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CHILDREN IN WALES

# Annual Child & Family Poverty Surveys 2022: Findings

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# About the surveys

- 2 surveys (26 April – 17 June 2022)
- 1 for practitioners & professionals
- 1 for children & young people

*"The general situation is getting worse and will get worse as the year progresses with the increase in the cost of living."*



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# Question areas

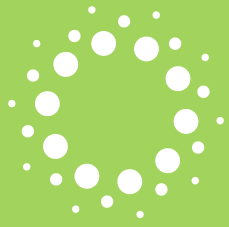
## Practitioners and professionals

- Overarching poverty issues
- Debt
- Food insecurity
- Fuel poverty
- Financial support
- Education
- Mental and emotional health
- Safeguarding
- Training

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## Children and young people

- Money
- School
- Home
- Community
- Poverty related bullying



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# Practitioners & Professionals

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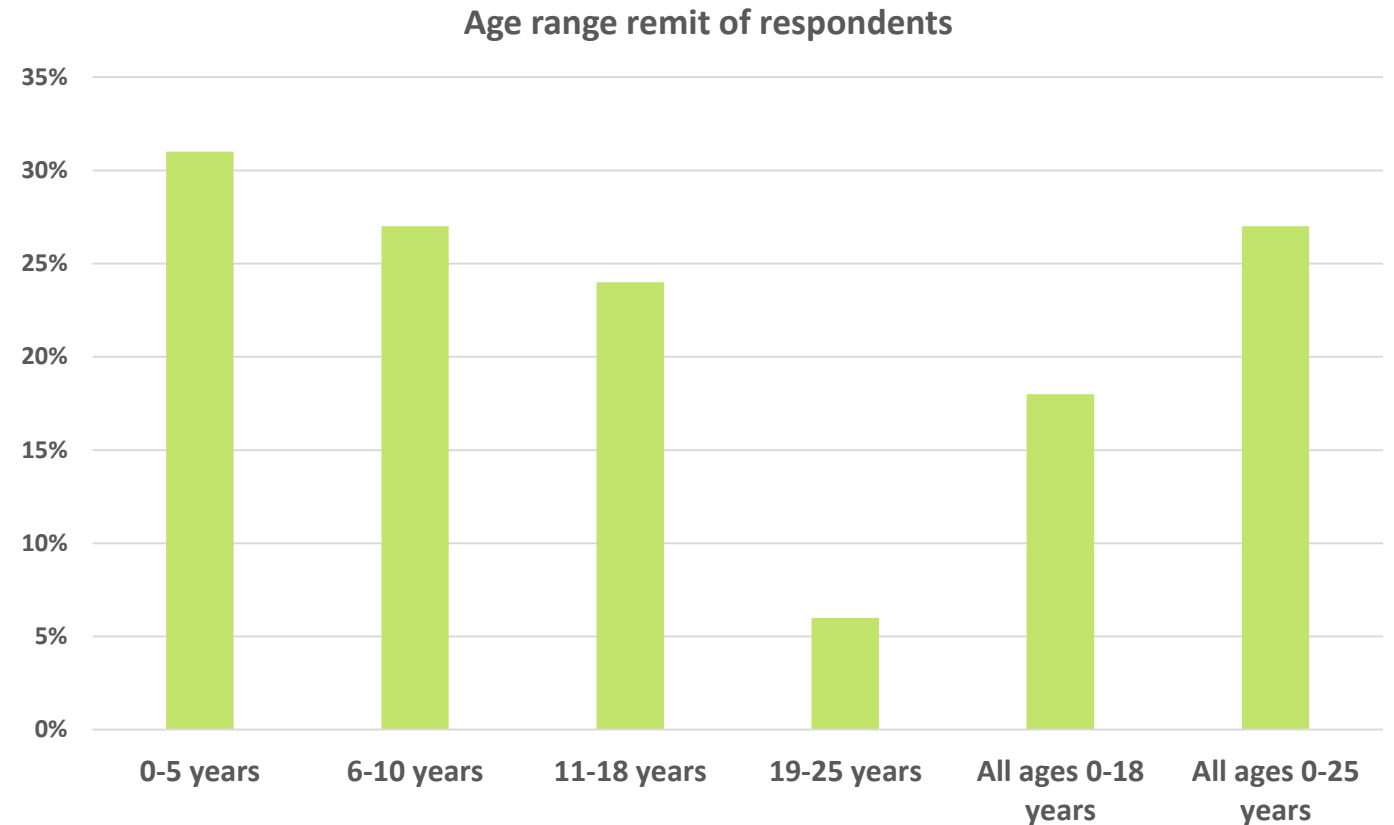


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## Practitioner & Professional Survey Headlines

### Sector breakdown:

- 28% Third sector
- 20% Education
- 19% Local authority
- 10% Early years & Flying Start
- 9% Health
- 8% Advisory Services

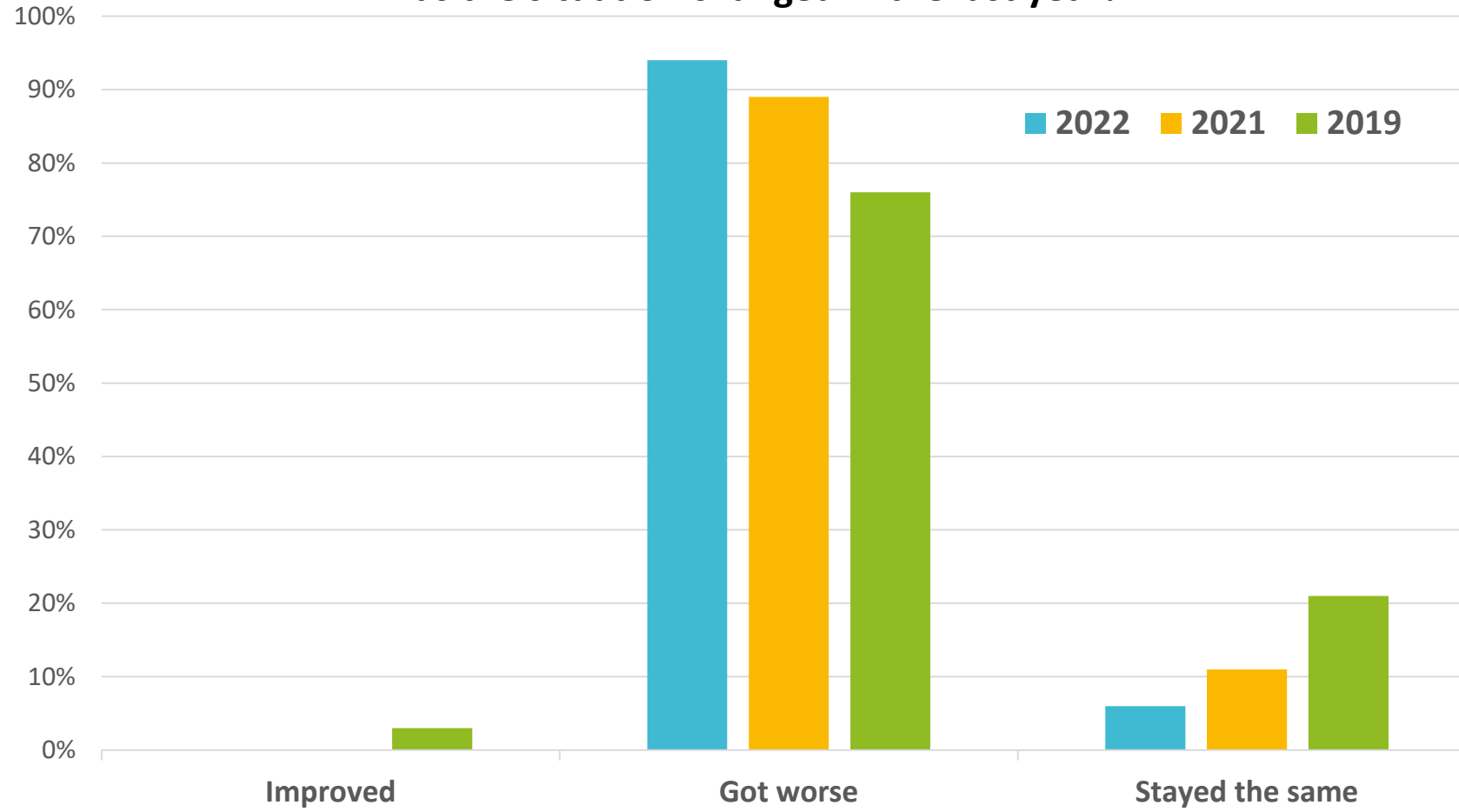


**79% worked directly with children and/or families**



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### Has the situation changed in the last year?

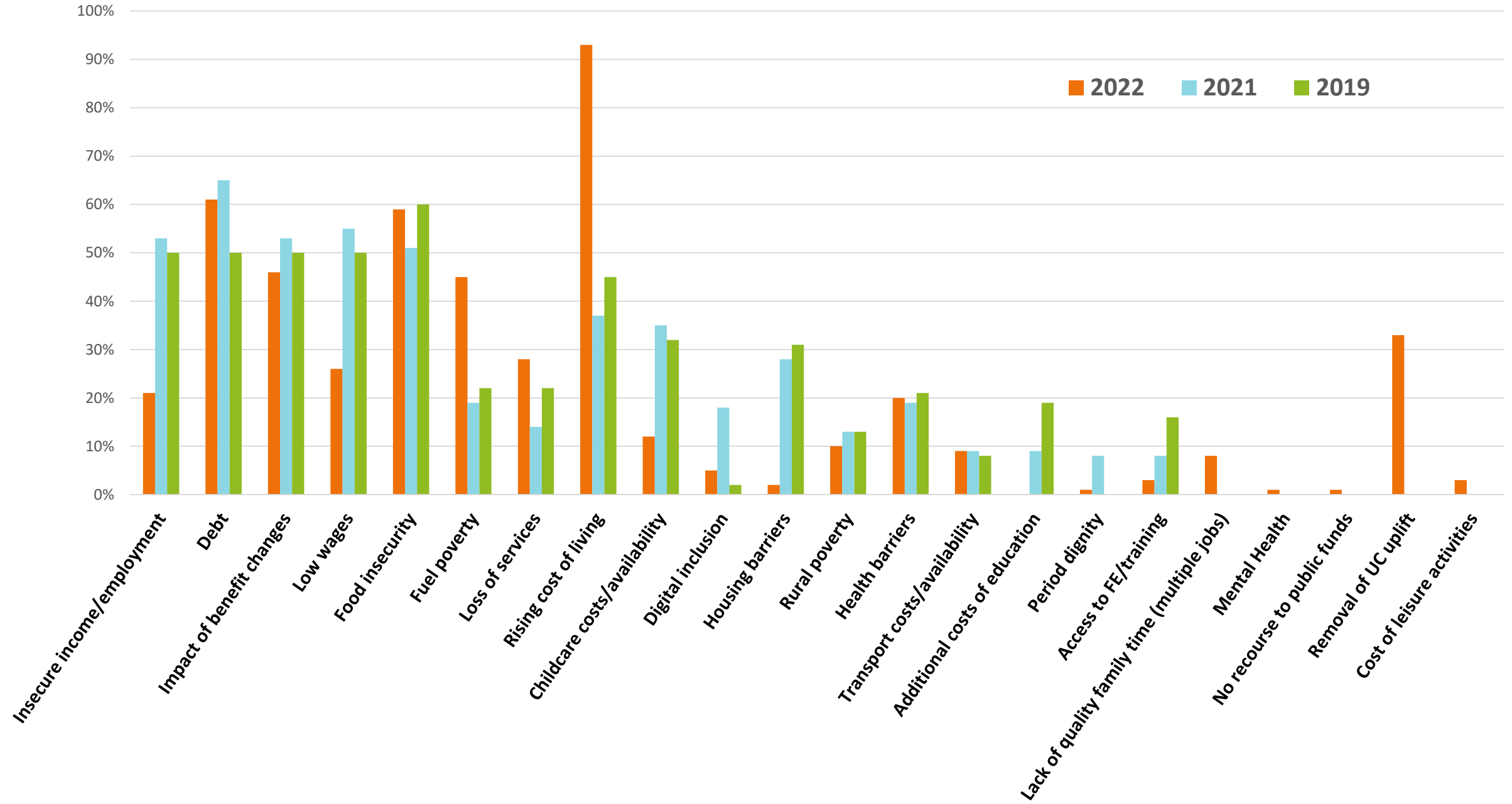


*"We are at crisis point"*

*"There is not one family that I am working with who have not said that they are now struggling"*

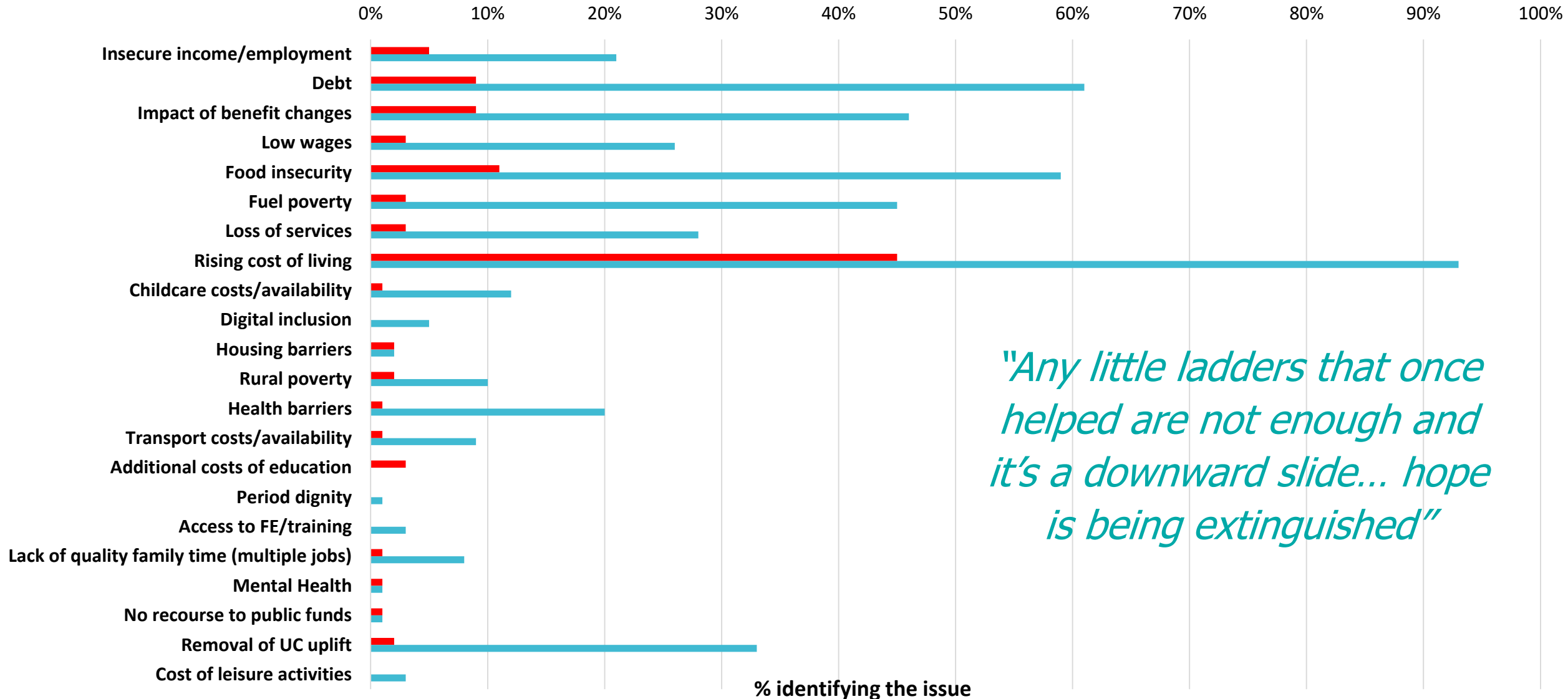
*"The situation is critical"*

Top 5 ranked poverty related issues - 3 year comparison



# Top 5 identified poverty related issue 2022

■ Top ranked issue



*"Any little ladders that once helped are not enough and it's a downward slide... hope is being extinguished"*





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# Rising cost of living

- 93% chose this as a top 5 issue
- More families in deteriorating circumstances
- Impact is far reaching
- Having to choose food or electricity
- Impact on physical health
- Impact on emotional and mental health
- Increase of 'in-work' poverty

*"The cost of living increase impacts everything. I work with young people whose families can no longer afford to buy them shoes when their feet grow. In evening sessions, when asked, only one young person was expecting food that evening*

*(we made them all a pasta dish and sat down to eat it)"*

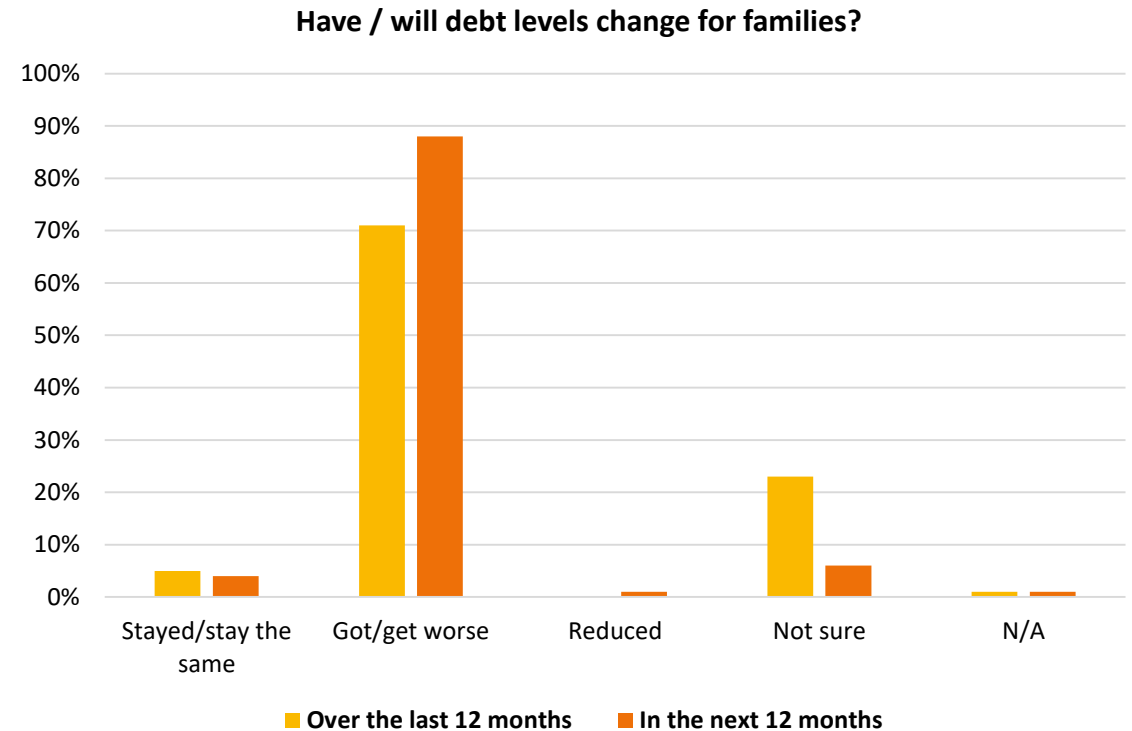
*"The increase in "in work poverty" is staggering. How can it be ok that you work a good job and still can't afford to feed your family?"*



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# Debt

- Debt increased during the pandemic
- 71% stated that debt levels have got worse over the last 12 months
- 88% stated that debt levels will get worse in the next 12 months
- Income is not sufficient to meet basic needs



*"Debt will not disappear even if things level up because families will be in debt legacy for at least a decade"*

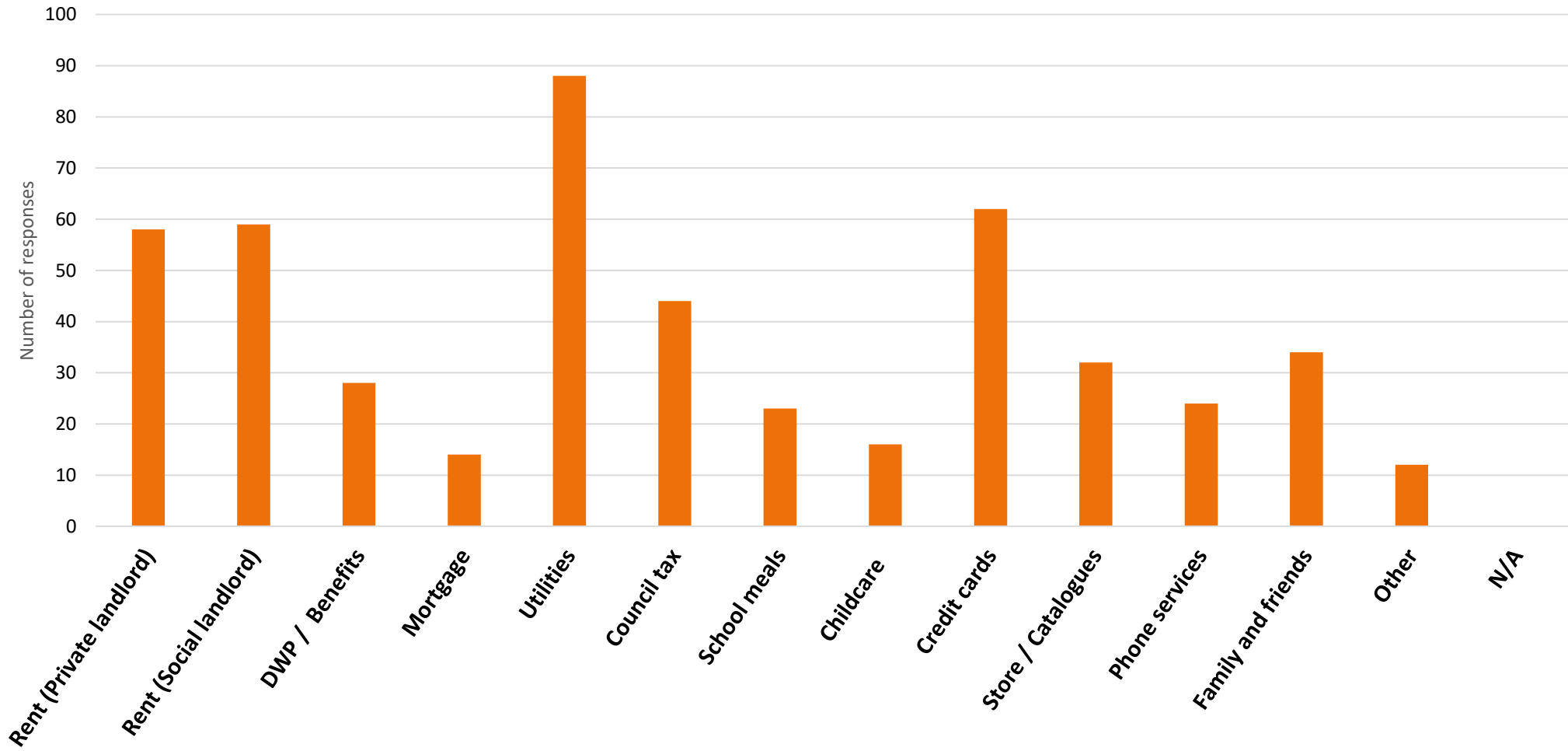


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*"Many clients have arrears precluding them from social housing.  
Private rented accommodation is scarce, expensive and often of  
poor quality."*

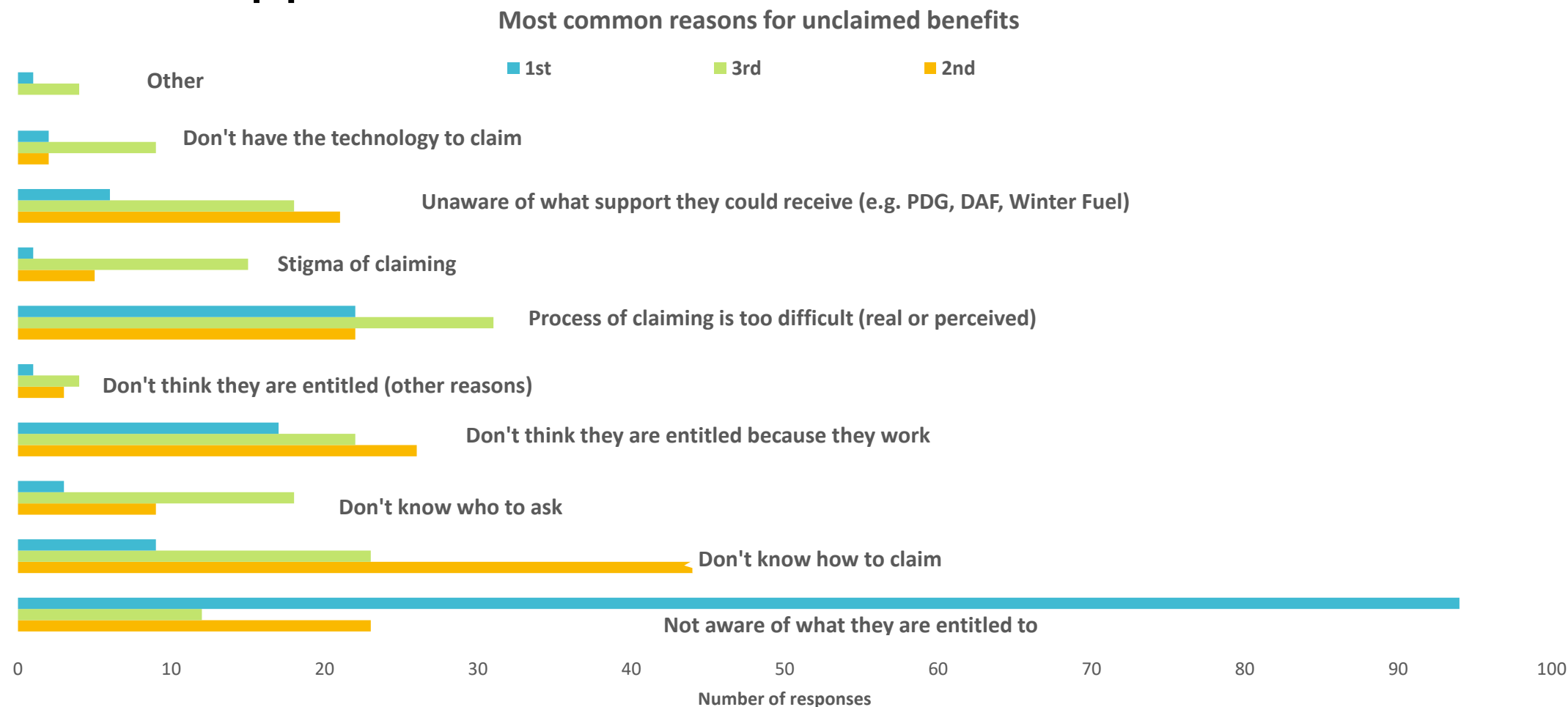
# Debt

Most common arrears



***"It is not enough to say people lack information about their entitlements. Many of the vulnerable people I see would not be able to navigate this complex system without a lot of ongoing support."***

## Financial support



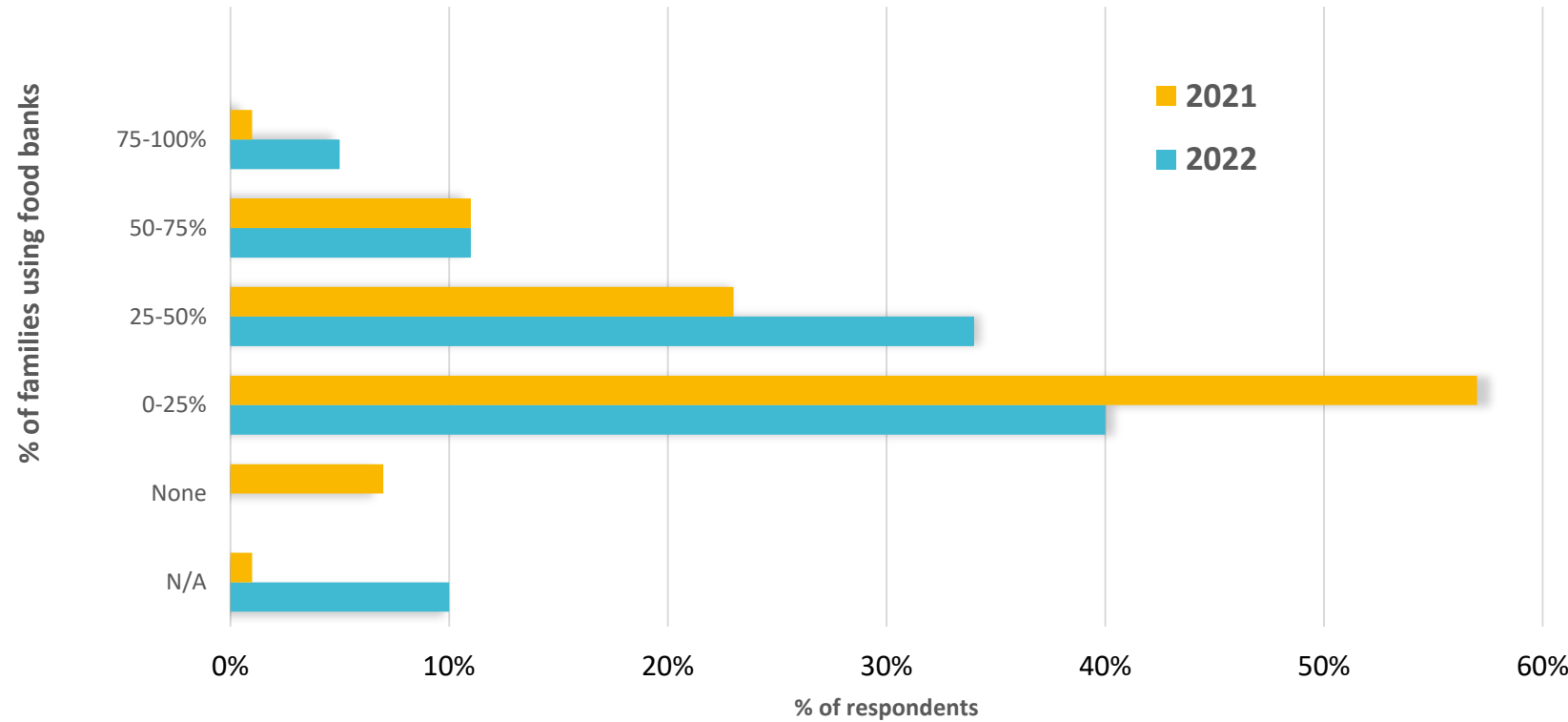


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# Food bank usage

*"Situations are becoming more and more dire every month"*

Percentage of Respondents' families using food banks





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## Education

*“Relentless. Almost all school classes with pupils now impacted visibly or quietly. Absenteeism rising because no food or sleep. Have to feed pupils regularly. Many at 15/16 yrs are working, not studying, to help with costs. Not known it this bad in a 20 year career.”*

**Tiredness**

**Hunger**

**Isolation**

**Inability to concentrate**

**Bullying**

**Inequality**

**Deteriorating mental health**

**Increased stress and anxiety**

**Increased absenteeism**

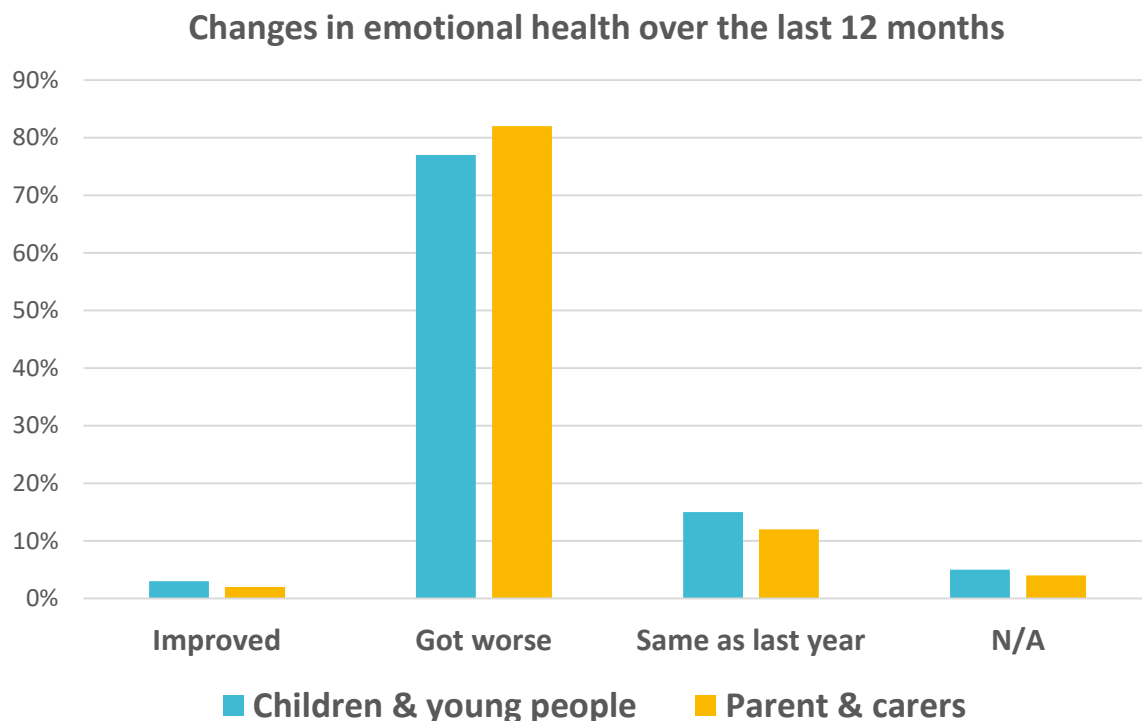
94% said that poverty affected CYP's experience of school and learning



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*"So many families and parents are in a worse position now than they were 12 months ago. The significant negative impact this [poverty] is having on their mental health and relationships is terrible."*

## Mental health



### Parents

- Debt
- Increasing financial pressures
- Inability to feed and clothe their children
- Reduction in mental health services
- "Never ending"; "Exhausted"

### Children & Young People

- Constant worry about money
- Stress within the home
- Worried about parents, often too concerned to leave them
- Reduction in mental health services

*"Most of the children and young people I work with now have 1 or both parents with a mental health condition"*



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## Mental health – Practitioners: *"How are you?"*

*"I have worked in the third sector for over 15 years and things have never been this bad. Working in these circumstances, seeing more and more families struggling and very little support available means that we have limited options to help them. This is really difficult on my own emotional health."*

*"I am utterly exhausted. Seeing and hearing so many harrowing stories, helping people who have been utterly failed by the state."*

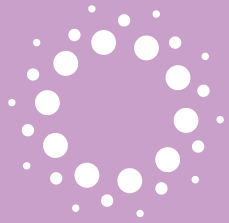
57% answered this optional question. Of these:

44% are generally "fine and doing well"

66% are affected by what they witness and experience around poverty.

- Overwhelmed by what they see
- Feel helpless, anxious, frustrated and a failure, knowing "there is nothing more they can do"
- Heavy emotional toll of seeing families and children struggling, hungry and despondent about their future





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# Children & Young People: Their voices



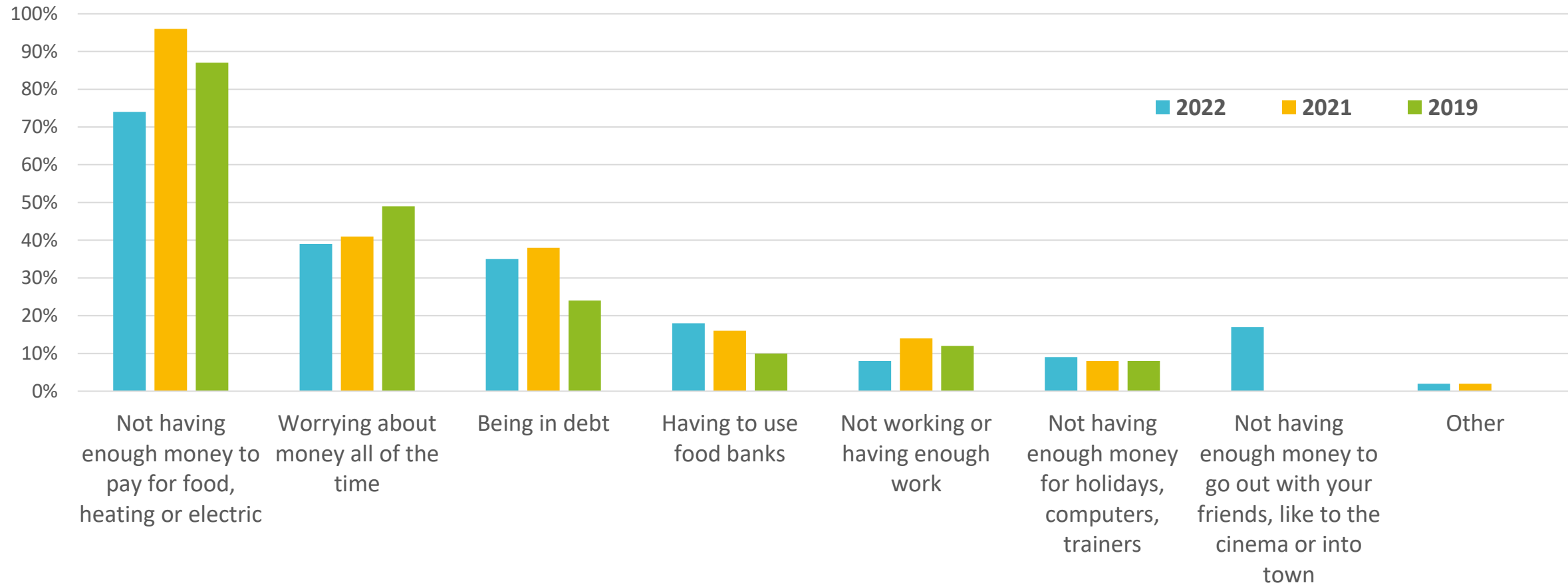


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## Children & Young People

*"Being hungry, shoes broken but can't get new ones, can't have a dog" (10-13yrs)*

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





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## ***Tell us how you think poverty and money affects children & young people?"***

- Shame & embarrassment
- Stress & anxiety
- Shyness & isolation
- Judgement
- Being bullied
- Parents constantly worried
- Hunger

*"They are not treated the same"*  
*(14-16 yrs)*

*"It can make you feel down about yourself  
and not as good as other people your age"*  
*(14-16 yrs)*

*"It ruins their childhood"*  
*(10-13 yrs)*

*"Moving away, leaving friends behind and need  
to sell your things"*  
*(19-25 yrs)*

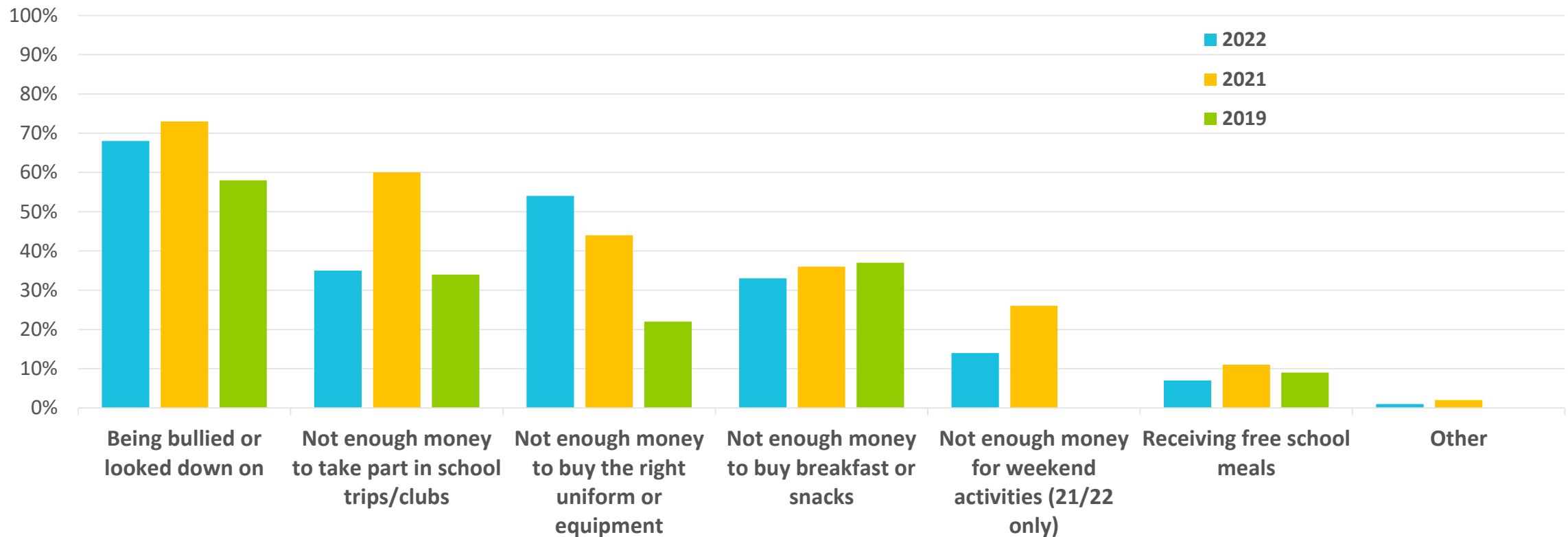


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## In school

*"Lower self-esteem. Feeling severely left out, misunderstood as in school, you can be punished for being tired, however if you have to work or have inadequate food and housing, then sleep can be tough." (14-16yrs)*

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



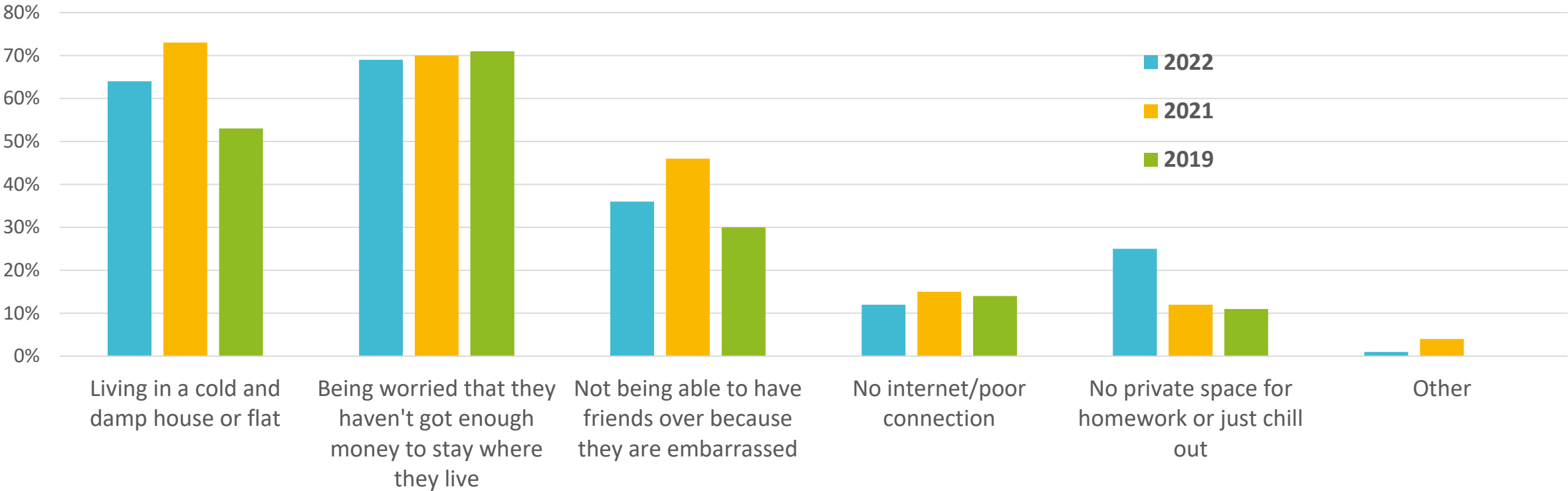
*"Being bullied and not having enough money for school meals and to buy unicorns." (10-13yrs)*



*"Have to move, Mum can't pay the bills. Not enough food.  
Alone a lot so Mum can work." (10-13yrs)*

# At home

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





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## Poverty and home

*"In debt of rent and potentially being kicked out of home"*  
(14-16 yrs)

*"Going hungry, not being able to sleep because of hunger, cold, in damp,  
sharing a room with other family members"*  
(17-18 yrs)

*"Sad House"*  
(Under 10 yrs)

*"It's bad ☹"*  
(10-13 yrs)

*"Parents relying on them to support themselves"*  
(14-16 yrs)



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*"Maybe have activities showing what it's like to live in poverty. Not just a poster or a short video to watch during assembly, but they need to be fully absorbed into the presentation." (14-16 yrs)*

## ***"What can be done to stop bullying?"***

- Ban non-uniform days
- Lessons on budgeting and how difficult it is to spread the money
- **Raise awareness and build compassion for teachers and pupils**
- All children should wear the same "cheap, supermarket" school uniform
- Free school meals and snacks for all
- Mind-set change
- Free school uniforms and shoe tokens, but provided with discretion and respect

*"Maybe we could all learn about poverty and the effects of it" (10-13 yrs)*



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## “Do you want to say anything else about poverty?”

*"Something needs to be done." (10-13 yrs)*

*"We should all be treated the same" (10-13 yrs)*

*"I would make sure that the Minister for Education includes teaching about poverty in the curriculum from an early age. I would ensure that a large sum of money is dedicated to tackling poverty."  
(14-16 yrs)*

*"Poverty affects all kinds of people, in all kinds of ways, for all kinds of reasons" (10-13 yrs)*

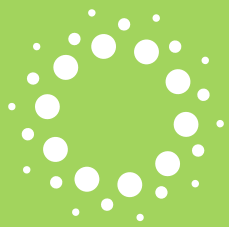




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**Example of something good that happens locally to help families**

***"Nana"***  
***(10-13 yrs)***



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**Thank you.**

**Any questions?**

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