

## Only the lonely - loneliness, student activities and mental wellbeing at university

Student mental health has arguably become the dominant student experience policy issue for the sector in the past couple of years.

Ministerial round tables, surveys, charters and initiatives from almost all of the sector bodies and umbrella groups have sought to shift this wicked policy problem into a space where the sector can learn from others and deploy interventions. Yet for all the activity, we still don't know much about the causes, or fully understand the problem.

In 2018, the Office for National Statistics' published a report on children and young people's experiences of loneliness - and offered the sector some interesting clues as to what might be causing the mental health epidemic. 9.8% of young people aged 16-24 said they often or always felt lonely. The highest proportion of young people who often or always felt lonely was for 18 to 21 year-olds. And they were most likely to have undergone a major life change in the past year, such as transitioning into university or work.

So for our major spring event this year, and to mark the launch of our work with students' unions, we commissioned Trendence UK to tell us more about loneliness on campus and to test some hypotheses that students and student leaders generated about what could be causing it. The acquisition of friendships and social capital is woven deeply into the value and purpose of higher education – but it may not be something being experienced by all students.

### Results – how lonely are students?

The results were stark. Over 15% of students said they felt lonely on a daily basis, and another third said they felt the same weekly. The figures were worse for Disabled students, Black and Minority Ethnic students and International students - and those students living at home were in a similar position.

How often do you feel lonely at university?	
Daily	15.8%
Weekly	32.7%
Monthly	19.0%
Less than monthly	16.0%
Never	16.6%

In ONS' work, 9.8% of young people (16-24) said that they were "often" lonely. Disability was a major linked factor - Disabled students were twice as likely to be lonely on a daily basis:

	DIS	NOT
Daily	28.5%	14.2%
Weekly	37.2%	31.8%
Monthly	11.8%	20.0%
Less than monthly	11.9%	16.2%
Never	10.5%	17.9%

Only 77% of students were able to agree that if they needed help, there would be people who would be there for them:

### **If I needed help, there are people who would be there for me**

		<b>If I wanted company or to socialise, there are people I can call on</b>	
Strongly agree	29.0%	Strongly agree	31.3%
Agree	48.0%	Agree	44.5%
Neutral/DK	16.7%	Neutral/DK	15.3%
Disagree	5.0%	Disagree	6.4%
Strongly disagree	1.2%	Strongly disagree	2.4%

Nationality was a linked factor – non-EU students were almost 10% points less likely to agree that there are people they can call on:

### **% agree or strongly agree that there “are people I can call on” for company or to socialise**

All	UK	EU	NonEU
75.8%	78.6%	75.5%	66.2%

And 17% of students said that they do not consider themselves to have *any* true friends at university - rising to 20% for international students:

### **Which of the following statements is most like you at university?**

	All	UK	EU	NON-EU
I have a large group of friends at university	21.4%	24.6%	21.0%	11.3%
I have a small group of friends at university	61.9%	60.3%	58.3%	69.5%
I do not consider myself to have any true friends at uni	16.6%	15.1%	20.7%	19.2%

Disability was, again, a key linked issue - students were almost twice as likely to report they have “no true friends”:

	All	Yes	No
I have a large group of friends at university	21.4%	18.1%	22.0%
I have a small group of friends at university	61.9%	52.5%	62.9%
I do not consider myself to have any true friends at university	16.6%	29.4%	15.2%

## **What are students worried about?**

Unsurprisingly, loneliness, friendship and concern re mental health are all linked in the data. Almost half of all students say that their mental health is one of their top three concerns - a figure that varies significantly depending on the number of friends that they have.

### **What concerns you most on a day to day basis at university? (Choose up to three)**

Coping with the course	55.1%
Making the most of my time at university	48.6%
My mental health (including stress and anxiety)	45.5%
Having enough money to get by	45.3%
Gaining the right skills / experience for my career	41.6%
Finding a job after graduation	46.3%
Relationships (family, friends, love sex, prof rships)	30.5%
Work / life balance	27.5%
Meeting new people / making friends	18.7%
Having the confidence to do the things I want to do	18.7%
Securing relevant work placements	16.6%
Homesickness / loneliness	12.2%
Finding part-time work	9.6%
Getting on with those in my accommodation	7.3%
Living environment (accommodation & transport)	7.3%
Alcohol / substance abuse	3.0%
Knowing where to find support / help	2.5%
Other	1.5%
Bullying / discrimination	1.1%

There were significant nationality differences - international students were more likely than average to worry about accommodation and transport, and finding part time work:

	UK	NONEU
Living environment (accommodation & transport)	6.1%	10.8%
Homesickness / loneliness	10.7%	18.9%
Work / life balance	32.2%	15.6%
Finding part-time work	7.3%	17.2%

There were student life cycle effects, but friendship was still an issue for some all way through - 12.6% of final year students listed meeting new people / making friends in their top three concerns:

	1stY	Mid	FinalY
Meeting new people / making friends	29.6%	17.0%	12.6%
Gaining the right skills / experience for my career	27.1%	38.9%	41.1%
Finding a job after graduation	22.7%	38.4%	57.7%

Disabled students were more likely to list mental health in their top three, and more likely to choose coping with course:

	Disabled	Not
My mental health (including stress and anxiety)	68.7%	42.3%
Coping with the course	60.7%	54.9%

## Which factors relate to loneliness?

We also wanted to understand the link between friendship, mental health and activities on campus. Involvement in extra-curricular activity - societies, sports, representation and events - all had a positive association with friendship and positive mental health and wellbeing. Loneliness is (unsurprisingly) directly related to number of friends:

<b>How often do you feel lonely at university?</b>			
	Lge group friends	Small group	No true friends
Daily	5.0%	12.6%	41.3%
Weekly	27.4%	34.9%	31.1%
Monthly	22.2%	20.4%	9.8%
Less than monthly	18.4%	17.5%	7.3%
Never	27.1%	14.7%	10.5%

Only 3 in 4 students could agree that if they wanted company or to socialise, there were people they could call on. And involvement in activities appears to be related to better wellbeing:

<b>Do you take part in any of the following activities?</b>						
Wellbeing factors	All	Societies	Sports	Rep'n	Night evnt	Day events
Satisfied	7,35	7,60	7,81	7,76	7,80	7,83
Worthwhile	7,41	7,69	7,82	7,86	7,72	8,06
Happy	6,98	7,22	7,37	7,48	7,31	7,62
Anxious	6,33	6,26	5,99	6,07	6,09	6,18

And friendships were related to participation:

<b>Which of the following statements is most like you at university?</b>							
	All	Societies	Sports	Rep'n	Vol'ng	Niight events	Daytime events
Large group	21.4%	29.6%	31.8%	33.2%	19.6%	34.6%	34.0%
Small group	61.9%	62.4%	59.7%	55.8%	65.4%	60.7%	60.8%
No true friends	16.6%	8.0%	8.5%	11.0%	15.0%	4.7%	5.2%

## How do students get friends?

We also asked students about the sources of their friendships:

	ALL	White	BaME
People from my hometown	53.3%	58.3%	45.6%
People from my course / faculty / department	66.4%	64.8%	68.8%
People I share my hobbies / interests with	35.1%	34.1%	36.7%
People I play sport with	14.7%	16.4%	12.3%
People I work with	13.8%	16.1%	10.1%
People I volunteer with	2.8%	3.2%	2.3%

People I was allocated accommodation with	33.0%	37.8%	25.3%
The local community I live in (if different from hometown)	3.2%	3.5%	2.8%
People that share my faith	7.0%	3.3%	12.5%
A group I share my identity with	4.1%	2.9%	5.9%
International students, (own country or another)	16.8%	11.3%	25.4%
The student population as a whole	5.3%	5.7%	4.7%

## Conclusions, solutions and ideas

Overall we found a strong link between loneliness, concern for mental health/poor wellbeing, the number of friends and student activities. The data suggests that more involvement in student activities is linked to better wellbeing and less loneliness. What we don't know is the nature of causation – and it would be helpful to test this in further research at campus level.

As part of the Wonkhe SUs project we will be looking at these issues and wider issues relating to the role of SUs and their value as part of a forthcoming collective research initiative, participation in which will enable more detailed internal work to be carried out at institutional level.

There are a number of interesting policy areas that the findings can generate discussion on:

- **Whose responsibility?** Often the “responsibility” for creating social activity falls on central services or SUs, but it is clear that social activity at course level and with programmes is crucial, particularly for day trippers and those considered (erroneously, these days) to be “non traditional”. Institutions and SUs would want to consider how this can be facilitated in partnership with academic departments, particularly for students that day trip and for those with demanding practice-based programmes.
- **When and What?** Social activity is often assumed (particularly within the UK system) to be something that must be organised at the start of an academic year but this research suggests that a sustained effort is required. In addition it is clear from free text comments that students want more of a focus on basic activity, the facilitation of friendship and less of a focus on formal participation or having to pay for or join groups.
- **Access and Participation:** It is clear that many of the issues surrounding class, barriers, comfort, aspiration etc are just as applicable to extra-curricular student activities as they are to academic programmes. Students’ unions, sports departments and other services organising such activity may want to consider the issues of participation from an access and participation perspective, and the OfS might usefully develop an agenda in this area given the links in this research to wellbeing and other research on the employability benefits of student activity.
- **Social Capital:** In the folklore, university is a place where social capital is acquired. But there is a clear risk that this does not happen. We might theorise that both bonding social capital (where students fund those like them) is much easier for some students to acquire than others; and bridging social capital requires real effort to develop on the part of universities and SUs, particularly for anyone not young, white, full time and affluent.

## Student voices on addressing the issues

How might providers and their SUs go about addressing these issues? We asked students to describe some of the barriers to those activities. Some described practical issues - like commuting or having family commitments. Others described their background, fearing that that their schooling or class would mean that other students were naturally better at sport, or music. Many described an off-putting culture focussed on alcohol and hedonistic behaviour. Most believed that students’ unions and universities should do more to arrange activities that depend less on “joining” groups. A representative sample of comments is below.

### Is there anything that prevented you from getting more involved in activities?

#### Practical (location, timing)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am a single parent so I have no childcare.</li> <li>• Anxiety and a long commute home</li> <li>• I am studying off campus where these activities are not available</li> <li>• University only seem to care for the wellbeing of on campus or in the city students, if you're a commuting student nobody seems to care if you struggle to make friends due to not being able to participate in normal</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• student events in order to meet people and make friends</li> <li>• No time due to course workload and part-time job</li> <li>• Having to come home from these activities on my own at night because our student village is highly unsafe (selly oak). Also fear of not being good at them.</li> </ul> |
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### **Commitments/Family (living at home, confidence)**

- I'm a mature student with 2 children and a part time job (and friends I don't see!)
- Family commitments - disabled husband not fair to leave him alone any longer than necessary
- In the past, my family did not support my activities as they thought it would hinder me from my studies. Working alongside studying due to the financial limitations of my situation and the cost of living in London means I have not been able to fully immerse myself in the student experience.

### **Social anxiety/MH**

- I often felt too nervous to join in group activities and stopped attending as a result. I would only go to events with people I knew that were also going. I also was not motivated during my first or second year to socialise as I often felt lonely and depressed. It was a never-ending cycle.
- I wanted to join more societies however my friends weren't interested in joining and I didn't want to go on my own.
- The stigma and the competitiveness and judging from societies. Although it is not overt it does need to be tackled as it is a large stigma and for those around me have reported the same things

### **Course demands**

- Being at university 5 days a week, commuting and working part time on the weekends. It can be difficult to allocate time for leisure with such a busy schedule
- Lack of time due to intensity of course
- Time constraints as I have a lot to study. If I had more time I would be more involved with my SU.
- My classes are 9-5, Monday to Friday. Then I have to study and work on the projects. Every 3 or 4 weeks I have exams. I must also travel back home, cook, clean, rest. Whenever there is "free time" I am either in bed trying to rest, or occasionally working out.

### **Cliqueness/Nature of activity**

- Lots of sports societies tend to have a drinking and party culture which meant because I don't enjoy those events frequently I felt I couldn't join.
- Being shy when starting Uni. Sometimes the timings of some activities, as I'd not be at University when some things were happening.
- Not the most outgoing person; don't feel easy making friend as a minority; everyone's got their groups already
- When I first arrived I struggled to get involved as all the information was so overwhelming. But even as I moved through university, I always felt like I wasn't good enough at sport/hobbies to join the societies. I think this stems from the fact that many people who are educated in private/independent school also are able to invest in their hobbies/extra curricular is provided for them at a much higher standard than in many state schools. This makes it hard to actually get into most sports clubs, but also applies to most large societies. It's not impossible to get involved, I just felt I didn't have the confidence or ability.
- Private schooled students tend to have better sports training, so are too difficult to play against. Most

musical societies have people who went to paid music lessons, I did not have that money or opportunity.

- I need to be with someone when starting a new activity, otherwise I am too anxious
- I feel that some activities organised by the university are not suitable for people wanting to try them for the first time, as a beginner. There is a sense that, particularly within sports societies, you have played the sport previously to joining university and know the basics of it. This is not always the case and I feel prevented from joining such societies for this reason.

### **Other**

- When in previous years the societies took my money to no return of the promised events or when rowing took hundreds or not even let me in the water
- I have not found activities that that I would really like to be more involved in like, Afro dance, dancehall etc.
- An injury early on in first term prevented me from joining a sports club, and now when I've recovered, I feel as if it's too late in term to join.
- My faith- as a Muslim woman there are so many events at night and involves alcohol that I can't attend. Which is why I felt that I didn't make as many friends as some who does drink alcohol would have.
- Anxiety and fear of walking alone at night, with an inability to afford Uber's to take me to and from places
- Commuting Living at home (If I lived on campus I would be able to go these events but as I live at home with my parents I have to ask them first before I go to an event. This includes telling them where it is, what time it ends etc and most of the time I can't go because some events are held at night like 6pm onwards or they're at times I have to go home as I go home straight after lectures :(
- Not being able to afford my way through university due to having a shit student maintenance loan. This caused me to have to get a job and I worked behind a bar until 5am and it messed everything up for me.
- Lacking preparedness to join societies in university because of the amount of work I feel I need to do to improve my outward attractiveness or the appearances associated with me to get anything meaningful from attempted socialisation, i.e. a pressure within myself to first improve myself to be 'ready' and to carry enough with me to be confident in the attractiveness or appeal I have as I approach other people I would find are truly attractive to know or prospects for attractive socialisation. I imply a need to do better academically for my self-esteem, so not feeling too comfortable to do much socially because I happen to not be able to do well academically without spending perhaps more time than others need to on academic work, a need to improve my physical appearance or fitness level, so reducing my body fat, applying for internships and making some headway in establishing my prospects as a graduate, getting the clothes and other possessions I want, etc., all before I can comfortably be social and truly try
- Being from a low-income family, self esteem is low therefore affecting social skills and having the confidence and freedom to socialise. Also living at home with parent makes it even more difficult to make friends.

We also asked students what more that universities could do to prevent students from feeling lonely. Students identified a raft of practical suggestions to improve the culture of peer support on campus and encourage students to help each other. A representative sample of comments is below.

### **What could your University/SU do to support students that feel lonely while at university?**

- Try to facilitate more social spaces and activities, I guess.
- Provide more social events specifically for students with anxiety or other mental health problems, to meet up and make new friends
- Have a global village activity where people dress up in traditional clothing, bring food, drinks, toys, games, etc from their countries, show case them, they will feel closer to home and possibly attract other people from their homes town/ country.
- Have an age appropriate buddy system to pair up people with similar interests
- I would suggest that in University halls there should be a complete mix of international students that would include both UK/EU. There should not be a segregation by placing non UK/EU students together. I live in accommodation with Chines, Mauritanian and Nepal. They are wonderful people but I found that even though I try my best they tend to want to keep to themselves.
- I feel that there should a more talks and events which cater for mature students with dependants. Talks that are held during school hours or perhaps ones where our children can come along
- Help students to create groups for studying and topic discussions so that we are not left to study alone. Potentially create a buddy system among the students in the same course to assist each other.
- You could try and create events that students can attend around lectures and workshops as that's the only way I would have been able to meet people. Unfortunately these types of events rarely ever happened and so I was unable to make friends in my three years at university.
- Encourage group work and discussions whilst in lecture to enable those who feel lonely to speak to their peers and perhaps make good friends.
- Introduce schemes that don't require so much formal commitment as many people who are lonely also suffer from other problems where by something they must attend on a regular basis does not appeal to them
- I feel like the importance of networking in the first weeks of university need to be emphasised. After the first few months everyone has their own groups formed and it hard to get involved
- The SU could put on more daily events/sober events for students to get to know each other, and spend time meeting new people.
- Coffee mornings
- They could offer/advertise more SU social events where people are able to make friends easily during first year. For instance, there can be equal focus and promotion of other events besides clubbing during freshers week. This is as many first years depend mainly on clubbing to meet new people and make friends but these friendships tend to be fleeting after the first few weeks.
- I think if there was more emphasis on sober events such as rollerblading, or other event where people actually talk to each other and make bonds, this would greatly help with the longevity of friendships. This would ultimately help in decreasing loneliness of students in the long run.
- Have more non-drinking events to allow people that don't drink to socialise with each other. Have events that allow you to meet people from the same city/town that you're from. Walk-in clinics with a therapist for those that would like to talk about feeling lonely whilst at university. Advertise the different sport and societies available at the university so people can find a club/group that they are interested in and are able to meet new people that they share something in common with.
- Try to have a better approach at moving people who are in uni accommodation and are in their first year and are struggling with their housemates due to different interests etc. I believe first year accommodation and who you live with is crucial to finding your feet and making friends.
- Often you don't get along with your flat mates and there is little to be done/support when this situation arises with uni and the accommodation team. Normally they say, you are on a waiting line but nothing ever materialises from that.
- Stop segregating groups eg run events for anyone not just international students
- Have more DAYTIME socials for different courses as the main ones are at night/clubbing which excludes a lot of people and leads to feelings of loneliness.
- Provide more events that don't involve drinking
- Put on more events that make everyone feel included. Many events are for LGBTQ students to get them involved which is good but I have been to a few events and feel like an outsider. Although these events have promoted minorities and made them feel welcome, I have often felt unwelcome not being a minority.
- Since I live with Asian parents it would be nice to have day time social events with NO alcohol. There aren't any social events to give me opportunities to socialise with others I have to find them in class etc.
- Encourage students on the course to be more friendly to one another. Remind students that there are people on the course who may not necessarily have a group of friends. As I found that I didn't make any friends on my course in my first year and then realised that many friendship groups had already formed and therefore I felt it was too late to get involved.
- A compulsory lecture on "surviving at uni" which explains the loneliness that we may experience and the facilities at university that can help us. when we start university we're not very aware of how lonely it can be and it surprises you when it hits you. sometimes I felt as though I was the only person who was lonely as loneliness doesn't get spoken about much.
- Run more events that are commuter-student friendly (as in during the day, not after 6pm) and get rid of 3-5pm lectures (it's at a ridiculous time, whoever makes the timetables are not taking into account the students who commute to uni everyday).
- My University is already doing Mature student free brunches and stuff. Maybe smth for ppl with disabilities? I think that in order not to feel lonely, you need to be able to integrate. Just that, when you come

from the outside, you are used to different standards and norms. For international students (like myself) it is really crucial to understand cultural particularities.

- First off, actually listen to students. Second, take away the utter bullshit governance they run with, implement new procedures that will benefit students, and give them the opportunity. They focus too much on “diversity” to try and attract more students internationally for more money. They’re happy to go and build a lot more faculties but they don’t focus on smaller things like making sure their students are all okay.
- Bringing small groups of the same course, or with similar interests together. Perhaps by making people work towards some kind of goal that is beneficial for the cohort/class/course overall and outside of academic responsibilities, i.e. not assessed group presentations etc.
- Enrol a extra-curriculum programme at uni? Rotating different sports, different skills to learn and more.

Gives opportunity for students to try new things and meet new people without thinking others won’t turn up.. or if that’s too much just keep pushing on voluntary extra curriculum activities on campus / nearby accomodation where students are hanging around.

- Having more casual sessions such as board/card games - things it's easy for people to pick up, and they're forced to work together and interact. Advertising these more widely as well would help - right now most events are advertised in student union spaces - someone who's lonely wouldn't be in those places to begin with.
- I think the best thing is to really dig deeper and find out what the students really want deep down and guide them to it. It'll essentially guide them to happiness and comfort while being around others. After all the university is our temporary parents and they must treat us like we're their children.

Finally, we asked students what could be done to support students struggling with their mental health. Unsurprisingly, investing in counselling staff was a common refrain, but students identified a range of other suggestions related to both individual support and peer support. Again, a representative sample of comments is below.

## What could your university/SU do to support students that are struggling with mental health issues?

### Services

- Better/easily accessible/walk in counselling services with more relatable counsellors
- Get them appointments with the mental health services much quicker. Currently, the waiting time is far too long.
- Have a shorter wait time for counselling services, and offer more time than the allocated slots
- They need to check up on people who have made some indication that they are struggling.
- They have support for students. However, you just get put on a list so its not really current. One just has to hang around struggling with problems until there is an appointment for you.
- Maybe reach out more instead of waiting for the people to go and see them plus more resources going into student support especially for health and well-being in general. The demand of the psychological help department of the university is so high that if you have a small problem, they are not going to see you and you will probably need to wait for more than 6 months to be able to have a chance to talk to some mental health professionals.

### Peer to peer

- Have regular forums/meetings online or in real life where students can drop by or leave anonymous messages and receive helpful advice and or comfort.
- Provide informal support groups so students can talk about their mental health problems without having to see a professional counsellor
- Maybe online things as some students have anxiety that prevents them from going to student welfare or to a social gathering. So they could have social media counsellors to slowly introduce them to actual physical appointments
- Mental health awareness talks and workshops.
- Organise social events that don't put pressure on students such as coffee morning etc

### Role of academic staff

- I believe the tutor's observation and support are quite important.
- More support from a personal tutor
- The college tutors and welfare officers could also host weekly or biweekly open hours where you can just drop in and have a coffee, whether you have any issues or if you just want to have a friendly chat.
- The University has helped but could do better by asking how students are coping with the academic side of things and the non academic side of things
- Promote the tackling of mental health more often, the odd email from our school is not enough. Maybe a lecture mid semester when people are starting to feel the pressure of deadlines
- Encourage more activities outside the confines of the course and make the timetables flexible to accommodate other engagements. Most people with mental health issues will not go to a support group or contact someone to get support, they need to sought out. This comes from increasing awareness among lecturers, small group teaching sessions and offering that support along the way- being friendly and open with students in a way that makes them feel comfortable and build a rapport with them
- Regular follow up on students who have opened up about feeling lonely or struggling with mental health issues.
- i think it could be more useful for my tutor to be more of someone i could come to with a mental health struggle, my tutor is just someone i see a few times of year to talk about work progress, ive made no connection with him and feel as though i have nobody to go to. I know there is student support services but i've found it too hard to access these because of my lack of confidence, having my own tutor who i could go to with personal problems would be a huge help

- Having tutors/wardens who actively check on students and have a relationship with them, more involvement with students so people don't go unnoticed

**Also**

- Set up a 24 hour helpline for any student struggling.
- Pop-up support team on campus or free groups of support maybe with a special interest (e.g. sport, reading)
- They could have someone or a group of people who students are expected to see once a year or term that isn't linked with their course who they can confide in as a mental health check up.
- Advisors from office could help with students' mental health by talking with them and help them make appointment with doctors, also give support in academic aspect.
- Send weekly/Monthly motivational messages Mental Health posters on where students can seek help Implement mindfulness into lectures/seminars e.g. breathing exercises Work in a pace that meets the needs of all students as lectures often feel rushed
- Provide helplines for specific mental health issues eg. Anxiety Someone feeling depressed due to homesickness/loneliness may think that ringing a helpline is too extreme and therefore won't do it
- Provide monthly student support emails welcoming students to seek support, if the reminder was there and encouragement to talk I think more people would seek support. I didn't seek support from my University till third year and didn't know much about it, so in all

three years of study provide more information on who you can go to specifically regarding issues.

- Relaxation areas, video tours of buildings so people with anxiety can see an area before going for layout.
- People are so getting depressed here, make them feel loved and carried along
- Be more approachable. Of so many people I've spoken to with regards to this, people have said they refuse to speak to somebody at university. If people do not want to speak to somebody at university, something isn't being done right. Process needs to be looked at in order to fully make people aware and give them trust and confidence to actually go and talk people.
- They could offer more help when you ask for it and not just say 'we can't do much unless you apply for disabled student allowance'. They could also make it easier to make it known to people (such as personal tutors or lecturers) so that if anything were to go wrong there would be more understanding
- Provide the chance for asking help anonymously as well
- I have had only one meeting with my tutor once out of my whole school year and that was concerning my attendance, tutors don't really care unless something concerning pops up and affects their records. My tutor does not support me and if I have issues, I would rather not share with her because she wouldn't care anyway, which makes me feel my University/ SU wouldn't care too, so I'd rather not talk to anyone.
- Offer confidential mental health clinics where students can drop in and discuss their feelings.

The research was conducted via the Trendence UK student database through an online survey in January 2019. The survey was promoted as concerning "student lifestyle research". 1,615 responses were received from 103 universities, and the data was weighted by gender.

**Respondent profile**

**Age**

16-20	45.8%
21-24	40.3%
25-29	7.8%
30 and over	6.1%

**Sexual Orientation**

Hetero/Strt	87.5%
LGBT+	10.5%
Prefer no say	2.0%

**Disability**

Yes	7.9%
No	87.8%
Don't know	2.3%
Prefer no say	2.0%

**Nationality**

UK	67.4%
EU/EEA	13.0%
Non-EU	19.5%

**Ethnicity**

White	60.6%
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	4.9%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black Brit	7.6%
Asian/Asian British	22.7%
Other Ethnic Group	4.2%

**Course Type**

Foundation degree	0.5%
Undergraduate degree	80.1%
Postgraduate taught degree	16.9%
Postgraduate research	2.5%

**Means tested funding?**

Eligible	30.5%
Non-Eligible	46.7%
Don't know	22.8%

**Did either of your parents/guardians attend university?**

Yes	53.4%
No	45.1%
Don't know	1.5%

Out of those that reported having a disability, 38% declared having Mental health disability/condition.