Autumn Survey of Colleges

Colleges, students and Covid-19

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES

AoC Autumn 2020 survey: Colleges, students and Covid-19

The Association of Colleges (AoC) represents around 90% of the 238 colleges in England incorporated under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and has several associate members.

This is a follow up survey to the two published in May and July on the profound impact of Covid-19 on colleges, staff and students. This late survey contains information about student enrolments and a range of issues relating to college activities following the autumn restart.

The results of the first survey helped AoC capture the national picture and provided evidence for discussion with the Department for Education and the Cabinet Office. This survey, issued on 15 October 2020 with a 2 November 2020 return date, raises further issues that require discussion and action.

Response rate: 97 colleges responded (40% of all colleges).

Summary findings

1. Enrolment this year:

- 16-18 enrolments are up in 62% of colleges, by between 15,000 and 20,000 students (around 3%) but the funding formula only provided for 0.1% growth.
- Adult enrolments are down in 46% of colleges.
- Apprenticeship numbers are down in 73% of colleges.
- Higher education (HE) enrolments are down in 49% of colleges.
- International (non-EU) enrolments are down in half of colleges.
- SEND numbers were up in 52% of colleges.

62% reported an increase in 16-18 enrolments this year, 20% by over 10%. 19% reported a fall.

46% reported a fall in adult enrolments this year, 25% by over 10%. 26% reported an increase.

73% reported a fall in apprenticeship enrolments this year, 58% by over 10%. 9% reported an increase. In normal years there are several thousand young people starting apprenticeships in college. Some of these young people have probably switched across to take education courses but government funding does not follow.

49% reported a fall in HE enrolments this year, 23% by over 10%. 23% reported a rise.

50% reported a fall in international (non-EU) enrolments this year, 45% by over 10%. 16% reported a rise.

52% reported an increase in SEND enrolments this year, 24% by over 10%. 12% reported a fall.

2. GCSE English & maths this November

- GCSE English and maths November entries were up in over half of colleges.
- The majority of candidates have a grade 3.
- These entries have created accommodation and staffing challenges for over a third of colleges.

53% reported an increase in the number of candidates for the November GCSE English exam. 28% reported that these numbers had doubled or more and 40% reported a decrease.

61% reported an increase in the number of candidates for the November GCSE maths exam. 30% reported that these numbers had doubled or more and 36% reported a decrease.

The vast majority of candidates are those with a previous GCSE grade 3. (88% of colleges reported that 80% or more of candidates had a grade 3)

37% anticipated having to close some or all of the college to accommodate November resits (up from 7%).

34% anticipated needing to hire more accommodation and/or staff than usual to accommodate November resits.

3. Lost learning

- 98% of colleges reported that lost learning was a concern for new students.
- 98% of colleges are accessing the tuition catch-up fund and using it to support small group tuition.

56% of colleges are making greater use of diagnostic testing to assess students' starting points this year.

4. Work experience

- 98% of colleges reported a negative impact of Covid-19 on work experience plans.

Alternative programmes being offered instead of apprenticeships include study programmes (93%), Traineeships (49%), Kickstart (45%), sector based work academies (42%) and T Levels (21%).

4. The digital divide

- 100,000 college students may lack access to a suitable digital device or home access to the internet.

Colleges report high numbers of 16-18 year-old students without a suitable device or access to the internet, with a total of 28,000 from those colleges providing a number. 80% report this is because of a lack of a stable internet connection at home, 58% because they are not eligible for bursary funding or 37% because bursary funding has run out.

5. Online / blended learning

- 98% of colleges describe their teachers' confidence and skills with online / blended teaching as moderate (64%) or strong (34%).

Colleges are developing the skills of their staff using internal training (93%), platform providers (64%), ETF (41%), JISC (37%) and the Ed Tech Demonstrator Programme (26%).

6. Student transport

- 46% of colleges report that their students have experienced difficulties travelling to college as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on transport.
- 44% of colleges report facing increased transport costs with an average of £73,000 additional costs per college (and a maximum of £400,000).

The reasons most often cited are that more dedicated transport is needed (59%), increased numbers needing assistance (50%), and increased costs of protective measures (34%).

Analysis of findings

7.1 16-18 enrolments
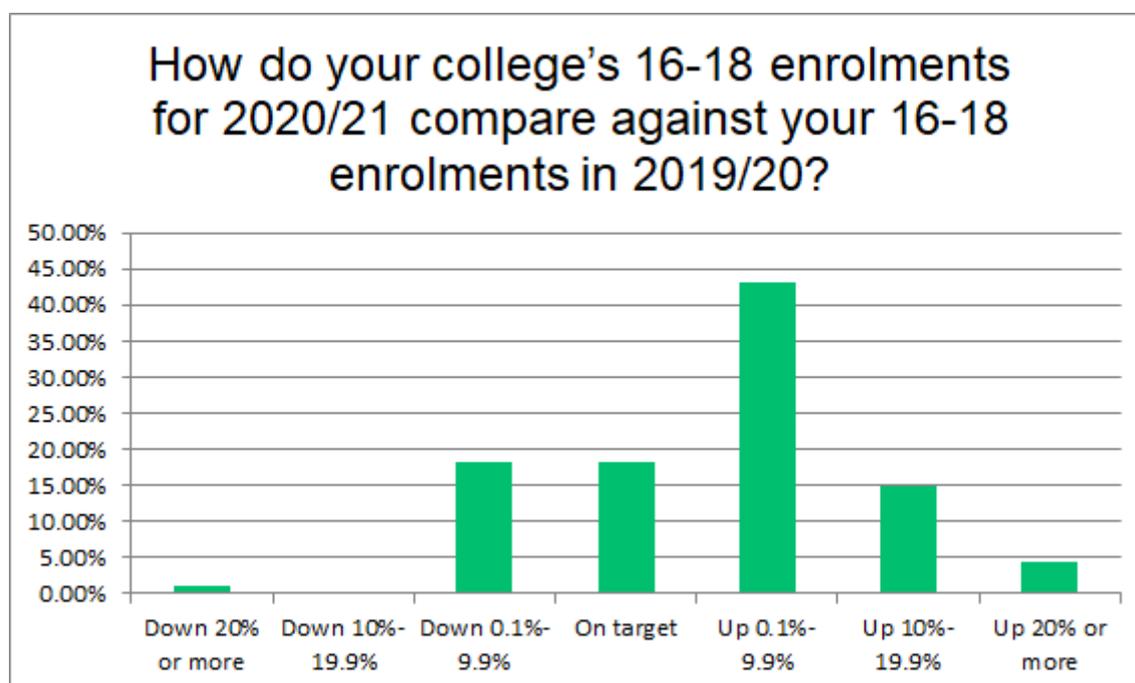
Colleges were asked to provide information on their enrolment trends in a percentage range. Although term started at the start of September, there is always some student turnover in the first weeks and more this year because enrolments were online and because the August exam chaos changed choices. Colleges do not officially confirm their student numbers until they make early December Individual Learner Record returns for the 2 November census date. Colleges were therefore asked to provide provisional information.

AoC staff compared individual college returns against funded student numbers for 2020-1 to estimate the size of this increase. This is not an exact figure and the sample of colleges who returned the survey may differ slightly from the whole population but our estimate is that there has been growth in a range of 15,000 to 20,000 students which is around 3% growth.

Some colleges are reporting a decrease in Travel and Tourism, Hospitality and Catering, Sport and Hair and Beauty enrolments but, as with adult recruitment trends, an increase in Health and Social Care as well as in Engineering and Construction and an upturn in A Level enrolments. Colleges are also reporting a slight decrease in numbers of 16-18 enrolments at Level 2 and an increase in Level 3, which could be, in part, due to the GCSE results this summer.
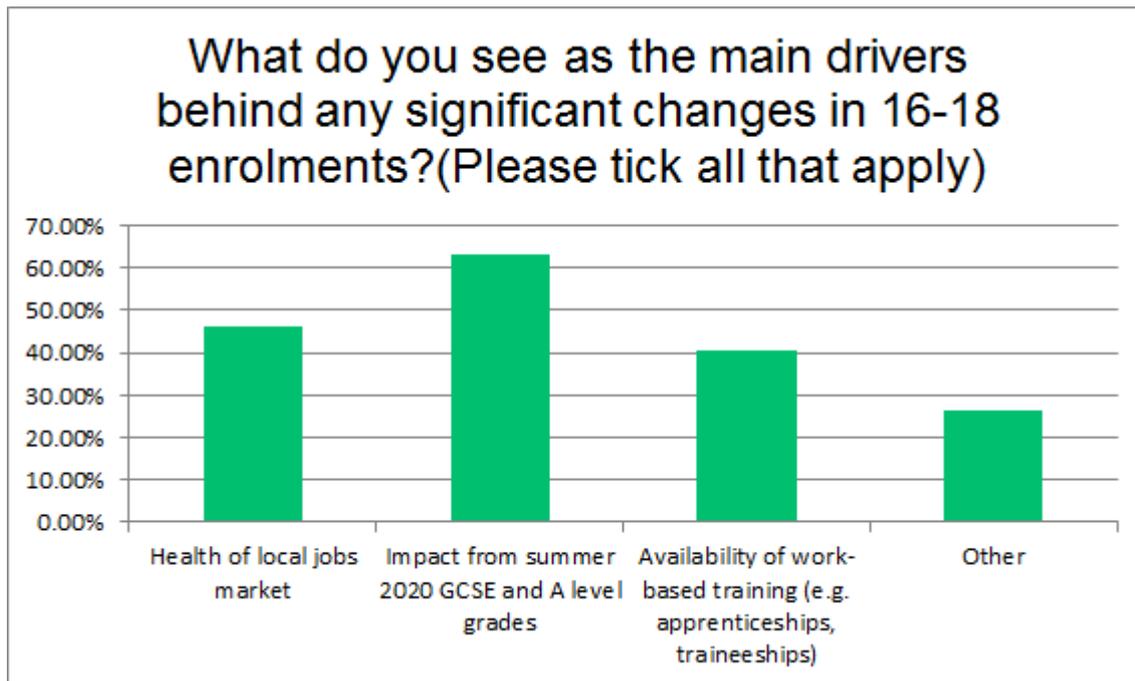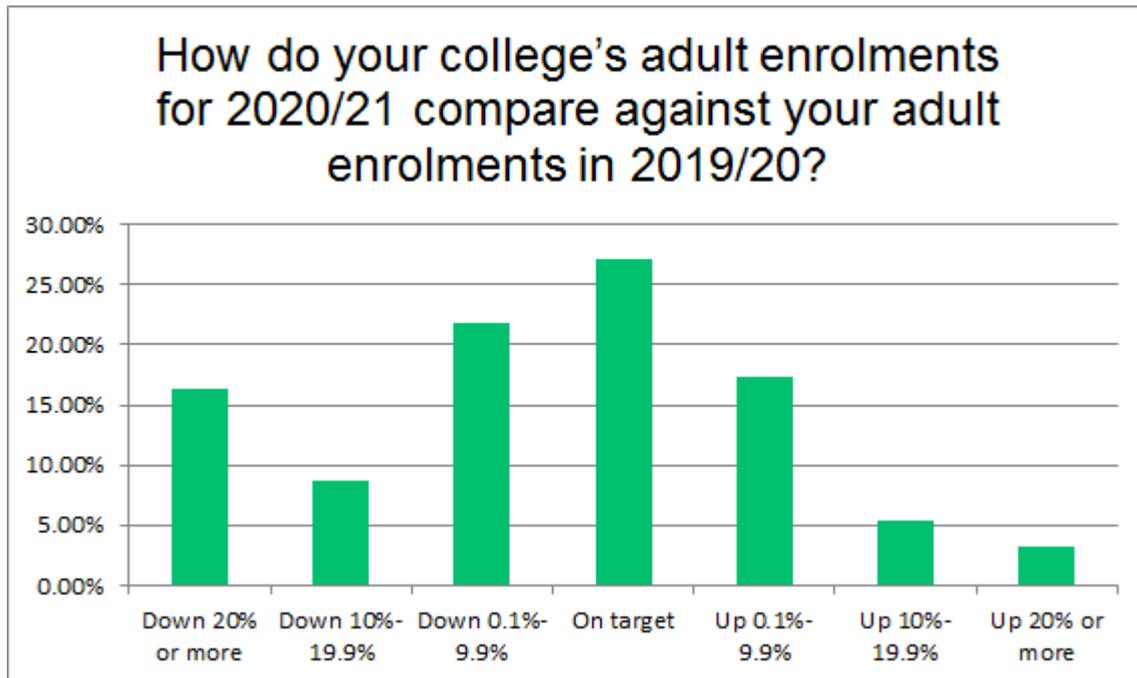

Colleges report that the main drivers behind any significant changes in 16-18 enrolment numbers this year are the impact from summer GCSE and A level grades (63%), the health of the jobs market (46%) and the availability of work-based training (40%). Where colleges specified other drivers these included the lack of opportunities to provide young people with an 'in person' experience of the college hampering recruitment and schools have held on to more students by re-offering places because of higher GCSE profiles resulting from the Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) process or as a result of parents thinking it would be safer to stay on in familiar surroundings and nearer to home. Some colleges also reported that demographic growth locally impacted positively on their enrolments. Where colleges have seen a decline in Sport enrolments they believe this is linked to the perception of participating in sport based education programmes and the impact of Covid19 on this.

Most colleges **(65%)** believed that retention will be broadly the same as last year, with **18%** saying retention will be better and **17%** saying it will be worse.

7.2 Adult enrolments

27% of colleges said that their adult enrolments were on target in comparison to numbers from 2019. A further **26%** said that their adult enrolment numbers were above their 2019 figures. However, **47%** of colleges said that their adult enrolment figures were below that of 2019, with **16%** of those saying that they were over 20% down on the same period last academic year.

How do your college's adult enrolments for 2020/21 compare against your adult enrolments in 2019/20?

Category	Percentage
Down 20% or more	~16.4%
Down 10%-19.9%	~8.8%
Down 0.1%-9.9%	~21.7%
On target	~27.0%
Up 0.1%-9.9%	~17.3%
Up 10%-19.9%	~5.4%
Up 20% or more	~3.2%

In terms of where growth and decline lie in terms of area of adult provision, it is a mixed picture and some of it is likely to be due to location of the college itself, local demographics and local challenges.

Community and Leisure courses are reported as having lower numbers than usual. Older learners also appear to be more nervous. Some students don't want to learn online or are reluctant to enrol because they're worried about mixing with others at this time and also are concerned about courses being cancelled given the changeable nature of the restrictions. Colleges are reporting fewer on-campus adults.

Most colleges have seen an increase in Access to HE, with only a few reporting a decline in numbers in certain Access programmes. Access to HE nursing routes are particularly popular this year.

Some colleges have noticed some hesitancy around adults enrolling in some of the more practical courses for adults and seen the restrictions of social distancing impact on the delivery of practical programmes. One gave the example of where class sizes in technical spaces would need to be halved in order to be Covid-19 secure and therefore if provision went ahead it would show a decrease on 2019/20 figures. Take up of

Hospitality courses for adults has decreased, which is likely to be due to the impact on the sector due to the pandemic. One college, however, was reporting a significant upturn in adult Engineering enrolments which was not predicted. Lots of colleges who responded have seen a significant growth of interest and enrolment in Health and Social Care courses and Counselling, which they are attributing to the effect of the pandemic.

Some colleges are seeing a decrease in demand for adult GCSEs but a growth in Functional Skills take up. However, some colleges are reporting a drop off in adult English and Maths take up, which has led colleges to wonder if those on lower incomes are prioritising earning over learning, at this current time.

Lots of colleges are reporting that ESOL continues to recruit strongly, however there are some that have seen a drop off in interest. Depending on the adult cohort demographic within certain large urban areas, some colleges are reporting a nervousness amongst BAME ethnic groups in returning to a college campus environment due to continuing rises in Covid-19 cases and the particular health risks to these specific groups.

On the whole, colleges are reporting more interest around employability programmes. However, one college pointed out some of the challenges of there being 'too many conflicting programmes for prospective learners, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and employers to cope with'. As each programme has differing incentives, constraints and eligibility rules, this can result in genuine confusion when they are targeting the same prospective learners. Some colleges report that referrals from JCP are significantly down with JCP clients opting to stay in isolation rather than attend college. Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) referrals dropped as this activity was suspended for some of the enrolment period. These types of programmes do not work well delivered online due to low level IT skills.

Other learners that pre-enrolled are not taking up places or dropping out early because of changing circumstances, for example taking up short-term and low paid employment opportunities, family ill health or changing childcare arrangements. However, there are some colleges also reporting additional adults this year on low level employability programmes and also enrolling onto the new Sector Based work academies, where colleges have been able to adapt quickly with new provision.

7.3 Take up of 19+ Advanced Learner Loans

31% of colleges said that their 19+ loan enrolments were in line with 2019/20 enrolment figures. **27% were up** on last year's numbers, however **42% were down** on 19+ loan enrolments in comparison with the same period last year. Those with a downturn could be for a number of reasons, as reported by some of the colleges. For example, flexibilities within the Greater London Authority and West Midlands Combined Authority Adult Education Budget (AEB) have meant that more adults have been able to access funding for their studies.

Some colleges reported that they had seen a gradual decline in adult learners over time after the introduction of 19+ loans. One reported that there was no appetite locally at this time for full cost provision in the college's core areas for adults and that they were now considering moving to greater levels of General Further Education (GFE) provision to bolster.However, another college reported that their overall access numbers have tripled with that particular college having needed to make a request for exceptional growth. Where colleges were reporting that they were on target or up on 19+ loans, many were reporting increased levels on Access to HE and, in particular, routes into health and nursing professions as well as Level 3 Care, Childcare and Counselling courses.

## 7.4 Apprenticeship enrolments and alternative provision

Just over **a quarter of colleges** report being on target, or slightly above (no more than 20%), for apprenticeship enrolments compared to the 2019/20 academic year. **74.6%** are reporting drops in recruitment, with **45%** seeing a drop of more than 20%.
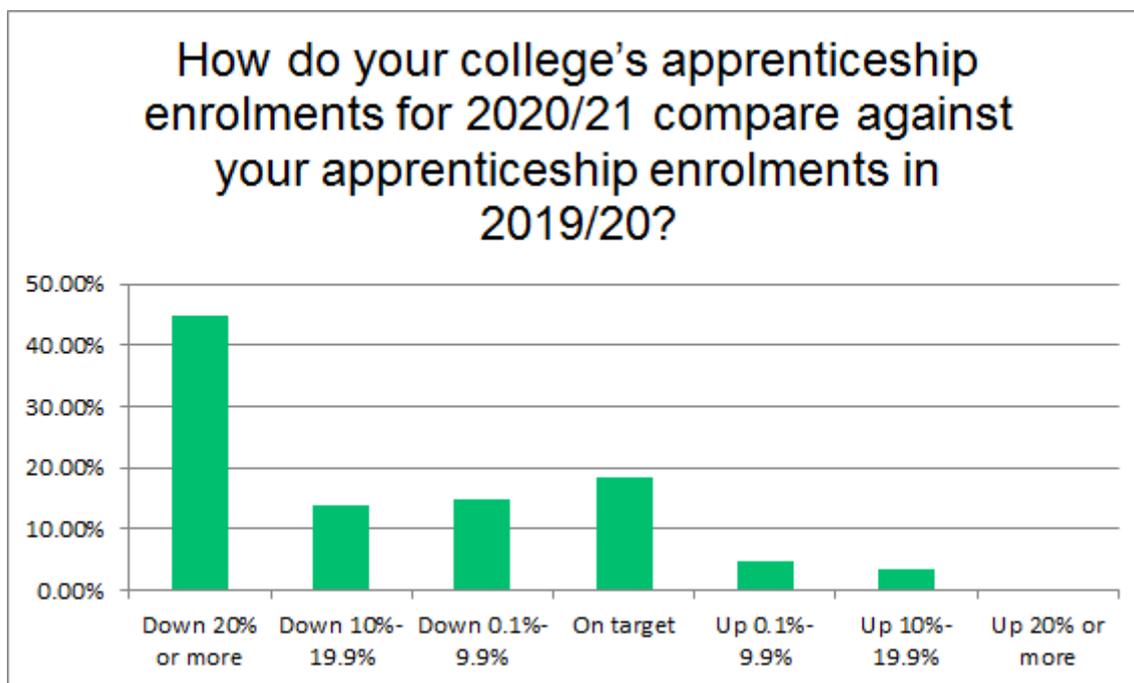
Anecdotally colleges report concerns that recruitment this year may drop as the impact of Covid-19 hits some industries later than others (where existing orders/contracts to fulfil are hiding the drop when this work dries up and is not replaced). The most common industries cited are engineering and construction.

Free text comments suggest real nervousness amongst employers to commit to taking on apprentices currently. Some larger engineering companies are 'taking a year off' from apprenticeships for example. The Service sectors (other than health) are felt to be

dropping at a greater rate than other areas.This would be expected and there are also some non-Covid-19 reasons mentioned, such as the removal of Business Administration Level 2 and the lack of availability of some new standards (for example, Sign Making). No college mentioned transition from frameworks to standards as a reason for lower or higher apprenticeship numbers.
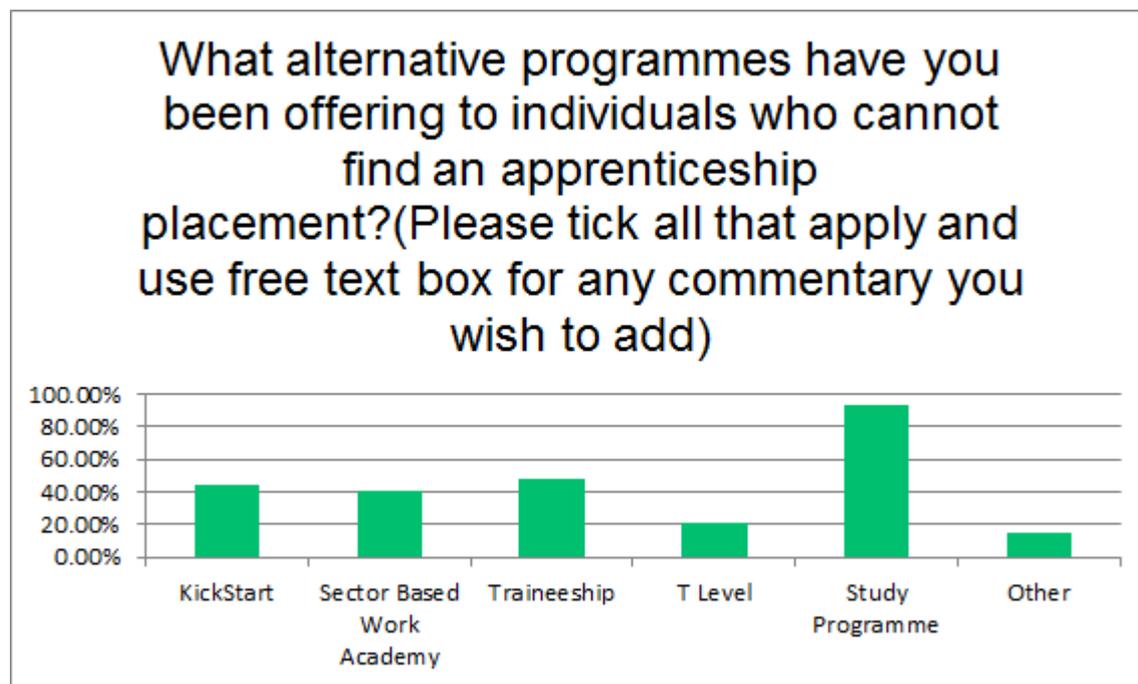
There was a fairly even response to the provision of alternatives (Traineeships, Study programmes, Sector Based Work Academies and KickStart) where apprenticeship work placements could not be secured. It is encouraging that colleges are trying to ensure that learners can progress in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours outside of apprenticeship, although concern is expressed in free text responses as to the level of flexibility within work placements in the alternative offers. Study Programmes are the most popular offer with over **90%** of colleges offering these. Free text suggests that these programmes are being offered full and part-time and are badged to learners as pre-apprenticeship offers, so study programmes are being adapted to fit the needs of these learners rather than the learners being 'shoe-horned' into an existing programme, or the college adopting a 'new' offer.
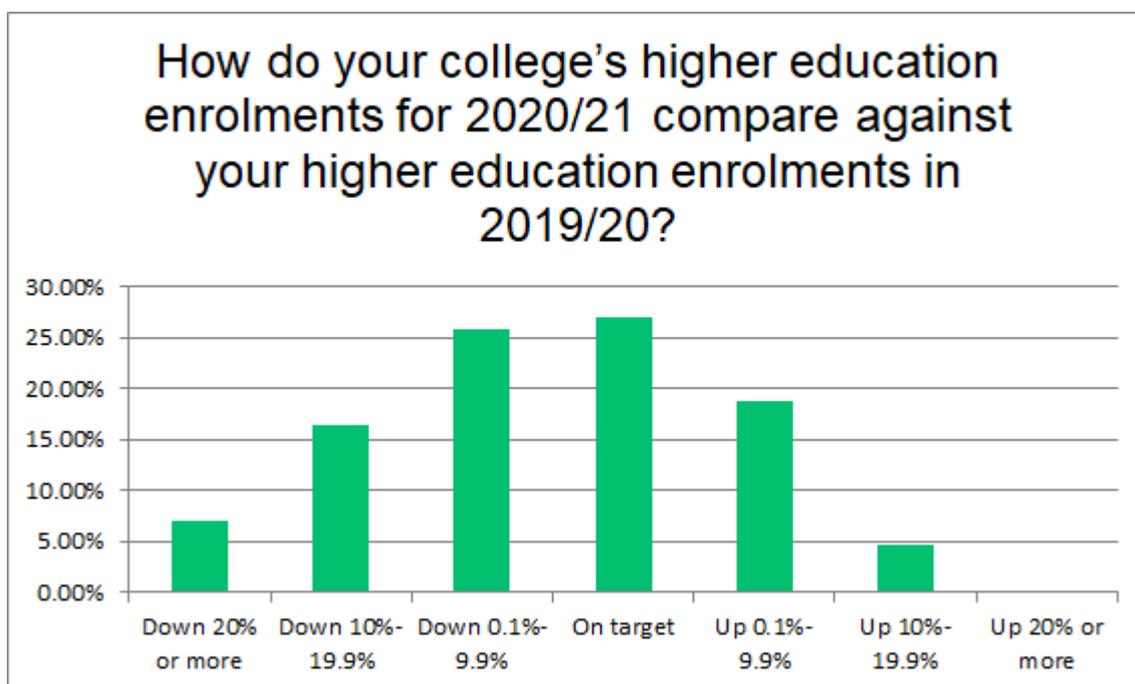
The other alternative offers sit around the **40%** mark which may well be reflective of the level of engagement a college has already in place around the delivery of DWP/JCP managed programmes. Colleges have reported a reluctance amongst their senior teams to attempt to introduce new programmes (such as KickStart) when staff are already stretched adapting their existing, and therefore familiar offer to the needs of the times.

When looking at the data in more detail it is encouraging to see that nearly **three-quarters of colleges** who responded provide more than one alternative for their aspiring apprentices. Of these colleges, over **half** offered three or more alternatives and **20%** offered the full range of four alternatives.

7.5 Higher Education enrolments

Nearly half of the colleges report an overall decline in their HE enrolments when compared to the last academic year. Of these colleges, **7%** have experienced a drop of **20%** or more. College HE is often a small but strategically important part of the college offer. It plays a key role in widening participation and in offering opportunities to those who would otherwise not study HE and it is also a crucial part of college finances. College HE is ~~also~~ characterised by small class sizes ~~and~~ therefore a decline in student enrolments has direct implications on financial viability of courses.

27% of responding colleges reported their HE enrolments were on target and just under **a quarter** have experienced an increase in their HE numbers. Of the latter, only **5%** colleges have witnessed an increase of 10 to 20 percent in their HE enrolments.

How do your college's higher education enrolments for 2020/21 compare against your higher education enrolments in 2019/20?

An analysis of free text responses suggests that the subjects and the nature of programmes that have witnessed a change in enrolments is mixed. Teacher training and counselling programmes have experienced a decline in some places but there has been an increase in HE numbers in these programmes elsewhere. Likewise, some colleges have experienced a decline in Foundation degrees whereas the decline is attributed to the lower uptake of Higher Nationals HNs at others.

Some colleges have reported an overall decline. This has been attributed to a decline in their franchised provision or explained by the intensified competition with local universities. Although the question did not specifically ask to explain the reasons for this change, aggressive admissions strategies adopted by universities – including lowering entry criteria and use of unconditional offers earlier in the year – have been expressed by the respondents. A decline in franchise numbers and a decline in the number of

higher and degree level apprentices has also been cited. This concurs with the anecdotal feedback we have received from colleges.

The introduction of Student Number Controls (SNCs) for 2020/21 and its subsequent removal also impacted on HE recruitment at some colleges. **25% of colleges** indicate that they have been negatively impacted by the SNC policy.

What is the impact of the introduction and subsequent removal of student number controls on your higher education?
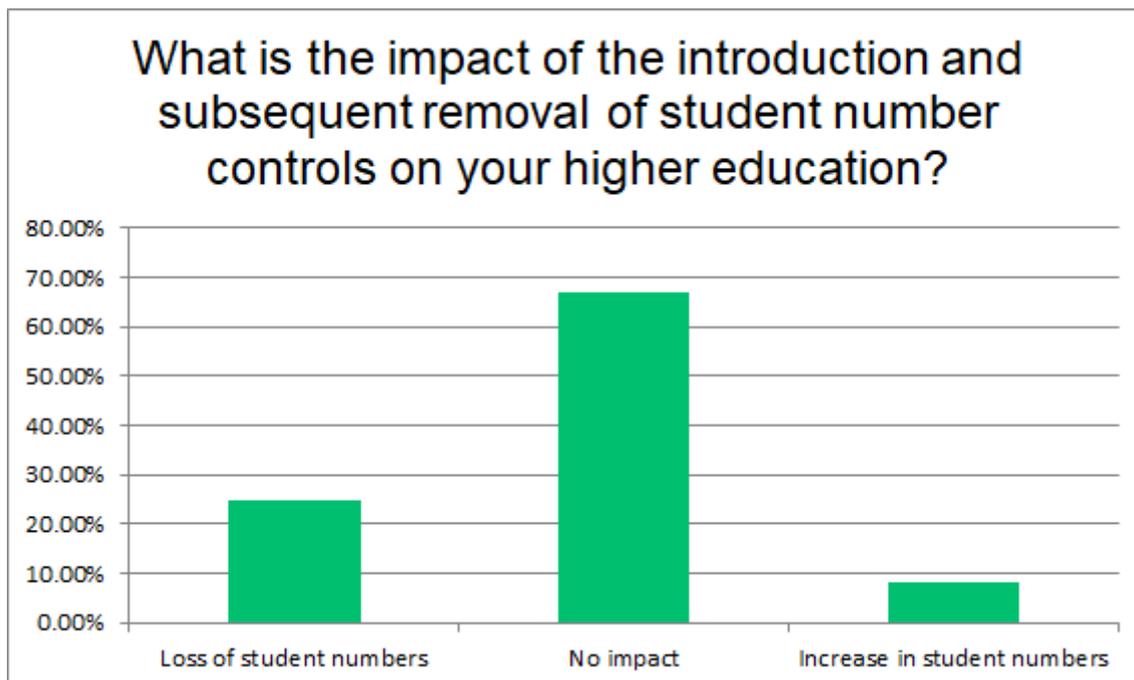

While the policy was intended to help stabilise the HE sector, the introduction of SNCs resulted in limiting the offers made by colleges at a crucial stage in the applications cycle. The last minute removal of the ~~policy~~ number controls compounded the detrimental effect on HE recruitment at some colleges. Use of centre assessed grades and lower entry criteria resulted in an unexpected loss of applicants at the close of the admissions cycle.

67% of colleges report no impact of SNCs on their HE. These are colleges that were less likely to exceed their number controls or in cases where number controls were not applicable. For instance, colleges where HE is mainly part-time or colleges that were part of Institutes of Technology (IoTs) (provision that was part of IoTs was exempt from the SNC policy)**.**

7.6 International enrolments

34% of colleges report that their international (non-EU) enrolments are on target in comparison with last year. However, **50% of colleges** recruiting international students said that their enrolments were down. Some colleges cited a big decline in numbers of students travelling to study from Asia (mainly China) as an issue and understood that the pandemic was the main cause.

How do your college's international (non-EU) enrolments for 2020/21 compare against your international (non-EU) enrolments in 2019/20?
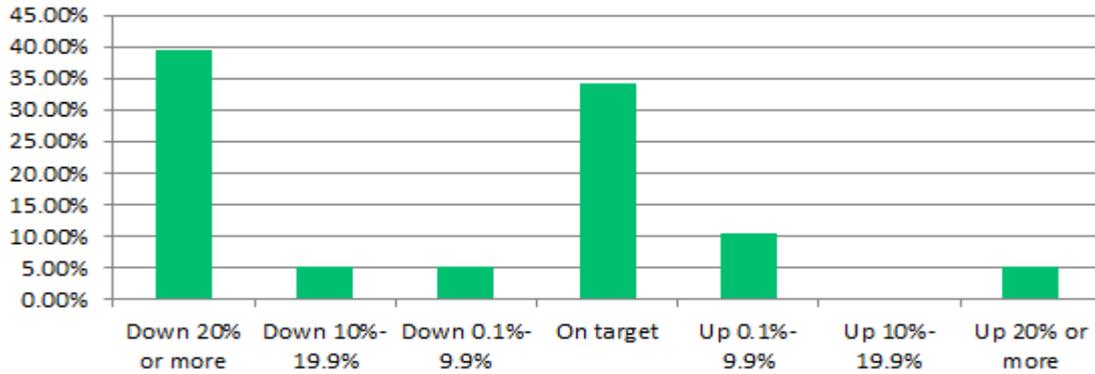
7.7 High Needs enrolments

51% of colleges reported that their High Need student numbers are up, and colleges have done an excellent job in keeping in touch with students and supporting them in their return. **35%** are on target in comparison with last year. However, as we had last year, reassurances are needed that High Needs Funding will continue to be paid even if students have to work from home. There were a few intimations last year that local authoritieswould claw back some money if students were not physically in college despite the fact that they were receiving ongoing support from tutors in addressing their Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan outcomes.

How do your college's high needs enrolments for 2020/21 compare against your high needs enrolments in 2019/20?

7.8 GCSE English & maths this November

Colleges reported increased numbers of Grade 3 students following awarding based on 2020 Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs). Some students have been encouraged to resit their exams due to exams being cancelled in the summer, in line with the Government's guarantee that learners can resit if they want to.

66% of colleges said that they had not had to hire additional staff or find additional accommodation for the November resits. **34%** were having to make additional staff and/or accommodation resources available. Some of their reasons for this were that more spaces required due to social distancing and, therefore, an accompanying increase in the numbers of exam invigilators and increased cleaning after room use to ensure compliance with Public Health England (PHE) requirements. Some colleges are reporting challenges in recruiting enough invigilators.

7.9 Lost learning

98% of colleges reported lost learning as a concern for new starts transferring from school. Some of the reasons given for this were concern around the inconsistency of approach from schools to Year 11s for continued learning from March due to exams being cancelled, students performing below the level of their predicted grades, increase of anxiety and lack of confidence in learners and concerns around mental health issues, and loss of study skills and habits.
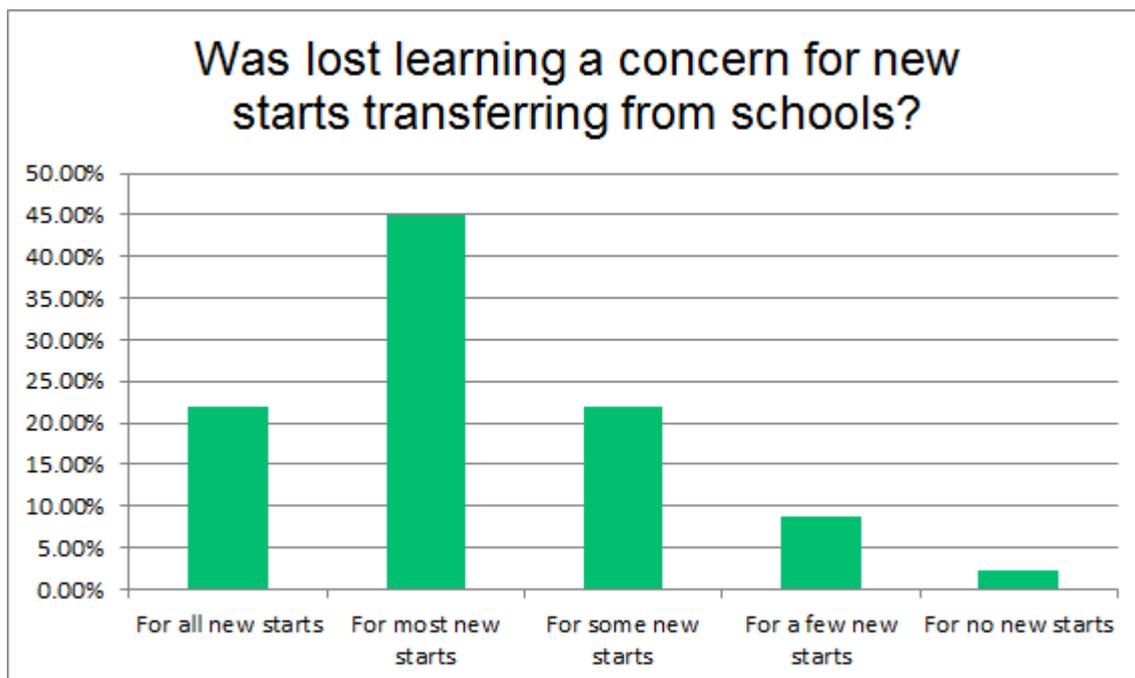

98% of colleges are accessing the one-off 16-19 tuition catch-up funding. They are mainly using this as small group catch-ups and one-to-one support. Some colleges put on catch-up 'boot camps' during the half-term holiday. Support was for a mix of either

English and Maths catch-up or technical/vocational catch-up or a mixture of the two. Some colleges prioritised it, during the first half of the Autumn term, for those resitting GCSE English and Maths. Colleges did make the point that there were too many restrictions in the funding and not enough flexibility.

## How are you utilising this one-off tuition catch-up funding?
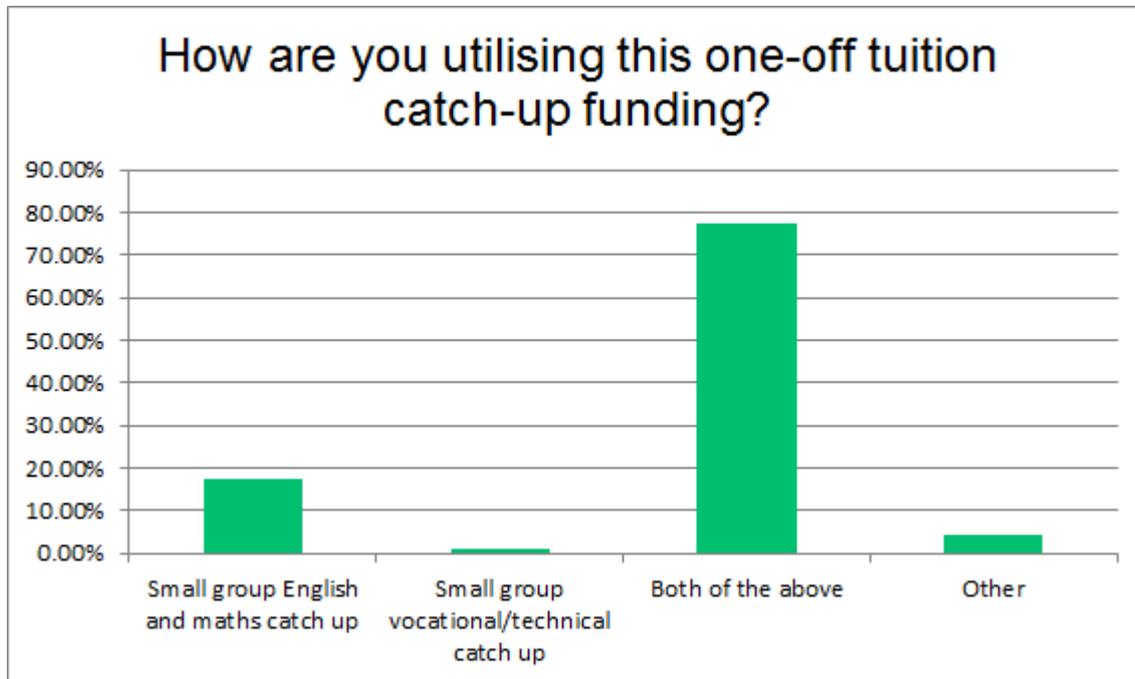
7.10 Industry placements and study programme work experience.

89% of colleges responded that meeting their capacity and delivery fund industry placement target will be a challenge.

In light of covid-19, do you anticipate challenges to achieving this target?
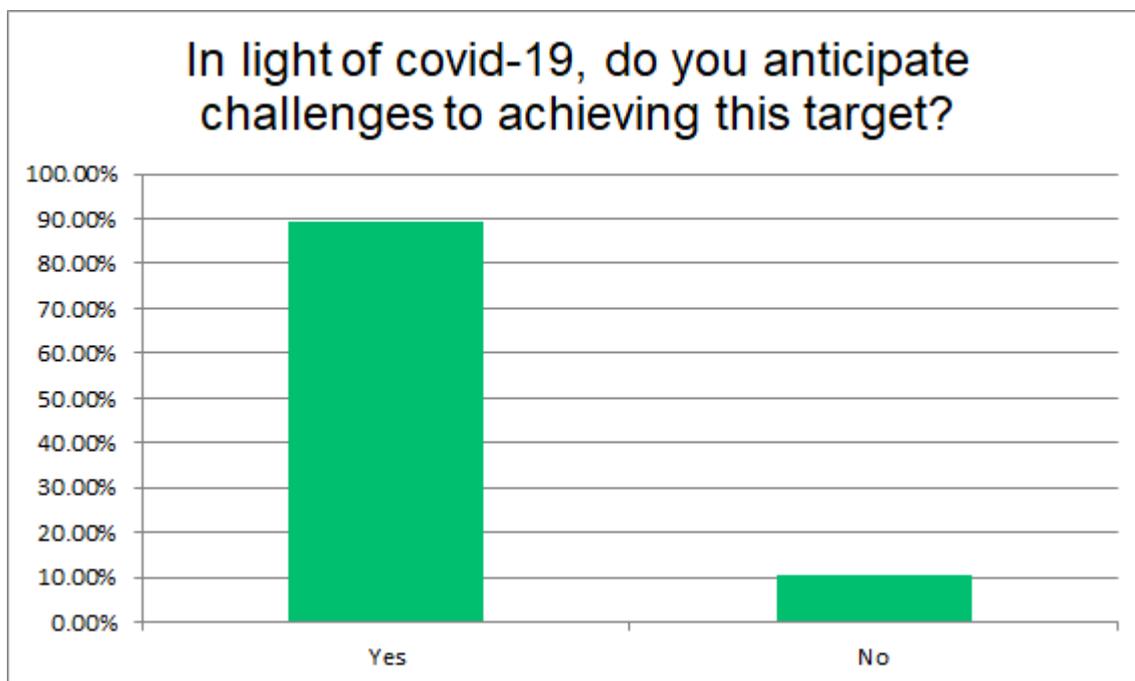
Of these **82%** indicated that this would impact **over 40%** of placements. **29%** or 24 colleges indicated this would affect **over 80% of their placements.**
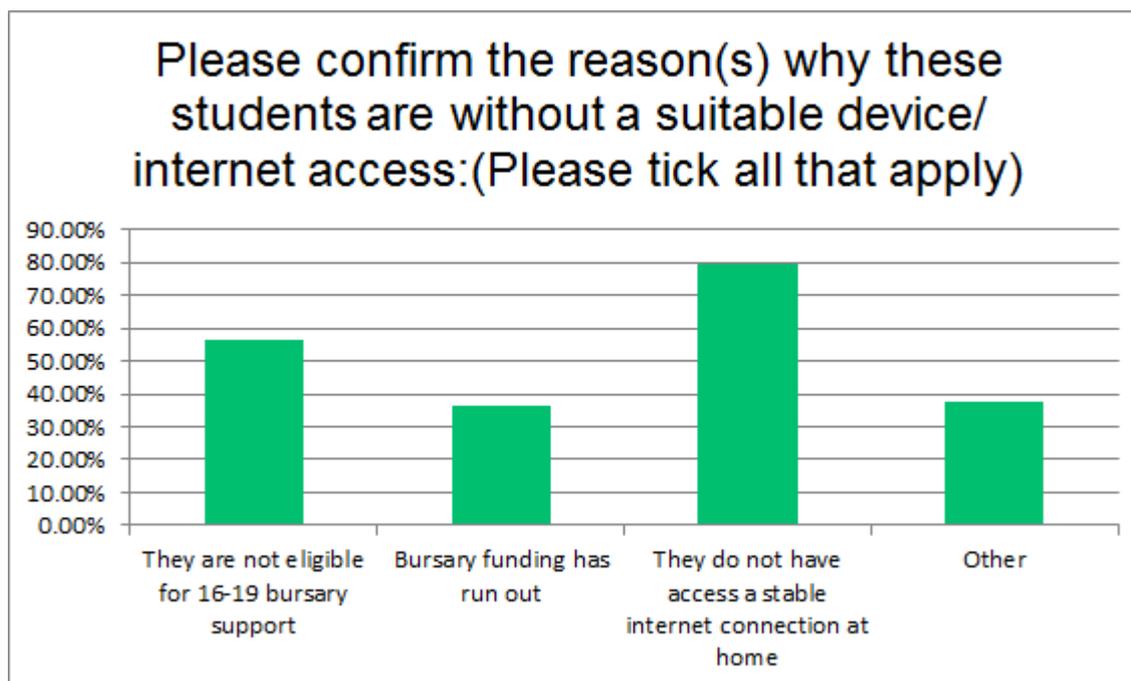
The responses regarding study programme placements were even more stark; **98%** of colleges indicated they will find it challenging to meet their study programme work experience target.
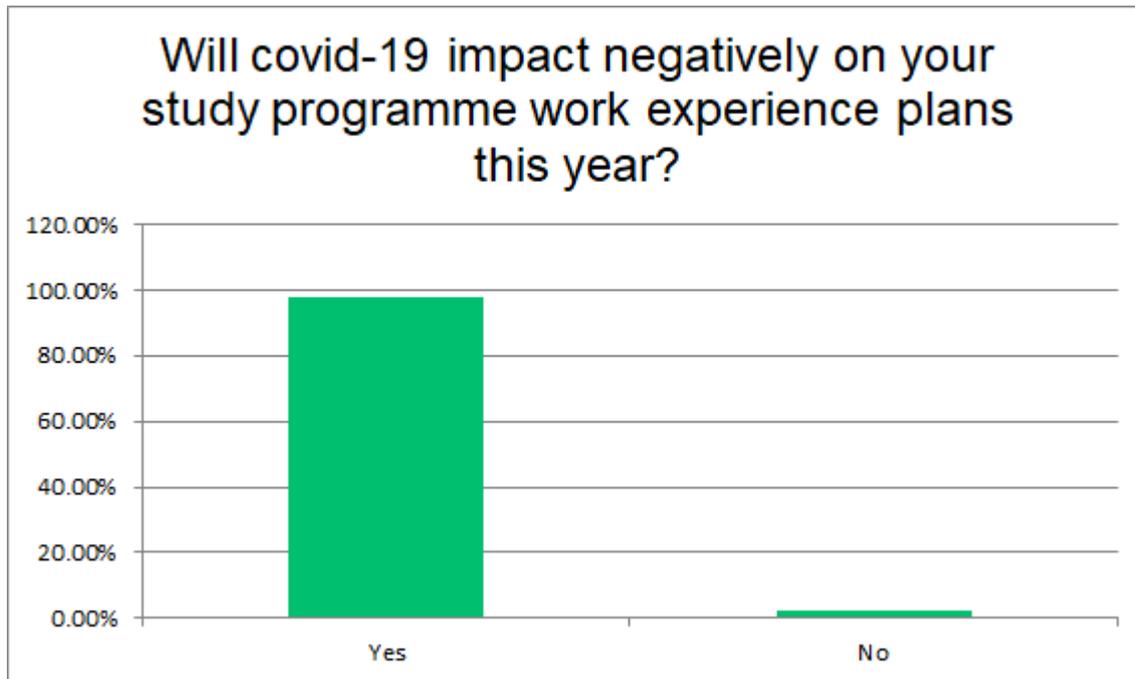
7.11 The digital divide

We asked colleges to provide an estimate of the number of students aged 16-18 without a suitable device or without internet access for learning remotely. **68 colleges** answered this question with a number and, of those, the cumulative number of students from those colleges without access is just over 28,000, suggesting that across the whole sector, the figure may be around 100,000. Of those, one college reported 2,700 students were without a suitable device or internet access. This does not include where colleges gave a percentage figure rather than a number.

We then asked for reasons why students did not have a suitable device or internet access for remote learning. **57%** said that students were not eligible for bursary funding. **36%** said that bursary funding had run out. **Nearly 80%** said that there was no suitable internet access in students' homes.

Please confirm the reason(s) why these students are without a suitable device/internet access:(Please tick all that apply)

The chart shows percentages for four reasons:
- They are not eligible for 16-19 bursary support: ~57%
- Bursary funding has run out: ~36%
- They do not have access a stable internet connection at home: ~80%
- Other: ~37%

37% of colleges ticked the 'other' option and we asked them to provide details. Many colleges are reporting issues with sourcing laptops as there were issues with the supply chain. Other colleges had purchased and provided laptops either as new or reconditioned for learners. One college stated that their investment in devices for learners was approximately £500,000. Colleges are also providing dongles for both staff and students where good internet connection is a challenge. Some also said that the bursary support was insufficient to cover the full cost of an adequate device for a learner or that the choice with the bursary had to be about whether to provide free meals for students or laptops/Wi-Fi access.

Many of those colleges who had ticked the 'other' box, reported that some of their learners are from families not eligible for bursary support but who still have what could be regarded as low incomes. Many of these ineligible learners also struggle as there may be only one device or laptop per family to be shared amongst siblings or being prioritised where a parent has to work from home. Additionally, many report that access to the internet or devices is not the only issue to consider but that many learners do not have suitable 'quiet spaces' in which to study at home.

In one London-based college, they reported that large numbers of young ESOL learners do not have smartphones or they have a smartphone but are limited in the space and data to allow them to download the recommended apps for learning. Phones are also not suitable for long-term remote learning. In a very different location, a college in a rural part of the country reported that high levels of deprivation within the county combined with the rurality made provision of reasonable and reliable internet access difficult.

There is additionally the challenge of online delivery/access for lower level learners. One college, in particular, said that many Level 1 learners lack even the most basic IT skills

and their engagement with online learning is very weak and they are therefore trying to reinstate full face-to-face delivery for some courses, although they stated their Covid-19 capacity for doing this is very limited. Many students with learning difficulties and disabilities have not had requisite equipment to continue their study at home. As well as needing a computer some disabled students also need additional features to ensure they have proper accessibility.

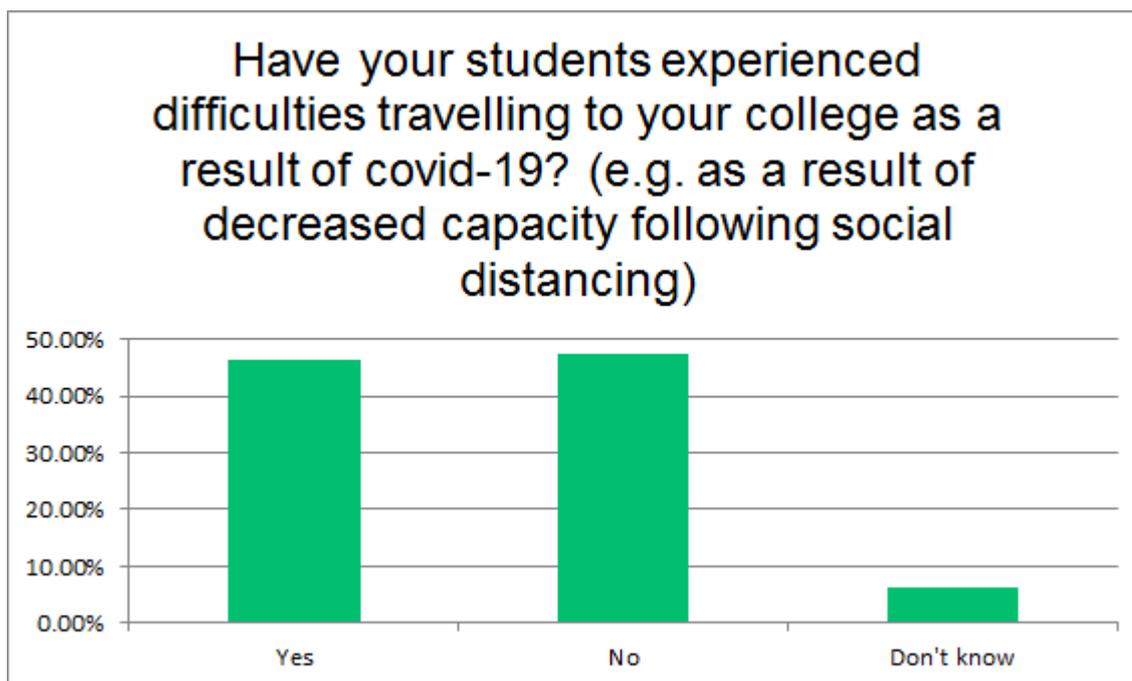## 7.12 Online / blended learning

34% of colleges felt that staff confidence in online delivery was strong. **64%** felt that staff confidence was moderate, which perhaps indicates there is a need to address this and support college staff in developing their skills and confidence in online delivery and blended learning. One college reported that teachers have coped well with full virtual learning but have found a blended approach more difficult where some students are in class and others are joining online from home.
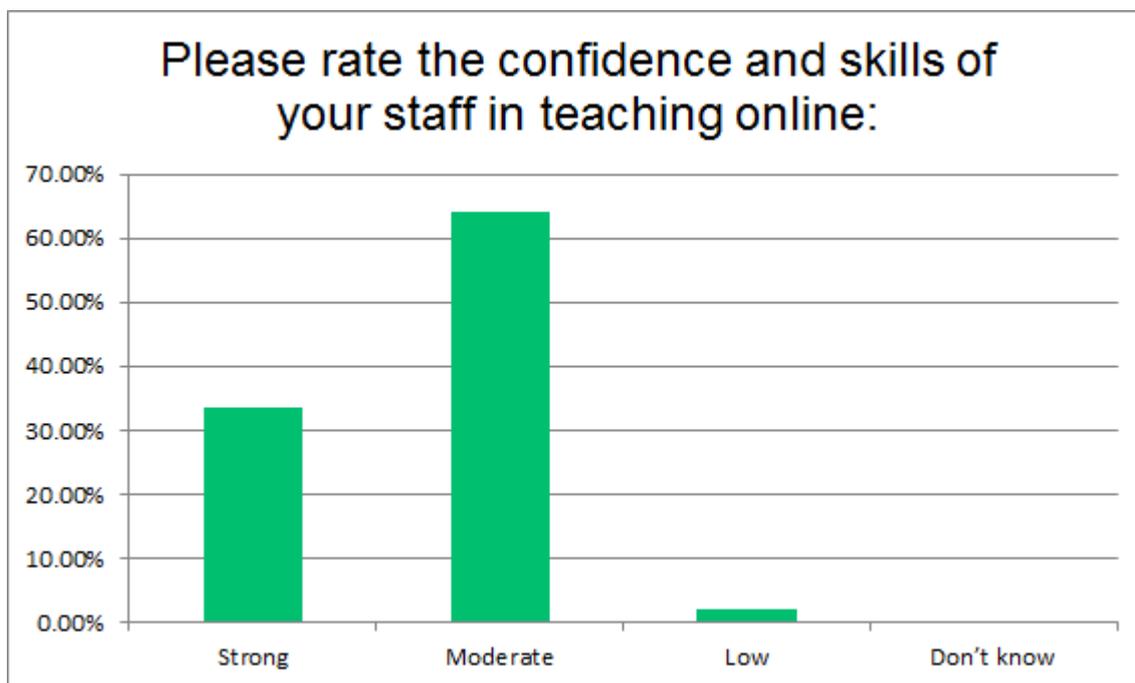
Colleges are providing continuing professional development (CPD) for staff to develop online teaching skills with **92%** providing training internally, **63%** using platform providers such as Google, Microsoft or Apple and **42%** using ETF training. A further **37%** use JISC and **25%** use the Ed Tech Demonstrator Programme.

7.13 Student transport

The survey asked colleges if students had experienced any difficulties travelling into college as a result of Covid-19. It was a fairly split response with **46%** saying students did have problems and **47%** saying there were no problems.

Have your students experienced difficulties travelling to your college as a result of covid-19? (e.g. as a result of decreased capacity following social distancing)

43% of colleges reported increased transport costs due to the pandemic. Where colleges are reporting increased transport costs, **58%** said that more dedicated transport services were needed to accommodate social distancing (more buses/ taxis, for example), **49%** reported that increased numbers of students are needing assistance with transport costs due to increased student hardship, **44%** said that more dedicated transport was needed due to larger student numbers, **35%** said that there were higher costs due to additional cleaning and provision of face masks, for example, and **23%** reported that fewer students using existing dedicated FE transport services had resulted in lower recoupment of costs through charging for seats. Where colleges ticked the 'other' box (**21%**), some of the reasons given were additional drop-off/pick-up during the day to minimise the amount of students on campus at any one time, a college's transport supplier going out of business (costing the college an additional £88k to replace the contract), and more SEND learners unable to use public transport therefore increasing costs in taxi services. Some colleges in London were reporting the impact of the proposed withdrawal of free travel Oyster card on recruitment and transport costs, which should now be allayed further to the new funding deal for Transport for London that includes protection for free travel for young people in London.

We asked colleges who were facing increased transport costs to give an indication of what those were. **33 colleges provided figures** which cumulatively totalled **£2,397,980** with the average amount being just over **£72.5k,** but with one college indicating a figure of £400,000.

7.14 Other funding issues

The majority of colleges said that implementing **Covid-19 secure measures** and allowing for social distancing in college buildings was extremely expensive with some colleges indicating that they have spent up to £500,000 on modifications and measures. Colleges state that these costs will impact on their financial outturn and could potentially impact on their financial health.

Regarding **apprenticeships**, colleges have had additional costs facilitating catch-up sessions following furlough. Some colleges are finding the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) apprentice market, in particular, is slow due both to Covid-19 and a reluctance for some SMEs to engage with the new apprenticeship system, with one college reporting only a few SMEs managed to reserve apprenticeship funding via the digital account for September starts. As a result they report that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will not pay for September and the college will have a mismatch between funding income and actual starts/registrations which will place additional financial pressures on college budgets. Many ask for an in-year uplift for 16-18s.

Regarding **adults and AEB**, some colleges have had to reduce adult learning capacity because of social distancing and additional hygiene routines. Whilst the recent letter from the ESFA states that face-to-face teaching is required, this is often at odds with what local councils and PHE are advising. Recruitment of adults in some colleges is slow and, as the November lockdown may prevent some individuals from studying, colleges asked for a fallback relaxation of Adult Funding tolerances. Colleges are asking for early clarity from the ESFA on its approach to reconciliation for 20/21 in order for colleges to plan in-year financial mitigation strategies if required. They also ask for more flexibility around the rules for particular 'new allocation' programmes such as Sector Based Work Academies – there is additional money but the current programmes are heavily prescribed and will be difficult to deliver under the current Covid-19 constraints. Flexibility around this additional funding is requested.

In regard to the delivery of **industrial placements**, employers are understandably reticent about accepting students onsite and many employers are not actually back in the workplace themselves. With local authorities and regions entering different 'Tiers' of restrictions, the workplace and societal constraints these impose means that this is only going to get harder for colleges. Colleges are requesting clarity on the ESFA's approach to reconciliation and potential clawback on capacity and development funds to give colleges the flexibilities to find remote/virtual solutions. Some colleges state that even allowing placement hours to be spread over two years does not work if students are already in year 2. If clarification is not provided quickly and additional flexibilities not considered, then some colleges report that they may need to mitigate this through pay and non-pay cost reduction measures now and not at the end of the year.

Colleges are also reporting the impact of the **loss of commercial income**. Those colleges that recruit international students are reporting a 50% drop in income. College catering costs have also reduced as students are not using them as they normally would. One college who outsources their catering reported that their contractor was expecting to be

subsidised for lack of income. Other areas of college that provide a commercial income for the college were similarly affected including college training restaurants, conferencing and sports facilities.

Other funding issues that were reported included:

- A request for more support for digital devices and solutions for students who do not qualify under the current schemes;
- A need for clarity on Pensions, as currently they only clarity until April 2021;
- Some colleges reporting significant numbers of students and apprentices being unable to complete their programmes in 19/20. All of these learners have had to be taught and assessed in 20/21 alongside new and progressing students, with no extra resources;
- A need for greater flexibility in use of capital grants to enable purchase of equipment;
- Concern around the uncertainty of how the unexpected impact of Covid-19 on enrolment numbers will be mitigated in next year's allocation calculations, especially for 16-18.