About the Research

About

Student Minds commissioned Voxburner to conduct a survey of university students in July 2022. Our aim was to better understand the factors influencing students' mental health at present and to identify any key issues.

Sample

- 500 UK university students, aged 18+.

- Includes undergraduate and postgraduate students.

- Includes UK-domiciled and international students.

- Broadly representative of the UK student population in terms of age, gender and level of study.

 - Asian students and UK-domiciled students are both slightly over-represented.

Given the relatively small sample size, we encourage readers to view these findings with an awareness of possible limitations, as well as the impacts of systemic biases, stigmas and inequalities which may impact our work.

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# Findings (mental health)

Life Satisfaction

Average life satisfactions scores over time

Average life satisfaction scores have consistently been lower for students compared to adults in Great Britain.

Legend: ■ Student Minds   ▲ ONS (HE Students)   ● ONS (GB adults)
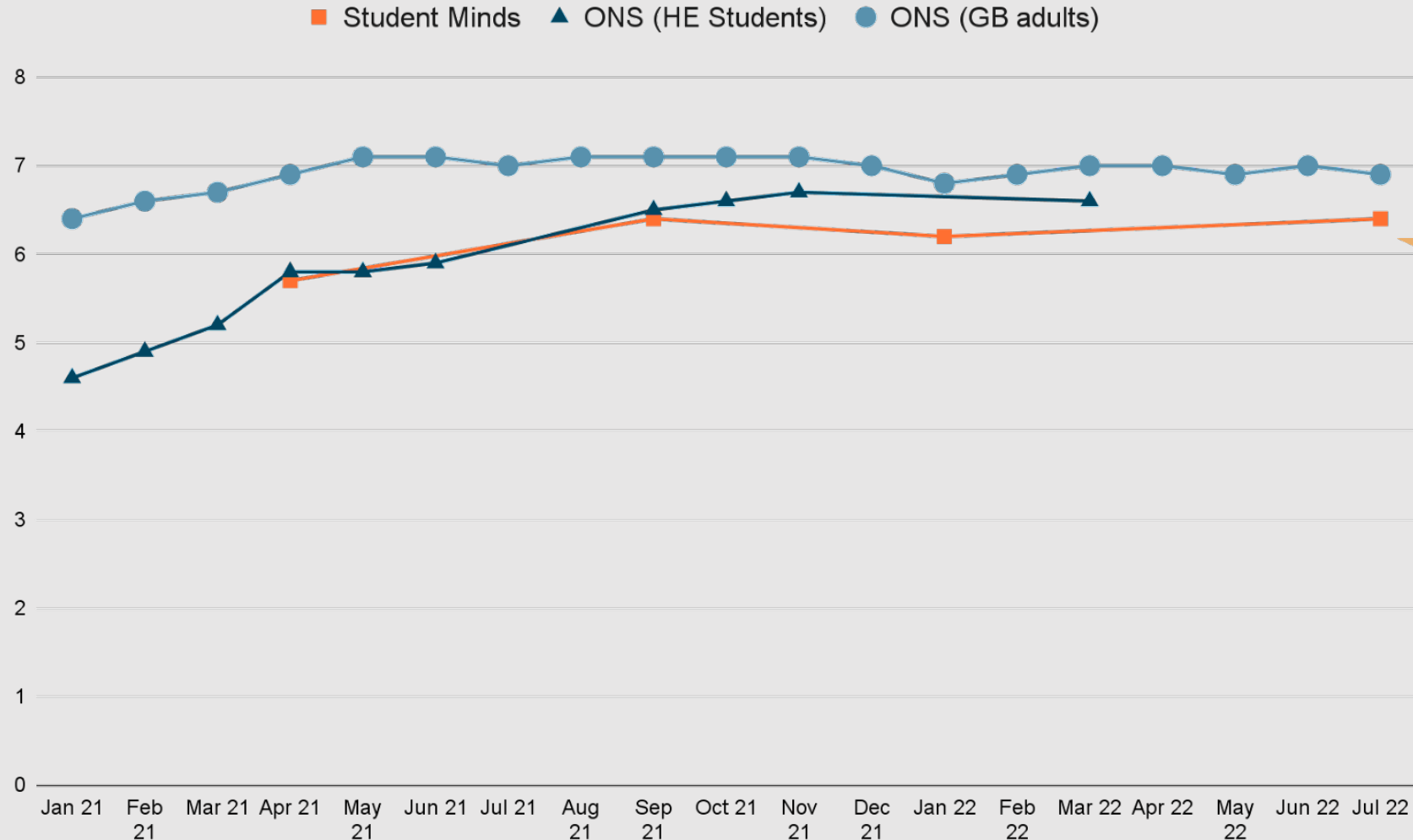
Students' average life satisfaction scores (out of 10):
- 5.7 in May 2021
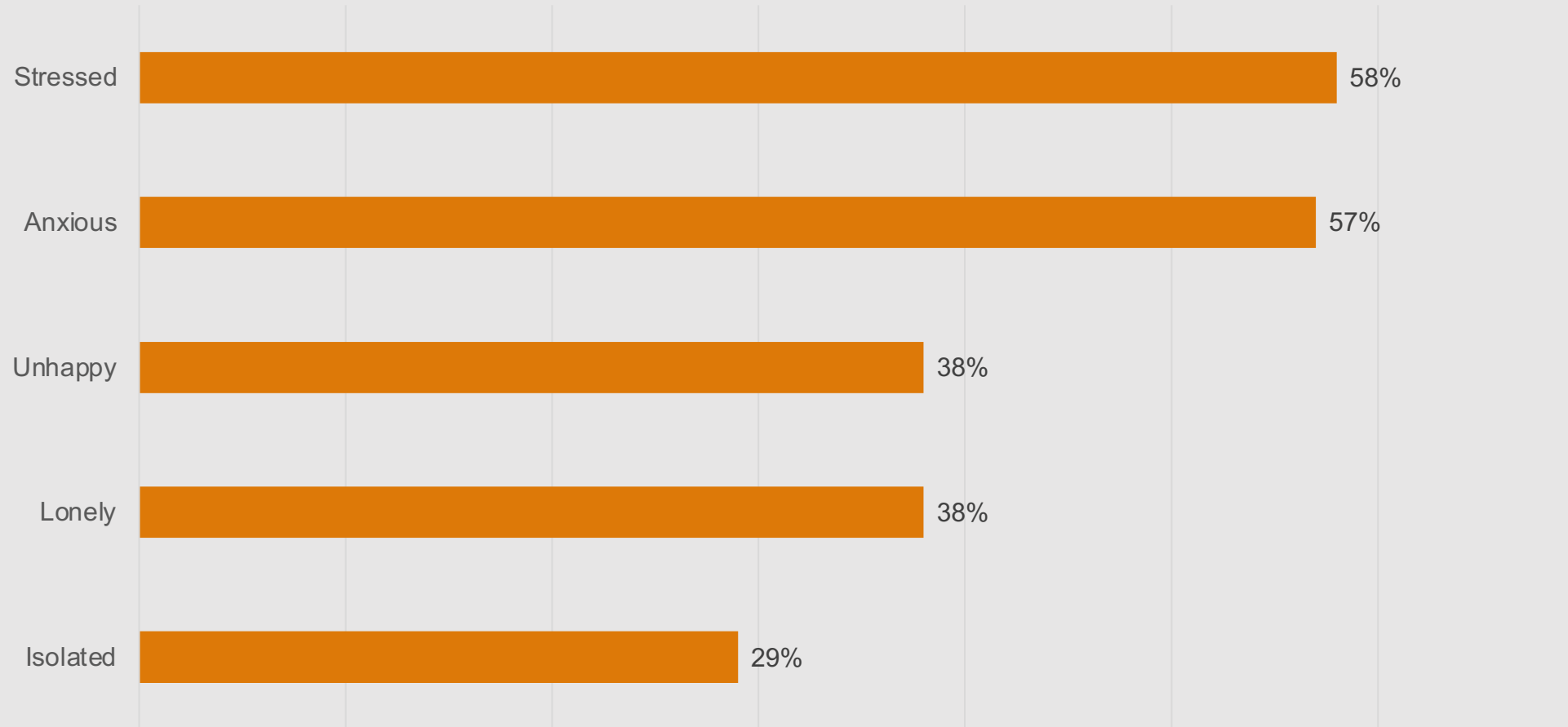- 6.4 in October 2021
- 6.2 in January 2022
- 6.4 in July 2022
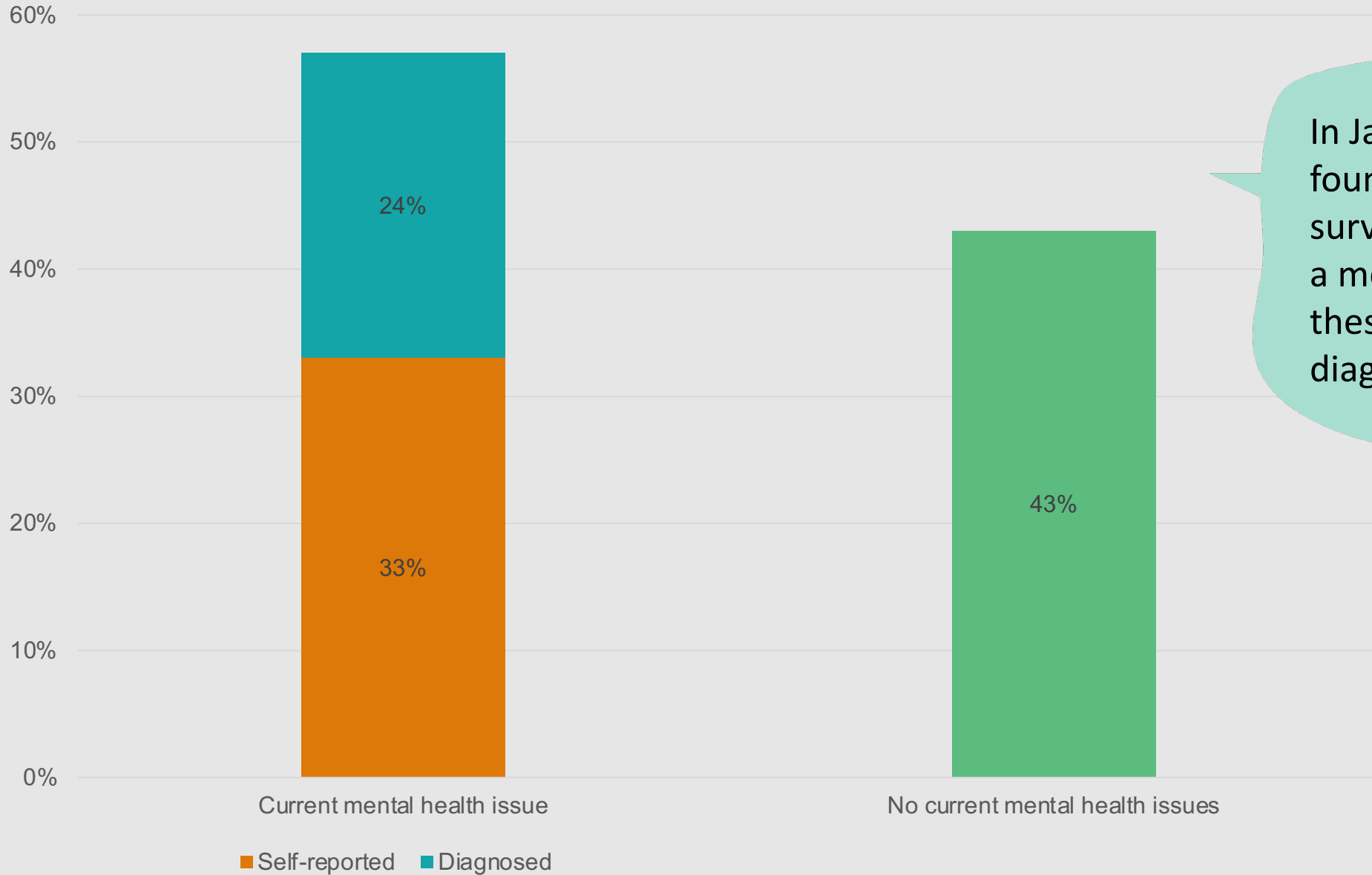
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Mental Health Issues

Over the past 12 months, students self-reported experiencing:

A diagnosed mental health issue
23%

No mental health issues
22%

An undiagnosed mental health issue
22%

Some short-term and manageable challenges with mental health
33%

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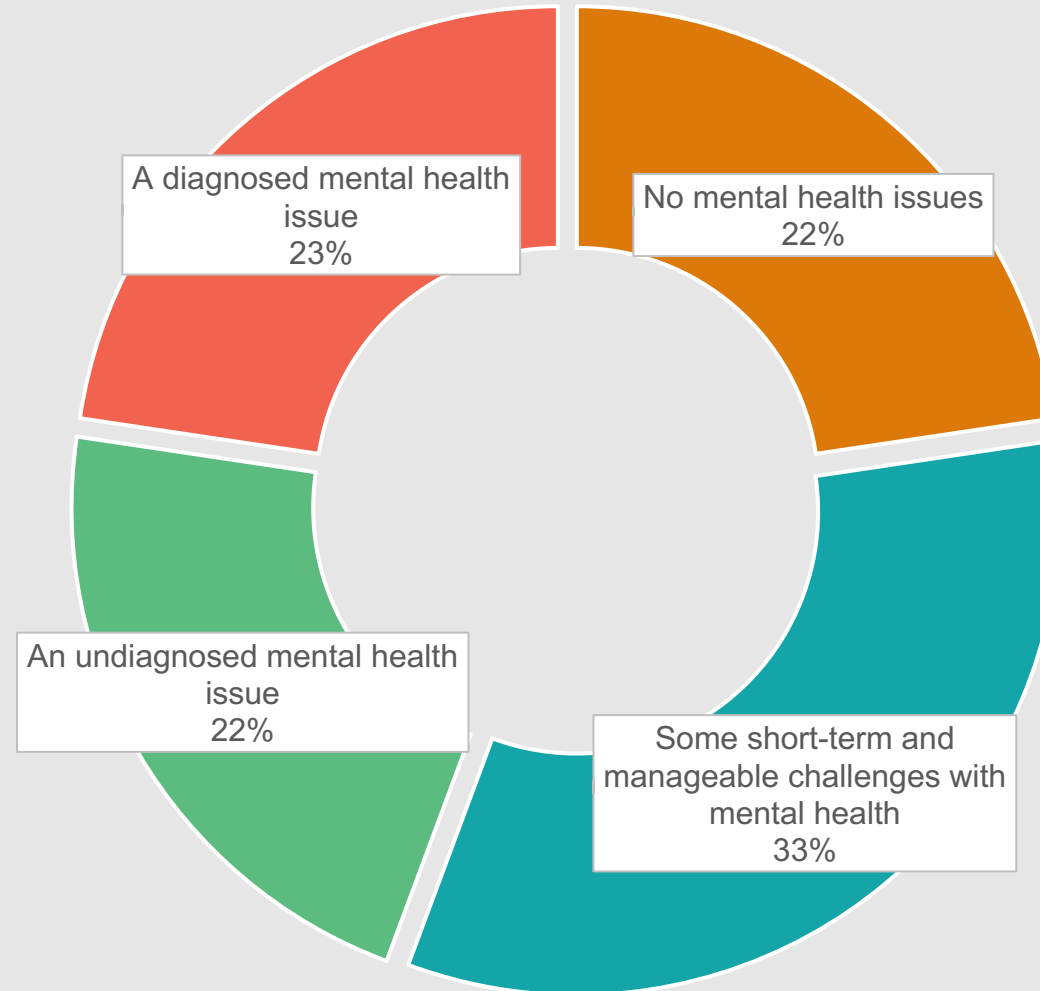
Issues impacting mental health
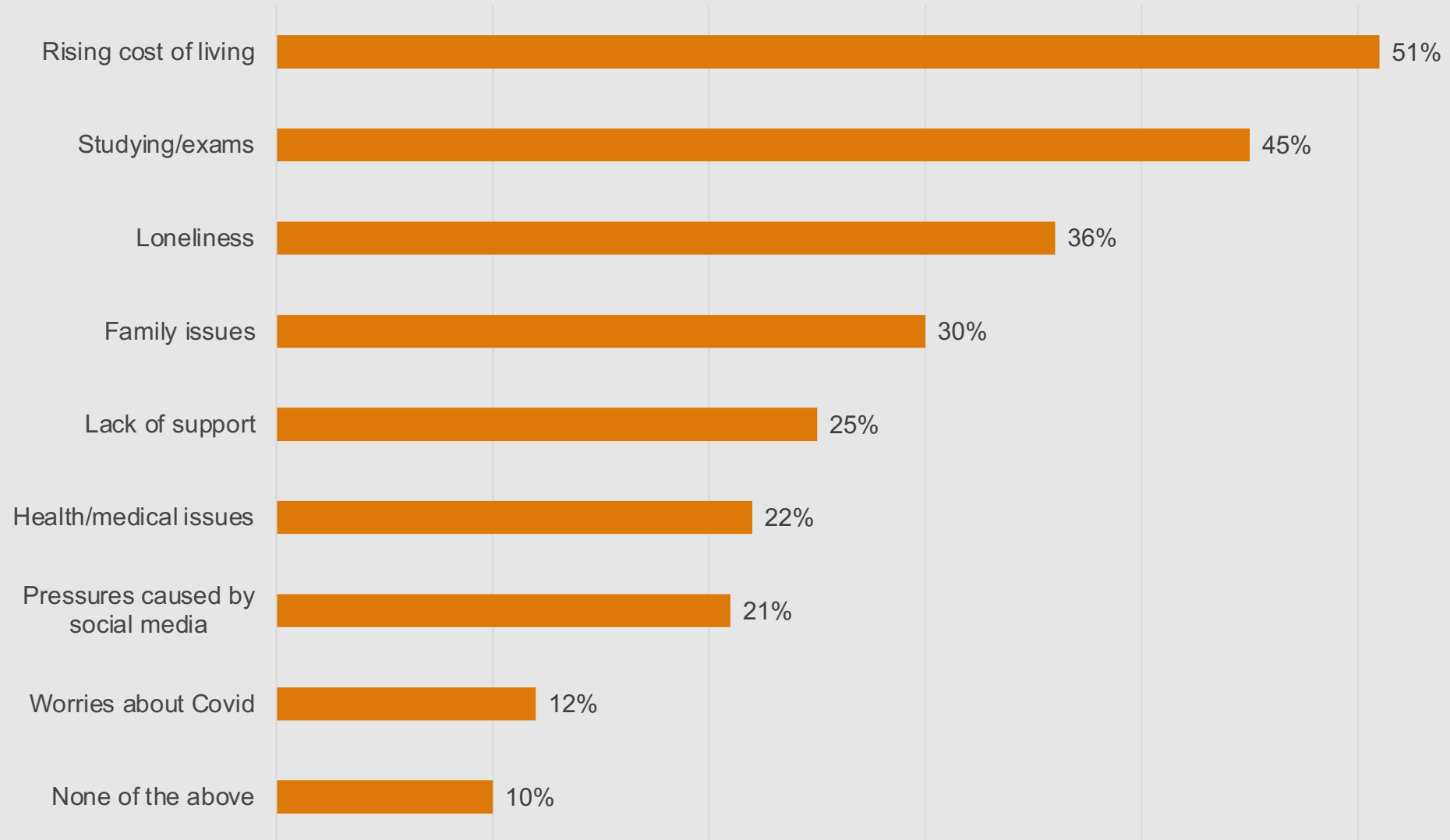
Issue	Percentage
Rising cost of living	51%
Studying/exams	45%
Loneliness	36%
Family issues	30%
Lack of support	25%
Health/medical issues	22%
Pressures caused by social media	21%
Worries about Covid	12%
None of the above	10%
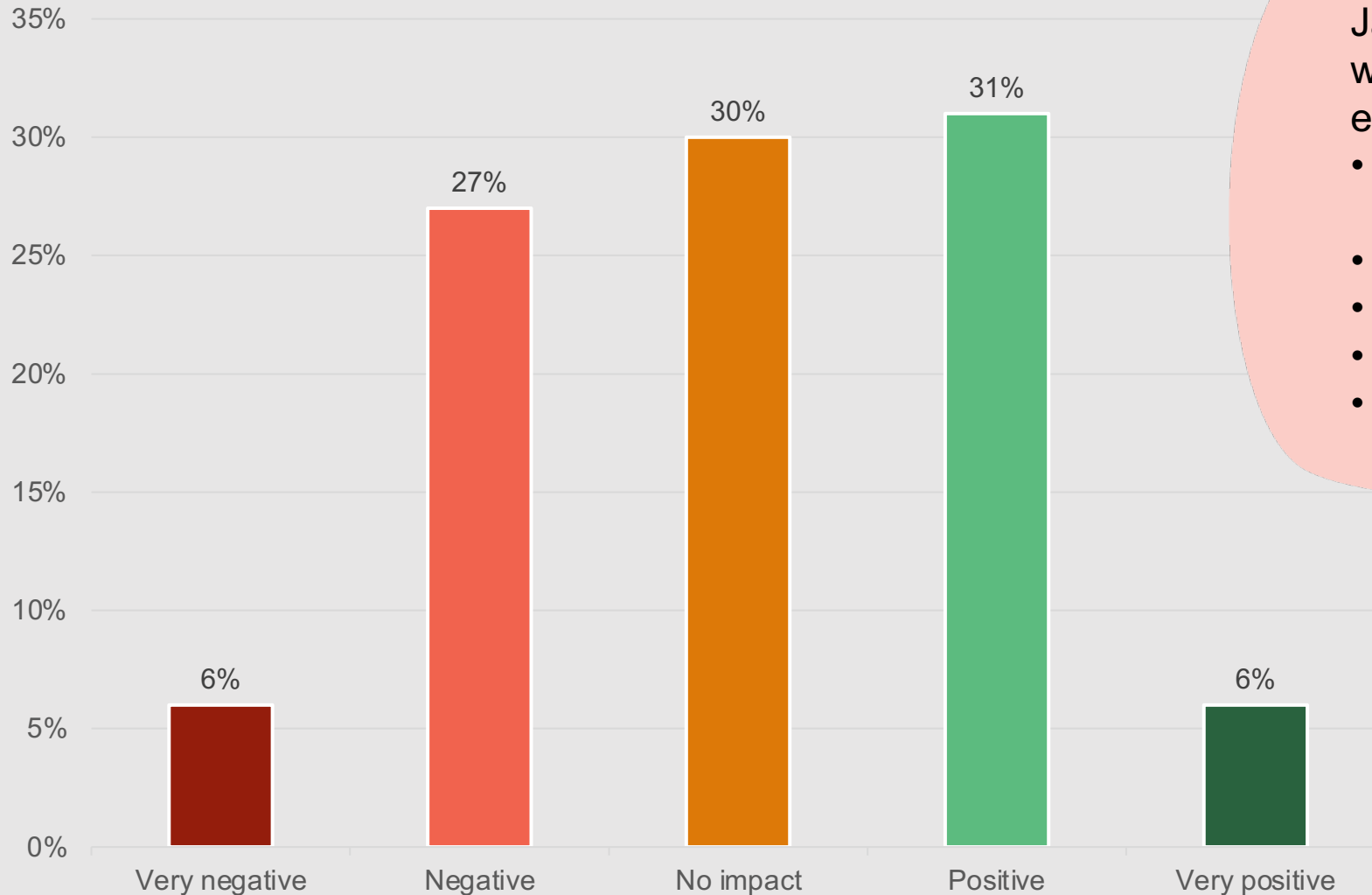
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Findings (support)

Support needed

When asked what areas respondents felt they need support in the most:
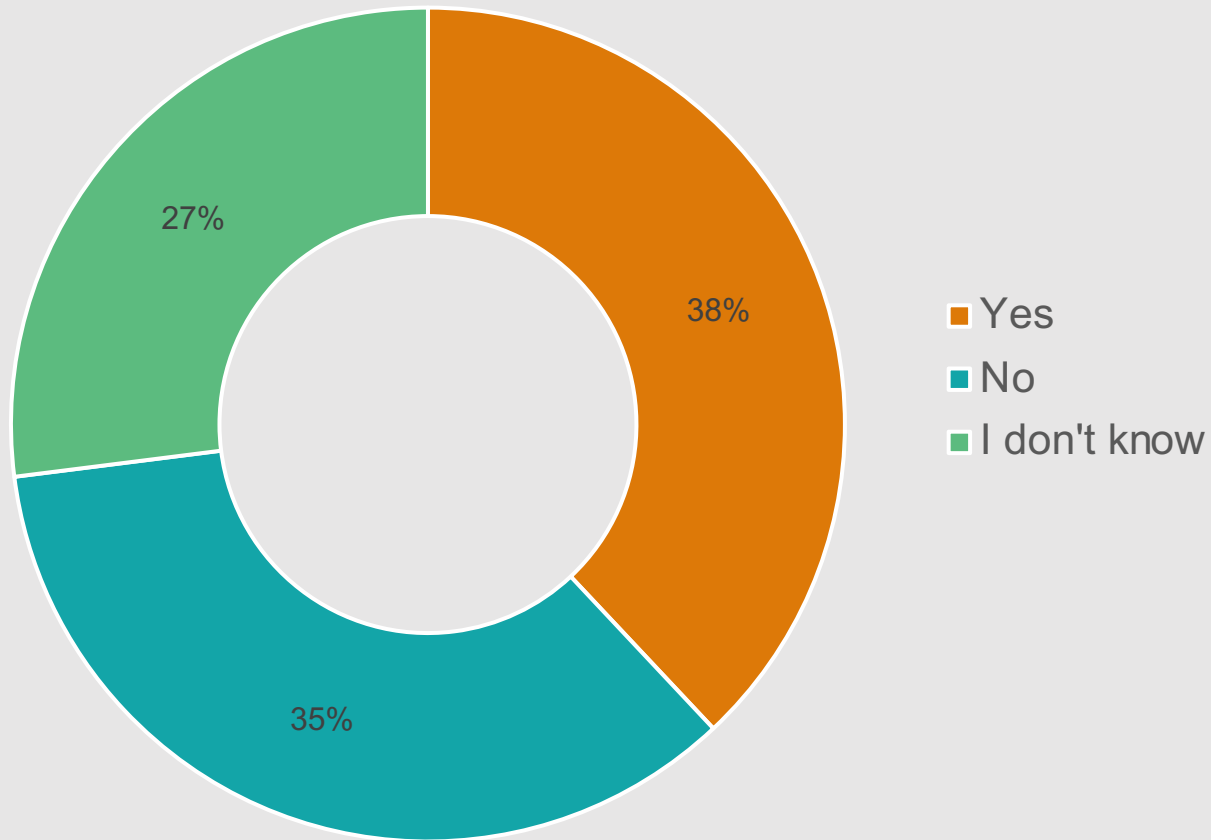
Average rankings:

1. Employability
2. Relationships (family, friends, dating etc)
3. Mental health
4. Education
5. Finances
6. Physical health
7. Other

Based on how many ranked top:

1. Employability - 29%
2. Mental health - 18%
3. Relationships (family, friends, dating etc) - 17%
4. Finances - 17%
5. Education - 9%
6. Physical health - 6%
7. Other - 2%

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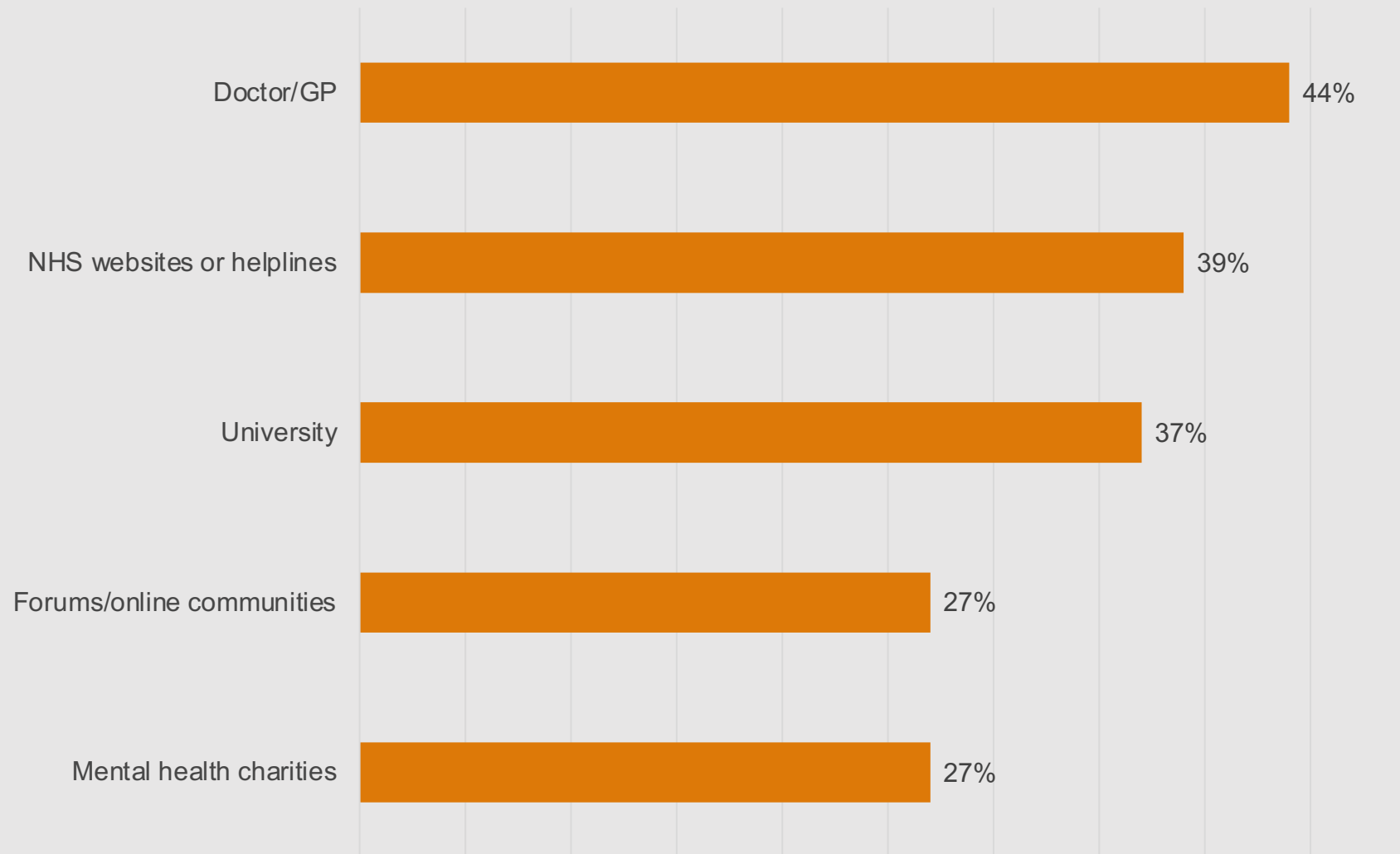# Accessing support

Students had sought support from the following sources:

Source	Percentage
Doctor/GP	44%
NHS websites or helplines	39%
University	37%
Forums/online communities	27%
Mental health charities	27%

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Self-support

We asked respondents what they do to support themselves on bad mental health days
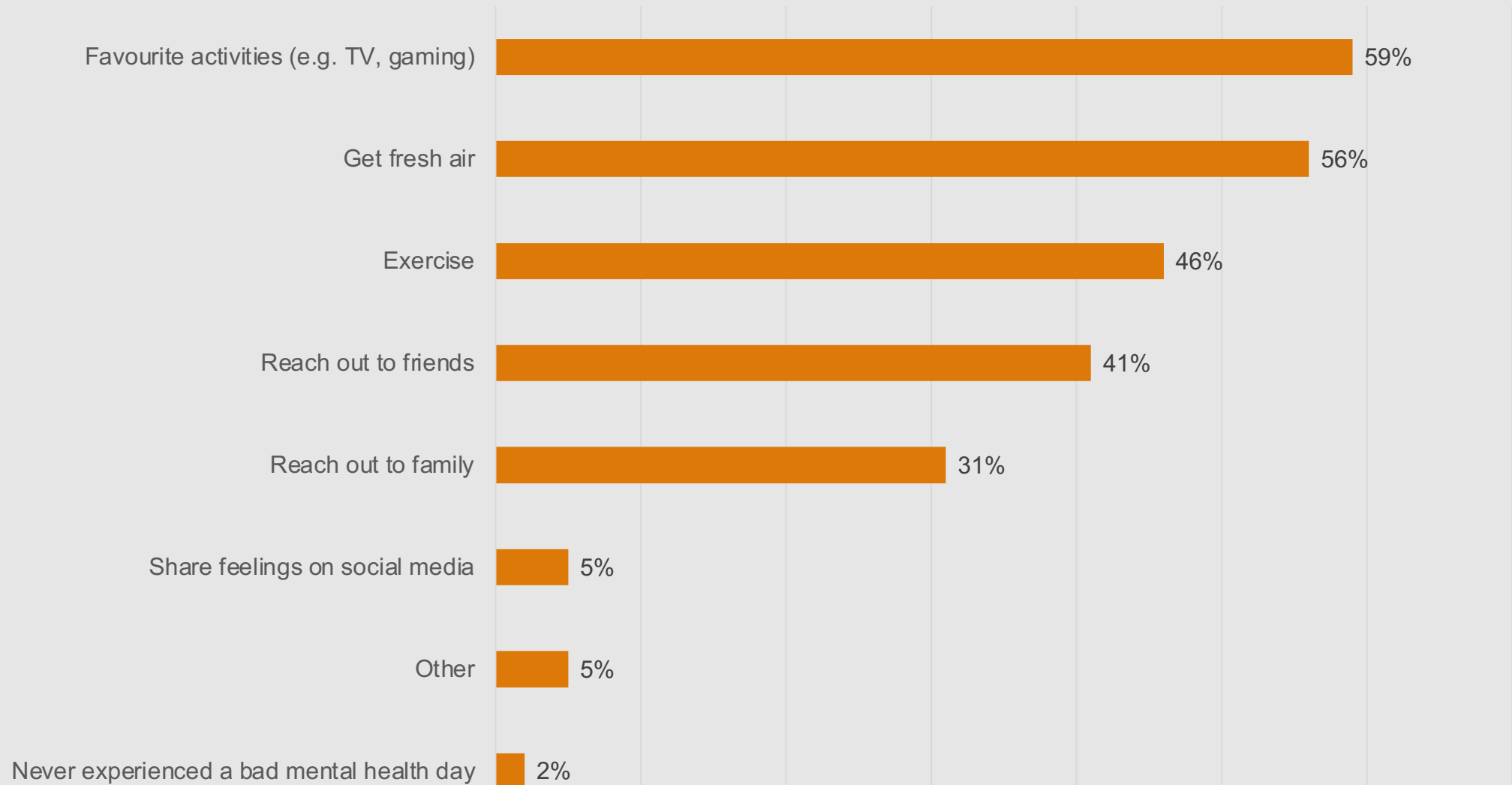
| Category	Percentage
Favourite activities (e.g. TV, gaming)	59%
Get fresh air	56%
Exercise	46%
Reach out to friends	41%
Reach out to family	31%
Share feelings on social media	5%
Other	5%
Never experienced a bad mental health day	2%

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Peer support

"How confident are you in your ability to recognise if a friend is struggling with their mental health, if they haven't told you directly?"
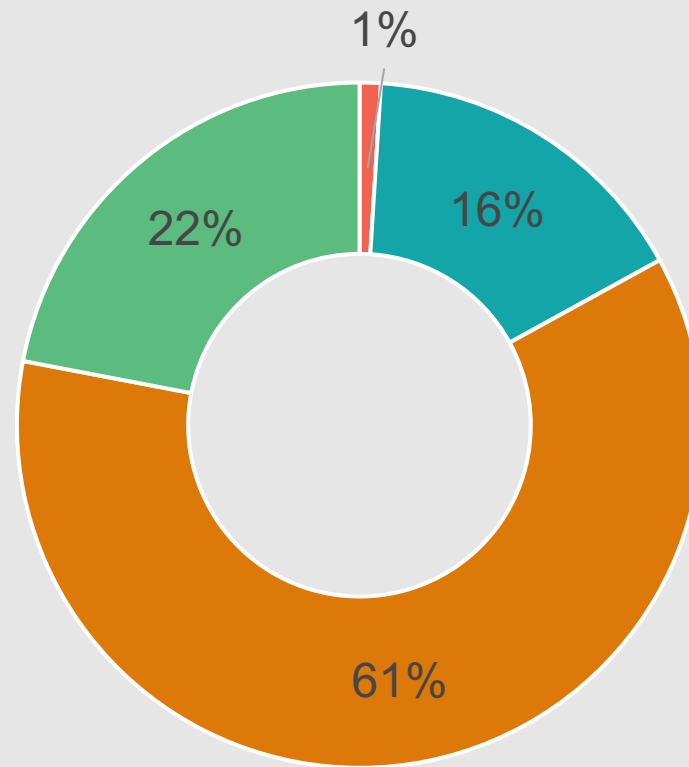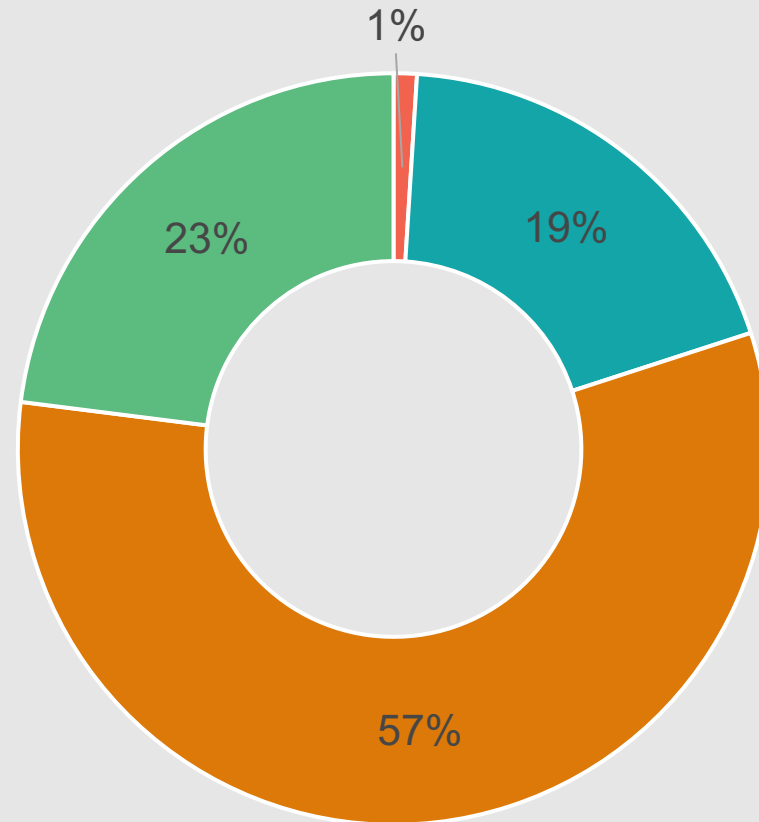
- Not confident at all
- Not very confident
- Fairly confident
- Very confident

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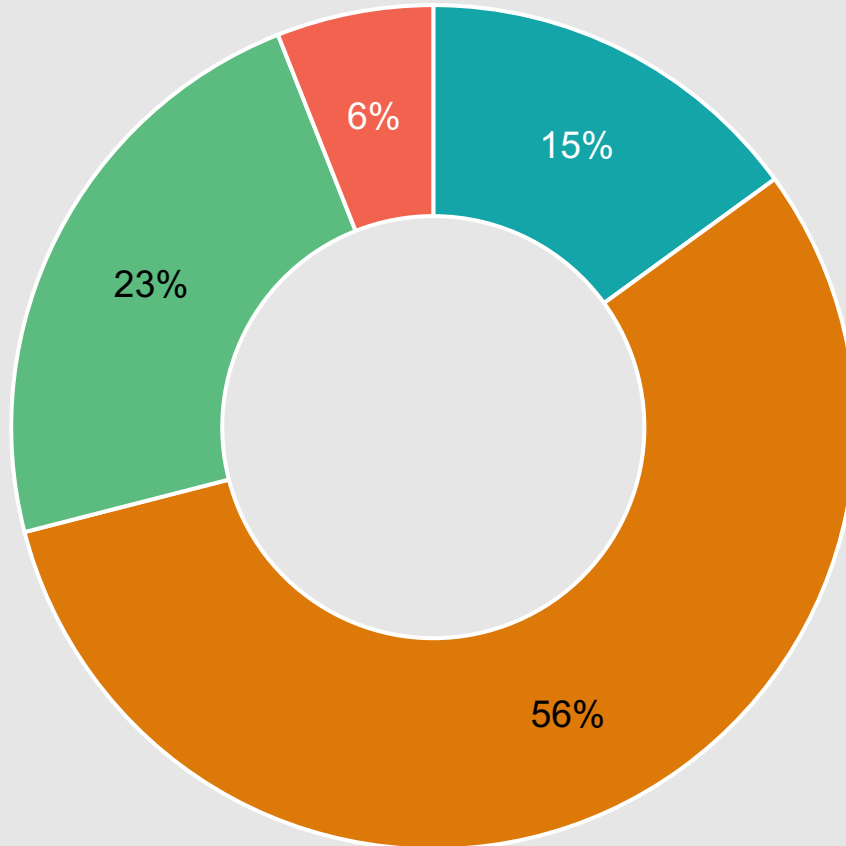
Findings (student experience)
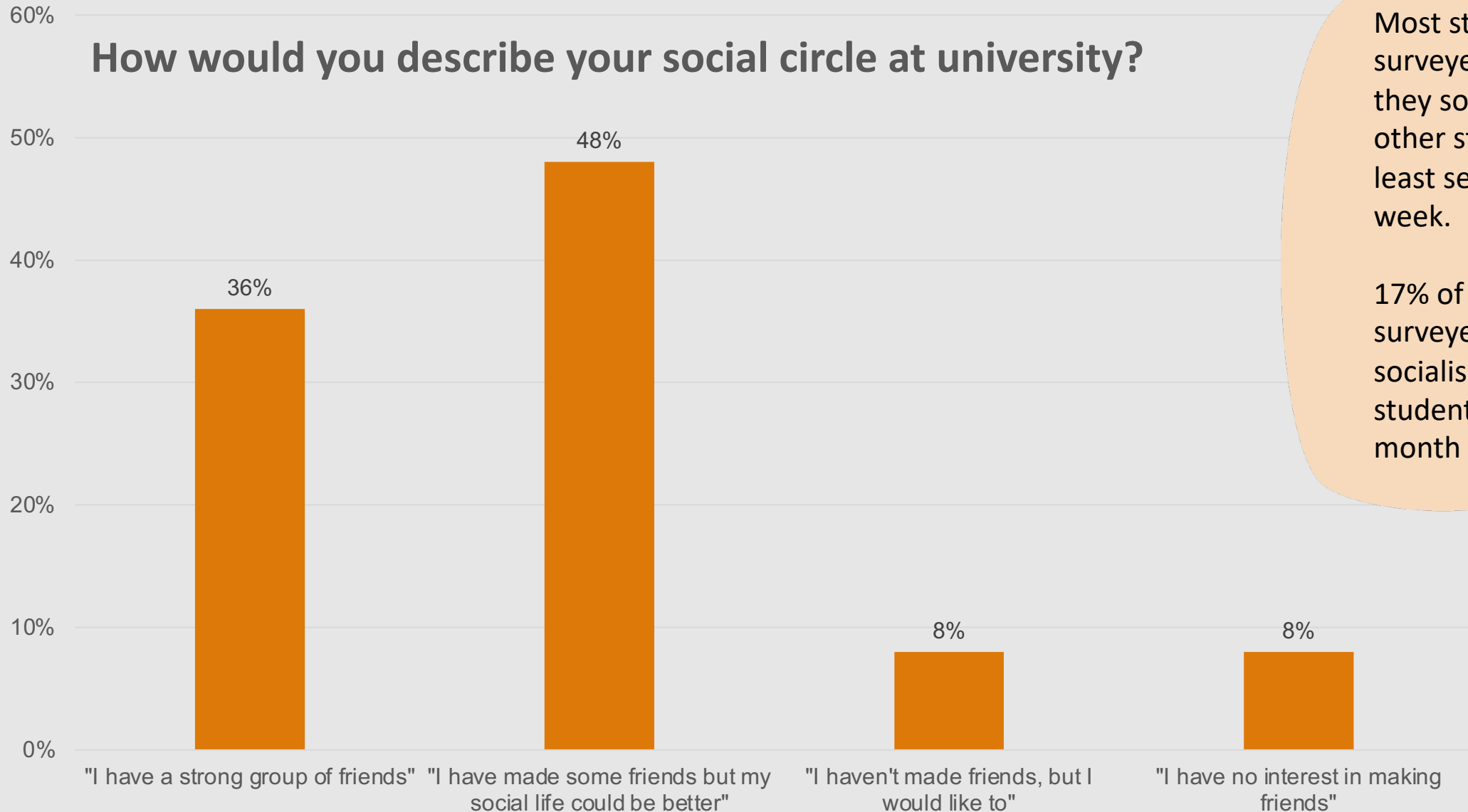
Finances

- Reminder: the rising cost of living was identified as the no.1 issue impacting students' mental wellbeing (slide 9).

Legend:
- "I'm in a good place financially and can afford things I want and need"
- "I can afford most things I want and need but have to spend carefully"
- "I am struggling with money and often can't afford what I want or need"
- "I'm in a very bad financial situation"
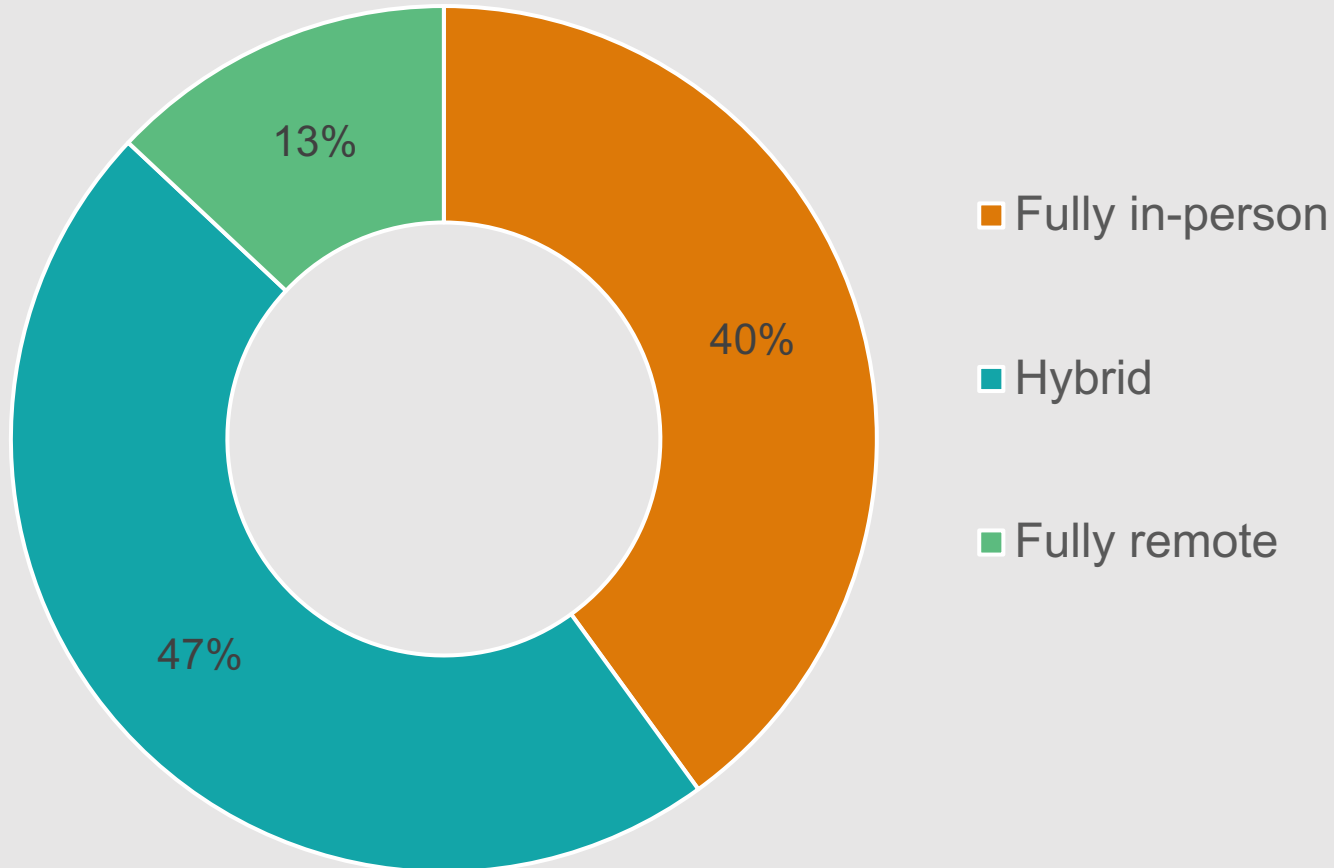
Chart values: 15%, 56%, 23%, 6%

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Employment

During term-time of the most recent academic year, survey respondents worked:

- Full-time — 20%
- Part-time — 37%
- Occasional — 14%
- None — 29%

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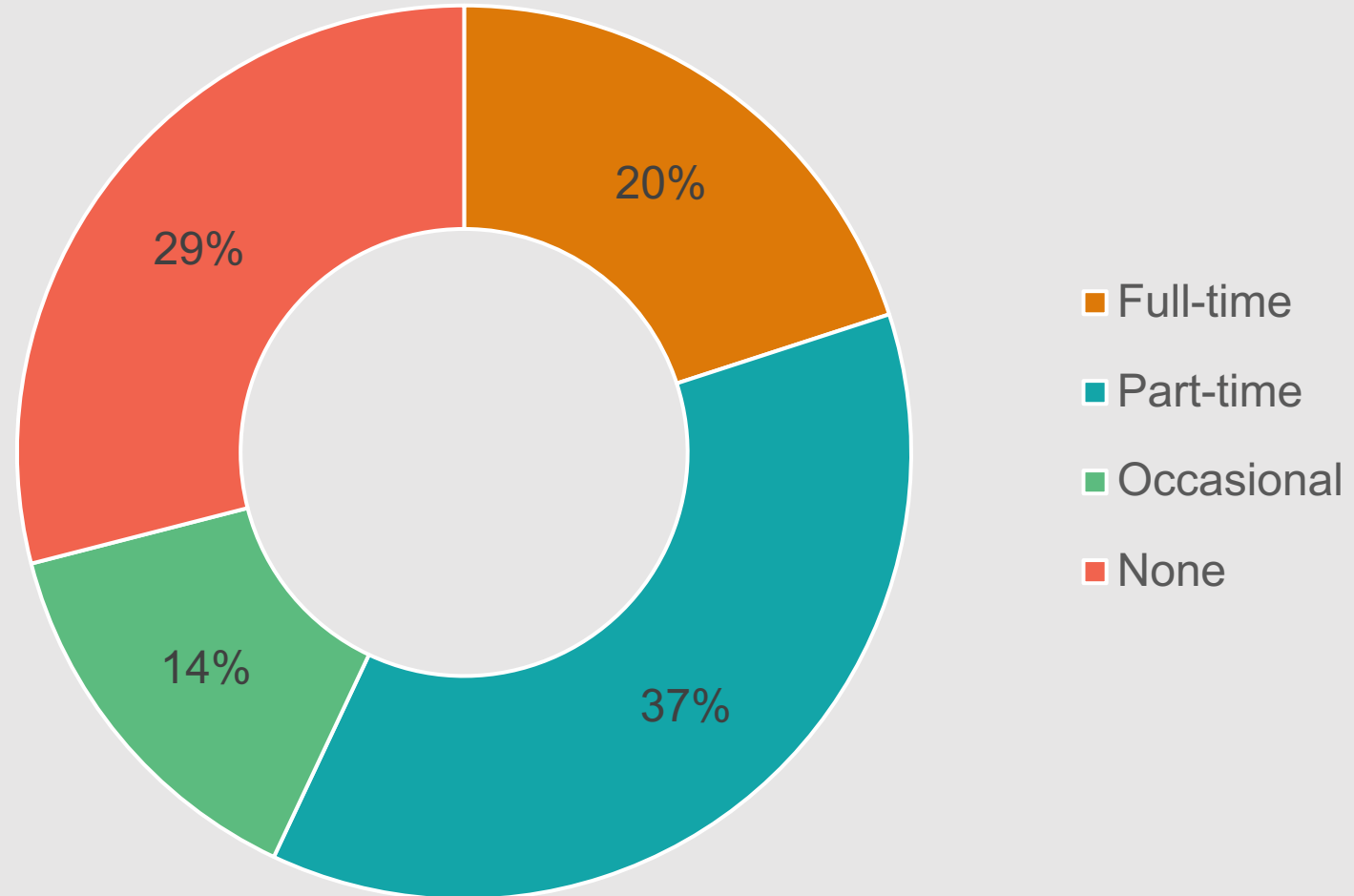
Education

Mode of learning, as of most recent term

- Fully in-person
- Hybrid
- Fully remote

40%
47%
13%

Of those who studied either fully or partially remotely:
- 37% said the impact of remote study on their mental health varies and preferences shift
- 25% said remote learning negatively impacts their mental health
- 20% said remote learning is better for their mental health than in-person learning
- 19% said remote learning did not impact their mental health

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Respondent Quotes

Respondent Quotes

"As a young person, I can say that I never feel like my mental health is taken seriously and this has been shared hugely with my peers. Even such a seemingly small thing as being taken more seriously can make a huge positive impact across the mental health of young people before it is too late."

"I think the government should do more to encourage and help support students with their mental health."

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Respondent Quote

"I feel like universities may provide mental health services etc, but they do not truly understand the mental trauma some students can have, especially with the cycle of needing to socialise and do other stuff at same time as study, finding the balance is very difficult and can be draining."

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Respondent Quote

"It can be difficult to determine when the right time to ask for help is, or even whether you need help or if the things you're experiencing are just a normal part of being a student."

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