



University of  
Nottingham

International Centre for Public & Social Policy



**THE CURRENT AND  
FUTURE STATE OF  
SOCIAL POLICY  
TEACHING  
IN UK HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS  
2023 REPORT**

Commissioned by the Social Policy Association (SPA)  
to the International Centre for Public and Social Policy  
School of Sociology and Social Policy,  
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Despite all our effort in ensuring accuracy of the information in this report, we apologise for any errors or oversights. We welcome feedback for improvement in the future.

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# FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the Social Policy Association's third report on teaching and learning in higher education institutions across the UK. This survey took place during the Covid-19 pandemic and we are especially grateful to colleagues for completing the survey when pressures on them had intensified.

Teaching and learning is a very important aspect of the work of the Association and the teaching of Social Policy is more important now than ever. Through our teaching we can support the development of passionate and independent learners with the knowledge and skills to contribute to the design and implementation of effective social policies.

The first report, published in 2011, reported concern about the future of Social Policy in light of significant challenges including declining student numbers and recruitment. The 2016 survey found grounds for cautious optimism and, while a complex picture emerged from the most recent findings with many challenges remaining, there is evidence of stability with some growth in the number of courses.

The survey provides us with valuable data on the reorientation and repackaging of some Social Policy courses and it is important that we have a better understanding of current discourses underpinning such developments. We have commissioned work to explore these issues in greater depth. The report makes a number of recommendations, which will be discussed further with the SPA membership so that these can be taken forward. For readers who are not already members of SPA, please do join so that you can participate in these discussions.

I would like to thank the Project Convenor, Ruby Chau for her leadership and Alessio D'Angelo and Libby Steel (PIs), Noor Alabbas, Caitlin Bunce, Ewan Cameron and Glesni Strange for all their work in carrying out the survey and analysing the data.

**Ann Marie Gray**  
Chair of the Social Policy Association



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third SPA-commissioned report on Social Policy teaching in Higher Education Institutions across the UK, following the studies undertaken in 2011 and 2016. Our research included two elements: a desk-based research consisting of an audit of Social Policy provision and an analysis of student numbers; and a national survey with academic staff teaching Social Policy.

## Audit of ‘Social Policy’ Provision

The first element of our study includes an audit of 2021 Social Policy provision in Higher Education Institutions in the UK, undertaken by looking at their respective websites. For the purpose of this audit, we have included programmes which use the term ‘Social Policy’ in their degree title. There are however degrees which do not fit this criterion but nonetheless include a significant proportion of Social Policy themes.

With regard to **undergraduate programmes**, overall, we have identified 16 Higher Education Institutions providing **single honours** ‘Social Policy’ degrees, with a total of 18 degrees. This corresponds to no substantial change in number since the 2011 audit. However, there has been a significant movement within providers, including changes in programmes and programme names. In addition, we have identified 25 institutions offering Social Policy **joint honours** degrees: down from 35 in 2016 and 32 in 2011.

An analysis of the module titles within these programmes reveals the breadth of the **content** which is taught within Social Policy degrees. However, whilst many programmes offer short-term placement opportunities, opportunities for ‘sandwich degrees’ including a year-long placement were rare.

With regard to **Postgraduate Taught programmes** (Master’s Degrees), we have identified 39 named ‘Social Policy’ programmes – an increase from the 35 identified in 2016. PGT programmes have a stronger focus on research methods, technical skills and international dimensions, when compared to undergraduate modules.

The last 10 years have seen an overall increase in **entry requirements** for single honours UG programmes, as well as significant increase in fees for international students. Both at UG and PGT level, these fees positively correlate with language requirements (measured through IELTS certificates).



## HESA data on student numbers

By looking at the data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) we sought to measure the number of ‘Social Policy’ students at UK institutions. The results vary significantly depending on the classification used.

According to the JASC (Joint Academic Coding System) for ‘Principal Subject’ (Social Policy), in the 2019/2020 academic year there were 3,185 first year ‘Social Policy’ students at undergraduate level and 3,285 first year postgraduate students. This marks a significant increase since 2014/2015 (when the entrance numbers were respectively 2,680 and 2,385). The last 5 years have also seen an increase of international students, both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. What has remained unchanged is the gender ratio, with a significant predominance of female students (75% at undergraduate level and 63% at postgraduate level).

An alternative measurement is offered by the Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS), which refers to the ‘Named Subject’ – an approach which corresponds more closely to the one we adopted in our audit. On the basis of this definition, in 2019/2020 there were 1,865 first year undergraduate students and 950 first year postgraduate students.

As an overview, the numbers of social policy courses and students are both increasing as compared to the results of the previous reviews. This may give some reassurance to social policy teaching providers across the HE Sector. However, our survey results also show an uneven distribution of this growth which may concern some providers more than the others.

## Survey with ‘Social Policy’ teaching staff

Our survey targeted staff teaching Social Policy in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the UK. We collected a total of 127 responses, spread across the different regions and nations, but with a predominance of participants from England (85). 60% of respondents worked at Russell Group universities – which make up only 15% of UK HEIs and 40% of universities offering Social Policy programmes found in this study (Table 2.2 on p.18) – suggesting an overrepresentation of Social Policy teaching at these institutions.

Participants were asked to identify their **level of concern** on a range of issues in their current teaching, scoring these between 1 (extremely concerned) and 4 (not at all). A large proportion of respondents were particularly concerned about workload, work-related stress, poor work-life balance and lack of administrative support, with an average score of 1.80, 1.94, 2.0 and 2.32 respectively.

Specific questions were asked about what the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted upon – with each issue to be rated on a scale between 1 and 5. Most respondents agreed the pandemic had led to an increase in workload regarding administration, teaching, and provision of student support (with average scores of 4.0, 3.8 and 4.1 respectively). At the same time, most participants also agreed during these unprecedented times they had been learning new skills (4.0); although few reported better relationships with colleagues (average score of 2.2) or students (2.1).

We also asked questions about the recently introduced Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), though nearly half of the respondents said they knew nothing or very little about it. Overall, 67% of the participants thought the TEF was relevant to their institution. Among these, many thought “[TEF] has increased my workload in teaching administration” (and average score of 3.5) or that it had increased teaching and assessment time (3.1). The statement “[TEF] had helped improved my teaching practice” saw an average score of only 2.2 (with agreement measured on a scale between 1 and 5).

Looking at the future, participants were asked to select what they felt were the top 5 main challenges facing Social Policy in the next 5 years. The higher numbers of responses were expressed for ‘Commercialisation of Higher Education’ (58%), followed by staff fatigue (56%), low morale (56%) and poor recruitment of students (55%).

The following section of the questionnaire focused on social policy teaching at the respondents’ own institution. The question about changes in the past five years produced very mixed results. Many observed a decrease in the number of social policy teaching staff (41%), although a significant number reported an increase (36%). Likewise, although 46% of respondents reported a rise in student numbers, 35% reported a decrease or no change at all. These aggregate results, however, hide a significant divide between different types of institutions. In particular, staff at Russell Group universities were more likely to report the creation of new programmes and an increase in social policy teaching staff, whilst those at post-1992 university were more likely to report a decrease in staff and the amalgamation of their department with another one within the university.

Respondents from Russell Group universities were more likely than post-1992 staff to predict an increase in Social Policy teaching staff, and introduction of new programmes, and new distance-learning programmes specifically. Overall, undergraduate student numbers were predicted to remain similar, whilst the number of PGT and international students were expected to rise.

Finally, respondents were asked about the role of the Social Policy Association (SPA) – of which 49% reported to be a member. With regard to what the SPA could do to address their concerns regarding Social Policy Teaching, 46% suggested the provision of training courses and events, and the further development of teaching and learning resources (42%). Many respondents were also eager for the SPA to report their concerns to university management (45%). The promotion of Social Policy as a discipline was also seen as important. In particular, 54% supported the ideas of a marketing campaign for school and college students, and 61% were in favour of exploring the possibility of developing Social Policy as an A-level subject.

# 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This is the third in a series of reports on the state of Social Policy teaching in UK higher education institutions. With the previous two studies that took place in 2011 and 2016 respectively, it would have been ideal to complete this in 2021. However, the unprecedented challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic had delayed decisions about the commissioning of this study, which eventually started in Summer of 2021 and was completed in the Autumn of 2022. Building on the previous reports, this offers a timely opportunity for Social Policy academics to raise concerns and share insights amid a global crisis and during challenging times for the higher education sector.

Since the early 2000s, there have been concerns about the future of the discipline. Some of these were discussed back in 2004, during a plenary session at the SPA annual conference entitled ‘Where next for Social Policy?’<sup>1</sup>. In the SPA newsletter in which the conference was reported, Paul Spicker named his article ‘Saving Social Policy’ and started it with the statement ‘Social Policy is in deep trouble.’<sup>2</sup> Eighteen years later, some people in the Social Policy community may still share the same sentiment, since some of the challenges raised back then are still of concern in 2022. Examples include the decreasing number of Social Policy students across the country and the closure of several Social Policy degree programmes. Besides, the intensifying commercialisation and marketisation of higher education in recent decades have led to new challenges, such as the sharp increase in university fees, fierce competition among institutions, and tightening financial and administrative control from university management. These problems are of course shared across the university sector but can have a disproportionate impact on degrees within the Social Sciences – a subject area which is already been ‘under attack’ for a long time.<sup>3</sup>

1 Policy World Editorial Team (2004) Where Next for Social Policy, Policy World: Newsletter of the Social Policy Association, Autumn, available at [https://social-policy.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PolicyWorld\\_Aut04.pdf](https://social-policy.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PolicyWorld_Aut04.pdf) [accessed 5 September, 2022]

2 Spicker, P (2004) Saving Social Policy, Policy World: Newsletter of the Social Policy Association, Autumn, available at [https://social-policy.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PolicyWorld\\_Aut04.pdf](https://social-policy.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PolicyWorld_Aut04.pdf) [accessed 5 September, 2022]

3 See e.g.: Brandmayr, F. (2021). Social science as apologia. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 24(3), 319–337.; and: Ziyad, M. (2014). “Social science is no ‘poor cousin.’” *The Bookseller*, no. 5606, p. 10.

However, not everybody is convinced that Social Policy has a gloomy future. In the 2011 report, Patrick et al<sup>4</sup>. cited the Joint University Council for Social and Public Administration<sup>5</sup> highlighting that ‘Social Policy has faced difficulties before and has survived.’ This is to some extent supported by the findings of the 2016 study, which showed more HEIs were offering single subject/single honours Social Policy undergraduate degrees in 2016 than in 2011, and that the provision at taught master’s level had remained broadly stable<sup>6</sup>. After a detailed analysis by institutions, the 2016 report further argued that ‘course closures reflected a repackaging of course offerings rather than institutional crises’.

Against this complex and changing background, the continuation of five-yearly studies would be worthwhile. These regular reviews of Social Policy teaching in UK higher education institutions could serve five main purposes:

- 1. To provide an overview of the latest Social Policy teaching provision in higher education in the UK;**
- 2. To provide comparable data for the observation of changes in Social Policy teaching provision over time;**
- 3. To identify and facilitate mutual learning of the strategies used by different institutions in sustaining and promoting Social Policy teachings**
- 4. To provide recommendations to the SPA and other stakeholders (such as higher education managers) on actions to sustain and promote Social Policy; and**
- 5. To engage Social Policy academics in the continuous discussion of challenges and potentials in the development of the discipline.**

To meet these purposes, the current study follows the 2011 and 2016 studies in including two main components: a desk-based research which is composed of an audit of social policy teaching provision and an analysis of student numbers; and an online survey. The former aims to collect and collate information on the current social policy

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4 Patrick, R; Brown, K and Drever, E. (2011). The Current and Future State of Social Policy Teaching in UK HEIs, Social Policy Association (SPA) and Social Policy and Social Work Subject Centre (SWAP), available at <https://social-policy.org.uk/about/teaching-and-learning-2/> [accessed 5 September 2022].

5 Joint University Council for Social and Public Administration - JUCSPC (1979) Teaching Social Policy and Administration in Britain and Ireland, London: JUC for Social and Public Administration.

6 Mackinder, S. with Hudson, J. (2016). The Current and Future State of Social Policy Teaching in the UK Higher Education Institutions: 2016, Social Policy Association, available at <https://social-policy.org.uk/about/teaching-and-learning-2/> [accessed 5 September 2022].

teaching provision and student numbers in higher education institutions in the UK. The latter serves to engage social policy teachers in the ongoing discussion of issues in Social Policy teaching and its future development.

In addition to what was covered in the previous studies, this review collects additional information such as EDI characteristics of the survey respondents and includes questions about recent and present concerns, such as the introduction of the Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF), the rapid changes in teaching delivery modes as a result of COVID, and the current call for diversifying and decolonising the curriculum.

This report consists of five parts. After this short introduction, Part Two introduces the research design. Part Three presents the main findings of the desk-based research. This is followed by the online survey results (Part Four). The final part (Five) presents our recommendations as informed by the study.



## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN

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Defining Social Policy in higher education is no easy task. HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) defines social policy succinctly as “the study of the policies of institutions which are designed to modify the balance of sociological factors”<sup>7</sup> and there are plenty of programmes called ‘social policy’ at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, highlighting the continued currency of social policy as a defined subject. Yet, most practitioners, academics and students would agree that, as a broad discipline, Social Policy stretches far beyond the boundaries of the subject as named. Intuitively, we know that there are elements of Social Policy in subjects and disciplines such as criminology, sociology, politics, economics; after all, what is the point of philosophising on policy without praxis to achieve aims? Thus, identifying social policy programmes can be challenging, as certain courses that can be seen to be Social Policy may not be named as such. This creates an unavoidably subjective element to the identification of Social Policy programmes.

In order to present a more rounded picture of the current status of the subject / discipline, we decided to adopt three main research strands:

- 1. An audit of Higher Education Institution websites to identify and analyse Social Policy programmes available in the 2021/22 year.**
- 2. The collection of data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to analyse student entrance numbers.**
- 3. An online survey of social policy teaching staff to collect and collate their views and perceptions on the current state of social policy teaching and learning.**

### **2.1 THE AUDIT OF SOCIAL POLICY TEACHING PROVISION**

Part of the remit of this report is to produce quantifiable, comparative data that can track the trends of social policy in academia; yet, with such a wide presence of Social Policy in higher education, we realised that attempting to capture all instances of Social Policy would be an impossible task and would always require an arbitrary cut-off point somewhere. This was also noted by the authors of the 2016 report who wrote that, while some peripheral programmes were very similar to Social Policy in everything but name, others only included a minor social policy element<sup>8</sup>. Some universities also use the term Social Policy to denote a cluster of related subjects. For example, while the Open University offers no programme with Social Policy in the title, it provides a range of undergraduate programmes and an MA in Criminology which are grouped together

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7 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/jacs/jacs3-detailed>

8 Ibid



on its website under the heading 'Social Policy & Criminology'<sup>9</sup>. Similarly, the University of York offers a Global Crime and Justice MA, under a suite of programmes under the 'Social Policy' banner<sup>10</sup>.

Thus, we concur with the authors of the previous audits in 2011 and 2016 that, for the task of providing a comparative list of Social Policy programmes available to undergraduates and postgraduates in the UK, the best method was to simply define a Social Policy programme as any programme that had Social Policy in the title. While we note that this method obviously misses programmes which are ultimately Social Policy in everything but name, as mentioned above, we see that this method is less arbitrary than making a subjective decision for each and every programme that has Social Policy elements. This method also captures the currency that "Social Policy" has for students, allowing us to appreciate the validity of the subject in its own right in HEIs today.

The audit followed the template set by the 2016 Edition with a few additions. We documented Universities, Programme titles, Entry requirements, Home Fees and International Fees. As suggested in the 2016 report (p.45), to provide more information for the marketing of Social Policy programmes, we included an audit of the Career Options mentioned on programme websites. With a seemingly growing recruitment base from outside the UK, we also chose to add international student language entry requirements as a variable. There are a variety of English language credentials available for students and most universities allow a range of these (e.g. TOEFL, PTE Academic). We chose IELTS as it was common to most universities in the list.

The data gathering process took place during the summer of 2021 and involved manually searching university websites to assess their provision of Social Policy courses (defined as above) for the 2021/22 year. The list of universities was taken from The UniGuide, a comprehensive university advice service developed from The Student Room and 'Which?'<sup>11</sup>. While we made every effort to thoroughly check each website, we note that some university websites were far from user-friendly when it came to accessing available courses and thus we apologise if any Social Policy courses are missing from the audit. We also began to document the value of programmes in the ways they appeared to prospective students through textual analysis. By referring to the programme information pages on university websites, we recorded the titles of core modules and the potential careers that the Social Policy degrees could lead to. By recording the module titles, we hoped to gain a better understanding of how Social Policy is taught and the dominant themes within. On the other hand, by recording the careers associated with the degree we also gained insight into the potential instrumental value of the degree for students.

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9 <https://fass.open.ac.uk/social-policy-criminology/qualifications>

10 <https://www.york.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/courses/ma-global-crime-justice/>

11 <https://www.theuniguide.co.uk/about/universities>

The data thus collected – and summarised in the tables below – are also presented in the form of word-clouds in Part 3 of this report.

**TABLE 2.1 - REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF HEIS WITH SOCIAL POLICY PROGRAMMES**

REGION	NUMBER	HEIS (NAMES IN A SHORT FORM)
East Midlands	3	Lincoln, Loughborough, Nottingham
East of England	1	Anglia Ruskin
London	4	Birkbeck, Canterbury Christ Church, LSE, UCL
North East	1	Teesside
North West	5	Central Lancashire, Liverpool, Liverpool Hope, Liverpool John Moores, Salford
South East	3	Kent, Oxford, Southampton
South West	3	Bath, Bristol, Marjon
West Midlands	3	Aston, Birmingham, Wolverhampton
Yorkshire and Humberside	4	Leeds, Leeds Beckett, Sheffield, York
Northern Ireland	2	Queen's University Belfast, Ulster
Scotland	5	Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde, West of Scotland
Wales	4	Bangor, Cardiff, Cardiff Metropolitan, Swansea

**TABLE 2.2 - TYPE OF HEIS WITH SOCIAL POLICY PROGRAMMES**

TYPE	NUMBER	HEIS (NAMES IN A SHORT FORM)
Russell Group	15	Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, LSE, Nottingham, Oxford, Queen's University Belfast, Sheffield, Southampton, UCL, York
Post-1992	13	Anglia Ruskin, Canterbury Christ Church, Cardiff Metropolitan, Central Lancashire, Leeds Beckett, Lincoln, Liverpool Hope, Liverpool John Moores, Marjon, Swansea, Teesside, West of Scotland, Wolverhampton
Pre-1992 not in the Russell Group	10	Aston, Bangor, Bath, Birkbeck, Kent, Loughborough, Salford, Stirling, Strathclyde, Ulster

## **2.2 THE ANALYSIS OF STUDENT NUMBERS**

In addition to identifying individual programmes offered by HEIs, as listed on the respective websites, we also collected data from HESA (the Higher Education Statistics Agency) to analyse student entrance numbers for programmes classified as social policy.

Previous SPA audits used the JACS 3.0 (Joint Academic Coding System) classification in order to assess student enrolment<sup>12</sup>. This included all programmes coded under L4 (Principal subject = 'Social Policy'), which are listed in the table below<sup>13</sup>, also detailing the four-digit sub-subject codes. This umbrella classification is much broader than the one used in our audit, which only looks at named Social Policy programmes.

For the 2019/2020 cohort, HESA began to transition to a new method of categorising students: the Higher Education Classification of Subjects (HECoS). In order to serve researchers wishing to assess comparative data, HESA also devised a Common Aggregation Hierarchy (CAH) which links the two classifications to each other (though there are some mismatches).

As part of this report's remit is to provide comparative historical data to previous years, our methodology is somewhat path dependent. Therefore, in order to provide comparative data of student demographics to previous SPA reports, we use the JACS 3.0 principal subject classification from 2014/15 to 2018/19 and then in 2019/20 use the CAH classification. It is important to note that, although efforts have been made to ensure consistency, we cannot guarantee a complete correlation in HESA's classifications of Social Policy as a principal subject in the transition from JACS to CAH.

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12 This broad definition is generated by using the HESA filter 'principal subject' in the relevant databases

13 Source: HESA <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/support/documentation/jacs/jacs3-detailed>

**TABLE 2.3 – DETAIL OF JACS 3.0 DETAILED (FOUR-DIGIT) CODES UNDER ‘SOCIAL POLICY’ (L4 ‘PRINCIPAL SUBJECT’ CODE)**

JACS 3.0 CODE	PROGRAM	PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION
L400	Social Policy	The study of the policies of institutions which are designed to modify the balance of sociological factors.
L410	UK Social Policy	The study of the policies of UK institutions which are designed to modify the balance of sociological factors.
L420	International Social Policy	The study of the policies of international institutions which are designed to modify the balance of sociological factors.
L430	Public Policy	The study of policies implemented by local and central governments to influence sociological factors.
L431	Health Policy	The study of policies implemented by local and central governments to influence the public health of societies.
L432	Welfare policy	The study of policies implemented by local and central governments to provide support for vulnerable and under-privileged members of society.
L433	Education Policy	The study of policies implemented by local and central governments to provide for the educational needs of society.
L434	Transport Policy	The study of policies implemented by local and central governments to provide for the transportation needs of society.
L435	Security Policy	The study of policies implemented by local and central governments to uphold and defend the structure and authority of the state.
L436	Emergency Services Policy	The study of policies implemented by local and central governments to support the emergency services.
L437	Criminal Justice Policy	The study of policies implemented by local and central governments to influence and support criminal justice in society.
L490	Social Policy not elsewhere classified	Miscellaneous grouping for related subjects which do not fit into the other Social Policy categories. To be used sparingly.

## 2.3 ONLINE SURVEY

### 2.3.1 Survey Design

To generate comparable data, the questionnaire for the current study was designed on the basis of that used for the 2016 report. Several questions were kept unchanged. Some were modified accordingly to the latest ONS guidelines (such as the questions on sex and gender) or to facilitate the data analysis process (such as the questions on the names and locations of the respondents' institutions). New questions were added to capture the EDI characteristics of the respondents (such as questions on gender, sexual orientation and disabilities). A section on the impact of current issues such as the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the COVID pandemic were added. Some open-ended questions were included to allow respondents to share their views in their own words.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections<sup>14</sup>.

- **Section A is about the respondents' personal information, such as sex, age, sexual orientation, disabilities and ethnicity, years of experience in teaching social policy and SPA membership.**
- **Section B is about their jobs, such as the types of their institutions, the name of their departments, their job titles and employment status, the teaching and assessment methods they used, and the subjects they taught and coverage of EDI issues in their teaching.**
- **Section C focuses on the impact of major changes in the last five years on the respondents' teaching, including the Teaching Excellent framework and the COVID pandemic.**
- **Section D contains questions about the respondents' observation of changes in their institutions in the past five years and their forecast of possible changes in the next five years. Changes include the variations in the student numbers, the modification of the social policy degree programmes and variations in staff numbers.**
- **The final section provides the space for respondents to share their views on matters not covered by the questionnaire.**

### 2.3.2 Survey dissemination

In order to distribute the survey, we created our own list of possible Social Policy teaching staff in the UK. To collate this, we visited the websites of all HEIs included in the desk audit and identified all possible Social Policy teachers within those institutions. We decided to be more inclusive in this selection, as those contacted could decide whether to complete the survey based on a self-ascribed Social Policy teaching role. 493 individuals were invited to complete the survey via emails sent on 26th-28th May.

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14 The full text of the questionnaire is available in Appendix I

Reminder emails were sent throughout June and July. The Social Policy Association also helped with publicising the survey via email and social media. Overall, 127 responses were received.

### 2.3.3 Research ethics and limitations

For this study, we followed the stringent research ethics procedures of the University of Nottingham (School of Sociology and Social Policy)<sup>15</sup> whilst also adhering to the principles identified by the SPA. These required to guarantee, among other things, secure storage of the data and the anonymity of all participants. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee at the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Nottingham in April 2022.

Our survey managed to capture a number of responses (127) in line with previous surveys and with our expectations – although with 40 fewer responses than in 2016. Participants were allowed to skip questions they preferred not to respond to; so for several questions there are fewer than 127 responses (the total number of responses is indicated in each table or figure). Moreover, it must be acknowledged that, as in all online surveys, there is a significant element of ‘self selection’. In this case, our sample is characterised by an over-representation of staff on more stable, senior posts, and an under-representation of more junior, part-time or casually contracted teachers.

The size of our sample would not allow for very complex, multi-variate statistical analysis. Nonetheless, we argue that the statistical distribution presented in Part 4 of this report presents an important overall picture of the situation, experiences, concerns and expectations of Social Policy teaching staff in UK Higher Education Institutions. Finally, it is worth highlighting that some of the concerns expressed by our respondents – e.g. with regard to unmanageable workloads and the marketisation of higher education – would be shared by other colleagues across different disciplines.

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15 See: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology/research/ethics/index.aspx>



## 3. **DESK-BASED RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### 3.1 PROGRAMME AUDIT

#### 3.1.1 Single honours degrees

The 2011 and 2016 audits reported, respectively, 16 and 17 providers of single honours Social Policy degrees. In 2021, we found 16 providers, a decrease of one from the previous report. Among these providers, we found a total of 18 single honours programmes; whilst this number is consistent to 2016, there has been a relatively significant movement within providers.

The University of Bristol, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Leeds Beckett University have had all established single honours programmes since 2016, whilst Anglia Ruskin University, Liverpool Hope University and University of Wolverhampton have closed their programmes. Of all these universities, only three offered a single honours programme but no joint honours programme. These were the University of Glasgow, Leeds Beckett University and University of Salford. Both the University of Edinburgh and the University of Kent offered Social Policy with Quantitative Methods as part of a Q-Step program, which were still present in 2021. The University of Kent also offered a 'BA Social Policy', therefore holding two single honours programmes. Similarly, the University of Bristol offered 'BSc Social Policy' and 'BSc International Social and Public Policy', a new programme since 2016.

Cardiff Metropolitan University, Canterbury Christ Church University and Leeds Beckett University all established social policy programmes in 2021. However, 12 universities closed their programmes in 2021. These universities were Anglia Ruskin University, Bolton University, University of Brighton, Central Lancashire University, Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, London Metropolitan University, Loughborough University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Middlesex University, University of Southampton, St Mark & St John (Marjon) University and the University of Warwick.

As of 2021, there are a total of 29 HEI's offering a social policy programme. Out of these 21 HEI's, only 3 offer a single honours programme, 10 only offer a joint honours programme and 14 offer both a single and joint honours programme.

The University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow both offer their social policy programmes as an integrated masters. These are both four-year courses that contain three years of undergraduate study and one year of postgraduate study. Meaning that students would graduate with a master's degree instead of a bachelor's degree upon completion of the course.

The full list of these programmes is provided on Table 3.1.



**TABLE 3.1 - UNDERGRADUATE SINGLE HONOURS 'SOCIAL POLICY' PROGRAMMES, 2021**

INSTITUTION	NAME OF PROGRAMME	HOME (UK) FEE (£/YEAR)	INTERNATIONAL FEE (£/YEAR)	SER (A LEVEL)	SER (UCAS TARIFF POINTS)	IELTS
Bangor University	BA Social Policy	9000	15000	BBC-CCC	96-112	6
Cardiff Metropolitan University	BSc Applied Social Policy	9000	13000	BCC	104	6
Leeds Beckett University	BA Social Policy	9250	13000	BCC	104	6
LSE	BSc International Social and Public Policy	9250	22430	AAB	136	7
Swansea University	BSc Social Policy	9000	16000	ABB-BBB	120-128	6
Ulster University	BSc Social Policy	9250	14910	BCC	104	6
University of Bath	BSc Social Policy	9250	18900	AAB	136	7
University of Birmingham	BA Social Policy	9250	19320	ABB	128	6.5
University of Bristol	BSc Social Policy	9250	20100	AAB	136	6.5
University of Bristol	BSc International Social and Public Policy	9250	20100	AAB	136	6.5
University of Edinburgh	MA Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods*	9250	22000	AAB-ABB	128-136	6.5
University of Glasgow	MA Social & Public Policy*	27,750 (4 years)	19350	AAB-BBB	120-136	6.5
University of Kent	BA Social Policy	9250	TBC	BBB	120	6.5
University of Kent	BA Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods	9250	TBC	BBB	120	6.5
University of Leeds	BA Social Policy	9250	20250	ABB	128	6.5
University of Lincoln	BA Social Policy	9250	14400	BCC	104	6
University of Salford	BSc Social Policy	9250	14400	CCC	96	6
University of York	BA Social Policy	9250	18350	BBB	120	6.5

Figure 3.1, below, compares the entry requirements for new and previous programmes. The old UCAS Tariff Point data were converted to the new Tariff system created in 2017 to ensure consistency. When a range was given for an entry requirement, the midpoint was taken, a method consistent with the 2016 audit.

Looking at the providers present across all three audits, it is possible to see a general increase in entry requirements across all providers. Of these, nine universities retained their entry requirements since 2016, four increased theirs and only one (the University of Edinburgh) decreased them. Consistently with 2016, the vast majority of providers require at least BBB at A Level, although three (the University of Salford, Ulster University and Lincoln University) set the entry requirement at a lower level.

As well as domestic entry requirements, we also looked at the English Language Entry Requirements for each programme, using IELTS as a measure. As shown in Table 3.1, there appears to be a general association between higher UCAS Tariff Requirements and higher requirements of IELTS.

**FIGURE 3.1 - ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR SINGLE HONOURS UG PROGRAMMES**

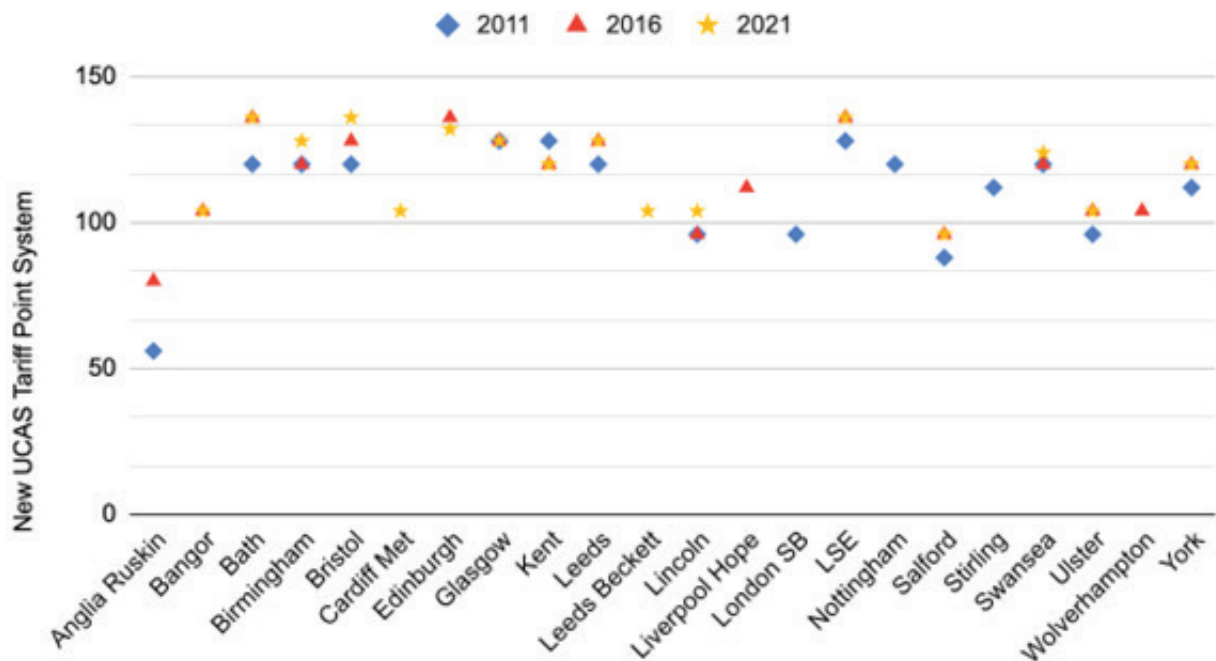
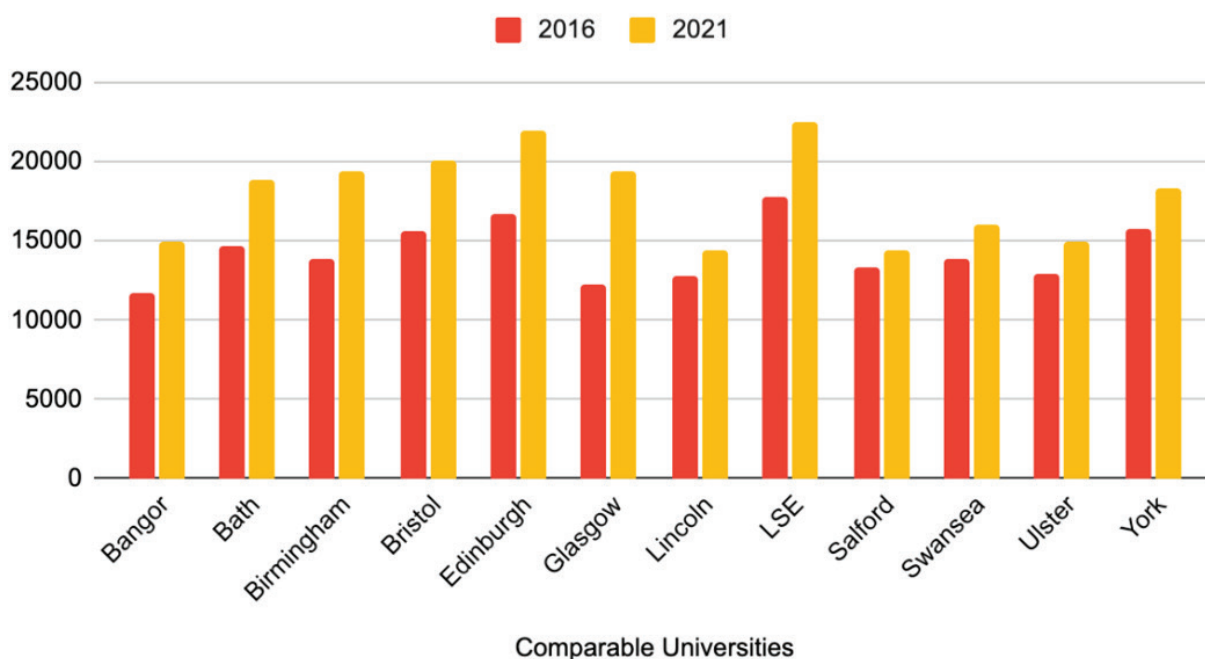


Figure 3.2, below, shows an overall increase in international fees for single honours programmes across providers. Only providers which had available data in both the 2016 and current audit are included for comparison.

There also seems to be a relationship between the level of requirements for IELTS and the programme’s international fees, as shown in Table 3.2. This was calculated by categorising all providers offering single honours as well as their IELTS requirements and then taking the mean average of each provider’s international fee. Only providers with available fees were used.<sup>16</sup>

**FIGURE 3.2 - INTERNATIONAL FEES FOR UNDERGRADUATE SINGLE HONOURS PROGRAMMES BY INSTITUTION, 2016 AND 2021**



16 The universities which presented up-to-date international fees on their websites included Bangor University, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Leeds Beckett University, Swansea University, University of Ulster, University of Lincoln, University of Salford, University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, University of Leeds, University of York, London School of Economics and Political Science and the University of Bath.

### 3.1.2 Joint Honours

Current data indicate 25 institutions offered Social Policy joint honours degrees in 2021, down from 35 in 2016, and 32 in 2011. These degrees were identified as those with titles including Social Policy ‘and’ or ‘with’ another subject (excluding the University of Glasgow and the University of Leeds’ Q-Step programmes, which were included in the single honours list).

Table 3.2 builds on the 2011 and 2016 audit data, tracking the changing provision of both single and joint honours programmes across providers. Three institutions (Anglia Ruskin University, Liverpool Hope University and the University of Wolverhampton) ceased their single honours programmes, while two institutions (Cardiff Metropolitan University, Leeds Beckett University) took them on, leaving 16 institutions total. Equally, 11 institutions ceased joint honours Social Policy<sup>17</sup> and only two (Canterbury Christ Church University, Cardiff Metropolitan University) took them on, leaving a total of 25. Therefore, there has been a substantial loss in institutions offering joint honours provision. Overall, there were 119 joint honours programmes throughout the institutions.

In two cases, there seems to be an explicit straying from the Social Policy name. LSE previously had a Social Policy BA programme in 2016, which has been discontinued. They had a new programme, International Social and Public Policy BSc in 2021. Similarly, although the University of Birmingham had a single honours programme, they also offered the more diluted Policy, Politics and Economics BA programme.

The most popular joint programmes were combinations with Sociology (20 programmes), Criminology (including ‘Crime’ and ‘Criminal Justice’) (17), Politics (12), Economics (6), a foreign language (6) and Law (5). While some universities offered these more traditional combinations with Social Policy, there were a few universities offering the subject with a wider range of programmes. For example, Liverpool Hope University had 22 joint honours Social Policy combinations (including Dance and Music Production), the University of Edinburgh offered 10 joint honours including many foreign languages and Strathclyde offered 12 programmes (including with Human Resource Management and Journalism, Media and Communication). The University of Wolverhampton notably offered Social Policy with Deaf Studies. The University of Kent offered Social Policy with various ‘Social Change’ programmes. Additionally, the joint subjects of childhood, youth and education were common throughout institutions, remaining consistent with previous years.

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<sup>17</sup> These were University of Birmingham, University of Central Lancashire, Coleg Llandrillo Cymru, University of Glasgow, London Metropolitan University, Loughborough University, Manchester Metropolitan University, Middlesex University, University of Southampton, University of St Mark & St John and University of Warwick.

**TABLE 3.2 - CHANGING PROVISION OF UNDERGRADUATE SINGLE AND JOINT HONOURS SOCIAL POLICY DEGREES**

INSTITUTION	2011 SINGLE	2016 SINGLE	2021 SINGLE	2011 JOINT	2016 JOINT	2021 JOINT
Anglia Ruskin University			X			
Aston University						
Bangor University		+				
University of Bath						
Birkbeck, University of London						
University of Birmingham						
Bolton University					+	X
Bournemouth University					X	
University of Brighton						X
University of Bristol						
Canterbury Christ Church University						+
Cardiff University						
Cardiff Metropolitan University			+			+
University of Central Lancashire						X
Coleg Llandrillo Cymru						X
Durham University						
University of Edinburgh		+				
University of Glasgow						X
University of Hull				X		
University of Kent						
University of Leeds						
Leeds Beckett University			+			

University of Lincoln						
University of Liverpool						
Liverpool Hope University		+				
London Metropolitan University						X
London South Bank University		X			X	
Loughborough University						X
LSE (London School of Economics and Political Science)						
Manchester Metropolitan University					+	X
Middlesex University London					+	X
University of Nottingham		X				
The Open University					X	
Queen's University Belfast						
University of Salford						
University of Sheffield						
University of Southampton						X
University of Stirling		X				
University of Strathclyde					+	
St Mark & St John – Plymouth Marjon University						X
Swansea University						
Ulster University						
University of Warwick					+	X
University of the West of Scotland					X	
University of Wolverhampton		+	X			
University of York					+	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>

## Legend:



Social Policy degree provided  
 Social Policy degree closed



new Social Policy degree

### 3.1.3 Undergraduate modules content and career options

To gain an understanding of what was being taught in Social Policy undergraduate degrees in 2021, Figure 3.3 shows the most common terms found in module titles on provider websites. Only phrases occurring at least twice were included in the word-cloud. The module titles show the breadth of the discipline and its teachings, both in relation to other subjects (e.g. Sociology, Economics, Politics) and key issues (e.g. rights, health, housing and justice). It also represents key methodologies within the discipline, with phrases relating to research, theory, international comparisons and qualitative data.



In a similar vein to the module titles, the careers proposed by institutions when advertising their Social Policy programmes have been presented (Figure 3.4). Again, only phrases occurring at least twice were included in the cloud. This shows an emphasis on the public sector, further research, teaching, and working in local governments and the Civil Service.



The 2011 and 2016 surveys found that many participants believed opportunities for placements during a degree programme would greatly increase the employability of Social Policy, as well as encourage the subject to be seen as a ‘practical’ degree. Consistently with previous audits, we found that while many single honours programmes offered short-term placement opportunities during studies, opportunities for ‘sandwich degrees’ including a one-year placement were rare. Of the single honour providers, only the University of Bath offered a four-year programme with a one-year placement. Opportunities for sandwich degrees were more often found in joint honours degrees. Therefore, despite the provision of short-term placement opportunities, the consistent lack of year-long placements in single honours degrees means Social Policy is missing an opportunity to be seen as practical and employable.

### 3.1.4 Undergraduate programmes not included in the audit

As mentioned before, the methodology of this audit entailed strict criteria to consider programmes as Social Policy; i.e. only programmes with Social Policy explicitly in the title were included. However, many other programmes which did not fall within this rule appear to have strong connections to the discipline. The concern regarding a dilution of Social Policy has been mentioned in previous reports and is still shown by programmes offered in 2021. Ulster University’s Health and Social Care Policy (BSc)<sup>18</sup> is a prime example of this. Held in the School of Applied Social and Policy Sciences, the programme was listed under the UCAS Code L510, therefore included in the ‘Health and Social Care’ category, and not in Social Policy (L400). Despite this, the module titles referred to key concepts within Social Policy, including the welfare state, policy making and delivery, poverty, social security and housing.

This was similarly identified at other universities. For example, Community Development and Public Policy at Birkbeck, University of London included modules associated with fundamental ideas of social justice and inequality, and one module in Year Two is Social Relations and Social Policy. The University of Edinburgh’s Government, Policy and Society was already mentioned in the 2016 audit as a Social Policy degree ‘in all but name’. Other providers offered degrees which involved Social Policy heavily, but within specific issues, such as Special Education Needs and Inclusion Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University, and Public Services and Social Justice at UCEN Manchester.

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18 <https://www.ulster.ac.uk/courses/202122/health-and-social-care-policy-21565>



Other heavily-related programmes include:

- [Health and Social Care Policy at Ulster University](#)<sup>19</sup>
- [Community Development and Public Policy at Birkbeck, University of London](#) <sup>20</sup>
- [Government, Policy and Society at the University of Edinburgh](#)<sup>21</sup>
- [Special Education Needs and Inclusion Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University](#)<sup>22</sup>
- [Community and Social Care Policy and Practice at Burnley College](#)<sup>23</sup>
- [Public Services and Social Justice at UCEN Manchester \(a one-year programme\)](#)<sup>24</sup>
- [Community and Social Care: Policy and Practice at the University of Central Lancashire \(a one-year programme\)](#)<sup>25</sup>
- [Social and Public Sector Development at Middlesbrough College \(a one-year programme\)](#)<sup>26</sup>
- [Health and Social Care at Grwp Llandrillo Menai \(a one-year programme\)](#)<sup>27</sup>

### 3.1.5 Postgraduate taught programmes

Also with regard to taught postgraduate Social Policy degrees, we have been comparing the previous reports to identify patterns of change. There are of course postgraduate programmes in research and at the PHD level, though we felt that the taught masters would provide a clearer indication of the state of Social Policy PGT provision in 2021. This is summarised in Table 3.3, below.

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19 [www.ulster.ac.uk/courses/202122/health-and-social-care-policy-21565](http://www.ulster.ac.uk/courses/202122/health-and-social-care-policy-21565)

20 [www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2021/undergraduate/programmes/UUBSCVDP\\_C](http://www.bbk.ac.uk/study/2021/undergraduate/programmes/UUBSCVDP_C)

21 [www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees/index.php?action=programme&code=L230](http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees/index.php?action=programme&code=L230)

22 [www.canterbury.ac.uk/study-here/courses/special-needs-and-inclusion-studies](http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/study-here/courses/special-needs-and-inclusion-studies)

23 [www.burnley.ac.uk/course/?code=A4689](http://www.burnley.ac.uk/course/?code=A4689)

24 [www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/courses/public-services-and-social-justice](http://www.ucenmanchester.ac.uk/courses/public-services-and-social-justice)

25 [www.uclan.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/community-social-care-policy-practice-ba-hons?term=community%20and%20social%20care](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/undergraduate/courses/community-social-care-policy-practice-ba-hons?term=community%20and%20social%20care)

26 [www.mbro.ac.uk/career-choices/course/21704-D500-BA-Hons-Social-and-Public-Sector-Development-Top-up-Full-Time-Level-6](http://www.mbro.ac.uk/career-choices/course/21704-D500-BA-Hons-Social-and-Public-Sector-Development-Top-up-Full-Time-Level-6)

27 [www.gllm.ac.uk/courses/ba-hons-health-and-social-care-top-up-with-specialist-additional-pathways](http://www.gllm.ac.uk/courses/ba-hons-health-and-social-care-top-up-with-specialist-additional-pathways)

**TABLE 3.3 - POSTGRADUATE 'SOCIAL POLICY' TAUGHT PROGRAMMES**

INSTITUTION	AWARD	NAME OF DEGREE	HOME COST (FT)	INTERNATIONAL COST	ENTRY REQUIREMENT	LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT IELTS
Anglia Ruskin University	Msc	International Social Welfare and Social Policy	£9,200	£16,200	2:2	
Bangor University	MA	Social Policy		0.93	115	
University of Bath	MRes	Social Policy	£9,500	£16,000	2:2	IELTS 6.0
University of Bath	MRes	European Social Policy	£4,500	£19,100	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of Birmingham	MA	Social Policy	£4,500	£19,100	2:1	
University of Birmingham	MA/DiploMA	Social Research (Social Policy)		1.13	116	
UCL	MSc	Social Policy and Social Research	£9,500	£19,440	2:1	IELTS 6.5
UCL	MSc	Social Policy and Social Research (With Systematic Reviews)	£9,500	£20,160	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of Cardiff	PgDip	Social Science Research Methods (Social Policy)	£12,500	£25,800	2:1	
University of Cardiff	MSc	Social Science Research Methods (Social Policy)		1.29	73	
University of Cardiff	MSc	Social and Public Policy	£12,500	£25,800	2:1	
University of Central Lancashire	MA	Social Policy				
University of Kent	MA	Social Policy	£7,700	£17,450	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of Kent	MA	International Social Policy	£7,700	£17,450	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of Kent	MA	International Social Policy [2 years]	£7,700	£17,450	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of Leeds	MA	Social and Public Policy	£6,900	£13,900	2:2	IELTS 6.5
Liverpool Hope University	MA	Social Policy	£5,200	£11,400	2:1	IELTS 6.5
Liverpool John Moores University	MA	Criminology and Social Policy	£7,750	£15,600	2:1	IELTS 6.5
London School of Economics and Political Science	MSc	International Social and Public Policy	£15,416	£23,720	2:1	IELTS 7.0

Loughborough University	MSc	Social Science Research (Social Policy)	£9,700	£19,950	2:1	IELTS 6.5
Loughborough University	MA	Childhood Youth and Social Policy	£9,700	£19,950	2:2	IELTS 6.5
Teesside University	MSc	Social Research Methods (Social Policy)	£6,100	£13,000	2:1, 2:2	IELTS 6.5
University of Nottingham	MA	International Social Policy	£9,250	£20,000	2:2	IELTS 6.5
University of Nottingham	MA	Social Science Research (Social Policy and Social Work)	£9,250	£20,000	2:1	IELTS 7.0
University of Oxford	MPhil	Comparative Social Policy [21 months]	£17,760	£27,580	2:1	IELTS 7.5
University of Oxford	MSc	Comparative Social Policy	£17,760	£27,460	2:1	IELTS 7.5
Marjon University	MA	Social Policy	£6,500	£12,000	Related Degree	
University of Southampton	MSc	Sociology and Social Policy	£9,250	£19,850	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of Strathclyde	MSc	Social Policy	£7,100	£16,000	2:2	IELTS 6.5
University of Strathclyde	MSc	Social Policy (Research Methods)	£7,100	£16,000	2:2	IELTS 6.5
University of the West of Scotland	MSc	Social Policy	£6,500	£13,325	2:2	IELTS 6.0
Ulster University	MSc	Social Policy	£6,270	£14,910	2:2	IELTS 6.0
University of York	MA	Comparative and International Social Policy	£8,440	£18,700	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of York	MRes	Social Policy	£8,440	£18,700	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of York	MA	Social Policy	£8,440	£18,700	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of York	MA	Global Social Policy	£8,440	£18,700	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of York	MPA	Comparative Applied Social and Public Policy, Evaluation and Research (21 Months)	£18,700	£18,700	2:1	IELTS 6.5
University of York	MPA	Social and Public Policy (online 2 years p/t)	£9,840.00	£9,840	2:1 or professional experience	IELTS 6.5

There are only a few universities included in the 2016 report that no longer offer named Social Policy programmes at the postgraduate level. The University of Durham Social Research Methods (Social Policy) programme was simply Social Research Methods in 2021, with Social Policy as a module choice<sup>28</sup>. The University of Bristol, University of Sheffield and University of Salford no longer offer Social Policy programmes at the Masters level (however, the University of Bristol still offered a Social Policy PHD programme). UCL, Liverpool John Moores University, Teesside, Ulster University, and the University of the West of Scotland have been added to the list of universities offering a named Social Policy taught masters since 2016.

Overall, there were 35 named Social Policy programmes in the 2016 edition, and 39 in this review. However, this does not necessarily mean a rise in provision. Individual Universities may repackage programmes at the postgraduate level without necessarily reducing or adding to provision. Ostensibly, the LSE MSc Social Policy programmes have been reduced from 5 in 2016 to just 1 in 2021. (Within this programme they offered 6 streams: General, Development, Migration, NGOs, Research, and a Double Masters in partnership with Fudan University in Shanghai, China). The University of Southampton also offered a choice of different streams within its Sociology and Social Policy programme with Substantive, International Social Policy and Research Methods being the three ‘pathways’ on offer to MSc students in the programme. The University of Birmingham offered a Social Policy MA, but their website noted that the MA programmes in Global Public Policy, Migration Studies, Research, and Sociology are all part of a Social Policy “study area”. Conversely, the University of York offered 5 differently named degrees within Social Policy.

As we noted in the general methodology, the Social Policy provision goes beyond those programmes specifically named as such. Some of these other programmes have a more specific policy focus such as City University of London’s Health Policy MSc<sup>29</sup> or UCL’s Policy Studies in Education<sup>30</sup> which may appeal to students who wish to pursue a more specific career pathway. Going even further along the career route, programmes such as Coventry University’s MSc Global Healthcare Management<sup>31</sup> or London Metropolitan University’s Health and Social Care Management and Policy MSc<sup>32</sup> have a clear career pathway towards healthcare management in a programme that combines modules on both management and policy. At the Masters level, an international or global focus is often present, and while there are some named Social Policy programmes that offer this dimension (for example, the University of Nottingham’s International Social Policy MA<sup>33</sup>), programmes such as University of Bedfordshire’s International Social Welfare and Social Development MA<sup>34</sup> and De Montfort University’s Global Health MSc<sup>35</sup> cover similar ground. These programmes also highlight the

28 [www.durham.ac.uk/study/courses/l3kb07/](http://www.durham.ac.uk/study/courses/l3kb07/)

29 [www.city.ac.uk/prospective-students/courses/postgraduate/health-policy](http://www.city.ac.uk/prospective-students/courses/postgraduate/health-policy)

30 [www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/taught-degrees/policy-studies-education-ma](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/taught-degrees/policy-studies-education-ma)

31 [www.coventry.ac.uk/course-structure/pg/2021-22/online/msc-global-healthcare/](http://www.coventry.ac.uk/course-structure/pg/2021-22/online/msc-global-healthcare/)

32 [www.londonmet.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/health-and-social-care-management-and-policy---msc/](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/health-and-social-care-management-and-policy---msc/)

33 [www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/course/taught/international-social-policy-ma](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/course/taught/international-social-policy-ma)

34 [www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/courses/postgraduate/next-year/international-social-welfare-and-social-development/](http://www.beds.ac.uk/howtoapply/courses/postgraduate/next-year/international-social-welfare-and-social-development/)

35 [www.dmu.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate-courses/global-health-msc/global-health-msc.aspx](http://www.dmu.ac.uk/study/courses/postgraduate-courses/global-health-msc/global-health-msc.aspx)

sometimes ‘fuzzy distinction’ between welfare and development, with development often being associated with countries in the Global South and ‘Welfare’ with the Global North<sup>36</sup>.

### 3.1.6 Postgraduate International Students

The audit shows that, on the whole, domestic entry requirements for postgraduate degree programmes correlate with IELTS requirements, with universities that have high domestic requirements also asking for high language ability from foreign students. As seen in the below table 3.4, IELTS requirements also have a positive correlation with programme fees.

The fee gap between domestic and foreign students is wide, with fees for international students having a high markup in costs. An exception to this is the University of York’s Comparative Applied Social and Public Policy<sup>37</sup>, a 21-month programme aimed at mid-career professionals with an equal price for both home and international students. The University of Kent’s two-year MA in International Social Policy<sup>38</sup> is similar and specifically designed for international students, with first year modules a combination of social policy topics and academic English upgrading.

**TABLE 3.4 – POSTGRADUATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS BY INTERNATIONAL FEES, 2021**

LEVEL OF IELTS	MEAN AVERAGE OF INTERNATIONAL FEES (£)
6	14,217
6.5	17,391
7	21,860
7.5	27,520

### 3.1.7 Postgraduate module content and careers

To gain an overview of module content at the taught postgraduate level, module titles of all named social policy programmes were collated and processed to create a word cloud using instances of words used with a frequency greater than one. Two images have been created, the first (Figure 3.5) shows core modules and the second (Figure 3.6) shows both core and optional modules. Notably, there seems to be a bigger focus on research compared to the undergraduate modules and perhaps a relatively smaller focus on welfare.

36 Gough, I. (2013) Social policy regimes in the developing world in Kennett, P. Handbook of Comparative Social Policy (2nd Edition) Edward Elgar. p.212

37 [www.york.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/courses/mpa-applied-social-public-policy-evaluation/#overview](http://www.york.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/courses/mpa-applied-social-public-policy-evaluation/#overview)

38 [www.kent.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/333/two-year-masters-in-international-social-policy](http://www.kent.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/333/two-year-masters-in-international-social-policy)

**FIGURE 3.5 - WORDCLOUD OF POSTGRADUATE SOCIAL POLICY MODULE TITLES (CORE)**



**FIGURE 3.6 - WORDCLOUD OF POSTGRADUATE SOCIAL POLICY MODULE TITLES (CORE AND OPTIONAL)**



Text from the Careers section of universities' programme sites was collated and processed with a minimum requirement of 2 mentions producing a cloud of 73 words (Figure 3.7). Compared to the undergraduate level, there is much more focus on international organisations as well as research, government and NGOs.

**FIGURE 3.7 - WORDCLOUD OF POSTGRADUATE SOCIAL POLICY CAREER OPTIONS**



On the technical side, research skills are a huge component of postgraduate masters and they dominate these clouds as almost all programmes will have a research element. Thematically, welfare, health, crime, and inequality appear often, though interestingly the word education only appears in one module we found, fittingly part of Loughborough University’s Childhood Youth and Social Policy MA<sup>39</sup>. This does not suggest that education does not form a part of social policy degrees, but that perhaps named social policy degrees have a broader welfare focus. We also note that postgraduate programmes tend to have more content relating to international, global, globalisation, and migration themes, which correlates with the careers section.

### 3.1.8 Summary

The findings from the audit in 2021 suggest that the future of Social Policy is not as bleak as predicted in the 2016 report. One aspect that has not changed since 2016 is that it was difficult to capture all social policy provisions because some programmes were very similar to Social Policy but on the periphery and some only had minor elements of Social Policy. There have been several significant highlights in the 2021 audit. On the one hand, there has been a significant reduction of Social Policy joint honours programmes. Current data suggest that 25 institutions are offering Social Policy joint honours programmes in 2020/2021. This is a significant reduction from 35 institutions in 2016 and 32 in 2011. The London School of Economics previously had Social Policy in the title in 2016, but this has now been discontinued.

On the other hand, there appears to be an increase in institutions offering taught Social Policy postgraduate programmes. In 2016 there were 35 institutions, and this review now shows 39. However, this could be due to the repackaging or rebranding of policy programmes. This seems to be an upcoming trend since the audit in 2016. Institutions appear to be rebranding modules and programmes to attract students to their courses. Is this a way forward for social policy? or is diluting the subject from module titles and programmes damaging the discipline’s future?

39 [www.lboro.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/masters-degrees/a-z/childhood-youth-social-policy/#modules\\_semester\\_1](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/masters-degrees/a-z/childhood-youth-social-policy/#modules_semester_1)

Single honours have remained steady with a decrease of one institution, but 18 single honours programmes are on offer; meanwhile, joint honours programmes have decreased from 35 to 25 institutions.

The audit in 2021 also shows a steady increase in international students enrolling on postgraduate programmes. The fee gap between home and international students is vast and generates significant revenue. Another highlight is that the postgraduate programmes focus more on research and less on welfare than the undergraduate programmes. There is more emphasis on International, global social policy and migration. Postgraduate career paths have an emphasis on research international organisations and NGOs.

The 2011 Report showed that academics had concerns about Social Policy as a discipline among the other social science subjects. However, the 2021 audit presents a slightly more optimistic picture. As previously mentioned, there has been an increase in the postgraduate provision and EU and international market, but evidence suggests that there needs to be more focus on home students and recruitment of undergraduate students into Social Policy programmes. As previously mentioned, repackaging or rebranding of policy programmes seems to be an upcoming theme/ trend across HEIs provision.

### **3.2 STUDENT NUMBERS ANALYSIS**

#### **3.2.1 Measuring Social Policy under the broader ‘Principal Subject’ System (JACS L4 & CAH)**

This section further explores Social Policy programmes in Higher Education Institutions through the use of data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). With the website audit, we chose to focus on programmes that were named Social Policy. However, as mentioned in the methodology section above, the way that HESA defines social policy is broader. The limitations of tracking student numbers within this broad definition of social policy are obvious once we start looking at the array of programmes that are included in the classification<sup>40</sup>. The lack of clarity found in the JACS 3.0 system has concerning implications about the nature of the data and its ability to adequately reflect the Social Policy discipline. Therefore, it should be clear that, while there is a large overlap, the courses represented by the data here do not correspond exactly with the data from the Institution’s website audit.

The data shown in Table 3.5 suggest that despite a dip in student numbers between 2011 and 2014, Social Policy is beginning to bounce back as a varied constellation of programmes concerned with the application, management and analysis of policy. Since the 2016 audit, numbers have recovered to match those at the start of 2010. When observing the percentage changes on Figure 3.8, one can see that there is a gradual upward trend, with significant increases in 2015/16 and 2017/18 for Postgraduate and Undergraduate students respectively.

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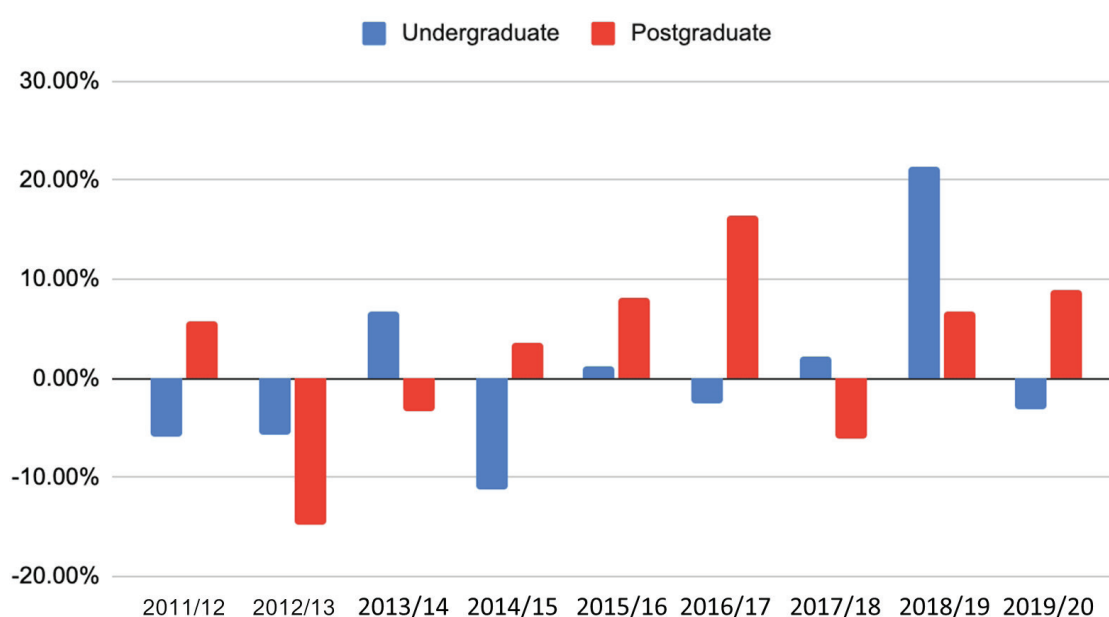
40 For example, students studying the University of Derby’s, BA Professional Policing, form part of the CAH dataset as they are listed under the code L345 (Security Policy). See: [www.derby.ac.uk/undergraduate/policing-courses/professional-policing-ba-hons/](http://www.derby.ac.uk/undergraduate/policing-courses/professional-policing-ba-hons/)



**TABLE 3.5 - STUDENT ENTRANCE NUMBERS 2014/15 TO 2019/20 ACCORDING TO JACS 3.0 'PRINCIPAL SUBJECT' DATA AND CAH LEVEL 3<sup>41</sup>**

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Undergraduate	2,680	2,715	2,645	2,705	3,285	3,185
Postgraduate	2,385	2,580	3,005	2,825	3,015	3,285

**FIGURE 3.8 - PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN STUDENT ENTRANCE NUMBERS 2010/11 - 2018/19<sup>42</sup>**

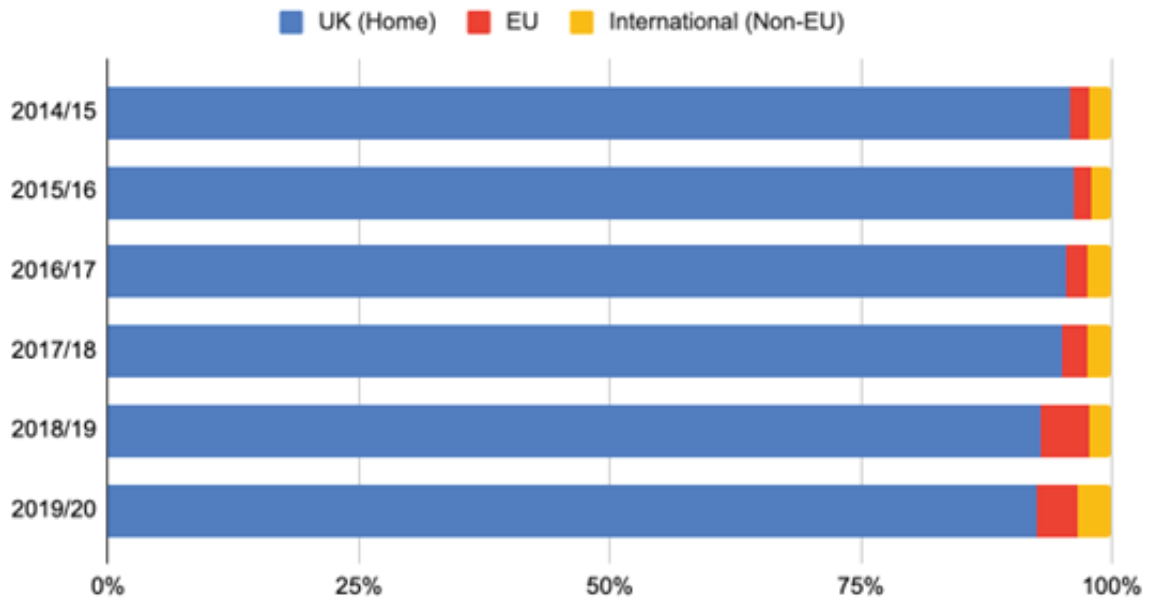


Another interesting element of student entrance number data is the increase in EU and International students in recent years. At undergraduate levels, there was a significant uptake of EU students in 2017/18, and a more gradual increase of International Students up to 2020 (Figures 3.10, 3.11). At the Postgraduate level, while EU students have remained very stable at around 200 each year, both domestic and international (non-EU) students have risen each year from around 1,000 in 2014/15 to 1,500 in 2019/2020.

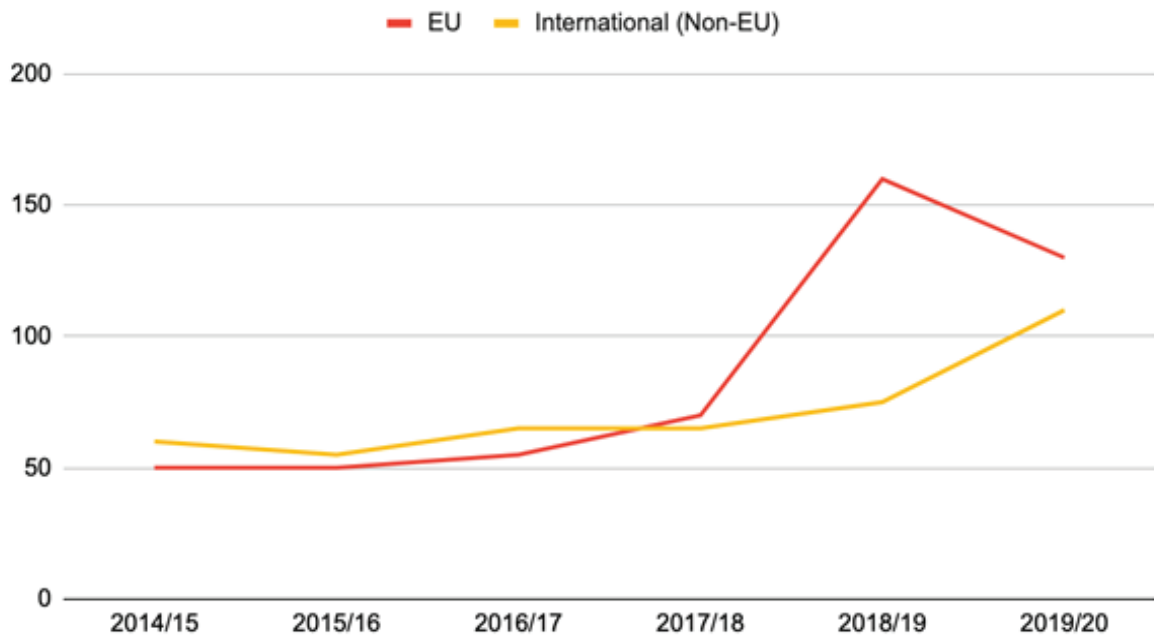
41 Data for years 2014/2015 taken from Table 22 (Principal Subject [L4], First Year, First Degree/Postgraduate Taught, Mode of Study: All) (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-22>) and data for years 2019/2020 taken from Table 52 (CAH level 3: [15-01-03 Social Policy], First Year, First Degree/Postgraduate Taught, Mode of Study: All) (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-52>)

42 Data source: 2016 audit, Table 22 (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-22>) and Table 52 (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-52>)

**FIGURE 3.9 - UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ENTRANCE NUMBERS, BY ORIGIN, 2014/15 TO 2019/20<sup>43</sup>**



**FIGURE 3.10 - NON-UK UNDERGRADUATE ENTRANCE NUMBERS BY ORIGIN, 2014/15 TO 2019/20<sup>44</sup>**

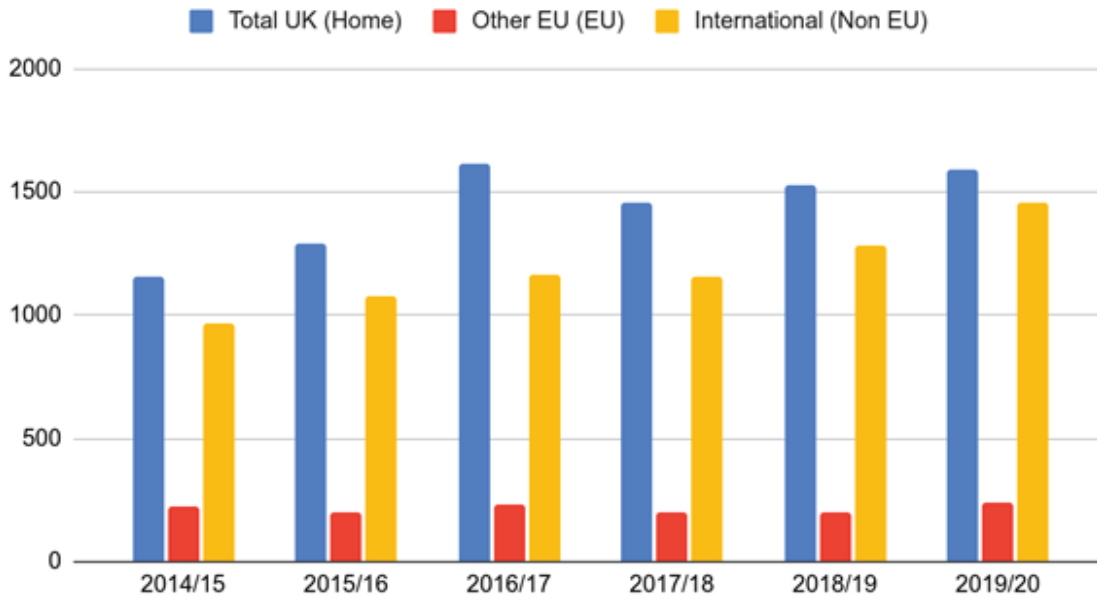


43 Data source: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-22>

44 Data source: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-22>

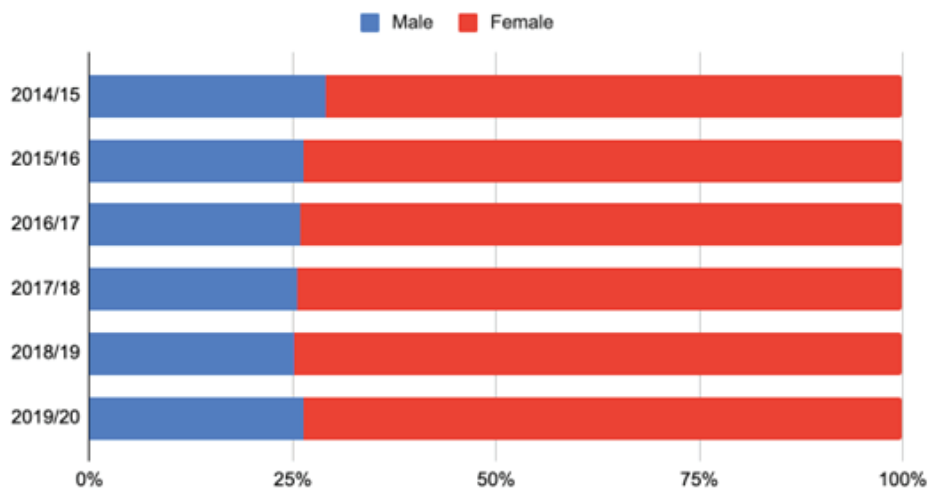
**FIGURE 3.11 - POSTGRADUATE STUDENT ENTRANCE NUMBERS, BY ORIGIN, 2014/15 TO 2019/20**

45



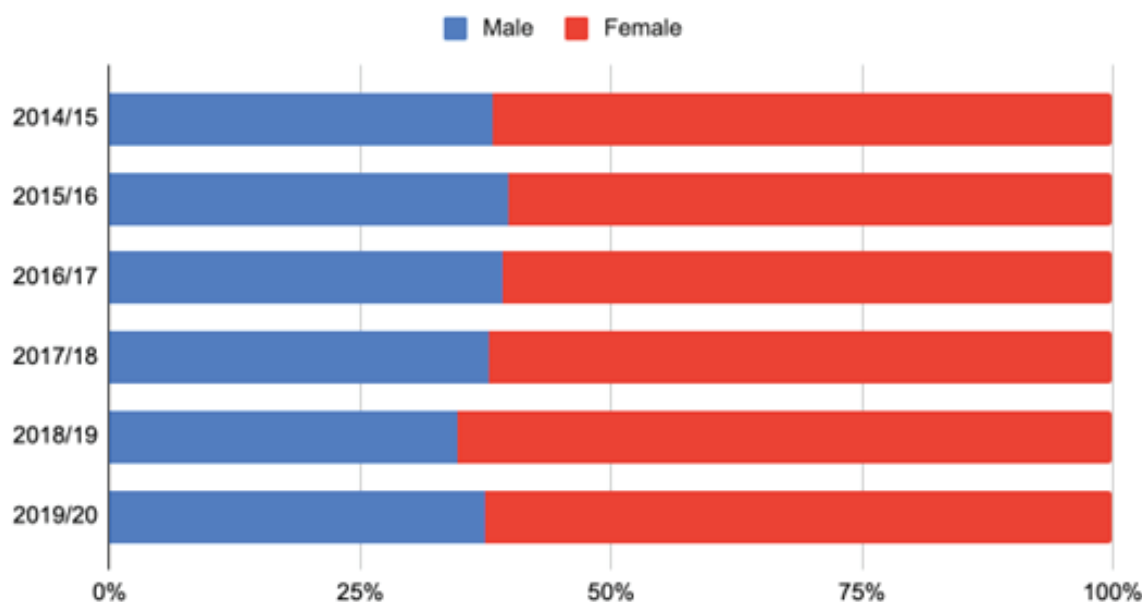
When looking at Social Policy students in terms of gender distribution, one can see a largely consistent ratio between male and female students at both levels (Figures 3.12, 3.13). However, there are consistently more male students at the Postgraduate level, averaging at about 37%, as opposed to just above 25% at Undergraduate level. (In both data sets there was an ‘Other’ category, but the numbers it produced did not appear on the chart due to its small size.)

**FIGURE 3.12 - UNDERGRADUATE GENDER RATIO, 2014/15 TO 2019/20<sup>46F</sup>**



45 Data source: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-22>

46 Data taken from <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-9>

**FIGURE 3.13 - POSTGRADUATE GENDER RATIO, 2014/15 TO 2019/20<sup>47</sup>**

### 3.2.2. Measuring Social Policy under the narrower ‘Named Subject’ System (HECoS)

In our study of student enrolment data, it became apparent that depending on our definition of social policy, the number of students enrolled would drastically change. As seen in Table 3.6, when we alter the measurement from Social Policy as a principal subject to the new HECoS definition of Social Policy as a more specific subject, the result is that there are much fewer students studying social policy. Of course, there is no ultimate correct answer to whether in 2019/20 13,910 or 6,240 students were studying social policy: both measurements are correct to an extent.

**TABLE 3.6 - STUDENT NUMBERS USING CAH AND HECOS SYSTEM, 2019/20<sup>48</sup>**

	CAH LEVEL 3 SOCIAL POLICY (15-01-03) [PRINCIPAL SUBJECT]	HECOS ‘SOCIAL POLICY’ (100502) ‘INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL POLICY’ (100645) [NAMED SUBJECT]
All Students	13,910	6,240
First Year UG	3,185	1,865
First Year PG	3,285	950

47 Data taken from <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-9>

48 Data taken from <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-52>

The HECoS categorisation prioritises a definition of Social Policy as a subject rather than a broad field of study in the Social Sciences. Thus, in comparison to the CAH and previous years JACS3.0 data, there are far fewer students studying Social Policy. This is because the HECoS system looks at subjects at a more granular scale, splitting students into subjects of social policy, public policy, health policy etc rather than the JACS 3.0 Principal Subject/CAH lv3 system which only looked at Social Policy as a broad discipline.

We believe that student enrolment figures that use the Social-Policy-as-subject approach as the new HECoS system better correspond to our methodology in the programmes audit (3.1). Therefore, in addition to the previous section, 3.2.1., which presented student numbers using the broader Principal Subject system, we have added this section which presents data using a narrower definition. Table 3.7 shows the new classification system of policy-based subjects. In the data that follow, we combine the numbers of two subjects: Social Policy (HECoS 100502) and International Social Policy (HECoS 100645). We did this in order to maintain consistency with Section 1, which includes both of these subjects.

**TABLE 3.7 - STUDENT NUMBERS ACROSS HECOS SOCIAL POLICY CLASSIFICATIONS, 2019/20<sup>49</sup>**

HECOS SUBJECTS	FIRST YEAR UNDERGRADUATE	FIRST YEAR POSTGRADUATE
Social policy	1,865	870
Public policy	260	1,240
Health policy	90	465
Security policy	240	320
Economic policy <sup>50</sup>	110	480
Welfare policy	35	5
Education policy	0	100
International social policy	0	80
Transport policy	0	10

We also realised that previous audits could have presented data on Social Policy as a subject if they had switched the variable of the old JACS system from Principal Subject to the four-digit method. Therefore, alongside the current (2019/20) data we have decided to present student demographics

49 Table 9 observes total student numbers across all years. Table 52 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-52> (HECOS, First Year, First Degree/Postgraduate Taught, Mode of Study: All, 2019/2020) This contrasts with student 'entrance numbers' data which take note of students only in their first year of the programme.

50 Economic Policy is not normally seen as 'Social Policy' and indeed in other categorisation regimes (JACS/CAH) was not included under the Principal subject banner of Social Policy (L4) but under Economics (L1), reflecting a Polanyian style separation of economics from society. Nevertheless, we include it here for comparison.

from previous years using the four-digit system. However, we must stress that there is not an exact correspondence between the old 4-digit JACS code and the current HECoS code, as during the transition there were some re-categorisations. For example, some Social Policy programmes were reclassified as applied social science, health studies and risk management and conversely, emergency services policy and UK social policy were reclassified as Social Policy. The previous classification Social Policy not Elsewhere Classified has also now been subsumed within the social policy subject. Thus, our retrospective numbers (2014/15-2018/19) have grouped Social Policy (L400), International Social Policy (L420) and Social Policy Not Elsewhere Classified (L490) to provide an aggregate that is as close as possible to the current HECoS classification.

From Table 3.8, we can see that, on the whole, student numbers for undergraduates on social policy programmes have hovered at around 2000 whereas postgraduate levels are at around 1000. There was a noticeable peak for postgraduates in 2016 and undergraduates in 2018. The 2019/20 data are taken from our updated methodology and its proximity to the previous years confirms the relative correspondence.

**TABLE 3.8 - STUDENT ENTRANCE NUMBERS 2014/15 TO 2019/20 ACCORDING TO SELECTED JACS 3.0 4-DIGIT CLASSIFICATIONS AND HECOS<sup>51</sup>**

	UNDERGRADUATE	POSTGRADUATE
2014/15* <sup>52</sup>	2,040	1,040
2015/16	1,995	1,031
2016/17	1,760	1,215
2017/18	1,735	1,060
2018/19	2,190	985
2019/20* <sup>53</sup>	1,865	950

<sup>51</sup> Data for years 2014/2015 taken from Table 22 (Principal Subject [L4], First Year, First Degree/Postgraduate Taught, Mode of Study: All) (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-22>) and data for years 2019/2020 taken from Table 52 (CAH level 3: [15-01-03 Social Policy], First Year, First Degree/Postgraduate Taught, Mode of Study: All) (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-52>)

<sup>52</sup> Social Policy (L400), International Social Policy (L420) and Social Policy Not Elsewhere Classified (L490) (this applies to all further years up to 2018/19)

<sup>53</sup> 'Social Policy' (HECoS 100502) and 'International Social Policy' (HECoS 100645)

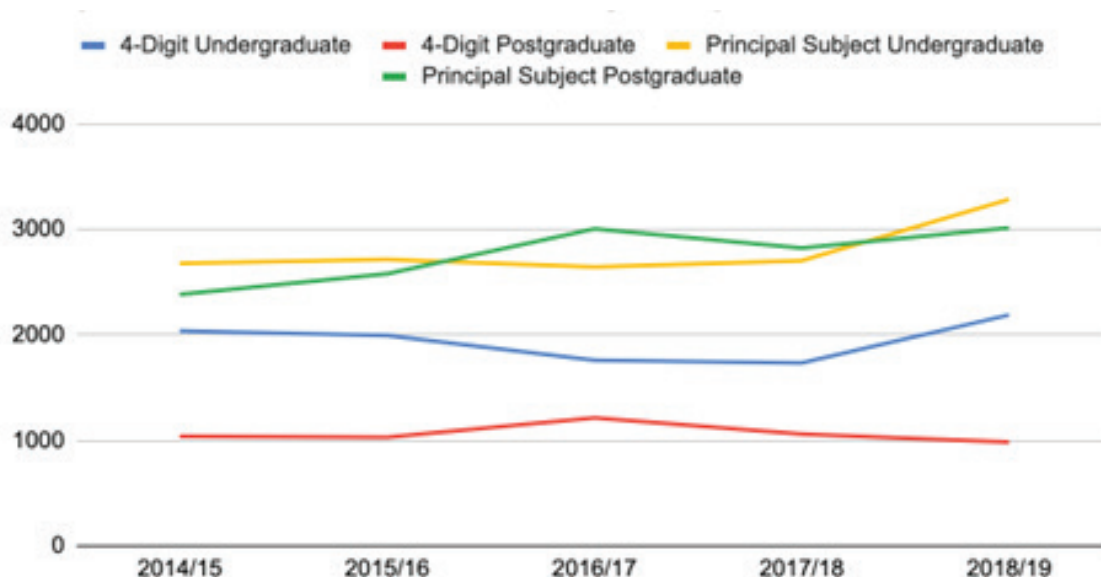
### 3.2.3. The effect of disciplinary boundaries on measuring student numbers

Figure 3.14 exemplifies the importance of setting the boundaries of which programmes count as Social Policy. Here, two lines (yellow and green) represent undergraduate and postgraduate entrance numbers using the JACS 3.0 Principal Subject L4 classification, encompassing all L4## programmes (refer to Table 2.3). Meanwhile, the blue and red lines represent the undergraduate and postgraduate entrance numbers respectively using the selected JACS 3.0 (detailed) four-digit codes (Social Policy, International Social Policy and Social Policy Not Elsewhere Classified). Inevitably, these numbers reflect a much lower rate of entrance to Social Policy programmes.

This discrepancy heightens the conflict in the foundations of past, present and future audits. While using the broader Principal Subject classification (and thus CAH level 3), one includes various other subjects which may be considered by many to fall out of the remit of Social Policy. However, using four-digit selected codes gives way to subjectivism and runs the risk of excluding valid programmes.

Social Policy Not Elsewhere Classified (L490) was included in Figure 3.14 as many of these courses were then mapped directly onto HECoS’ Social Policy (104502) classification. The only L490 programmes which were mapped elsewhere concerned Gerontology<sup>54</sup>. When searching for other L490 programmes, we found many college programmes heavily centred around ideas of social and public services and management<sup>55</sup>.

**FIGURE 3.14 - A COMPARISON OF STUDENT ENTRANCE NUMBERS BETWEEN JACS 3.0 ‘PRINCIPAL SUBJECT’ AND JACS 3.0 DETAILED (FOUR-DIGIT) SELECTED SUBJECTS, 2014/15 TO 2018/19<sup>56</sup>**



54 While it is difficult to establish how many Gerontology courses were included due to a lack of UCAS codes on many university websites, it appears there are only a select few, mainly offered at the University of Southampton.

55 These programmes included Public Services at Truro & Penwith College, Community and Public Service Management at City College Plymouth, and Public Services: Policing Studies at Sheffield College, amongst others.

56 Data taken from Table 52 (<https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-52>)

### 3.2.4 Summary

This section focused on undergraduate and postgraduate numbers and enrolment. Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency were utilised as their data are much broader. Figure 3.8 shows that despite a dip in numbers for undergraduate programmes from 2014-2016, the numbers have increased steadily with another dip in 2019/2020 which does correlate with the pandemic. Interestingly, postgraduate numbers have been increasing steadily since 2014 with just a dip in 2017/2018 and then increasing in numbers in 2019/2020. This could be due to universities offering postgraduate taught courses online.

In recent years according to Figure 3.7 there has been an increase in EU and international students. There has been a significant increase in postgraduate domestic students and international students from 2014/2015 to 2019/2020 from 1000 to 1,500 in 2019/2020. The audit highlighted that student numbers differed depending on the definitions of Social Policy. For example, table 3.6 showed different enrolment figures for undergraduate and postgraduate numbers depending on social policy being the principal subject CAH of the HECoS-named subject. This showed a significant difference in student enrolment. However, the HECoS focus on social policy as a subject could skew the data.

The data collected from the HECoS according to table 3.7 were more focused, subject-specific, and under different themes under the umbrella of Social Policy. It would have been beneficial if there were clearly defined boundaries on which programmes constitute social policy. This would have made the audit process easier for correlating student numbers.

Table 3.8 utilises different types of data, JACS 3.0, HECOs and 4-digit classifications. This showed a decrease in undergraduate numbers from 2014/2015 to 2018/2019 where there was an increase before dipping again in 2019/2020. Postgraduate numbers increased in 2016/2017 but then steadily decreased from 1040 in 2014/2016 to 950 in 2019/2020.

Finally, the last figure, 3.14 showed that there was a significant increase in social policy being the principal subject at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The postgraduate figures peaked in 2016/2017 and undergraduate numbers were still growing in 2019/2022. There were a few limitations in tracking student numbers due to the array of programmes offering some forms of Social Policy in their degree programmes e.g. University of Derby- BA Professional Policing. The lack of clarity found in the JACS 3.0 system has concerning implications about the nature of the data and their ability to reflect the Social Policy discipline adequately. As aforementioned, there has been a significant increase in International and EU students. Recruitment has remained remarkably stable at around 200 each year, and domestic and international (non-EU) students have risen yearly from around 1000 in 2014/15 to 1500 in 2019/2020. Also, quite surprisingly according to the HESA, there has been an increase of EU students in undergraduate programmes in 2017/2018 and a more graduate increase in international students in 2020. What stood out in the audit for 2021 was the increase of international postgraduate students registered on Social Policy programmes. However, this could be due to marketing, agents and academics focusing to recruit from the EU and other international countries, predominantly China.





## 4. SURVEY FINDINGS

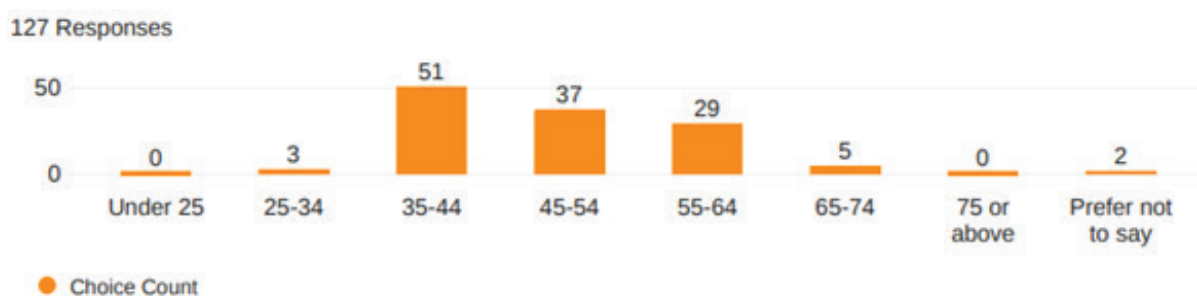
### 4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION AND SPA MEMBERSHIP OF RESPONDENTS

Through our 2021/2022 online survey we received a total of 127 responses<sup>57</sup>. This compares to 167 responses collected in the 2016 survey.

#### 4.1.1 Demographic information

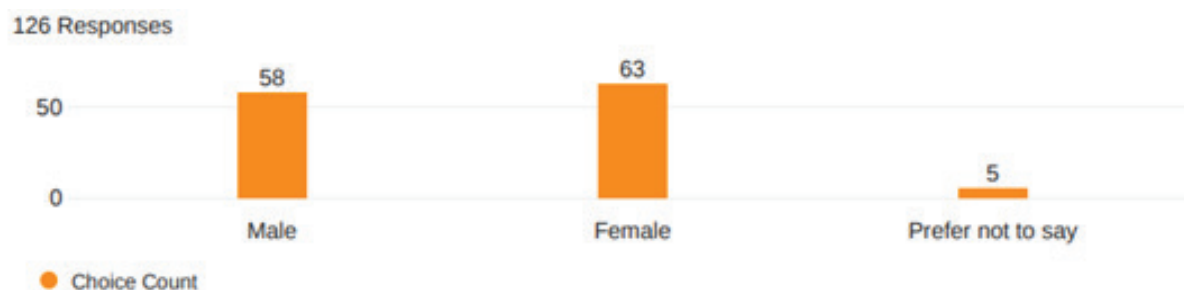
The vast majority of respondents were between 35 and 64 years of age, with just 3 people under 35 and 5 people over 64 (Figure 4.1).

**FIGURE 4.1 AGE OF RESPONDENTS**



The distribution by sex was slightly skewed, as 50% of respondents self-identified as female, and 46% self-identified as male (5 respondents preferred not to respond)<sup>58</sup>- Figure 4.2.

**FIGURE 4.2 LEGAL SEX OF RESPONDENTS**



<sup>57</sup> This figure refers to the 'clean' database, i.e. excluding some questionnaires which were started by users but then left entirely or mostly unfilled.

<sup>58</sup> This compares in a distribution in the overall population of England and Wales – as reported in the latest Census 2021 – of 51% women and 49% men. Source: [www.ons.gov.uk/census](http://www.ons.gov.uk/census).

The majority of respondents identified as straight/heterosexual, with 13 identifying as gay or lesbian (11%) and 8 bisexual (6.5%) – see Figure 4.3.<sup>59</sup>

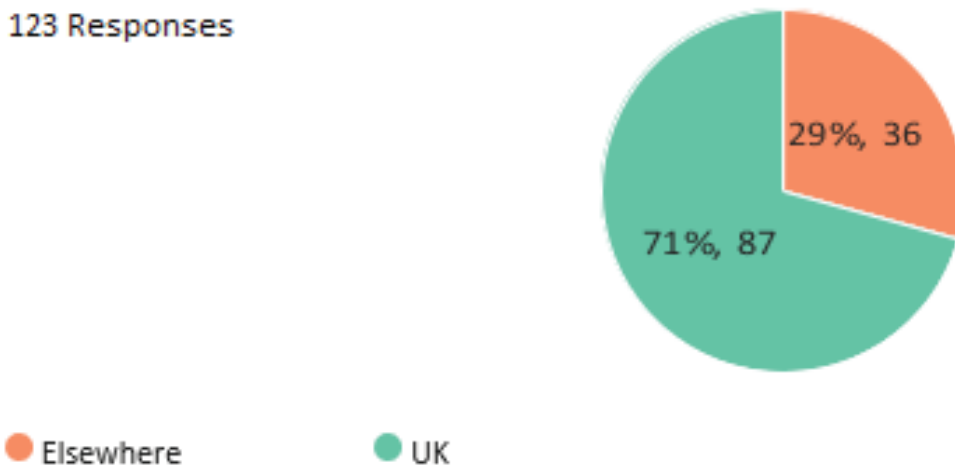
**FIGURE 4.3 SEXUAL ORIENTATION OF RESPONDENTS**



78 respondents (62%) identified as White English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish, while 27 (21%) identified as ‘white-others’ and 3 (2%) as ‘White – Irish). Thus 85% of respondents self-identified as White, about the same proportion reported in the 2021 Census of England and Wales<sup>60</sup>. Other reported ethnicities include Chinese (3), Black Caribbean (2), Indian (2), ‘Mixed/multiple ethnicity – White and Asian (1), others (4). 4 respondents chose ‘Prefer not to say’.

A majority (71%) of respondents were born in the UK (Figure 4.4).

**FIGURE 4.4 BIRTHPLACE OF RESPONDENTS**



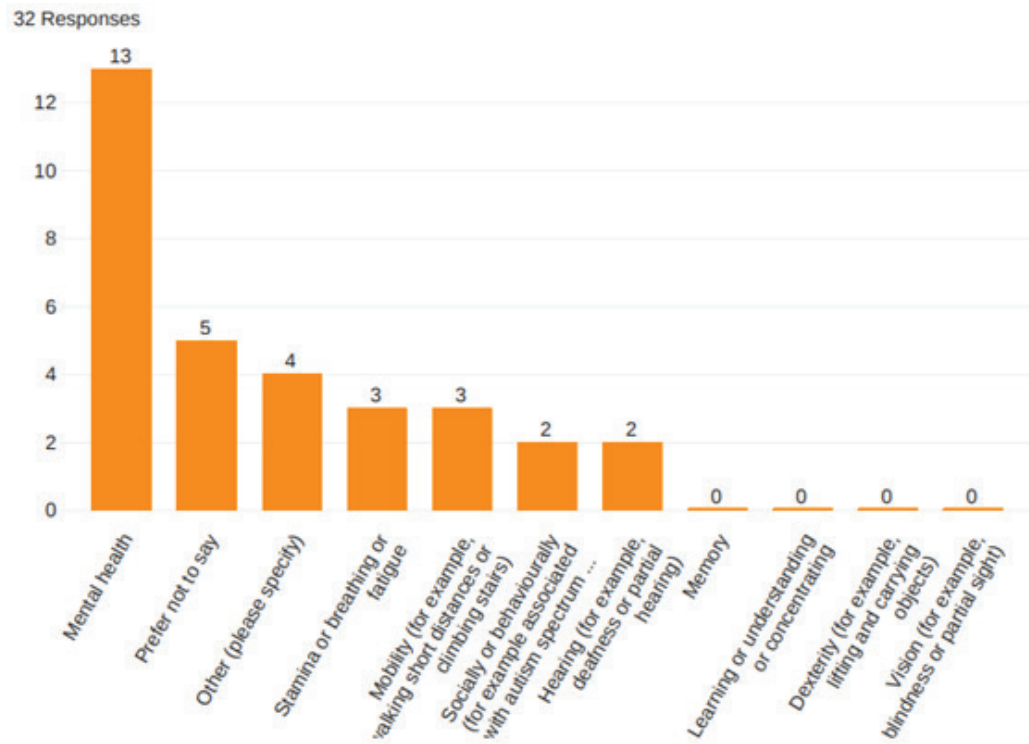
The survey also collected data on health and found that 33 respondents reported having long term conditions or illnesses, 2 respondents reported didn’t know and 7 respondents preferred not to say.

<sup>59</sup> According to the ONS Census 2021 report, the total proportion of people in England and Wales who identified as “Gay or Lesbian”, “Bisexual” or “Other sexual orientation” is of 3.2%. Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

<sup>60</sup> Office for National Statistics (ONS) Census 2021 data give the proportion of self-identified ‘White’ residents in England and Wales as 81.7% of the total. Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>

Among those reporting health conditions or illnesses, 13 of these being related to mental health, 3 had stamina or breathing problems or fatigue and 3 had mobility issues (Figure 4.5).

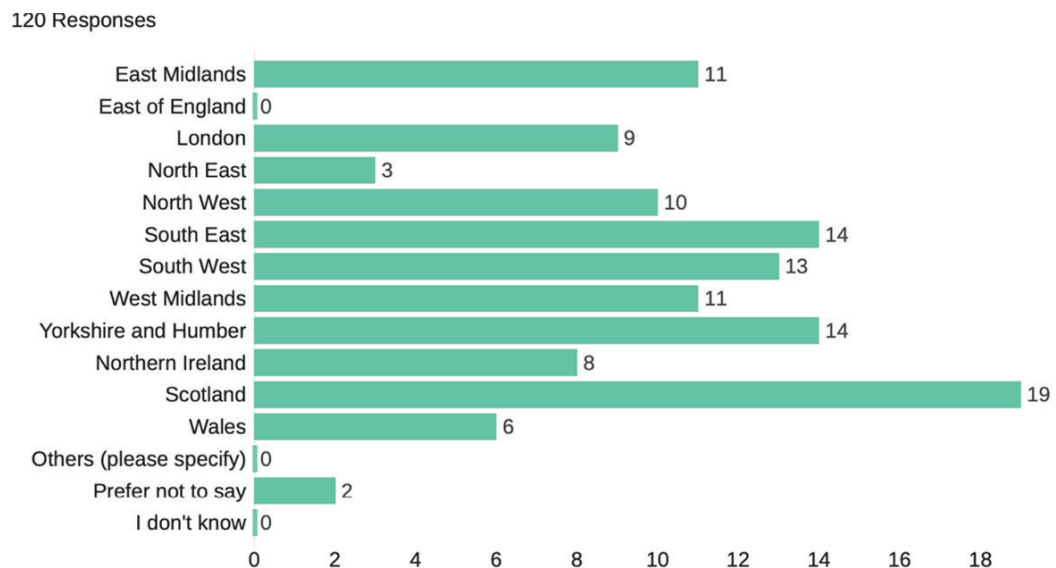
**FIGURE 4.5 BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS’ HEALTH CONDITIONS OR ILLNESSES**



#### 4.1.2 Occupational Information

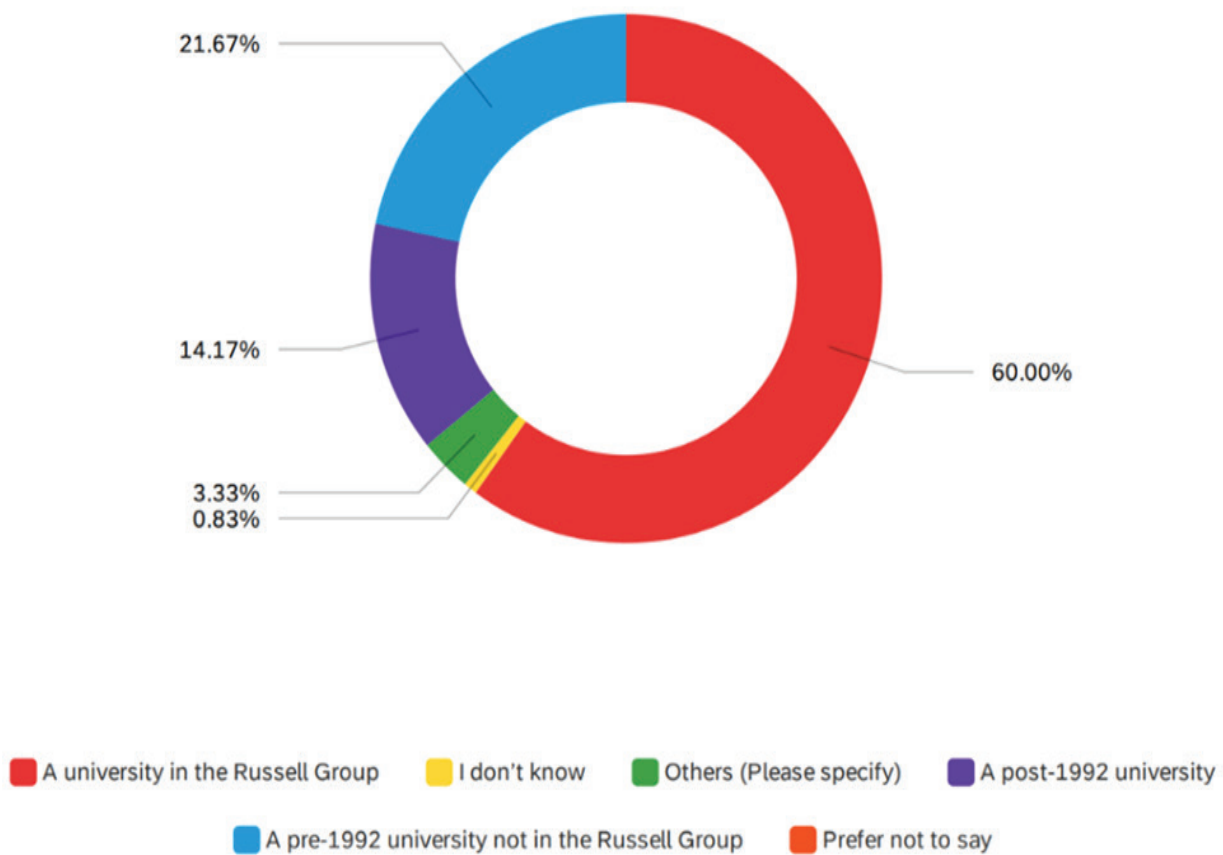
Respondents were spread across Britain, with around 8-14 respondents for each English region (with the exception of East of England, with no responses, and the Northeast, with 3); additionally, we received 6 responses from Wales and 19 for Scotland (Figure 4.6).

**FIGURE 4.6 REGIONAL SPREAD OF RESPONDENTS**

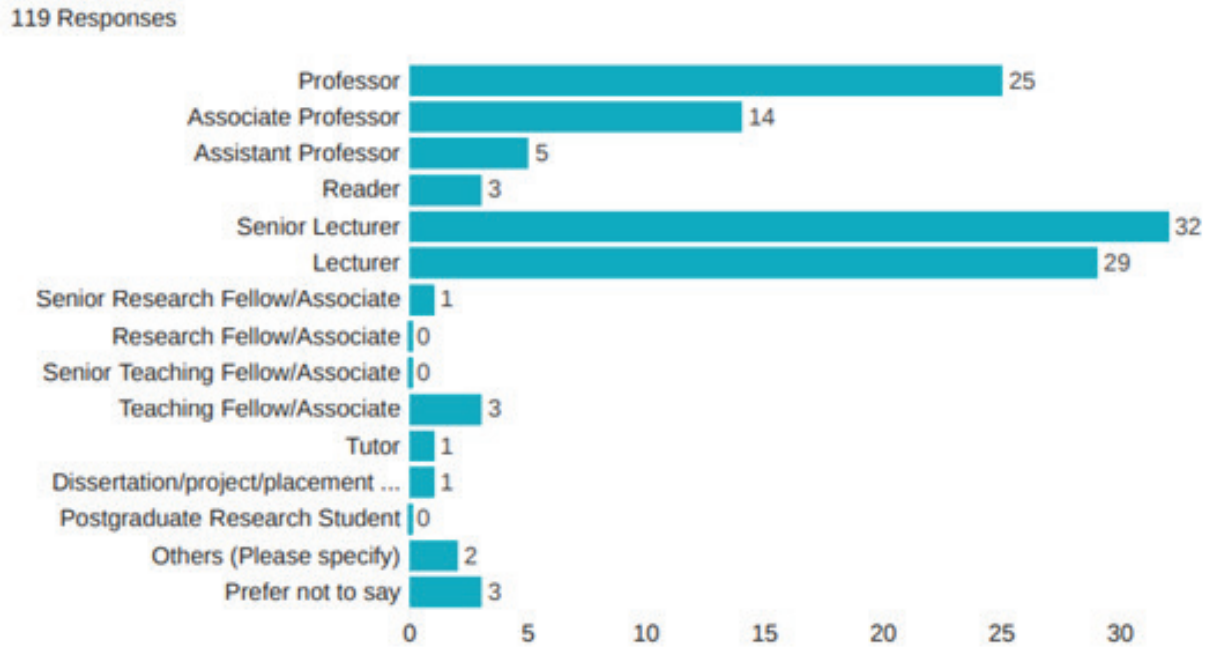


60% of respondents worked at Russell Group universities. Since overall RG institutions make up only 15% of the UK University sector<sup>61</sup>, it appears Social Policy teaching is over-represented among these ‘research intensive’ institutions. The respondents from pre-1992 universities not in the Russell Group were 26, and another 17 respondents worked at post-1992 universities Figure 4.7).

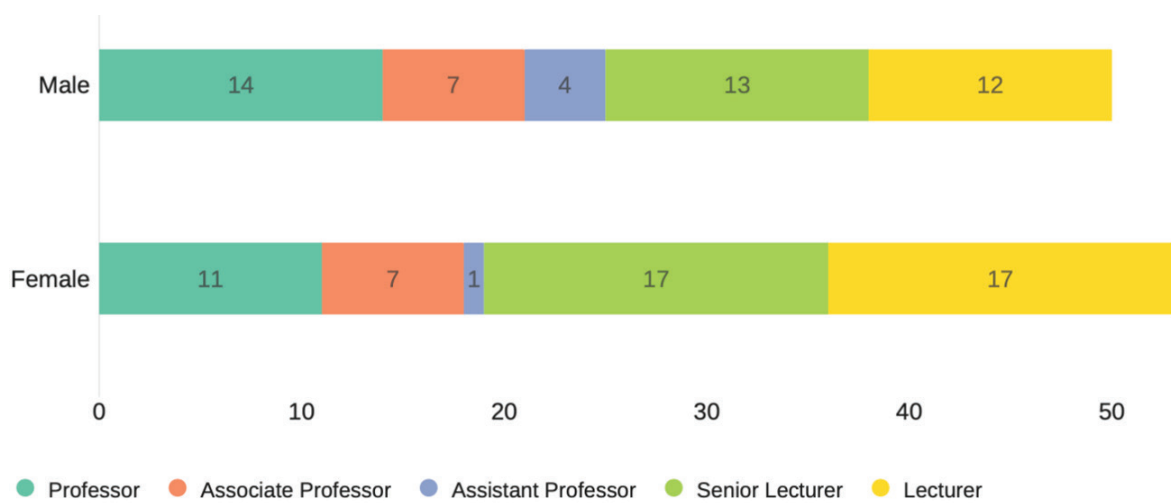
**FIGURE 4.7 – BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS’ HEI TYPE**



The majority of respondents identified as Professors, Associate Professors, Lecturers and Senior Lecturers (Figure 4.8) A vast majority worked full time (81%) on a permanent basis (93%). Only 23 respondents (19%) worked part time, 7 (6%) were on a temporary contract and 2 (2%) had casual jobs. Although there are no official figures of the number of social policy teachers working part time or on insecure contracts, it is still reasonable to believe that they were under-represented in this survey.

**FIGURE 4.8 JOB POSITION OF RESPONDENTS**

Looking at this by gender, female respondents were more likely to be Lecturers and Senior Lecturers, while male respondents were more likely to be Professors (Figure 4.9).

**FIGURE 4.9 – JOB POSITION OF RESPONDENTS BY SEX**

### 4.1.3 SPA membership

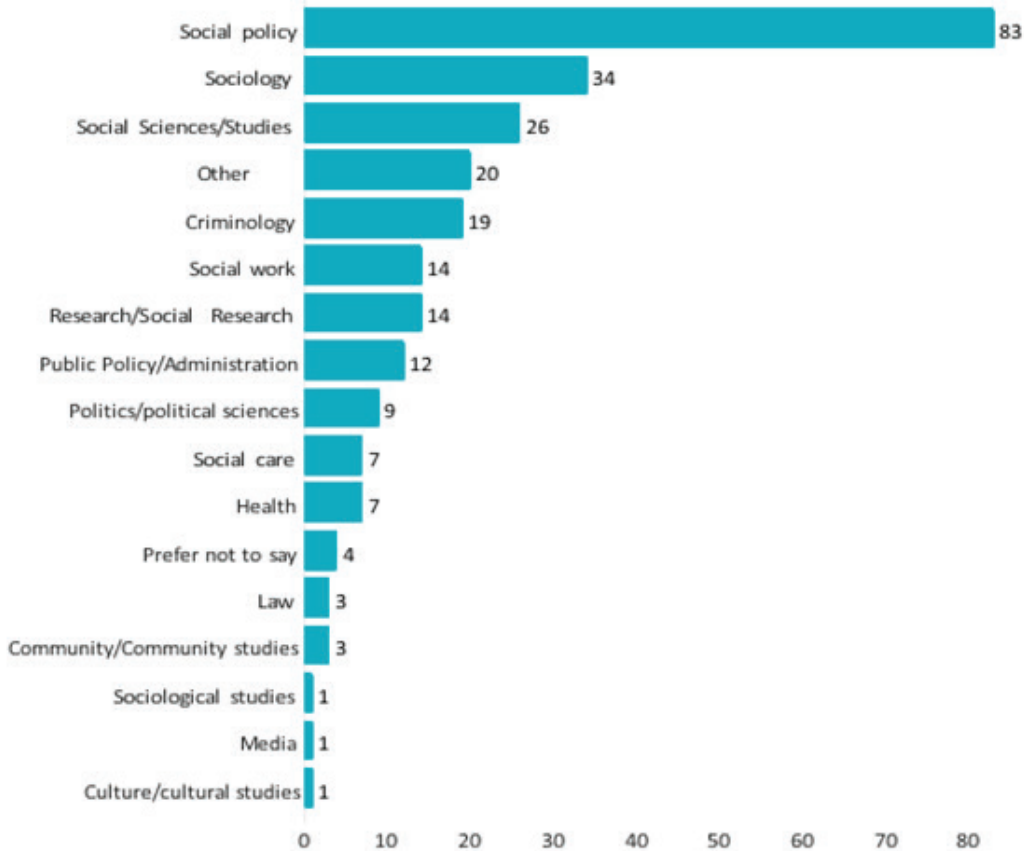
The survey was open to anyone teaching Social Policy in the UK Higher Education Sector, irrespective of their affiliation. However, among the 127 respondents, half (62 people, 49% of the total) reported to be members of the Social Policy Association (SPA). The composition of SPA-member respondents in terms of demographic characteristics and professional positions aligns with that of the wider sample.

## 4.2 TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

### 4.2.1 Name of units

Question B3 asked respondents for key words and phrases included in the name of the Department, School or Unit where they teach. Social Policy was reported by 69% of respondents; while other answers included sociology (28%), social sciences (22%), criminology (15%) and social work (12%)<sup>62</sup>. Interestingly enough, 31% of respondents did not have the phrase Social Policy in their unit name, giving support to the idea that Social Policy is a wider field of study than simply named courses (Figure 4.10).

**FIGURE 4.10 NAME OF THE UNIT RESPONDENTS TAUGHT IN**



62 Respondents could select more than one answer for this question.

#### 4.2.2 Teaching and assessment

We asked respondents if Social Policy was their core subject of teaching. Only 98 (82%) said so and 21 (18%) answered 'no'. Other core subjects taught often include Sociology, Public Policy, Social Work, and Research Methods.

Respondents were asked to use up to 5 keywords to describe the main Social Policy issues in their teaching. The Word Cloud in Figure 4.11 shows the range of issues covered. Only keywords occurring at least twice were included. The main words identified are social, policy, welfare, health, poverty and inequality.

**FIGURE 4.11 WORD CLOUD OF MAIN SOCIAL POLICY ISSUES COVERED IN TEACHING**



We then asked the respondents questions about their teaching of EDI issues. Most respondents reported that their teaching included issues of race and ethnicity. Many said they also taught other EDI topics, including gender, class, disability, age, sexuality, religion and others (Table 4.1)

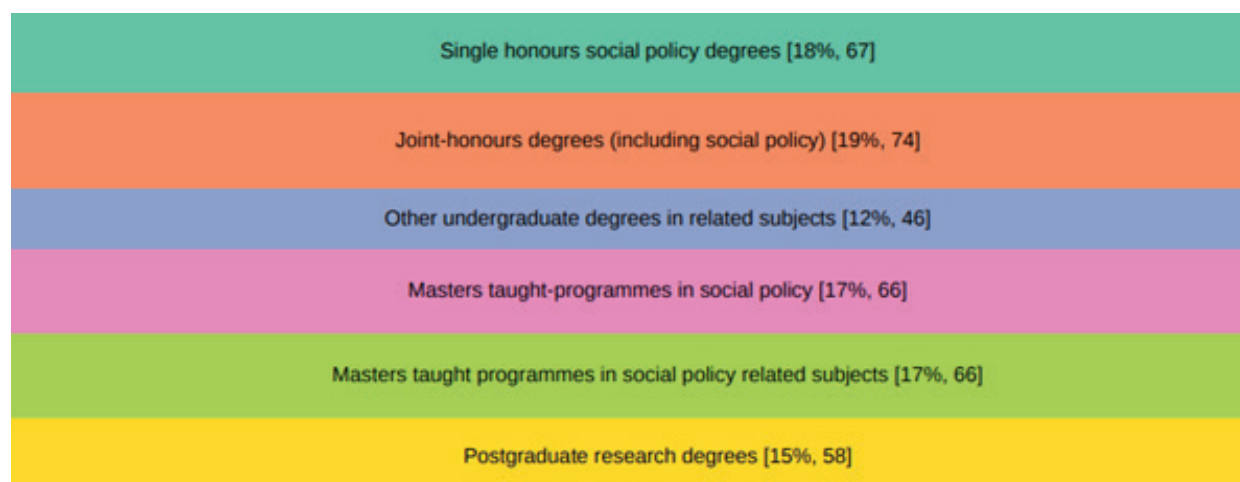


**TABLE 4.1 EDI ISSUES TAUGHT BY RESPONDENTS**

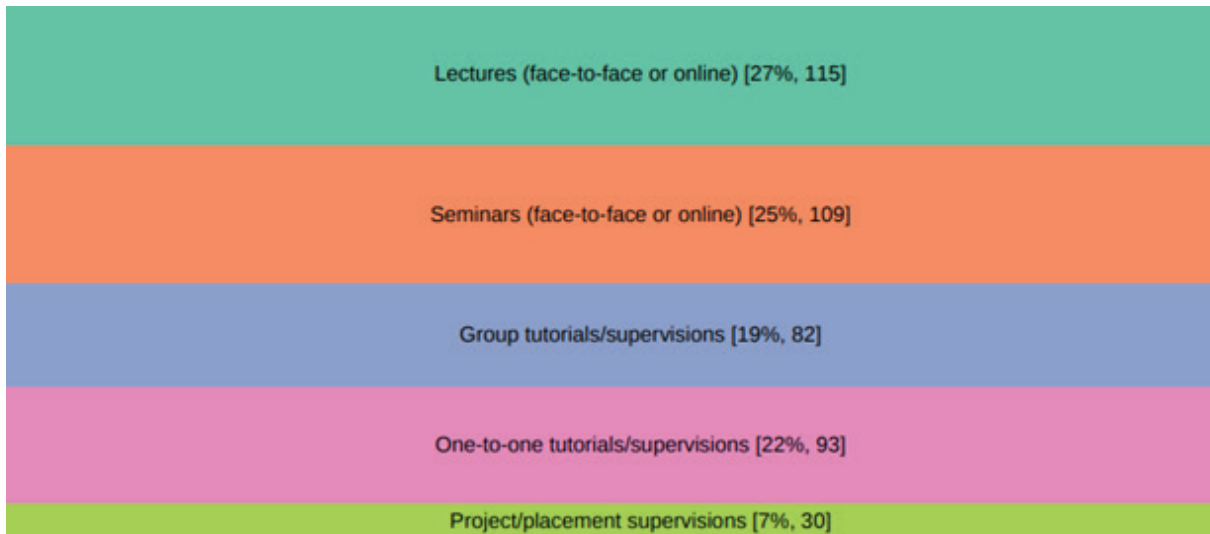
ISSUE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS (N=119)
Race and ethnicity	93 (78%)
Gender	92 (77%)
Class	91 (76%)
Disability	66 (55%)
Age	66 (55%)
Sexuality	45 (38%)
Religion	27 (23%)
Others	11 (9%)

Respondents were spread fairly evenly among different levels of degree programmes including singles and joint honours, masters and research (Figure 4.12).

**FIGURE 4.12 TYPES OF PROGRAMMES TAUGHT BY RESPONDENTS**



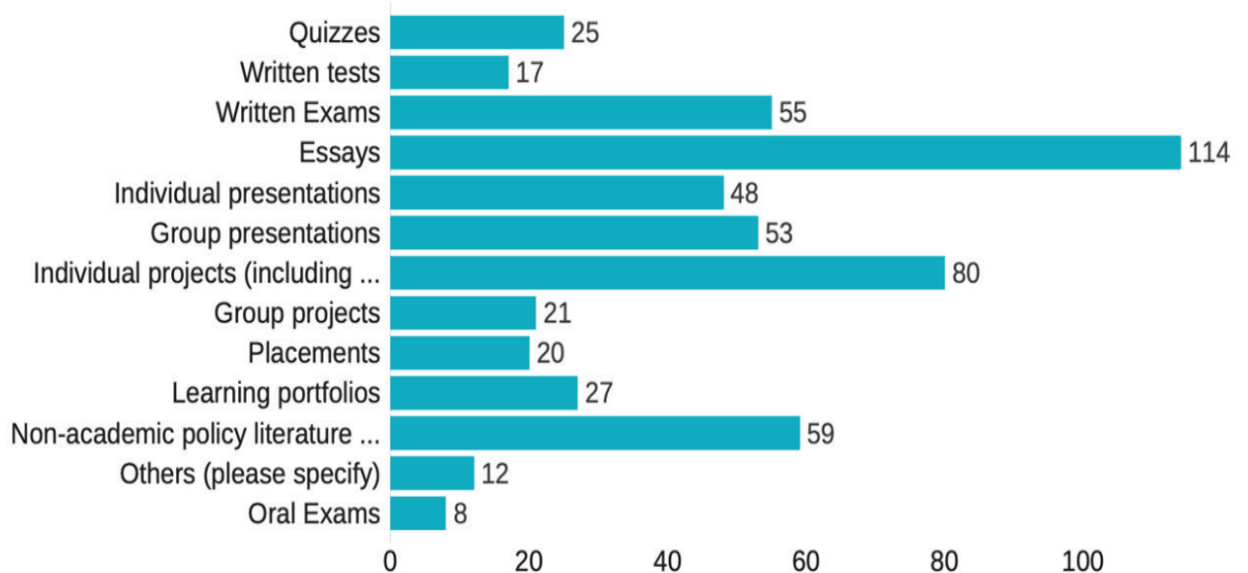
The most popular forms of teaching among respondents were lectures (face-to-face or online) (27%), seminars (face-to-face or online) (25%) and one-to-one tutorials/supervisions (22%). Other forms of teaching were group tutorials/supervisions (19%) and project/placement supervisions (7%) (Figure 4.13).

**FIGURE 4.13 REPORTED FORMS OF TEACHING (120 RESPONSES)**

We then asked respondents about the type of assessment used in their teaching: written essays were used by the vast majority of people, followed by individual projects, non-academic literature, written exams, and group and individual presentations (Figure 4.14).

**FIGURE 4.14 – REPORTED METHODS OF ASSESSMENT**

120 Responses



## 4.3 CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

### 4.3.1. Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF)

Just over half of the respondents either knew the TEF very well or had some ideas about what it entailed, while just under half either knew very little or had no idea. While 67% were able to assert that the TEF was relevant to their institutions, 11% were unsure.

Respondents who said the TEF was relevant were asked to assess its relevance in relation to different issue, with a score between 1 and 5. The statement “[TEF] has increased my workload in teaching administration” resulted in the highest mean average (3.46). The statement “it has increased my workload in teaching and assessment” was similarly high (3.15). However, the mean was much lower (2.25) when it came to the statement “[TEF] has helped improve my teaching practice” (Table 4.2).

**TABLE 4.2 IMPACT OF TEF ON RESPONDENTS**

FIELD	MIN	MZX	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	RESPONSES
1. It has helped to improve my teaching practice	1.00	4.00	2.25	0.78	72
2. It has increased my workload in teaching adminstraion	1.00	5.00	3.46	0.88	72
3. It has increased my workload in teaching and assessment	1.00	5.00	3.15	0.91	72
4. It has led to changes in the programme or course design	1.00	5.00	2.93	0.86	72
5. It has impacted in other ways (Please Specify)	1.00	5.00	2.87	0.65	53

Respondents were also given the opportunity to add their own comments on how the TEF had changed things: comments were all negative, with respondents noting that it brought additional stress and pressure, took time away from research, and detracted from learner-orientated practice towards a more market based and outcomes approach. For one respondent it was a “ticking the box exercise”.

### 4.3.2 COVID-19 pandemic

Respondents were given a series of statements on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their work and invited to select a number between 1 and 5 to indicate how much they agreed (with 5 being ‘strongly agree and 1 ‘strongly disagree’). Statements of an increased workload in administration, teaching, and providing support, drew very high mean averages (4.00, 3.83, and 4.18 respectively) indicating a near consensus that the pandemic had increased overall workloads. At the same time, most respondents agreed that they had learned new skills during this time (3.96 mean). Several respondents were less likely to agree that the pandemic had helped them develop better relationships with their colleagues or with their students – though in smaller proportions (2.17 and 2.16 mean respectively) (Table 4.3).

**TABLE 4.3 IMPACT OF THE COVID PANDEMIC ON RESPONDENTS**

FIELD	MIN	MZX	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	RESPONSES
1. It has negatively affected my physical health	1.00	5.00	3.09	1.26	116
2. It has negatively affected my mental wellbeing	1.00	5.00	3.64	1.11	115
3. It has negatively affected my work-life balance	1.00	5.00	3.66	1.16	116
4. It has increased my workload in teaching administration	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.94	116
5. It has increased my workload in teaching and assessment	1.00	5.00	3.83	1.06	116
6. It has increased my workload in providing support and pastoral care for students	1.00	5.00	4.18	0.98	116
7. It has led to changes in the programme and course design	1.00	5.00	3.96	0.97	116
8. It has helped me to aquire new skills (e.g. online teaching and meeting)	1.00	5.00	3.42	1.09	116
9. It has induced me to develop innovative teaching and assessment methods	1.00	5.00	3.42	1.09	116
10. It has helped me to develop better relationships with my colleagues	1.00	5.00	2.17	1.01	114
11. It has helped me to develop better relationships with my students	1.00	5.00	2.16	0.99	115
12. It has no effect on my teaching	1.00	5.00	1.59	0.80	116
13. It has other effects on my teaching (Please specify)	1.00	5.00	1.59	0.61	73

Some of the comments from teachers on the new learning environments that sprung up during the pandemic mentioned that online learning undermined the “normal learning community” of a class, classes became more condensed and repetitive, “block teaching” was introduced, and the “ability to explore” issues in depth was limited because of “the risk of being taken out of context”. One respondent said, “pressures to live stream can be very demoralising as it adds further discouragement to physical attendance”. Teaching online has also induced more anxiety. One respondent said it made him/her less confident. Another said, “teaching hours for ducks sake”. One said, “It has made me want to stop teaching many times”.

#### 4.3.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) issues

Respondents were given the opportunity to expand upon any EDI issues they may have experienced. One respondent noted that there was a lack of diversity in the student body which would lead to “pipeline issues...in terms of staff base.” Another respondent called for more recognition for the way in which institutional and social factors, such as underlying

biases, affected EDI issues rather than “formal mechanisms” such as working groups and statements which, while essential, are not sufficient.

Issues around care also were mentioned by a number of respondents, who noted that there was a lack of recognition of the caring role that they played towards students, particularly during the pandemic. Respondents also commented on the difficulties faced by those looking after children, highlighting associated struggles with maternity leave and missed opportunities which have impacted career progression.

Some respondents highlighted EDI related issues they are facing, such as “trans exclusionary attitudes”, gender imbalance, gender equality and disability. One noted, “mental health is still a catch 22 – distress can be heightened by work, but also is a risk to expose at work.”

One respondent noted the “increased needs of students” during this time and how this resulted in additional roles for staff, who “are not and should not be professionally equipped to take on these responsibilities”. There were concerns about pressures on financially challenged student which could cause stress and poor mental health to both staff and students. One respondent noted the impact of students from under-represented groups, such as international students.

Another responded noted uneven workloads across staff, particularly for more junior staff members in their department. A few respondents mentioned potential impact of EDI issues on progression and retention. One said, “difficult for women to progress fast”.

A couple of respondents also pointed out the lack of research linked to EDI issues and not enough discussion around EDI issues in social policy research.

A respondent was not sure how to include ‘race’ in teaching.

#### **4.3.4. Main concerns in current teaching**

Respondents were also asked to note their current concerns regarding teaching based on a series of statements, and to assign a number from 1 to 5, with 1 being “extremely” concerning and 4 being “not at all” concerning. From the results it was clear that a large proportion of respondents found that workload and work-related stress were very concerning, with mean averages of 1.80 and 1.94 respectively. Poor work-life balance (2.0) and a lack of administrative support (2.32) also showed high levels of concern in the aggregate (Table 4.4).

**TABLE 4.4 RESPONDENT'S CONCERNS IN THEIR CURRENT TEACHING**

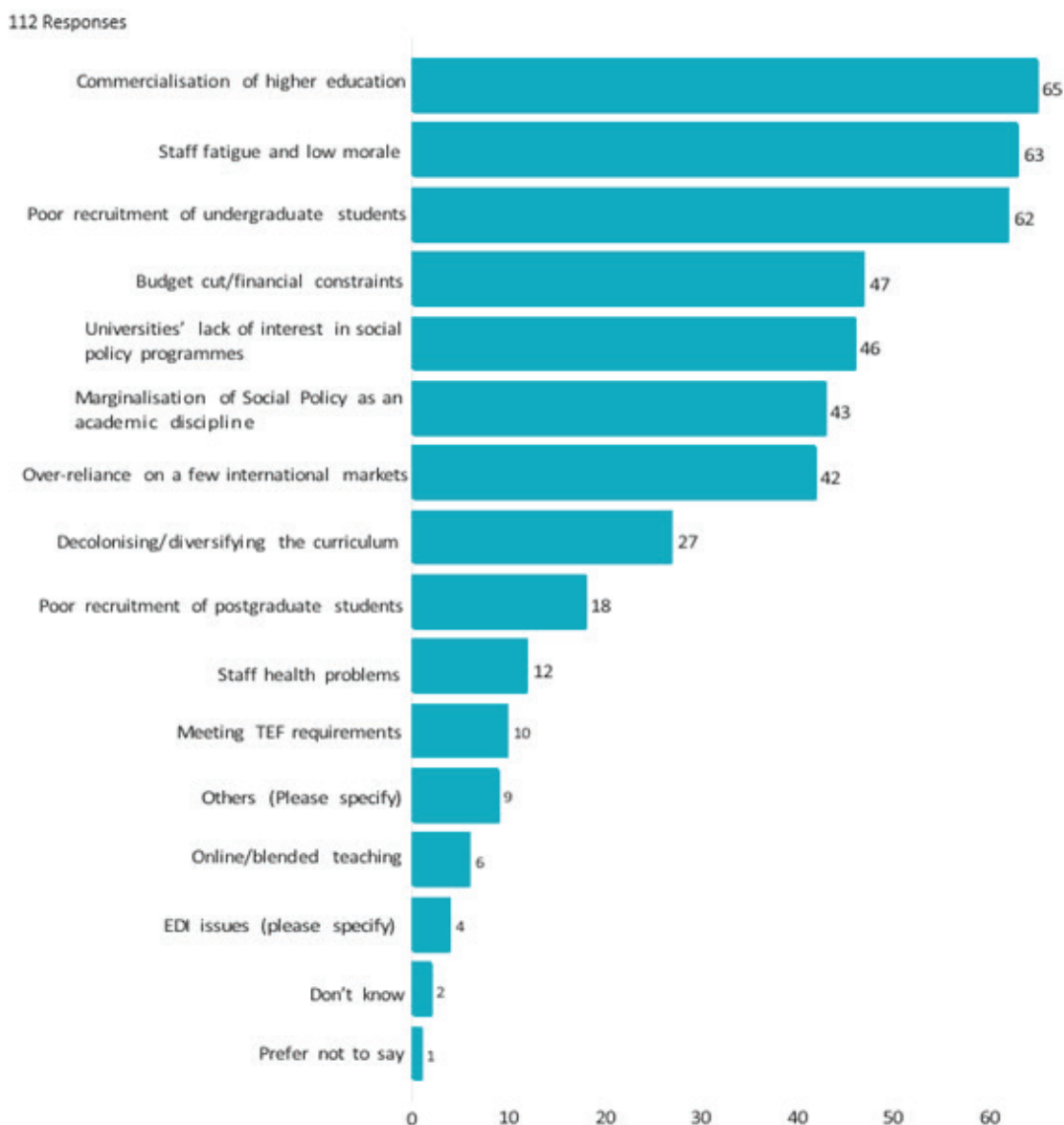
FIELD	MIN	MZX	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	RESPONSES
Workload	1.00	4.00	1.80	0.85	116
Wprk-related stress	1.00	4.00	1.94	0.93	115
Poor work-life balance	1.00	4.00	2.00	0.91	115
Limited opportunities for career progress	1.00	5.00	2.54	1.13	116
Online and blended teaching	1.00	4.00	2.66	0.99	116
Lack of administrative support	1.00	5.00	2.32	1.13	116
Lack of teaching resources	1.00	5.00	3.03	0.98	116
Lack of peer support	1.00	5.00	3.06	1.01	116
Lack of job security	1.00	5.00	3.16	1.02	115
EDI issues (please specify)	1.00	5.00	2.90	1.29	73
Other (please specify)	1.00	5.00	3.79	1.35	34

Respondents were also given space to write their own concerns. One respondent was concerned that following marketisation reforms the subject (presumably Social Policy) is in “danger of being wiped out”. Others noted a “substantial lack of care” by HEIs towards staff and staff family welfare and growing pressures on both staff and students’ mental health and workload. One respondent also noted that there was no time for research. Another said that he/she was looking to change career.

#### 4.3.5 Challenges in the following five years

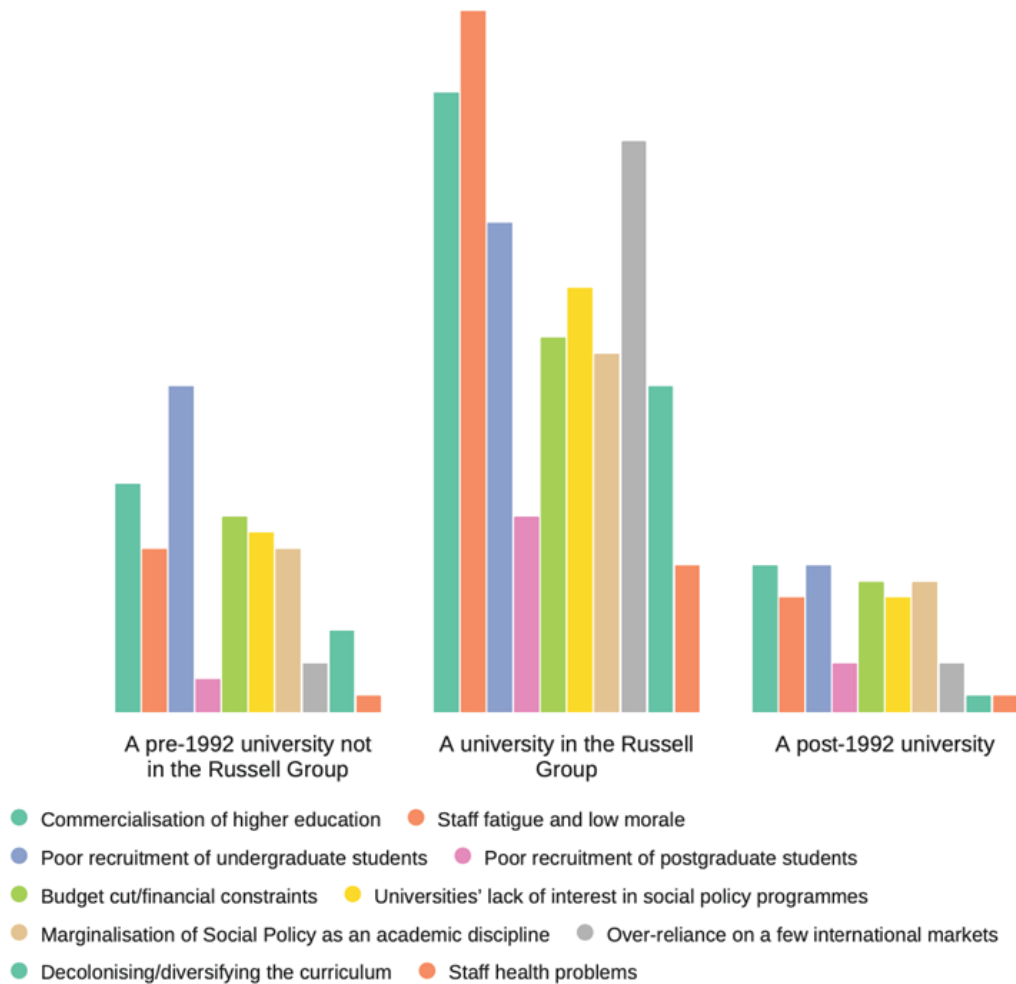
Respondents were asked to select what they felt were the top five main challenges facing social policy in the next five years. From 112 responses, the highest result was the commercialisation of Higher education at 58%, followed by staff fatigue and low morale at 56%, and poor recruitment of students at 55%. The next batch of results, selected by between 42% and 38% of respondents, included budget cuts, the lack of interest in social policy from universities, the marginalisation of social policy, and the over-reliance on international markets (Figure 4.15).

**FIGURE 4.15 PERCEIVED MAIN CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL POLICY TEACHING IN THE FOLLOWING FIVE YEARS**



Staff at pre-1992 universities were most likely to select poor recruitment of undergraduate students, commercialisation of higher education, and budget-cut/financial restraints. Post-1992 university staff were the most mixed in this regard, though their top two challenges were the commercialisation of higher education and poor recruitment of undergraduate students. However, those at Russell Group universities found staff fatigue and low morale, commercialisation of higher education, and over-reliance on a few international markets as their main challenges. Overreliance on international markets was, interestingly, a challenge overwhelmingly belonging to the Russell Group (Figure 4.16).

**FIGURE 4.16 - PREDICTED MAIN CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL POLICY TEACHING IN THE FOLLOWING FIVE YEARS BY TYPE OF HEI**



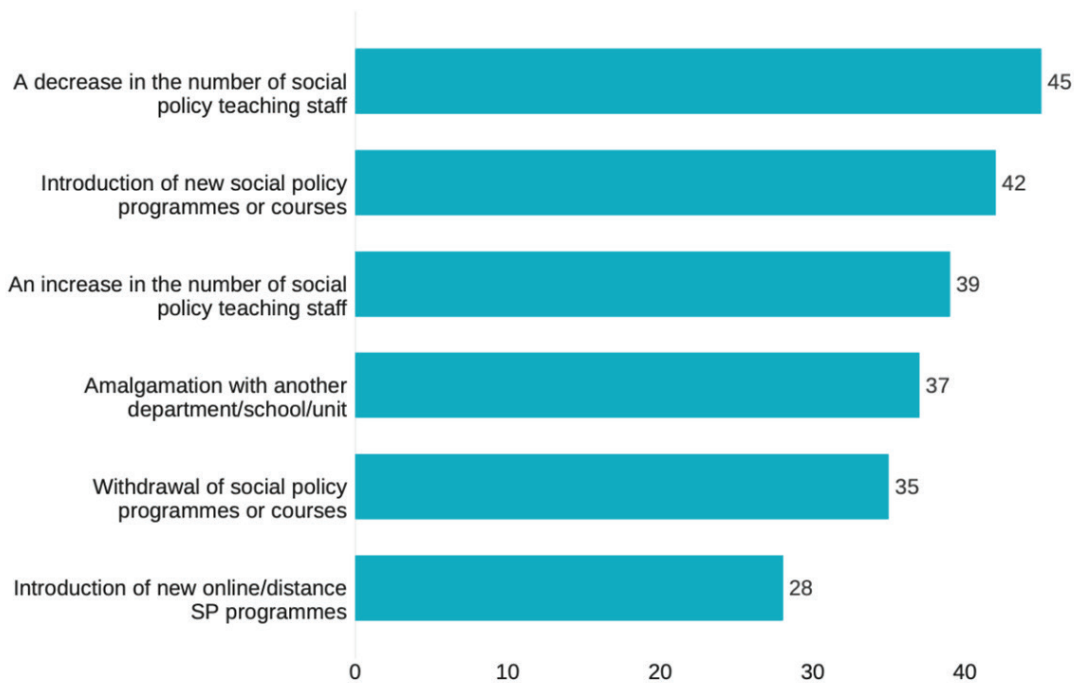
## 4.4 CHANGES IN SOCIAL POLICY TEACHING AND IN HEIS

### 4.4.1 Changes in the past five years

When asked about changes to social policy teaching in the past five years, respondents held very mixed views (Figure 4.17). While many observed a decrease in the number of social policy teaching staff in their department (41%), others observed an increase in staff (36%) and the introduction of new social policy programmes (39%).

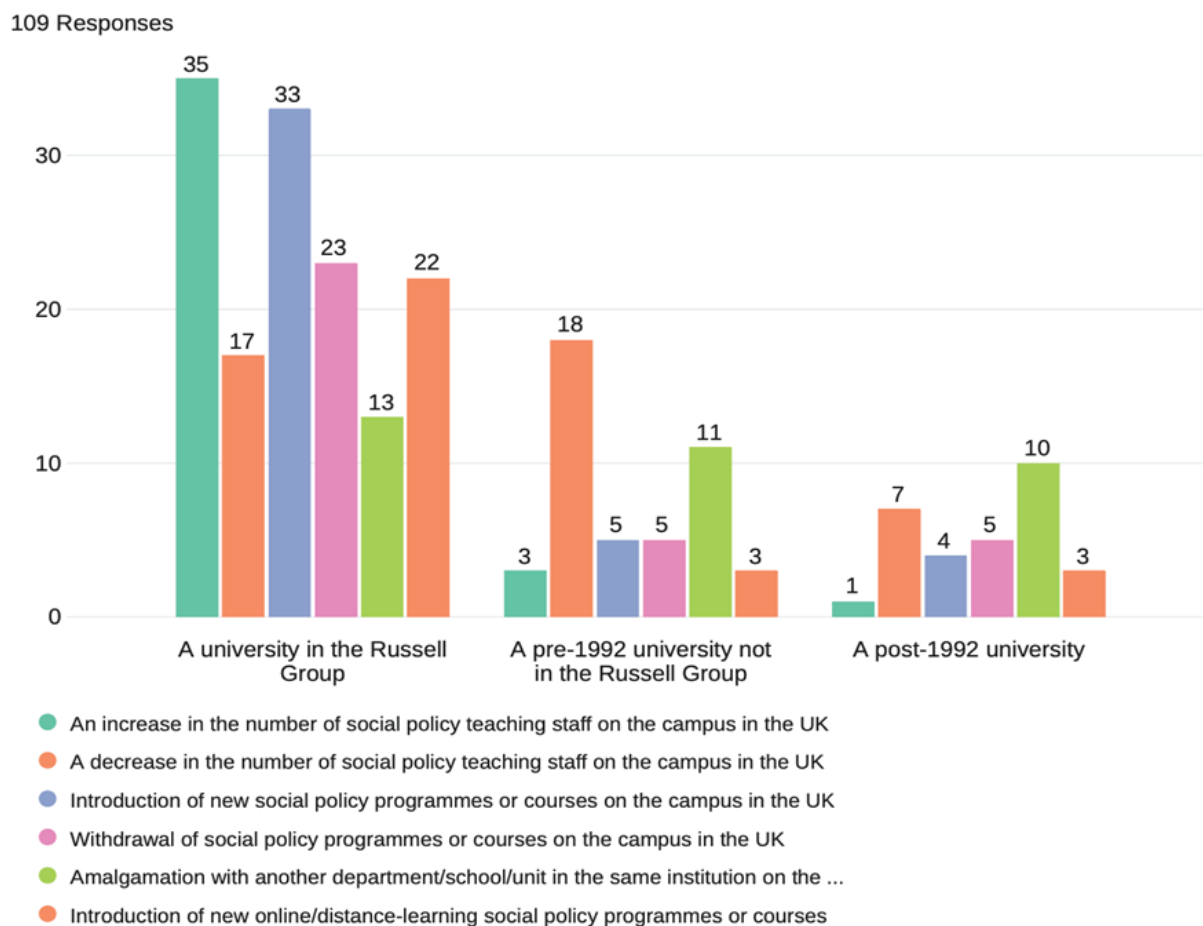


**FIGURE 4.17 - PERCEIVED CHANGES UNDERGONE IN THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS IN RESPONDENTS' DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL/UNIT**



However, looking at these responses by the type of university is insightful (Figure 4.18). Those in Russell Group universities were more likely to report an increase in social policy teaching staff in their departments, the creation of new programmes, the withdrawal of programmes and the creation of new programmes dedicated to online and distance learning. Meanwhile, staff of pre-1992 universities not in the Russell Group and post-1992 universities were both more likely to perceive a decrease in social policy teaching staff and the amalgamation of their department with others.

**FIGURE 4.18 – PERCEIVED CHANGES UNDERGONE IN THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS BY TYPE OF HEI IN RESPONDENTS’ DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL/UNIT**



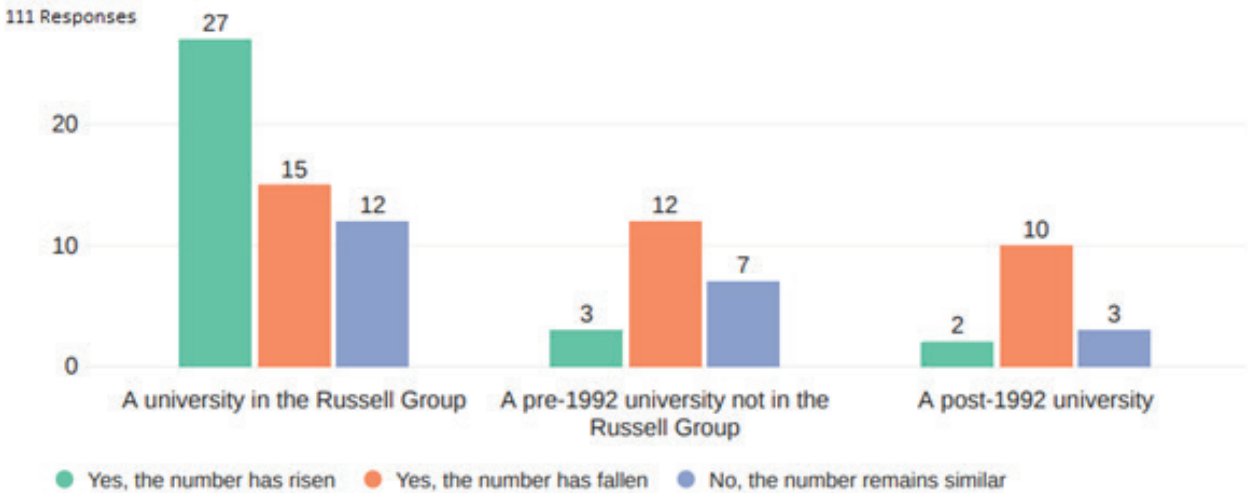
Respondents were asked to report observed changes in the number of students in the past five years. Reported numbers for undergraduate students varied. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) noted the number had increased or remained similar, 36% said there was a fall. Although 46% reported a rise in postgraduate students, 35% reported a fall or no change at all (Table 4.5).

**TABLE 4.5 PERCEIVED CHANGES IN NUMBER OF SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS IN THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS**

FIELD	THE NUMBER HAS RISEN	THE NUMBER HAS FALLEN	THE NUMBER REMAIN SIMILAR	DON'T KNOW	PREFER NOT TO SAY
Undergraduate students (N= 111)	32 (29%)	40 (36%)	22 (20%)	17 (15%)	0 (0%)
Postgraduate students (N = 112)	51 (46%)	16 (14%)	23 (21%)	21 (19%)	1 (1%)

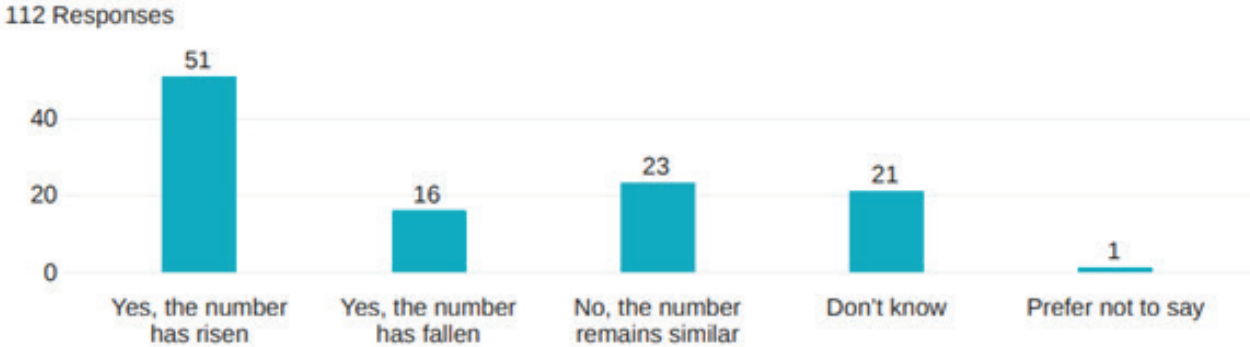
By breaking down the numbers, the responses show different patterns in the changes of student numbers among different types of institutions. About half of respondents from Russell Group universities reported an increase in undergraduate numbers while a majority from pre-1992 non-Russell- Group and post-1992 universities noted a fall (Figure 4.19).

**FIGURE 4.19 PERCEIVED CHANGES IN NUMBER OF SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS IN THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS**



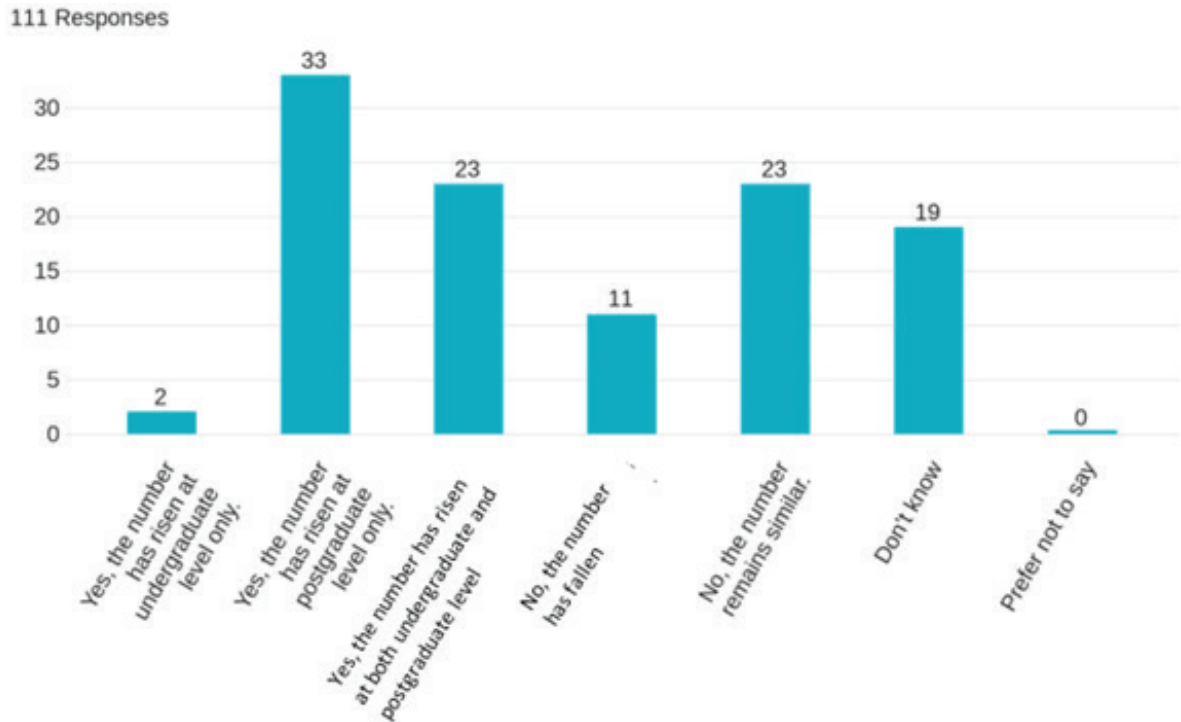
At postgraduate level, about 60% of respondents from Russell Group and post-1992 universities reported an increase in their student numbers. Only 40% of those from pre-1992 non-Russell-Group institutions reported the same (Figure 4.20)

**FIGURE 4.20 PERCEIVED CHANGES IN POSTGRADUATE SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS**



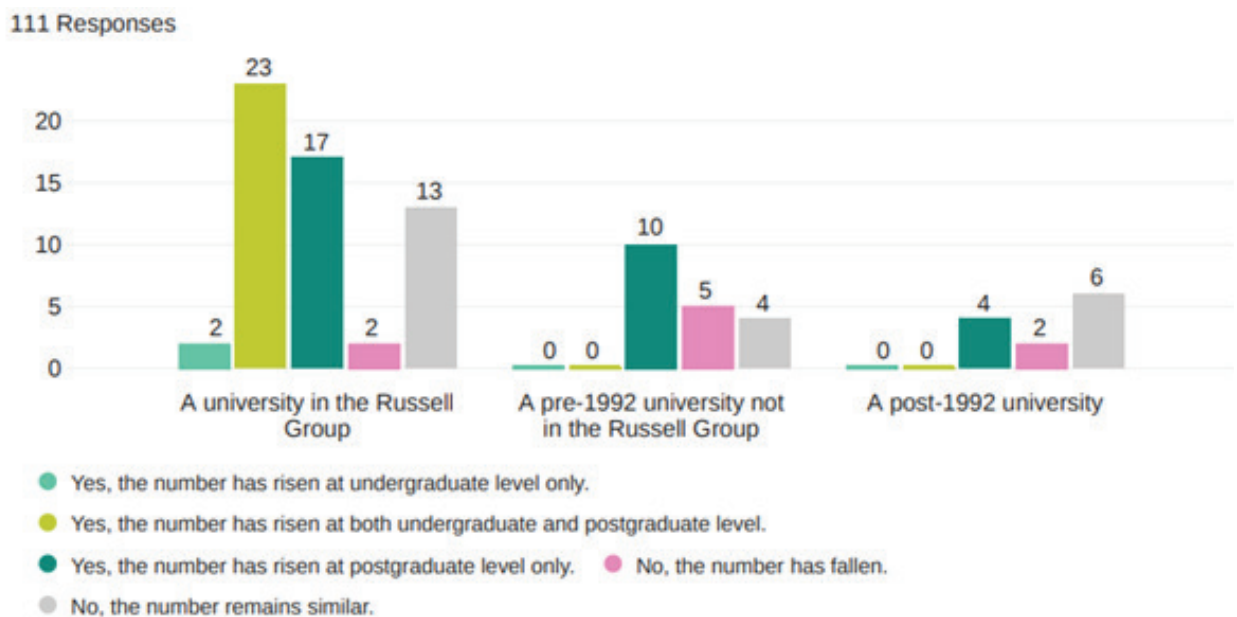
Regarding international students, many respondents noted a rise in the number at postgraduate level only (30%) or at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (21%). About 21% reported that the number remain similar (Figure 4.21).

**FIGURE 4.21 PERCEIVED CHANGES IN THE NUMBERS OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS IN THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS**



However, when breaking down the responses by types of institutions, the data show respondents from Russell Group universities were more likely to report an increase of student numbers at both undergraduate and/or postgraduate levels (Figure 4.22).

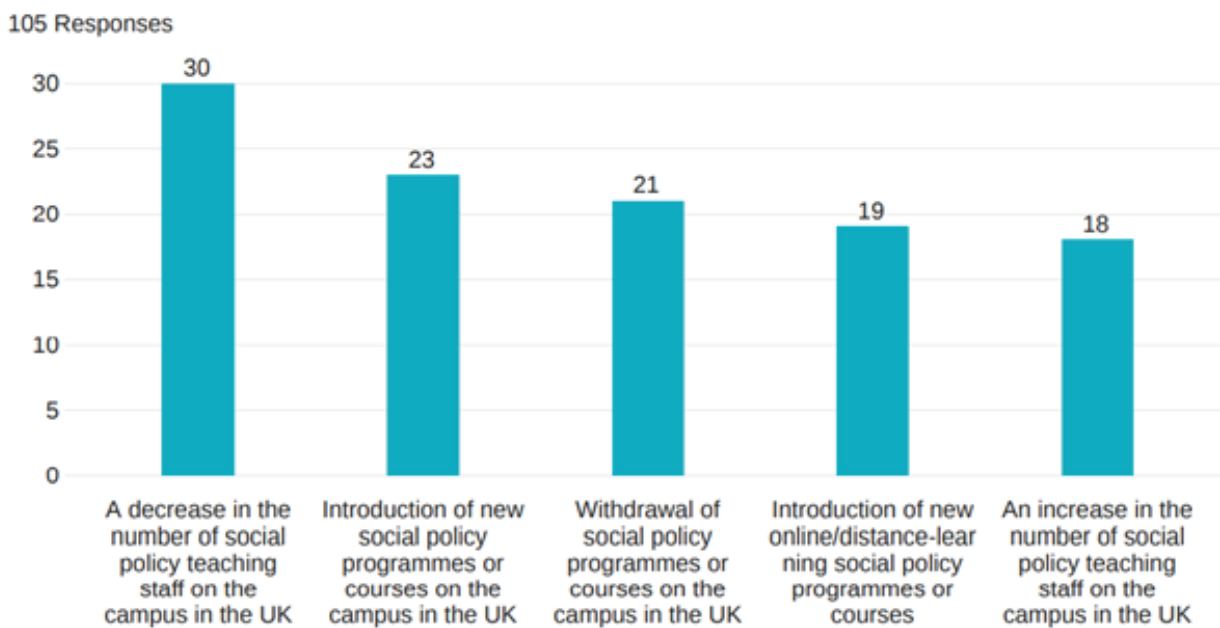
**4.22 PERCEIVED CHANGES IN THE NUMBERS OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS IN THE PREVIOUS FIVE YEARS – BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION**



#### 4.4.2 Potential changes in the following five years

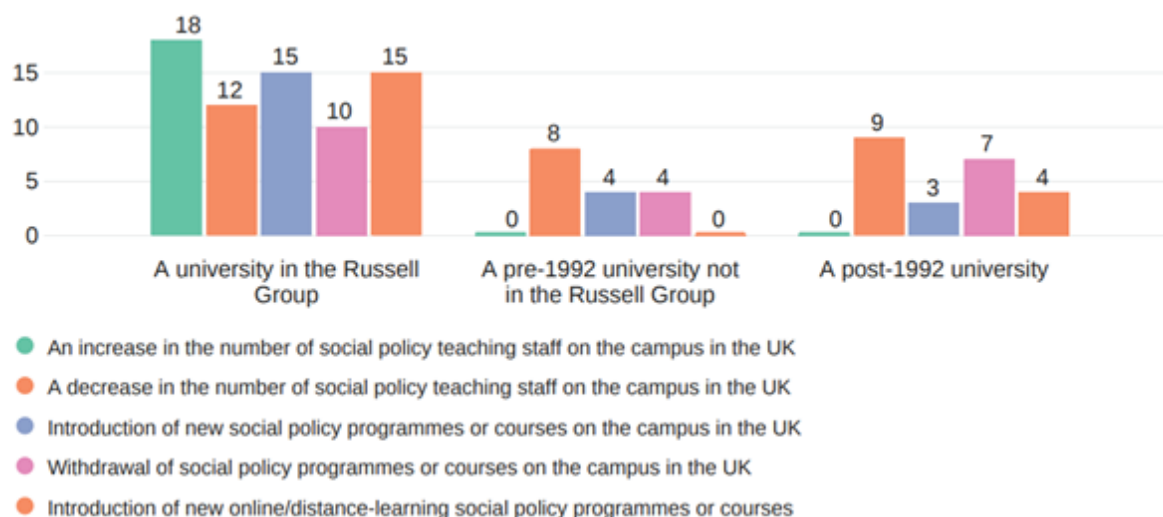
Similarly to the reflective responses, views were also mixed regarding the prospective changes to departments in the next five years (Figure 4.23). While some thought to see a decrease in the number of social policy teaching staff (29%), others predicted the introduction of new programmes (22%), or programme withdrawal (20%).

**FIGURE 4.23 PREDICTED CHANGES UNDERGONE IN THE FOLLOWING FIVE YEARS IN RESPONDENTS' DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL/UNIT**



When the responses were broken down by types of institutions, the views of respondents from different types of institutions look different (Figure 4.24). Respondents from Russell Group universities perceived the top three changes are an increase in the number of social policy teaching staff, introduction of new social policy programmes and introduction of new online/distance-learning social policy programme or courses. Respondents from pre-1992 non-Russell-Group and post-1992 universities both ranked a decrease in the number of social policy staff as the top potential change, followed by withdrawal of social policy programme or courses in the UK. Fewer perceived the likelihood of positive developments such as increase in social policy teaching staff and introduction of new courses or programmes.

**FIGURE 4.24 PREDICTED CHANGES IN THE FOLLOWING FIVE YEARS IN RESPONDENTS' DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL/UNIT BY TYPE OF INSTITUTIONS**



Overall, undergraduate student numbers across all HEI types were predicted to stay similar, and postgraduate and international numbers were expected either to rise or stay the same despite uncertainties of the future of international numbers (Table 4.6).

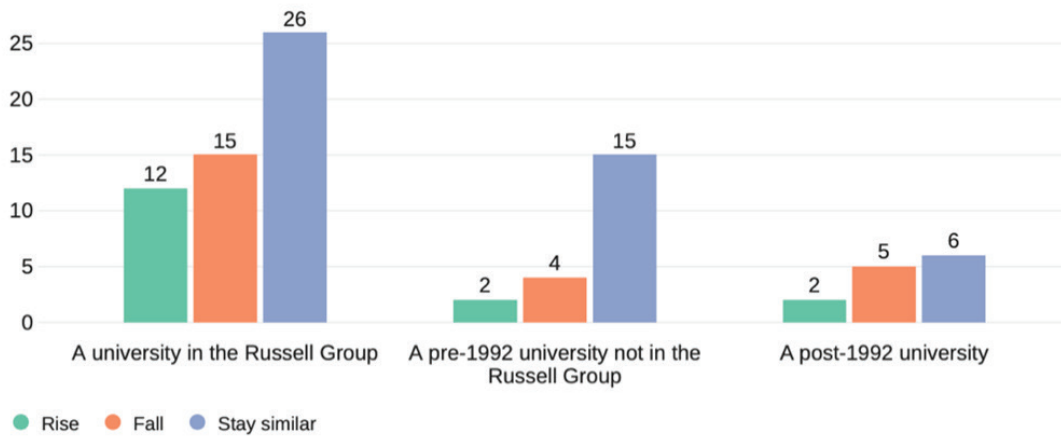
**TABLE 4.6 PREDICTED CHANGES IN NUMBERS OF SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS IN THE FOLLOWING FIVE YEARS**

	THE NUMBER WILL RISE	THE NUMBER WILL FALL	THE NUMBER WILL STAY SIMILAR	DON'T KNOW	PREFER NOT TO SAY
Undergraduate students (N = 111)	17 (15%)	26 (23%)	48 (43%)	20 (18%)	0 (0%)
Postgraduate students (N = 111)	36 (32%)	12 (11%)	35 (32%)	28 (25%)	0 (0%)
International students (N = 112)	36 (32%)	15 (13%)	30 (27%)	31 (28%)	0 (0%)

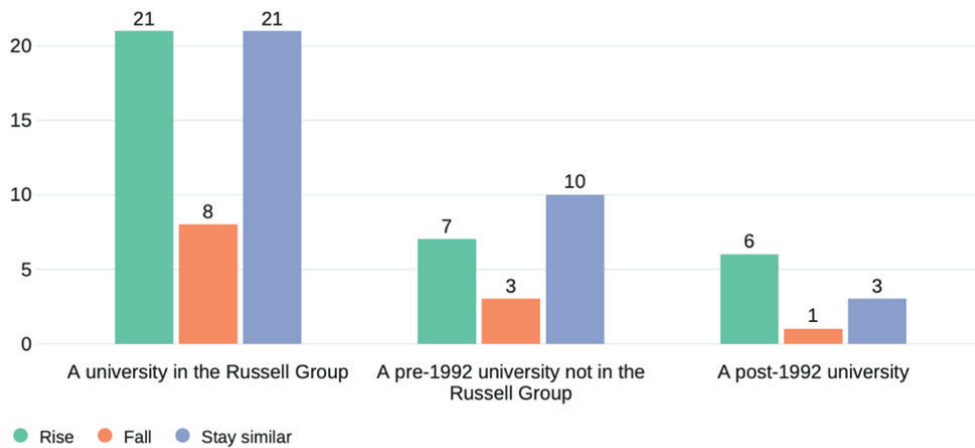
While undergraduate numbers at pre-1992 universities are predicted to remain steady, at post-1992 universities predictions are numbers will remain similar or fall (Figure 4.25). Postgraduate students were more likely to be predicted to stay the same at pre-1992 universities, and to rise at post-1992 universities. Similar to Russell Group universities, both pre-1992 and post-1992 universities expect further rises in international student numbers (Figure 4.26).

Many Russell Group respondents believed undergraduate student numbers would remain the same in coming years, and an equal amount predicted little change or a rise at the postgraduate level (Figures 4.25, 4.26). Equally, the number of international students at Russell Group universities is expected to either stay similar or continue rising (Figure 4.27).

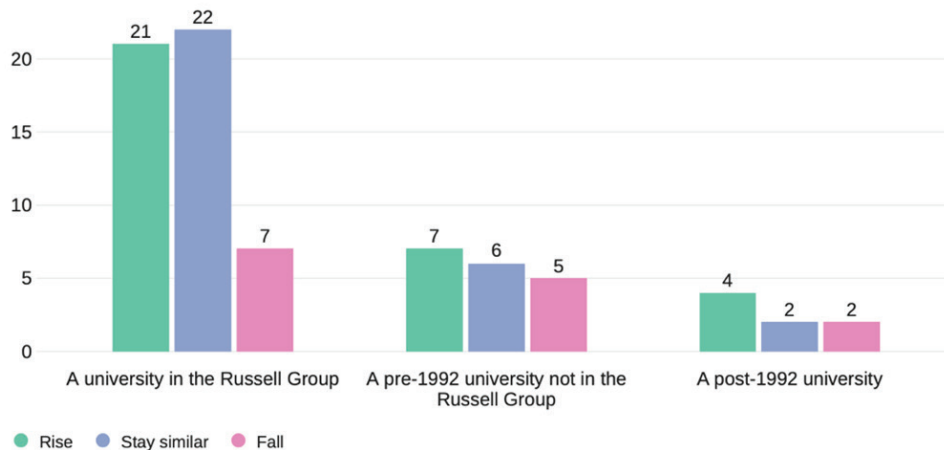
**FIGURE 4.25 - PREDICTED CHANGE IN NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS STUDYING SOCIAL POLICY BY TYPE OF HEI**



**FIGURE 4.26 - PREDICTED CHANGE IN NUMBER OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS STUDYING SOCIAL POLICY BY TYPE OF HEI**

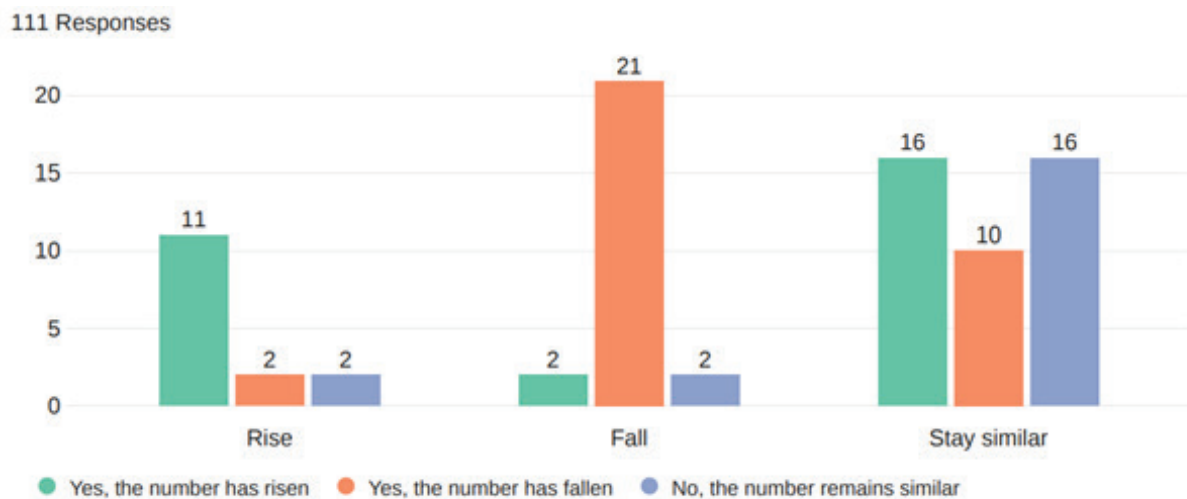


**FIGURE 4.27 - PREDICTED CHANGE IN NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS STUDYING SOCIAL POLICY BY TYPE OF HEI**

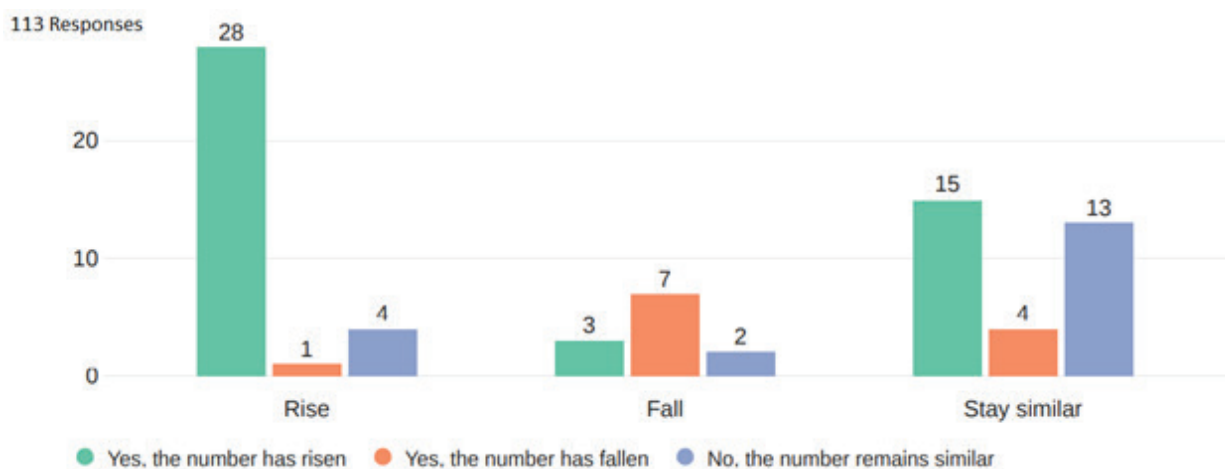


Regarding undergraduate students, 73% of those perceiving a past rise continue to expect future increases, and 84% of those perceiving a past fall expected further decline (Figure 4.28). This was a similar trend with postgraduate students: however, those perceiving a previous rise in postgraduate numbers were more likely to be sure of a continued rise (85%) (Figure 4.29). Many respondents, however, were likely to predict undergraduate and postgraduate numbers to remain the same if they perceived a rise or little change. Those reporting a rise in international students at undergraduate and/or postgraduate levels predict future rises (83%), and vice versa. However, some respondents predicting a rise at only the postgraduate level estimate numbers to steady in the future (Figure 4.30).

**FIGURE 4.28 PREDICTED CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS (BREAKDOWN BY CHANGES IN THE PAST)**

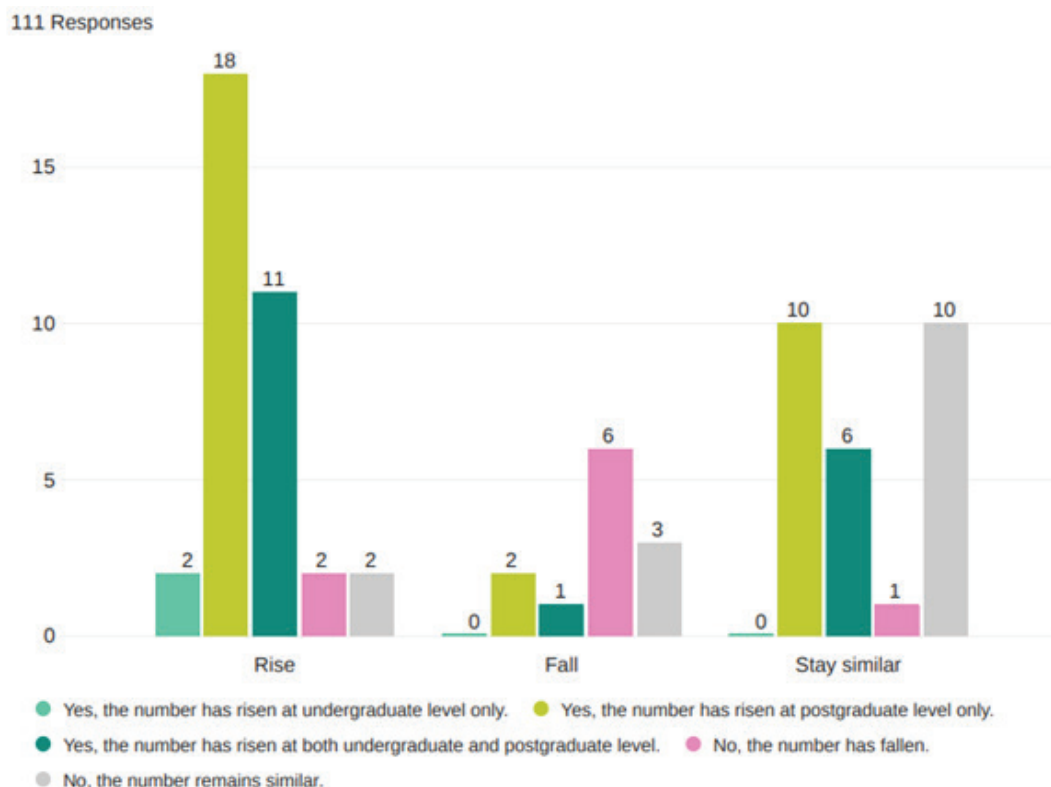


**FIGURE 4.29 PREDICTED CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF POSTGRADUATE SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS (BREAKDOWN BY CHANGES IN THE PAST)**





**FIGURE 4.30 PREDICTED CHANGES IN THE NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL POLICY STUDENTS (BREAKDOWN BY CHANGES IN THE PAST)**



Reflections on student numbers in the past five years provide a strong indicator of perceptions of the future. Broadly speaking, undergraduate numbers are expected to mostly stay the same. Russell Group and post-1992 universities are most optimistic about a rise in postgraduate students in the future. There also appear to be expectations across HEI type regarding the increase in international students.

#### 4.4.3 Comparison of perceived and predicted changes in student numbers with the findings of the 2011 and 2016 surveys

The 2011 and 2016 surveys asked respondents to report their expectations about the changes in the number of undergraduate and postgraduate students in the upcoming five years. The same question was asked in the 2022 survey. As shown in tables 4.7 and 4.8, below, respondents in 2022 were overall more likely to expect a reduction in undergraduate numbers (23.4%) and an increase in postgraduate numbers (32%) – a trend registered since 2011.

This is also consistent with the answers about the past five years. In 2016, 28% of respondents reported undergraduate numbers had seen a decrease, whilst this figure reached 36% in 2021. As for postgraduate students, whilst the proportion of those who reported an increase in numbers in 2016 was 15%, this figure had more than trebled in 2022: 45.5%.

**TABLE 4.7 – NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS – PAST AND EXPECTED CHANGE**

	2011		2016		2022	
	Next year	Next 5 years	Past 5 years	Next 5 years	Past 5 years	Next 5 years
Rise in numbers	2%	6%	20%	28%	29%	15%
Fall in numbers	41%	38%	28%	19%	36%	23.4%
No changes in numbers	28%	26%	29%	34%	20%	43.2%
Don't know	29%	30%	27%	30%	15.3%	18%

Sources: (Mackinder and Hudson, 2016., Patrick et al, 2011)<sup>63</sup>. Note that in 2011 there was a high expectation for a fall in the number of students as it was after the 2012 tuition fee reform.

**TABLE 4.8 - NUMBER OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS - PAST AND EXPECTED CHANGE**

	2011		2016		2022	
	Past 2 years	Next 2 years	Past 5 years	Next 5 years	Past 5 years	Next 5 years
Rise in numbers	6%	14%	15%	23%	45.5%	32%
Fall in numbers	21%	21%	18%	12%	14%	11%
No changes in numbers	37%	31%	23%	28%	20.5%	31.5%
Don't know	25%	33%	31%	38%	19%	25%
Prefer not to say					1%	

Sources: (Mackinder and Hudson, 2016., Patrick et al, 2011).

63 Mackinder,S., and Hudson,J. (2016). The Current and Future State of Social Policy Teaching in Higher Education Institution, Social Policy Association.

Patrick, R., Brown, K. & Drever, E. (2011) The current and future state of Social Policy teaching in UK HEIs, Social Policy Association.

#### 4.4.4 Comparison of perceived and predicted departmental changes with the findings of the 2011 and 2016 surveys

In the 2011 survey, respondents were asked to report departmental changes that occurred in the past two years and the expected departmental changes in the upcoming two years. Instead, 2016 and 2022 surveys asked to record such changes over a 5-year period. As shown in table 4.9, in 2011 only 21% of respondents reported that amalgamation with another department had occurred, while this number increased in 2016 to 26%, and reached 31.2% in 2022. The most significant change between 2016 and 2022 is the decrease in the reported withdrawals of Social Policy programmes: 30.2% of respondents reported this change in 2022, in comparison to 47% in 2016.

**TABLE 4.9 - DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES – PAST AND EXPECTED CHANGES**

	2011		2016		2022	
	Past 2 years	Next 2 years	Past 5 years	Next 5 years	Past 5 years	Next 5 years
Amalgamation with another department	21%	27%	26%	18%	31.2%	Not calculated
Withdrawal of programmes	27%	29%	47%	53%	30.2%	20%

Sources: (Mackinder and Hudson, 2016., Patrick et al, 2011).

#### 4.5 Expectations on SPA and potential involvement

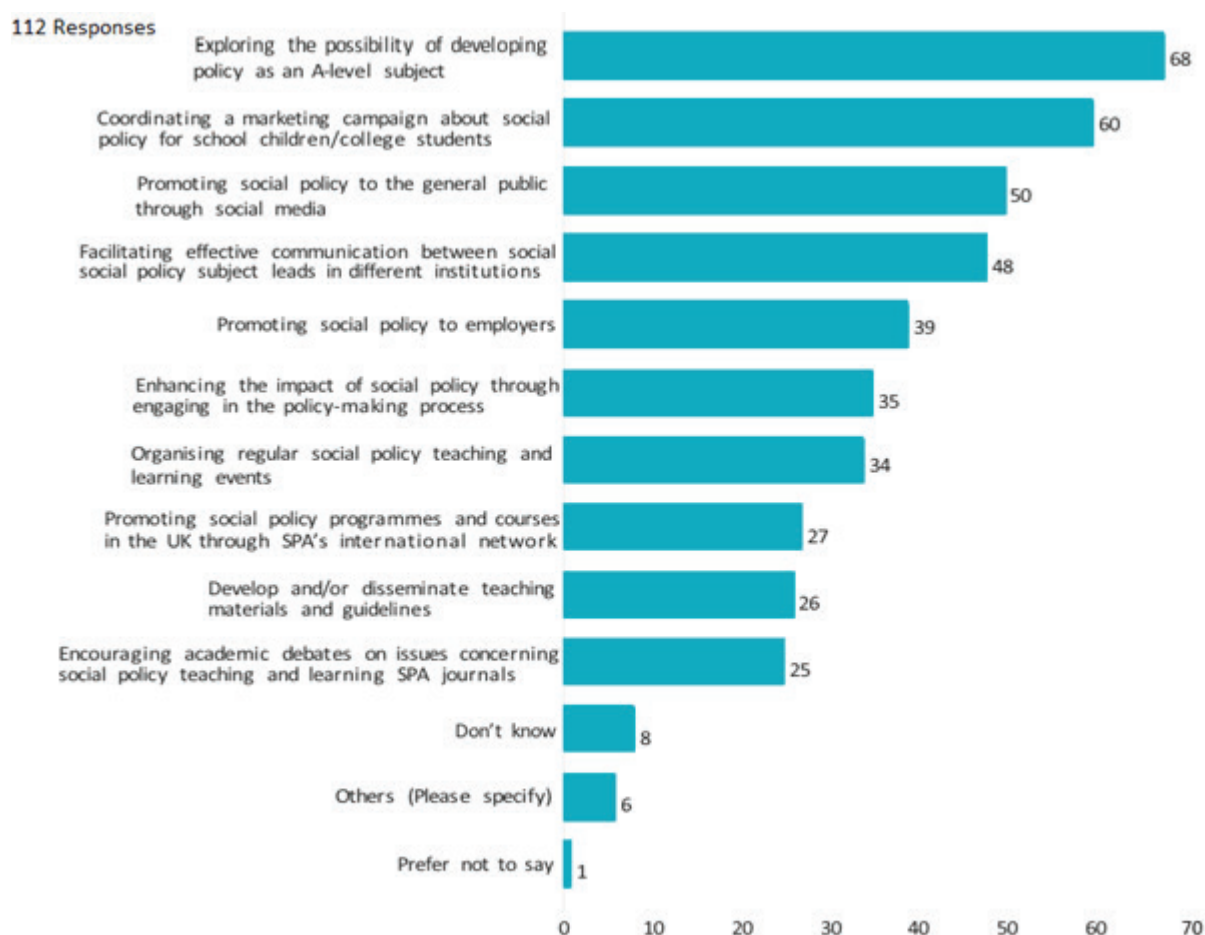
Respondents were asked about what the Social Policy Association (SPA) could do to address their concerns regarding their social policy teaching (Figure 4.31). Each respondent was asked to pick up to 5 priorities. 46% suggested the provision of training courses or events on social policy teaching: for instance, in module and course development, innovative teaching and assessment methods. Respondents were also eager for the SPA to report the concerns highlighted previously to university managers and unit heads (45%). The development of a library of teaching and learning resources by the SPA was also a popular recommendation (42%).

Given the space to list other possible responses, some respondents wrote that the SPA needed to come to terms with the increasing “residualisation” of the subject by engaging with “creative ways that social policy can be retained”, while another tasked the SPA with finding “a new future for the subject”, while another respondent wrote that the SPA should work to raise the profile of social policy.

Another respondent wrote of the need to demand “systemic changes” rather than “individual-level resourcing”, echoing a similar respondent that felt strongly that “we don’t need more stuff (e.g. training manuals, resource links, classroom tech)”, but staff on “decent contracts” who can contribute to the department’s research and teaching. Two respondents wrote that the SPA should work with unions to achieve their goals.

Additionally, respondents were asked what the SPA could do regarding the main challenges in social policy teaching in the next five years. Of 112 responses, 61% suggested the exploration of the possibility of developing social policy as an A-level subject (or indeed, its equivalent 'Higher' in Scotland, as one respondent noted). Some 54% suggested coordinating a marketing campaign about social policy for school children and college students. Other popular recommendations were 'promoting social policy to the general public through social media' (45%), 'facilitating effective communication between social policy subject leads in different institutions' (43%), and 'promoting social policy to employers' (35%). It is worth highlighting that four of the top five suggestions centre on the promotion of the discipline.

**FIGURE 4.31 SUPPORT RESPONDENTS EXPECTED FROM THE SPA**



Despite the range of expectations on the SPA, 72 respondents (72%) reported that they were not interested in involving in organising SPA teaching and learning events or other teaching and learning work. Only 14 (14%) replied 'yes' and 14 (14%) replied 'maybe'.

## 4.6 Other issues (responses to open end questions)

At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to write anything else concerning their views about Social Policy teaching in HEIs that had not been covered by our questions.

One of the key themes that came through was the idea that Social Policy was an unfamiliar subject compared to history, sociology and criminology and there was a correlation between falling student numbers at the undergraduate level and this lack of awareness about social policy, with many students “stumbling” upon the subject rather than actively seeking it out as a course of study. One of the reasons given for this unfamiliarity was the lack of provision for social policy at A Level. According to one respondent, “applicants are often interested in what we teach but don’t know that it’s called Social Policy”. This general lack of acquaintance with the subject was, according to some, even more dismal when they considered that the key issues facing society such as the environmental crisis and pandemic politics require social policy grounding in order to adequately engage with.

Many of these responses thus seemed to fall firmly on the side of seeing Social Policy as a discipline and subject in its own right, one that needed to re-assert itself for a position in the repertoire of university provision. One respondent, noting the reduction of Social Policy at a university from a department to a module, wrote that “This is the future unless Social Policy can shift from its polite and apologetic stance to one where Social Policy academia matters, for society, for government and for business”. On the other hand, others looked to the ways in which Social Policy components could be part of other programs such as criminology, sociology, management and policy as part of a ‘survival strategy’.

Other suggestions for improving the status of Social Policy were bringing in more of a decolonisation and diversity lens and a broader perspective of what Social Policy is and is for. It was also noted that growing internationalisation brought its own challenges and rewards, on the one hand creating a need to broaden curricula, but also giving some measure of institutional stability.

## 4.7 Summary

In conclusion, our survey of staff teaching Social Policy in the UK Higher Education sector presents an interesting and complex picture of their profile, professional experiences and concerns – with some indication of how these vary across different types of institutions. Whilst our online sample has a significant element of self-selection – and so we cannot claim it to be statistically representative – the 127 questionnaires we collected offer a diverse picture, with distributions in terms of e.g. gender and ethnicity similar to those reported in the latest 2021 Census of England and Wales<sup>64</sup>.

As detailed in the previous sections of this chapter, staff teaching Social Policy share many of the challenges and concerns which are present in the overall university sector. At a personal level, large proportions of respondents are seriously concerned about poor work-life balance, high workload and work-related stress (with average scores of around 2.0 out of 5). These issues are

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64 Quite notably, however, among our respondents there is a significantly larger proportion of people identifying as gay, lesbian or bisexual than in the wider population.

connected to wider concerns about HE and the discipline of Social Policy in particular, with the ‘Commercialisation of Higher Education’ identified by most (58%) as one of the main current challenges.

Recent developments in HE, such as the introduction of the Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF), tend not to be seen as progress – and at times defined as ‘tick-box’ exercises. In fact, most people thought the TEF “has increased my workload” in term of teaching and assessment per week as teaching administration (with average scores above 3) – whilst only a minority of people though the TEF has helped improving teaching practice. Similarly, the shift to online teaching experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic was associated to an increase in administrative and teaching workload as well as more time spent for student support (with average scores around 4.0). On the other hand, a significant proportion of respondents at least agreed the lockdown had been an

opportunity to learn new skills and – in unprecedented times of professional and personal challenges – to develop better relationships with some colleagues.

With regard to issues more specific to Social Policy as a discipline, many respondents seemed particularly concerned about recruitment, with ‘poor recruitment of students’ identified as one of the top challenges by 55% of respondents. When comparing our 2022 survey with those undertaken previously, we can see a growing concern particularly about undergraduate students when compared to 2016 (though the outlook was even less positive back in 2011). Things are different regarding postgraduate recruitment, which most respondents have seen growing and predict to increase even further over the next 5 years – and more so than what was reported in previous surveys.

As discussed throughout the chapter, many of these patterns differ significantly between staff at Russell Group universities and those in post-1992 institutions; with the former being more optimistic both about the recent past and the future in terms of recruitment and even creation of new programmes, including distance-learning; albeit some worried about the overreliance on international markets. ‘Staff fatigue’ and ‘low morale’, however, were concerns shared across the board. Social Policy teachers at modern universities are also more likely to be concerned by – or have experienced – the amalgamation of Social Policy within – or under – other subjects and disciplines. Thus, there seems to be a risk for Social Policy becoming a ‘niche’, if not an elite, discipline.

In this respect the role of the Social Policy Association (SPA) is seen as crucial. Over half of our respondents supported the idea of marketing campaigns for school and college students and 61% were in favour of exploring the possibility of developing Social Policy as an A-level subject. At a critical juncture where the social sciences in general, and Social Policy in particular, are so crucial to address the challenges of our societies – and at the same time are at the receiving end of very little political support – promoting the discipline and supporting those who teach it are even more urgent imperatives.



# 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

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## 5.1 FOR THE SPA

### **1. To include the five-yearly review on social policy teaching provision in HEIs as a regular activity in the SPA calendar**

This would accumulate valuable comparative data for the understanding of the development of social policy teaching provision in HEIs over time and provide an evidence base for SPA to develop action plans on supporting and promoting Social Policy. A reasonable budget for the review could be included in the SPA budget for the years concerned (e.g. 2026, 2031). Research teams could be recruited through an open call for interest and selected by the SPA Executive Committee on relevant criteria.

### **2. To develop and deliver a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote Social Policy**

Respondents from the current and previous surveys have a common concern that social policy is less known than other social science subjects. Students may not have heard of it at all when they decide what to study at university. SPA could appoint a working group within the Association to oversee the development and delivery of the marketing strategy. The working group should be provided with sufficient financial support to purchase professional marketing advice and services, such as the production of promotional videos.

### **3. To commission a feasibility study on developing Social Policy into an A-Level subject**

The findings from the current study show that the decrease in the number of undergraduate social policy degree programmes and students is common among many HEIs. Some respondents from the current and previous studies have called for the development of Social Policy as an A-Level subject. This had been discussed by the SPA Executive Committee in previous years but no conclusion was drawn. It would be worthwhile to commission a research team or an education consultant to look into the feasibility of this suggestion and to produce a realistic assessment of the costs and actions required. This would provide SPA with the evidence to decide on how to follow up on this suggestion.

### **4. To commission a qualitative study to capture the current discourse on Social Policy as a subject and a discipline**

As discussed in the research design chapter, an immediate challenge at the beginning of the current study was to decide on the definition of Social Policy and the inclusion criteria of degree programmes in the research. This unclear boundary of Social Policy was also reported in the 2016 study (Mackinder with Hudson, 2016). Many social policy scholars from different generations have debated Social Policy's purposes, and whether it is a teaching subject or an academic discipline. The current trends of repackaging, restructuring and conglomeration of



social policy degree programmes in HEIs have led to more confusion. It is necessary to capture the current discourse on Social Policy and explore the potential pathways for Social Policy to develop in the future. This could be done by commissioning a qualitative study to engage social policy teachers, researchers, practitioners, students, course managers and other stakeholders in a conversation on their understandings and visions of Social Policy through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and other qualitative data collection methods. The research team could be recruited through an open call for interest and selected by the SPA Executive on relevant criteria.

## **5. To strengthen the SPA Teaching and Learning portfolio**

Teaching provision is an essential part of Social Policy. It not only gives existing social policy teachers a job but also carries the important mission of enhancing awareness of social policy issues and training social policy researchers, policy-makers and practitioners for future generations. There is a need to strengthen the Teaching and Learning Portfolio on the SPA Executive Committee. This could be done by but not limited to:

- organising a Teaching and Learning Day once a year or every other year
- including a chapter on social policy teaching and learning in the annual Social Policy Review
- including a symposium on teaching and learning at the annual SPA conference
- updating the teaching and learning resources on the SPA website once every two years
- developing a comprehensive strategy and an action plan for supporting social policy teaching and learning

## **6. To provide financial and administrative support for further data analysis and dissemination activities**

The current study was conducted on a small budget which has been mostly spent on paying the wages of the two student research assistants. We believe this report could provide a valuable reference to the social policy community and the higher education sector. We would be grateful if the SPA may consider providing extra support for further data analysis and upcoming dissemination activities such as a launch event for the report.

## **7. To be responsive to respondents' concerns and suggestions**

In addition to the recommendations above, the survey respondents have provided other insightful views which could inform the SPA's decisions on future strategies and actions in responding to issues and concerns and on the development of the discipline in the future.

## 5.2 FOR HEI SOCIAL POLICY CONVENORS AND MANAGERS

### 1. To address workload issues and to promote a better work-life balance for social policy teachers

As shown in the survey findings, high workload, work-related stress and poor work-life balance are among the main concerns of respondents in their current teaching. Among respondents who reported long-term conditions or illnesses, 40% said their conditions were mental health related. We call for attention from HEI Social Policy convenors and managers to address these issues with suitable measures.

### 2. To provide support for Social Policy teachers that may be disadvantaged due to their protected characteristics

The survey findings also show that Social Policy teaching staff is a diverse group that comprises members with a range of personal, physical, cultural and other characteristics. Due to their gender, ethnicity, health and physical conditions, sexuality and other social positionings, some may face more challenges than others in the work setting and the wider society. It would be important for HEIs to provide appropriate support to enable and empower them in playing the role of Social Policy teachers.

### 3. To provide support for Social Policy teachers who have caring responsibilities

In responding to the questions about EDI issues, some respondents flagged up the lack of recognition of the caring roles they played towards students and their families, especially during the COVID pandemic. There were also concerns about the potential impact of caring responsibilities on their career progression. HEI Social Policy convenors and managers also have the responsibility to support staff with caring responsibilities.

### 4. To support the inclusion of Social Policy within wider social science programmes

Many respondents had serious concerns for the future of Social Policy. About 58% chose the commercialisation of Higher Education as a main challenge facing Social Policy in the following five years. In the open space for written comments, one respondent shared the worry that Social Policy is in 'danger of being wiped out' because of the marketisation reforms in HE in recent decades. In the desk-based audit, Social Policy was found to have a close connection with many other social science disciplines, such as Criminology, Sociology and Social Work. In addition to developing Social Policy programmes, it is also important to support the inclusion of Social Policy within wider social science programmes. criteria.

### 5. To actively engage in Social Policy development as a discipline and Social Policy network beyond their institutions

Although the results of the audit show that the number of Social Policy programmes and student numbers remain stable over the years, our survey findings suggest that there is a discrepancy between the development of Social Policy in different types of HEIs. Post-1992 universities are more likely to have experienced and expect changes such as a decrease in student numbers, a fall in teaching staff and withdrawal of Social Policy programmes. Social

Policy convenors and managers from different types of institutions need to develop a stronger network to share successful experiences and good practices. This would be beneficial to individual institutions and the Social Policy discipline.

### **5.3 FOR SOCIAL POLICY TEACHERS**

#### **1. To actively engage in Social Policy education research**

Few would deny that there is a vibrant research culture within Social Policy in the UK. However, very few Social Policy academics are interested in investigating teaching and learning issues of their discipline. Literature on Social Policy Education is hard to find on any major academic search engines. More research on Social Policy education is important not only in improving teaching and learning practices but also in consolidating the discipline and nurturing future generations of Social Policy teachers and researchers.

#### **2. To actively engage with social policy developments as a discipline and social policy networks through the SPA**

Even though many survey respondents had high expectations of the SPA in addressing their concerns in teaching, promoting Social Policy, providing training, developing teaching materials and so on, only 14% of respondents expressed their interest in involving in organising teaching and learning events or other related work and another 14% said they 'maybe' would get involved. Sustaining and developing the discipline should be a shared commitment of all Social Policy academics. A strong and influential Social Policy discipline could only be achieved through the active engagement of all members of the Social Policy community.

# APPENDIX I: PAPER COPY OF THE ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

## SPA SURVEY 2022 SOCIAL POLICY TEACHING IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION

Dear colleague

You are invited to take part in this survey because of your social policy teaching role in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK. This survey is part of the third study in a series of five-yearly reviews commissioned by the Social Policy Association (SPA).

### About this study and the questionnaire

The study aims to provide a platform for social policy teaching staff to share their views on the issues and challenges they are facing at work. Your participation is very important in helping the social policy community and HEI managers to understand the current and future state of social policy teaching.

Filling the questionnaire will take between 10 to 15 minutes. There are five sections in the questionnaire: 1) About you; 2) About your current job; 3) Impacts of recent developments on your social policy teaching; 4) Current and future state of social policy teaching in HEIs; 5) Sharing your ideas.

By comparing the findings with the previous studies conducted in 2011 and 2016, the study will enable the observation of changes in the discipline over time and potential trends in the future. The data will be used by the SPA to develop strategies in supporting the teaching and learning of social policy. The final report will be available on the SPA website and presented at occasions such as meetings of the Social Policy Convenors Group and the SPA conference. The reports of the previous studies in 2011 and 2016 are available at <http://www.social-policy.org.uk/about/teaching-and-learning-2/>

### Anonymity and confidentiality

If you join the study, the anonymous data collected from you will be looked at by authorised persons from the University of Nottingham who are organising the research. They may also be looked at by authorised people to check that the study is being carried out correctly. All will have a duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant and we will do our best to meet this duty. The survey data will be analysed and published in aggregated form so that it will not be possible to identify individual participants.

At the end of the survey, you will be asked to provide your name and email address “if you would like to engage in further discussion”. This is entirely optional. If you provide us with these or other personal data, these will be kept for 7 years after the end of the study so that we are

able to contact you about the findings and possible follow-up studies. After this time your data will be disposed of securely. During this time all precautions will be taken by all those involved to maintain your confidentiality, only members of the research team will have access to your personal data.

## Research Ethics

All research in the University of Nottingham is looked at by a group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee (REC), to protect your interests. This study has received a Favourable Ethical Opinion by the School of Sociology and Social Policy Research Ethics Committee.

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researchers who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the School Research Ethics Officer. All contact details are given at the end of this information sheet.

## Project team and contact details

Project PIs: Alessio D'Angelo, email: [alessio.dangelo@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:alessio.dangelo@nottingham.ac.uk)  
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Project Researchers: Noor Alabbas; Libby Steel  
Research Assistants: Caitlin Bunce; Ewan Cameron

Research Ethics & Integrity Officer: Melanie Jordan, email: [melanie.jordan@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:melanie.jordan@nottingham.ac.uk), +44 (0)115 74 87284/ 95 15410

[ ] Please click on this box to indicate that you have read and understood the above provided information and that you voluntarily agree to complete the survey on this basis. Then, select the arrow below to continue.

## Section A - About you

A1 What is your age?

- Under 25 (1)
- 25-34 (2)
- 35-44 (3)
- 45-54 (4)
- 55-64 (5)
- 65-74 (6)
- 75 or above (7)
- Prefer not to say (8)

## A2 What is your legal sex?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Prefer not to say (4)

## A3 How would you describe your gender identity?

- Female (1)
- Male (4)
- Non binary (5)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (2)
- Prefer not to say (3)

## A4 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

- Straight/Heterosexual (1)
- Gay or Lesbian (2)
- Bisexual (3)
- Other sexual orientation (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (4)

## A4 What is your ethnicity?

- White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish (1)
- White Irish (2)
- White Gypsy or Irish Traveller (3)
- White - others (16)
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity - White and Black Caribbean (4)
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity - White and Black African (5)
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity - White and Asian (6)
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnicity - others (17)
- Indian (7)
- Pakistani (8)
- Bangladeshi (9)
- Chinese (10)
- Asian - others (18)
- Black African (11)
- Black Caribbean (12)
- Black others (19)

- Arab (13)
- Other ethnic background (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (14)
- Prefer not to say (15)

A5 What is your country of birth?

- UK (1)
- Elsewhere (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (2)

A6 Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Don't know (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

A7 Do any of these conditions or illnesses affect you in any of the following areas?

- Vision (for example, blindness or partial sight) (1)
- Hearing (for example, deafness or partial hearing) (2)
- Mobility (for example, walking short distances or climbing stairs) (3)
- Dexterity (for example, lifting and carrying objects) (4)
- Learning or understanding or concentrating (5)
- Memory (6)
- Mental health (7)
- Stamina or breathing or fatigue (8)
- Socially or behaviourally (for example, associated with autism spectrum disorder, which includes Asperger's and attention deficit hyperactivity) (9)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (10)
- Prefer not to say (11)

A8 Do you have any access or special support requirements when conducting your teaching duties?

- Yes (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- No (2)
- Don't know (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

A9 Are these requirements met by your current employer(s)?

- Yes, fully met (1)
- Yes, partially met (2)
- No (3)
- Don't know (4)
- Prefer not to say (5)

A10 How long have you been teaching Social Policy?  
(please include also any years teaching as a postgraduate student)

- Less than 2 years (1)
- Between 2 and 5 years (2)
- Between 5 and 10 years (3)
- Between 10 and 20 years (4)
- Over 20 years (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

A11 Are you a member of the Social Policy Association?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Prefer not to say (3)

### **Section B - About your job.**

If you have more than one job, please refer to the main one in answering the questions in the rest of the questionnaire

B1 In which region/country do you currently teach Social Policy?

- East Midlands (1)
- East of England (2)
- London (3)
- North East (4)
- North West (5)
- South East (6)
- South West (7)
- West Midlands (8)
- Yorkshire and Humber (9)
- Northern Ireland (10)
- Scotland (11)
- Wales (12)



- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (13)
- I don't know (15)
- Prefer not to say (14)

B2 Which of the following is the best description of your institution?

- A university in the Russell Group (1)
- A pre-1992 university not in the Russell Group (5)
- A post-1992 university (3)
- Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (14)
- I don't know (15)
- Prefer not to say (16)

B3 Which of the following words/phrases are in the name of the unit (department, school, institute, centre, etc) that you are teaching in? (Please tick all that apply)

- Community/Community studies (1)
- Criminology (4)
- Culture/cultural studies (5)
- Health (6)
- Law (7)
- Media (8)
- Research/Social Research (9)
- Politics/political sciences (10)
- Public Policy/Administration (11)
- Social care (12)
- Social policy (13)
- Social sciences/Studies (14)
- Social work (15)
- Sociological studies (16)
- Sociology (17)
- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (18)
- Prefer not to say (19)

B4 Which of the following is the best description of your job position?

- Professor (1)
- Associate Professor (4)
- Assistant Professor (5)
- Reader (6)
- Senior Lecturer (7)
- Lecturer (8)
- Senior Research Fellow/Associate (9)
- Research Fellow/Associate (10)
- Senior Teaching Fellow/Associate (11)
- Teaching Fellow/Associate (12)
- Tutor (13)
- Dissertation/project/placement Supervisor (14)
- Postgraduate Research Student (15)
- Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (16)
- Prefer not to say (17)

B5 Do you work full time or part time?

- Full time (1)
- Part time (Please specify the number of contracted hours per week) \_\_\_\_\_ (4)
- Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

B6 Which of the following is the best description of your employment contract? (Please tick all that apply)

- Permanent (1)
- Temporary (4)
- Casual (5)
- Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
- I don't know (7)
- Prefer not to say (8)

B7 Is social policy your core subject of teaching?

- Yes (1)
- No (4)

- Prefer not to say (5)

B8 What other subjects do you teach?

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B9 Which type of programmes are you teaching? (Please tick all that apply)

- Single honours social policy degrees (1)
- Joint-honours degrees (including social policy) (4)
- Other undergraduate degrees in related subjects (5)
- Masters taught-programmes in social policy (6)
- Masters taught programmes in social policy related subjects (7)
- Postgraduate research degrees (8)
- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (9)
- I don't know (10)
- Prefer not to say (11)

B10 Which forms of teaching are you involved in? (Please tick all that apply)

- Lectures (face-to-face or online) (1)
- Seminars (face-to-face or online) (4)
- Group tutorials/supervisions (5)
- One-to-one tutorials/supervisions (6)
- Project/placement supervisions (7)
- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (8)

B11 Which of the following methods do you use to assess students? (Please tick all that apply)

- Quizzes (1)
- Written tests (4)
- Written Exams (5)
- Oral Exams (16)
- Essays (6)
- Individual presentations (7)
- Group presentations (8)
- Individual projects (including dissertations and theses) (9)
- Group projects (10)
- Placements (11)
- Learning portfolios (12)
- Non-academic policy literature (e.g. posters, policy briefs) (13)
- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (14)

B12 What are the main social policy issues you cover in your teaching? Please add up to 5 key words

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B13 Does your social policy teaching include issues of race and ethnicity?

- Yes, in more than half of the modules/subjects I teach (1)
- Yes, in less than half of the modules/subjects I teach (4)
- No (5)
- I don't know (6)
- Prefer not to say (7)

B14 Does your social policy teaching include other topics of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)?

- Yes, in more than half of the modules/subjects I teach (1)
- Yes, in less than half of the modules/subjects I teach (4)
- No (Go to section C) (5)
- I don't know (Go to section C) (6)
- Prefer not to say (Go to section C) (7)

B15 What other EDI topics do you teach? (Please tick all that apply)

- Gender (1)
- Sexuality (2)
- Disability (3)
- Class (4)
- Age (5)
- Religion (6)
- Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (7)

### Section C - Impacts of recent developments on your social policy teaching

C1 Which one of the following is the best description of your knowledge of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)?

- I know it very well. (1)
- I have some ideas. (4)
- I know very little. (5)
- I have no idea. (go to C4) (6)
- Prefer not to say (7)

C2 Does the TEF apply to your institution?

- Yes (1)
- No (go to C4) (4)
- Don't know (go to C4) (5)

C3 As far as the TEF is concerned, to what extent would you agree with the statements below?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure / I dont know (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1. It has helped to improve my teaching practice (1)					
2. It has increased my workload in teaching administration (4)					
3. It has increased my workload in teaching and assessment (5)					
4. It has led to changes in the programme or course design (6)					
5. It has impacted in ther ways (Please specify) (7)					

C4 As far as the COVID Pandemic is concerned, to what extent would you agree with the statements below?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure / I dont know (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1. It has negatively affected my physical health. (1)					
2. It has negatively affected my mental wellbeing. (4)					
3. It has negatively affected my work-life balance. (5)					
4. It has increased my workload in teaching administraion. (6)					
5. It has increased my wokload in teaching and assessment. (7)					
6. It has increased my workload in providing support and pastoral care for students. (8)					
7. It has led to changes in the programme and course design.(9)					

C5 In your current social policy teaching, to what extent are you concerned by the following?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Not sure / I dont know (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Workload (1)					
Work-related stress (6)					
Poor work-life balance (7)					
Limited opportunities for career progress (8)					
Online and blended teaching (9)					
Lack of administrative support (10)					
Lack of teaching resources (11)					
Lack of peer support (12)					
Lack of job security (13)					
EDI issues (please specify) (14)					
Other (please specify) (15)					

C6 What can SPA do to address these concerns? (Please tick the top 3 priorities only)

- I know it very well. (1)
- I have some ideas. (4)
- I know very little. (5)
- I have no idea. (go to C4) (6)
- Prefer not to say (7)

## Section D - The current and future state of social policy teaching in HEIs

D1 In the past five years, has the department/school/unit in which you are currently teaching social policy undergone any of the following changes (Please tick all that apply)

- An increase in the number of social policy teaching staff on the campus in the UK (14)
- A decrease in the number of social policy teaching staff on the campus in the UK (15)

- Introduction of new social policy programmes or courses on the campus in the UK (1)
- Withdrawal of social policy programmes or courses on the campus in the UK (4)
- Amalgamation with another department/school/unit in the same institution on the UK campus (5)
- Collaboration with other institutions in the UK in developing new social policy programmes or courses (6)
- Withdrawal of social policy programmes or courses jointly provided with other institutions in the UK (7)
- Introduction of new social policy programmes or courses on overseas campuses (8)
- Withdrawal of social policy programme or courses on overseas campuses (9)
- Introduction of new online/distance-learning social policy programmes or courses (10)
- Withdrawal of online/distance-learning social policy programmes or courses (16)
- Developing new joint social policy programmes or courses with overseas institutions (17)
- Withdrawal of social policy programmes or courses jointly provided with overseas institutions (18)
- Other major changes (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (11)
- Don't know (12)
- Prefer not to say (13)

D2 In the next five years, is your department/school/unit likely to undergo the following changes? (Please tick all that apply)

- An increase in the number of social policy teaching staff on the campus in the UK (1)
- A decrease in the number of social policy teaching staff on the campus in the UK (15)
- Introduction of new social policy programmes or courses on the campus in the UK (16)
- Withdrawal of social policy programmes or courses on the campus in the UK (17)
- Amalgamation with another department/school/unit in the same institution on the UK campus (18)
- Collaboration with other institutions in the UK in developing new social policy programmes or courses (19)
- Withdrawal of social policy programmes or courses jointly provided with other institutions in the UK (20)

- Introduction of new social policy programmes or courses on overseas campuses (21)
- Withdrawal of social policy programme or courses on overseas campuses (22)
- Introduction of new online/distance-learning social policy programmes or courses (23)
- Withdrawal of online/distance-learning social policy programmes or courses (24)
- Developing new joint social policy programmes or courses with overseas institutions (25)
- Withdrawal of social policy programmes or courses jointly provided with overseas institutions (26)
- Other major changes (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (27)
- Don't know (28)
- Prefer not to say (29)

D3 Have you seen a change in the number of undergraduate students studying social policy at your institution in the last five years?

- Yes, the number has risen (1)
- Yes, the number has fallen (4)
- No, the number remains similar (5)
- Don't know (6)
- Prefer not to say (7)

D4 In the next five years, do you expect the number of undergraduate students studying social policy to:

- Rise (1)
- Fall (4)
- Stay similar (5)
- Don't know (6)

D5 Have you seen a change in the number of postgraduate students studying social policy at your institution in the last five years?

- Yes, the number has risen (1)
- Yes, the number has fallen (4)
- No, the number remains similar (5)
- Don't know (6)
- Prefer not to say (7)



D6 In the next five years, do you expect the number of postgraduate students studying social policy to:

- Rise (1)
- Fall (4)
- Stay similar (5)
- Don't know (6)
- Prefer not to say (7)

D7 Have you seen an increase in the number of international students (including EU students) studying social policy at your institution in the last five years?

- Yes, the number has risen at undergraduate level only. (1)
- Yes, the number has risen at postgraduate level only. (4)
- Yes, the number has risen at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. (5)
- No, the number has fallen. (6)
- No, the number remains similar. (7)
- Don't know (8)
- Prefer not to say (9)

D8 In the next five years, do you expect the number of international students studying social policy to:

- Rise (1)
- Fall (2)
- Stay similar (3)
- Don't know (4)
- Prefer not to say (5)

D9 In your opinion, what are the main challenges in social policy teaching in the next five years? (Please select the top five challenges only)

- Poor recruitment of undergraduate students (1)
- Poor recruitment of postgraduate students (4)
- Over-reliance on a few international markets (5)
- Universities' lack of interest in social policy programmes (6)
- Commercialisation of higher education (7)
- Budget cut/financial constraints (8)

- Meeting TEF requirements (9)
- Online/blended teaching (10)
- Staff fatigue and low morale (11)
- Staff health problems (12)
- Decolonising/diversifying the curriculum (13)
- Marginalisation of Social Policy as an academic discipline (18)
- EDI issues (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (14)
- Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (15)
- Don't know (16)
- Prefer not to say (17)

D10 What kind of support can SPA provide to face these challenges? (Please tick the top five priorities only)

- Facilitating effective communication between social policy subject leads in different institutions (e.g. through social policy convenors meetings) (1)
- Coordinating a marketing campaign about social policy for school children and college students (4)
- Exploring the possibility of developing social policy as an A-level subject (5)
- Promoting social policy programmes and courses in the UK through SPA's international network (6)
- Promoting social policy to the general public through social media (7)
- Promoting social policy to employers (14)
- Enhancing the impact of social policy through engaging in the policy-making process (e.g. through SPA policy groups) (8)
- Encouraging academic debates on issues concerning social policy teaching and learning in SPA journals (9)
- Develop and/or disseminate teaching materials and guidelines (15)
- Organising regular social policy teaching and learning events (such as online seminars and teaching and learning days) (10)
- Others (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (11)
- Don't know (12)
- Prefer not to say (13)

D11 Would you be interested in being involved in organising SPA teaching and learning events or other teaching and learning work?

- Yes (please provide your name and email for follow up contacts) \_\_\_\_\_ (1)
- Maybe (please provide your name and email for follow up contacts) \_\_\_\_\_ (4)
- No (5)

## **Section E - Sharing your ideas**

E1 Please use the space below to tell us your views about social policy teaching in HEIs that has not been covered in the previous sections.

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E2 Please provide your name and email address if you would like to engage in further discussion:

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**End of questionnaire**

