



# 2022/2023 HeppSY Partnership Report

(Pre-16 students)

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Produced by the HeppSY Data & Evaluation Team

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# Foreword



This year's partnership report provides an insightful analysis of the first wave of the HeppSY Learner Survey in partner schools and colleges for our pre-16 responses between November 2022 and January 2023.

With almost 5,000 complete responses in total, including 3174 from pre-16 students, the survey and subsequent report offer HeppSY and the wider region valuable insights into young people's perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge of higher education. Furthermore, this report provides an extensive overview of young people's educational ambitions and perceived options following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic experienced in previous years of study.

The outcomes and recommendations outlined here will inform HeppSY as we develop our core offer for 2023/24. We would like to extend our gratitude to our partner schools and colleges across their region for the instrumental support in administering the survey.

**Vicki Spink**

HeppSY Programme Manager

# Executive summary

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The HeppSY partnership report (pre-16 students) is a detailed illustration of the learning outcomes that HeppSY pre-16 students self-reported through the annual learner survey implemented in the last half of the autumn term. While celebrating success in the past academic year, this report highlights gaps between learner groups broken down by demographic characteristics to inform future intervention planning.

The key findings from this year's learner survey are outlined below.

## HE aspiration

- There is an increased likelihood among pre-16 students of applying to HE aged 18 or 19 compared to last year, with 83.1% of respondents indicating they are confident that they would be successful should they apply.
- The majority of pre-16 students aim to remain in full-time education at either a sixth form or college after completing Key Stage 4.
- Male students from a disadvantaged background are less likely to apply than any other student group broken down by ethnicity, gender, and index of multiple deprivation (IMD).

## HE knowledge

- Students are confident in their knowledge of the subjects available to them at HE and of the grades required to enter.
- Pre-16 students felt they had a good understanding of how HE could lead to careers in which they may be interested but were less confident in their understanding of the financial support available to them.
- Year 10 students had a lower level of knowledge overall than their older peers.
- White males, who had the lowest knowledge (34.4% at “4” or “a lot”). Disadvantaged White males were least knowledgeable across several topics presented in the HE knowledge series of questions.

## HE benefits

- The most highly perceived benefits of HE were “it will enable me to get a better job” and “it will enable me to earn more.”
- Students’ understanding of HE benefits appeared to have a distribution pattern that is consistent with previous waves of the CFE Learner Survey.
- Year 11 students had a greater perception of HE benefits than their peers in Year 10 and College Level 2.
- Male students from Mixed backgrounds and from White backgrounds appeared to have a lower perception of the HE benefits presented in the survey, with the lowest frequency of “agree” and “strongly agree”.

## Sense of belonging

- Year 10 and 11 students did not substantially differ in their beliefs that HE was for people like them. College Level 2 students, relative to Year 10 and Year 11 students, were slightly more likely to disagree or strongly disagree.
- The majority of students across gender and ethnic groups believed that they were academically capable of succeeding in HE, with slightly more positive responses among Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students compared to White students.

## Self-efficacy

- Motivation was generally higher amongst Year 11 students, 55.1% of whom indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement “I am motivated to do well in my studies.”
- Overall, female pre-16 students appeared more motivated in their studies compared to their male peers and those who chose not to disclose their gender. Across ethnic groups, BAME students are less motivated to do well in their studies than their White peers. When factoring gender, it becomes evident that motivation is lowest amongst BAME male students.
- BAME females from non-disadvantaged backgrounds had the greatest belief in their ability to enter HE, 86.9%.

## Recommendations

- Produce a report exploring the experiences of students with disabilities at pre-16 using data from the HeppSY Learner Survey.
- Produce a baseline report to inform the attainment-raising interventions.
- Provide holistic support for pre-16 males from White disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Support College Level 2 students to increase their overall HE knowledge and boost confidence in their ability to enter and cope with life at HE.
- Provide comprehensive support to improve self-efficacy amongst student groups and confidence for female students from BAME backgrounds.
- Do not treat BAME students as a holistic group when planning outreach interventions. This report demonstrates key differences between ethnic groups, indicating bespoke interventions are necessary.

# Acknowledgements

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This report would not have been possible without the participation of students and school/college staff. A special thank you goes to those who completed the questionnaires. Your voice has been part of the reports that will be spread and acknowledged by the stakeholders, who will use the findings and recommendations to support students like you better.

The author would also like to thank all the HeppSY colleagues who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to enable young people's voices to be heard:

- Hepp Director Gemma Styles, and HeppSY Programme Manager Vicki Spink, for guidance and support to the HeppSY Learner Survey 2022/23;
- the School and College Programme Managers, Charlotte Rodbourne, Joanne Slater, and Jamie Taylor, Senior Administrator Nick Lewis, and the Higher Education Engagement Assistants for liaison with schools and colleges to implement the survey;
- the evaluation and data team, Daniel Fletcher, Lilith Roberts and Helen Zhu for redesigning the survey questionnaire, administering the survey, processing, and analysing data, and producing the reports.
- Data and Evaluation Manager Helen Zhu for spearheading the project.



# Introduction

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## About HeppSY

The Higher Education Progression Partnership South Yorkshire (HeppSY) is part of the national Uni Connect Programme, funded by the Office for Students. The Uni Connect Programme was set up in 2017 to support the strategic goal that students' access to higher education is not limited by their background, location, or characteristics. HeppSY is a working partnership between Sheffield Hallam University, the University of Sheffield and South Yorkshire schools and colleges.

## HeppSY outreach

HeppSY provides impartial HE information and progress advice to the students in 45 HeppSY schools and colleges. The outreach offers are designed to increase the students' understanding of higher education and how to progress to HE, enable them to make informed career decisions and support them in overcoming the barriers to their sense of belonging and HE aspiration. In line with the aims, bespoke content is developed for the students at different stages of study.

HeppSY adopted two ways to deliver outreach activities. Relatable role models present in schools and colleges. We recruit them from recent graduates or university students. Professional careers advisers provide a wide range of careers advisory services for the students. Their activities range from formal sessions for a year group to bespoke one-to-one or group advisory sessions.

Our partners, including Hepp, Sheffield Hallam University, and the University of Sheffield, also delivered outreach activities. We also commissioned educational providers, such as the Brilliant Club and the Linacre Institute, to organise mentoring and summer school programmes.

Additionally, HeppSY developed bespoke projects, such as SHE Can, HE Can, YOU Can, Amplify, and ElevatED, to support students with certain characteristics who need more specific support to improve their confidence, sense of belonging, and knowledge and skills to progress to HE.

Some students who participated in the current survey could have engaged in HeppSY outreach activities across two academic years provided by multiple organisations if they had studied in HeppSY schools and colleges.

## Evaluation aims

- To outline the HE aspiration-related learning outcomes of the young people at 45 HeppSY partner schools and colleges.
- To make evidence-based recommendations that support HeppSY in targeting provisions for the next academic year.
- To inform and influence outreach activity planning by partnership members, including local universities and South Yorkshire schools and colleges.

## Evaluation methods

HeppSY adopts the CFE learner survey as the evaluation tool to measure key outcomes associated with learners' understanding of HE and the likelihood of accessing HE in the future.

### Survey information

The survey was completed by students in Years 10–13 and College Levels 2–31, online and in HeppSY schools and colleges from 1st November to 5th January 2022/2023. Overall, 4,969 complete student responses across 38 schools/colleges (with a sample from 1 to 535) were included in the final dataset. The number of responses collected during the survey window were lower than in previous years, however as the remit of Uni Connect Programmes has narrowed, the number of students in scope to complete the survey has reduced with the omission of Year 9 students.

### Learning outcomes

The HeppSY evaluation and data team validated the scales in the CFE Learner Survey with past survey data before implementing the survey this year. We are confident that the five outcomes outlined in the following sections are the most suitable tools for evaluating targeted outreach and other HE aspiration interventions.

Learning outcomes such as the likelihood of applying for HE at age 18 or 19, sense of belonging, and academic self-efficacy can also inform attainment raising interventions. The literature shows strong correlations between these outcomes and attainment from GCSE onwards.

## Data analysis

In line with the evaluation aims, the data analysis for this report focuses on the following areas:

1. changes identified by comparing the outcomes between different academic years;
2. 'gaps' of specific learning outcomes between different demographic groups;
3. the cold spots highlighted by statistical tests of the significant differences between different demographic groups.

The recommendations are based on the above analysis outcomes.

## Limitations

The most prominent limitation is that any positive changes found in the survey could not be owed to HeppSY and partners' outreach activities because many factors influence young people's knowledge, belief, and aspiration in a year whose impact is impossible to separate. The student cohorts in different surveys are different every year.

For a large cohort with thousands of students, the cohort variations across year groups hardly cause significantly different outcomes without intervention. However, the cohort variations could cause significant differences between two years for a small group of students.

The survey featured large number of responses from students with variance on gender, disability, and ethnic group. These have no significant difference to those in the student population, but some small demographic groups in the survey might not be representative of them in the student population. For example, it is impossible to know whether the students who identified their gender as "Other" in this survey can represent those in the 45 HeppSY schools and colleges because "Other" is not recorded in the secondary student profile data.

To overcome the limitations, HeppSY partnership reports did not report some groups with a small number of responses, for example, those who did not respond to the demographic questions. However, this report reported the significant difference between some small groups and their larger counterparts to enable the voices of small groups to be heard.

# 1. Future plans

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Three questions in the learner survey can provide insight into students' intended future plans:

- How likely are you to apply to higher education at age 18 or 19?
- How likely do you think it is that if you do apply to higher education aged 18 or 19, you will get in?
- When you finish your current studies, what would you most like to do next?

## 1.1 HE aspiration and expectation

Overall, the percentage of students reporting that they were “fairly likely”, “very likely”, or that they “definitely will apply” in the HeppSY Learner Survey, 66.3%, is slightly lower than that in Wave 4 of the CFE Learner Survey, 70.1%. For those in studying at a Key Stage 4, the percentage of students intending to apply to HE aged 18 or 19 is slightly higher at 67.3%.

Of the pre-16 students who indicated that they were “fairly likely”, “very likely”, or that they “definitely will apply”, 83.1% of them felt that they were either “likely” to get in, or that “definitely would” be accepted into HE.

## 1.2 Choice after Key Stage 4

When asked what they would like to do after finishing their current studies, the majority of students at key stage 4 indicated that they wished to remain in education. A total of 68.4% identified either a sixth form or a college as their next step and a further 14.1% were planning to pursue an apprenticeship.

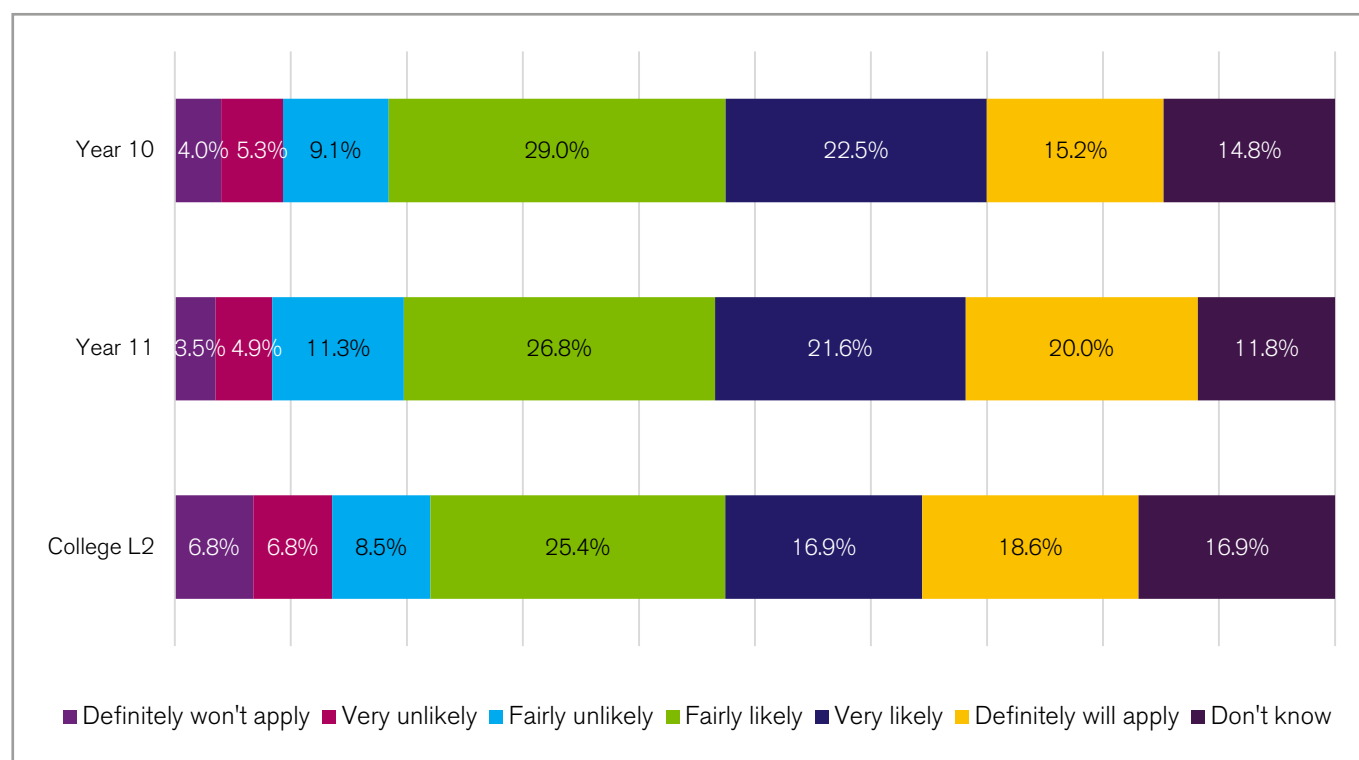
A small number of students suggested that they intended to enter employment following their current studies, with 4.3% wanting to get a full-time or part-time job and a further 0.5% wanting to join the army.

## 1.3 Subgroup differences in future plans

### Year group

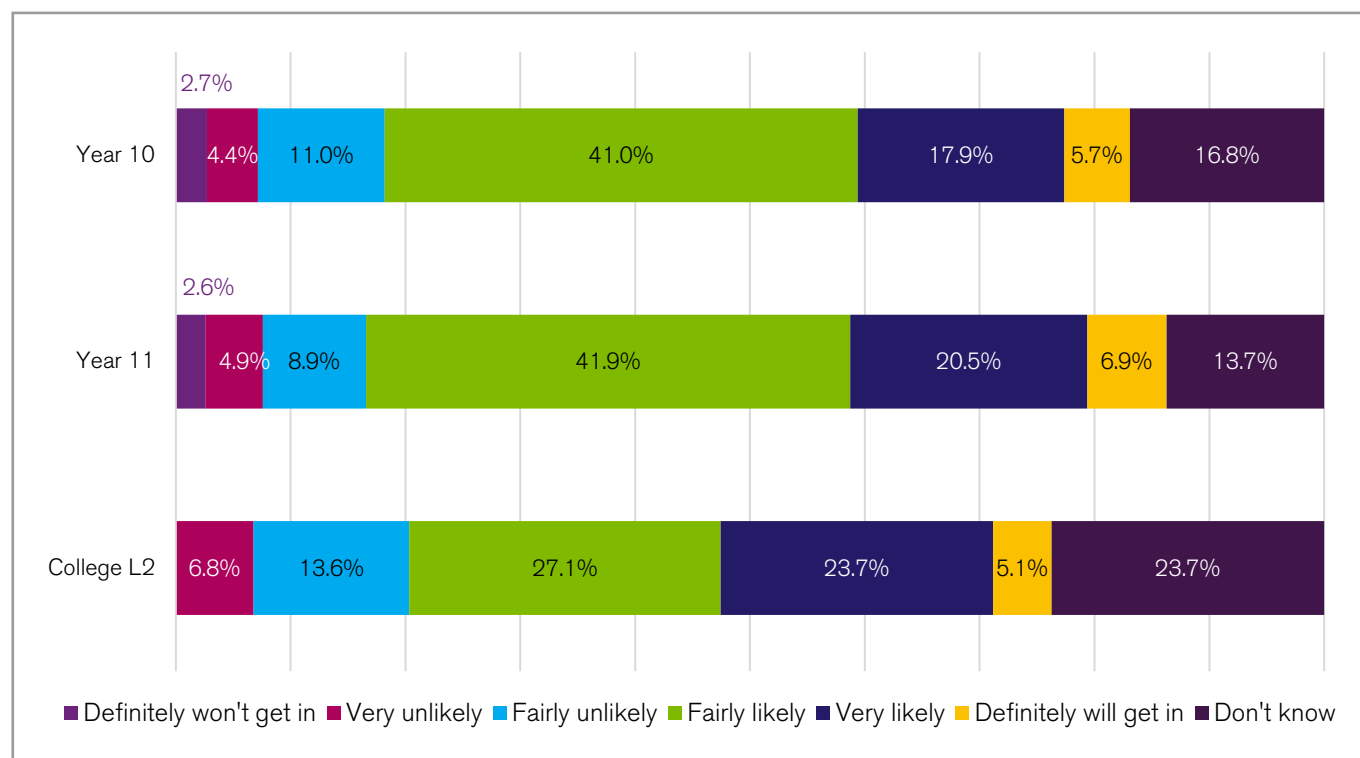
Year 11 respondents indicated that they would “definitely” apply to HE at a higher rate than their peers in Year 10 and studying at College Level 2 (20.0%). Year 10 students indicated that they were “fairly likely” to apply aged 18 or 19 (26.8%). Overall, College Level 2 students were less likely to apply to HE compared to Year 10 and 11 students. This group had the highest number of students select an answer from the “unlikely” end of the scale than any other at 22.0% (figure 1).

Figure 1: Pre-16 likelihood of applying to HE aged 18 or 19



The distribution of responses between Year 10 and Year 11 follows a similar pattern, the most popular response for both groups being “fairly likely” to be successful in their application to HE, should they apply aged 18 or 19 (41.0% and 41.9% respectively). Students in Year 11 were slightly more confident than their Year 10 peers, with 27.4% selecting “very likely” or “definitely will get in”.

College Level 2 students were much less consistent in their responses. The number of students indicating that they were likely to get in to HE was much lower at 55.9%. Almost a quarter of College Level 2 respondents selected “don’t know” (23.7%), indicating they are much less certain in their ability to enter HE than their peers in years 10 and 11.

*Figure 2: Pre-16 perceived likelihood of getting into HE aged 18 or 19*

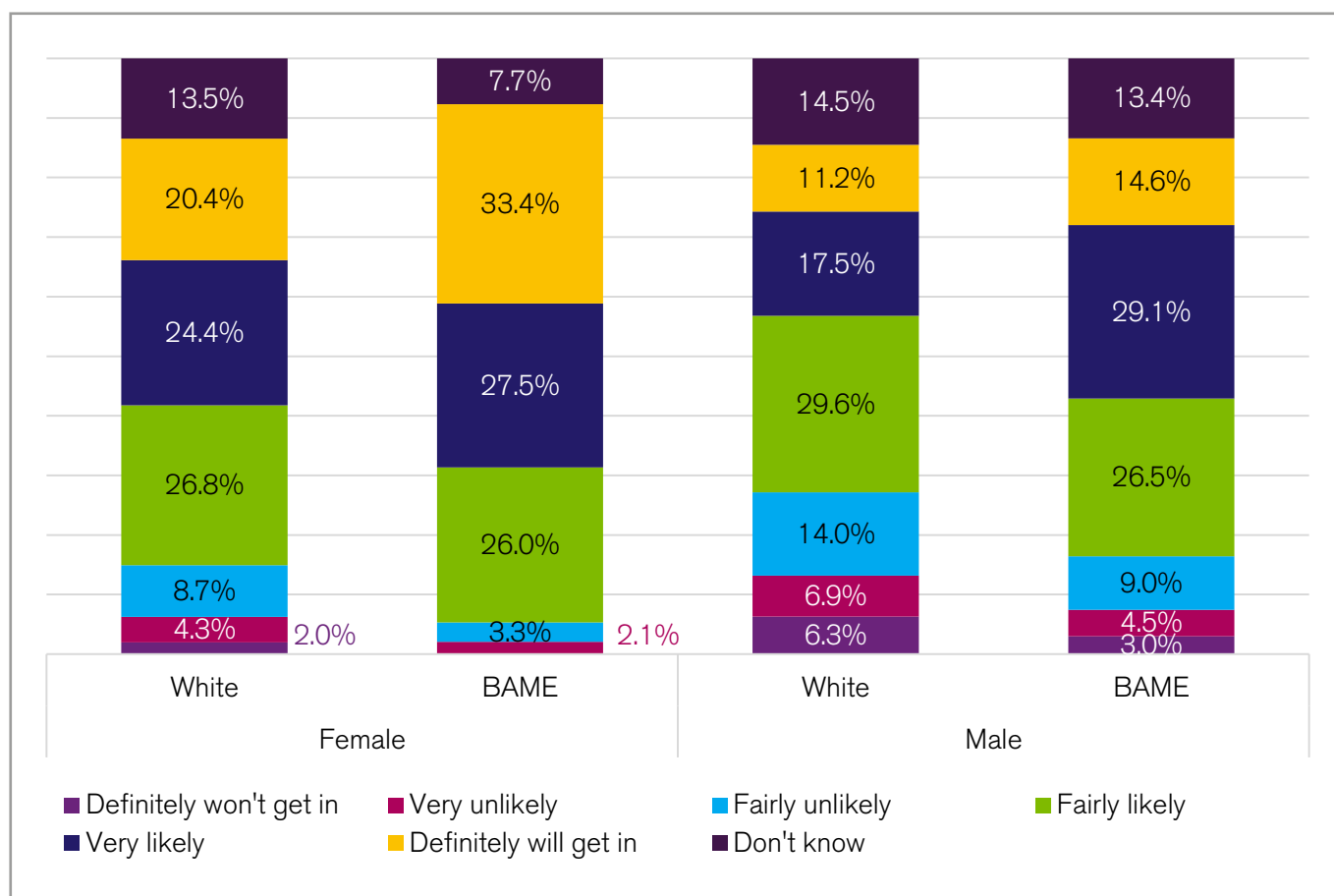
Students in years 10 and 11 indicated that they were intending to continue in formal education, such as school, sixth form, or college, at a higher frequency than their peers studying in at College Level 2. The responses of College Level 2 students were more evenly split between continuing at a college (25.4%), getting a full-time job (20.3%), beginning an apprenticeship (20.3%). College Level 2 students were the most likely to select “get a full-time job” out of the three year groups included in the pre-16 sample.

Year 10 students, at the lowest end of the age range in HeppSY’s pre-16 sample, were the least certain in their next steps, with 17.0% of students selecting “unknown”. A further 13.6% of College Level 2 students selected “unknown”, as did 5.4% of Year 11 students.

## Gender and ethnic group

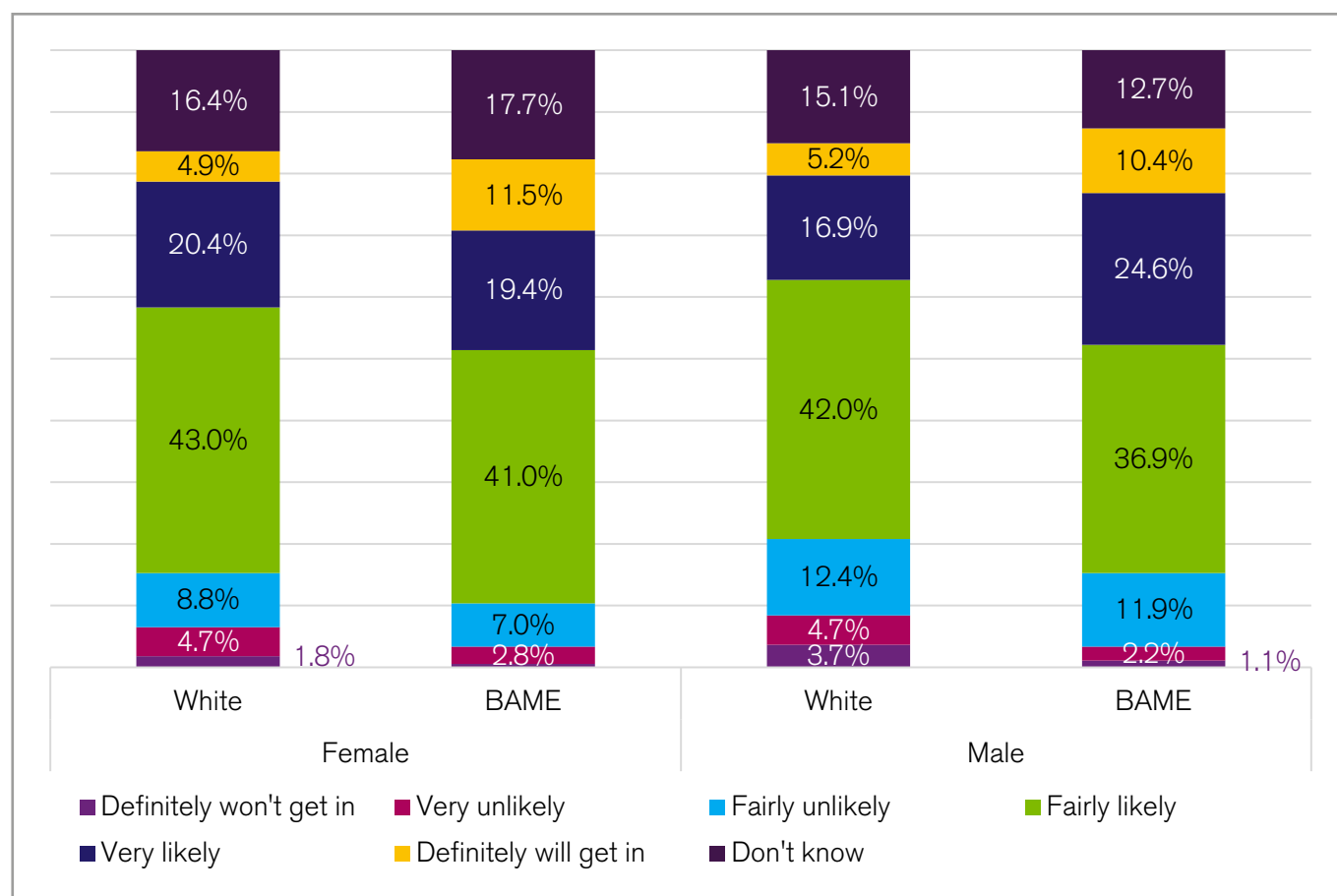
Female students selected “definitely will apply” (23.4%) at a higher frequency than their male peers (12.0%) and those who preferred not to disclose their gender. Female students were also more confident in the idea that their applications to HE would be successful, with 83.81% believing they would be “fairly likely”, “very likely” to get in, or that they “definitely would get in”. Overall, female students were more likely to select “definitely will apply” (23.4%) than males, who selected “fairly likely” to apply more frequently (29.0%), and more confident that their applications would be successful.

Figure 3: Pre-16 likelihood of applying to HE aged 18 or 19 by gender and ethnicity



Factoring in students' ethnic groups, Black female students intend to apply to HE at 18 or 19 at a higher frequency than female students from other backgrounds, with 51.8% indicating that they “definitely will apply” and 97.6% indicating some degree of likelihood. White female students were least likely to apply to HE aged 18 or 19 when compared to their female peers (71.6%).

Figure 4: Pre-16 likelihood of getting into HE aged 18 or 19 by gender and ethnicity



For male students, those from Black and Asian backgrounds stated that they were “very likely” to apply to HE at a higher rate than those from other ethnic groups (31.2% and 31.4% respectively). Black students were also most likely among the male pre-16 students to select “definitely will apply” (19.5%). Male students selected “definitely will apply” at a lower frequency than their female peers.

Across all ethnic groups, BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) students were more likely to indicate they were likely to apply to HE aged 18/19 (87.0% of females and 70.2% of males), however all groups shared the same top two choices for future plans. Pre-16 students most frequently selected “study at school or a sixth form college” followed “study at a further education college”, however the



frequency at which these options were selected varied slightly. A key exception to this is male students from “other” ethnic backgrounds, who opted for a further higher education college at a higher rate than their peers (44.4%).

Female students were less varied in their responses to the question about their future plans compared to males. Black and Asian females indicated that they were most likely to remain in education, with 67.1% and 62.6% respectively selecting school or sixth form. Black males also selected school or sixth form at a higher rate than their peers at 52.0% compared to an average 30.4% for other ethnic groups.

Compared to their female peers, a higher rate of male students across all ethnic groups indicated that their future plans were “unknown” at the time of completing the survey. Male students were also more varied in their responses and were more likely than females to plan to enter training, part-time work, or the army, although the frequency of these responses was very low. Only White males indicated they planned to enter the army after completing their current phase of education.

## **UCP vs non-UCP**

There is little difference between UCP and non-UCP students when it comes to their future plans. When asked how likely they were to apply to HE aged 18 or 19, the distribution of answers between both groups differed only by single digits. The confidence levels were also consistent between the two groups, both similarly confident that they would be successful should they apply to HE, with 67.8% UCP indicating some degree likelihood and 70.3% of non-UCP believing they would be accepted upon application to HE.

Both UCP and non-UCP student groups indicated that they intended to study at school or sixth form college following their current studies (45.1% and 50.4% respectively). The second most popular choice was “study at a further education college”, 34.6% for UCP students and 30.1% for non-UCP students. This preference for school, sixth form college, and college is consistent across genders, with no differences between male UCP and non-UCP or female UCP and non-UCP.

Differences between UCP and non-UCP students emerge when considering ethnicity. White UCP students selected “begin an apprenticeship” at a higher frequency than their peers (16.1%), whereas BAME UCP students showed a preference for remaining in a school or sixth form college (56.8%).

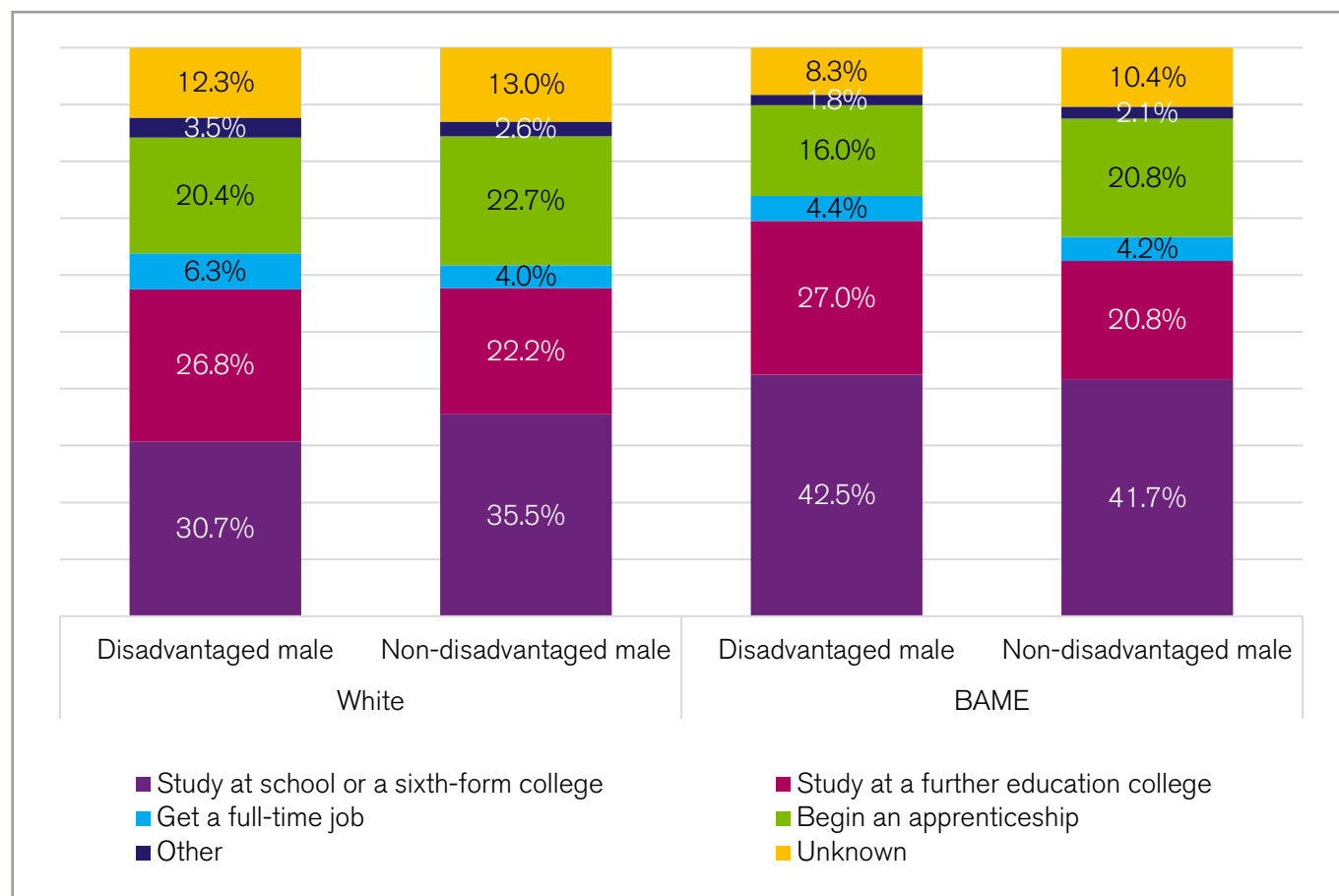
## **Disadvantaged White males**

Disadvantaged White males were the least likely of their peers to indicate that they were likely apply to HE (57.4% selecting “fairly likely”, “very likely”, or “definitely will apply”), contrasting the 70.0% of disadvantaged White females and 64.6% of disadvantaged BAME males indicated that they were

likely to apply. Furthermore, disadvantaged White males were least confident in the likelihood that their applications to HE aged 18 or 19 would be successful (61.5%), together with those from unknown backgrounds (57.8%)

Compared to other males their age, disadvantaged White males were least likely to indicate that they planned to remain in full time education once they had completed their current studies at 57.6% (figure 5). Similarly, 57.7% non-disadvantaged White males selected “study at school or a sixth form college” followed “study at a further education college”. However, disadvantaged White males indicated that they planned to get a full-time job at a higher frequency than other pre-16 males from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds (6.3%). Disadvantaged White males are also more likely than their disadvantaged female peers to opt for an apprenticeship instead of remaining in full time education (20.4% compared to 10.2% respectively).

Figure 5: Male students' future plans by disadvantage and ethnicity



## 2. HE knowledge

Two groups of statements were used to determine students' knowledge relating to applying to HE and life at HE:

Applying to HE	Life at HE
Subjects I could study	Student life
Type of course I could take	Careers
How to apply	Cost of study
Where to find information	Financial support available
Qualifications and grades needed	Where to live while studying

Students were asked to evaluate their knowledge level against each statement on a scale from 1 “nothing” to 5 “a lot”.

### 2.1 Applying to HE

Students were most confident in their knowledge of the subjects available to them in HE. Almost half of respondents, 45.4%, selected “4” or “a lot.” They were largely confident in their understanding of the qualifications and grades required to enter HE, with 45.1% selecting “4” or “a lot.” The pre-16 respondents were fairly confident in their level of knowledge on the types of courses available (35.8% selected “4” or “a lot”) and where to find information about applying (35.6% selected “4” or “a lot”).

### 2.2 Life at HE

Pre-16 responses indicated this age group felt they had a greater understanding of how HE leads to careers that they may be interested in, with the highest proportion of “4” and “a lot” ratings (39.8% and 12.1% respectively). Students were least confident in their knowledge of the financial support available, with 20.2% indicating they knew “nothing at all” and a further 25.8% selecting “2” on the scale.

## 2.3 Subgroup differences in HE knowledge

### Year group

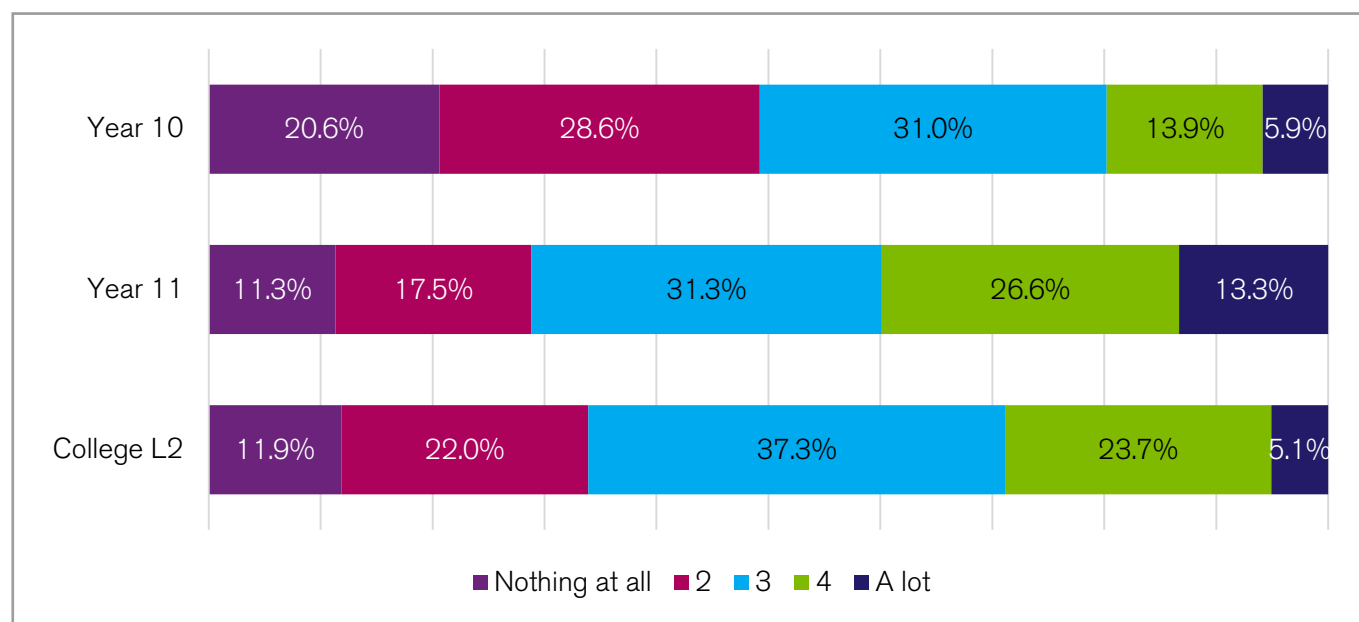
Where their confidence waned was in relation to how to apply to higher education. 31.3% of students rated themselves at a “3” on the scale and a further 39.6% selected “2” or “not a lot.”

At year group level, the responses indicate that the Year 11 cohort are the most confident in their knowledge of how to apply to HE. Showing a similar pattern to the overall responses in terms of where their confidence lay, 55.2% of Y11 students identified at a “4” or “a lot” on the scale when asked about the subjects they could study and 55.1% gave the same responses when asked about qualifications. Although still least confident when asked about how to apply to HE, the majority of students indicated a “3” (31.3%), or above (39.9%).

The Year 10 students were overall the least confident in their responses to the given statements. As the youngest in the cohort, they are furthest away from the point of applying to HE. In three areas, Y10 students identified as knowing “nothing at all” or as a “2” on the scale when asked about the types of courses available in HE, how to apply to HE and where to find information. Confidence was slightly higher in their knowledge of the subjects available and the qualifications they would need.

The college students at Level 2 were less consistent in their responses. Their confidence levels fluctuated more compared to their peers. Although highly confident in their understanding of the necessary qualifications and grades (50.9% at a “4” or “5”), they were less sure in their understanding of how to apply to HE, as well as the subjects and types of courses available.

Figure 6: Pre-16 HE knowledge - applying to HE

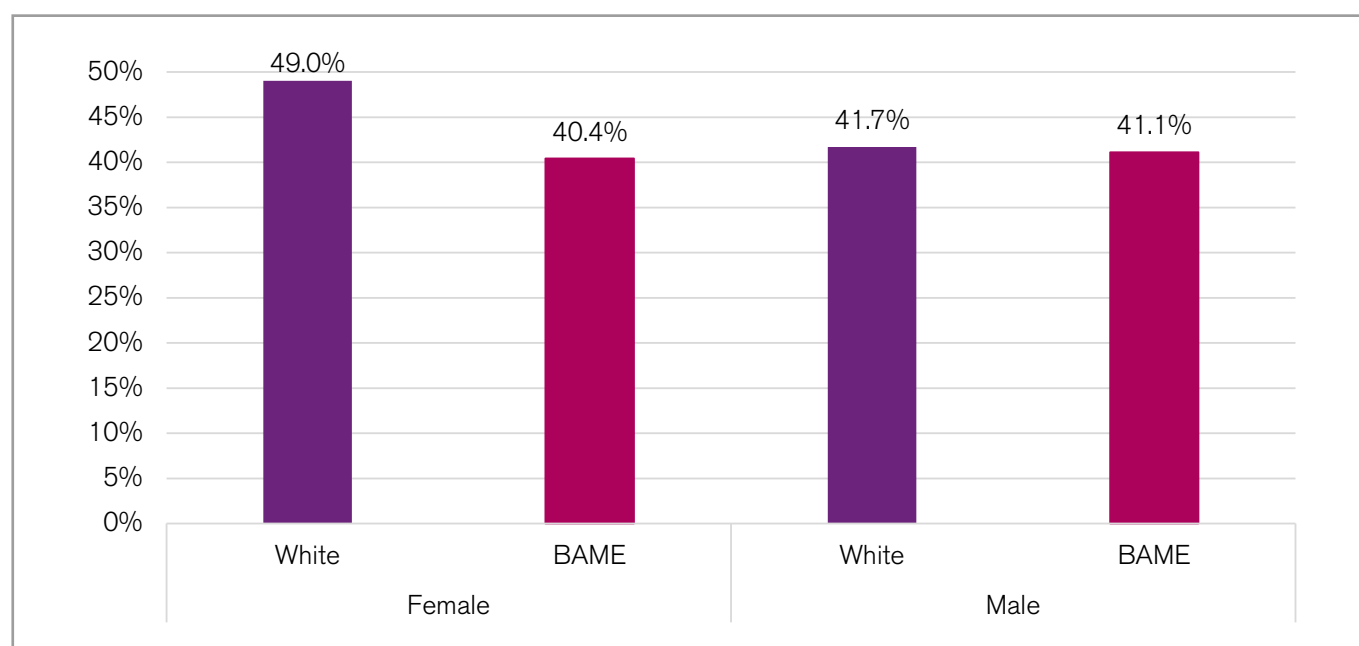


## Gender and ethnic group

Female students reported a greater understanding of the subjects they could study at HE (47.8% selecting “4” or “a lot”) compared to male students (43.1%). However, those who preferred not to share their gender reported higher knowledge (50.7%). Black females (62.4%), Mixed males (54.8%) indicated the highest levels of knowledge when ethnic groups were compared.

Although lower overall knowledge in the types of courses they could study at HE, female students responded “4” or “a lot” at a higher rate than males and those who preferred not to identify. Black female students reported the greatest knowledge of course types compared to their peers (54.1% selecting “4” or “a lot”). Males reported similar levels of knowledge, with the exception of White students, who had the lowest knowledge (34.4% at “4” or “a lot”).

Figure 7: The subjects that I could study (“4” and “A lot”) by gender and ethnicity



There was less of a gap between male and female students in their knowledge of how to apply to HE and where to find information. However 31.2% of those who preferred not to say reported that they knew “nothing at all” about how to apply compared to 15.1% and 15.7% of males and females. Black students reported the highest knowledge of how to apply (38.8% at “4” or “a lot”) and where to find information (46.6% at “4” or “a lot”). Students' answers followed a similar pattern when asked to rate their knowledge of the qualifications needed to enter HE, with Black female and male students recording the highest answers (58.8% and 55.8% respectively).

Focusing on what student life might be like, students reported overall lower levels of knowledge. While Black females were still most knowledgeable (44.7% selecting “4” or “a lot”), there was less variation between male students compared to other statements in the HE knowledge series of statements. The

most popular response across all male groups was “3” at the middle of the scale. Although knowledge of student life was low, there was a clear understanding of how HE could lead to careers that they may be interested in. Following the trend identified in previous statements in the series, Black female students selected answers at the upper end of the scale at greater frequencies than any other group (61.2%). Male students from Mixed backgrounds responded at the upper end of the scale more frequently than males from other ethnic backgrounds (59.5%).

Black students from all gender groups demonstrated the highest level of knowledge, about the cost of study and the financial support available with a total of 44.9% and 38.3% respectively selecting “4” or “a lot”. Considering gender, female students were more knowledgeable (32.0% selecting “4” or “a lot”) about the cost of study, but their male peers were more reported higher levels of knowledge about the financial support available (24.4%). Female students also had the greatest level of knowledge regarding accommodation options (30.38% at “4” or above) across gender groups, particularly those from Black backgrounds (48.2%). Male students were fairly even across ethnic groups, with those from Mixed backgrounds reporting slightly higher knowledge compared to their peers (35.7%).

## **UCP vs non-UCP**

The differences between UCP and non-UCP students across all ten statements presented to them in the HE knowledge section of the survey were marginal, differing by less than 5%, and the responses across the rating scales followed similar patterns. This suggests that there is no difference between UCP and non-UCP students at pre-16 in their self-reported levels knowledge of the application process and student life.

## **Disadvantaged White males**

Disadvantaged White males were least knowledgeable across several topics presented in the HE knowledge series of questions. Statements where disadvantaged White males selected “4” or “a lot” least often, as well as “nothing at all” or “2” most often included “the subjects that I could study”, “how it leads to careers that you may be interested in”, “what student life would be like” and “the cost of study.” There were no areas in the HE knowledge section where disadvantaged White males indicated that they were most knowledgeable.

In addition to the statements above, greater proportions of disadvantaged White males indicated that they knew “nothing at all” or selected “2” compared to other ethnicities and levels of disadvantage when asked about “how to apply to study higher education” (41.6%) and “the qualifications and grades needed to get into higher education” (26.8%).

## 3. HE benefits

Students were given a series of statements outlining possible benefits to attending HE. They were then asked to rank the degree to which they agree or disagree on a five-point scale.

### 3.1 Perceived HE benefits

While the majority of respondents selected “agree” or “strongly agree” in relation to all statements, it is clear that some benefits were more highly recognised than others:

*Table 1: Percentage of “agree” and “strongly agree” responses to HE benefits statements in the HeppSY Learner Survey and CFE Learner Survey (Wave 4)*

Statement	HeppSY Learner Survey	CFE Learner Survey Wave 4
It will enable me to get a better job.	71.7%	77.4%
It will enable me to earn more.	69.6%	73.4%
It will challenge me intellectually.	68.1%	70.0%
It will give me valuable life skills.	67.2%	72.5%
It will improve my social life.	60.0%	61.7%
It will broaden my horizons.	55.9%	57.4%

Students’ understanding of HE benefits appeared to have a pattern that is consistent with previous waves of the CFE Learner Survey, i.e. more students understood “it will enable me to get a better job”, “it will enable me to earn more”, “it will challenge me intellectually” and “it will give me valuable life skills” than “it will broaden my horizons” and “it will improve my social life”. However, the perception of HE benefits has decreased significantly since the fourth and final wave of the CFE Learner Survey ( $p=0.003$ ).

Fewer than 10% of respondents selected “disagree” or “strongly disagree” in the HeppSY Learner Survey, which is consistent with wave 4 of the CFE Learner Survey.

Table 2: Percentage of “disagree” and “strongly disagree” responses to HE benefits statements in the HeppSY Learner Survey and CFE Learner Survey (Wave 4)

Statement	HeppSY Learner Survey	CFE Learner Survey Wave 4
It will improve my social life.	9.4%	7.5%
It will broaden my horizons.	6.6%	5.6%
It will give me valuable life skills.	5.5%	4.0%
It will enable me to earn more.	4.9%	3.4%
It will challenge me intellectually.	4.6%	3.5%
It will enable me to get a better job.	4.4%	2.9%

## 3.2 Subgroup differences in perceived HE benefits

### Year group

Year 11 students consistently responded with “agree” and “strongly agree” at higher frequencies than their Year 10 and College Level 2 peers, indicating a greater perception of HE benefits. Over 70.00% of Year 11 students responded with “agree” or “strongly agree” to all statements. Year 10 students and College Level 2 students were more varied in their responses.

The majority of Year 10 students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statements presented to them about HE benefits. Similarly to 75.9% of Year 11s, Year 10 students agreed most strongly with the statement “it will enable me to get a better job” at a frequency of 68.3%. Year 10 students were less inclined to agree or strongly agree with the statements “it will broaden my horizons” (50.9%) and “it will improve my social life” (57.5%).

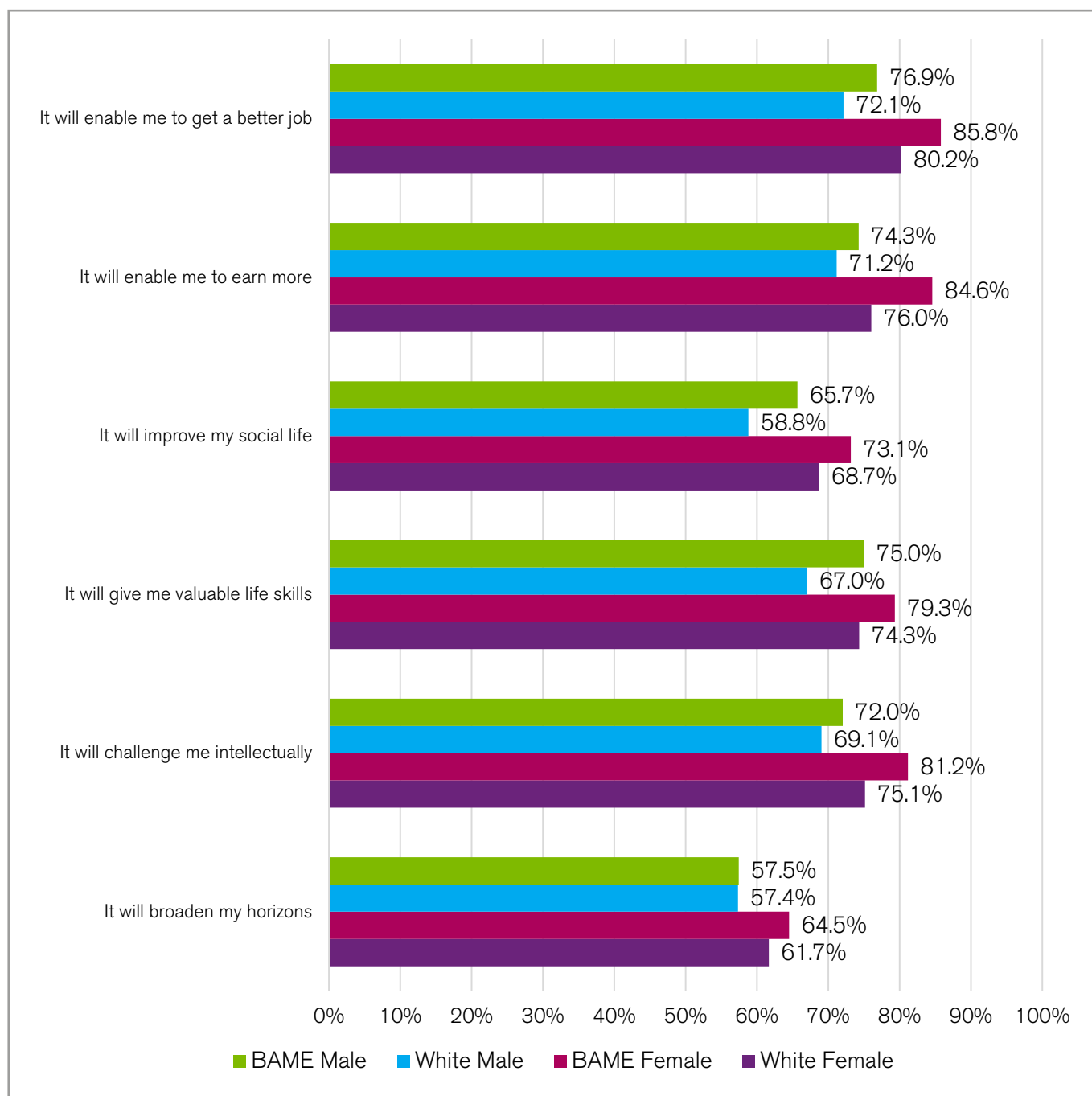
Mirroring their Year 10 peers, College Level 2 students were also least likely to respond with “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statements “it will broaden my horizons” (49.2%) and “it will improve my social life” (59.3%). Unlike the other students in the pre-16 age group, College Level 2 students most strongly agreed with the statement “it will give me valuable life skills” (69.5%), rather than “it will enable me to get a better job” (64.4%).



## Gender and ethnic group

The majority indicated that “it will enable me to get a better job” was the greatest benefit, with students from White (77.0%), Asian (79.6%) and Unknown backgrounds (71.4%) selecting “agree” or “strongly agree” at the greatest frequency in addition to Black males (87.0%) and Mixed females (79.3%).

Figure 8: Percentage of “agree” and “strongly agree” responses to HE benefit statements by ethnic group



Male students from Mixed backgrounds and from White backgrounds appeared to have a lesser perception of the HE benefits presented in the survey, with the lowest frequency of “agree” and “strongly agree”. Mixed males consistently gave the highest number of “strongly disagree” and “disagree” to all but one statement, “it will broaden my horizons”, which saw males from Other backgrounds (22.2%) narrowly surpassing Mixed males (21.4%).

Overall, female students from all ethnicities selected “agree” or “strongly agree” at a greater frequency than males across all statements (figure 8). Black females, followed by Black males consistently responded to the HE benefits scale with the highest frequencies of “agree” and “strongly agree”.

Male and female students demonstrated identical patterns in their “agree” and “strongly agree” statements, indicating they recognise the benefits of HE in a similar way:

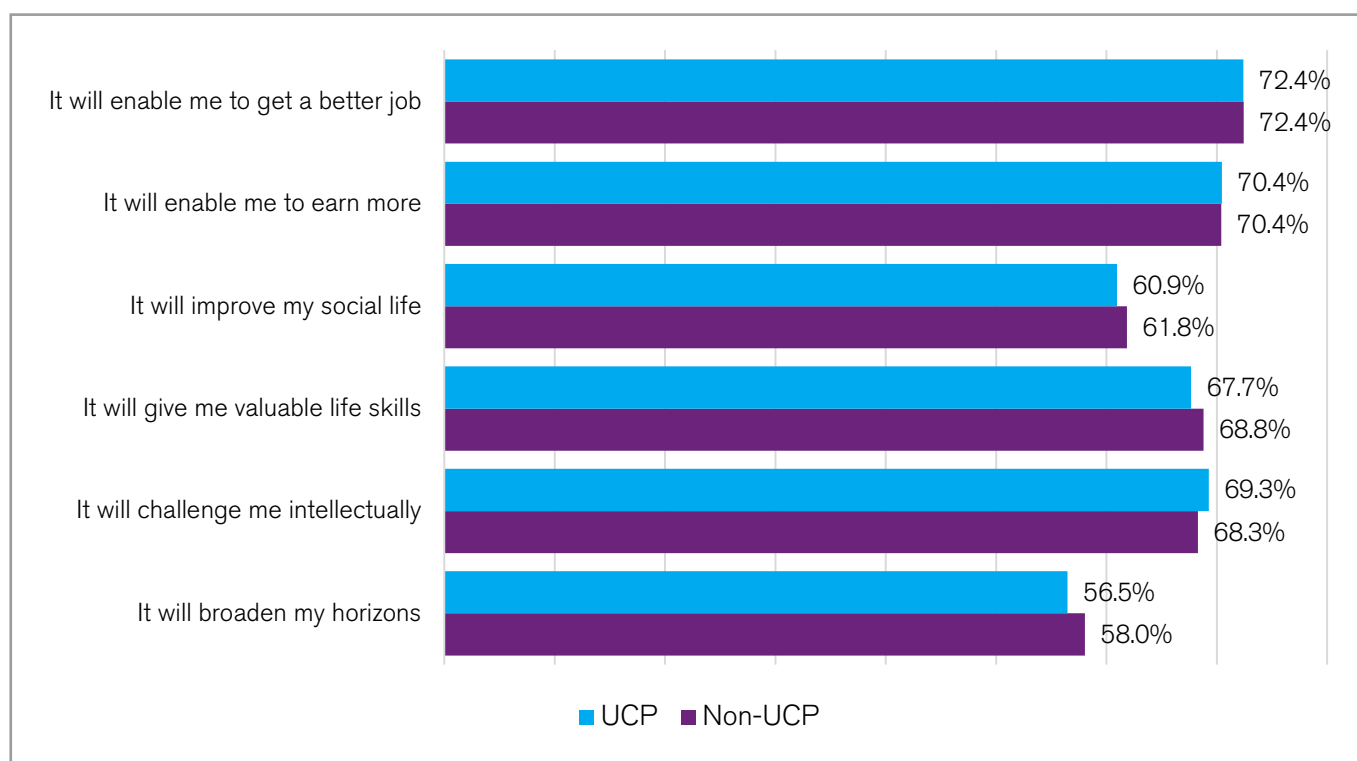
*Table 3: Percentage of “agree” and “strongly agree” responses to HE benefit statements by gender*

Statement	% Agree and Strongly Agree	
	Female	Male
It will enable me to get a better job.	81.5%	73.1%
It will enable me to earn more.	78.0%	71.7%
It will challenge me intellectually.	76.5%	69.6%
It will give me valuable life skills.	75.6%	68.7%
It will improve my social life.	69.8%	60.2%
It will broaden my horizons.	62.3%	57.3%

## UCP vs non-UCP

Perception of HE benefits is similar across groups of UCP and non-UCP students. Both sets of students identified “it will enable me to get a better job” as the top benefit of HE, with 72.4% of UCP students and 72.4% of non-UCP students selecting “agree” or “strongly agree”. The greatest differences between groups related to “it will give me valuable life skills”, which was a more highly perceived benefit by non-UCP students (68.8%) and “it will broaden my horizons” (58.0% non-UCP to 56.5% UCP).

Figure 9: Percentage of “agree” and “strongly agree” responses to HE benefit statements by UCP status



## Disadvantaged White males

The majority of disadvantaged White males recognised the benefits of HE, with over 50.0% selecting “agree” or “strongly agree” for all statements. The highest number of “agree” and “strongly agree” responses related to the statement “it will improve my social life”, followed by “it will enable me to learn more” (68.2%).

The largest number of “strongly disagree” and “disagree” responses was “it will challenge me intellectually” (14.9%). The majority of “strongly disagree” and “disagree” responses were given by disadvantaged White males; however, they were closely followed by BAME males from non-disadvantaged backgrounds and disadvantaged BAME males.

## 4. Sense of belonging

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Students were given a series of statements outlining possible benefits to attending HE. They were then asked to rank the degree to which they agree or disagree on a five-point scale.

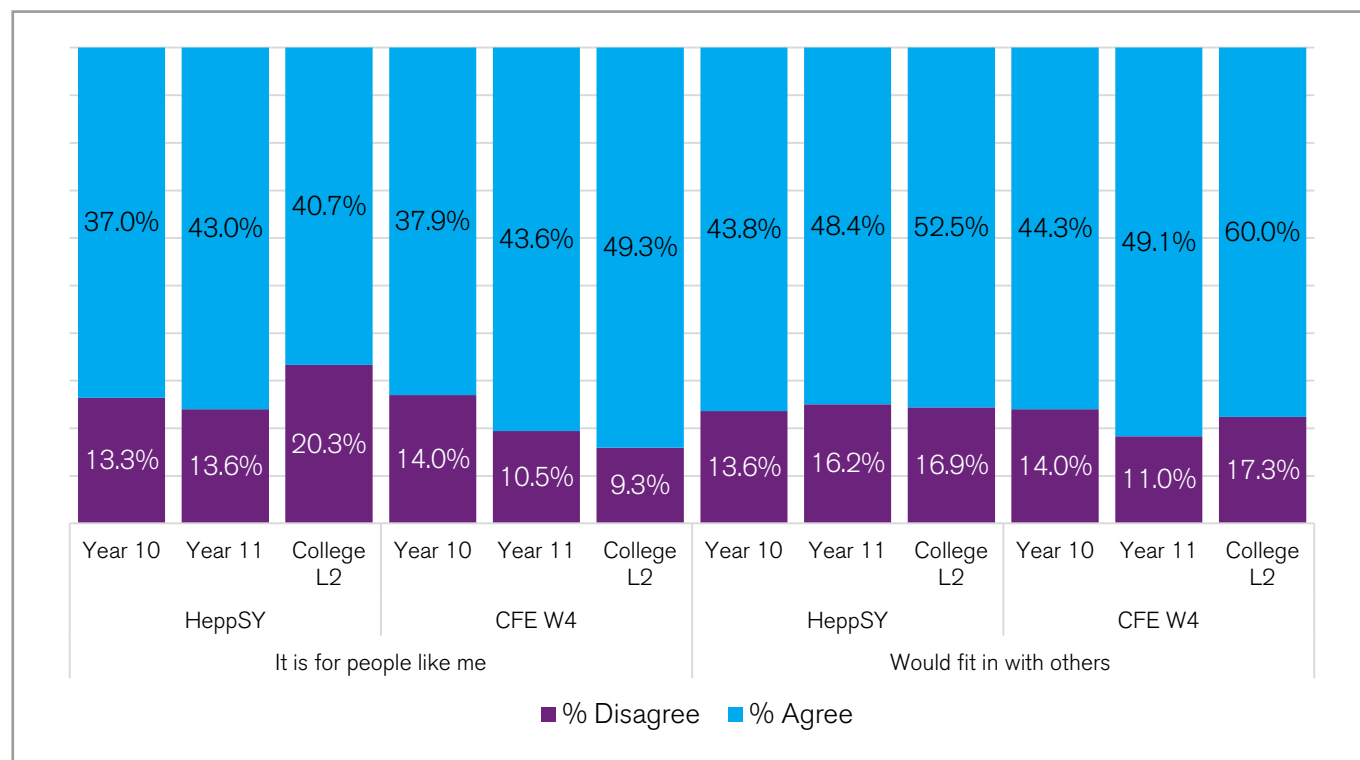
- It is for people like me.
- I would fit in well with others.
- I have the academic ability to succeed.
- I could cope with the level of study required.

### 4.1 Sense of belonging

The majority of pre-16 respondents felt that they had the academic ability to succeed in an HE environment, with 59.9% selecting “agree” or “strongly agree” when presented with the rating scale. A high proportion of students also felt that they could cope with the level of study required of them upon entering HE, with 49.2% indicating they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. However, the number of students who felt that HE is “for people like me” was much lower, with only 39.86% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Responses to this statement were distributed much more broadly across the rating scale, with 31.1% selecting “don’t know” and 29.6% indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Compared to the final wave of the CFE Learner Survey, the sense of belonging increased among College Level 2 students has decreased slightly by 8.7%, as has their belief that they would fit in well with others (-7.5%) (figure 10). For Year 10 and 11 students, the sense of belonging and perceived fit has remained the same.

Figure 10: Comparison of perceived fit of pre-16 respondents between the HeppSY Learner Survey and CFE Learner Survey (Wave 4)



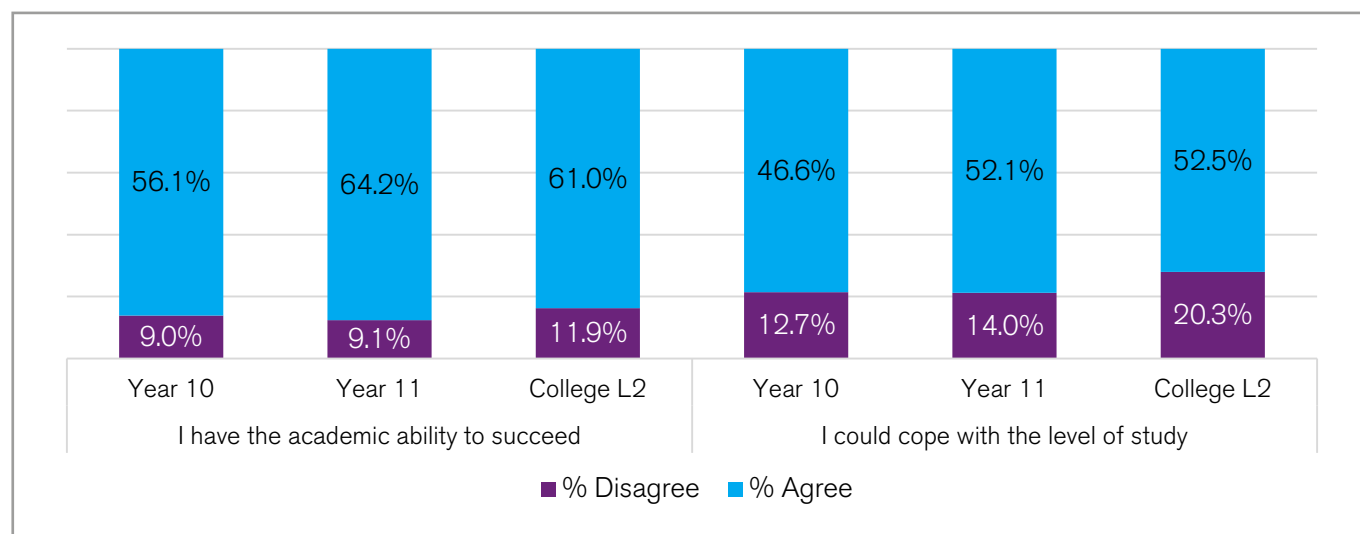
## 4.2 Subgroup differences in sense of belonging

### Year group

Year 10 and 11 students did not substantially differ in their beliefs that HE was for people like them (figure 10). College Level 2 students, relative to Year 10 and Year 11 students, were slightly more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that HE is for people like them, but this finding should be treated with caution due to the small number of College Level 2 students in the sample ( $n = 59$ ). Responses to the item, 'I would fit in well with others', did not differ substantially across Year 10 and Year 11 students, though College Level 2 students were slightly more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement (see figure 10).

Students across all year groups generally believed that they had the academic ability to succeed in HE (figure 11), with 56%, 64%, and 61% of Year 10, Year 11, and College Level 2 students, respectively, indicating that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Students' beliefs in their capacity to cope with the level of study required at HE was also high across Year 10 and Year 11 students (figure 11). College Level 2 students were slightly more likely to feel that they would be unable to meet the demands of HE study, with a fifth of students in this year group disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that they could cope with the level of study required, compared to 13% of Year 10 students and 14% of Year 11 students.

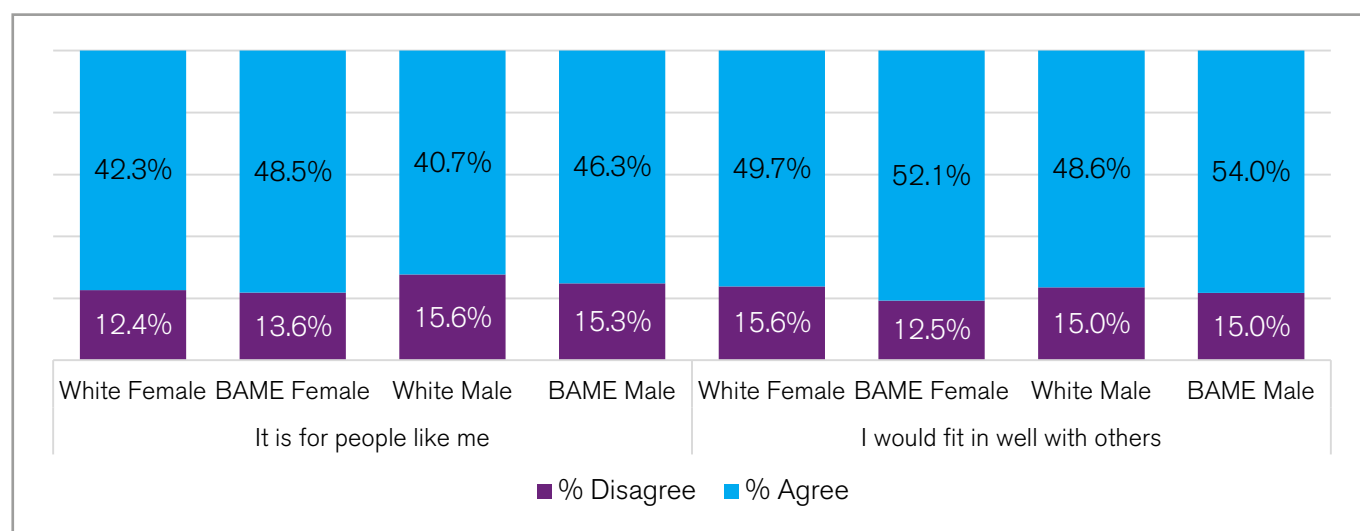
Figure 11 Perceived academic ability to cope at HE by year group



## Gender and ethnic group

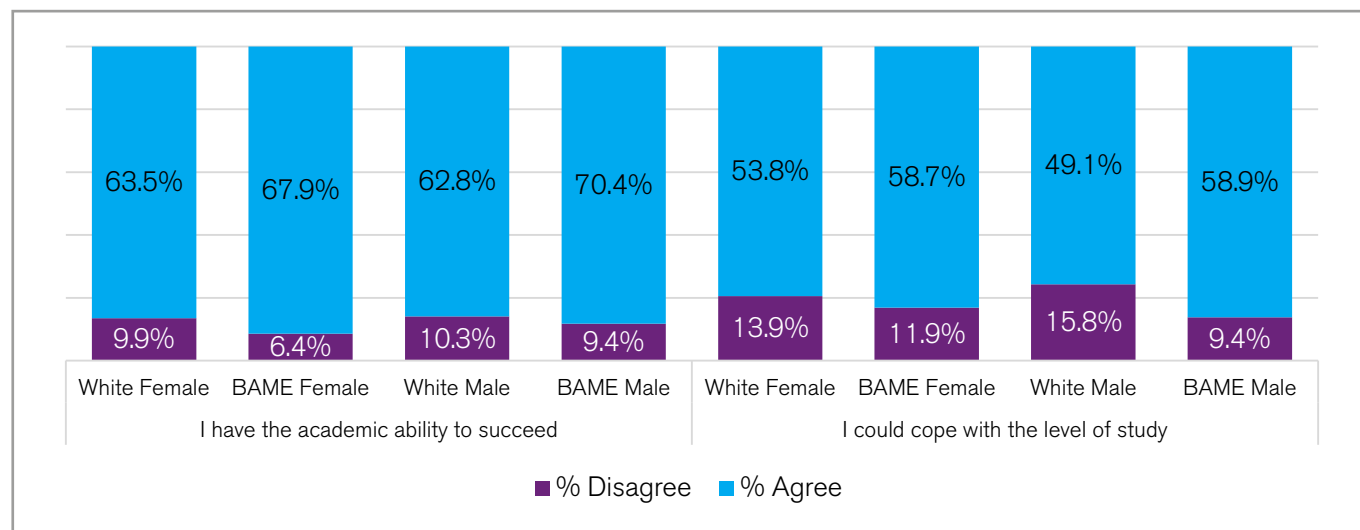
Students across ethnic groups and gender had a generally positive view of whether HE was for people like them (figure 12), with slightly more positive responses among BAME students (agree/strongly agree, female: 48.5%, male: 46.3%) compared to White students (agree/strongly agree, female: 42.3%, male: 40.7%). Students across gender and ethnic groups generally felt that they would fit in at HE (figure 12), with approximately half of students in each group providing an 'agree' or 'strongly agree' response to the statement, "I would fit in well with others". BAME male students had especially positive views about their social fit within HE, with nearly a quarter (23.0%) strongly agreeing that they would fit in well with others, compared to 15 to 16% across other gender/ethnic groups.

Figure 12: Perceived fit of pre-16 respondents from the HeppSY Learner Survey by gender and ethnicity



The majority of students across gender and ethnic groups believed that they were academically capable of succeeding in HE, with slightly more positive responses among BAME students compared to White students (figure 13). 63% of White male and female students agreed or strongly agreed that they had the academic ability to succeed in HE, compared to 68% of BAME female students and 70% of BAME male students. Nearly a third of BAME male students (32%) strongly agreed that they had the academic ability to succeed in HE, compared to 23% of White male students. BAME students were also slightly more likely to believe that they could cope with the level of study required at HE (figure 13). 54% of White female students and 49% of White male students agreed or strongly agreed that they could cope with the demands of HE study, compared to 59% of BAME female and male students.

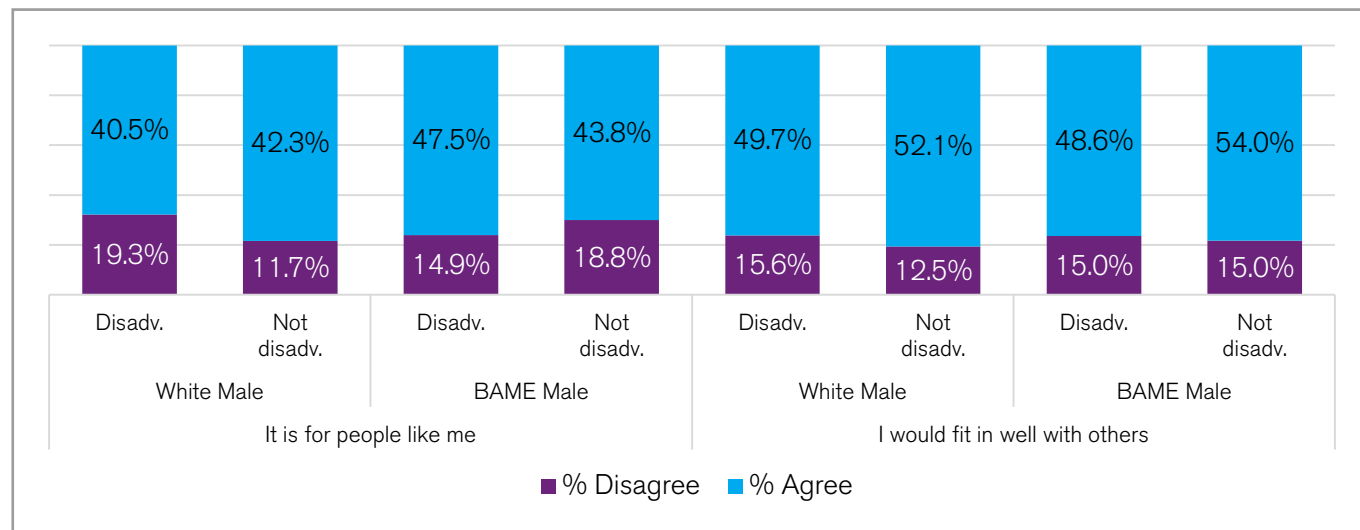
Figure 13: Perceived academic ability to cope at HE by gender and ethnicity



## Disadvantaged White males

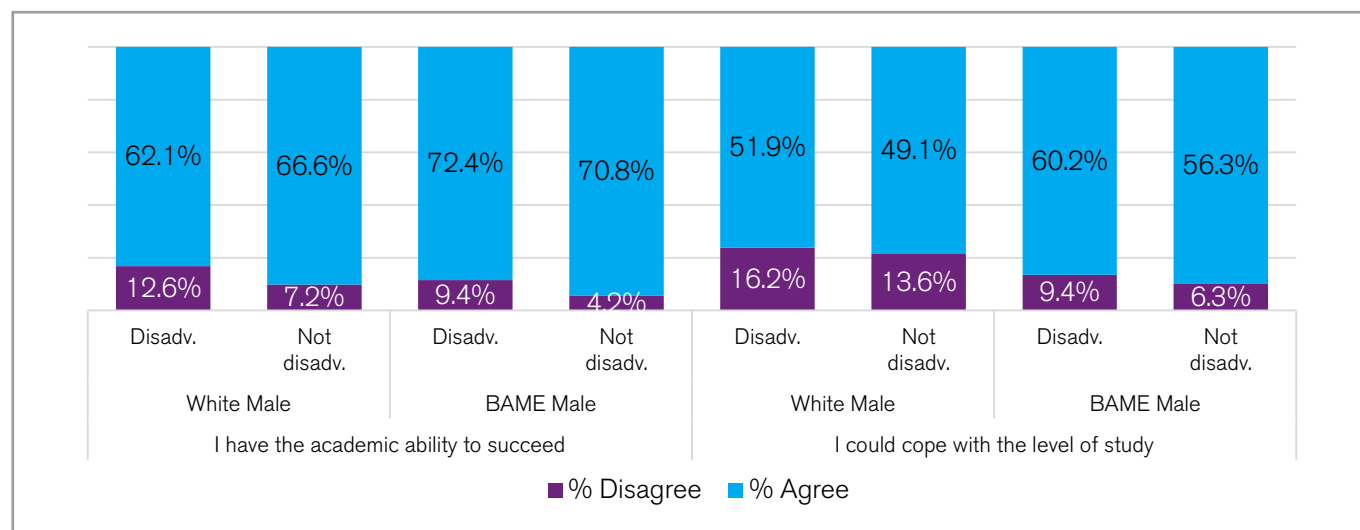
Among male students from disadvantaged areas, White students were slightly less likely to believe that HE was for people like them, with 40% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it was, compared to 48% of BAME students (figure 14). Compared to White male students from areas that were not disadvantaged, White male students from disadvantaged areas were slightly more likely to disagree or strongly disagree that HE was for people like them. There was little difference between groups in the extent to which students believed they would fit in well with others at HE.

Figure 14: Perceived fit of pre-16 respondents from the HeppSY Learner Survey by disadvantage and ethnicity



BAME male students from disadvantaged areas were more likely than White male students from disadvantaged areas to “agree” or “strongly agree” that they have the academic ability to succeed in HE (figure 15). There was little difference in perceived ability to succeed academically between male students from disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas. BAME male students from disadvantaged areas were also more likely than White male students from disadvantaged areas to believe that they cope with the level of study required in HE (figure 15) There was little difference in perceived ability to cope with the level of study required between male students from disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas.

Figure 15: Perceived academic ability to cope at HE by disadvantage and ethnicity





## 5. Self-efficacy

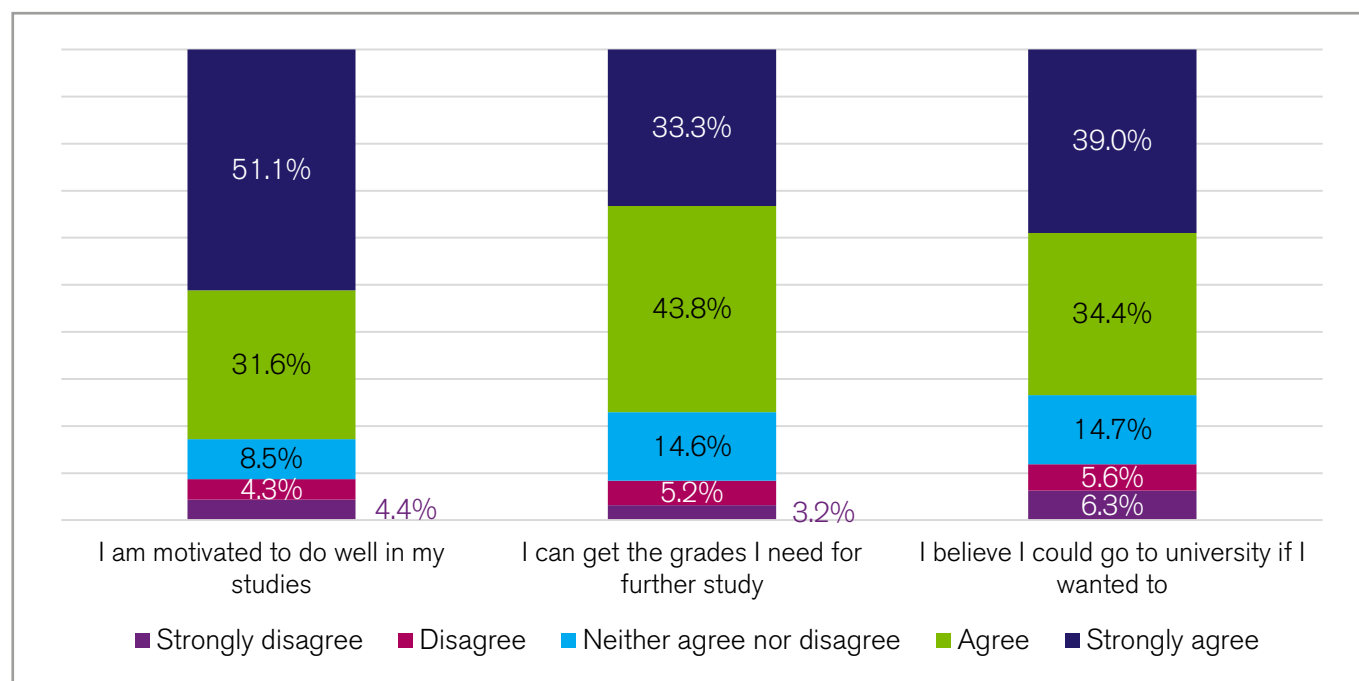
Three statements in the learner survey measure the students' self-efficacy related to academic achievements. The students rated their agreement with each of the following statements:

- I am motivated to do well.
- I can get the grades I need.
- I could go to university if I wanted.

### 5.1 Self-efficacy

The majority of pre-16 students selected “strongly agree” or “agree” when presented with the three self-efficacy statements, particularly in response to “I am motivated to do well in my studies”, where 51.2% of respondents strongly agreed.

Figure 16: Pre-16 self-efficacy



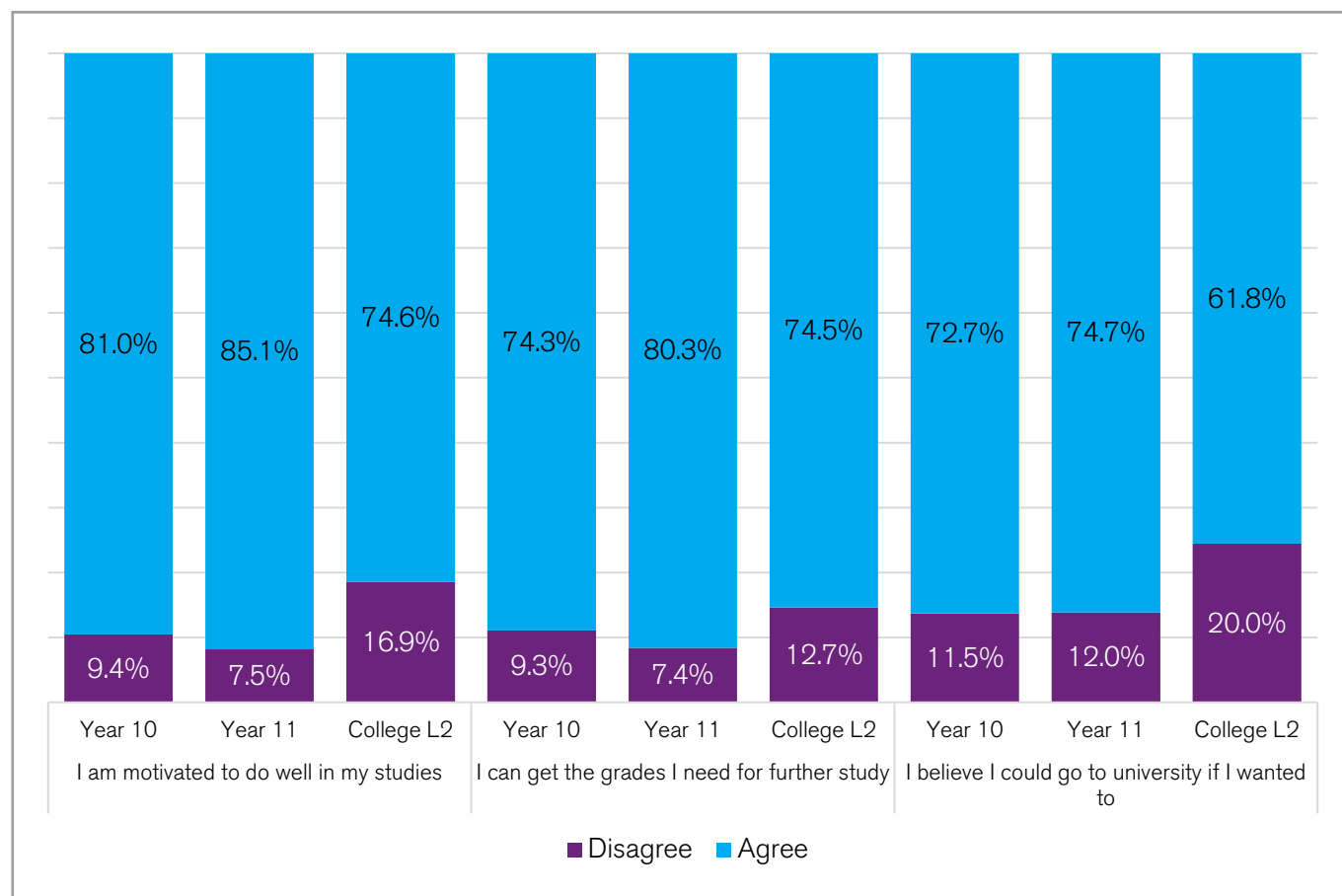
## 5.2 Subgroup differences in self-efficacy

### Year Group

Motivation was generally higher amongst Year 11 students, 55.1% of whom indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement “I am motivated to do well in my studies.” While the majority of students across all year groups indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the motivation statement, students studying at College Level 2 were less motivated, at 74.6%.

Year 11 students also felt more confident in their ability to achieve the grades needed for further study, with 80.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the given statement. Year 10 students were less likely to agree, however it was College Level 2 students who appeared to have the lowest confidence levels, with a frequency of 12.7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Furthermore, College Level 2 students had less belief that they could go to university if they wanted to, displaying both the lowest agreement (61.8%) and highest disagreement (20%) across year groups.

Figure 17: Pre-16 self-efficacy by year group

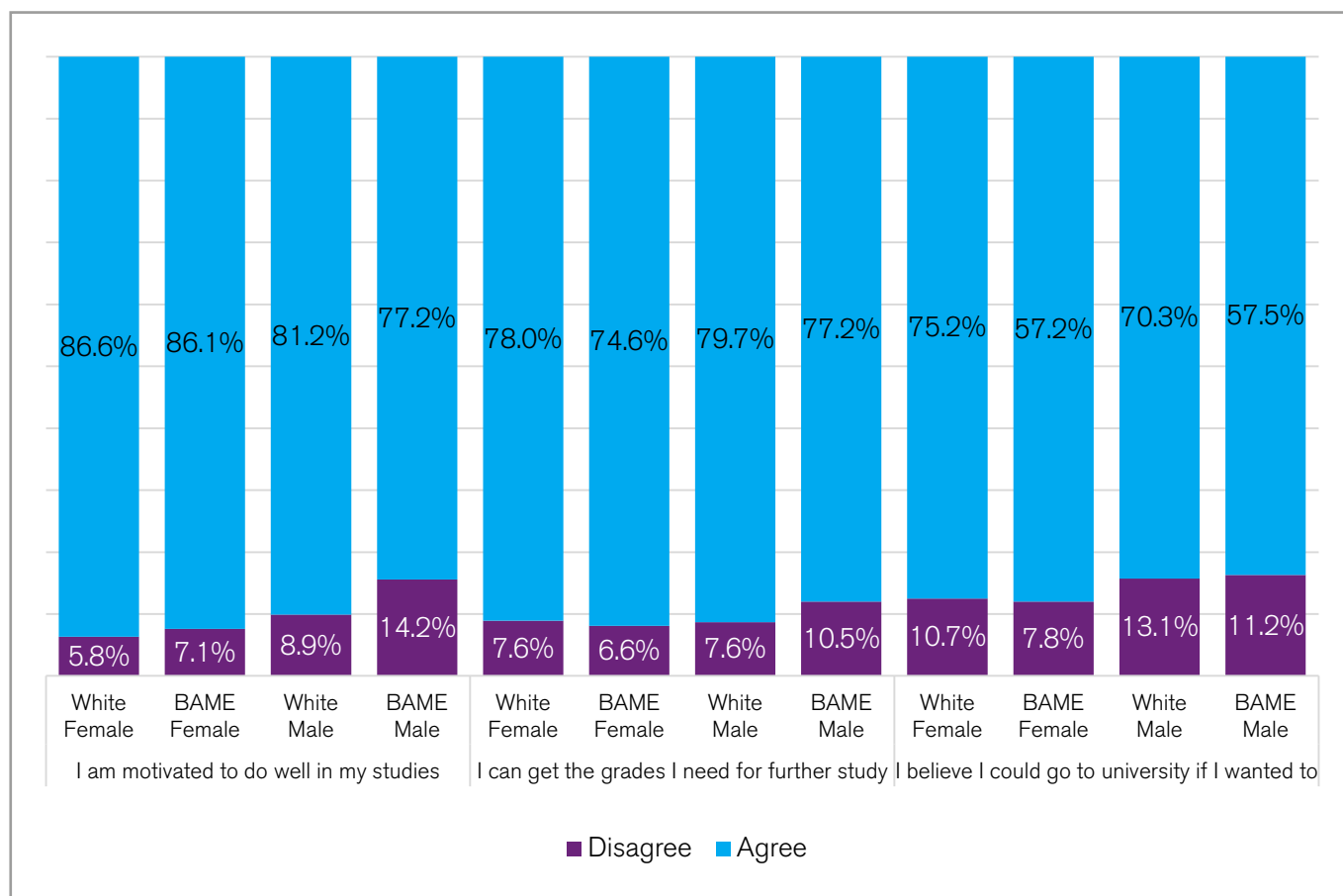


## Gender and ethnic group

Overall, female pre-16 students appeared more motivated in their studies compared to their male peers and those who chose not to disclose their gender. Across ethnic groups, BAME students are less motivated to do well in their studies than their White peers. When factoring gender, it becomes evident that motivation is lowest amongst BAME male students (figure 18), particularly for those from Mixed backgrounds (11.9% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with “I am motivated to do well in my studies”). The highest levels of motivation were female students from Asian backgrounds, with 88.62% indicating that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Of those who chose not to disclose their gender, Black students demonstrated the highest level of motivation, with 100% agreeing or strongly agreeing with “I am motivated to do well in my studies”.

The belief respondents can achieve the grades needed for further study did not vary significantly across gender or ethnic groups, although White students appeared to be more confident. White students also showcased a greater belief than BAME students in their ability to go to university if they wanted to. The lowest level of confidence in being able to attend university stemmed from BAME students who chose not to disclose their gender, or those whose gender was unknown at the point of data collection, suggesting there may be additional barriers faced.

Figure 18: Pre-16 self-efficacy by gender and ethnicity

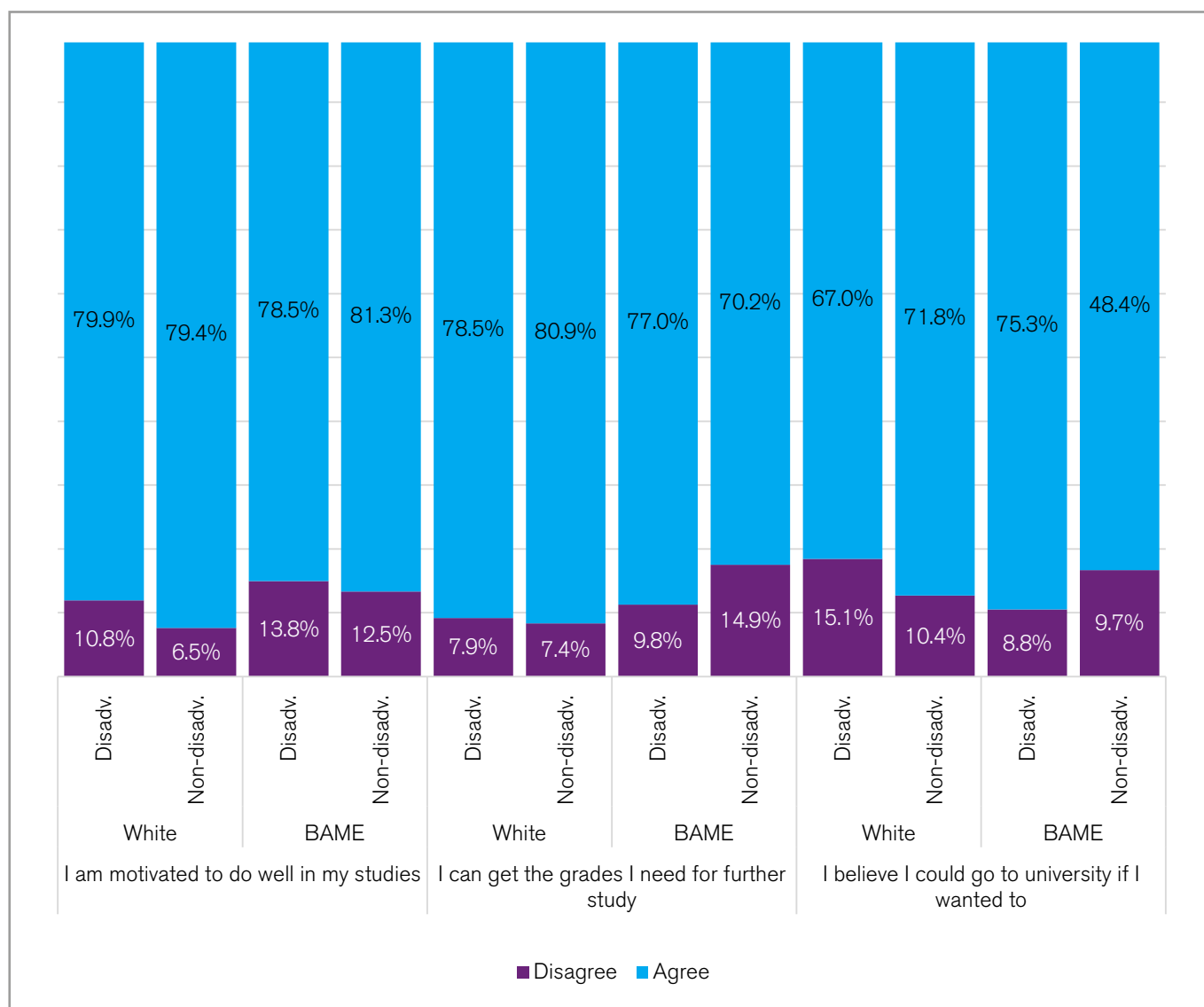


## Disadvantaged White males

The responses from pre-16 students varied across the three self-efficacy statements when considering ethnicity and level of disadvantage. BAME males from non-disadvantaged backgrounds were less likely than their White peers to hold the belief that they could go to HE if they wanted to (48.4% compared to 67.0%). BAME males from non-disadvantaged backgrounds were also least confident in their ability to attain the grades needed for further study (70.2%) compared to their peers, particularly BAME females from non-disadvantaged backgrounds, who had the greatest belief in their ability to enter HE, 86.9%.

Considering motivation, BAME students from disadvantaged backgrounds were least likely to agree or strongly agree, 78.5%, followed by White male students from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged backgrounds (79.4% and 79.9% respectively).

Figure 19: Pre-16 self-efficacy by disadvantage, gender and ethnicity



## **6. Main reasons to go, or not go to HE**

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Students completing the survey were presented with a list of common reasons for going to HE and a list of common reasons not to go to HE. Depending on whether they intended to apply to HE or not, they were directed to the appropriate list and then asked to select which would be their main reason.

### **6.1 Main reasons to go, or not go to HE**

The most predominant reason pre-16 students wanted to go to HE was “to enable to get a well-paid job” (66.0% of respondents). This is consistent with the most highly perceived benefit of HE “It will enable me to get a better job”. The second most common response was “I enjoy learning” at 13.0%. The remaining responses were distributed across the rest of the series of options.

The main reason not to go was “it depends on the grades I get”, suggesting the main reason for not applying to HE is either a lack of confidence in meeting entry requirements, or feeling their current qualifications may be sufficient to progress without HE.

### **6.2 Subgroup differences in reasons to go, or not go to HE**

The main reason to go to HE across all subgroups, “to enable to get a well-paid job” was the most frequently selected main reason to go to HE. There is no change when accounting for gender, ethnicity, UCP status or level of disadvantage.

There was little difference in the main reason not to go among subgroups of pre-16 students, with the highest number of respondents selecting “it depends on the grades I get” across year group, UCP status, gender, or ethnicity, with the exception of students from Other ethnic backgrounds, who felt the main reason not to go was “it does not appeal to me” (21.7%).

When considering disadvantage in conjunction with gender and ethnicity, the main reason not to go to HE is less consistent. For most White students, the main reason not to go was “it depends on the grades I get”, however for White non-disadvantaged males, the main reason not to go was “I want to work and earn money” (14.2%). For students from BAME backgrounds, reasons not to go were more varied. BAME disadvantaged males also wanted to work and earn money (14.3%). For BAME non-disadvantaged males, the main reason not to go to HE was because they “have decided on a specific career (that does not require further study)”.

## **7. Part I conclusions and recommendations**

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### **7.1 A year of success**

For a second year, gaps in HE knowledge between UCP and non-UCP students have remained closed. There are no significant differences between these student groups at pre-16 level.

Students demonstrate high likelihood of applying to HE aged 18 or 19 and as a cohort demonstrated high levels of confidence in their ability to be successful in their applications. There is clear evidence that students recognise the benefits of HE at pre-16.

BAME students, especially Black students and BAME female students from non-disadvantaged backgrounds, outperformed their counterparts in many areas. Black female students in particular demonstrated high levels of HE knowledge, a clear recognition of benefits and a strong likelihood of applying to HE.

### **7.2 Gaps yet to close**

Many gaps have narrowed and the impact of HeppSY's intervention is clear. However, within the pre-16 cohort, there are gaps which remain apparent. There is a clear gender gap between male and female students. Male students do not fare as well as their female peers in HE knowledge, understanding of HE benefits and self-efficacy.

Previous HeppSY reports show evidence of gaps between ethnic groups, particularly for White males, who had lower HE knowledge than their BAME peers and the lowest sense of belonging relating to HE in the future. White males indicated they were least likely than any other group to apply to HE aged 18 or 19 years. While female students generally possessed greater knowledge of HE, those from BAME backgrounds were less confident in their ability to achieve the grades needed to HE and least likely to believe they could go to HE if they wanted to. These gaps are clear amongst HeppSY's pre-16 cohort. White males from disadvantaged backgrounds have the lowest levels of HE knowledge across gender, ethnicity, and level of disadvantage, and are least likely to remain in full time education or apply to HE.

## 7.3 Recommendations

- Produce a report exploring the experiences of students with disabilities at pre-16 using data from the HeppSY Learner Survey
- Produce a baseline report to inform the attainment-raising interventions
- Provide holistic support for pre-16 males from White disadvantaged backgrounds
- Support College Level 2 students to increase their overall HE knowledge and boost confidence in their ability to enter and cope with life at HE.
- Provide comprehensive support to improve self-efficacy amongst student groups and confidence for female students from BAME backgrounds.
- Do not treat BAME students as a holistic group when planning outreach interventions. This report demonstrates key differences between ethnic groups, indicating bespoke interventions are necessary.

# Appendix 1: Pre-16 respondent characteristics in last two surveys

		2021/22 CFE Learner Survey		2022/23 HeppSY Learner Survey	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Year Group	Year 10	1832	51.3	1658	52.2
	Year 11	1661	46.6	1458	45.9
	College Level 2	75	2.1	59	1.9
Disability	With disability	481	13.5	504	15.9
	No disability	2221	62.2	2024	63.7
	Unknown	866	24.3	657	20.7
Gender	Female	1531	42.9	1465	46.1
	Male	1464	41.0	1321	41.6
	Other or prefer not to say	376	10.5	138	4.3
	Unknown	385	10.8	251	7.9
Ethnicity	White	2535	71.0	2250	70.9
	Black	98	2.7	165	5.2
	Asian	246	6.9	327	10.3
	Mixed	96	2.7	99	3.1
	Other	99	2.8	31	1.0
	Unknown	494	13.8	303	9.5
Gender and Ethnicity	White Female	1217	34.1	1104	34.8
	BAME Female	303	8.5	361	11.4
	White Male	1173	32.9	1034	32.6
	BAME Male	267	7.5	287	9.0
	White Gender-unknown	130	3.6	112	3.5
	BAME Gender-unknown	51	1.4	26	0.8
	Unknown	427	12.0	251	7.9



# Appendix 1: Pre-16 respondent characteristics in last two surveys

		2021/22 CFE Learner Survey		2022/23 HeppSY Learner Survey	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
UCP or not	UCP	1861	52.2	1695	53.4
	Non-UCP	1476	41.4	1182	37.2
	Unknown	231	6.5	298	9.4
IMD	IMD Q1			1593	50.2
	IMD Q2			576	18.1
	IMD Q3			310	9.8
	IMD Q4			240	7.6
	IMD Q5			79	2.5
	Unknown			377	11.9
Gender, Ethnicity, and IMD (disadvantage = IMD Q1; Not-disadvantage = IMD Q2-5)	White disadvantaged Female			500	15.7
	White disadvantaged Male			462	14.6
	White Non-disadvantaged Female			503	15.8
	White Non-disadvantaged Male			428	13.5
	BAME disadvantaged Female			253	8.0
	BAME disadvantaged Male			181	5.7
	BAME Non-disadvantaged Female			61	1.9
	BAME Non-disadvantaged Male			48	1.5
	Other or Unknown			739	23.3
Total		3568	100	3175	100



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