

Predicting Futures: Study Findings and Recommendations

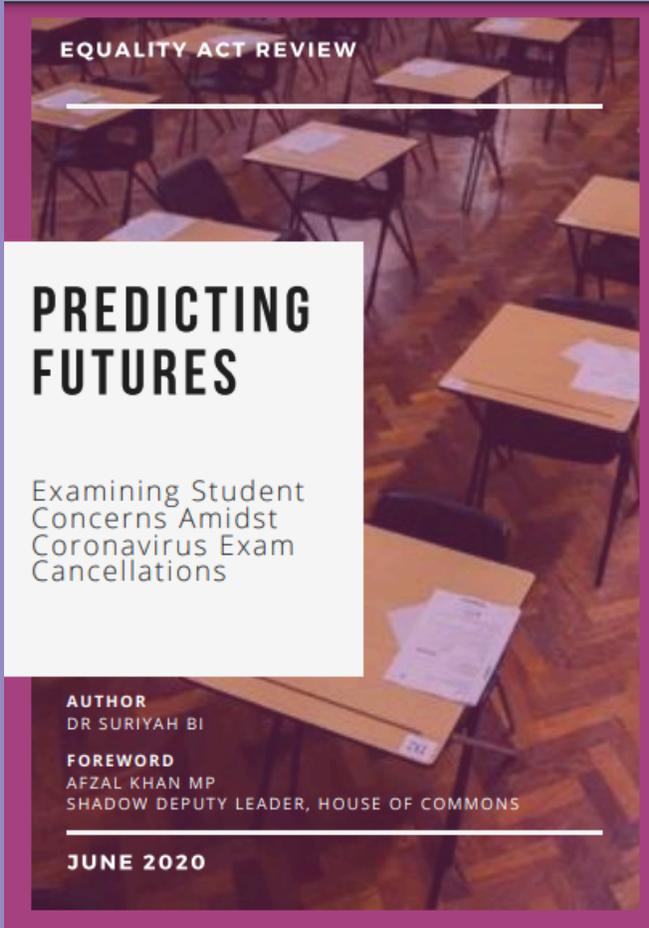
*A presentation for the Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP,
Secretary of State for Education*

Dr Suriyah Bi
CEO Equality Act Review

Overview

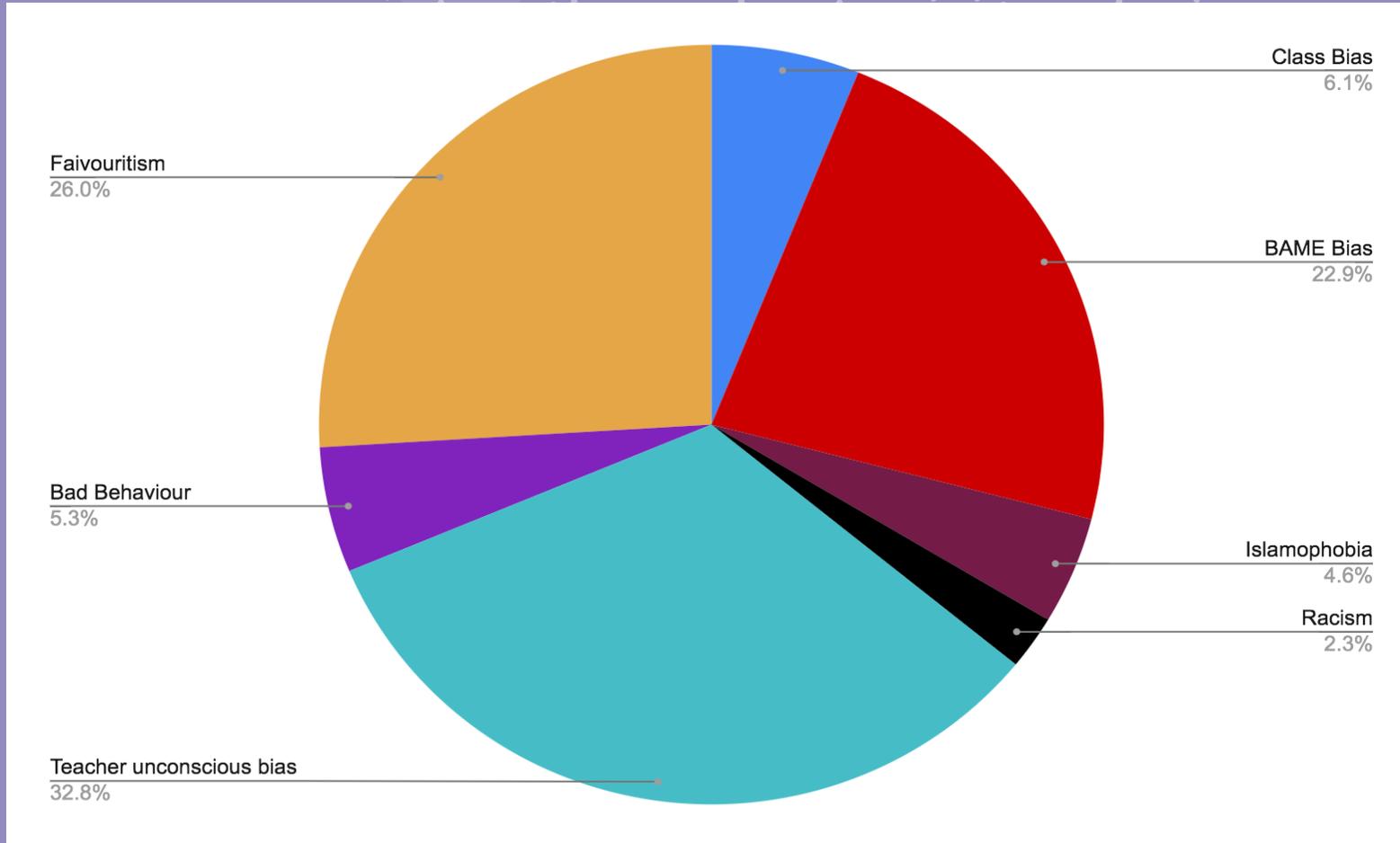
- Introduce Predicting Futures research project, its aims and objectives.
- Anthropological research, understanding student experiences.
- Emphasise from statistics to story method.
- Findings of the first report.
- Findings the second report.
- Key recommendations.

Predicting Futures



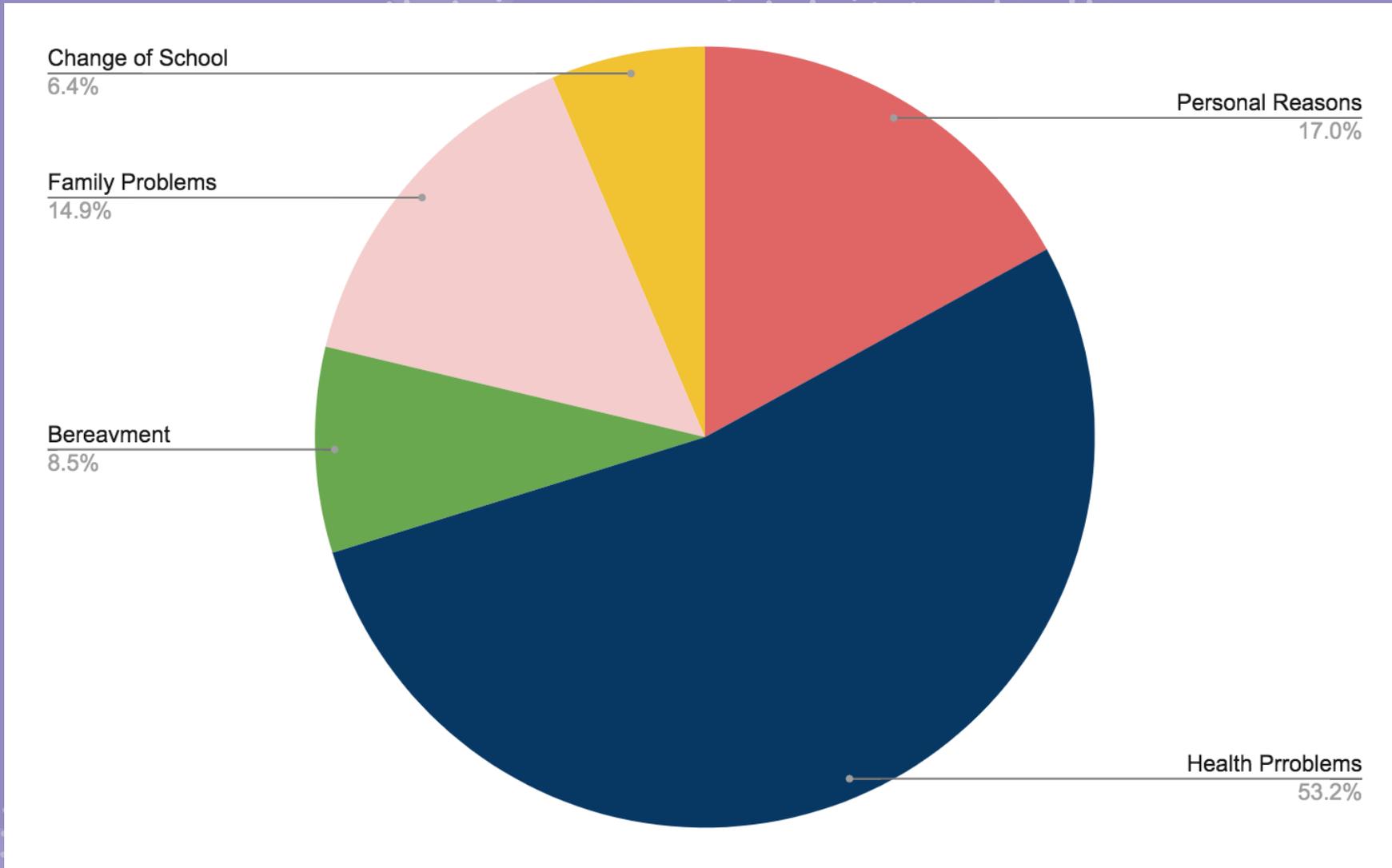
- Between April and May 2020.
- 803 responses.
- 80% of students were concerned about their grades being predicted.
- 85% of respondents were from BAME backgrounds.
- 22.9% of the respondents expressed that they were worried about anti-BAME bias.
- Over 50% of students expressed concern about their learning style, namely that they work harder under pressure and have made progress since their mock exams, which is not accounted for by a predicted grade.
- The current grade predictions system does not account for learning style, mitigating circumstances or BAME bias.
- 80% of respondents were concerned about their future education and employment prospects.

Chart 14: A breakdown of the concerns relating to the nature of bias



Bias concerns extend *beyond* BAME identity to bad behaviour, favouritism, class, Islamophobia, and learning style.

Chart 12: A breakdown of the concerns relating to the nature of mitigating circumstances



Narratives

“My child is Dyslexic and just received the pen reader for exams in March.

“My child was very laid back when he did his mocks in January but when he got the results (which were disappointing) he studied hard from January all the way to the start of the lockdown. I tested him with a past paper and all I can say he did astonishing he went from grade 2’s to grade 8’s. This is why predicting a child using previous work is totally wrong.”

“Students sometimes go throughout the whole year doing minimal revision but when it comes to real exams they put their heads down and go for it.”

“Child parent has terminal cancer - exam board usually take this into account for increased marks ... school will not and exam board not involved.”

“Teachers know my Muslim name whereas the exams are marked anonymously so I’m being marked for my ability not my religion.”

“Prior to lockdown, our teachers constantly undermined and underpredicted BAME students at our school, and we always came out doing better, but now with predicted grades there is lack of anonymity so we are bound to be downgraded due to bias they hold against BAME students.”

“Teachers are not the best to judge. They have their favourites. It will be unfair.”

“At the start of the mocks my grandad passed away, so my performance wasn’t good as a result so solely basing on mocks and predictions is unfair.”

“...I am also from a working class background and I have felt that I haven’t been giving the same opportunities as my peers when it came down to accessing materials or revision resources even when asking for help.”

“Lack of teacher knowledge of pupils. I have a teacher who will be predicting my grades yet hasn’t taught me for over a year...”

“I’m transgender. I’ve been out to the school for years but some teachers still aren’t very accepting. I’m also worried that I won’t get my fair grade because I’ve suffered mental health issues in the past.

“...during My AS year my dad nearly died in an ambulance on the way to hospital as his kidney were not working correctly. A few months later he was diagnosed with cancer (all can be backed up with paper work/documents). So I was constantly visiting him in ICU/hospital and had no motivation to revise...”

Recommendations



Bias training for teachers



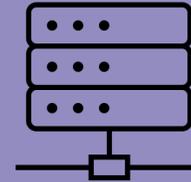
Mitigating circumstances forms



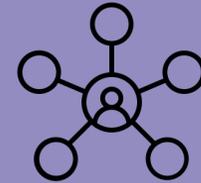
Central appeals process, widen grounds of appeal



Do not consider a school's past exam performance which will reify postcode lottery system grades

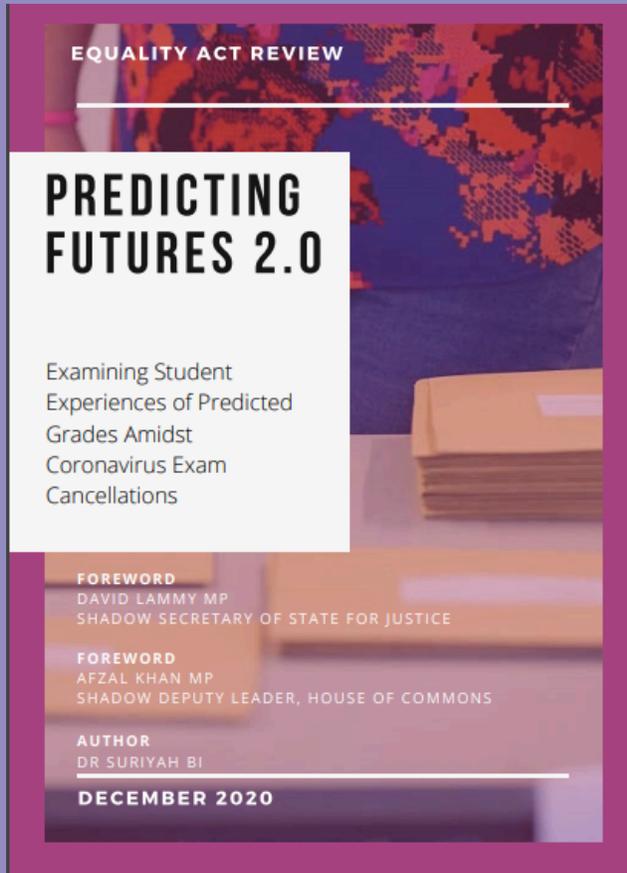


Electronic aptitude test to deduce learning style, the score to accompany predicted grade



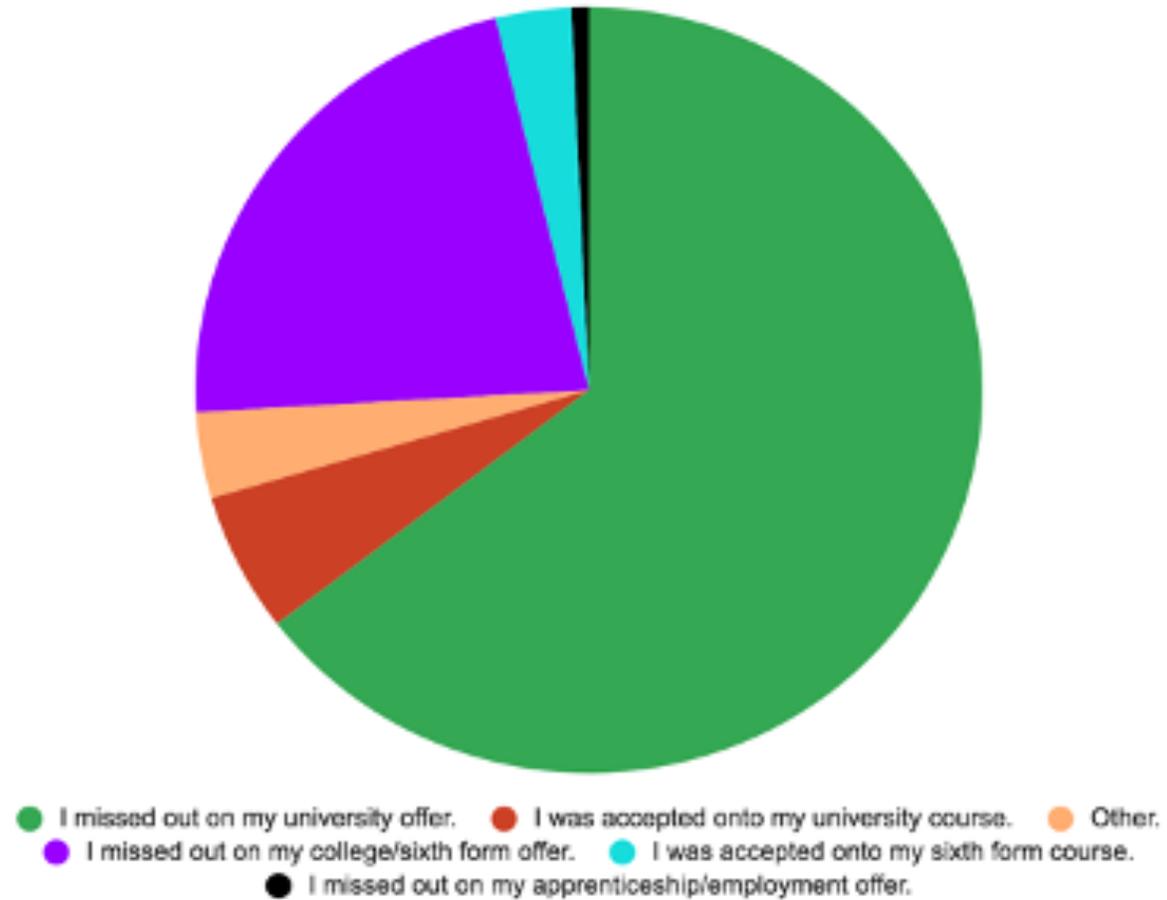
Inform universities of the process in advance

Predicting Futures 2.0



- 2091 responses.
- Nearly 80% were from BAME backgrounds.
- 77.2% (1614) of respondents stated that they received results that were an under-estimate of their abilities.
- Over half of the applicants were from households below the national average household income of £28,500.
- Loss of aspiration and talent: We found that 50.7% (1070) respondents decided to re-take their exams, 26.5% (555) decided not to re-take, and 22.8% (476) were undecided at the time of taking the survey as to whether or not they wished to re-sit their exams to improve their grades.
- Low success of appeals: 69% wanted to appeal, 33% not able to appeal, and those who appealed only 2% were successful but only 0.1% successful with a positive outcome for higher education.
- Assessment centres behaved as gate keepers.

Chart 12: Impact of predicted grades.



The study also found that almost 65% of respondents missed out on university offers.

Chart 9: Experience of predicted grades in relation to household income.

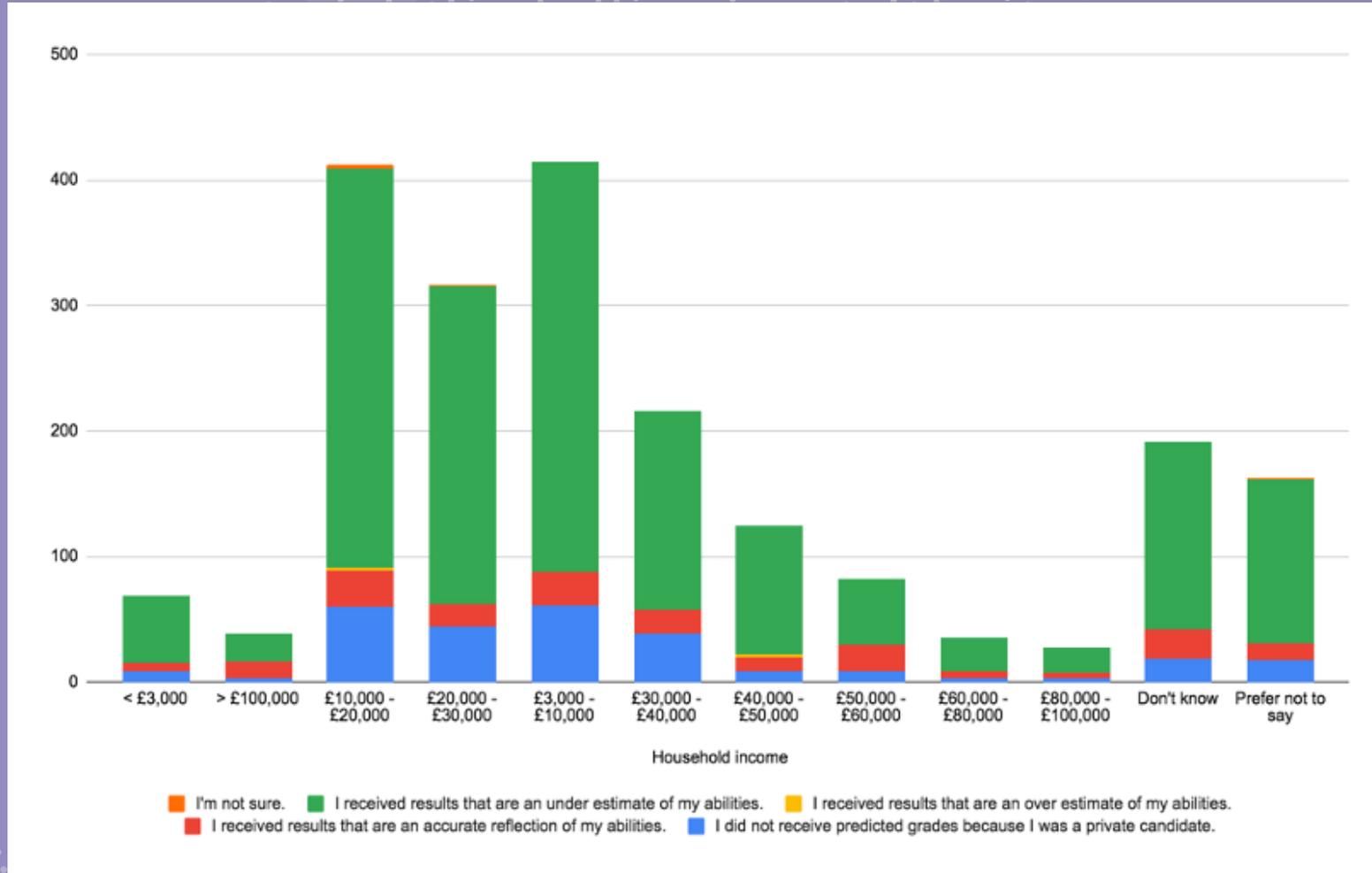
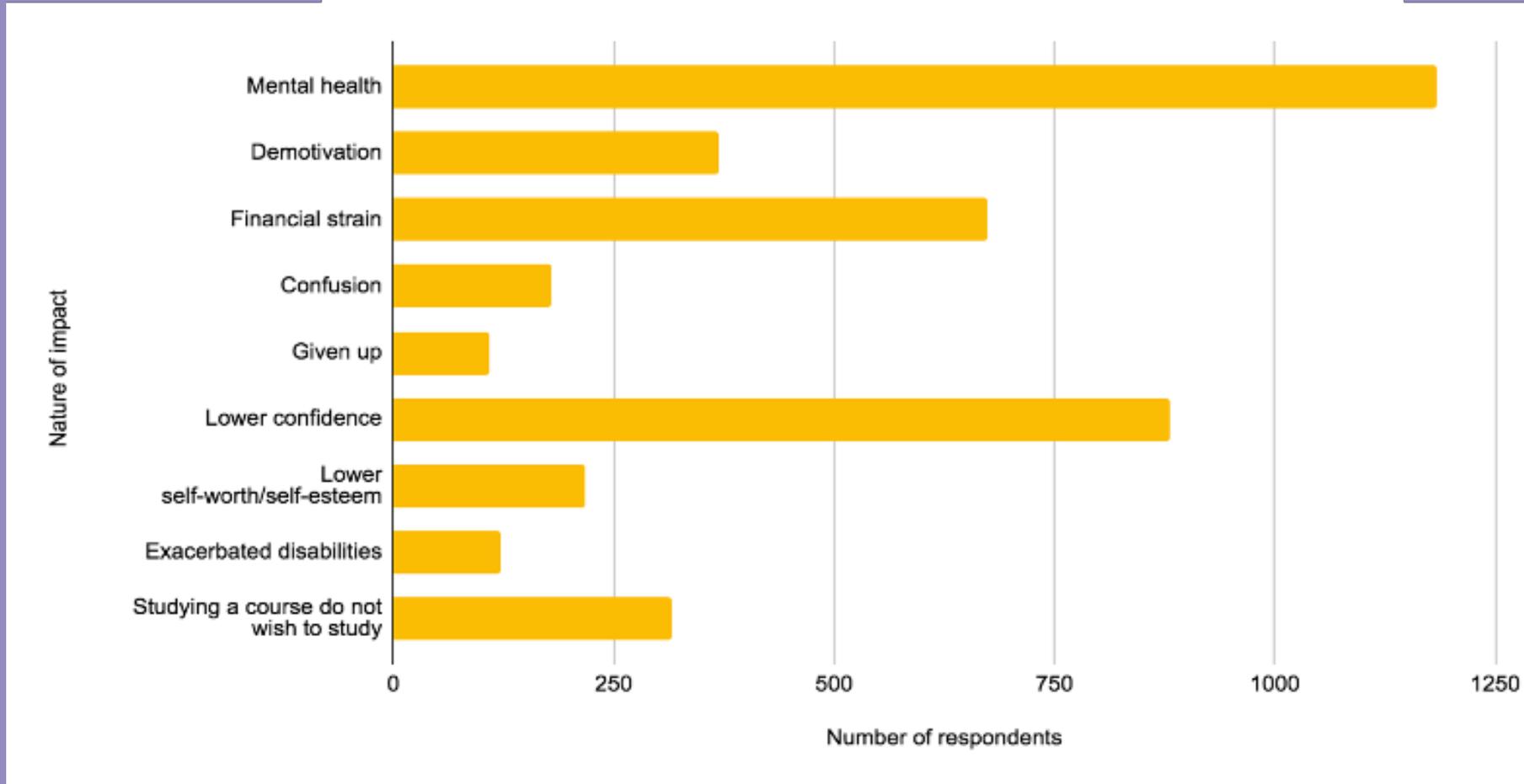


Chart 13: Nature and proportion of impact amongst respondents.



The results indicate that predicted grades had a negative impact on 56.5% (1183) of respondents' mental health, caused 17.6% (368) to feel demotivated, 32.3% (675) to experience financial strain, 8.56 (179) to experience confusion as to future directions, 5% (108) to 'give-up' on their education, 42% (880) to experience lower levels of confidence, 10.3% (217) to experience low self-worth and/or self-esteem; 5.8% (121) said they experienced an exacerbation of existing disabilities, and 15% (316) said they were studying a course they did not wish to study

Narratives

“I’ve had to do a course that I don’t wanna do.”

“Awful, my appeal was sent off weeks ago and they are aware of universities having a deadline for holding offers for students appealing and yet they are still not responding to appeals.”

“I missed a lot of the school year due to illness. Traditionally, one would submit extenuating circumstances to compensate, however this was not possible. I was too ill to sit my mock exams, so cannot appeal. to achieve and there isThe grade is lower than I ever expected no legislation which works in my favour.”

“It’s been a hard process and the application requires posting hardcopies of online paperwork, meaning those without the facilities (E.g. printers) would struggle.”

“Wrote to school. Their reply was generic. “We have not made any errors in grading”. Closed door.”

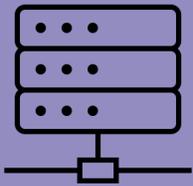
“All I can do is wait for my appeal but I am worried the course will have no more spaces by the time the appeal comes through.”

My parent’s didn’t understand that I did not intentionally do bad on my exams and I was forced to leave the UK and go Pakistan. I don’t have access to my passport and I don’t know if I will ever return.

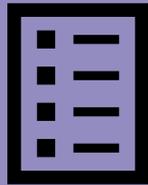
“They gave me the wrong grades due to behaviour and won’t let me appeal.”

“I’m a resit student who wanted to retake 2 subjects from my 2019 A-Levels. I begged and begged my old college, pretty much every other college near me and even my GCSE school to take me on and predict me CAGs but was denied brutally. Honestly it took a huge toll on my mental health and I was in a state of depression for months. The thing is that I want to go to University this year. I am the first generation in my family going to Uni and this is a pressure that me and so many people in my situation carry

Recommendations



Electronic aptitude test to deduce learning style, the score to accompany predicted grade



Mitigating circumstances forms



Central appeals process, widen grounds of appeal



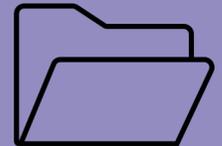
Guarantee external students UCAS PGs



Cool off period between grades and UCAS offers



Unis to prioritise those who missed offers last year



A DfE advisory pack for all GCSE/A level students

Broader Implications



Future
workplace
diversity



Social mobility
becomes
inaccessible



Lack of access to
social capital (e.g.
property ownership)



Deterioration of
mental health
amongst youth