Student Money & Mental Health

why it takes a village

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Who are we?

Blackbullion is the fintech company for education, championing financial wellbeing for students.

We partner with 40+ universities and colleges to empower millions of students to create a better financial future. Our award winning digital platform brings effective and life enhancing financial education to almost a million students across the UK, Australia and NZ.

business.blackbullion.com

"(we are) facing a crisis in terms of adults' financial literacy skills... our results bring into question how many adults really have the skills to make complex financial decisions. The reality is that many adults struggle to complete even quite basic financial tasks"

Professor John Jerrim, UCL Institute of Education[1]

[1] Aditi Bhutoria, John Jerrim , Anna Vignoles . 2018. The financial skills of adults across the world. New estimates from PIAAC

3 key questions:

- Can students afford to stay at university?
- How does financial wellbeing impact student mental health? And how has COVID-19 affected this?
- How can we work together to support students to develop holistic wellbeing?

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Can students afford to study in 2021?

Yes, but for many, only because they had help.

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48%

of students have, or are, considering dropping out or deferring a year due to money constraints

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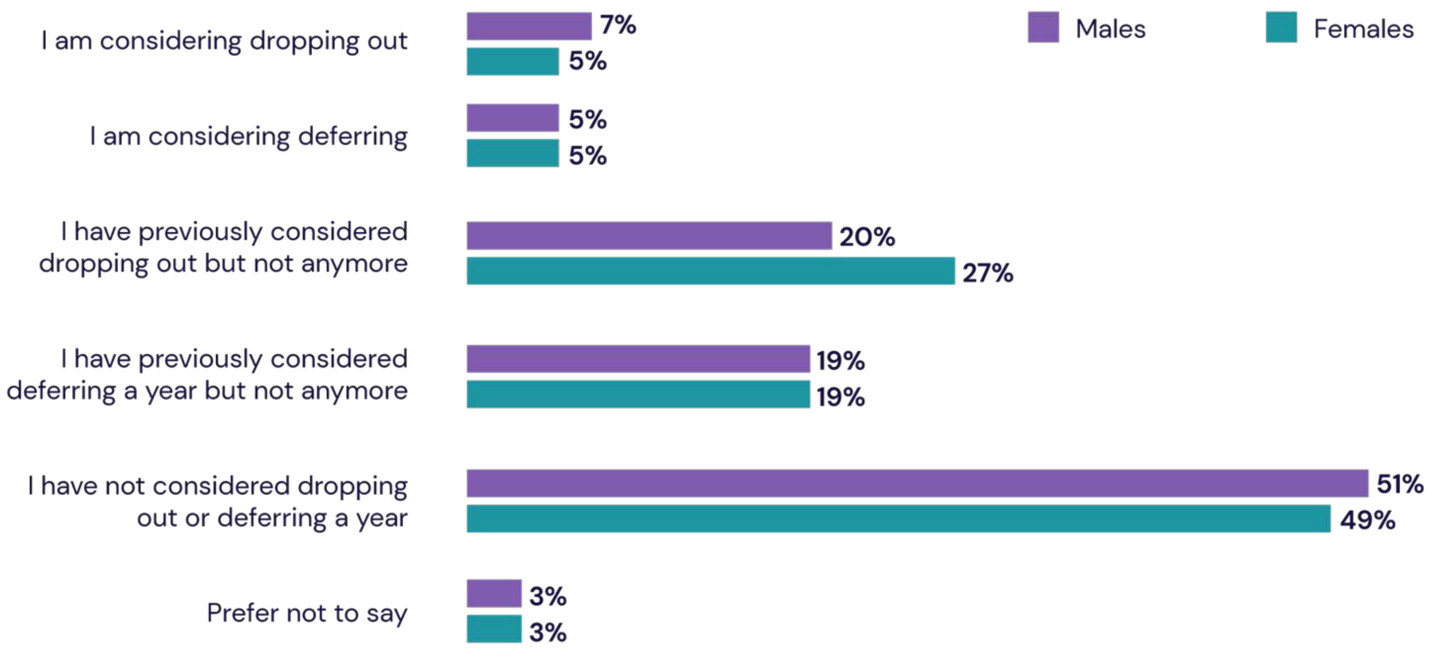
The impact on non-continuation: Have you thought about dropping out of university or deferring a year due to money constraints?

(Tick all that apply)



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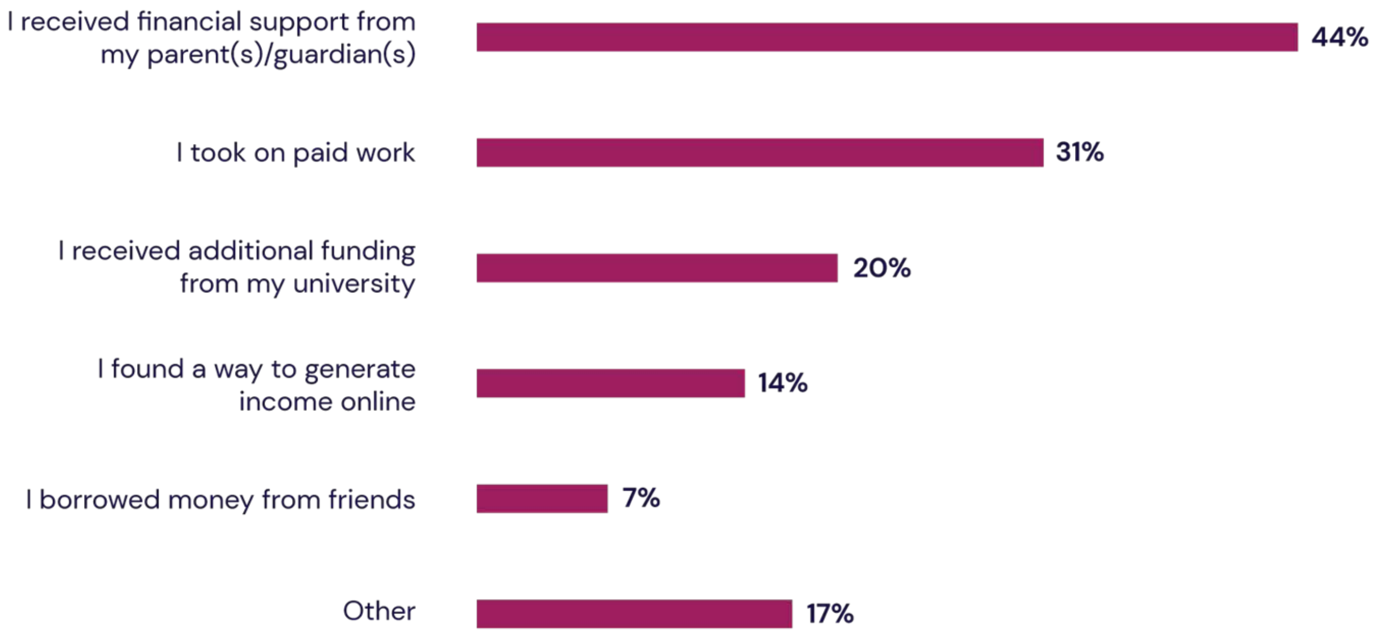
Factors preventing non-continuation: Of students who had previously considered dropping out or deferring but changed their minds (tick all that apply):



How big is the gap between what students need and what they have?

Students believe the gap is

£329/month

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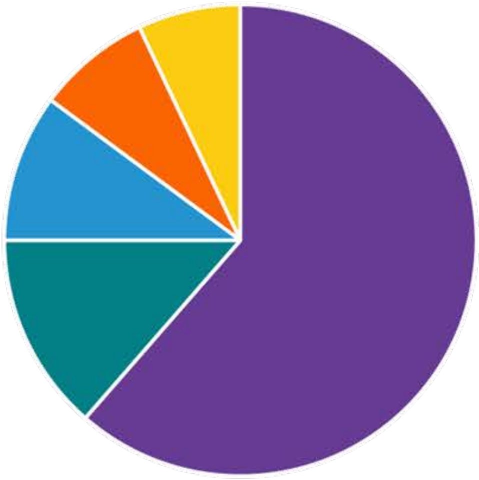
Which of the following options best describes your financial situation?



- I receive financial help and I don't think I would be able to complete my degree without this help – **61.7%**
- I receive financial help but I think I would be able to complete my degree without this help – **12.9%**
- I don't receive financial help but I don't think this will impact my degree result – **10.5%**
- I don't receive financial help and I think this will impact my degree result – **7.7%**
- Other (none of the above/prefer not to say) – **7.2%**

* Financial help was defined as "income that supplements student loans or grants e.g. income from your parent(s)/guardian(s)/partner/work."

The darker side of minding the gap

- 1 in 20 (5%) students surveyed took out a payday loan to avoid dropping out or deferring a year
- 1 in 8 students surveyed have used a buy now pay later facility
- 1 in 25 have been to a food bank
- 35% have skipped a meal
- 6% have gambled
- 4% of those whose financial situation has been affected by COVID-19 have started an OnlyFans account
- 2% have taken on sex work

Can students afford to study in 2021? In students' own words

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I did not apply for financial support as it feels shameful to have to submit my bank statements for scrutiny when I have already submitted universal credit statements.

I'd rather rely on the food bank!

I've been trading without clear knowledge.

I have considered escorting.

There aren't really any side hustles available at the moment, and the ones that are available would mean there is an increased chance of bringing covid back home with me... The only thing I could do is create an Only Fans account but I don't think I'm brave enough or pretty enough for that. Still, as the potential for income is there.. I'm considering (it) more and more often.

Practical action

If additional funding is available on campus make it easily discoverable and (much!) easier to apply for

Signpost services wherever students are

Add staff capacity by letting technology do the heavy lifting

Help students to better understand the financial consequences of their actions

How has financial wellbeing affected students' mental health?

75% of students surveyed said they worry about finances

67% of those who worry about their financial situation say this negatively impacts their mental health

How has financial wellbeing affected students' mental health?

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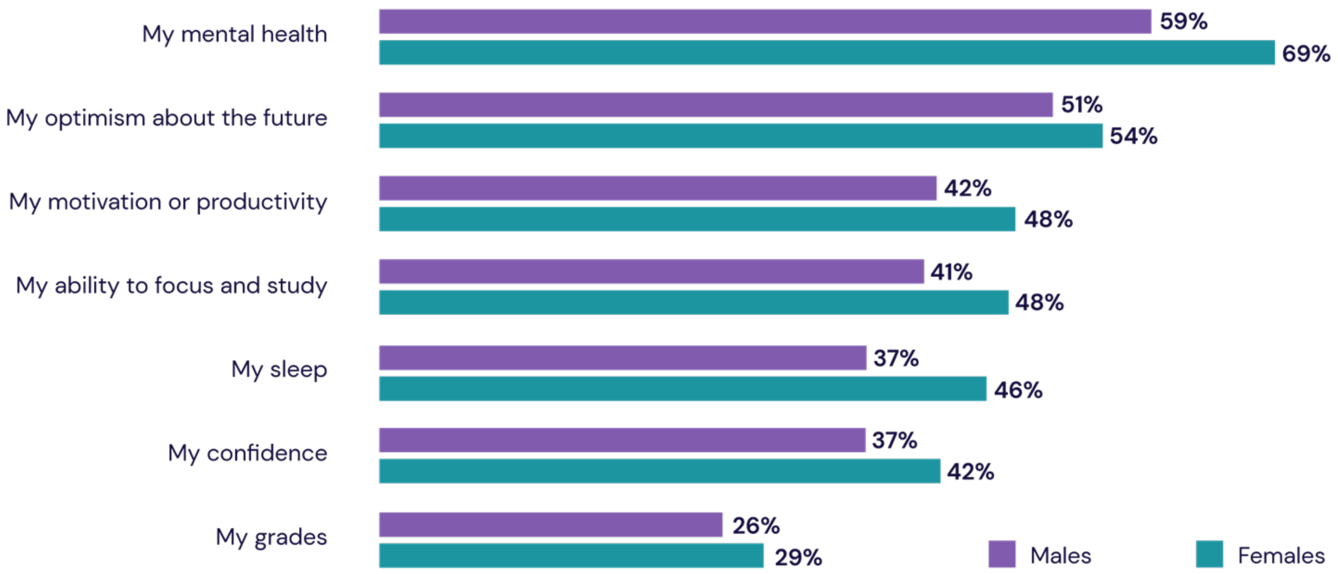
What, if anything, does worrying about finances negatively impact for you? (Tick all that apply)

*Of the 75% of students surveyed who say they worry about their finances



How has financial wellbeing affected students' mental health?

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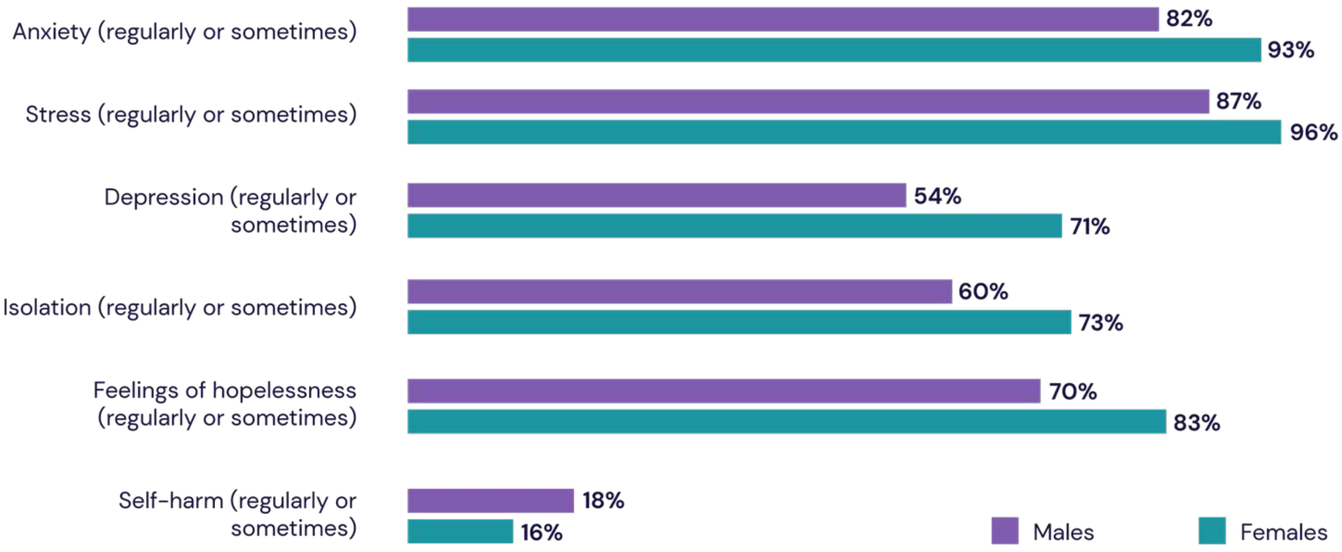
You said worrying about finances negatively impacts your mental health, how often have financial worries triggered the following for you, if at all?

*Of the 67% of students surveyed who say worrying about finances negatively impacts their mental health



How has financial wellbeing affected students' mental health?

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My mental health has been impacted seriously.

Really struggling to concentrate with the pandemic going on and other family issues and commitments.

I lost my mom who was sponsoring me two months ago and it has been tough on me.

the university experience and vibe of socialising and going to events/new places with friends has been halted which is devastating.

Practical action

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Be flexible and responsive to macro conditions and don't be afraid to change as the need changes (i.e. some funds are the same now as they have been for years). Reduce complexity for students - Ask yourself how much info you REALLY need to help students

Ask your student reps/SU for input into what the students need

Have money conversations from the start and encourage people to come to you even before they are in crisis

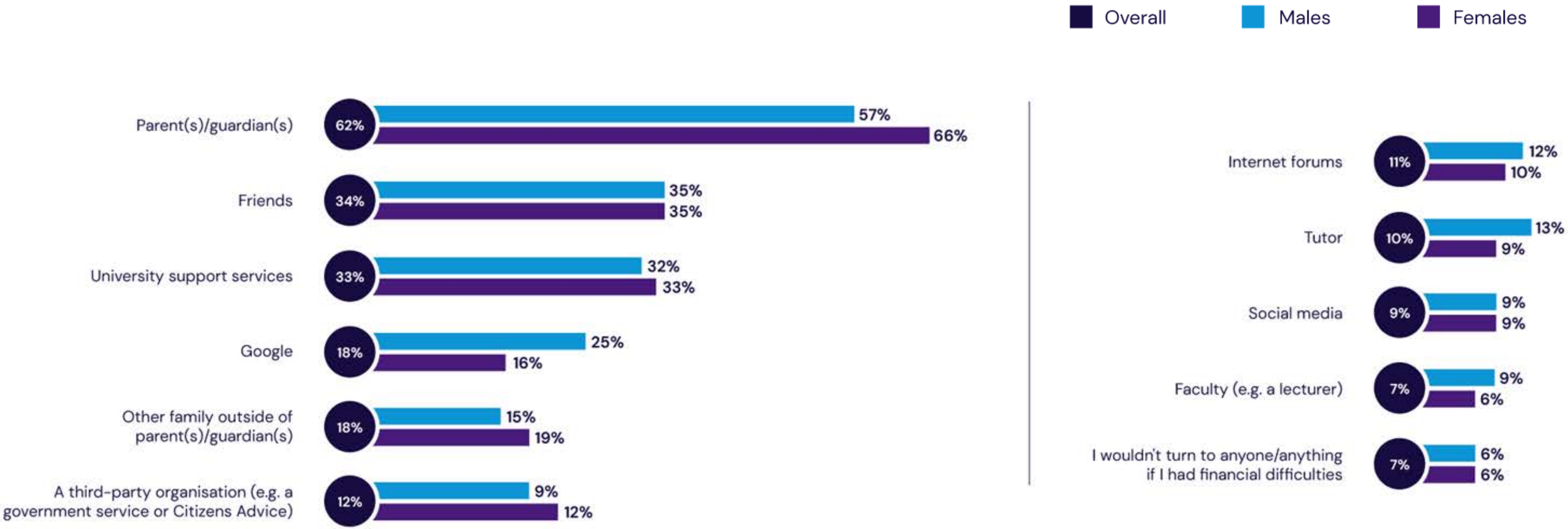
Take an holistic cross-channel approach to support to ensure all student facing staff have an understanding of the financial support offered to students

Where do students go for financial guidance and advice?

Exactly where you'd think…

Where do students go for financial guidance and advice?

Who/what, if anyone/anything, would you turn to for advice and support if you had financial difficulties? (Tick all that apply)

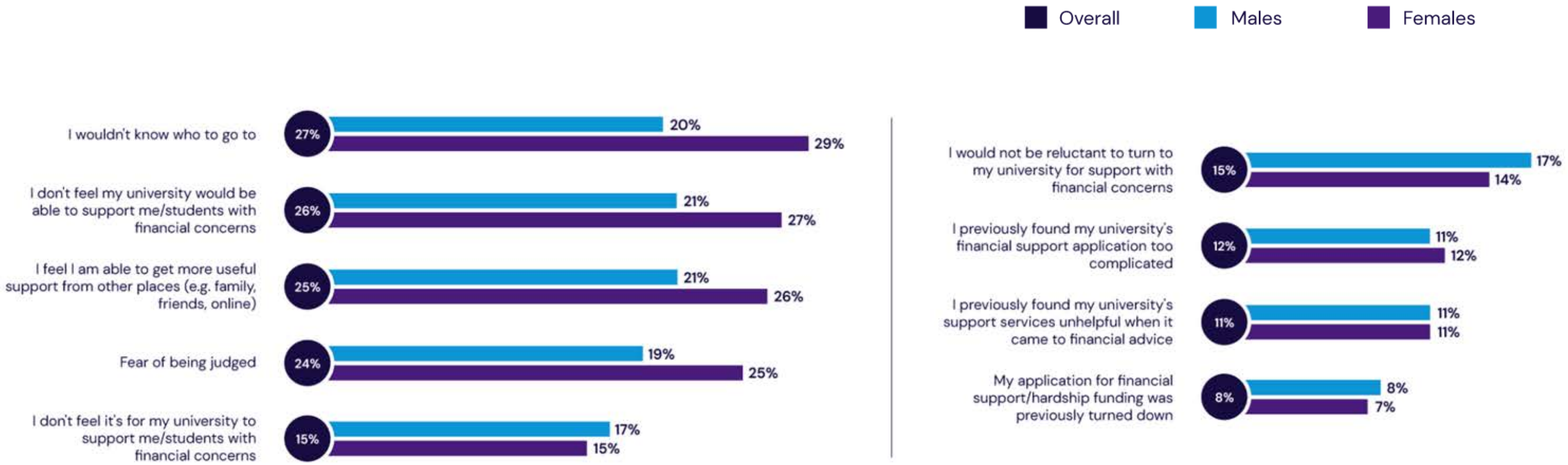


What stops students from turning to student services?

It’s complicated…

What stops students from turning to student services?

Why, if at all, would you be reluctant to turn to your university for support with financial concerns? (Tick all that apply)



What are students’ expectations for financial support

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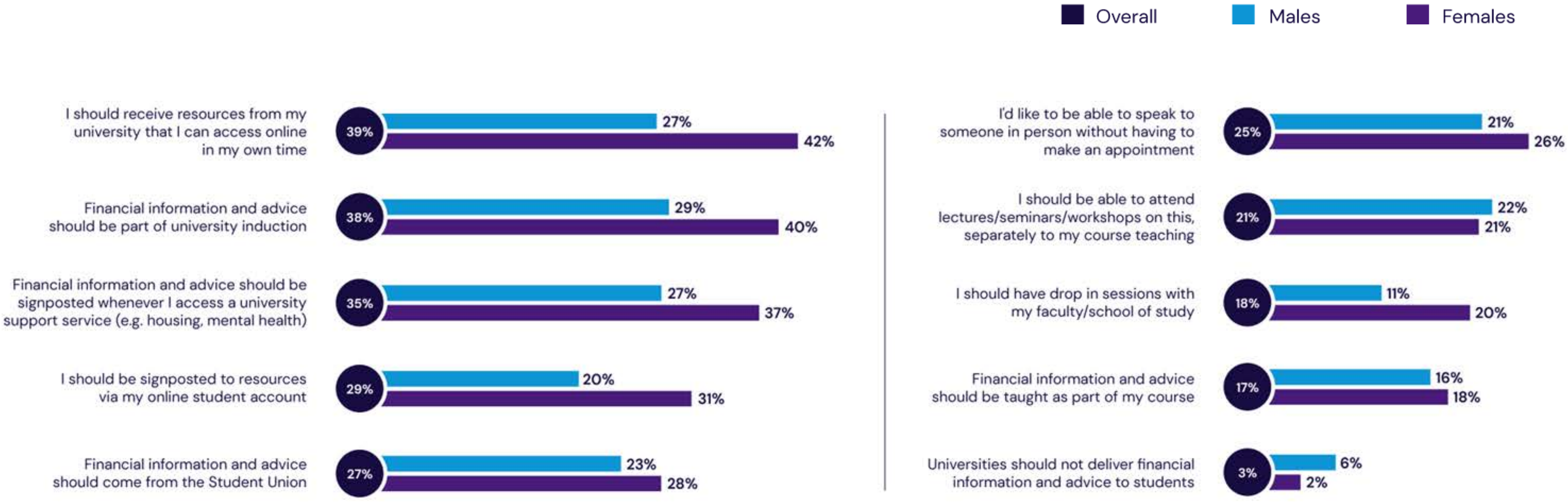
How, if at all, do you think universities should deliver financial information and advice to students? (Tick all that apply)



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> I can get a payday loan in 5 minutes but getting money from the hardship fund at my university took more than a month.

Practical action

Provide financial education content which is accessible, independent and engaging which is suitable for all types of students - mature, traditional, P/T, post graduate

Question the current process/questions and don't be afraid to make changes to improve the student and staff experience

Question the current process/questions and don't be afraid to make changes to improve the student and staff experience

Think prevention AND cure

In conclusion

Enhancing the student experience by cutting through the complexity of financial support is key to retention and student success.

The challenge is global and no one can do it alone - let's work together to change the financial trajectory of every young person in the country!

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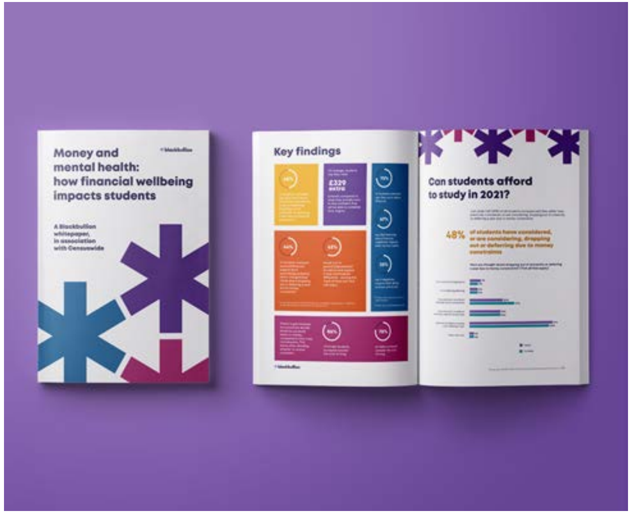
If you want to find out more:

vivi@blackbullion.com

Find the research at:

business.blackbullion.com/download



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