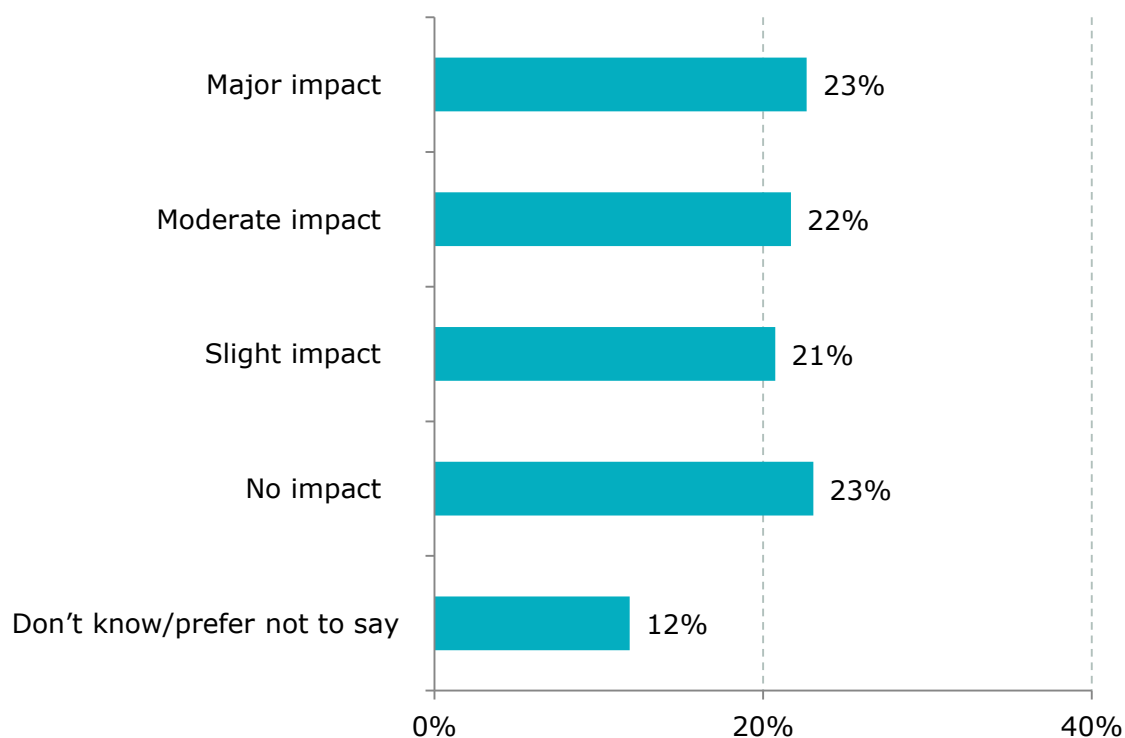
Of those students who currently work, one in five have been furloughed and a similar proportion have lost their jobs. One in six say they have not been affected.

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



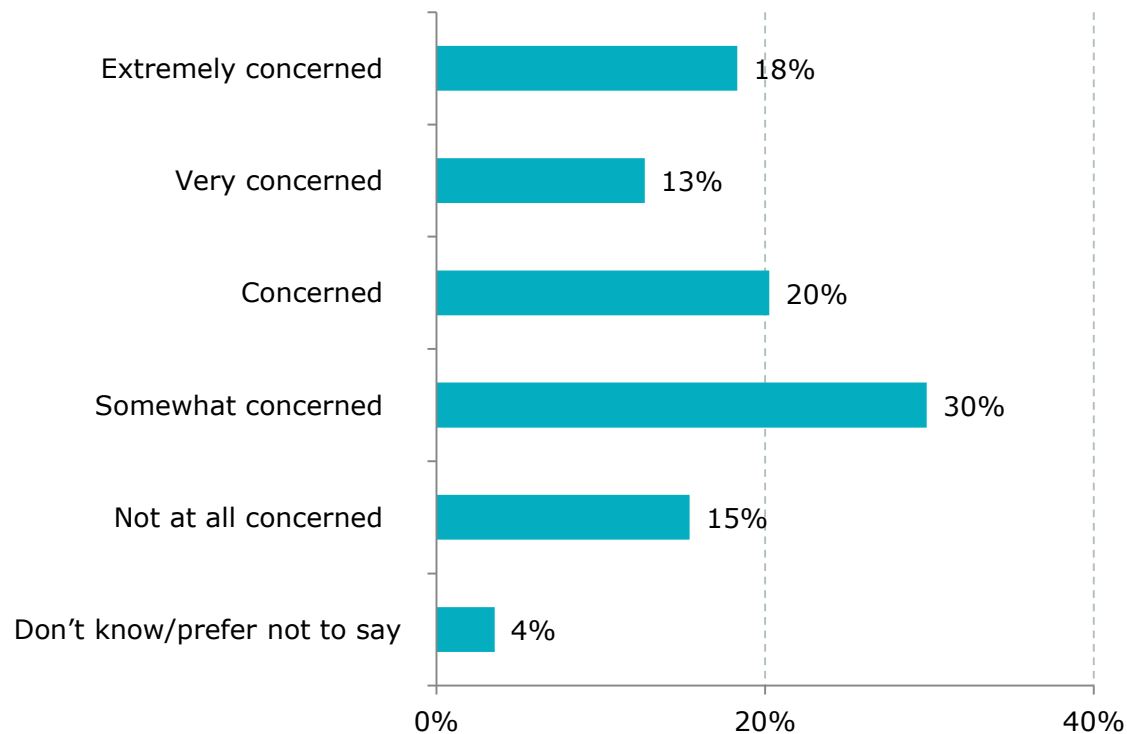
Almost half of students in Northern Ireland say that the income of someone who supports them financially has been impacted by Covid-19, with one in four saying it has had a major impact.

**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. One in three are 'very' or 'extremely' concerned.

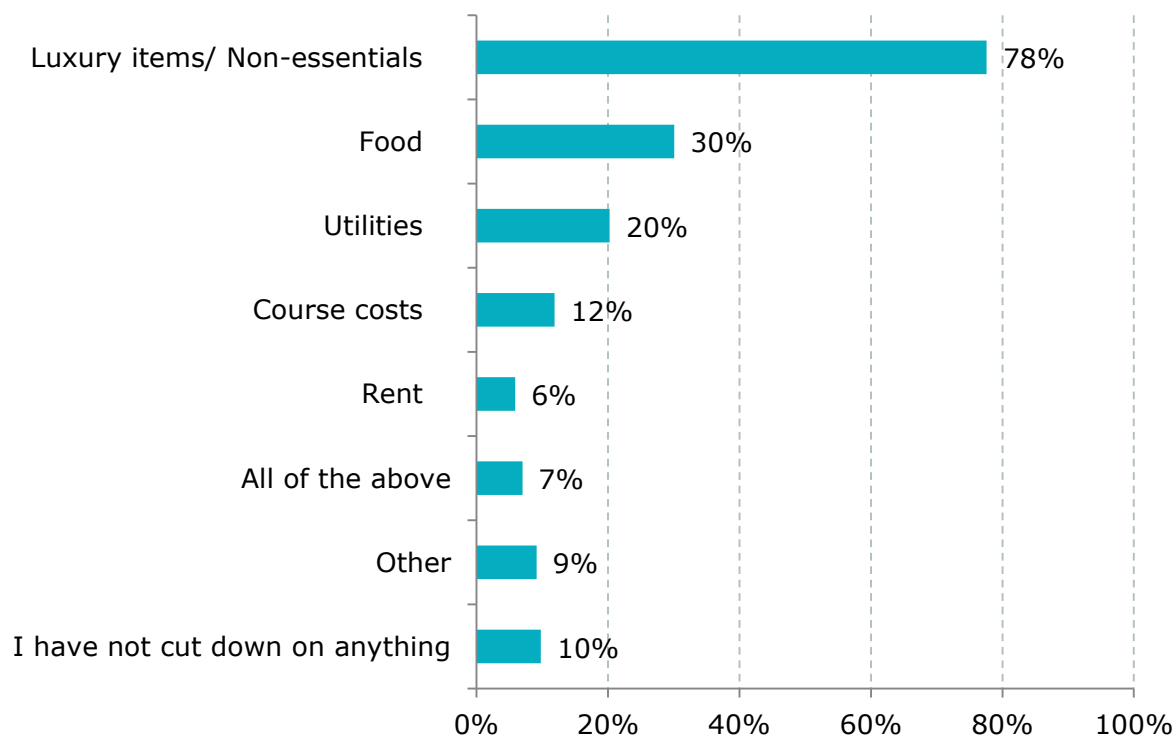
### Concern about ability to manage financially during outbreak





Three in four students in Northern Ireland have cut back on luxury/non-essential items since the Covid-19 outbreak. Nearly a third have also cut back on food expenditure and around a fifth have cut back on utilities.

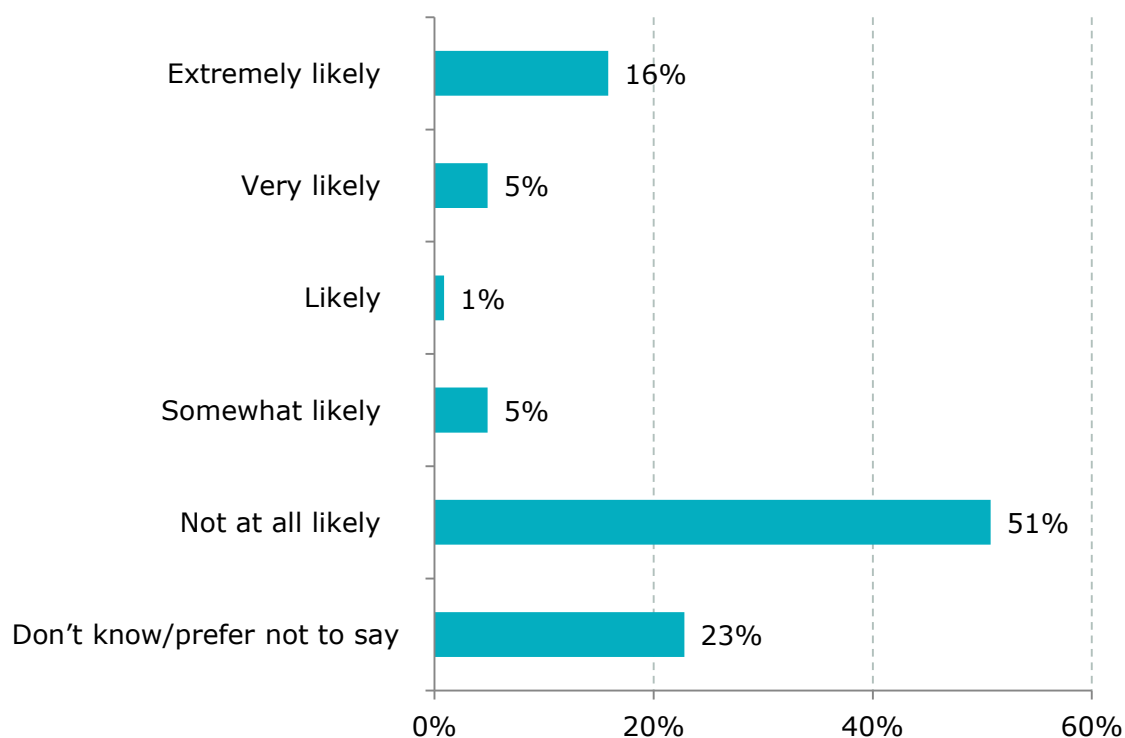
### Cutting back in terms of spending since Coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak



# Accommodation

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. Reasons given for doing so are because they can't travel/can't view other properties/can't empty out their belongings.

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

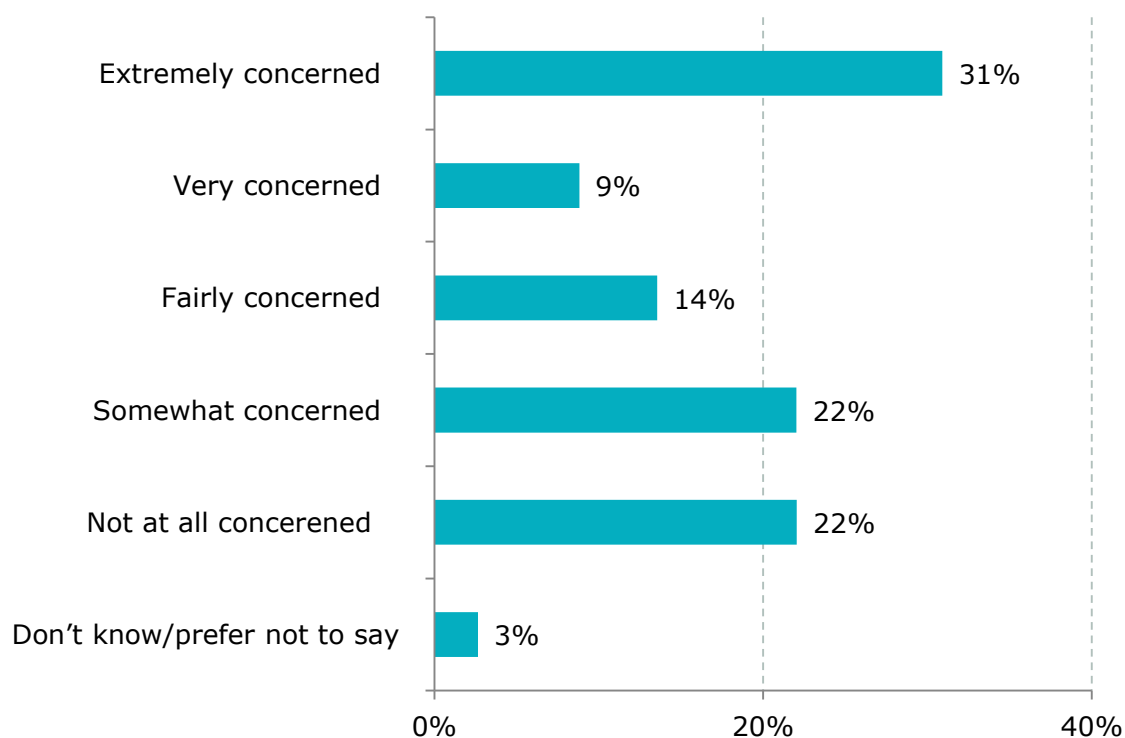


Weighted Base: 84 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or owned halls of residence

**F1 and F2. 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?**

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

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

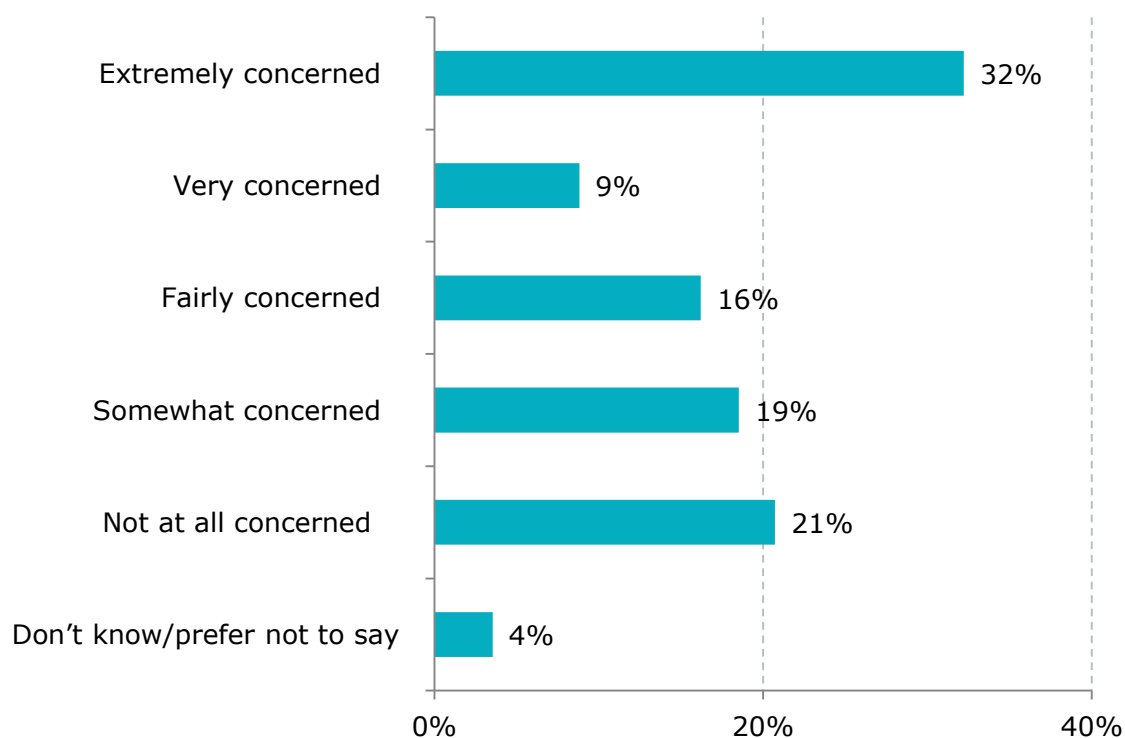


Weighted Base: 84 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or owned halls of residence

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

Three in four students in Northern Ireland are concerned to some extent about their ability to pay their bills as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Again two in five are either 'very' or 'extremely' concerned.

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

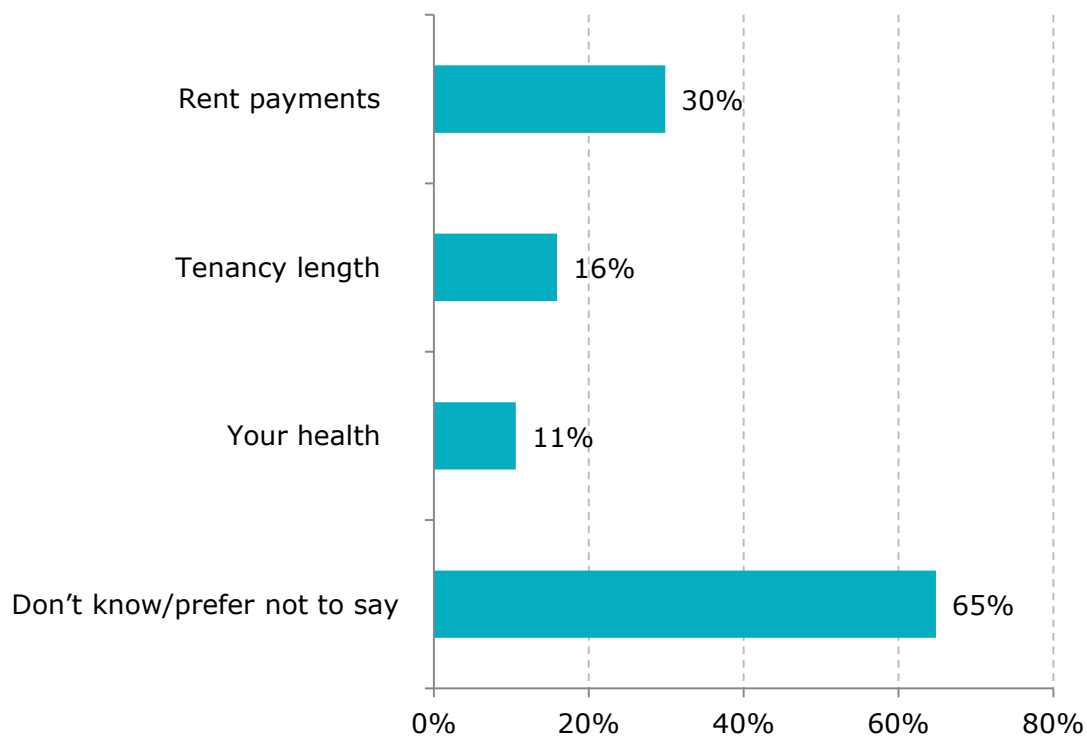


Weighted Base: 84 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or owned halls of residence

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

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. The communication with landlords was mixed; some had negative outcomes where tenancies were not extended and landlords were inflexible whereas others had a positive outcome with tenancies extended, cut short without penalty or genuine concern shown.

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

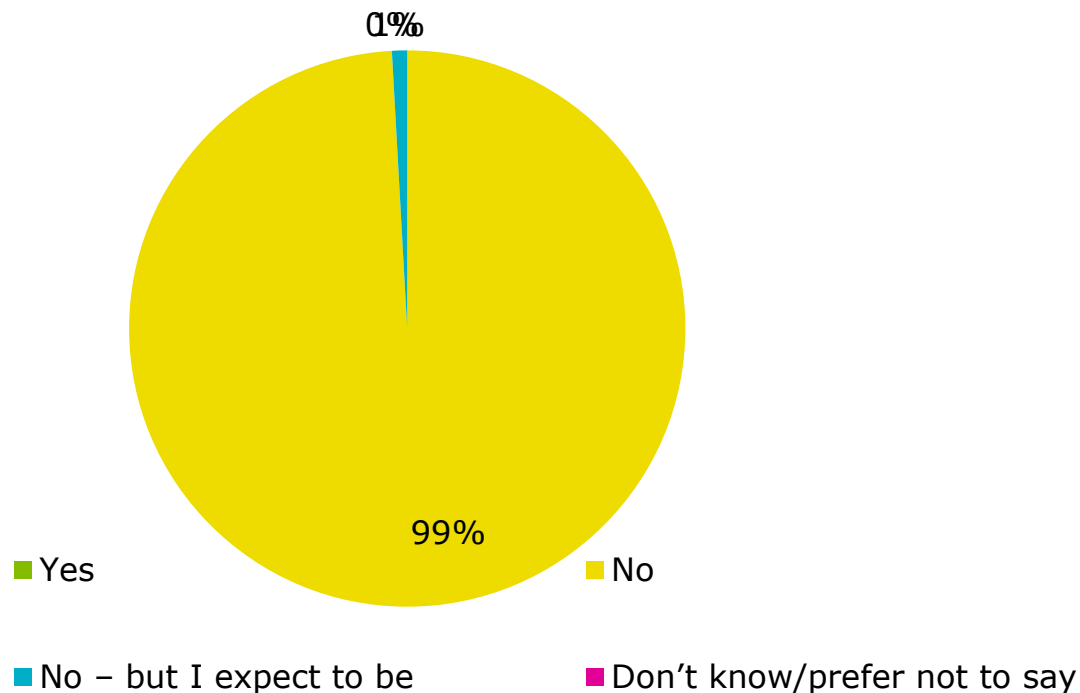


Weighted Base: 88 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or privately owned halls of residence

**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?**

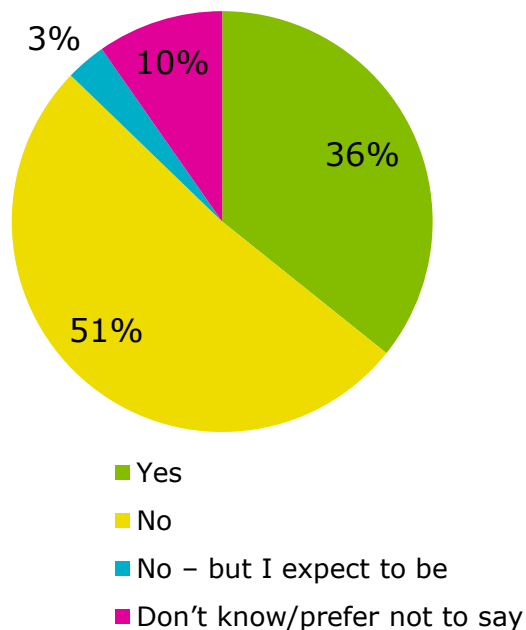


Weighted Base: 84 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or privately owned halls of residence

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

Around 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 one in four students saying they would like to be released early from their contracts.

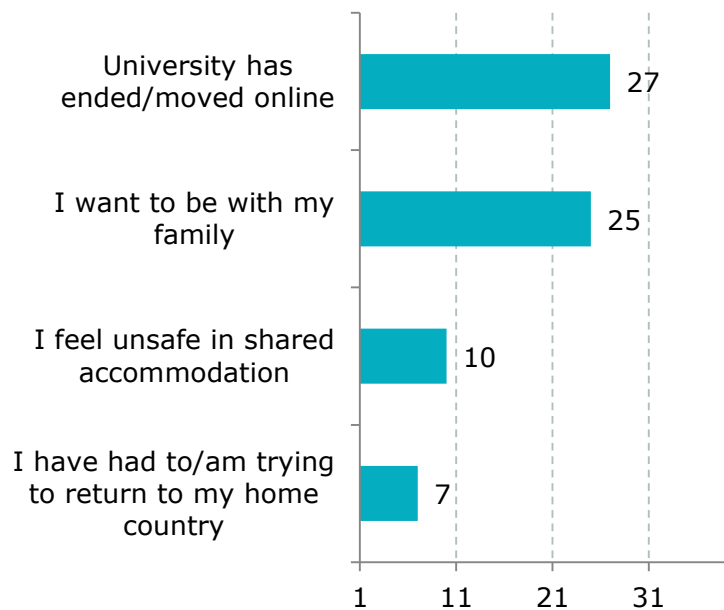
### Preference for being released from rental early?



Weighted Base: 84 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?



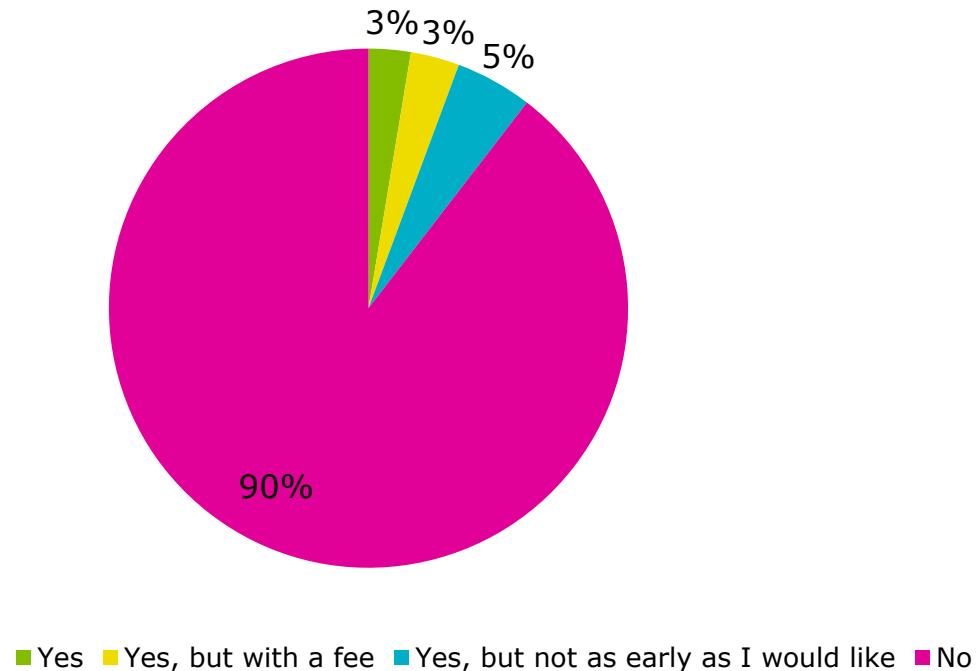
Weighted Base: 30 respondents. Balance : those who do not want to be released from their contract

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



However, fewer than 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?**



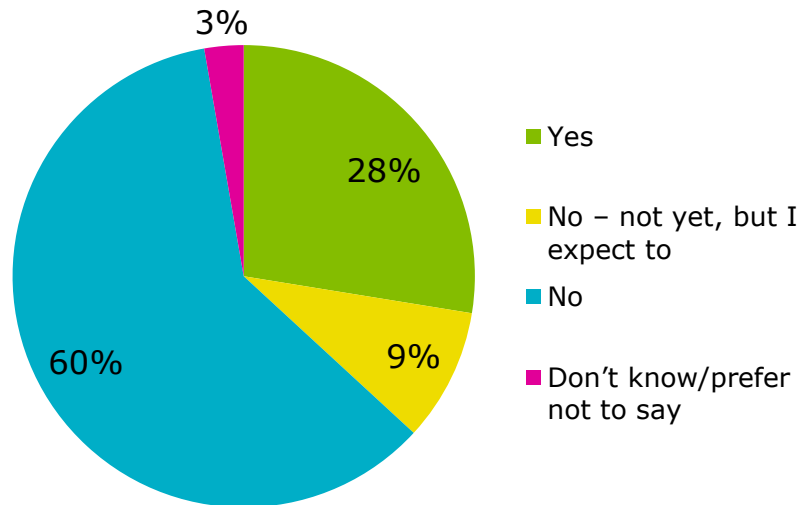
Weighted Base: 85 respondents. Balance : those not living in privately rented accommodation or privately owned halls of residence

**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?**

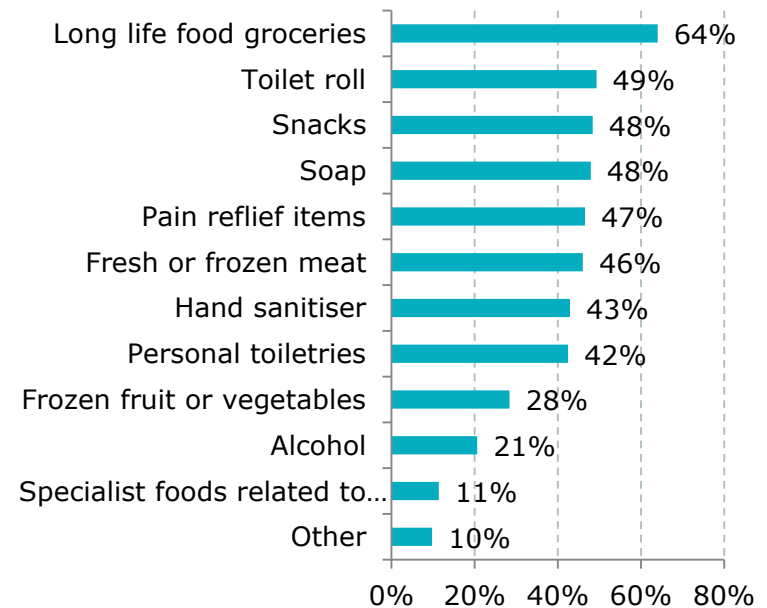
# Consumption/Goods and Purchases

One in four students studying in Northern Ireland say they have purchased something more than usual. In the main this has related to long life groceries. Toilet roll and snacks were also mentioned by around half as items that they have purchased more of than usual – this is significantly higher than the average.

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



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

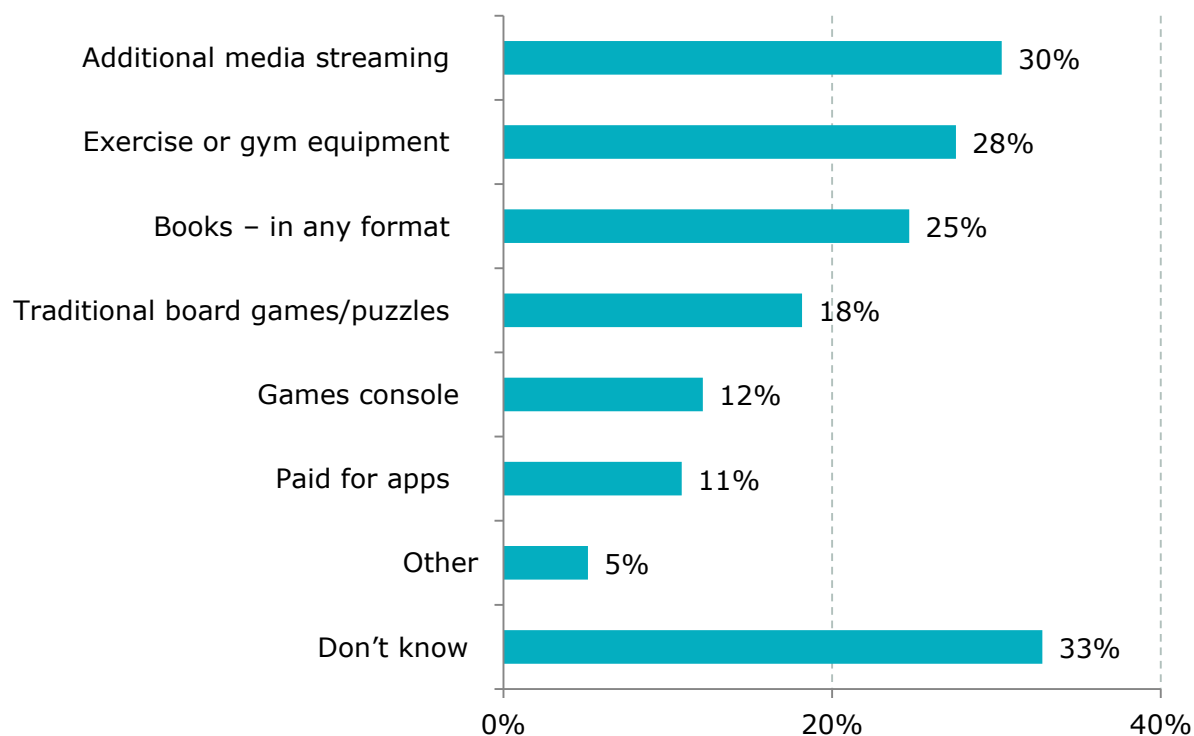


Weighted Base: 132 respondents. Balance : those who have not bought/don not expect to buy more than usual

**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 additional media streaming, equipment to aid exercise or books.

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



Weighted Base: 348 respondents. Balance: no response

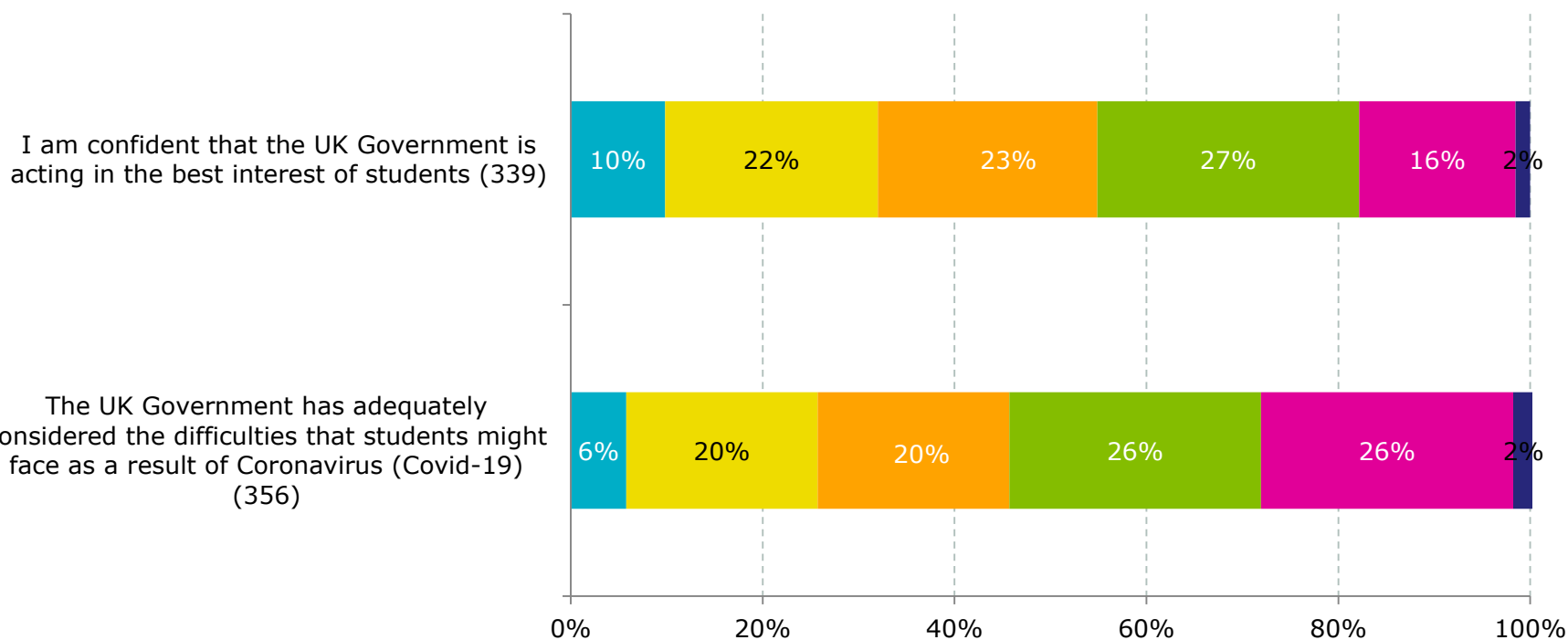
**G3. Have you, or are you considering buying any of the below to manage either self isolation or the newly announced movement restrictions?**

# Government actions

Marginally more students (two in five) disagree than agree (one on three) that the UK Government is acting in the best interests of students. Over half 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

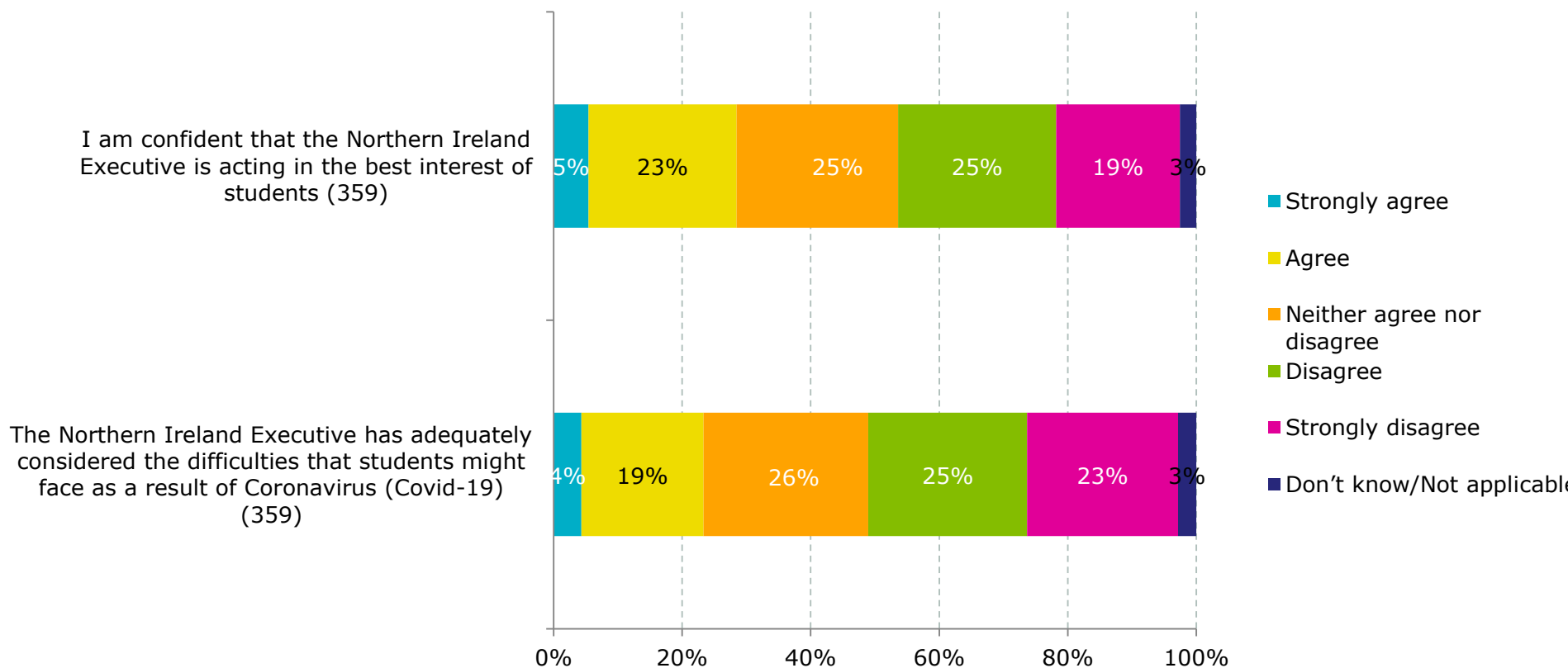


Weighted Base: (in brackets). Balance: no response

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

Over two in five students studying in Northern Ireland disagree that the NI Executive are acting in the best interests of students. A similar proportion disagree 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

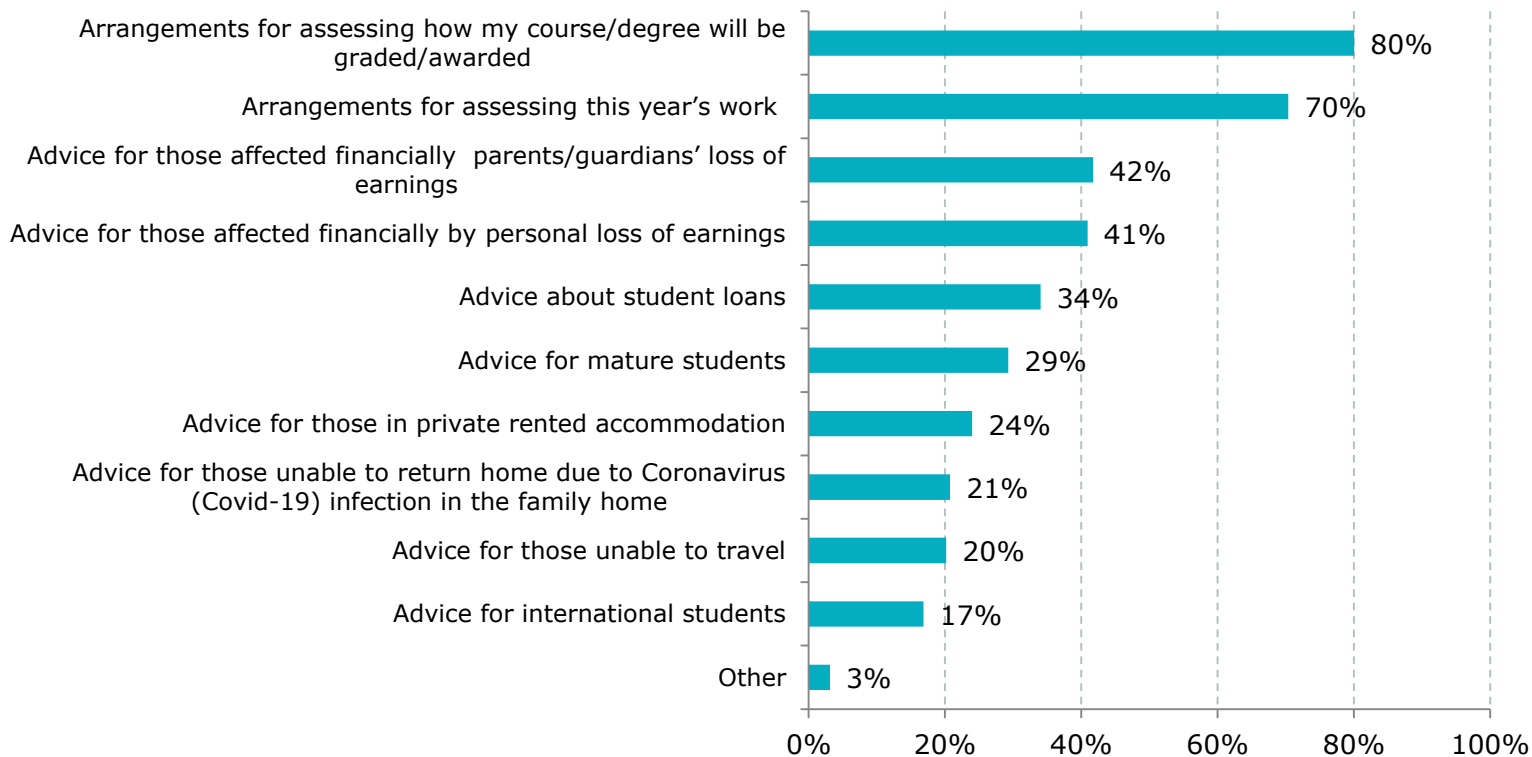


Weighted Base: (in brackets). Balance: students not studying in Northern Ireland

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

Four in five students in Northern Ireland would like further info/guidance from governments on how their course/degree will be graded/awarded; this is significantly higher than average. Seven in ten would like further info/guidance on how this year's work will be assessed.

### Other information/guidance would like from governments



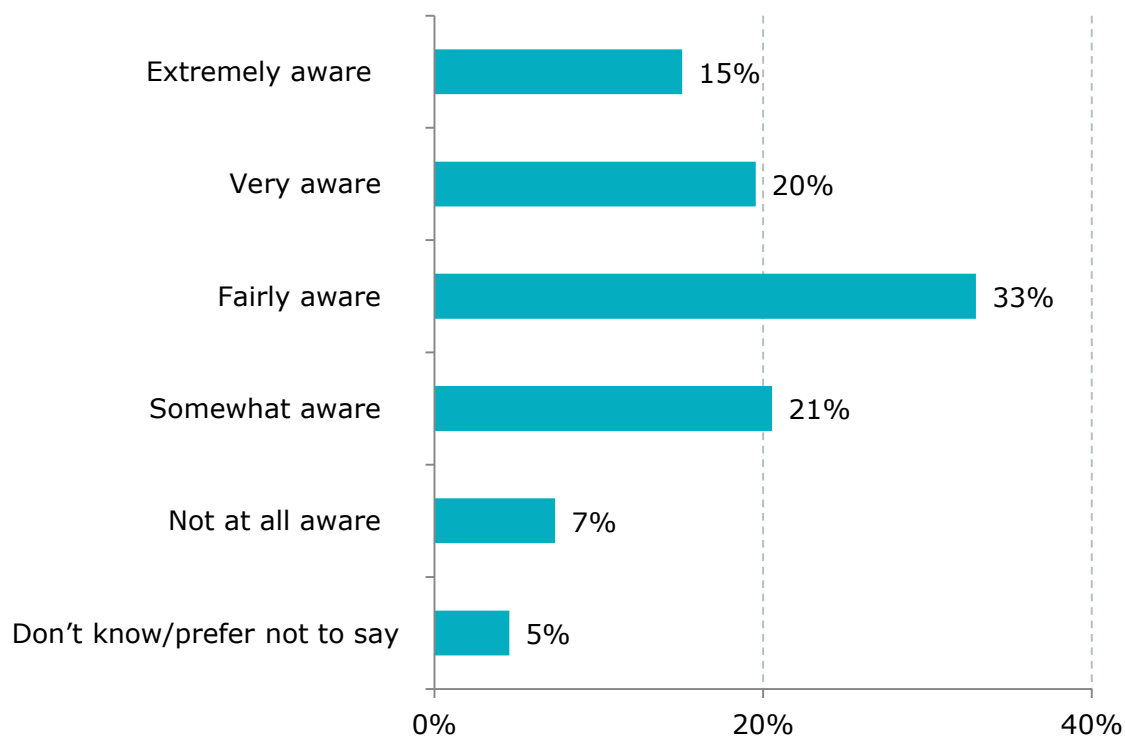
Weighted Base: 355 respondents. Balance: no response

**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. One in three are either 'very' or 'extremely' aware.

### Awareness of Government measures to combat economic impacts



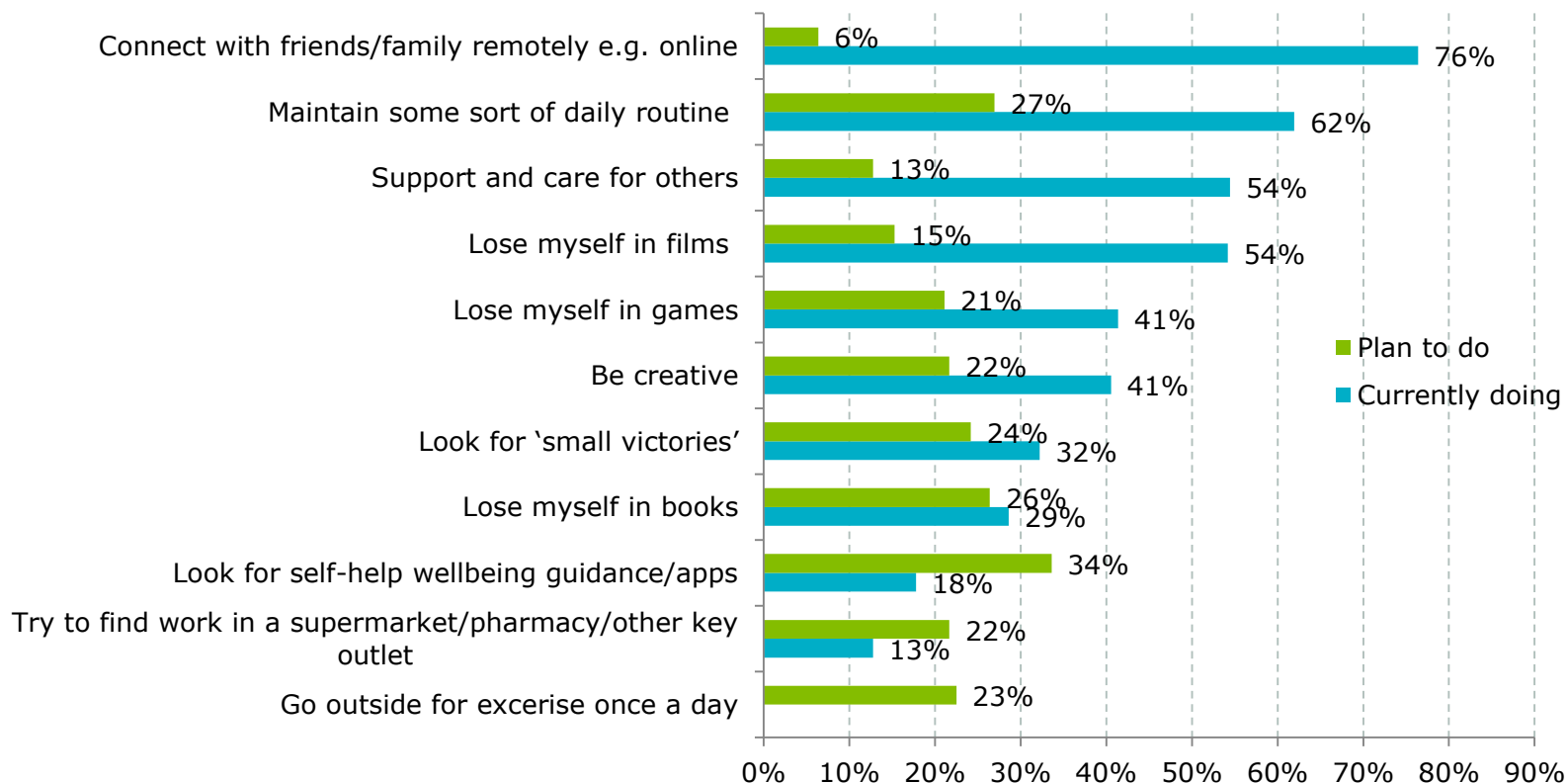
Weighted Base: 357 respondents. Balance: no response

**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, although a third plan to do this, or work in a supermarket, although a quarter plan to do this

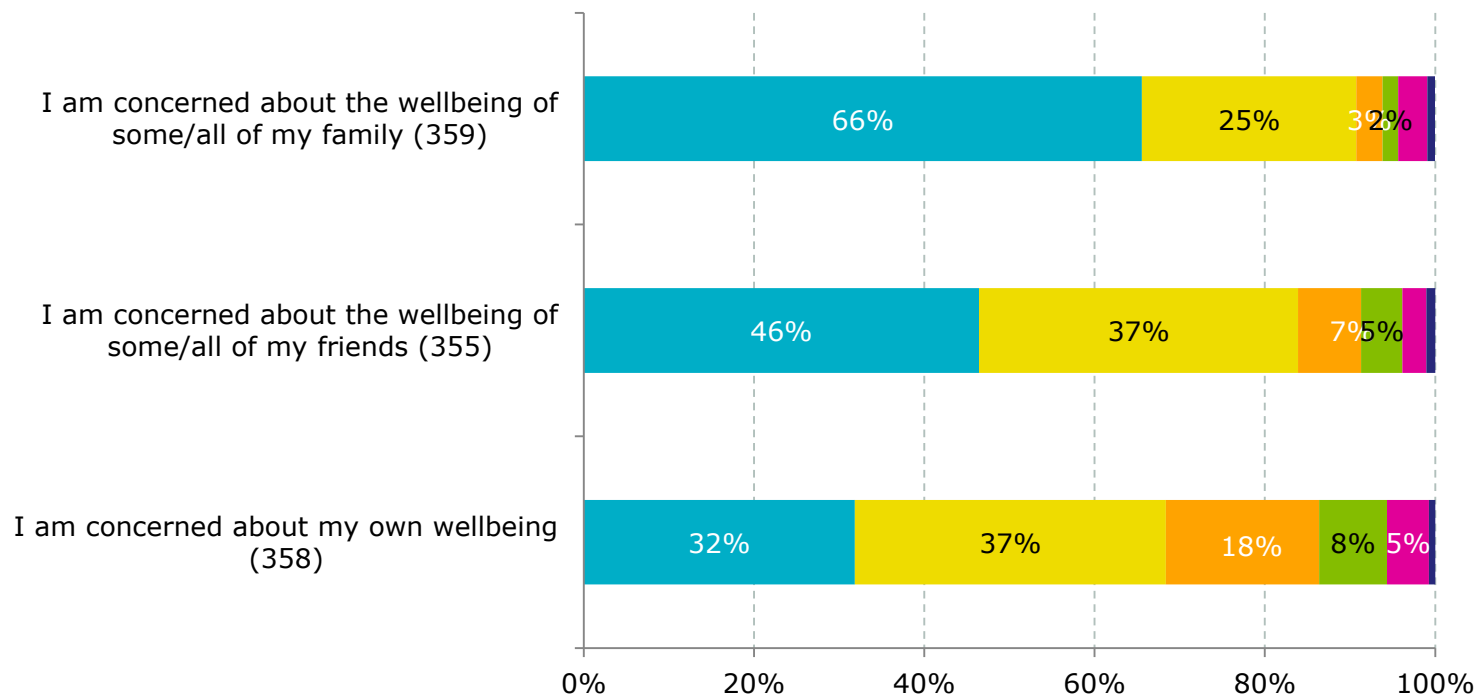
### What are you currently doing/plan to do to support your well being?



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:

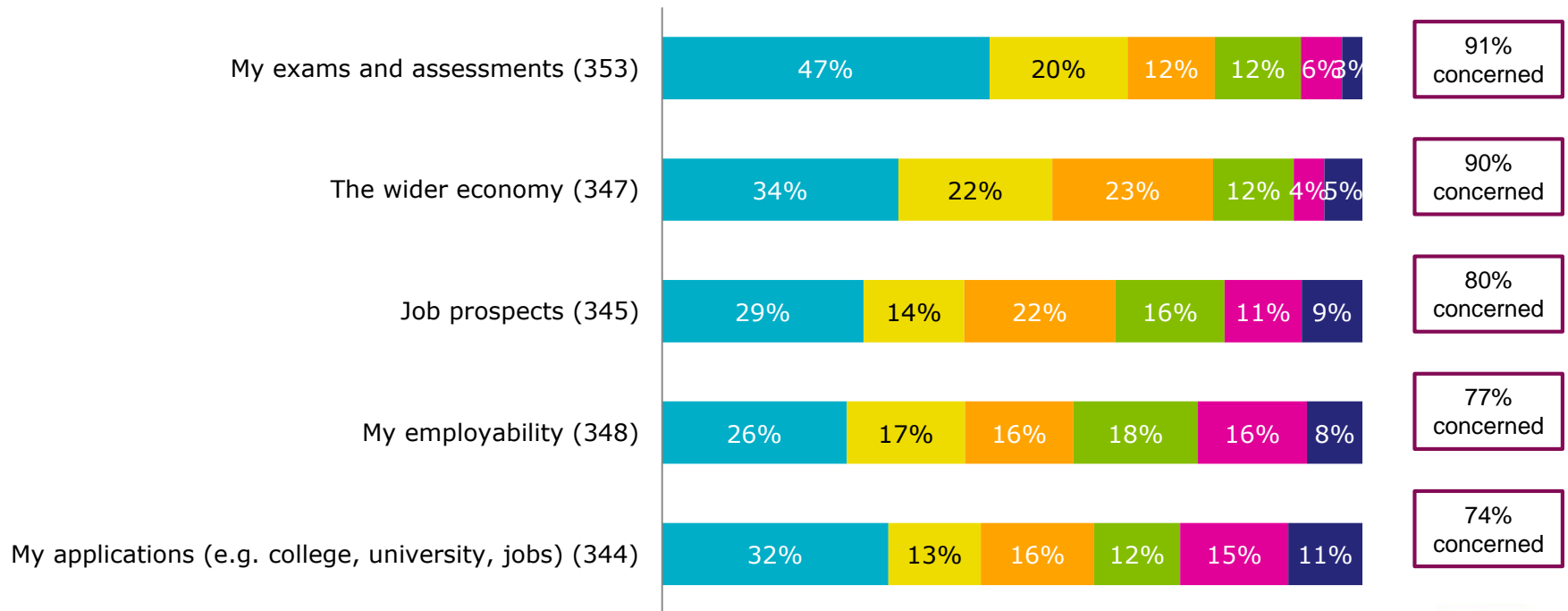
12. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements as a result of Coronavirus (Covid-19)?

# The future

Students are most likely to show a 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:

- **Ultimate grades / predicting grades**
- **Lack of time** to prepare / meeting deadlines
- Impact on stress and health
- Having to work / submit online
- Lack of **motivation / focus / concentration**

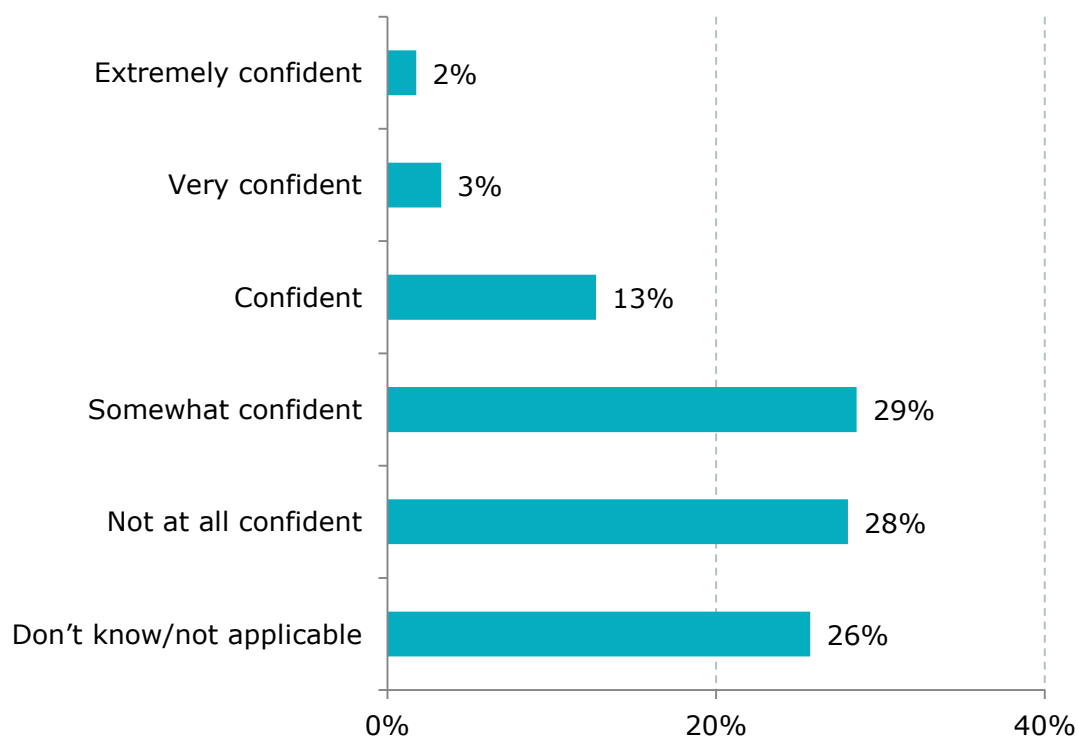
*"Not being able to sit my exams which impacts on my over all result for my class."*

*"I will not get the time to study at home as I have young children living with me I need to look after all day so I don't get time to study and I worry this will impact on my grades I'm very concerned about this to be honest as looking after small children is a full on job at home"*

*"The school is not taking into consideration the anxiety and stress that students are experiencing. Many students struggle to adapt to at home learning and this is not being considered.."*

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**



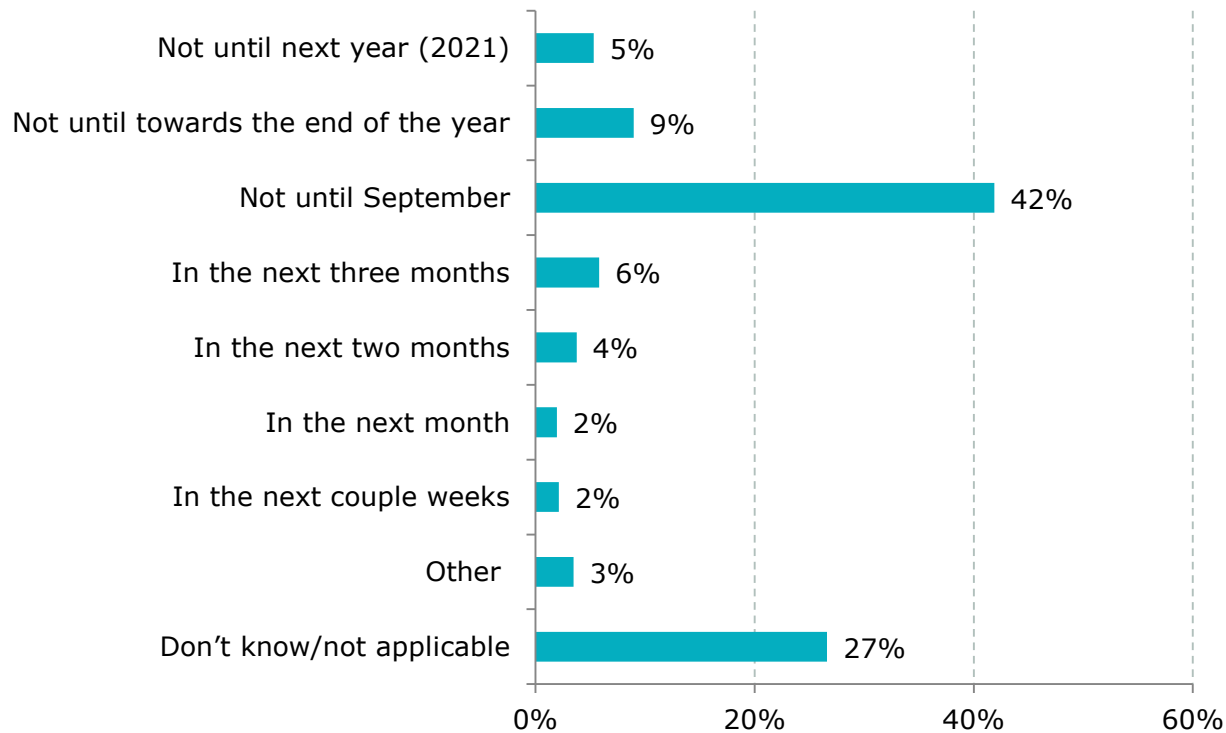
Weighted Base: 358 respondents. Balance: no response

**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?

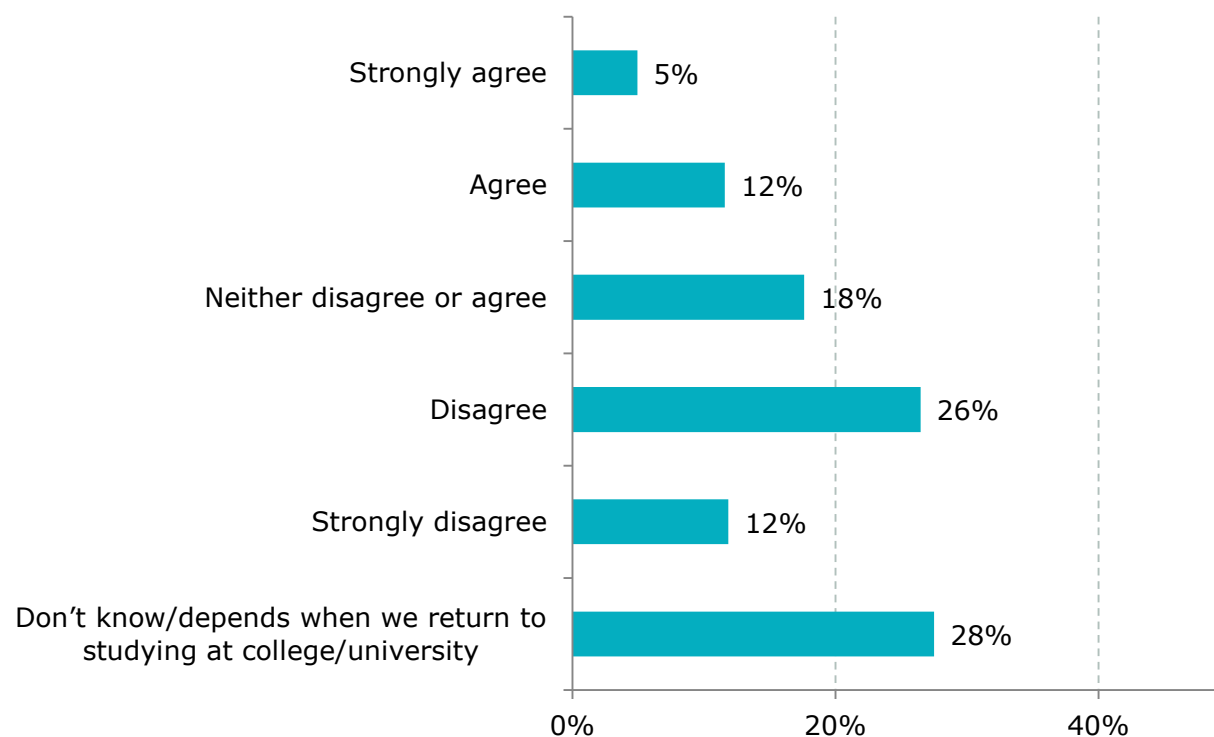


Weighted Base: 360 respondents.

**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 quarter 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: 357 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 50%

Men 48%

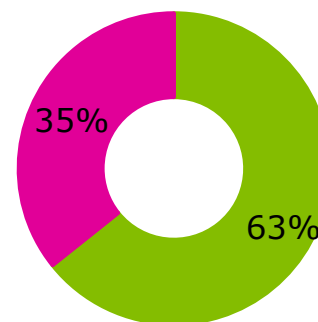
## Age



## Level of study

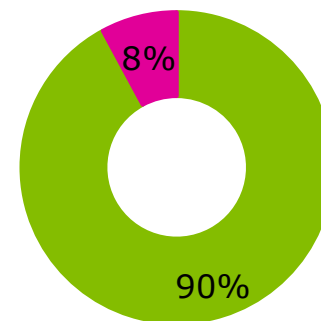
■ FE

■ HE



■ UK citizen studying in the UK

■ International student from within the EU studying in the UK



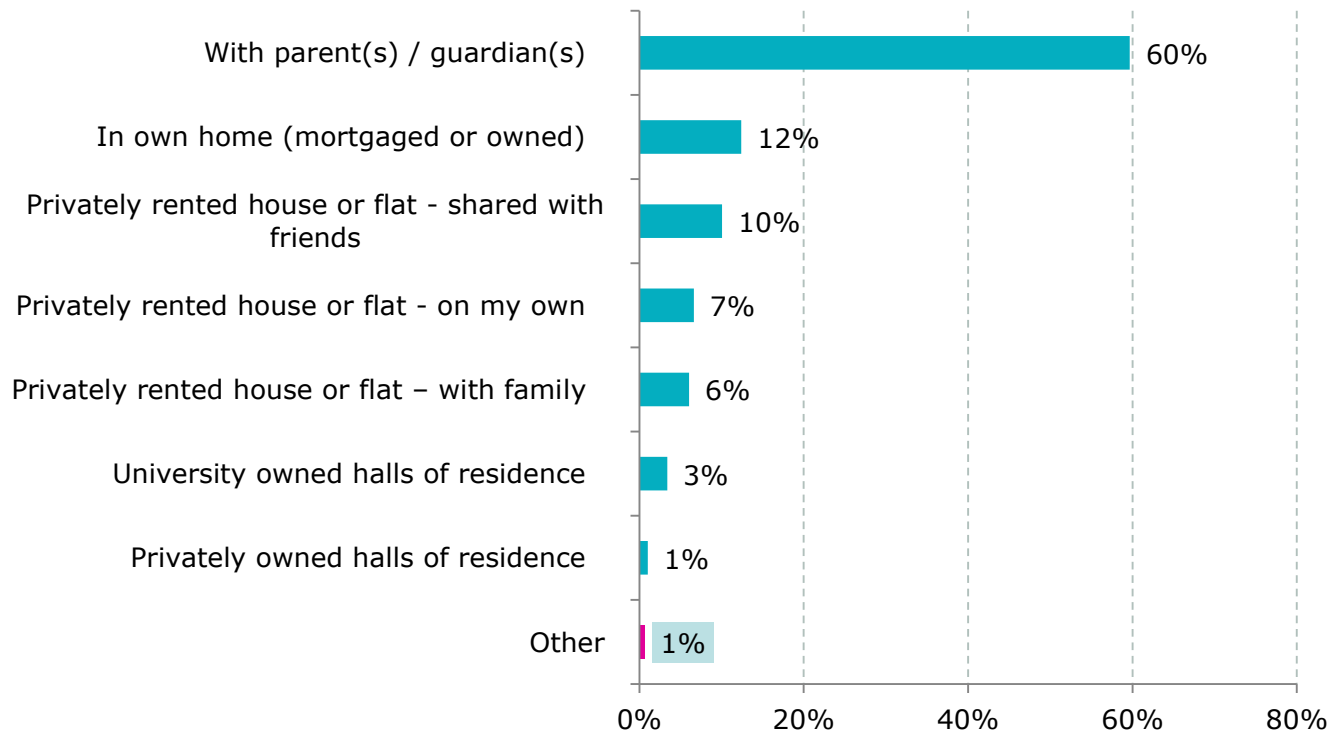
**Full time: 79%**

**Part time: 20%**

**Distance learner: 3%**

# Demographics

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

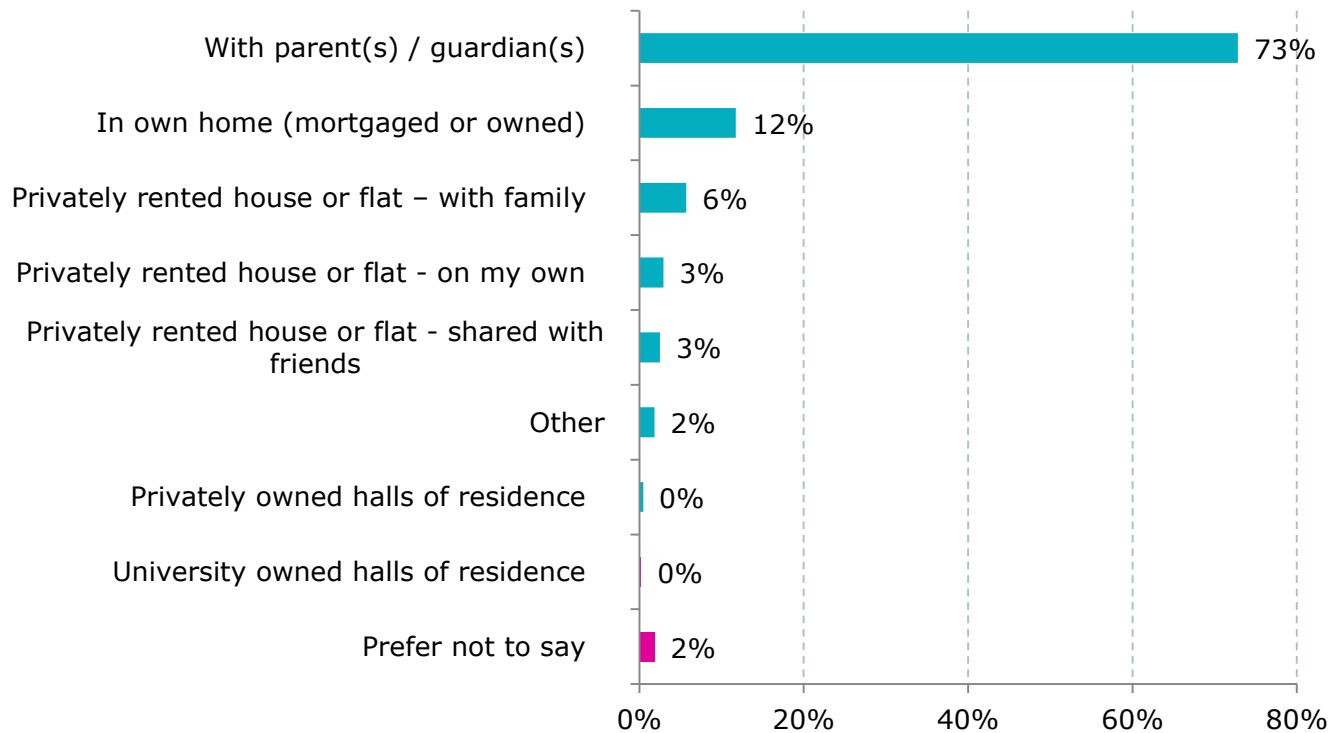


Weighted Base: 360 respondents

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

# Demographics

## Current living circumstances

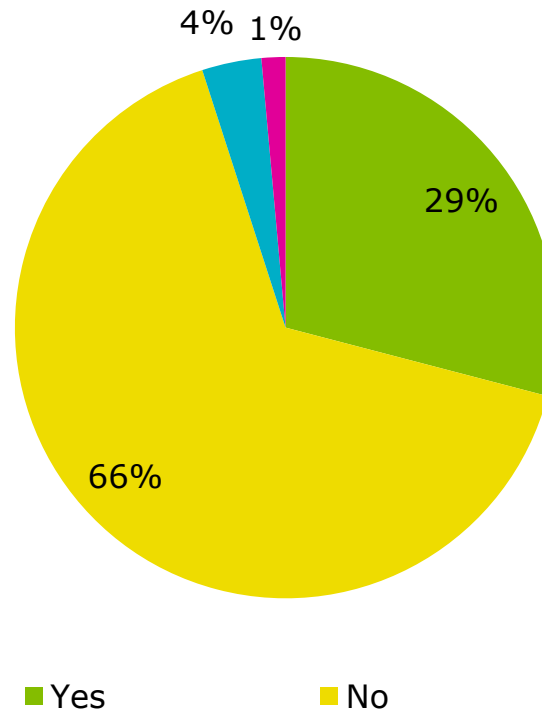


Weighted Base: 360 respondents Balance : circumstances not changed, no response

**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

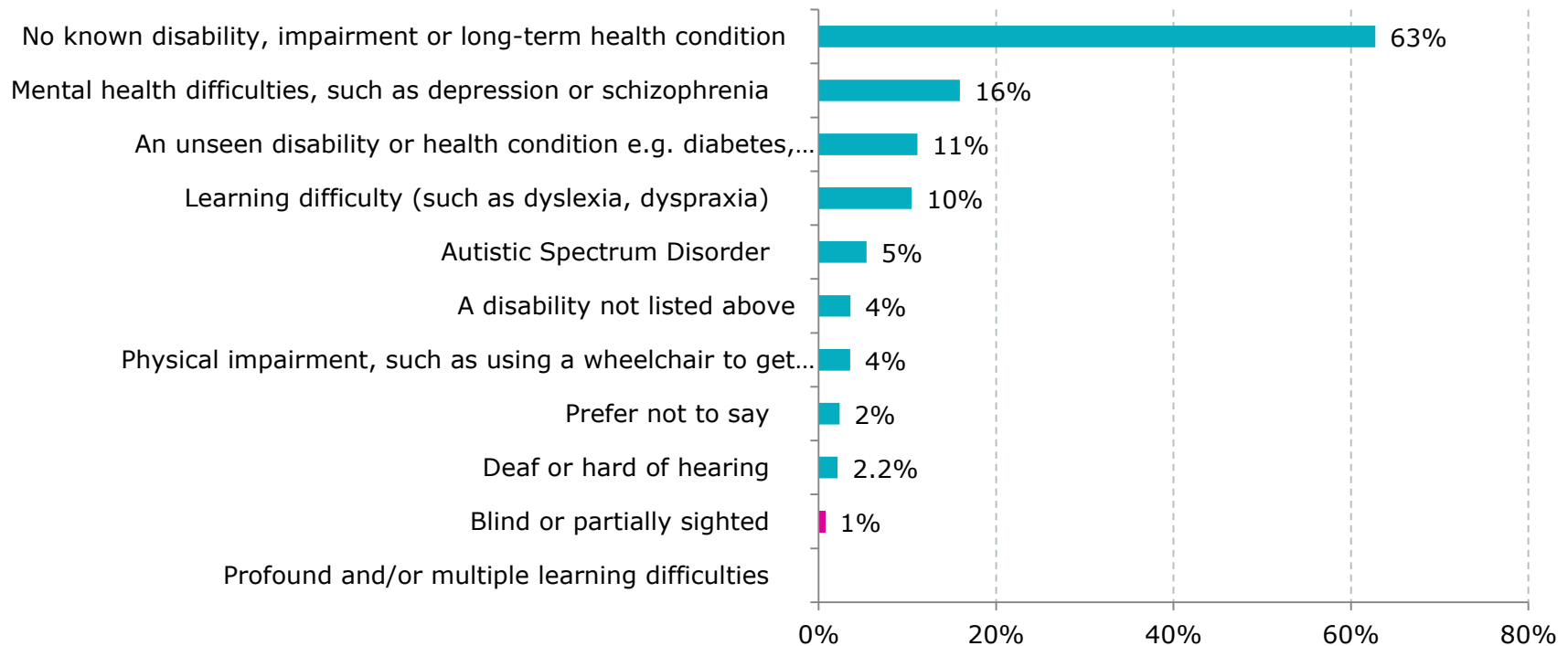


Weighted Base: 345 respondents.

**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



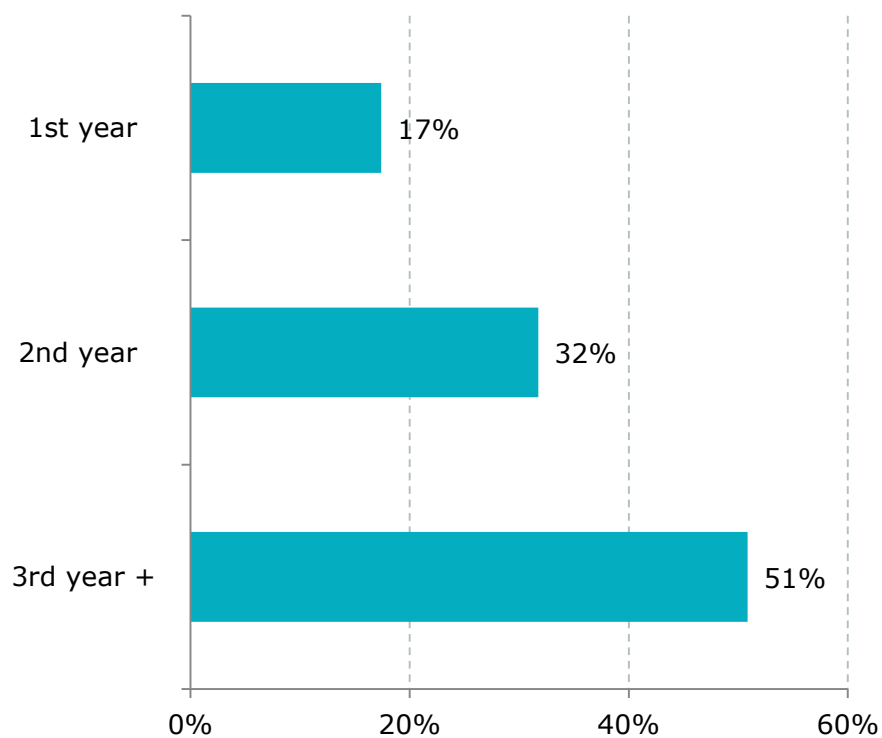
Weighted Base: 360 respondents

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



# Demographics

## HE Year of study

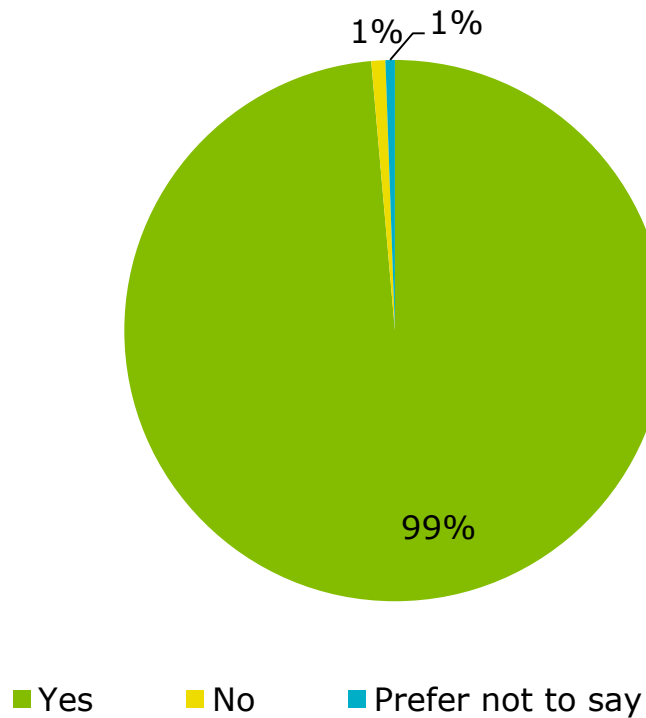


Weighted Base: 110 respondents Balance : FE students, no response

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

# Demographics

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

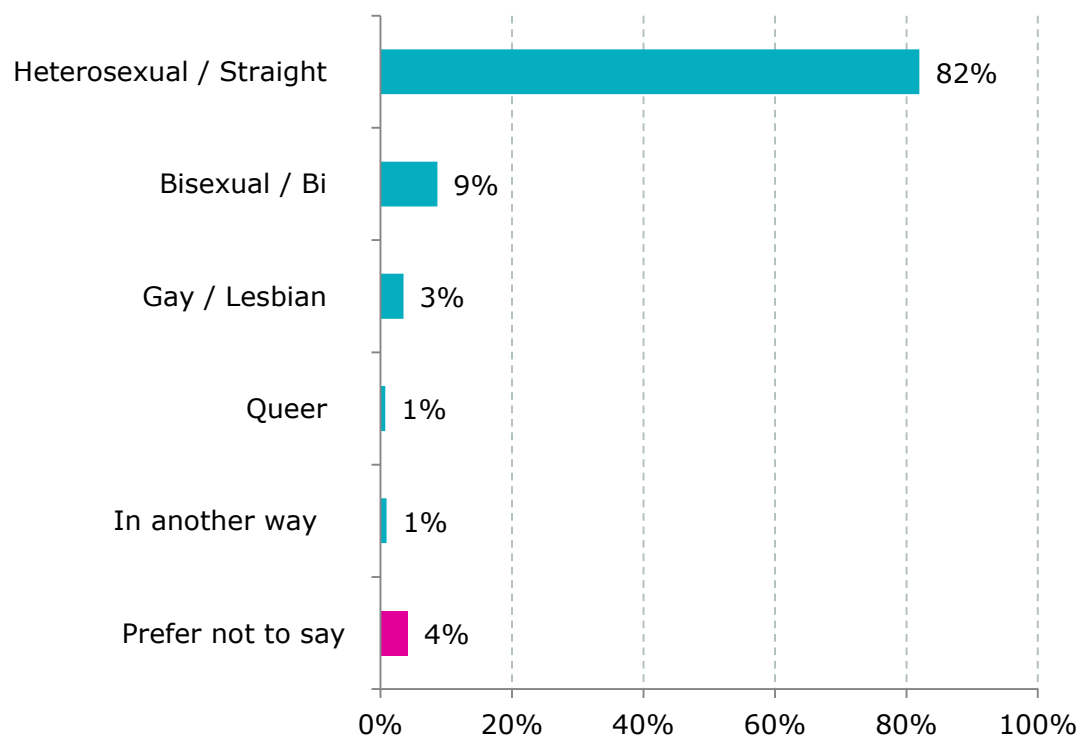


Weighted Base: 359 respondents.

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

# Demographics

## Sexual orientation/preference

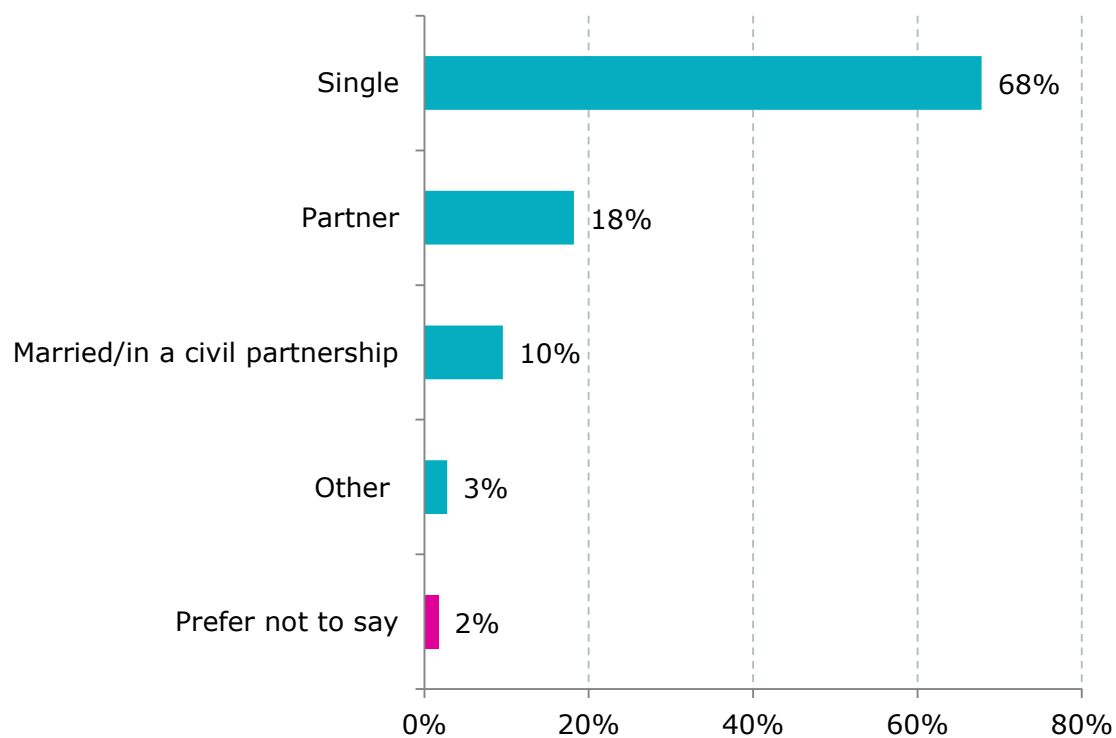


Weighted Base: 358 respondents.

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

# Demographics

## Marital status

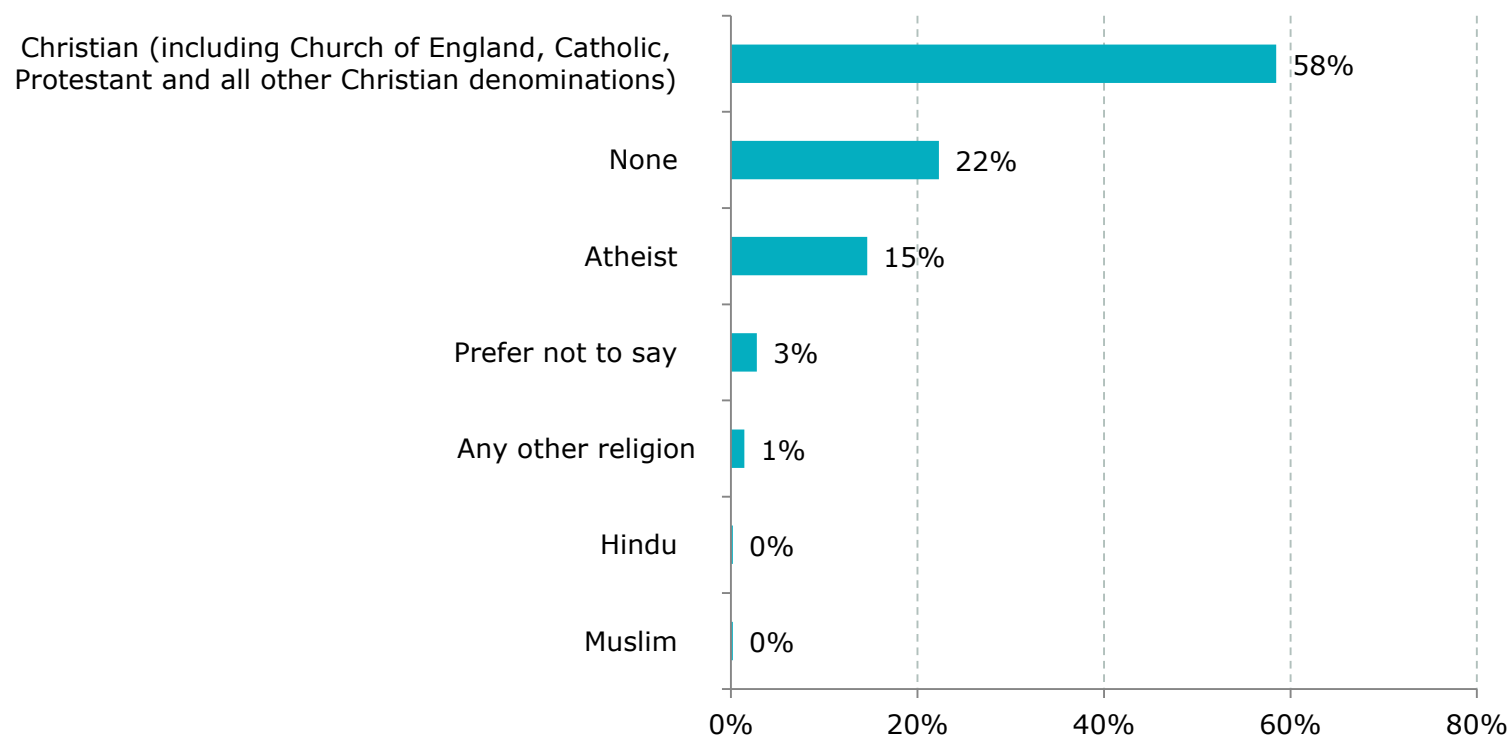


Weighted Base: 360 respondents.

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

# Demographics

## Religion, faith or belief



Weighted Base: 360 respondents.

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

# Coronavirus and Students Survey: Northern Ireland Results

**April 2020**

NUS Insight