

The 'Impact of COVID-19 on Students' Survey

Key Findings



NHS

Health Education England

Headline Messages

The first COVID wave has changed student experiences in several profound ways:

- The students who were on an extended placement were largely positive about their experience – although anxious about catching up on their academic studies.
- The students who focused on academic studies were very positive about contacting the academic staff but less so about the online learning especially completing learning outcomes.
- Most students are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their careers with BAME students slightly more concerned.
- The reasons behind students thinking about leaving are: academic concerns; being overwhelmed and stressed by the situation they find themselves in; and doubting their clinical ability.
- Student nurses and student midwives are particularly concerned about catching up with their clinical skills.
- White nursing students are concerned about the lack of HEI support whereas BAME AHP students are concerned about mental health challenges.

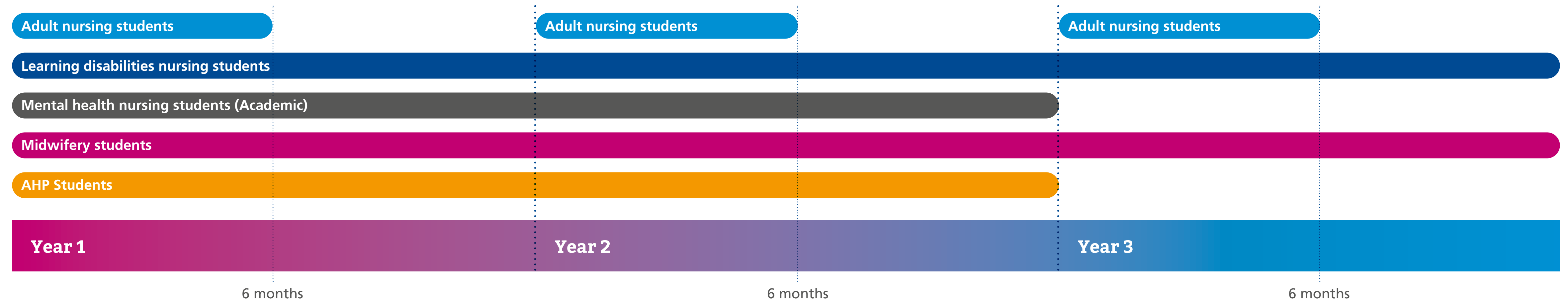


“ Seeing the effect that nurses and other healthcare professionals are having on surviving COVID patients has been inspiring and has assured me that I am on the correct career path.”

Key Recommendations

1. Changing minds

The Health and Care Education sector (HEIs and Service provider Organisations) should focus their activity on particular years and/or disciplines to improve student retention:



2. Tackling concerns

At regional level, HEIs and Healthcare Provider Organisations must work together, with assistance from HEE's regional teams, to support student groups who have the most concerns. These include younger students, BAME students, and those who have reported being overwhelmed and stressed by the situation.

3. Increasing confidence

HEIs should continue to review the online provision to ensure the students are confident that they will be able to achieve the necessary learning outcomes and be clinically competent and confident when they qualify.

4. Repeating the survey

HEE should consider the approach to repeating this survey, early in the New Year, to ascertain how the second wave has impacted on students and to compare and contrast results and outcomes over two points in time, instead of one.

About the Survey

The nursing, midwifery and AHP student experience during wave one of the pandemic – the possible impact of COVID-19 on student retention

In May 2020 Health Education England (HEE) asked the RePAIR (Reducing Pre-registration Attrition and Improving Retention) team to undertake a survey to capture the experience of pre-registration nurses, midwives and AHPs (allied health professionals) during wave one of the pandemic.

Why?

The survey was created to source insights into nursing, midwifery and AHP student experiences and concerns during the first wave of the pandemic, and the potential impact on student retention levels.

When?

The survey was launched at the beginning of June 2020 and ran for one month.

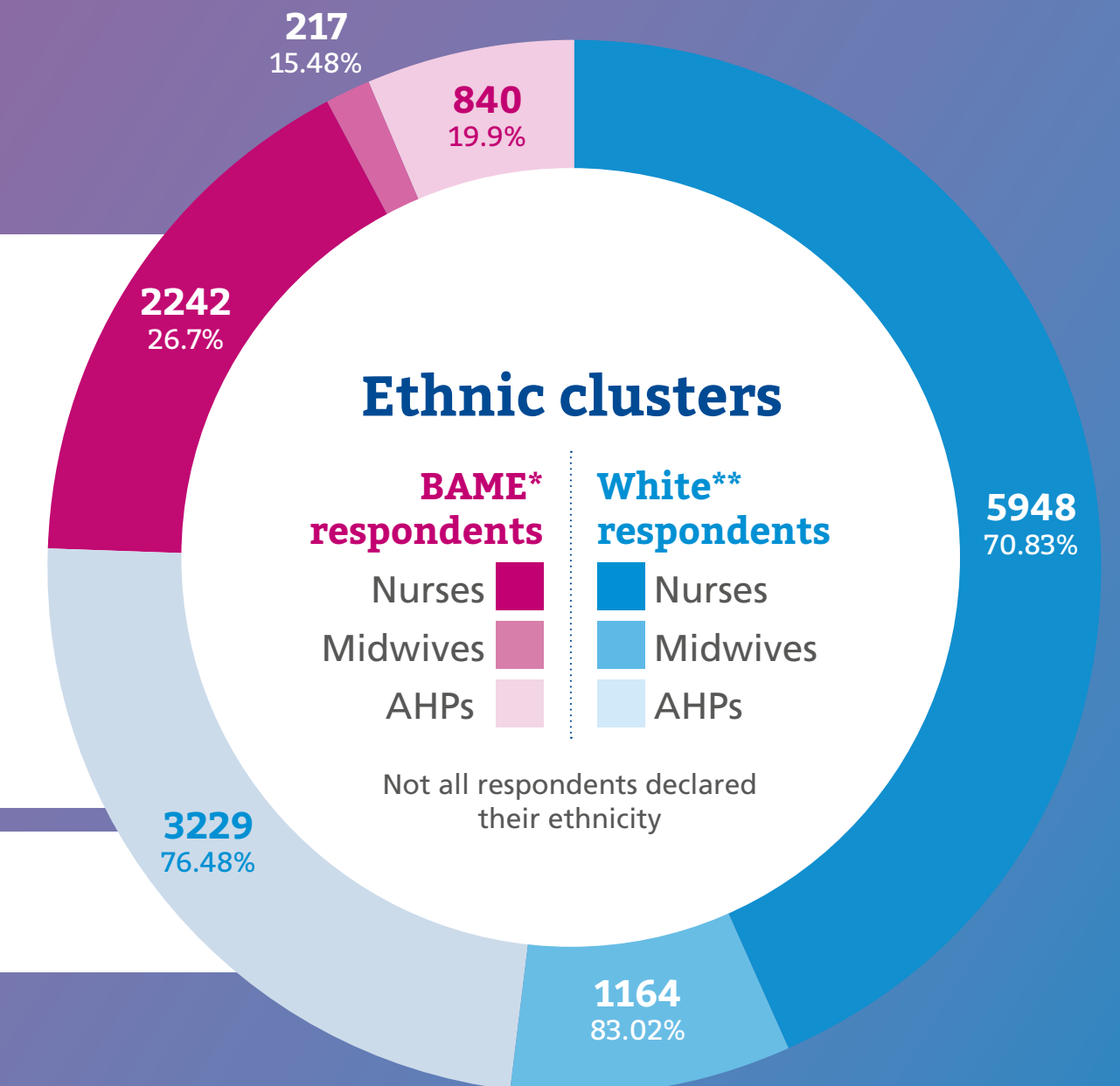
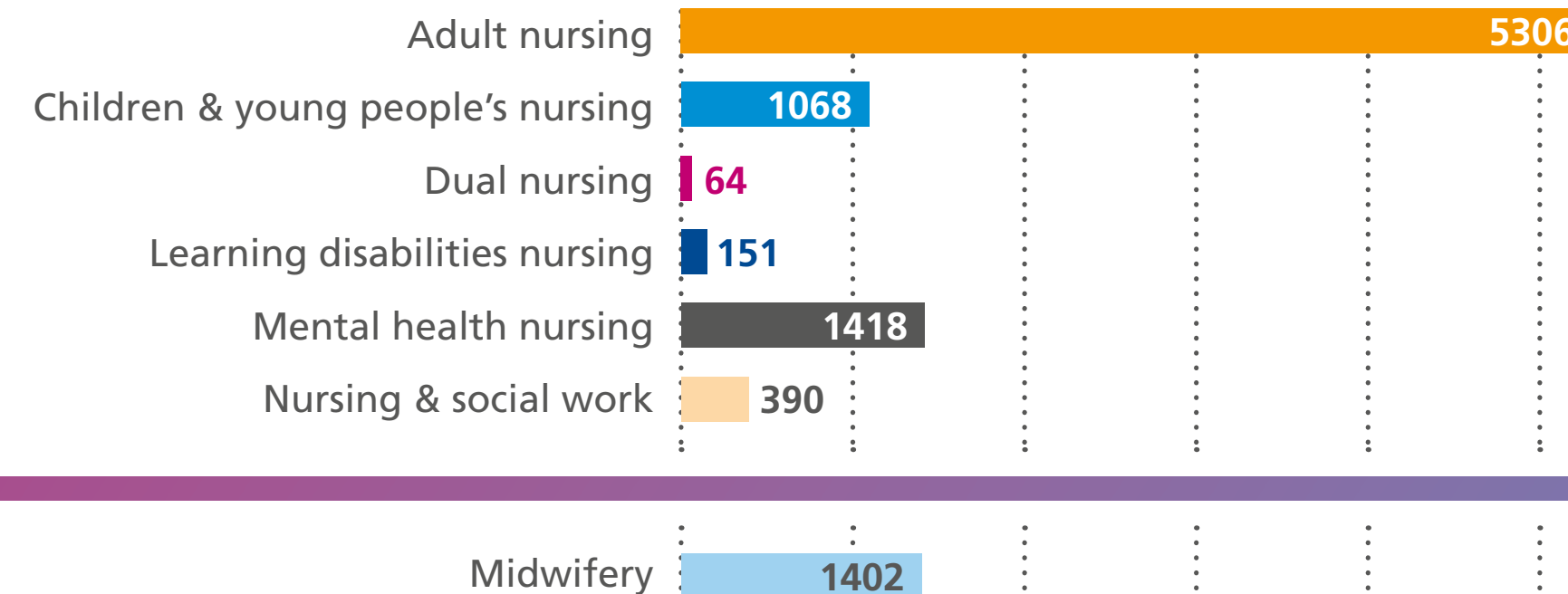
How?

The survey was based on two well established surveys – Health Education England’s RePAIR survey and HEE’s National Education and Training (NETS) survey.

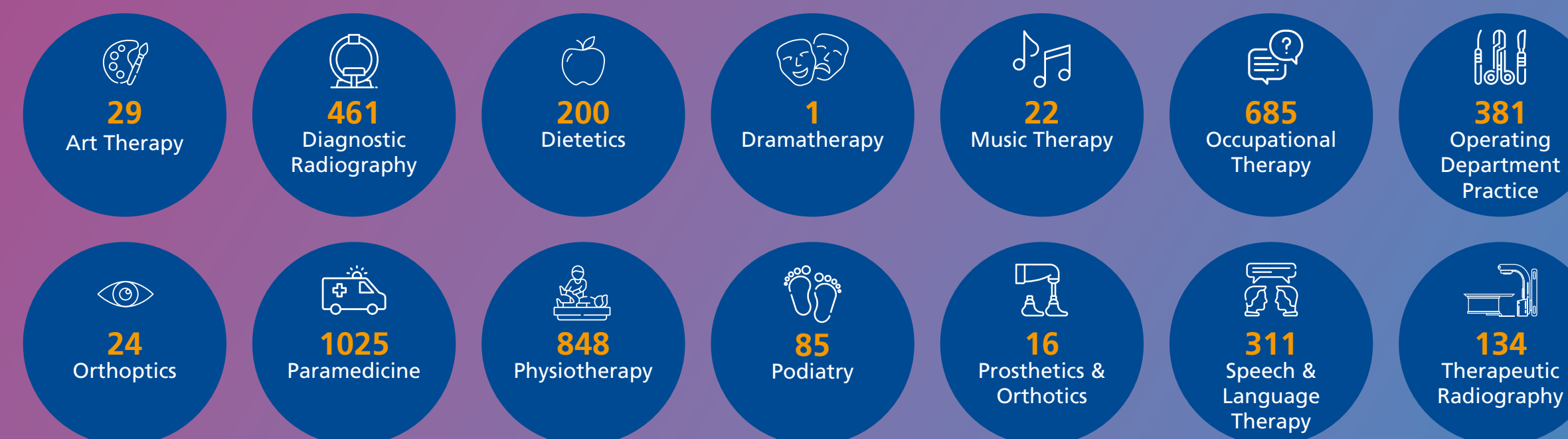
What?

The number of students who responded and the sample analysed was **14,021** which included all the cohorts irrespective of whether they had opted for extended placements or continued on an academic programme.

Nursing and midwifery - 9799



AHPs - 4222



This large data set was systematically analysed against an analysis framework by a team comprised of RePAIR Fellows and the Academic Director to RePAIR.

* Oxford English Dictionary definition non-white communities in the UK ** White British, white Irish & white other

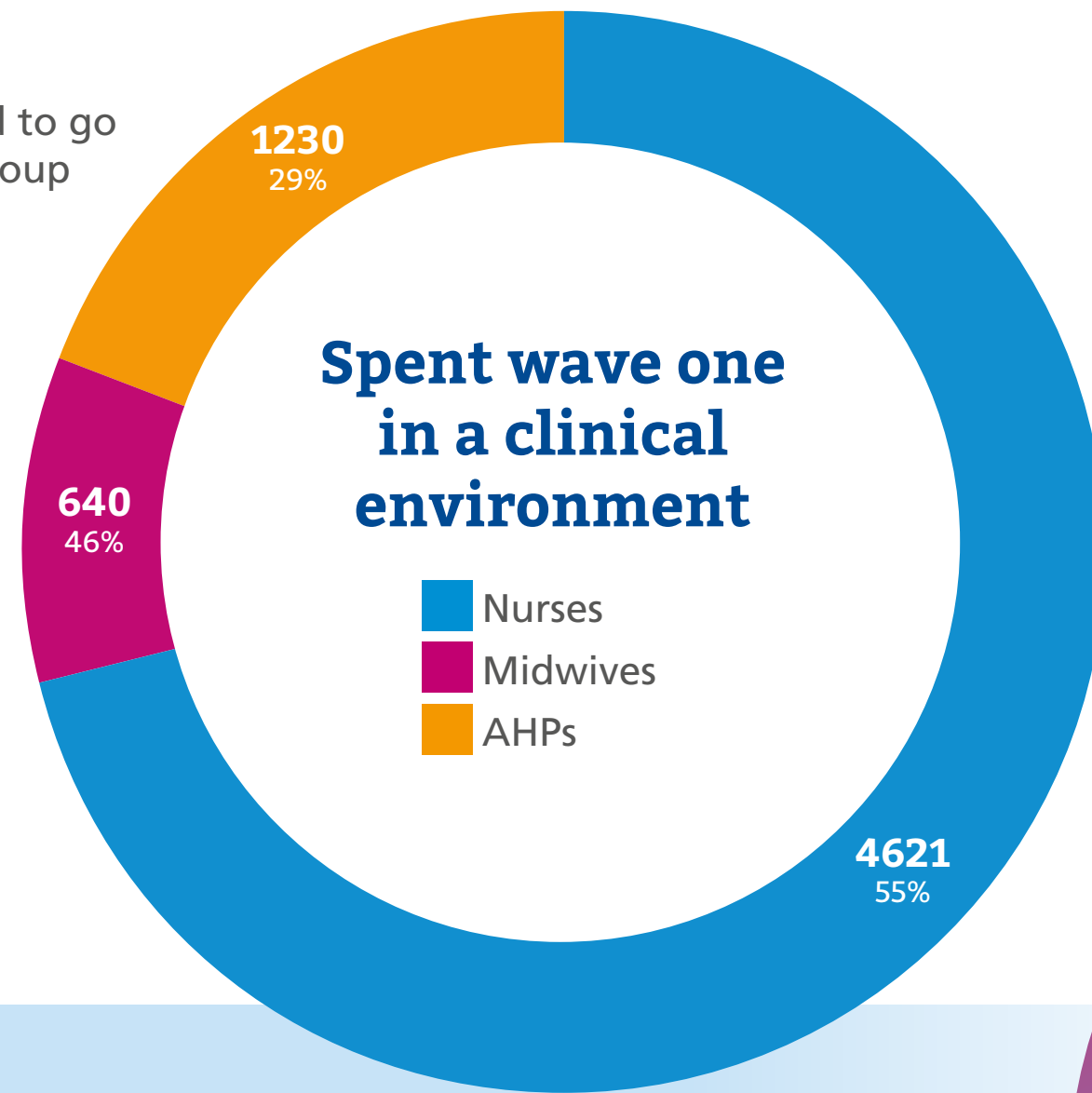
Student Experiences

The survey responses have been grouped according to students:

- who opted for an extended placement during the first wave
- who continued on an academic programme

Students who have been in clinical service facing environments

The majority of these students opted to go into the clinical environment. The group included Year 2 and Year 3 students on an undergraduate programme and those on a postgraduate programme. All were positive about the formal induction (60%), clinical supervision (69%), discussions about their learning needs (59%), and their clinical learning opportunities (63%).



What works well

85%
agreed they were supported in the clinical environment.

84%
acknowledged they received support from academic staff during placements.



90%

stated clinical placements were of a high quality and a good learning environment.



Where we can improve



60%

agreed that they were challenged by the amount of work they were required to do and the complexity of the clinical care.



59%

stated they were concerned about catching up with their academic studies.



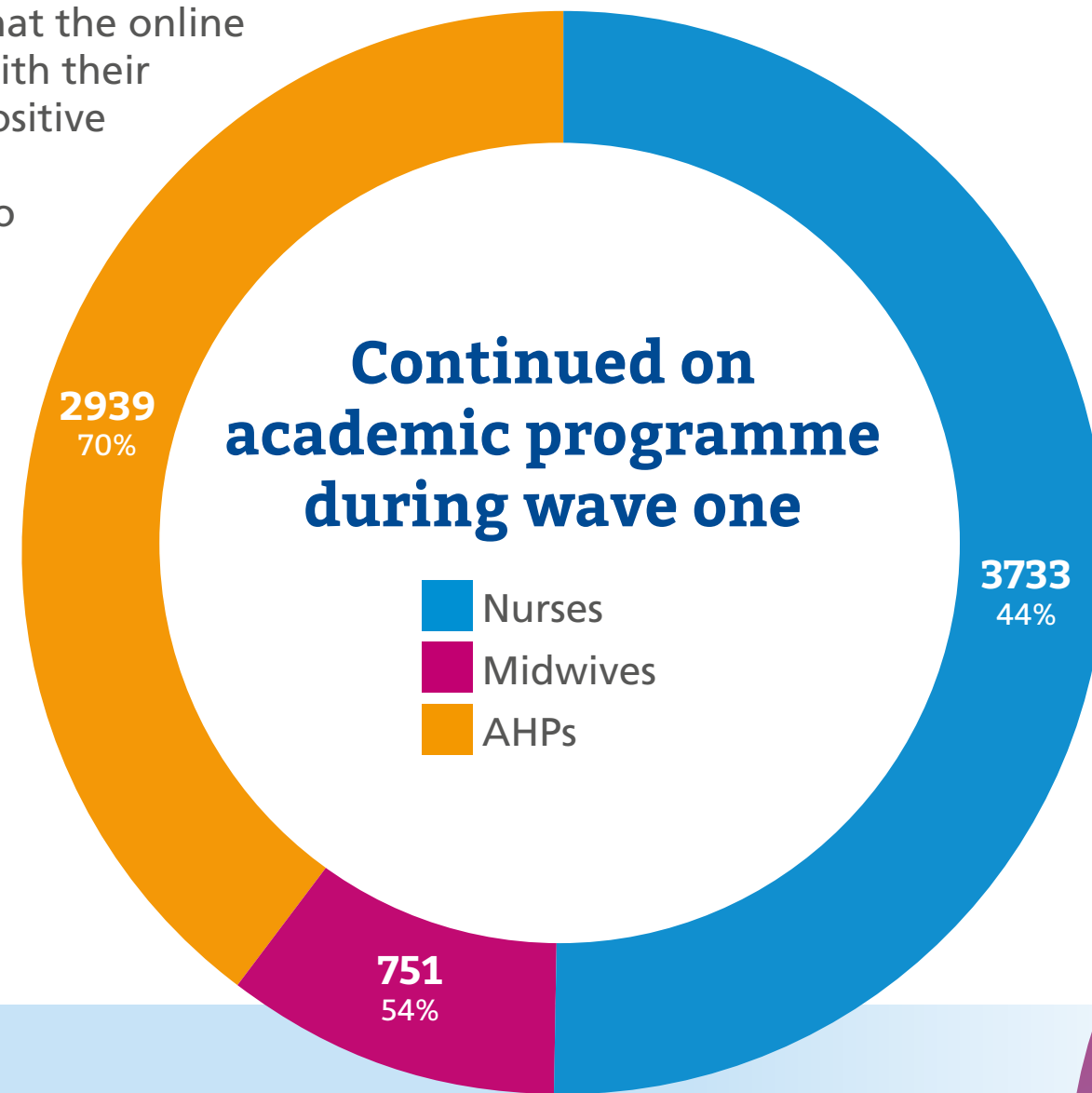
“It has been a privilege and a valuable learning experience to work for the NHS throughout a monumental time in history and I feel it has enriched my learning experience.”

Students who have been HEI-facing

This group comprised of students who spent this time solely on academic study from all groups including the total Year 1 sample.

The students who spent this time solely on academic study reported that they knew how to contact the academic staff (94%) and that the staff were available if they needed to communicate with them (80%).

While sixty-nine per cent reported that the online delivery enabled them to progress with their studies, the respondents were less positive about the extent to which online learning fulfilled the need for face to face contact, with fewer than fifty per cent (43%) agreeing that online learning met this need. Furthermore seventy two per cent agreed that they struggle to complete the learning outcomes in the context of online learning. This group of students are particularly worried about catching up with clinical skills, principally the student nurses and the student midwives.



“Our lecturers are very supportive even though it is online studies, and encourage us to hold on tight as this time will pass.”

What works well



Where we can improve



69%

stated the online delivery enabled them to progress with their studies, however only...



43%

agreed that online learning fulfilled the need for face-to-face contact.



72%

agreed that they struggled to complete the learning outcomes in the context of online learning.



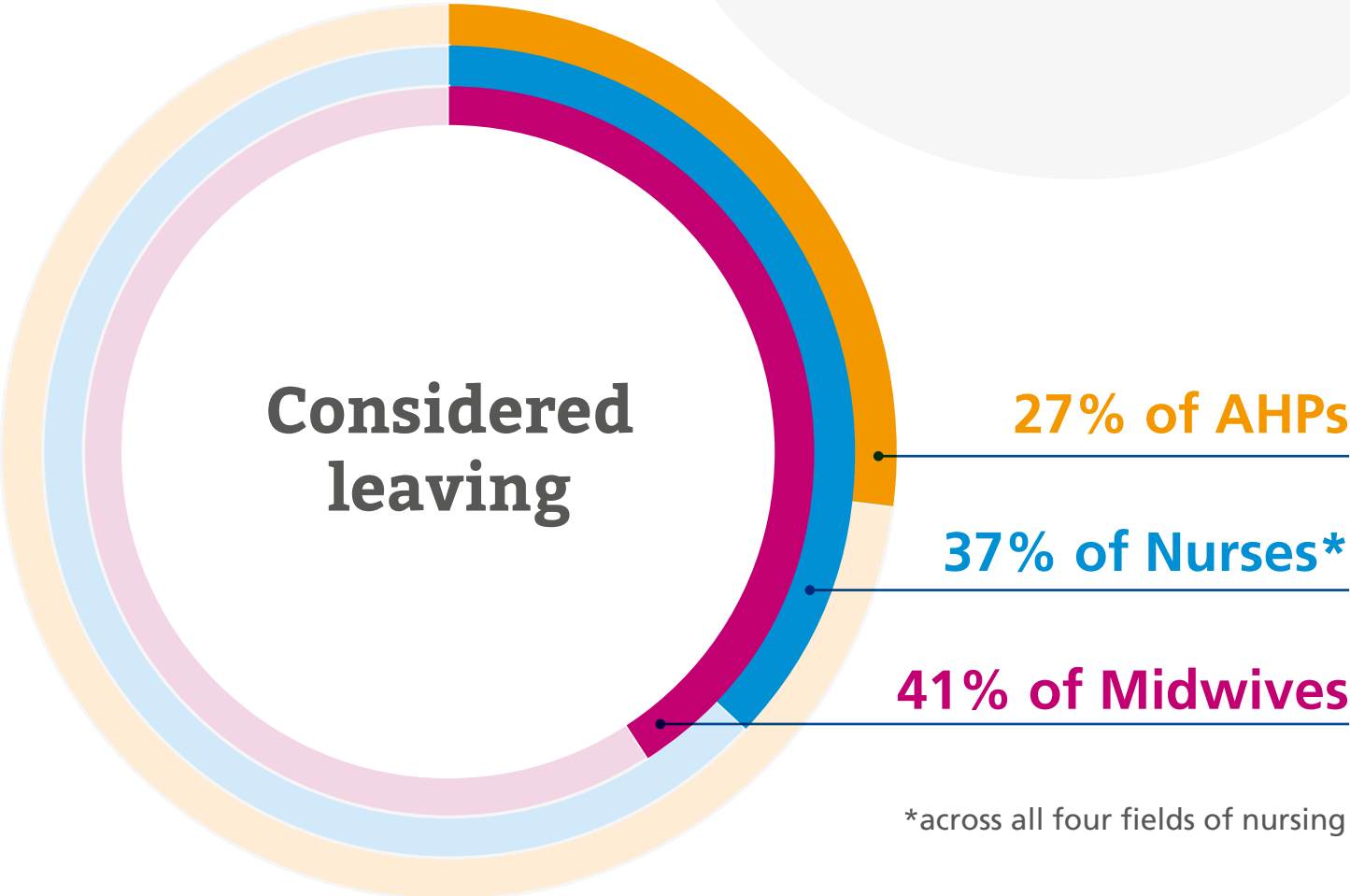
Uncovering Concerns

The pandemic has highlighted several areas of concern for students:

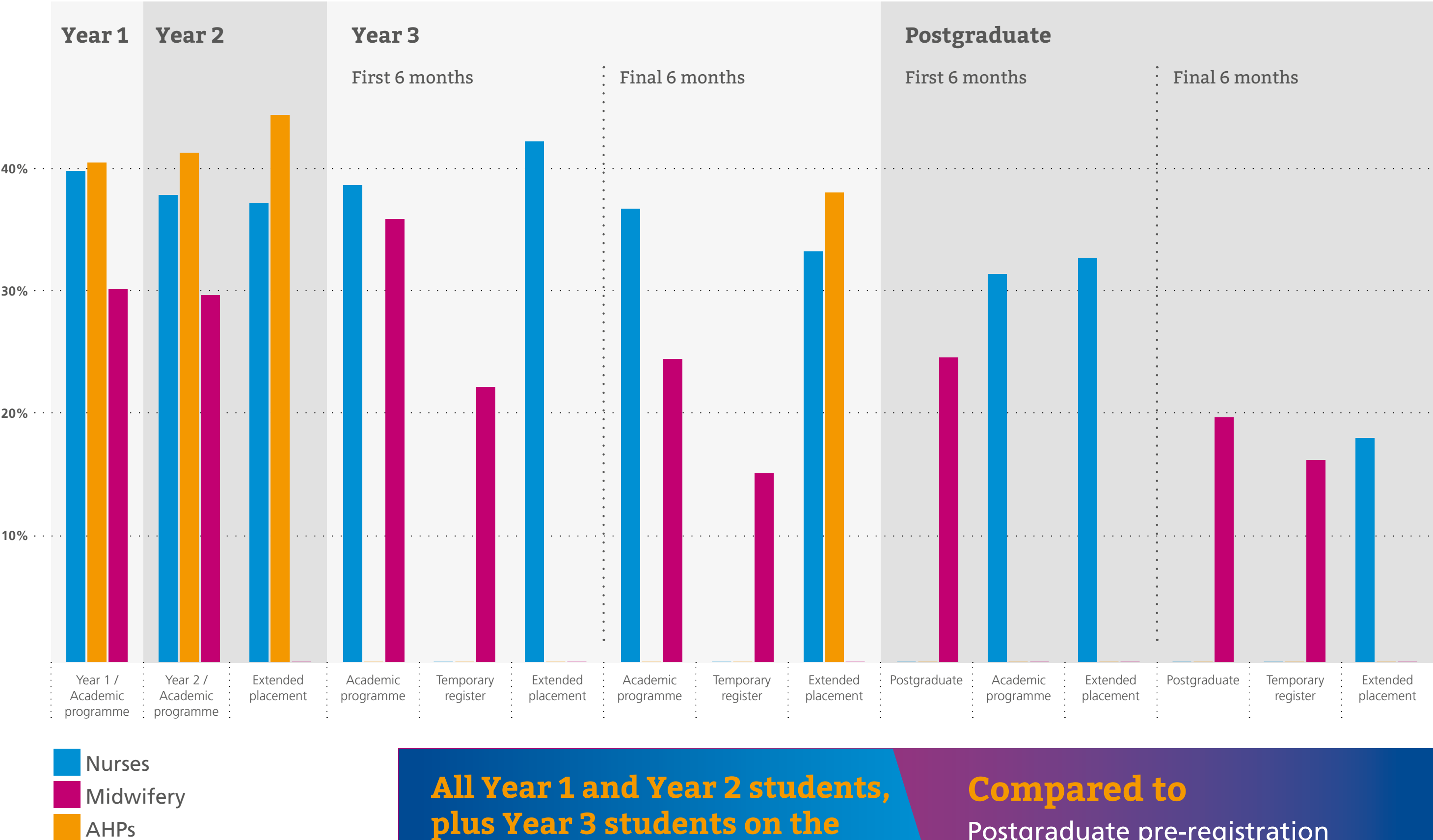
Concerns about future careers

30%

more **BAME students** are anxious about COVID's impact on their future careers when compared to White respondents.



Considering leaving by programme

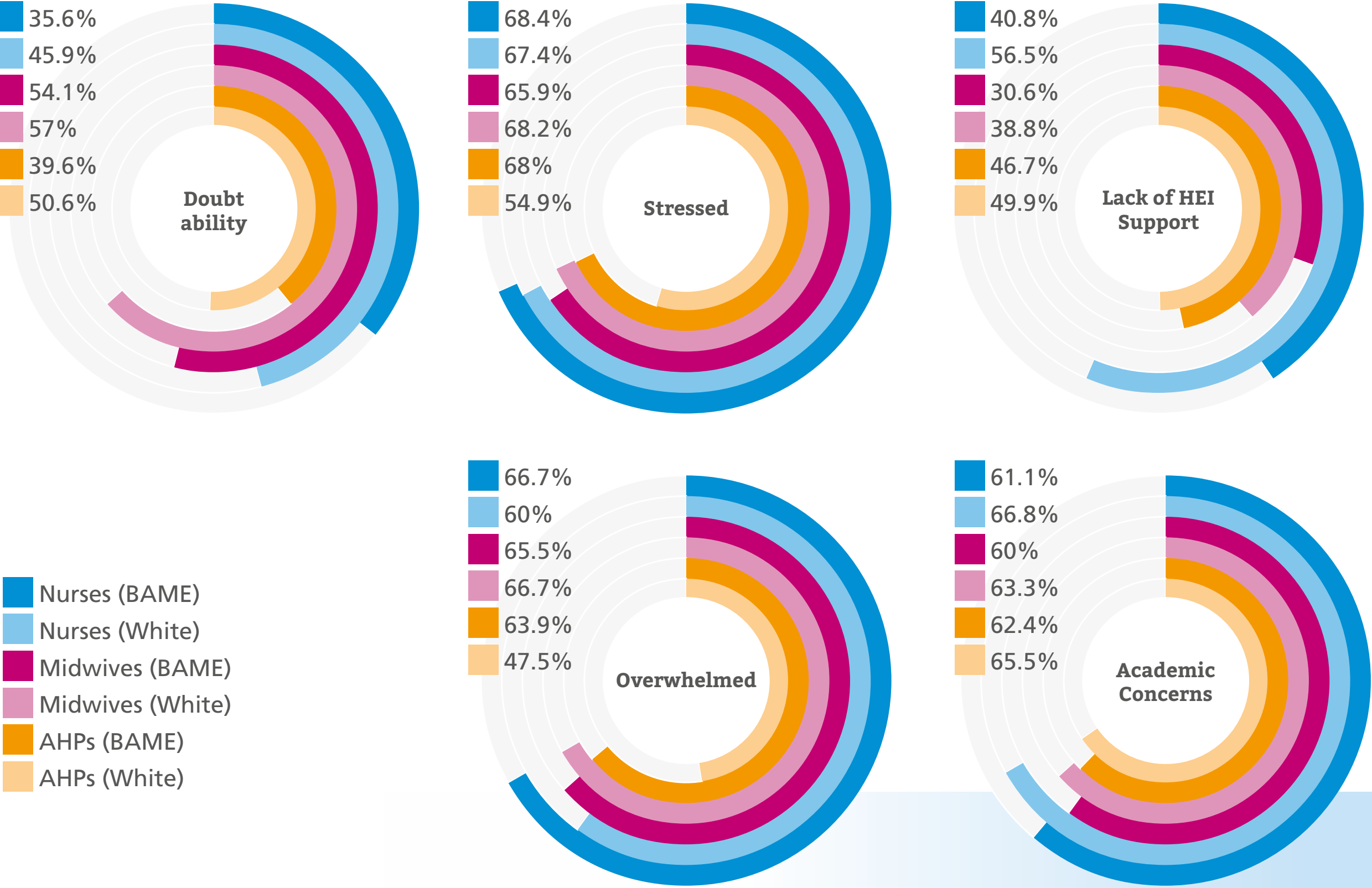


All Year 1 and Year 2 students, plus Year 3 students on the first six months of the course are more likely to consider leaving.

Compared to Postgraduate pre-registration students and students on the final six months of their programme.

Reasons for considering leaving

High concerns



Reasons for considering leaving

Nurses	Midwives	AHPs
Academic concerns	Academic concerns	Similar reasons to midwifery and nursing
Being overwhelmed and stressed by the situation	Being overwhelmed and stressed	But higher stress levels, feelings of being overwhelmed and mental health challenges among BAME respondents compared to White students.
Perceived lack of Higher Education Institution (HEI) support among White students.	Doubting their clinical ability	

Reasons for staying

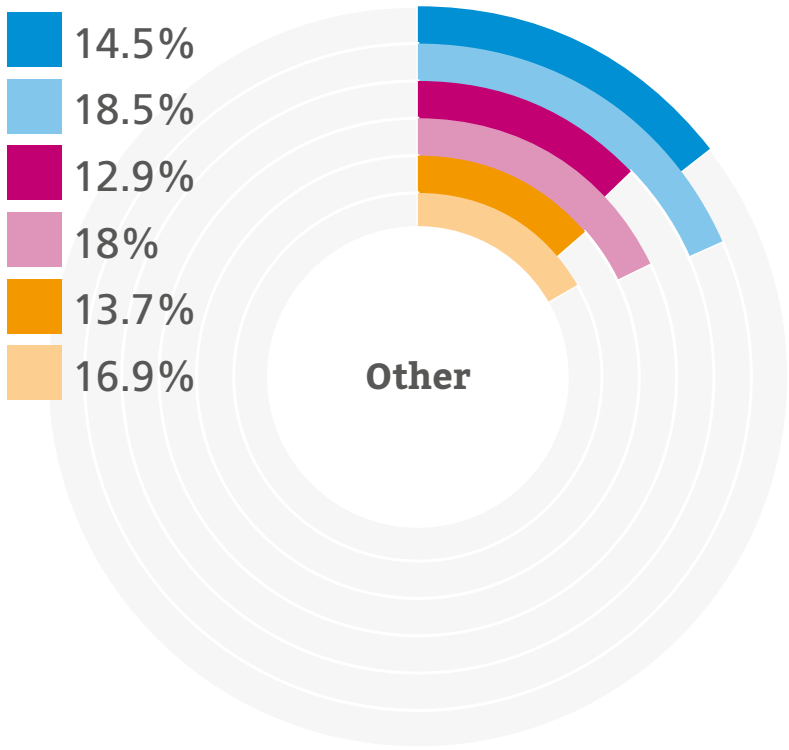
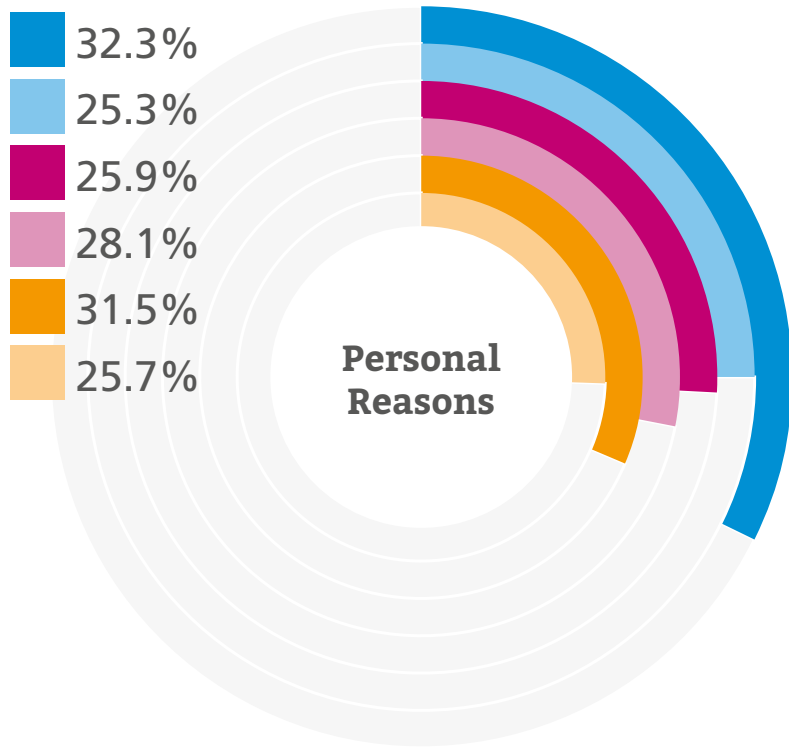
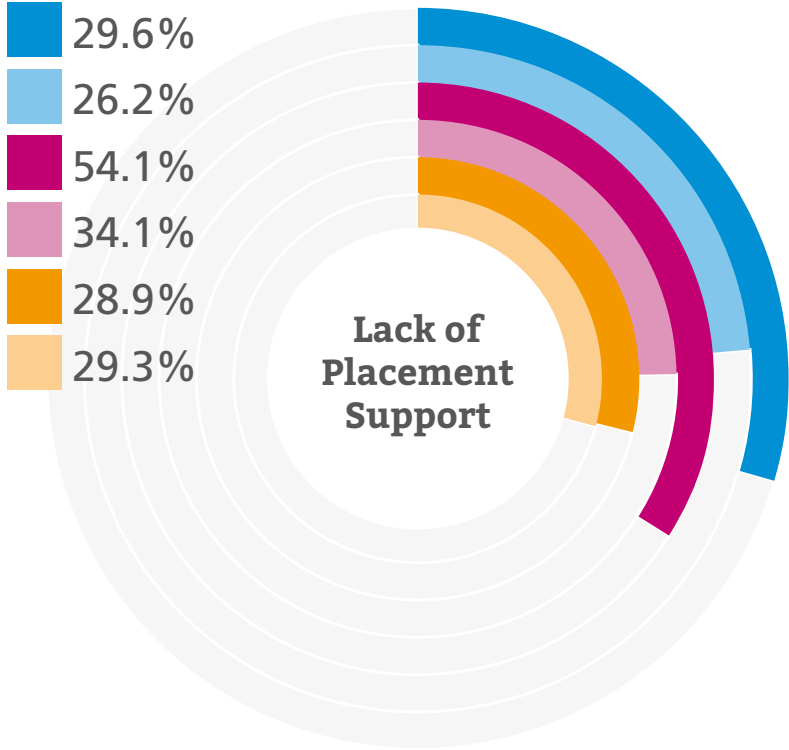
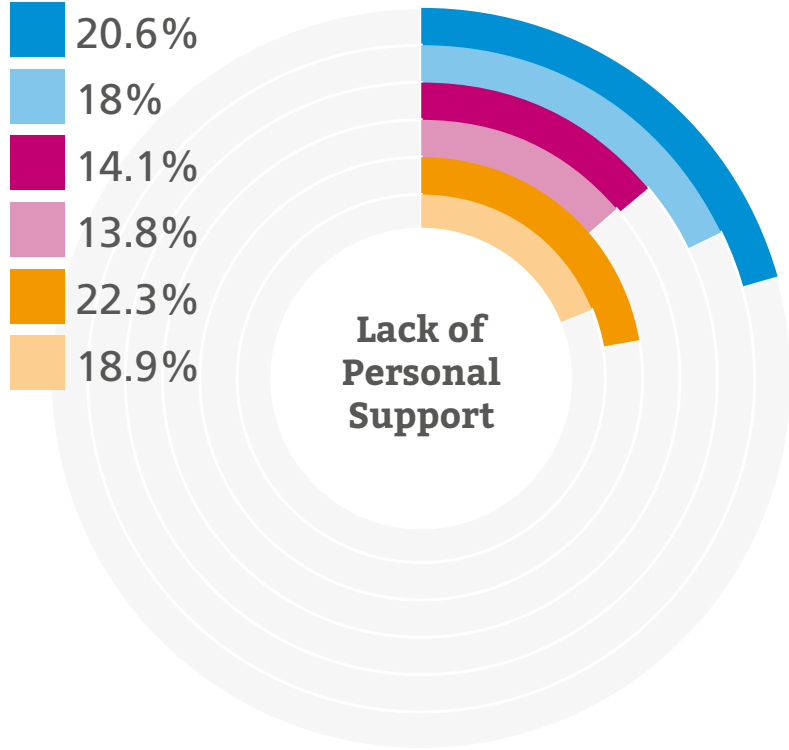
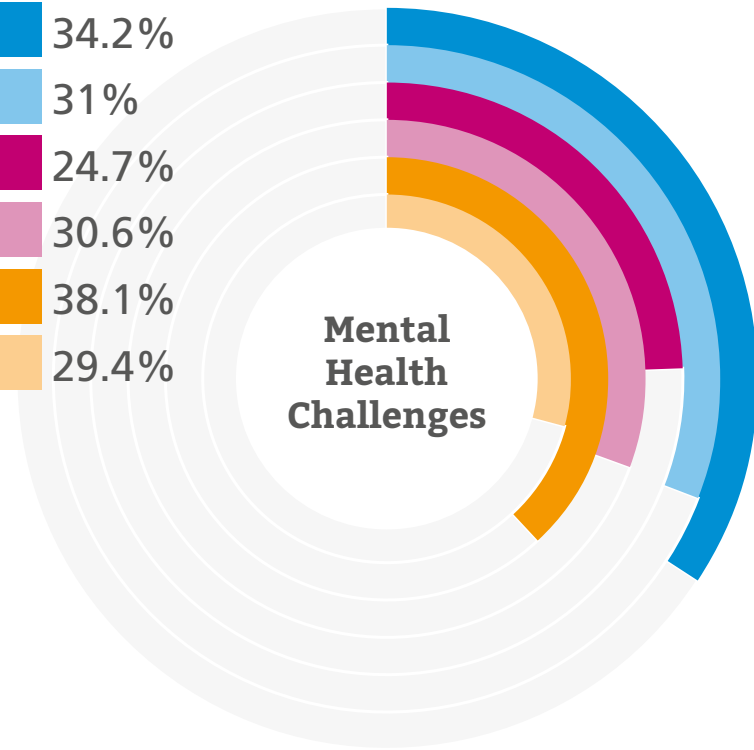
Personal incentives	Professional incentives	Support from others
To finish programmes	Commitment to a career in healthcare	Staff in the university
Amount of time and/or money already invested	Desire to help and care for others	Clinical supervisors
To support family		Family and friends



“The most important thing to me at the moment is to get through this course, graduate and become an occupational therapist so I can help others the way I have wanted to for years. I’m not one to give up.”

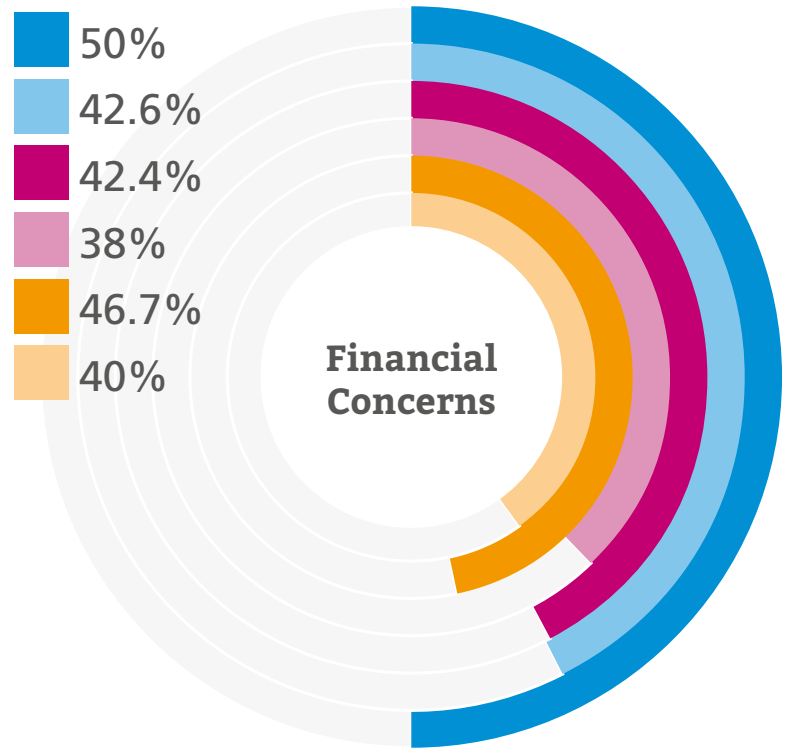
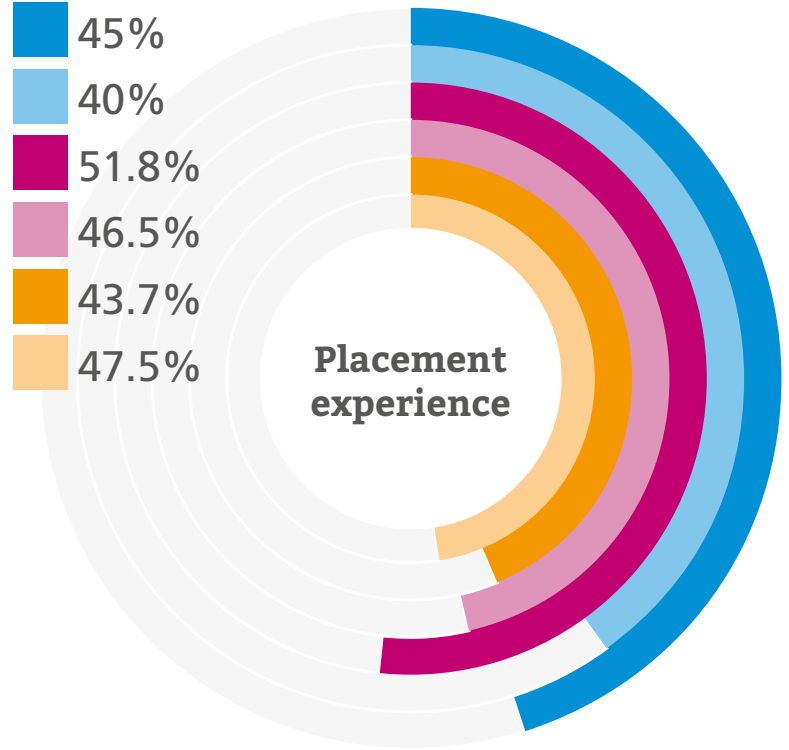
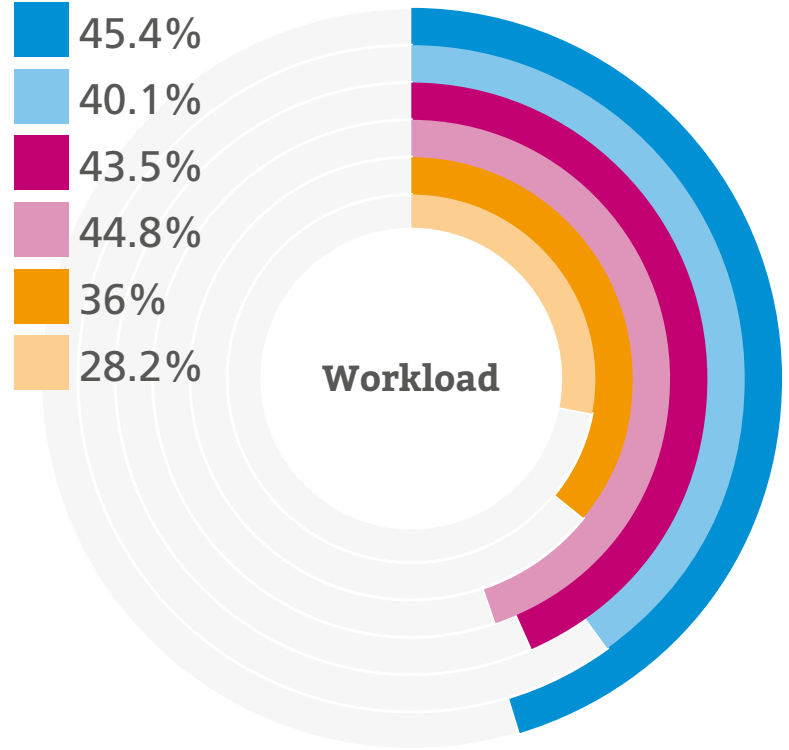
Reasons for considering leaving

Low to medium concerns



- Nurses (BAME)
- Nurses (White)
- Midwives (BAME)
- Midwives (White)
- AHPs (BAME)
- AHPs (White)

Medium to high concerns





The pandemic has only increased the number of people in need and I want to help. I am fit and healthy, and would rather it was myself going into hospitals to help than more vulnerable staff.”

HEE extends grateful thanks to the Council of Deans of Health and the Universities for their help in distributing this survey.

Particular thanks to all the students who took the time to share their experience.

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