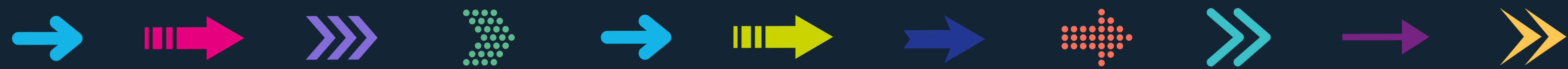


THE RISE OF THE COMMUTER STUDENT



GEMMA STANDEN, UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
CARYS WILLGOSS, UCAS

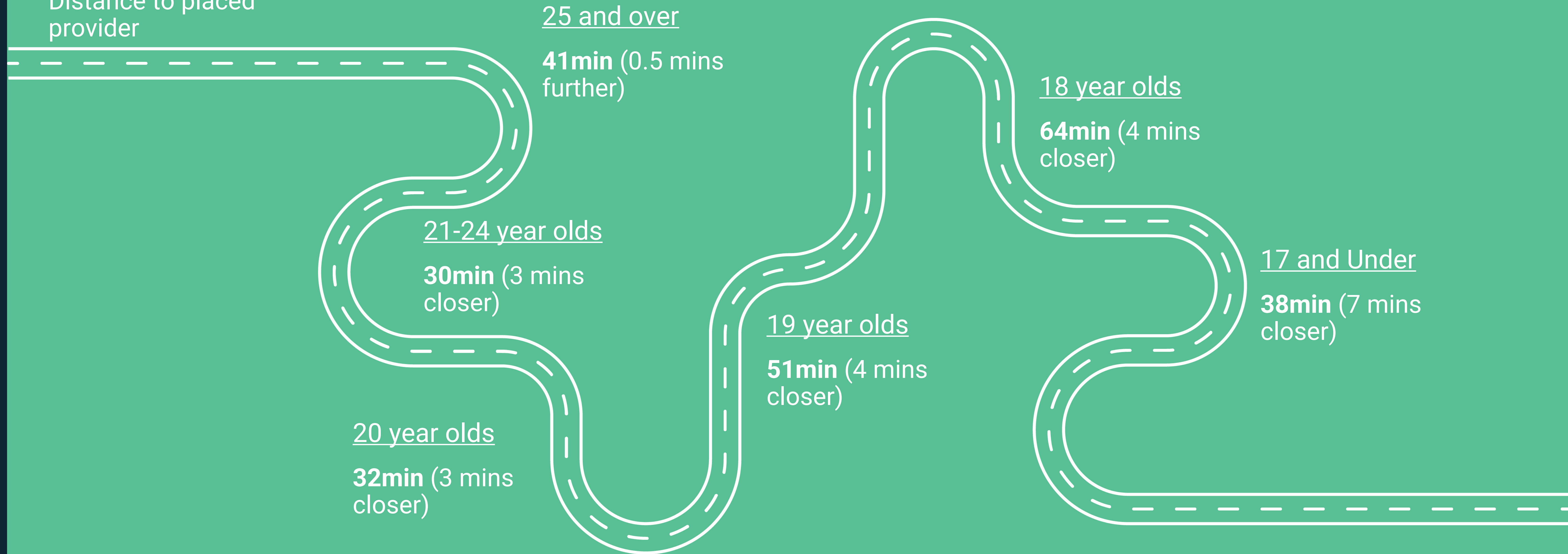
UCAS

THE RISE OF THE COMMUTER STUDENT



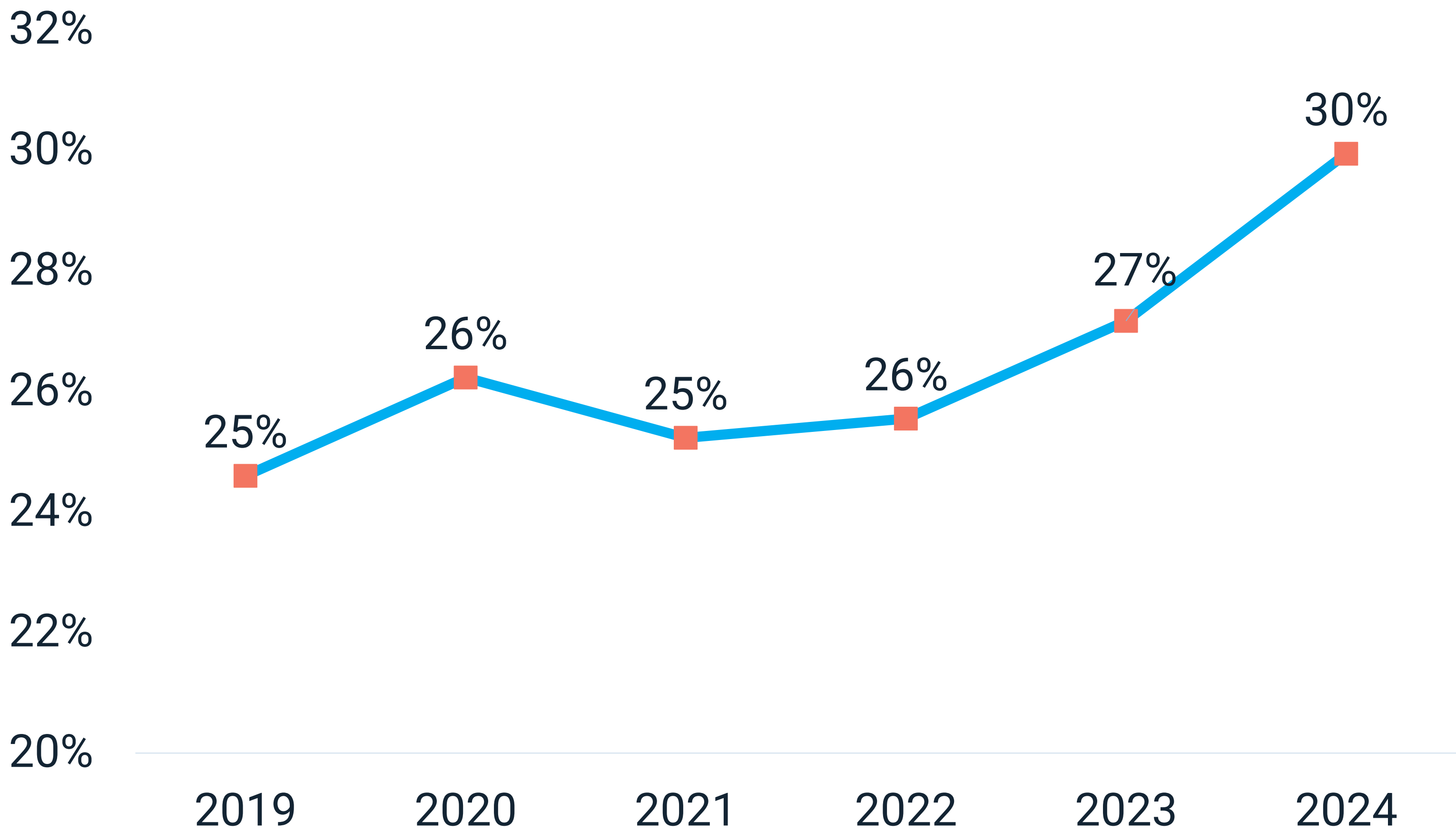
TRAVEL TIME - YOUNG APPLICANTS STUDYING CLOSER TO HOME

Distance to placed provider



LIVE AT HOME STUDENTS ON THE RISE

Proportion of UK 18-year-old accepted applicants living at home to study



30%
UK 18 year olds



17%
UK18 IMD Q5



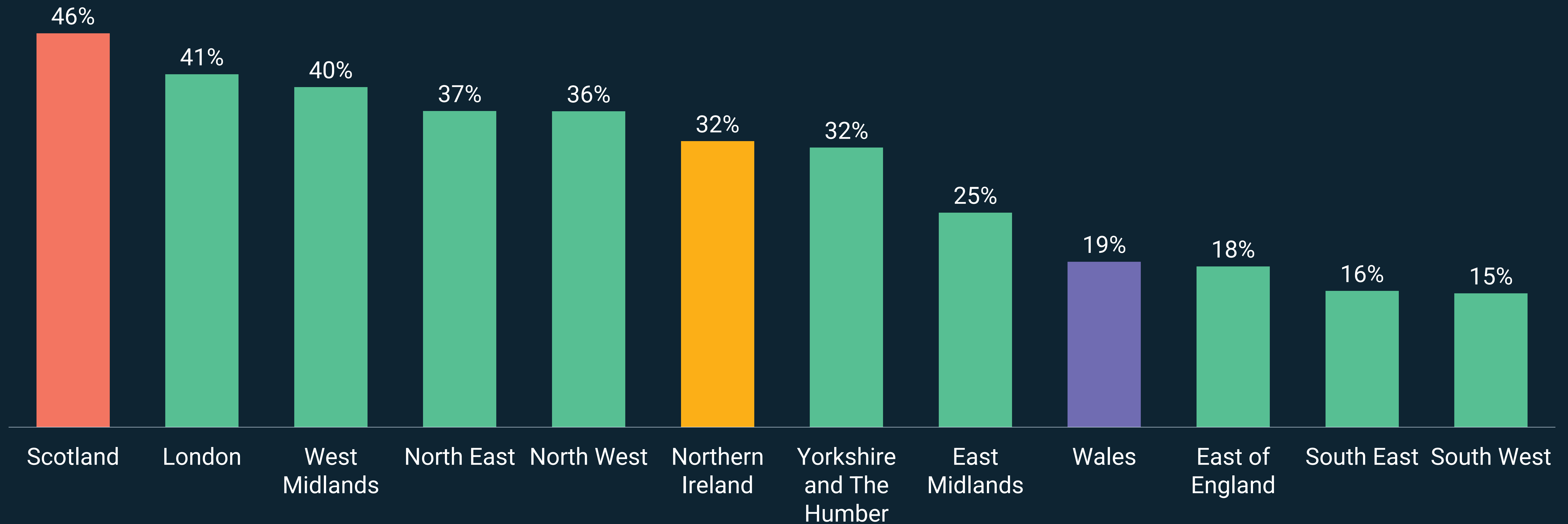
44%
UK 21+



51%
UK18 IMD Q1

LIVE AT HOME BY REGION

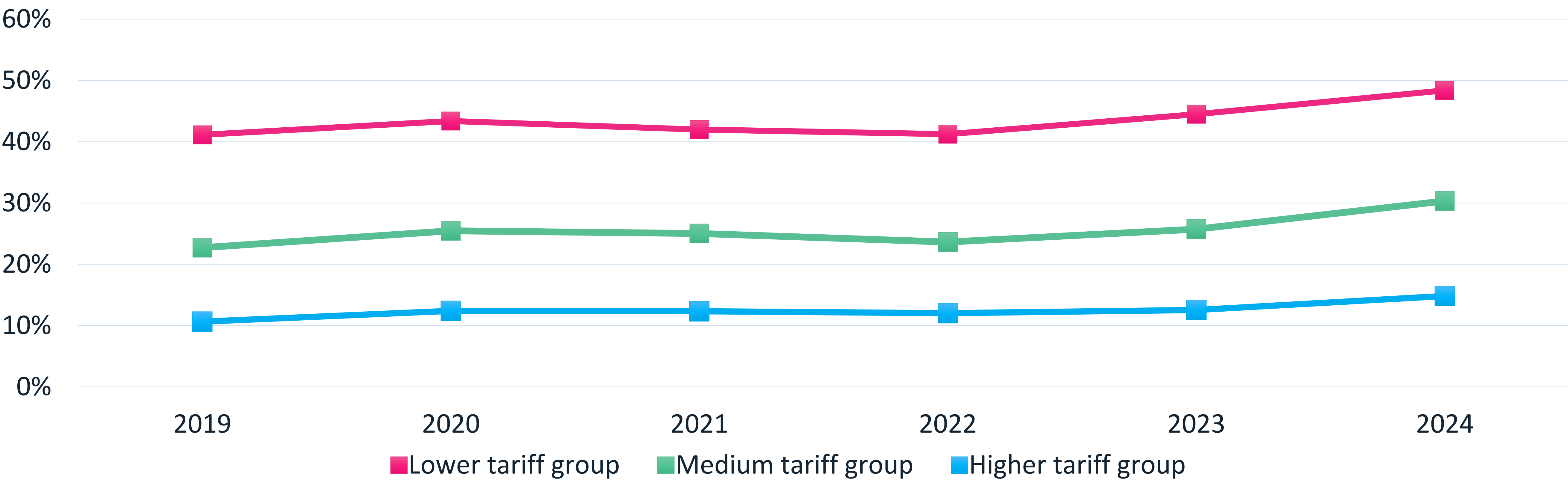
Proportion of UK 18-year-old accepted applicants living at home to study



LIVE AT HOME APPLICANTS BY HIGH, MEDIUM AND LOW PROVIDER TARIFF

A growing proportion of applicants placed at lower tariff providers are intending to live at home (+3.9% compared to the previous cycle – vs +2.3% for those placed at higher tariff providers).

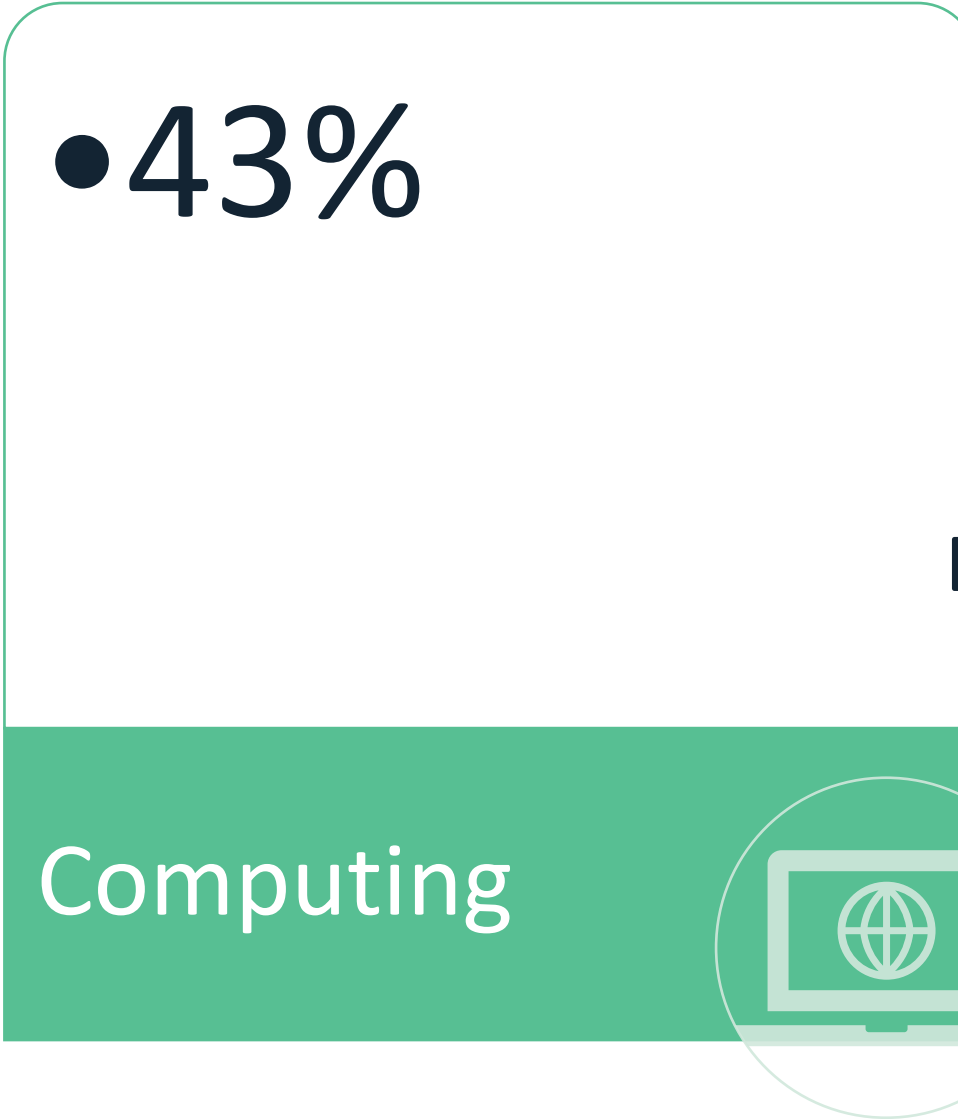
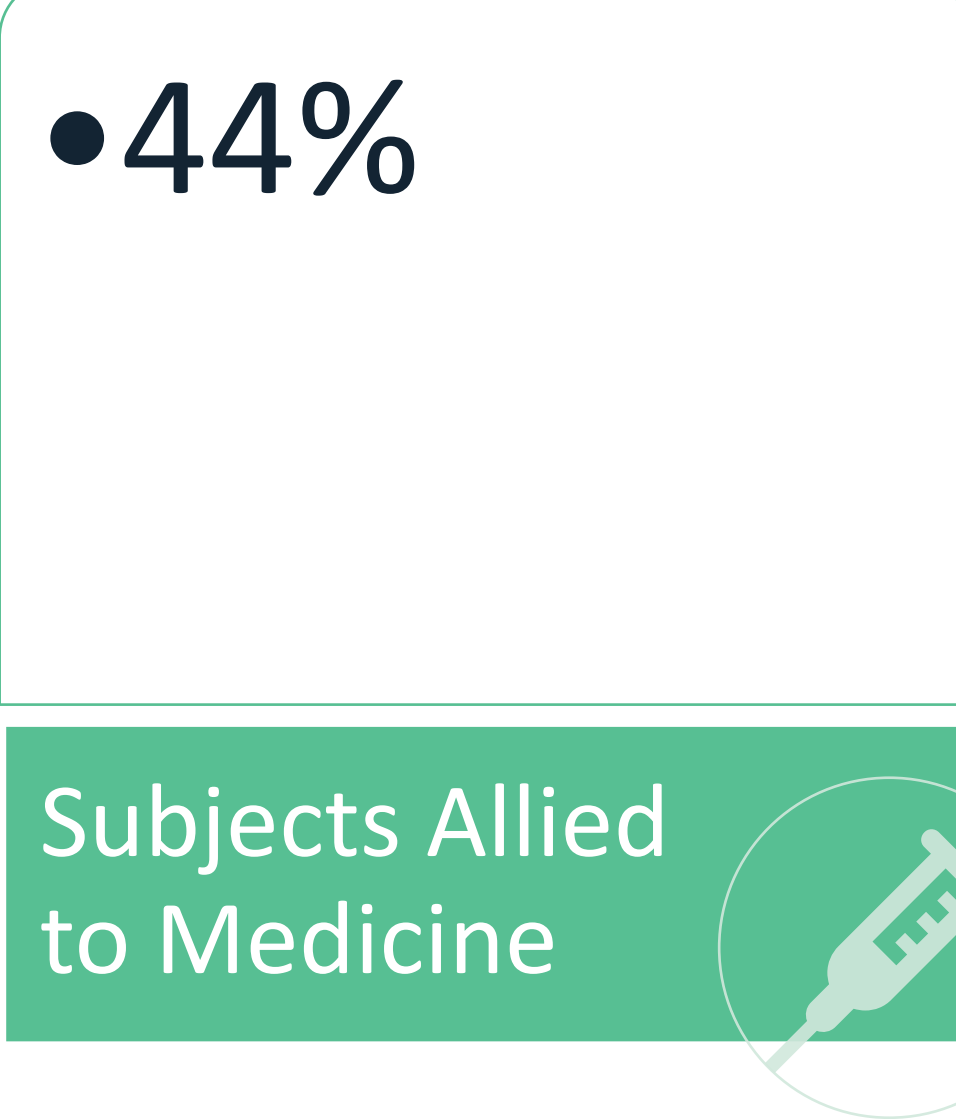
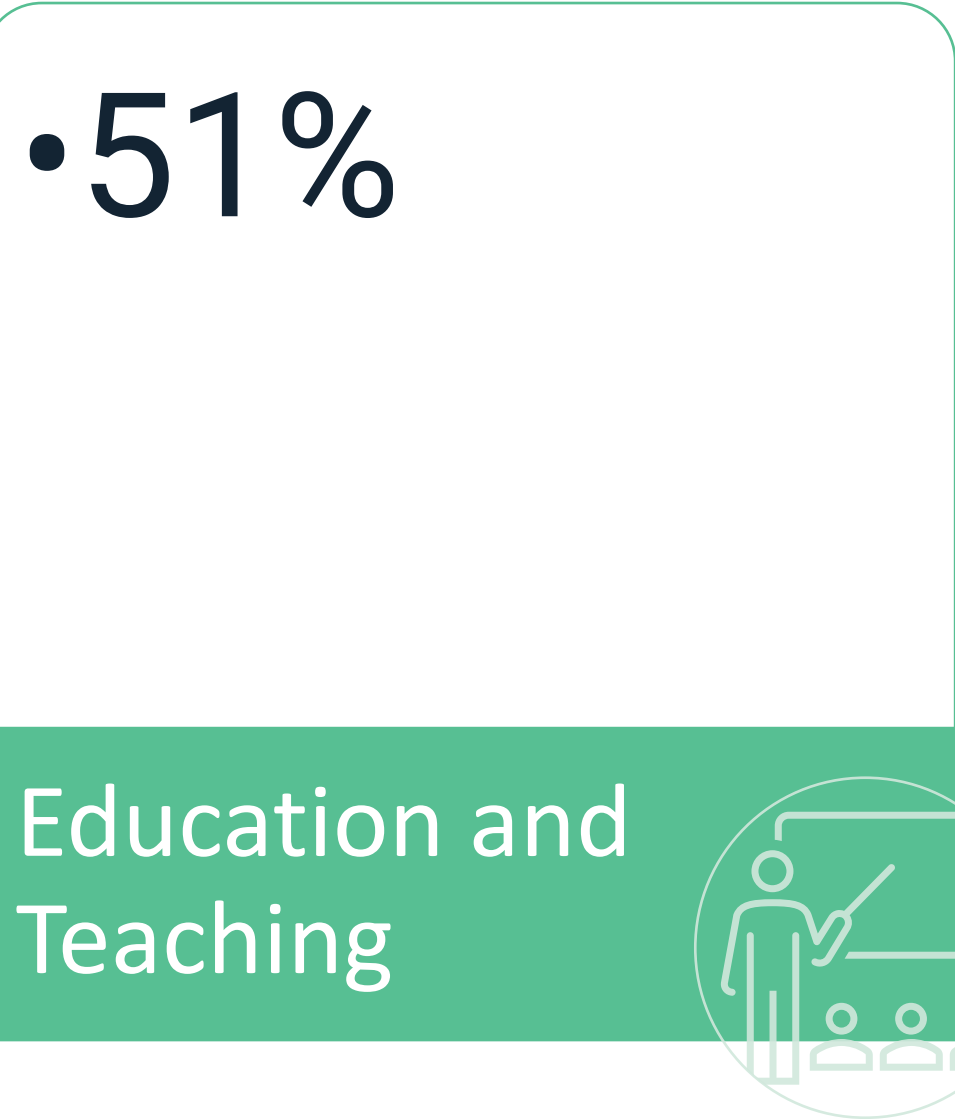
Proportion of placed applicants intending to live at home split by provider tariff
(UK 18 year olds end of cycle)



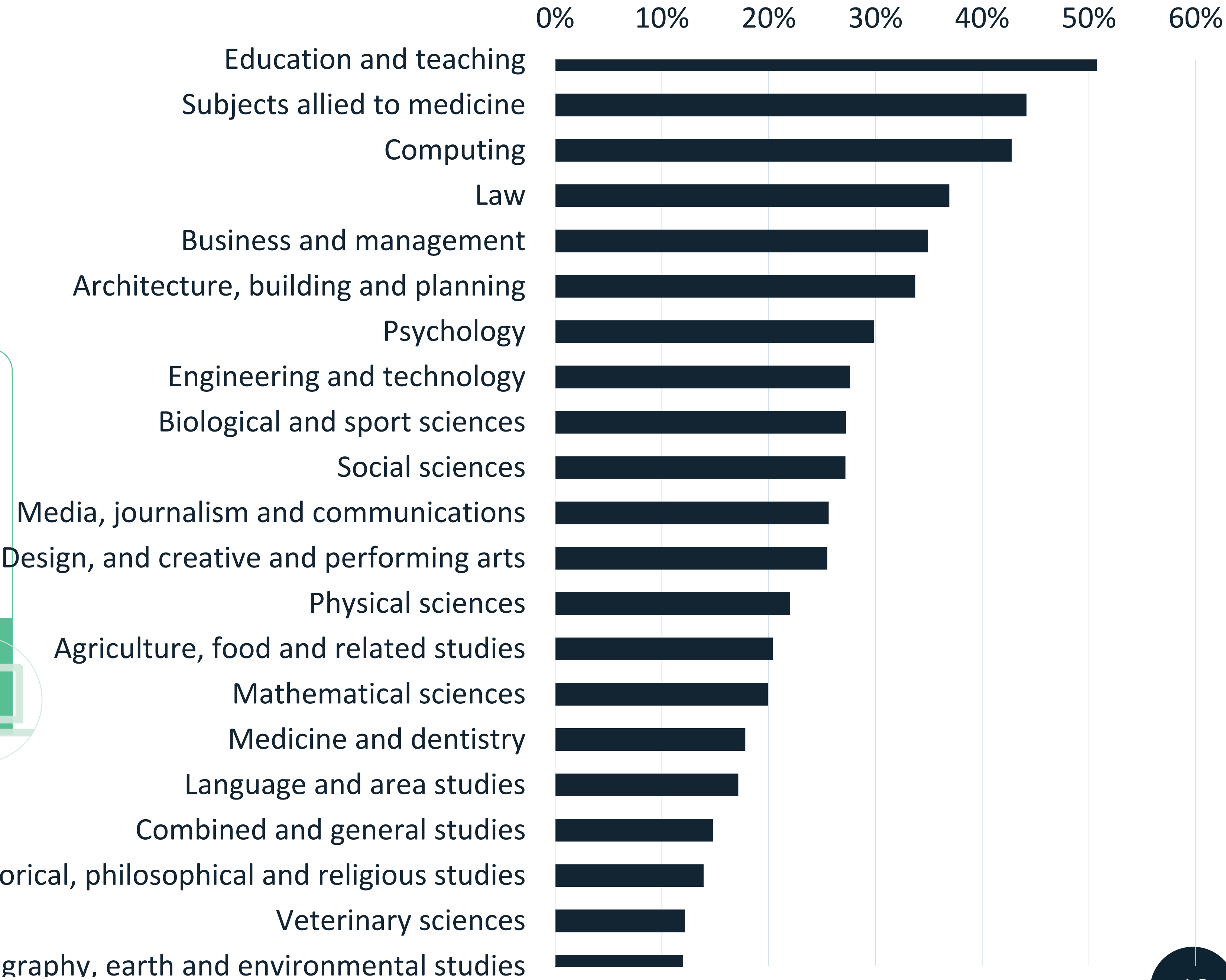
Medium tariff seeing the largest increase in applicants intending to live at home (+4.6%).

LIVE AT HOME BY SUBJECT

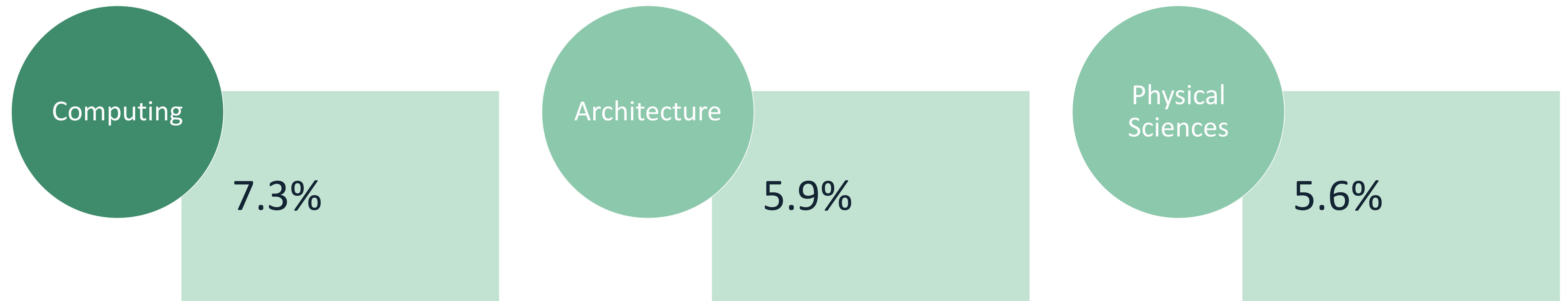
Largest % of applicants intending to live at home by subject



Proportion of placed applicants intending to live at home, split by HECoS CAH1 group (UK 18 year olds)



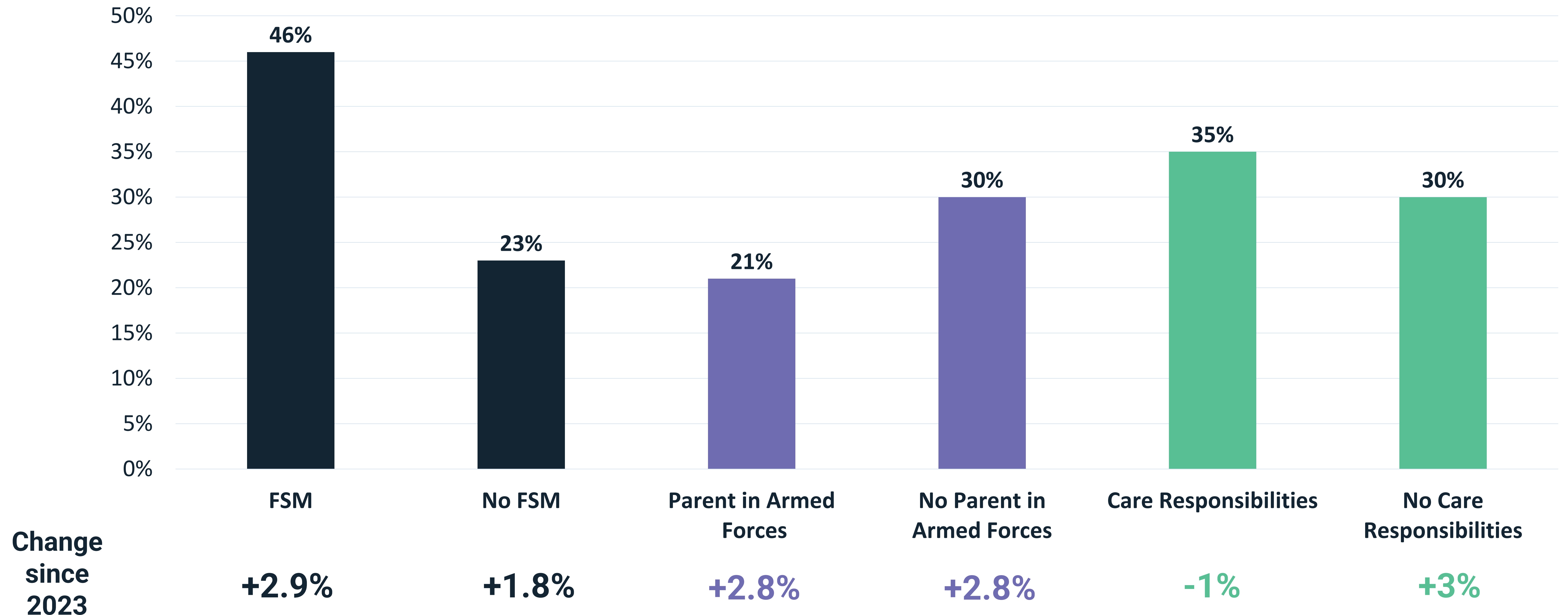
LIVE AT HOME BY SUBJECT: LARGEST LONG-TERM GROWTH



% increase in applicants intending to live at home by subject since 2020

LIVE AT HOME APPLICANTS BY BACKGROUND

Proportion of placed applicants intending to live at home (2024, UK 18year olds)



WHAT DO OUR SURVEYS SAY?

The option to live at home saw the greatest increase in score over the five-year period (but remains bottom of the list).

Cost of living impacts are evident with increased importance over time being placed on:

- Local part time employment
- Accommodation costs
- Accommodation proximity to campus - as students may be aiming to minimise the cost of day-to-day travel while at university
- Ease and cost of travelling to the university.

Factor	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2024 vs. 2020
Range of modules in course	92.3	90.5	90.3	90.5	89.4	-2.9
Student reviews of this uni	84.9	83.9	84.1	83.2	82.9	-2.0
Social life or activities available	80.9	80.4	81.4	81.2	80.9	+0.0
Location in town or city	80.5	79.9	80.1	80.5	80.5	+0.0
Graduate earning potential	78.3	77.0	77.7	78.1	79.7	+1.4
Work experience as part of course	75.3	73.1	71.8	73.4	75.4	+0.1
Communication before/after applying	79.1	77.9	78.9	76.7	75.1	-4.0
Accommodation quality	75.0	74.1	76.4	75.6	74.9	-0.1
Fit in with other students	78.6	73.8	75.6	75.2	74.7	-3.9
Accommodation availability	73.9	72.2	74.6	74.2	74.1	+0.2
League table position	74.8	72.0	70.6	71.0	71.2	-3.6
Ease of travelling to this uni	66.3	63.2	66.0	67.9	68.9	+2.6
Accommodation proximity to campus	68.2	66.3	70.1	69.9	68.9	+0.7
Accommodation cost	64.8	63.6	68.4	68.7	68.9	+4.1
Local part-time employment	61.2	58.5	63.2	64.5	66.2	+5.0
Cost of travelling to this uni	59.8	56.1	61.1	62.8	63.4	+3.6
Incentives to make firm choice	57.7	57.5	60.6	59.8	59.8	+2.1
Sports facilities offered	45.5	45.9	48.5	50.0	50.2	+4.7
Speed of getting an offer	48.2	49.8	54.0	50.5	50.2	+2.0
Option to live at home	31.0	32.0	33.2	34.9	37.1	+6.1

Significant increase

No change

Significant decrease

Importance ratings are calculated by taking the proportion of offer holders who rated a factor as 'not important' or 'not at all important' from the proportion who rated it as 'important' or 'extremely important'. This difference is then rescaled to give an overall rating between 0 and 100.

COMMUTER STUDENTS: A HE PERSPECTIVE

Commuters are broadly defined as students who reside at home and travel into university, rather than relocate for the purpose of study (Thomas, 2020). However, the definitions used by universities can vary due to the group not being explicitly named by the Office for Students.

Discussions in academic literature reflect the following:

- Commuter students are intersectional with other Outreach target groups (Donnelly and Gamsu, 2018).
- ‘Stayeducation’ students are likelier to have an existing support network or community outside study, and therefore only engage with studies when necessary (Pokorny et al., 2017).
- ‘Live at home’, ‘off-campus’ and ‘learn and go’ students are terms used to describe commuter students (Thomas and Jones, 2017).

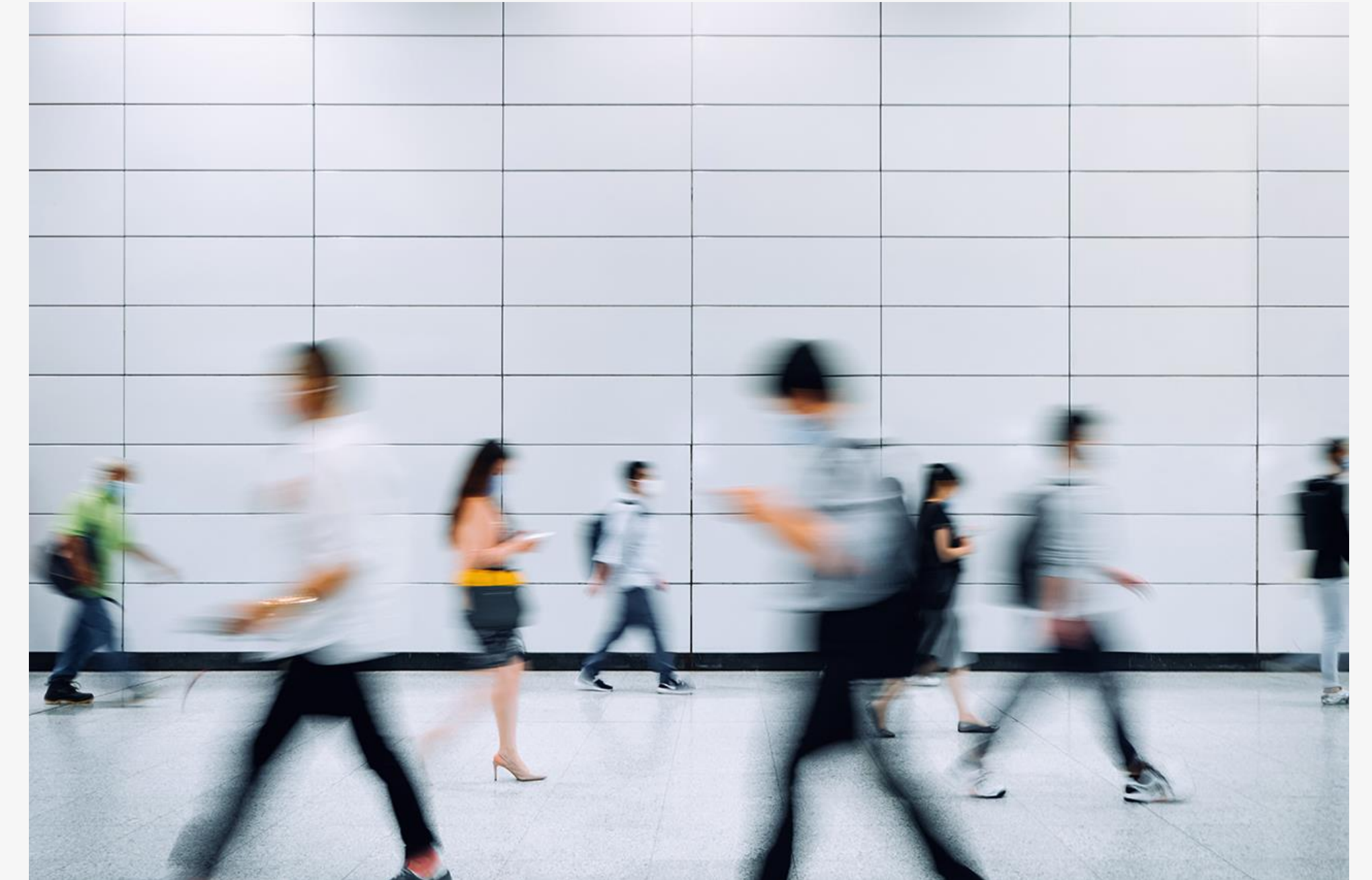
Taxonomy of commuter student types

	Close to place of study	Distant from place of study
Cohabit with other students	'Typical' residential student Higher social engagement potential Lower travel disruption potential	'Social' commuter student Higher social engagement potential Higher travel disruption potential
Lives alone or cohabits with non-students (eg parents, family etc)	'Home' commuter student Medium / lower social engagement potential Lower travel disruption potential	'Higher-risk' commuter student Lower social engagement potential Higher travel disruption potential

COMMON CHALLENGES

- Experiencing a commute in real-time.
- Adjusting to timetabling and student life.
- Networking with peers inside and outside of class.
- Being engaged with extra-curricular activities.
- Managing other responsibilities alongside studies.
- Cost of transport and/or parking.

The above examples can be further compounded by level of social need and distance travelled.



Sources: Pokorny et al., 2017; Thomas and Jones, 2017; Maguire and Morris, 2018; Donnelly and Gamsu, 2018).

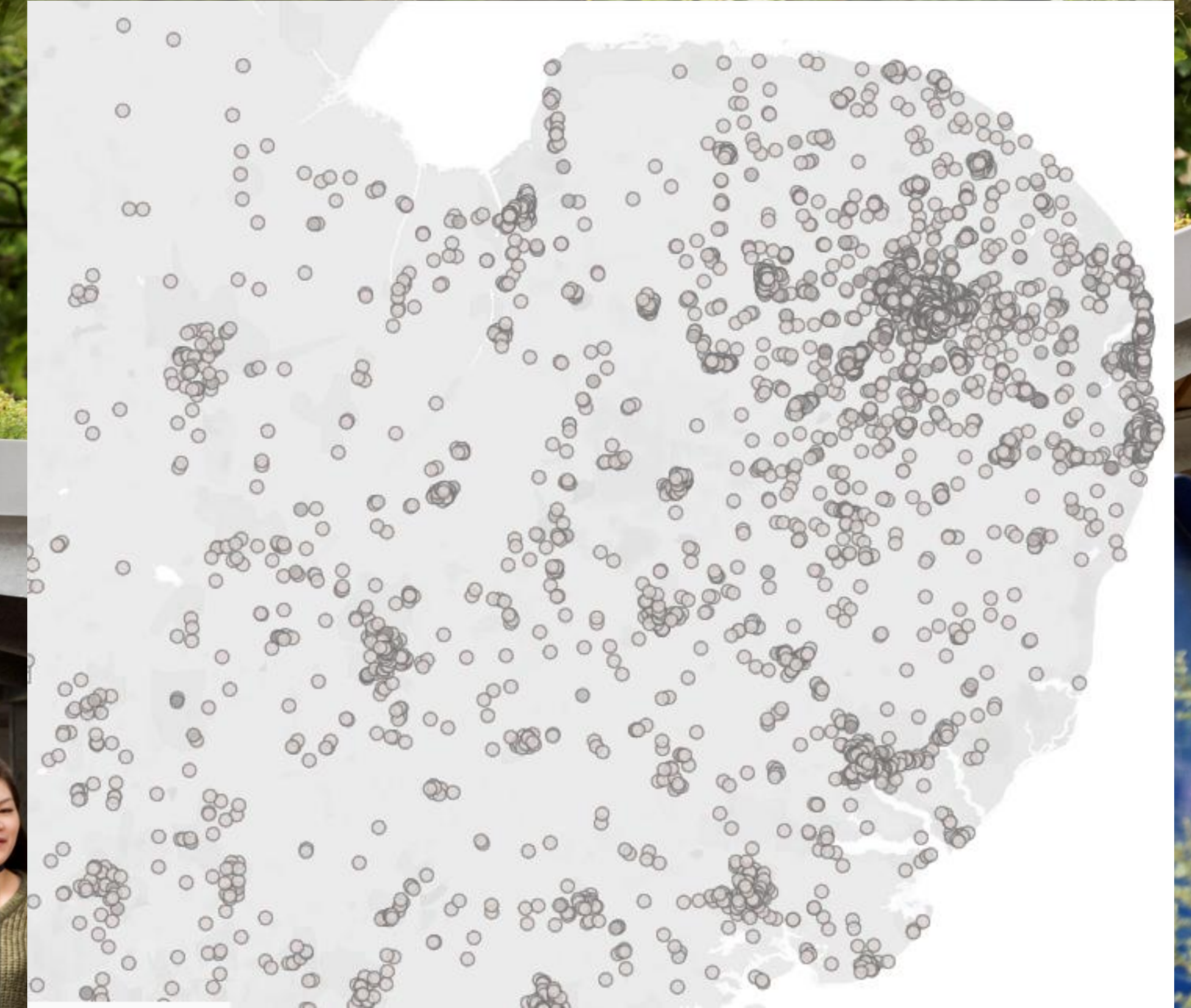
A CASE STUDY: UEA COMMUTERS

UEA define commuters as students who live at the same address (i.e., termtime and non-termtime address stays the same).

Norwich is based centrally in Norfolk, with key transport links across the region and UK.

We are a regional university that predominantly attracts commuter students from all over East Anglia. Commuter students make up just over a quarter of our whole student community.

Courses commuters are attracted to include Healthcare and Medicine, Education, Pharmacy, Physics, History and Social Work.



UEA COMMUTER STUDENT SUPPORT PACKAGE

- Commuter student welcome mailing and events (including a pin-badge and travel planner).
- A peer support group for mature and/or commuter students.
- Training for UEA Student Union club and societies.
- Representation in marketing and through recruitment events (i.e., open days).
- Commuter breakfast events.
- Dedicated space for commuters on campus – facilities to store and heat food, refill hot and cold water and lockers (plus associated guide on portal pages).
- A transport team who partner with local transport providers to offer and promote discounts, lift-sharing and free park and ride services.
- Lecture recording and virtual learning environment, online library services and remote access to professional and learning/teaching services.
- Drop-in study support sessions (which can be facilitated as hybrid sessions).
- Discounted on campus accommodation (bed and breakfast and unused student residences).

IAG FOR COMMUTERS


If you are finding more of your students are considering staying local for their studies, please consider:

- Signposting to the university website and information about transport. Students can note any student discounts on journeys and any incentives.
- Influencing students to practice their commute, particularly if visiting for an open or applicant day.
- Students are advised to contact universities directly to speak to staff and/or students for insight into student experience.
- Feasibility – if students are very socially driven, they may find a longer commute challenging or isolating. Universities may offer accommodation options later if they change their mind. It is worth asking if this option is available to support informed decision making.

Please feel free to share any recommendations you have through your own experience.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Commuter students are increasing, and they are a diverse group
2. Commuter students now feature in the Office for Students' equality of opportunity risk register, meaning that many institutions will have considered their experience in the latest round of access and participation plans
3. Personalisation is key, in terms of how advisers, UCAS and providers support this cohort in taking their next steps in education.



ANY QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU

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