

A photograph of a student with a blue backpack walking away from the camera on a stone path. The path leads towards a large, multi-story stone building with Gothic-style windows and arches. The building is surrounded by green lawns and trees. The sky is overcast.

An applicant's view: Thinking about September

May 11th 2020 webinar

YouthSight

UCAS
Media

A partnership approach between YouthSight and UCAS

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Third look at our applicant mood tracking data



Online survey

Representative sample of applicants,
by gender and school type, and
including the UK regions

All sample from YouthSight's
OpinionPanel Community

Fieldwork **30th April – 4th May 2020**

We explored...



How applicants are currently feeling and how they are preparing to go to university



Their preferred option for starting university out of a range we posed



And how applicants might adapt or change their plans as a result

A 5% growth cap will have limited impact on the majority in the sector

19

Providers already have 5% more EU and home applicants than at June 30th 2019

While the focus is on those who may be close to reaching the cap, this misses the point that many more providers – 88 – are down by 5% or more.

Least likely to be high tariff

Most likely to be smaller providers

What impact might this have on current applicants?

Our analysis shows that, with many assumptions, fewer than **0.5%** of applicants would be impacted by a cap.



May 11th 2020

98%

**of applicants have concerns
about starting university in
Autumn**



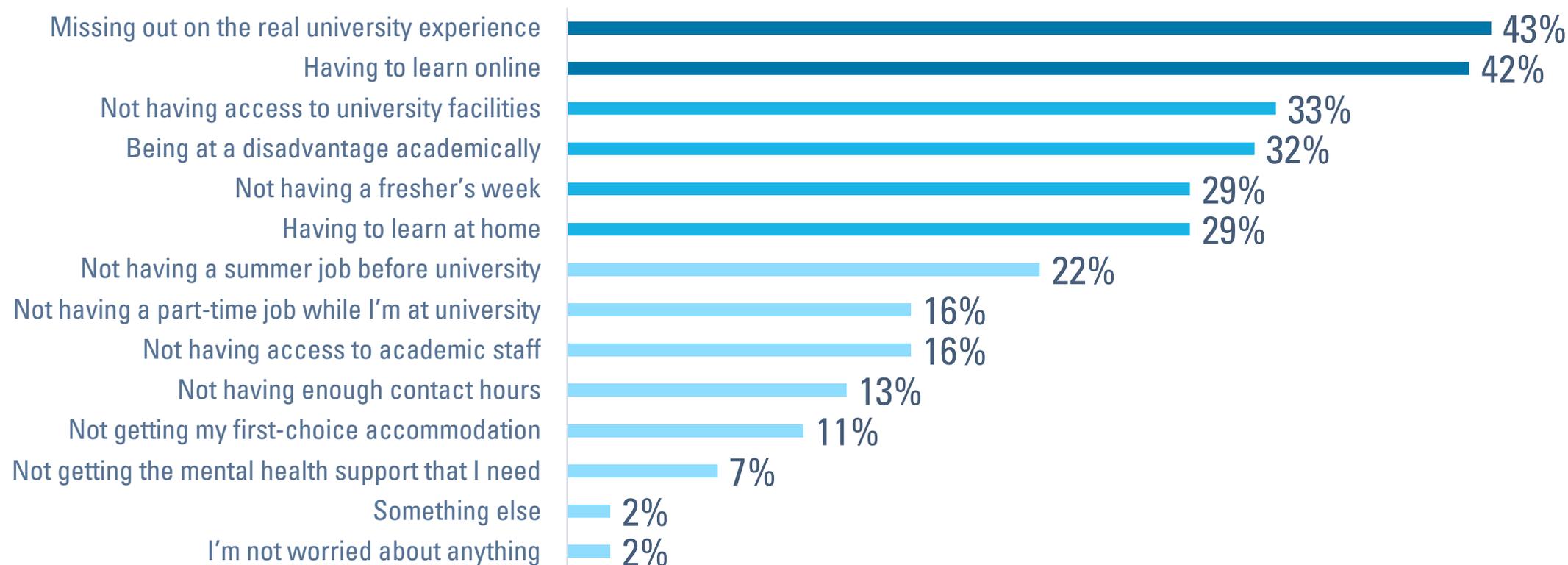
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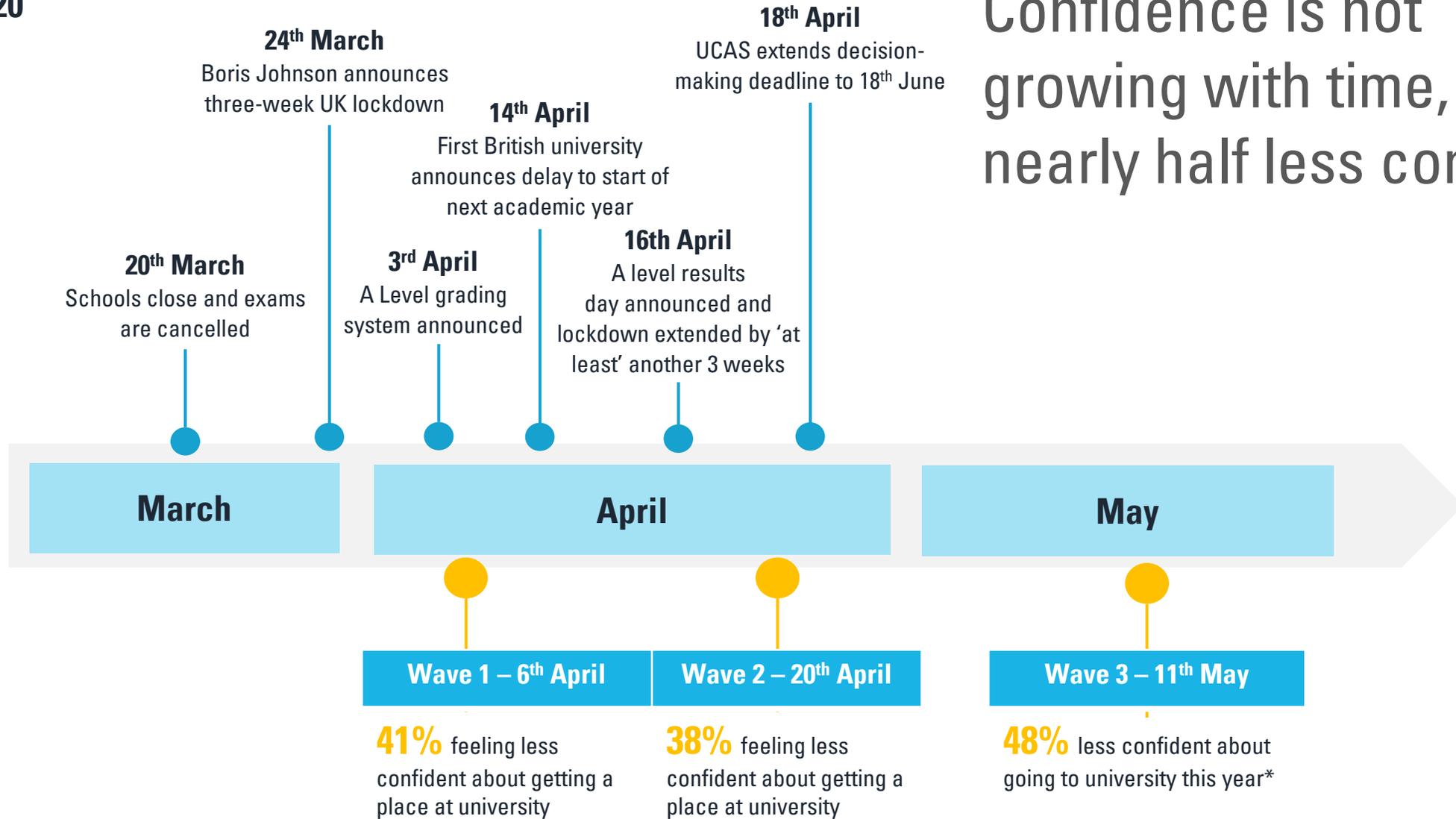
Q5. Which of the following, if any, are you personally worried about?
Base: All respondents (522) May 11th 2020

Applicants need a lot of different reassurances this year

% who ranked each in their top 3 worries



May 11th 2020



Confidence is not growing with time, with nearly half less confident

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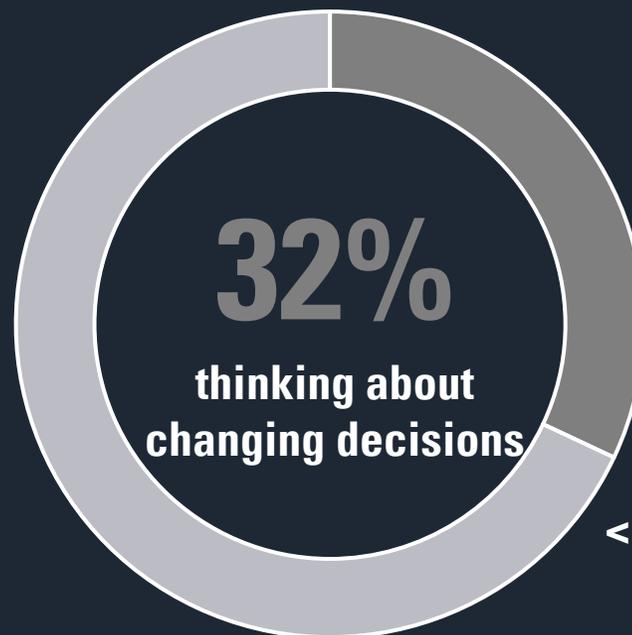
Q2. Compared to before Coronavirus, how are you feeling about going to university this year?
Base: All respondents (Wave 1 – 506), Wave 2 - 519, Wave 3 - 522)

May 11th 2020

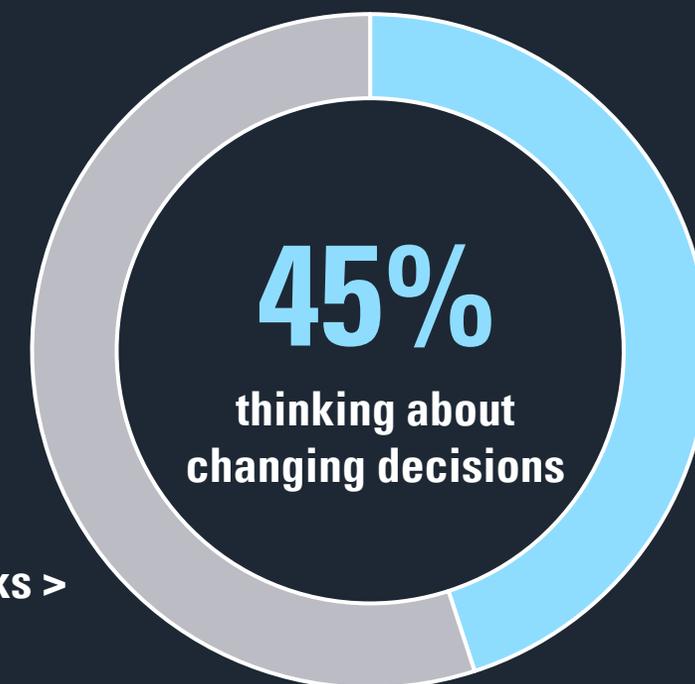
Nearly half of applicants have considered changing their university choices



9-14th April



30th April – 4th May



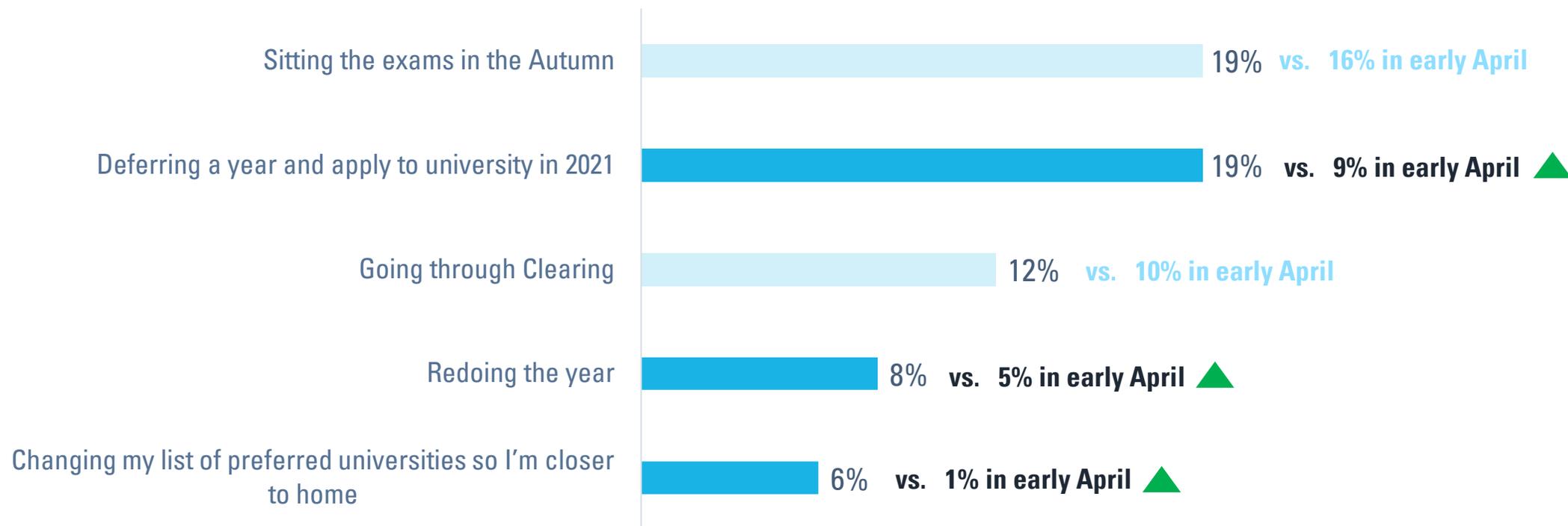
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Q3. Since the start of lockdown, are you thinking about changing any of your decisions about university?
Base: All respondents (Wave 2 - 519), (Wave 3 - 522)

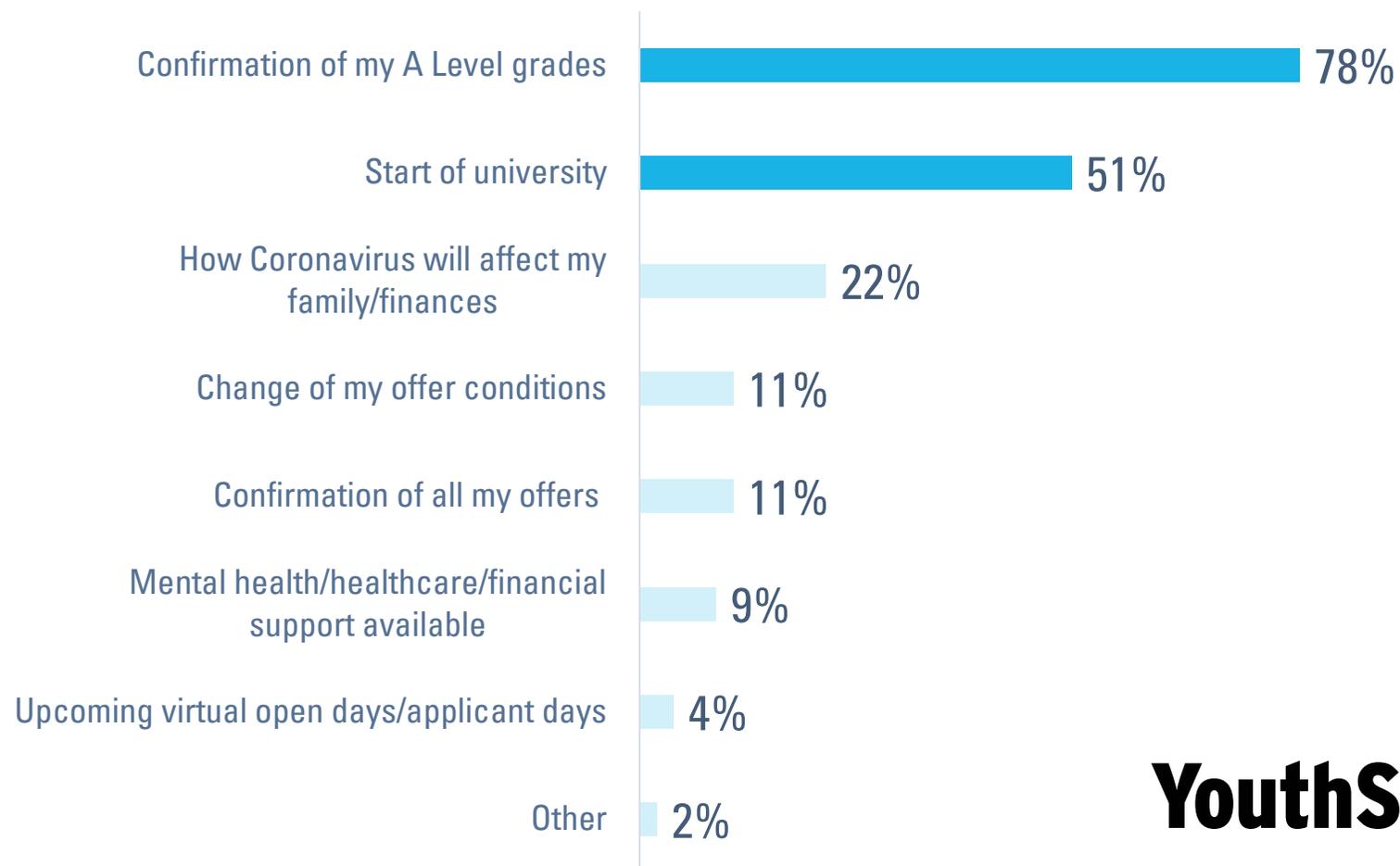
There's significantly more interest in deferring, redoing the year and studying closer to home



▲ Significant increase since Wave 2

Apart from A Level grades, applicants are waiting for more certainty around start dates

What information do you need to make your final decision?



May 11th 2020



Thinking about their preferred start date ...

52%

Want to start university in September with social distancing in place

29%

Want to delay until social distancing is relaxed completely which maybe early 2021

19%

Want to start in September but study from home

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Q9. At this stage we do not know what social distancing measures may be in place for Autumn Universities therefore need to think about how to start the next academic year.

Which option from the following would be the most likely to welcome new students like yourself?

Base: All respondents surveyed on May 11th 2020

Security marking: PUBLIC

70%

of applicants would be happy to go along with their preferred start date/scenario and **not change their plans**

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And here is what they would do ...

Start in September but with social distancing	Start after social distancing (early 2021?)	Start in September but study from home
52% preferred	29% preferred	19% preferred
Note that the outcomes were only asked about preferred scenario...		
16% would defer	32% would defer	17% would defer
5% would pick a university closer to home	4% would pick a university closer to home	8% would pick a university closer to home
4% would not go to university	4% would not go to university	12% would not go to university



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PROVIDERS

If you haven't made a decision on start dates then this is needed from applicants imminently.
Offer certainty and reassurance where you can.

Be realistic that all options have implications for learners' eventual choices

Most applicants still seem hesitant to start concrete preparations – so, do everything you can to encourage this – and give them something to look forward to

The 5% cap is not likely to have a significant impact on the sector

Applicants are chiefly concerned with missing a real University experience and learning online

45% are now considering changing their choices

52% want to start uni in Sep even with social distancing

All starting options may precipitate applicants to make a different choice for themselves