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Post-graduation planning survey.

In association with APPGAT, this survey is designed to inform and improve government policy on disability, assistive technology and employment.

Contents

Introduction

The aim of this survey is to help us gain a better understanding of how we can best support students as they finish their studies and move into the workplace. We asked students to share their current understanding of the support available to them, as well as any aspirations and concerns they had for their future career, post-graduation.

We specifically targeted students who received Disabled Students' Allowance during their time at university, either in the form of Assistive Technology (AT) equipment, AT hardware or software training or other support such as specialist study skills support or mentoring.

Our aim is to ensure that students, our future workforce, continue to receive the appropriate support once they embark on their journey within the workplace, as well as empowering students to know what they are entitled to and how their employers should be supporting them. Through this and other initiatives, we are working to improve the support available for students entering the workplace.

We partnered with the think tank Policy Connect and the results of this survey will be used to inform their work with government to improve policy on disability, assistive technology and employment.

Students are at the forefront of everything we do and working with Policy Connect on this survey further establishes our commitment to ensure that every student has a positive entry into the workplace.
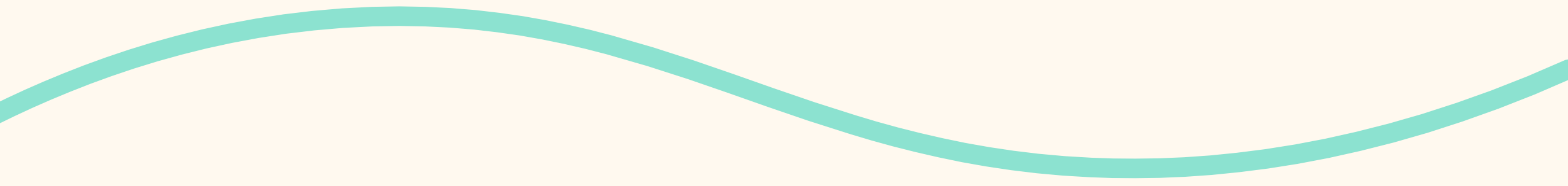
Executive Summary

- A total of 371 students responded to the survey; all were students approaching graduation and looking at starting their careers.

- The majority of students had limited or no knowledge of Access to Work.

- Students had a confidence level of 43% on average when it comes to discussing their disability with potential employers at interview stage.

- Overall, students did not feel confident that they were equipped with the right questions to ask an employer to ensure appropriate support to meet their individual needs.

- 40% of respondents said that they would turn down a job offer without the appropriate support for their needs.

- 56% of respondents planned to seek disability support in the workplace.

- It has been clear through the responses to this survey that more can be done to raise awareness of Access to Work and to give students the confidence to discuss their individual needs with potential employers.

Methodology

This survey was sent to students who received, or who are receiving, Disabled Students' Allowance during their time at university, either in the form of Assistive Technology equipment, Assistive Technology hardware or software training or other support such as specialist study skills tuition or mentoring.

Section One:

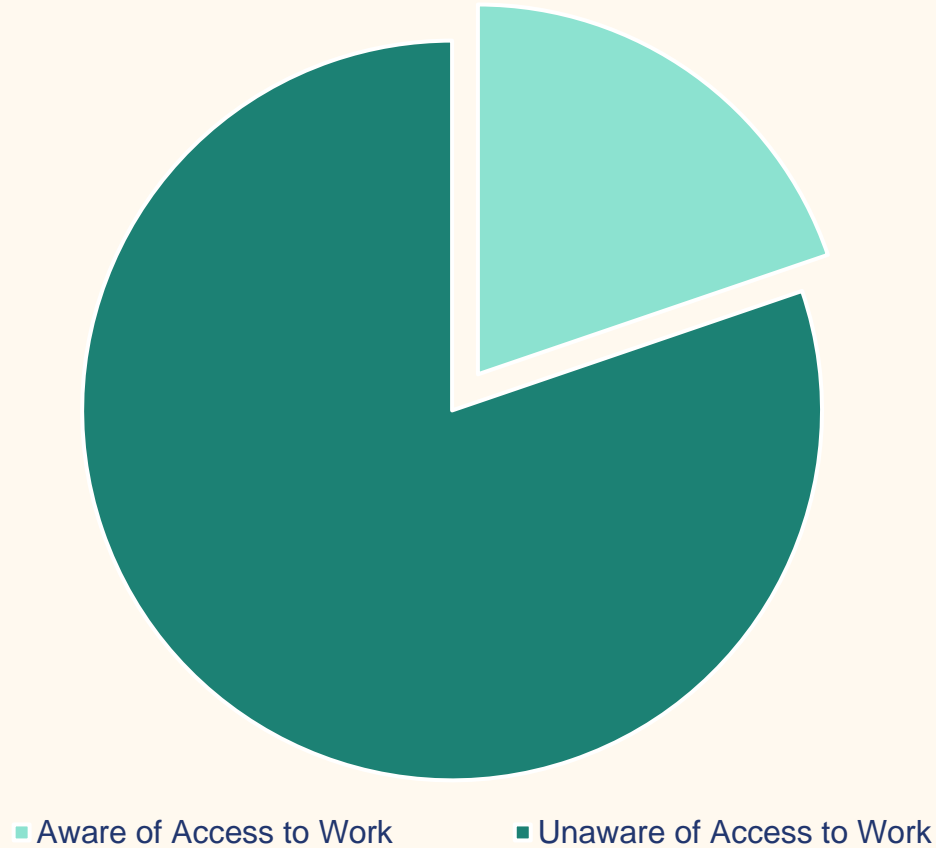Student knowledge and awareness of Access to Work

Section One:

Have you heard of the Access to Work scheme?

Starting off, we asked students if they had heard of the Access to Work scheme.

19.76% of students had heard of the scheme, however, an overwhelming majority of students (80.24%) had not heard of Access to Work.

- Aware of Access to Work
- Unaware of Access to Work

Section One:

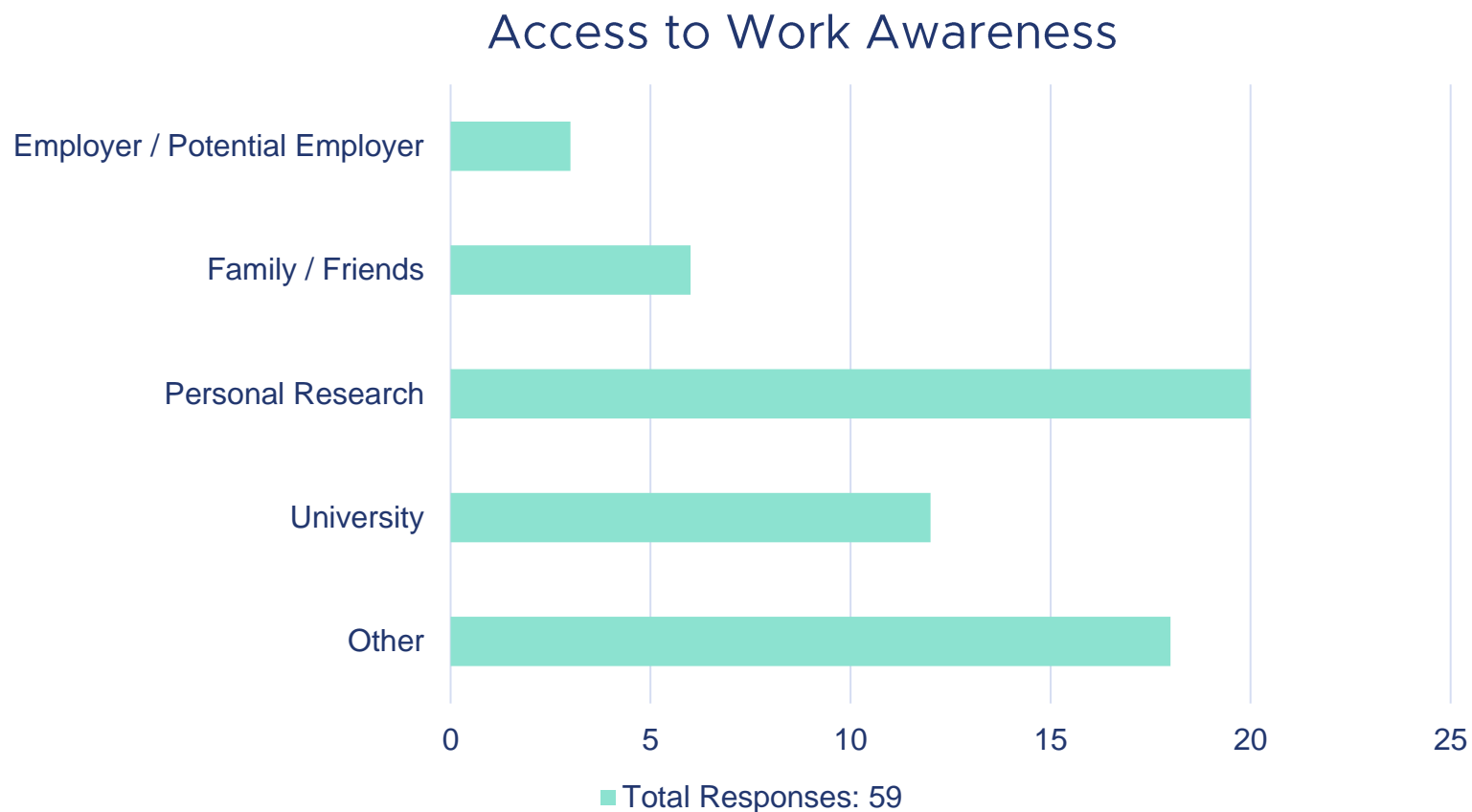Where did you hear about Access to Work?

Of those who had heard of Access To Work (59 respondents), these are their sources of information.

Access to Work Awareness

Horizontal bar chart showing sources of Access to Work awareness:
- Employer / Potential Employer: ~3
- Family / Friends: ~6
- Personal Research: 20
- University: ~12
- Other: ~18

X-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25

Total Responses: 59

Other Responses

Combination of sources including family, university, Amano support.
Disability support worker
DWP benefits enforced scheme
I first heard about it through one of my DSA providers
I received it when I was working prior to PhD
Internet
Job centre
One of the adviser's who helped me use the software programmes offered to me mentioned it.
Previous research for a disabled child
Previously used them
RNIB employment helpline
Social media
Through my role as an assessor and the BDA
Universal credit
Website
When I was applying for PIP

Section One:

How satisfied are you with the support Access to Work can provide?

- We asked those students who were aware of Access to Work *"How satisfied are you with the support Access to Work can provide?"*

- Access to Work ranked 59% on the satisfaction scale. Whilst more than half of respondents said that they were satisfied with what was on offer, this figure indicates that there are still improvements to be made.

Section One:

Is there anything you feel may be missing from the support Access to Work can provide?

We asked students what they felt was missing from Access to Work support and what they feel would be beneficial as future recipients of Access to Work funding.

A working from home printing allowance consideration
Better explanations for the workplace on what they will receive for helping individuals
Flexible working
Full hours 1 to 1 support at work
Funding for full assessments for some people
I need specific colour tinted glasses to work and they are not on NHS, would things like this be considered in this sort of thing, if not this is something of a concern for me as I need them to read anything on black and white paper
Informational support someone who can sit down and explain a disease or disability
It is not easy to navigate or to find specific information
Maybe accessible information to read (dyslexic friendly)
Mental health general support

Section Two:

Universities & Access to Work
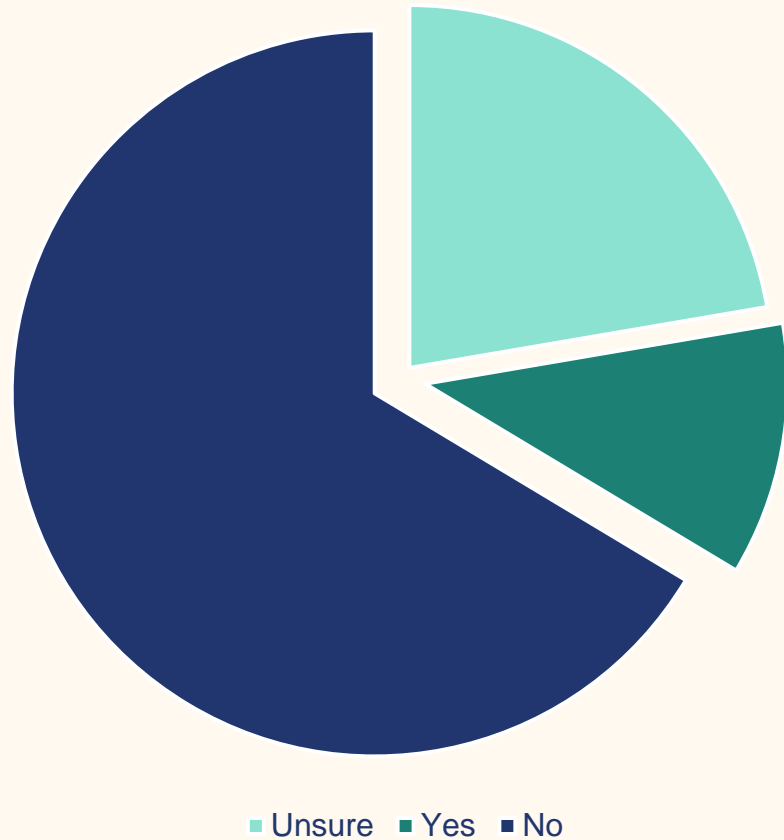
Section Two:

Has your university provided you with any information about disability support in the workplace (for your post-graduation career)?

Asking students if their university had provided information on disability in the workplace helped us to gauge what information was available to students from their Higher Education Institution (HEI).

11.32% of students responded yes to this question and 66.31% responded no with the remainder unsure about whether they had received any information about Access to Work. This illustrate that Access to Work information needs to be more readily available from some HEIs.

■ Unsure ■ Yes ■ No

Section Two:

Have you carried out any research about disability support available in the workplace (for your post-graduation career)?

Only 19.14% of students who responded had carried out research on the support available to them in the workplace; we believe that this this is linked to the lack of awareness that the support exists.
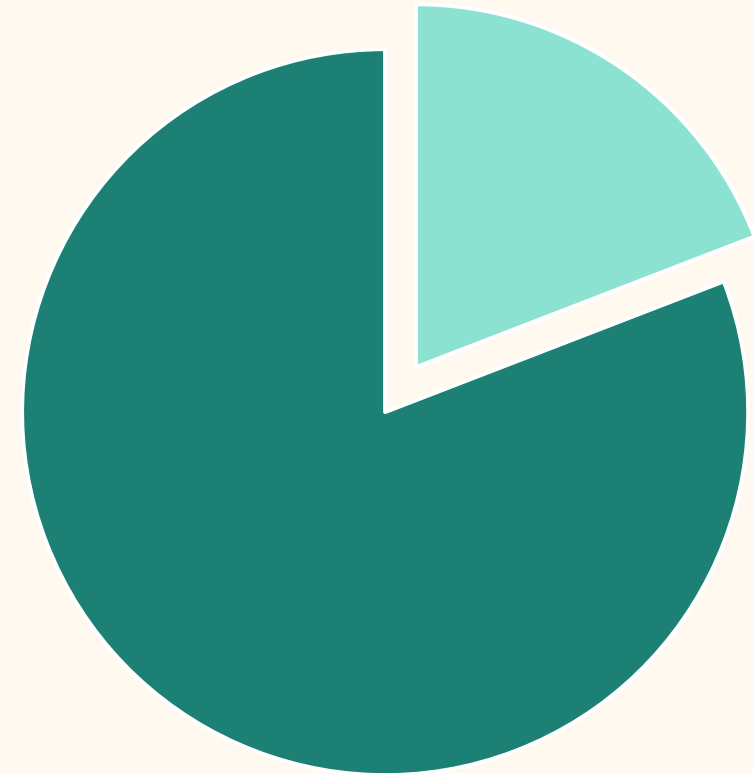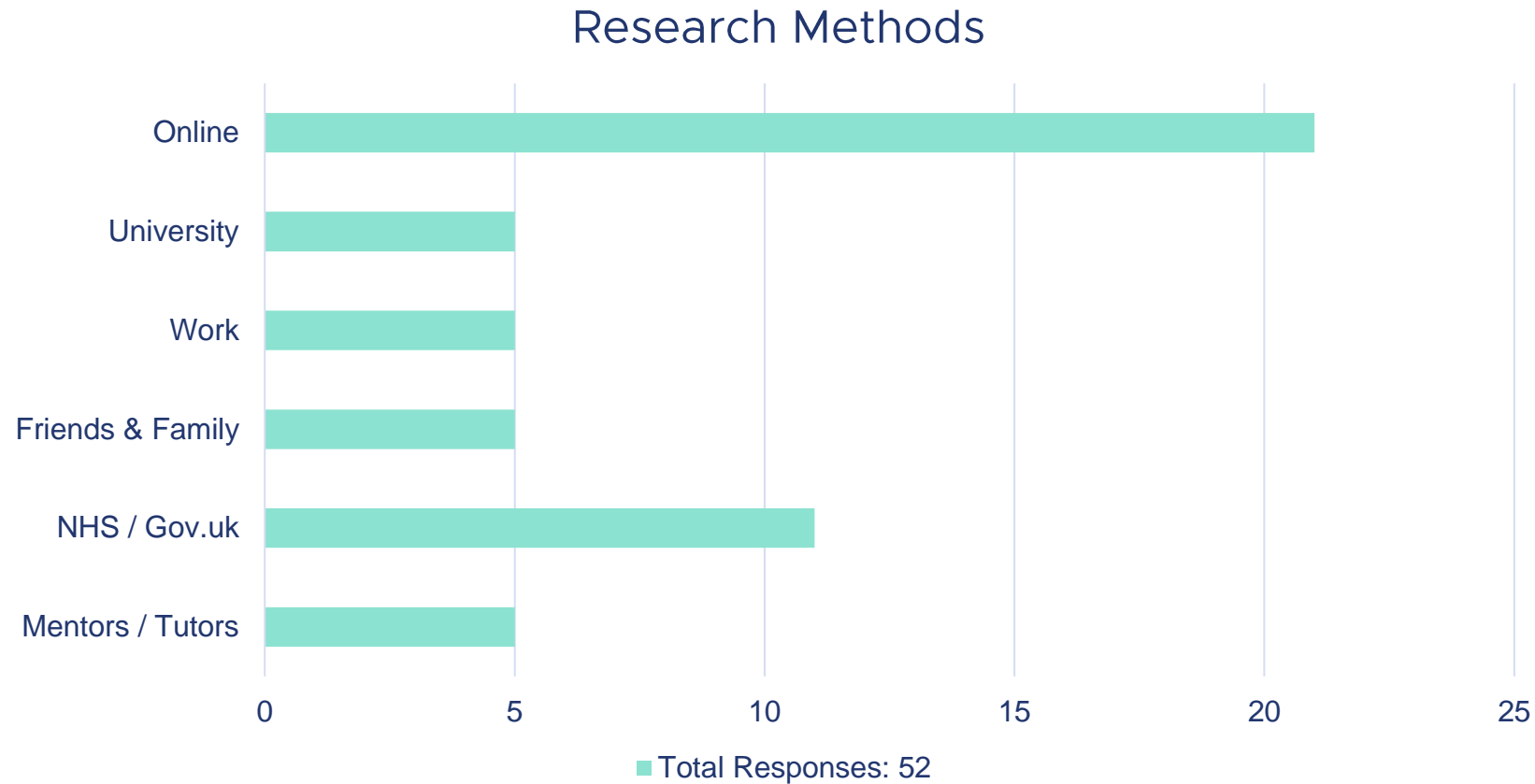

■ Yes ■ No

Section Two:

What source/s did you use to carry out your research? (i.e. where did you look for information on workplace disability support?)

Of the students who had conducted research (52 respondents), the below resources were used to research Access To Work.

Research Methods

| Category	Value
Online	21
University	5
Work	5
Friends & Family	5
NHS / Gov.uk	11
Mentors / Tutors	5

Total Responses: 52

Section Two:

How satisfied were you with the disability support information you found?

Of the students who conducted research, (52) respondents ranked their satisfaction with the information found on a scale of 1-100%, where 1% means not at all satisfied, and 100% is completely satisfied.

Satisfaction levels with disability support information available

Number of respondents
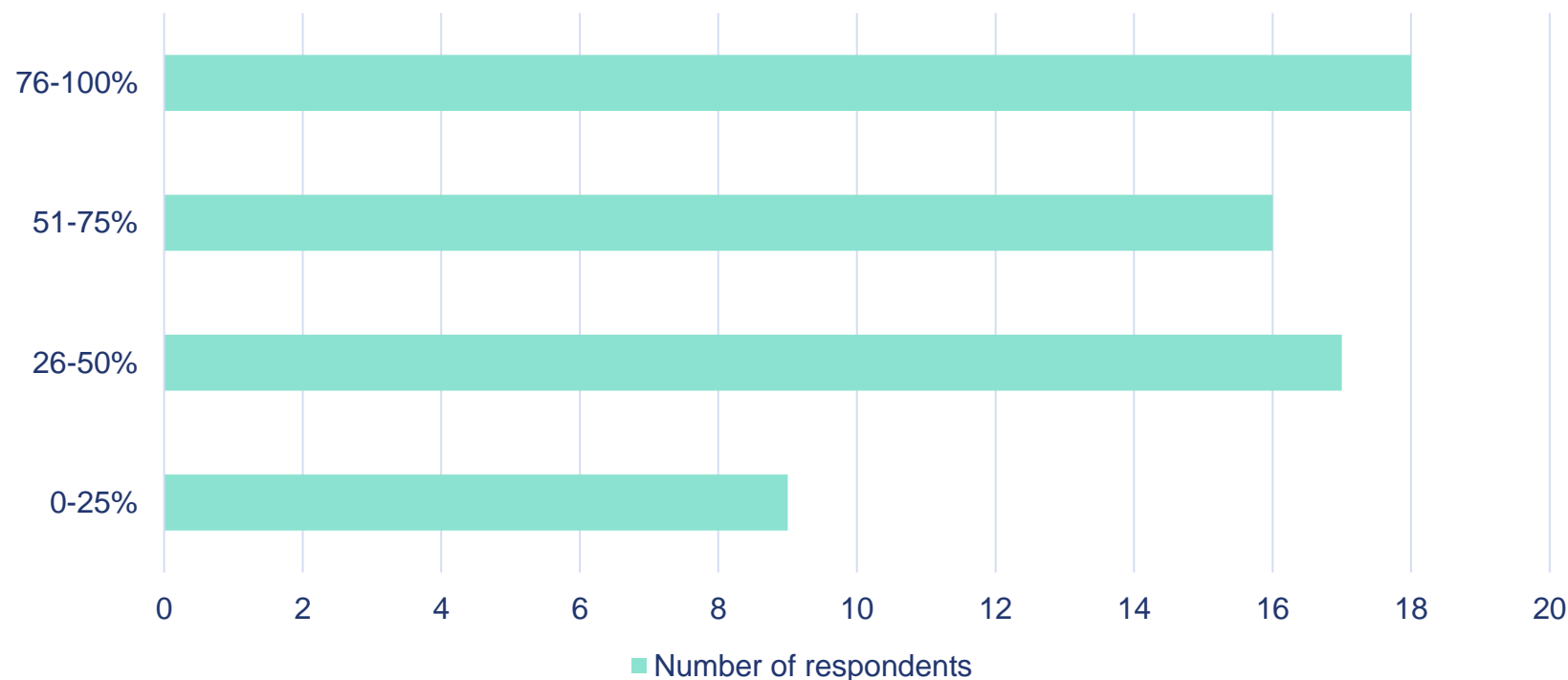
Section Two:

Is there anything you struggled to find out or felt maybe was not supported in the workplace?

Of the students who have conducted their own research, 39 responded with what they felt was missing. Some of these responses are below.

1 to 1 support
How having a disability might impact my chances of employment.
I get the impression I should disclose my dyslexia once a job has been offered.
I was able to find out support that can be offered but not really much information on how to get the support put into place.
Information regarding what happens if my conditions are bad unexpectedly
More specific information about different conditions, unsure about support for travelling to and from work, eg if you're unable to drive
Information on self employment
Specific support provide and what is recommended for my type of career path
Testimonials from others in the office who have been supported (or not).
The way an employer maybe able to aid and guide me in the work place efficiently and with the tailored support I may need?
Wasn't sure the exact thing I would get and how they would help me. felt you have to reach out to get help rather been informed of it and support offered
What time off for frequent appointments would mean and how to disclose when applying
Yes I struggled to get info in just what I could realistically do also how benefits work in terms of signing on and being off sick at the same time

Section Two:

Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding disability support in the workplace?

Of the students who conducted research, we asked for any additional comments based on their views regarding disability support in the workplace.

A lot of this I haven't even considered. I know I will declare my disabilities but I'm not sure how much assistance I will require or want
As a mature student with a career behind me already, I'm pretty sure that raising any of my disability needs in the workplace would immediately ensure I either wouldn't get the job, or would be treated less seriously than others if I did. I suspect SpLDs are perceived differently in the workplace to visible, physical disabilities.
Ensuring that the workplace are aware of the benefits of providing the assistive support and the renumeration that they will receive for doing so
For it to be more apparent to people that they can access this support at work
For post graduate work place a travel allowance and assistance with computer skills plus the access to work place scheme are the things I need in place for when I graduate
I am worried my disability status would impact my chances of getting hired and keeping the job.
I did not know there was any so information what is available would be useful
I find it difficult to know when and how to disclose my disability (mental illness) to an employer to access any help I need. I also am unsure about how I am going to explain any absences in my education to future employers e.g. I am doing a 4 year degree but I am currently in year 3 of my studies but it is my 6th year in total as I have had to take time out and have extensions etc.
I have two mental health conditions and often feel uneasy about disclosing this to potential employers before accepting a job offer. This is because, whilst I would like to disclose my diagnoses with potential employers so that support can be put in place, I sometimes feel that I have been turned down roles due to disclosing. I know this would be discrimination but there is no way to prove that this was the employer's motivation for rejecting me.

I would like support in making things easier to understand and appropriate adjustments put in place to make my transition easier; also throughout my nursing career.
I would particularly like to focus on what support - if any - is available for disabled graduates looking to work abroad. Teaching in Japan is my first choice for a postgraduate career. I would also like to require what support might be available in the event that I return to the UK to pursue a different career path.
I would to be interested to know what is currently available for me
If I return to the UK, I hope to receive the same access of support as I did during my undergraduate.
Is mental health support available?
It is a legal requirement
It is a minefield moving forward and I have no idea how to approach employers with my needs.
It is essential that people with any disability should get a mentor within the workplace who can closely monitor, supervise, and support the individual.
More jobs need to be accessible by people with disabilities, especially rare and severe ones. Lack of jobs which allow people to do them means fewer disabled people to work.
I really benefitted from the support at uni and I think because of that it helped me to achieve a first.
I sometimes feel intimidated to mention my disability in the workplace.
I started a job as soon as I finished university, so I am more aware of the support that I would like to have in the workplace post-graduation. I am finding it difficult not having the same support that I had at university, especially as there are limited services available during the pandemic. I've tried to research what options I have, but it would be nice to have a greater understanding of my options from a service that is dedicated to helping former students like myself with their wellbeing.
I think it would be good if there were more employment opportunities suitable for people with disabilities (particularly autism) in general. For example a wider awareness of disability in the workplace and more disability-confident employers.
I welcome any support that could enable me to have an independently working career.
I would be interested in receiving advice on this via email or online chat as I find phones very difficult. I am not really aware of what support is out there for disabilities in the workplace, but I have found the mentoring part of my DSA support especially helpful.
I would be keen to discuss support options as I was not aware such support existed after my studies were completed. I am also hesitant to disclose my anxiety and depression issues with potential employers for fear it will go against my application; therefore, some advice on this issue would be helpful.
I would like for more workplaces to understand that just because I have learning disability's, that dose not mean I can't work to the same level it just means my process to get there may take a conversation longer? or a few extra questions from me.

| |
|---|
| unsure what support i can receive |
| Only that it would be great to have a one to one possible recorded session explaining how people such as myself, with dyslexia and memory issues from a childhood head injury. In order for us to really benefit from the conversation by being able to revisit the recording to make sure we fully understood what was being explained to us. |
| The support needs to be more accessible and also informative. |
| there is not enough information on how this could be achieved in smaller establishments |
| there is o support to get placements for those needing adjustments so I feel I am discriminated against |
| There is still too much discrimination in the workplace for me to even feel able to mention my disability and/or needs to a potential new employer. I feel it would impede on the opportunities available to me. |
| There is still too much stigma and lack of understanding: people need more awareness training which should be free and compulsory. |
| Unsure about mentioning SpLDs in interviews / pre-job and if you can receive support if you're freelancing, I am wondering if you can get support / DSAs for postgraduate study e.g a masters, and whether there are any grants or help with money available specifically for postgrad study for people with disabilities. |
| Workplace environment can be toxic, culture needs to change so disabled people feel like their disabilities are not an inconvenience |
| Wouldn't feel able to bring it up at interview, would rely on seeing if their recruitment materials/website brought it up and would check with former/current employees through eg. glass door. Would only discuss directly once I already had a job offer. |

Section Three:

Post-Graduation student support requirements, expectations and support options

Section 3:

Do you think you would find any of the support you may have received through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) useful in your future career?

Students were asked which of the areas of support they received at university they would find useful in the workplace. The below chart shows the importance of each aspect of support as ranked by the students.
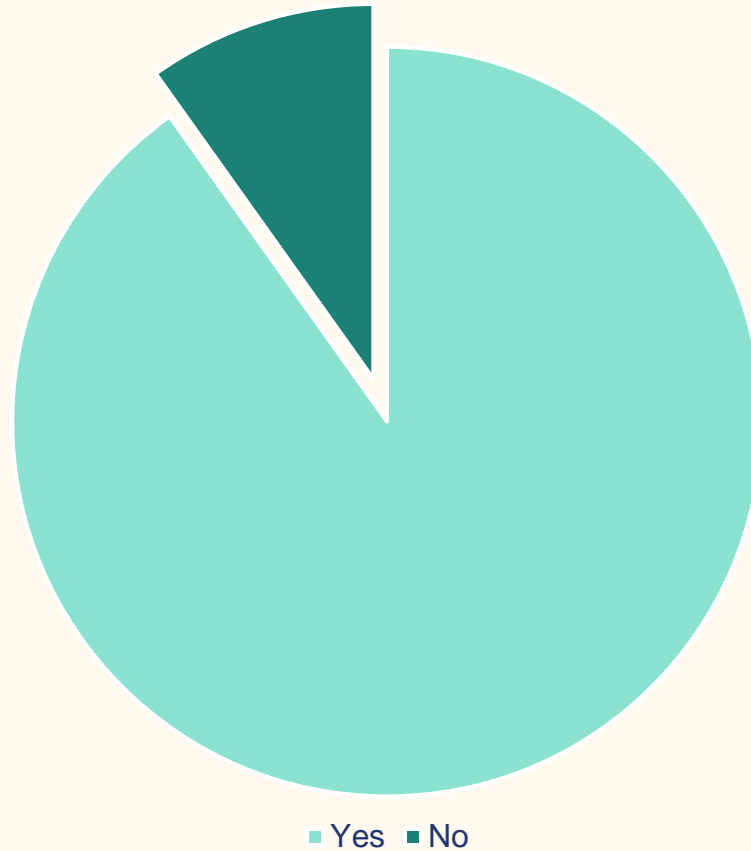

Support Received

Total Responses: 318
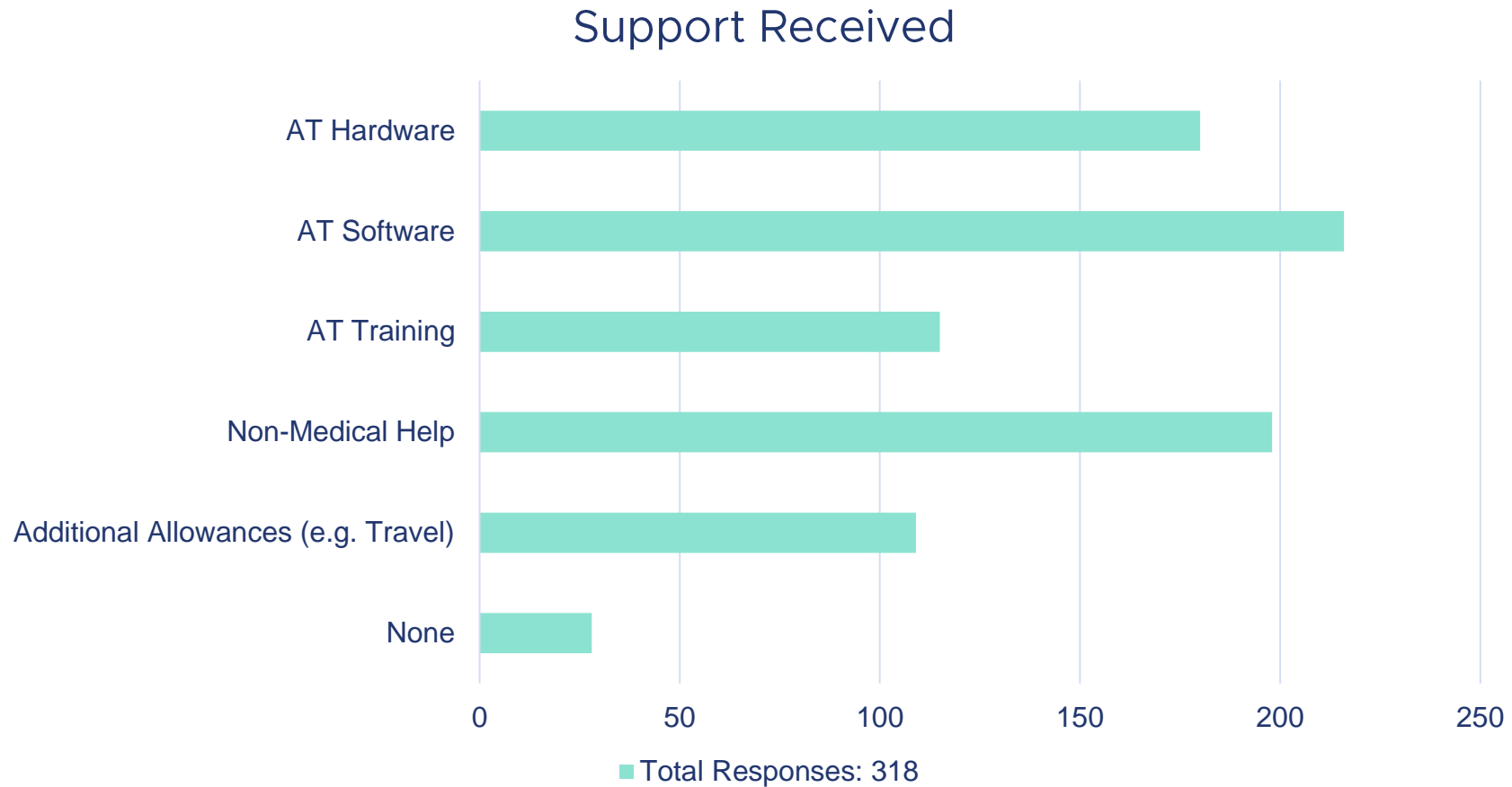
Section Three:

Should you continue any support post-graduation would you be keen to continue with the same providers?

75.47% of students would be keen to continue their workplace support with their current providers.

Yes   No

Section Three:

Would you be interested in a one-to-one advice call to discuss your disability support options post-graduation?

55.7% of students would be interested in an advice call to discuss their options after they graduate.
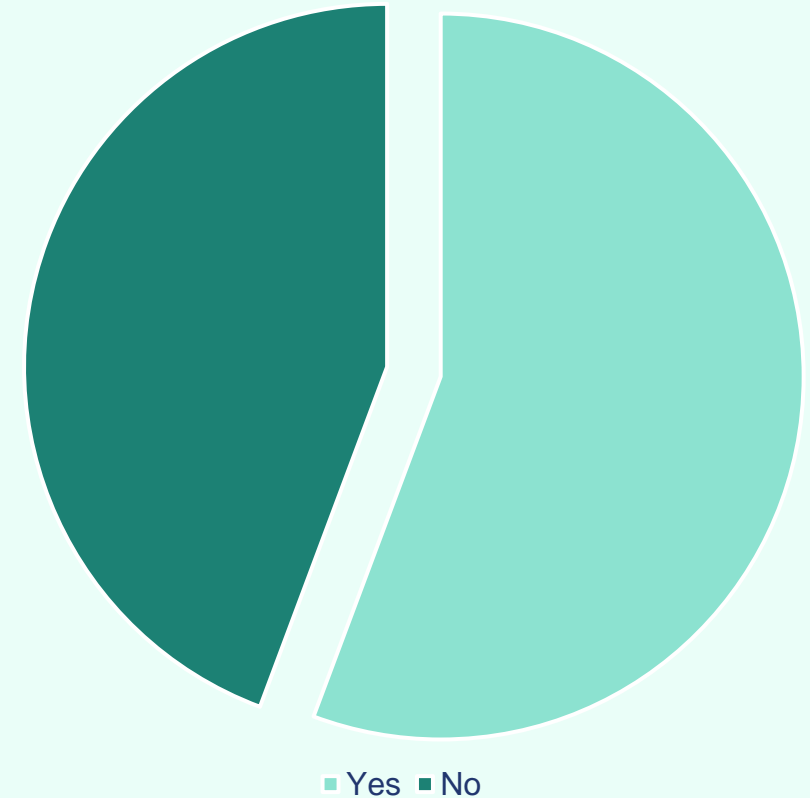
Yes   No

Section Three:

Do you think you would find any of the support you may have received through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) useful in your future career?

Additional Comments

A sighted guide
Adaptive / ergonomic chair and desk
Career advice, interview techniques, help with CV and job search
Coloured/ tinted glasses
Help with arthritis
I think much of the technology would help. I did not receive training for the software so have been unable to use it. I was passed from one person to the next when enquiring about it, so I gave up asking.
Mentor / study skills tutor
Personal organisation
Printed materials
Specialist workstation equipment
Taxis to and from work.
Work from home

Section Three:

Do you think you would find any of the support you may have received through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) useful in your future career?

AT software has been ranked as most important to continue with into the workplace. Out of 371 students surveyed, 58% of those voted for AT software, such as but not limited to, text-to-speech, note-taking or mindmapping programmes. The focus on AT software being available shows the value that AT software adds to a student's overall learning and working experience.

AT hardware (48%) and AT training (31%) also ranked second and third in a students' priorities when looking for post-graduation support; this further reinforces the positive support that these tools provide.

Section Three: Conclusion

The responses from this section suggested that ongoing support with assistive technology is required after graduation and should be recommended during the Access to Work process. The responses also suggested that students will feel better supported and more engaged with their place of work with access to the appropriate Assistive Technology tools.

Students also require additional support to discuss the options available to them before applying to Access to Work.
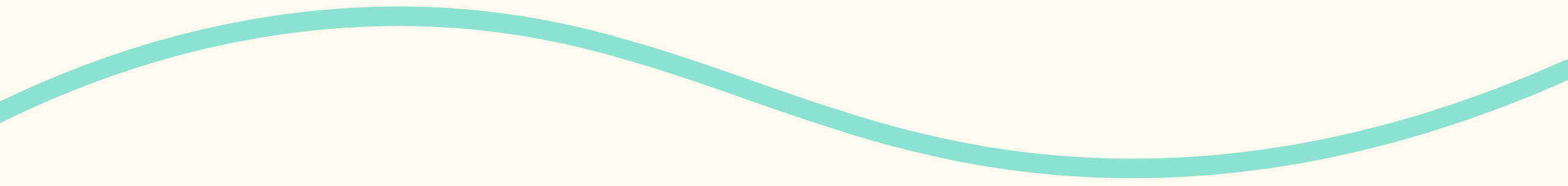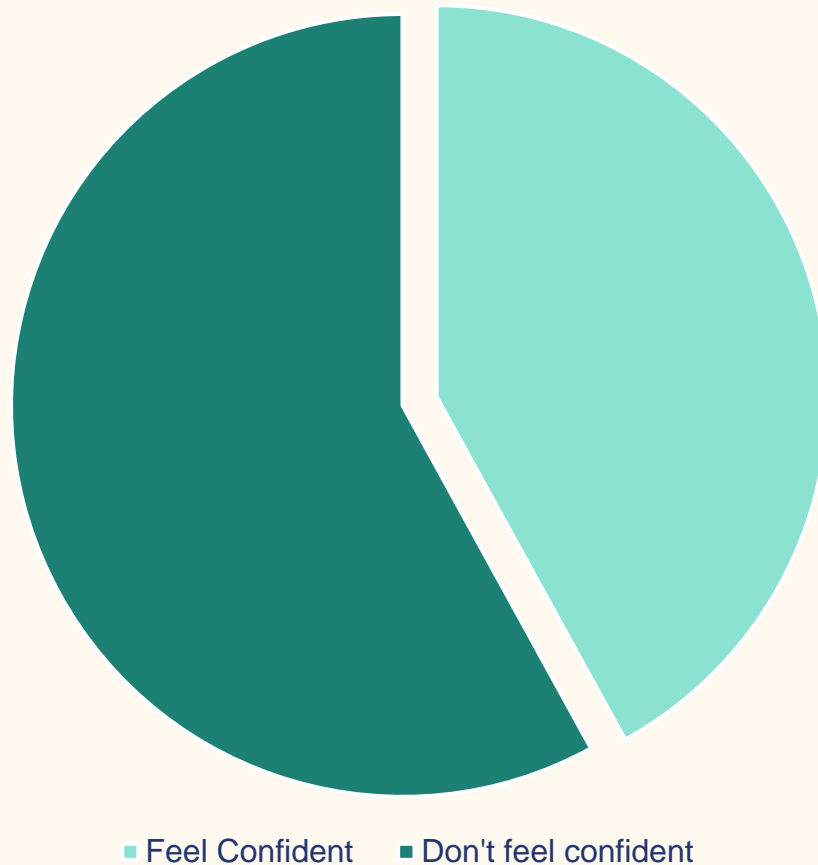
Section Four:

Assessing student confidence levels when discussing their additional needs with potential employers

Student Confidence Levels

■ Feel Confident　　■ Don't feel confident

We asked students "*How confident do you feel discussing your disability and the support you need with a potential employer at interview stage*?"

On average, students rated their confidence level as 42%.

This shows that there is still more work to do to instil confidence in students to discuss their individual needs at interview stage.

We asked students *"How confident are you that you will know the right questions to ask a potential employer to ensure they will provide appropriate support to meet your needs?"*

This is an indicator on how well prepared students feel to discuss their support needs at interview stage.

On average, students rated their confidence level as 34%, indicating that more preparation work needs to be done in this area.

Student Confidence Levels
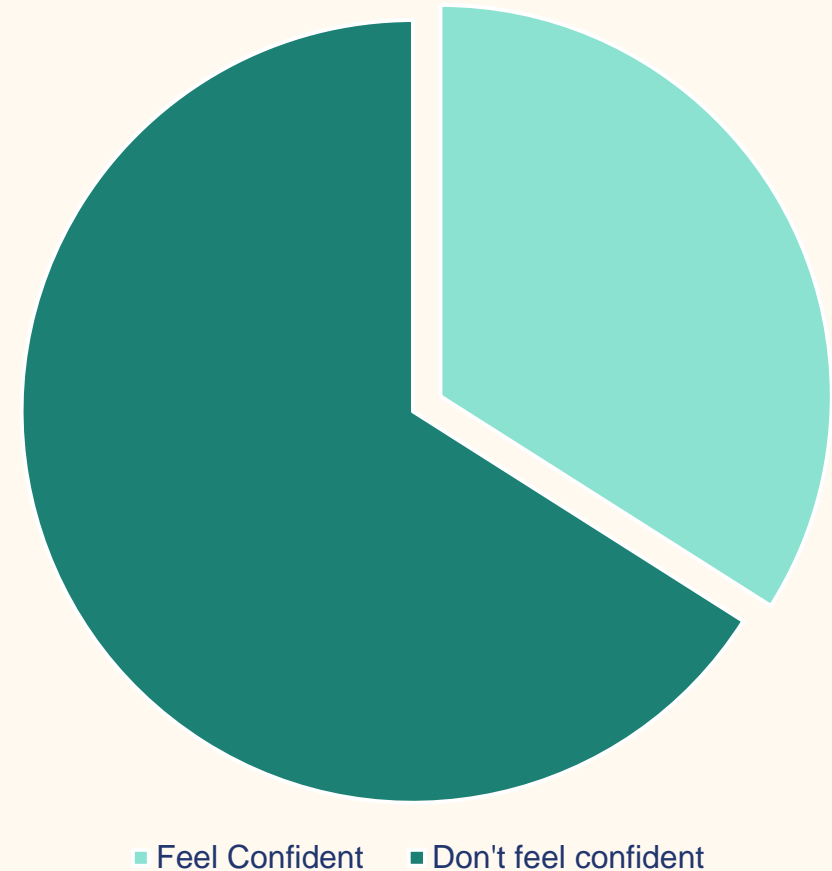
■ Feel Confident ■ Don't feel confident

Section Four:

Assessing student confidence levels when discussing their additional needs with potential employers

This survey focuses on the students desired and predicted needs and wants as they leave education and venture into the workplace. We asked students to rank their current confidence levels when it comes to discussing their additional requirements with potential employers.

This shows us the level of preparedness a student feels when entering the workplace, as well as their knowledge on what they are entitled to and what obligations are with the employer to ensure each employee is supported in their role.

Of the students surveyed the vast majority did not feel confident in discussing their additional needs with potential employers.
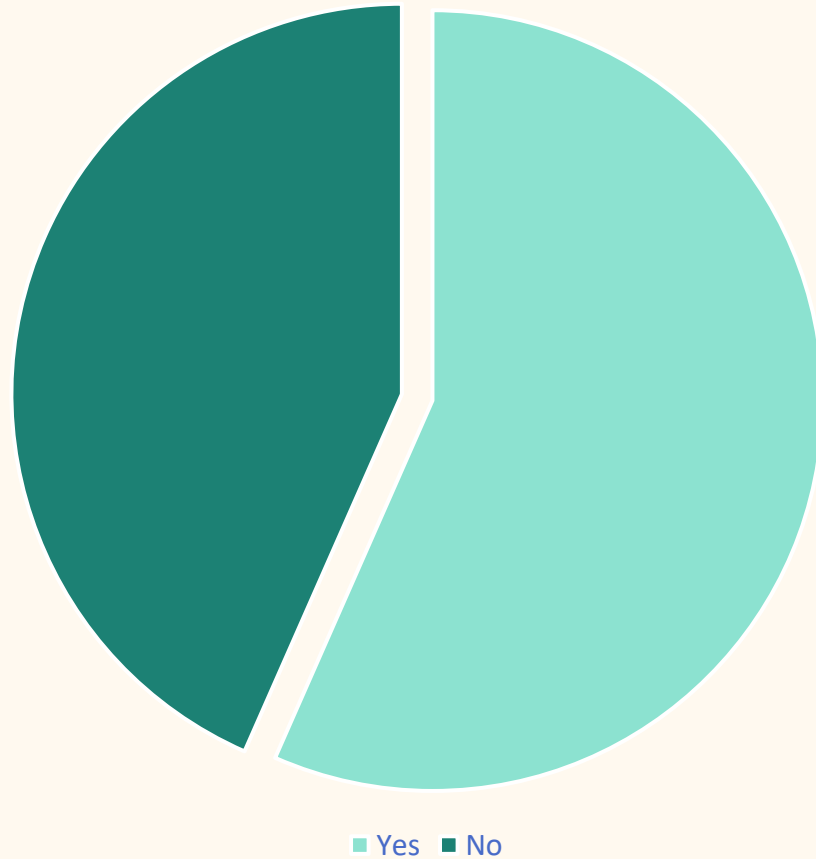
Section Four: Conclusion

This suggests that there is additional work to be done to empower the student to discuss their additional needs as well as inform them on their employer obligations.
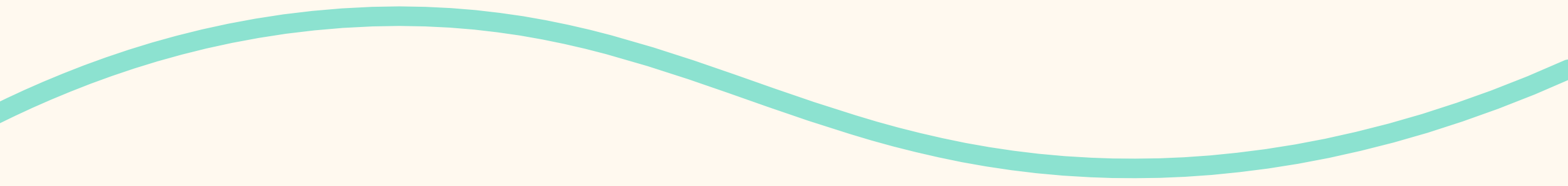
Section Five:

Student future plans

Section Five:

Do you plan to apply to seek disability support in the workplace post-graduation (whether this be through the Access to Work scheme, your employer or any other method)?
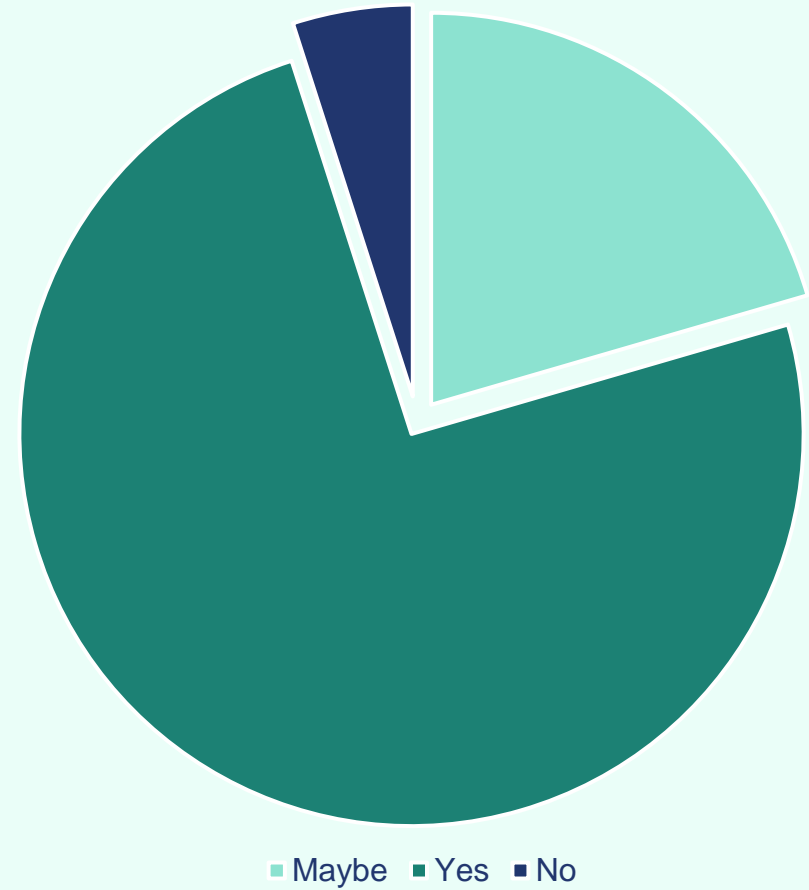
56.6% of students planned to seek disability support in the workplace after they have completed their studies.

■ Yes ■ No

Section Five:

Do you plan to seek a job that is related to your course of study?

57.18% said yes, 3.79% said no and the remaining students were unsure of their future plans.

Maybe ■ Yes ■ No

Section Six:

Focusing on the employer

Section Six:

Would you consider turning down a job offer / leaving a job if you did not receive the appropriate support for your needs?

A large proportion (40.12%) of students would consider leaving a role, or rejecting a job offer, if appropriate support was not offered.

47.79% students are unsure if they would reject a job offer, or leave a role for lack of support. The survey results show that a lack of knowledge about support available combined with a lack of confidence to discuss support needs at interview would contribute to the uncertainty about staying in a role and requesting appropriate support, whether through Access to Work or their employer directly.

Yes   Maybe   No

Section Six:

When seeking an employer, how important is it for the company to place value on inclusivity (this can encompass the organisational processes, communications, workforce, working environment, culture and more)?

We asked students to rate as a percentage how important it was for their future employer to place value on inclusivity.

On average, students rated inclusivity as highly important at 80%. This shows that today's students place a high expectation on employers to be inclusive.
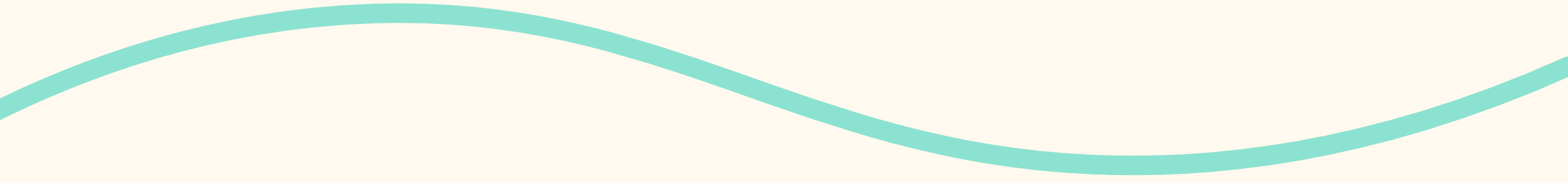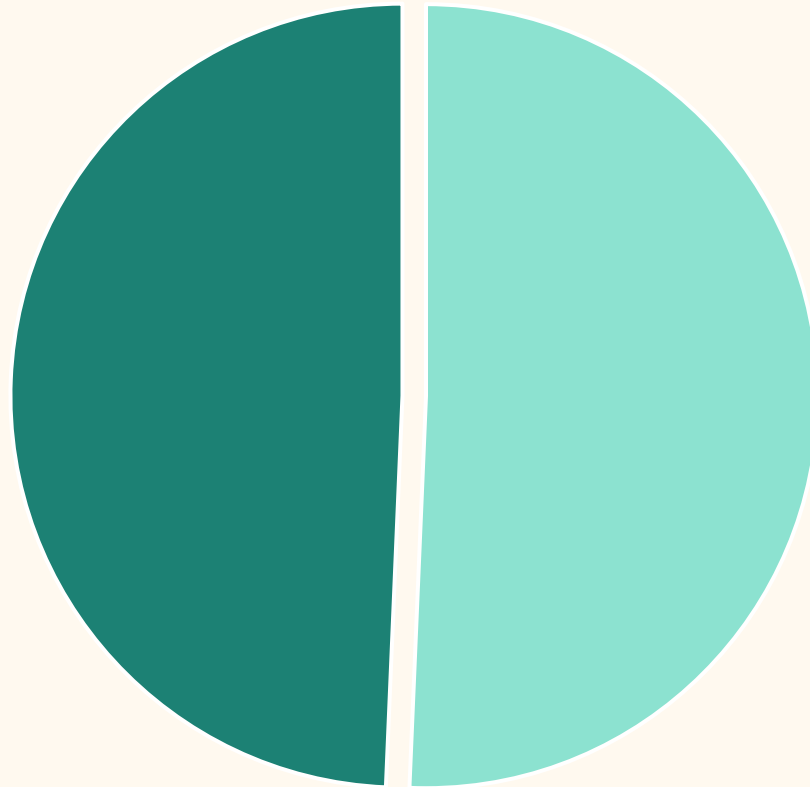
Section Seven:

About the respondents

Section Seven:

Percentage of students graduating in the academic year 2021/22

Out of 371 students surveyed, 188 of those are graduating this academic year.

183 of those students are still in the process of completing their course.
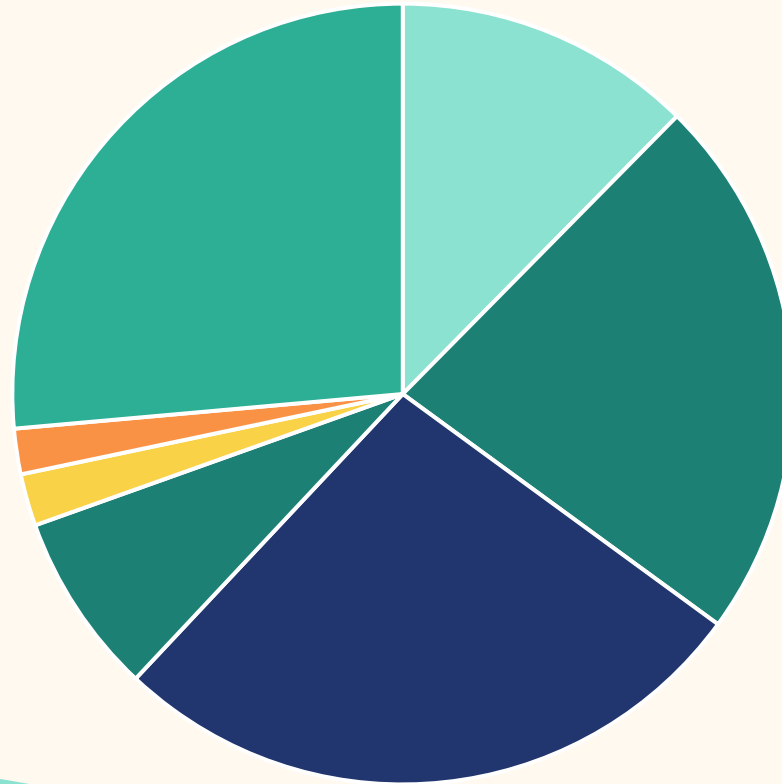
Total Responses: 371

■ Graduating 21/22   ■ Other

Section Seven:

Student year of study when survey was completed

First Year (Fresher) ■ Second Year ■ Third Year ■ Fourth Year ■ Fifth Year ■ Placement Year ■ Other