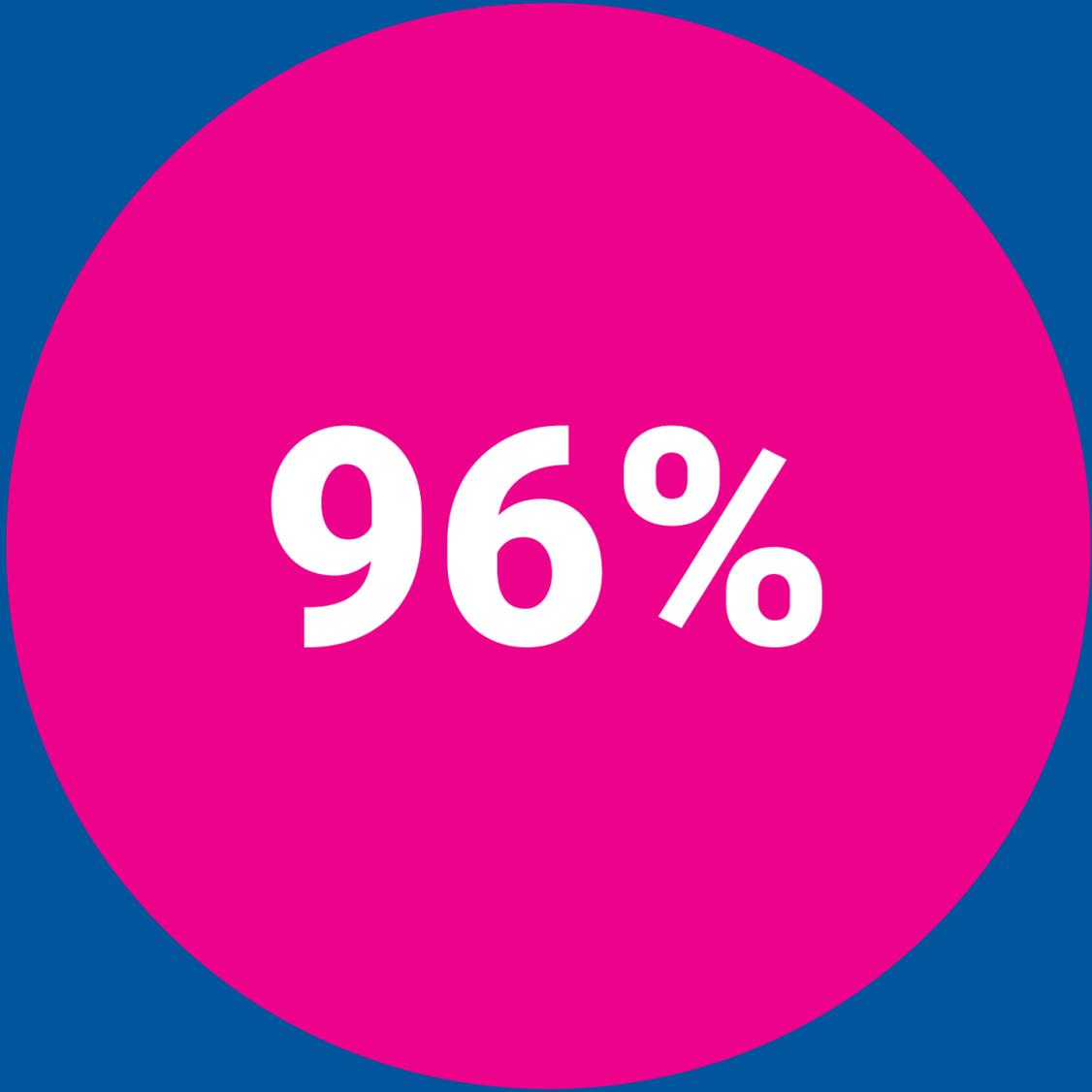


★ RATEMY**PLACEMENT**

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT ATTITUDES TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION 2020



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96%

of employers see diversity and inclusion as one of their biggest priorities when recruiting early talent.*

*Institute for Student Employers, 2019

Introduction

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) is one of the most important priorities for employers in the UK today.

At RateMyPlacement.co.uk, we wanted to find out students' perspectives on D&I in the workplace to help employers, universities and agencies approach it more effectively. To achieve this, we carried out an extensive research project delving into D&I from a student perspective.

We conducted some research in January 2020 and received responses from over 1,600 students across 74 universities on topics such as female-targeted events, sharing personal information with employers and barriers to entry.

This report outlines the key findings to help and support employers to attract diverse talent into their organisations.

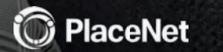
A huge thank you to everyone who has supported the research, including universities, employers and our industry partners.



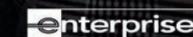
Headline Supporter



Industry Partners



Supporters



Contents

The Sample

The Sample 7

Ethnicity 8

The Results

Section 1: Students' understanding of diversity & inclusion in the workplace 10

Do you think diversity and inclusion is important in the workplace? 11

What does diversity and inclusion mean to you? 12

Quotes from students 13

Do you understand why employers ask for your diversity information when applying for a job? 14

Why do employers ask for personal information about you, when you apply for jobs? 15

When would you feel comfortable sharing the following information? 16

Section 2: Targeting students for events and jobs by demographics 17

How far would you agree with the following statements? It's good for employers to target women for events on campus 18

How far would you agree with the following statements? It's good for employers to target women specifically for roles 19

Quotes from students 20

How far would you agree with the following statements? It's good for employers to target students from particular ethnic backgrounds for events on campus 21

How far would you agree with the following statements? It's good for employers to target students from particular ethnic backgrounds specifically for roles 22

Quotes from students 23

How far would you agree with the following statements? It's good for employers to target students who are from low socioeconomic backgrounds for events on campus 24

How far would you agree with the following statements? It's good for employers to target students who are from low socioeconomic backgrounds specifically for roles 25

Section 3: Important factors to students when they apply for a job 26

How important are the following factors when applying for a role? 27

Mental health focus 28

Section 4: Barriers to interviews 29

Have you ever opted out of an interview due to financial constraints? E.g. travel costs to get to the interview 30

Have you ever opted out of an interview due to work commitments? 31

Quotes from students about interviews 32

Key Findings

95% of students feel that diversity & inclusion is important in the workplace.

A positive work environment and interesting work is more important to students than salary.

26% of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds have opted out of interviews due to financial constraints.

48% of students do not know why employers ask for their diversity information.

Mental health is now a very important consideration for young people, with 79% saying that adequate support provision in the workplace influences their decision-making about jobs.

20% of BAME students think employers collect personal information to identify who won't fit into their organisations.

THE SAMPLE



The Sample

1,672
Responses

Gender

65% female / 32% male

16%

with a disability

14%

received free school
meals

37%

were first in their family to
go to university

74

universities

Mixture of year groups

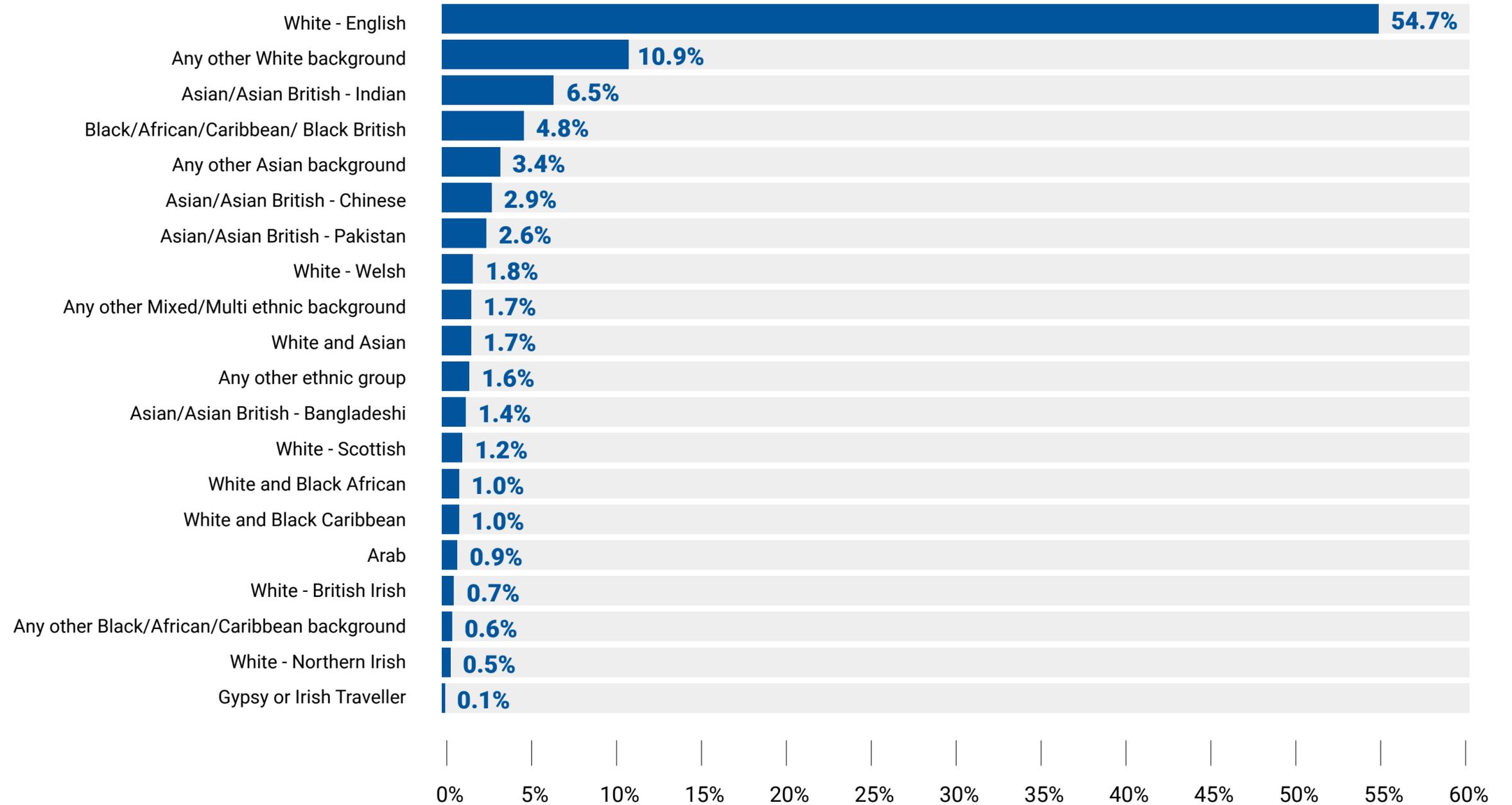
25% 1st year, 27% 2nd year,
28% 3rd year, 8% 4th year,
10% masters, 2% PHD

Ethnicity

Analysis:

Our sample is reflective of the overall student population outlined by HESA, the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

*List of ethnic groups taken from UK government website.



THE RESULTS



SECTION 1

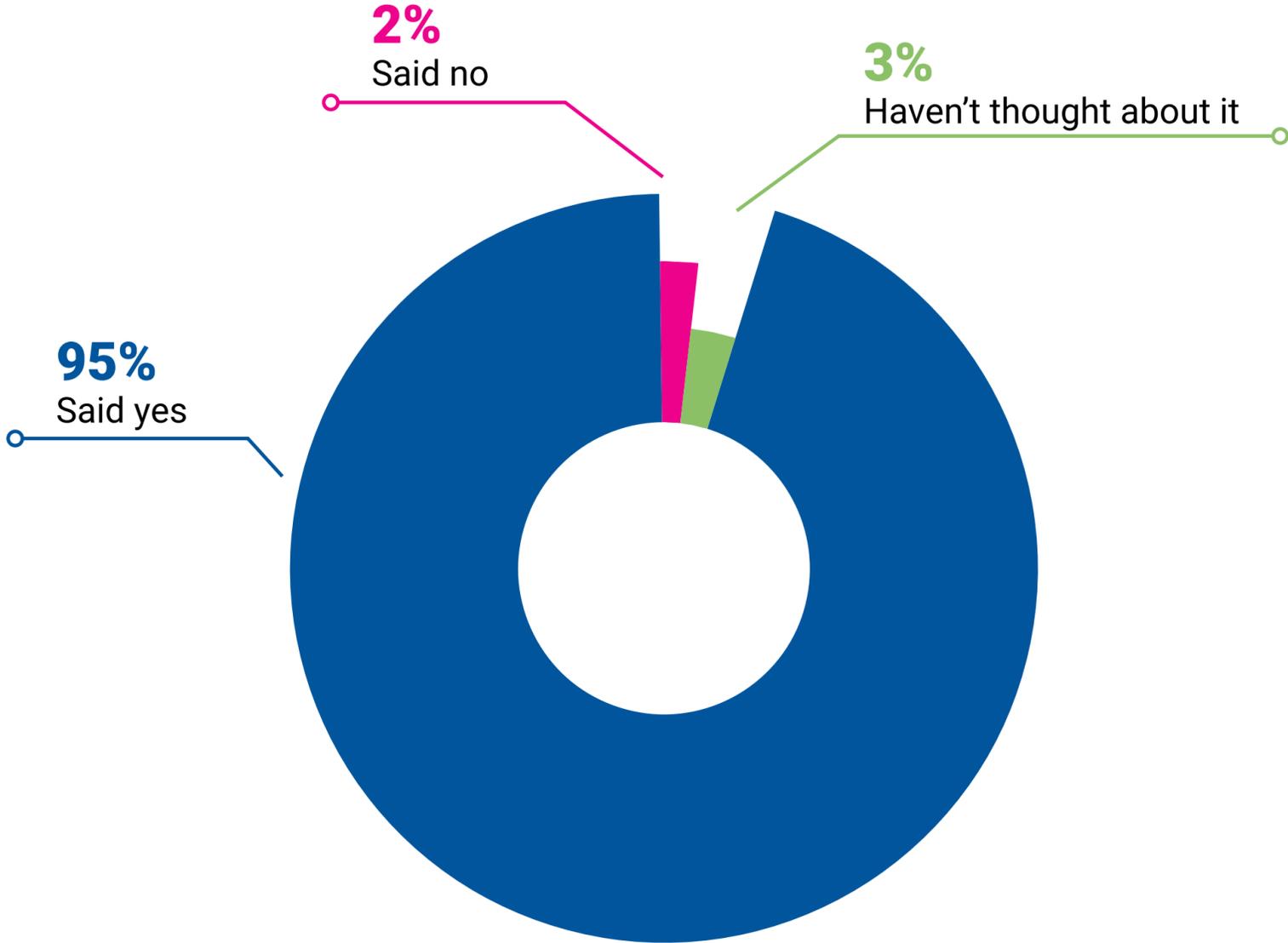
Students' understanding of diversity
& inclusion in the workplace



Do you think diversity and inclusion is important in the workplace?

Analysis:
95% of students feel that diversity & inclusion is important in the workplace.

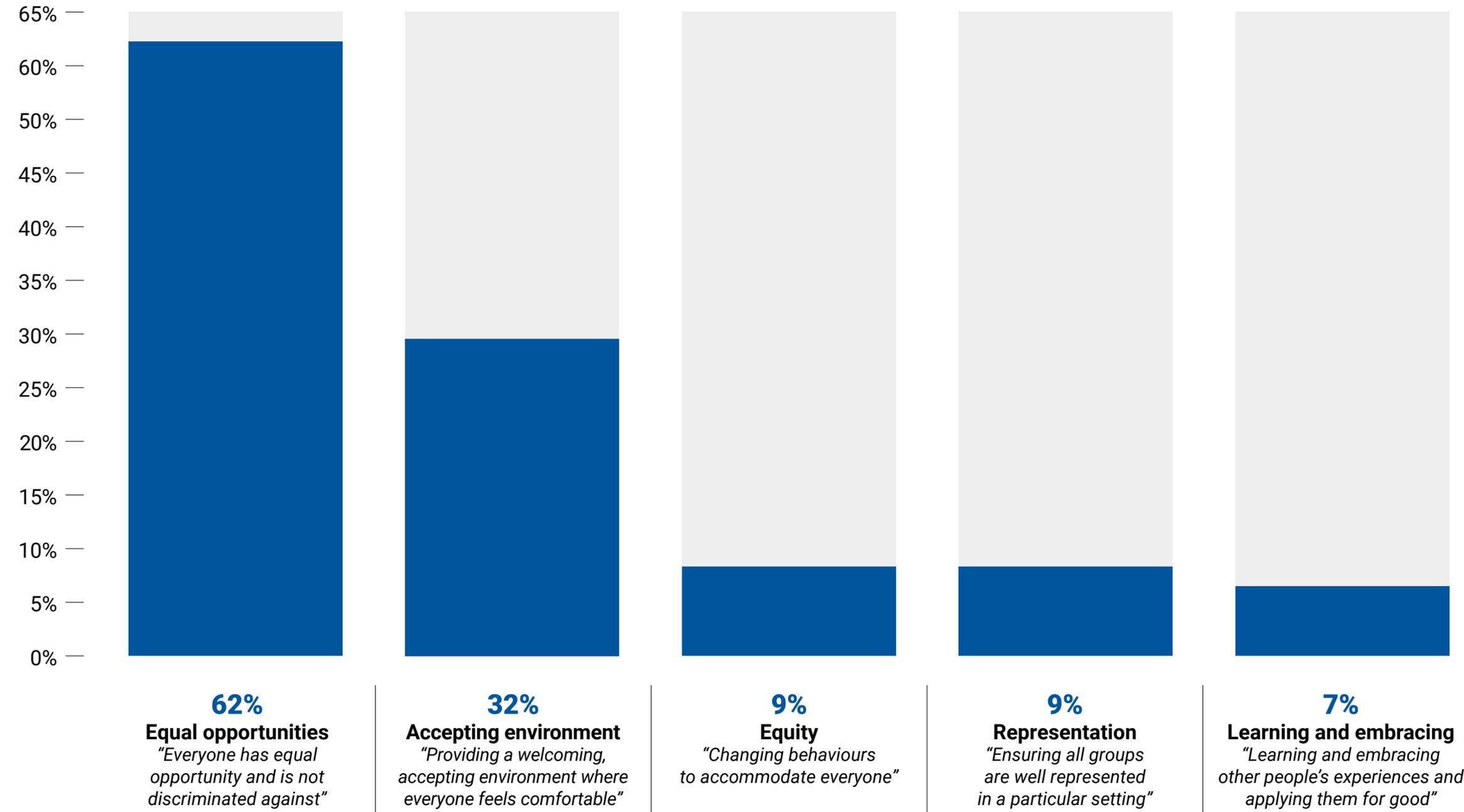
This level of importance is shared across different demographics, including 94% of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and 96% of BAME students.



What does diversity and inclusion mean to you?

Analysis:
 This was a free text answer so we've grouped together the main themes. As the graph shows, the majority of students believe D&I is about giving equal opportunities to everyone.

32% said that D&I shouldn't stop after the hiring process and that employers need to provide a welcome and accepting environment where everyone feels comfortable.



What does diversity and inclusion mean to you? Quotes from students

“It’s the opportunity to work with colleagues from a variety of backgrounds and learn about how they view the world, the ways in which they approach problems and most importantly, learn from a diverse range of people.”

“Equality and understanding for everyone, not just in terms of ethnicity or gender but in terms of knowledge and experience as well. Knowledge being shared between co-workers to elevate each other.”

“Equality amongst age, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sex etc. In the workplace, you must have a mix of employees for an organisation to be successful and grow. Diversity brings new ideas and innovations to the business and different perspectives and ways of thinking that’s beneficial. D&I gives you a competitive advantage.”

“It’s not about fitting in it’s about being accepted for who you are.”

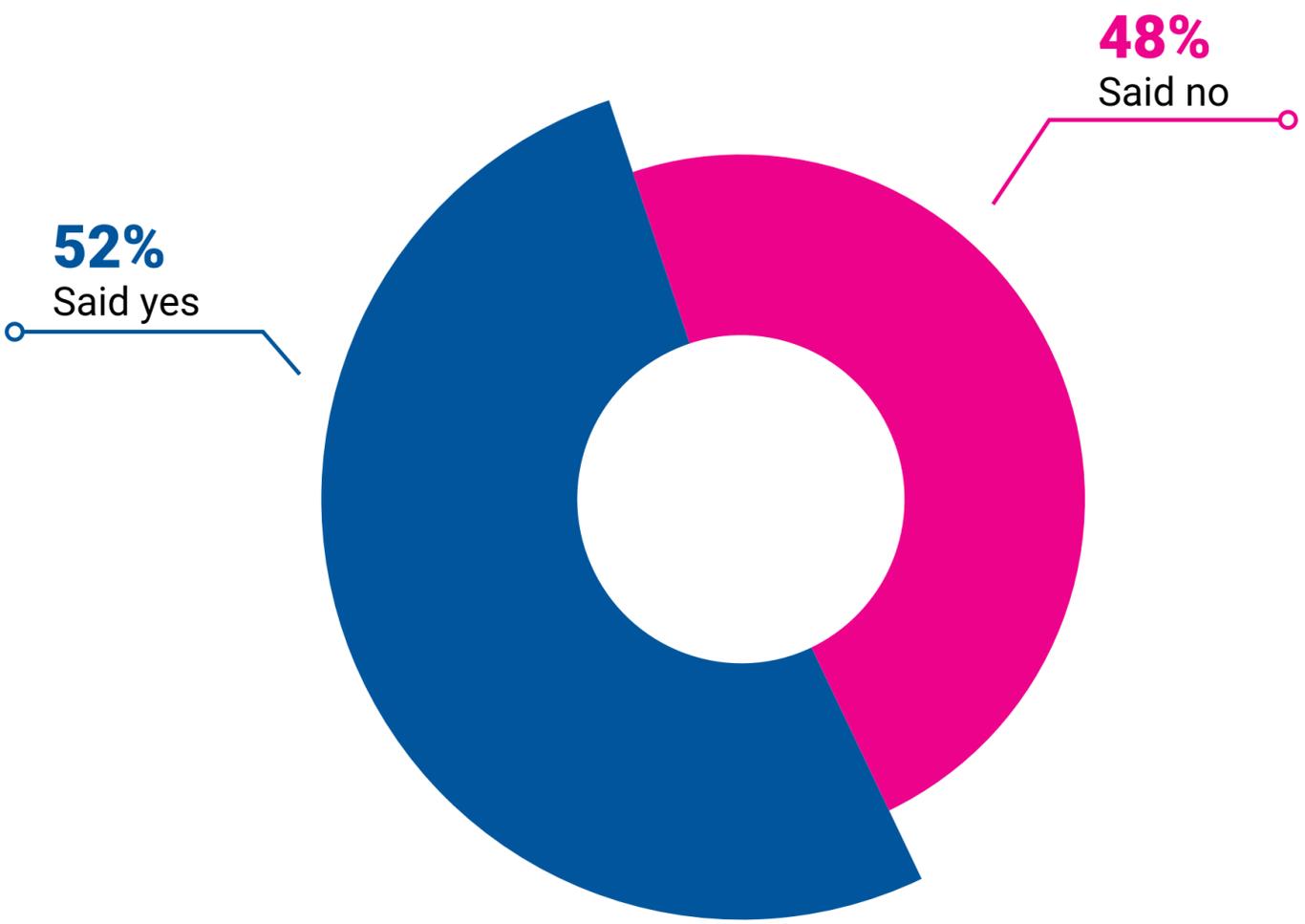


Do you understand why employers ask for your diversity information when applying for a job?

Analysis:
Despite 95% of respondents saying D&I is important in the workplace, 48% of students do not know *why* employers ask for their diversity information.

When we broke it down by ethnicity, only 28% of students from Black backgrounds said they knew why employers asked for their diversity information.

This shows how important it is for employers to educate students about why they're asking for diversity information during the recruitment process.



Why do employers ask for personal information about you, when you apply for jobs?

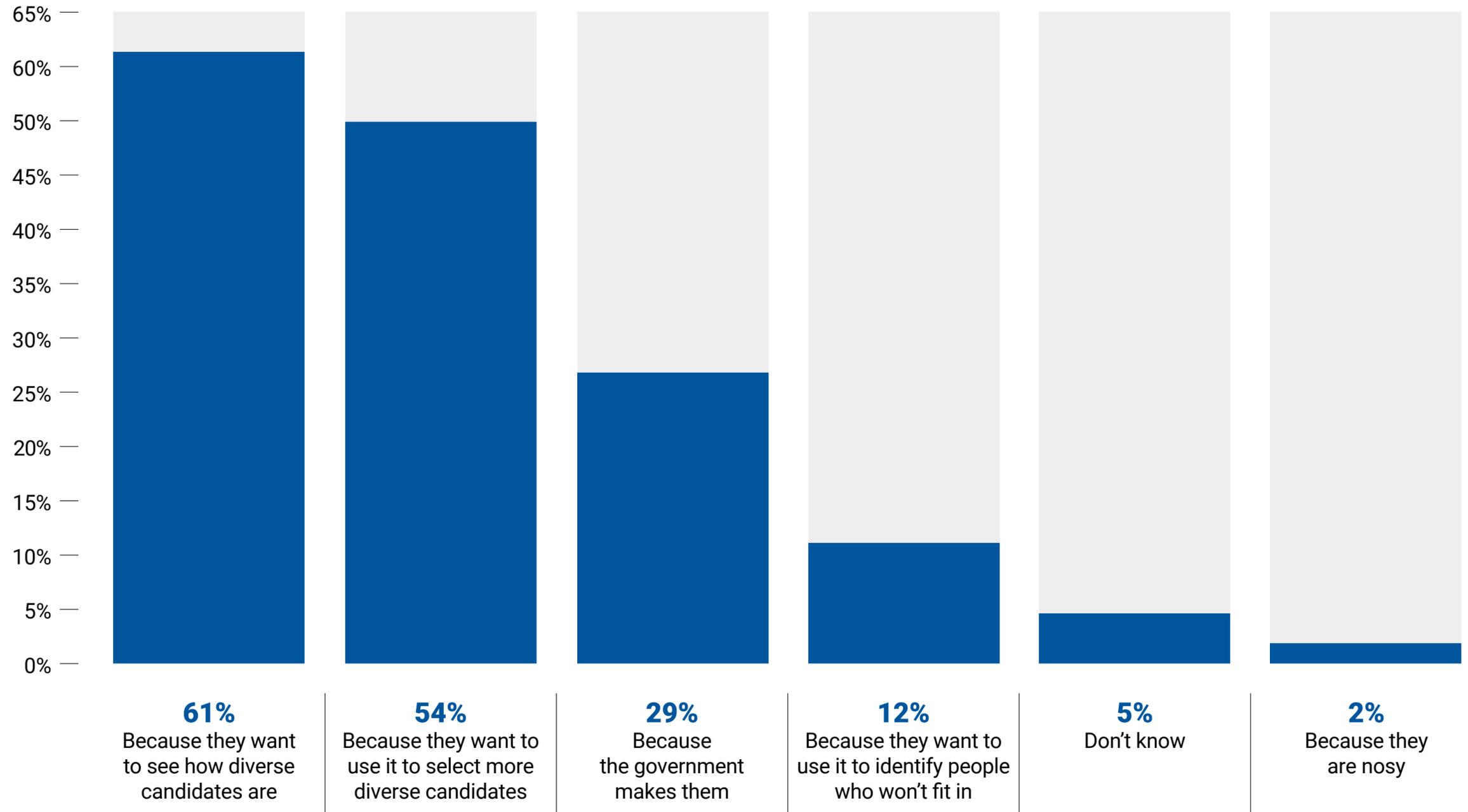
Analysis:

This graph shows students' responses about why employers ask for personal information about them when they apply for jobs.

The majority of students said that employers collect their personal information to determine how diverse candidates are and to select them in the recruitment process.

Worryingly, 12% of students think employers use this information to identify who won't fit in.

This concern is even greater for students from BAME backgrounds, with 20% saying employers ask for personal information to use it to identify people who won't fit into their organisations.

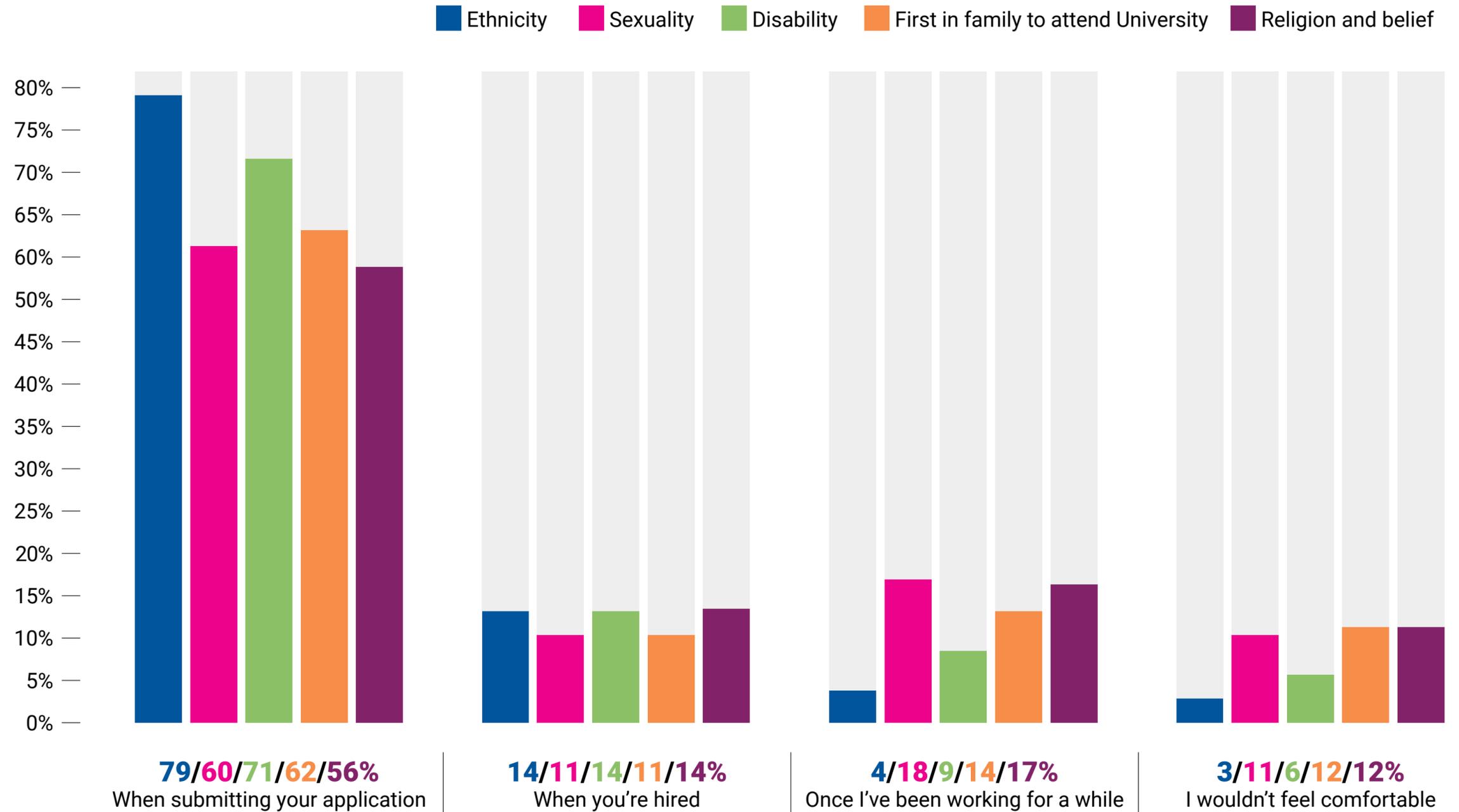


When would you feel comfortable sharing the following information?

Analysis:

This generation is generally comfortable with sharing certain types of personal data with an employer – across all types of personal information at least three quarters of students were happy to share.

The three things students are most likely to feel uncomfortable sharing at any point with their employer are – sexuality (11%), first in family to attend university (12%) and religion and belief (12%).



SECTION 2

Targeting students for events
and jobs



How far would you agree with the following statements?

It's good for employers to target women for events on campus

Analysis:
 53% of students agree or strongly agree with targeting females for campus events. 30% don't feel strongly either way and 18% disagree or strongly disagree.

Interestingly, when we broke this down by male and female responses (Fig. 2), 44% of males agree or strongly agree, whereas the majority of females (56%) agree or strongly agree. And only 16% of females disagree, compared to 22% of males.

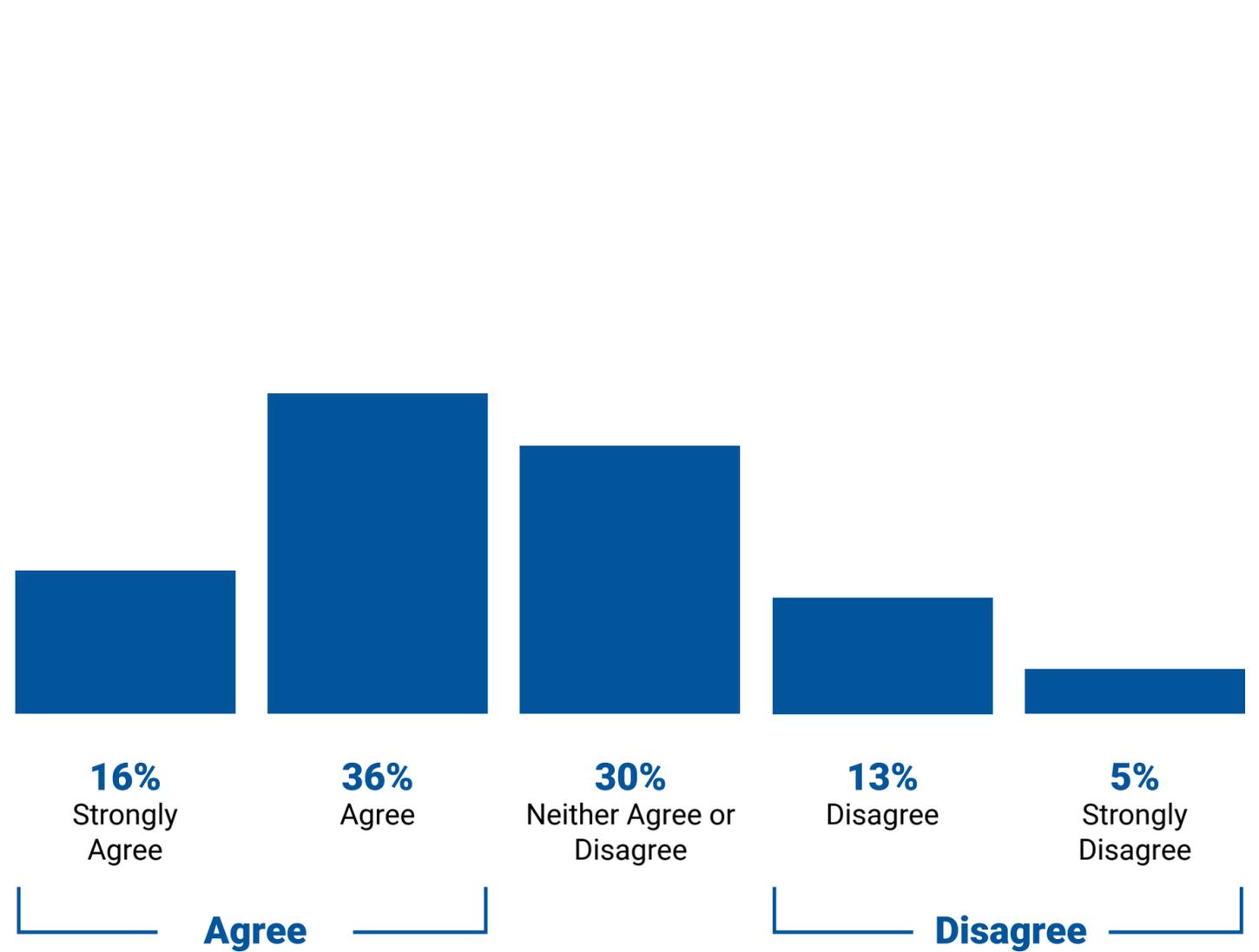
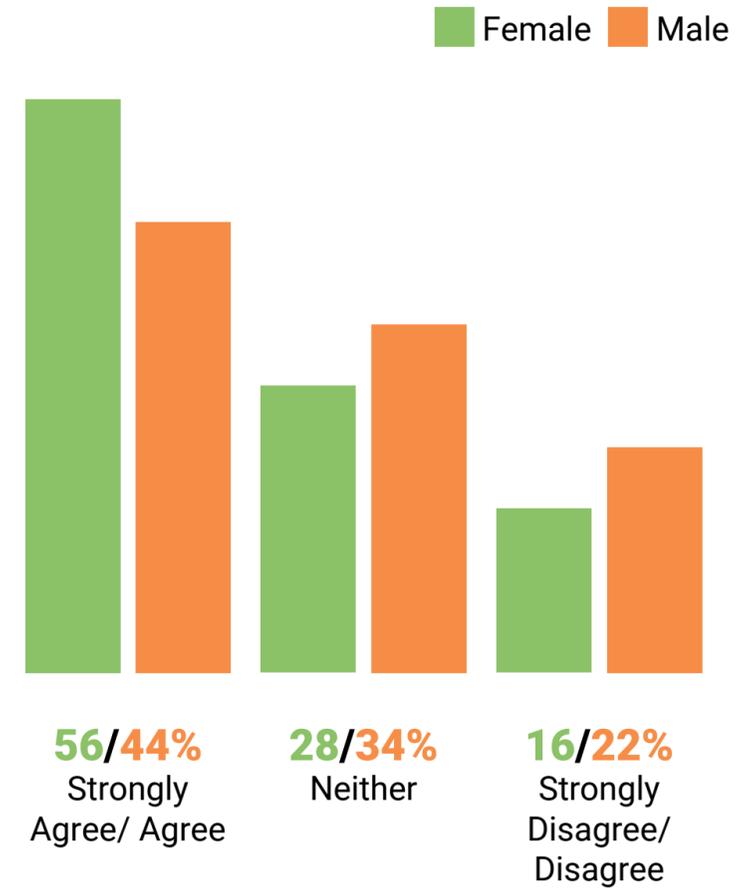


Fig. 2 Extra analysis to support graph (broken down by female / male).



How far would you agree with the following statements?

It's good for employers to target women specifically for roles

Analysis:

This graph shows that 34% of students strongly agree and agree with employers targeting women specifically for roles.

When we split answers down by male / female responses (Fig. 2), both genders are somewhat divided on the idea.

37% of females strongly agree or agree compared to 27% of males. More males disagree with targeting women, at 41% compared to 32% of females.

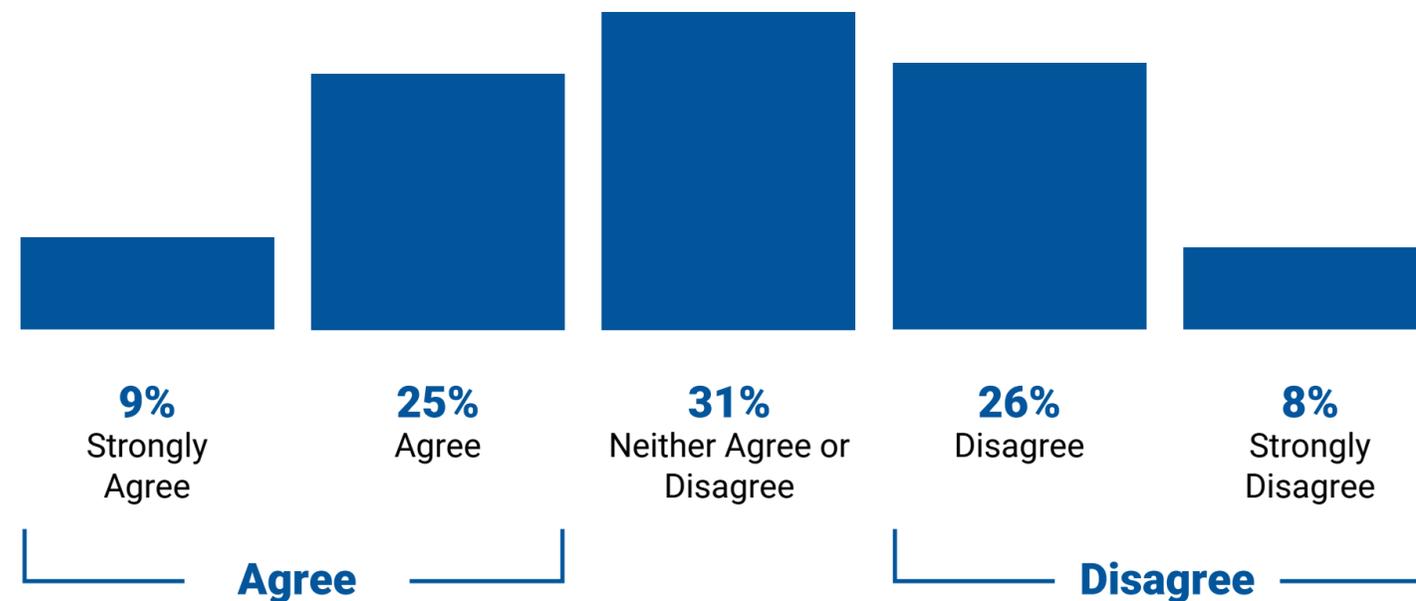
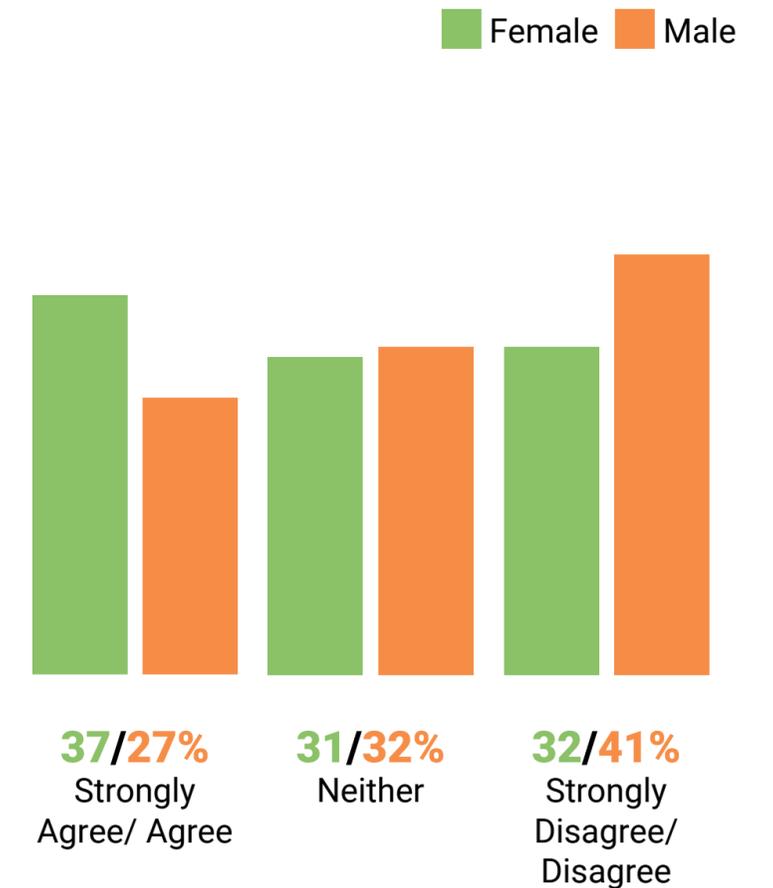


Fig. 2 Extra analysis to support graph (broken down by female / male).



Quotes from students

“I think targeted events are great: such as tech related ones for women, since women don’t tend to be encouraged to look into it as much. But only targeting a specific type of person seems weird. I think if I knew I only got a role because of such circumstances I’d get major imposter syndrome.”

“While I am a woman in a women-minority industry (computer science), I do not feel as though women should be specifically targeted/ approached for jobs in this industry. I would want to get a job because I am qualified, NOT because I am a woman.”



How far would you agree with the following statements?

It's good for employers to target students from particular ethnic backgrounds for events on campus

Analysis:
This graph shows how far students agree with employers targeting students from particular ethnic backgrounds for events on campus.

When we broke it down by students from BAME backgrounds (Fig. 2), the majority (54%) agreed with employers targeting them, however nearly a quarter (25%) did not agree with this practice.

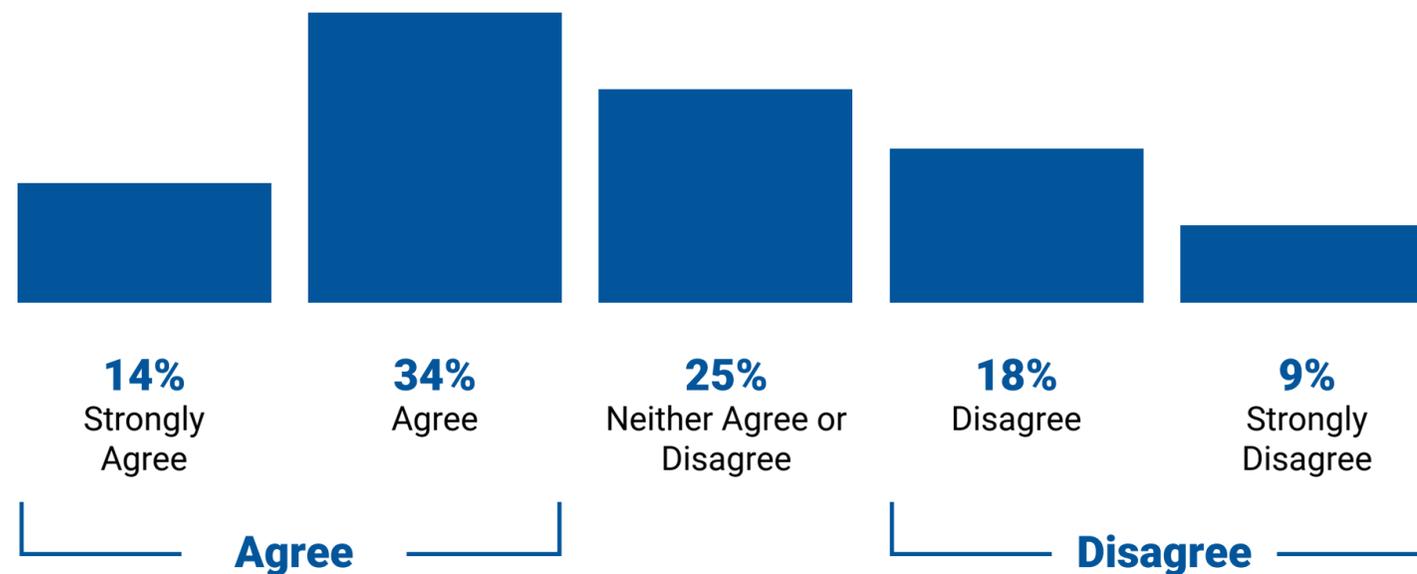
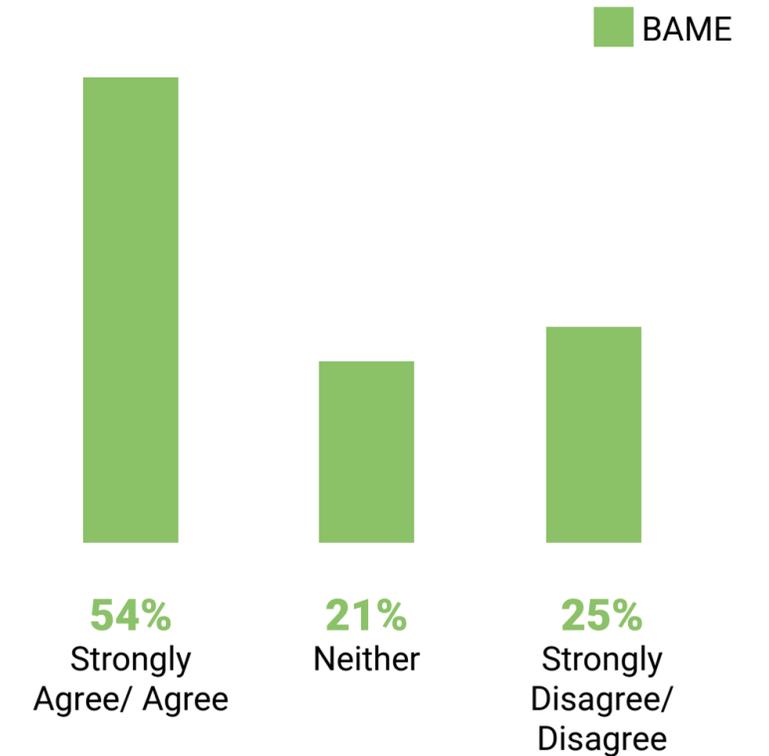


Fig. 2 Extra analysis to support graph (broken down by students from BAME backgrounds).



How far would you agree with the following statements?

It's good for employers to target students from particular ethnic backgrounds specifically for roles

Analysis:
This graph shows how far students agree with employers targeting students from particular ethnic backgrounds specifically for roles.

When we broke it down by students from BAME backgrounds (Fig. 2), they were more in favour of employers targeting them, although 29% neither agreed or disagreed either way and 30% disagreed.

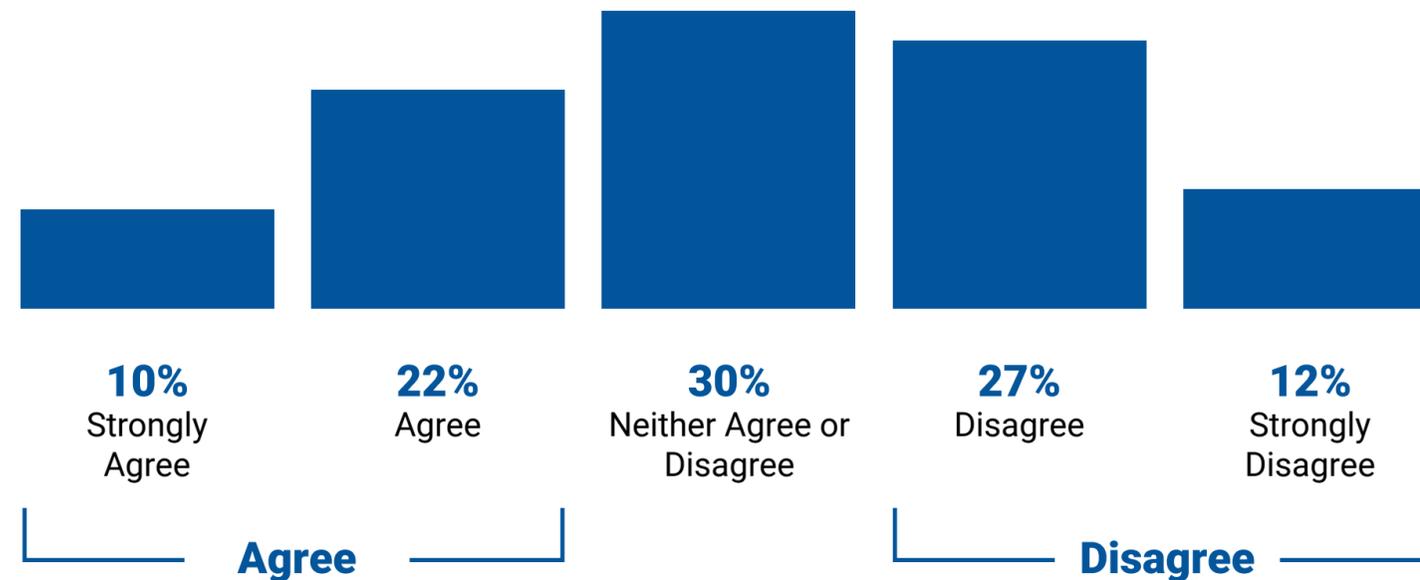
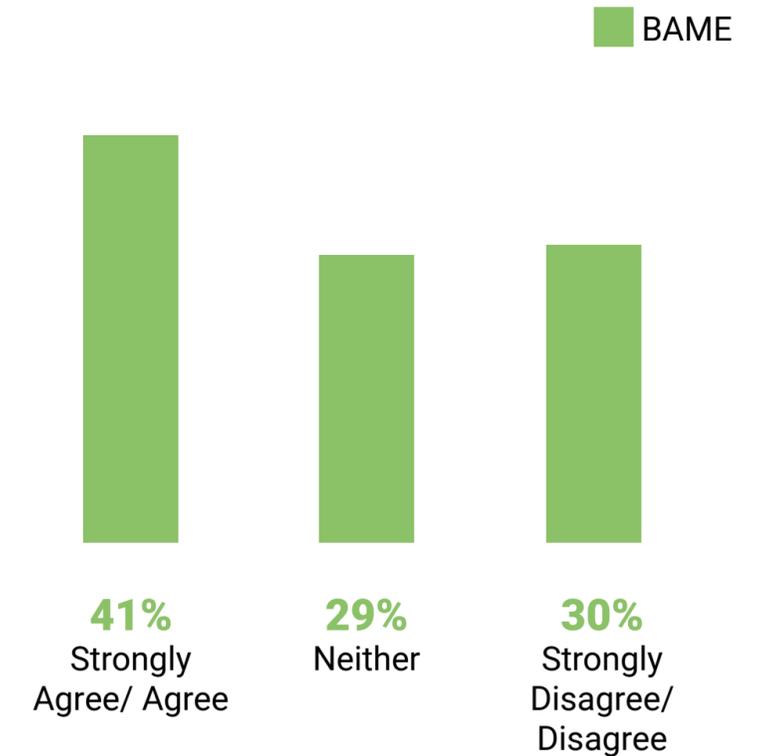


Fig. 2 Extra analysis to support graph (broken down by students from BAME backgrounds).



Quotes from students

“Diversity and Inclusion is not simply just being at the table, but being involved in discussions. Being made to feel that I am just as worthy of being there as others.”

“A lot of employers openly seek to employ BAME or people with difficulties to improve their diversification. It is positive discrimination.”

“I don’t think that students from particular backgrounds should be ‘specifically’ targeted (positive discrimination) but it is very important that companies make sure to promote themselves and make themselves accessible to all students of all backgrounds equally.”



How far would you agree with the following statements?

It's good for employers to target students who are from low socioeconomic backgrounds for events on campus

Analysis:

This graph shows how far students agree with employers targeting students from low socioeconomic backgrounds for events on campus.

Students are much more in favour of this targeting than they are of targeting by gender or ethnicity.

When we broke down the data (Fig. 2), students who had free school meals were more in favour of employers targeting them for events on campus with 65% strongly agreeing or agreeing.

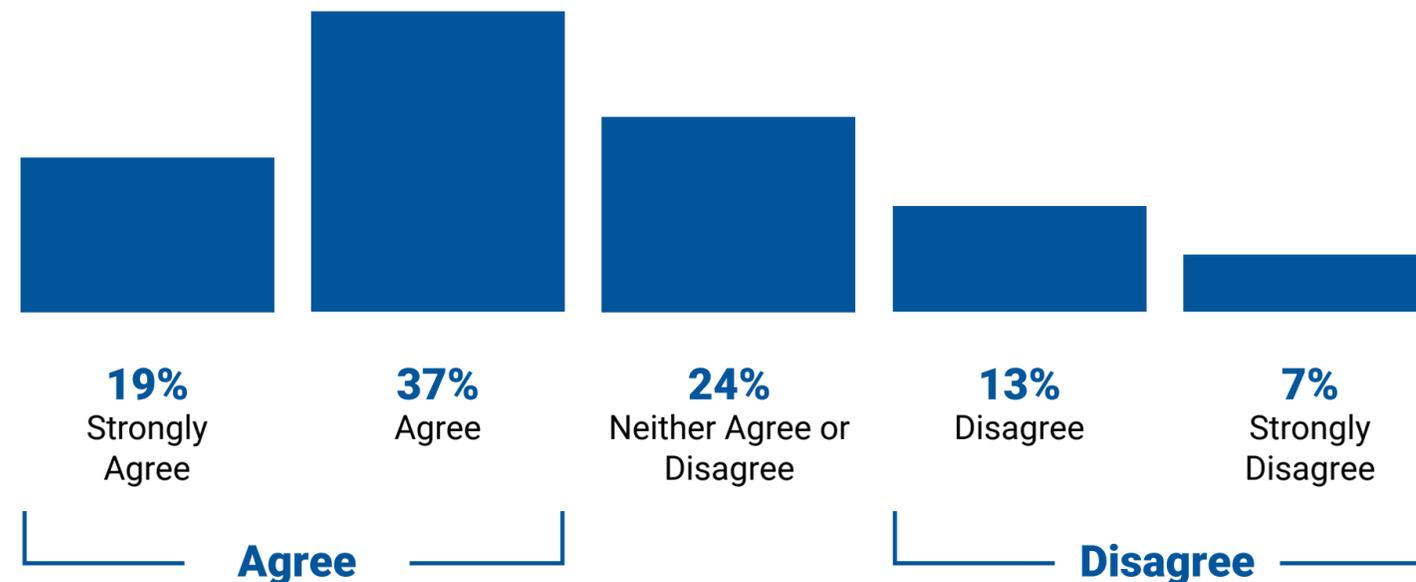
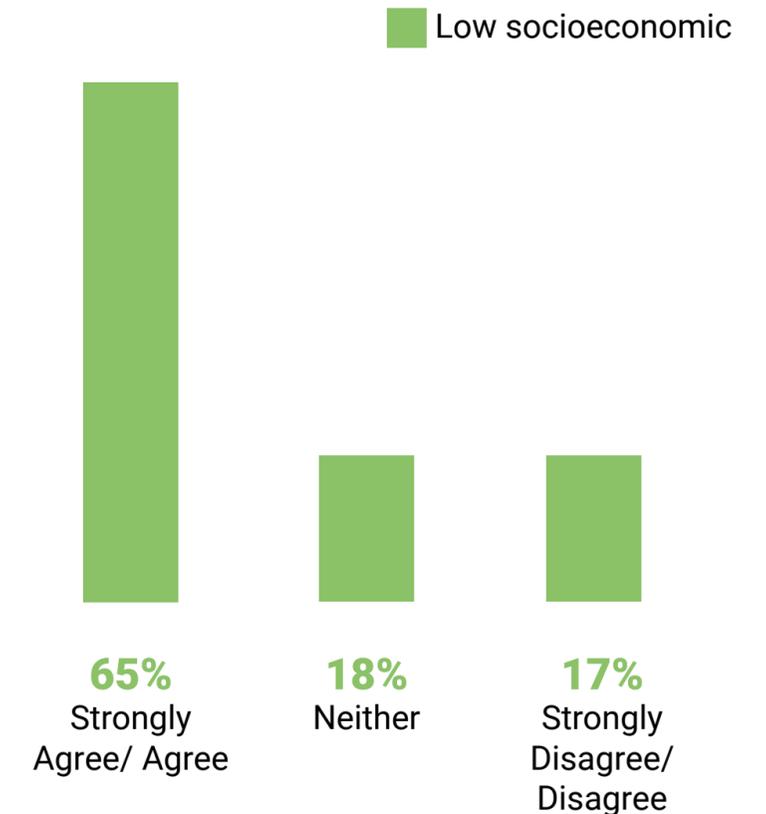


Fig. 2 Extra analysis to support graph (broken down by students who received free school meals).



How far would you agree with the following statements?

It's good for employers to target students who are from low socioeconomic backgrounds specifically for roles

Analysis:

This graph shows how far students agree with employers targeting students from low socioeconomic backgrounds for roles.

Overall, students are less in favour of targeting students from low socioeconomic backgrounds by role than they are for events on campus.

50% of students who received free school meals strongly agree or agree with employers targeting them for roles. This is in comparison to 65% who strongly agree or agree with being targeted by employers for events on campus (see previous slide).

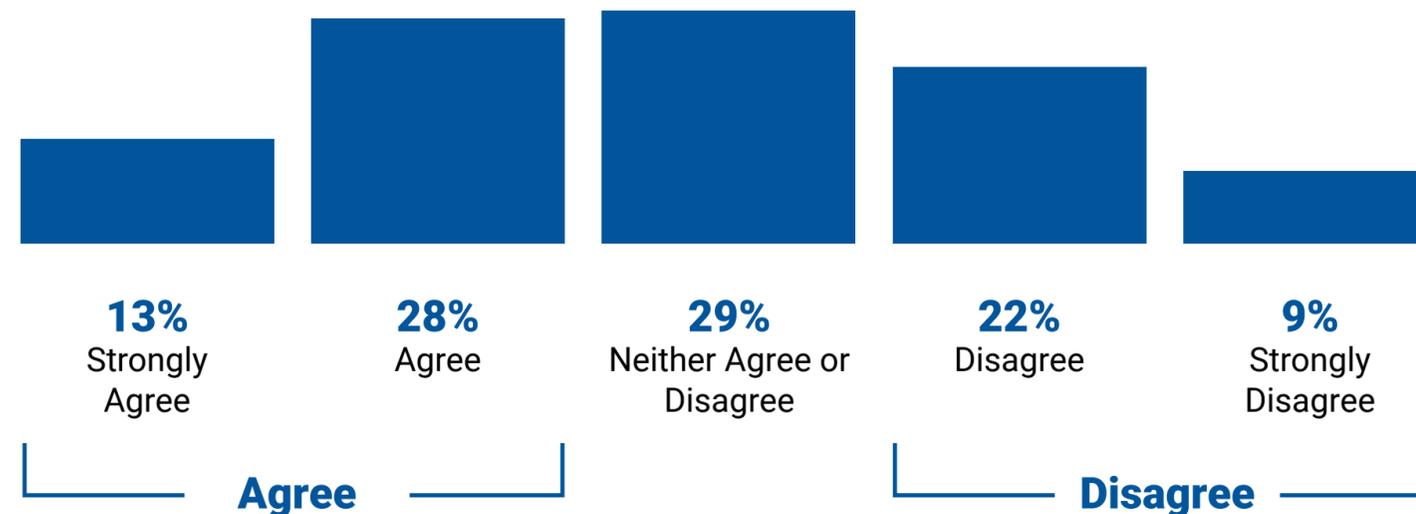
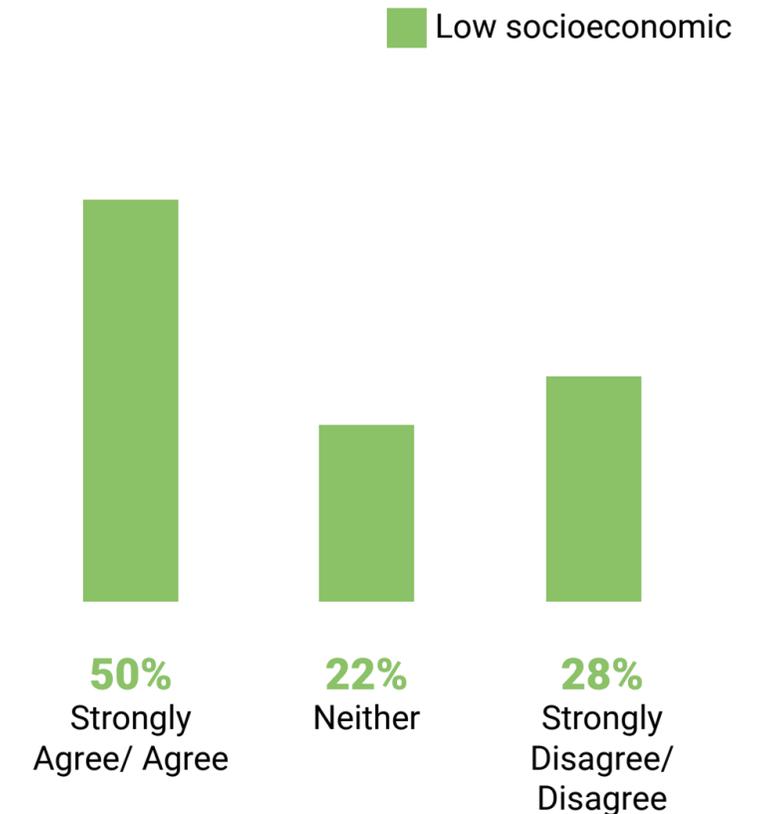


Fig. 2 Extra analysis to support graph (broken down by students who received free school meals).



SECTION 3

Important factors to students when they apply for jobs



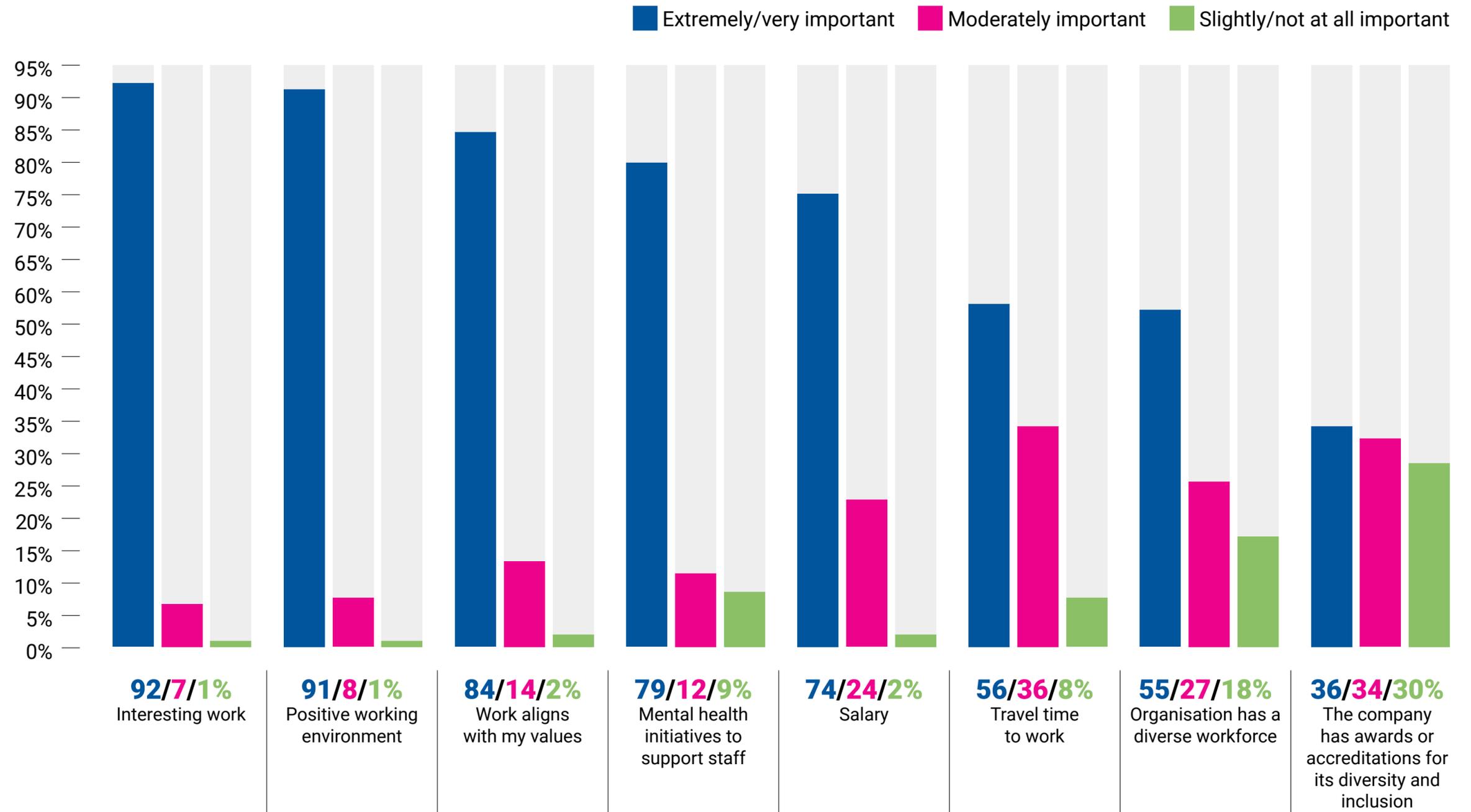
How important are the following factors when applying for a role?

Analysis:

Overall, interesting work is the key factor driving job-hunting decisions. However, for female students, a positive work environment is marginally more important.

The alignment of work with personal values is the third most important factor driving job decisions, There is also a significant gender difference here, with 88% of females and 75% of males saying it is important.

Black students consider **salary** to be more important than any other ethnic group, with 94% saying it was extremely / very important.



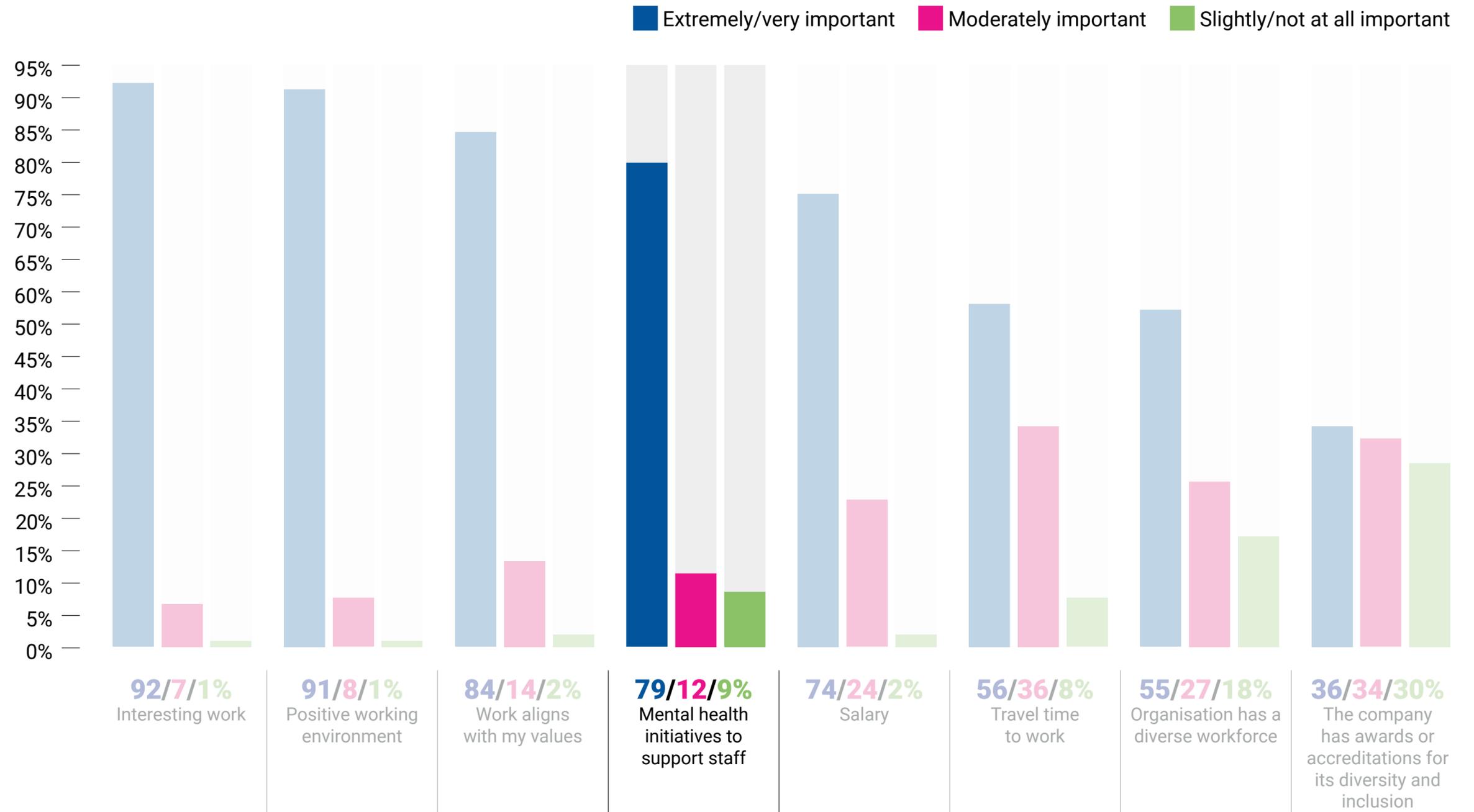
How important are the following factors when applying for a role?

Analysis:

Mental health is now a very important consideration for young people, with 79% saying that adequate support provision in the workplace influences their decision-making about jobs.

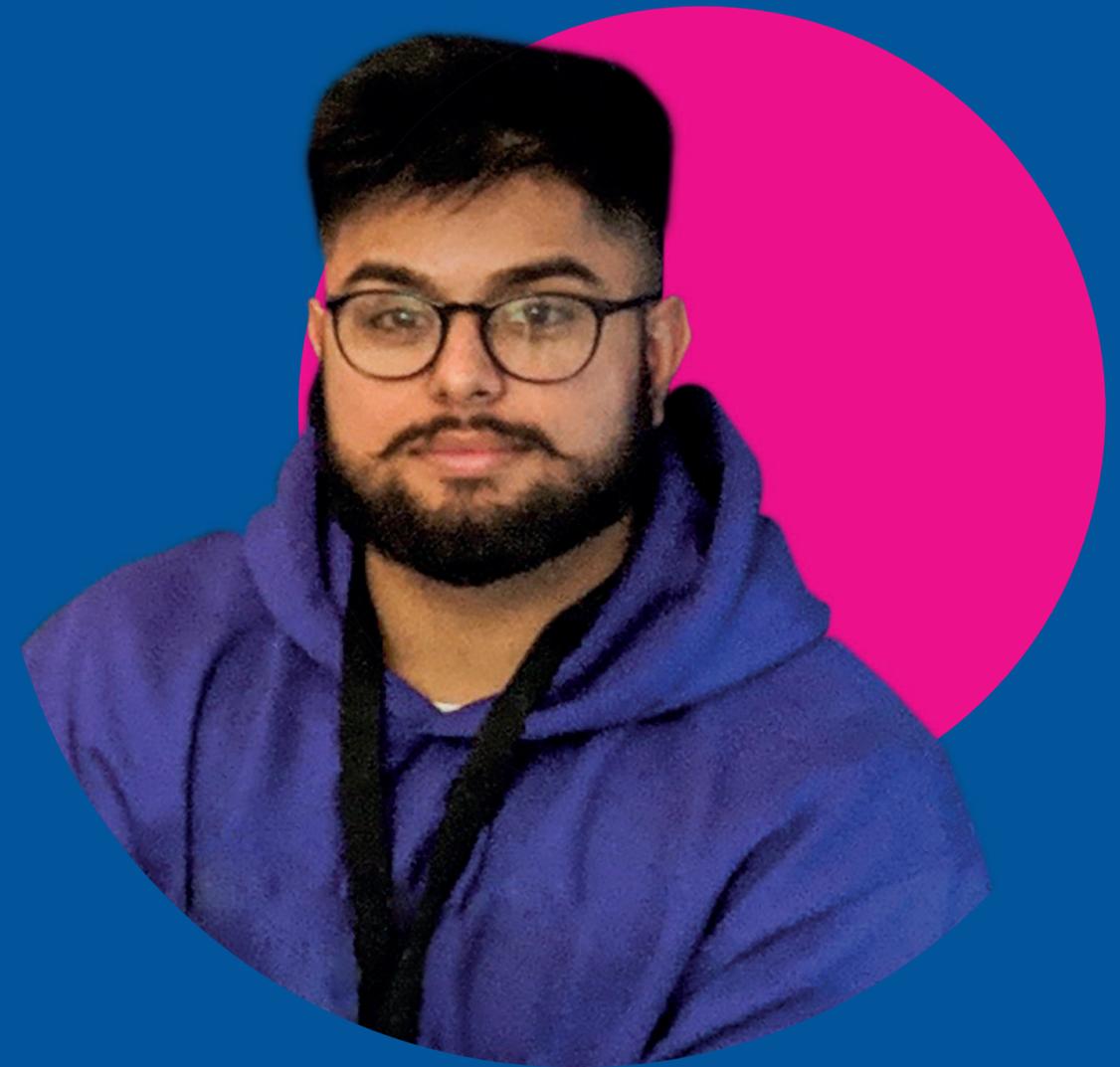
Among four ethnic groups, 100% of students said mental health provision was very important - 1) any other Black / African / Caribbean 2) White – Northern Irish 3) White – Scottish and 4) White – Welsh. However, the responses reveal that mental health issues are important across all BAME groups.

For 92% of students who declared a disability, mental health provision was the top consideration, compared to 75% of those who did not declare a disability.



SECTION 4

Barriers to interviews



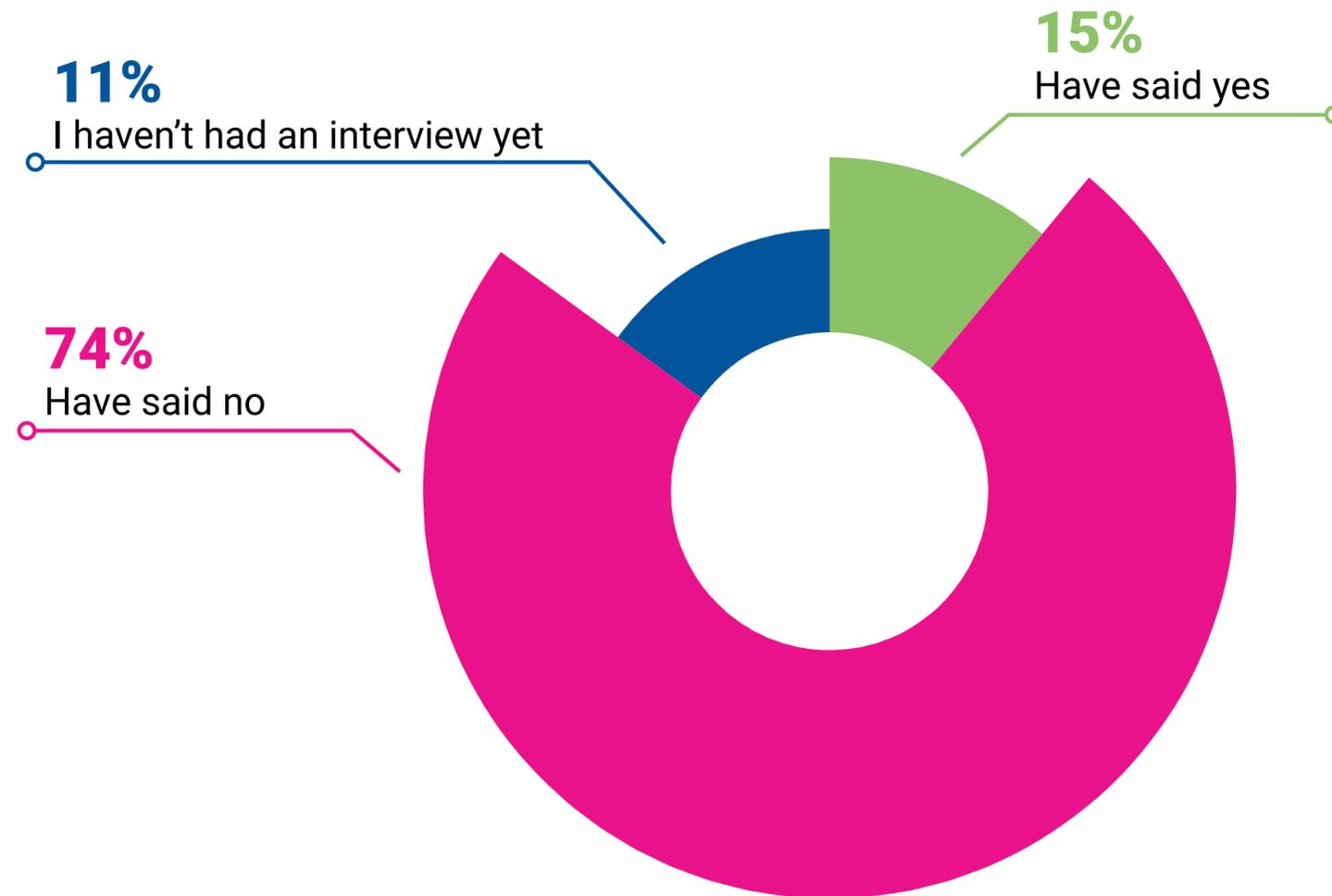
Have you ever opted out of an interview due to financial constraints?

E.g. travel costs to get to the interview

Analysis:

When it comes to missing interviews because of financial restraints, 15% of students said they had experienced this issue, rising to 26% for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

“As a student, if the company cannot pay expenses for me to travel to an interview I may not be able to afford to go. If the distance is short or the train is reasonable it might be ok, but further travel has meant I have missed out on opportunities in the past.”



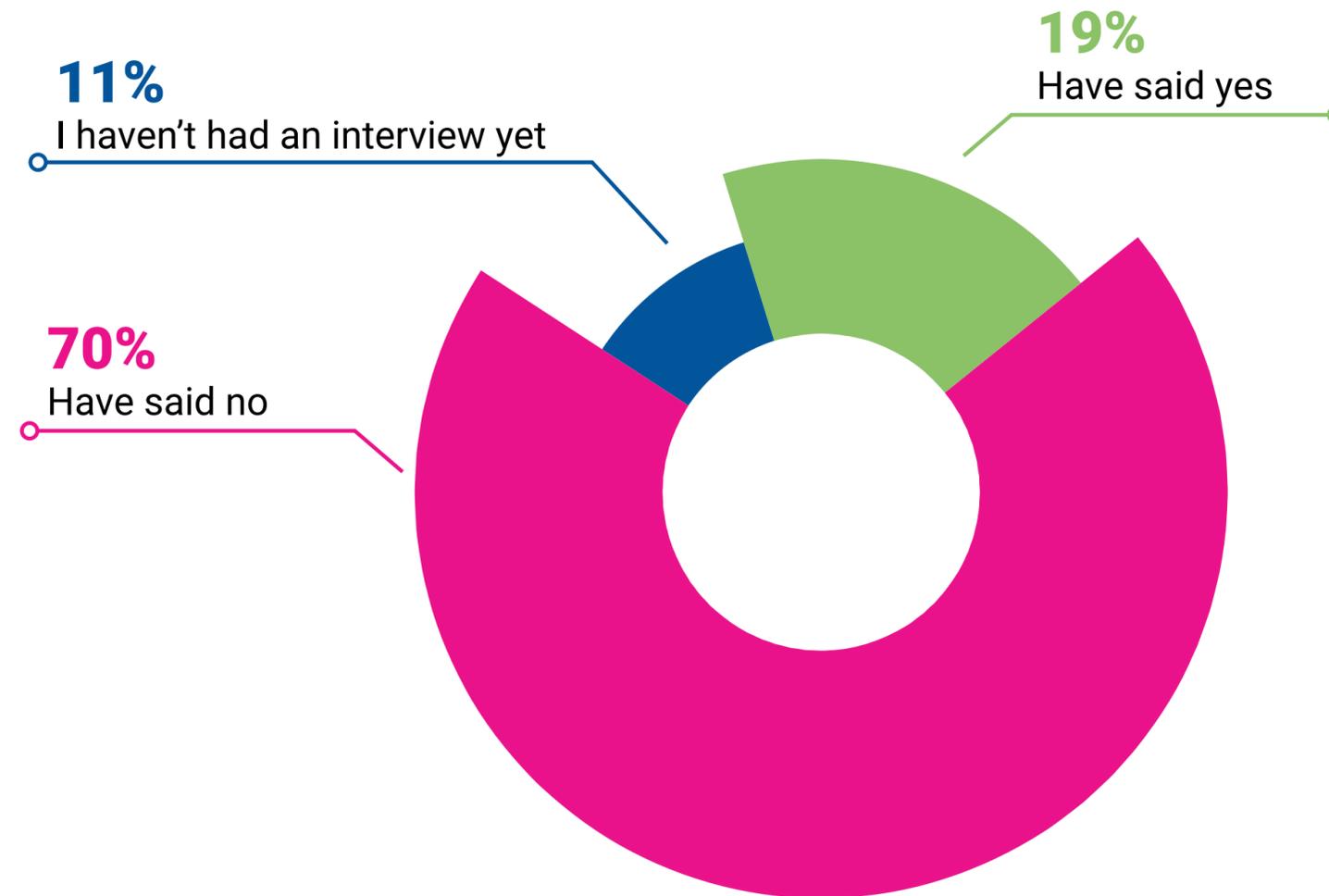
26%
of students who received free school meals have opted out of interviews due to financial constraints

Have you ever opted out of an interview due to work commitments?

Analysis:

The research showed that almost a fifth of students have missed an interview due to work commitments, rising to 25% for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

To remove these barriers to entry, employers need to think about when they reimburse travel costs, and support students when they take time off work to attend interviews.



25%
of students who received free school meals have opted out of an interview due to work commitments

Quotes from students

About interviews

"Face-to-face interviews can ruin the idea of no prejudice or discrimination as people make subconscious judgements on people before they have even begun to speak."

"Perhaps, there should be a flexible approach by providing options that would suffice a face-to-face one."

"Interviews aren't very good for people with severe anxiety/ASD as you feel you can't ask for adjustments as you feel it will put you at a disadvantage"

"I sometimes felt that my nationality played a factor in hiring decisions"

"I think employers should make it clear if they can reimburse travel expenses and if yes, how fast can they reimburse the money."

Conclusions

Despite **95% of respondents saying D&I is important** in the workplace, **48% of students do not know why employers ask for their diversity information**.

Our research shows there is a real disconnect here. Educating students about why employers need diversity & inclusion information throughout the recruitment process will help them to trust your brand and be more open to disclosing their personal information.

When it comes to targeting students for events and jobs, respondents had mixed feelings on this. Being mindful about how accessible events are to students from all walks of life is important. Virtual events are increasing due to COVID-19, but this provides an opportunity to make events more accessible to a wider audience in the future too.

More females (56%) agree with employers targeting them for campus events than males (44%). If you're running events to attract females, be mindful of the perception of these among males.

Overall, interesting work, a positive work environment and work that aligns to values are key drivers when job hunting. Mental health is also a very important consideration, with **79% of respondents saying that adequate mental health support influences their decision-making about jobs**.

Finally, employers need to remove barriers to entry as **over a quarter of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are missing out on attending interviews**. Removing travel costs or supporting students with financial loss through taking time off work to attend face-to-face interviews is a start. A further way to increase accessibility is through digital competitions, virtual events and online assessments, which remove the need for travel costs.

RMP Enterprise is committed to helping young people from all walks of life take the first steps in their career. We hope the results of this survey challenge us all to continuously improve and innovate the way in which we attract and engage with students in the future.



Thank You

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Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions, please contact lizzie@rmpenterprise.co.uk



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