



Understanding the knowledge gap

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Understanding the knowledge gap: public perceptions of UK universities

December 2024

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Key Findings

1. **81%** of parents with children under the age of 18 said they wanted them to go to university.
2. The main reason parents are enthusiastic about a university education is because they think their children will get a better job (**70%**).
3. **59%** of respondents think we'll need the same number or more graduates in the workforce in the future (compared to **24%** who think we will need fewer graduates).
4. When asked how Britain should develop and maintain expertise in AI and green energy, the top answer (**42%**) was *"we should ensure universities have the skills and resources to conduct advanced research in this area."*
5. **51%** of respondents said they know "not much" or "very little" about the role their local university plays in their local area.
6. **28%** of respondents said they didn't want any interaction with their local university - rising to more than half of over 65s
7. Keeping tuition fees down for students (**29%**), and providing more scholarships and bursaries for poorer students (**29%**), were the top suggested benefits to come from public money going into universities.
8. **Almost a third (31%)** of respondents think UK universities are better funded than other developed countries' universities

Executive Summary

In this report, we summarise extensive new polling on public attitudes to universities and higher education and their role in helping the UK meet its current and future challenges.

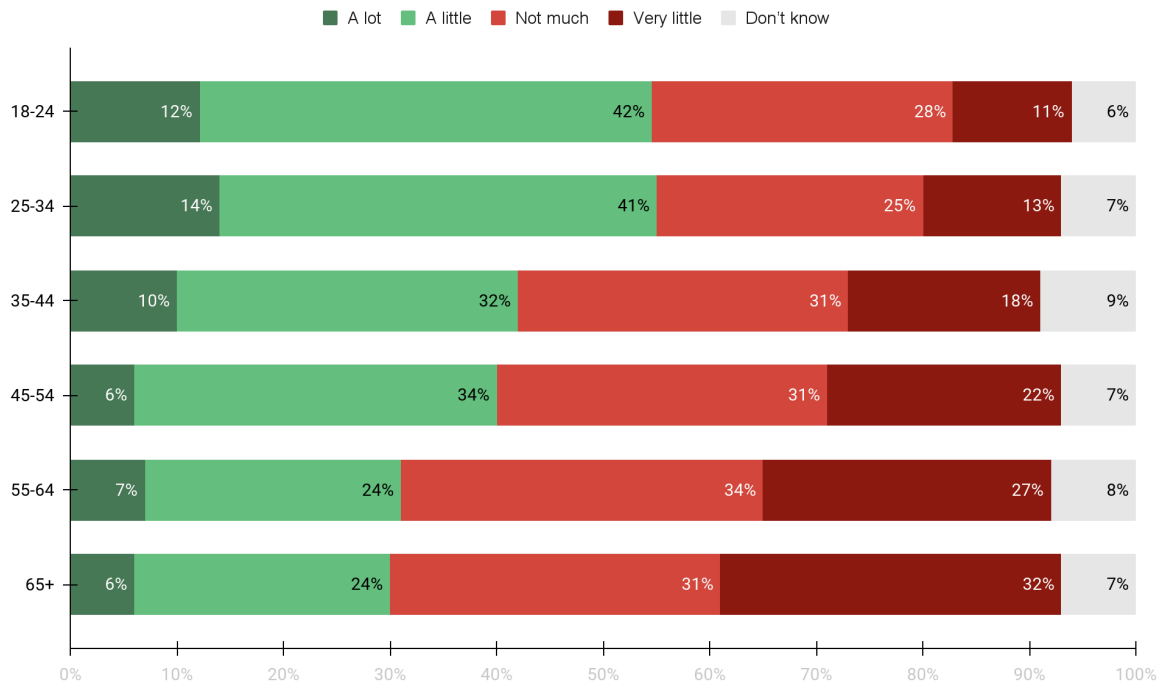
Throughout this research, one theme emerged most strongly: the knowledge gap that exists between the public and our higher education institutions. This has important implications for policymaking in this sector.

Across the UK, while universities are trying to engage with local residents in myriad ways, our research found the public know very little about what happens on the campuses of their local institutions, and that public knowledge of the broader higher education sector is also low.

There are some world-class examples of civic engagement across UK universities, from civic panels, legal advice clinics, and support for local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs, through to science festivals and large scale public activity. But this isn't yet cutting through to ordinary people.

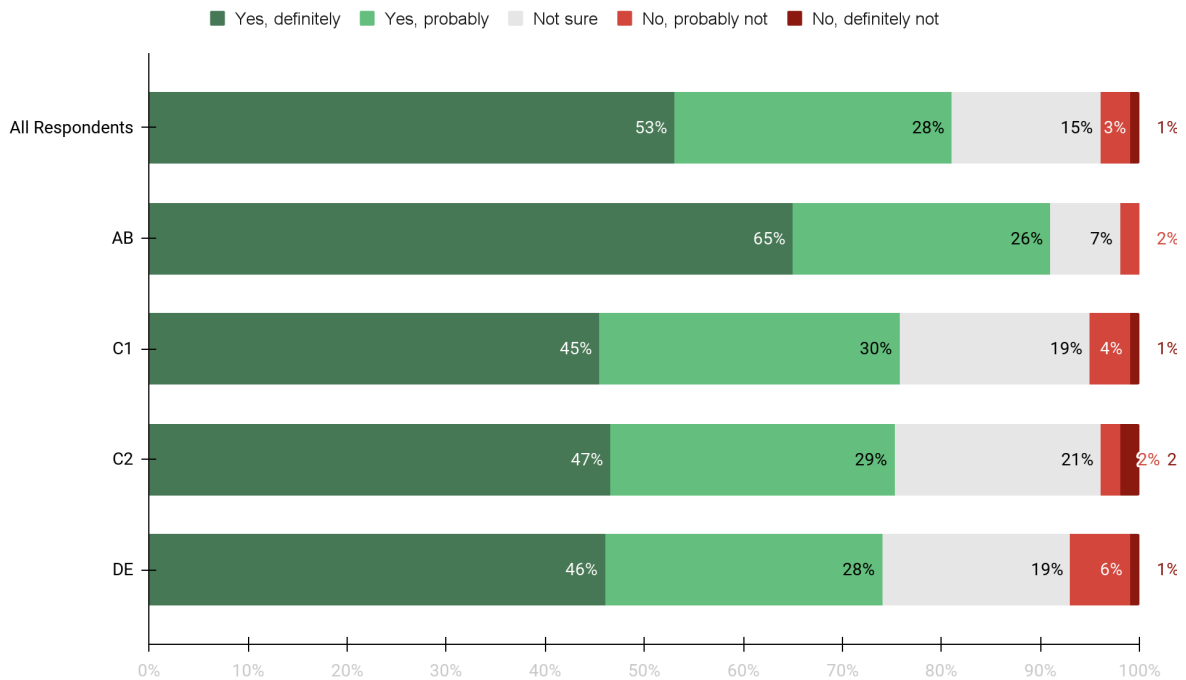
It should go without saying, but this doesn't imply some failing on behalf of ordinary people. After all, this knowledge gap exists even as student numbers have surged and universities have expanded. It would therefore be worth looking at whether a different approach is required, or perhaps an approach where the best examples of local engagement are used on a national level.

Table 1 - Other than just teaching students, how much would you say you know about the role your local university (the university nearest to you) plays in your local area?



Our polling confirms that the higher education sector does not have a reputation problem. Quite the reverse: the vast majority of parents say they want their children to go to university. Above all, they see the huge advantages their children will have in the workplace with a degree. Elsewhere, they see the direct economic benefits that universities can and do bring to the country.

Table 2 - You said that you had children under 18. Would you like them to attend university one day?



Base: UK parents who have a child aged under 18, sample size: 1165

In this research, we found that people are persuaded that universities will play a critical role in keeping the UK competitive in important industries of the future - namely, artificial intelligence and green technology. They seem to recognise that the advanced research that takes place on campuses across the country is fuelling these technologies.

When asked how the UK should develop and maintain expertise in AI in the years ahead, the top answer was “We should ensure universities have the skills and resources to conduct advanced research in this area”. When asked where they think technical breakthroughs in issues like AI or clean / green technology come from, the top answer was “Staff and students conducting advanced research in labs etc at universities”.

Table 3 - It is widely said that artificial intelligence – where computers perform tasks which have usually required human intelligence – will become an ever-more important technology to Britain and other countries. How should Britain best develop and maintain expertise in artificial intelligence in the years ahead? Select up to three.

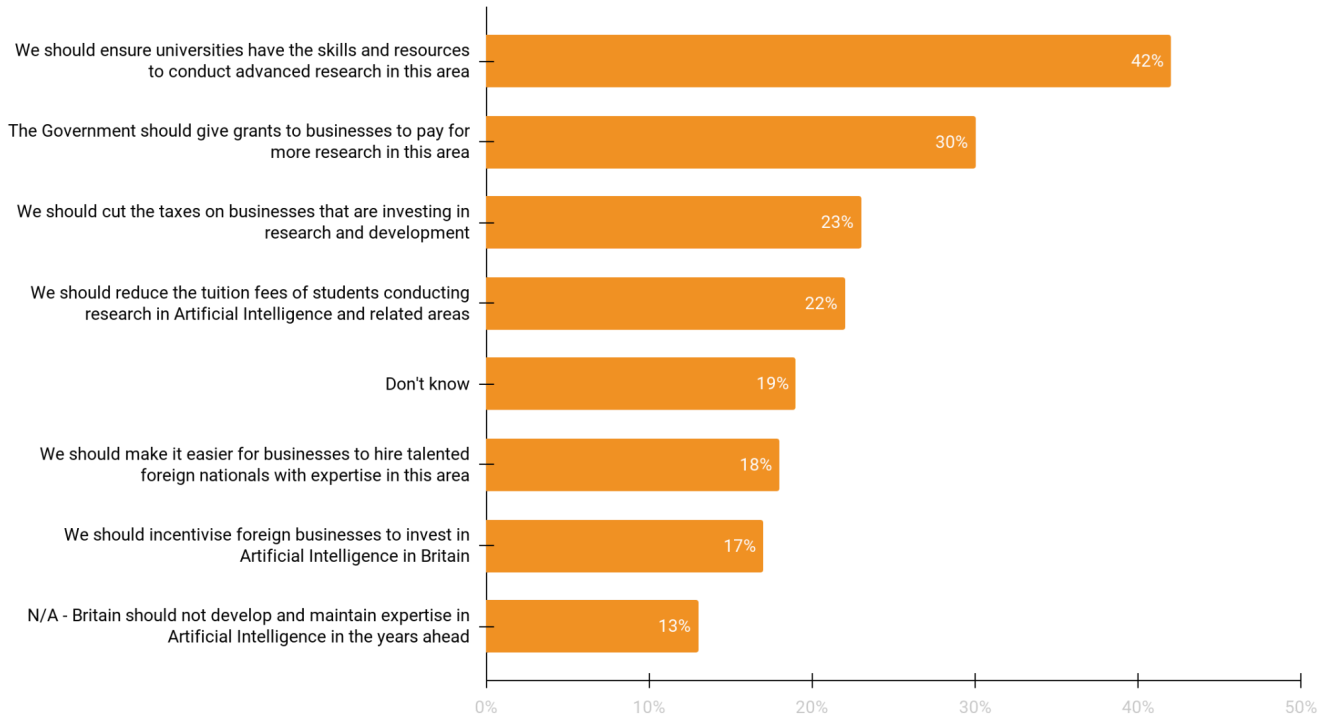
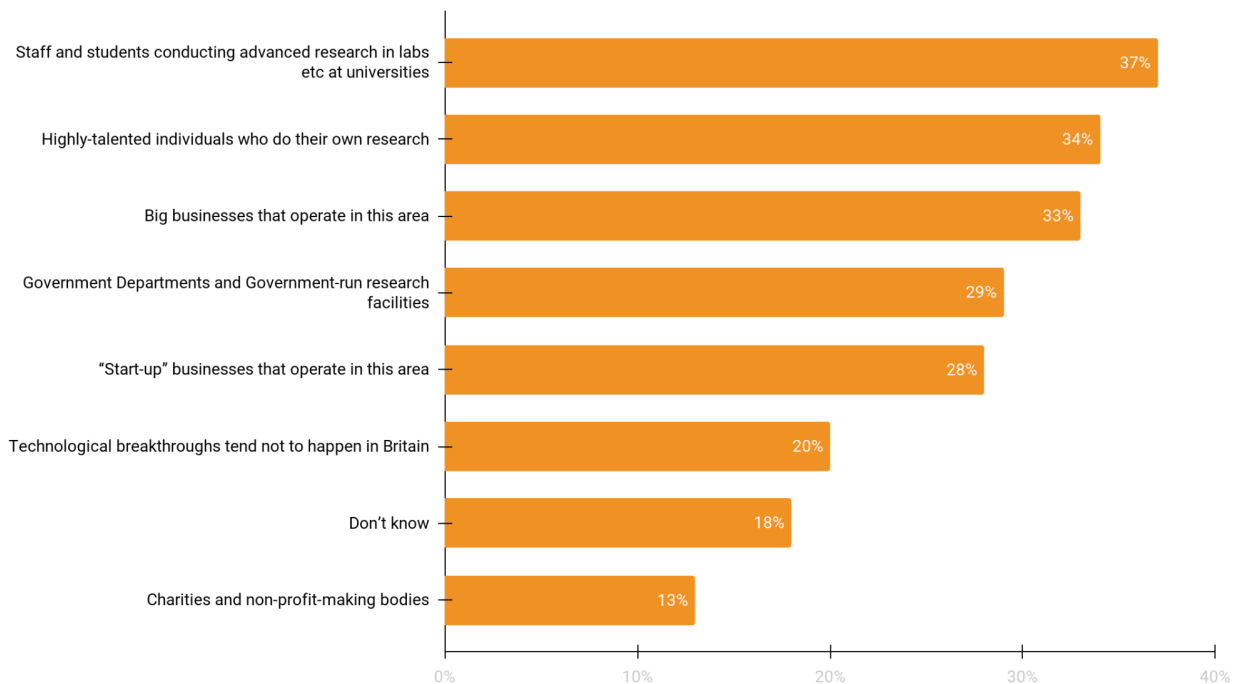


Table 4 - Where do you think technological breakthroughs in Britain in issues like artificial intelligence or green / clean energy tend to come from? Select up to three.

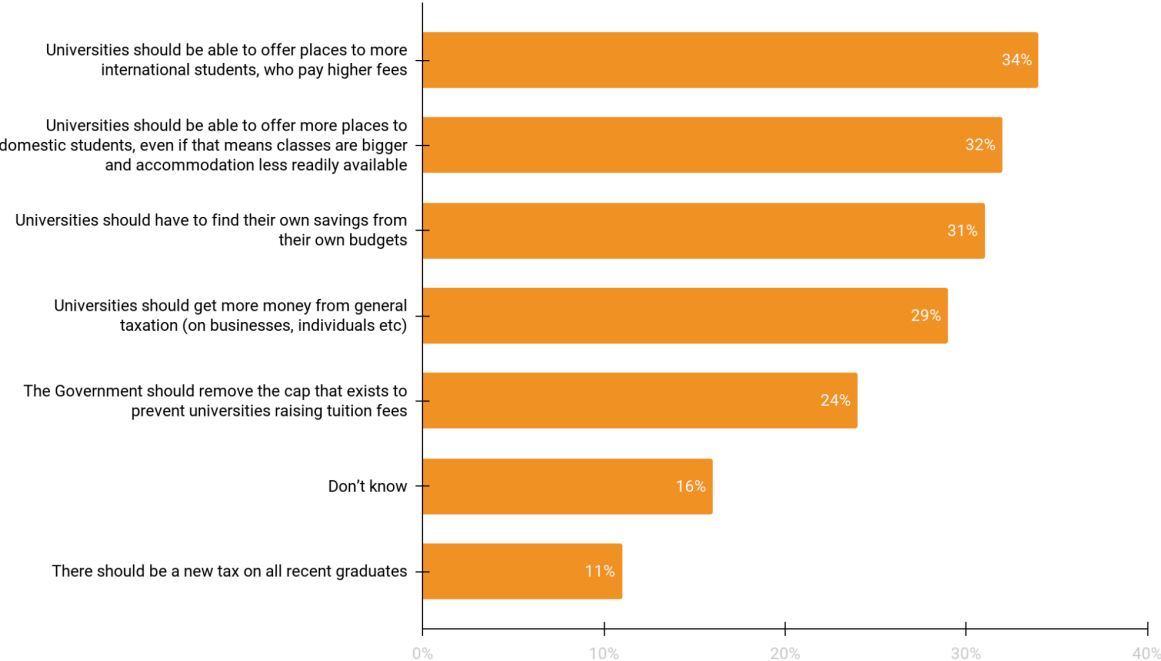


To amplify this point, when confronted with more general challenges facing the country and how to deal with them, people don't think of universities much at all. So while the public want their children to attend university and think universities are completely integral to our high-tech future, they don't think of universities as playing a more general role in our economy (or society), nor are they that engaged with what is happening at a local level.

They don't immediately see, for example, the role universities do or can play in improving the country's long-term economic prospects. Here, they are more likely to see the importance of apprenticeships (which some universities already offer) and re-training. These policy areas clearly are vital to the country's economic fortunes - this is not the point. It is more that they do not immediately see the importance of universities even though they then volunteer the importance of universities to industries they think are important to the country's future.

People's lack of understanding about universities is perhaps most starkly revealed in the research by their attitudes to university funding. People have very little idea about how well universities are funded - in both absolute terms, and relatively compared to universities in other countries. Elsewhere, they don't have strong views on how universities should be funded or how students should pay for their own education. This is true across the country and across different demographics; lack of clarity was widespread.

Table 5 - If many universities collectively said they needed more money to keep paying for staff, for teaching, and to maintain the university experience for students, which of the following do you think would be the best ways of getting them more money? Select up to three.



This lack of knowledge about how universities are funded and the sufficiency of the current system matters to the sector going forward. Despite the recent increase in domestic undergraduate tuition fee levels (from September 2025), many institutions are still expected to be in deficit due to years of frozen fees and inflationary pressures. The Office for Students' latest modelling suggests that nearly three quarters of English higher education providers could be in deficit by 2025-26, and 40% would have fewer than 30 days' liquidity.

The knowledge gap also matters because universities clearly have a critical role in ensuring the country can meet existing future challenges as well as crucial public sector workforce needs. These aren't just the challenges in artificial intelligence or clean / green technologies we highlight above, but in a variety of other fields, from healthcare research and management to building and engineering.

The government is expected to make announcements on potentially major reforms to the sector in summer 2025, but will likely want to know it has public support, or at least consent for any significant policy changes such as raising fees or moving the cost of higher education to the Treasury.

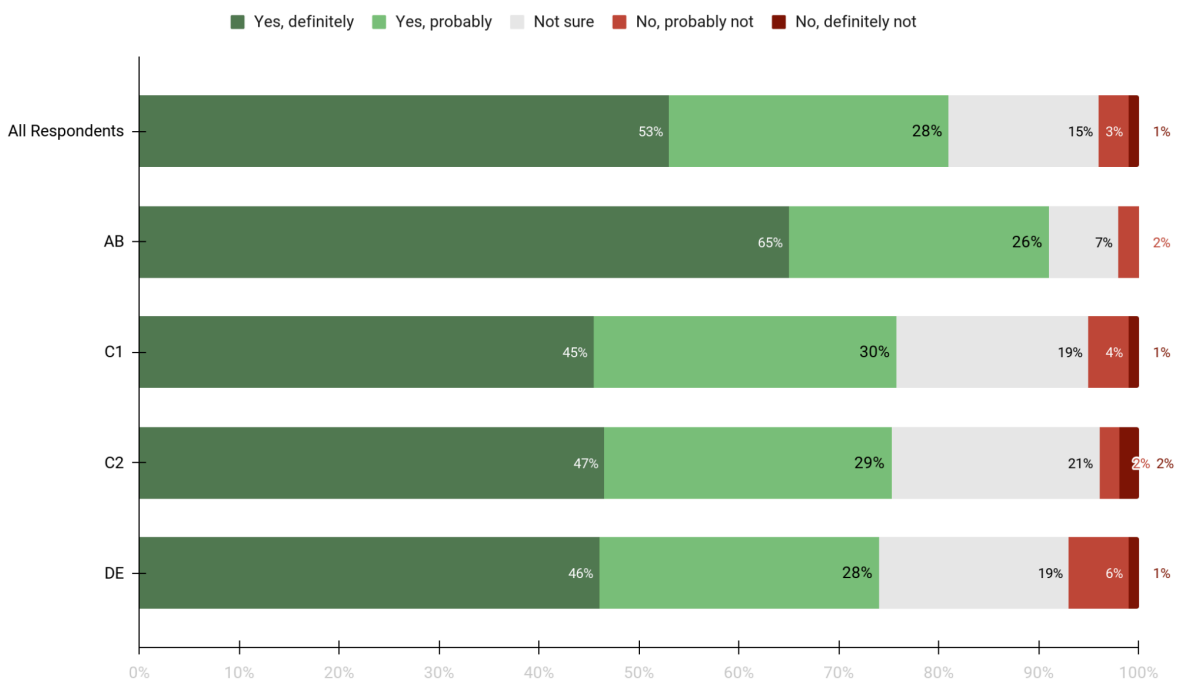
Fundamentally, universities need public support so they can develop and maintain centres of excellence in those areas that really matter to the public.

Knowledge and understanding of UK universities

In 2023, more than 750,000 people applied through UCAS to do an undergraduate course in the UK, and the majority of these students applied from UK schools. These are huge numbers and reflect the ongoing popularity of UK universities amongst young people and - crucially - their parents. A university education represents good value, but it is clearly not cheap: even those students who stay in their home town or city invest a significant amount to pay for tuition (even if this is largely facilitated through student loans) and spend their social lives and other associated costs.

In our research, we found that parents of children under 18 were incredibly positive about sending their children to university. A massive 81% of parents with children under 18 said they wanted them to go to university. This enthusiasm was shared right across different demographics: for example, three quarters of the least-affluent voters (from the socio-economic groups "DE") said they wanted their children to go to university.

Table 6 - You said that you had children under 18. Would you like them to attend university one day?

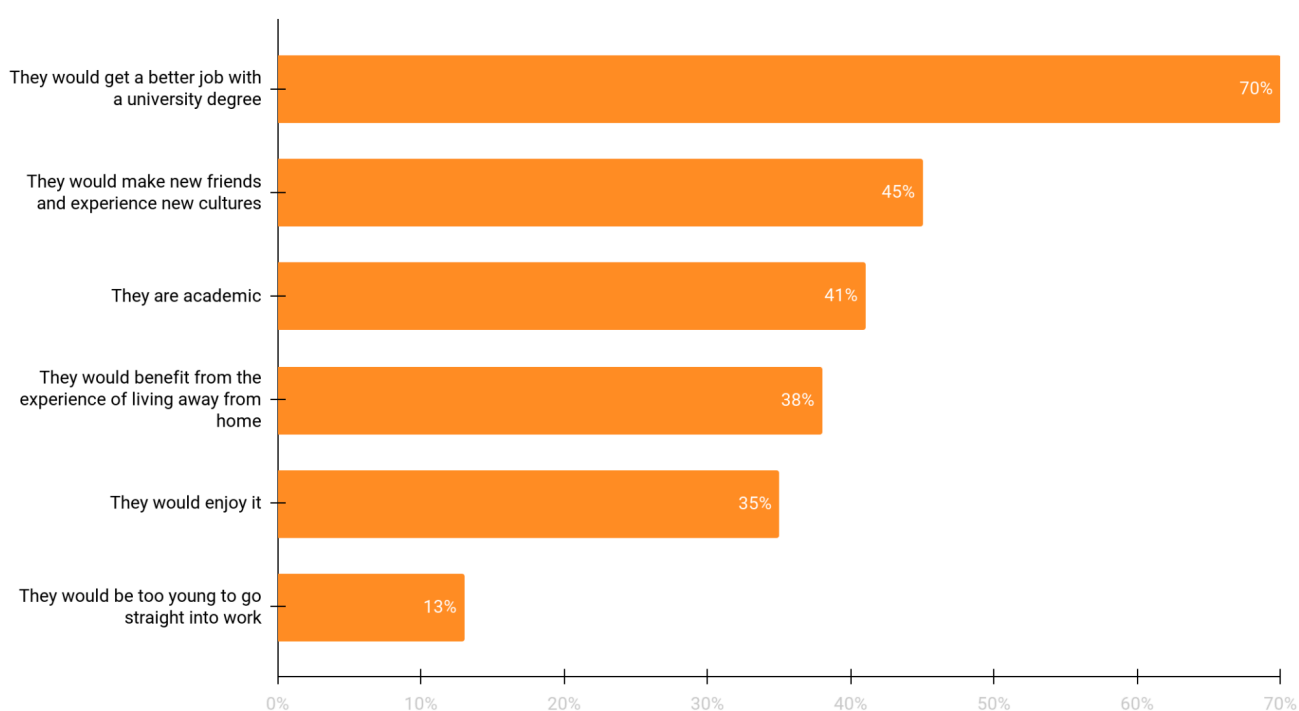


Base: UK parents who have a child aged under 18, sample size: 1165

The main reason parents are enthusiastic about a university education is because they think their children will get a better job. This was by far the top answer parents gave (chosen by 70% of this cohort). However, they see other social advantages too, like making new friends; there remains a great sense that the whole “university experience” is something to be valued.

This belief in economic gain makes sense. Analysis by [Universities UK](#) showed that, while between ages 17 and 22 average earnings of non-graduates are higher as they enter the workforce (at a time graduates are in full-time study), from 23 years of age onwards, average earnings of graduates gradually overtake those of non-graduates. By 31, on average, graduates earn around a third more (32-37%) than non-graduates who could have gone to university across all regions of England.

Table 7 - You said you wanted your children to attend university one day. Which of the following reasons best explains why? Select up to three.



Base: UK parents of a child under 18 who want their child to go to university, sample size: 936

Despite the widespread enthusiasm that exists across the country for higher education, this isn't built on a real understanding of what universities actually *do*. This is the most important theme in this research: that enthusiasm exists, but isn't built from a clear picture about what goes on at specific universities, or indeed across the wider higher education sector.

Does this matter? We believe it does - because this knowledge gap ultimately affects how people see the entire debate on higher education. As we will see later in this

report, it affects what people think about how much of a priority the sector is, what universities contribute to the economy, how well the sector is funded, how it *should* be funded, and even how much time university students ought to be working to support themselves.

The UK higher education sector is large, and as a result it contributes a huge amount of money to the UK economy. According to recent research for [Universities UK](#), graduate skills from HE teaching and learning in 2022 was estimated to have had an economic impact of £95 billion, spread across the UK. This includes a £75,000 return to the UK government for each UK first degree student. Overall, this represents a return of £13 for every £1 spent on higher education teaching in the UK.

It naturally also receives a significant amount of funding. Politicians and policymakers take decisions about the sector which put many billions of pounds at stake. Although the system is heavily funded by individual students' fees, a significant amount of public money is spent on universities through research funding, the Strategic Priority Grant for high cost subjects and student support and unpaid student loans. Public opinion therefore matters if public money is to be increased. This is particularly true at a time of tight departmental budgets and competing national priorities.

As such, it's imperative that people understand more about what the sector does and the value for money it provides. A crucial way for them to understand this is to understand more about what their local universities are doing in a practical sense, and beyond simply teaching undergraduate students. This isn't because it would be just *nice* if they knew, but because a lot of money is being committed on taxpayers' behalf to a sector which delivers a vast amount in return.

Policies regarding higher education, particularly how it is funded, will make a difference to wider societal (and current government) priorities. Increasing public understanding of how, for example, universities provide the skills needed for the NHS workforce, provide advice to local SMEs, or attract inward investment to towns and cities will increase enthusiasm for initiatives that support universities in the short and longer term.

People's lack of knowledge about the sector is best reflected in what they say about their own local university, which they might be expected to know more about.

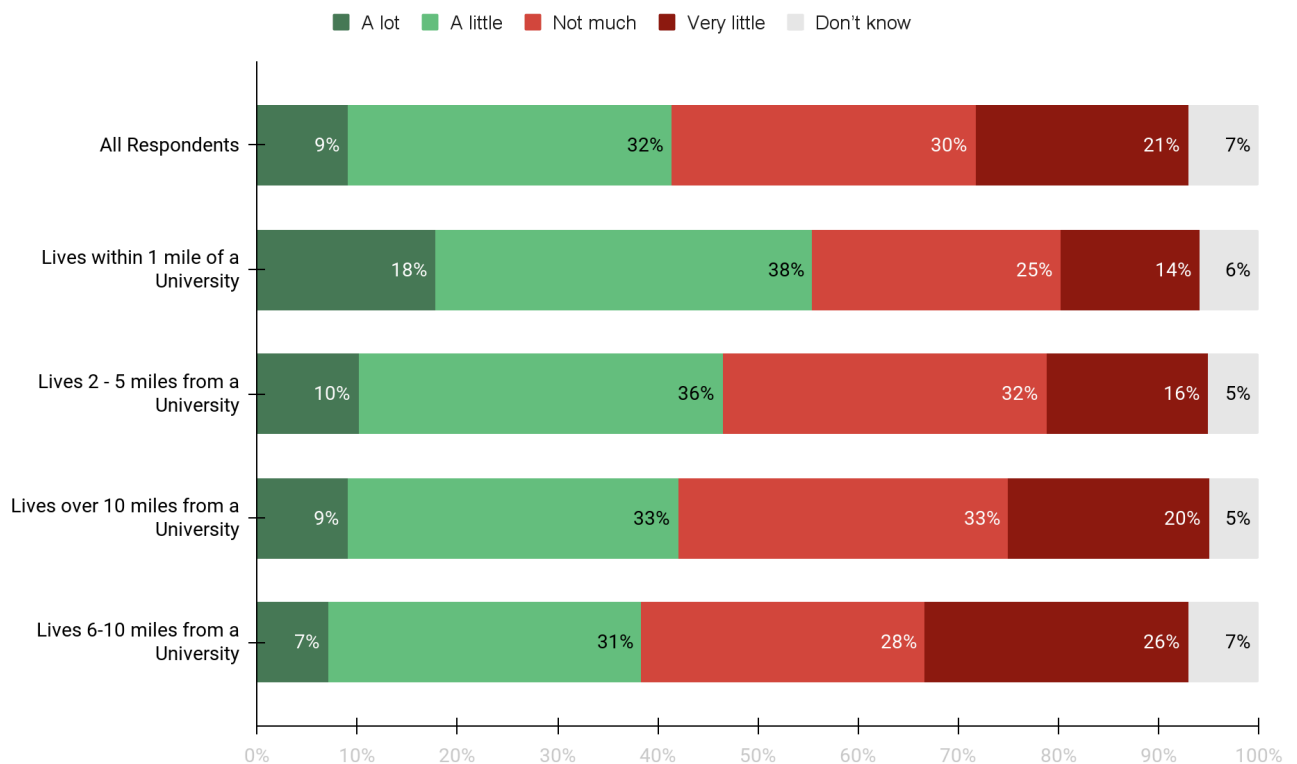
In this research, 51% of people said they know "not much" or "very little" about the role their local university plays in their local area. Even 39% of 18-24 year olds said this - presumably a group of people who would have at least considered applying to their local university, or know close contacts that have.

This lack of knowledge comes despite the fact, for example, that even in the North East (the smallest UK region, economically), the economic impact of teaching and learning in higher education amounted to £4.15 billion in 2022. Asked about the engagement

they'd had with their local university, only a small minority chose anything at all, with the top answer (chosen by 21%) being "I have family or friends who study there".

Those who live very close to a university know much more about their local university than those who live more than ten miles away. When asked how much they knew about their local institution, 56% of those who lived closest said they knew a little or a lot, compared to 38% who said they knew much or very little. The figures for those who said they lived far away were inverted. Of those who lived far away, 55% said they knew not much or very little about universities, compared to 38% who knew a little or a lot. This is not a surprising finding given the impact of the physical presence of university buildings, but still a clear sign that channels of communication could be stronger.

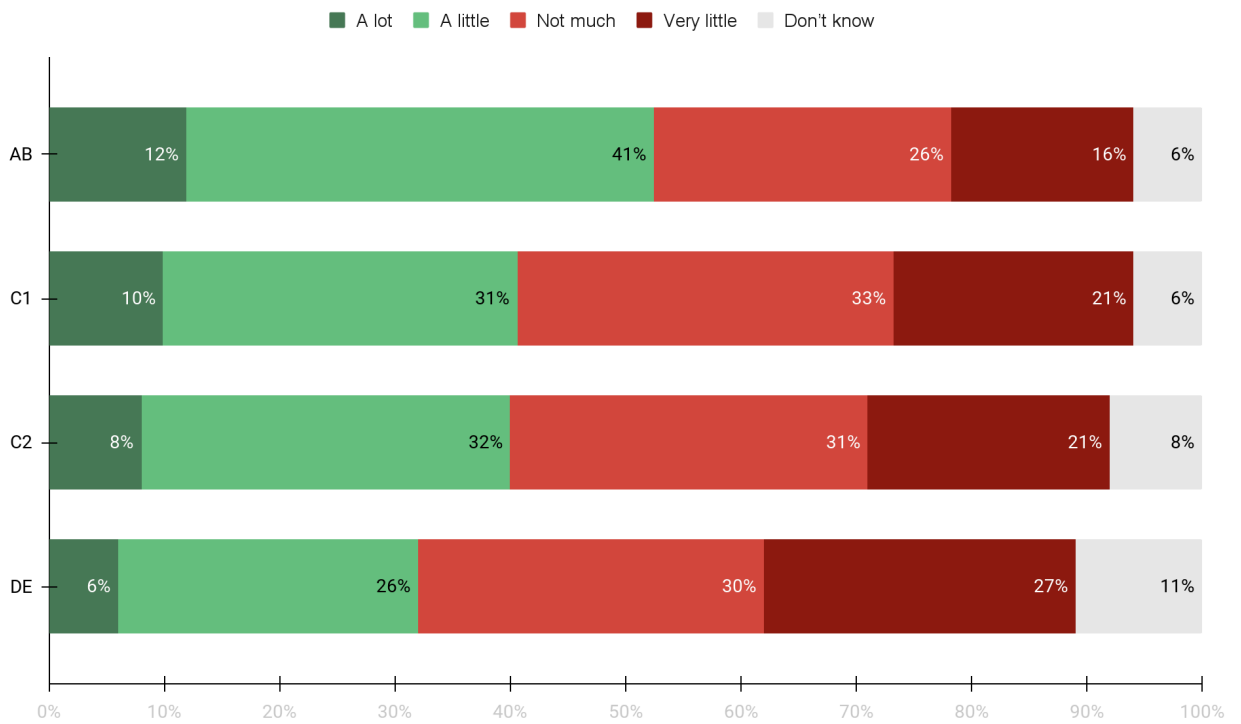
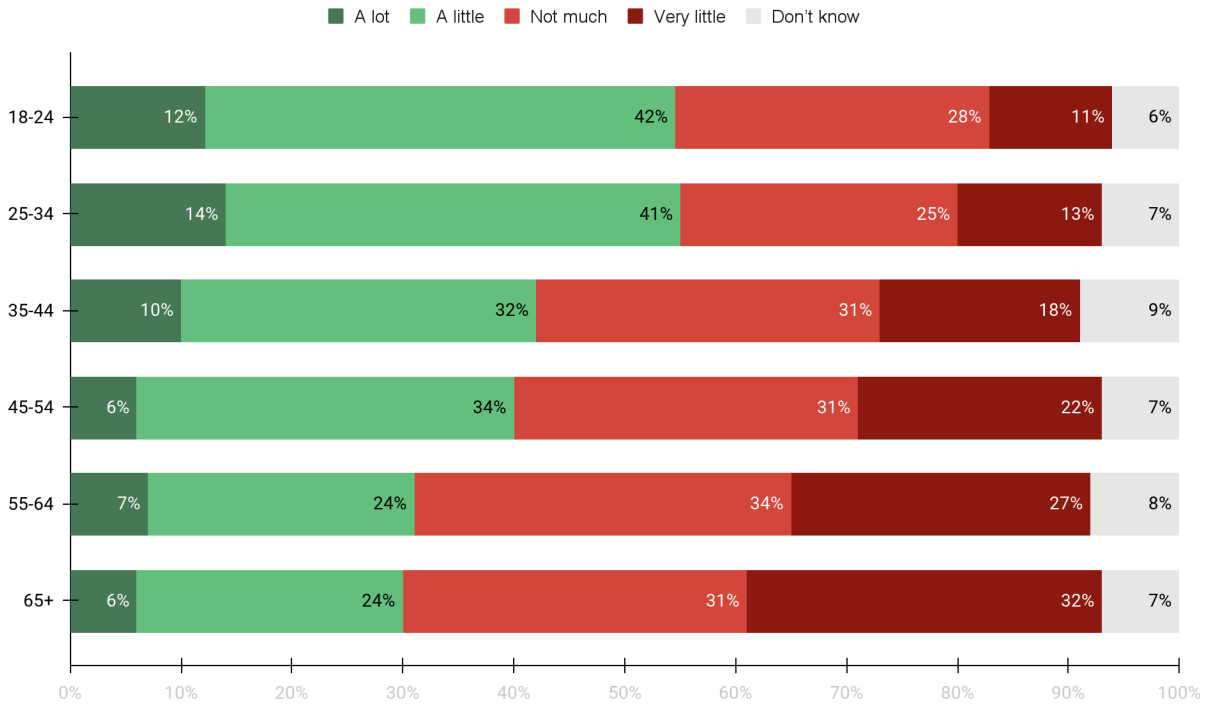
Table 8 - Other than just teaching students, how much would you say you know about the role your local university (the university nearest to you) plays in your local area?



There are other interesting divides on these questions. Older people and working-class people were much more likely to say they "didn't know" about any engagement or interaction they'd had with their local university.

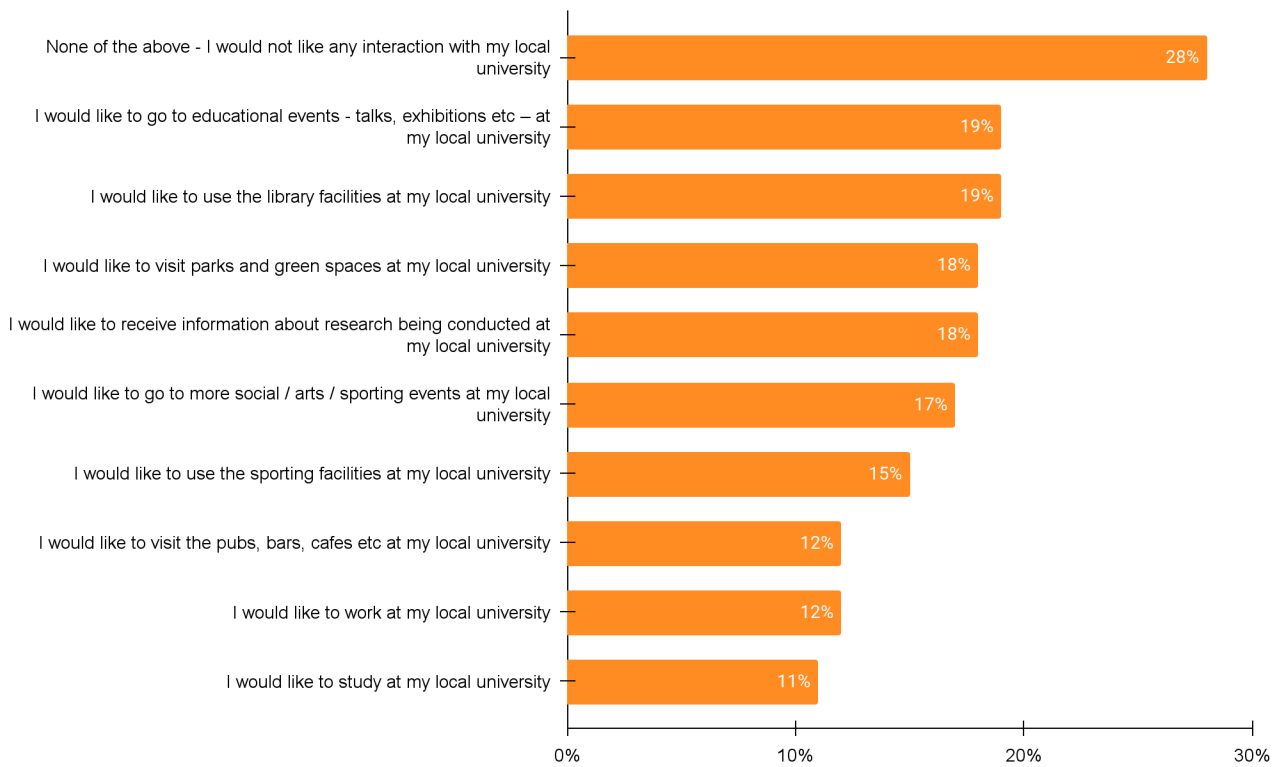
While this might seem like an obvious divide - given older people are less likely overall to have been to university, and less likely to have children that went to university - we have found from previous public polling projects that older people often have higher levels of knowledge about their local communities and longer-standing institutions. This lack of knowledge amongst older people is therefore more surprising than it might seem at first glance.

Table 9 and 10 - Other than just teaching students, how much would you say you know about the role your local university (the university nearest to you) plays in your local area?



Perhaps reflecting this lack of knowledge about what goes on at their local university, people were unsure what interaction they'd like to see. 28% said they didn't want any interaction – rising to more than half of over 65s. The top answer (chosen by a fifth) was: "I would like to go to educational events - talks, exhibitions etc - at my local university."

Table 11 - Thinking about your own personal life, what interaction would you most like to have with your local university, if any? Select up to three.



In some ways, it helps that the knowledge gap exists primarily amongst older people. After all, these are people who tend to consume local news in greater quantities and in more detail than younger people, and whose belief in civic pride makes facts and arguments about how well local institutions are doing resonate with them.

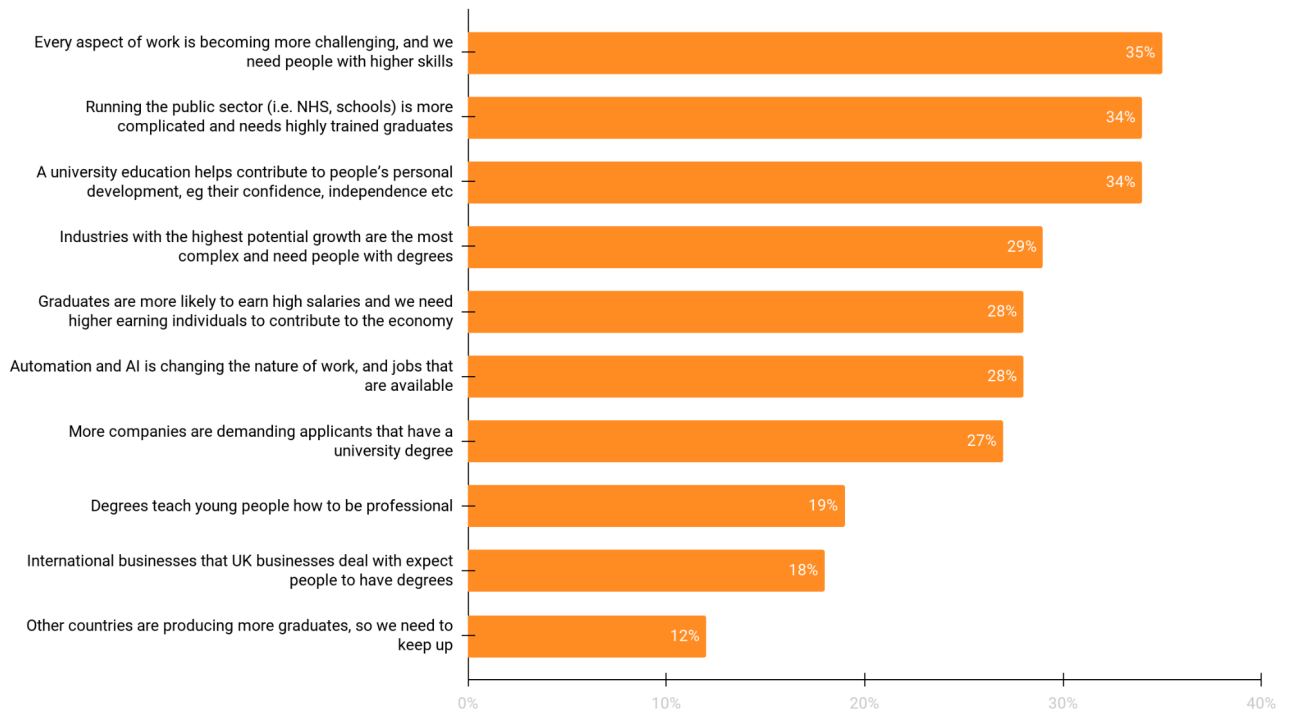
The benefits of universities

As we have seen, the enthusiasm for a university education doesn't mean that everyone knows what universities actually do. But, in turn, this doesn't mean that people doubt that universities bring benefits to the country. On the contrary, they see those benefits clearly - particularly in terms of what universities do for the economy.

However, there is an important caveat to all this. The research revealed that, when people are confronted with questions which probe the practical benefits of universities to the country as a whole, they readily acknowledge the importance of universities and higher education. But they don't always associate university activities with meeting the challenges of the real world, or addressing local challenges. And because they don't know what universities actually *do*, they don't immediately see the wider benefits universities have on the country.

It is positive for the university sector that 59% of people think we'll need the same or more graduates in the workforce in the future, compared to 24% who said we'll need fewer graduates. Of those that said the UK will need more graduates, the top explanations were: every aspect of work is becoming more challenging; running the public sector is becoming more challenging; and a university education helps contribute to a person's development. Just as we saw with the question which probed why parents wanted their children to attend university, it's clear people see the economic benefits that a university education brings both to the individual and to wider society.

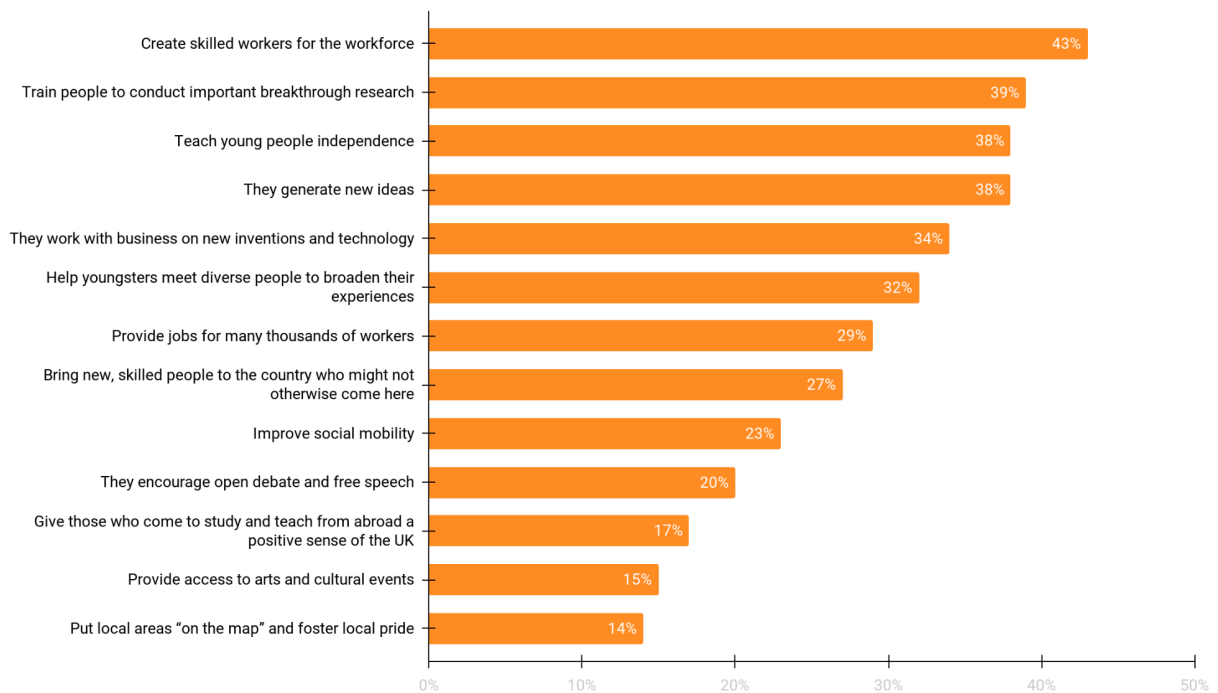
Table 12 - You said that you think the UK will need more graduates in the workforce in the future. Which of the following reasons best explains why? Select up to three.



Base: UK respondents who think the UK needs more graduates, sample size: 965

We see people's instinctive understanding and belief that universities help the economy elsewhere in the poll. The top national benefits people see in universities is creating skilled workers for the workforce (which was top response for all demographics). Business-focused benefits dominated the top of these choices.

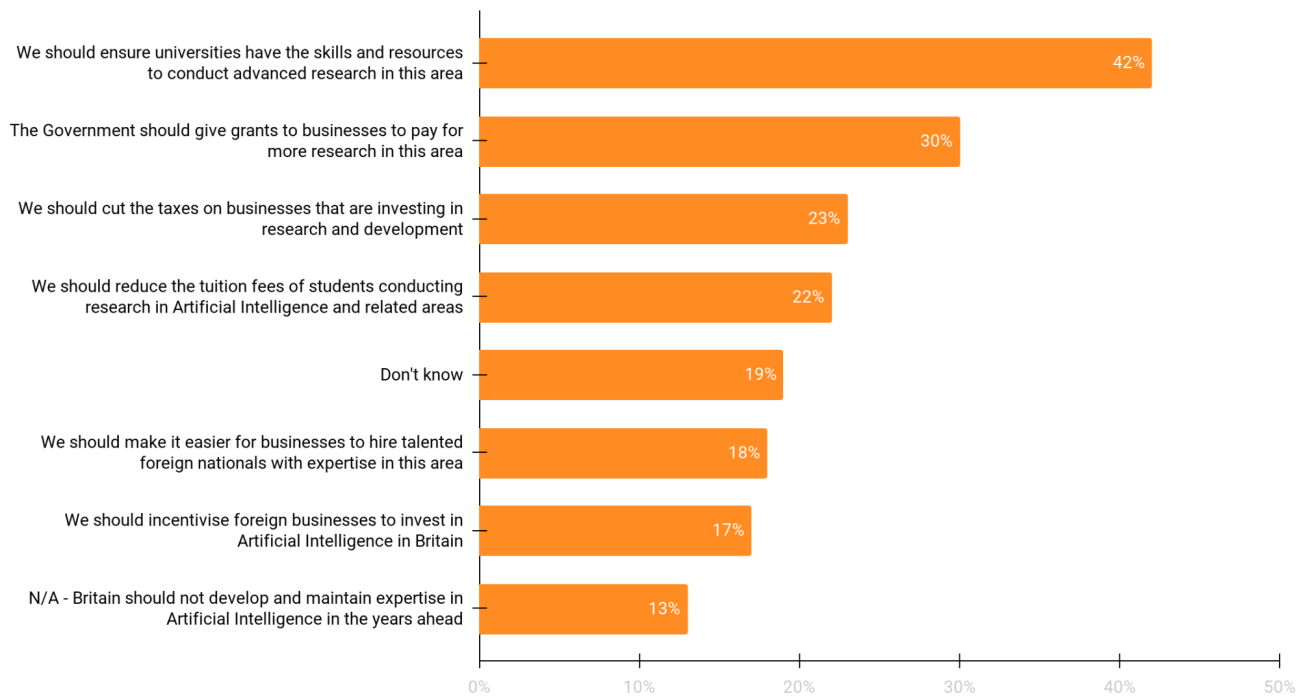
Table 13 - Thinking about the role that universities play nationally, for the country as a whole, which do you think are the main benefits they bring? Select all that apply.



We asked some more specific questions about what universities might do to enable the UK to compete in two fields we know to be crucial to the future of the country: Artificial Intelligence and clean / green energy. These are two areas where other research for Public First has shown that people believe them to be important for the future of the UK economy.

When asked how Britain should develop and maintain expertise in AI, the top answer was "we should ensure universities have the skills and resources to conduct advanced research in this area". When asked the same question about developing and maintaining expertise in clean or green energy, respondents gave the same answer. Furthermore, when asked where they thought technological breakthroughs in these technologies tend to come from, the top answer was "staff and students conducting advanced research in labs etc at universities".

Table 14 - It is widely said that artificial intelligence – where computers perform tasks which have usually required human intelligence – will become an ever-more important technology to Britain and other countries. How should Britain best develop and maintain expertise in artificial intelligence in the years ahead? Select up to three.

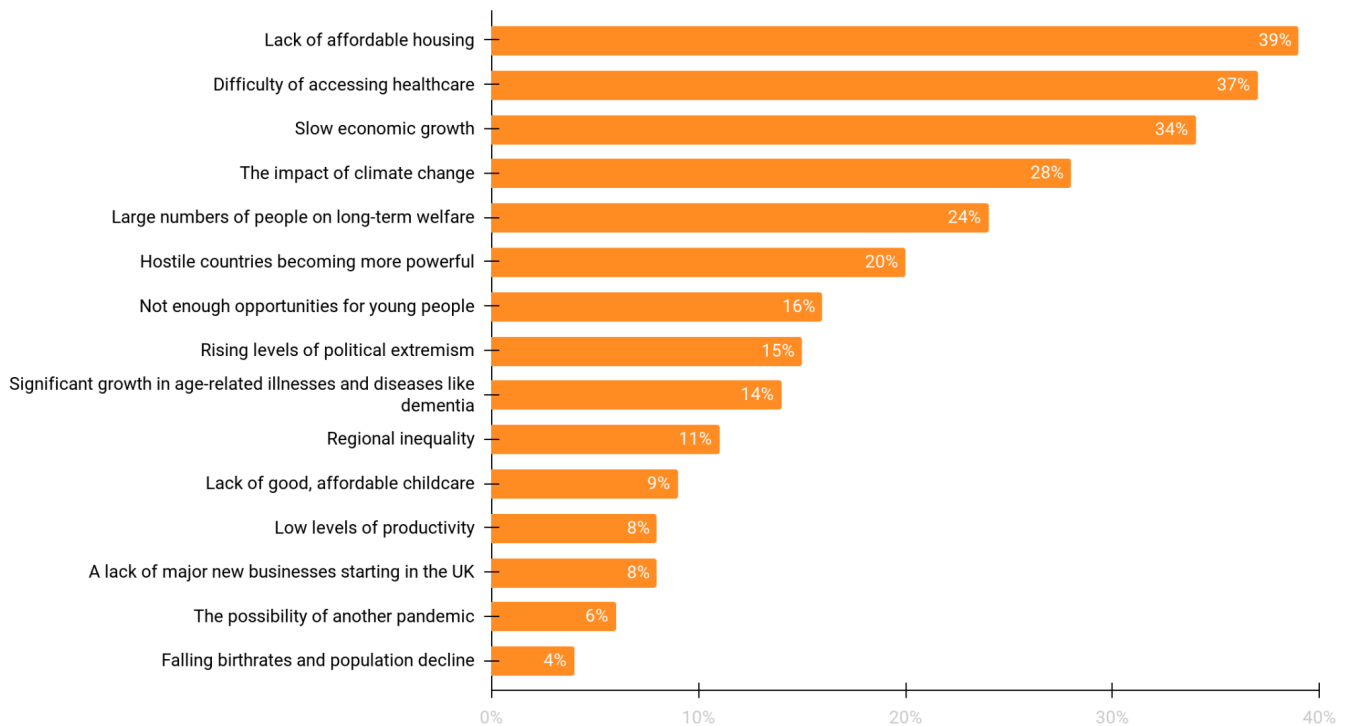


People therefore *instinctively grasp* that the challenges facing the country are becoming more complex and that we need lots more graduates and a well-funded HE system to cope. In this way, they see higher education as an integral part of meeting future challenges.

This is where our caveat above comes in. When we take this up a level, and ask people about the challenges facing the country more broadly, or how to tackle these broad challenges, they tend to focus on the challenges that stand right in front of them, and they consequently dwell on what they think of as the most *practical* solutions.

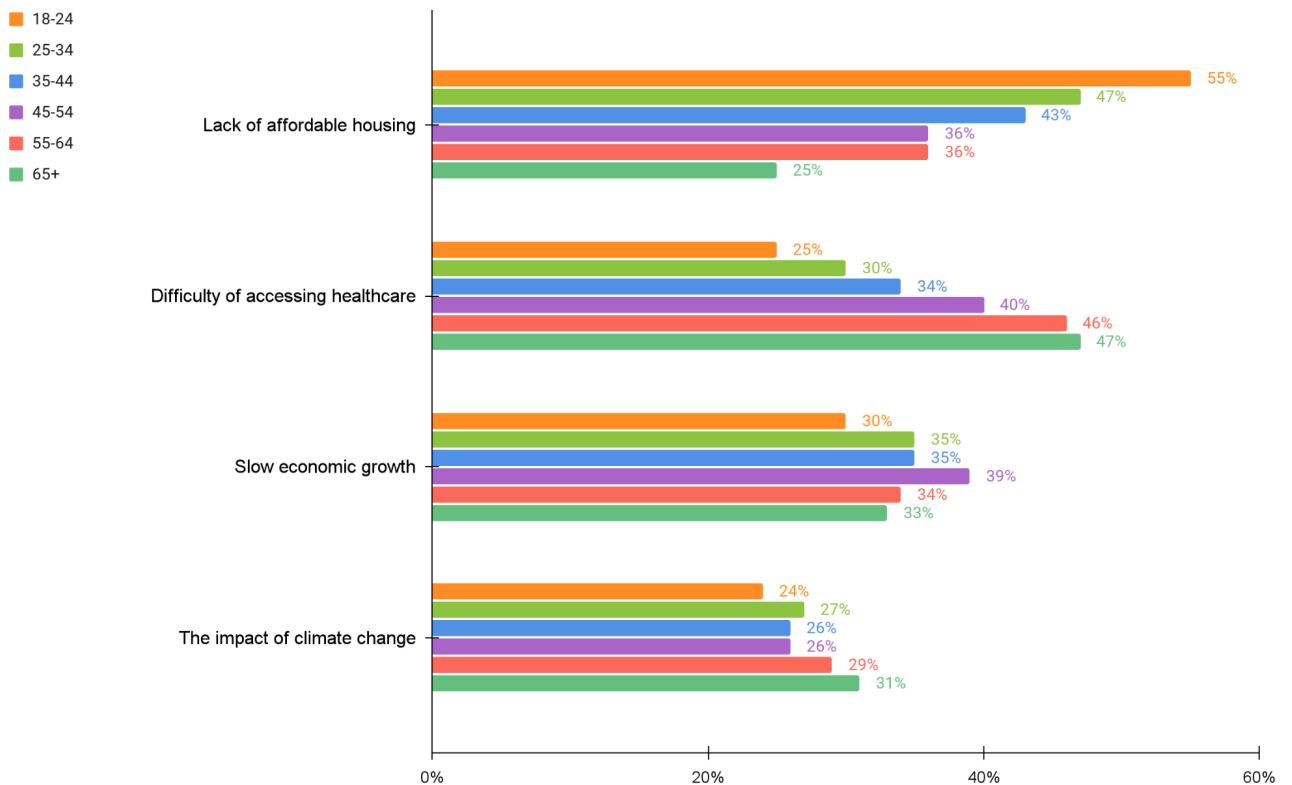
Given a list of the most important challenges facing the country, overall people dwelled on issues that are more immediate and which dominate current political debate: availability of housing and accessing healthcare. As such, when asked about how to tackle these problems, people focused on building more houses and spending more money on healthcare, for example.

Table 15 - Thinking about the longer-term, which of the following issues do you think are the biggest challenges facing the United Kingdom? Select up to three



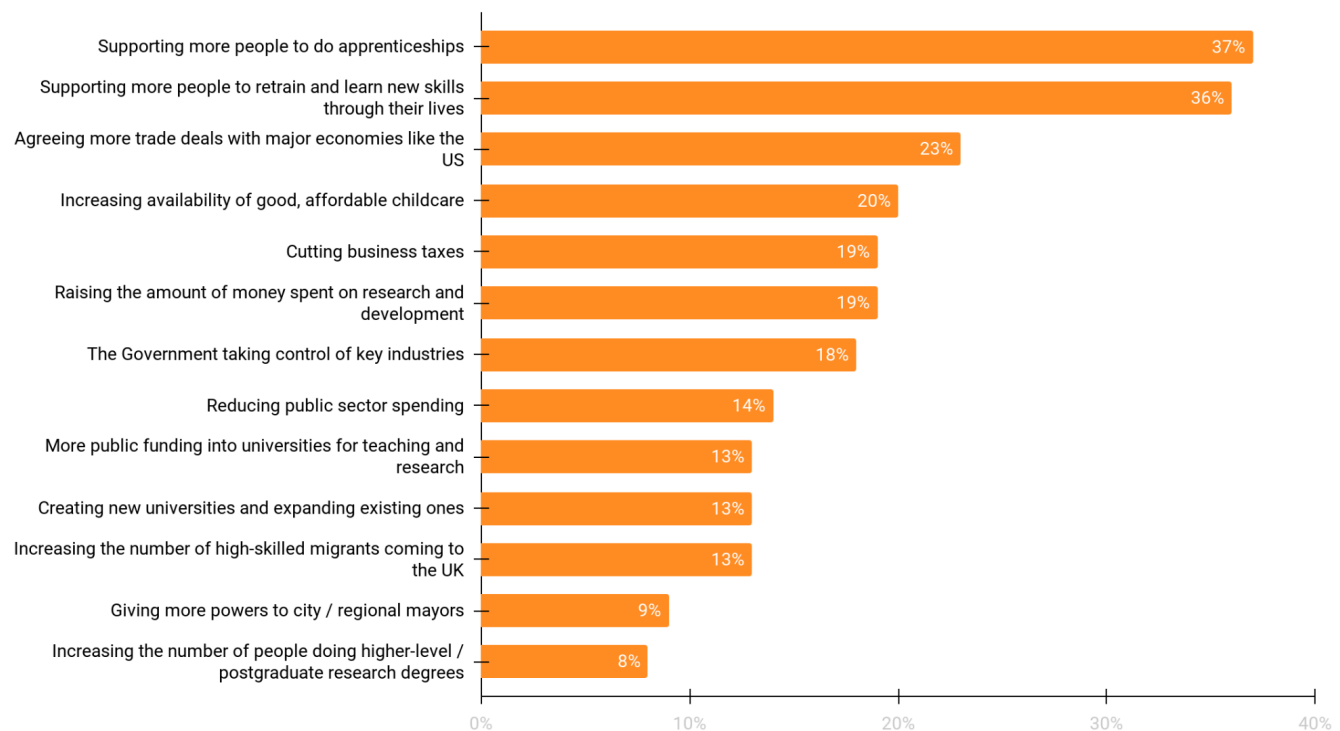
We should note these figures are wildly affected by the huge differences in opinion between young and old particularly. Younger people choose affordable housing as the biggest long-term challenge facing the country by a massive margin, while older people choose accessing healthcare as the biggest challenge. If you take these “extremes” into account, people chose a number of issues which can really only be addressed through a very highly-skilled workforce – which in turn requires vast numbers of graduates to tackle. So, slow economic growth came third and the impact of climate change fourth, for example.

Table 16 - Thinking about the longer-term, which of the following issues do you think are the biggest challenges facing the United Kingdom? Select up to three



And when we asked how to boost the economy, people again jumped towards the most *immediately* practical solutions, rather than the “abstract” or less immediate answer of higher education and universities. The top answer was “supporting more people to do apprenticeships” and “supporting more people to retrain”. Higher education-related answers came lower down (although 18-24 year olds put “creating new universities” joint-second).

Table 17 - Thinking specifically about how to improve the long-term economic prospects of the UK, which of the following policies would best help achieve this? Select up to three.



These are the most important set of charts in this publication, because they reveal the true conundrum of public opinion that universities face. This is the following:

- A. The public are enthusiastic for a university education for their children. This is arguably the greatest test of all as people tend to care more about their children than anything else;
- B. The public are enthusiastic about university education because they think their children will get a better job;
- C. People know instinctively that universities are good for the economy;
- D. However, because they don't know what universities actually do on a day-to-day basis, they tend to think of other things being more important to the country than universities (an example of this being the role of universities powering the NHS not necessarily cutting through);
- E. Yet, when specific suggestions are made to them on the impact of universities on the economy (in our case, AI and green technology), they strongly agree.

What it ultimately shows is that the gap in people's knowledge means they don't immediately think about universities when they think about how best to tackle the challenges facing the country. But when they are made to think about specific challenges like the need to build an industry in artificial intelligence - which, although they know little about it, they believe strongly that it will be important in the future - then they immediately see the importance of universities.

As we explore at the end of this paper, this opens up huge possibilities for UK universities to explain to people how their graduates and research will ultimately help build and maintain UK competitiveness in a range of industries.

Universities and local economies

In our past research, Public First have found that some universities have managed to create a real connection between their institution and local people; in some places, universities have become part of local *civic pride*. Sunderland and Teesside come to mind: these are places which have experienced difficult times economically, but where local identity has been strong. In both places, the growth in the university has, in the minds of local people, helped put their town or city “on the map”.

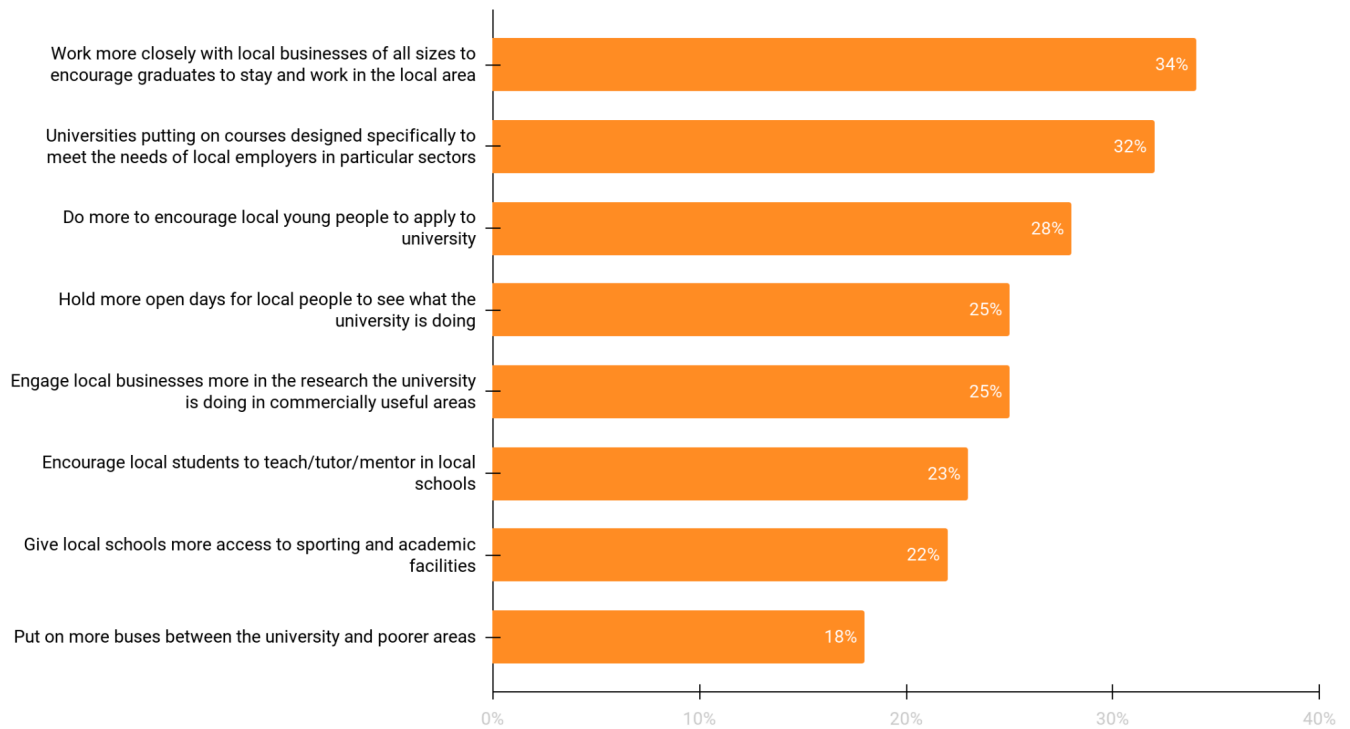
However, in some places, it’s clear the connection is less strongly felt. And in some places, this lack of a connection is understandable. Sometimes the city might be of such a size that a university’s impact is essentially hidden. On the other end of the spectrum, it might be that the university feels dominant and somehow elite or unwelcoming.

Overall, in this research, as we explain above, we found that, in many parts of the country, the general public knows little about what their local university does - and they never visit. An obvious way of forming a connection between local people and their local university is by connecting on *economics*. By this, we mean encouraging greater links between universities, students (of all ages), and local businesses - all to maximise the economic impact universities have on the regions they sit in. Where this already happens, the task is to maximise the knowledge and understanding of this activity, which is clearly not yet cutting through.

We know many of these activities are already taking place, sometimes to great effect. But it is worth raising here two points for consideration: the public appetite for activity that boosts specifically local economies is significant, and knowledge, awareness and understanding that these activities are already taking place is low.

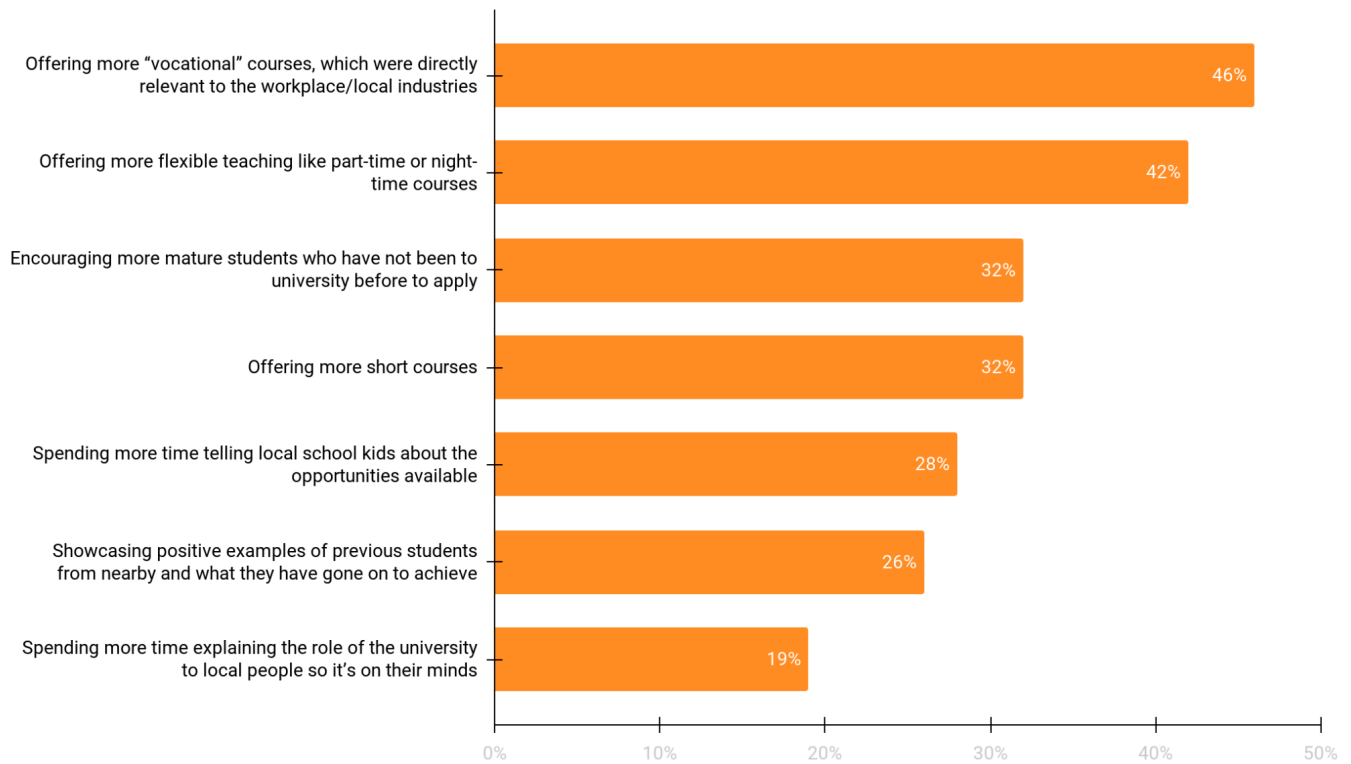
This theme came out strongly in our research. People suggested there should be greater links between universities and local businesses to boost the economic fortunes of their local area. When asked what things a university could do to help the local economy, the top answer was “work more closely with local businesses of all sizes to encourage graduates to stay and work in the local area”, followed by “universities putting on courses designed specifically to meet the needs of local employers in particular sectors.”

Table 18 - Thinking about your local area specifically, which of the following things do you think your local university could best do to help improve the economy and society of your local area? Select up to three.



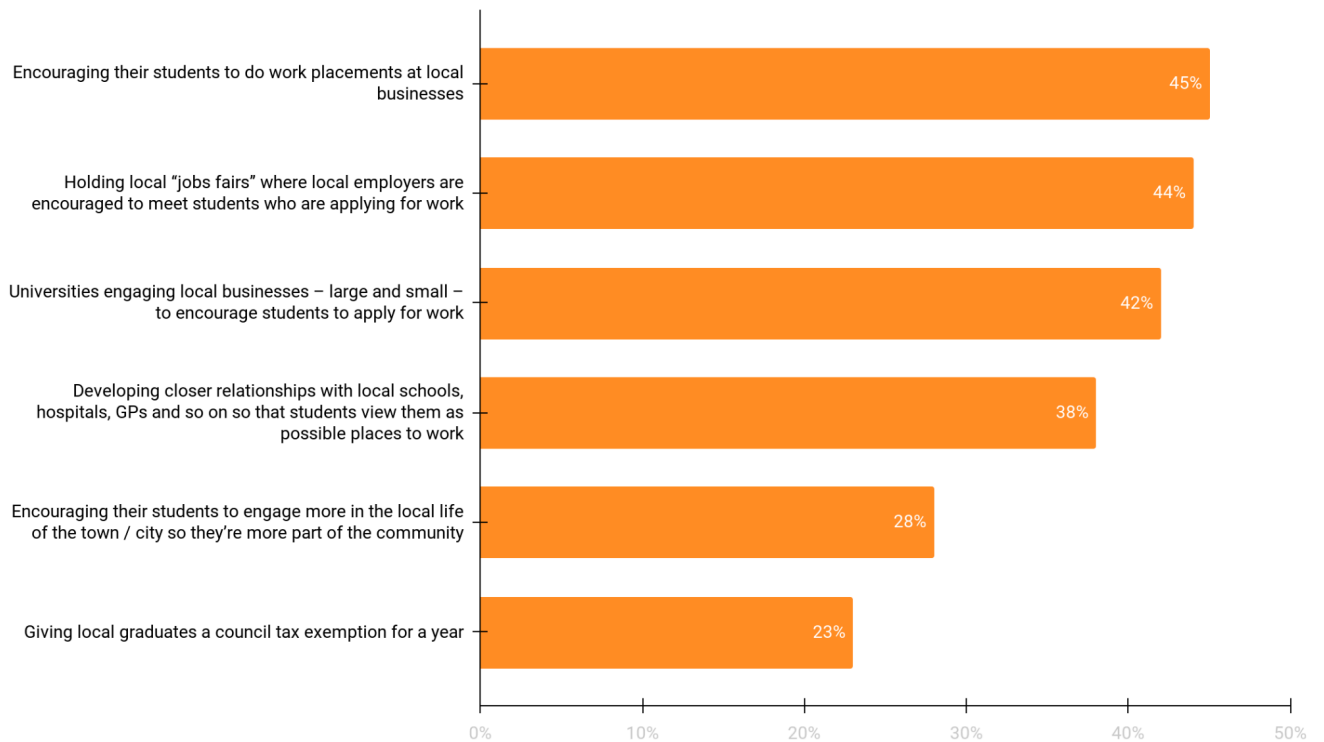
Asked what would encourage more people to apply to local universities, the top answer was “offering more ‘vocational’ courses, which were directly relevant to the workplace/local industries”, followed by “offering more flexible teaching like part-time or night-time courses.”

Table 19 - Which of the following things do you think would most encourage people to apply to their local university? Select up to three.



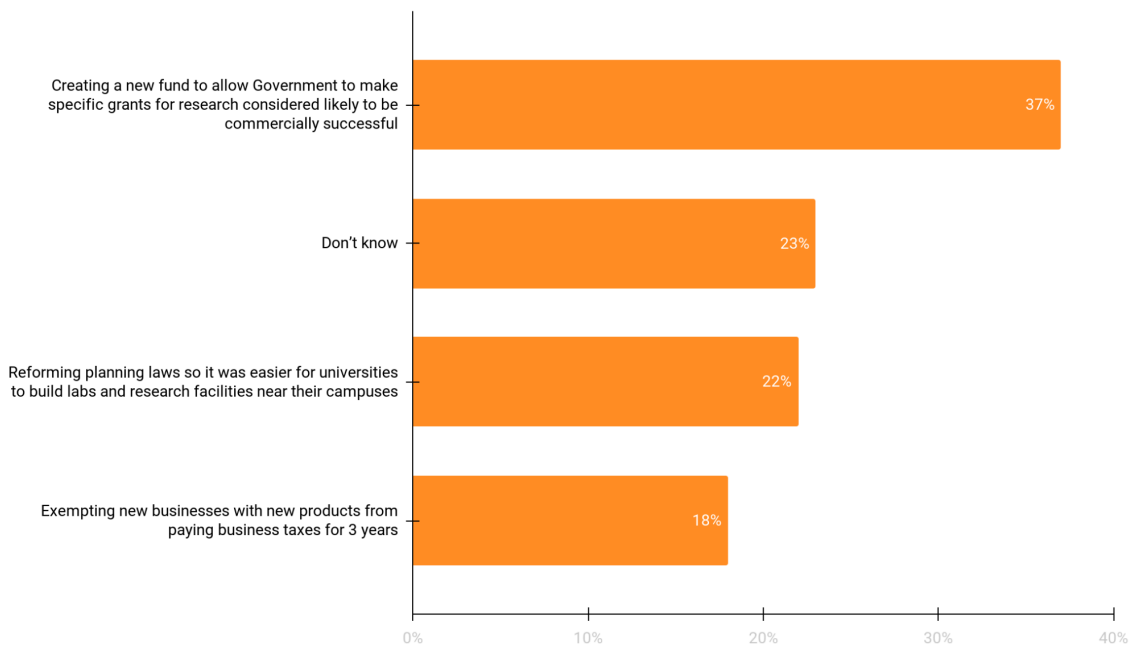
When asked what would most encourage people to stay in the area after studying locally, the top answer was "encouraging their students to do work placements at local businesses." This was closely followed by "holding local 'jobs fairs' where local employers are encouraged to meet students who are applying for work", and "universities engaging local businesses - large and small - to encourage students to apply for work."

Table 20 - Which of the following do you think would most encourage people to stay in the local area after studying at your local university? Select up to three.



The most popular answer for how best to encourage universities to use their research to create new businesses locally was "creating a new fund to allow government to make specific grants for research considered likely to be commercially successful."

Table 21 - Which of the following policies do you think would be most likely to encourage universities to use their research to create new businesses locally?



Funding UK universities

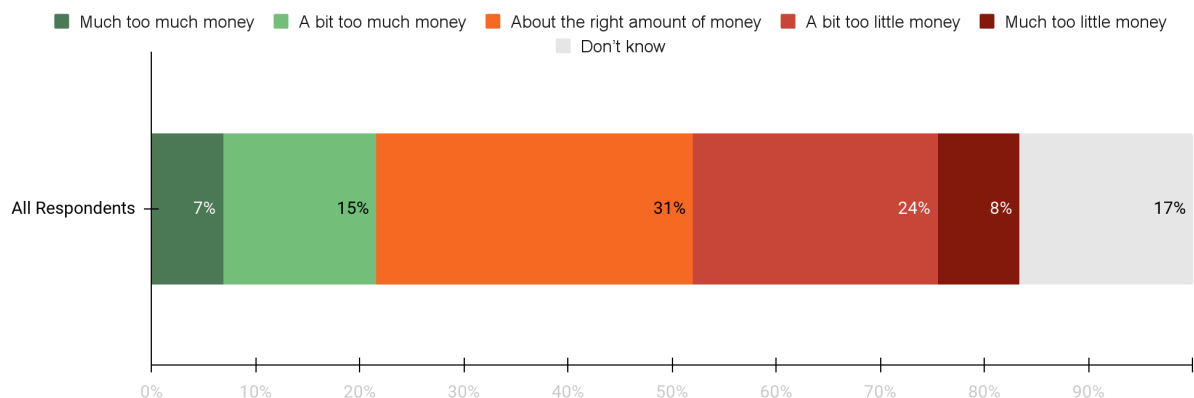
We know some universities have been struggling financially for a number of years, and that operating costs have risen significantly while investment has remained relatively flat. There is even concern that a university could go bankrupt. Regardless of how much some universities are struggling, it's clear that the sector needs more money if UK universities are going to maintain their international competitiveness, and in turn help the UK maintain its own national economic competitiveness against other countries.

As we have noted earlier in this report, the UK higher education sector is big. The sum that each university manages is large and the collective income across the sector reached [£52 billion in 2023/24](#). If universities are going to maintain the competitiveness we describe above, they will need a great deal more money, totalling billions, not millions. This requires public support or consent. And in turn this requires the public to know more not just about what they do in broad terms, but how they operate financially.

While this research showed how little people know about universities broadly, it particularly showed how little people know about the scale of funding within the sector and how universities are actually funded. This is clear across a whole range of questions, and we suspect is driven in part by a tendency of media coverage about university funding to focus only on domestic tuition fees, rather than the wider funding system as a whole. People just don't know how the sector is funded.

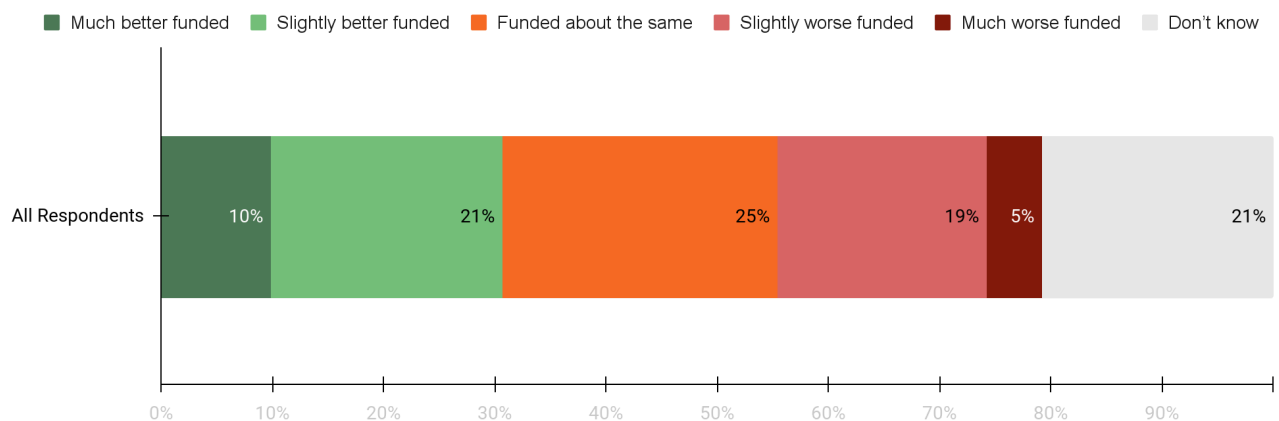
While more people think universities have too little money than think they have too much money (31% to 22%), 31% say they have the right amount of money. There is a reasonably similar picture across demographics.

Table 22 - From what you have seen and heard, and from your own experience, do you think most British universities have enough money, too much money, or the right amount?



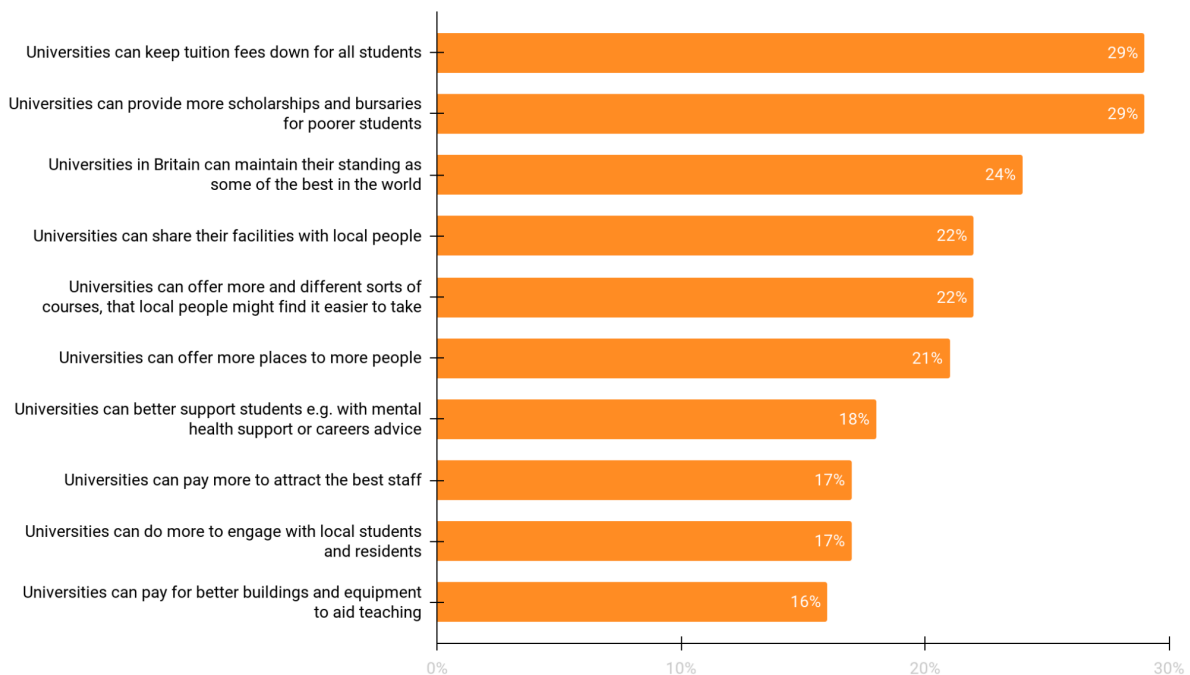
And people don't know how UK universities' funding compares to those in other countries. By 31% to 24%, they think UK universities are better funded than other developed countries' universities, but 25% say they're funded about the same and 21% say they don't know – a very high figure for a poll like this.

Table 23 - From what you have seen and heard, and from your own experience, do you think universities in Britain are as well-funded as those in other developed countries, better-funded, or worse-funded?



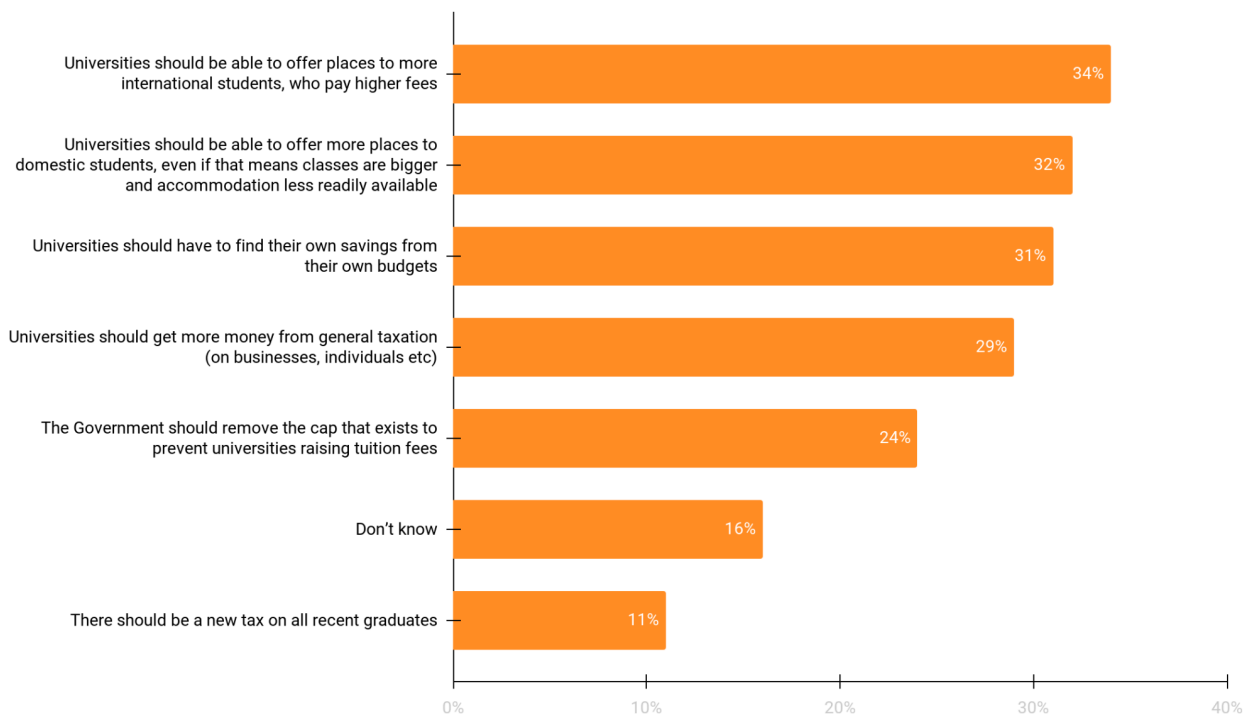
Asked about the benefits arising from public money going into universities, the joint-top answers were “universities can keep tuition fees down for all students”, and “universities can provide more scholarships and bursaries for poorer students.”

Table 24 - Which of the following suggested benefits do you think come from public money going into universities? Select up to three.



Interestingly, it appears that the recent debate on immigration, and how it relates to international students, seems to have had some impact on public opinion. In this research, people were open to universities taking a range of options to raise more money to keep paying staff. Interestingly, the top answer was “universities should be able to offer places to more international students, who pay higher fees”. This implies the economic benefits of students from around the world coming to study in the UK are well understood.

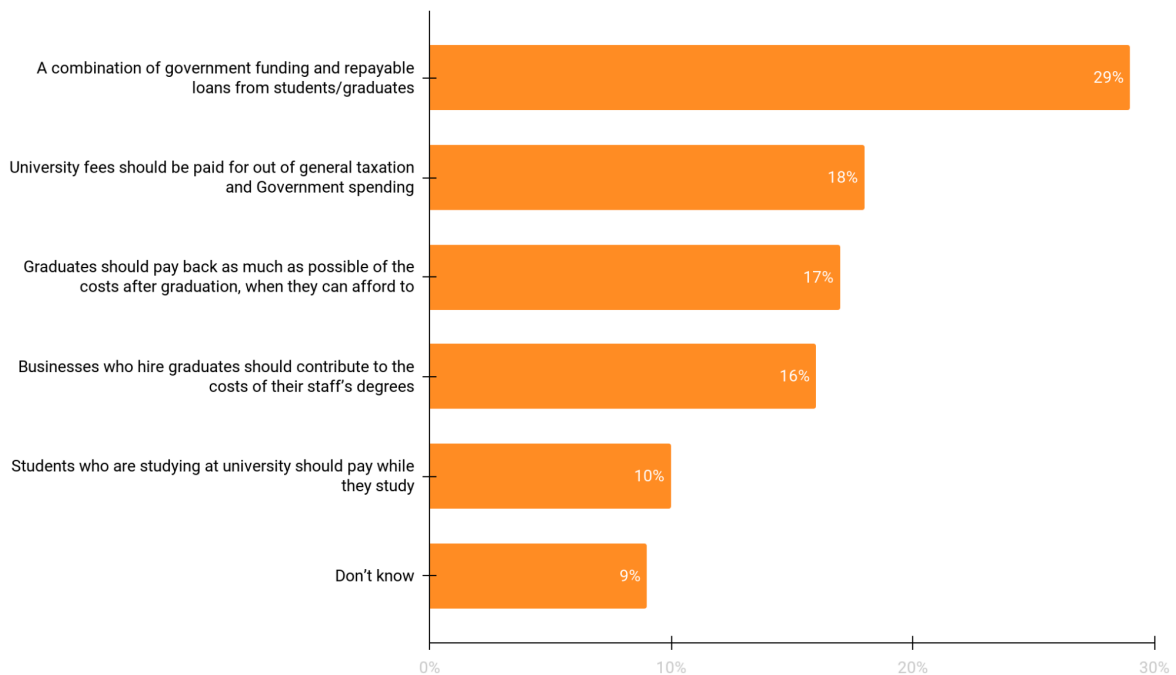
Table 25 - If many universities collectively said they needed more money to keep paying for staff, for teaching, and to maintain the university experience for students, which of the following do you think would be the best ways of getting them more money? Select up to three.



Thinking about how students themselves should pay for their education, people are divided. The top answer was the status quo: “a combination of government funding and repayable loans from students/graduates.” Fewer than 20% said fees should be paid out of general taxation, with only a quarter of 18-24 year olds choosing this option.

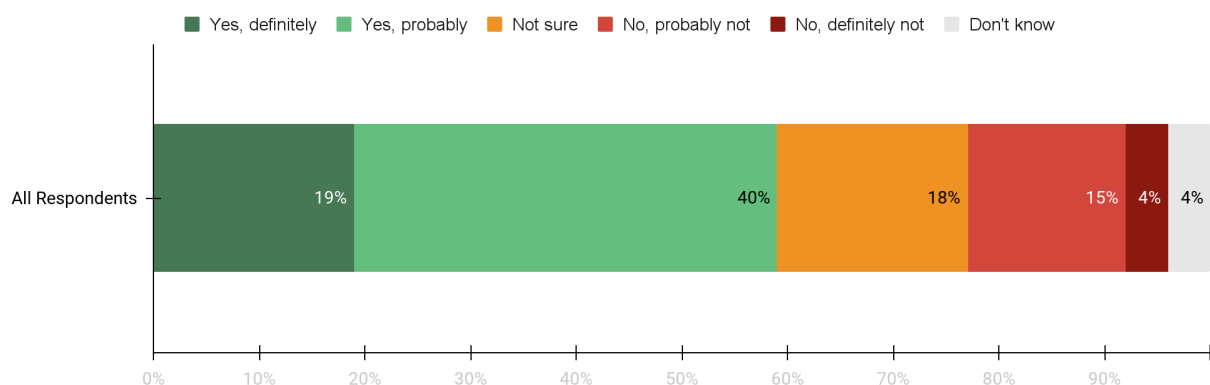
This was an interesting finding as there appears to have been a shift in opinion. In the past, research often showed that people were much more supportive of the idea of a “free education” at universities or, at the least, an education that was heavily subsidised. Whether this is down to the cost of living crisis making everyone more wary of further high spending commitments, or something else, isn’t clear, but people do seem to accept that students need to pay at least a very large chunk themselves.

Table 26 - How should students' university education – their tuition fees and costs - be paid for, to maximise the benefits that universities bring to the country as a whole? Select just one.



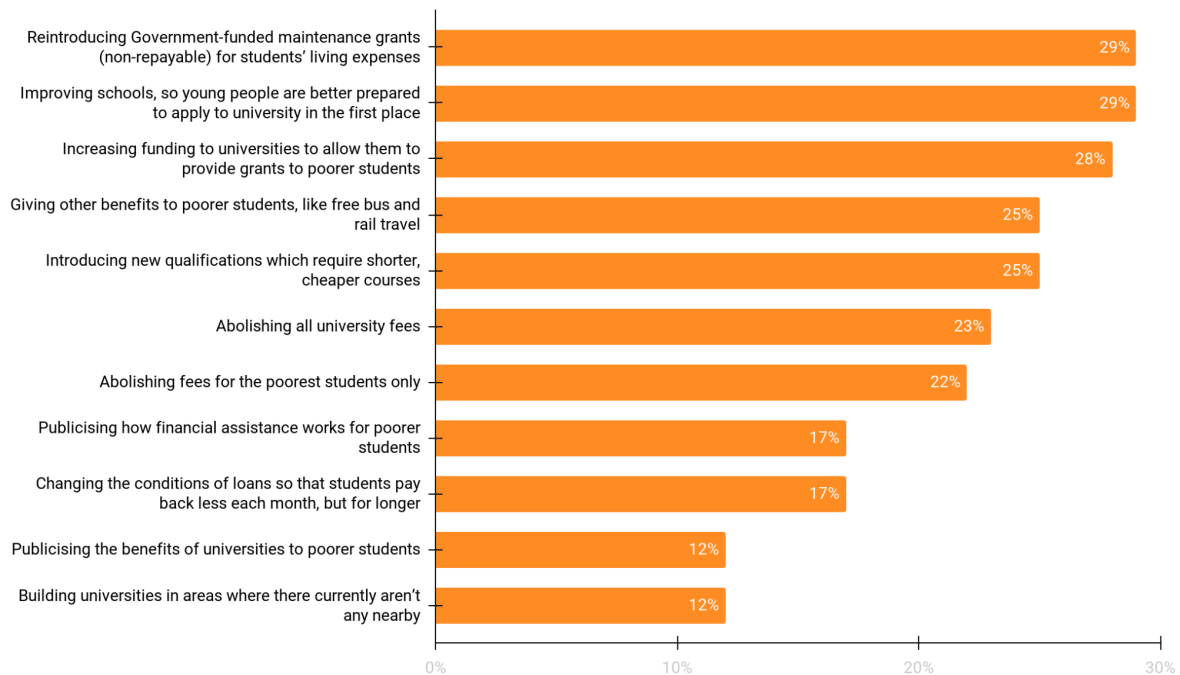
The lack of knowledge we found on university life was particularly clear in the question we asked on how students should themselves pay for fees and costs. 60% think students have the time to take on paid work during term-time, when they are also studying. Half of 18-24 year olds agreed. Extraordinarily, of those that said students had the time to do paid work, two-thirds thought that students could work at least 2 days a week.

Table 27 - From what you have seen and heard – and from your own experience – do you think university students have the time to take on paid work during term times, when they are also studying?



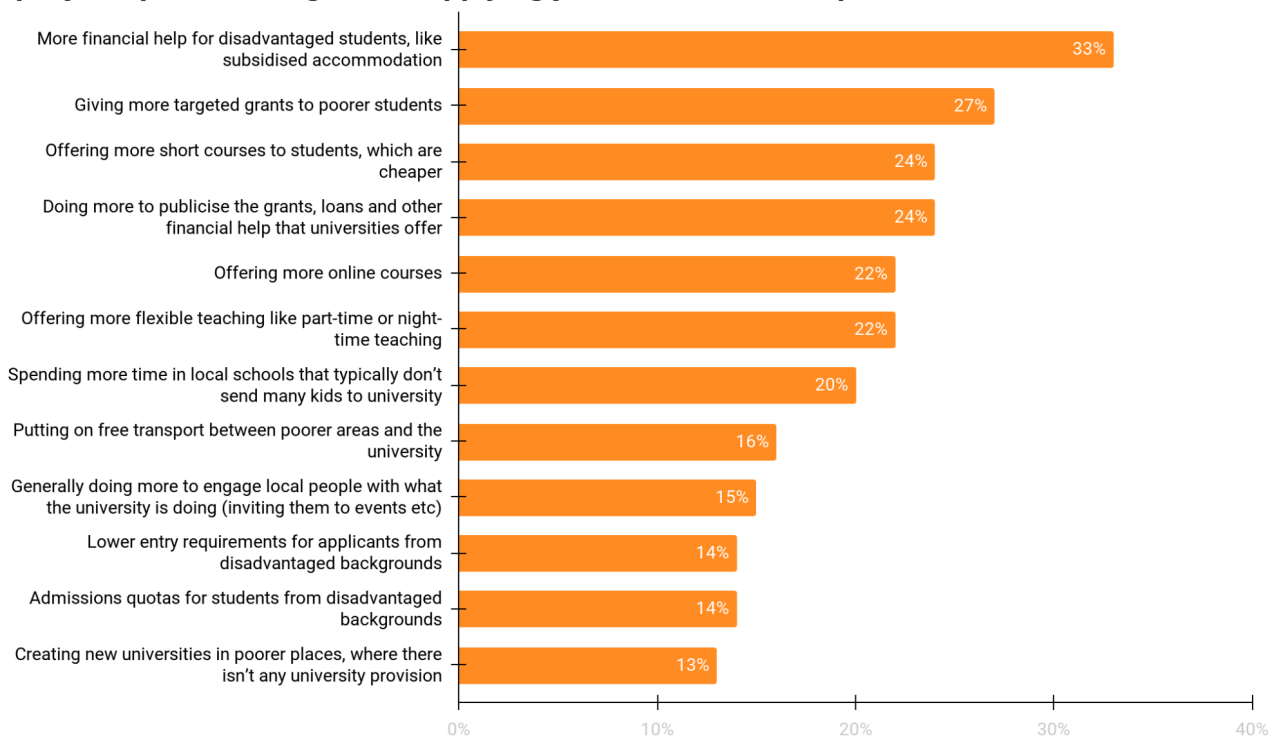
People were divided on how best to increase applications from young people from low-income backgrounds. The top three were very closely packed: reintroducing government-funded maintenance grants; improving schools; and increasing funding to universities.

Table 28 - How best do you think Government can increase the number of people from poorer backgrounds applying for courses? Select up to three.



Asked how universities themselves could increase applications from poorer kids, the top answer was “more financial help for disadvantaged students, like subsidised accommodation.”

Table 29 - How best do you think universities themselves can increase the number of people from poorer backgrounds applying for courses? Select up to three.



Methodological note

This report summarises opinion research undertaken by Public First. Public First ran a nationally-representative poll with a sample of 4,034 people between 20th November 2024 and 26th November 2024. For all tables, unless otherwise stated, the base is the full UK nationally representative sample.

All results are weighted using Iterative Proportional Fitting, or 'Raking'. The results are weighted by interlocking age and gender, region and social grade to Nationally Representative Proportions. The full tables can be found on Public First's website [here](#). Public First is a member of the BPC and abides by its rules.

The All-Party Parliamentary University Group

The All-Party Parliamentary University Group was founded in 1994 by MPs and Peers to establish a dialogue between parliamentarians and university leaders on the issues concerning higher education. It is now one of the largest groups in the Palace of Westminster.

The University APPG's objective is to be the main avenue of communication between parliamentarians and vice-chancellors of the UK's universities; and to provide an opportunity to examine issues affecting the country's university sector and university research which is influencing public policy and higher level skills.

Public First

Public First is a policy research agency, specialising in opinion research and policy analysis. Since its formation in 2016, Public First has had a particular interest in higher education, working for many universities across the UK. Public First is a member of the British Polling Council and the Market Research Society, and accepts their rules and guidelines.



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