



Student support review

Topline report for the Scottish Government (unweighted data)

March 2017



Background to the research

In October 2016 Jayne-Anne Gadhia, CEO of Virgin Money, was appointed by the Scottish Government to lead a review of the student support system in Scotland.

The review, which is being carried out as part of the Scottish Government's 'programme for government' aims to assess whether college and university students in Scotland – poorer and more vulnerable students in particular - receive fair and effective support and to make recommendations for improvements.

As part of this review YouGov was commissioned to carry out a survey of current FE and HE students in Scotland.

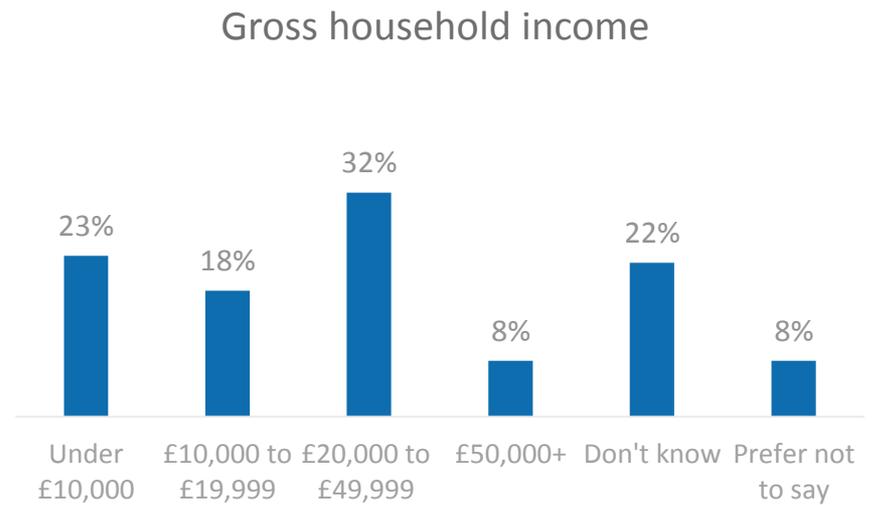
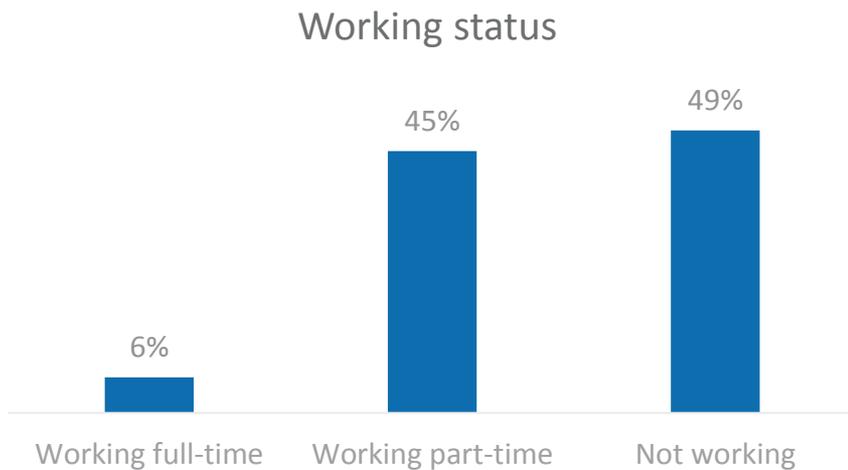
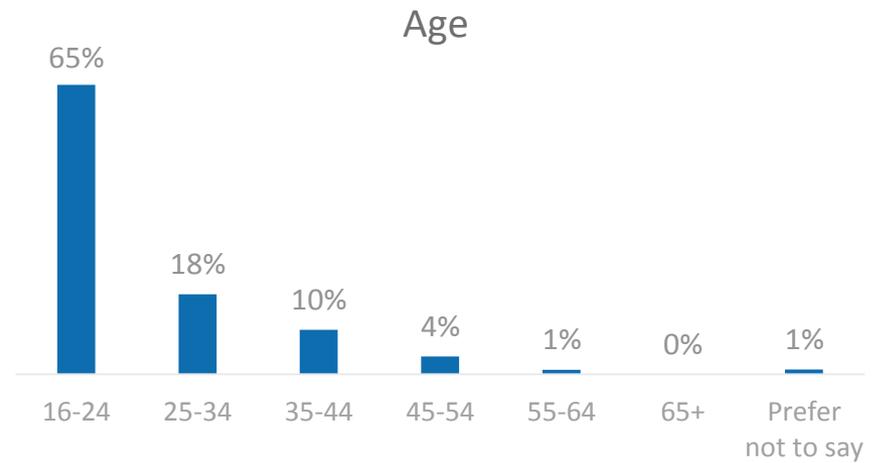
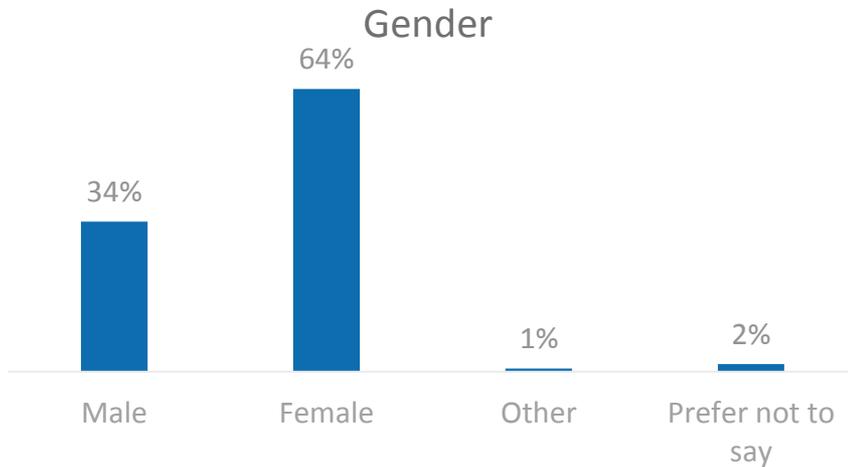
YouGov worked with the Scottish Government to design a questionnaire which was then scripted and hosted on YouGov's bespoke survey platform.

A link to the online questionnaire was sent out to students in Scotland by organisations such as the NUS and Open University.

In total, 3,568 students completed the survey between and 9th February and 6th March 2017.

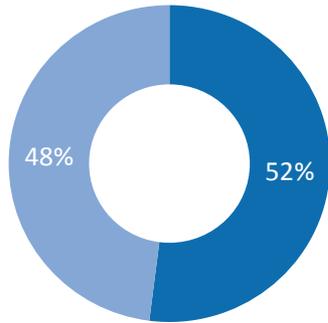
Note: the data in this report is unweighted.

Sample profile



Sample profile

FE or HE student?



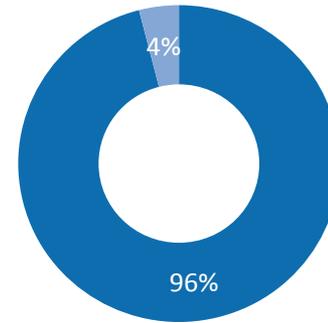
■ Further Education ■ Higher Education



59%

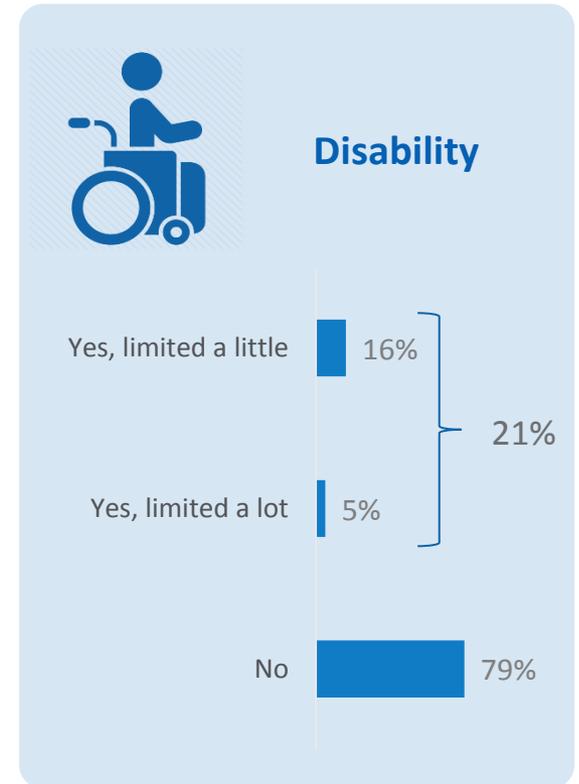
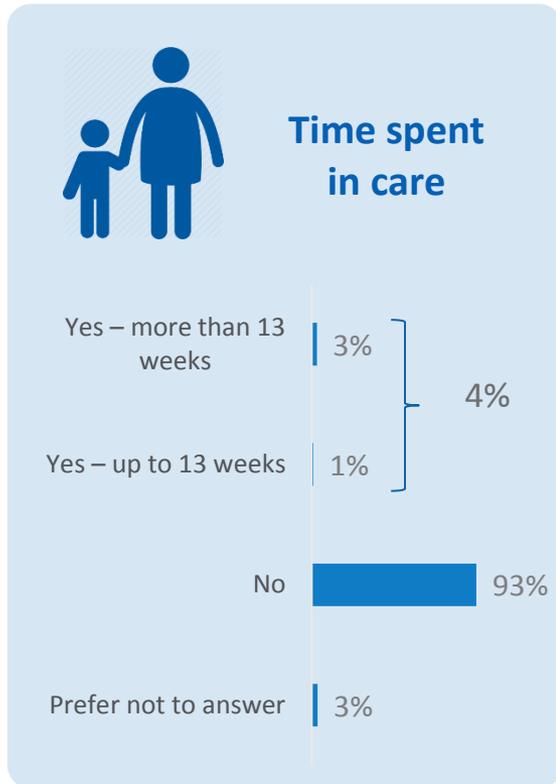
of HE students are studying at University, 41% are studying at college

Full-time or part-time?



■ Full-time ■ Part-time

Sample profile: vulnerable groups



Main findings

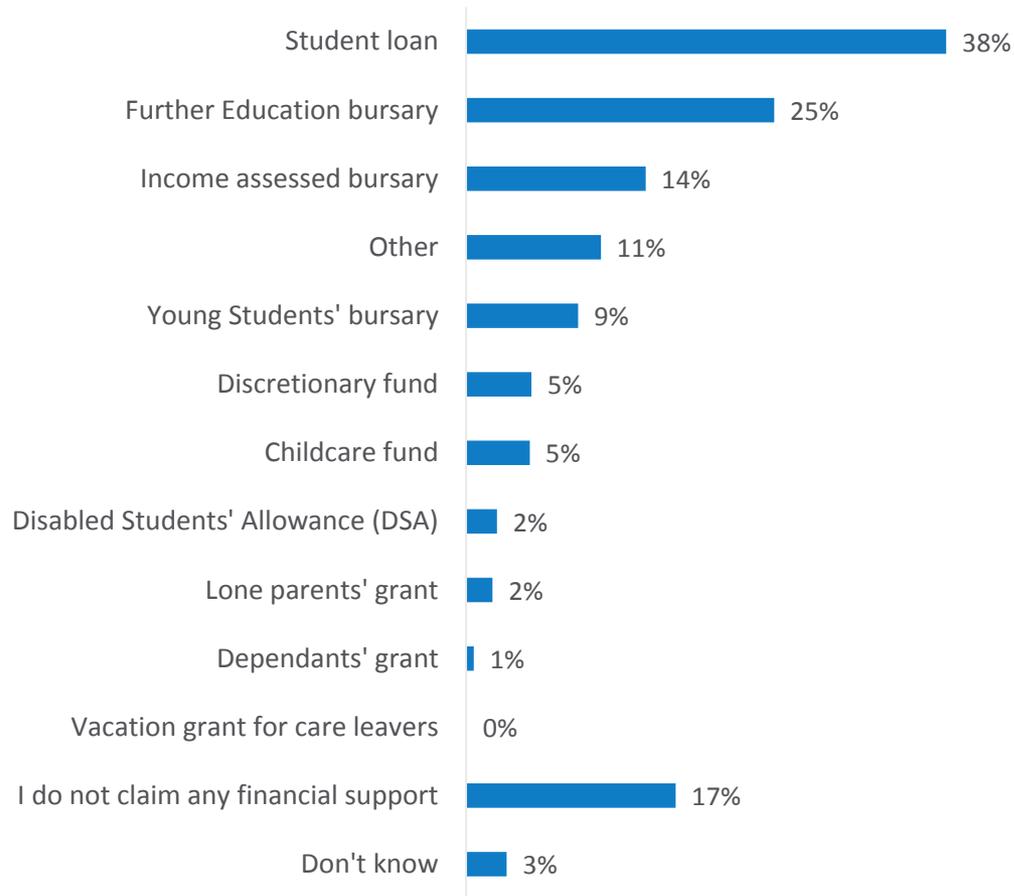


Financial support claimed

80%

of all students surveyed claim at least one form of financial support

Financial support currently claimed

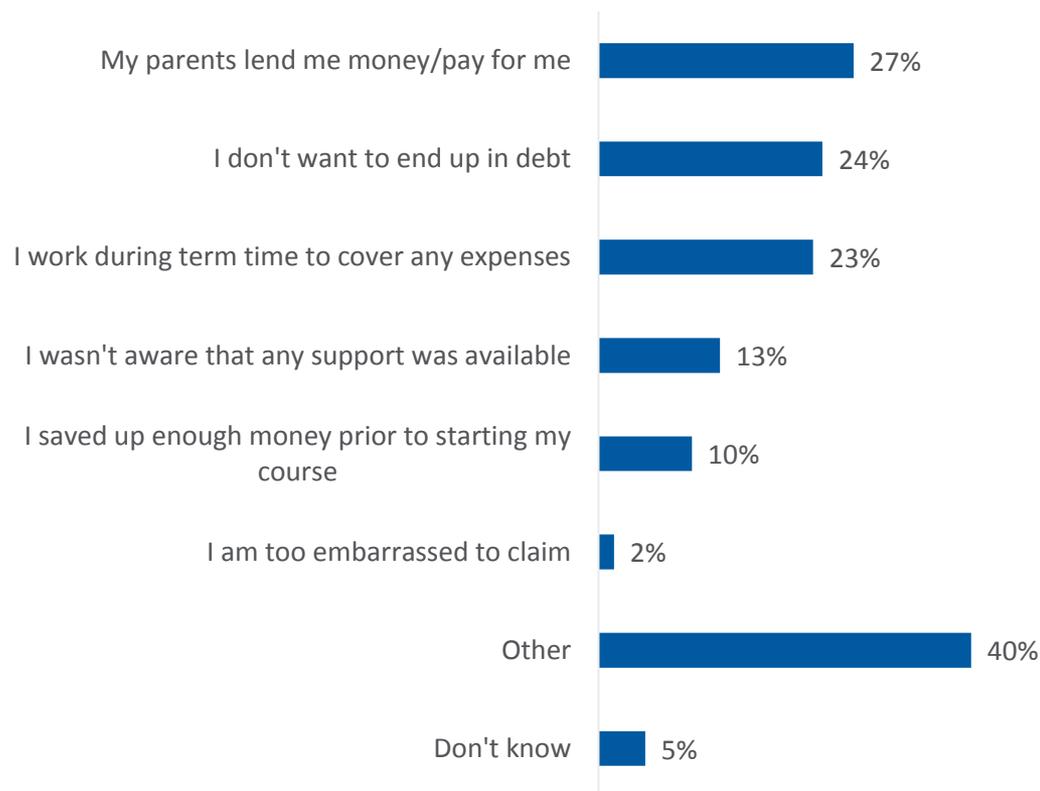


Base: All Scottish students (3,568)

Q1. Which of the following types of financial support, if any, do you currently claim?

Why do students not claim financial support?

Reasons for not claiming financial support



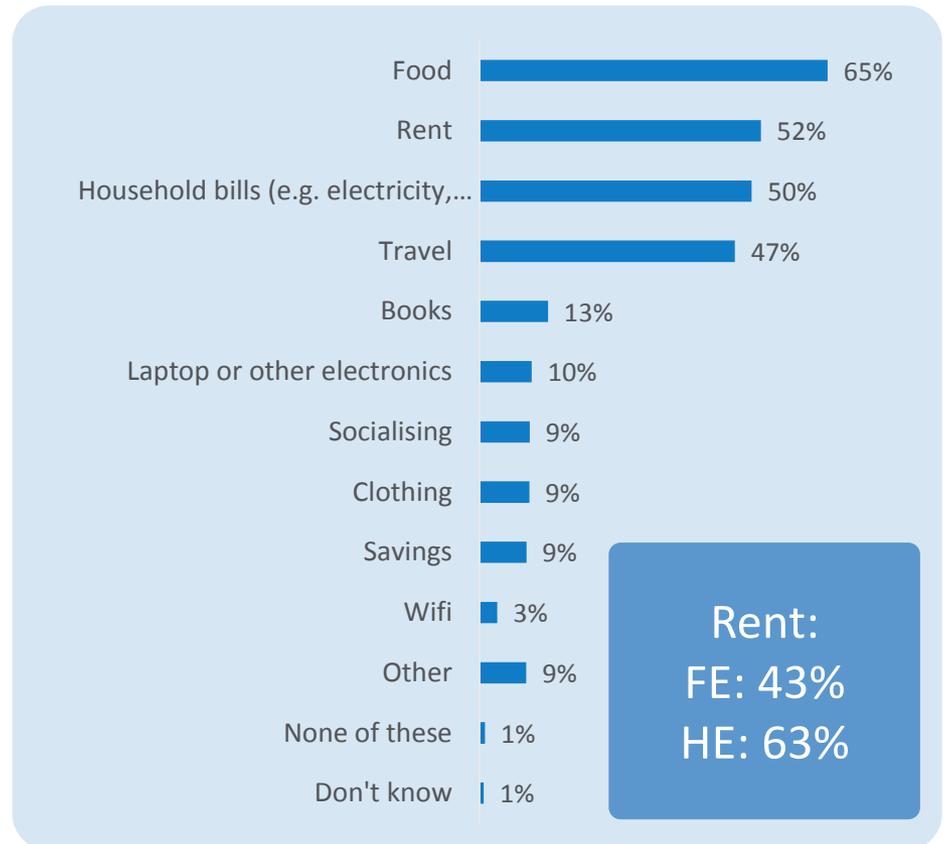
Those who said 'other'

- Do not qualify as an international student
- Parents or partner earn over the threshold
- Working full-time/part-time or have worked during the holidays
- Course is funded by employer



Food, rent and household bills are the items that financial support is most commonly used for

Top three biggest expenses that financial support is used for



Base: All students who claim financial support (2,853)

Q5. What are the three biggest expenses, from the list below, that you spend your financial support on? Please select up to three options.

Three in five students say that they have had to pay for materials or activities that were required by their course

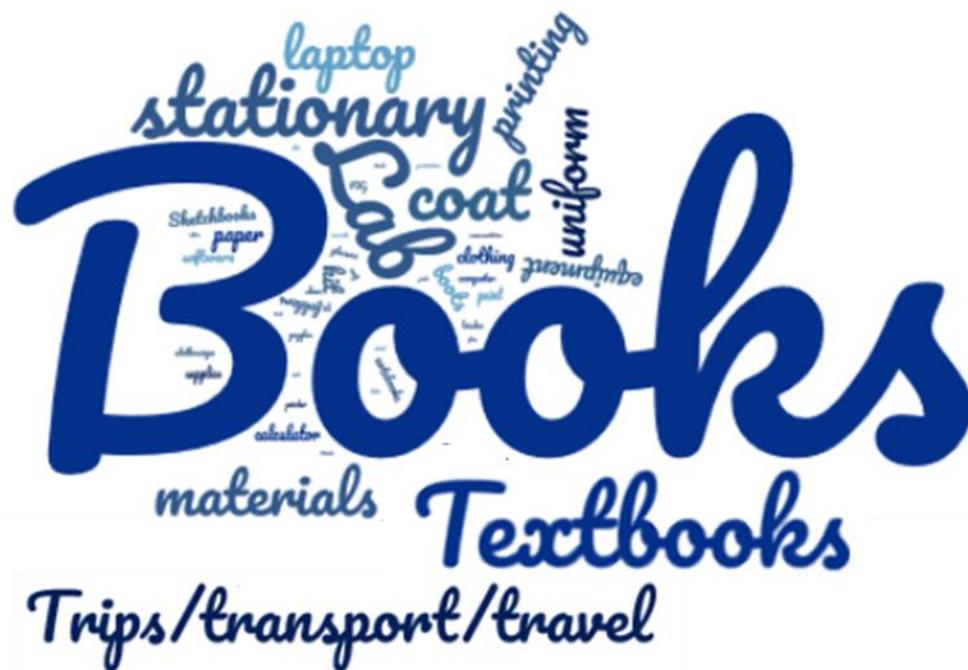
Required to pay for materials, activities or other costs?

58%

No: 37%

Don't know: 5%

What materials do students have to pay for?



Base: All Scottish students (3,568)

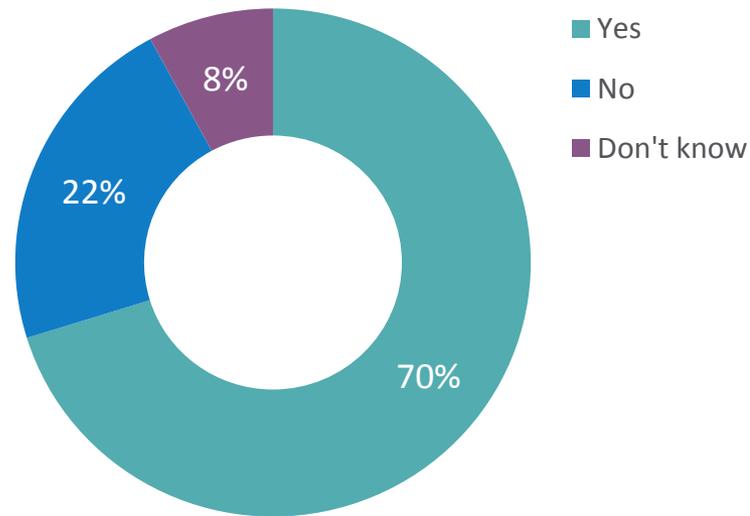
Q12. Have you ever been required to pay for materials, activities or other costs that were required for your programme of study? / Q12a. What materials or activities did you have to pay for?

YouGov

Information and advice



Seven in ten students who claim financial support say that they had the right information to help them apply

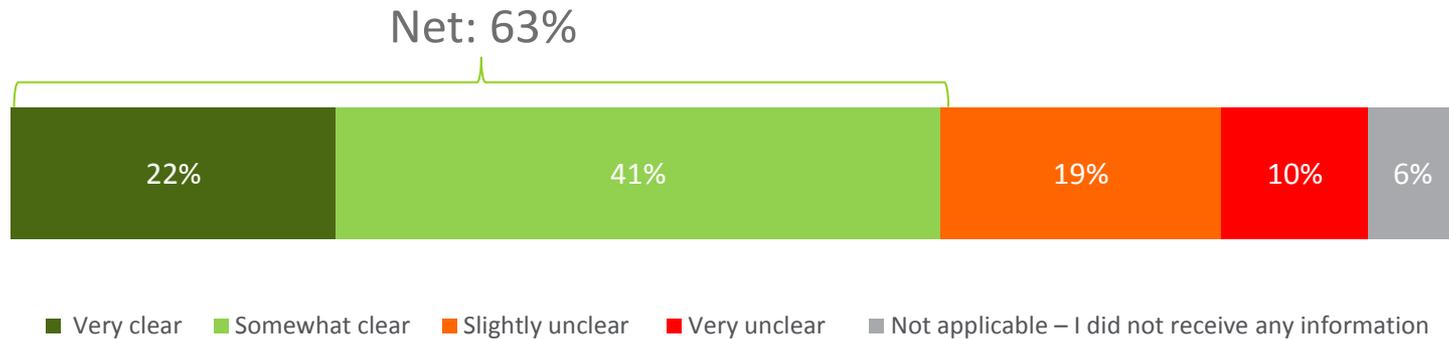


Base: All students who claim any type of financial support (2,853)

Q21. When applying for student support did you feel you had the right information to help you apply?

Three in five students think that the information they received about the support they are entitled to was clear

Clarity of information received about the amount of financial support entitled to

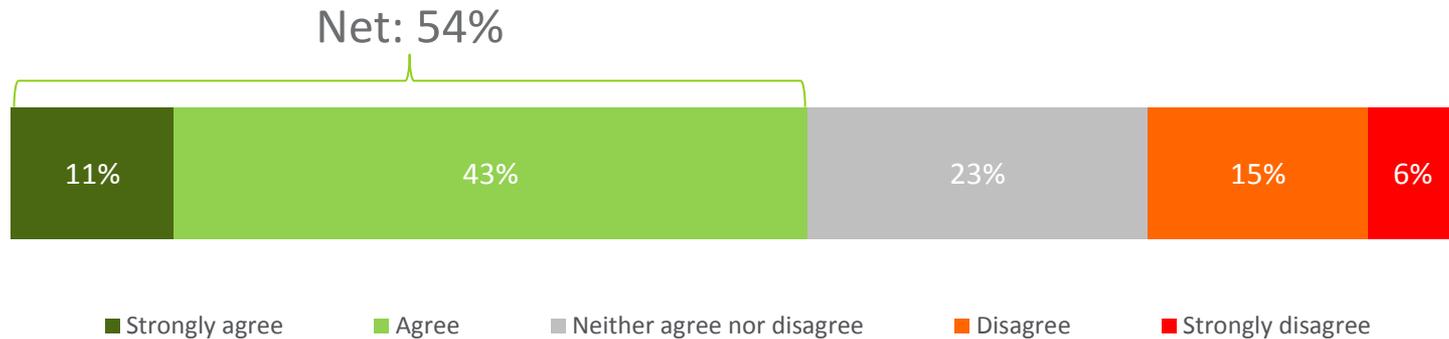


Base: All Scottish students (3,568)

Q3. How clear was the information you received about the amount of financial support you were entitled to?

Only 54% of students who claim financial support say that the process for applying was straightforward

Agreement of whether the application process was straightforward



Base: All students who claim any type of financial support (2,853)

Q23. To what extent, if at all, do you either agree or disagree that the process of applying for and receiving your student support payments is straightforward?

Three quarters of students claiming support had to submit evidence to be means tested for that support

77%

Of students who claim financial support had to submit information/evidence about income

Ease of finding this information



Easy:
58%

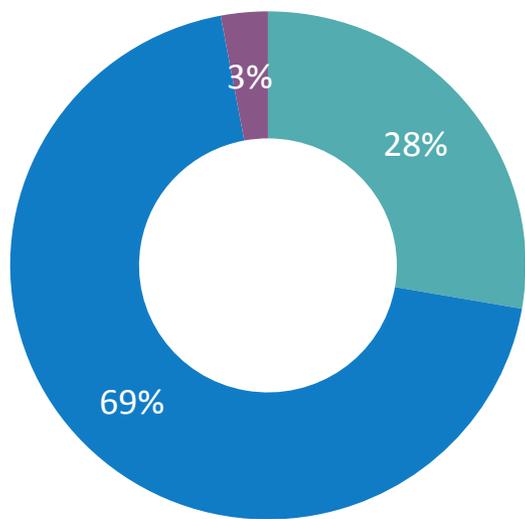
Difficult:
41%

Base: All students who claim any type of financial support (2,853)

Q7. Did you have to submit information/evidence about your/your parents/your partner's income in order to test how much financial support you could receive? / Q8. How easy did you find this?

Although only three in ten students received guidance from a funding adviser when they applied for funding an overwhelming majority of recipients found that information to be important for accessing funding

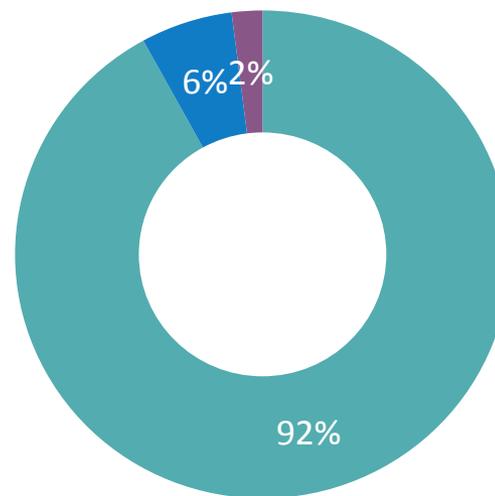
Students who received guidance from a student funding adviser



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Importance of receiving this information

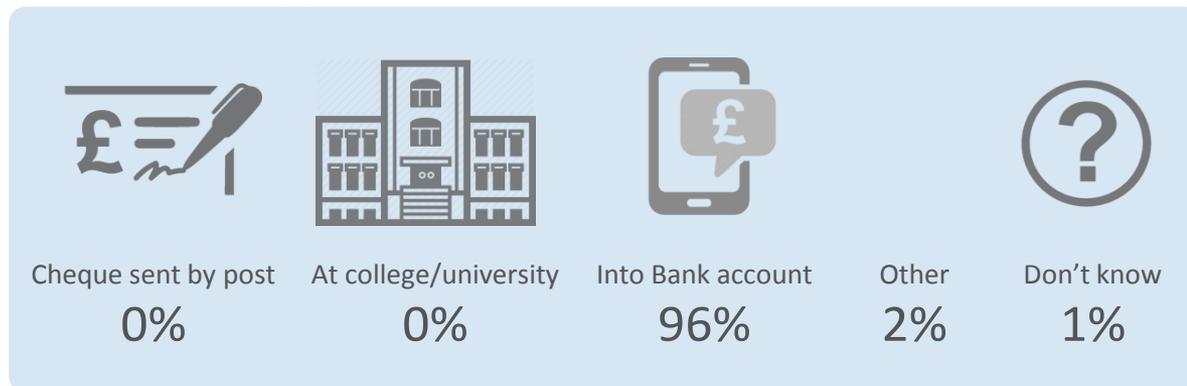
Base = All who did receive guidance (791)



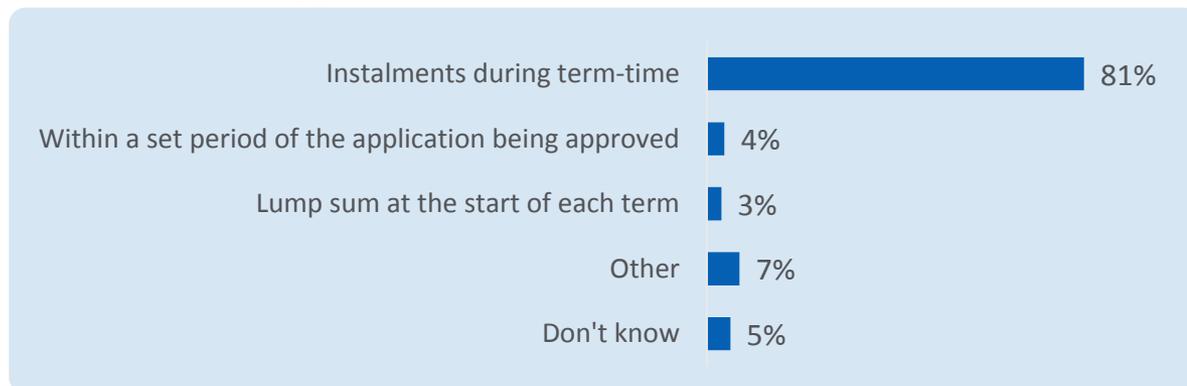
■ Important ■ Unimportant ■ Don't know

Virtually all students like the way in which they receive financial support, whereas only three quarters like *when* they receive their support

How financial support received...



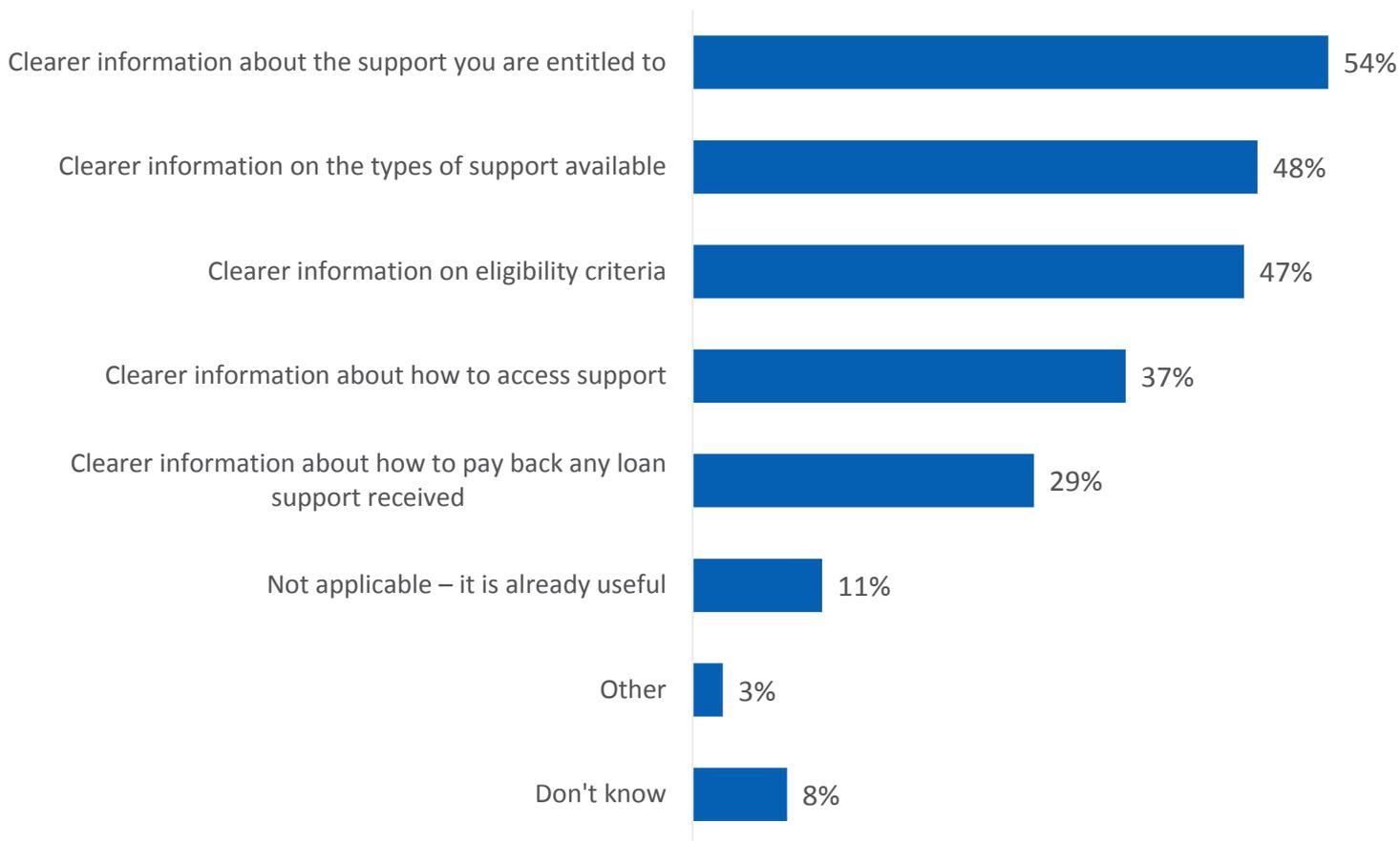
When financial support received...



Base: All students who claim any type of financial support (2,853)

Q27a. How do you receive your financial support? / Q27b. When do you receive your financial support? / q27c_how. Do you like how and when you receive your payment? - How you receive your payment? / q27c_when. Do you like how and when you receive your payment? - When you receive your payment?

What should be done to make advice more useful?

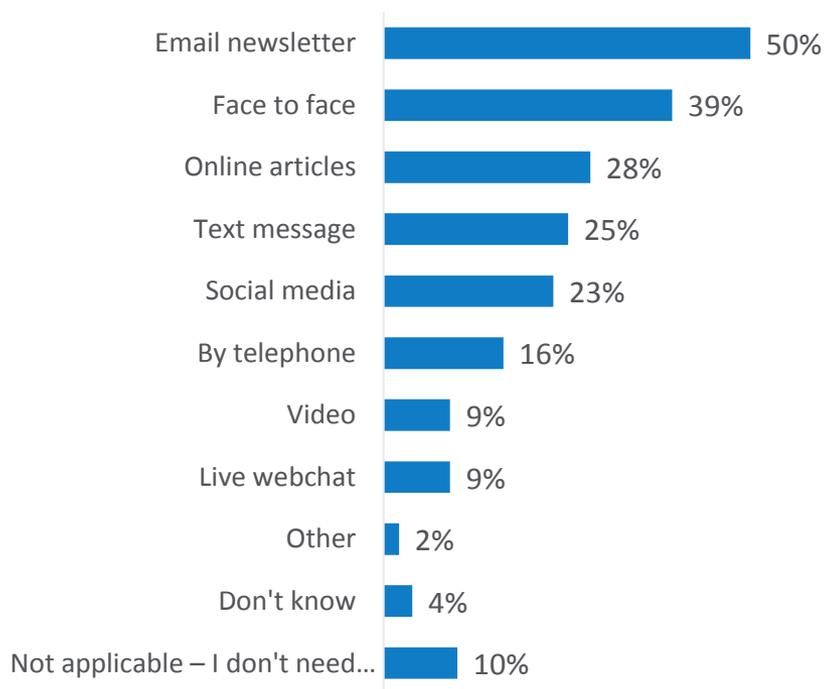


Base: All Scottish students (3,568)

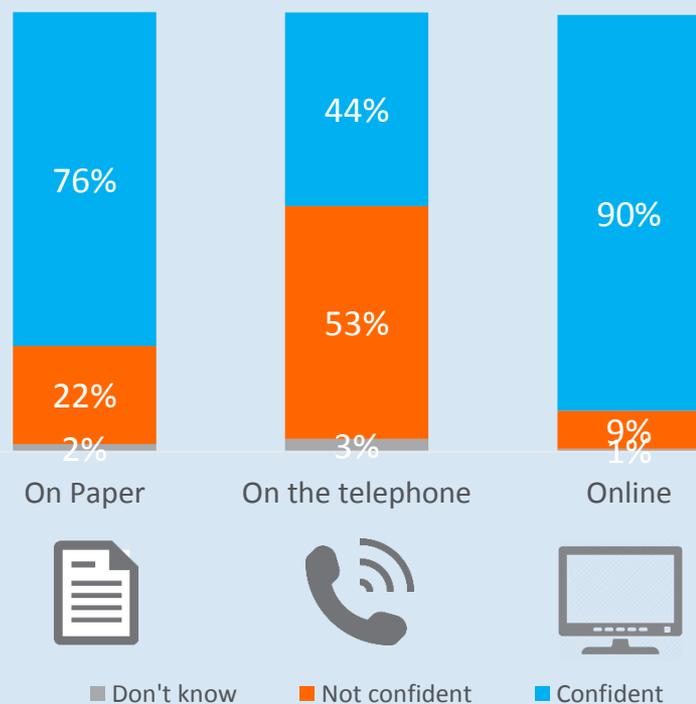
Q20. What, if anything, do you think should be done to make the advice, guidance or information more useful to you and other students?

Although students are very confident using online channels for information they are more likely to prefer face-to-face contact

Preferred ways in which students would like to receive information



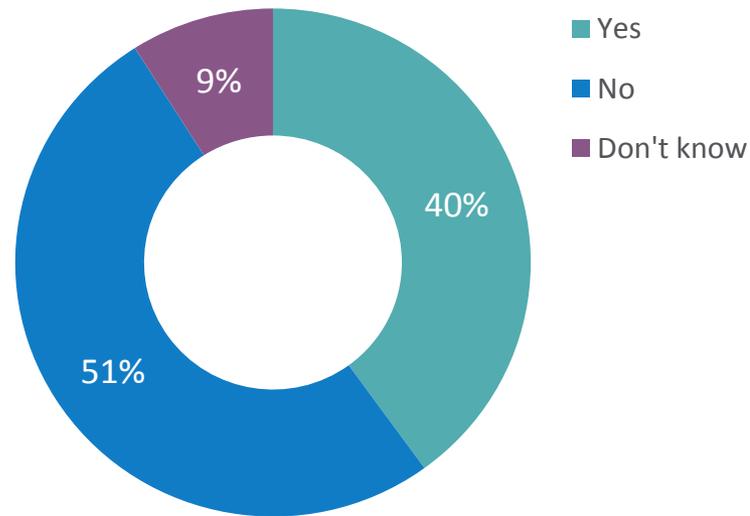
How confident students feel using the following channels...



Other types of student support



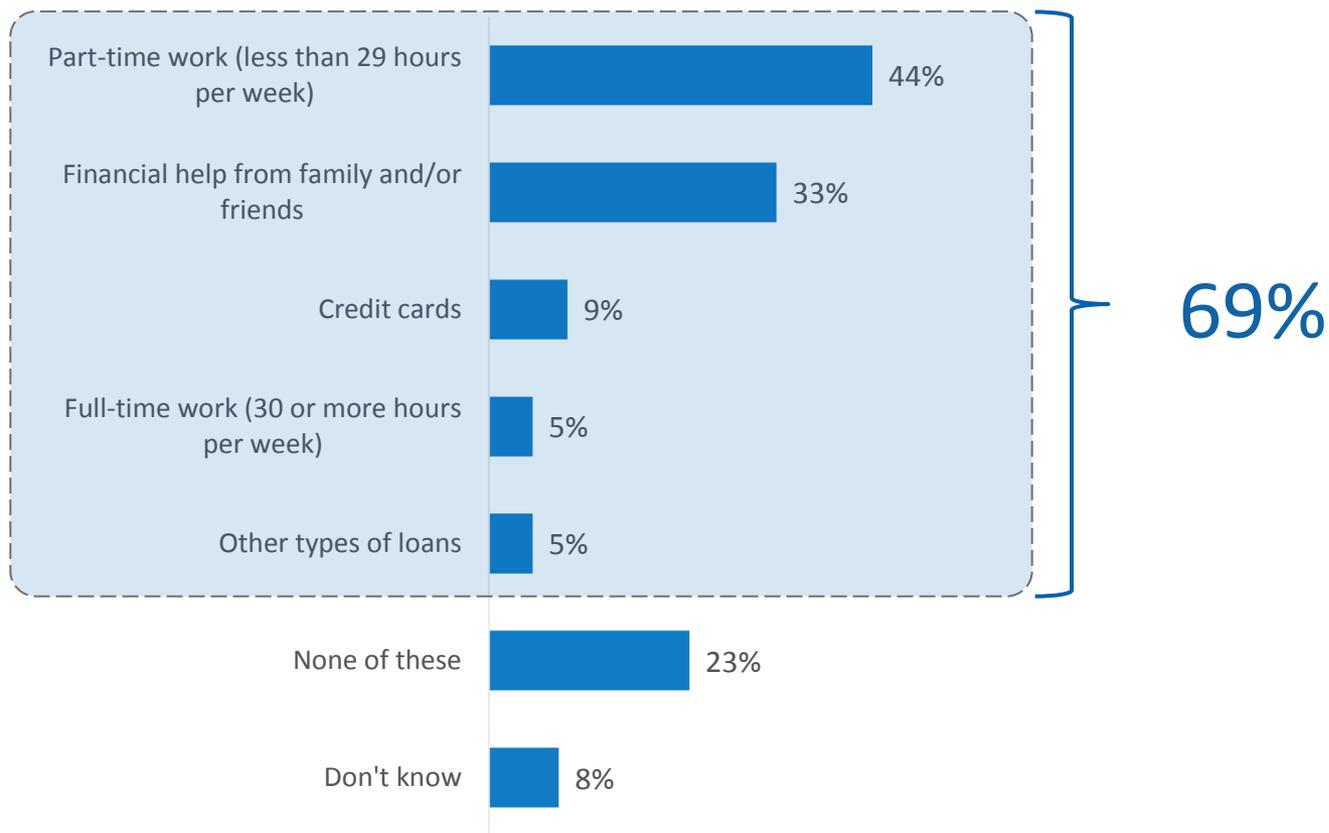
Half of students are unaware of services in college or university which could help with money management or budgeting



Base: All Scottish students (3,568)

Q9. Are you aware of any services in your college or University which could help you with money management/budgeting?

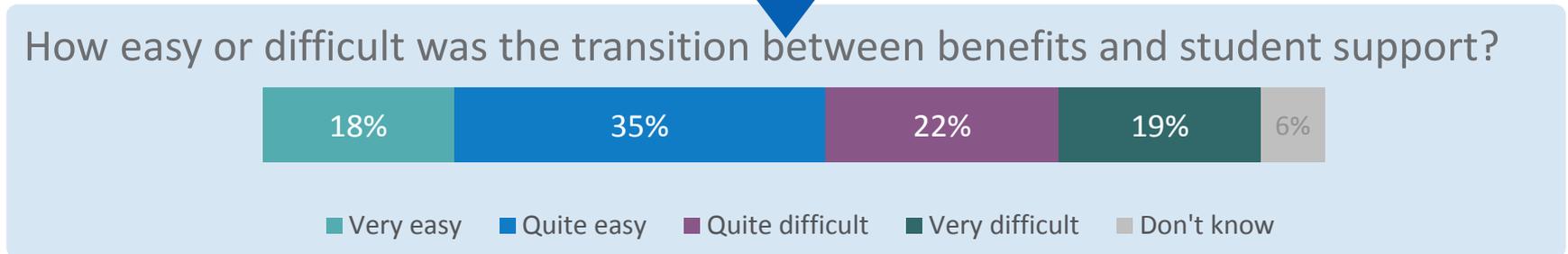
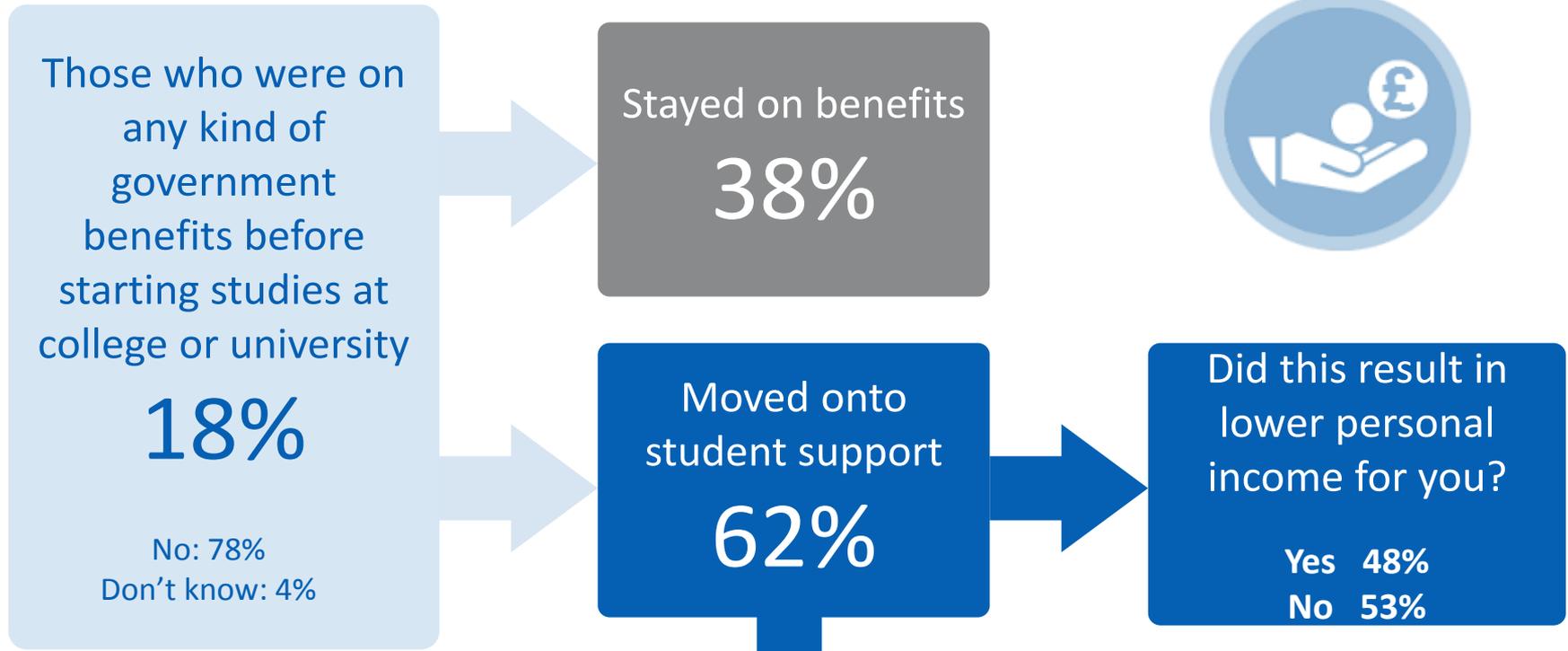
Seven in ten students who receive financial support have to supplement that support in other ways



Base: All students who claim any type of financial support (2,853)

Q13. Do you supplement the financial support you receive for completing your studies with any of the following?

Receipt of government benefits



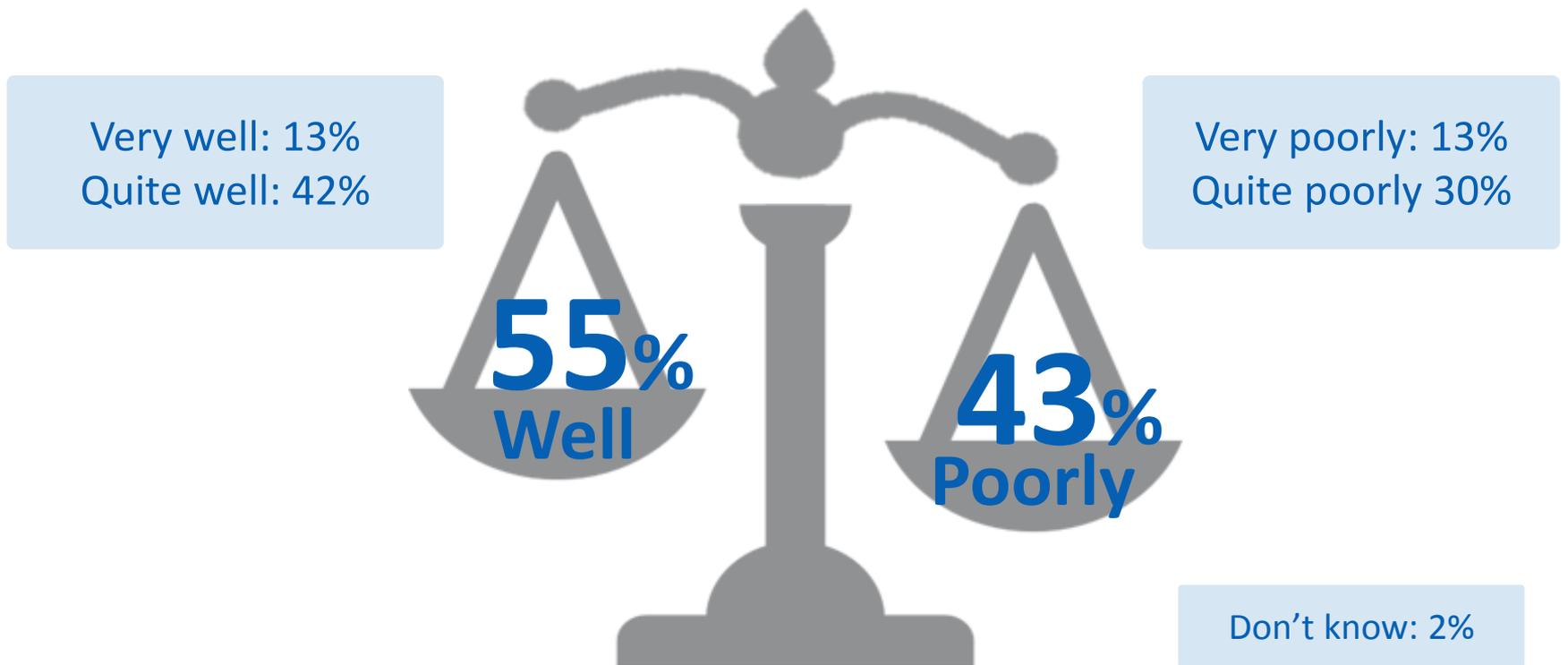
Base: All Scottish students (3,568), All who were on benefits before starting studies (641), All who moved onto student support (400)
 Q15. Were you on any kind of government benefits before starting your studies at college or University? / Q16. And did you stay on benefits or move onto student support? / Q17. Did the move from government benefits to student support result in a lower personal income for you? / Q18. How easy or difficult was the transition between government benefits and student support?

Attitudes towards student support



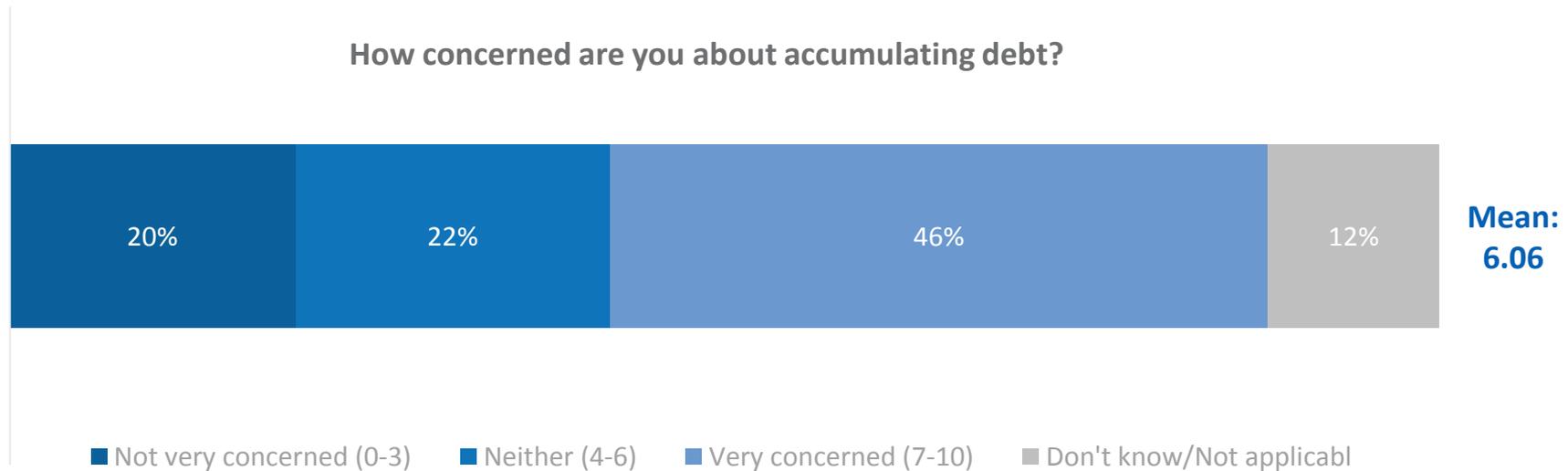
Students who claim financial support are divided on the issue of whether that financial support meets their needs

How well, if at all, does the current financial support you receive meet your needs?



Base: All students who claim any type of financial support (2,853)
Q4. How well, if at all, does the current financial support you receive meet your needs?

Half of students who claim financial support are very concerned about accumulating debt as a result of claiming that support



Base: All students who claim any type of financial support (2,853)

Q10. How concerned, if at all, are you about accumulating debt as a result of claiming financial support? Please answer using the following scale where 0 is "not at all concerned" and 10 is "extremely concerned".

When forced to choose, the vast majority of students prefer to have money in their pocket now rather than reducing the amount of debt they have

78%

Having enough money
in my pocket to
complete my studies

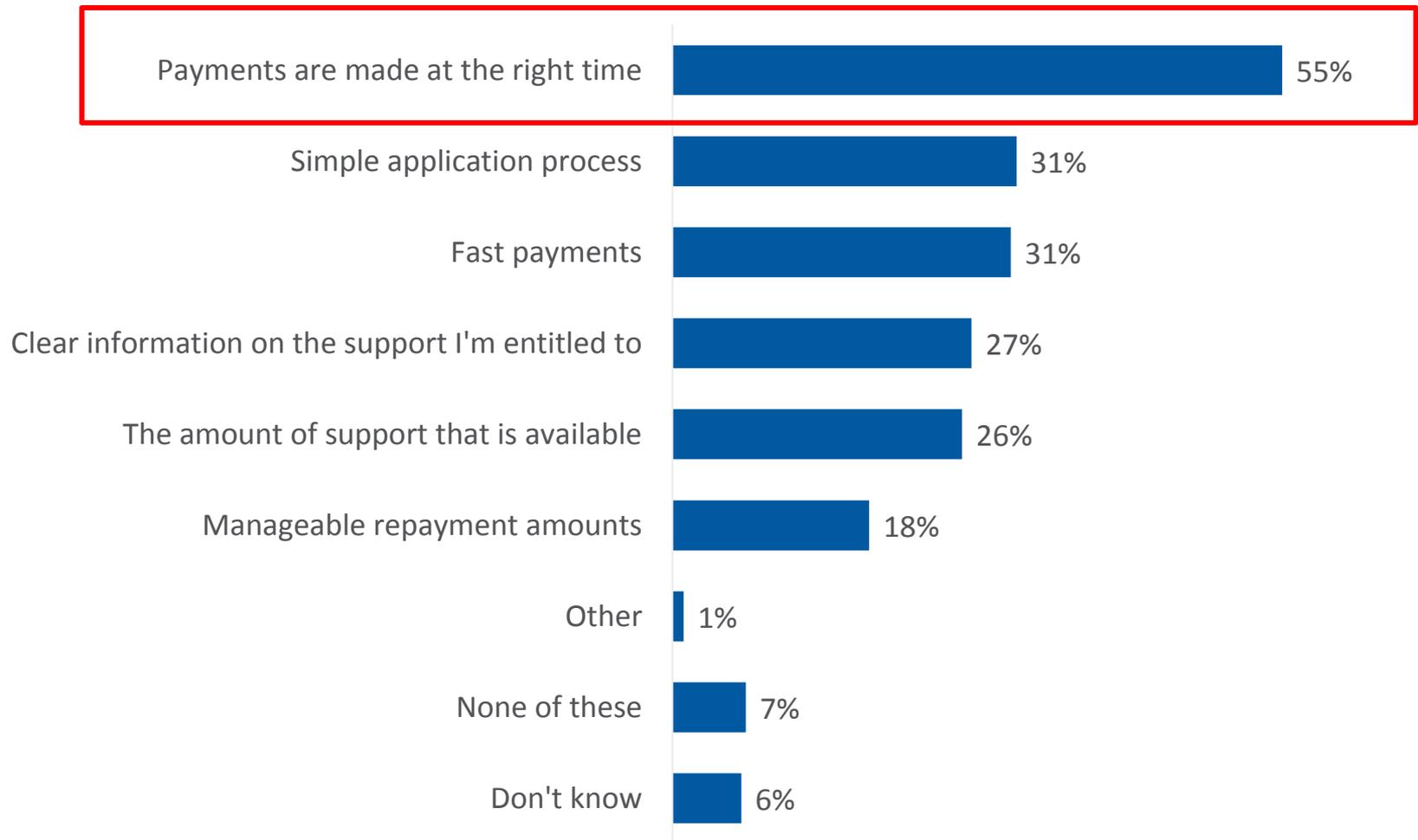
13%

Reducing the amount
of student loan debt I
have at the end of my
studies



Neither (9%)

Those who receive financial support place the greatest value on receiving their support at the right time





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