

# Coronavirus Student Survey Phase III

## November 2020

## Government actions

Commissioned by NUS, NUS Charity, TOTUM and the Co-op

Delivered by NUS Insight

# Project Overview

## Objectives

This is the third survey in the series commissioned by NUS, NUS Charity and TOTUM to understand more about how students and recent graduates feel about the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the impacts they are experiencing. The Co-op is also now a partner in this study. Previous surveys – phases I and II – took place in March and July 2020 respectively.

## Methodology

A sample of 4,193 was achieved.

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

The survey was promoted via the NUS Student database, the TOTUM database, and through social media in November 2020.

The survey took around 25 minutes to complete and was in field from noon 6 November to 9.00 am 23 November.

## What we look for

Within this report, a number of questions have been broken down by demographics, which have been compared with each other. Where applicable and the base size is large enough ( $n > 50$ ), statistically significant differences between demographics and their answers have been shown. A difference is significant when it is likely to have been caused by something other than random chance.

# Sample weighting

## Explanation of weighting

NUS achieved an original sample of **4,241** students. The response rate reflected the trend that females participate more than males in completing surveys - the initial gender split was: 65% female and 27% male.

While this survey sampled both HE and FE, our practice is to reflect a student population where possible. In the absence of any national FE statistics, NUS practice is to use HESA. According to HESA statistics the gender split within Higher Education is 56% female and 45% male. In order to reflect this, 'weighting' was applied to the data in this report. In this case, we adjusted the profile of the sample by applying weights so that the over represented group, females, are down weighted and the under represented group, males, are up weighted. This resulted in a gender split in this survey of 56% female and 36% male and a sample of **4,193**.

# Government actions

# Summary

Attitudes towards the UK Government are similar to those reported in the summer, with two in three disagreeing that the UK Government is acting in the best interests of students and that they have adequately considered the difficulties students face as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. Students aged 18-29, in full-time education, are more likely to disagree that the Government is acting well, as are those with a disability, or who identify as Bisexual/Bi, Gay/Lesbian or Queer.

Conversely there has been a general decrease in how well students studying in the nations (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) feel their respective governments have been acting with regards to their best interests and the difficulties they face.

The majority of students, regardless of which nation they are studying in, continue to claim that they keep themselves up to date with the information provided by the UK and/or the relevant devolved governments.

As was the case in the summer, the majority do not trust the UK Government to do the right thing for students in the event of a second wave of the virus. However, it is no longer the case that half or more of those studying in the nations report trusting their respective governments to do the right thing.

# Summary

Students believe that the biggest single priority for the UK Government is for them to provide better, honest and clear information. This is followed by the desire for tuition fees to be reduced. Similarly one of the key things students would like to tell the government is to be consistent, truthful and honest.

The government's new slogan 'Hands. Face. Space' is perceived to be fairly, very or extremely clear by two in three students. Furthermore the perceived clarity of key messages from the UK Government on social distancing appears to have improved since July, however the proportion of students who feel that the messaging on social distancing is not at all clear has gone up in Scotland and Wales.

Adherence to the government's guidelines on restricted social interactions is high, with nearly four in five saying they adhere, and only 4% having personally, or known someone else, to have received a penalty for breaking government guidance.

The pandemic is continuing to have an impact on how political some students feel, with over half now feeling more political as a result of Coronavirus. This has increased since July (46%). Those most likely to be feeling more political are aged 16-22 years, living in halls or with parents, full-time students and those identifying as Bisexual/Bi, Gay/Lesbian or Queer.

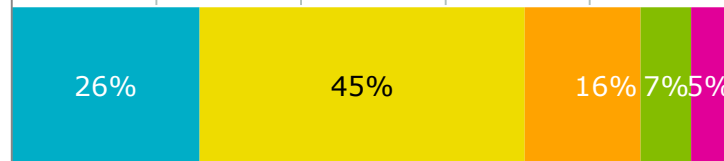
Similar to the data from the summer, just under three in four keep themselves updated with daily information and communications from the UK Government. However similar to July, three in five do not trust the UK Government to do the right thing for students in the event of a second wave of Coronavirus.

**November 2020**

## Agreement with statements – UK Government

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

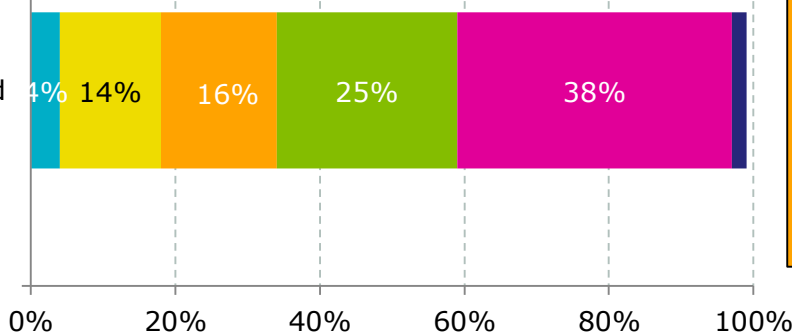
I keep myself updated with the daily information and communications provided by the UK Government



**More likely to agree:**

HE

I trust the UK Government to do the right thing for students in the event of a second wave of coronavirus



**More likely to disagree:**

18-29 year olds  
HE  
UK citizens  
Welsh Full-time  
Bisexual/Bi, Gay/Lesbian, Queer  
Those with a disability  
White students

Weighted average Base: 4048 Balance: no response

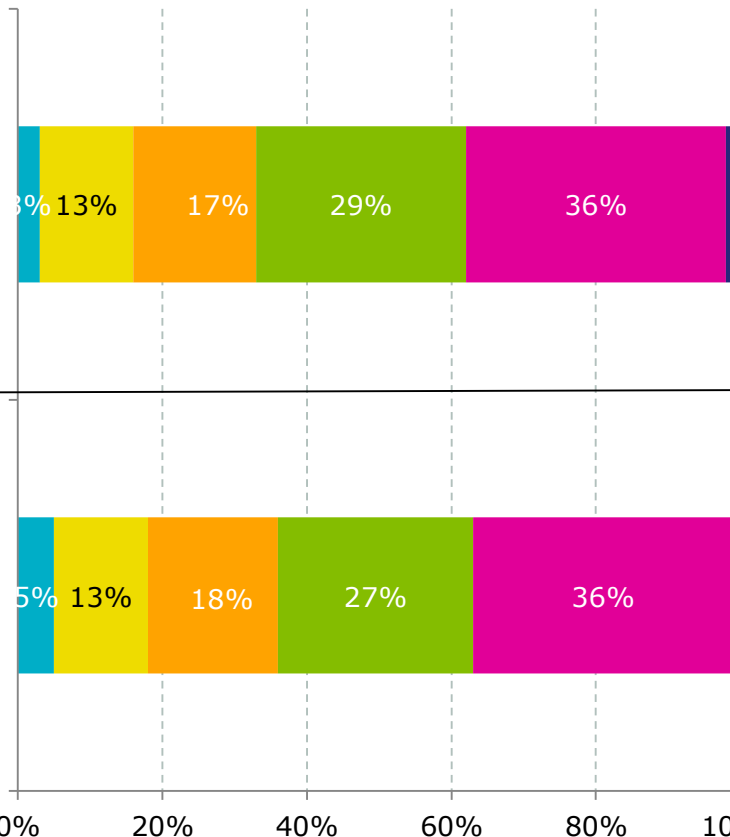
**G1. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below regarding the UK Government in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Two in three disagree that the UK Government has adequately considered the difficulties that students might face as a result of Coronavirus, and the same proportion do not feel confident that the UK Government is acting in the best interests of students. These are similar to the levels reported in the summer which had increased sharply from those recorded in March (Phase I, 40% disagreed that the government was acting in students' best interests and 55% disagreed the government had considered student difficulties).

**November 2020**

## Agreement with statements – UK Government

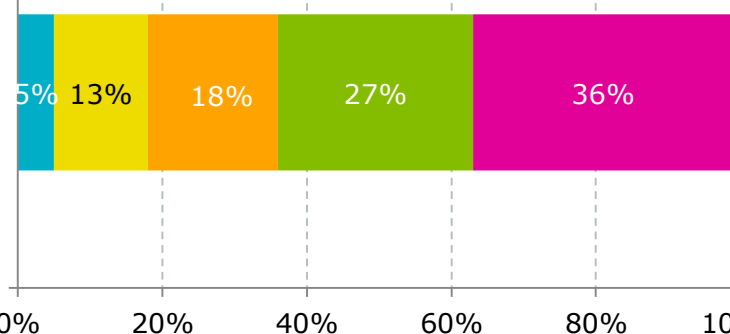
The UK Government has adequately considered the difficulties that students might face as a result of Coronavirus (Covid-19)



### More likely to disagree:

18-29 year olds  
UK citizens  
Those in halls or rented  
Full-time students  
Bisexual/Bi, Gay/Lesbian, Queer students  
Those with a disability  
White students

I am confident that the UK Government is acting in the best interest of students



### More likely to disagree:

18-29 year olds  
HE  
UK citizens  
Full-time students  
Non-binary  
Bisexual/Bi, Gay/Lesbian, Queer students  
Those with a disability

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

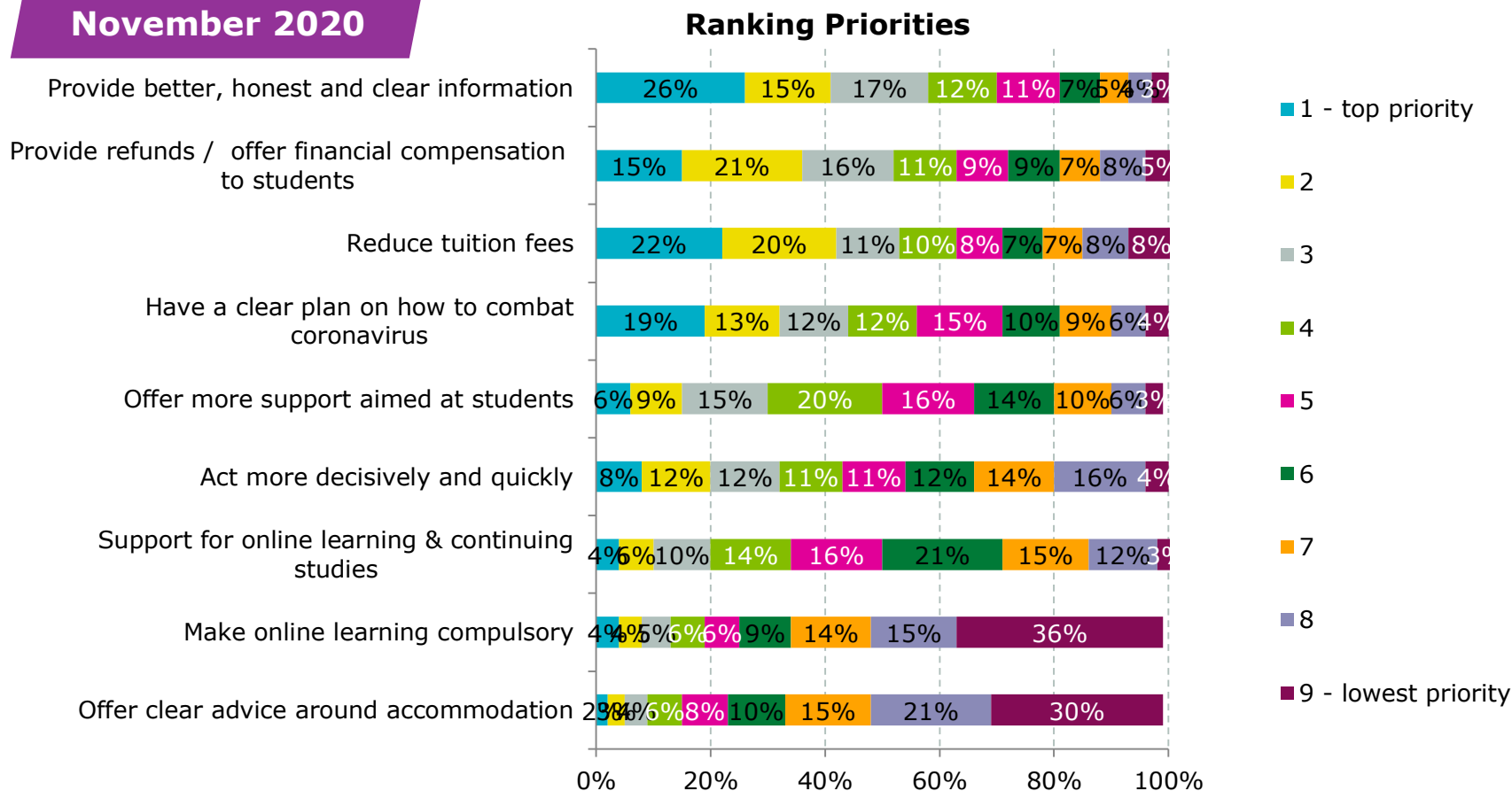
Weighted average Base: 4048 Balance: no response

**G1. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below regarding the UK Government in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**



Students state that the biggest single priority for the UK Government is for them to provide better, honest and clear information. This is followed by the desire for tuition fees to be reduced, a clear plan on how to combat the virus and to provide refunds or compensation for students.

**November 2020**



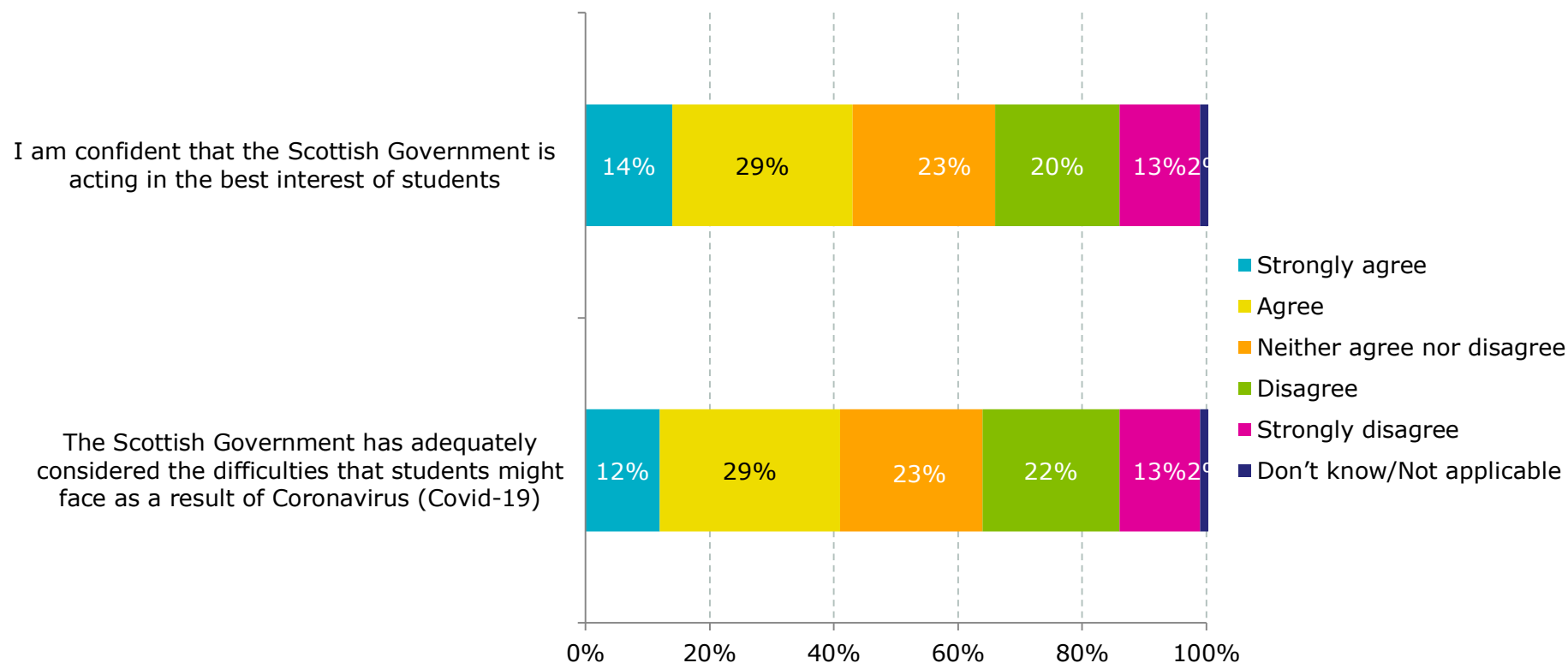
Weighted average Base: 3724 Balance: no response

**G2.During the last phase of this research, students told us the UK Government should concentrate on the following priorities for students. Can you please rank them, where 1 is top priority for you and 9 is lowest priority.**

Confidence that the Scottish Government is acting in the best interests of students, has dropped down to 43% from 57% in July taking it back to the levels seen in March (46%). More encouragingly however is that the proportion of those agreeing that the Scottish Government has adequately considered the difficulties students face has remained more stable at 41% (compared to 46% in July)

**November 2020**

### Agreement with statements – Scottish Government



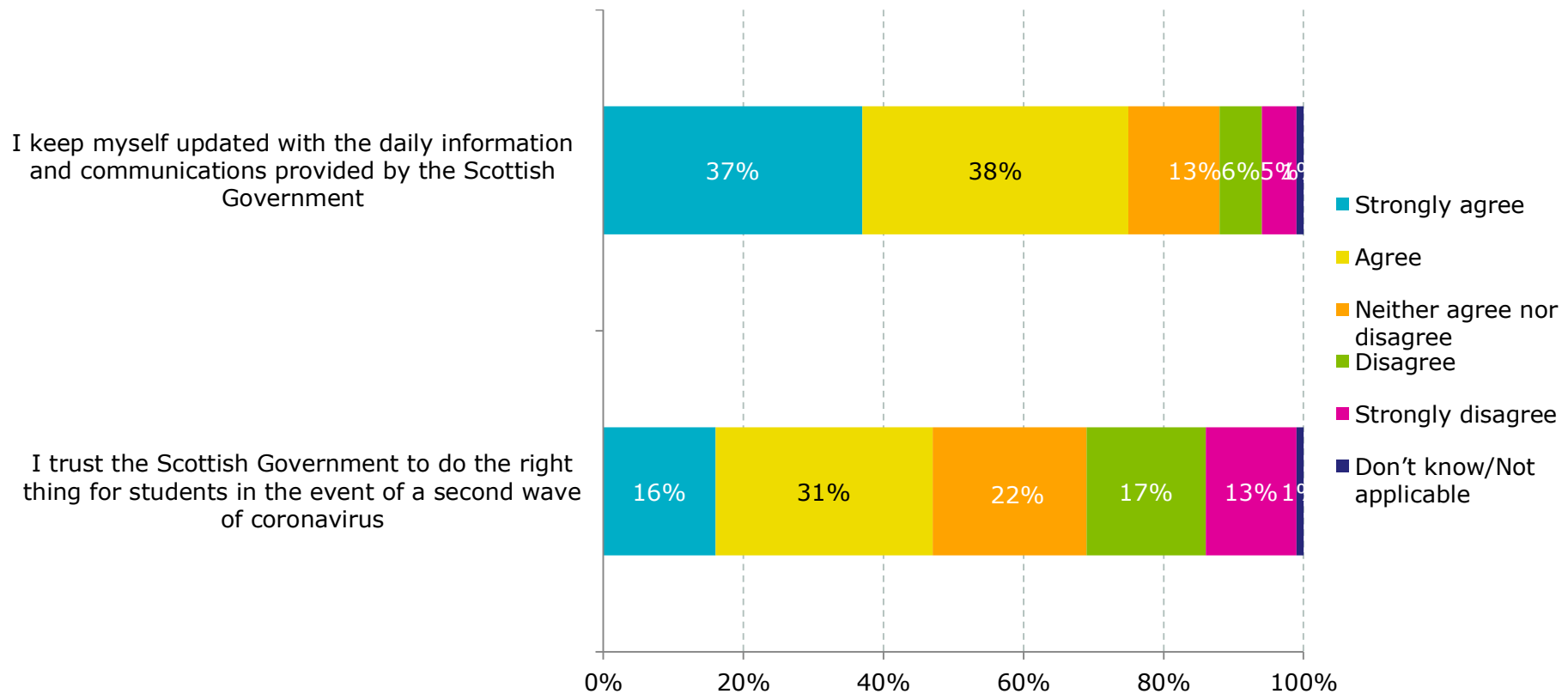
Average weighted Base: 627. Balance: students not studying in Scotland

**G3. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below regarding the Scottish Government in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Three in four students studying in Scotland keep up to date with daily information and communications provided by the Scottish Government. Trust in the Scottish Government however has dropped with around half (47%) trusting the Scottish Government to do the right thing for students in the event of a second wave of Coronavirus, compared to 62% in the summer.

**November 2020**

### Agreement with statements – Scottish Government

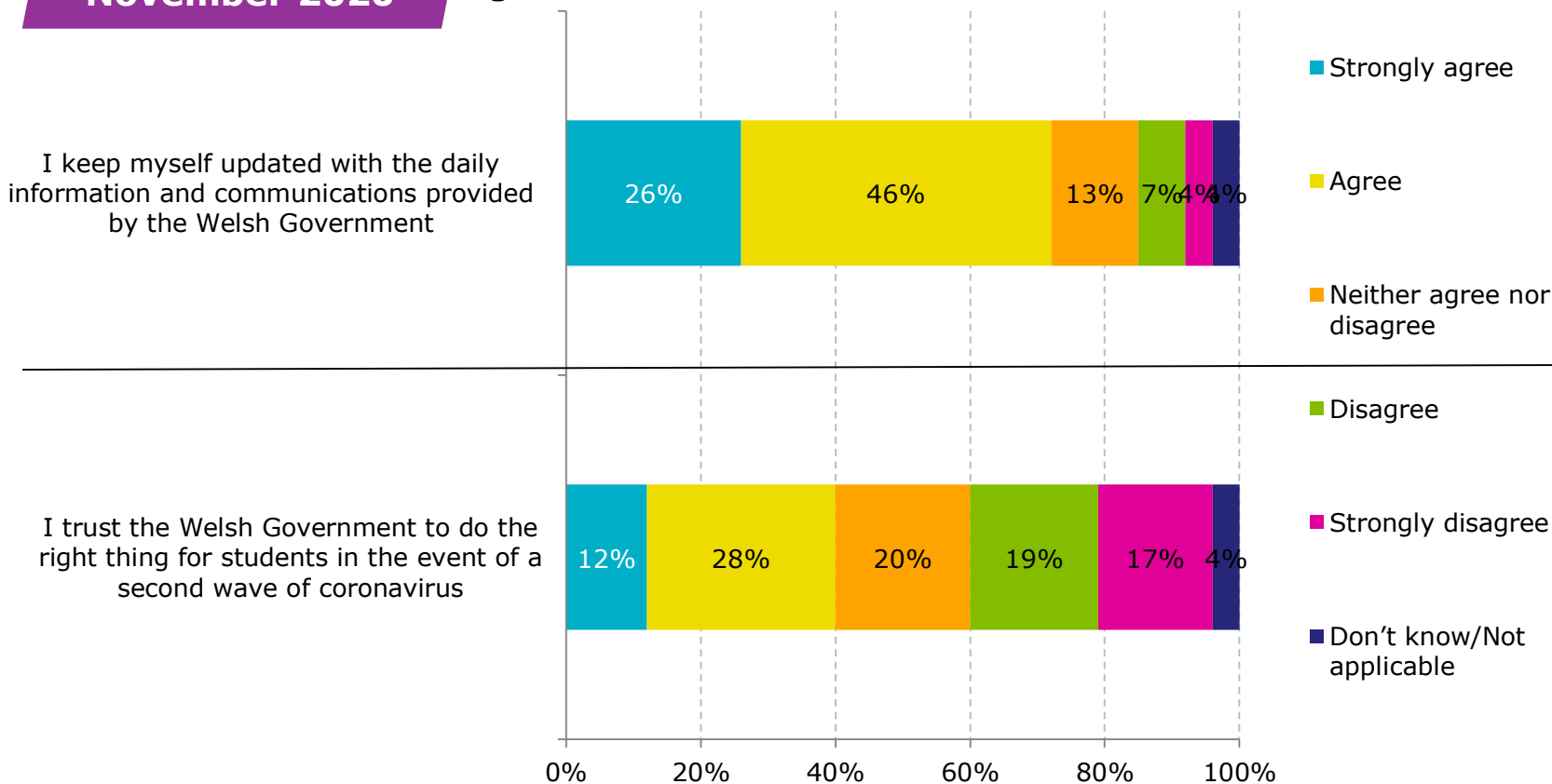


Average weighted Base: 627. Balance: students not studying in Scotland

Just under three in four students studying in Wales keep themselves updated with the daily information and communications provided by the Welsh Government. And two in five trust the Welsh Government to do the right thing for students in the event of a second wave of Coronavirus – this is a drop from half who trusted the Welsh Government in July.

**November 2020**

### Agreement with statements – Welsh Government



Average weighted Base:192. Balance: students not studying in Wales

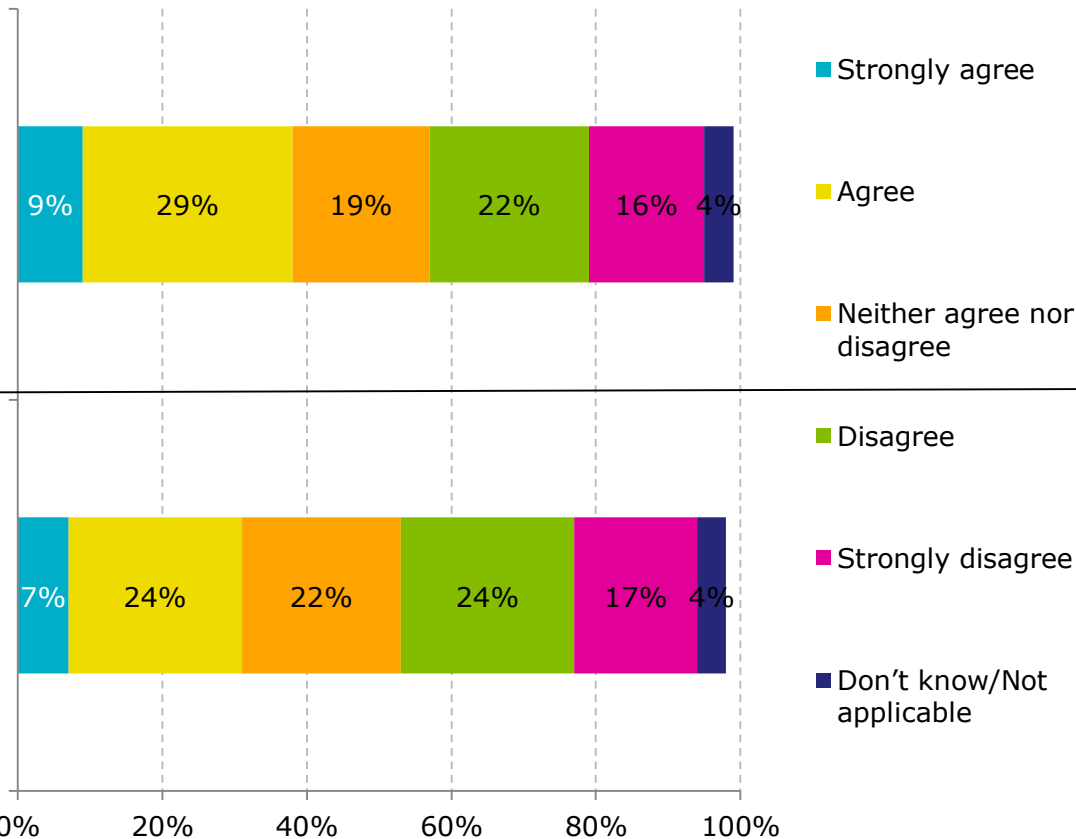
**G4. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below regarding the Welsh Government in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Confidence that the Welsh Government is acting in the best interests of students has fallen to 38% from 49% in July – taking it back to similar levels seen in March (35%). Agreement that the Welsh Government has adequately considered the difficulties faced by students is resting in between the levels seen in March (21%) and those seen in July (39%).

**November 2020**

### Agreement with statements – Welsh Government

I am confident that the Welsh Government is acting in the best interest of students



The Welsh Government has adequately considered the difficulties that students might face as a result of Coronavirus (Covid-19)

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

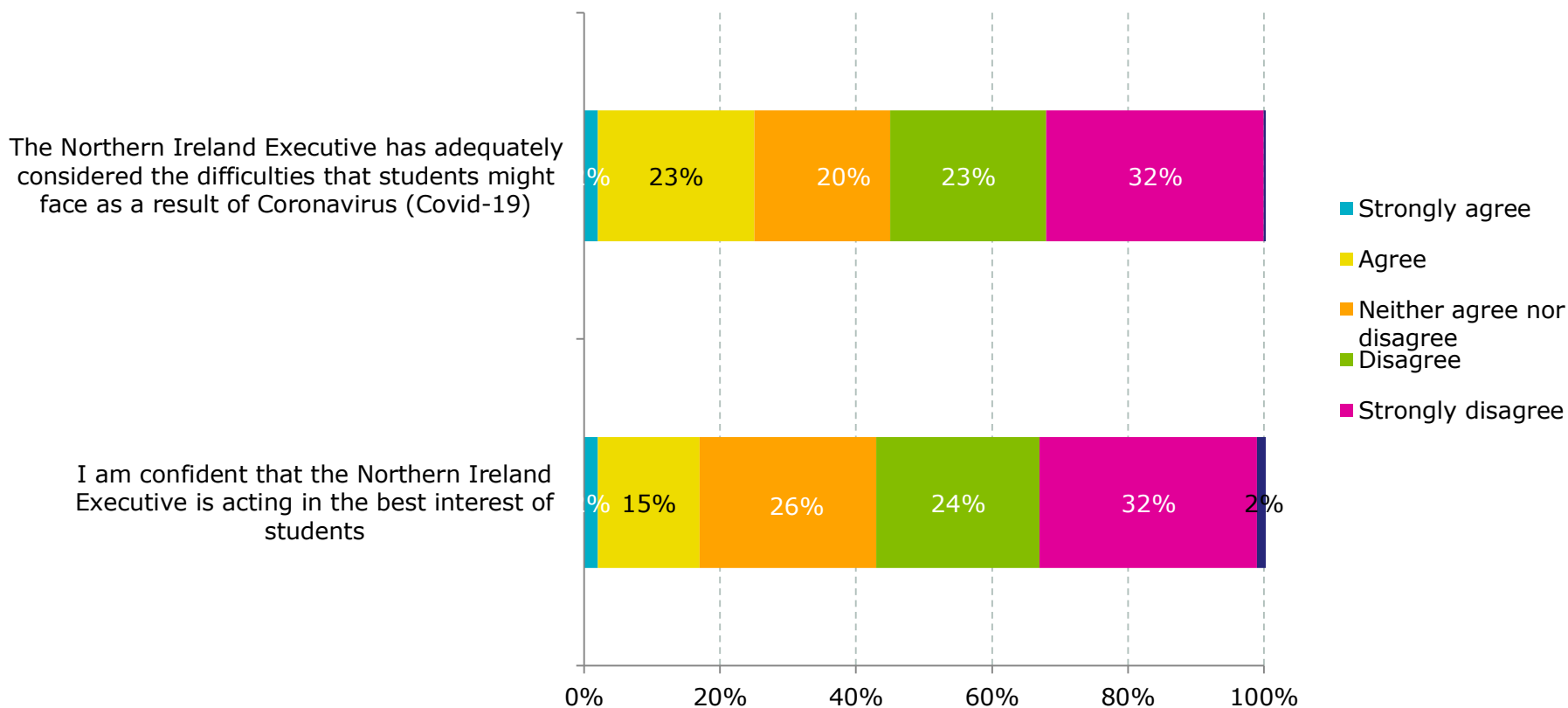
Average weighted Base:192. Balance: students not studying in Wales

**G4. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below regarding the Welsh Government in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Compared to July 2020, the proportion of students studying in Northern Ireland who strongly agree they are confident that the NI Executive is acting in the best interests of students has halved from 33% to 17%. The proportion who agree that the NI Executive has adequately considered the difficulties that students face as a result of Coronavirus has dropped from 33% in July to 25%.

**November 2020**

### Agreement with statements – Northern Ireland Executive



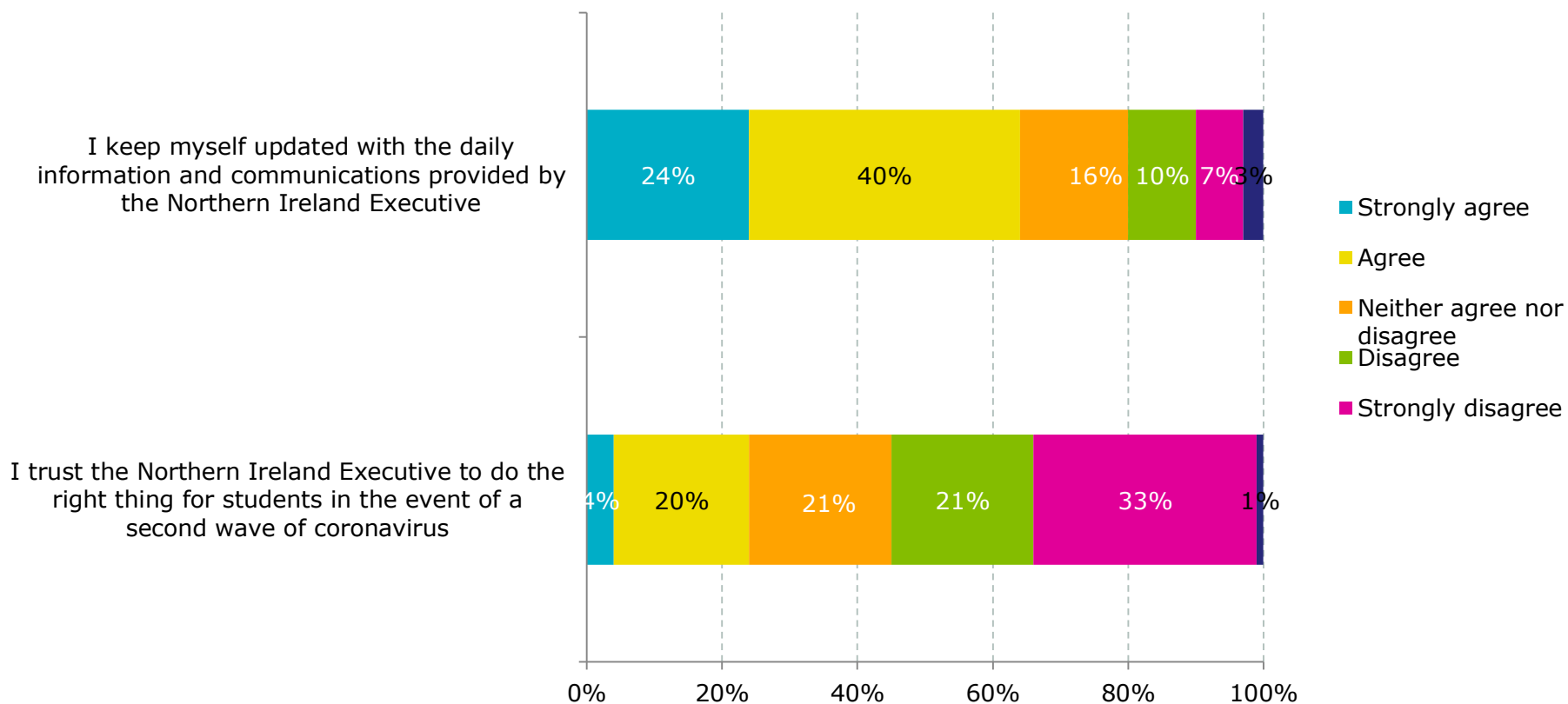
Average weighted Base: 22. Balance: students not studying in Northern Ireland

**G5. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below regarding the Northern Ireland Executive in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Two in three (64%) students studying in NI keep themselves updated with the daily information and communications provided by the Northern Ireland Executive – a drop from 81% in July. And one in four (24%) trust the NI Executive to do the right thing for students in the event of a second wave of Coronavirus – a drop from 40% in July.

**November 2020**

### Agreement with statements – Northern Ireland Executive



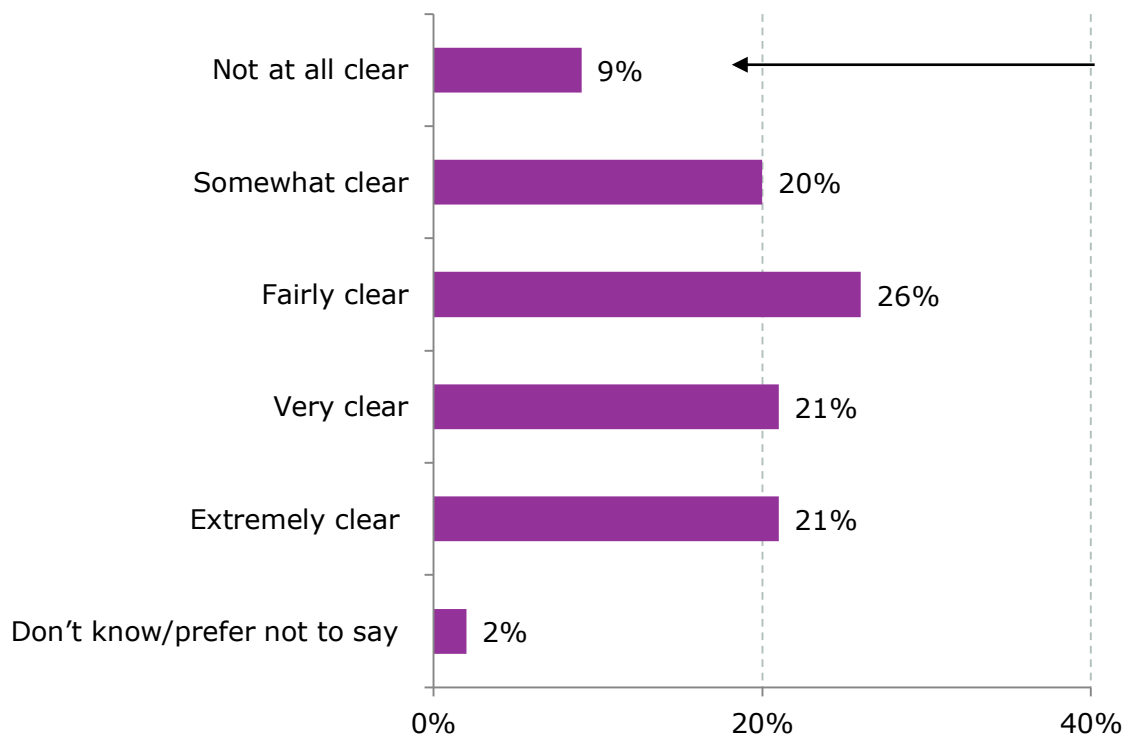
Average weighted Base: 22. Balance: students not studying in Northern Ireland

**G5. Please tell us how far you agree, if at all, with the statements below regarding the Northern Ireland Executive in relation to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic?**

Two in five students feel the UK Government's 'Hands, Face, Space' message is extremely or very clear. A similar proportion feel the message is fairly or somewhat clear.

November 2020

### Clarity of 'Hands. Face. Space' slogan



#### More likely amongst:

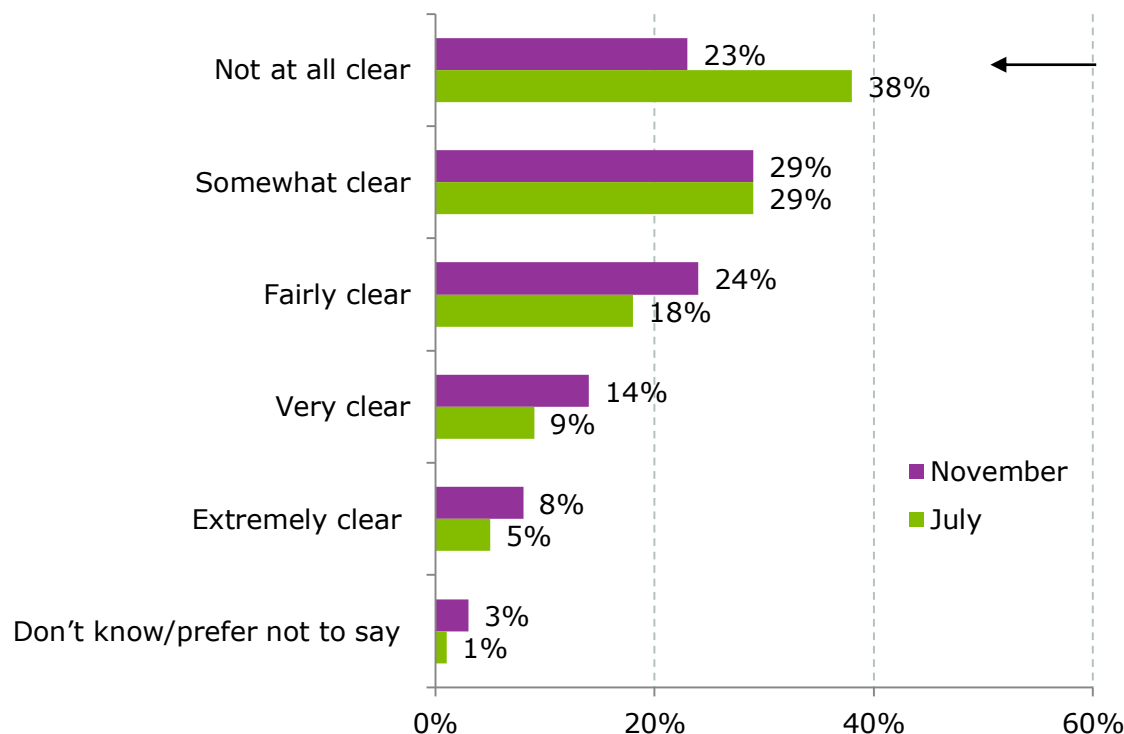
16-17 years  
BAME students



Clarity around the UK government's new advice on social distancing appears to have improved since July. With fewer believing it is not at all clear (23% compared to 38%) and more believing it is fairly, very or extremely clear.

## Tracked

### Clarity of UK government's new advice on social distancing



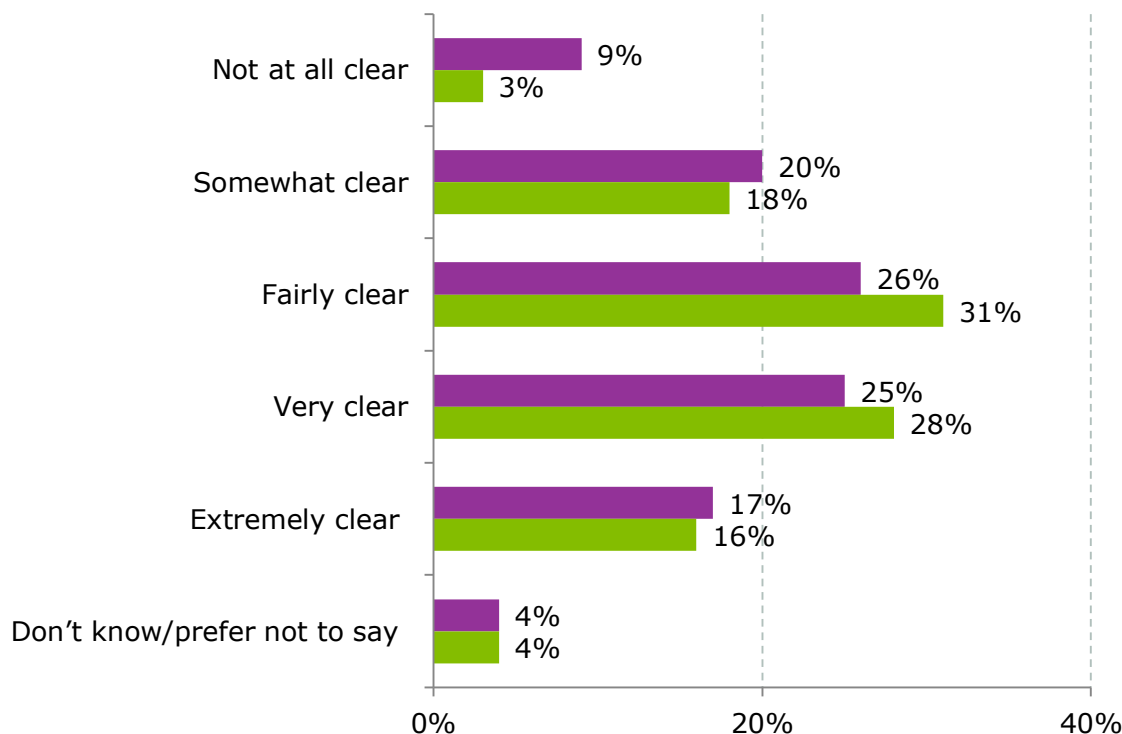
#### More likely amongst:

30+ years  
UK citizens  
Bisexual/Bi, Gay/Lesbian,  
Queer  
Those with a disability

Similar to July, around two in five students studying in Scotland believe the Scottish government's new advice on social distancing to be extremely or very clear. And half feel that the advice is fairly or somewhat clear. However, fewer feel it is fairly clear and more believe it is not at all clear.

**Tracked**

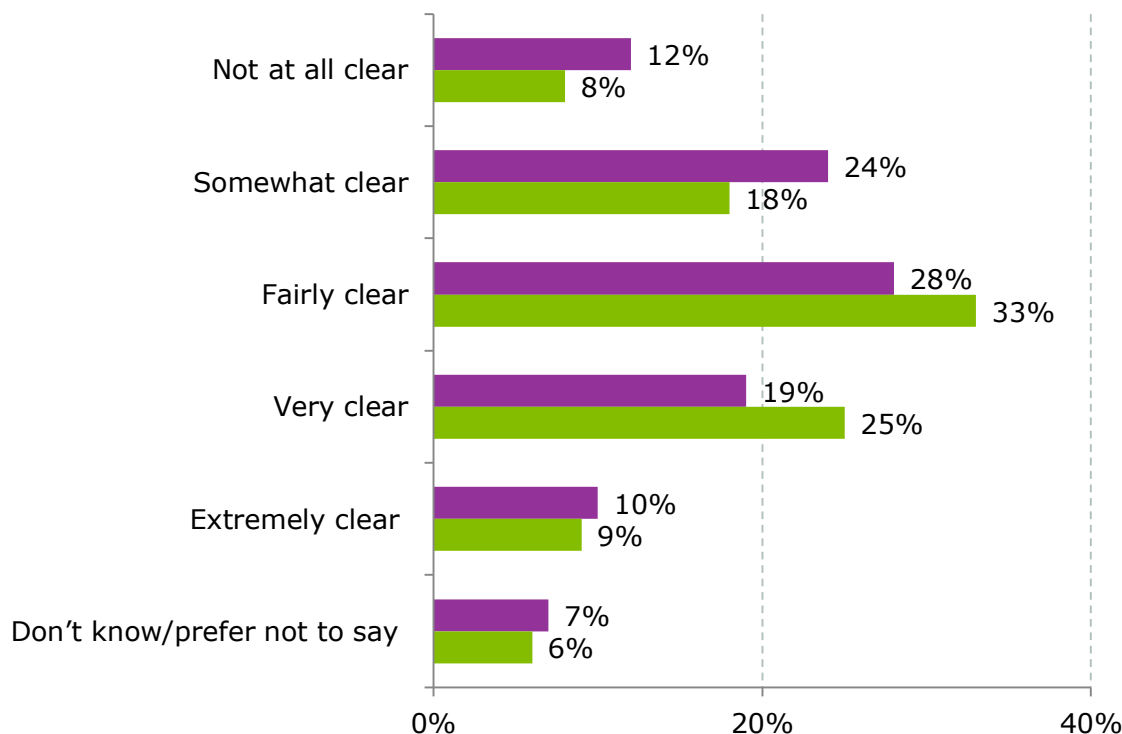
### Clarity of Scottish government's new advice on social distancing



Just over a quarter (29%) of students studying in Wales feel the Welsh government's advice on social distancing is extremely or very clear. This is a slight drop from July (34%). However, fewer feel it is fairly clear and more believe it is only somewhat clear or not at all clear.

**Tracked**

### Clarity of Welsh government's new advice on social distancing

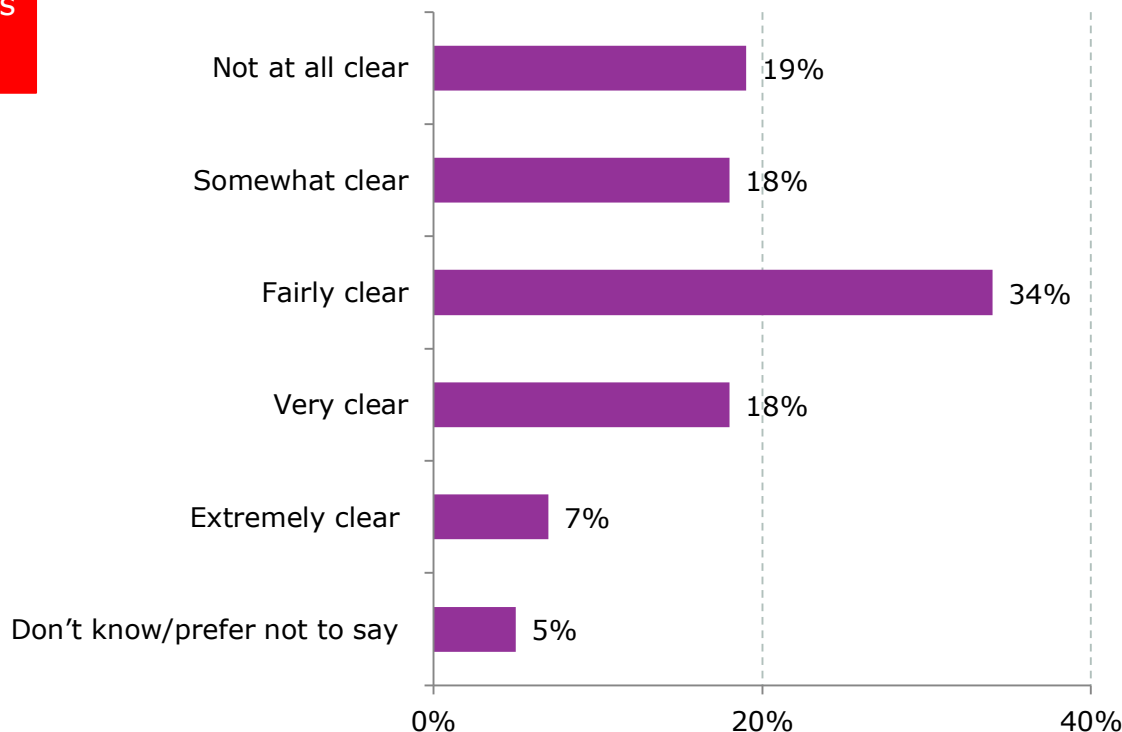


One in four students studying in Northern Ireland believe the NI Executive's advice on social distancing to be very or extremely clear. Half feel it is fairly or somewhat clear but a fifth believe it is not at all clear.

**November 2020**

### Clarity of Northern Ireland Executive's new advice on social distancing

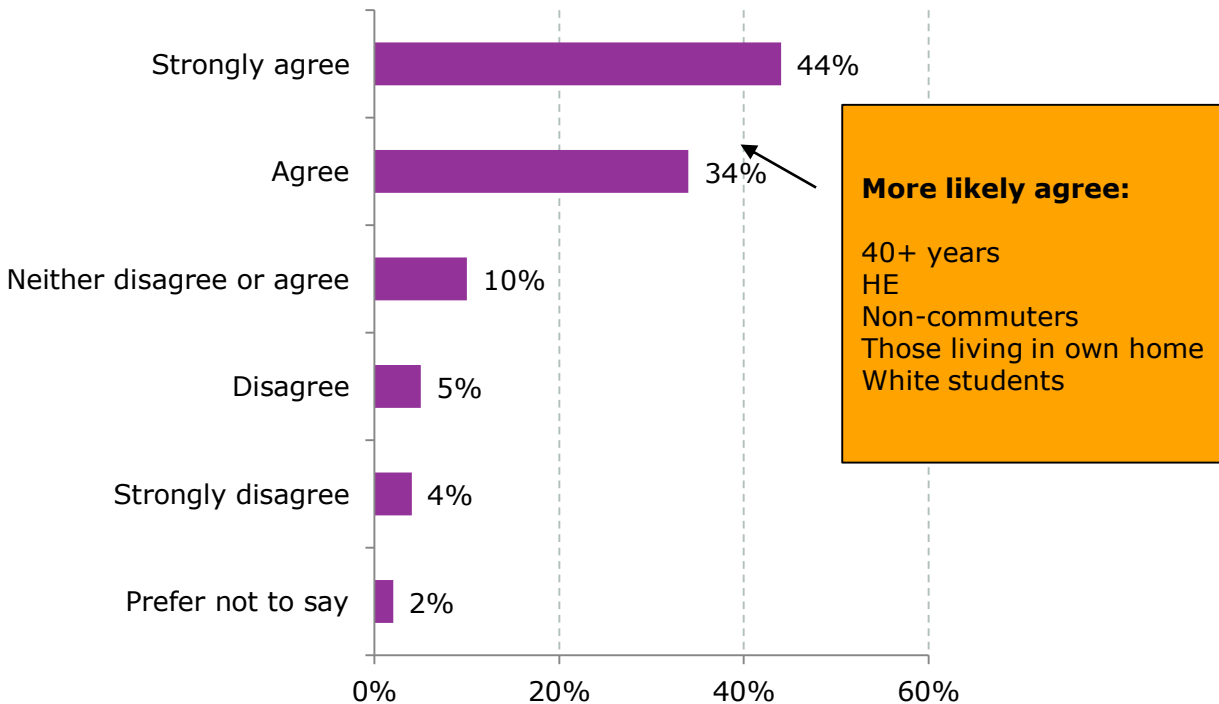
Numbers too low in previous wave to track



Over three in four agree to some extent that they are adhering to the government guidelines on social distancing. And the vast majority have not personally, or known someone else to have received a penalty for breaking the government guidance.

**November 2020**

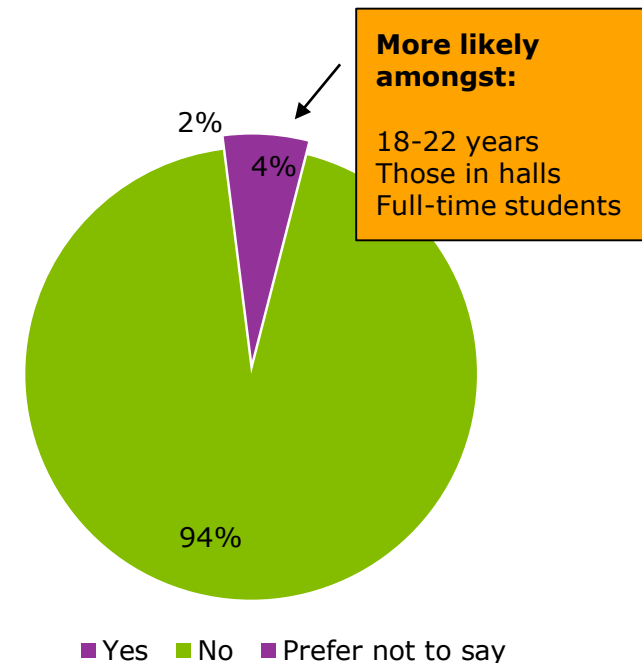
### Adherence to Government guidelines on restricted social interactions



Weighted Base: 4133 Balance: no response

**G11.**On the whole, how far do you agree or disagree that you are adhering to the Government guidelines on restricted social interactions?

### Adherence to Government guidelines on restricted social interactions



Weighted Base: 4126 Balance: no response

**G12.**Have you, or anyone you know received a penalty or notice for breaking Government guidance on Coronavirus?

When asked what **one thing** they would like to tell the UK Government, the most common thing was for them to be **consistent, truthful and honest**. Other comments included prioritising the right things, acting faster and providing clear and concise information to name a few.

## November 2020

### One thing to tell the Government

#### Key themes

- Be consistent, truthful and honest
- Prioritise:
  - People over the economy
  - Mental health
  - Vulnerable people
  - People and their health in general
- Act faster and decisively
- Clear and concise information
- Listen to the experts
- Stop blaming people – particularly students
- Sort out track and trace and testing
- Financial support:
  - Minimum wage / income support
  - Reduce tuition fees
- Fund and support the NHS

*"Take notice of the evidence and advice given by scientists, and act on it at the time, not three weeks later. Prompt action reduces costs and later economic impact, as well as saving more lives. The government's current practice has drastically increased deaths, as well as worsening the economic impact.."*

*"The wrong things have been prioritised, and students have been forgotten about. We face the worst financial and mental consequences in the long term, receiving no support and being punished with suspended studies, and no social interaction."*

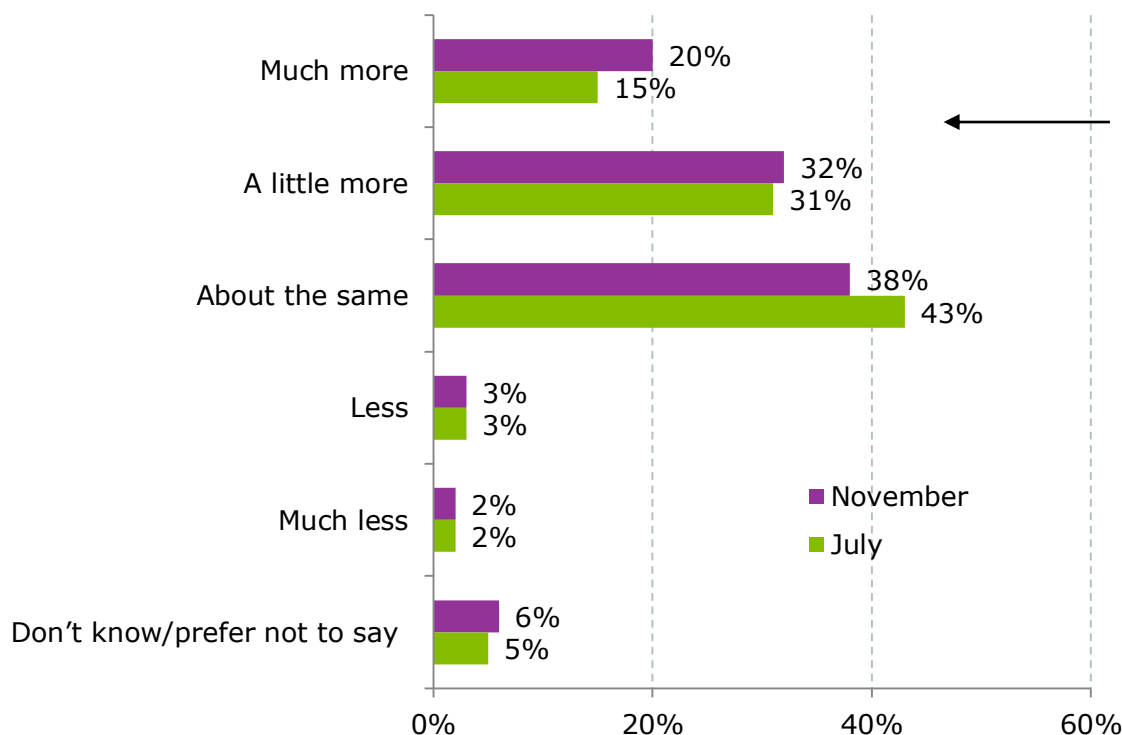
*"Get your act together. Time over the summer was squandered, when full focus should have been put on a \*functioning\* test and trace system in conjunction with work on a vaccine, so get it right NOW."*

*"Act quicker and act with integrity and then people wouldn't think you're giving out mixed messages."*

The proportion of students saying that they feel more political as a result of Coronavirus has increased from 46% in July to just over half (52%). Amongst those more likely to feel more political are those aged 16-22, living in halls or with parents, full time students, and those who identify as Bisexual/Bi, Gay/Lesbian or Queer.

## Tracked

### How much more political do you feel as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic



#### More likely agree:

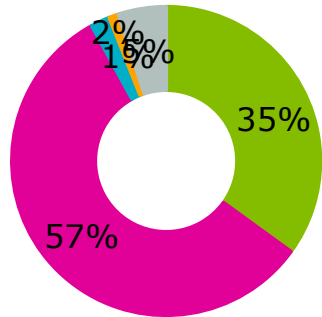
16-22 years  
Those in halls or living  
with parents  
Full-time students  
Bisexual/Bi, Gay/Lesbian,  
Queer

# Demographics



# Key demographics (weighted base)

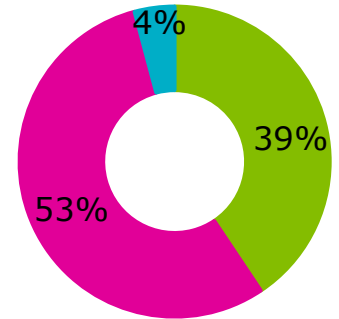
## Gender



- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- I prefer to self-describe
- Prefer not to say

## Level of study

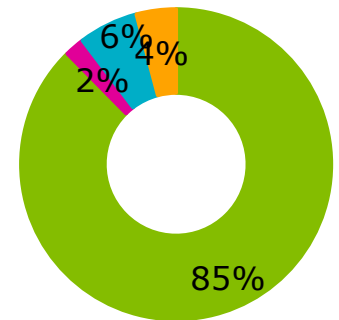
- FE
- HE
- Apprentice



## Age



- I am a UK citizen studying in the UK
- I am an Irish citizen from the UK studying in the UK
- I am an international student from within the EU studying in the UK
- I am an international student from outside the EU studying in the UK



**Full time: 69%**  
**Part time: 21%**  
**Distance learner: 15%**

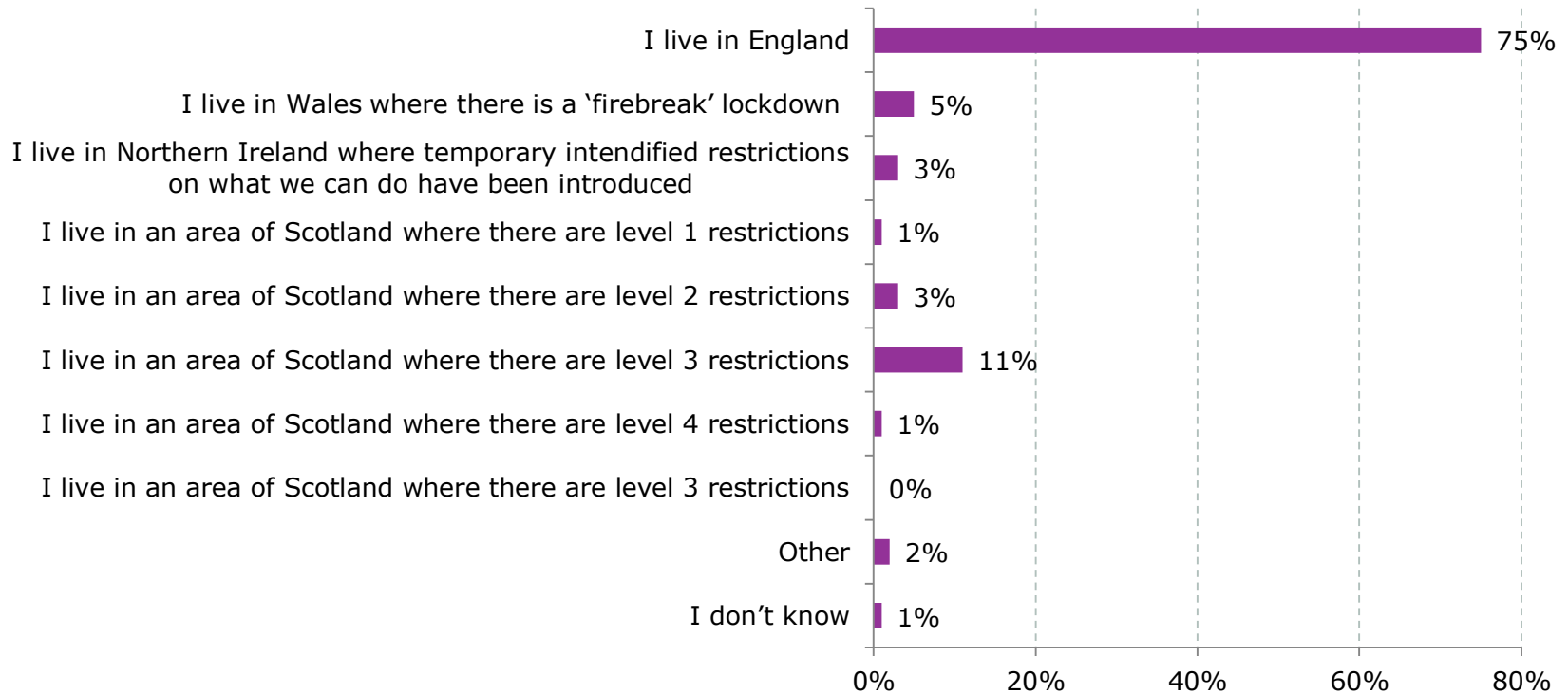
# Demographics

Region	Percentage
North East	5%
North West	13%
Yorkshire and the Humber	7%
East Midlands	7%
West Midlands	8%
London	12%
East of England	4%
South West	10%
South East	11%
<b>England Total</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>3%</b>



# Demographics

## Living in areas of lockdown

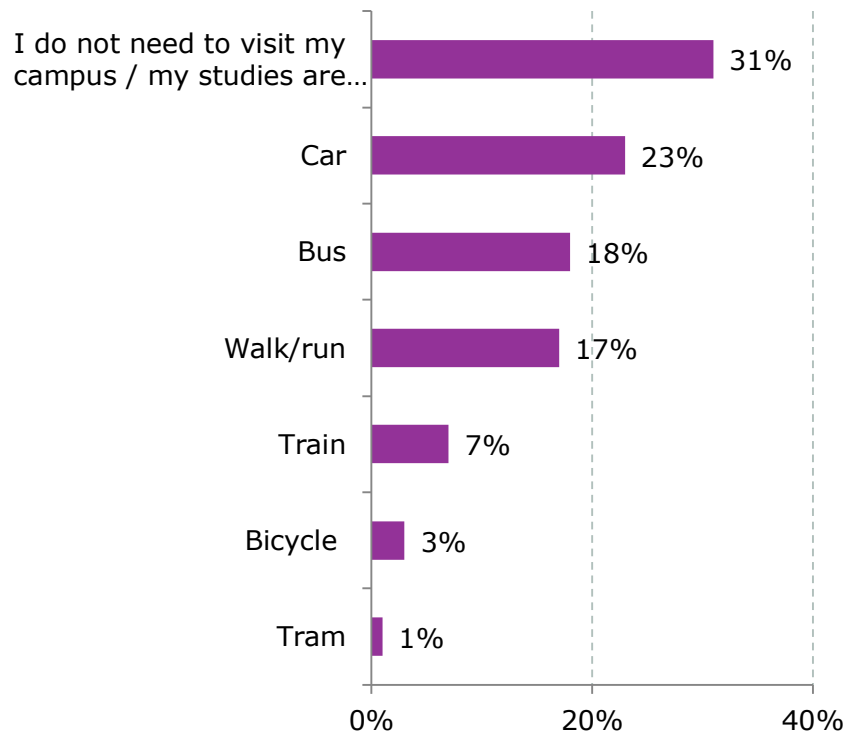


Weighted Base: 4193 respondents

**A5. Please tell us which of the following applies to where you live during term time:**

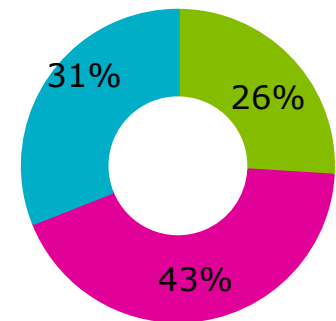
# Demographics

## Mode of transport to commute



## Commuters

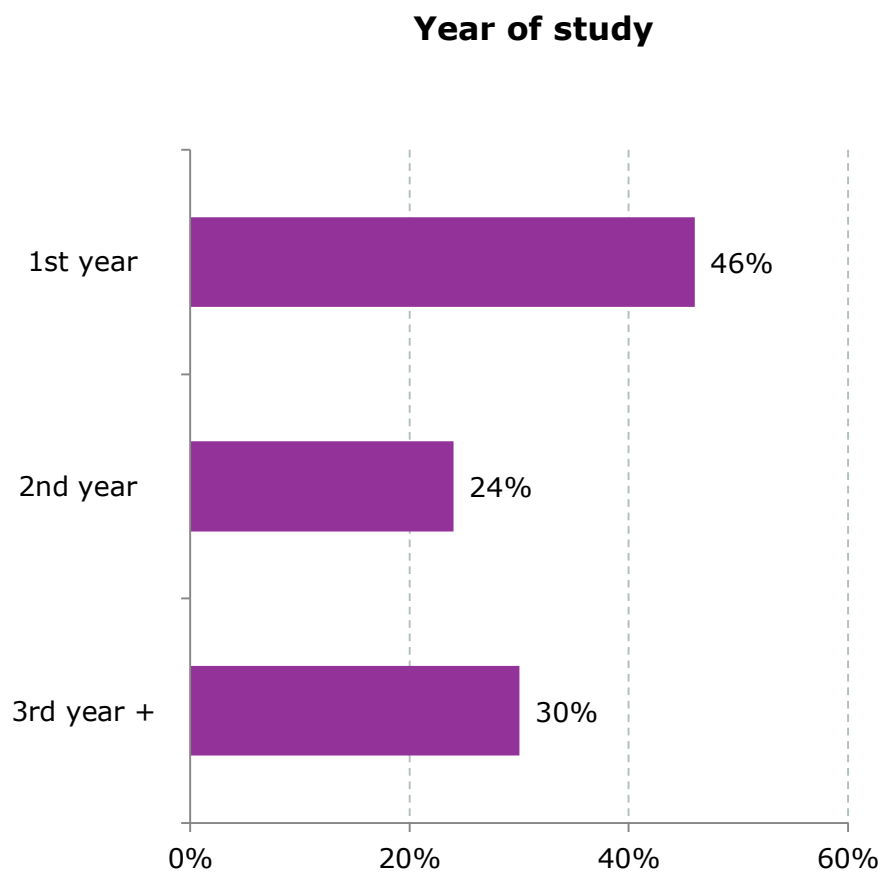
- Commuting on public transport
- Commuting in own transport
- Don't commute



Weighted Base: 4185 respondents Balance : FE students, no response

**A6. Which of the following modes of transport do you use regularly in order to get to and from your campus?**

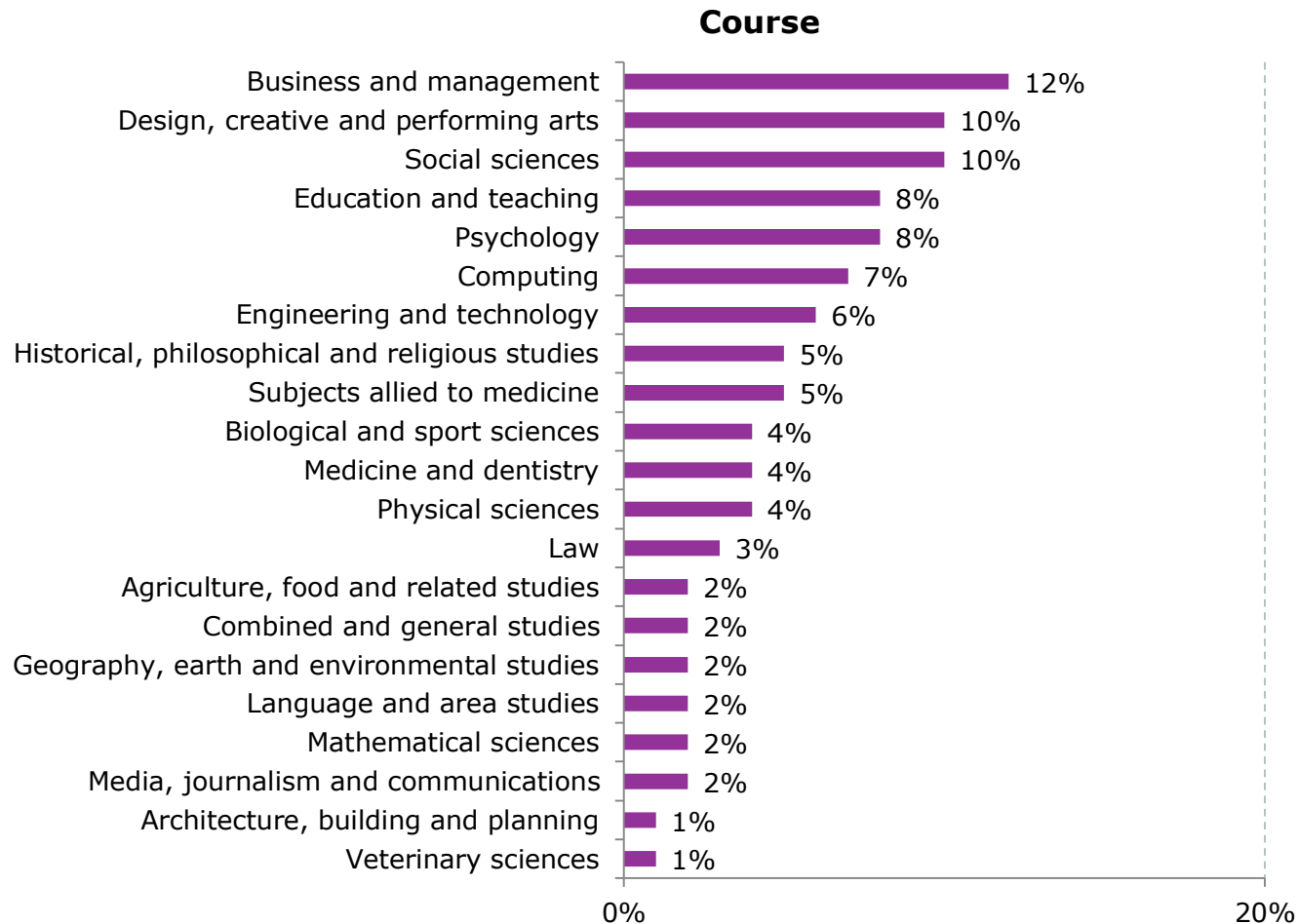
# Demographics



Weighted Base: 1522 respondents Balance : FE students, no response

**K1. What year of study are you in?**

# Demographics

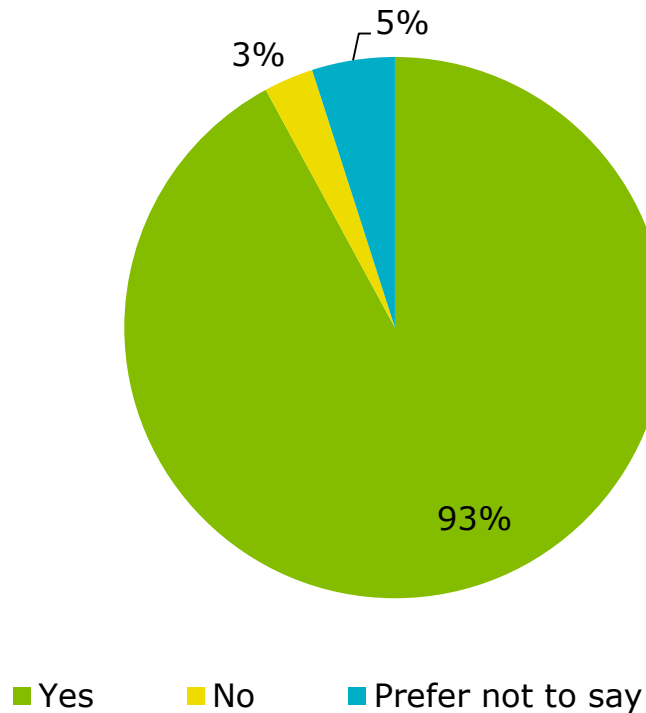


Weighted Base: 4048 respondents Balance: no response

**K4. Which of the following best describes your course (or your most recent course)?**

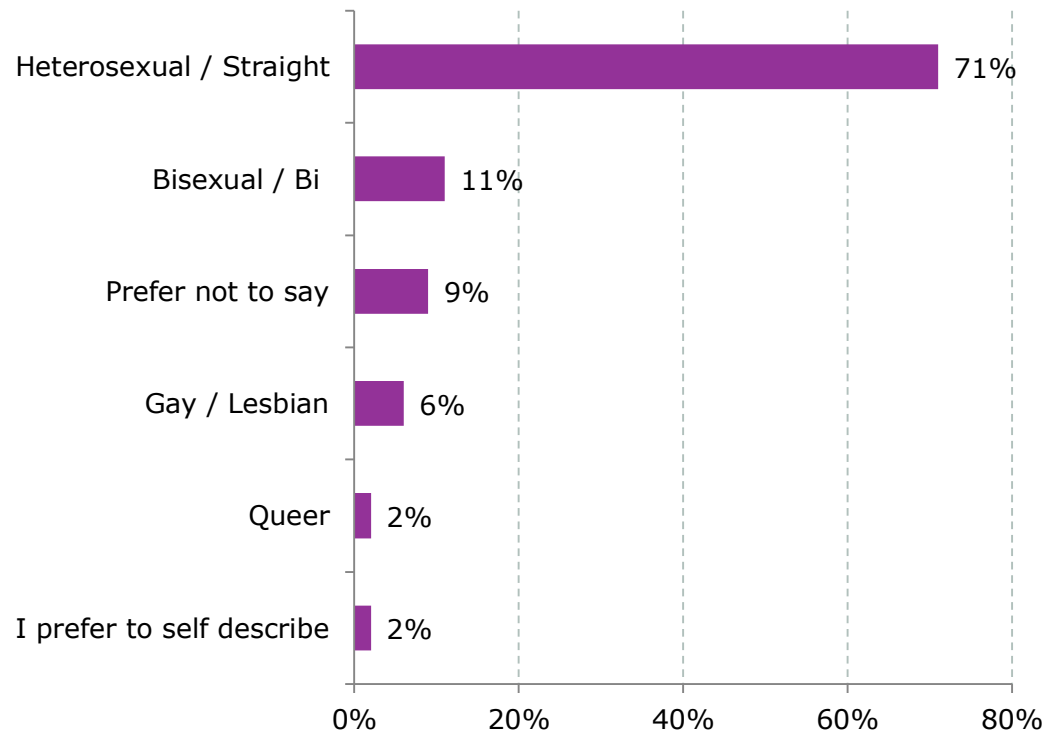
# Demographics

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



# Demographics

## Sexual orientation/preference



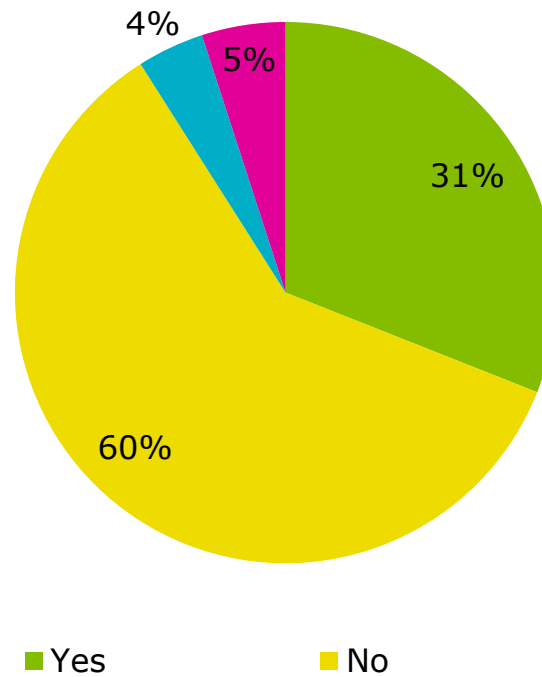
Weighted Base: 4193 respondents.

**K7. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation/preference?**



# Demographics

## Disability, impairment or long term health condition

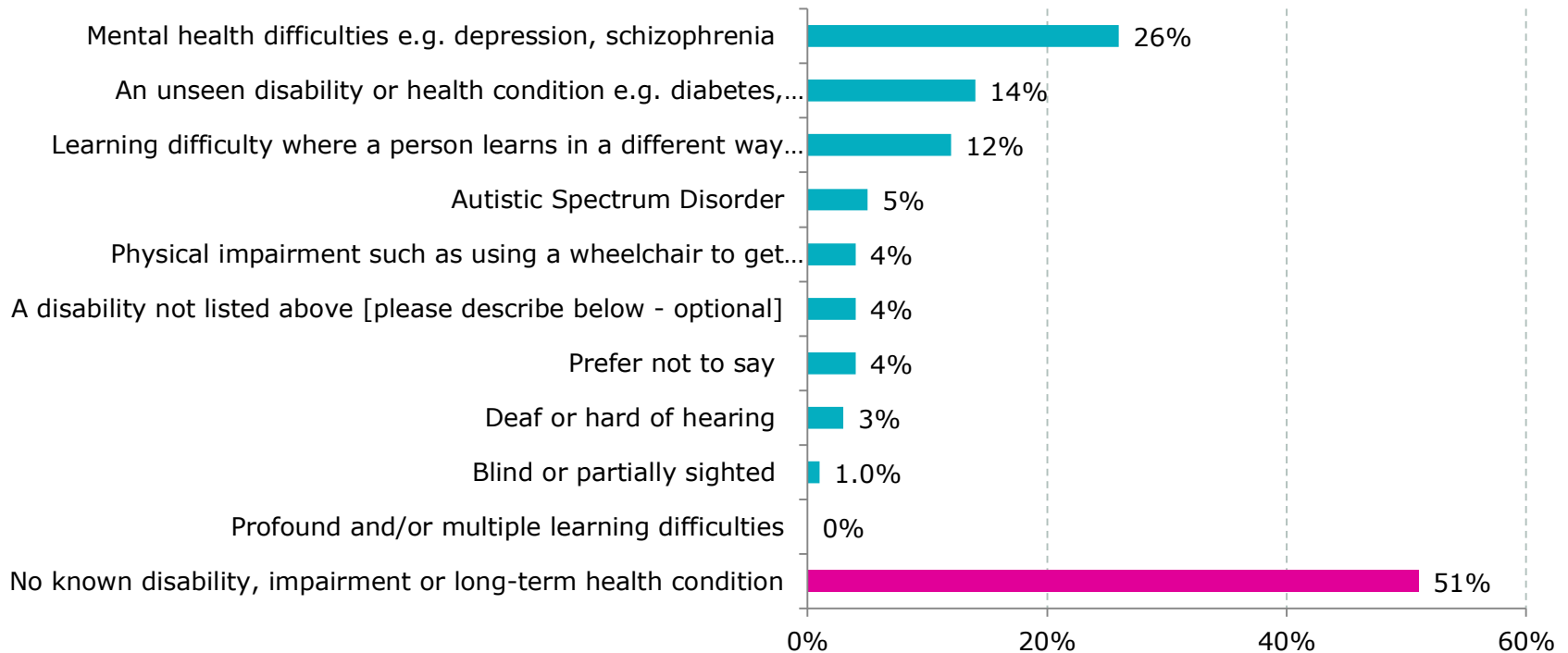


Weighted Base: 4193 respondents.

**K11.Do you consider yourself to have a specific learning disability, other disability, impairment, long-term illness or health condition?**

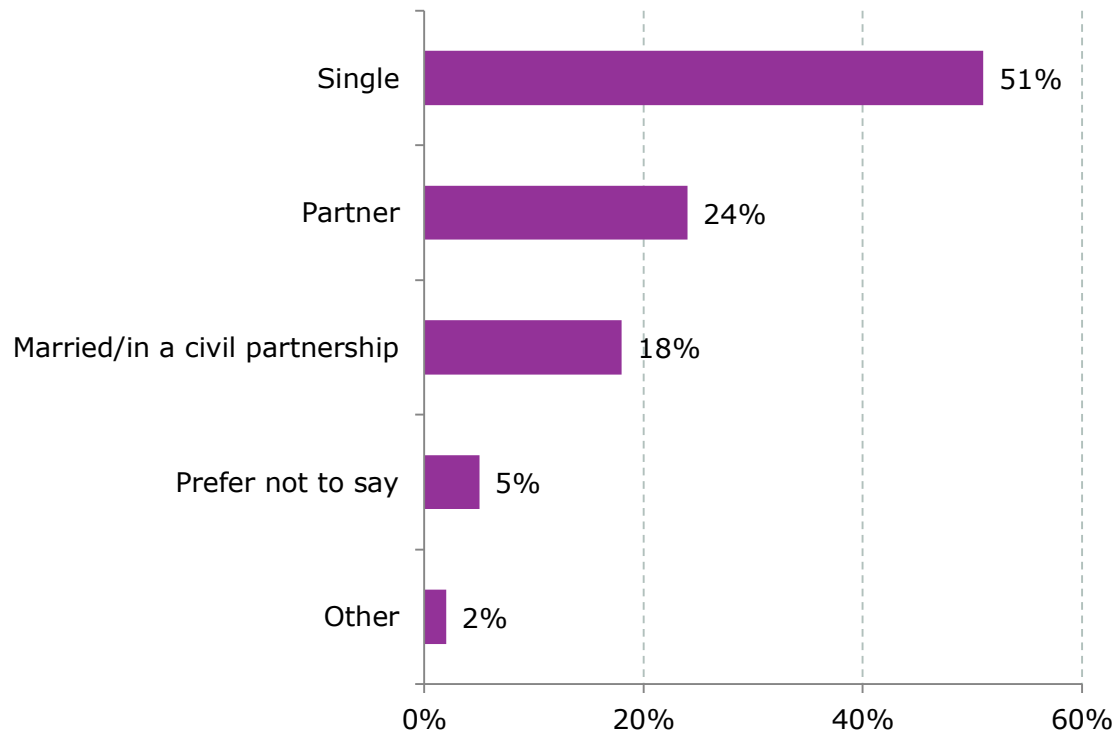
# Demographics

## Disability, impairment or long term health condition



# Demographics

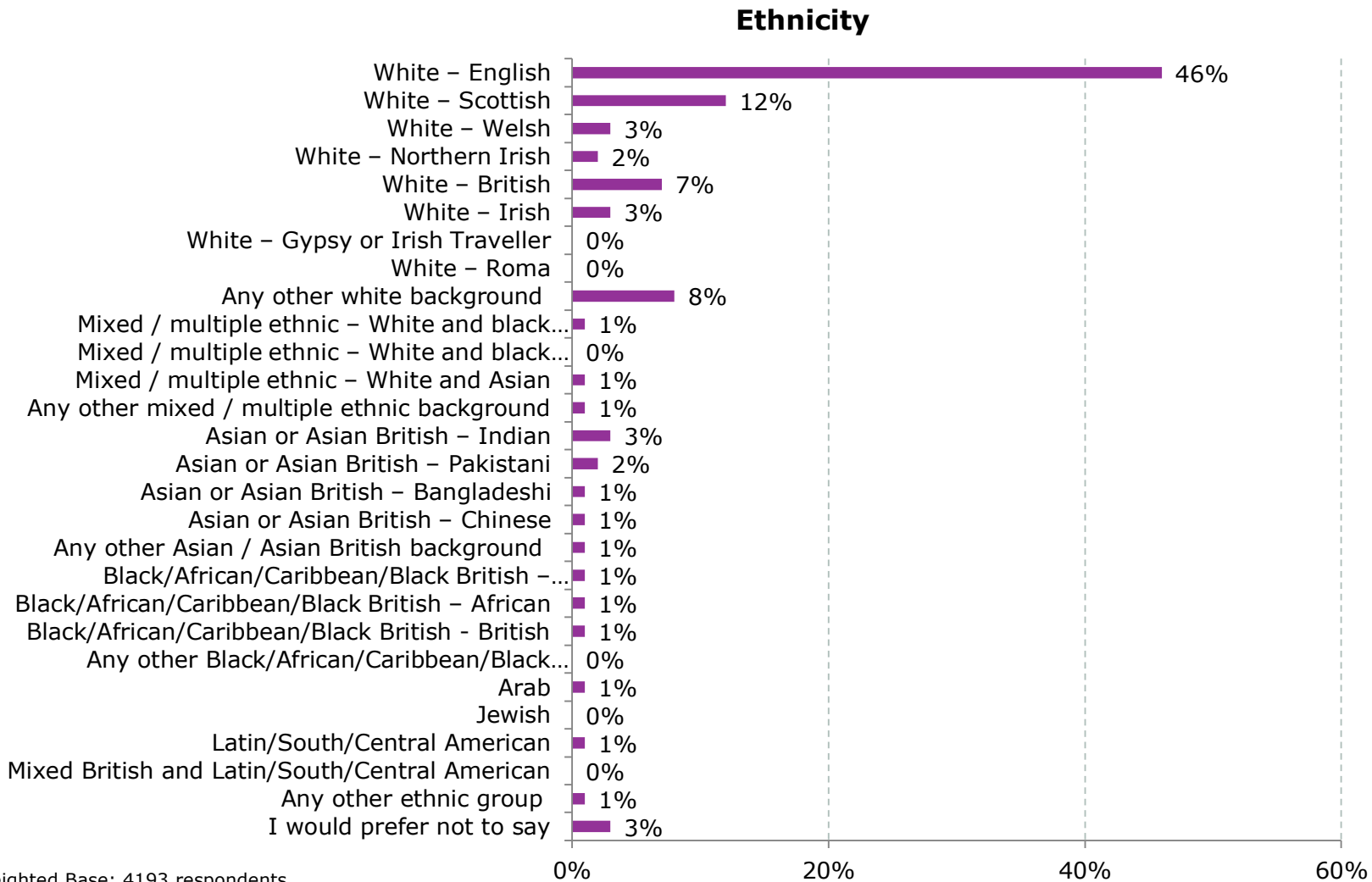
## Marital status



Weighted Base: 4193 respondents.

**K8. Which of the following best describe your marital status?**

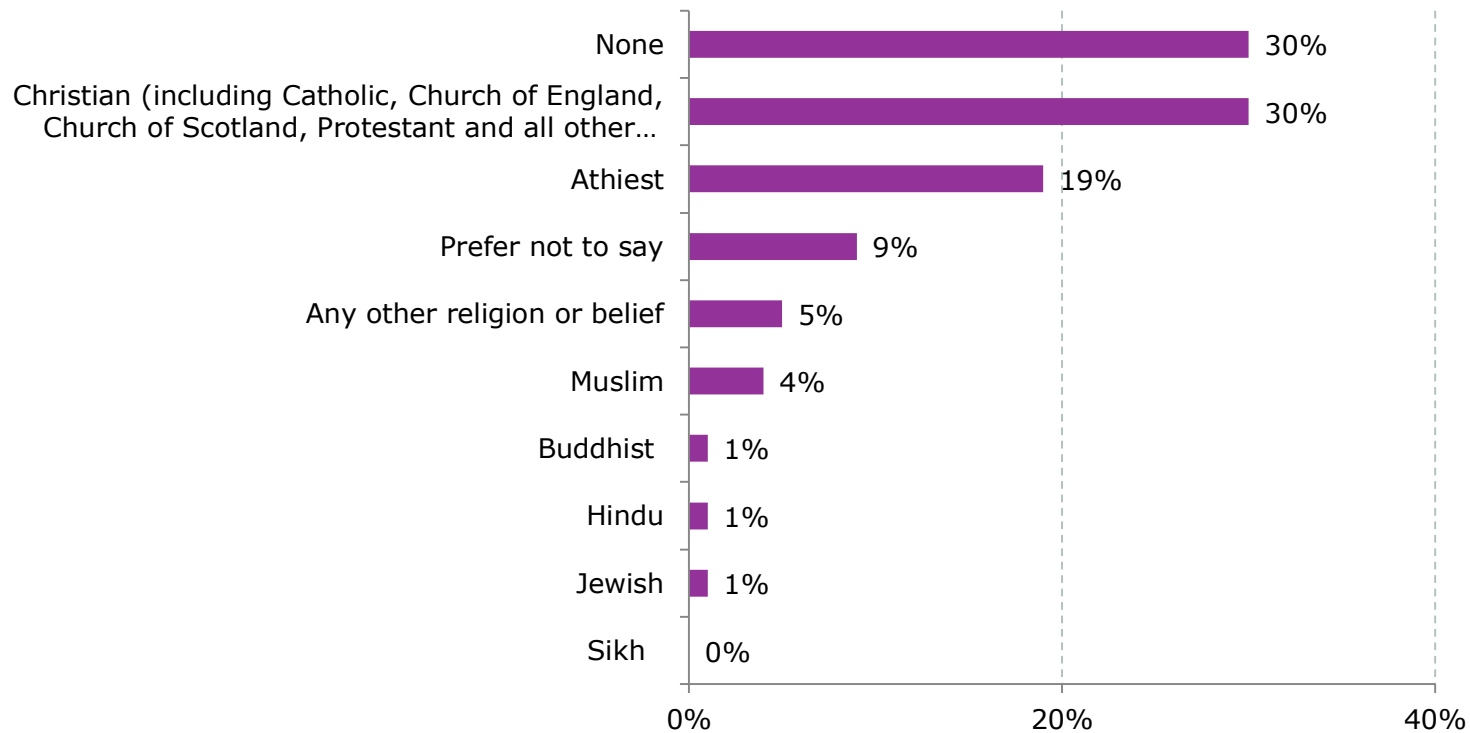
# Demographics



**K9. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?**

# Demographics

## Religion, faith or belief

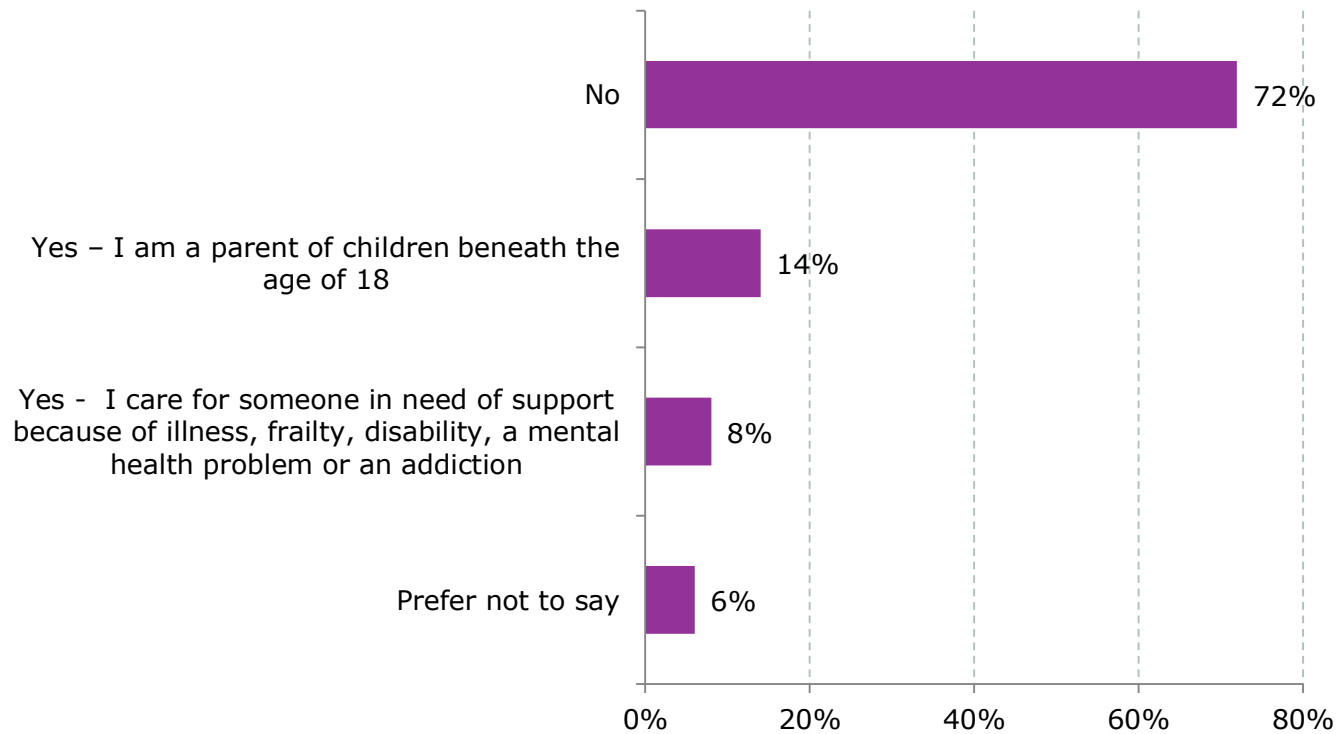


Weighted Base: 4193 respondents.

**K10. What is your religion, faith or belief?**

# Demographics

## Caring responsibilities

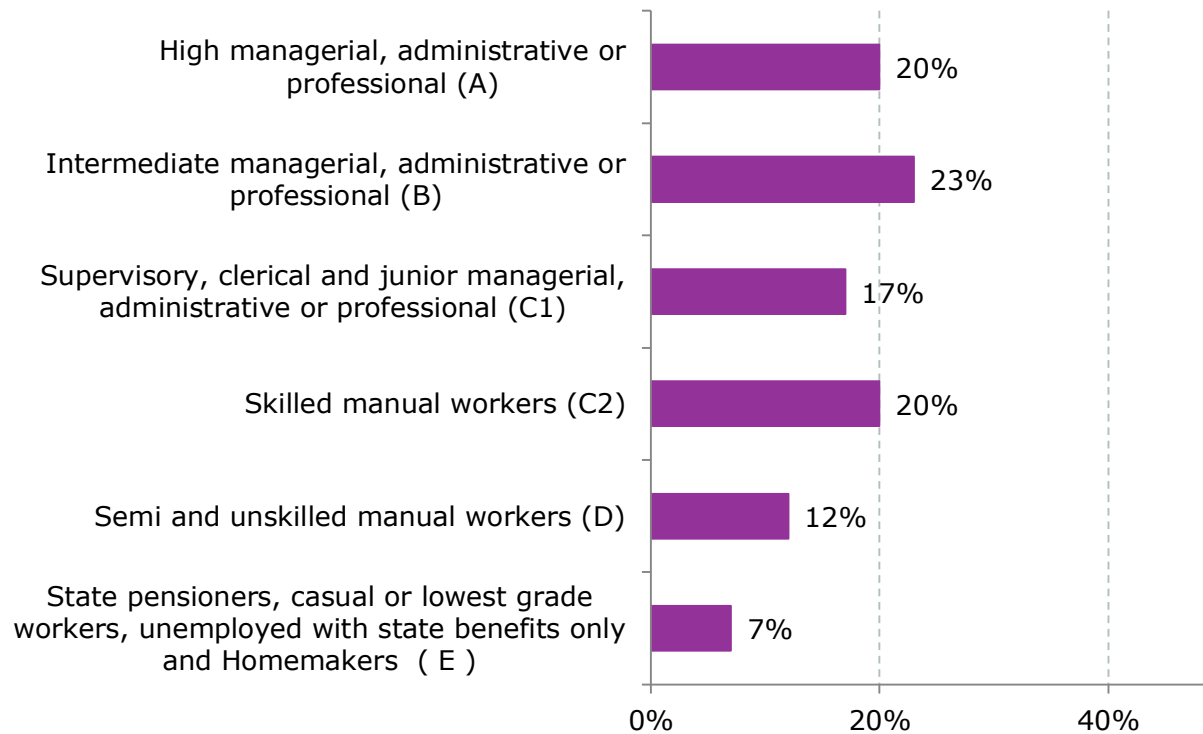


Weighted Base: 4193 respondents.

**K13. Do you have any caring responsibilities?**

# Demographics

## Social Grade



# Coronavirus Student Survey Phase III

**NUS Insight**