

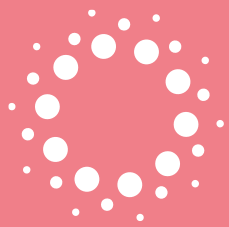
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CHILDREN IN WALES

Annual Child & Family Poverty Surveys 2023: Findings

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Practitioners & Professionals

- 84% worked directly with children, young people and families
- Working with a minimum of 110,000 families

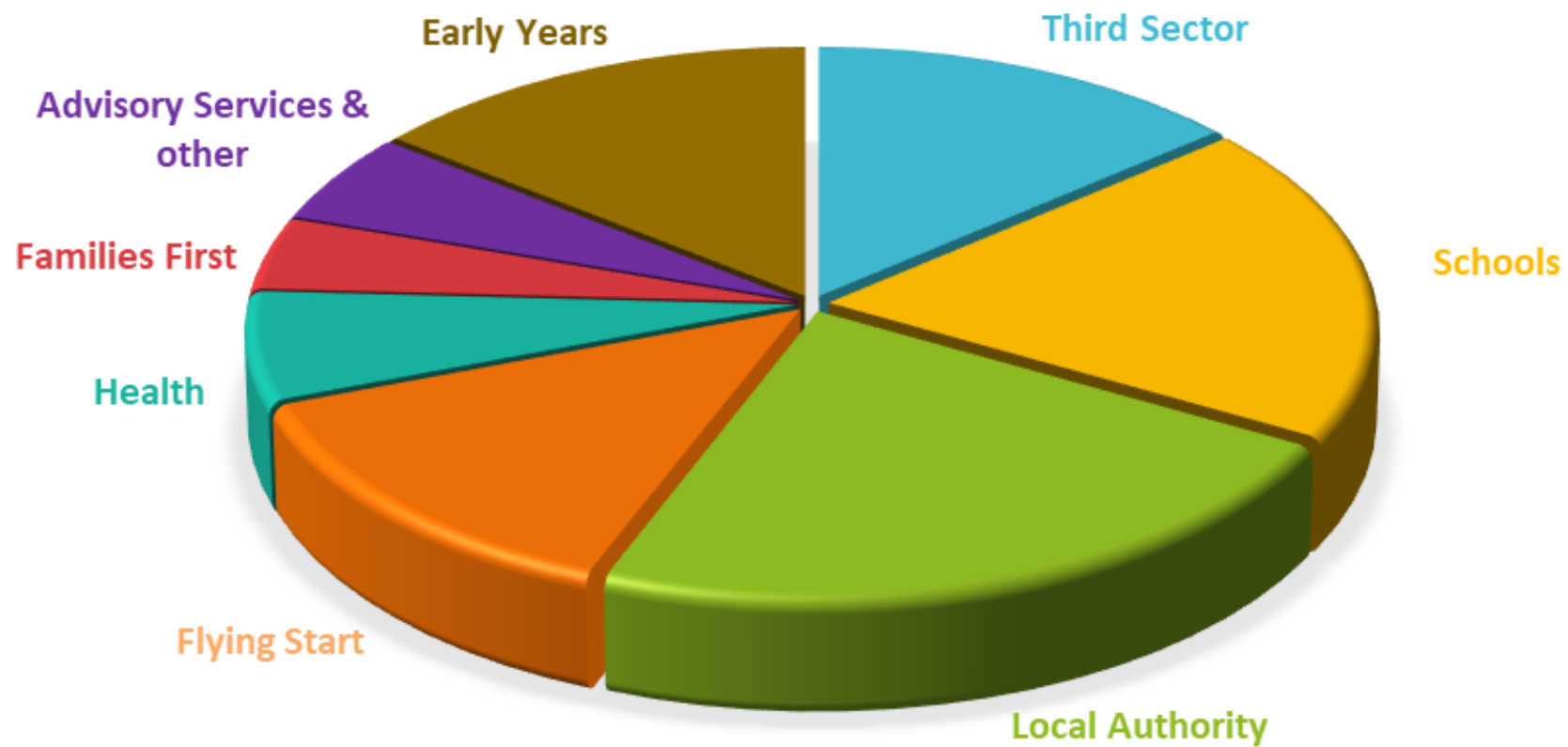
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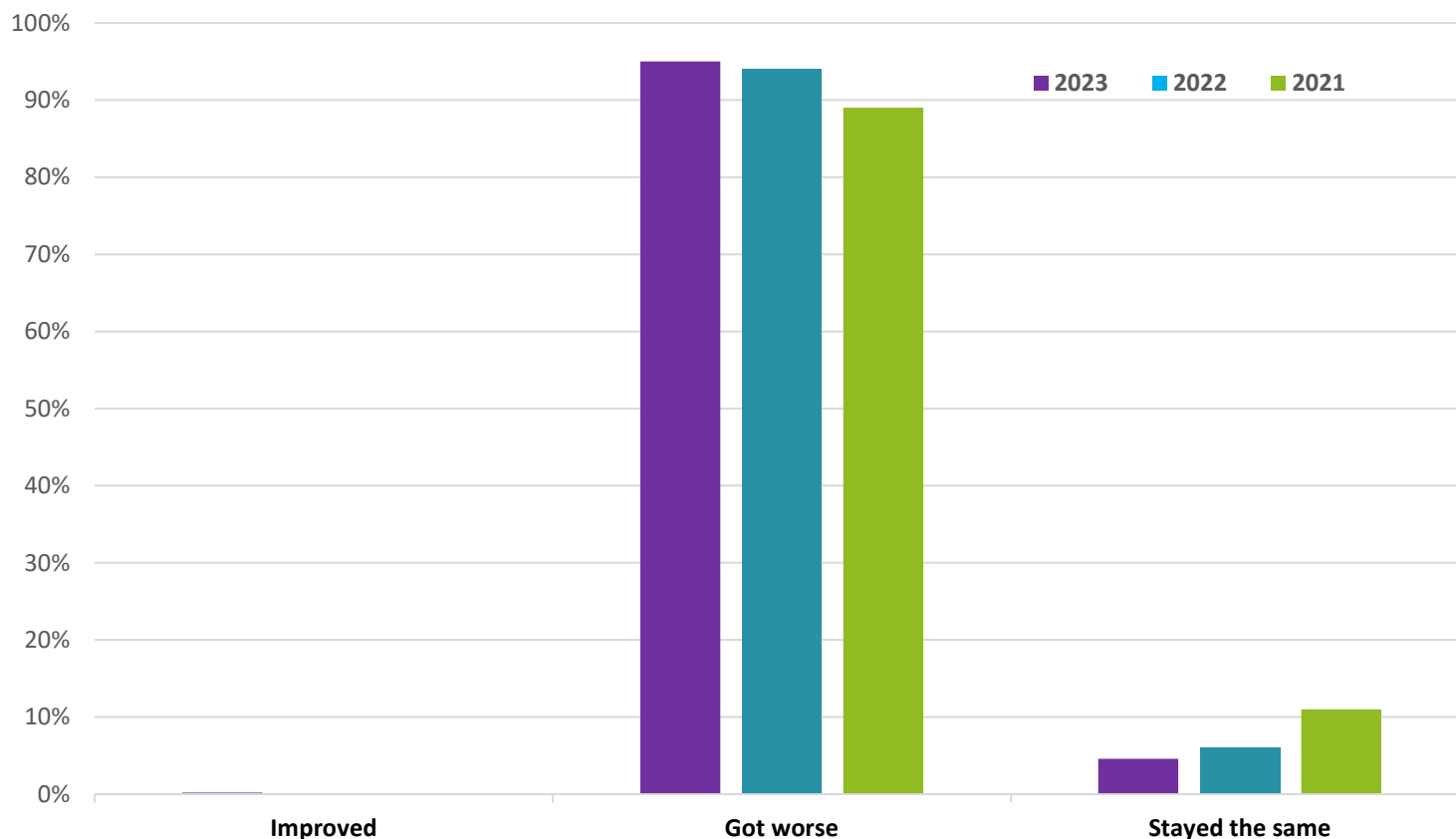
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Responding Sectors





Has the situation changed in the last year?



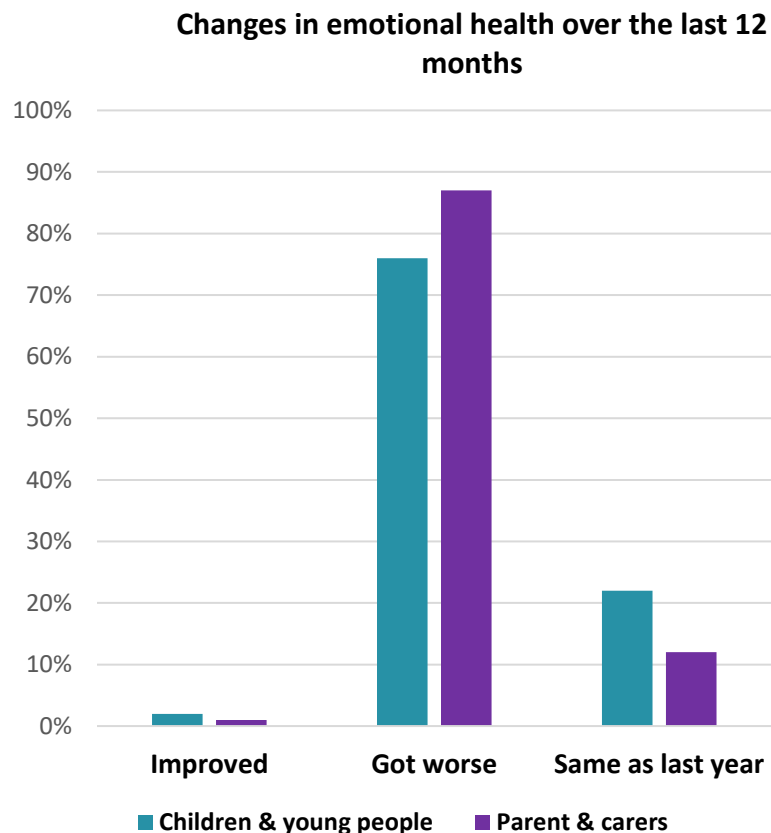
"They are struggling like I have never seen before in 30yrs of working with families and children"

"We must do something this time.....things are getting worse in Wales"



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Mental health



"Most of our parents have been prescribed antidepressants due to poor mental health, but there is no solution. They continue to worry about meeting basic care needs of their children due to lack of finances, which is out of their control"

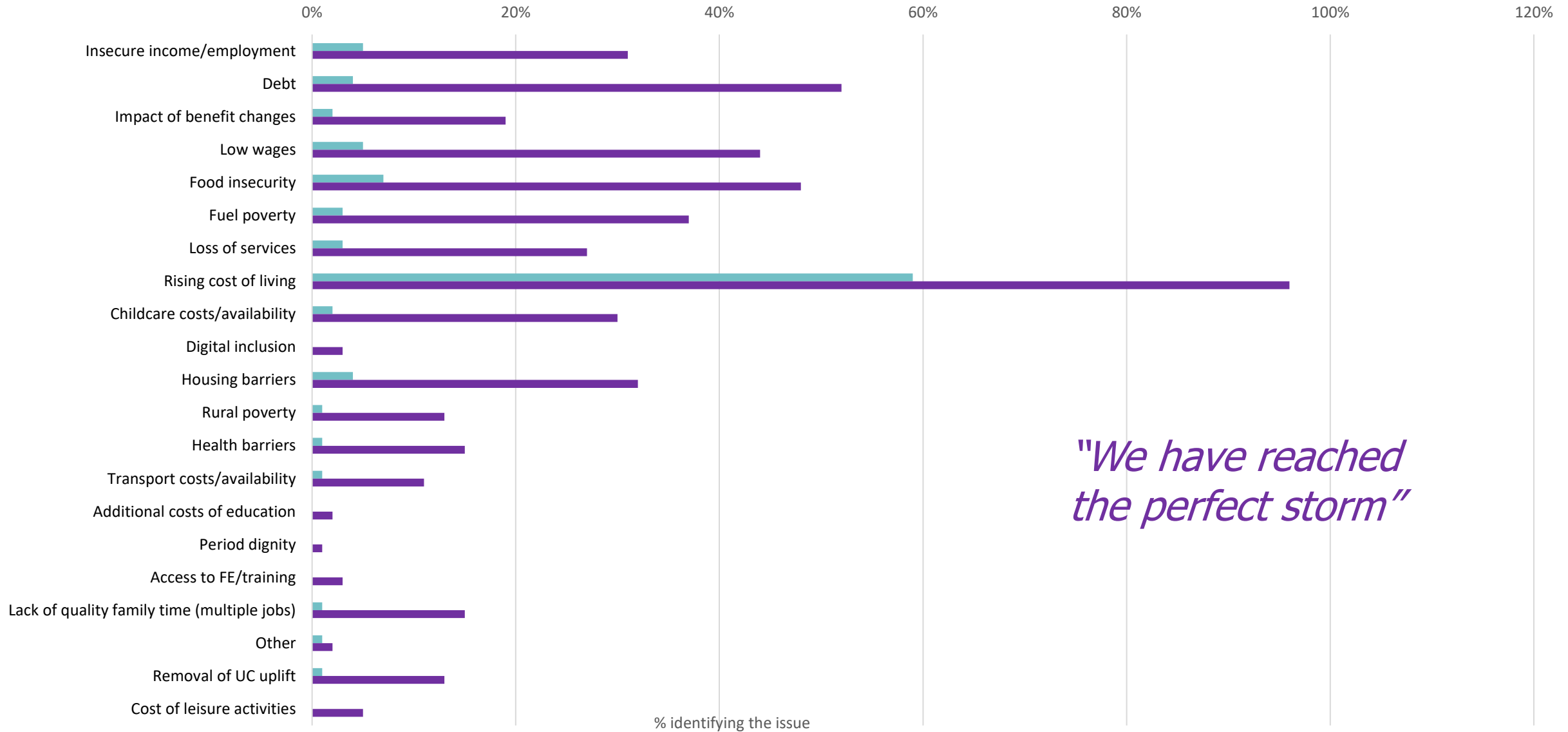
"Parents are demoralised as they don't feel they can provide their children with a roof over their heads, or food to eat, or put the heating on"

"My Mum cries all the time because she has no money. I feel really bad and don't know what to do. I can't tell her I'm hungry because she will cry more"(10-13yrs)

"We have a number of children who regularly say they are 'sad' in nursery. When we ask why, they are not always able to tell us. A number of parents have split and children have moved home as a result of [poverty]"

Top 5 identified poverty related issues

■ Top ranked issue 2023 ■ Top 5 ranked issues for 2023



"We have reached the perfect storm"



Rising cost of living

- 96% chose this as a top 5 issue
- *“Drastic consequences”* for families and CYP
- Impact on emotional and mental health
- Impact on physical health
- Having to choose food or electricity
- Impact on education
- Impact on ability to work

“The rising cost of living is not only impacting families financially, it is having a frightening impact on mental and physical health”

“There’s a sense of hopelessness and negative mental wellbeing”

“I have seen families reduce the money they spend on food, for example eating cereal and toast”

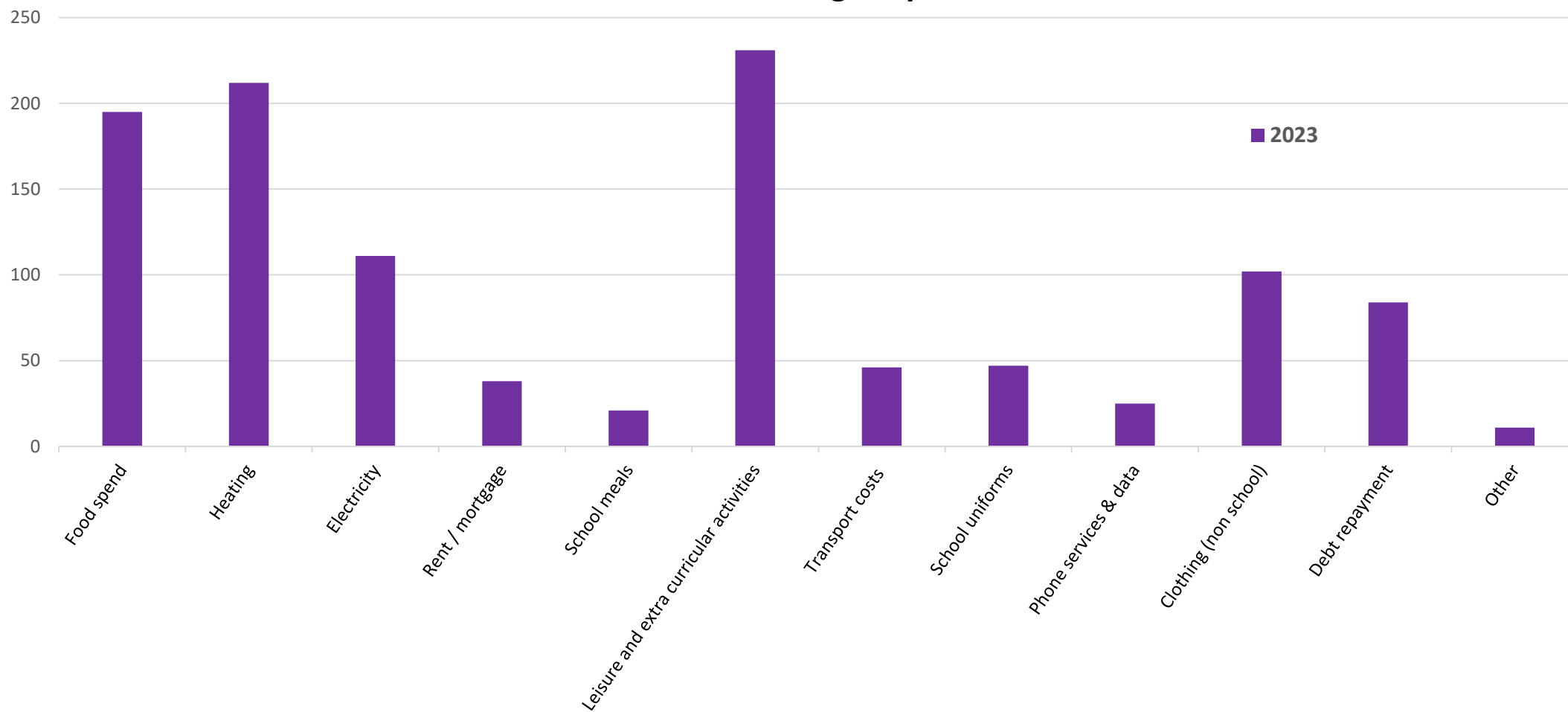
“Sharp increase in families not being able to transport their children to school.....families are unable to afford to take their children to school 5 days a week”



"If children are not able to attend extra curricular activities, they will not develop properly socially or educationally. There are lots of smart, intelligent children that do not have the opportunity to grow"

Budget/spend reduction

Most common areas for budget/spend reduction





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Debt

- 70% stated that debt levels have got worse over the last 12 months
- 70% stated that debt levels will get worse in the next 12 months
- Income is not sufficient to meet basic needs
- No opportunity/capacity to increase income
- Leads to poor emotional and mental health

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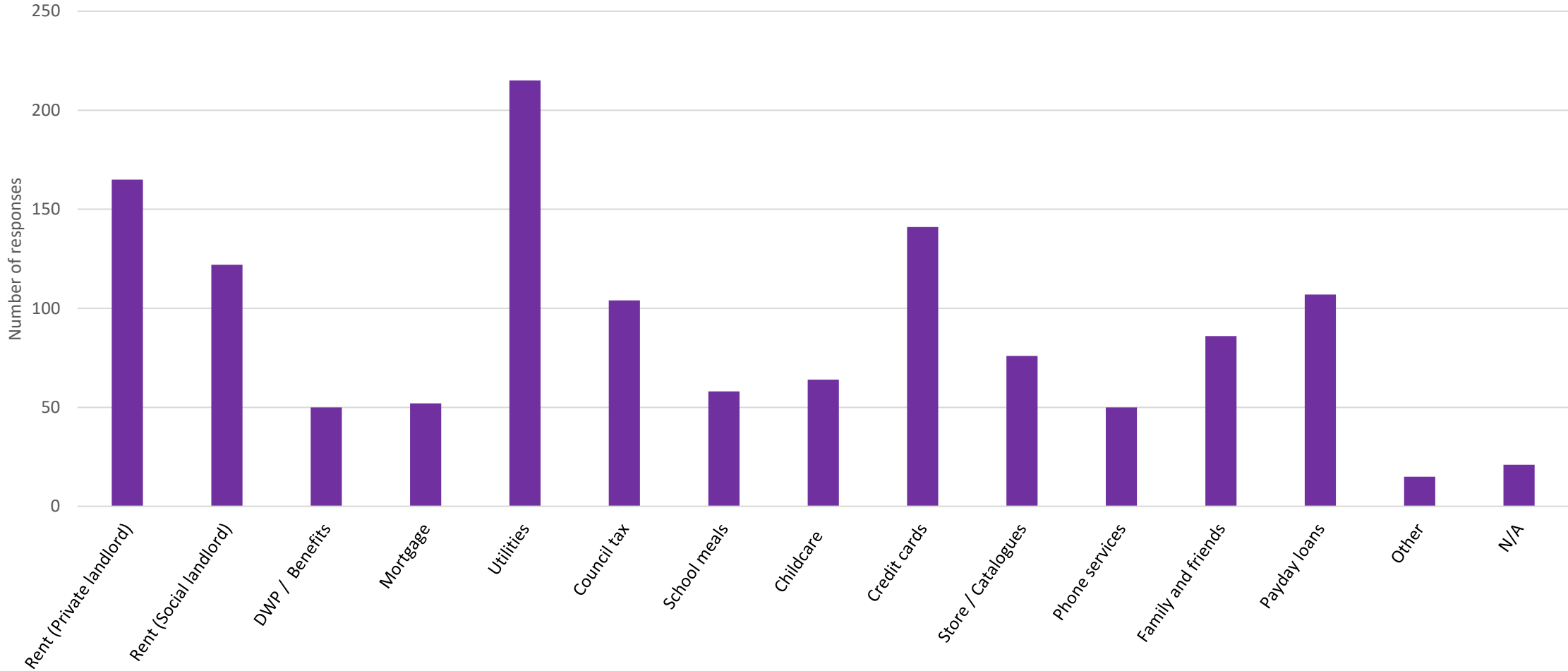
"Now debt is not a choice but a necessity to have their basic needs met"

"This is putting more pressure on all support services, cases are more time intensive and complicated. It is taking longer to get advice appointments, so in the meantime, bailiffs have often already visited"

"How can any family survive and not go into debt"

"Adults who should be emotionally available are not because of the stress and strain they are under"

Most common arrears



"It is hard to be materially poor, to be cold, hungry, not have access to decent healthcare, but to live with stressed parents is damaging"



“They can’t concentrate, they are in fight or flight mode and on the edge. They are expected to follow superficial rules like wearing a specific jumper, when inside they have more important things to worry about, such as their Mum who cries all of the time due to money pressures”

Overarching theme: poor emotional and mental health

Hunger

Tiredness

Poverty related bullying

Stigmatisation

Isolation

Home environment

Inequity of opportunity

Increased absenteeism

Does poverty affect CYP’s experience of school and learning?

92% YES

7% not sure or n/a

1% NO



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Universal Free School Meals Roll-out

- Overwhelmingly positive impact
- Children not as hungry
- Receiving at least one nutritional meal a day
- Reduced stigma
- Children felt more included and had better self-esteem
- Positive impact on family budgets
- Positive impact on parental stress and mental health

"It gives reassurance to families that they know their children are having at least one main meal in the daytime. It also evens out the social balance making all children equal at lunchtimes"

"The impact on esteem and mental health is marked"



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Children & Young People: Their voices

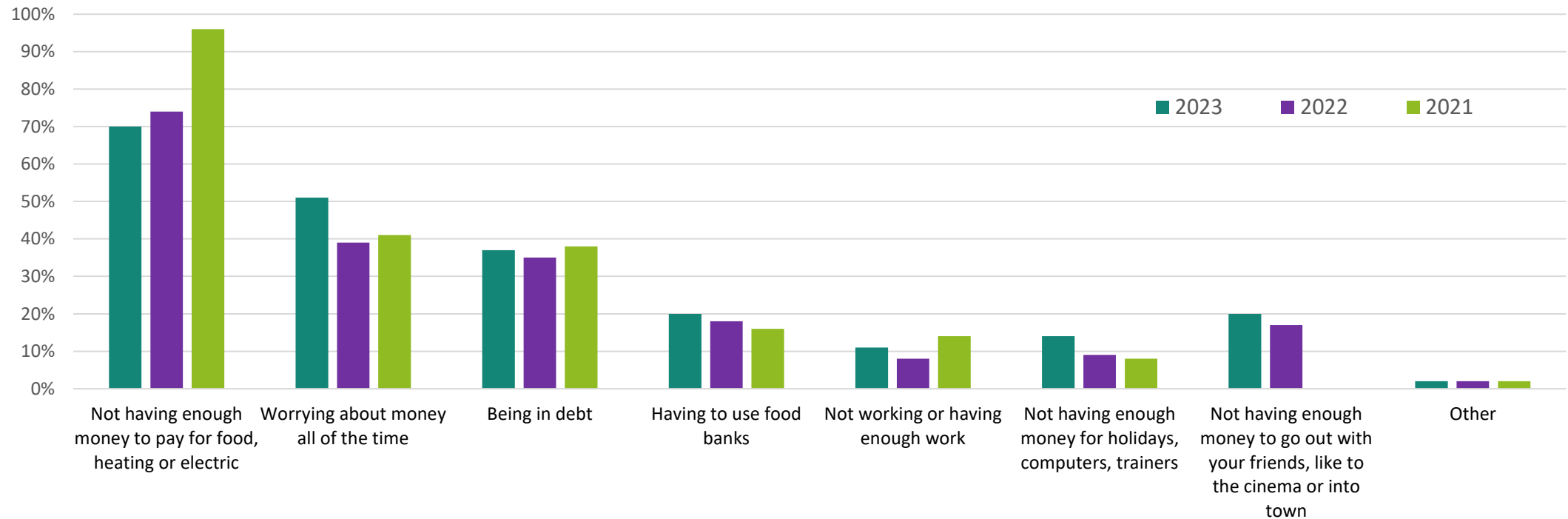
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Children & Young People

What do you think affects children who live in poverty the most?"





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Tell us how you think poverty affects children & young people?"

- Anxiety, worry and stress
- Enormous pressure
- Depression and sadness
- Isolation
- Unhappy childhood
- Generational poverty
- Bullying

"Feel different and not good enough" (14-16yrs)

"My Mum cries all the time because she has no money. I feel really bad and don't know what to do. I can't tell her I'm hungry because she will cry more" (10-13yrs)

"Feel lonely and your life is empty" (14-16yrs)

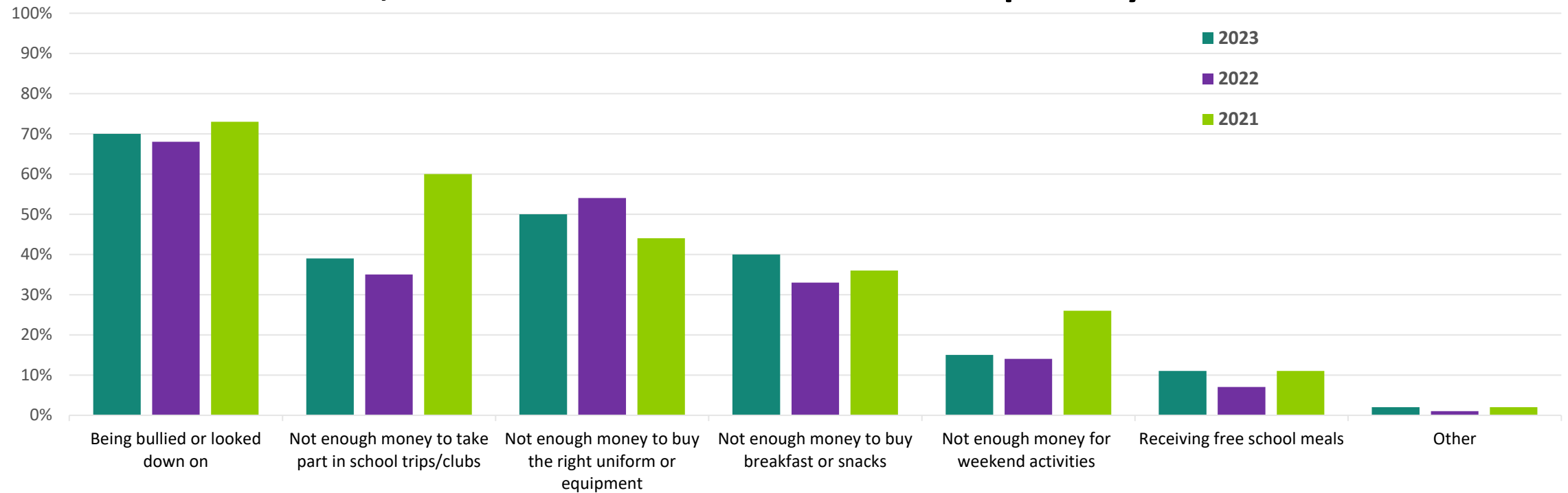
"Feel like life is always downhill. Get depressed and poor mental health. Feel like there is no safe haven to talk about anything as your life is always chaotic" (14-16yrs)



"Can't concentrate due to worrying about my parents, not able to go to school as parents unable to put credit on the electricity and gas meters, being cold and not able to have hot meals or even food as it's too expensive" (under 10)

In school

In school, what affects children who live in poverty the most?"





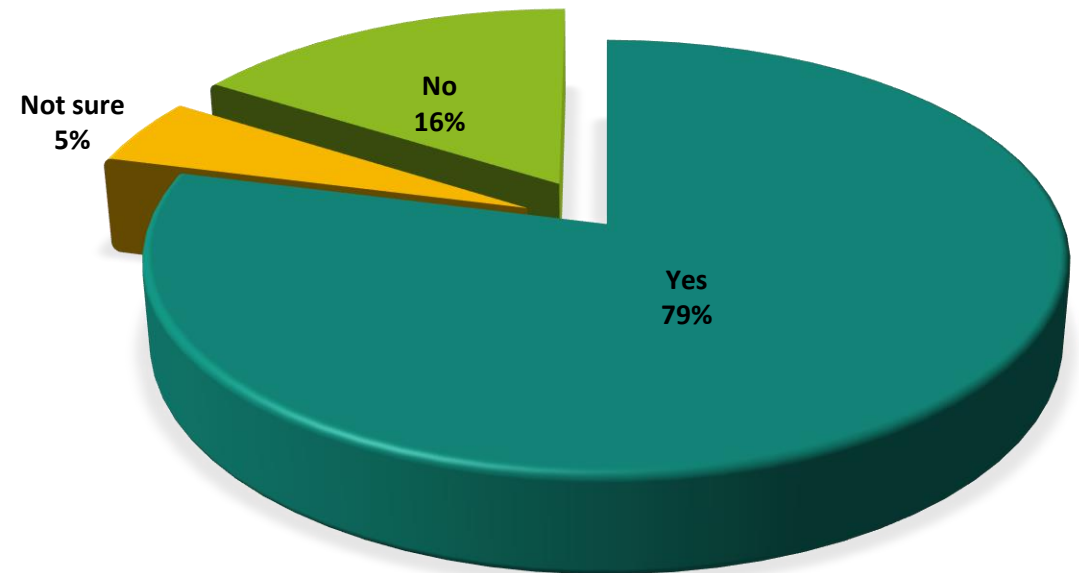
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School Uniform

- 31% must wear a branded blazer
- 60% must wear branded PE Kits (usually between 2-4 items)
- 77% have to buy from a specialist shop
- Branded/logo uniform examples £154 - £183
- Non branded/logo example £75

"If you do not have the correct uniform, you are given a uniform slip to take home and if the uniform is not corrected, you get a negative behaviour point which can escalate to detention"(14-16yrs)

Do you have to wear a school badge or school logo on your uniform?



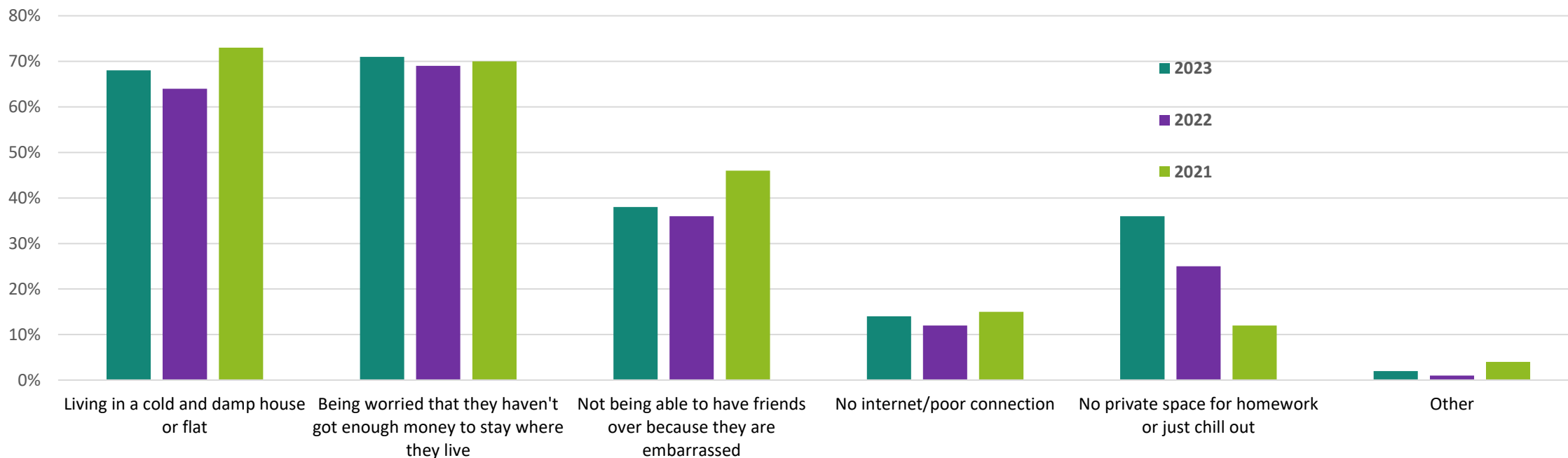


At home

"Listen to parents arguing more at home" (10-13yrs)

"Having to watch meters to see if we will be in the dark" (10-13yrs)

At home, what affects children who live in poverty the most?

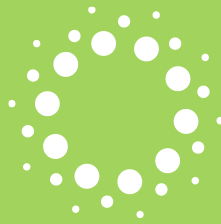


Poverty means not having enough money for things that you need like food or heating or clothes

We asked children and young people about poverty. This is what they said needs to change

- No more bullying. It's not fair that children are bullied because they can't afford things
- All children and young people should have enough food. They should all get free school meals
- All schools should have uniform recycling points so that all children can afford a school uniform
- Ban logos on school uniforms. They make uniforms expensive and you can't buy them in supermarkets
- Everybody, including adults need to understand what it's like to live in poverty
- The minimum wage should be increased so that families can afford to buy food
- Benefits should be increased so that families can afford to pay for rent and food
- Need cheaper public transport so that children and young people can get to school and parents can get to work
- **Treat everybody equally. We all deserve respect and to be treated with kindness, whatever our circumstances**





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Thank you.

#PovertySurvey2023

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