

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on researchers and research

Wave 2 results

June 2021

Funded by UKRI



UK Research
and Innovation



Key findings

Context

Profile of respondents

Working hours

Time for research activities

Impact on research

External peer reviewing activities

Funder support

Health and wellbeing

Next steps



Key findings

Researchers experiences Feb - Mar 2021

- **At the time of the Wave 2 survey (Feb-Mar 2021), almost half of respondents had returned to pre-Covid working hours. However, there was still evidence of an increased distribution of working hours seen in Wave 1 survey (May-June 2020) with 30% working less hours and 25% working more hours compared to pre-Covid levels.**
- **Over 80% agreed that Covid-19 restrictions had forced changes to the way they do their research and made it difficult to plan. 58% reported finding it impossible to do the research they planned, while 40% were forced to change their research direction.**
- **The impact of Covid-19 restrictions on a wide range of staff responsibilities was negatively affecting time for research, particularly for those with teaching and administration duties, whereas a large minority (20-35%) reported no impact of other activities on their time for research. Overall, respondents reported that less in-person contact with research group members had had the biggest impact on their ability to undertake planned research, followed by lack of access to research facilities and resources.**
- **There was no evidence of any increase in workplace-based research activity since June 2020. However, there was evidence of less time being spent on research that could be done from home, which had halved compared to both pre-Covid and June 2020 levels. Respondents reported spending increased time on writing, peer review activities and teaching compared to both pre-Covid and June 2020 levels.**
- **Overall, researchers reported poor levels of wellbeing and mental health. Around 11% of researchers had experienced bullying and harassment over the last year, with two thirds of these reporting this was higher than before Covid-19 restrictions.**
- **There were mixed views on funder support with 45% agreeing and 33% disagreeing that their funder had provided clear information on how they would be supported. However, this balance had improved since the Wave 1 survey in June 2020 when only 33% agreed.**

Impact on different groups

- Although everyone has been affected by the lack of access to research facilities, **postgraduate researchers (PGRs)** report an average of 16 less hours per week on workplace-based research compared to pre-Covid, with **research staff** reporting 10 hours less, compared to other academic staff at 4 hours less. Half of PGRs had been forced to change their research direction. 73% of PGRs were worried about missing work due to Covid-19 and 55% worried about the amount of money coming in. 55% of PGRs did not believe that their funder had done all that it could to support them and this opinion had strengthened since Wave 1.
- Both PGRs and research staff, and to some extent mid-career researchers, had high levels of concern about their career prospects, with around a third of PGRs and a quarter of research staff anticipating a very negative long-term impact. 63% of PGRs and 51% research staff reported poor levels of wellbeing, higher than reported the SMarTeN / Vitae survey* in April 2020. 57% of mid-career researchers also reported poor wellbeing.
- **Mid-career** and **senior researchers** reported Covid-19 restrictions impacting on all their work activities, particularly institutional administration, teaching, doctoral supervision, line management and REF submission. They were more likely to identify lack of in-person contact as having the biggest impact on their ability to undertake planned research. For those engaged in peer review activities, around half reported increased requests to review research papers and between a quarter and a third increased requests to review research proposals.
- There were relatively **few differences by discipline**. However, respondents from REF Panels C and D reported that the effects of Covid-19 restrictions on their teaching and administration duties had a greater negative effect on their time for research than other Panels. Panel C was most likely to report Covid-19 had provided unexpected opportunities for their research. Panels A and B researchers were more likely to report being worried about missing work and long term impact on their career prospects than other Panels.

* Impact of Covid-19 on doctoral researchers and research staff, 2020, SMarTeN / Vitae
<https://www.smartenn.org.uk/covid-19-study.html>

Impact on different groups

- Unsurprisingly given schools were closed at the time, **researchers with caring responsibilities** (predominately mid-career and senior researchers; gender balanced) were more likely to have been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions than those without. They were also less likely to have returned to pre-Covid working hours, but had seen a considerable increase from their June 2020 working hours. 62% reported a negative impact of caring responsibilities on their time for research (cf. 9% without), while 66% reported it was impossible to do the research they had planned, compared to 52% without. Caring responsibilities were also more likely to be negatively impacting on their time for teaching, supervision and administration duties. These researchers were also more likely to be concerned about missing work and to predict a negative impact on their career prospects. There were no differences in levels of wellbeing compared to non-carers.
- Generally, few **gender differences** emerged. However, female researchers were more concerned about missing work and the long-term impact on their job prospects. They also reported lower levels of wellbeing than male researchers.

Future prospects

- With the exception of senior researchers concern about the long-term impact of Covid-19 restrictions on career prospects was high, especially from PGRs (89%) and research staff (88%).
- Three-quarters of researchers predicted a negative overall impact on their research over the next three years by not being able to plan their research or build collaborations, whereas, 24% reported that ongoing Covid-19 restrictions had provided unexpected opportunities for their research. Similarly, 25% predicted that it would result in positive impacts on the way they do their research.



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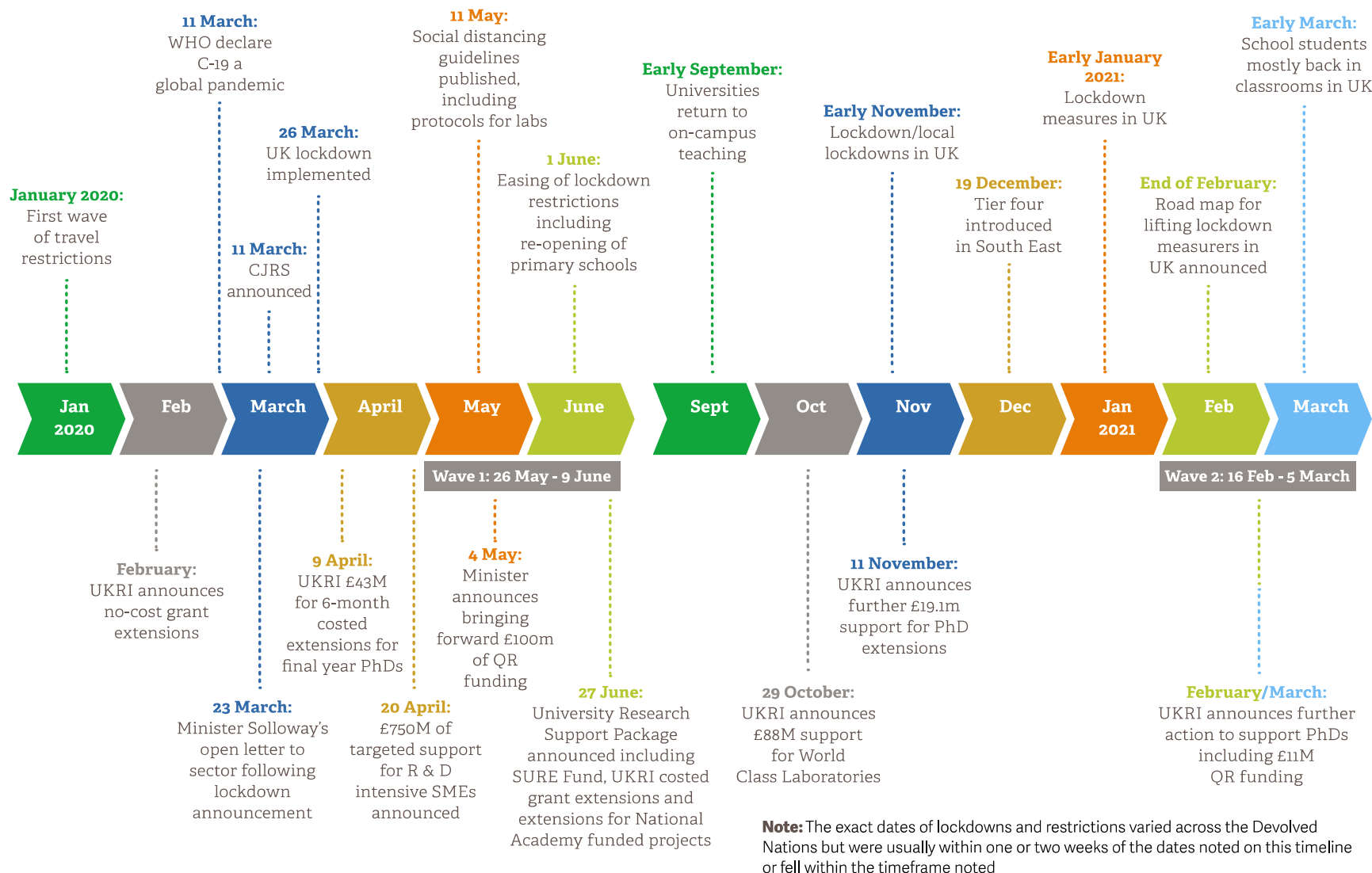
Next steps

Context for survey

- On 26 March 2020, the UK government introduced a complete 'lockdown' to reduce the transmission of the Covid-19 virus. Since this time, Covid-19 restrictions have impacted researchers and research activities. This research, funded by UKRI and BEIS, aims to inform policy responses to support the research and development (R&D) sector.
- The survey consisted of two waves: wave one in May/June 2020, followed by a second wave in February/March 2021. This presentation presents the results from the second wave. The results from the Wave 1 survey can be found at: <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/impact-and-evaluation/the-impact-of-the-covid19-pandemic%20on-researchers-in-universities-and-research-institutes>
- 3312 respondents from Wave 1 who had provided permission to be recontacted (from a total of 10,408 respondents) were invited to complete the Wave 2 survey in February 2021. 1347 (41%) provided valid responses that were matched back to Wave 1 data on an individual basis. The demographic profile of these respondents is given on slides 10 - 12.
- A sub-set of 843 respondents provided complete responses to questions in Waves 1 and 2 relating to their working hours at different points in time and the proportion of their time spent on different activities. This enabled comparison of working patterns at three different points: Pre-Covid-19 restrictions; May/June 2020; and February/March 2021. The demographic profile for this subset is given at slide 12.
- Respondents were primarily researchers in universities (89%) and research institutes. Respondents self-identified their career stage, which were used to explore any differences by career stage. The data was also examined by REF Panel, gender and by caring responsibilities. The sample was too small to analyse by ethnicity. Where the data refers to researchers this equates to respondents.
- The survey provides indicative data. It is unweighted and not fully representative of all UK researcher's experiences during Covid-19 restrictions. However, it is a relatively balanced sample by gender, nationality and career stage of academic staff when compared to HESA data (slide 12). There is an over-representation Ref Panel A respondents and an under-representation on PGRs, who were not specifically targeted in the survey.

Environment for survey Waves 1 and 2

2020 - 2021



A person is shown from the chest down, wearing a light-colored lab coat. They are holding a clipboard with a silver clip at the top and writing on it with a black pen. The clipboard has a piece of paper with some text and lines. The background is a blurred clinical or hospital setting with white walls and some greenery.

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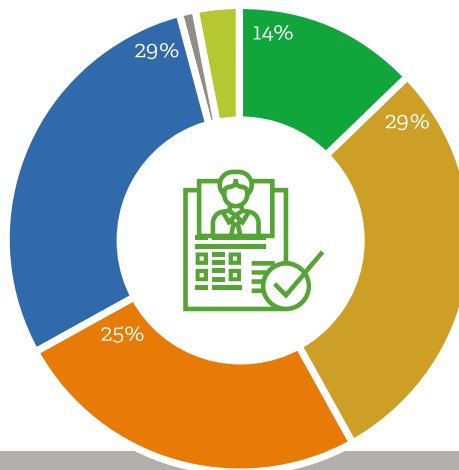
Next steps



Profile of responses

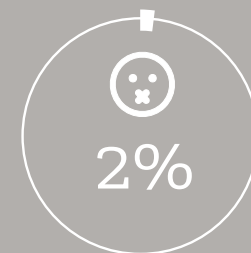
3312 contacted from Wave 1

1347 matched back to Wave 1 to form the basis of these results

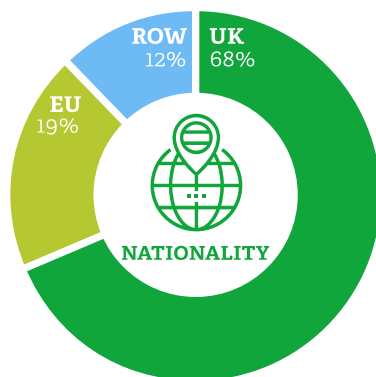


- **Postgraduate researchers (PGRs)**
- **Research staff**
- **Mid-career researchers**
- **Senior researchers**
- **Technicians**
- **Other**

Gender:



Prefer not to say (PNS)



Caring responsibilities: 43% (no gender differences)

Ethnicity:* **93%** white; **5%** ethnic minorities

Disability: **18%** disclosed an impairment or health condition

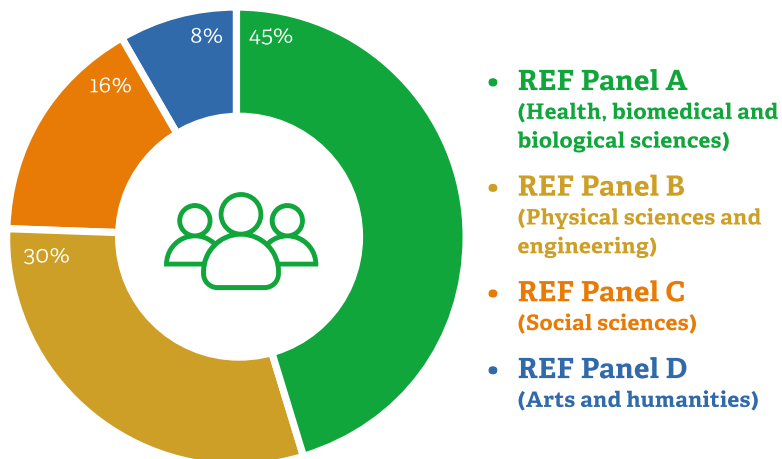
* Ethnicity data is for UK nationals only.

Due to very small numbers, no analysis has been undertaken by ethnicity or for technicians and other respondents.

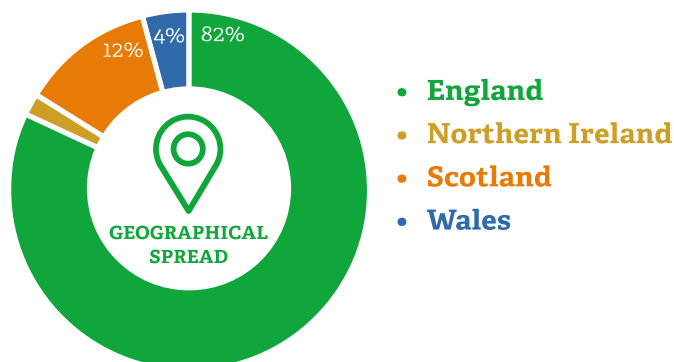
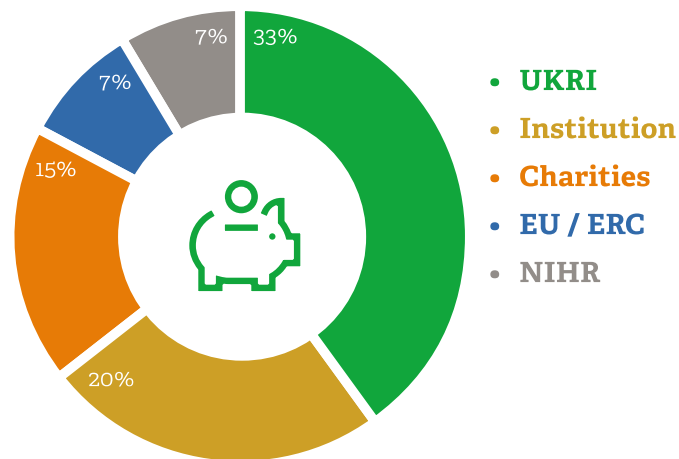
Estimated 95% confidence interval for the sample is 2 - 2.5%.

Profile of respondents

Disciplinary profile



Main source of funding



- **42%** principal investigator or grant holder
- **89%** employed in HEIs;
6% in a research institute;
6% in other organisations
- **66%** from Russell Group institutions
(% within HEIs)

Comparison of respondents

	Wave 1 total ¹ HEI/RI only	Wave 2 responses	Wave 2 ² hours worked sub-sample	Wave 2 ³ hours per activity sub-sample	HESA ⁴ 2018/19	HESA contract levels
N	9,189	1,347	1,222	843	260,130	
Senior	29%	29%	28%	31%	20%	A-I
Mid-career	29%	25%	26%	26%	16%	J
Research staff	28%	29%	31%	29%	21%	K-M
PGR ⁵	14%	14%	15%	14%	43%	PGR
Panel A	40%	45%	45%	44%	32%	
Panel B	32%	30%	31%	31%	29%	
Panel C	18%	16%	15%	16%	22%	
Panel D	9%	8%	8%	7%	17%	
Other	2%	1%	2%	2%	—	
Female	49%	52%	51%	50%	46%	
Male	46%	46%	47%	48%	54%	
Other	1%	1%	1.6%	2%	0.2%	
Prefer not to say	4%	1%	0.7%	—	—	
UK	65%	67%	68%	68%	62%	
EU	20%	20%	19%	19%	16%	
Rest of world	12%	12%	13%	12%	21%	

1. Total Wave 1 responses for comparison purposes. All Wave 1 data reported are the individually matched Wave 2 respondents.
2. Sub-sample of respondents fully reporting hours worked at three points in time. See slides 14 - 15.
3. Sub-sample of respondents fully reporting hours worked and breakdown of activity at three points in time. See slides 17 - 22.
4. Based on HESA PGR data and academic staff data on 'research only' or 'research and teaching' contracts. Career stages extrapolated from contract levels.
5. PGRs were not a target population in the Wave 1 survey.



Key findings

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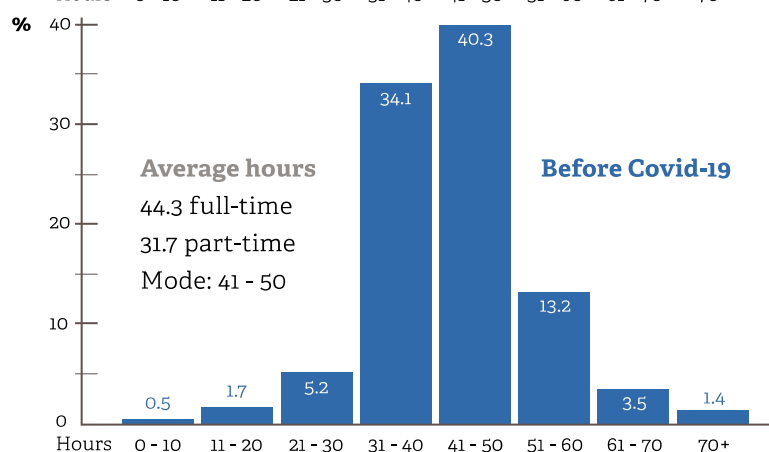
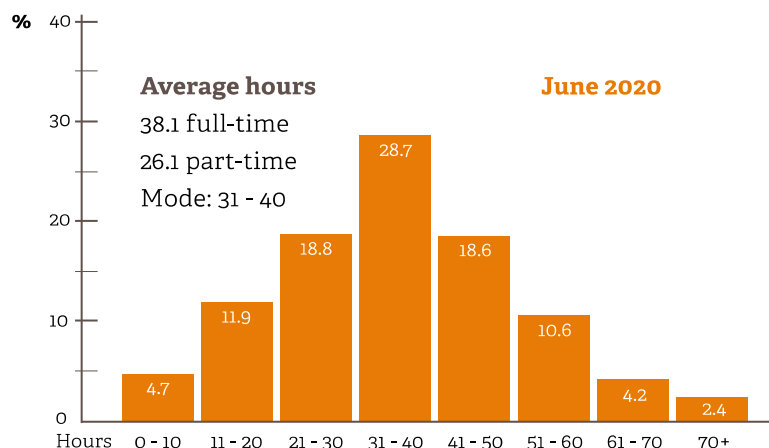
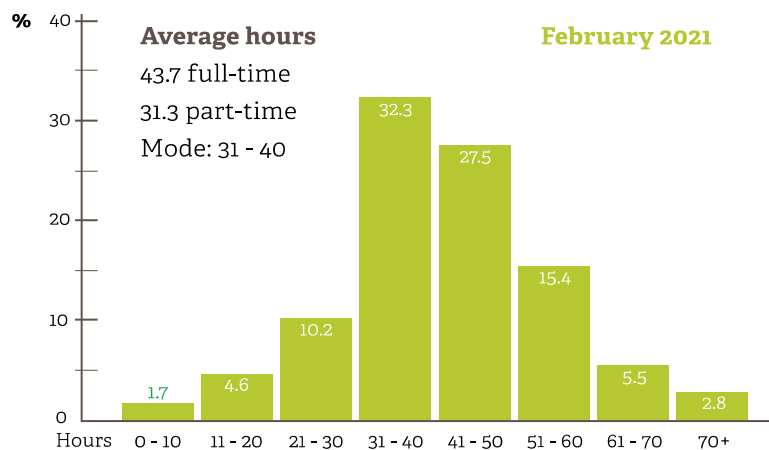
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Overall, average hours worked in February 2021 comparable to pre-Covid-19 levels

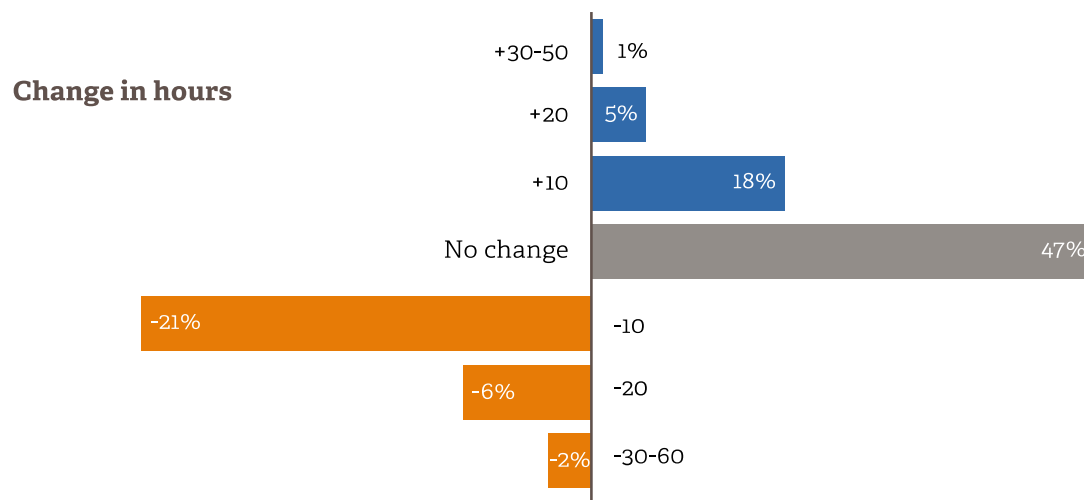
However higher proportions of researchers (24%) were working more than 50 hours in Feb 2021 compared with June 2020 (17%) and pre-Covid (18%).

While fewer researchers (17%) were working less than 30 hours in Feb 2021 compared to June 2020 (45%), but still more than pre-Covid (7%).

N=1222*

* This sub-sample consists of all respondents who answered completely questions on their working hours at three timepoints: Pre-Covid-19, June 2020 and February 2021. The profile of these respondents is similar to the overall sample and given in slide 12.

Almost half of researchers had returned to their pre-Covid working hours



Change in individual working hours** Feb 2021 compared before Covid-19 restrictions, N=1222*

- Overall 29% had decreased their hours, while 24% had increased their hours compared to pre-Covid levels.
- PGRs and research staff most likely to report an overall decrease in working hours (37% and 36%), than mid-career and senior staff (25%).
- Mid-career and senior staff most likely to report an overall increase in working hours (30%), than PGRs and research staff (15% and 20%).
- Researchers with caring responsibilities more likely to report an overall decrease in working hours (35%) and less likely to have returned to pre-Covid hours (43%) than those without (26% and 48%).

* This sub-sample consists of all respondents who answered completely questions on their working hours at three timepoints: Pre-Covid-19, June 2020 and February 2021. The profile of these respondents is similar to the overall sample and given in slide 12.

** Individual records were matched with Wave 1 data.



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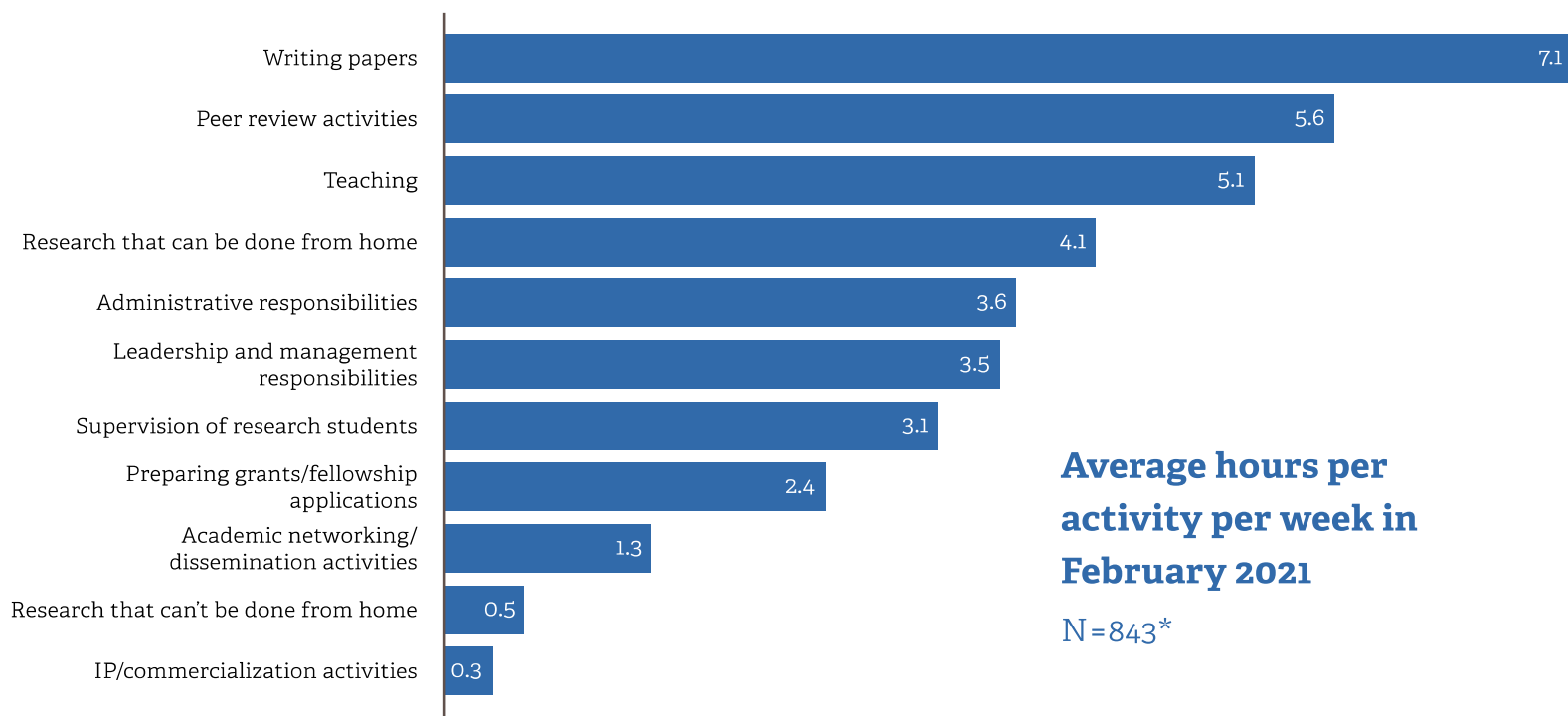
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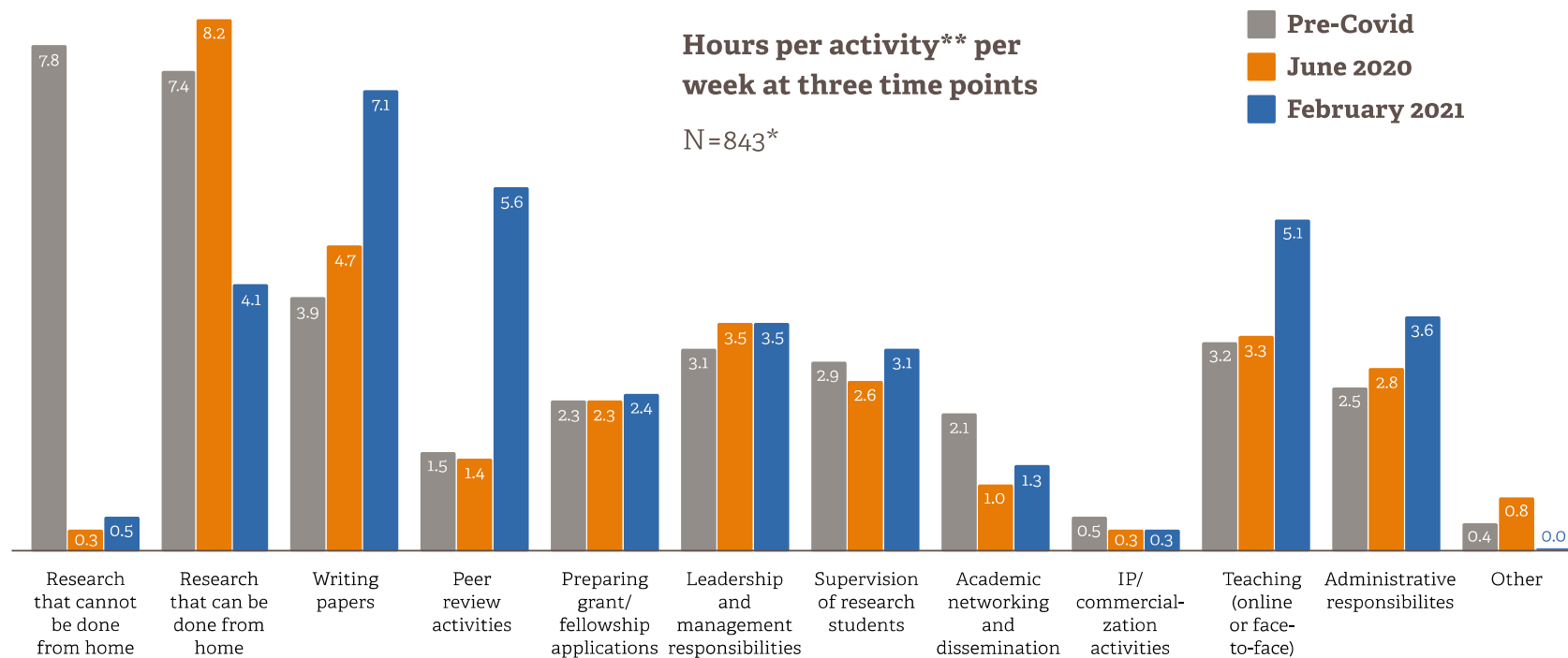
Next steps

Writing papers and peer review activities constituted a third of researchers' working hours in February 2021



* This sub-sample consists of all respondents who answered completely questions on their working hours at three timepoints: Pre-Covid-19, June 2020 and February 2021. The profile of these respondents is similar to the overall sample and given in slide 12.

Research from home in February 2021 had halved from June 2020 and pre-Covid levels

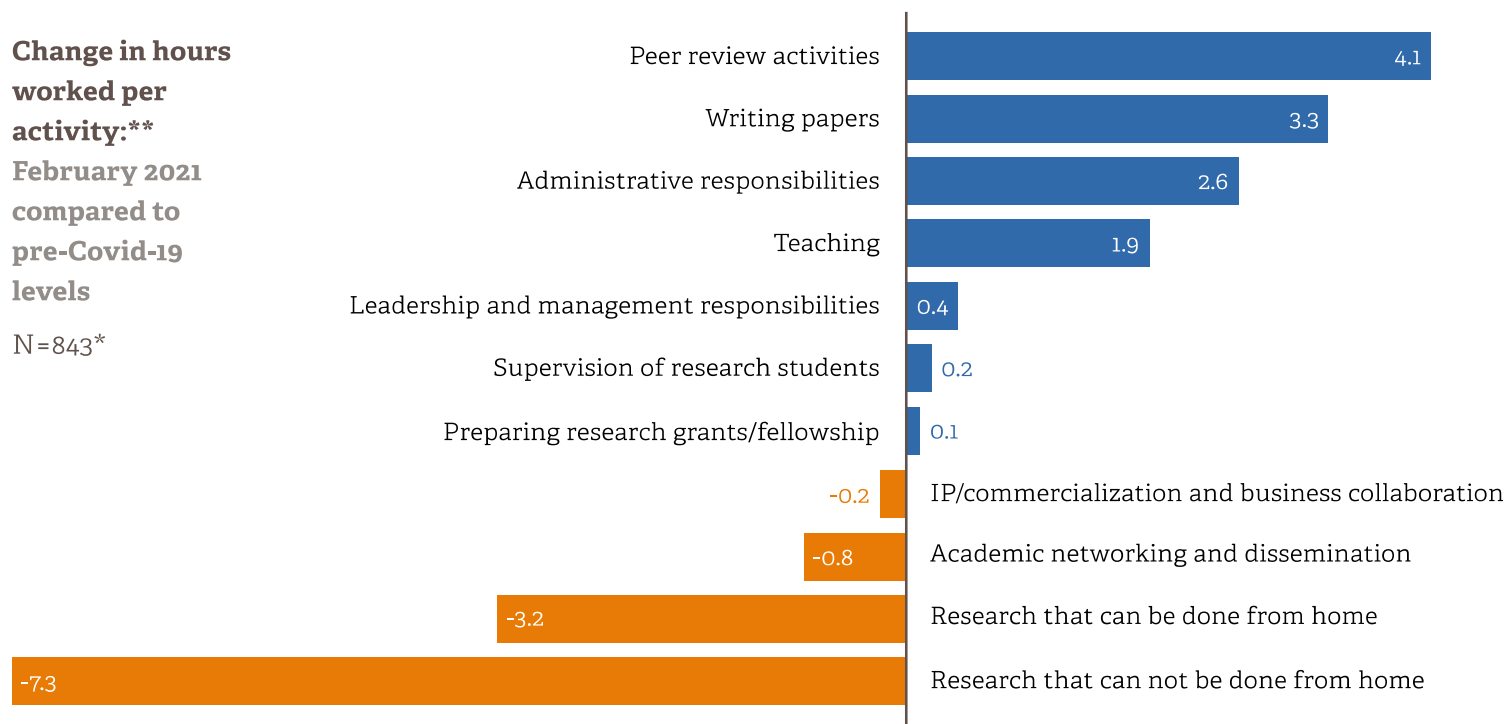


No evidence of an increase in research that can't be done at home since June 2021. Time spent writing papers (7.1 hrs), peer reviewing (5.6 hrs), teaching (5.1 hrs) and admin (3.6 hrs) continued to increase.

* This sub-sample consists of all respondents who answered completely questions on their working hours at three timepoints: Pre-Covid-19, June 2020 and February 2021. The profile of these respondents is similar to the overall sample and given in slide 12.

** 'Peer review of papers' and 'grant proposals'; and 'research grant' and 'non-grant administrative activities', have been combined for comparability with Wave 1.

Time lost to research replaced by peer review activities, writing papers and administration



* This sub-sample consists of all respondents who answered completely questions on their working hours at three timepoints: Pre-Covid-19, June 2020 and February 2021. The profile of these respondents is similar to the overall sample and given in slide 12.

** 'Peer review of papers' and 'grant proposals'; and 'research grant' and 'non-grant administrative activities', have been combined for comparability with Wave 1.

Less research being done at home than in June 2020

**Change in
hours worked
per activity:**
February 2021
compared to
June 2020**

N=843*



Researchers reported doing less research at home (4.2 hrs) and spending more time on peer review activities (reviewing grants and papers, 4.2 hrs), writing papers (2.4 hrs) and teaching (1.8 hrs) in February 2021 than in June 2020.

* This sub-sample consists of all respondents who answered completely questions on their working hours at three timepoints: Pre-Covid-19, June 2020 and February 2021. The profile of these respondents is similar to the overall sample and given in slide 12.

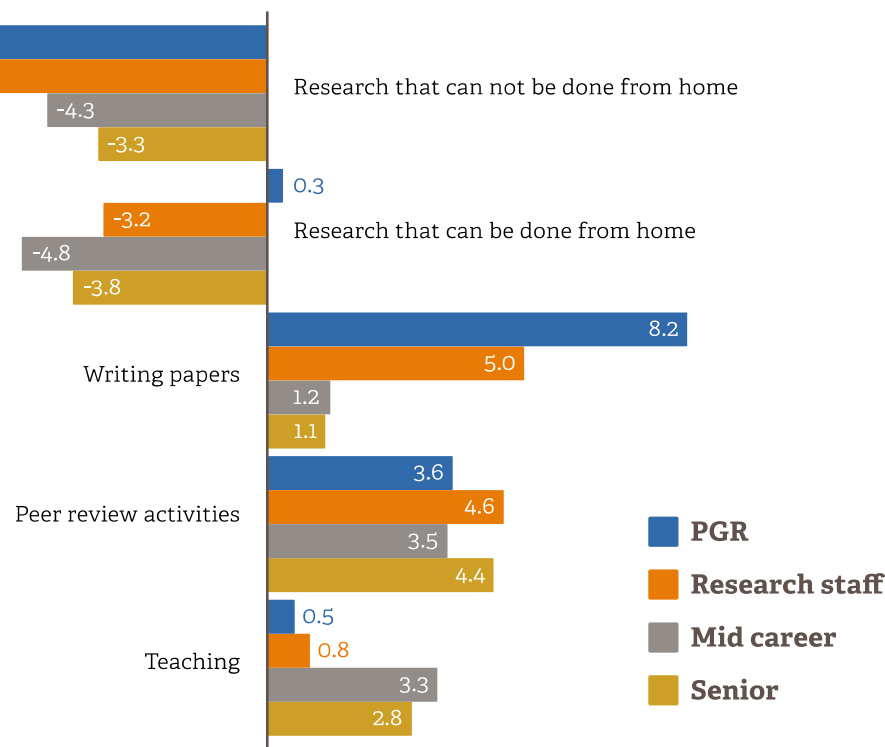
** 'Peer review of papers' and 'grant proposals'; and 'research grant' and 'non-grant administrative activities', have been combined for comparability with Wave 1.

PGRs and research staff most heavily affected by lack of access to research facilities: February 2021 compared to pre-Covid-19 levels*

Change in hours worked per activity per week Feb 2021 compared to pre-Covid-19 levels by career stage**

N=843*

Average hours	PGR	RS	Mid	Senior
Before Covid-19	35.0	33.7	38.3	41.2
June 2020	24.8	26.5	30.3	38.1
February 2021	31.7	32.1	38.9	42.0



PGRs reported spending 16 hours less on workplace-based research and 8 hours more on writing papers in February 2021 than pre-Covid. All other career stages reported spending more than 3 hours less on research that can be done from home.

* This sub-sample consists of all respondents who answered completely questions on their working hours at three timepoints: Pre-Covid-19, June 2020 and February 2021. The profile of these respondents is similar to the overall sample and given in slide 12.

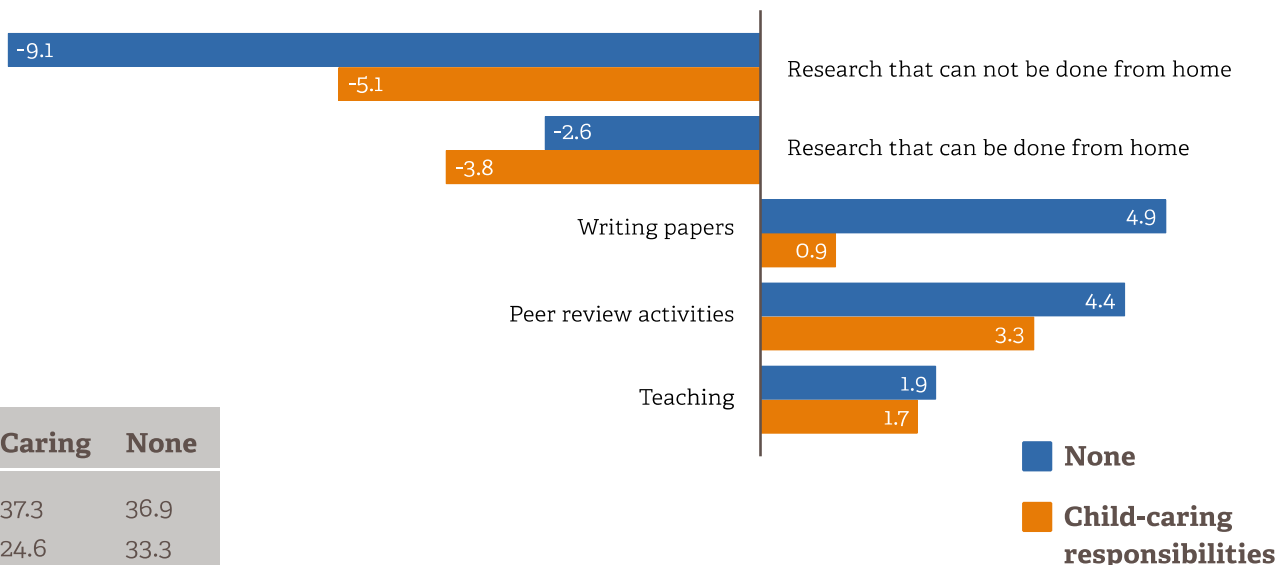
** 'Peer review of papers' and 'grant proposals'; and 'research grant' and 'non-grant administrative activities', have been combined for comparability with Wave 1.

Researchers with child-caring responsibilities almost back to pre-Covid working hours

Change in hours worked per activity per week February 2021 compared to pre-Covid-19 levels by caring responsibilities**

N=843*

Average hours	Caring	None
Before Covid-19	37.3	36.9
June 2020	24.6	33.3
February 2021	34.4	37.5



Researchers without and with child-caring responsibilities reported workplace-based research falling to near zero hours in February 2021 from pre-Covid levels (9.6 and 5.5 hours, respectively).

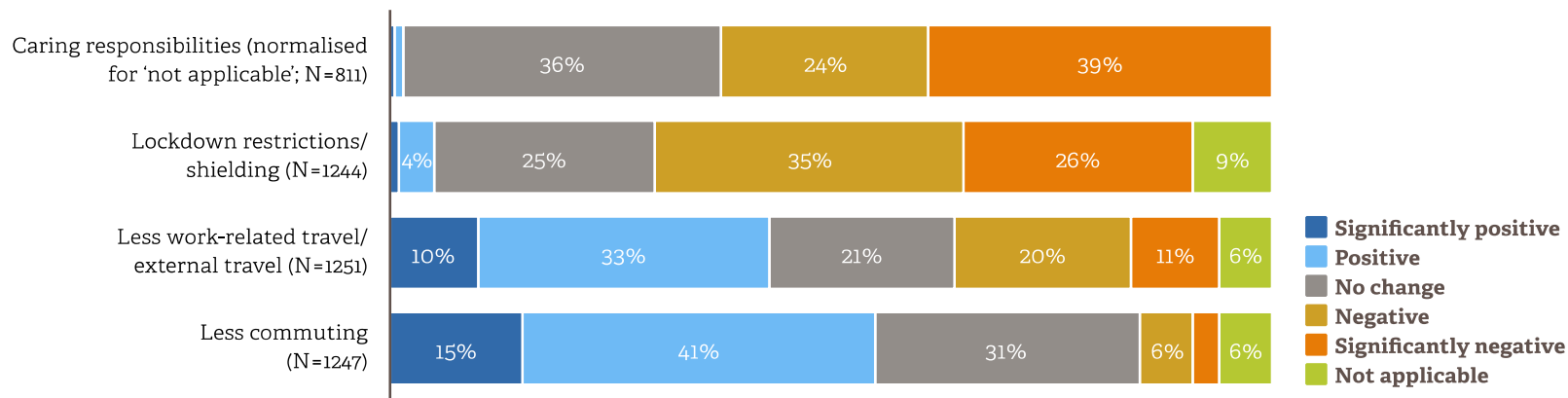
Researchers with child-caring responsibilities were spending similar number of hours writing papers as pre-Covid (4 hrs) compared to non-carers who had more than doubled their time writing papers compared to pre-Covid (3.6 hrs).

* This sub-sample consists of all respondents who answered completely questions on their working hours at three timepoints: Pre-Covid-19, June 2020 and February 2021. The profile of these respondents is similar to the overall sample and given in slide 12.

** 'Peer review of papers' and 'grant proposals'; and 'research grant' and 'non-grant administrative activities', have been combined for comparability with Wave 1.

Lockdown and caring reduced time for research, but most benefited from less travel and commuting

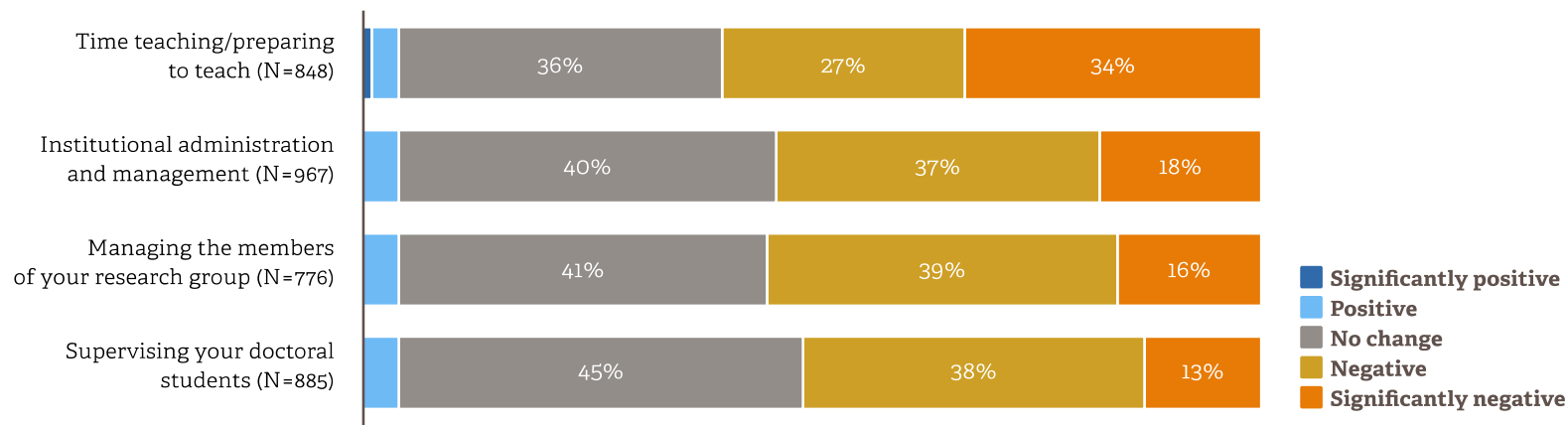
What consequences are Covid-19 restrictions on the following activities having on your time for research?



- **61% of researchers reported lockdown or shielding had negatively impacted on their time for research (26% significantly).**
- **Overall 63% reported that caring responsibilities had a negative impact on time for research; 39% significantly. This negative impact rises to 88% for researchers with child-caring responsibilities. The negative impact of caring responsibilities increased to 57% and 48% for mid-career and senior researchers. This compares with 44% of researchers being concerned in Wave 1 about less capacity for research due to caring responsibilities; 27% significantly.**
- **56% of researchers reported that less commuting and 43% less work-related travel had positive impacts on their time for research. These benefits increased at each career stage (64% commuting and 57% work-related travel for senior researchers).**
- **For 31% of researchers the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on work-related travel had negatively impacted on time for research. In Wave 1 86% of these researchers were concerned about having to postpone or cancel important conferences/meetings.**
- **Between 21% - 36% researchers reported no impact on their time for research due to the effect of Covid-19 restrictions on these activities. There were no notable gender or REF Panel differences.**

More than half reported a negative impact of Covid-19 restrictions on other work activities reduced their time for research

What consequences are Covid-19 restrictions on the following activities having on your time for research?



- **Between 50% - 60%* reported the impact of Covid-19 restrictions on teaching, institutional admin, doctoral supervision and line management activities had negatively impacted on their time for research. However, between 36% - 45% reported no impact on their time for research due to the effect of Covid-19 on these activities.**
- **34% reported significantly negative impacts of Covid-19 on teaching responsibilities. This increased to 50% of mid-career researchers. Panels C and D reported higher significantly negative impacts on teaching (43%; 47%) than other Panels. In Wave 1 44% were concerned about less time for research due to their increased teaching load.**
- **62% of mid-career and senior researchers reported a negative impact of institutional administration. Negative effects were more common in Panels C (67%) and D (66%).**
- **Generally researchers with child-caring responsibilities were more likely to report a negative impact of Covid-19 restrictions on teaching (68%), supervision (57%) and administration (58%). There were no notable gender differences.**



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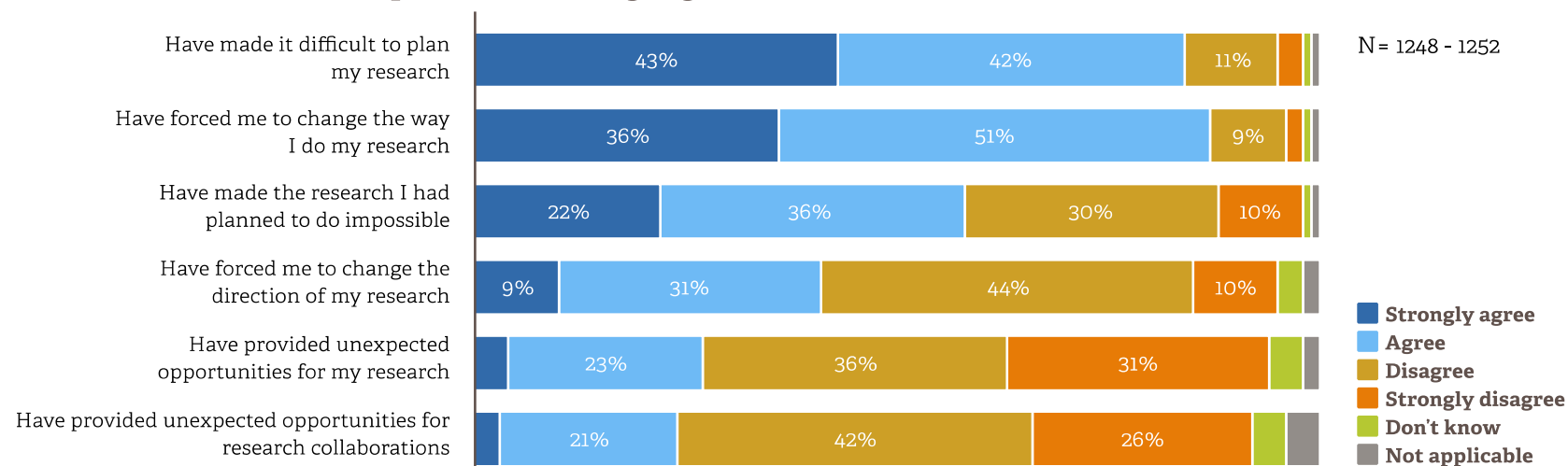
Funder support

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40% forced to change research direction while 27% identified unexpected opportunities

Since the start of the academic year (Oct 2020), ongoing Covid-19 restrictions



- **Ongoing Covid-19 restrictions have impacted research activity across the system. 87% agreed Covid restrictions over this academic year had forced changes in the way they do their research. Slightly less likely to agree in Panels C (82%) and D (80%) and PGRs (83%).**
- **85% agreed it made it difficult to plan their research.**
- **58% agreed it made it impossible to do the research they planned, with 66% of researchers with caring responsibilities agreeing Covid-19 made it impossible, compared to 52% without. Research staff were least likely to agree (48%) that Covid-19 restrictions made it impossible to do the research they planned.**
- **40% were forced to change the direction of their research, compared to Wave 1 when 49% of respondents reported exploring new research directions to some extent. PGRs were mostly likely to report having changed direction (55%).**
- **27% agreed Covid-19 had provided unexpected opportunities for their research. Senior researchers were most likely to agree (36%), with PGRs least likely (17%). While Panel C respondents were most likely to agree (42%), Panel B were least likely to agree (18%).**
- **There were no gender differences.**

Lack of in-person contact has had the biggest impact on ability to undertake planned research

Top five activities* where Covid-19 restrictions have had the biggest impact on ability to undertake planned research

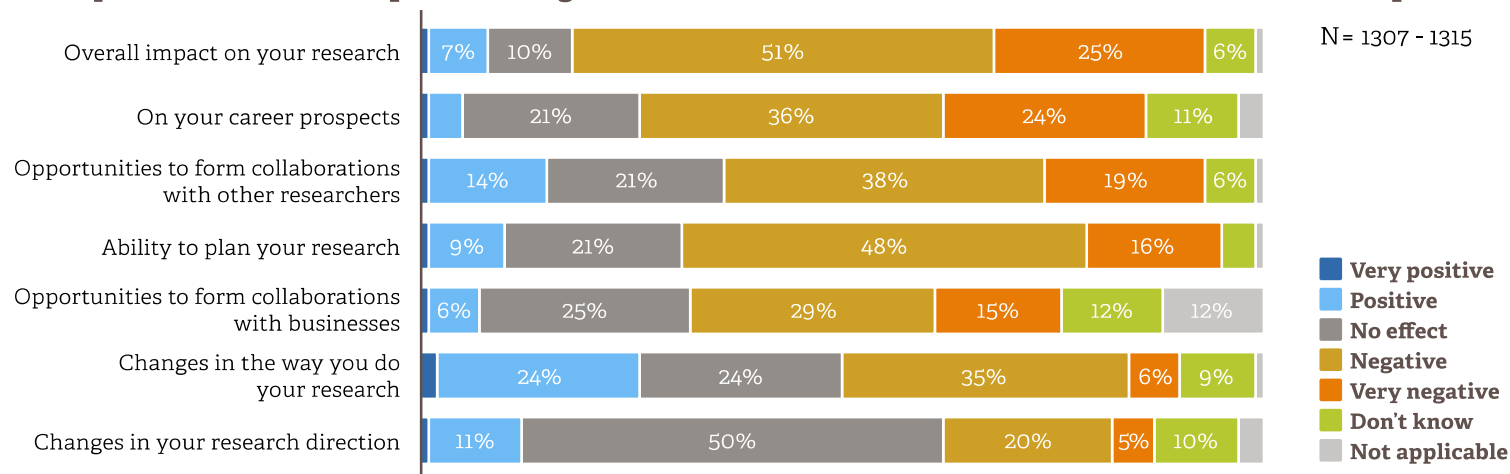
1. In-person contact with research group members
(2.9; in top five for 85% of respondents)
2. Access to research facilities
(2.9; in top five for 73% of respondents)
3. Access to research materials and infrastructure
(e.g. to equipment, computing facilities, archives, samples, libraries, or collections)
(2.2; in top five for 66% of respondents)
4. Attendance at conferences and in-person events
(1.7; in top five for 69% of respondents)
5. Ability to undertake fieldwork / trials / engage research users
(1.4; in top five for 66% of respondents)

- PGRs and research staff were more likely to identify lack of access to research facilities (3.5; 3.9) and infrastructure (3.0; 2.3); they were less likely to identify lack of in-person contact (2.2; 2.7), attendance at events (1.4; 1.6) and fieldwork (1.0; 1.3).
- REF Panels A & B were more likely to identify lack of access to research facilities (3.3; 3.4); Panel C inability to undertake fieldwork (3.0); Panel D lack of access to research infrastructure (3.3).
- Those with caring responsibilities were more likely to identify lack of in-person contact (3.1) compared to those without (2.7). There were no notable gender differences.

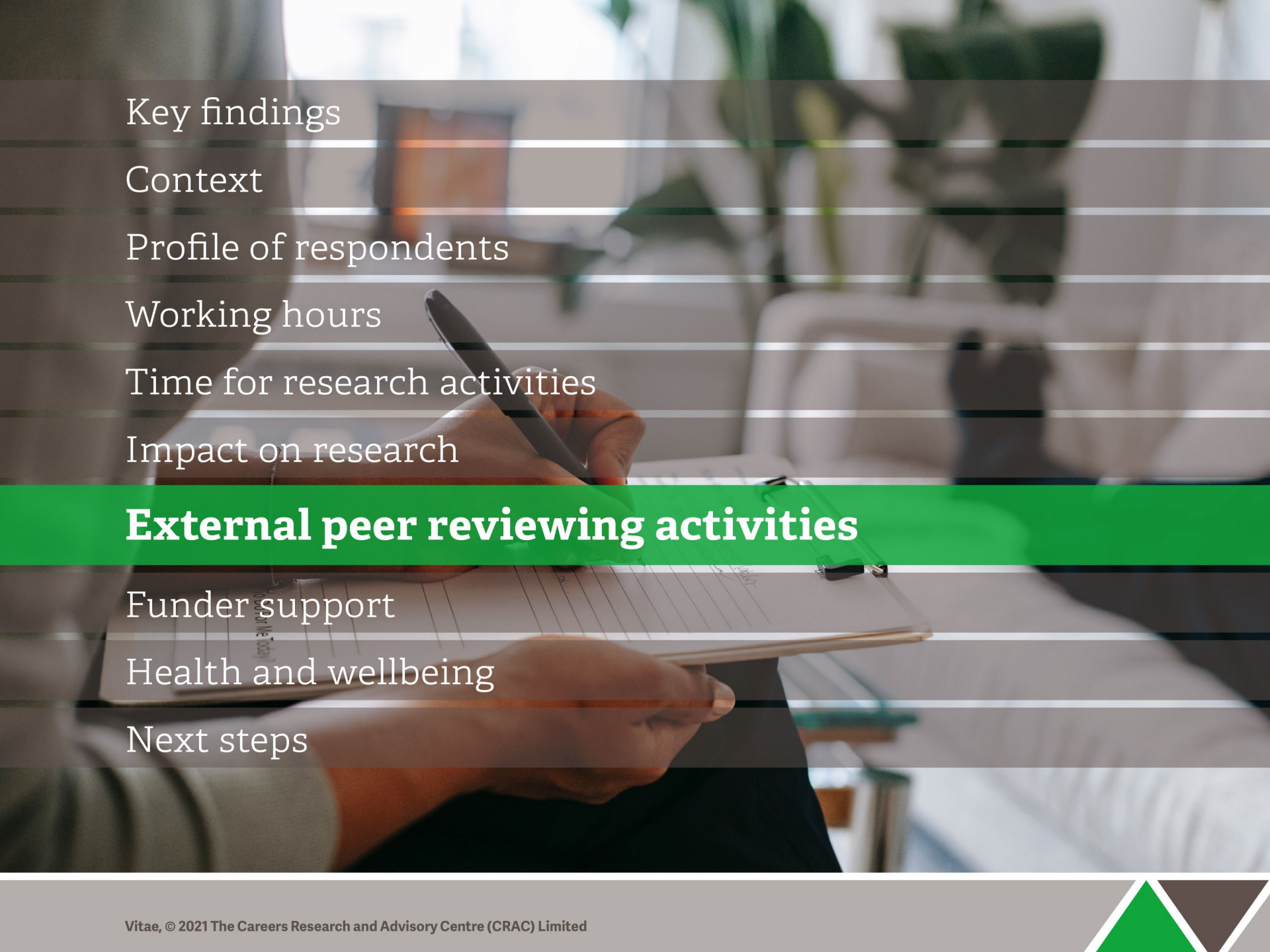
* Respondents were offered 13 choices. Responses were scored: 1st = 5 points; 2nd = 4 points, etc. Maximum score = 5

Majority predicted a negative impact over the next three years on their research, ability to plan, form collaborations and career prospects

Consequences of current ways of working due to Covid-19 restrictions on research over the next three years?



- **76% of respondents predicted a negative overall impact on their research due to Covid-19, with Panel C respondents least likely to predict a negative impact (67%).**
- **64% reported a negative impact on their ability to plan their research, increasing to 72% of mid-career researchers.**
- **41% reported a negative impact on the way they do their research, while 25% reported a positive impact.**
- **50% reported that Covid-19 will have no impact on the direction of their research, with mid-career (56%) and senior researchers (57%) most likely to predict no impact. Male researchers (56%) were more likely to predict no impact than female researchers (45%). While 12% of all respondents predicted a positive impact.**
- **Between 20 – 25% report no effect over the next three years on their ability to plan, collaborations with researchers or businesses, or their career prospects.**
- **34% of PGRs and 28% of research staff predicted a very negative impact of Covid-19 on their careers. Those with child-caring responsibilities (65%) and female researchers (62%) were more likely to predict a negative impact on their careers than those without (57%) and male researchers (56%).**

A background image showing a person's hands writing in a notebook with a pen. The notebook is open, and the person is holding a pen over it. The image is slightly blurred, focusing on the text overlay.

Key findings

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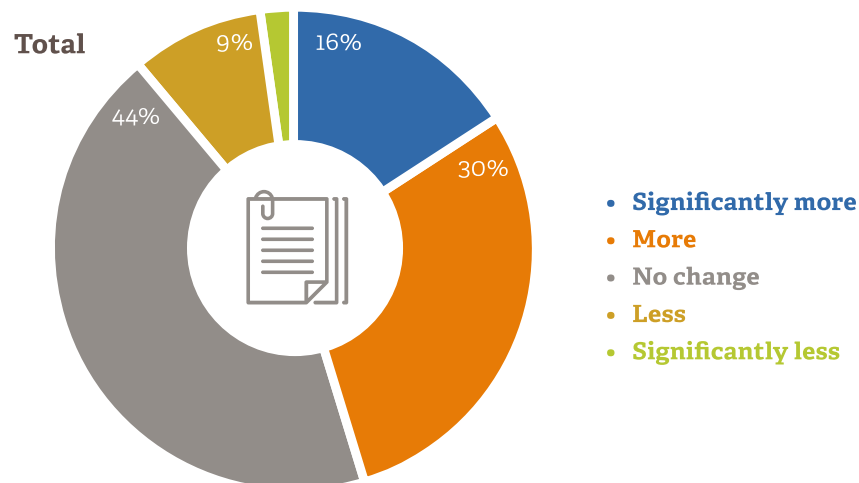
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Health and wellbeing

Next steps

Almost half of peer-reviewers reported increased external requests to review research papers



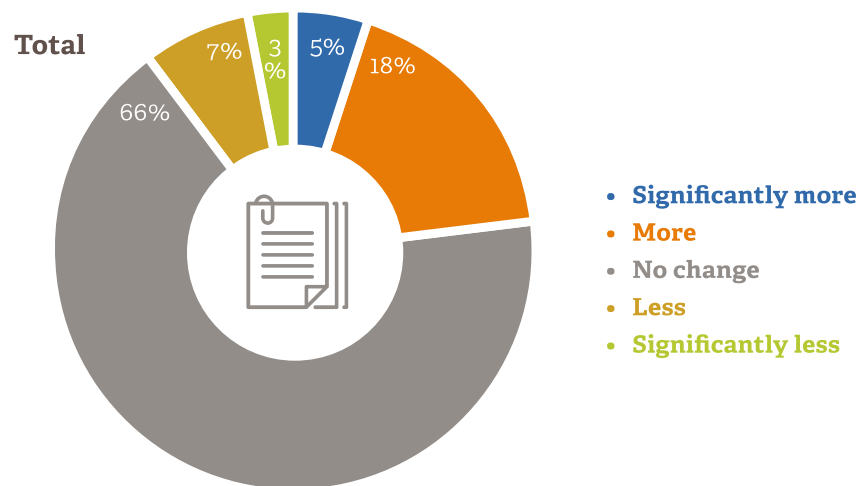
- **46% of respondents involved in peer reviewing activities* had seen an increased number of requests to peer review papers. There were no gender differences.**
- **Researchers in Panel A had seen the largest increase at 51%, while Panel D had seen the lowest increase at 33%.**
- **44% of mid-career and 56% of senior researchers reported an increased number of requests.**

Of those receiving additional requests, 66% were unable to meet them.** 73% of mid-career and senior researchers and those with caring responsibilities (74%) were less likely to be able to meet additional requests.

* Data have been normalised by removing 'not applicable' responses. (N=1018)

** Sample sizes are small.

Almost a quarter of peer-reviewers reported increased requests from funders to peer review research proposals

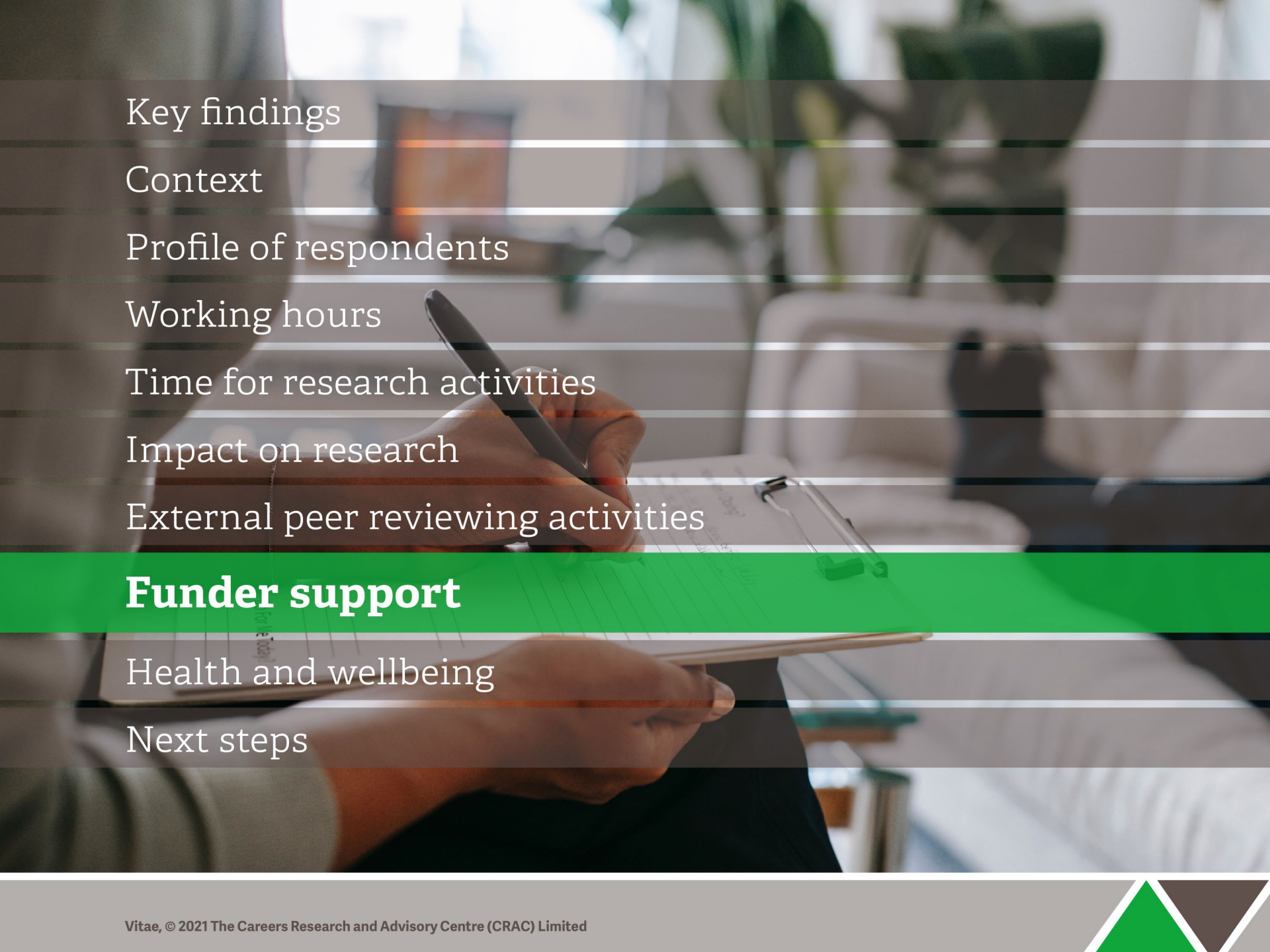


- **23% of respondents involved in peer reviewing activities* had seen an increased number of requests from funders to peer research proposals (66% no change; 10% less). There were no gender differences.**
- **25% of mid-career and 31% of senior researchers reported an increased number of requests. There was no difference for UKRI-funded researchers.**

Of those receiving additional requests, 58% were unable to meet them.** Female researchers (63%) and those with caring responsibilities (69%) were less likely to be able to meet requests.

* Data have been normalised by removing 'not applicable' responses. N=871

** Sample sizes are small.



Key findings

Context

Profile of respondents

Working hours

Time for research activities

Impact on research

External peer reviewing activities

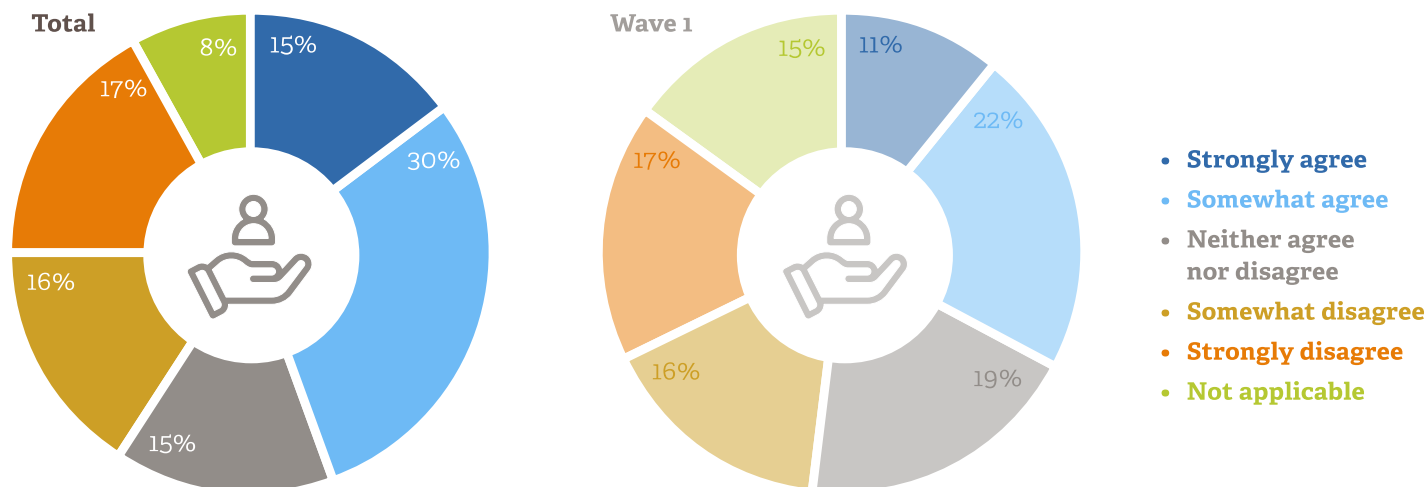
Funder support

Health and wellbeing

Next steps

Improved, but still mixed views on funder support during Covid-19 restrictions

My (principal) funder has provided clear information on how they will support me to manage any changes in my ability to continue my research.

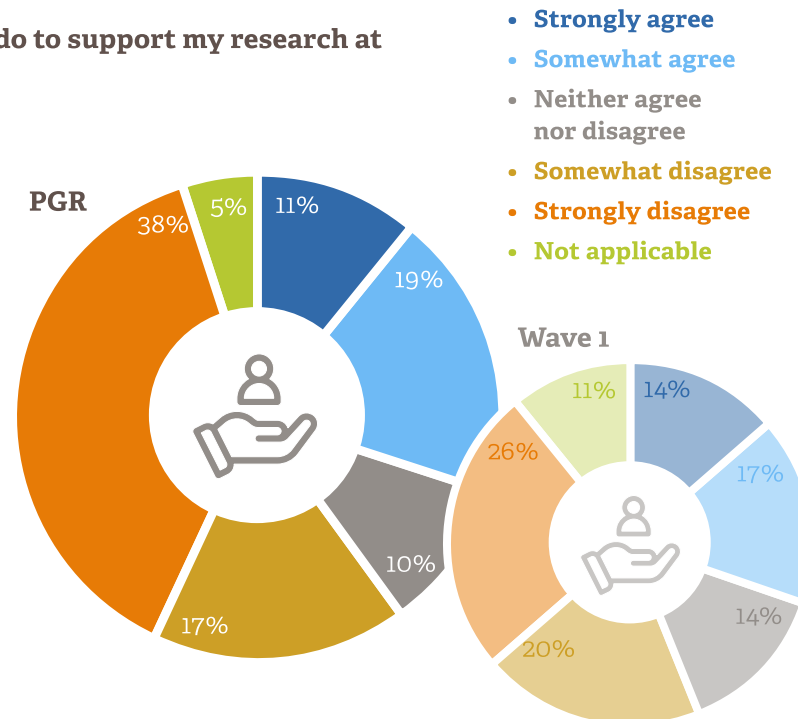
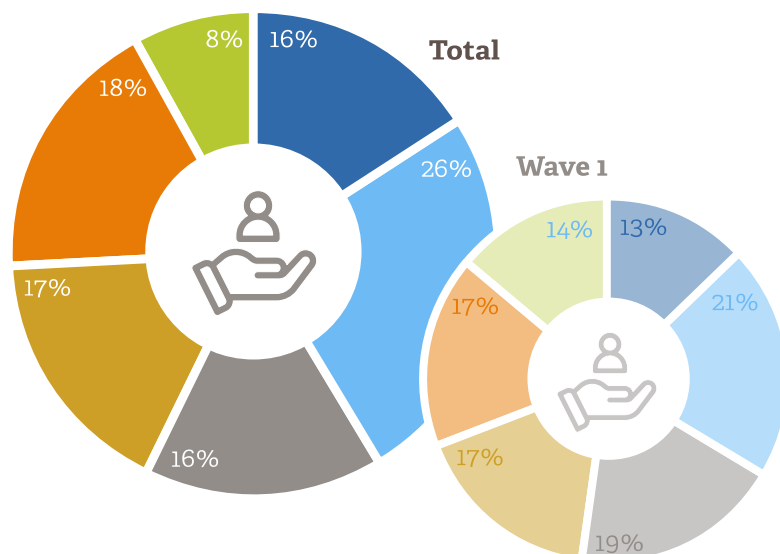


- Overall 45% of respondents agreed their (principal) funder provided clear information since 16 March 2020 when social distancing came into effect on how they will support them to manage any changes in their ability to continue their research. This compared to 33% of respondents agreeing in Wave 1 in June 2020.
- Senior researchers most likely to agree (56%) in February 2020 compared to 40% in Wave 1.
- 39% of UKRI-funded researchers agreed compared to 54-62% for researchers funded by charities, academies and NIHR.
- A larger percentage of all PGRs (51%) disagreed that they had received clear information compared to 41% of PGRs in Wave 1.
- There were no differences by REF Panel, gender or caring responsibilities.

* 53% of PGRs funded by UKRI; 11% by charities, academies and NIHR collectively.

More PGRs disagree that their funder had done all they could to support their research compared to June 2020

My (principal) funder has done all I believe they can / should do to support my research at this time.



- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not applicable

- 55% of PGRs disagreed that their (principal) funder had done all they could / should do to support their research since 16 March, when social distancing came into effect. This compared to 46% of PGRs disagreeing in Wave 1.
- All other career stages reported lower levels of disagreement (17% - 24%) compared to PGRs and to Wave 1 (26% - 30%).
- For all UKRI funded researchers 34% agreed* compared to 52% - 58% for researchers funded by charities, academies and NIHR.
- No differences by REF Panel, gender or caring responsibilities.

* 53% of PGRs in the sample funded by UKRI; 11% by charities, academies and NIHR collectively.

A person is shown from the side, writing on a clipboard with a pen. The background is a blurred office environment with plants and furniture. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Key findings

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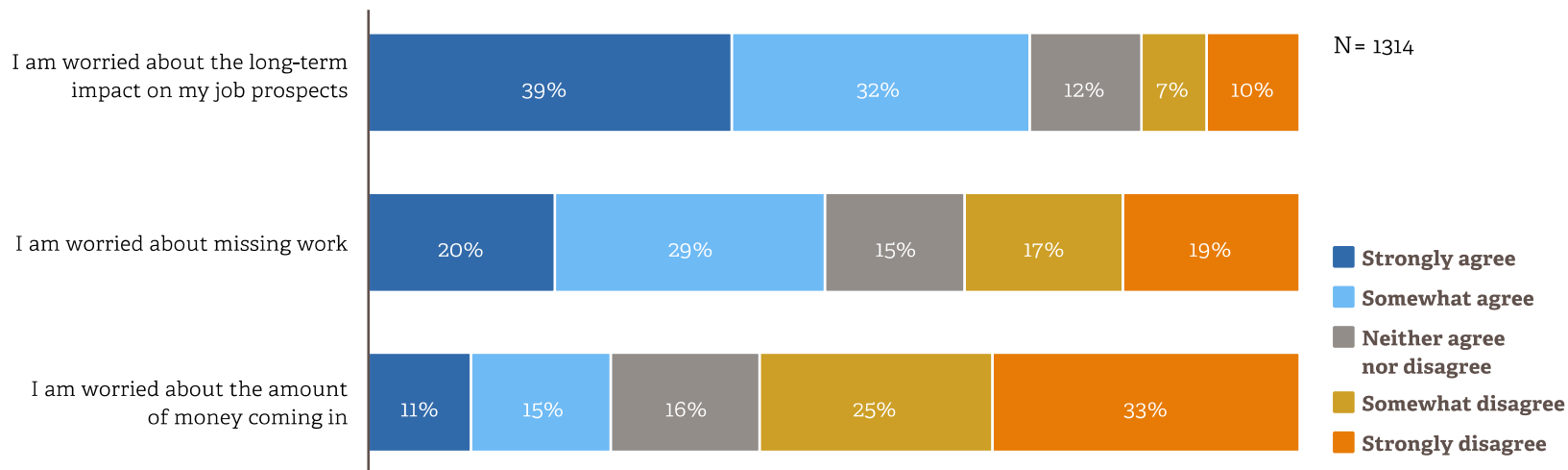
External peer reviewing activities

Funder support

Health and wellbeing

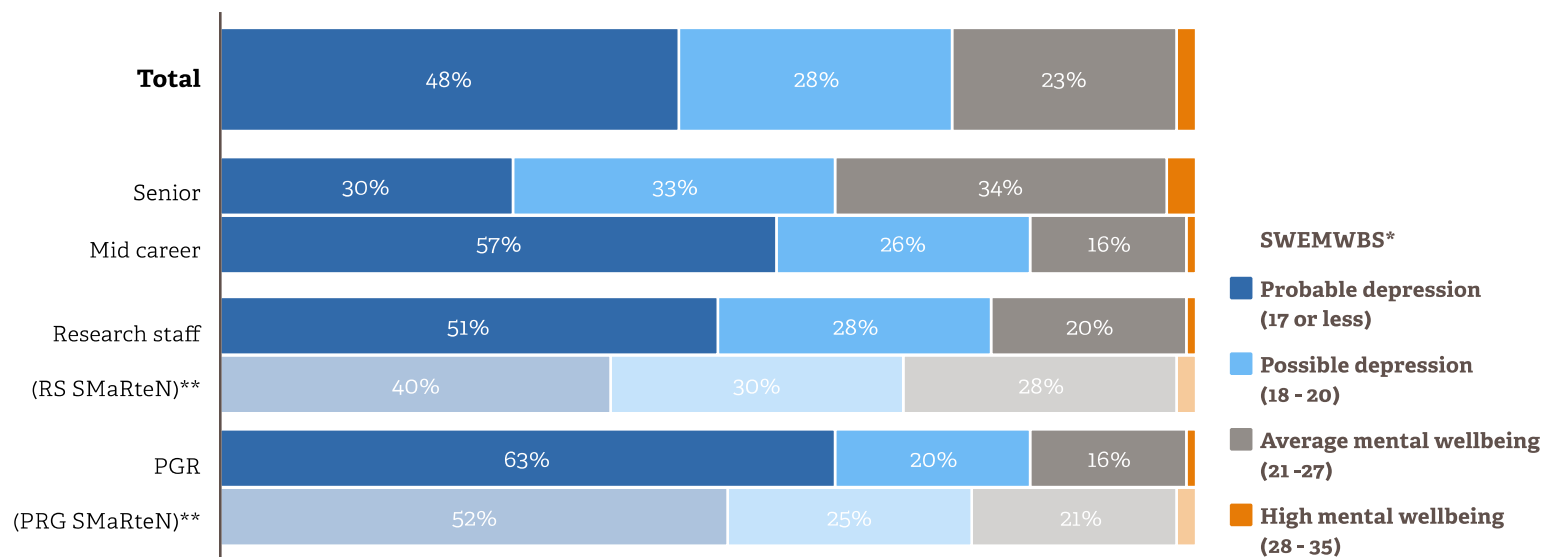
Next steps

PGRs, women and carers most concerned about the long-term impact of Covid on their job prospects



- **71% agreed they were worried about the long-term impact on their job prospects, particularly PGRs (89%) and research staff (88%) with more than half of both these groups strongly agreeing they were worried about their prospects.**
- **49% were worried about missing work, increasing to around 73% of PGRs (40% strongly agreeing). 45% of PGRs also reported being worried about the amount of money they had coming in (6% of PGRs were self-funded).**
- **60% of those with caring responsibilities were concerned about missing work, compared with 44% of those without.**
- **Female researchers were more concerned about the long term impact on their job prospects (75%) and missing work (54%) than male researchers (65% and 43%, respectively).**
- **Panels A & B strongly agreed that they were concerned about the long term impact on their job prospects (41%) compared to Panel C (30%) and Panel D (28%). Panels A & B also were more likely to be worried about missing work (51%) than Panel C (37%) and Panel D (44%).**

PGRs, research staff and mid career researchers reported poor levels of mental wellbeing



- **PGRs (63%), mid-career researchers (57%) and research staff (51%) exhibited high levels of probable depression. The SMarTeN / Vitae survey in April 2020, a month after the initial Covid-19 lockdown, also recorded high levels of mental distress in PGRs and research staff.**
- **There were minimal differences by gender, REF Panel or with caring responsibilities.**
- **The ONS reported 21% of adults in Great Britain experiencing depressive symptoms in early 2021, more than double pre-Covid levels.*****

* Short Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) © NHS Health Scotland, University of Warwick and University of Edinburgh, 2008. This widely adopted scale is used nationally and internationally in clinical and community settings.
<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs/about/use>

** Impact of Covid-19 on doctoral researchers and research staff, 2020, SMarTeN / Vitae <https://www.smartent.org.uk/covid-19-study.html>

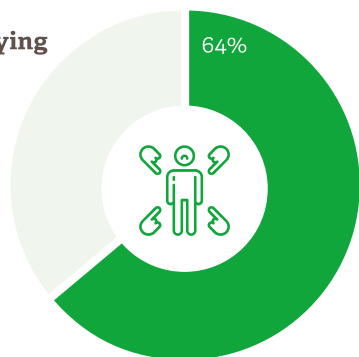
*** Coronavirus and depression in adults, Great Britain: January to March 2021.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/coronavirusanddepressioninadultsgreatbritain/januarytomarch2021>

11% experienced bullying and harassment over the last year - two thirds reporting more than pre-Covid

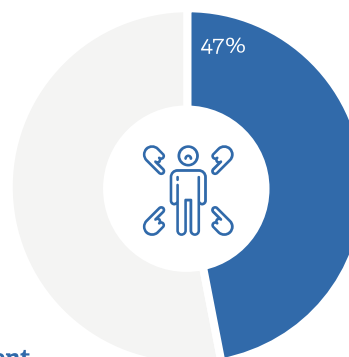
**11% experienced bullying and harassment over the last year of Covid-19 restrictions:
13% of women and 7% of men (N=1253)**

Of those that
experienced bullying
and harassment
(N=133, small sample)

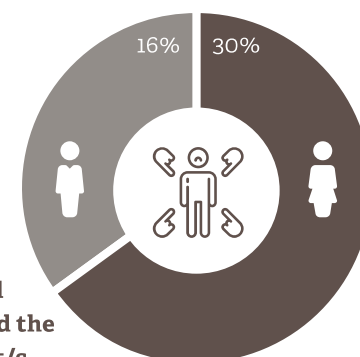
**64% reported
this as more than
before Covid-19
restrictions**



**47% had sought
support within
their research
group/department**



**24% had
reported the
incident/s**



Comparative data:

Wellcome Trust: What Researchers Think About the Culture They Work In 2020

**43% reported experiencing bullying and harassment sometime during their research career; 49% women, 34% men
(2019; N=4267, 76% in UK; 58% mid and senior career, 37% research staff)**

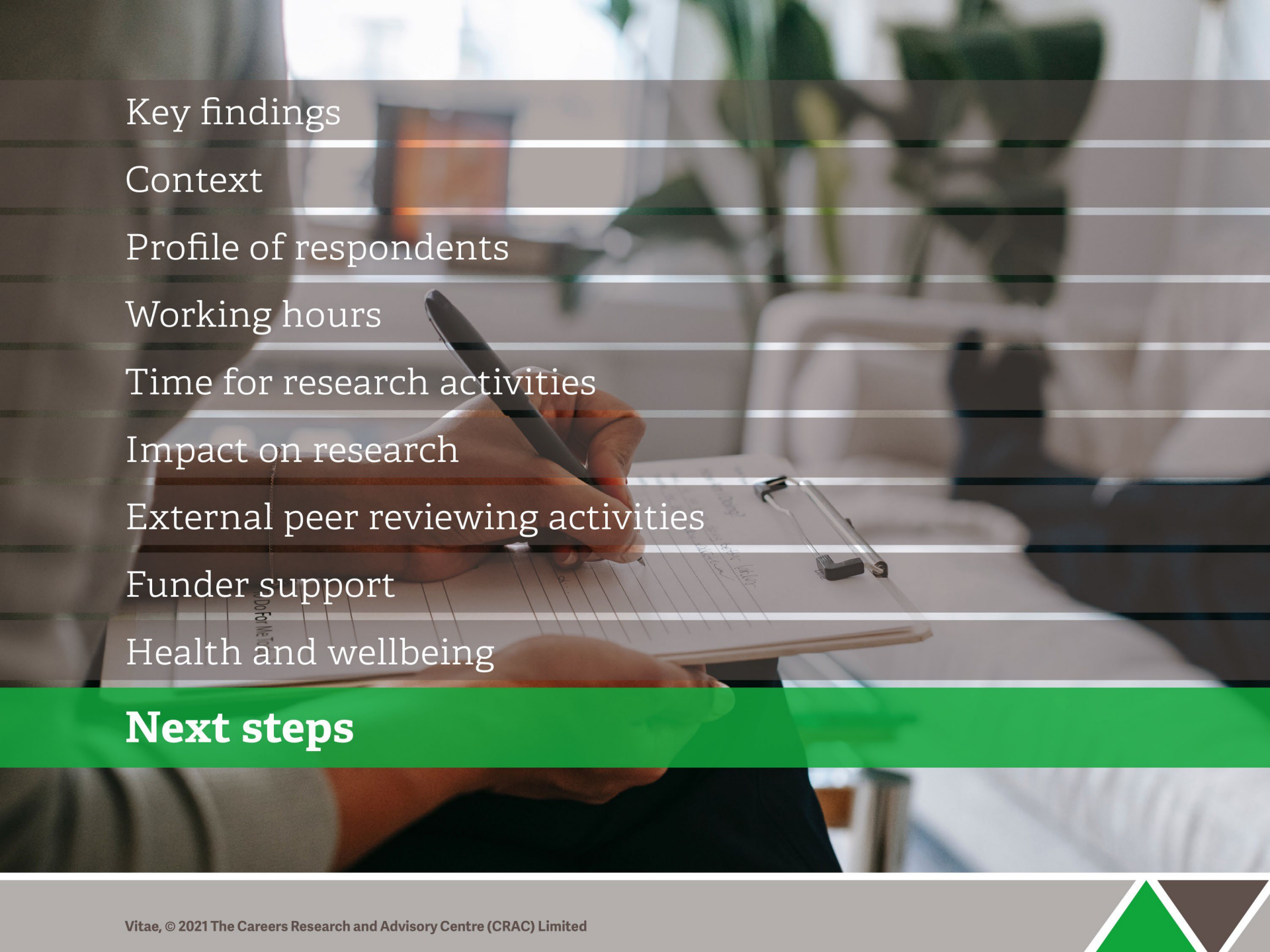
<https://wellcome.org/reports/what-researchers-think-about-research-culture>

Vitae: CEDARS 2020 Aggregate UK results

**25% of mid and senior researchers reported experienced bullying and harassment in the last two years;
26% women, 20% men.**

**17% of research staff experienced B&H in the last two years; 22% women, 13% men
(2020; N=3025; 62% mid and senior career, 29% research staff)**

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/impact-and-evaluation/cedars/culture-employment-and-development-in-academic-research-survey>

A person is writing on a clipboard with a pen. The background is a blurred office environment with plants and furniture. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

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Uses for the survey data

- **UKRI, BEIS and other interested organisations will use this data to understand the current and anticipated impact of Covid-19 on researchers and research and to track changes in pressures on this sample since June 2020. This information will be used by UKRI to better understand the needs of the sector at this point in time and to inform potential future action, including ongoing work to support healthy research culture and environments.**
- **Vitae will use the results to inform their work related to the Researcher Development Concordat in improving the research culture and the mental health and wellbeing of researchers. Specifically, Vitae will explore the results with their wellbeing and researchers' careers working groups.**