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## **It's a mystery: Parents in the dark about the university Clearing process, says study**

With just a week to go before A-level results are released, more than half of parents – including those who themselves have studied at university – have not heard of Clearing and Adjustment, according to new research.

Northumbria University, Newcastle commissioned market research company Opinium to survey 500 parents whose children are likely to go into higher education within the next five years.

The results of the survey reveal a high proportion of parents are unaware of how the Clearing process works. As a result, they would not be able to have informed conversations with their children on what options might be open to them when they receive their A-level results next Thursday (15 August).

Universities across the UK will host Clearing helplines for prospective students to offer places to thousands of young people. Clearing is available to students who performed either better or worse than expected in their exams. It gives them the opportunity to secure a place on their chosen course, or at a particular university.

Helen Bower, who is responsible for undergraduate recruitment at Northumbria University, said: “Overall, 58 per cent of all parents surveyed had not heard of Clearing.

“It’s a critical period in the higher education calendar and we hope that this study can raise awareness among parents and carers of what Clearing is all about.

“It’s an important time for parents and their children as they begin a new phase of their lives. Here at Northumbria, we are ready to support families and help as many young people as we can to provide them with the knowledge and resources they need to find a suitable place to find their future path.”

The study also found:

- 67 per cent of parents felt the biggest benefit for their children going to university was ‘better employment prospects’, followed by their children ‘learning to live independently’
- 59 per cent of parents who expressed concerns about their child going to university had themselves studied within higher education
- More than 200 parents felt less contact with their child would affect them personally.
- A similar number of parents were also troubled about debt and financial worries – something Northumbria says its student support team can help with.

Parents who responded in more detail highlighted anxiety and stress about the Clearing process, worrying if their child would make the right choice for their future. Northumbria University sees this as a key area to support parents during this time.

Although awareness does improve as children progress through school years, the study found by the time pupils reach year 12, roughly four in five parents have still not seen any information related to Clearing.

And around three quarters of parents (77 per cent) with children already studying at university have seen little information about the Clearing process.

The University believes the survey will help it communicate how it can support young people achieve the hopes that parents have for them. It is also considering how it shares information about university life with students and parents while they are deciding where to study.

Northumbria University has a limited number of places available for high quality students through Clearing this summer. For more information, visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/clearing](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/clearing) or call the Clearing Hotline on 0800 085 1085.

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call 0191 227 4604.

## Contacts



### **Rik Kendall**

Press Contact  
PR and Media Manager  
Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences  
rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk  
07923 382339



### **Andrea Slowey**

Press Contact  
PR and Media Manager  
Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences  
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk  
07708 509436



### **Rachael Barwick**

Press Contact  
PR and Media Manager  
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk  
07377422415



### **James Fox**

Press Contact  
Student Communications Manager  
james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



### **Kelly Elliott**

Press Contact  
PR and Media Officer  
kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



### **Gemma Brown**

Press Contact  
PR and Media Officer  
gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk