

Finance Committee Inquiry into Higher Education Funding

Summary of Higher Education Funding Inquiry Survey

Background

This document provides a summary of responses received to the Higher Education Funding Inquiry survey conducted by the Outreach team.

Methodology

As part of the Finance Committee Inquiry into Higher Education Funding in Wales the Outreach Team conducted a survey in both online and paper-based formats. Participants were asked a range of questions relating to the financial considerations they make before deciding to enter higher education and the efficacy of the tuition fee grant that is currently available to them.

Two surveys were created, targeting:

- 1st and 2nd year undergraduate students studying at universities and higher education institutions in Wales and 1st and 2nd year Welsh students studying in England
- Prospective undergraduate students in years 12 and 13 (or equivalent) in schools, 6th forms, and further education colleges in Wales

Please note that due to a high-volume of respondents from Cardiff University, separate figures which excluded all responses from Cardiff University were prepared by the Outreach Team. Analysis of these showed, however, that the statistical variation between both sets of data were never more than +/- 4.5% and in the majority of cases fell within the +/- 3% margin of error. A breakdown of the figures (excluding Cardiff University respondents) is provided in Annex 1.

Awareness Raising

In order to promote awareness of the survey and attract participants the Outreach Team contacted a broad-range of universities, schools, colleges and organisations. Those contacted were able to raise awareness using a range of methods including – placing articles on websites; signposting on social media including Facebook and twitter; and emailing participants directly.

The following groups were able to help raise awareness of the survey:

- A total of 8 Welsh universities

- A total of 23 English universities (within one hundred miles of the Welsh border)
- A total of 12 Further Education colleges located across Wales
- A total of 8 organisations working within the HE/FE sector
- The surveys were also promoted by Assembly staff with relevant groups visiting the Senedd and receiving education visits, and during the Assembly's presence at summer shows

Please note that a full breakdown of the groups, institutions and organisations contacted is provided in the annex.

Key Statistics

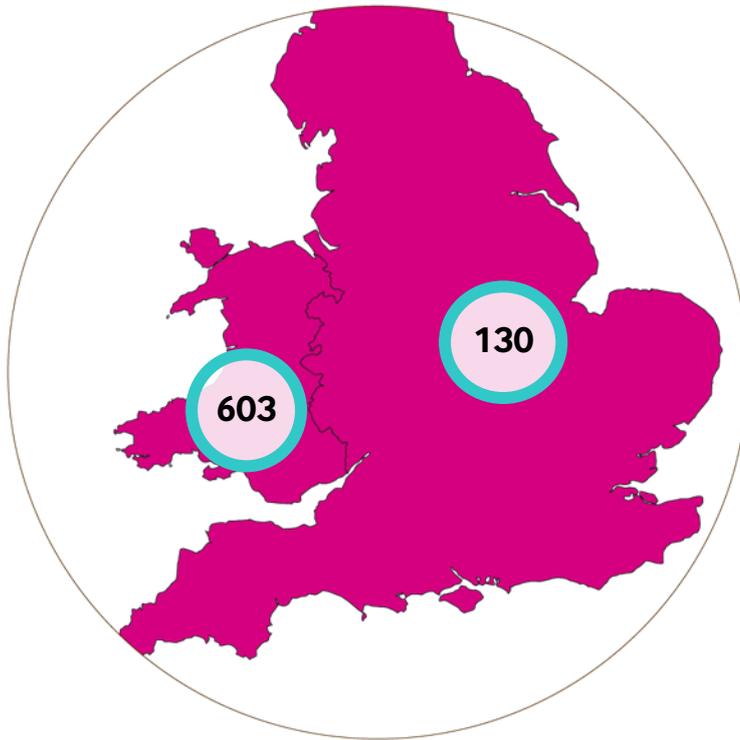
1345 Total number of survey responses received

765 Total number of survey responses received from current students

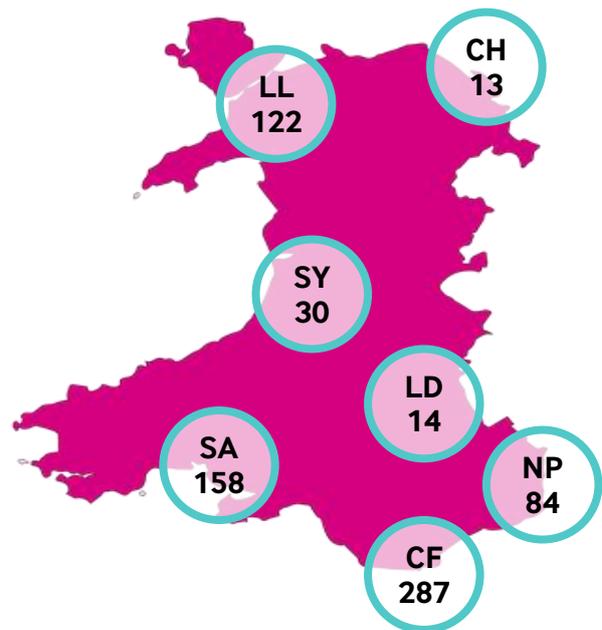
580 Total number of survey responses received from prospective students

Geographical Summary of Responses

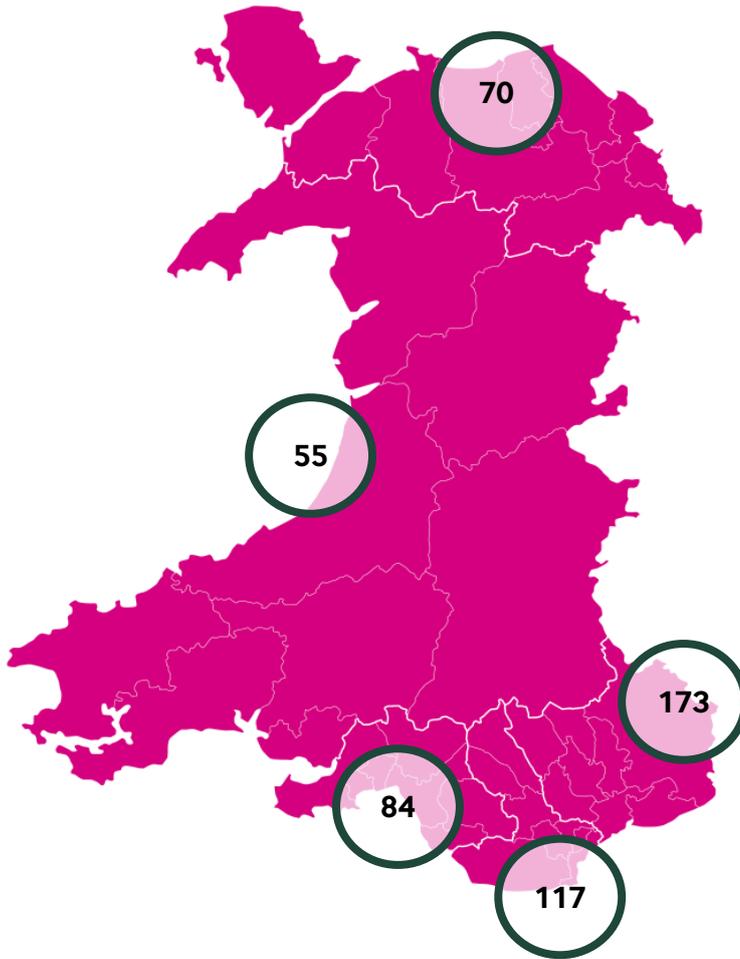
Number of survey responses received from current students at university, or higher education institution in England and Wales.



Home postcode of survey respondents (inclusive of current students at university, or higher education institution in England and Wales only).



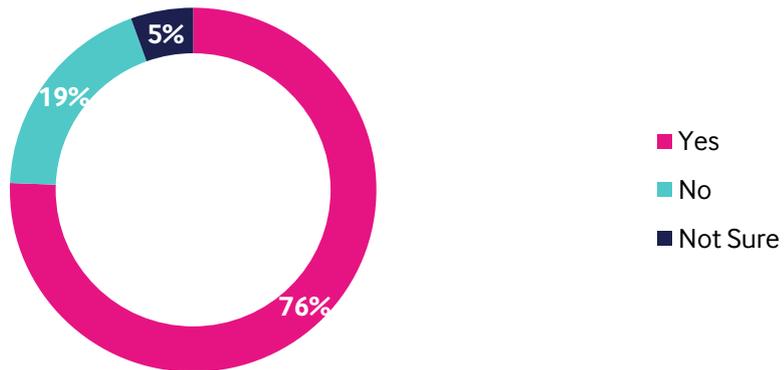
Number of survey responses from prospective students (years 12 and 13 or equivalent) broken down by electoral region.



Summary of Responses – University Students

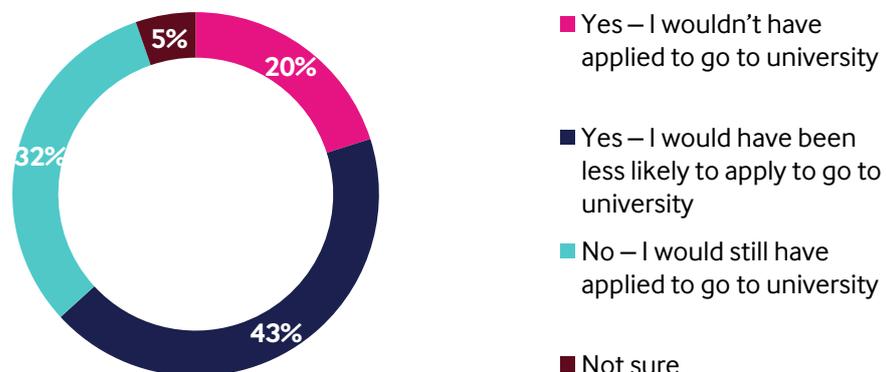
Question 1 – Did the Welsh Government's tuition fee grant encourage you to apply to go to university?

- Yes: **75.6% (573)**
- No: **18.9% (143)**
- Not Sure: **5.5% (42)**



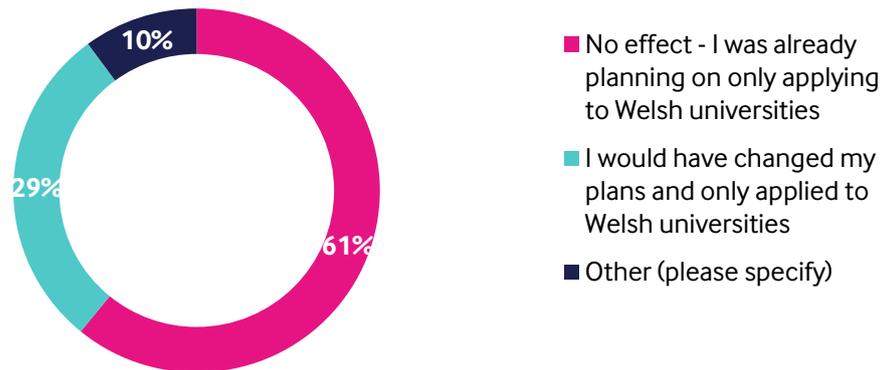
Question 2 – If you had to pay the full amount of tuition fees (up to £9,000) would this have affected your decision to apply to go to university?

- Yes – I wouldn't have applied to go to university: **20.1% (152)**
- Yes – I would have been less likely to apply to go to university: **43.1% (327)**
- No – I would still have applied to go to university: **31.5% (239)**
- Not sure: **5.3% (40)**



**Question 3 – (For Welsh students studying in Welsh Higher Education Institutions)
If the tuition fee grant only applied to Welsh students studying at Welsh universities how would this have affected your decision as to which university to apply to?**

- No effect - I was already planning on only applying to Welsh universities: **60.9% (367)**
- I would have changed my plans and only applied to Welsh universities: **29% (175)**
- Other (please specify): **10.1% (60)**

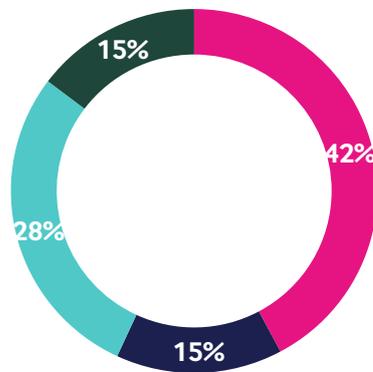


Question 3 – Comments



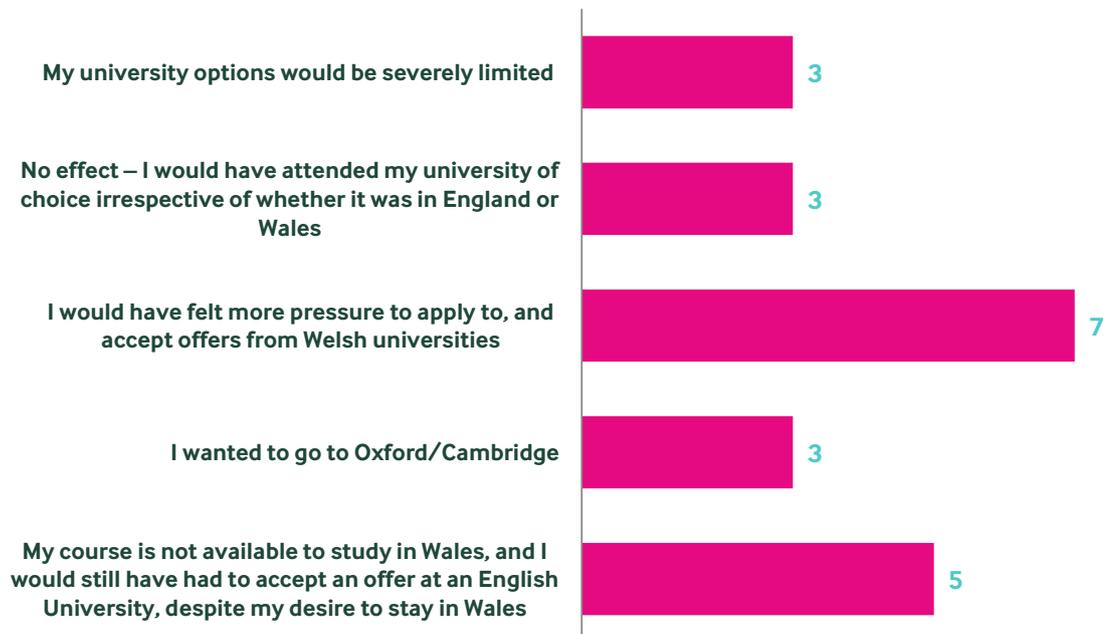
Question 4 – (For Welsh students studying in English Higher Education Institutions) If the tuition fee grant only applied to Welsh students studying at Welsh universities how would this have affected your decision as to which university to apply to?

- I would have changed my plans to study outside of Wales and only applied to Welsh universities: **42.2% (86)**
- I would not have applied to go to university and instead, followed another education or employment route: **14.7% (30)**
- I would have applied to my university of choice irrespective of whether I would receive a tuition fee grant: **28.4% (58)**
- Other (please specify): **14.7% (30)**



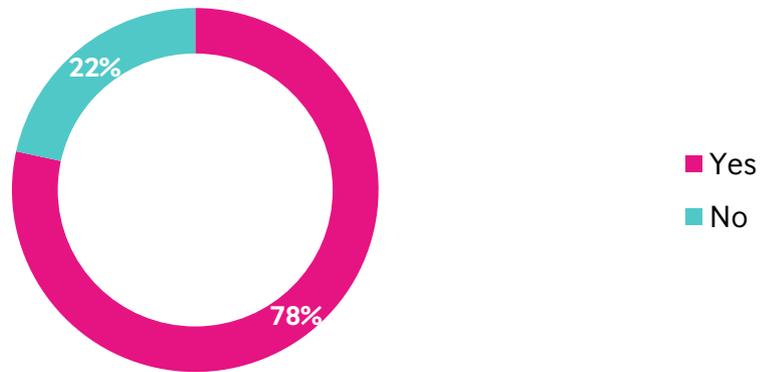
- I would have changed my plans to study outside of Wales and only applied to Welsh universities
- I would not have applied to go to university and instead, followed another education or employment route
- I would have applied to my university of choice irrespective of whether I would receive a tuition fee grant
- Other (please specify)

Question 4 – Comments



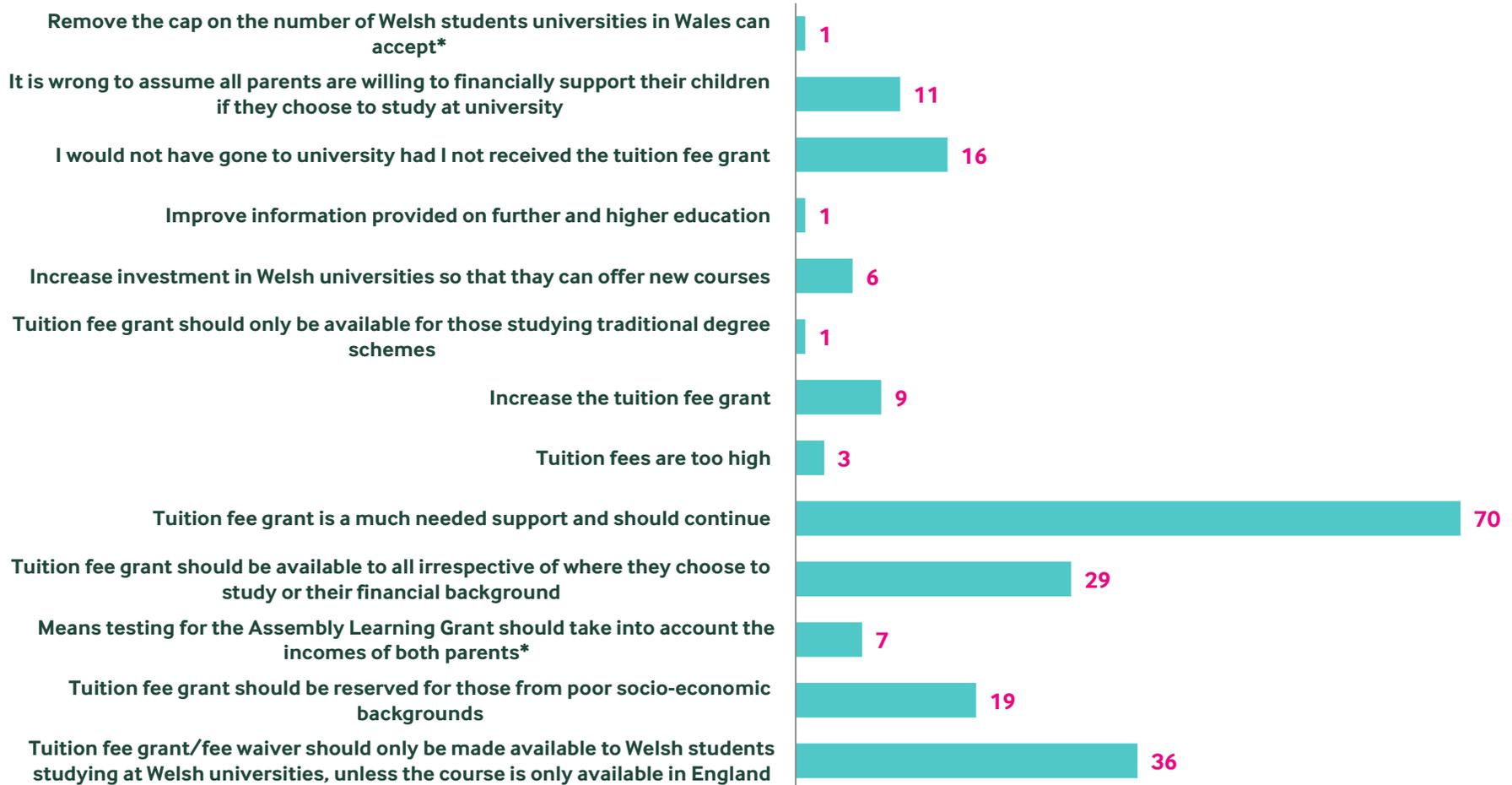
Question 5 – Should the Welsh Government’s tuition fee grant be given to all students whose home address is in Wales, irrespective of their financial circumstances?

- Yes: **78.5% (588)**
- No : **21.5% (161)**



A total of 199 additional comments were made, a summary of which is provided on the following page.

Question 5 – Additional Comments



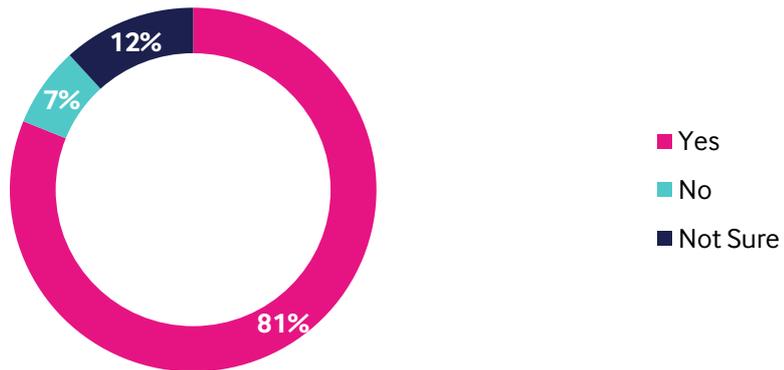
*Brief explanation = In December 2012 HEFCW stated their current approach will not constrain the recruitment of Welsh and EU domiciled students, nor students from the rest of the UK, but will constrain the associated fee grant income.

**Brief explanation = The Assembly Learning Grant is means tested on the current household income of the student and that of their parents or partner.

Summary of Responses – Year 12 and 13 Students

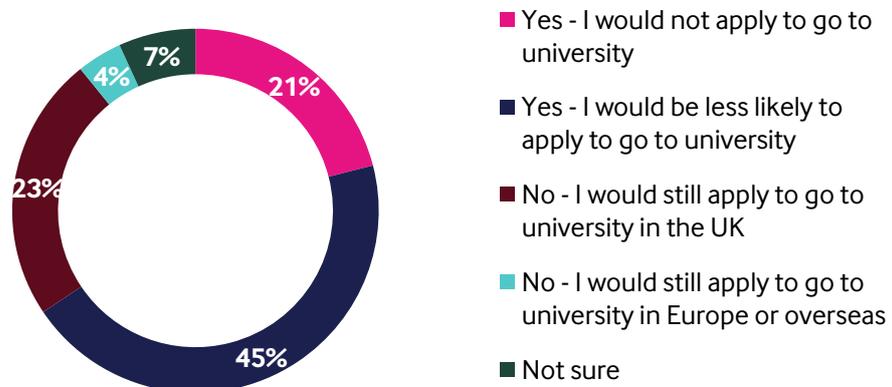
Question 1 – Does the Welsh Government's tuition fee grant encourage you to go to university?

- Yes : **81.2% (469)**
- No: **7.1% (41)**
- Not Sure: **11.8% (68)**



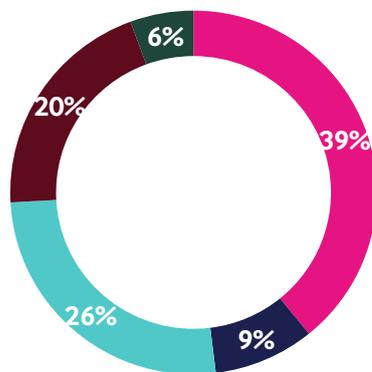
Question 2 – If you had to pay the full amount of tuition fees (up to £9,000) would this affect your decision to apply to go to university?

- Yes - I would not apply to go to university: **21% (121)**
- Yes - I would be less likely to apply to go to university: **44.6% (257)**
- No - I would still apply to go to university in the UK: **23.6% (136)**
- No - I would still apply to go to university in Europe or overseas: **4% (23)**
- Not sure: **6.8% (39)**



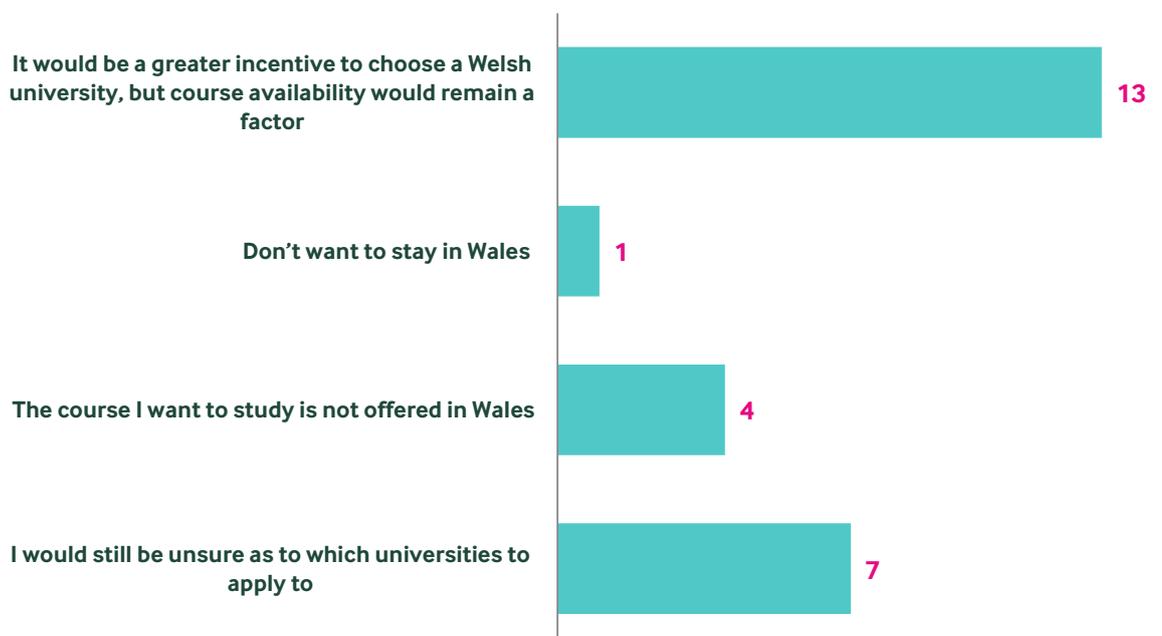
Question 3 – If the tuition fee grant only applied to Welsh students studying in Welsh universities would this affect your decision as to which university to apply to?

- Yes - I would change my plans to study outside of Wales and instead, apply to go to Welsh universities: **39.2% (225)**
- Yes - I would no longer apply to go to university and would follow another education or employment route: **8.9% (51)**
- No - I was already planning on applying to Welsh universities: **26.1% (150)**
- No - I would still apply to go to university outside of Wales: **20.3% (117)**
- Other (please specify): **5.6% (32)**



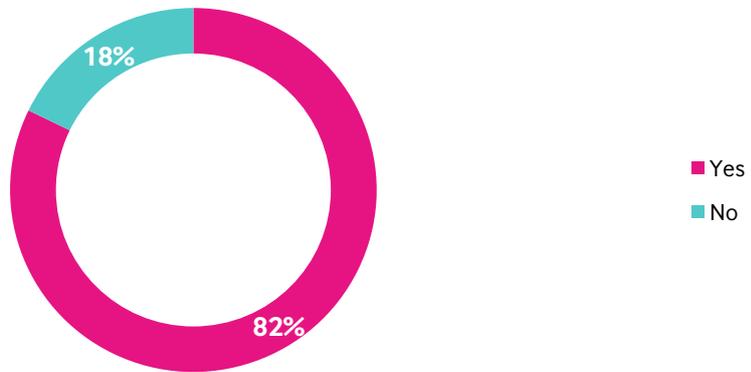
- Yes - I would change my plans to study outside of Wales and instead, apply to go to Welsh universities
- Yes - I would no longer apply to go to university and would follow another education or employment route
- No - I was already planning on applying to Welsh universities
- No - I would still apply to go to university outside of Wales
- Other (please specify)

Question 3 – Additional Comments

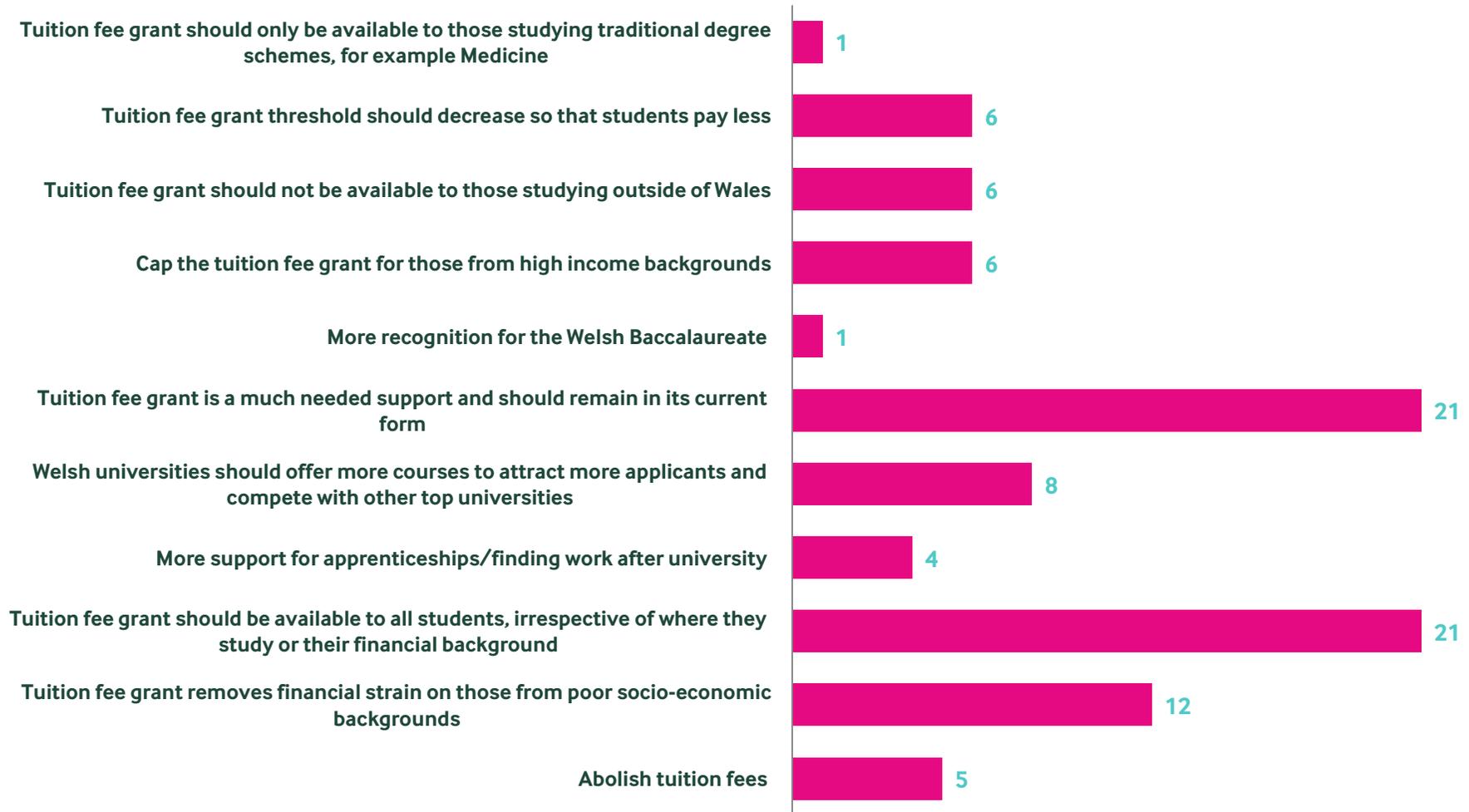


Question 4 – Should the Welsh Government's tuition fee grant be given to all students whose home address is in Wales, irrespective of their financial circumstances?

- Yes: **82.2% (471)**
- No: **17.8% (102)**

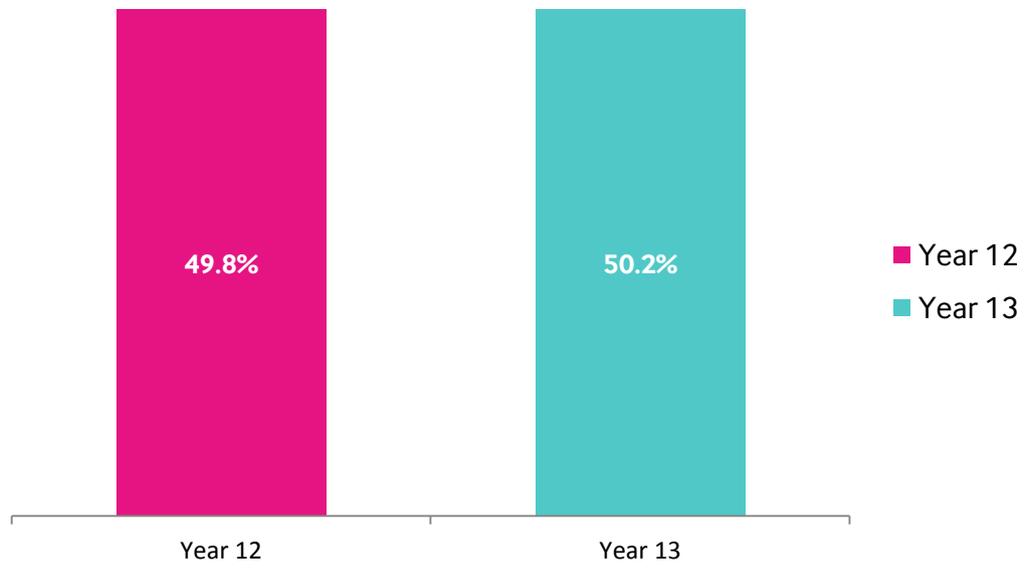


Question 5 – Do you have any other comments?



Question 6 – Which school year are you in?

- Year 12: **49.8% (238)**
- Year 13: **50.2% (240)**



Annex 1

Overall figures excluding respondents from Cardiff University

Did the Welsh Government's tuition fee grant encourage you to apply to go to university?

– Yes: 72.5% (190)

– No: 22.5% (59)

– Not Sure: 5% (13)

If you had to pay the full amount of tuition fees (up to £9,000) would this have affected your decision to apply to go to university?

– Yes - I wouldn't have applied to go to university: 24% (63)

– Yes – I would have been less likely to apply to go to university: 40.3% (106)

– No – I would still have applied to go to university: 30.8% (81)

– Not sure: 4.9% (13)

For Welsh students studying in Welsh Higher Education Institutions: If the tuition fee grant only applied to Welsh students studying at Welsh universities how would this have affected your decision as to which university to apply to?

– No effect - I was already planning on only applying to Welsh universities: 62.1% (108)

– I would have changed my plans and only applied to Welsh universities: 27% (47)

– Other (please specify): 10.9% (19)

For Welsh students studying in English Higher Education Institutions: If the tuition fee grant only applied to Welsh students studying at Welsh universities how would this have affected your decision as to which university to apply to?

– I would have changed my plans to study outside of Wales and only applied to Welsh universities: 38.4% (56)

– I would not have applied to go to university and instead, followed another education or employment route: 13.7% (20)

– I would have applied to my university of choice irrespective of whether I would receive a tuition fee grant: 31.5% (46)

– Other (please specify): 16.4% (24)

Should the Welsh Government's tuition fee grant be given to all students whose home address is in Wales, irrespective of their financial circumstances?

– Yes: 78.2% (205)

– No: 21.8% (57)