

Press release

One in three students skip meals for a day or more to cope with costs

- *New research reveals dark side of costly university living, including theft, escorting and drug dealing through to skipping meals and going without power*
- *The Student Room encourages any students struggling financially in the festive period to seek help and advice*

www.thestudentroom.co.uk

A third of students are skipping meals for a day or more to help cope with the cost of living at university, reveals new research from The Student Room. A further one in five students have gone for a week or more without electricity.

The new research* asked university students across the country how they cope with soaring living costs – responses range from exotic dancing and escorting, through to skipping meals and going for weeks without electricity. The Student Room, the world's largest online student community, commissioned the research to encourage students struggling financially to seek help and advice.

Of the students surveyed, almost a third (30%) have gone for a day or more without eating. More than one in ten (13%) admitted to stealing, with the basic need to eat the most common motivation. Of the students who admitted stealing, more than 70% said they steal food. Anecdotally, students also told of visiting food banks and scavenging from bins in order to eat.

The financial squeeze of university life has also seen students turn to drug dealing on campus (10%), seeking out a “sugar daddy” or “sugar mummy” partner (11%), working multiple jobs (20%) and gambling (12%). Other students have been forced to move home with their parents (20%) or, less shockingly, cut back on the social life (56%).

Hannah Morrish, university community manager at The Student Room said: “Across the country everyone is feeling the stress of rising living costs and, unfortunately, students are no exception. However, what this research goes to show is how vulnerable many students are, not just financially, but socially as well.

“For any students who are struggling to make ends meet we want to stress that there is an active and easy to access support network available – from short term loans through to independent and anonymous financial advice forums, such as The Student Room.

“The Step Change Debt Charity, National Debtline and the Citizens Advice Bureau are all great starting places for debt counseling and money management advice,” adds Morrish.

Students can use The Student Room forums anonymously for advice from other students and professionals to get support if they’re feeling the pressures. From money saving tips to sexual health and relationship issues the website offers reliable advice and help for those struggling to cope.

The survey by The Student Room polled 860 UK students, aged between 16 and 25, from 1 to 21 December 2015. See the full survey finding here:

1. Have you ever worked as an escort or exotic dancer to cover costs at uni?

- Yes - 9%
- No, but I have considered it - 19%
- No, but I know somebody who does - 26%

2. Are you in a relationship with a sugar mummy/daddy to help cover costs at uni?

- Yes - 11%
- I have considered it - 13%
- I know someone who does - 19%

3. Have you ever sold drugs on campus to cope with the cost of living

- Yes - 10%
- I have considered it - 10%
- I know someone who has sold drugs on campus - 31%

4. Have you ever stolen to cope with the cost of living at uni?

- Yes - 13%
- I have considered it - 8%
- I know who does - 17%

4b. Of those who've stolen (could select more than one answer):

- 79% stole food
- 51% stole alcohol
- 51% stole money
- 40% stole electrical equipment

5. Have you ever done any of the following to help cope with the cost of uni:

- Live without heating / electricity for 1 week or more – 19%
- Go without food for a day or more – 30%
- Webcamming – 9%
- Work more than one job – 20%
- Gambling – 12%
- Payday loans – 9%
- Moved home – 20%
- Not socialising – 56%

- ends -

ABOUT THE STUDENT ROOM

Founded in 2001, The Student Room is the world's largest online student community and the UK's no.1 education website according to ComScore data. The Student Room has over 3 million registered members, primarily aged between 14-24 and attracts over 8 million visitors a month. It provides student-to-student advice on studying, educational career choice and lifestyle issues. The Student Room works directly with most UK universities as well as a wide range of leading brands and companies.

For more information, images and interviews, please contact:

Andrew Will / Vicki Hughes

Fugu PR

T: 01273 327 514

E: Andrew@fugupr.com / Vicki@fugupr.com