Sustainability in Education 2017

Survey research by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges, National Union of Students, University and College Union, Association of Colleges and the College Development Network

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HEADLINE SUMMARY

Headline summary

This report presents the findings of the Sustainability in Education survey conducted in 2017.

A final sample of **500 staff members from universities, colleges and students' unions** was achieved, with **64** respondents identifying as lead staff members on environmental sustainability and social responsibility on a formal or informal basis.

The objective was to understand the resources available and perceptions of performance on delivery on environmental sustainability and social responsibility within Higher Education (HE), Further Higher Education (FHE) and Further Education (FE) institutions.

The survey was promoted amongst students' unions and institutional representatives by the EAUC, NUS, UCU, AoC and College Development Network.

Perceptions and attitudes were collected from two audiences, identified as follows.

Sustainability staff: Respondents who work at university or college, who have a formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

Overall respondents: Sustainability staff (as above) AND respondents who work at university or college, or students' union, with no formal or informal remit or responsibility or are members of a team with formal or informal remit or responsibility for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility.

This survey is the third annual survey to be conducted, tracking perceptions and experiences from staff within Further Education, Further Higher Education and Higher Education institutions across the UK. This summary presents some headline observations comparing the current results with those of 2015 and 2016.

Icons used throughout this report are sourced from the Noun project: 'Education' by Berkay Sargin and 'Advocacy' by OCHA Visual Information Unit

Headline summary | Key findings from overall respondents

Sustainability staff (Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative).

There continues to be significant differences in terms of resourcing (financial and human) for sustainability reported by respondents across FE, FHE and HE, with HE dominating in terms of having dedicated sustainability professionals and budgets within their institutions. Half of respondents from FE, working in a formal/lead sustainability role, spend just 10% of their time working on sustainability.

Within HE, and FE, addressing sustainability continues to be led by estates / facilities teams, with the heads of department and senior management most commonly reported as the most senior members of staff with a remit to deliver on sustainability.

Budget available for delivery on environmental sustainability and social responsibility varies widely both within and between the types of institution with a number of FE institutions reporting that no budget is available, this can be seen as a reflection of the relatively low response rate received from FE institutions. Concerns over availability of financial resources for the 2017-18 academic year remain with slightly more respondents likely to report an expected decrease rather than increase in budget. Despite this, respondents report feeling secure in the roles with three quarters agreeing that they are satisfied with their overall job security. Respondents also report a reliance on external funding with a third saying they had received external funding this year.

There is more confidence this year that institutions are able to meet their carbon targets with over half of 2017 respondents feeling they will meet them, compared to under half in 2016. However it is worth noting that an annual review of progress against these targets revealed after this research was completed in 2017 highlighted that 60% of the HE sector were not on track to meet 2020 carbon targets[1].

Action on teaching and learning for sustainability continues to be varied. In 2017 ESD is significantly more likely than in 2016 to be implemented through campaigns and plans. Over half of HE respondents say ESD is to be included in their overall strategies. The UN Sustainable Development Goals were the most commonly reported national or international initiative that was influencing teaching and learning on sustainability and social responsibility.

1. http://www.brite-green.co.uk/index.php/our-work/reports-publications/university-carbon-report

Headline summary | Key findings from overall respondents

Overall respondents Sustainability staff AND respondents who work at university or college, or students' union, with no formal or informal remit or responsibility or are members of a team with formal or informal remit or responsibility for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility)

Whilst respondents indicate a role for all stakeholders, students' union officers, students and institutional leaders are perceived as the stakeholders within institutions which place the greatest importance on taking action on sustainability. These stakeholders are also seen as being most valuable and influential in terms of supporting action on sustainability and representing a mismatch in terms of institutional leaders with specific accountability for sustainability. Trustees are also seen as valuable supporters to action on sustainability however there is a perception of lower importance of sustainability amongst this group.

Significantly more respondents in 2017, compared to 2016, report that sustainability is a strategic priority for their institution. 2017 respondents have a significantly more positive impression of their institution's action on sustainability with almost half of respondents seeing their institution as ranking 7 or above, where 10 is doing all that the institution can, compared to just a third in 2016. Only 1% believe that their institution is achieving 10 out of 10 in terms of their action on sustainability.

Respondents have a slightly more positive perception of their institutions commitment to addressing ethical investment / unethical divestment with 29% of overall respondents rating performance in this area as 'good' or 'very good', compared to 20% in 2016. However, this element of sustainability represents the biggest unknown for respondents with 23% reporting that they 'don't know' for this option. Recycling and waste is seen as the most positive area of performance on sustainability issues at institutions with over 2 in 3 respondents overall rating their institution's commitment to recycling and waste as 'good' or 'very good'.

Respondents continue to highlight a lack of financial and staff resources as being the biggest barriers to acting for sustainability with support from the highest levels seen as the most important way of overcoming these barriers.

Headline summary | Key trends across three years of research

The following trends can be seen when considering the responses of both sustainability and wider staff working in the sector.

Respondents to the survey have shown an increasingly positive perception of the performance of their institution on sustainability and social responsibility, along with an increasing focus on the issues within institutional strategies and also in the remits of those in leadership roles.

When reviewing the financial information provided by respondents, however, it appears that this reported increased prioritisation of sustainability has not translated into increased budget and resources within teams devoted to working on the issues. For example, the number of staff with a formal remit for working on sustainability has remained constant throughout the three years of research, as has the proportion of respondents expecting their budget to remain the same for the next academic year. Reflecting these findings, overall respondents have consistently identified a lack of financial and staff resources as being the biggest barriers to acting for sustainability with support from the highest levels seen as the most important way of overcoming these barriers (despite the increased in higher level of support reported above).

Throughout the three years of research, there has been a consistent mismatch between the perceptions of respondents on likelihood of reaching their carbon targets and assessments carried out elsewhere across the sector which paint a less positive picture with reported 60% of institutions likely to miss their 2020 targets.

It is also worth noting the consistent differences between the further and higher education sectors when it comes to resourcing for sustainability and social responsibility. For example, in 2017 half of respondents from FE, working in a formal/lead sustainability role, spend just 10% of their time working on sustainability compared with almost two thirds of HE sustainability leads spending 100% of their time in this area.

In terms of the value of support of different roles within institutions, students have been reported as increasingly important across the three years of research. Vice-chancellor / Chief-executive support is also seen as extremely value for progressing sustainability and social responsibility within institutions.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives and methodology

This report presents the findings of the Sustainability in Education survey conducted in 2017.

A final sample of **500 staff members from universities, colleges and students' unions** was achieved, with 63 respondents identifying as lead staff members on environmental sustainability and social responsibility on a formal or informal basis. Data has been presented as percentages throughout to allow for comparisons of proportions across the three years of research.

Objective: To understand, and track on an annual basis, the resources available and perceptions of performance on delivery on environmental sustainability and social responsibility within HE, FHE and FE institutions.

A prize draw of a ticket to the Green Gown Awards, £100 John Lewis voucher and a £250 donation to charity was offered to encourage completion.

The survey was promoted amongst students' unions and institutional representatives by the EAUC, NUS, UCU, AoC and College Development Network.

Key to data

Sustainability staff

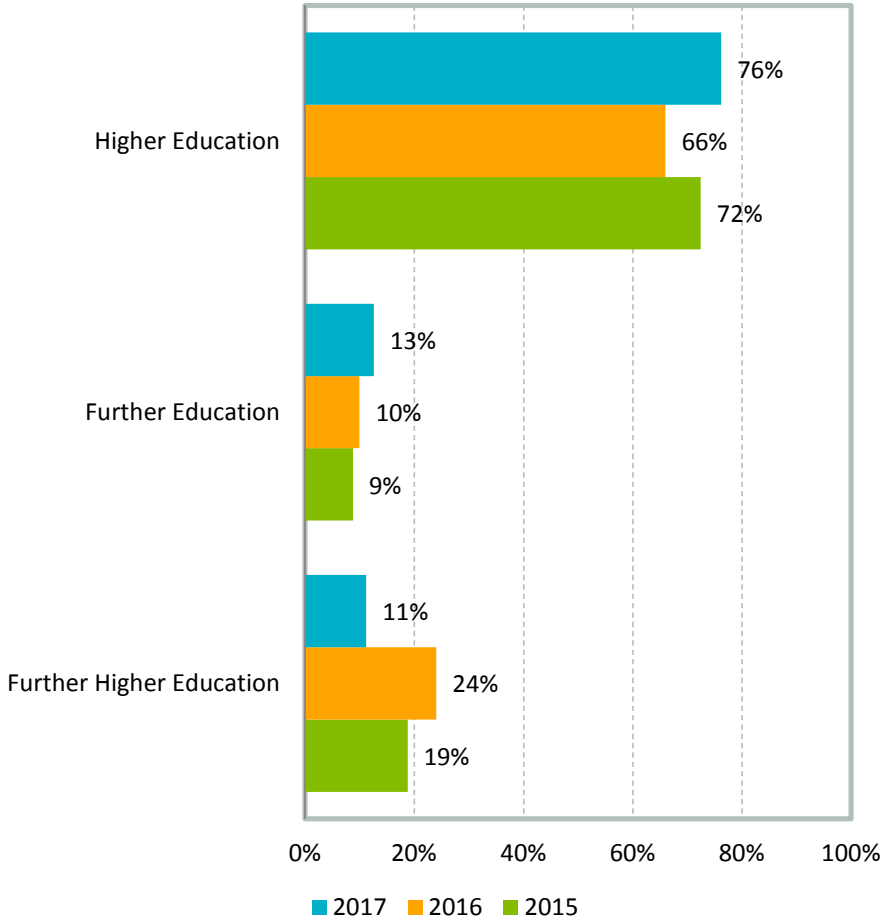
Respondents who work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and are either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

Overall respondents

Sustainability staff (as above) AND respondents who work at university or college, or students' union, who either have no formal or informal remit or are members of a team with formal or informal remit or responsibility for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility.

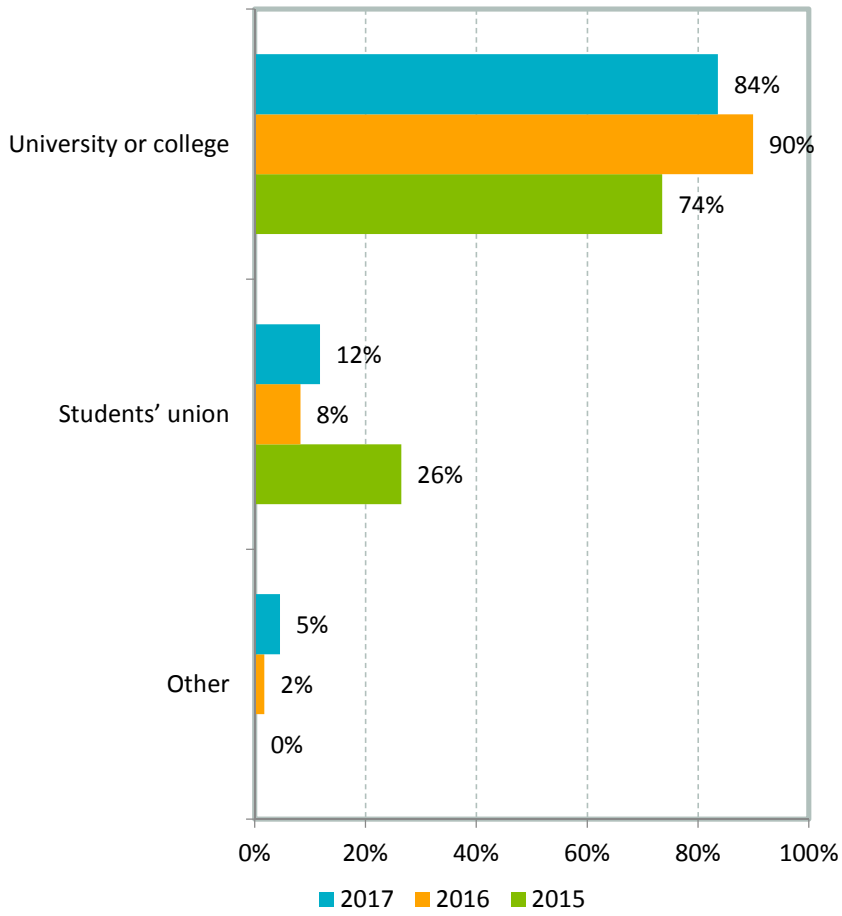
CHAPTER 2: THE RESPONDENTS

The profile of respondents is slightly different in 2017, compared to 2016, with three in four based in higher education institutions, and just over eight in ten based in a university or college rather than a students' union.



Base: 500 (2017), 504 (2016), 548 (2015) respondents

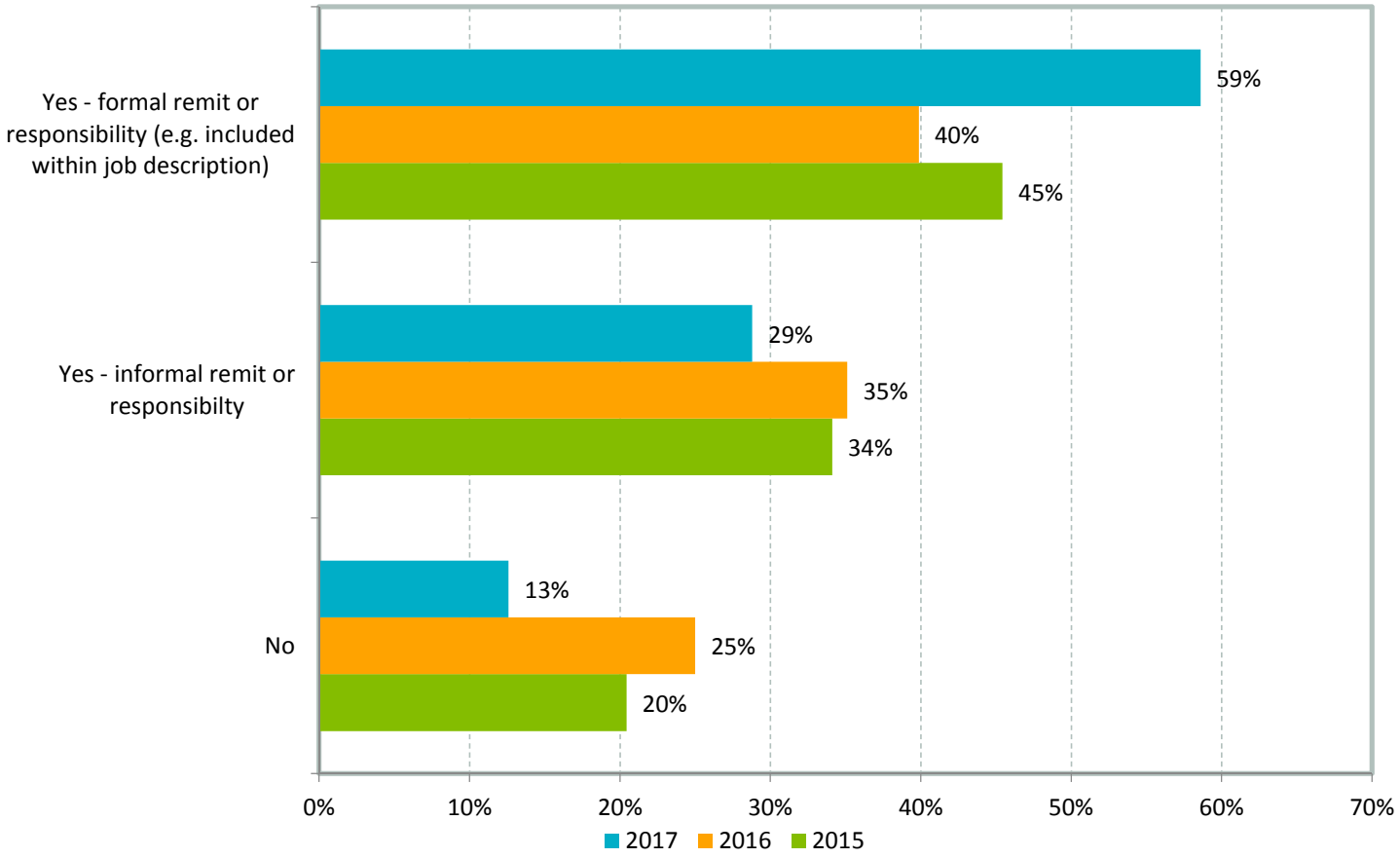
A1. Which of the following types of institution do you currently work at?



Base: 500 (2017), 504 (2016), 548 (2015) respondents

A2. What kind of organisation do you work for?

Significantly more say they have a formal remit to deliver on sustainability within their institutions in 2017 than in previous years. 3 in 10 have an informal remit and 13% say they have no remit at all.



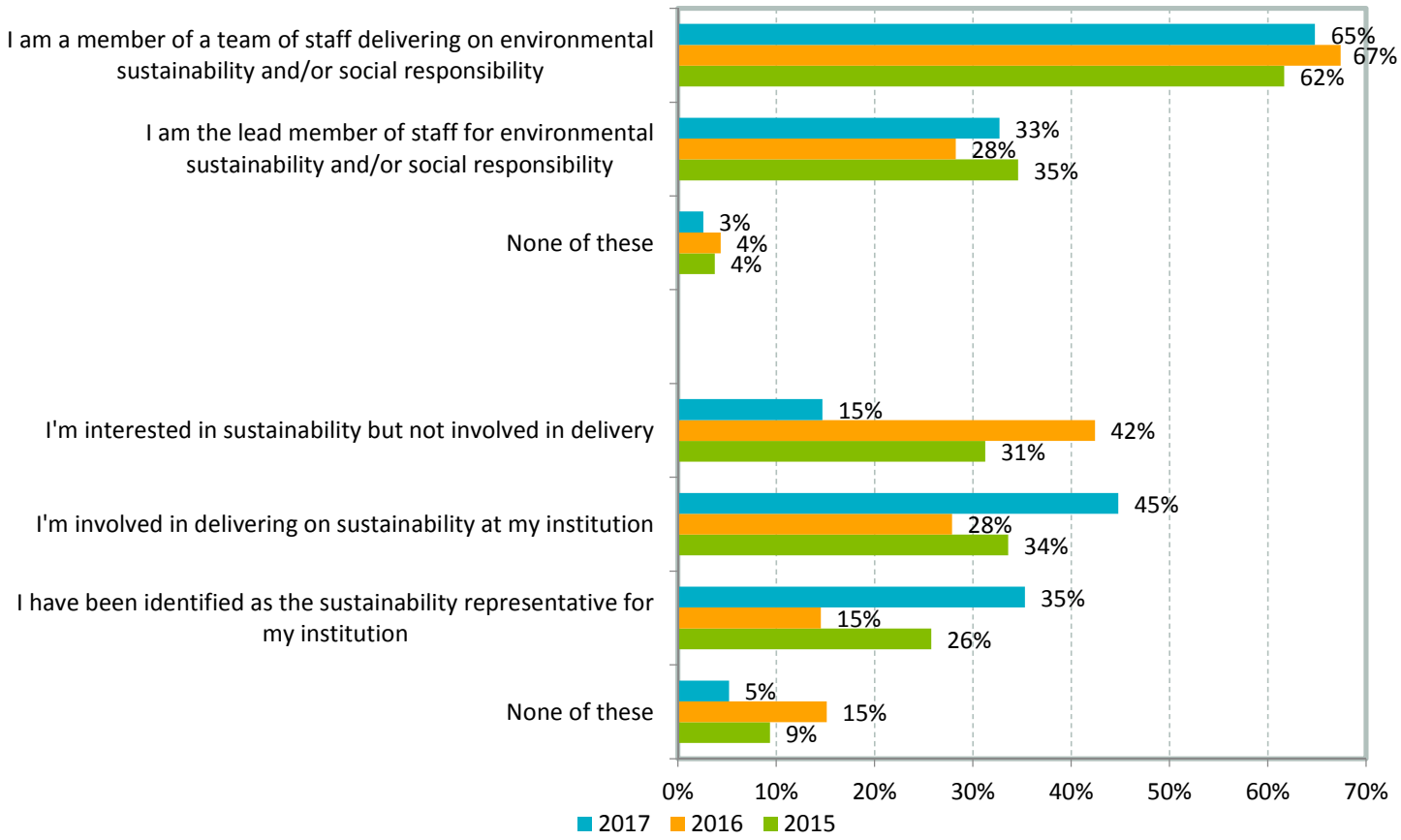
Base: 500 (2017), 504 (2016), 548 (2015) respondents

A3. Do you have a remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility within your institution on a formal or informal basis?

Significantly more FE and FHE respondents say they are involved in delivering on sustainability at their institution or have been identified as the sustainability rep for their institution than in previous years.

Higher education

Further education and Further Higher education

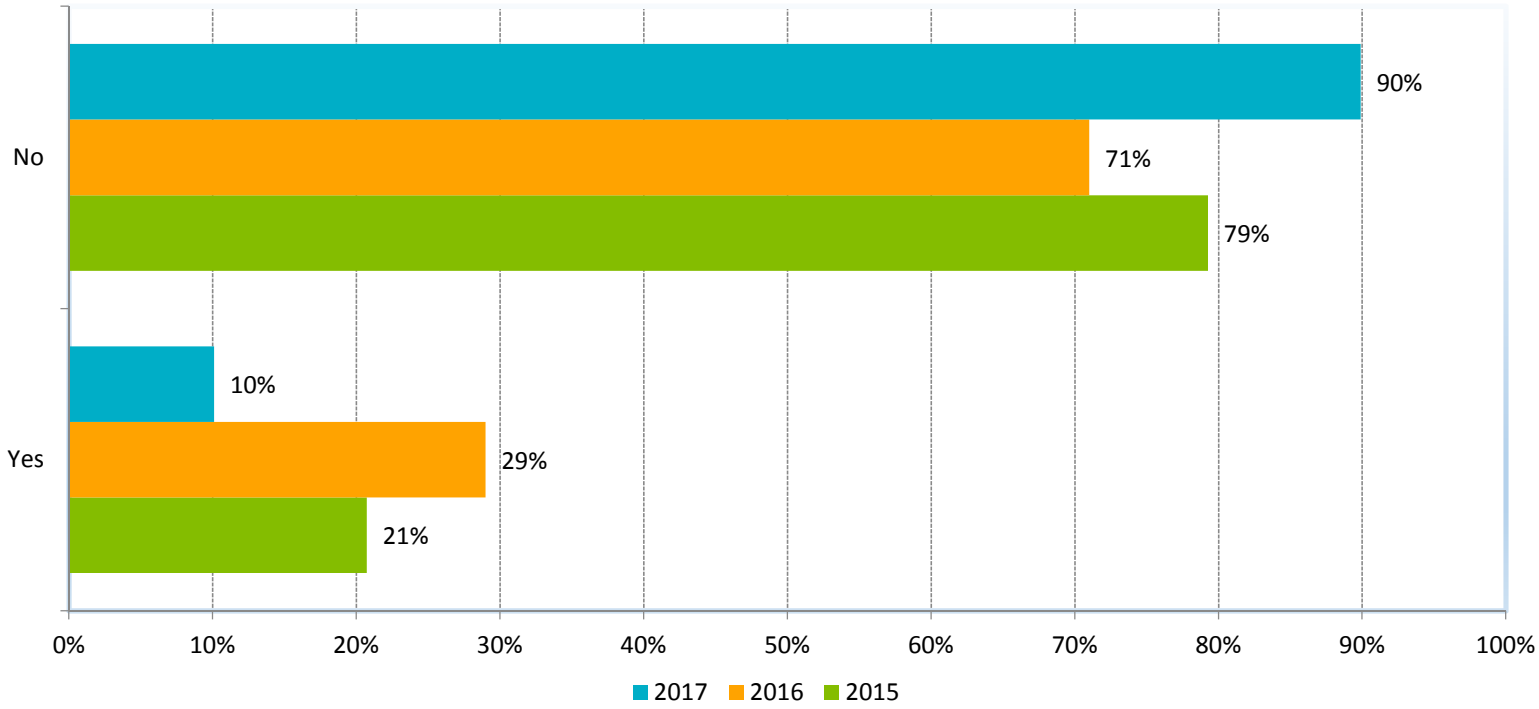


Base : Q4 196 (2017), 138 (2016), 133 (2015) respondents. Have a remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility within your institution on a formal or informal basis?
Base : Q5 116 (2017), 165 (2016), 128 (2015) respondents. Have a remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility within your institution on a formal or informal basis?

A4/5. Which of these options best describes your role in relation to delivering on environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility?

In 2017 there are significantly fewer respondents working within institutions (excluding staff from students' unions) who say they are a UCU representative.

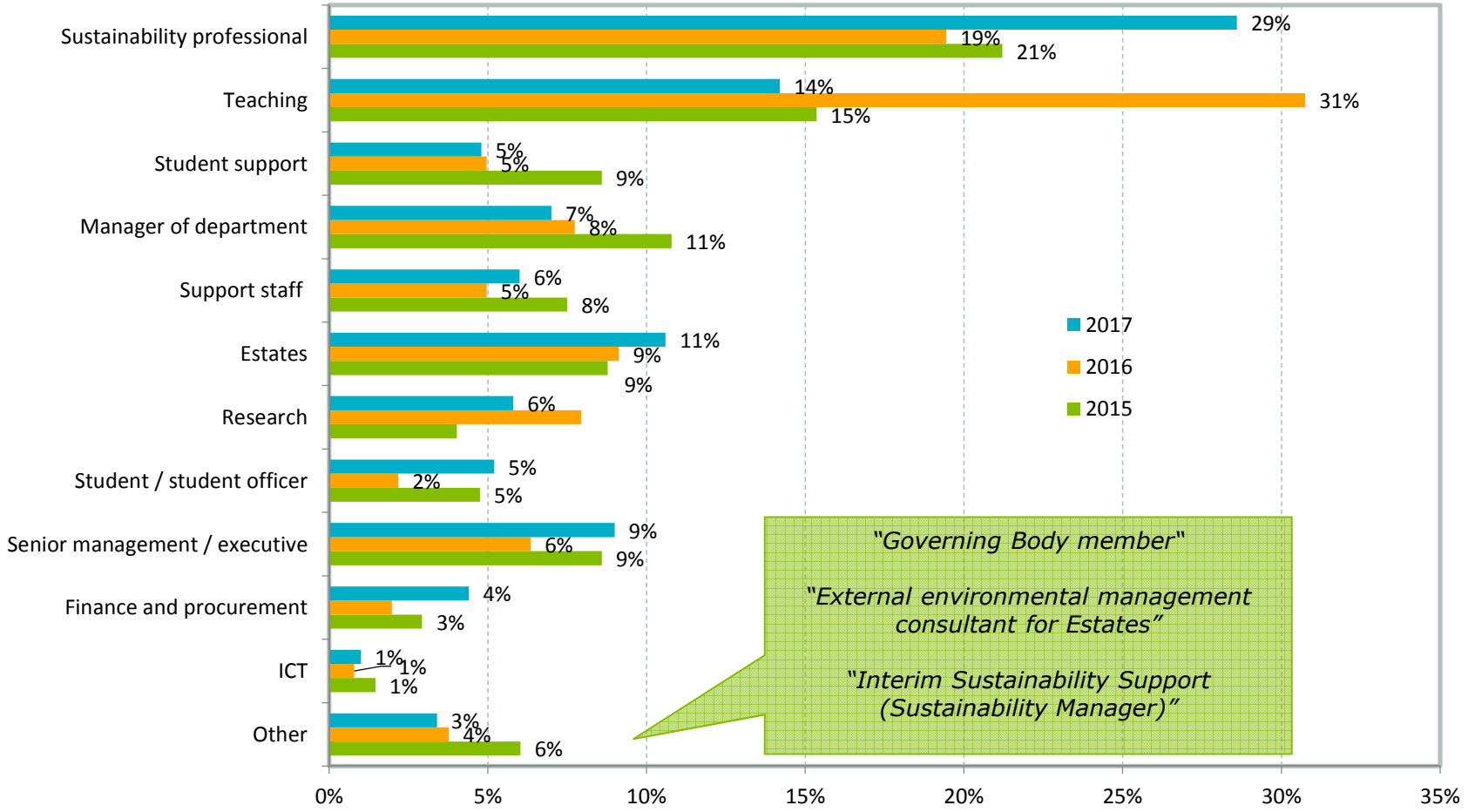
University and college staff only



Base: 356 (2017), 415 (2016), 357 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college.

A6. Are you a University and College Union representative at your institution?

Overall 29% are sustainability professionals, with 32% of respondents from HE having this role. Significantly fewer respondents in 2017 are teaching staff.

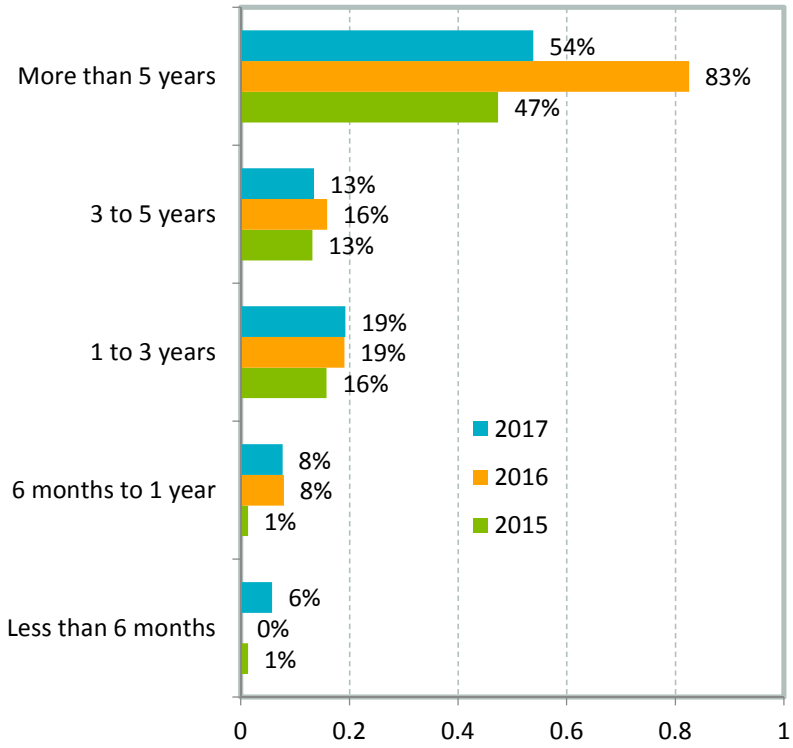


Base: 500 (2017), 504 (2016), 547 (2015) respondents.

A7. Which of the following job types most closely matches your current role?

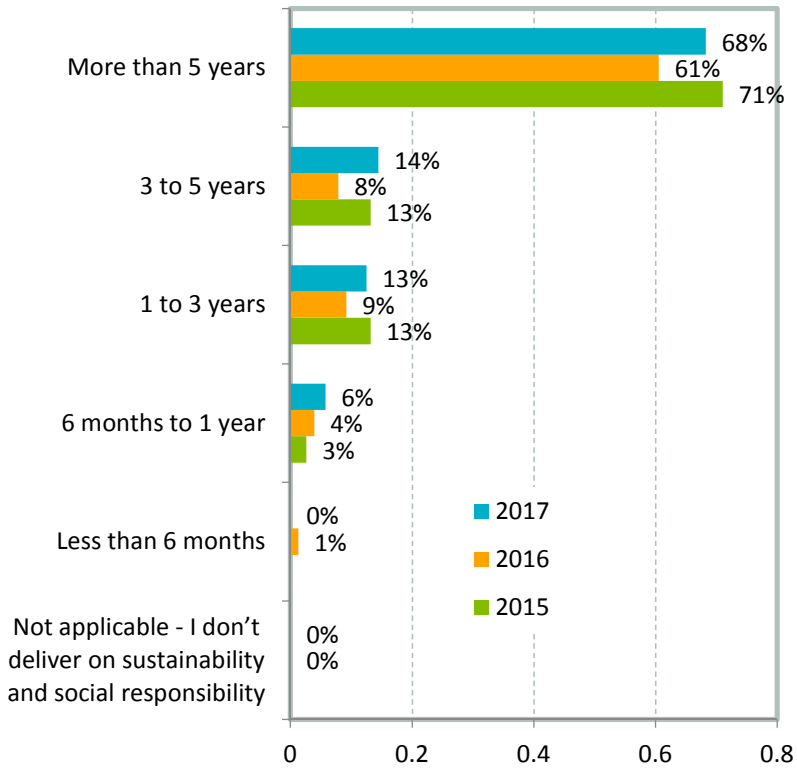
The majority of respondents classed as sustainability staff have worked at their current institution for more than 5 years, and have been involved in delivering on sustainability for more than 5 years.

Current institution



A9. How long have you worked for your current institution?

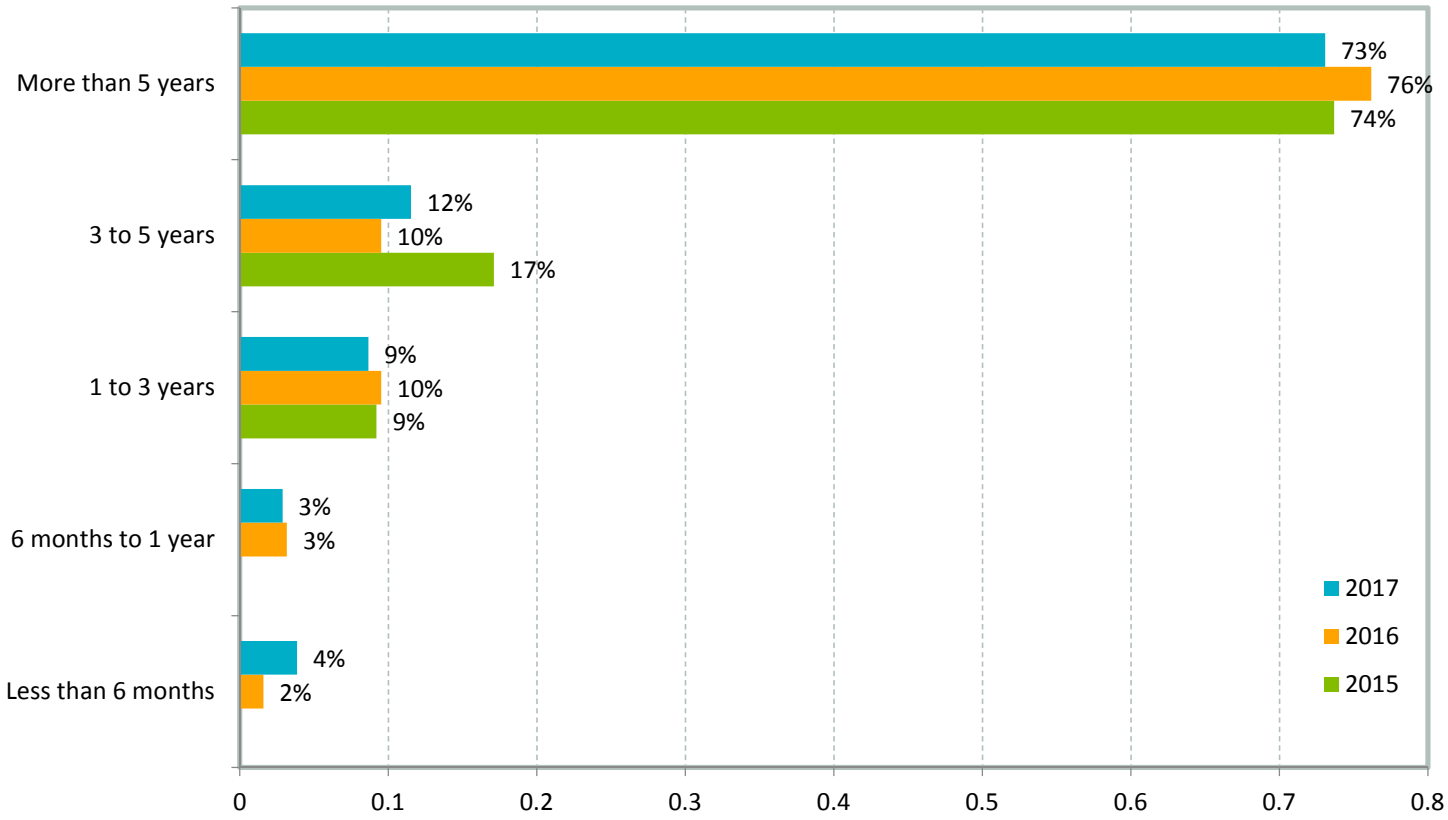
Sustainability role



A10. How long have you worked in a role directly involved in delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility?

Base: 104 (2017), 63 (2016), 76 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

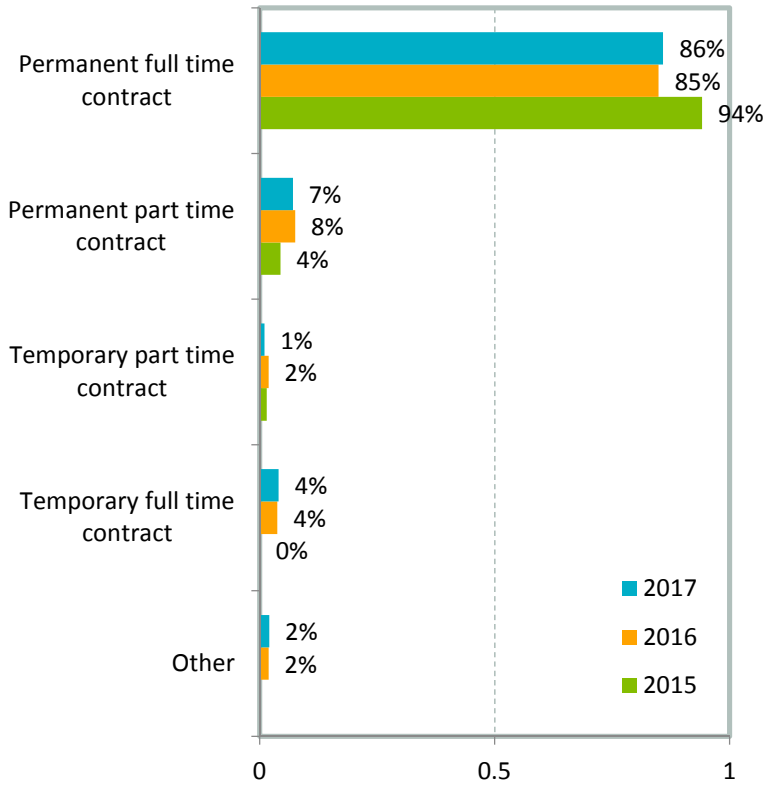
Most respondents who are sustainability staff have worked in the education sector for more than five years, and this is the case across FE, FHE and HE institutions.



Base: 104 (2017), 63 (2016), 76 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

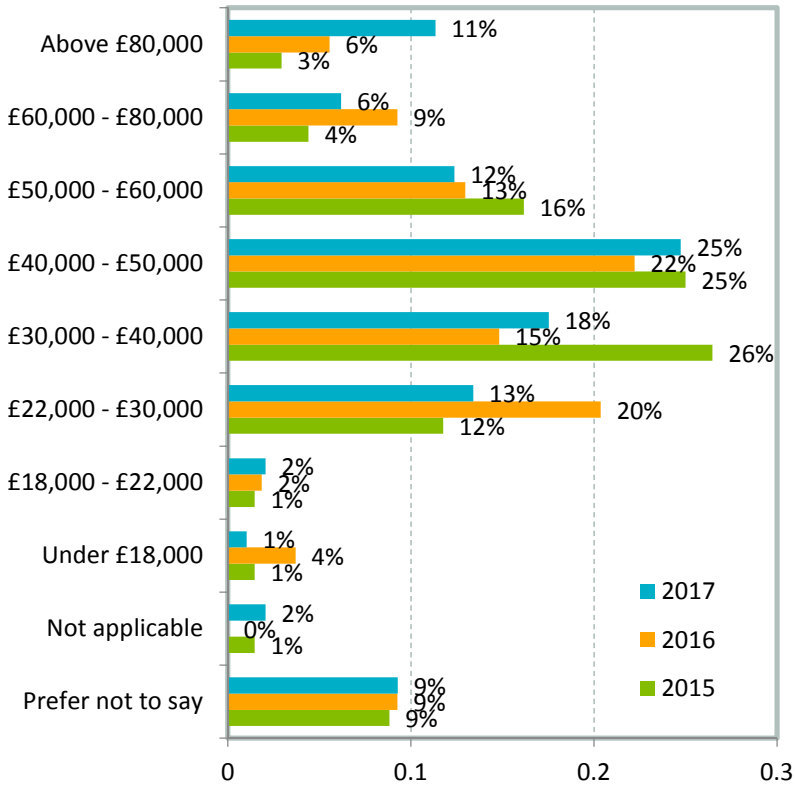
A11. How long have you worked in the education sector?

The majority of sustainability staff respondents in FE, FHE and HE are on permanent full time contracts. Staff with responsibility for sustainability typically earn between £30-50,000. Within HE, the spread in salary is greater, reflecting the embedding of sustainability within senior management roles.



Base: 99 (2017), 53 (2016), 68 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

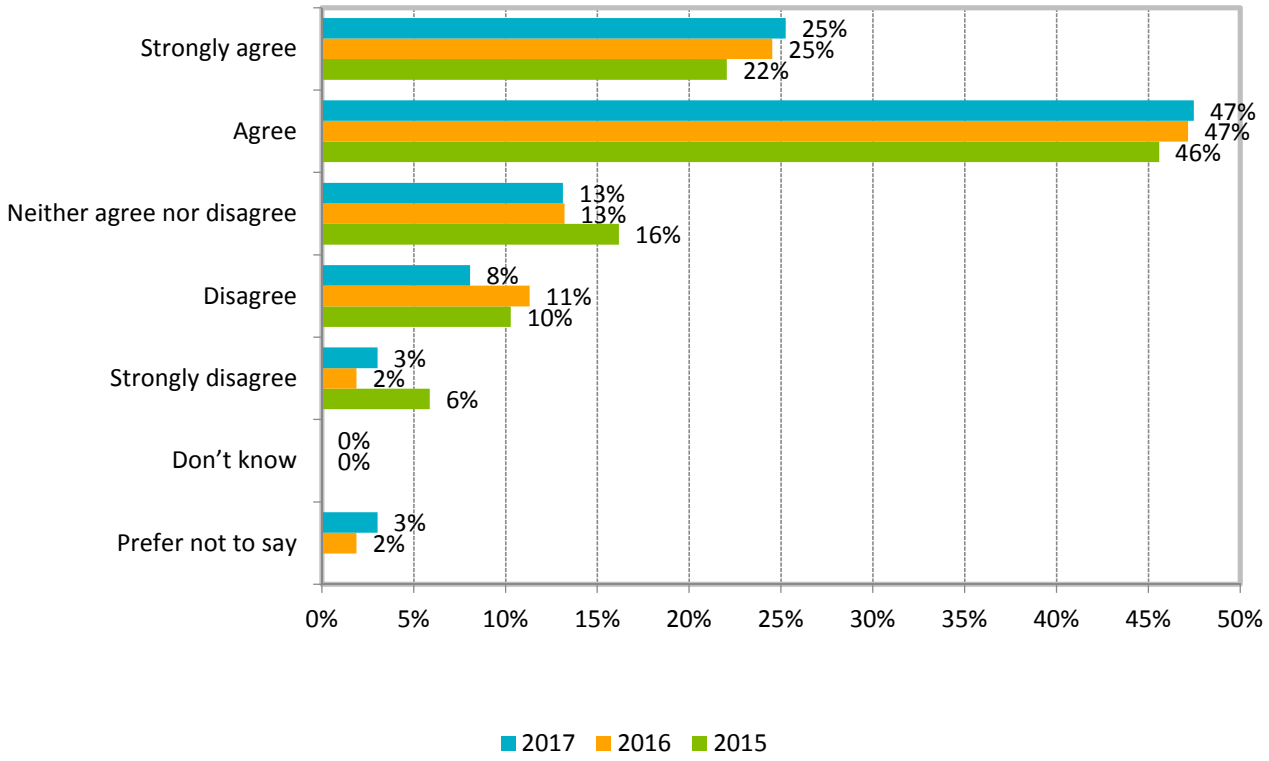
A12. Which of the following options best describes your role?



Base: 97 (2017), 54 (2016), 68 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

A13. We would like to gain a picture of the current pay for the sustainability profession in education. Please indicate your current salary range, per annum.

Overall, around 3 in 4 respondents in a sustainability role report that they are satisfied with their overall job security. There are no differences in levels of agreement across the different types of institution worked at.

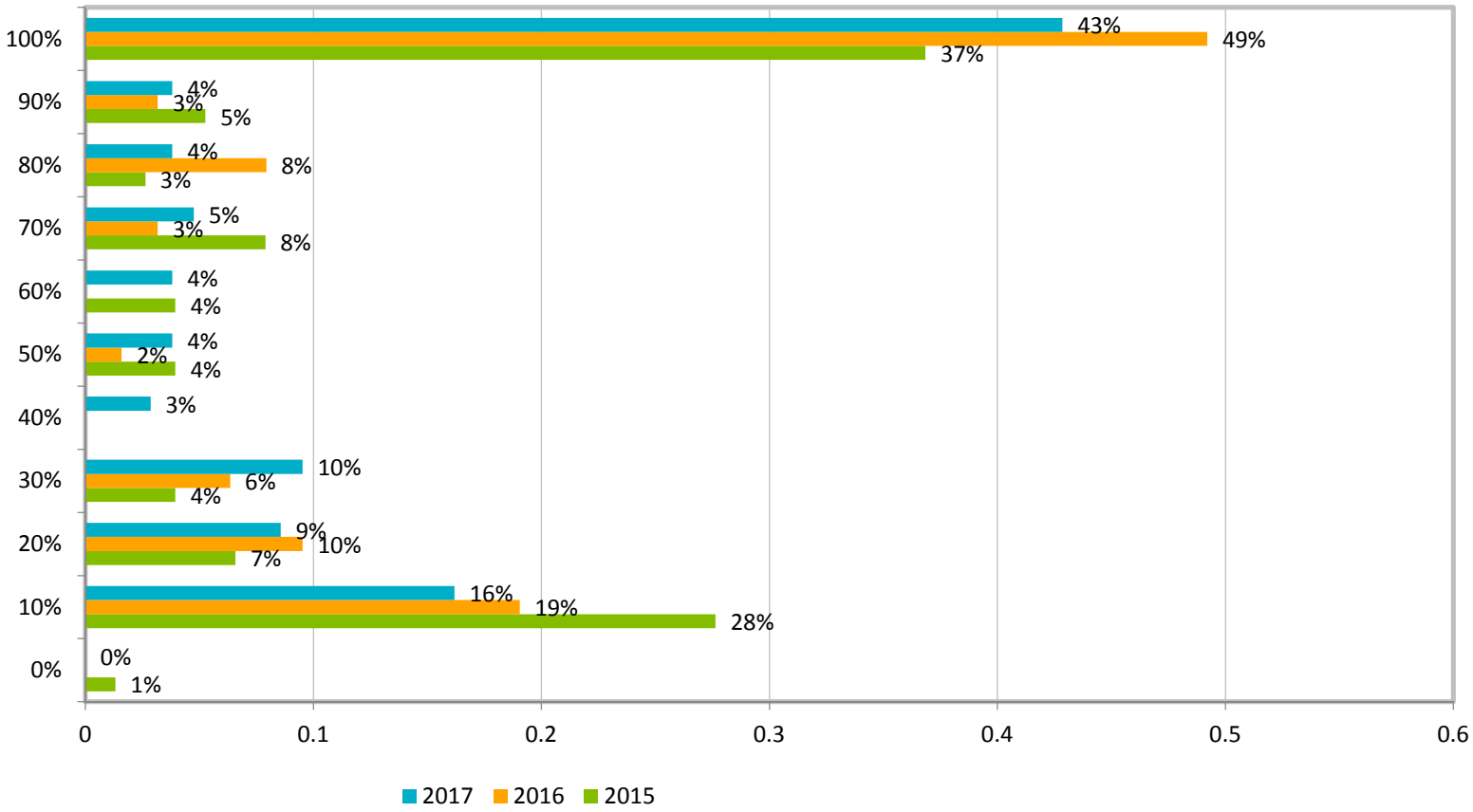


Base: 99 (2017), 53 (2016), 68 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

A14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am satisfied with my overall job security.

CHAPTER 3: RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

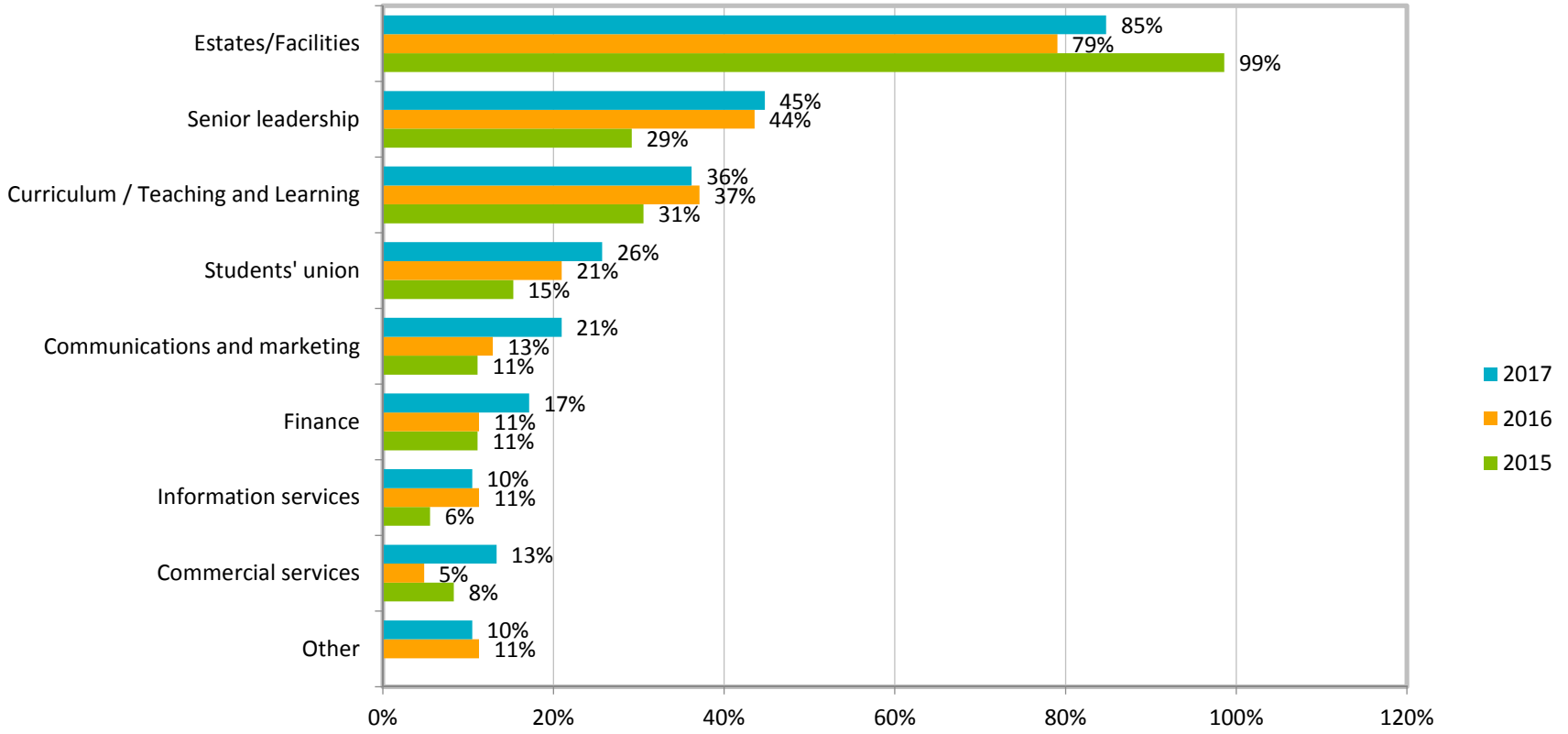
Almost half of lead sustainability staff respondents spend 100% of their time working on sustainability. However, there is a vast difference between HE and FE staff with half of sustainability leads in FE spending just 10% of their time on sustainability compared with almost two thirds of HE sustainability leads spending 100% of their time in this area.



Base: 105 (2017), 63 (2016), 76 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

B1. What proportion of your time is spent working on sustainability?

Estates and facilities teams, particularly in FHE and HE, are most likely to lead on environmental sustainability and social responsibility. In FE institutions Finance teams are significantly more likely to lead on these issues than in FHE and HE. In 2017, respondents report a more diverse picture in terms of action on sustainability compared with previous years.

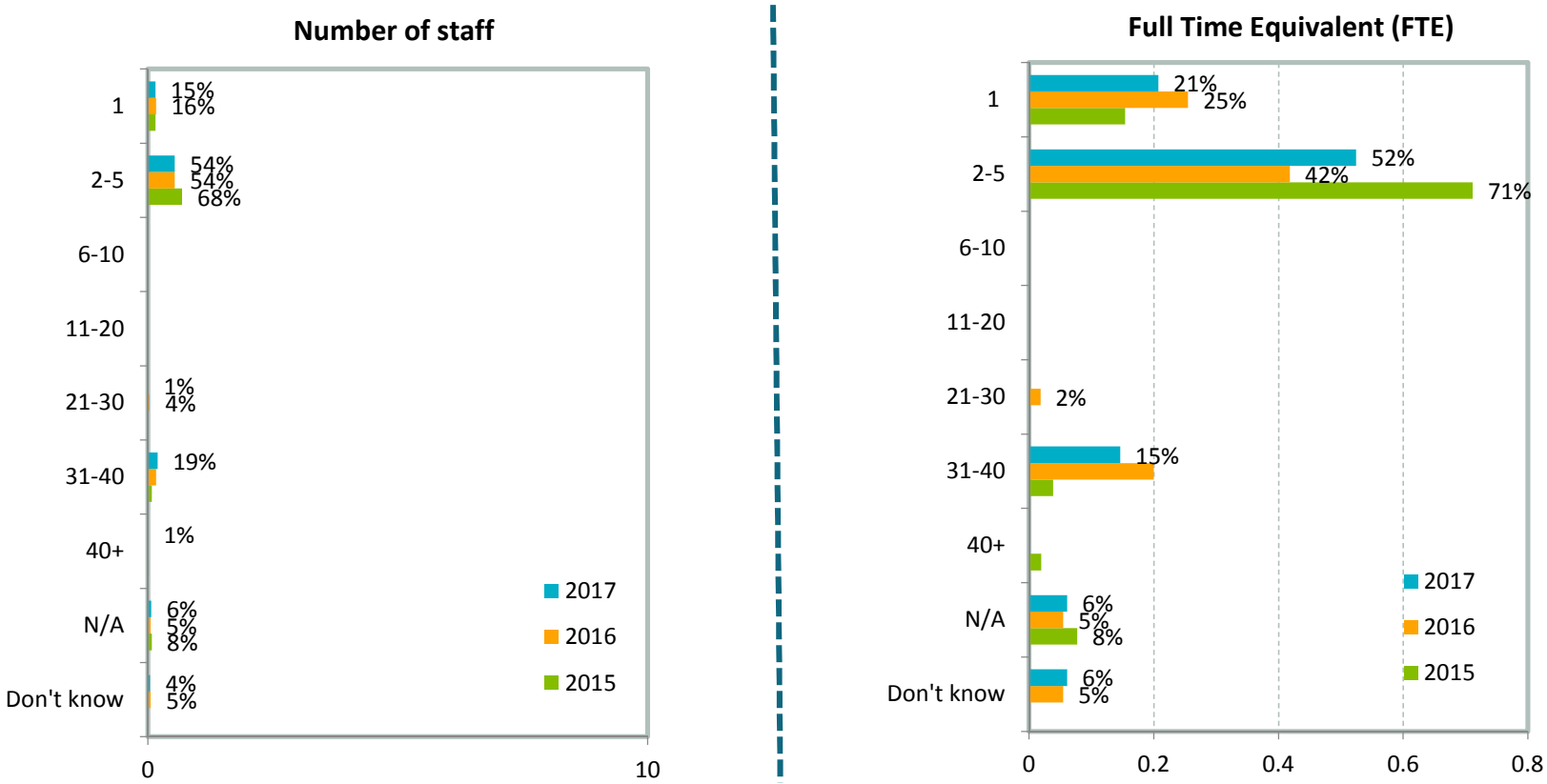


Base: 105 (2017), 62 (2016), 72 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

B2. Which parts of the institution lead on environmental sustainability and social responsibility? 23
[n.b. respondents were asked to select all that apply]

Most sustainability staff respondents report working with 2-5 members of staff who have a formal remit to deliver on sustainability.

Formal remit

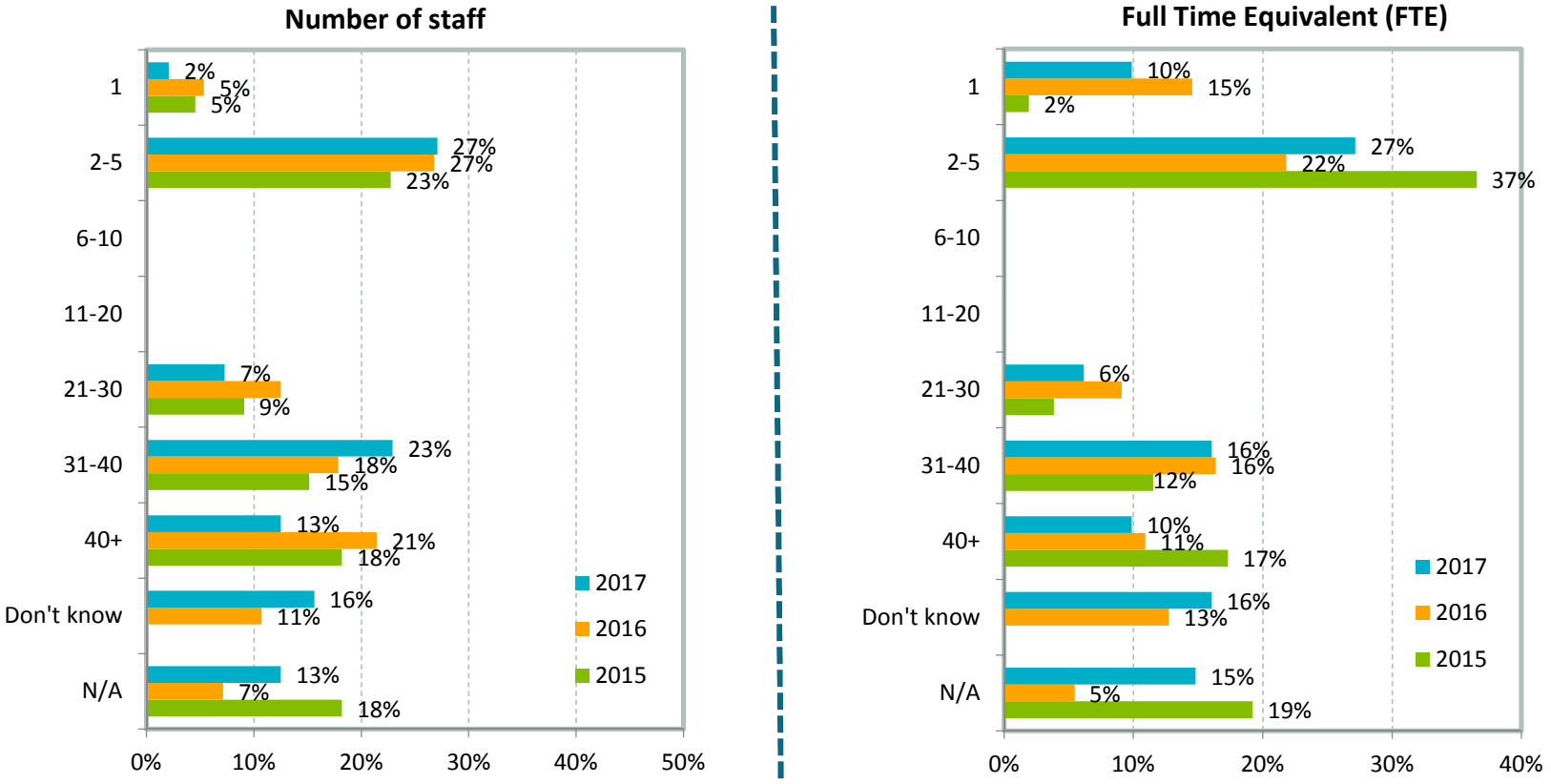


Base : 95 (2017), 56 (2016), 66 (2015) answering about Number of staff. Base : 82 (2017), 55 (2016), 52 (2015) answering about FTE. Work at university or college, formal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

B3. How many members of staff within your institution have a formal remit to deliver on environmental sustainability and social responsibility?

There is a wider spread of size of staff/FTE with an informal remit to deliver on sustainability, but most commonly respondents report working with 2-5 colleagues with this remit.

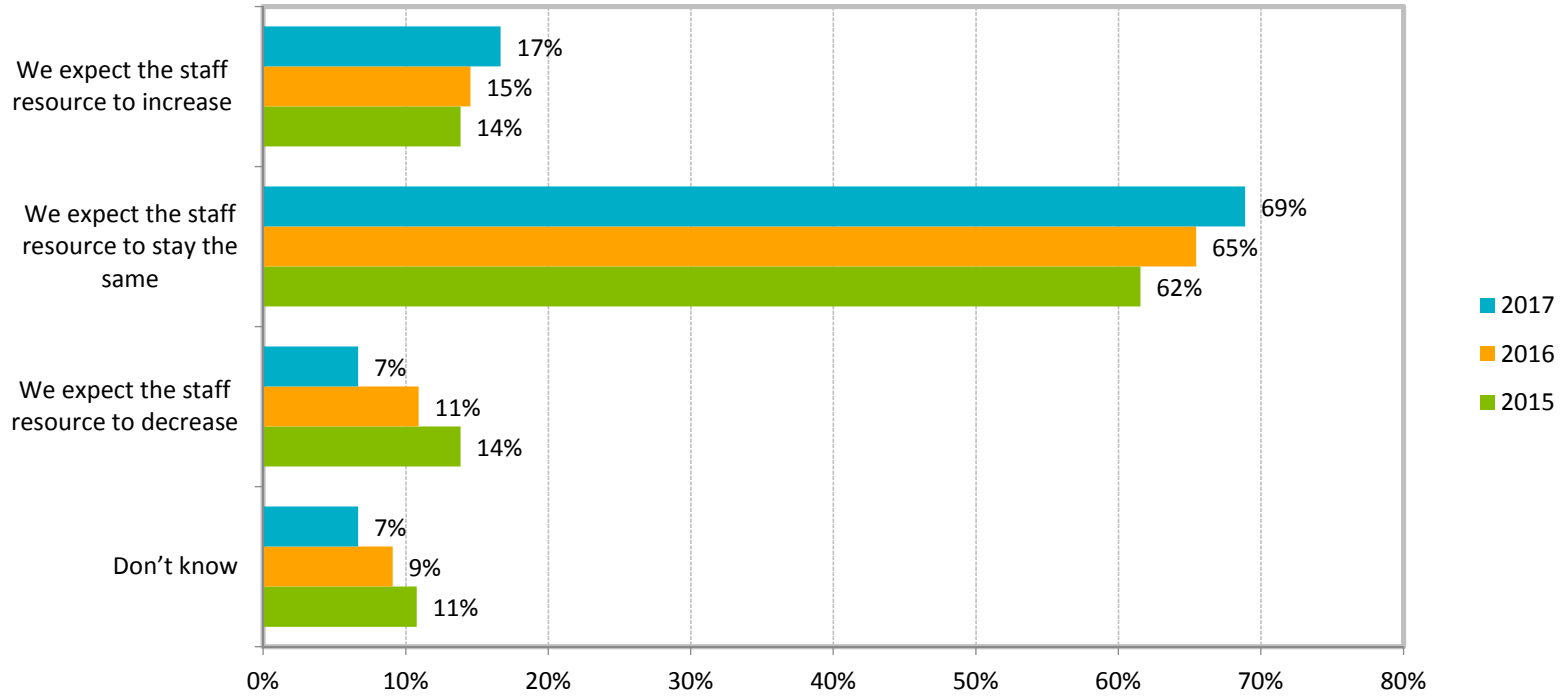
Informal remit



Base : 96 (2017), 56 (2016), 66 (2015) answering about Number of staff. Base : 81 (2017), 55 (2016), 52 (2015) answering about FTE. Work at university or college, informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

B5. How many members of staff within your institution have an informal remit to deliver on environmental sustainability and social responsibility?

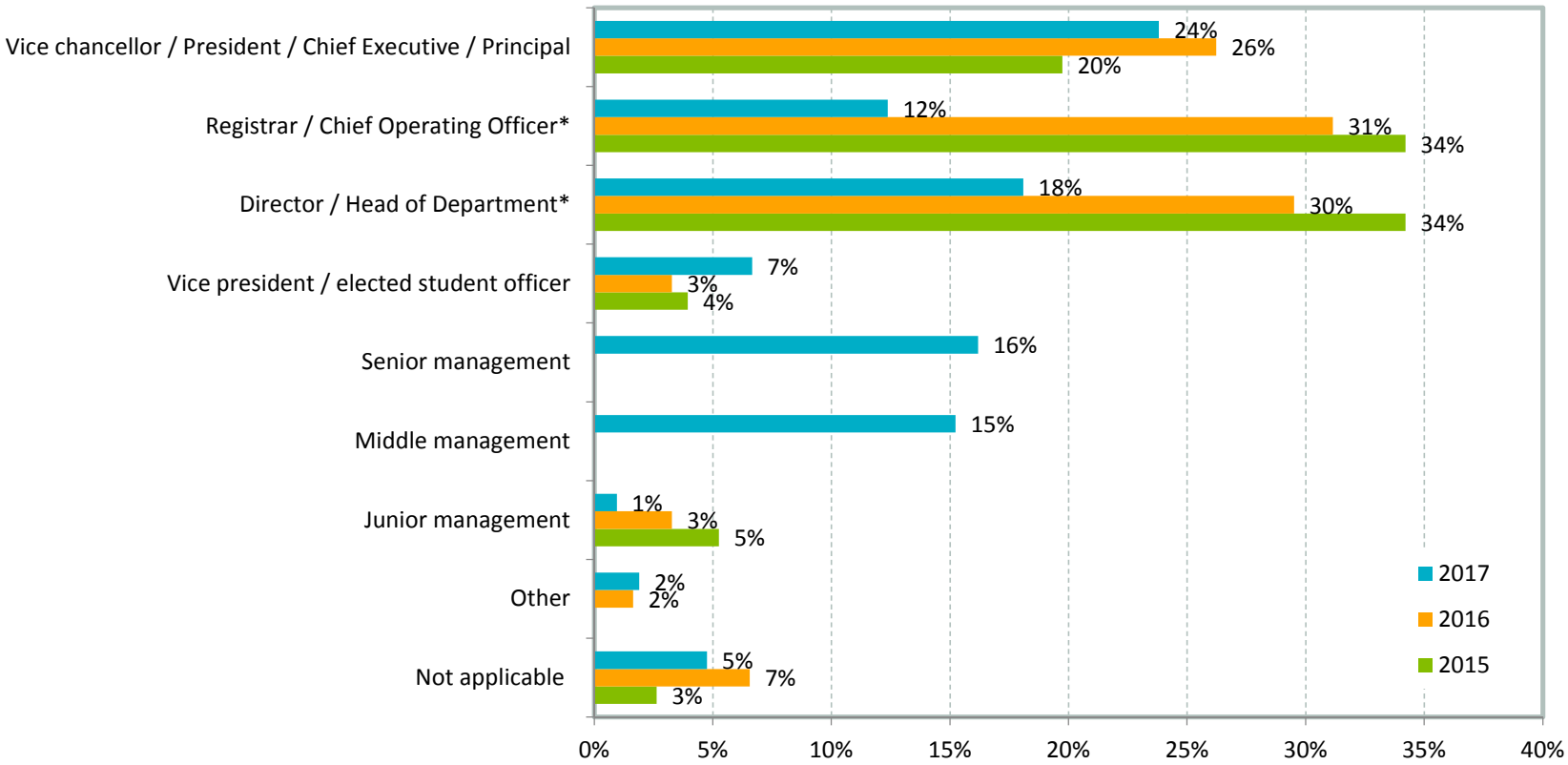
Most sustainability staff respondents expect the staff resource with a formal remit to deliver on sustainability to remain the same for the next academic year.



Base: 90 (2017), 55 (2016), 65 (2015) respondents. With 1-40 staff or FTE within institution that have a formal remit to deliver on environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

B4. Do you expect the staff resource with a formal remit to deliver on environmental sustainability and social responsibility to change for the 2015-2016 academic year?

In 2017, Vice Chancellor/President/ CE/Principal roles are reported as being the most senior member of staff with a formal remit to deliver on sustainability, across all types of institution.



Base: 105 (2017), 61 (2016), 76 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative. * in 2017 wording changed to separate out Middle and Senior Management roles.

B6. What level is the most senior member of staff with a formal remit to deliver on environmental sustainability and social responsibility?

CHAPTER 4: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Sustainability staff respondents report a broad range in their budgets available for delivering on sustainability during the 2017-18 academic year, with higher average and median budgets seen for 2016 compared to 2017.

2015 (n=21)
- £1,200,000 largest budget*
- £0 smallest budget*
- £204,087 average budget
- £50,000 median budget

2016 (n=29)
- £4,000,000 largest budget*
- £0 smallest budget*
- £221,576 average budget
- £60,000 median budget

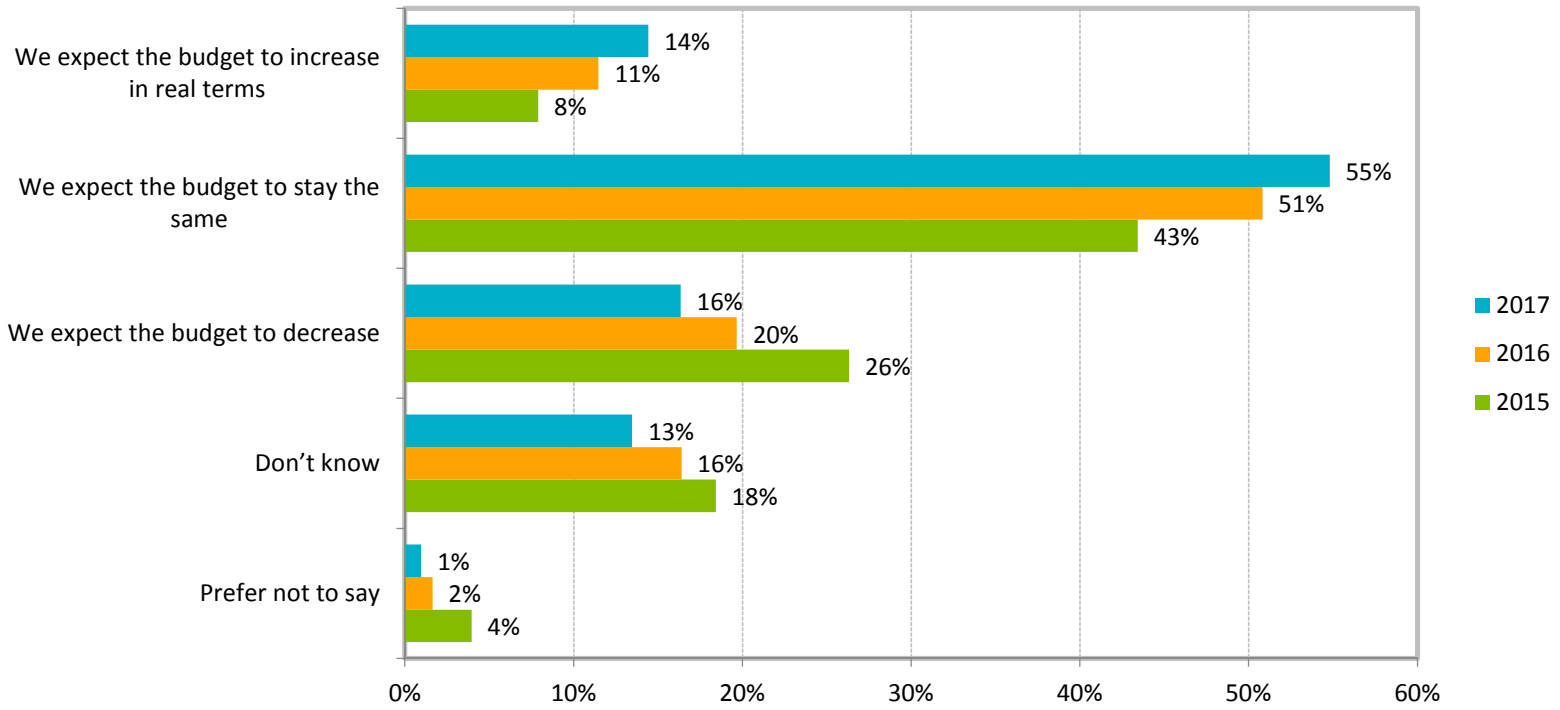
2017 (n=47)
- £1,200,000 largest budget*
- £0 smallest budget*
- £182,323 average budget
- £55,000 median budget

C1. What is the approximate total budget available for delivering on sustainability within your institution for the 2015-2016 academic year?
Please include costs for any staff with a formal responsibility for sustainability (i.e. included in job descriptions) within this figure. Please do not include any external funding you have received, or waste and utility budgets in this figure.

Outliers at either end of the scale removed for calculations of average and median.

Provided by lead sustainability staff who work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

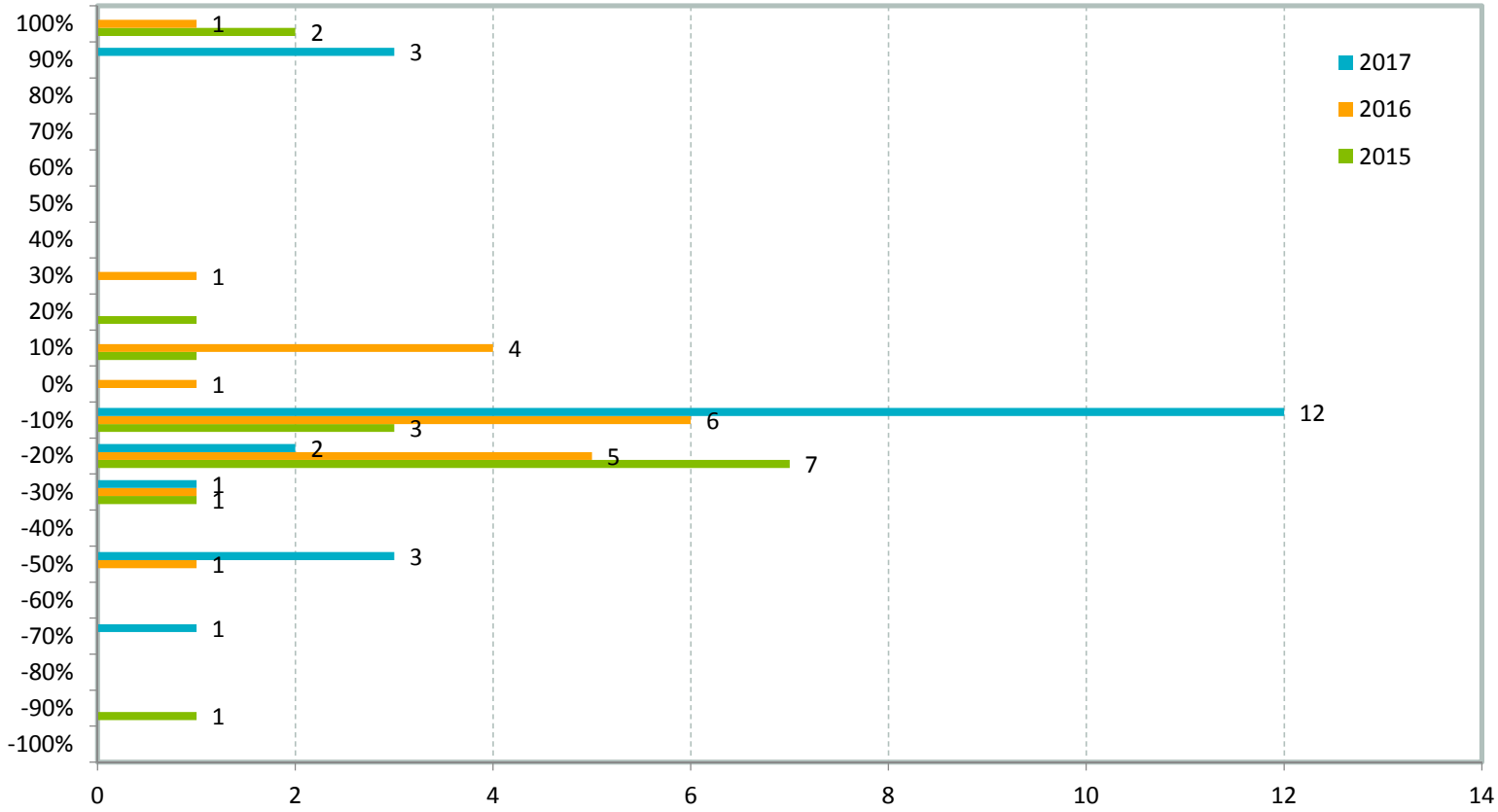
Over half of all sustainability staff respondents expect the budget to remain the same in 2017-18 when compared to the 2016-17 academic year.



Base: 104 (2017), 61 (2016), 76 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

C3. What are your expectations for the budget available for sustainability for the 2017-18 academic year compared to the 2016-17 academic year?

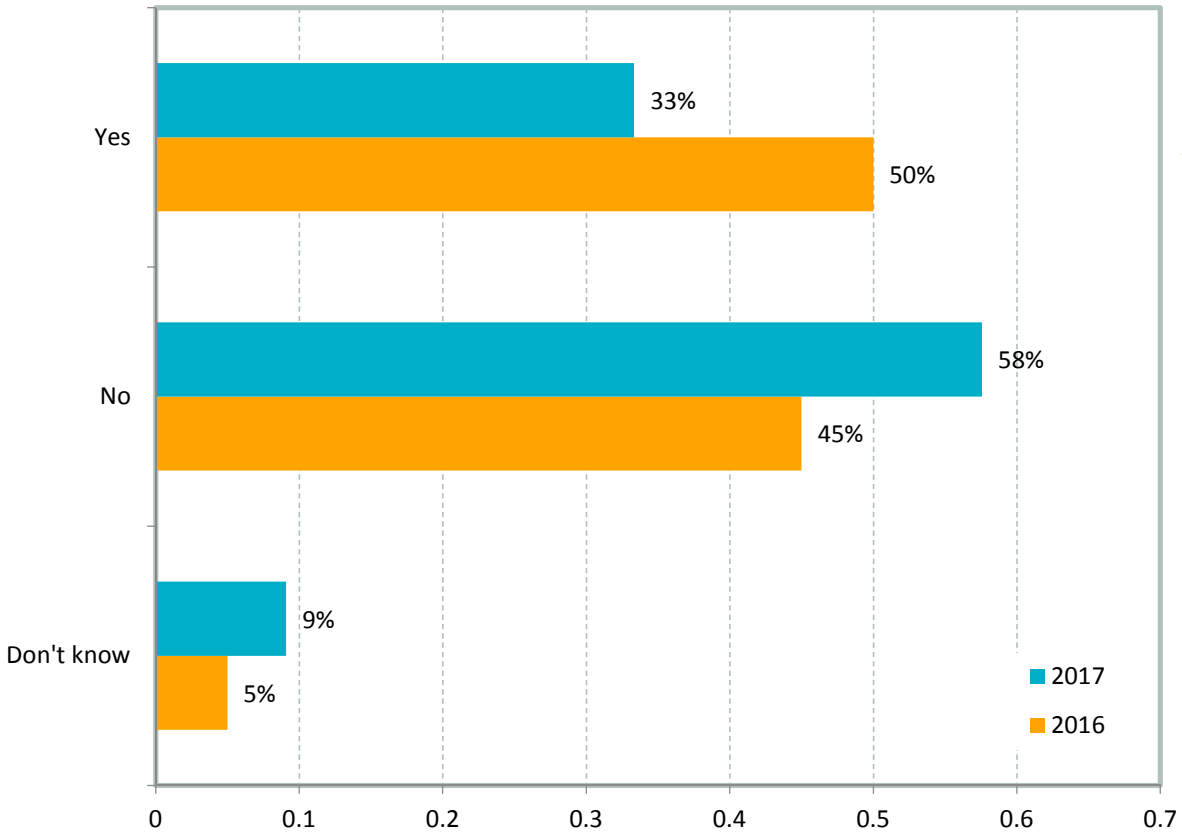
For those that expect a change in budget, most expect a 10-20% reduction in budget, mirroring the change that was expected between 2015/16 and 2016/17.



Base: 22 respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

C4. You indicated that you expect the budget available to deliver on sustainability to change in 2017-18 compared to 2016-17. Please let us know what percentage increase or decrease you expect to see.

A third of respondents indicated that they had received external funding related to delivering sustainability during 2017/18 and funding was secured from a range of sources.



"Set up a composting project. Also capital funding to achieve BREEAM very good on our new building"

"Salix revolving fund, energy initiatives."

"SALIX/RGF funds for energy efficiency"

"RHI funding in 2016/17 (£10,487) - goes into general Estates budget, not sustainability budget."

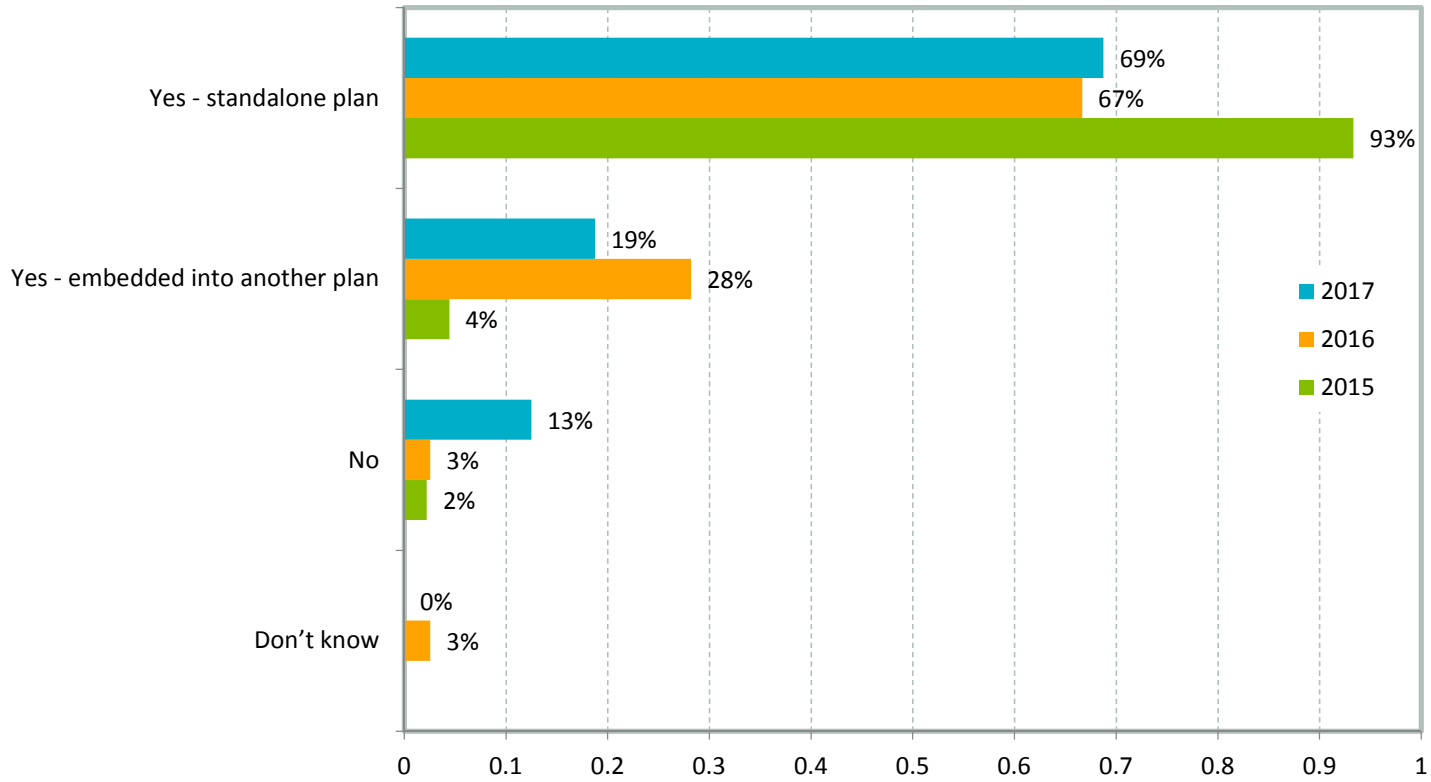
Base: 33 (2017), 20 (2016) respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

C5. Have you received any external funding related to sustainability in 2017-18? [n.b. not asked in 2015]

CHAPTER 5: CARBON

The majority of sustainability staff respondents in HE institutions report that their institution has a carbon reduction plan, either as standalone or embedded into another plan.

HE only



Base: 64 (2017), 39 (2016), 45 (2015) respondents. Work at HE university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility, not the sustainability representative for institution.

D1. Does your institution have a carbon reduction plan?

Examples of carbon reduction targets from HE institutions

HE only

"38% absolute based on 2005/06 baseline to be met by 2020/21 (scopes 1 &2)."

"Carbon Reduction: Scope 1& 2 Absolute reduction from 2005/6 – 2020/21: 1.5% annual reduction, 2016/17 interim target: 16.5% total reduction, 22.5% total reduction by 2020/21."

"75% by 2020 against 2005/6 baseline."

"-43% of HESA assessed 2005/6 scope 1 & 2 emissions by 2020."

"2007/08 baseline year 40% reduction target for 2020, currently developing targets post-2020."

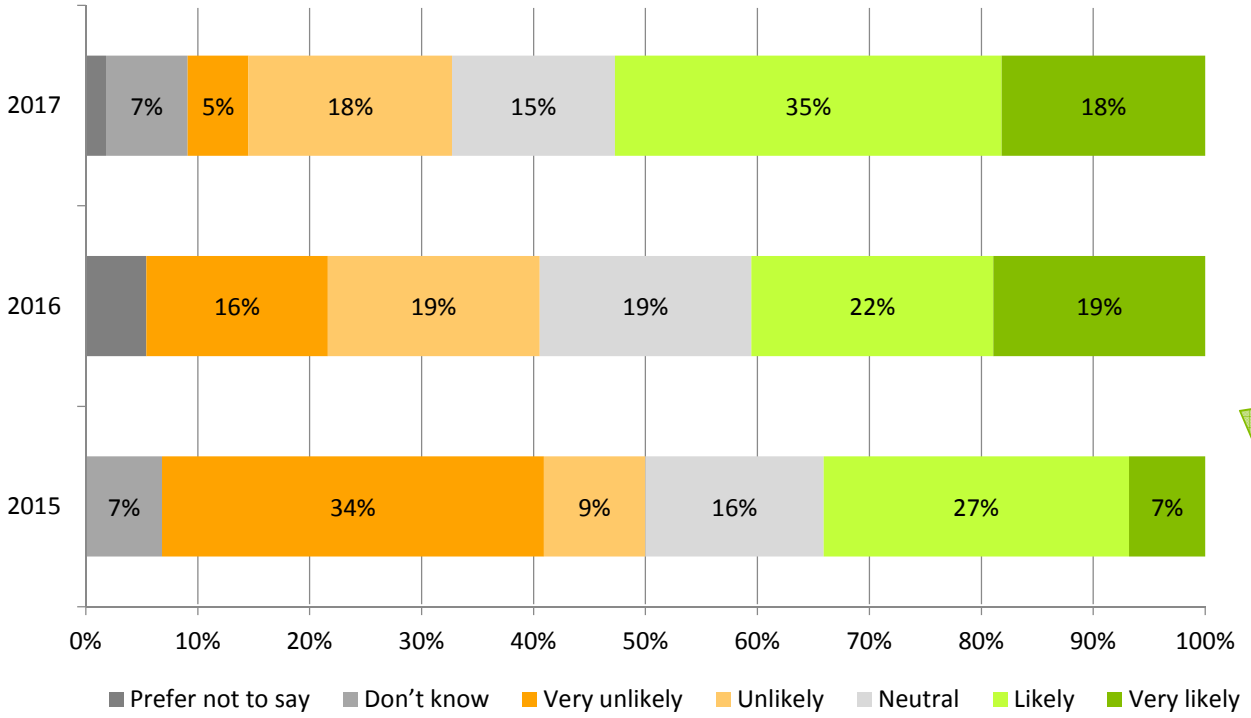
"20% reduction by 2020 against a 2005/6 baseline - this has already been achieved."

Base: 64 respondents. Work at HE university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility, not the sustainability representative for institution.

D2. What is your carbon reduction target?

Over half of respondents in 2017 report confidence in their institutions ability to meet it's carbon target compared to under half in 2016. Around a quarter, however, say they are unlikely to meet their target compared with a third in 2016. As noted below, there appears to be a disconnect between the responses to this survey, and the progress report published across the sector as a whole. This warned that 60% of universities are likely to miss their targets.

HE only



This survey was completed before the release of the annual report on progress against carbon targets by consultants Brite Green. The 2016 report (released September 2017) states that the sector remains off track to meet its reduction target of 43% and 60% of universities are due to miss their individual targets[1].

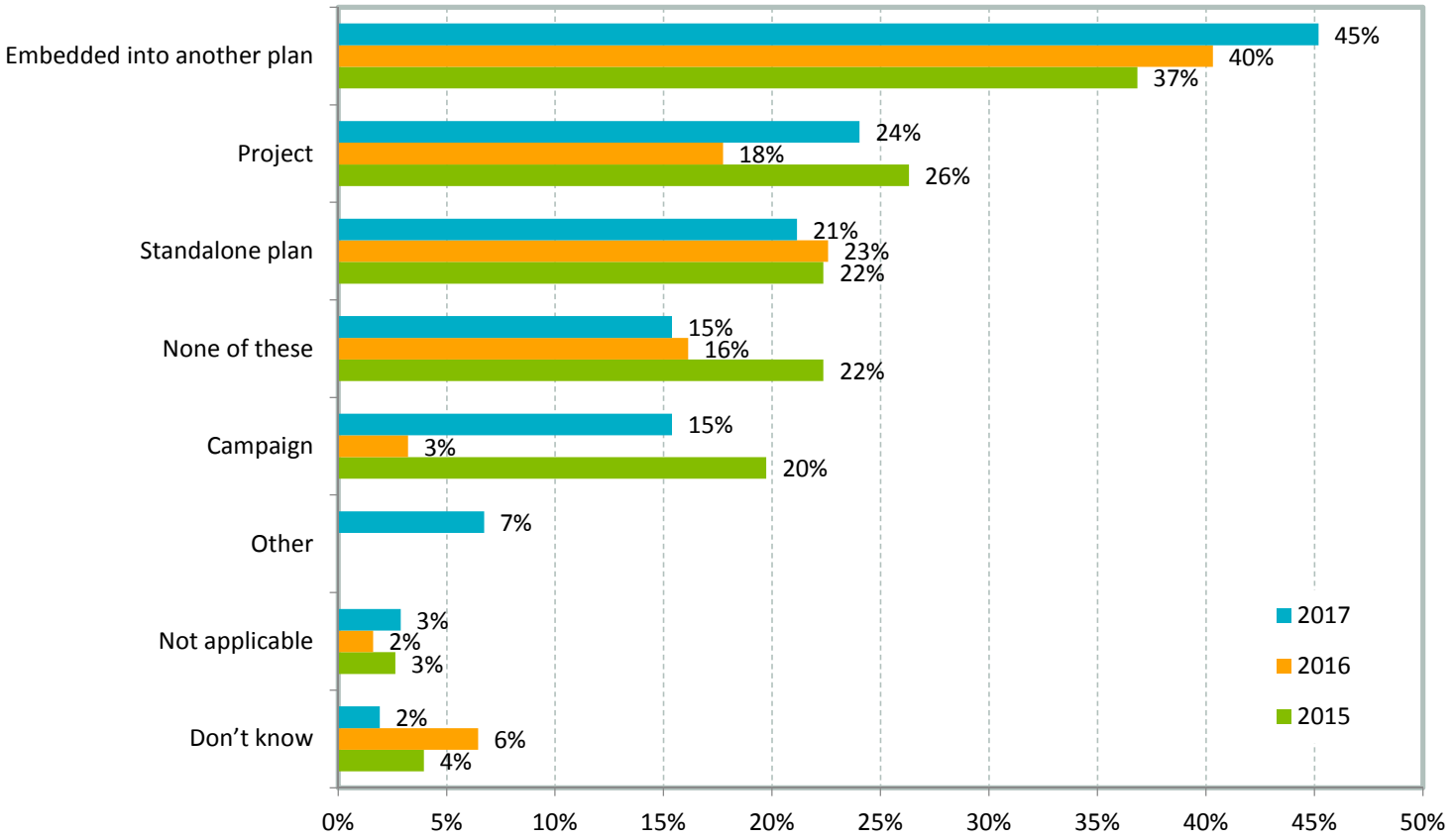
Base: 55 (2017), 37 (2016), 44 (2015) respondents. Work at HE university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility, not the sustainability representative for institution.

D3. Thinking about the final target you have currently set, how likely is your institution to reach its carbon target?

1. http://www.brite-green.co.uk/index.php/our-work/reports-publications/university-carbon-report

CHAPTER 6: EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Teaching and learning on sustainability is most commonly embedded into other plans operating within the institution.

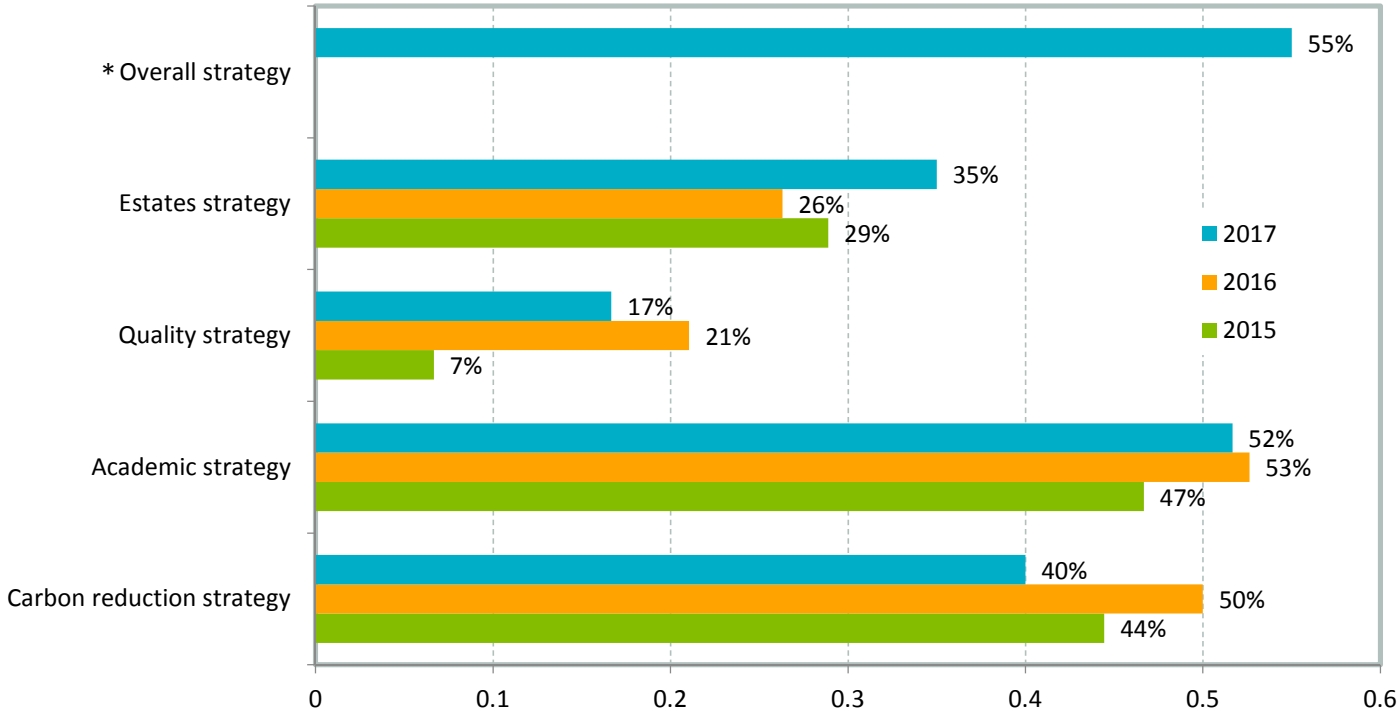


Base: 104 (2017), 62 (2016), 76 (2015) respondents. Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

E1. Does your institution have a plan, campaign or project that includes teaching and learning on sustainability?

Over half of HE sustainability staff respondents report ESD to be included in their overall strategies. Half say it is included in their institution's academic strategy and over a third say they are within their carbon reduction strategy.

HE only

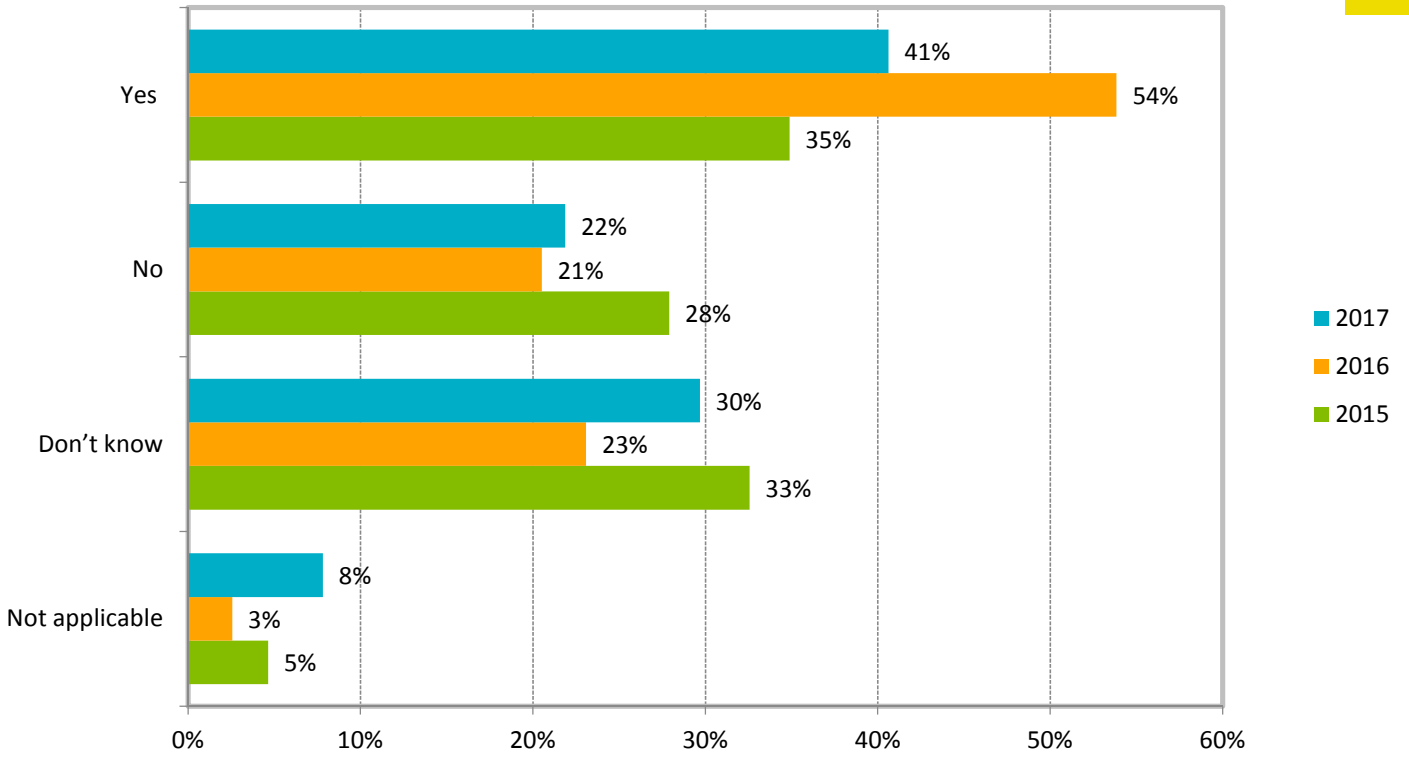


Base : c. 60 (2017), c.38 (2016), c.45 (2015). Work at HE university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility. Responses to No, don't know and not applicable not shown. *Added in 2017.

E2. Is teaching and learning on sustainability included in the following strategies at your institution?

Despite reporting that ESD is covered in a range of institutional strategies and plans, only four in ten HE sustainability staff respondents in 2017 report that their institution's graduate attributes include sustainability related attributes.

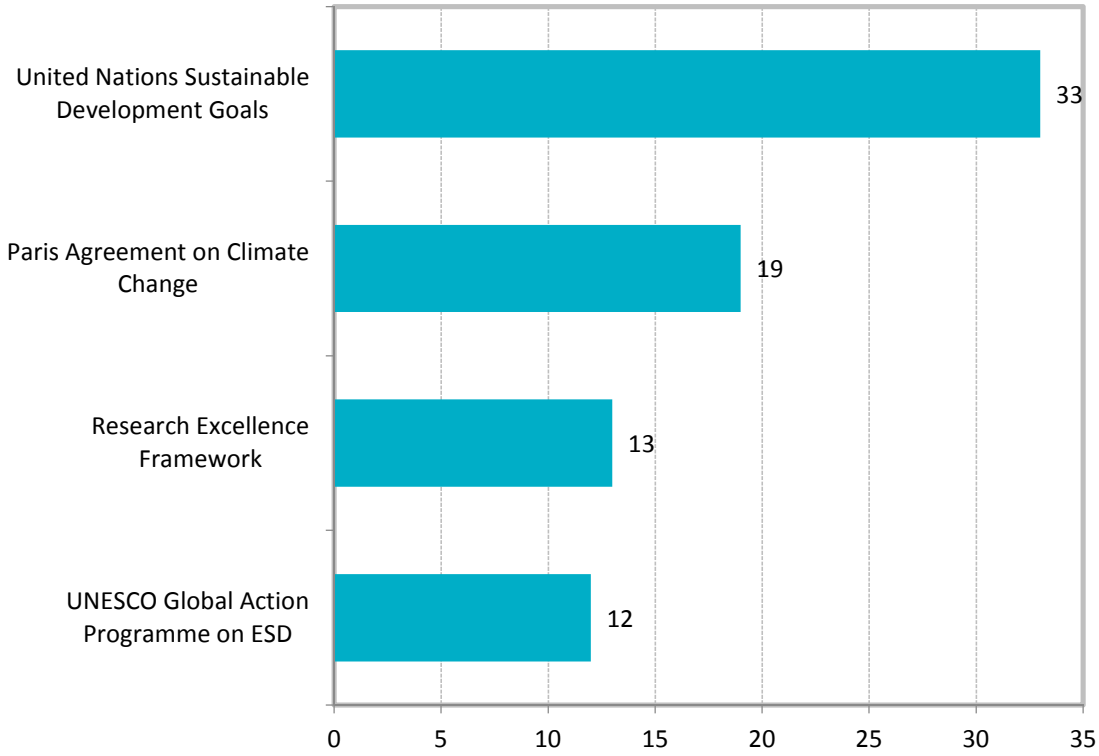
HE only



Base: 64 (2017), 39 (2016), 43 (2015) respondents. Work at HE university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility.

E3. Are sustainability related attributes included in the graduate attributes, or equivalent, developed by your institution?

Three in four sustainability staff respondents report that their institution has progressed action linked to environmental sustainability and social responsibility as a result of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals initiative.



"Using the LiFE assessment tool and producing an action plan from this."

"Signed HESI declaration, range of carbon management research conducted aimed at emissions reduction at the city scale."

"Using past REF to demonstrate impact of research on sustainability."

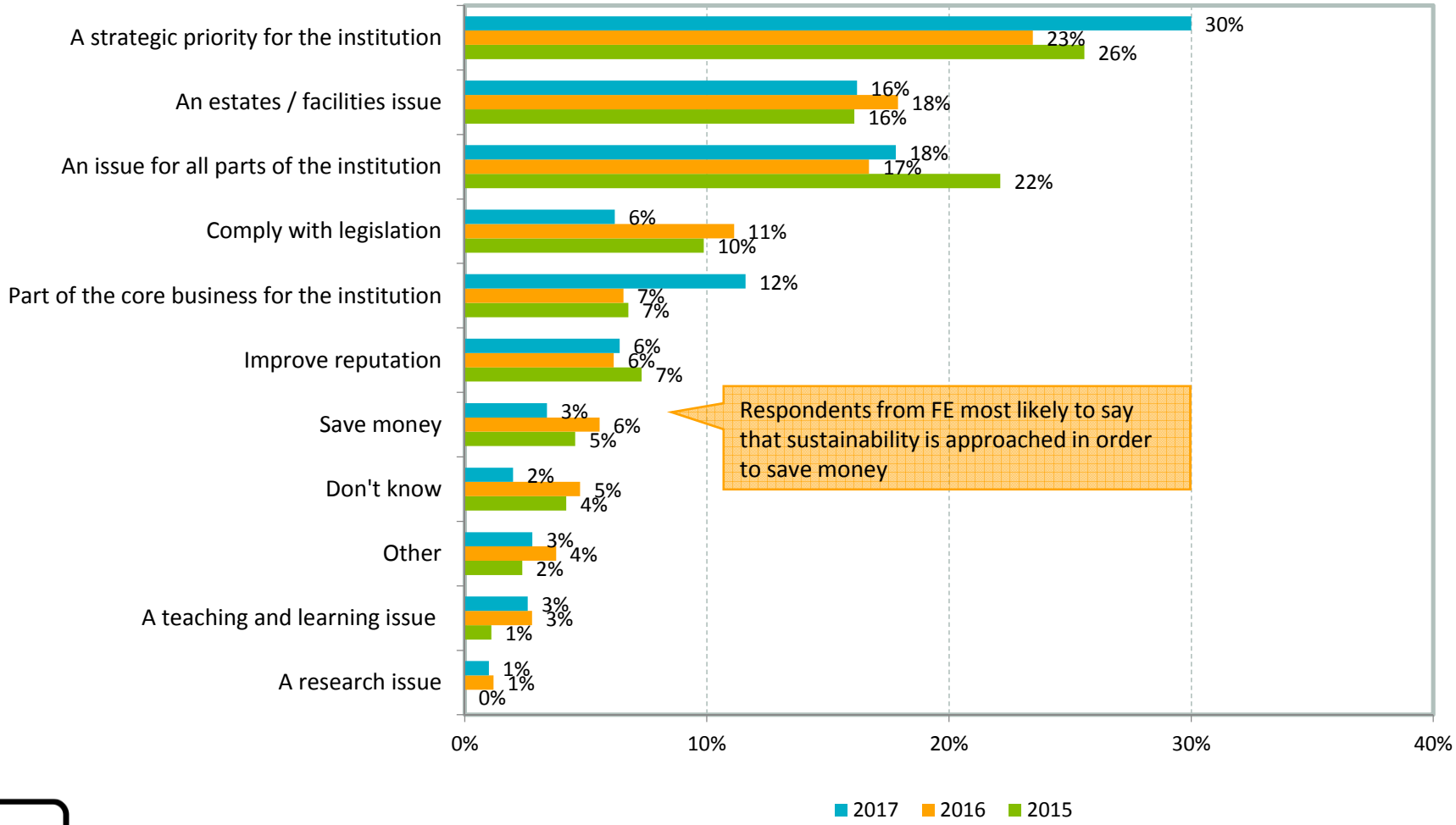
"Located in a designated UNESCO learning city where these are in action"

Base: 44 (2017) respondents. Work at HE university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility.

E4. Has your institution progressed action linked to environmental sustainability and social responsibility as a result of any of the following policies or initiatives?

CHAPTER 7: INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

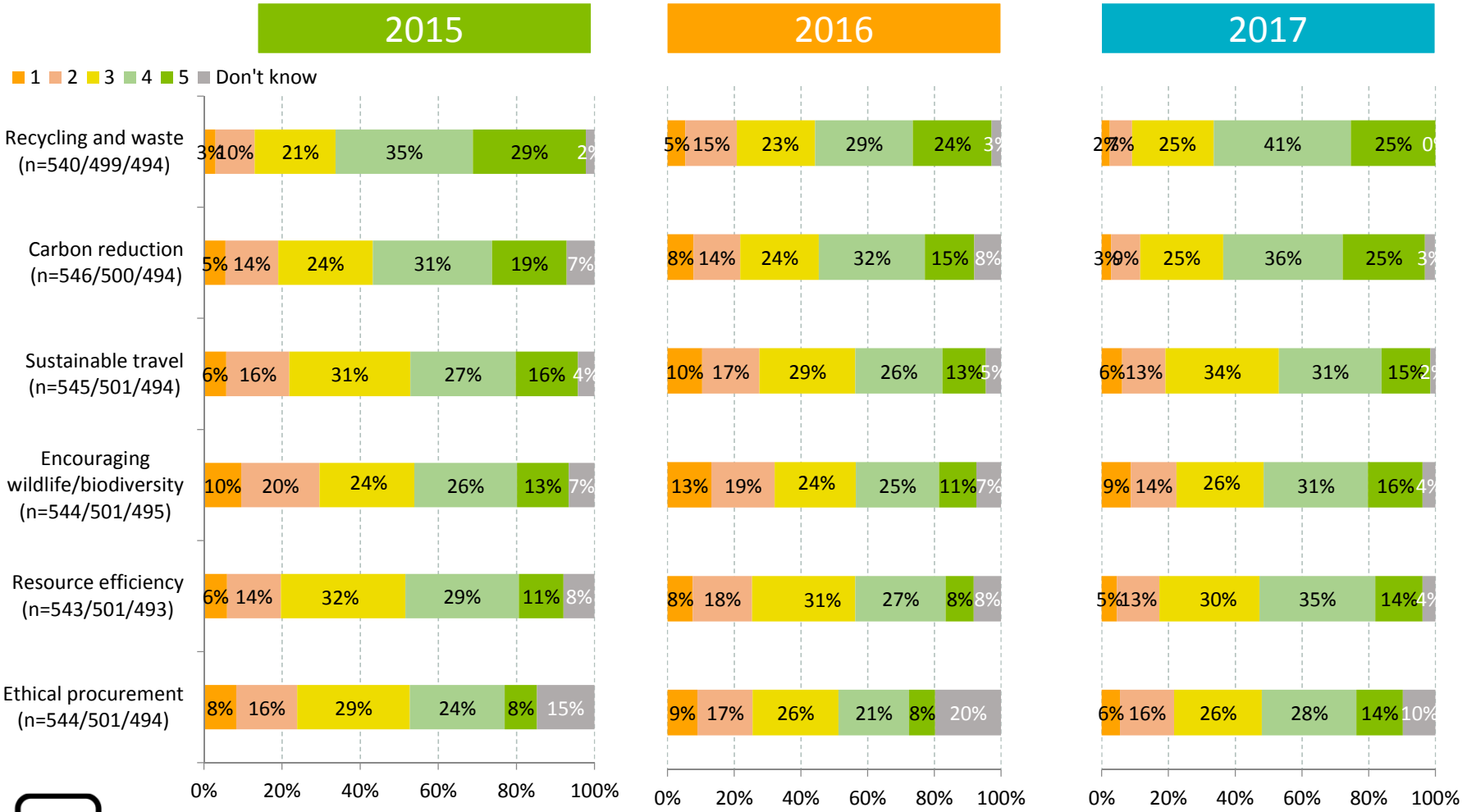
1 in 3 respondents overall report that sustainability is a strategic priority for the institution they work at, this is significantly higher than in 2016.



Base: 500 (2017), 503 (2016), 547 (2015) respondents.

F1. Which of the following options best describes your institution's overall approach to environmental sustainability and social responsibility?

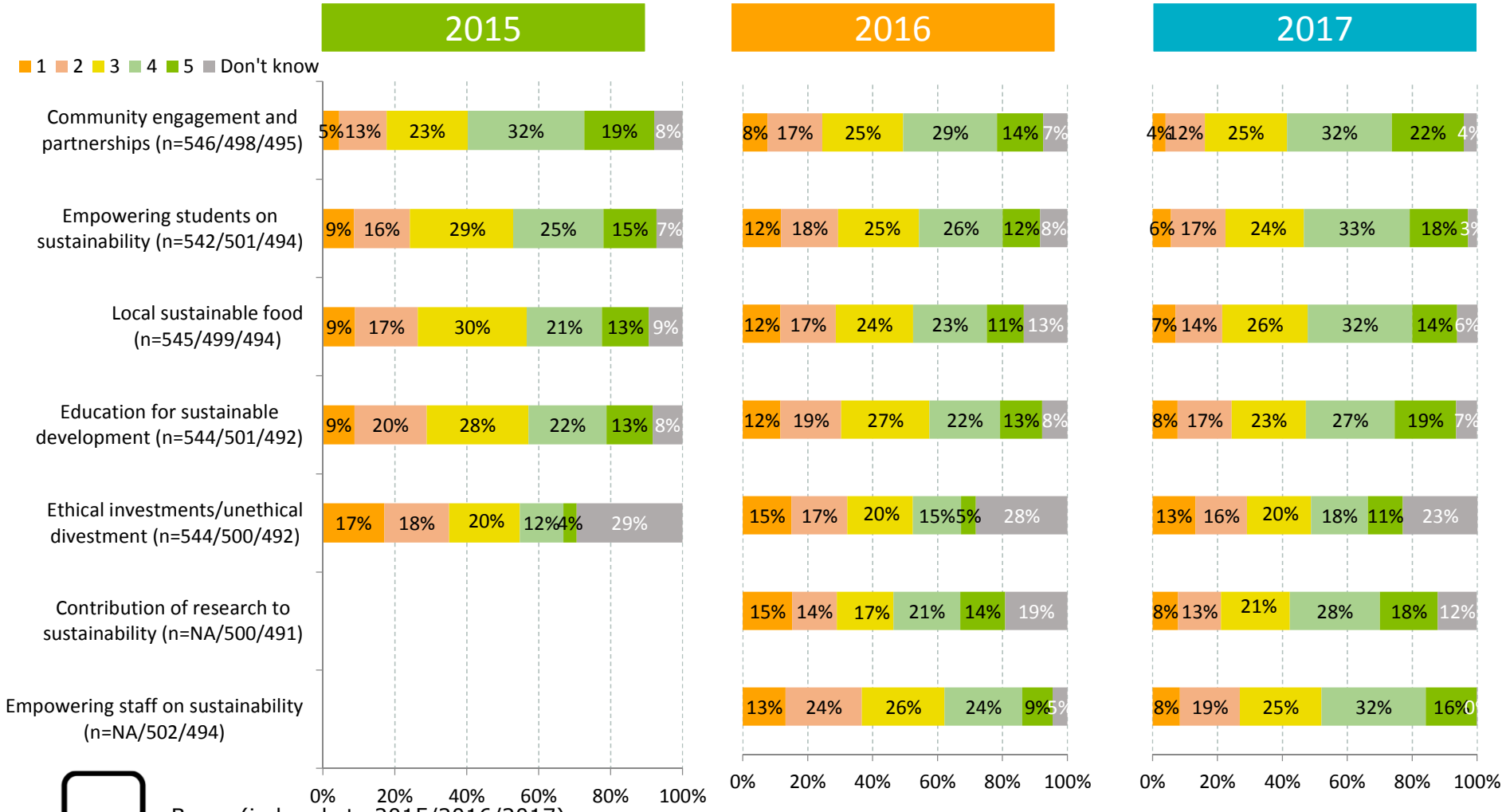
A quarter of respondents rate their institution's commitment to recycling and waste as 'very good', similar to 2016. 25% rate performance on carbon reduction as 'very good', significantly higher than the 2016 score. Ethical procurement represents the biggest unknown for respondents with 1 in 10 selecting this option, significantly lower than 2016.



Base: (in brackets 2015/2016/2017)

F2. How would you rate your institution's commitment to addressing each of the following issues? Please pick one only for each option, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good

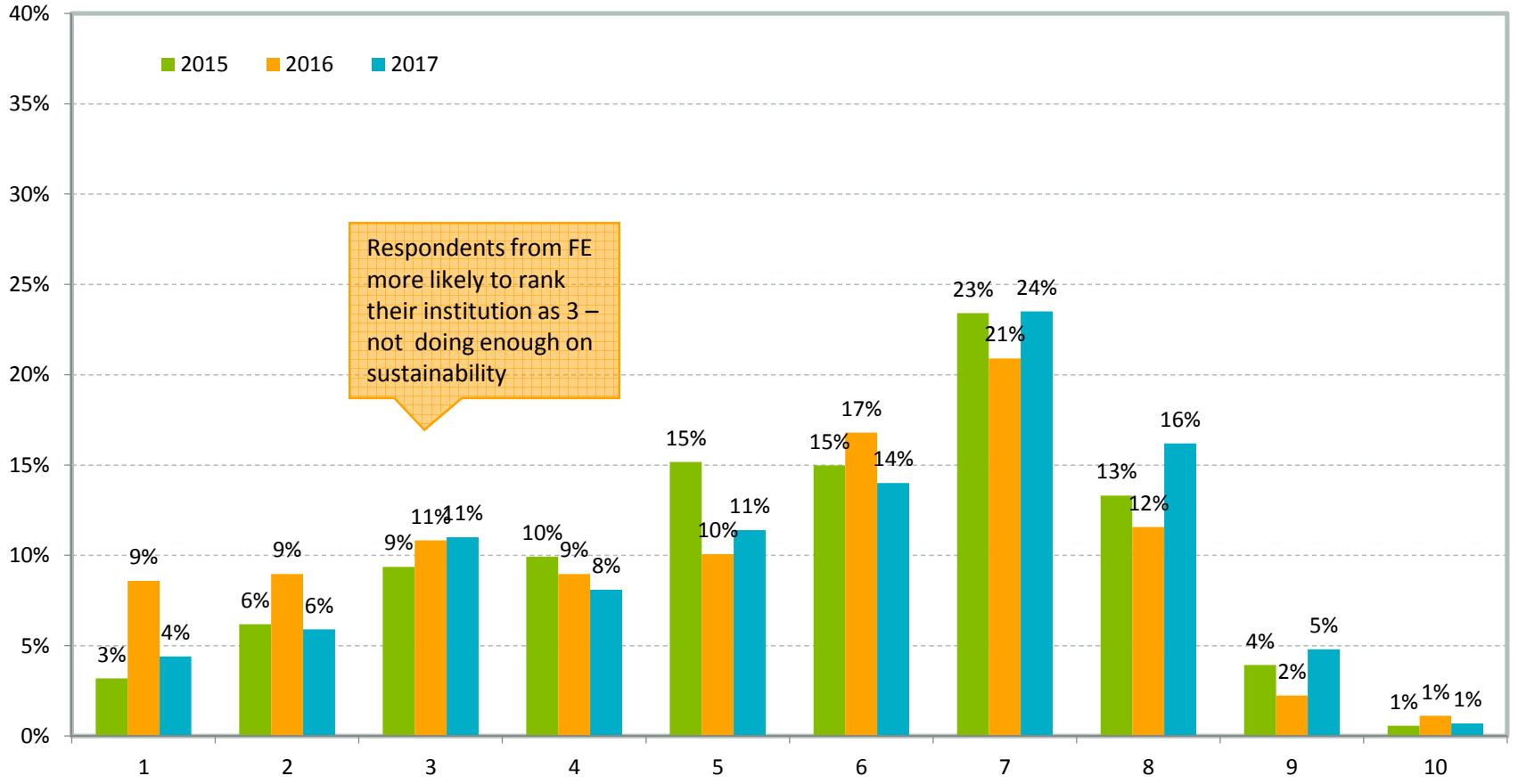
Performance on ethical investments also presents a significant unknown for staff, with 23% saying they don't know how committed their institution is to addressing unethical investment. This is lower than the 2016 score but represents an ongoing need for increased financial transparency. Of the two new issues added to the survey in 2016 1 in 8 responding in 2017 said they didn't know if their institution was committed to addressing the issue of the contribution of research to sustainability.



Base: (in brackets 2015/2016/2017)

F2. How would you rate your institution's commitment to addressing each of the following issues? Please pick one only for each option, where 1 is very poor and 5 is very good

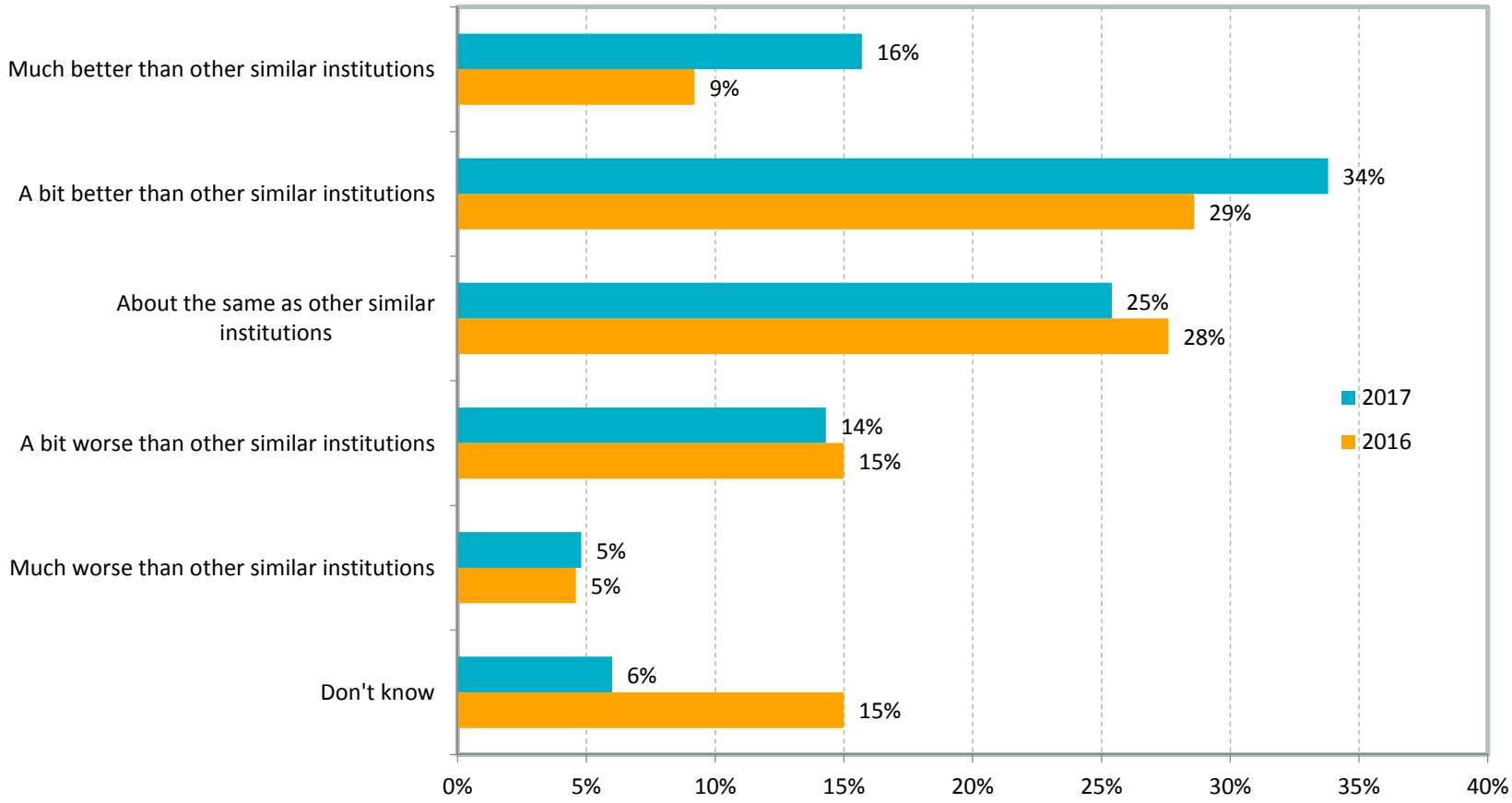
2017 respondents have a significantly more positive impression of their institution's action on sustainability compared to 2016. Almost half (46%) respondents see their institution as ranking as 7 or above, compared to 36% in 2016.



Base: 272 (2017), 268 (2016), 534 (2015) respondents.

F3. Overall, do you think your institution is doing enough to progress environmental and social responsibility? Please click the scale below, where 1 is nowhere near enough, and 10 is doing all that the institution can.

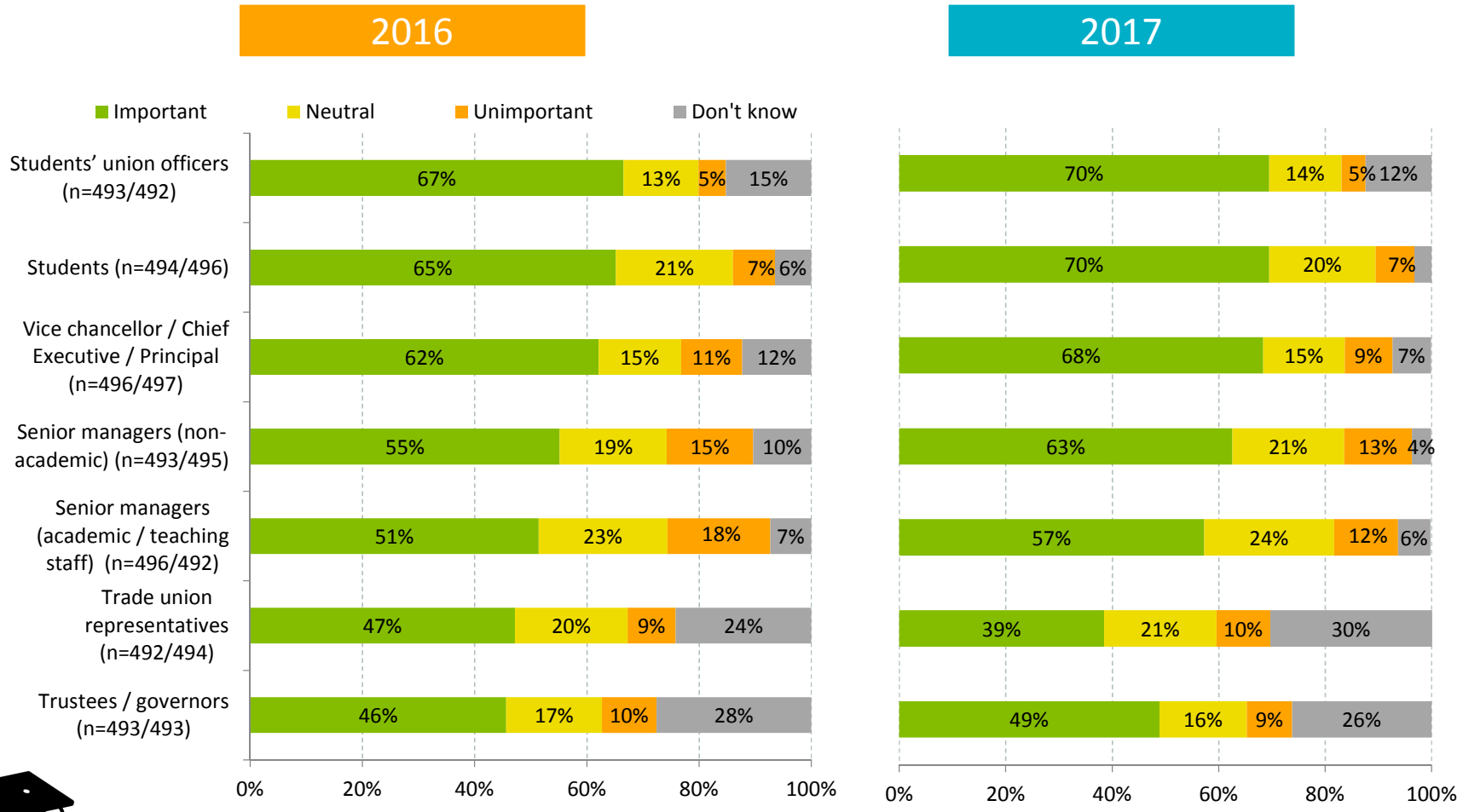
Compared to similar institutions in the sector, half rate their institution to be better than others, this is a significant improvement over the 2016 results. 1 in 4 feel they are about the same. There were no significant differences by level of education.



Base: 497 (2017), 500 (2016) respondents. Not asked in 2015.

F4. And, how do you think this compares with other similar institutions in the sector?

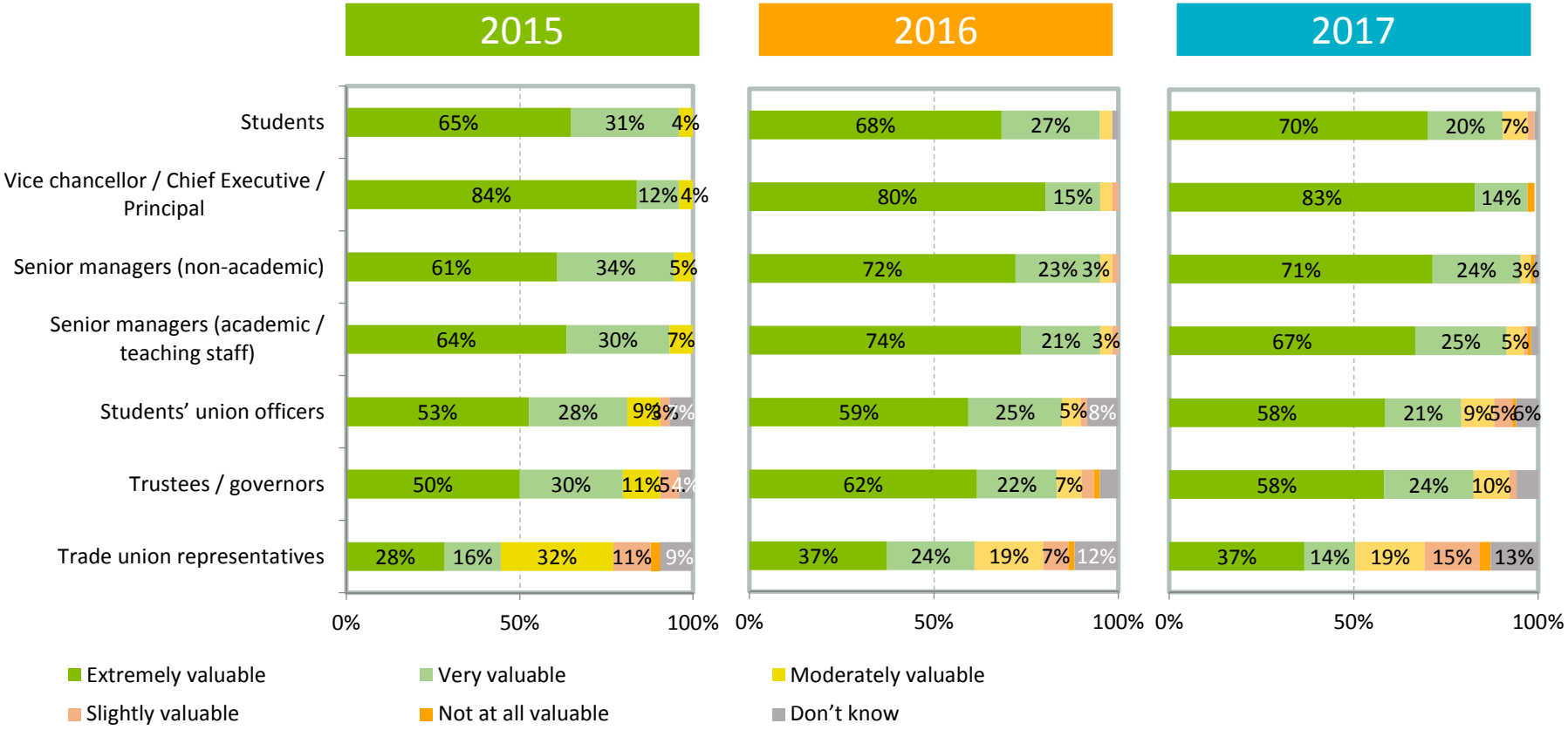
Assessing different groups within their institution, students and students' union officers are seen as most likely to believe that addressing environmental sustainability and social responsibility is important, followed by institutional leaders and senior management. Overall there is a general shift in perceptions of how important these issues are for all audiences within institutions.



Base (in brackets)

F5. In your opinion, how important is addressing environmental sustainability and social responsibility to the following groups within your institution?

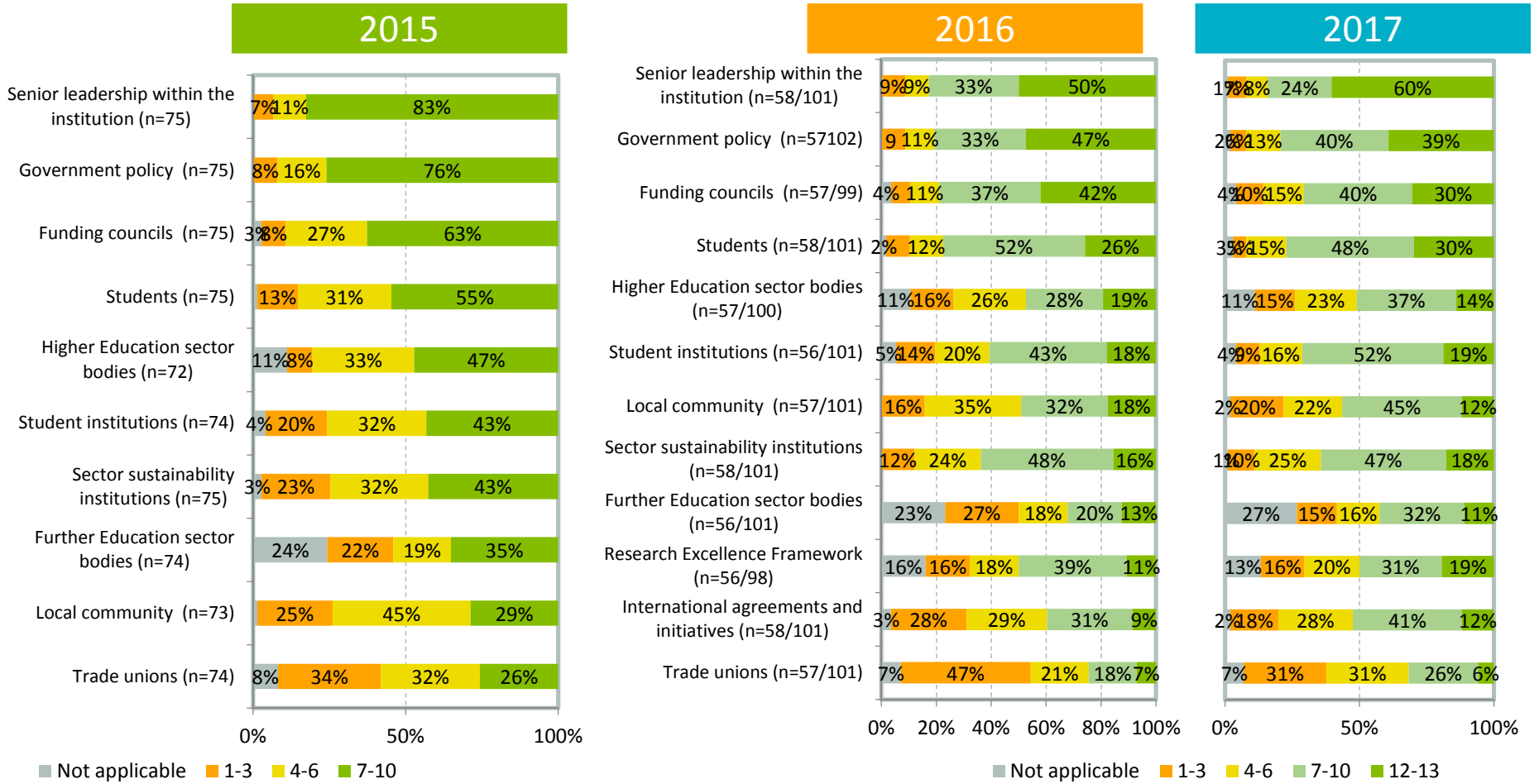
The support of students and institutional leaders is seen as having the biggest potential to help address environmental sustainability and social responsibility, however respondents indicate a role for all stakeholders across institutions. Trustees / governors are seen as having valuable potential to support action on sustainability within institutions, however respondents previously indicated relatively low levels / a lack of awareness of perceived importance to this group.



Base (2015=74 / 2016=c.60/ 2017=c.104). Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative.

F6. How valuable would the support of the following groups within your institution be to addressing environmental sustainability and social responsibility?

Senior leadership, government policy, funding councils and students are seen as having the greatest influence on the importance placed on addressing sustainability within the institution.



Base: (in brackets). Work at university or college, formal or informal remit or responsibility for delivering on environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and either the lead member of staff for environmental sustainability and/or social responsibility or a sustainability representative. *N.b. – scale changed in 2016 to account for additional influences.*

F7. What influence do the following institutions and groups have on the importance placed on addressing environmental sustainability and social responsibility within your institution? Please rank the institutions and groups listed in order of influence, where 1 is least influence and 13 is most influence

As was seen in 2016, the most frequently mentioned barrier to delivery on sustainability within institutions is securing financial resources. This is followed by a lack of senior management commitment, lack of staff resource, lack of student engagement and competing priorities.

Barriers	Number of responses
Finances / budgets / budget cuts	150
Lack of senior management commitment/strategic direction	101
Lack of staff resources	85
Lack of student engagement	57
Competing priorities	45
Lack of time	44
Definition of sustainability/communicating/awareness	43
Lack of staff engagement	31
Bureaucracy / decision making in universities / infrastructure	23
No clear owners of agenda / cohesive approach	21
Lack of sector leadership / wider sector issues	20
Engaging with curriculum / academics	9
Local community/transport issues	5
Other	14

F8. What barriers face your institution in doing more on environmental sustainability and social responsibility? [Coded responses from an open-ended question]. Excludes don't know/none/not answered (81)

Barriers facing the institution when acting on sustainability include…

"Perceived conflicts with research. In light of Brexit, funding is under increasing pressure and it is harder to make the case for resources for sustainability. People are too busy/ beyond maximum capacity. Need clearer and stronger leadership that this is a priority for the organisation."

"Change in senior management and lack of buy-in. Priorities in other areas. Students claim to want sustainability but don't make decisions to voice this loud enough or vote with their feet e.g. no proven link to improving recruitment."

"Budget - Higher management thinks that being sustainable is too costly. Disinterest - feedback from many people is that they aren't interested in improving environmental sustainability Lack of knowledge - people do not know the full meaning of sustainability Poor engagement - students do not seem to want to get involved in sustainable issues and see it as something only relevant to the 'Green Societies'."

"Awareness of staff and students on sustainability and sustainable development is still limited and the concept is not well understood by many. The Sustainability team is fully active and committed to the cause but embedding this in wider decision-making and investment decisions remains a challenge."

"We struggle to engage with students on sustainability issues. We are also a very small team of just two people so we do not always have the time to look at new and innovative projects. We have also not been able to spend enough time on embedding sustainability into the curriculum."

"The whole institution pretty much ignores the sustainability agenda and will occasionally pay lip service to certain aspects."

Climate change is seen as the most important agenda looking forward into 2017-2018 and beyond. More training and integration of ESD into the curriculum as well as raising awareness, communication and embedding these issues in to daily life should also be high on agendas.

What more could your institution be doing on sustainability?	Number of responses
Climate change/CO2 reduction/carbon management	85
Curriculum/ESD/training	82
Raise awareness/communicate/educate/embed in to daily life	79
Waste management/recycling	77
Staff/senior management/student engagement	59
Energy	48
Plan/strategy/policy/governance	38
Sustainable transport/travel	32
Other	30
Ethical procurement	23
Actions in wider community	19
Ethical investment/divestment	11
The impact of Brexit	5

F9. Looking forward into 2017-2018 and beyond, what are the most important agendas within environmental sustainability and social responsibility to you? [Coded responses from an open-ended question]. Excludes don't know/none/not answered (82)

Sustainability staff identify climate change as the most important agenda looking forward into 2017-2018 and beyond. Embedding into the curriculum and raising awareness, education and embedding these issues in to daily life should also be high on agendas.

"Improving our recycling and educating students/staff on ways to reduce their carbon footprint"

"Sustainable leadership in our organisation. Embedding that principal at the top of our organisation will empower us to deliver better projects and achieve meaningful change on campus."

"Circular economy Getting more staff and students engaged in behaviour change initiatives Reducing GHG emissions/making efficiencies"

"Reducing carbon emissions. Improving engagement for staff and students. Improving sustainability in to the curriculum."

"Reducing our carbon footprint. Getting wider engagement with students and staff to try and put more pressure on senior management to include ESD within the curriculum."

"Incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into everything we do as a University."

"Integrating Sustainability throughout the curriculum. Sustainable procurement"

"The College has had major refurbishment projects completed over the last 5 years, each having an impetus to reduce its carbon foot print. We need to maintain this commitment in the short and medium term."

For further information about this research please contact:
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