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# RACIAL DIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONS: 2022

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# SUMMARY

**This ‘racial diversity in environment professions’ report builds upon the [2017 Policy Exchange](#) report on racial and ethnic diversity in UK professions and previous [follow-up research](#) specifically focused on the environmental sustainability sector.**

- It provides a snapshot of current racial diversity within environment professions and within the career pipeline. It also explores student perspectives on the attractiveness and barriers to the environment sector.
- The report draws on datasets from the Office for National Statistics and the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) in addition to a targeted student survey.
- This research has been co-funded by [SOS-UK](#), [IEMA](#) and [NERC](#) to aid a better sector understanding of racial diversity within the environment sector.

**Key findings arising from this report are that:**

- ‘Environment professionals’ are one of the least racially diverse professions in the UK, with just 4.81% identifying as Black, Asian or from other minority ethnic groups, compared to 12.64% across all UK professions.
- Racial diversity amongst UK higher education subjects closely related to environment professions is notably lower when compared to the racial diversity seen across all subjects. Across all higher education subjects, students who identify as Black, Asian, Mixed or other, account for 26% of students. When looking at subjects closely related to environmental careers this ranges from 14% for ‘Applied environmental sciences’ to 6% for ‘Biodiversity conservation’.
- Regardless of race/ethnicity, key motivations for pursuing a career in the environment sector were wanting to help tackle global environmental issues, such as climate change, and an interest in these issues.

# HEADLINE FINDINGS

**4.81%** of 'environment professionals' identify as Black, Asian or from other minority ethnic groups,

In comparison with...

**12.64%** across all UK professions.

**6% to 14%** of students taking higher education courses closely related to environment careers identify as Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnicities.

In comparison with... **26%** across all higher education subjects.

'Environment professionals' have consistently ranked as one of the least diverse professions in the UK, ranking

**247/317** professions in 2020-21

and **201/202** in 2015, based on Office for National Statistics data.

Being part of tackling global issues like climate change is students' main motivation for a career in the environment sector, regardless of race or ethnicity.

**57%**  
Asian, Black, Mixed, Latin/South/Central American, Other and Arab identities

**48%**  
White British nationalities

**50%**  
All respondents

**9%** of staff working in 'environment academia' identify as Black, Asian, Mixed or other race or ethnicities.

In comparison with...

**16%** of all academic staff working in higher education in the UK.

**7%**  
Asian, Black, Mixed, Latin/South/Central American, Other and Arab identities

**17%**  
White British nationalities

**15%**  
All respondents

Students say they would consider working in the conservation and environment sector after they finish studying, when choosing from a list of sectors operating across the UK.

# ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

- In 2017, the think tank Policy Exchange published research providing a measure of the ethnic diversity of occupations in England and Wales, finding that ethnic diversity has been unevenly distributed across different sectors. The study, '[The two sides of diversity](#)', used data from Office of National Statistics research to develop a ranking of ethnic diversity across occupations in the UK, finding that ethnically diverse occupations can be seen as two distinct groups: 1. highly skilled, professional occupations or 2. low skilled jobs. This analysis found 'environment professionals' to be the second least diverse profession in the UK (the least diverse being 'farmers'). By comparison, the most diverse occupations are 'taxi and cab drivers or chauffeurs' and 'dental practitioners'.
- This current research, delivered in partnership by Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK), the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), has aimed to provide an updated measure of the racial and ethnic diversity of occupations with a focus on the environment sector, and specifically 'environment professionals' and those working in 'environment academia'. Insight into the perceptions of the sector amongst future potential employees (students currently in higher and further education) to understand where different experiences and views exist according to ethnicity.
- The aim for this report is to provide a tool for further discussions within the sector, and ultimately for commitments for collaborative action to achieve a more inclusive workforce across the sector as a whole.
- The research, and this report, includes three elements:
  - **Racial and ethnic diversity in UK professions**, which includes an interrogation of publicly available datasets from the Office of National Statistics and the Higher Education Statistics Agency to assess diversity across the two environment professions under focus in comparison with the UK average and other professions.
  - **Diversity in the environment sector career pipeline**, which includes analysis of data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency on students taking courses closely associated with environment professions.
  - **Student career perspectives and the environment sector**, including findings from a student-facing survey looking broadly into course and career aspirations, and then specifically into how these translate to the environment sector.

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# RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN UK PROFESSIONS

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- [The Annual Population Survey](#) is a continuous household survey covering the UK. Topics include employment and unemployment, housing, ethnicity, religion, health and education. The sample size achieved is approximately 320,000 respondents.
  - Data from the July 2020-June 2021 dataset was accessed for this research, via the Office for National Statistics, using 3-digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes (a common classification of occupational information for the UK). Data provided included a breakdown of ethnicity within each occupation code to the % White and % all BAME. Further granularity was not provided due to small sample sizes.
  - Mirroring a methodology used by The Policy Exchange, in its 2018 research [The two sides of diversity](#), diversity has been measured using an index of pluralism, designed to identify the extent to which an occupation is monopolised by a single ethnic group. The index was applied to averaged quarterly data from the 2015 [Labour Force Survey](#). Scores range from 0 to 1, with higher scores representing greater diversity. Whilst the mechanism for assessing diversity has been followed, this data is not directly comparable with The Policy Exchange's work due to differences in datasets used.
  - The index has been applied across the 369 professions within the classification, and then ordered from most to least diverse to give a rank. When tied rankings are considered there are 318 positions in the ranking (e.g. 'Architectural and town planning technicians' and 'Finance and investment analysts and advisers' both show an index score of 0.812 and have a tied rank of 40). A total of 29 professions fall into position 318, with these professions showing no recorded diversity within the Annual Population Survey research sample.

# MOST AND LEAST RACIALLY/ETHNIC DIVERSE PROFESSIONS IN THE UK

- The tables below identify the ten most diverse and ten least diverse professions, with professions reported as having no racial diversity outlined overleaf.
- **Whilst falling outside of the ten least diverse professions, ‘environment professionals’ and ‘environment and conservation associate professionals’ are amongst the professions with the lowest levels of racial diversity in the UK.** Please note, ‘environmental health professionals’ are associated with quality and regulatory assurance over several categories including food safety, public health along with environmental protection. The breadth of this role means it has been excluded from our analysis.

Most diverse professions		
Profession	Index of pluralism	Rank according to index
Taxi and cab drivers and chauffeurs	0.760	1
Dental practitioners	0.621	2
Ophthalmic opticians	0.621	3
Pharmacists	0.614	4
Footwear and leather working trades	0.594	5
Medical practitioners	0.574	6
Textiles, garments and related trades	0.541	7
Air-conditioning and refrigeration engineers	0.532	8
Chartered architectural technologists	0.511	9
Air traffic controllers	0.475	10

Low diversity professions		
Profession	Index of pluralism	Rank according to index
Environment professionals	0.094	274
Environment and conservation associate professionals	0.084	282
Mobile machine drivers and operatives n.e.c.	0.043	308
Painters and decorators	0.042	309
Fire service officers (watch manager and below)	0.040	310
Fishing and other elementary agriculture occupations n.e.c	0.038	311
Senior police officers	0.035	312
Undertakers, mortuary and crematorium assistants	0.033	313
Officers in armed forces	0.027	314
Environmental health professionals	0.023	315
Furniture makers and other craft woodworkers	0.015	316
Veterinarians	0.013	317

# MOST AND LEAST RACIALLY/ETHNIC DIVERSE PROFESSIONS IN THE UK

- The following 29 professions were recorded as having no recorded diversity, Falling in joint 318<sup>th</sup> position when the 369 professions are ordered from most to least diverse according to their index of pluralism score.

## No recorded diversity professions

- Managers / proprietors agriculture and horticulture
- Managers / proprietors forestry, fishing and related
- Waste disposal and environmental services managers
- Conservation professionals
- Podiatrists
- Speech and language therapists
- Dispensing opticians
- Farmers
- Groundsmen and greenkeepers
- Agricultural and fishing trades n.e.c.\*
- Smiths and forge workers
- Moulders, core makers and die casters
- Sheet metal workers
- Metal plate workers, and riveters
- Boat and ship builders and repairers
- Steel erectors
- Weavers and knitters
- Pre-press technicians
- Florists
- Animal care services occupations n.e.c
- Glass and ceramics process operatives
- Energy plant operatives
- Printing machine assistants
- Scaffolders, staggers and riggers
- Road construction operatives
- Rail construction and maintenance operatives
- Agricultural machinery drivers
- Forestry workers

n.e.c. - Not elsewhere classified

# DIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION PROFESSIONS

- Looking specifically at environment and conservation focused professions, these show a relatively low level of diversity, with conservation professionals being among those professions recorded as 100% white. The two other profession categories record scores on the index of pluralism of 0.084 for conservation and environmental associate professionals and 0.094 for environment professionals. This accounts for 4.29% and 4.81% of respondents to the Annual Population Survey within these categories identifying as Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic community backgrounds. By comparison, the national average score on the index of pluralism is 0.237 and reports as 12.64% from Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic community backgrounds. In terms of their ranking, 'environment professionals' are 274th out of 318 when the professions are ranked in terms of their index of pluralism. 'Conservation and environmental associate professionals' are ranked as 282nd and 'Conservation professionals' fall within the group of professions in 318th place, recording no diversity in the Annual Population Survey 2020-21.

Profession	White (%)	All Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic groups (%)	Index of pluralism	Rank according to index
Conservation professionals	100.00	0.00	0	318
Conservation and environmental associate professionals	95.71	4.29	0.084	282
Environment professionals	95.19	4.81	0.094	274
<b>All professions</b>	<b>87.36</b>	<b>12.64</b>	<b>0.237</b>	<b>-</b>
Least diverse: Veterinarians (excluding professions recorded as 100% white)	99.34	0.66	0.013	317
Most diverse: Taxi and cab drivers and chauffeurs	48.98	51.02	0.76	1



# DIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION PROFESSIONS

- The table below provides descriptions of the professions which have featured in this analysis.

Profession	Standard Occupation Classification description
Conservation professionals	<p>Conservation professionals are responsible for ensuring that landscapes, habitats and species are protected and enhanced via appropriate management and conservation. They promote public understanding and awareness of the natural environment and help to develop and implement appropriate policies to achieve these objectives.</p> <p>Typical entry routes are listed as: Entrants normally require a degree in a relevant subject, sometimes with a related postgraduate qualification. Entry is also possible with a relevant BTEC/SQA Award or HND. Prior practical work experience (which may be obtained on a voluntary basis) is needed for most posts. Additional on-the-job training is available.</p> <p>Example roles include: Conservation officer, Countryside officer, Ecologist, Heritage manager, Land management adviser, Landscape scientist, Marine conservationist.</p>
Environment professionals	<p>Jobholders in this unit group investigate, address, and advise on a variety of terrestrial and marine environment and resource management issues, including the development and implementation of environmental policies and remedies that address the impacts of human activities and industrial processes on the environment.</p> <p>Typical entry routes are listed as: A good degree in a relevant subject is normally a minimum entry qualification, and some employers will require a postgraduate qualification. Relevant work experience to complement academic qualifications is highly desirable. Professional qualifications across a wide range of areas of work are available.</p> <p>Example roles include: Energy manager, Environmental consultant, Environmental engineer, Environmental protection officer, Environmental technician, Flood risk manager, Water quality scientist.</p>

# ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONALS DIVERSITY RANKING

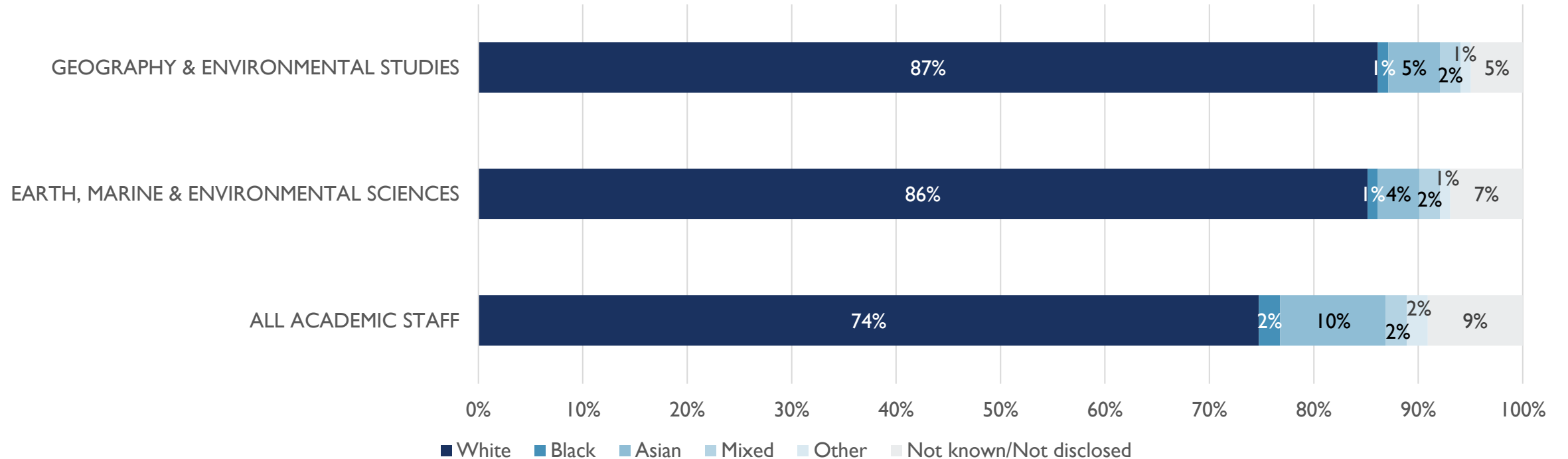
- Whilst the data used in this study is not directly comparable to the previous assessment of diversity across professions in the UK, it is possible to look at the relative position of professions when their index of pluralism scores are ranked from high to low (i.e. from high levels of diversity to low levels of diversity). The table below shows the position of 'environment professionals in relation to the most and least diverse professions. In both studies, 'taxi and cab drivers and chauffeurs' report the greatest racial/ethnic diversity (rank 1). In [The Policy Exchange report](#) which drew on the 2016 Labour Force Survey data, 'Farmers' were reported as least diverse (rank 202 of a total of 202 professions listed in the ranking) with 'environment professionals' the rank above in 201<sup>st</sup>. When professions in the 2020-21 Annual Population Survey are ranked, 'environment professionals' are ranked as 274 of 317 (excluding 29 professions in 318<sup>th</sup> place which showed no reported diversity in the survey).

Profession	2015 Labour Force Survey data ranking	2020-21 Annual Population Survey data ranking
Environment professionals	201	274
<b>Most diverse profession</b>		
Taxi and cab drivers and chauffeurs	1	1
<b>Least diverse professions</b>		
Farmers	202	No recorded diversity
Veterinarians	Not reported in ranking	317
Total number of professions included	202	317*

\* Excludes 29 professions which were included in the analysis to produce the index of pluralism which showed no reported diversity. These professions can be ranked as joint 318<sup>th</sup> from a total of 369.

# UK HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF DATA

- The Higher Education Statistics Agency also collects data about the staff working in Higher Education. A system of 'cost centres' is used to map the activity of staff working in higher education institutions, including the subject area under which their research and teaching is carried out.
- Cost centre data for the areas of 'Earth, marine and environmental sciences' and 'Geography and environmental studies' has been accessed, including a breakdown of the racial and ethnic identities of staff working within these groups. These sectors align with the cost centres most commonly funded by the Natural Environment Research Council. The figures for all academic staff in the UK are also provided for reference.



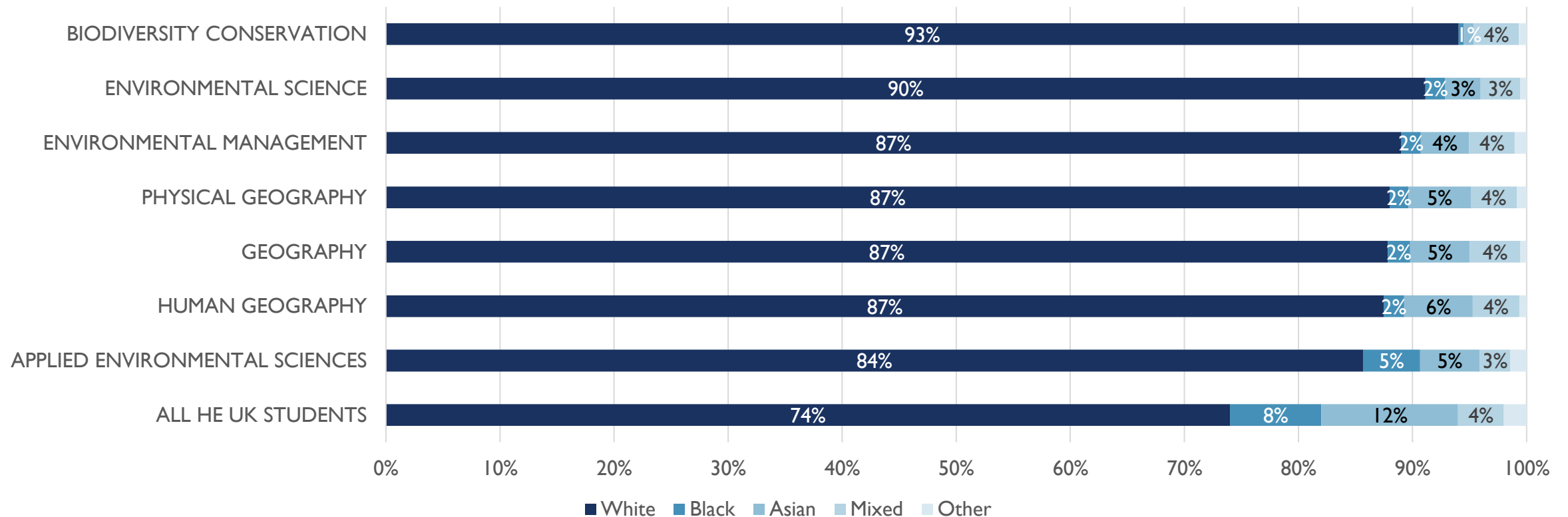
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# DIVERSITY IN THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR - CAREER PIPELINE

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- To look comprehensively at the sector, national data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) was reviewed to provide insight into the racial and ethnic diversity of students studying subjects that are most closely related to careers in the environment sector.
  - A data access request was issued for the 2020-21 data for the race/ethnicity of UK domestic students, undertaking the following subjects which can be seen as closely linked to environment careers:
    - Biodiversity conservation
    - Environmental science
    - Environmental management
    - Physical geography
    - Geography
    - Human geography
    - Applied environmental sciences
  - Data was provided with a breakdown into the following categories:
    - White
    - Black
    - Asian
    - Mixed
    - Other
  - All figures relate only to students of UK domesticity, this data is not collected from international students. The data includes undergraduate and postgraduate students.

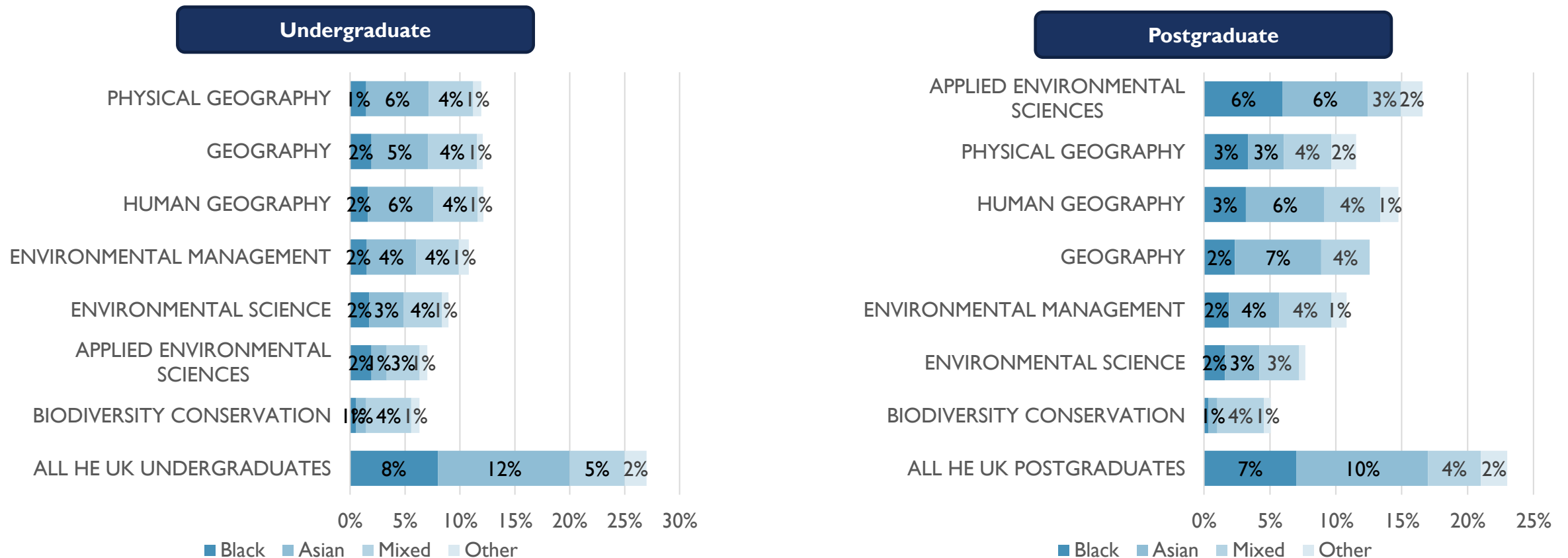
## RACIAL DIVERSITY AMONGST UK DOMICILE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SUBJECTS CLOSELY RELATED TO ENVIRONMENT CAREERS

- The chart below demonstrates the percentage of White, Black, Asian and students of Mixed or other ethnicities, and compares these figures with national figures for all students of UK domesticity studying in Higher Education. The data shows that across all Higher Education subjects, students who identify as Black, Asian, Mixed or other account for 26% of students. When looking at subjects closely related to environment careers this ranges from 14% for 'Applied environmental sciences' to 6% for 'Biodiversity conservation'.



# RACIAL DIVERSITY AMONGST UK DOMICILE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION SUBJECTS CLOSELY RELATED TO ENVIRONMENT CAREERS – UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

- The charts below show the differences across the subjects, and across undergraduate and postgraduate students, for students identifying as Black, Asian, Mixed or other ethnicities. Figures for all students at each level of study are shown for comparison.



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# STUDENT CAREER PERSPECTIVES AND THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR

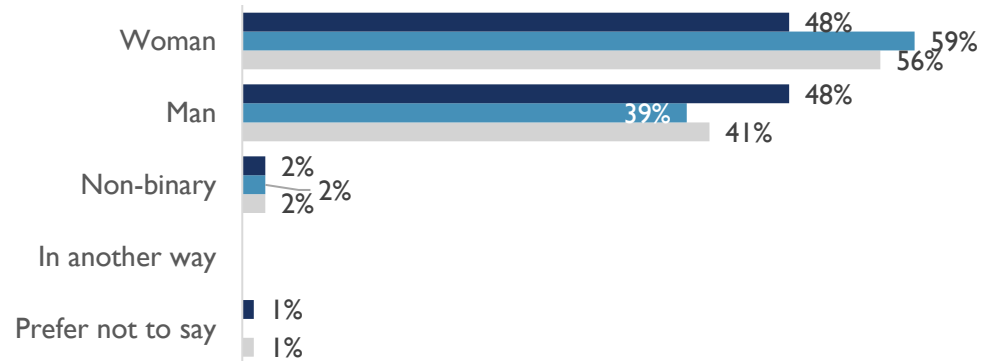
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- A student-facing online survey, distributed via the TOTUM student discount cardholder database. The main focus of the survey was to understand the perceptions of students in further and higher education of the environment sector as a future workplace upon leaving education, and the differences that exist across different diversity characteristics.
  - Key question areas included:
    - Aspirations and motivations for sector to work in after leaving education
    - Awareness of opportunities within environment sector
    - Expected barriers to entry to work in general
    - Perceptions of barriers to working in the environment sector
  - A total of 758 responses were received, meeting the requirements for a representative sample of 95% confidence level at 5% margin of error for the UK higher education student population. 169 responses were received from students who reported as Black, Asian, Mixed, Latin/South/Central American and Arab, which is not large enough to meet the same requirements of 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error and so the results should be read as indicative only.
  - Responses have been weighted according to gender to reflect the proportions recorded nationally in data gathered by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. No equivalent dataset exists for further education, therefore higher education statistics have been used.
  - Where different racial or ethnic backgrounds have been grouped, this does not imply any one group is more or less important than another or that the experiences of these groups are uniform. Grouping has been carried out for practical purposes only, where populations are too small to support meaningful analysis and where grouping allows for a better understanding of trends and relationships.

# ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

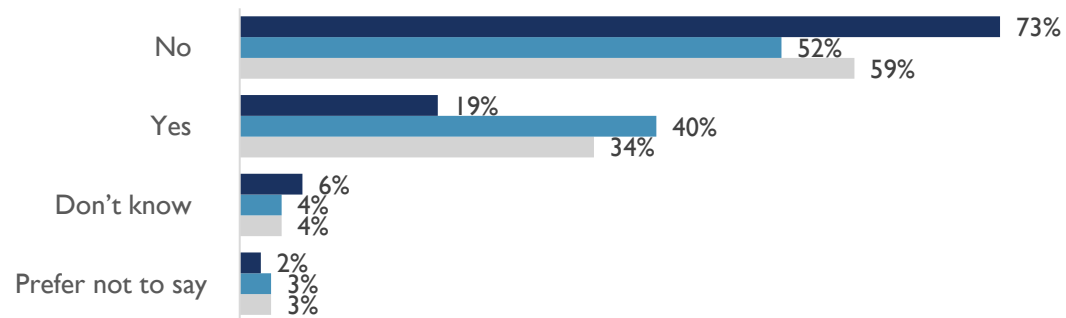


# RESPONDENT GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

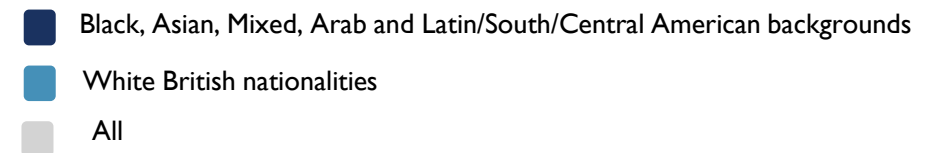
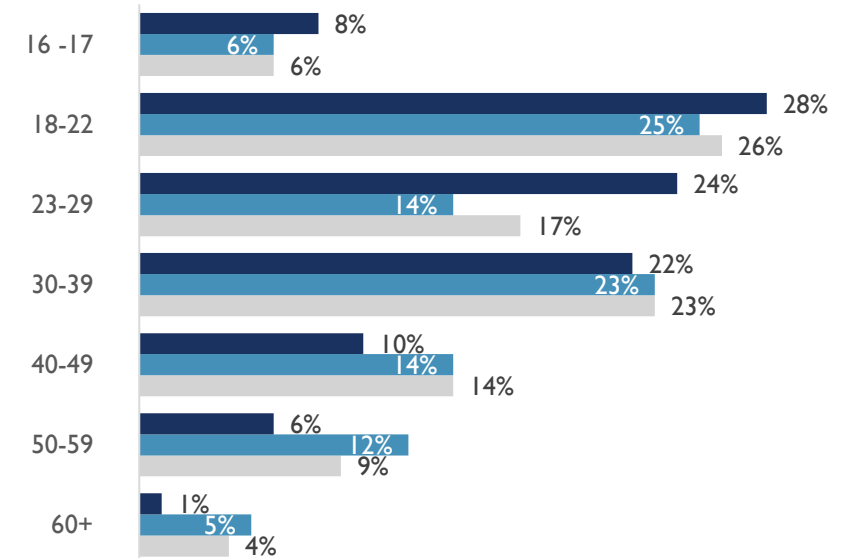
## GENDER



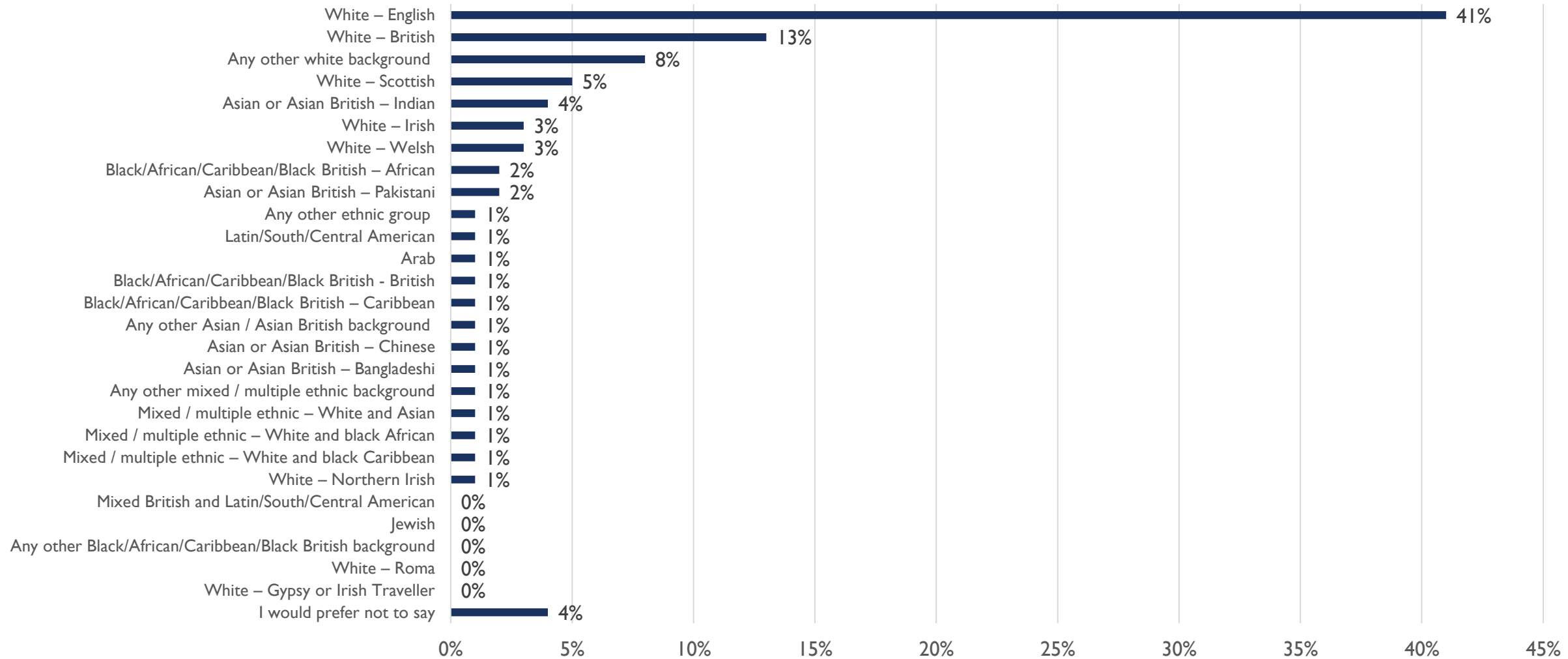
## DISABLED



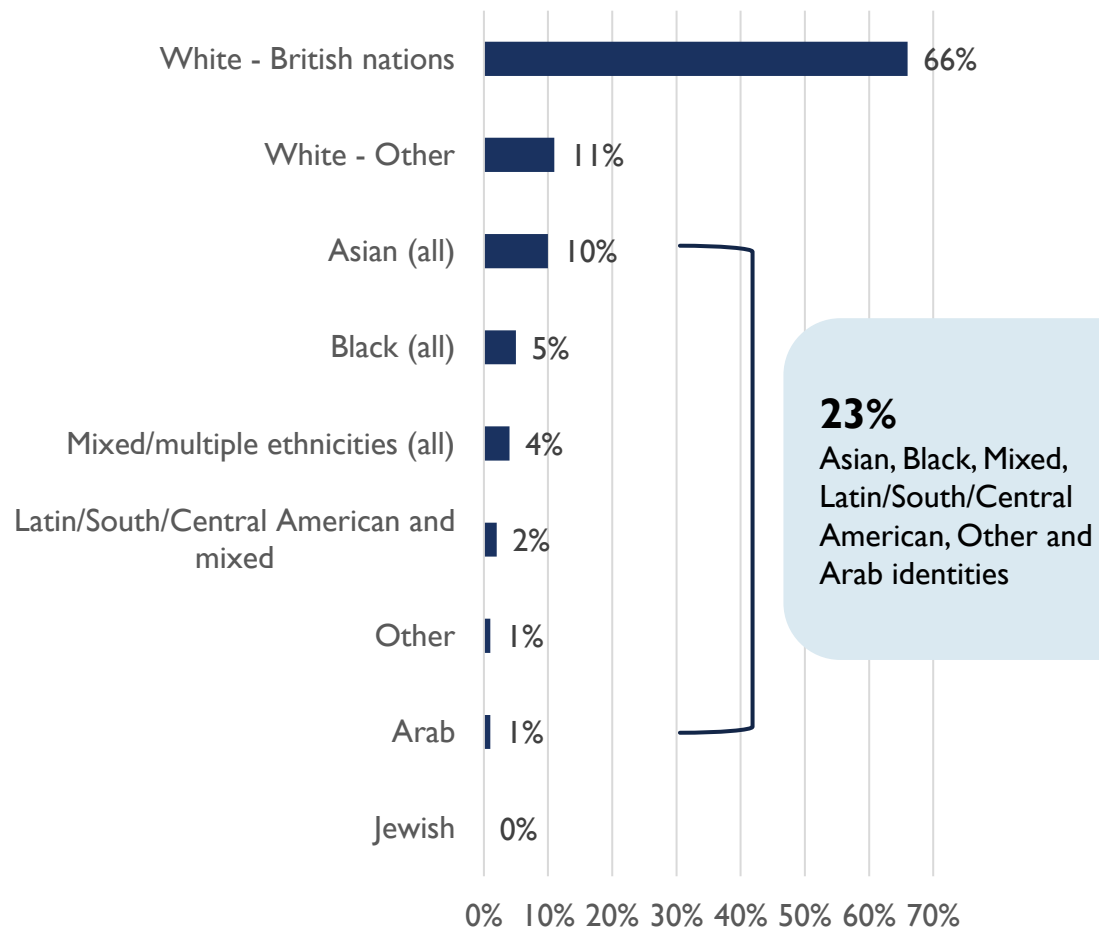
## AGE



## RESPONDENT GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS: RACE / ETHNICITY – DETAILED GROUPS



## RESPONDENT GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS: RACE / ETHNICITY – COMBINED GROUPS



For the remainder of this report, respondents identifying as any of the following identities have been combined to form a single variable:

- **Asian** (all identities: Asian/Asian British – Indian, Asian/Asian British – Pakistani, Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi, Asian/Asian British – Chinese, Any other Asian/Asian British background)
- **Black** (all identities: Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – British, Any other Black/African/Caribbean/Black British background)
- **Mixed / multiple ethnicities** (all identities: Mixed/multiple ethnic – White and black Caribbean, Mixed/multiple ethnic – White and black African, Mixed/multiple ethnic – White and Asian, Any other mixed/multiple ethnic background)
- **Arab**
- **Latin/South/Central American and Mixed British and Latin/South/Central American**
- **Any other ethnic group**

Respondents from the following identities have also been combined to form a single variable:

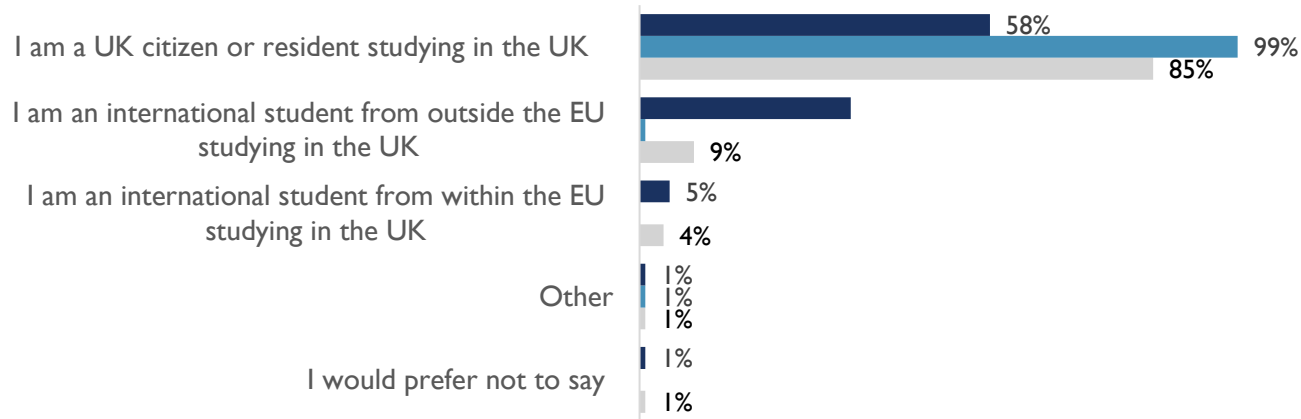
- White – English, White – Scottish, White – Welsh, White – Northern Irish, White - British

Within these variables, this does not imply any one identity is more or less important than another or that the experiences of these groups are uniform.

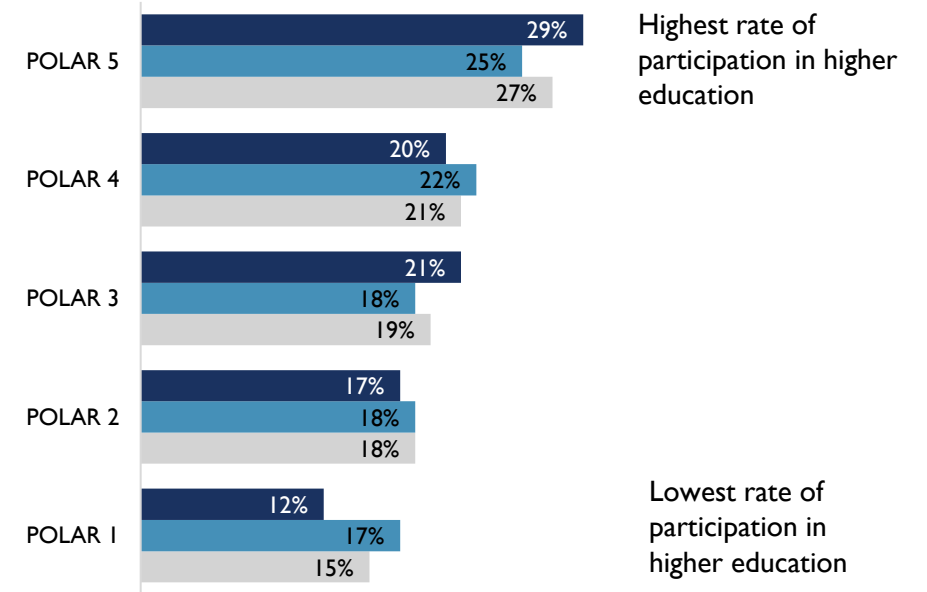
Grouping has been carried out for practical purposes only, where responses for specific identities are too small to support meaningful analysis and where grouping allows for a better understanding of trends and relationships.

# RESPONDENT EDUCATION DEMOGRAPHICS

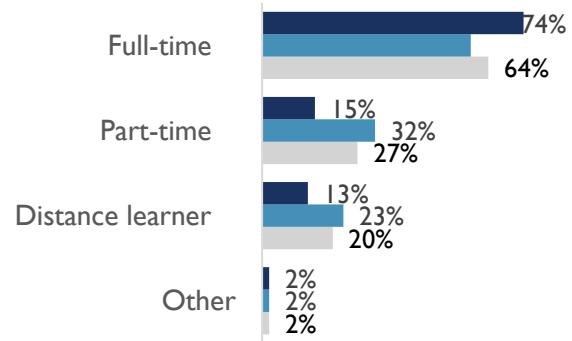
## DOMESTICITY



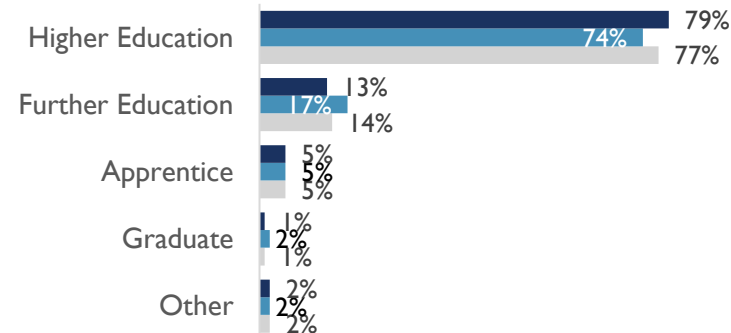
## POLAR



## MODE OF STUDY



## LEVEL OF STUDY

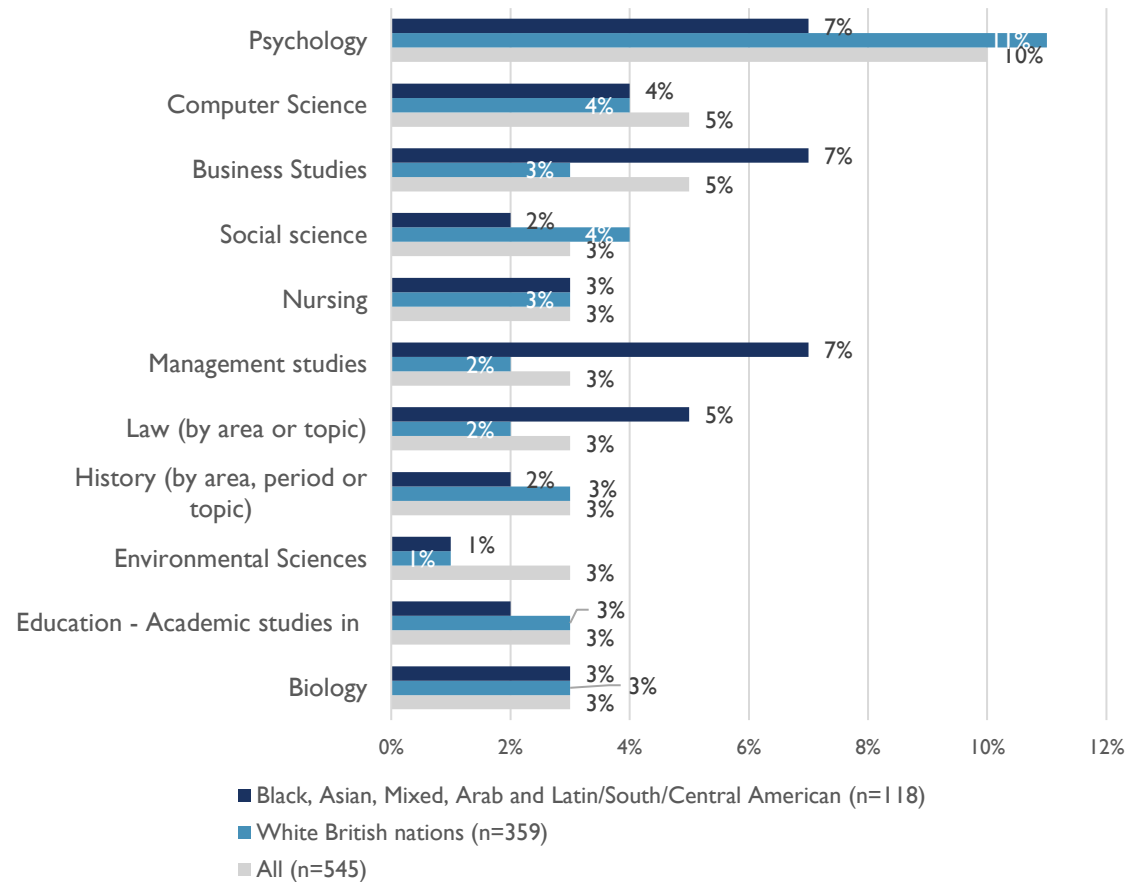


- Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American (n=131)
- White British nationalities (n=462)
- All

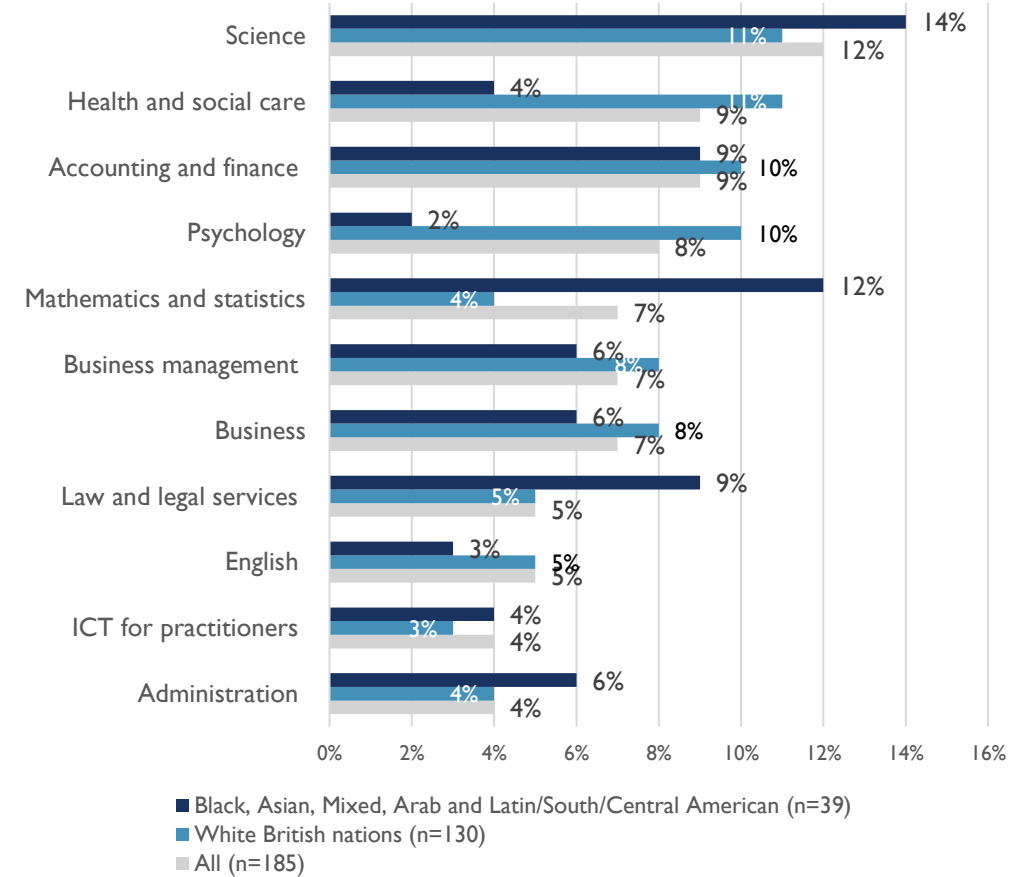
The participation of local areas (POLAR) classification groups areas across the UK based on the proportion of young people who participate in higher education.

# RESPONDENT EDUCATION DEMOGRAPHICS

## SUBJECT – HIGHER EDUCATION

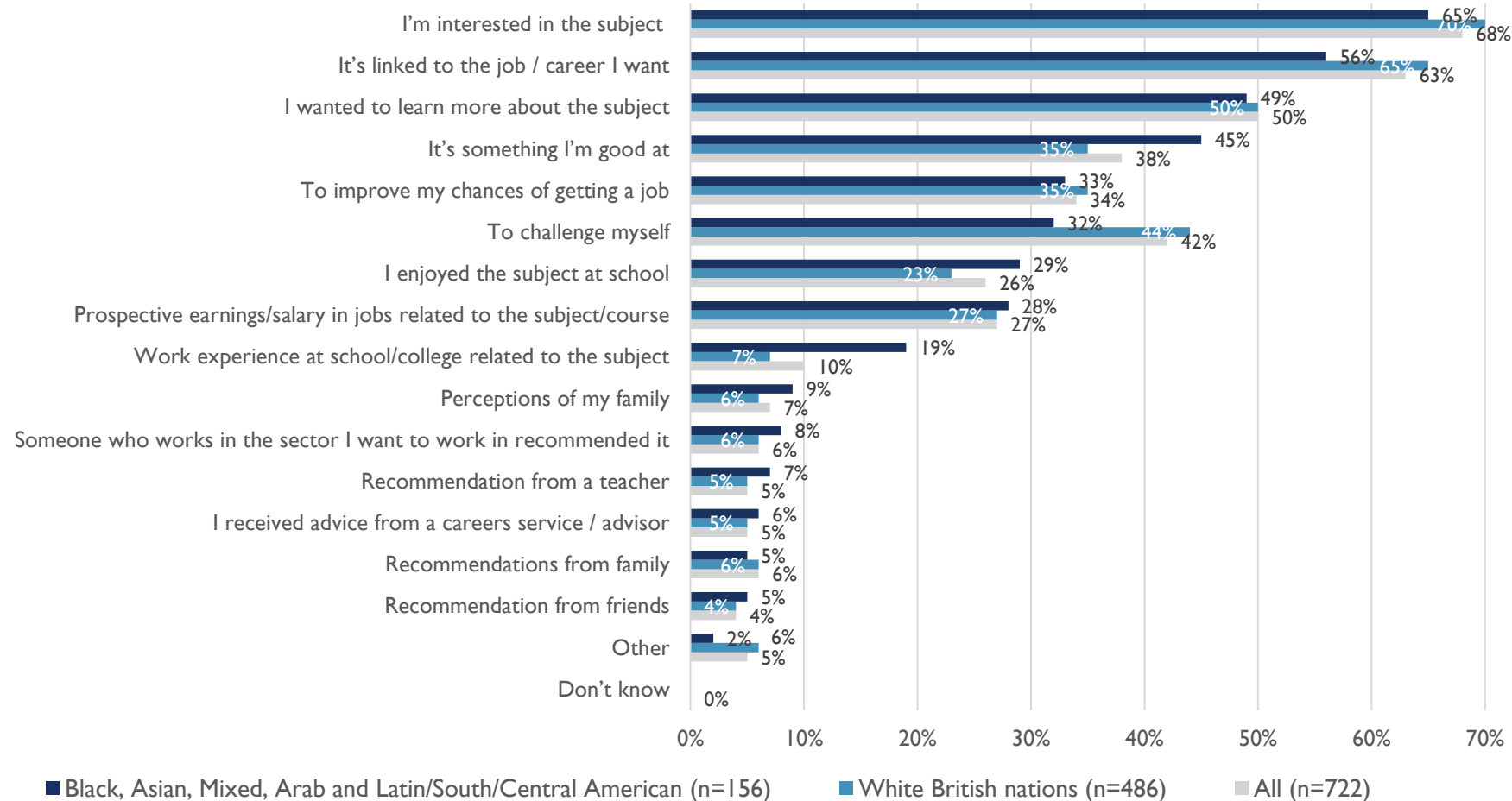


## SUBJECT – FURTHER EDUCATION



# RESEARCH FINDINGS

# FACTORS AFFECTING COURSE / SUBJECT CHOICE



- The most notable factors affecting respondents' choice of course or subject include their personal interest in the subject and its links to their job/career aspirations.
- 70% of respondents identifying as White British nationalities say their interest in the subject influenced their choice, and 65% of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents also chose this option.
- 56% of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents stated their choice was linked to their career/job aspirations and 65% of White British nationalities also reported this influence.

**Q. Thinking about the course or subject(s) you're currently studying, which of the following factors, if any, influenced your choice of what to study?**

Base: See legend Balance: No response

# BARRIERS WHEN CHOOSING COURSES

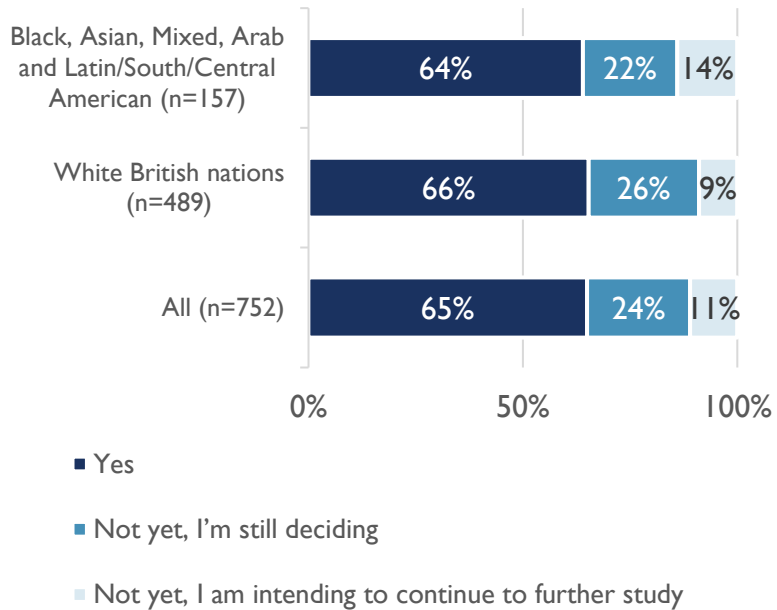
- Respondents were asked to elaborate on any difficulties or barriers they had experienced when deciding which course or subject to study. Of those that reported barriers, these include:

Barrier	Proportion of White British nationalities responses	Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American responses	Example
Information and support available to help choose course	19%	22%	"No other family members had attended university, didn't know anyone in the field, no access to knowledgeable careers advice specific to my subject area.."
Grade or qualification requirements	13%	15%	"The entry requirements to study Law at my chosen University are very high."
Cost of course / studying	14%	6%	"Being able to afford the course and pay for it myself, the course is £30,700 per year and I only get £11k from student finance."
Understanding influence on future career options	8%	11%	"A difficulty was choosing between what I enjoy and I am good at and what could give me a career that I could pursue and sustain a living from."
Mental or physical health concerns (including confidence)	11%	7%	"I have Dyslexia and ADHD and a physical disability so I had to look for a course that would be part-time with a chance for practical application of the subjects I am studying, whilst not too physically demanding."
Time commitment required	12%	5%	"Choosing between part-time, full-time context-based from home, or full-time residential courses was dictated by financial pressures and also trying to maintain family life while studying."
Course and place availability	4%	5%	"Difficult in getting accepted due to the popularity of the course."
Family disapproval/lack of support	2%	5%	"Not a very traditional subject, my parents were less enthusiastic."
Diversity on courses	0%	2%	"Being the only girl in my Computer Science discussions made me feel looked down upon, many times I would be talked over and heard multiple sexist jokes directed towards me."
No barriers experienced	28%	22%	



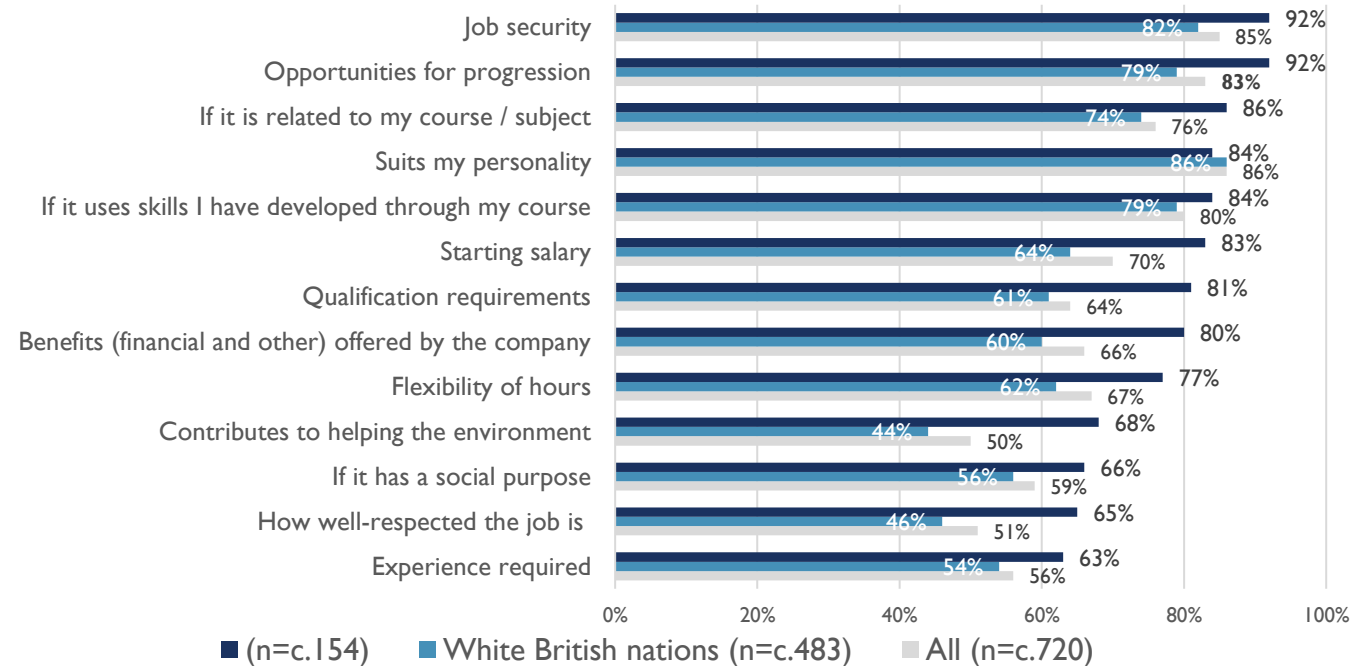
# CAREER AND JOB ASPIRATIONS

- Two thirds of respondents say they know what career or type of job they will be looking for when they finish their current course. 9% of White British nations respondents say they intend to continue to further study, and 14% of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents stated they also have this intention.



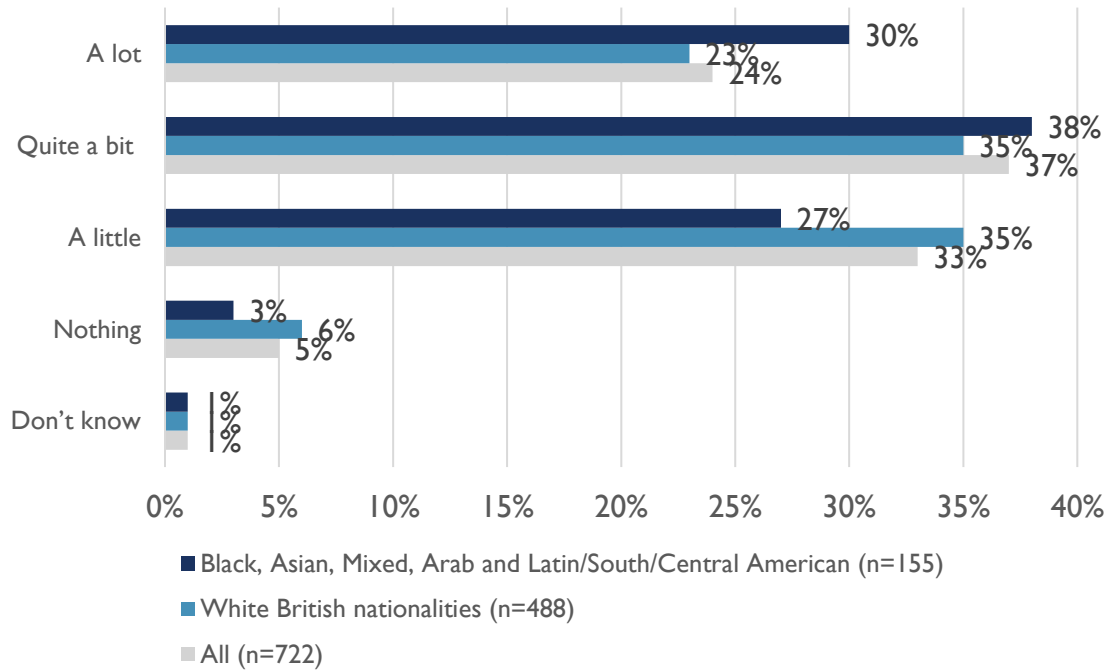
Q. Do you have an idea of the career, or type of job you will be looking for when you finish studying your current course? [Base: See chart Balance: No response]

- Job security and opportunities for progression are the most commonly considered factors when thinking about respondents' careers or future jobs. 92% of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents stated these influences, and 82% and 79% of White British nationalities respondents reported the same. 68% of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents say they consider if the career/job contributes to helping the environment, and 44% of White British nationalities say the same.



Q. How important, if at all, are the following factors when considering your future career or type of job? [Base: See legend Balance: other responses apart from Very important or Important, no response]

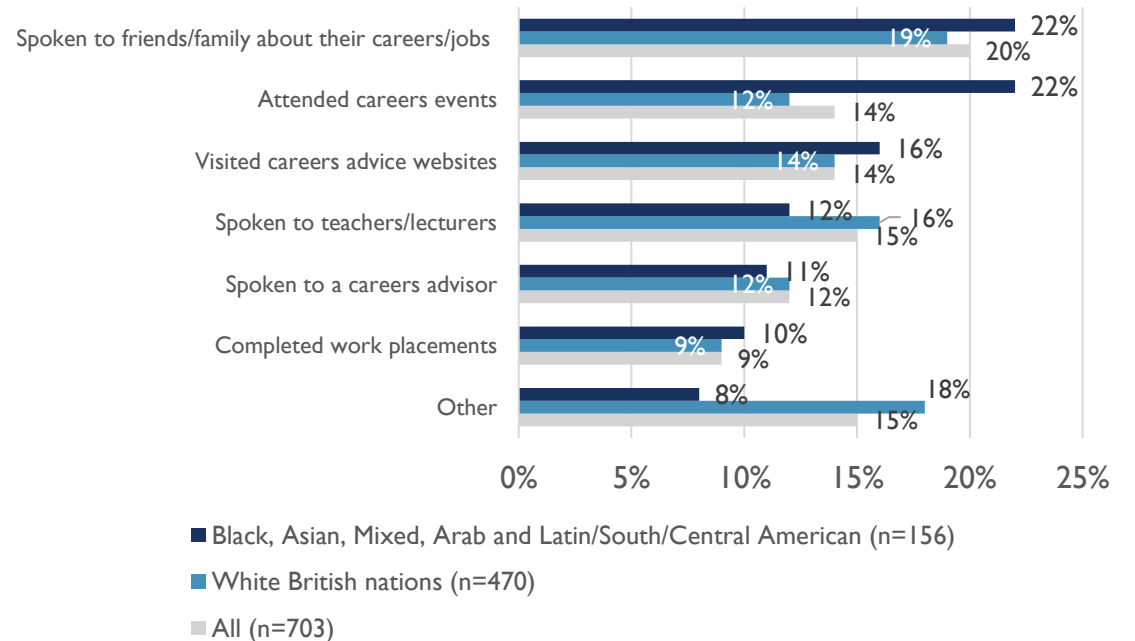
# CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AND ADVICE



Q. How much, if anything, did you know about the career opportunities related to the subject(s)/course you are currently studying when choosing what to study?

- 68% of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American backgrounds say they knew a lot or quite a bit about the career opportunities related to their subject or course when they were choosing what to study. 58% of respondents from White British nationalities reported the same understanding.

- 22% of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American backgrounds say they spoke to friends or family or attended careers events to help understand what career opportunities are available. 19% of respondents from White British nationalities also sought advice from friends or family but reported advice from teachers/lecturers as the second most common source (16%).



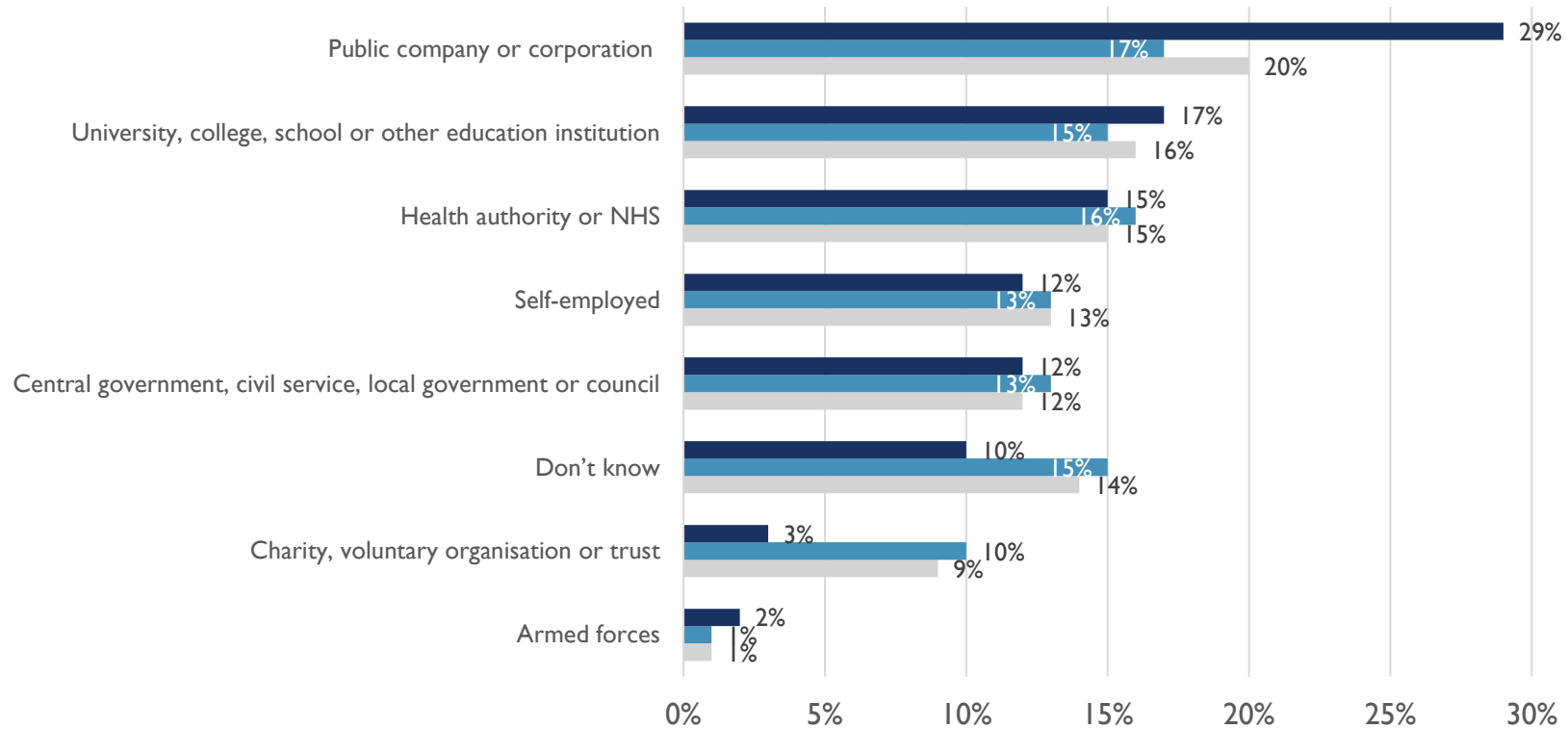
Q. What careers advice or support have you received or accessed to help with your decisions on what career opportunities are available?

# PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO SECURING A JOB

- Respondents were asked to elaborate on their perceptions of any difficulties or barriers they expect to experience when finding and applying for jobs following completion of their course. 112 qualitative responses received from respondents identifying as Black, Asian or from other minority ethnic groups and 413 responses from White respondents have been coded to identify the main barriers. The key barrier identified by respondents is the requirements associated with roles, for example the qualifications and experience necessary.

Barrier	Proportion of White – British/Other responses	Proportion of responses from Black, Asian or other minority ethnic groups	Example
Job requirements (e.g. qualifications, experience)	24%	41%	“Most companies require a degree of experience. Although I will hold a higher qualification than if I did not continue my studies, I feel by doing so I could be on the back foot in the eyes of employers.”
Limited opportunities and competition for roles	22%	16%	“The field of study I’m interested in has become very popular and means that it can be very competitive in order to get a job”
Personal characteristics (e.g. age (most common), gender, ethnicity)	17%	11%	“I’m trans so a lot of employers won’t be interested.”
Mental and physical health (and support availability)	11%	6%	“Being neurodiverse and the challenges that come with that, being working-class and having no class or financial privilege.”
Location of opportunities	10%	7%	“I am struggling to find a job because of my location; I live in the North East and I can’t afford to move out, but all the jobs I find are based in London or the South East.”
Personal requirements for roles (e.g. salary, working hours, enjoyment)	13%	7%	“Finding something that balances good pay and enjoyment.”
No barriers anticipated	13%	11%	“I have been told there is always jobs for nurses so I’m not too worried in that respect but might be difficult to get into a specific job.”
Applicability of course to job requirements	2%	5%	“It’s not a professional degree but a specialism-based course, so the prospects of getting a job are lesser.”

# EMPLOYMENT ASPIRATIONS



■ Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American (n=155) ■ White British nationalities (n=489) ■ All (n=723)

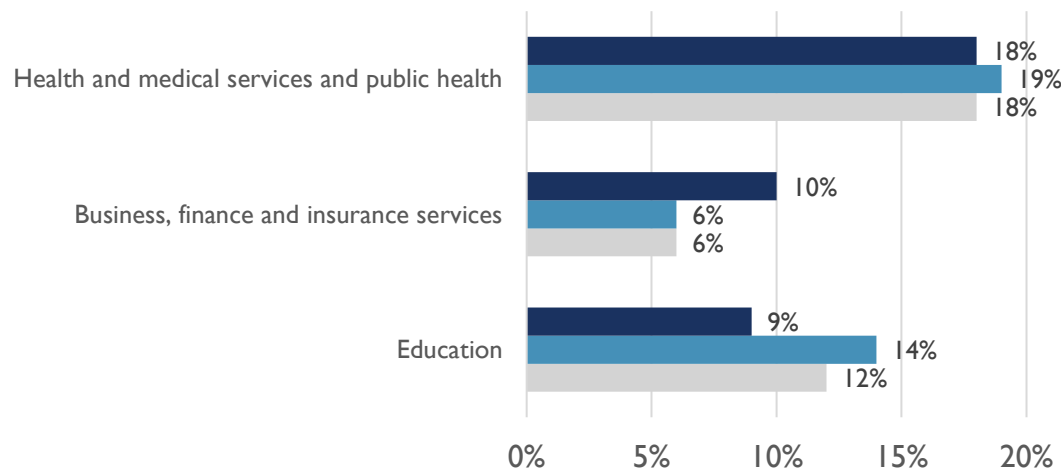
Q. Which of the following type of organisations do you most want to work in? [Base: See legend Balance: No response]

- When thinking about the type of organisation they would like to work for, the most commonly reported option amongst respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American backgrounds was in 'public companies or corporations' (29%). Education organisations e.g. universities, schools or colleges were also seen as future employers for 17% of these respondents.
- Respondents of White British nationalities also reported a desire to work in 'public companies or corporations' (17%) or within health authorities / the NHS (16%).
- These differences could be attributed to the subject respondents are taking, with a greater proportion of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American background respondents taking business related courses compared to White British nationality respondents.

# MOST APPEALING SECTORS TO WORK IN AFTER STUDY

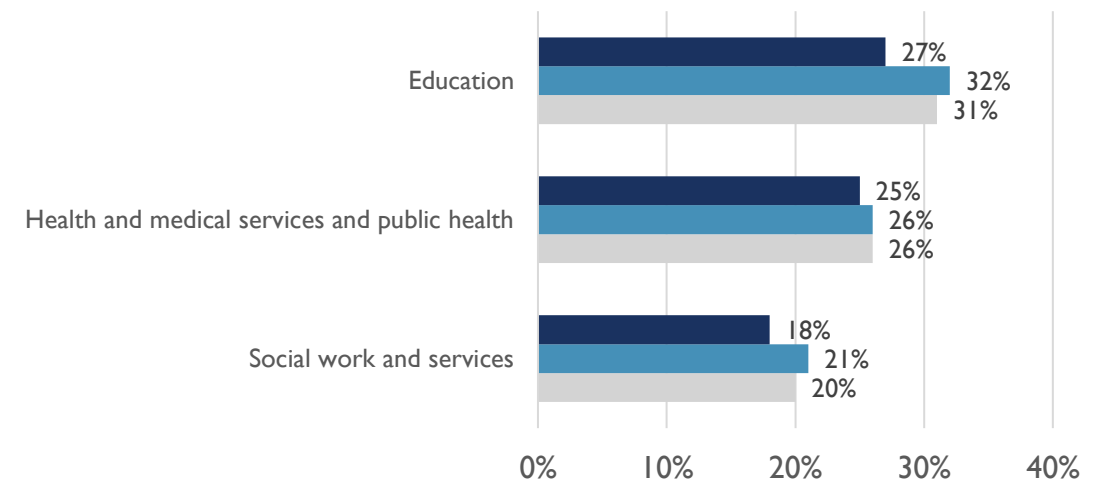
- The sectors identified by respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American backgrounds as those they'd most like to work in include 'health and medical services and public health' (18%) and 'business, finance and insurance services' (10%). For respondents from White British nationalities, the same sector was reported as being the most desirable (19%) however 'education' was reported to be the second most desirable to work in (14%).
- When looking at the sectors they would consider working in, education was reported as the most likely to be considered by respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American backgrounds (27%) and those from White British nationalities (32%).

## Sectors most like to work in



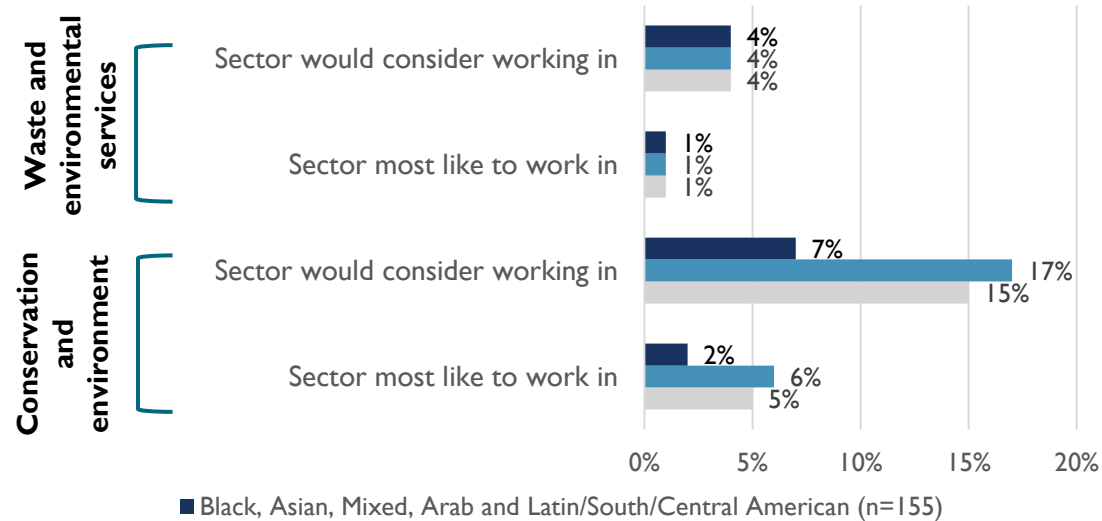
■ Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American (n=155)  
 ■ White British nationalities (n=489)  
 ■ All (n=723)

## Sectors would consider working in



■ Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American (n=155)  
 ■ White British nationalities (n=489)  
 ■ All (n=723)

# ENVIRONMENT SECTOR ASPIRATIONS



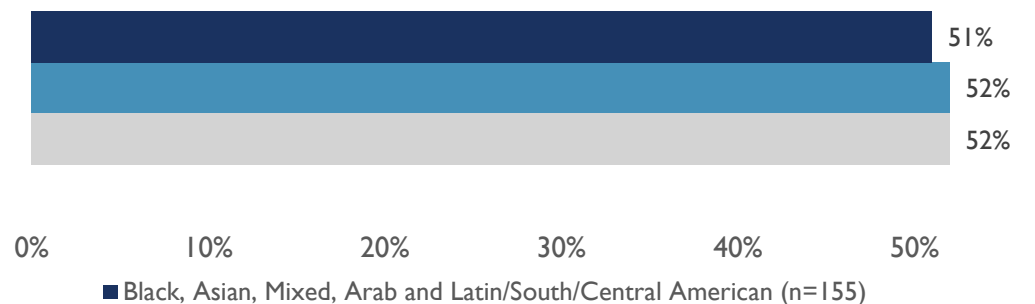
**Q. Which of the following sectors would you most like / consider working in when you've finished studying?**  
[Base: See legend Balance: No response]

- Despite a greater proportion of respondents who identify as Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American saying whether a career or job helps the environment is a deciding factor (68%) compared to respondents from White British nationalities (44%), a smaller proportion say they would most like or consider working in the sector.
- 2% of as Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents say they would most like to work in the 'conservation and environment' sector, and 7% say they would consider it.
- Waste and environmental services careers were not widely considered or desired by any respondent group.

- After being provided with a brief definition of the environment sector, respondents were asked how appealing a career in the sector was to them. Just over half of respondents in each group said that a career in the sector would be appealing.
- The definition of the sector provided is as follows:  
"This sector covers a wide range of jobs, including roles that work directly on tackling climate change, protecting nature and wildlife, and improving air or water quality. A range of different types of organisations operate within the sector, from charities to large businesses, and small enterprises to academia.

Organisations, including businesses and charities, that work specifically on these issues will also have more general roles, for example communications, campaigns, education, finance and HR. Roles also include environmental consultancy which could encompass all of the issues mentioned above, and more.

Many business employers will also now have environmental managers and departments to reduce the environmental impact of the business, covering things such as energy efficiency and waste management."



**Q. Based on the definition provided, how appealing, if at all, to you is a career in the environment sector?** [Base: See legend Balance: No response, respondents who view the sector as unappealing / neither / don't know]

# PERCEPTIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR

- Respondents were asked to describe their perceptions of working in the environment sector in three words. The following images summarise the words used to describe the environment sector by different groups of respondents. No substantial differences can be seen across the descriptions.

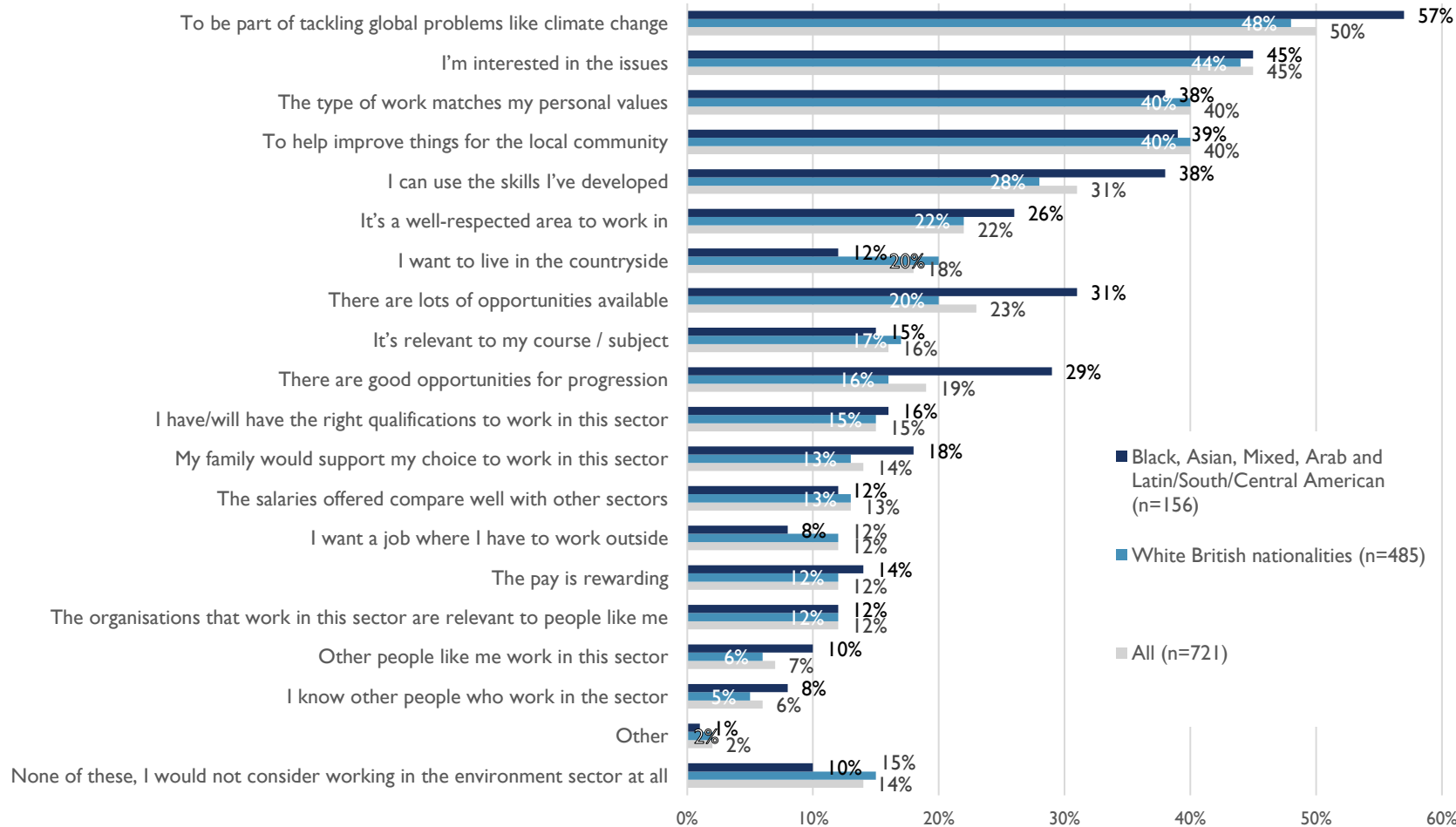


**White British nationalities**



**Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American backgrounds**

# MOTIVATIONS FOR WORKING IN THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR

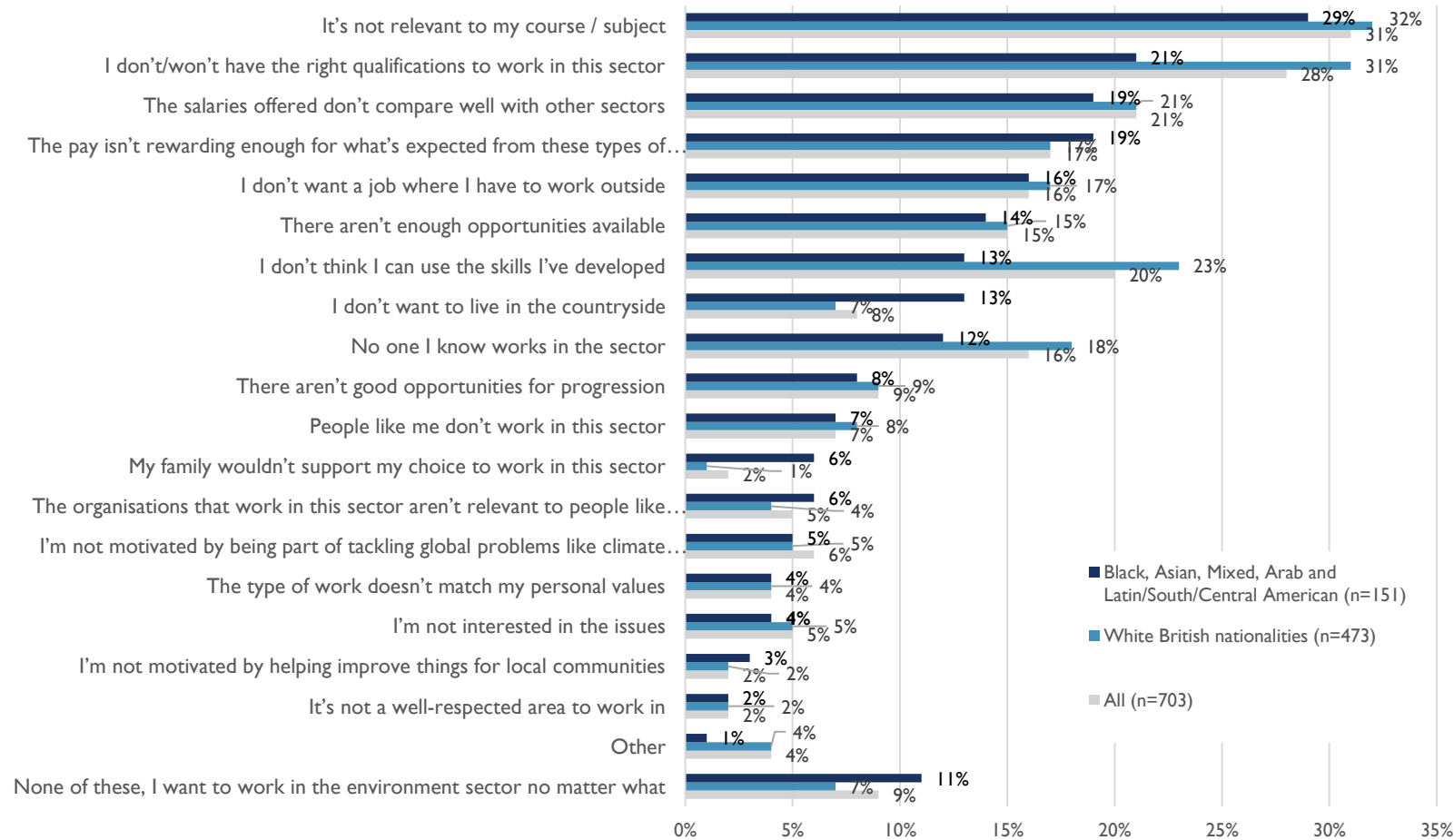


- Respondents who, following provision of a description of the sector, stated they would find the environment sector an appealing career option were asked to elaborate on why they would consider it.
- Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents identified being 'part of tackling global problems like climate change' as a key motivation (57%). An interest in the issues covered by the sector was also stated as an influence (45%).
- For respondents identifying as White British nationalities, being part of the solution to climate change was also a key motivation (48%) as was an interest in the issues (44%).

Q. Please tell us which, if any, of the following reasons describes why you would consider working in the environmental sector? [Base: See legend Balance: No response, don't know]



# BARRIERS TO WORKING IN THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR



- Respondents who reported that a career in the environment sector wouldn't be appealing to them were asked why they wouldn't consider it.
- Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents identified a lack of relevance to their course/subject (29%) and a perception that they would lack the right qualifications for a job in the sector (21%) as the key barriers.
- For respondents identifying as White British nationalities, a perceived lack of relevance to their course/subject was also described as the main barrier (32%), followed by a perception of needing different qualifications to the ones they have/would gain (31%).
- Other reasons given for a lack of motivation to work in the environment sector include health and disability barriers, experience required and prioritisation of other career paths, for example:

“Disability means I'm limited to what I can do, much of this kind of work is unlikely to be wheelchair accessible!”

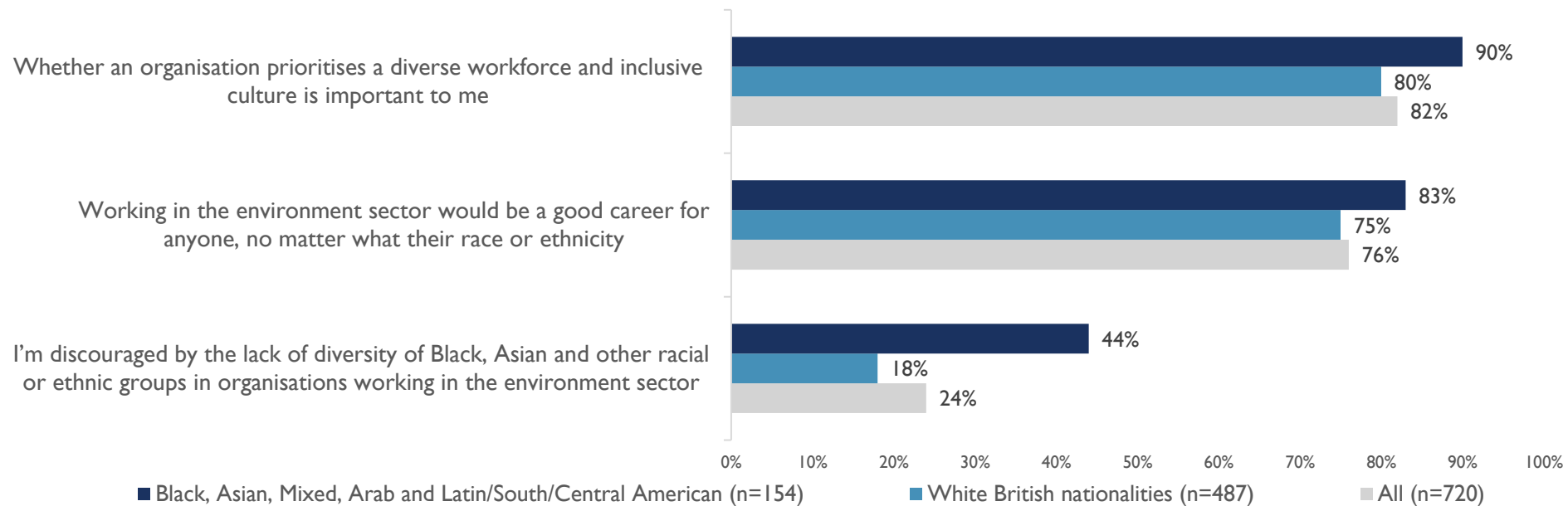
“I am already interested in other career sectors which aren't environmental.”

“Often jobs in this sector are given to long term volunteers but I cannot afford to volunteer for months or years before getting paid work.”

**Q. Please tell us which, if any, of the following reasons describes why you would not consider working in the environmental sector? [Base: See legend Balance: No response, Other, Don't know, those that definitely want to work in the sector]**

# IMPORTANCE AND PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR

- Respondents were asked for their overall perceptions of the importance of diversity and inclusion within the workplace, as well as how this relates to their perceptions of the environment sector. Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents overwhelmingly agreed that the priority given by organisations to diversifying their workforce and developing an inclusive culture is important to them (90%). 80% of White British nationality respondents also agreed.
- Just under half of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents say they are discouraged by the lack of diversity of different racial or ethnic groups within organisations working within the environment sector. This question was asked without any mention of diversity statistics or research for the environment sector.



Q. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? [Base: see legend Balance: No response, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and don't know]

# EXPERIENCES OF ENGAGING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR

- Respondents who identified as Black, Asian, mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American were introduced to the data that identifies environment professionals as being amongst the least diverse occupations in the UK via the following statement:
- “In 2017, a research study which looked at data from national surveys found that the environment sector is one of the least racially and ethnically diverse in the UK, when looking at the people that work in this sector in comparison to the UK population overall.”

When reading this statement, how much, if at all, does this reflect your experiences with organisations that work across the environment sector? [106 responses]

Response	Number of respondents
Not surprised by the findings / matches experiences elsewhere	20
Alienating and exclusive for people from diverse backgrounds	8
Evidence of need to attract more diverse employees/particularly given the focus of the sector	8
Doesn't match experiences elsewhere/in other sectors	5
Disappointed by findings	4
No experience/understanding of the sector so unable to say	27

“This sounds about right. Even the young people at COP 26 that were represented in the media were predominantly white despite there being BAME individuals present.”

“I think that this is true of many major sectors within the UK, and I believe and hope that things change radically in the future, so that our work force reflects, and represents everyone irrespective of their ethnicity.”

“Disappointment.”

“Yes, I agree that diversity is not something I have noticed. And I would. It is mostly white people.”

“I've not had much encounters with such organisations but I agree with the data. From my cultural experiences here and if you consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs, my people's stage is at the bottom level and they are still struggling with getting basic needs - fighting for the environment seems to be an "elite" thing.”

“This very strongly reflects my experience of working in the sector when helping to establish the South Downs National Park in 2011.”

# EXPERIENCES OF ENGAGING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR

- Respondents who identified as Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American were also asked how the research findings, that placed the environment sector among the least racially diverse in the UK, made them feel about working in the sector.

And what, if anything, does it make you feel about working in the environment sector?

Response	Number of respondents
Put off working in the sector	28
Driven to be part of the change in the sector	14
Recognise that there needs to be changes in the sector	5
Other factors need to be taken into consideration too	2
No influence / no experience of the sector	26

“I am used to being the only brown face in an organisation/sector, therefore it would not discourage me necessarily. I am used to it.”

“It would be good if a range/diversity of people could be skilled in this area, but this could be down to many reasons and hopefully it will improve one day. As long as I am working with likeminded people who are knowledgeable in changing the environment for the better, I do not care what their race is, and would hope my employers do not either.”

“Makes me imagine it as a white, middle-class and out-of-touch sector that, whilst concerned with an important issue, loses touch with the present.”

“It makes me wonder why that is and whether it would be tougher for me to work in the sector.”

“Being ethnic myself, I don't feel like I'd ever be inclined to work in a room full of white men.”

“It makes me want to work in the sector more so I can see improvement.”

“I am interested in working in this area due to my course degree, but I do hope that the diversity situation improves.”

# EXPERIENCES OF ENGAGING WITH THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR

- Respondents who identified as Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American were also asked for their views on actions the sector can take to improve representativeness within its workforce.

What suggestions do you have for actions that organisations that operate in this sector can take to improve the representativeness of the environment sector?

Response	Number of respondents
Changes to recruitment/roles	24
General outreach / awareness raising of the sector	22
Prioritising diversity within organisations	11
Collaborating with universities	9
Outreach to early education	8
Training and development for staff for improving diversity	7

“Actively recruit people of colour: use adverts featuring people of colour, have a quota for minimum percentage of workforce that should be of colour, perhaps openly advertise with that.”

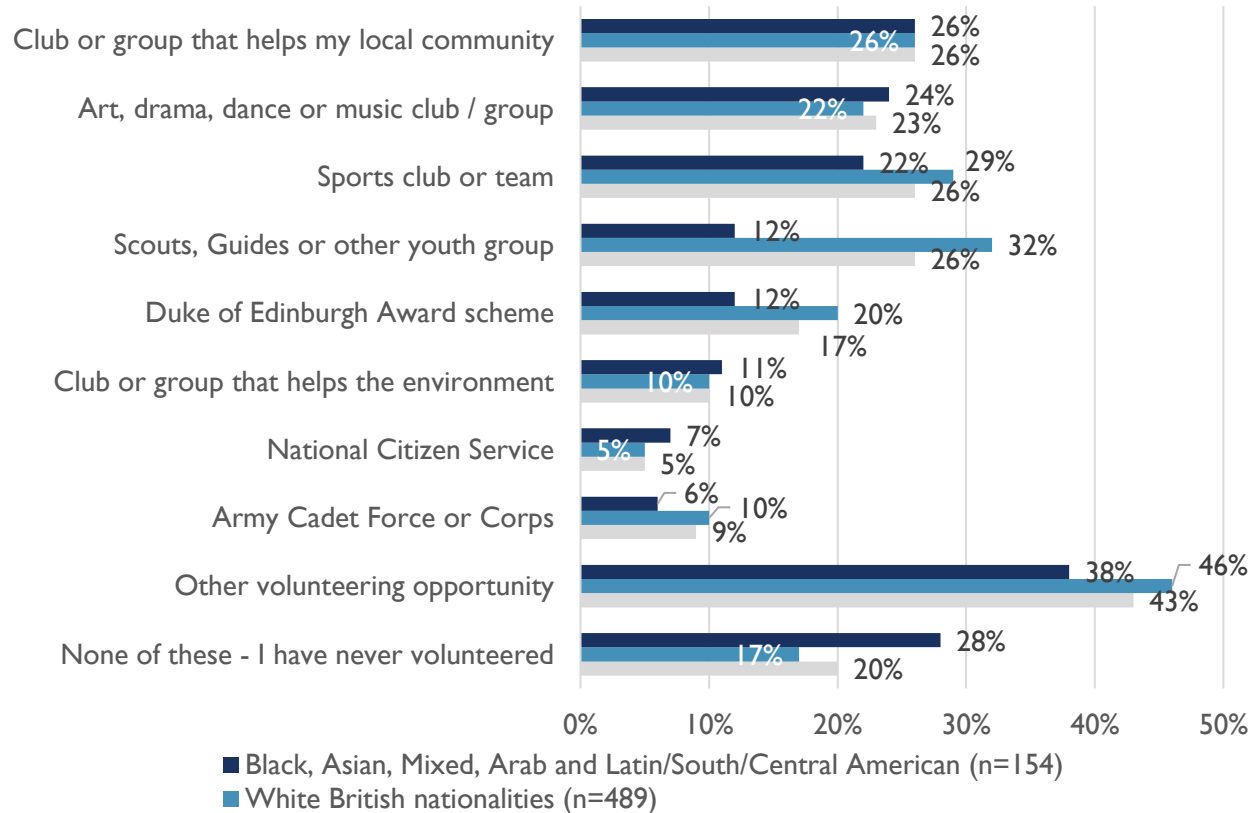
“Things like unconscious bias training would certainly help avoid attitudes that make workplaces hostile, but I think the main issue lies in representation in education rather than sector employment, since these jobs tend to require such extensive education.”

“Organise events for BAME students that introduces work in the environmental sector.”

“Creating awareness and specifically targeting Universities that rank high in student diversity.”

“Go to schools, colleges, and universities (especially those in more racially / ethnically unrepresented areas), and provide talks on possible careers in the environment sector. Start up environment clubs and societies in these schools, colleges & unis, which would provide the students with direct links into environment sector businesses before even leaving their place of education.”

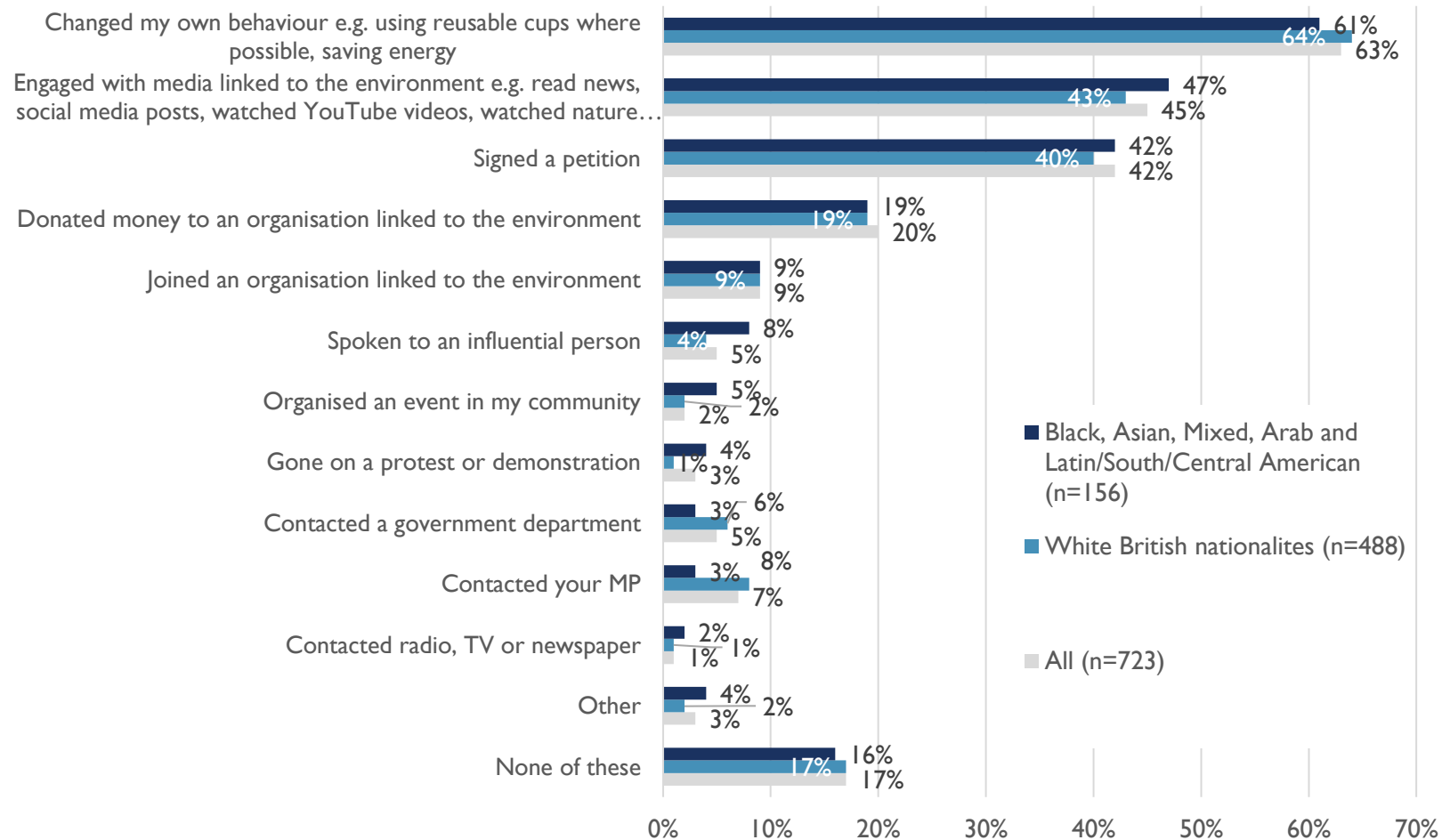
# EXPERIENCES OF ENVIRONMENT VOLUNTEERING



- A quarter of respondents (26%) from all backgrounds say they have volunteered at some point for clubs or groups that help local communities.
- 11% of respondents from Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American backgrounds say they have volunteered for a club or group that helps the environment, and 10% of White British nationality respondents say they have volunteered for this type of activity.

Q. What volunteering activities, if any, have you ever taken part in? Please think only about volunteering you have completed outside of formal school, college or university hours [Base: See legend Balance: No response]

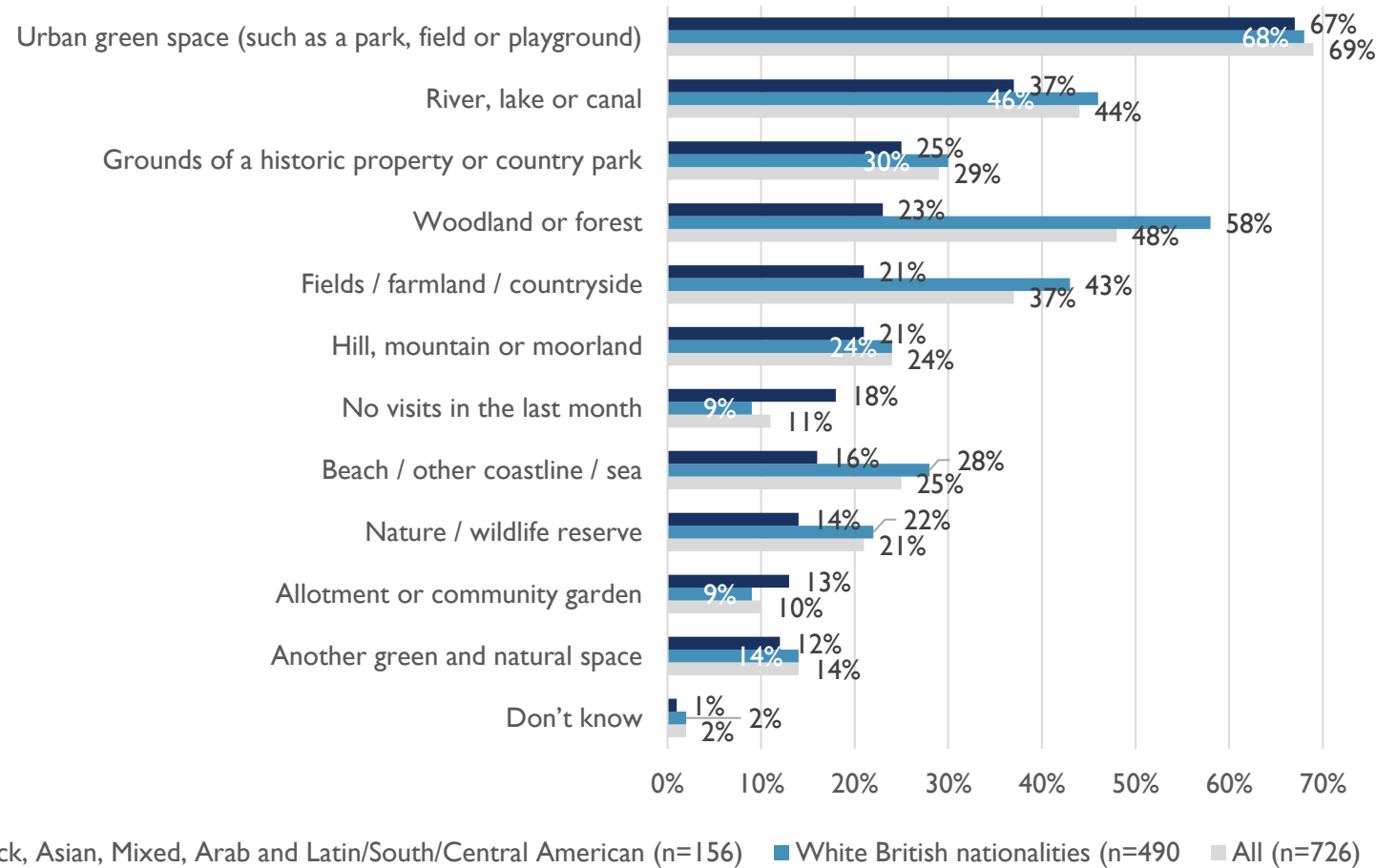
# ACTION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



- 61% of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents say they have changed their own behaviour to protect the environment in the last 12 months. 64% of respondents from White British nationalities say the same.
- Almost half of Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American respondents have engaged with media linked to the environment and 43% of White British nationality respondents say they have done the same.

Q. Which, if any, of the following actions have you taken related to protecting the environment in the last 12 months? [Base: See legend Balance: No response]

# EXPERIENCE OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS



- **Two thirds of respondents from all backgrounds say they have visited an urban green space in the last month.**
- Rivers, lakes and canals form the next most visited green and natural space, with 37% of respondents identifying as Black, Asian, Mixed, Arab and Latin/South/Central American saying they have visited in the last month. 46% of respondents from White British nationalities say they have visited these spaces.

**Q. Which of the following types of green and natural space have you visited during the last month? [Base: See legend Balance: No response]**



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# RACIAL DIVERSITY IN ENVIRONMENT PROFESSIONS: 2022

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