

# The pre-results edition: Worries about socialising and meeting offers; financial skills and cost of living...

Plus more...

Student sentiment update by The Student Room

4 July - 2 August 2022



# Sharing the student voice

*I'm Mhairi and I'm the Head of Student Voice and Diversity at The Student Room.*



*I've worked with TSR for over five years, having started as a Community and Volunteer Manager, then moving to Head of Community, and I'm now thrilled to continue transforming our support for students in this role. Before my TSR life I was a secondary school teacher and head of year. Through my career I've always been driven by my passion for supporting students and helping them to create a future they love, no matter their background or personal circumstance.*

*I started writing these student sentiment updates back in January of 2021, when schools were closed to most students and traditional exams were cancelled. At TSR, we spend our days chatting to students and hearing all about the way they experience their world and the challenges they face. In 2021 we shared 17 of these updates, showcasing 72 community polls, with over 42,000 votes from students. We have an incredible opportunity (and responsibility) as the UK's largest online student community, to raise the voice of students and share it with people like you who are there to support them. I really do believe that its by listening to students and working across the whole industry together that we can make a real difference in students' lives.*

*I'm always up for a chat, so do get in touch if you'd like to hear more about this work (or massively geek out about students with me over a coffee).*

*Mhairi*

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# Highlights in this update

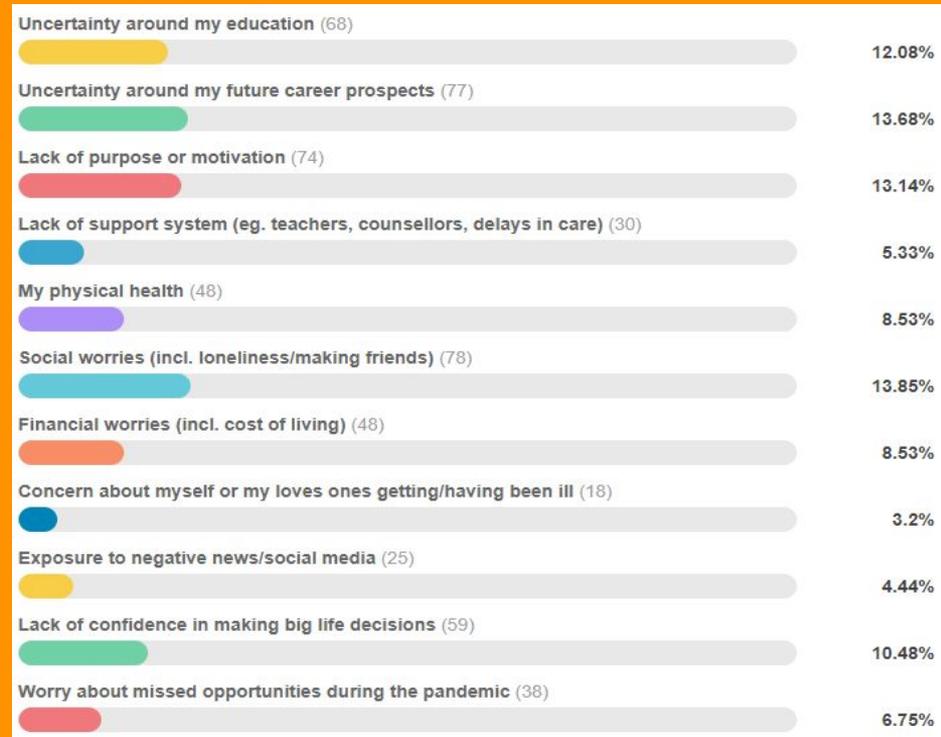
- Social worries and uncertainty about future career prospects are the top factors influencing mental health right now
- 41% of students on The Student Room say their biggest worry on results days is missing their offer
- Half of students think financial skills are missing from the school curriculum
- 82% of students starting uni are affected by the cost of living increase, with 34% reconsidering their plans
- Three quarters of students feel more needs to be done to tackle issues facing LGBTQ+ people
- And more...



# Social worries and uncertainty about future career prospects are the top factors influencing mental health right now

Uncertainty around education, uncertainty around future career prospects and lack of purpose/motivation have consistently been in the top factors since we started asking this question in April 2020.

But this month we are also seeing social worries creeping in, as students look toward starting a new academic year. We saw social worries appear as a top mental health concern around this time last year as well, which implies that the support institutions and organisations are able to provide around community and belonging is incredibly important.



# Students biggest Results worry is missing their uni offer

41% of students on The Student Room say their biggest worry is missing their offer on results day. The next biggest concerns are their hard work not paying off and disappointing their parents/carers.

Students could only select one option for this poll, and I think it's interesting that the majority focused on missing their offer, with only 4% talking about finding a place in clearing. This makes sense from a sequential point of view (ie. students who miss their offers will have to face that reality first, then think about things like clearing next if they need to), but it does show how important support is going to be for those who find themselves in clearing, especially as we are anticipating a competitive year.



# Students biggest Results worry is missing their uni offer

In our Applications, Clearing and UCAS forum, we are seeing students asking questions about clearing already...

*I finished sixth form and I got a BTEC DMM . This year I did A levels in one year and probably won't get the highest grades, and there is a chance I might not pass one subject . So I'll enter clearing hoping to access university and do a foundation year for chemical engineering, taking into consideration my BTEC, so I wanted to know if there was a possibility to transfer into a top university from, for example, if I do foundation at Bradford University, then I transfer to Nottingham, Manchester, or Sheffield, or Ucl? Do you need to inform UNI that you want to transfer? Do you need to tell them that you came there just to do a foundation year?*

*I was wondering whether someone could clear up my confusion. I firmed my choice of uni a few months ago and now have changed my mind and want to go through clearing. Do you have to wait until results day to go through clearing, if you've accepted an offer? Or is there a way to decline my firm now and go through clearing?*

*I was just wondering if anyone knew if you can still decline a uni offer after enrolling on the course? It's just because the offer I have is at a uni that I don't really want to go to, but if there's no other places anywhere else for the course I want to do in clearing on results day then I'll be going there if that makes sense.*

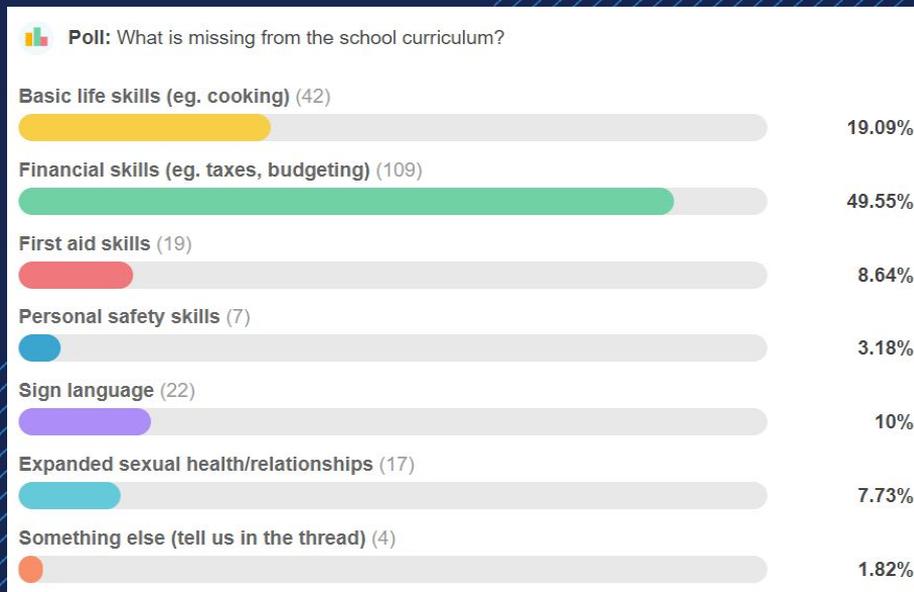
# Half of students think financial skills are missing from the school curriculum

Half of students in The Student Room community said financial skills, including things like taxes and budgeting, are missing from the school curriculum.

A further 20% felt basic life skills, like cooking, are also missing from the curriculum.

It's interesting to consider the impact of the cost of living crisis on these feelings about financial management...

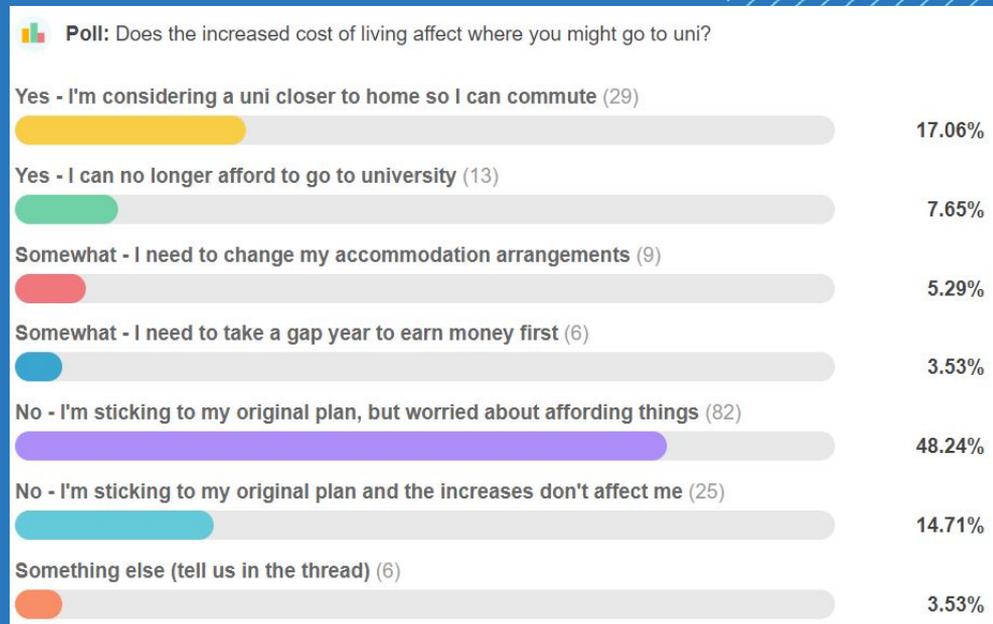
*Deffo finances. E.g. stuff such as budgeting, earning money, how taxes work, day to day bills, savings accounts, how mortgages work etc etc etc. Im good with money, but i wasnt really taught much about money at school.*



# 82% of students starting uni are affected by the cost of living increase, with 34% reconsidering their plans

In July we also asked students who are intending on starting university in September whether the increase in cost of living will affect where they might go to university. Worryingly, we found that only 15% of students are not affected at all by the cost of living.

Half of the students who responded said their plan hasn't changed but they're worried about affording things; while a further 15% are now considering attending a uni closer to home so they can commute, and another 8% said they can no longer afford to go to university.



# 82% of students starting uni are affected by the cost of living increase, with 34% reconsidering their plans

*'I prefer the course structure learning style for my firm but seriously considered putting my insurance as my firm, simply because I heard the accommodation is meant to be cheaper there... I'm not getting financial help from parents, so pulling as many shifts at work as possible rn [right now]. Tbh [to be honest] idrm [I don't really mind(?)], I think it would feel too odd taking money off parents when I know they are already cutting back. My maintenance loan just about covers all my accommodation preferences except my lowest ranking choice (picked very carefully). Of course it's great universities are able to give bursaries and SFE increased student finance to students with lower incomes, but I'm in the position where I don't qualify for these but won't get money from parents.'*

*'Absolutely moneys important and has been a huge part of my decision of where to apply and also what I've done in my gap year. I've worked tons of hours took no holiday (apart from 4 days to go up to have a look at my uni) and opted out of the pension scheme to get those extra pennies. I think really it should be part of the decision process and as moneys getting tighter the weight that should be put on that factor should also increase. There are schemes and bursaries but it doesn't help completely and this decreases with the CoL crisis and doesn't help the squeezed middle.'*

*'I'm trying not to think about the financial ramifications of doing part-time study in London Just hoping I can save enough this year to at least have a buffer so I can find a job when I get there for 2023.'*

# Three quarters of students feel more needs to be done to tackle issues facing LGBTQ+ people

In a poll in The Student Room community, we found that the majority of students feel that while things may have changed for the better, more needs to be done to tackle the issues facing LGBTQ+ people.



# Three quarters of students feel more needs to be done to tackle issues facing LGBTQ+ people

*I voted: "I think that we've come a long way but more needs to be done". Our rights are much better, but the fact that there is still homophobia and transphobia out there shows more needs to be done*

*Personally I feel the concept of "enough" doesn't really exist. If, after 300 000 years human beings living on the Earth we haven't cracked a universal system of fairness/equality then I'm not sure we will ever get consensus on one... What I am doubtful of, is whether there will ever be an "enough" amount of equality for any cause. Human beings should continue to strive for what they feel is right and the belief that everyone should be treated respectfully and fairly in a society is one I support. Every human life has the same value as another, I would hope that statement has almost a consensus. However, sadly, there will always be people who don't recognise calls for equality as being fair and who will resist change because they don't feel it is the right thing to do.*

*From personal experience, I certainly want more done. I did choose the 'we've done lots but there's more to do' option, just because I seriously recognise my privilege now as a bisexual person knowing what it would've been like 40 years ago. It's two factors which are going to make life easier: generational turnover and **education**.*

# Prepping for new academic year, hobbies and relaxing are top summer priorities

As students started their summer holidays, we asked them what the most important thing was they wanted to do this summer, and made it tougher by limiting them to choosing one option!

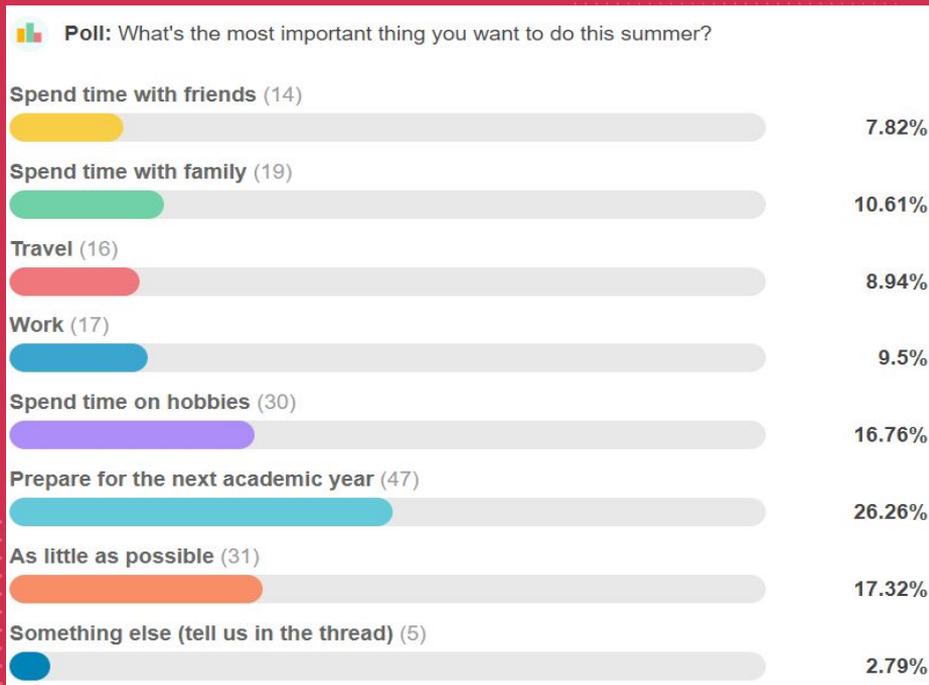
In terms of importance, 26% wanted to use the holidays to prepare for the next year; while hobbies and relaxing were also top of the list for another 17%.

*My main priority for the summer is:*

- 1. to do some preparation for my personal statement and write a personal statement draft over the summer*
- 2. Be 100% sure about the courses and the university i want to apply for*
- 3. Finish some coursework that due in september*

*As i will be going to year 13 in september which will the time when you start finalising your choices and putting them on UCAS.*

- 4. Spend as much time with family and friends*



# 50% of TSR students are fans of poetry at school

This month our TSR Volunteers have been inviting discussions about different aspects of the curriculum. In a poll of 240 members of The Student Room, we found that half are fans of poetry being part of the English curriculum.

*I think it teaches good analytical skills - particularly when comparing/contrasting two poems. It's also funny the poems that stick with you/that you remember decades later - even if you hated the poems in question at the time! Poems...have followed me into/helped me process things throughout adulthood...*

*Yes. But not because of the skills - I learned the same skills with all the other stuff in the English curriculum. Rather because poetry is a special, unique and almost sentimental way of communicating something to the reader. When you read poetry it's like reading art.*

