

AdvanceHE



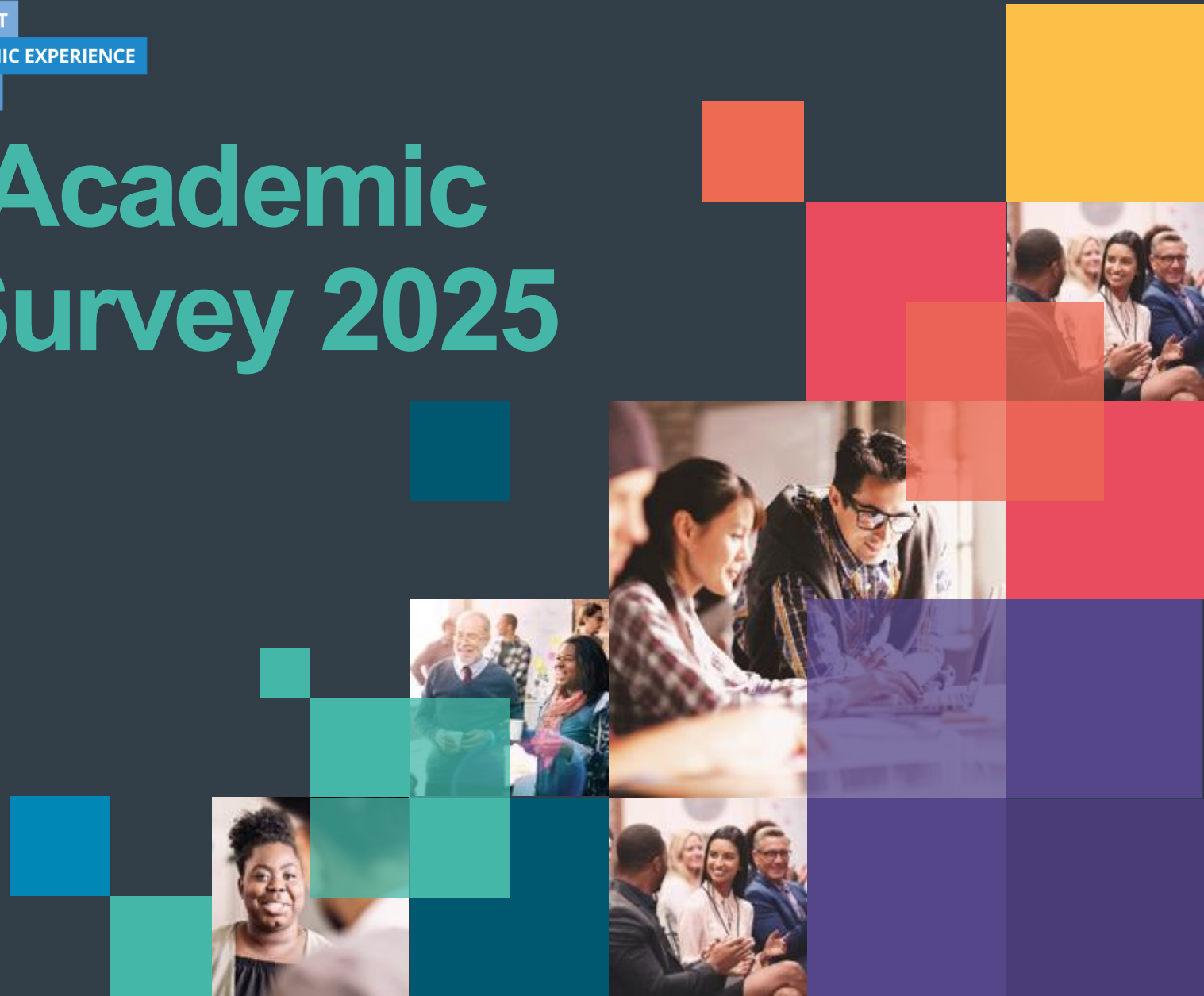
STUDENT
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE
SURVEY

The Student Academic Experience Survey 2025

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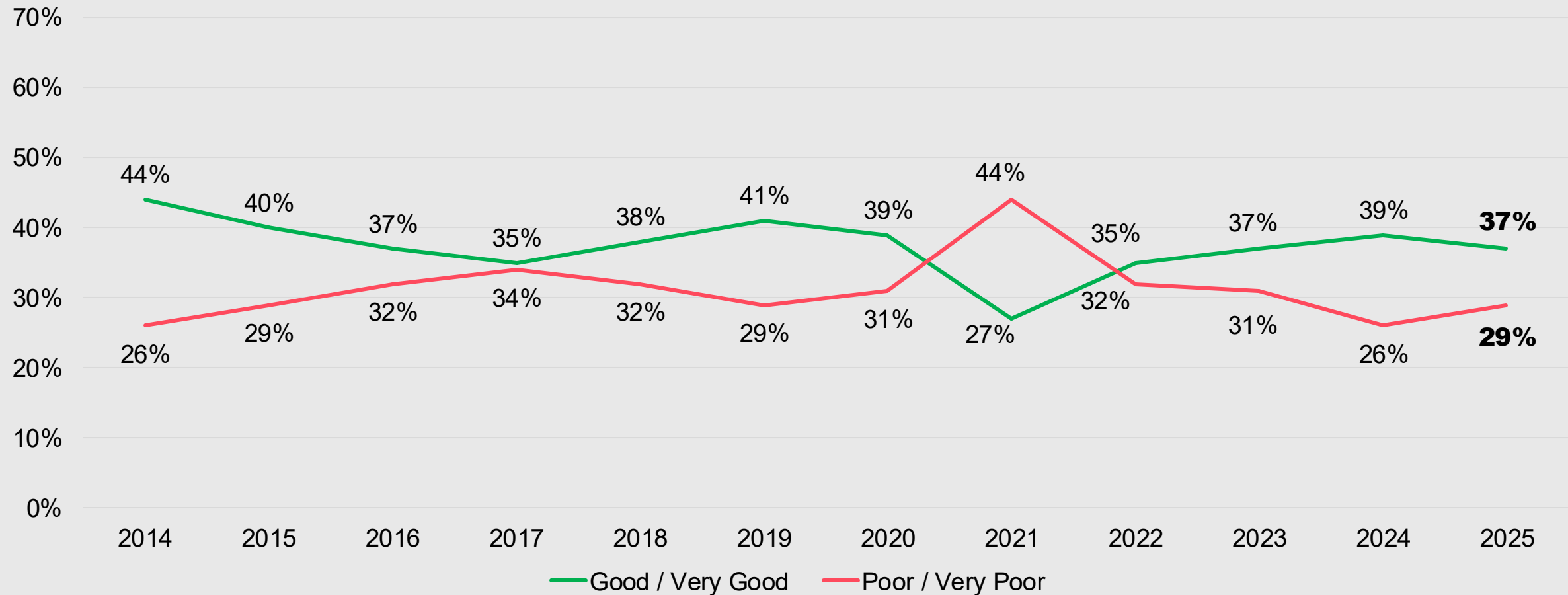
Josh Freeman, HEPI

Rose Stephenson, HEPI



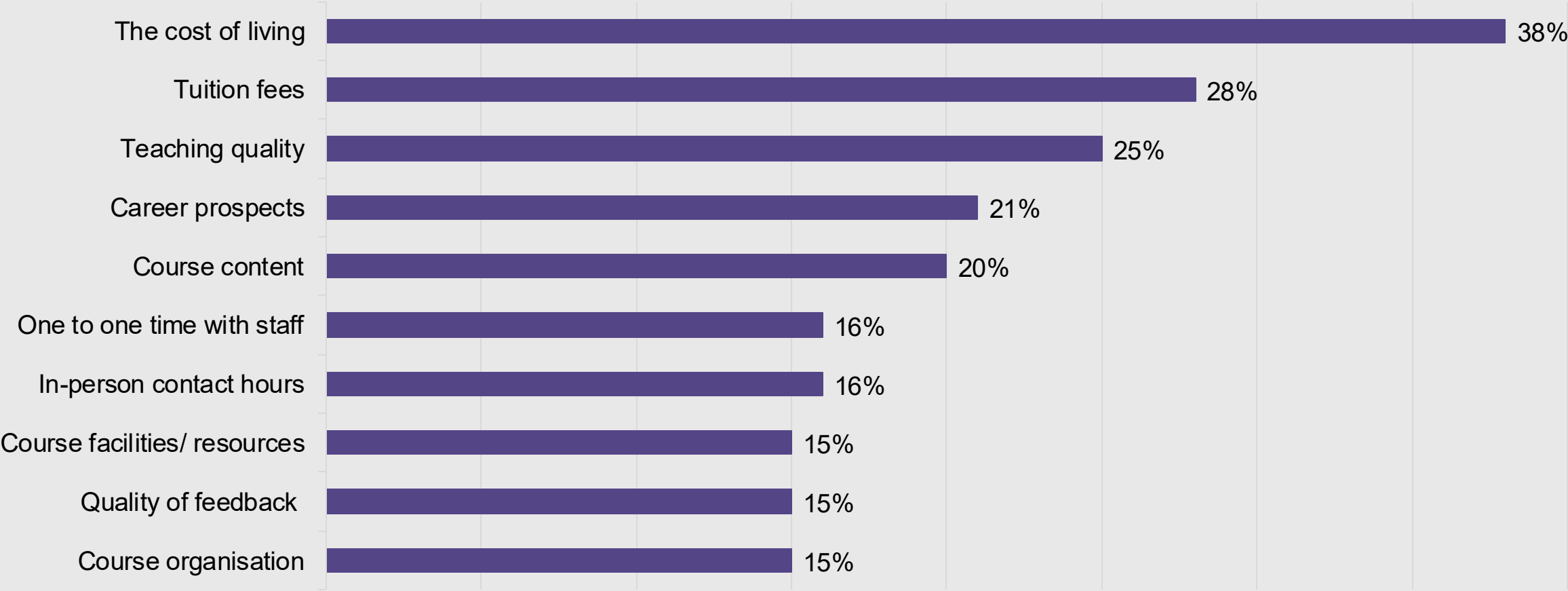
Perceptions of value-for-money have declined from last year, but trends are relatively flat over the medium term, with ‘good value’ perceptions well ahead of ‘poor value’

Value for money of your present course



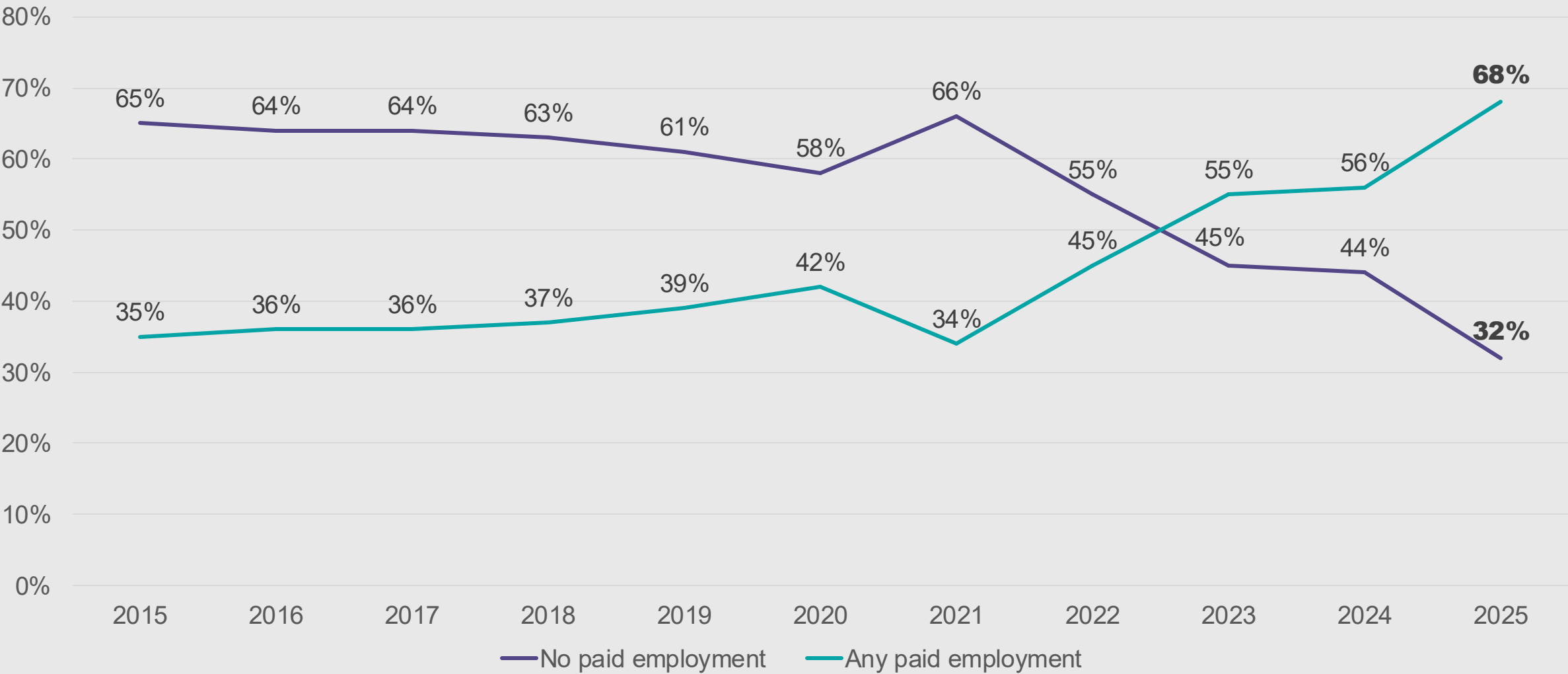
Cost of living concerns are the main driver of perceptions of ‘poor value’ – now well ahead of other factors

When saying you received poor value / very poor value, what were you thinking about?



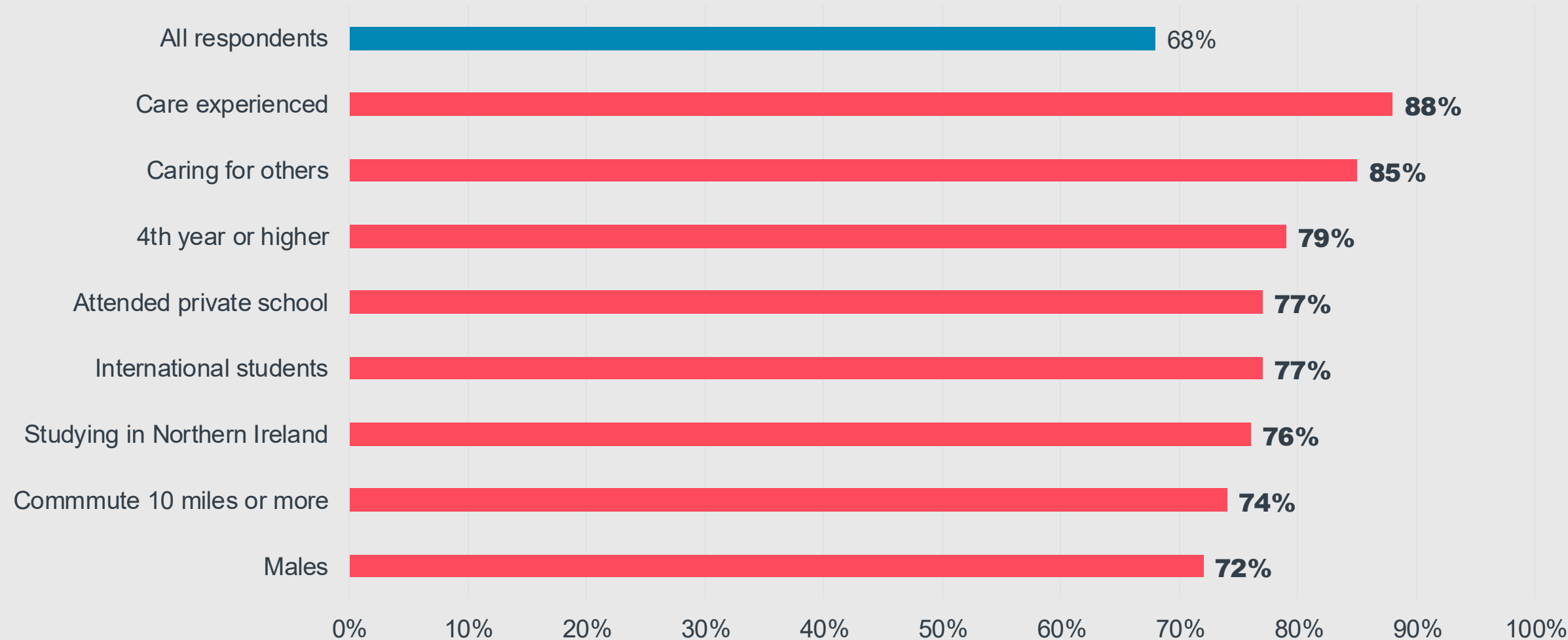
As a likely link to cost concerns, paid employment during term time has become the norm rather than the exception

Students in paid employment in term time



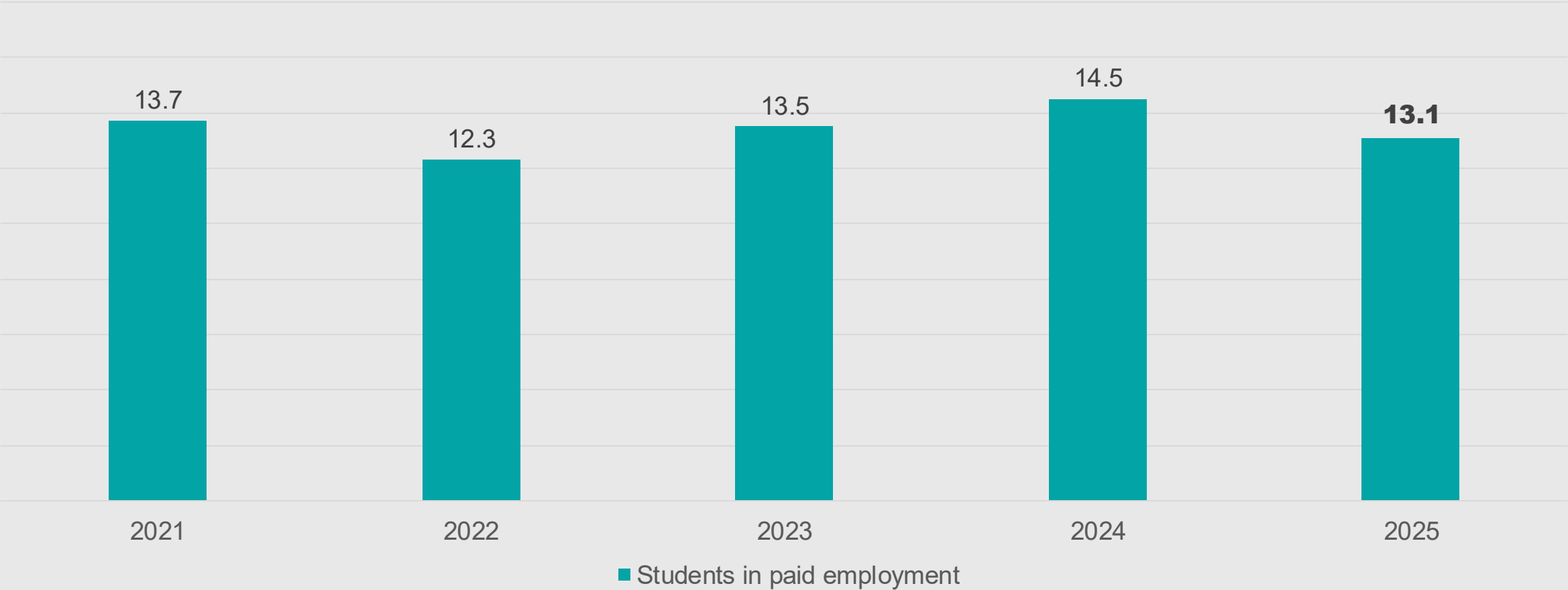
Propensity to work for pay is even higher among particular demographic groups

Selected cohorts with a high propensity to be in paid employment



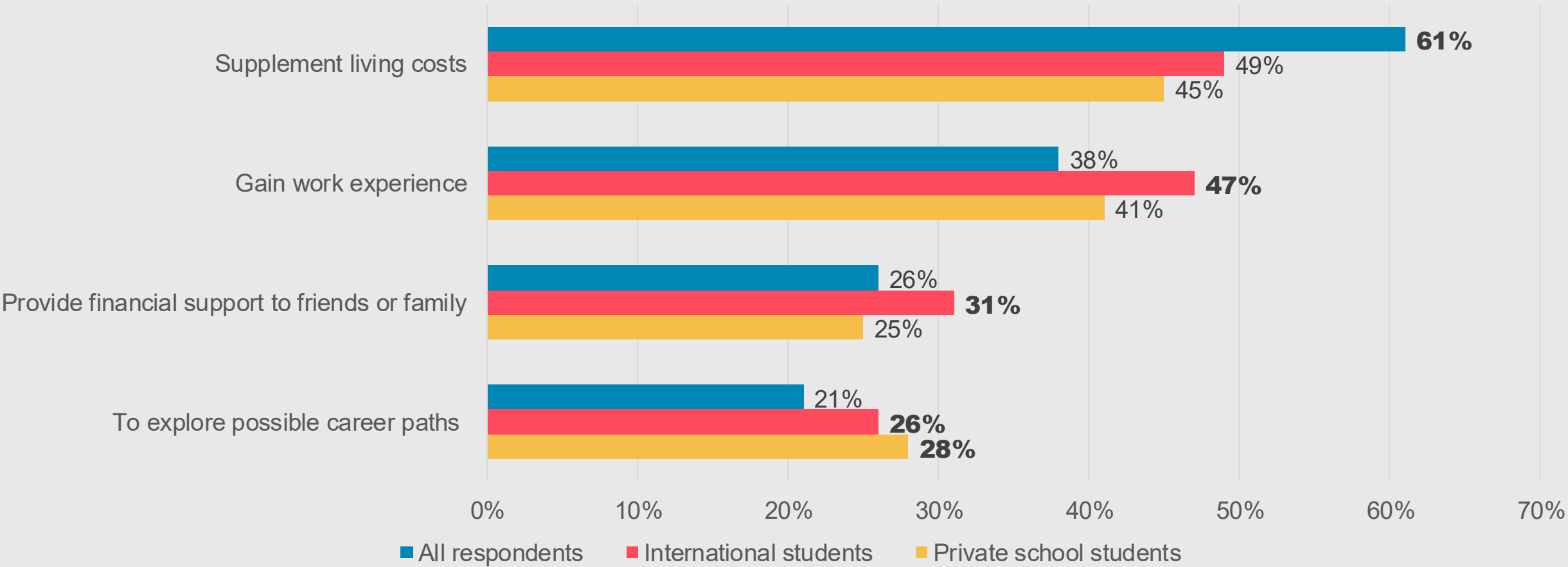
However, the average hours worked among those students has fallen – indicating more students are working but in some cases at slightly lower intensity

Paid employment – mean hours per week term time



Reasons for paid work are principally economic, although career-related drivers also play a role for international students as well as those from private schools

Reasons for paid work (those in paid employment)

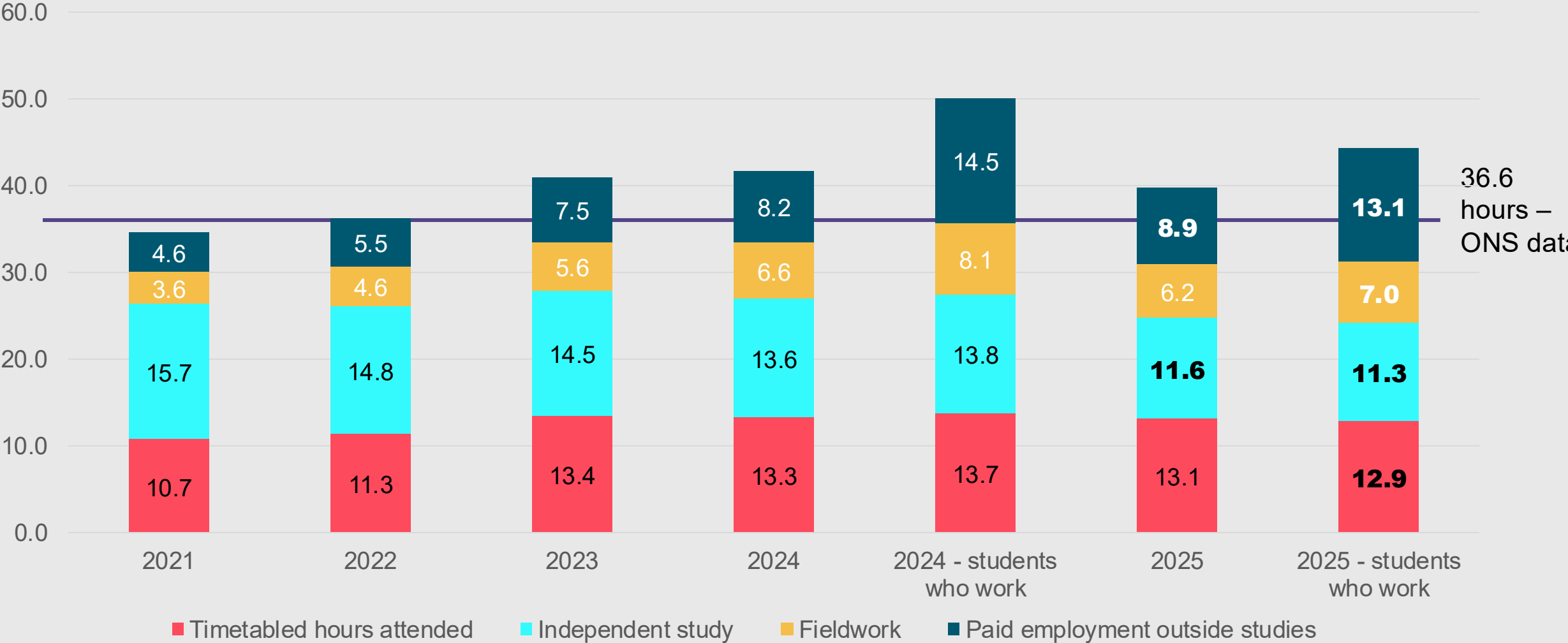


Increased paid employment looks to have had an impact on the time available for independent study, which has fallen significantly

	Total study workload hours (in a typical week)	Timetabled hours attended	Independent study hours	Placements or fieldwork hours
2022	30.7	11.3	14.8	4.6
2023	33.4	13.4	14.5	5.6
2024	33.5	13.3	13.6	6.6
2025	30.8	13.1	11.6	6.2

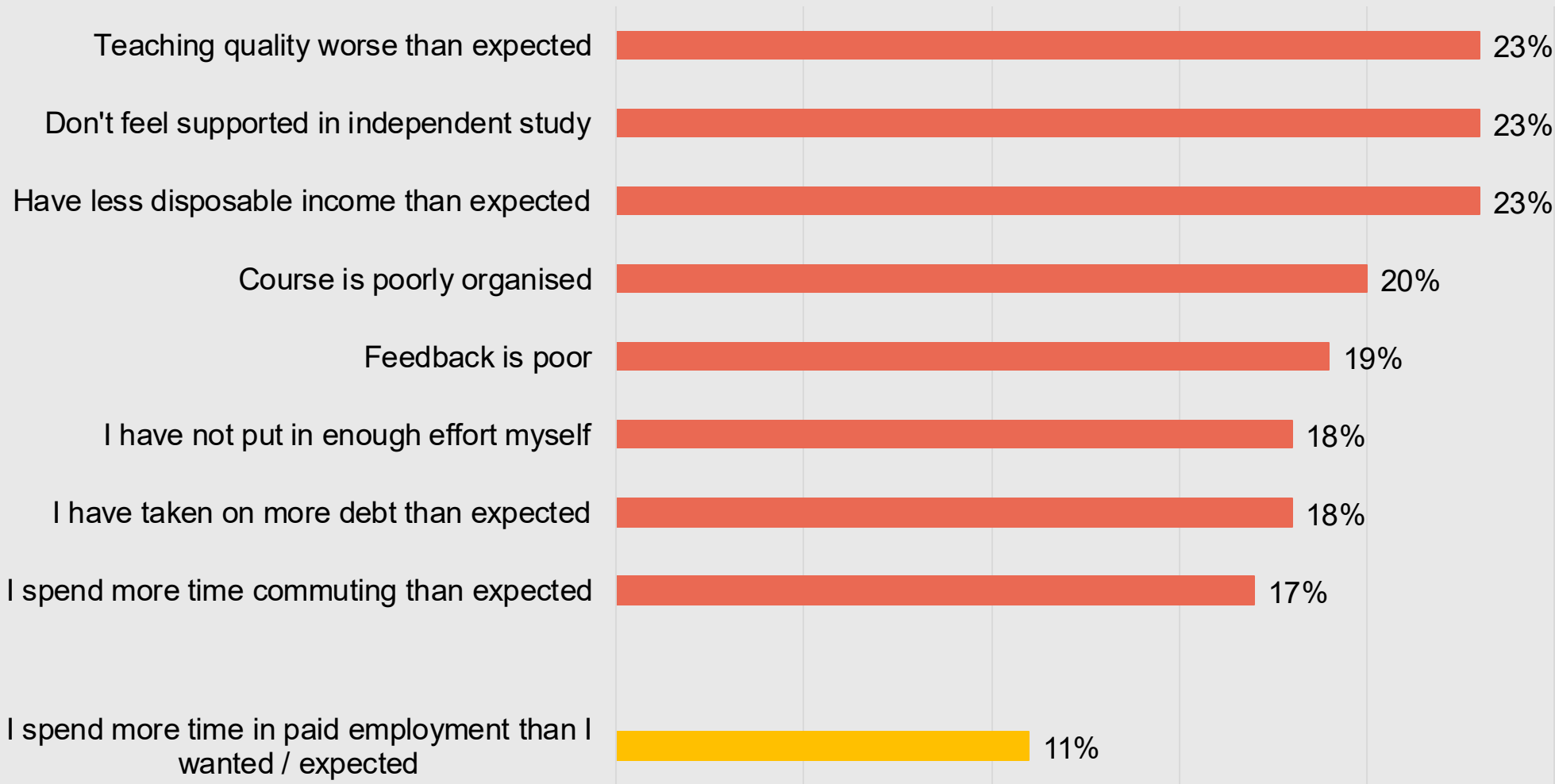
Workloads are still high, but appear to have reached a tipping point for now, with students in employment finding less time for classes or independent study

Average number of hours spent studying or in employment



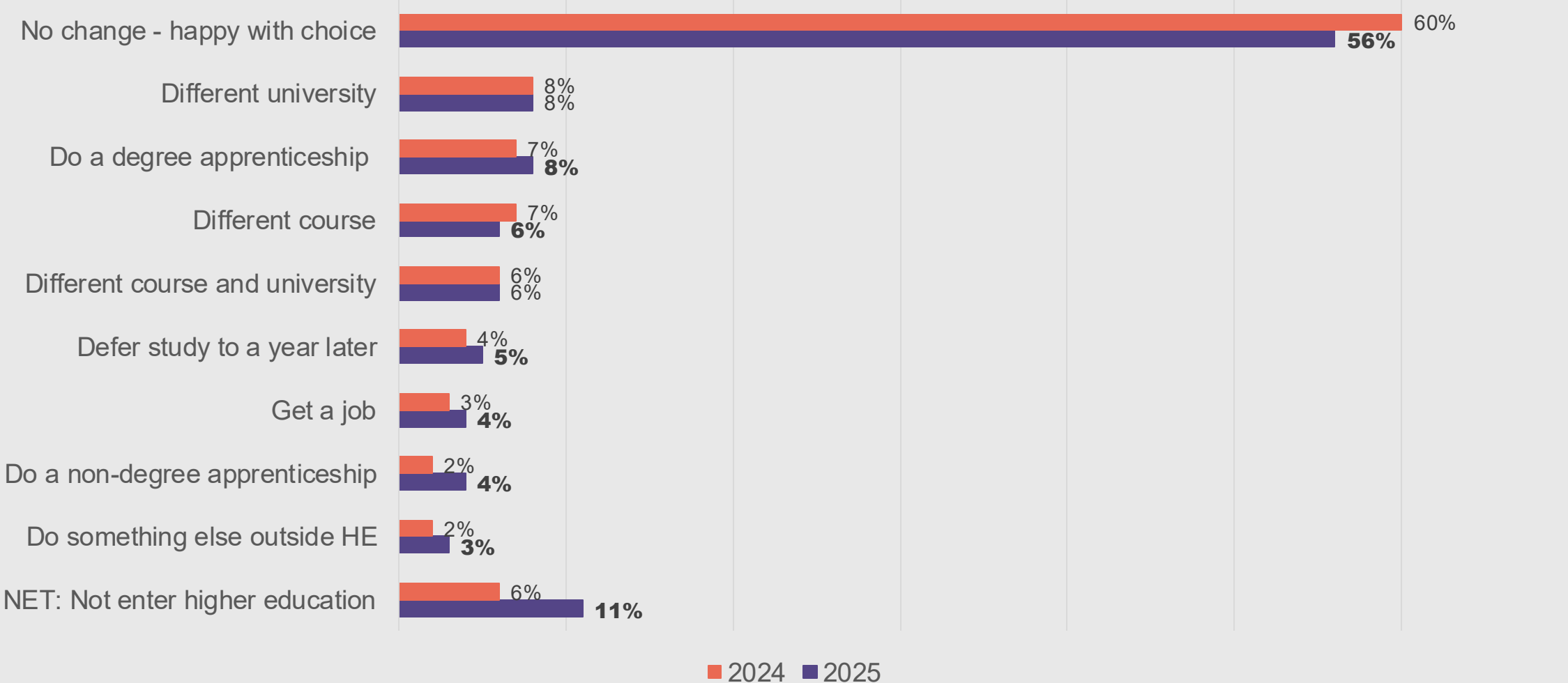
Significantly, paid employment was not highlighted as something unexpected, with other factors cited instead when the experience did not meet expectations

Why was your experience worse than expected?



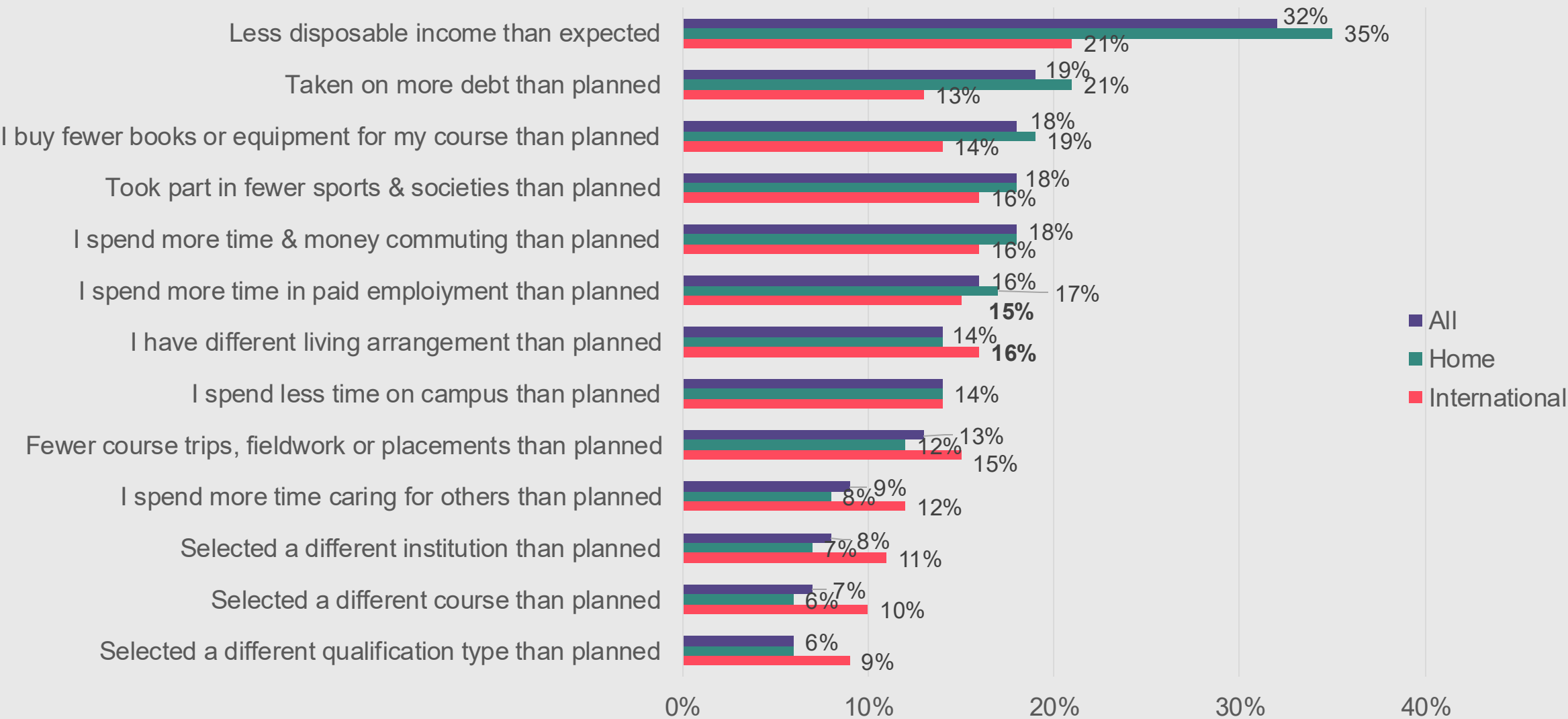
With the benefit of hindsight, fewer students this year would make the same choice, with a clear increase in those considering options outside higher education

Whether students would make the same choice again



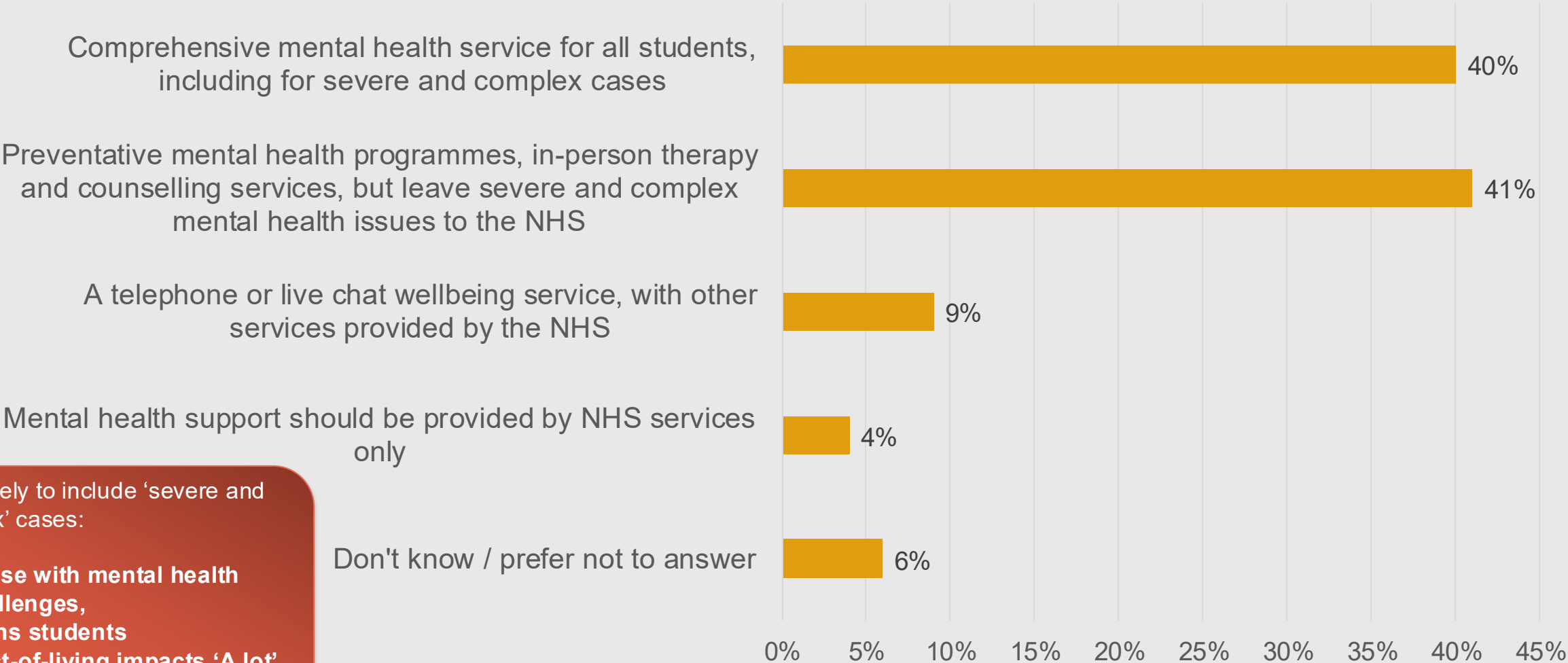
Cost-of-living effects unchanged, but students have less disposable income and taking more debt than planned

Impacts of financial challenges



Students want ‘comprehensive’ mental health services, even for ‘severe and complex’ cases

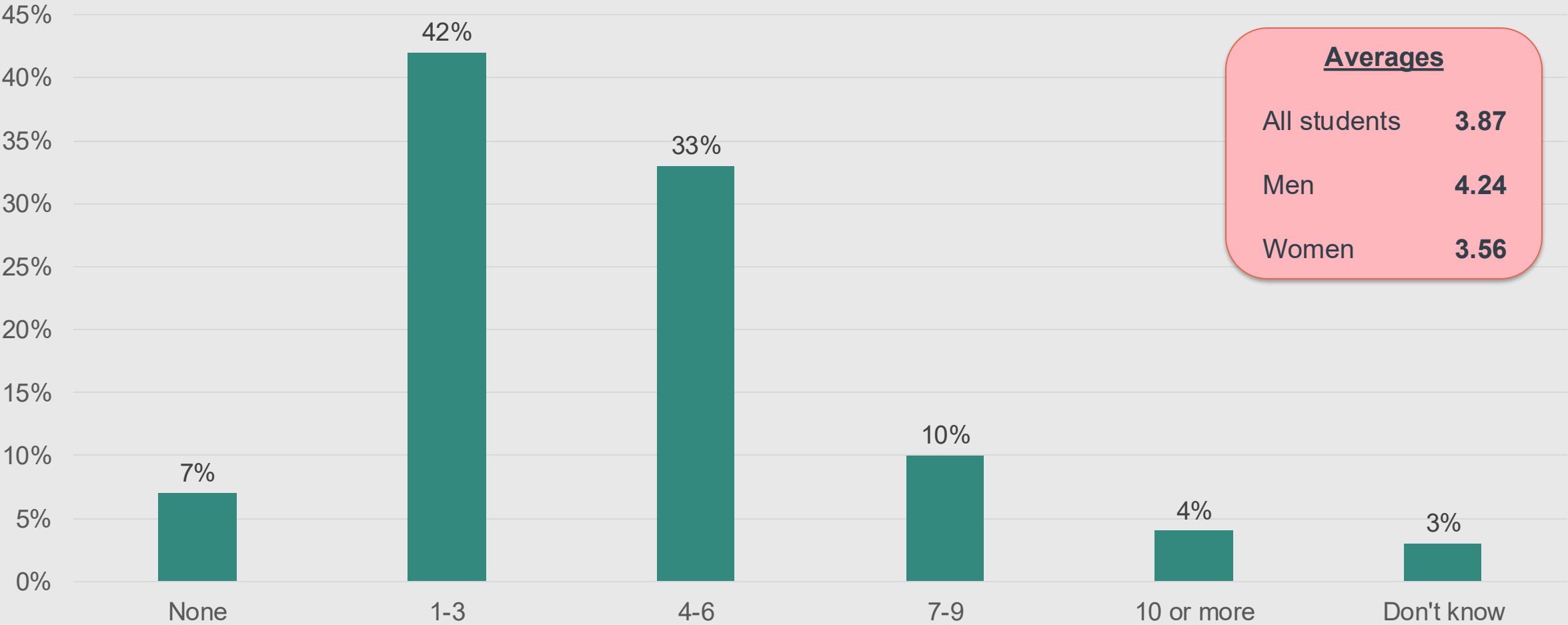
My institution should provide...



- More likely to include ‘severe and complex’ cases:
- Those with mental health challenges,
 - Trans students
 - Cost-of-living impacts ‘A lot’
 - First-year students

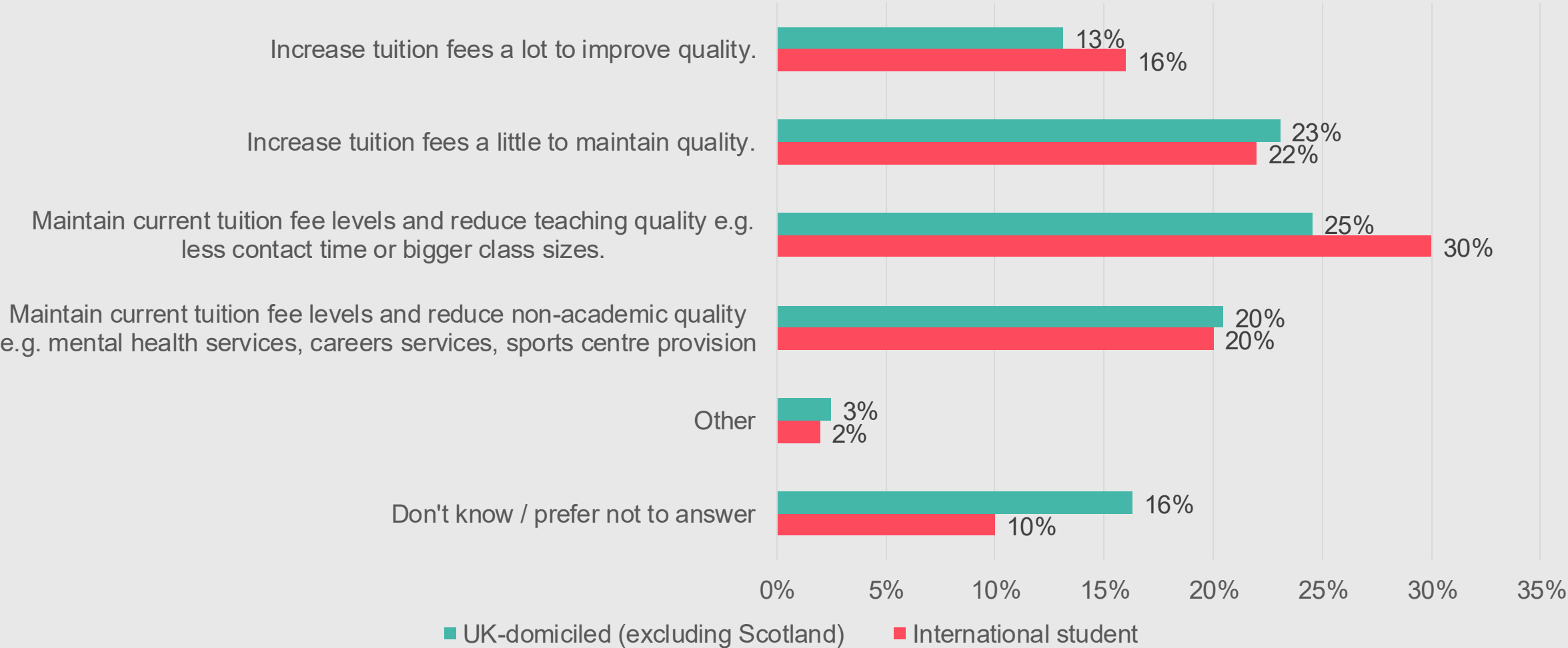
On average, about four academics know students' names and course progress

How many academics know your name and have some idea of the progress you are making on your course?



Nearly half of students would accept lower quality if it meant lower fees

How to address financial challenges in UK higher education



Increase informed choice upon application & choice during study	Measure completion & awarding rates in relation to paid work	Improve pre-arrival guidance
Increase maintenance support	Incentivise take up of the Lifelong Learning Entitlement	Monitor assignment rates
Clarify who is responsible for mental health provision & fund it appropriately	Weave increased debate into higher education curricula	Increase cross-curricula, problem-based study