

# NUS demands action on student cost-of-living crisis

NUS is demanding action after not one but *two* new reports were published which reveal the shocking toll the cost-of-living crisis is continuing to have on students.

Furthermore, NUS knows of a *third* report which will be published imminently.

The Office for National Statistics and Save The Student have both published data revealing the stark reality of student misery.

Save The Student's UK-wide survey of over 1,700 students found:

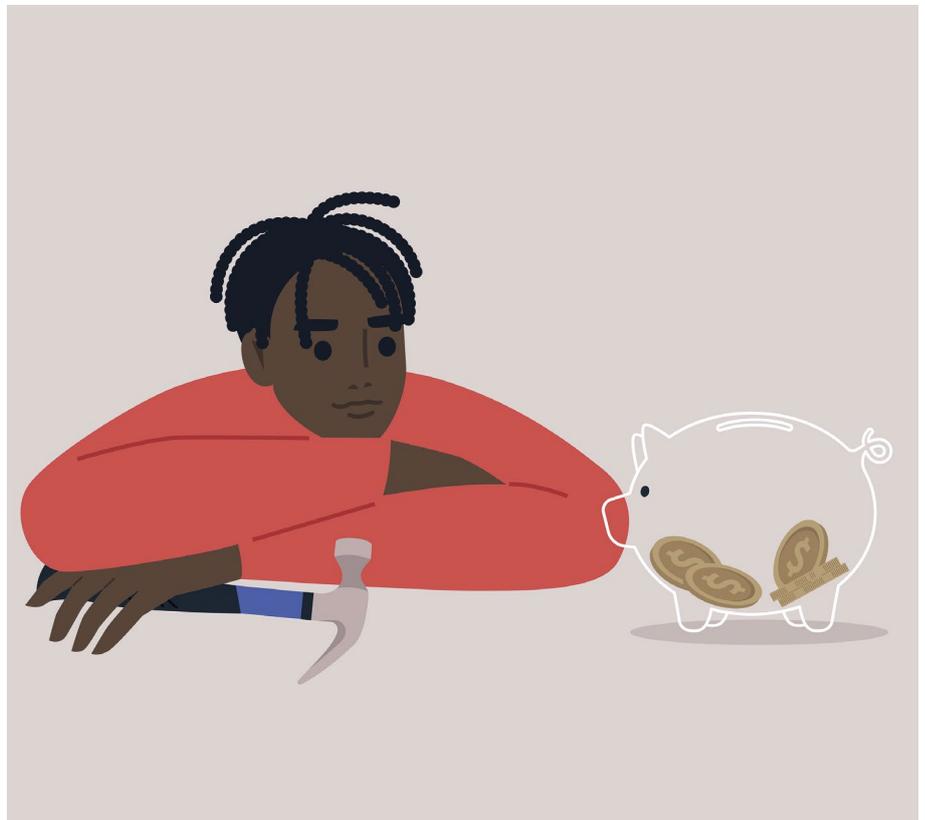
- Average monthly living costs have risen by 17% since 2022
- Below-inflation increases in the Maintenance Loan mean it falls short of living costs by an average of £582 per month, up from £439 per month in 2022
- 18% of students surveyed used a food bank in the last academic year, up from 10% in 2022
- 64% skip meals at least some of the time to save money
- 21% received hardship funding, double the proportion of last year's survey.

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All this has predictably had an impact on students' health:

- 30% report their grades are suffering
- 38% report an impact on their relationships
- 33% report disrupted sleep
- 49% report an impact on their diet
- 55% report poor mental health.

NUS UK Vice President for Higher Education, Chloe Field, said: ‘I am sick and tired of being here again. Report after report, data set after data set, and each paints a picture worse than those that came before. Yet the Government refuses to act,



while no major political party is offering anything to students and young people.

‘Students are the nurses, doctors, teachers and public sector workers of the future. We are the scientists and engineers who will make breakthroughs that transform society, and solve our most pressing issues, such as the climate crisis. Yet all too many are having our futures blighted by poverty and hardship that risks their potential. We urgently need a complete overhaul of our failed HE system. Immediately, maintenance loans must be brought into line with inflation, and a rent freeze and rent controls are needed. Going forward, we need a return to grants instead of loans and an abolition of tuition fees.’

Chief Executive of the BDA Benevolent Fund, Laura Hannon, said: ‘We’re sadly not surprised to see the results of the latest two reports on how difficult it is for students to manage the cost-of-living crisis as it echoes much of our findings in the second survey of UK Dental Students published earlier this year.

‘We identified 93% of UK dental students were worried about the cost of living and 42% of dental students’ respondents were struggling to afford necessities such as rent, food and bills - over double the previous year (18%). A further 38% said that once their rent had been paid for, they had less than £50 per month to live off and the same number said financial difficulty and debt affected their wellbeing. We also found that despite nearly all students being worried about financial pressure, just 25% accessed extra financial support.

‘We would encourage students to reach out to services available to them such as their university’s hardship funds, and charities like ours to see if they can get extra help. However, we would really welcome an immediate review and improvements to the funding and policies around Student Finance and NHS bursary schemes which are adversely affecting dental students particularly those from low socio-economic backgrounds.’