

LJMU/Shaping Futures Questionnaire Results

A questionnaire to identify whether parents/carers of KS3, KS4 and KS5 students feel supported with Higher Education and whether existing provision needs to be enhanced or additional provisions introduced.

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Introduction

Shaping Futures, (also known as the Merseyside Collaborative Outreach Programme) is an outreach programme for the Liverpool City Region formed by 12 local Higher Education (HE) providers, including Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). Funded by the Office for Students (OfS), the Uni Connect Programme aims to boost higher education (HE) participation rates in the most disadvantaged areas in England. The Uni Connect Programme consists of 29 partnerships of universities, colleges and other local partners across England (available on the OfS website). The role of each consortia is to deliver targeted outreach to young people in years 9 to 13 as well as provide support and signposting to schools, colleges and the wider community.

Shaping Futures have created an Outreach Hub, an online platform to pool together local outreach resources, making it easier for students, teachers and parents to access support. LJMU are contributing to the hub through the creation of video content to be featured on the site. These videos will be created specifically to address frequently asked questions and common concerns parents/carers have when their child transitions into HE and university life. The questionnaire provided parents with the opportunity to tell us whether they need more support with HE. In addition to this, the results determine what topics LJMU will cover during their series of short films. This parent/carer voice ensures we are supporting parents/carers needs to the best of our ability through creating videos covering the topics they have requested further support with.

Background

During the previous academic year, Shaping Futures asked partners from all 12 HE providers to form 'working groups' that emphasised on providing provision to specific under-represented groups. Parental engagement was identified as one of these working groups, and a discussion took place to identify how Shaping Futures could engage parents through working collaboratively. The outcome of the discussion was the need to complete a parental consultation exercise, which would take the format of a short survey to reach out to parents with aim of identifying what support they really need. LJMU took the lead on this survey as the results complement the objectives of their video project. Therefore, the survey was designed LJMU/Shaping Futures Questionnaire Results
January 2020

by LJMU to ensure the results are beneficial to both the parental engagement working group, and the workings of their video project.

Aims

- To identify if parents/carers are confident with their knowledge of HE
- To evaluate whether parents/carers should be confident with their knowledge of HE
- To determine what areas of HE parents/carers need support with

Methodology

The method of a survey was the most appropriate way to generate the quantitative data required. The questionnaire took the format of predetermined closed questions, which had various answers provided for the participants to select. At the end of the survey was the opportunity for participants to provide qualitative data if they wished to. The questions were designed collaboratively between LJMU's Shaping Futures Project Officer and Shaping Futures Partnerships and Evaluations officer.

The audience for the questionnaire was parents/carers of students (KS3-KS5) who attend Shaping Futures schools. The questionnaire was distributed through many channels over the duration of a month to ensure maximum participation. These channels include newsletters from the 12 HE partners of Shaping Futures and their social media accounts, all promoting the survey to contacts within schools/colleges to then be shared with parents. This is due to LJMU/Shaping Futures having the inability to directly contact parents with no access to parental contact details following GDPR. We therefore relied on existing relationships with teachers to support the survey in reaching parents. Many schools shared the survey in parent newsletters.

The survey included the following privacy statement before participants completed the survey:

Your data will be stored on a secured drive in password-protected files. If you wish to withdraw your data at any point, please just let us know and we will do so. Otherwise the data will be stored for the duration of the programme (until July 2021) and for any period of time for analysis after this (with the expected maximum being 12 months). We will at no point produce any reports or other outputs naming yourself.

If you have any questions about the purpose of this questionnaire or the work that we do, please contact the project lead via Email: H.L.Williams@ljmu.ac.uk Phone: 0151 6449/ 07816153060

Results

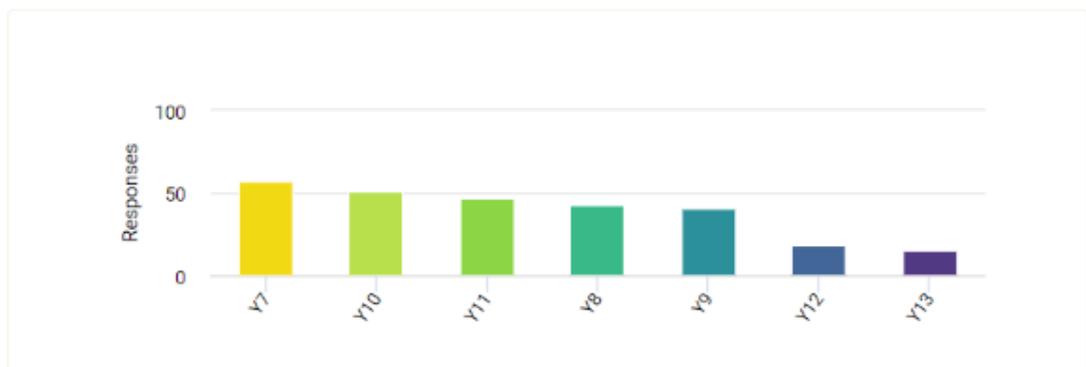
(Please pay close attention to the key located to the right of each survey)

Started	13 August 2020	Respondents	211
Ended	Ongoing	Report generated	03 December 2020
Duration	3 months		

Answers

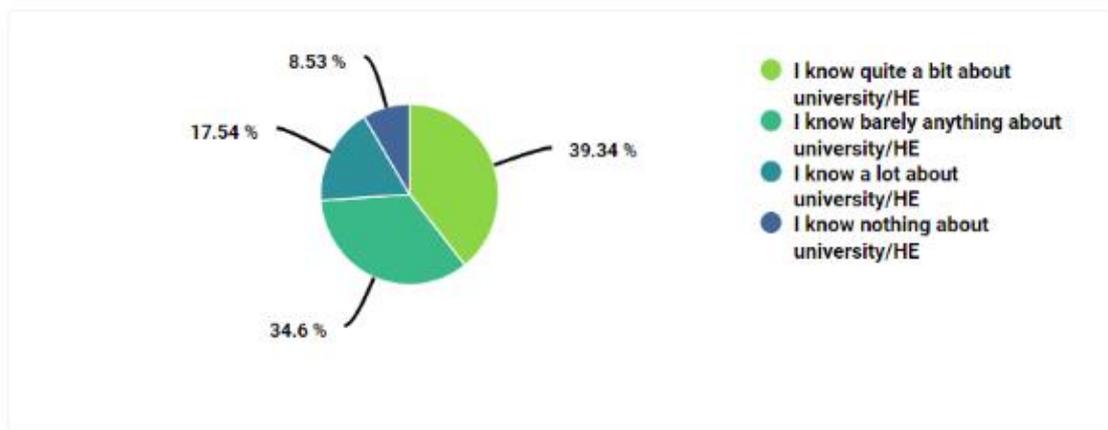
Page 1

1. What school or college year is/are your child(ren)/student(s) currently? Please write as many as are applicable:

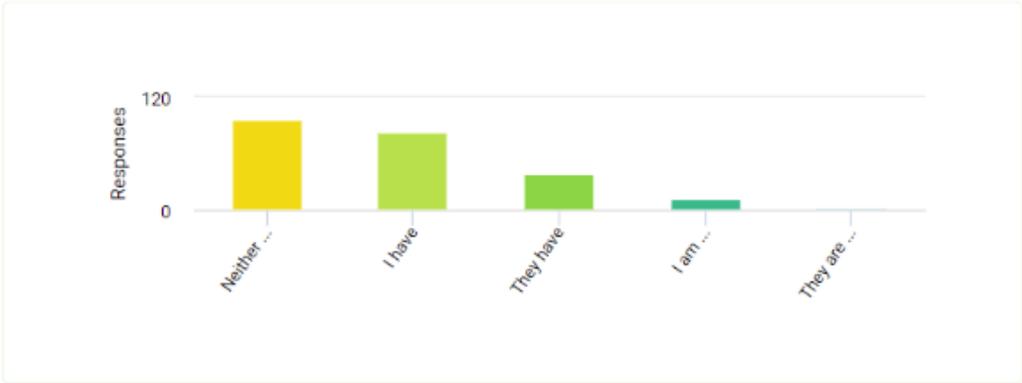


2. How much do you know about university/higher education (HE)?

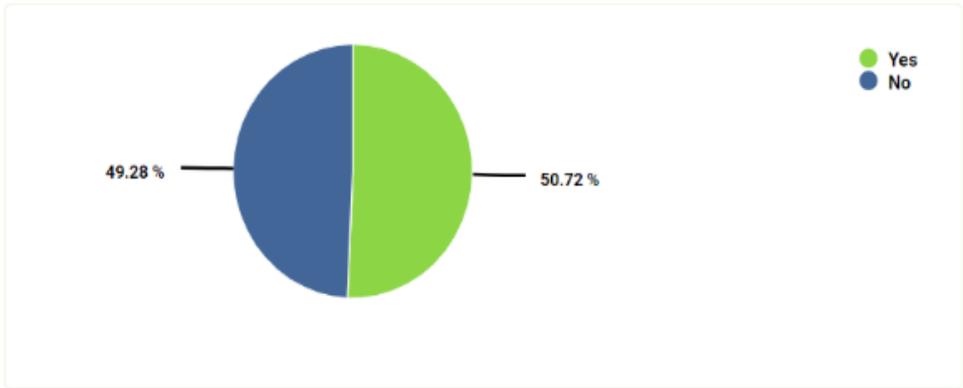
211 responses



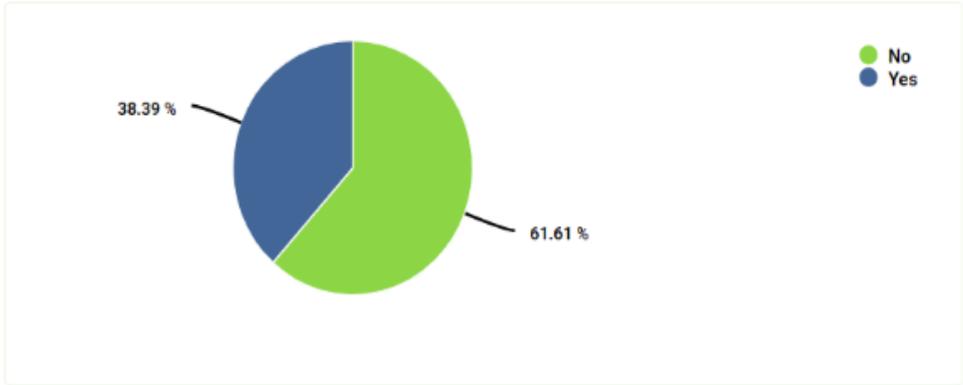
3. Have you or your co-parent/carer/guardian (if applicable) been to university/HE? (Only tick if yes; multiple boxes can be ticked)



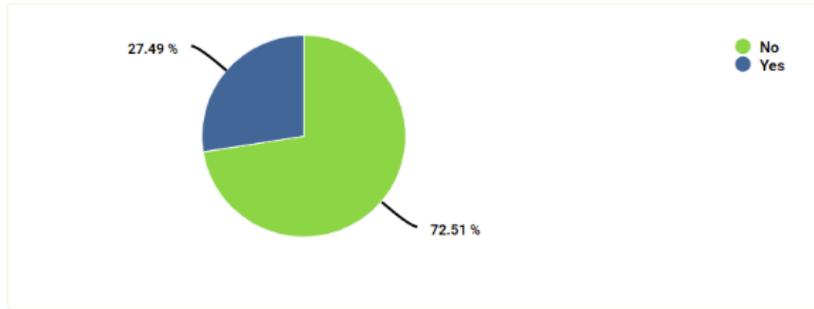
4. a) Do you understand how student loans and their repayment system works? **209 responses**



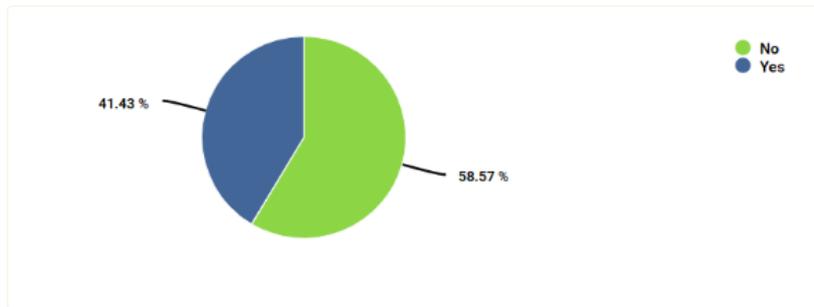
b) Do you understand the different between a tuition fee loan and a maintenance loan? **211 responses**



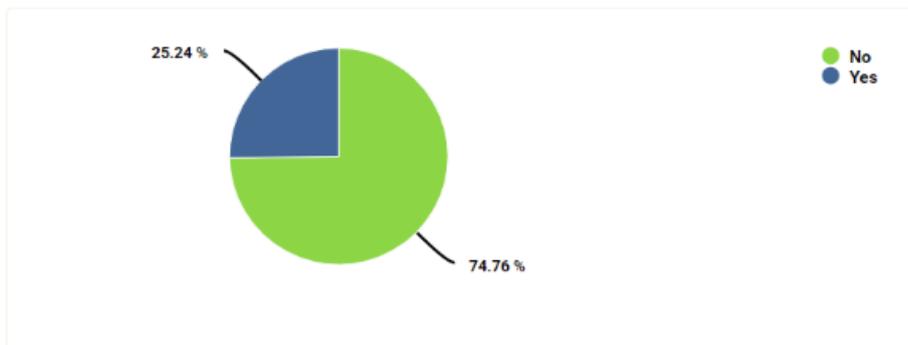
c) Do you understand the student loan application system and how the amount of maintenance loan each student receives is calculated? **211 responses**



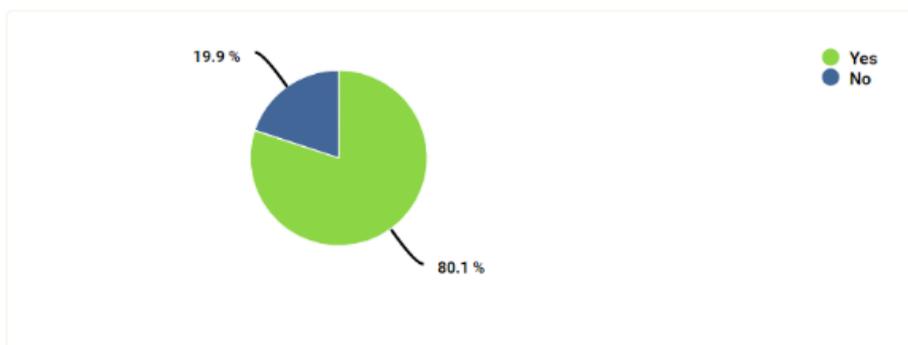
d) Do you know what costs are associated with university? **210 responses**



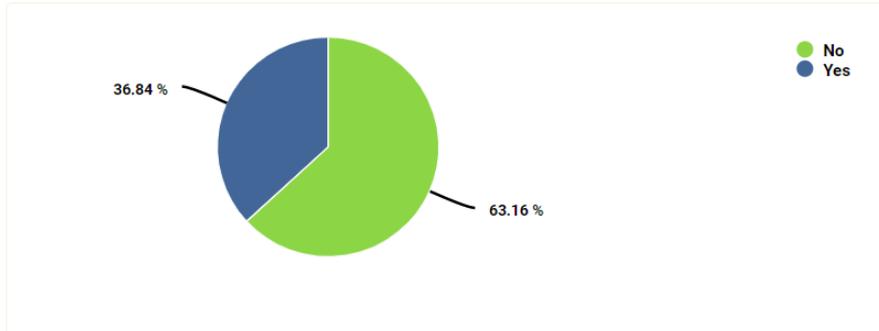
e) Do you know the financial support that is available for your child/(ren) if they are to attend university? **210 responses**



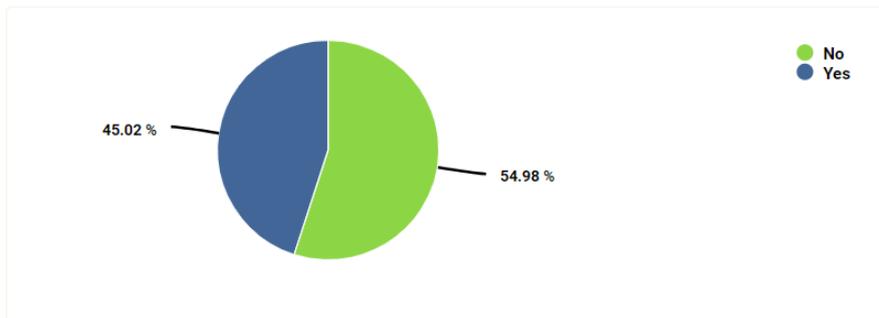
f) Would you benefit from provision regarding student finance? **206 responses**



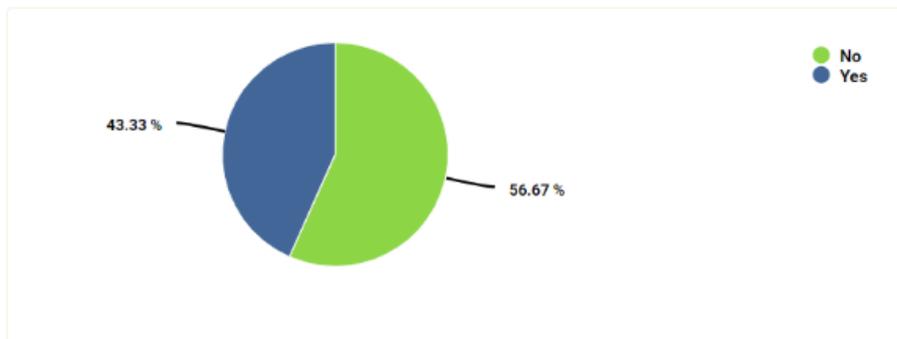
5. a) Do you know about the range of HE options available for your child/(ren)? 209 responses



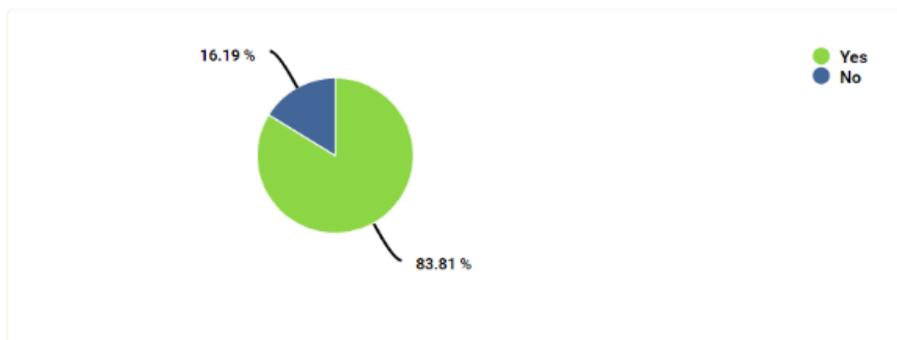
b) Do you know how to support your child/(ren) into higher education? 211 responses



c) Do you know what factors you need to look into when choosing a university? 210 responses

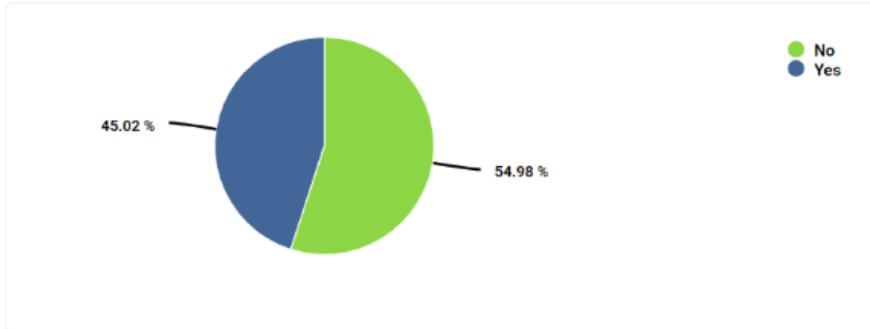


d) Would you benefit from information to help support your child/(ren) in higher education? 210 responses



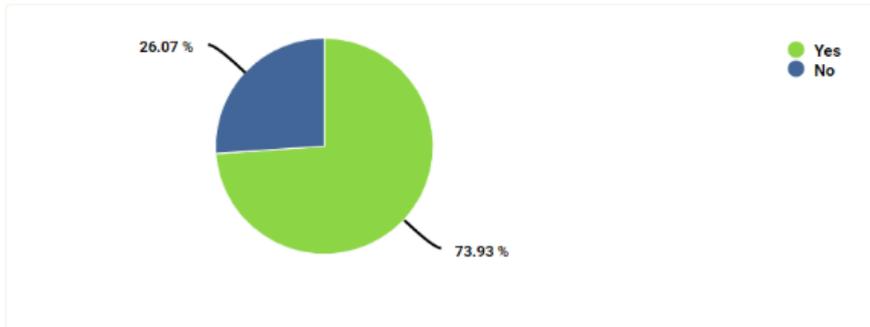
6. a) Are you familiar with UCAS and the university application process?

211 responses



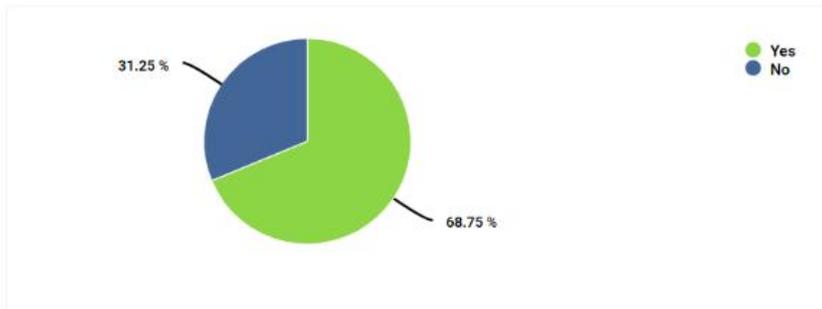
b) Would you benefit from an explanation of the university application process?

211 responses



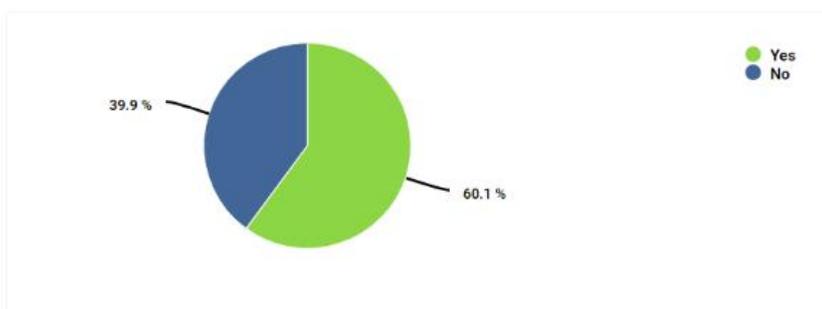
7 a) Would you benefit from provision regarding university accommodation?

208 responses



b) Would you benefit from support on or with your child moving away from home?

208 responses



Q8. Are there any additional areas of higher education that you would like support with? If yes, please provide details below.

- SEN colleges
- Any info on sixth form and universities .
- It would be helpful to know about vocational courses for those students with EHCP 's or those who are not academic
- Not at this time. I work at a University so know a lot about it from University side but not from a parent side
- Yes. I'd like to know what support there is for pupils with SEN, more specifically, Autism and what effect, if any does having an EHCP have on the University application process.
- Application and selection process. Timelines/deadlines. Appropriate college for career aspirations and qualifications/grades required. Difference for university.
- My son has SEN needs
- Support for students with autism
- Can a student go to uni with a btec qualification my son is doing an apprenticeship in engineering btec level 3 and he is thinking of going on to get his masters can he do that.
- What provision is there for children who fail their GCSE and A levels
- Details of direct entry to graduate employment from each university, with salary tiered data per subject (not just faculty).
- I would like it discussed early on with my child to make him more aware of his choices rather than waiting until he is older.
- Apprenticeship details too
- What routes from college to uni. What qualifications etc or differences between different routes
- Disability grants and what we have to do. SEN support at uni

Discussion

Question 1 demonstrates a wide sample with participants covering all key stages 3,4 and 5.

Question 2 conveys that the sample is divided into participants either knowing 'quite a bit' (40%) about HE or knowing 'barely anything at all' (34%). The minority know either a lot (17%) or nothing (9%).

Question 3 shows only 50% have not attended university suggesting their children fit a different criteria of widening participation other than being the first in their family to go to university.

Question 4 highlights the gaps in participant's knowledge regarding student finance. There is almost a 50/50 split between participants understanding or not understanding the repayment system. The majority (60%) do not know difference between tuition and maintenance loans or the associated costs with university (58%). Another majority (72%) do not understand how the maintenance loan is calculated and therefore how much money their child would receive. Following this, 75% do not understand the financial support available for their child. This proves to be incredibly important in this case, with 5 participants requesting provision for students with special education needs (SEN) in the further comment section.

It is incredibly likely that these participants are not aware of Disability Students Allowances (DSA's) and this could make a huge impact to their outlook of HE if they know there is bespoke support for them and their child. All of the above responses demonstrate the lack of knowledge regarding what costs are involved with university, and how students are expected to fund such. Many parents believe they cannot afford for their child to go to university due to misconceptions within the media relating to student finance due to the system changing since they experienced / researched university". It is so important to address this in order to inform parents that the system is designed to support each individual student and their specific needs. 80% of participants would benefit from support with student finance.

Question 5 addresses the range of HE options available to evaluate whether participants have the ability to support their child with HE decisions. 65% claim they do not know the HE options available for their child meaning they do not have the ability to support their child in making these decisions. This contradicts the initial findings that approximately 50% know quite a bit about Higher Education and this leads to the understanding that parents think they understand HE, when really they do not. It's even possible that parents define university as higher education and they are ill informed of the other routes. With 55% admitting that they do not know how to support their children and a further 56% failing to understand the factors they need to consider when choosing a university- there is clearly a real need for provision that explores the ranges of HE options and how children can be supported into each of these. This is supported with 84% claiming to benefit from information to support their child into HE.

Question 6 portrays 55% are not familiar with UCAS and this is expected due to the sample size including KS3/4. However, 74% would like an explanation of UCAS and the application process, which suggests that many of the 45% who claim to understand UCAS, are not fully confident in their knowledge.

Question 7 is evidence that there needs to be support with accommodation with 69% claiming to benefit from accommodation support and a further 60% wanting support with their child moving away from home.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that extra provision is needed across multiple areas regarding higher education. This is completely expected as in many HEI's, parental events and provisions are not a priority. However, these findings clearly show the lack of understanding parents/carers have and it's questionable that no matter how hard outreach teams work with students to inform them about HE, if parents aren't informed equally, will they receive the support they need at home to partake in higher education? The participants in this survey are clearly motivated to learn about HE, and therefore support for parents/carers should be brought in to HEI's outreach strategies.

Conclusions

- The majority of the parents/carers who think they know 'quite a bit about HE' do not. The results to the questions asking them about different factors of higher education act as evidence to this.
- HE intuitions should introduce support for parents and carers with student finance, student accommodation, support for students with special educational needs and further support with the range of HE options that are available for students and how to support students into these.

Recommendations

Factors to strengthen this research include:

- The opportunity for participants to reveal which school their child currently attends. This would make the response to this study targeted and more effective.
- The opportunity for participants to provide contact details to receive a direct response to any questions they may have submitted and to receive the results directly.
- Question 7b could be strengthened by specifying what type of support, whether this be details is physical or emotional support.