

Mental Health and Wellbeing of University Students

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Background

- The pandemic created a range of challenges for HE communities
- Staff & students faced extra strain and uncertainty
- Between 52% and 74% of HE students reported their mental health deteriorated (NUS, 2020; Student Minds 2020)

"Loneliness, social isolation and staying at home the whole day cause me more stress, anxiety, sudden drops of self-esteem and loss of confidence"

"No-one is hiring, student finance doesn't even cover half the cost of my rent. My parents can't just fund my life."

"Long lectures (3 hours) make it hard to stay motivated when staring at a laptop screen and juggling poor Wi-Fi, lack of privacy and disruptions within the home. These issues make it difficult to concentrate"

Student COVID Insights Study (SCIS)

Student COVID Insights Study

- Survey with series of publications from November 2020 – March 2022
- Sample of all university students drawn from NUS
- Assessed student attitudes and behaviours during the pandemic

March 2022

- Average life satisfaction (6.6/10) significantly lower than the adult population in GB (7.0), but not significantly different to 16-29yo (6.6)
- Significantly greater proportion of students felt lonely often or always (17%) compared to the adult population in GB (7%)
- 36% of students reported their mental health and wellbeing had worsened since the start of the Autumn 2021 term (significantly more than in Nov '21)

Student Experiences Insights Survey (SEIS)

First year Higher Education students

In the field: 4-11 October 2021

Methods

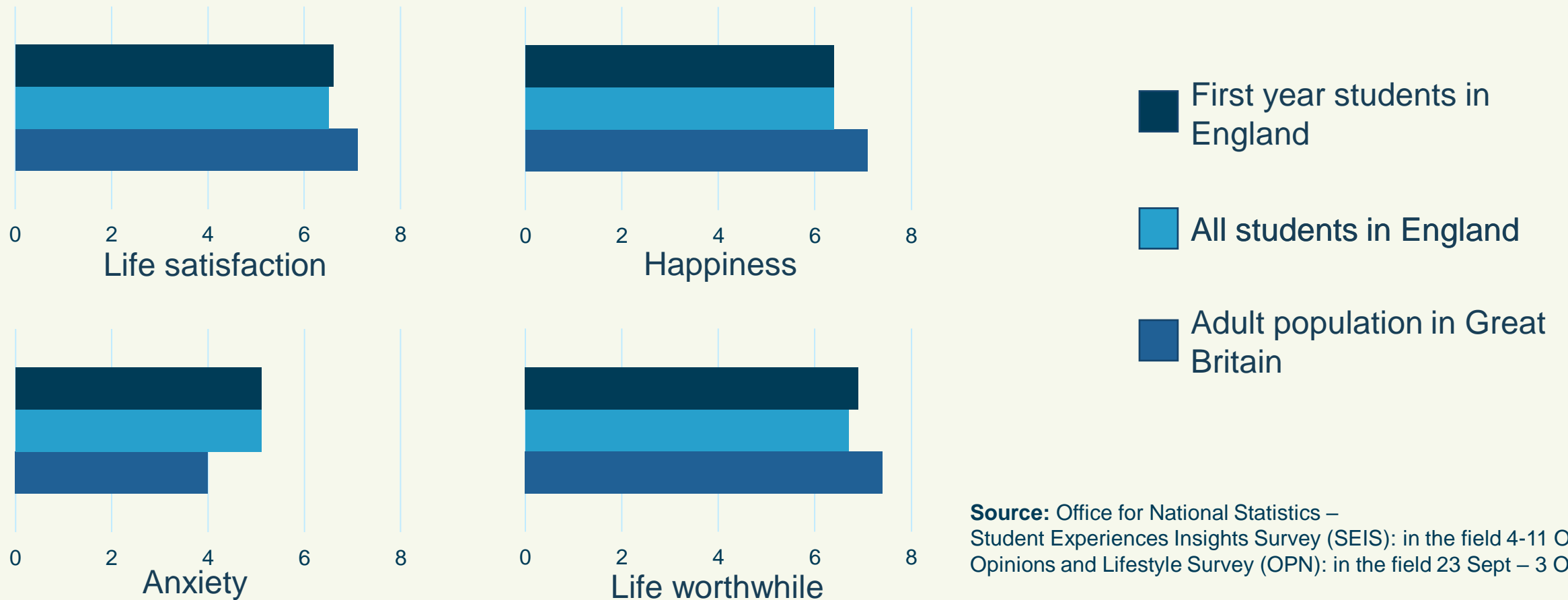
Student Covid Insights Study

- Student attitudes and behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Sample of all university students drawn from NUS
- Series of publications
- The survey wave used for comparison in the next slides was in the field 27/09 – 04/10

Student Experiences Insights Study

- Greater focus on wellbeing and mental health
- Sample of foundation and first year students from 11 HEIs
- One-off product
- Online survey in the field 04/10 – 11/10

Mean wellbeing scores, students and adult population in Great Britain



Source: Office for National Statistics –
Student Experiences Insights Survey (SEIS): in the field 4-11 Oct '21
Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN): in the field 23 Sept – 3 Oct '21

Mental Health Difficulties

	Foundation & first year students	16–29-year-olds in GB	Adult population in GB
Anxiety (GAD7)	39%	28%	16%
Depression (PHQ8)	37%	22%	16%
Eating disorder (SCOFF)	27%	-	-
Eating/body image issues (SCOFF)	23%	-	-

Source: Office for National Statistics –
Student Experiences Insights Survey (SEIS): in the field 4-11 Oct '21
Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN): in the field 23 Sept – 3 Oct '21



Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

- 21% had engaged with wellbeing and mental health services in the last 12-months

	GP/primary care	Private counsellor	NHS/IAPT programme	University services	Don't know
Past use	47%	30%	28%	26%	
Hypothetical future use (in the first instance)	16%	12%	5%	23%	24%

- 70% would prefer face-to-face support should they need it in the future, compared to 13% who would prefer online support

Student Experiences Insights Survey (SEIS)

Third year or higher HE students

In the field: 29 November – 20 December 2021

Headline findings

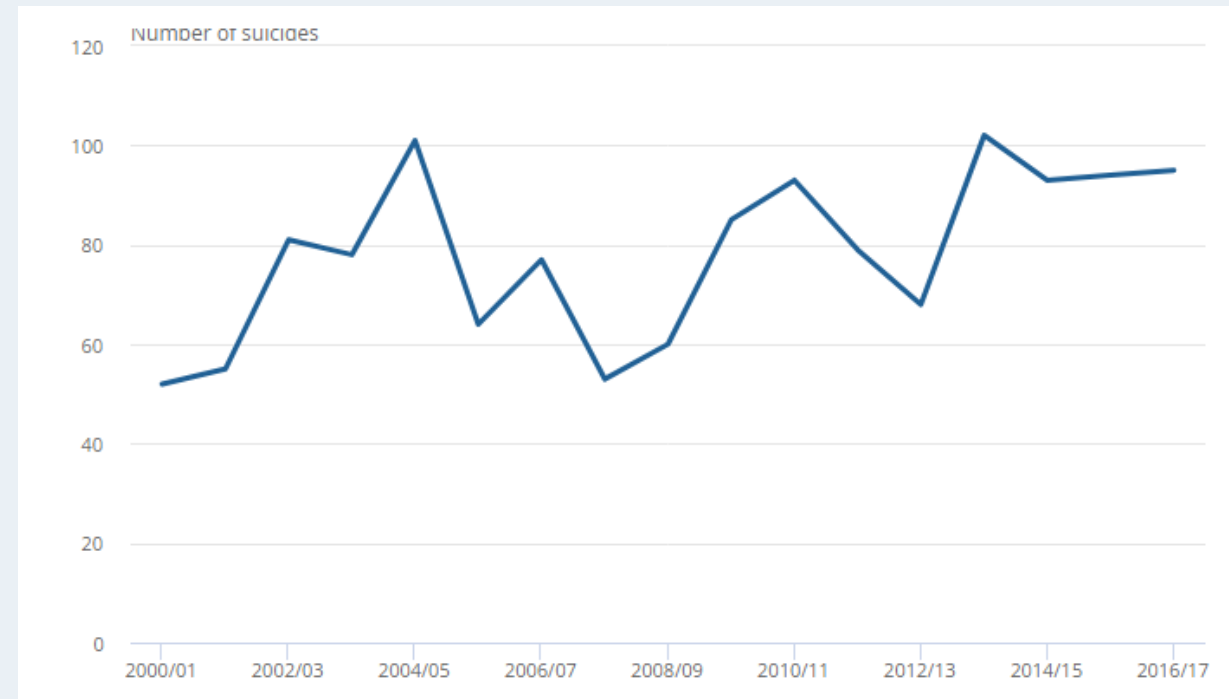
- Third year or higher students were significantly more likely to report their mental health and wellbeing had worsened since the start of the Autumn 2021 term (46%) compared to all students (28%)
- Average life satisfaction was significantly lower among third year or higher students (6.0) than all students (6.7) and the adult population in GB (7.0)
- Two-thirds (67%) of third year or higher students said the pandemic had a major or significant impact on their academic performance, significantly higher than the student population as a whole (48%)
- Half of third year or higher students felt very or fairly likely to achieve the level of attainment they expected at the start of their degree or course

Suicide among HE students in England and Wales

June 2018

Student suicide (mortality records linked to HESA student records)

- 1,330 students died by suicide between the 12-months ending July 2001 and the 12-months ending July 2017
- 878 (66%) male; 452 (34%) female
- 1,109 deaths (83%) undergraduate; 221 deaths (17%) postgraduate
- Median age 26 years
- Current work: updating this analysis to include academic years 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 (publication expected early 2022)



Thank you

Please contact me with feedback, queries, questions:

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