

The impact of the covid-19 pandemic on researchers in universities and research institutes

Science, Technology and Innovation Analysis

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

<https://www.gov.uk/business-and-industry/science-and-innovation>

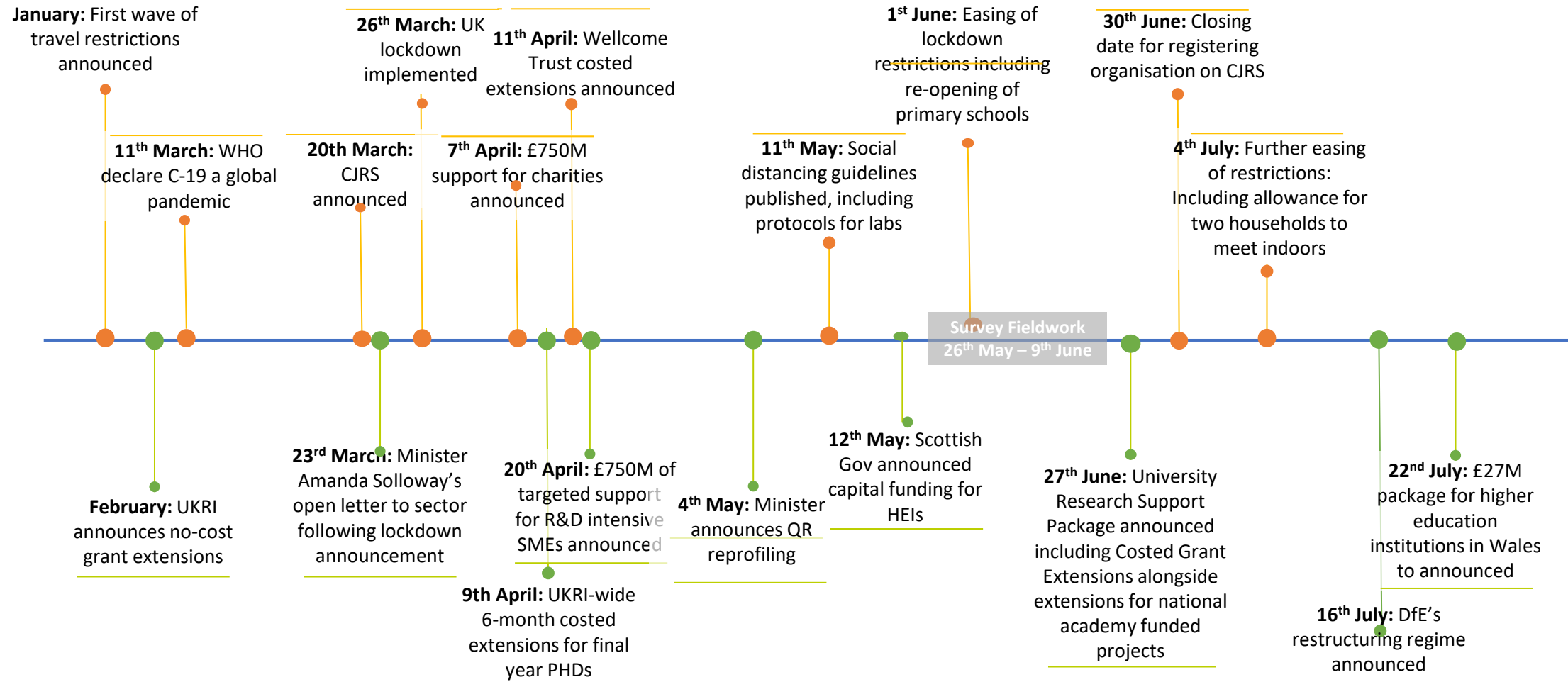


Wider context for this survey

- On March 16th, the government introduced social distancing measures to reduce the transmission of the Covid-19 virus. This included instruction to work from home where possible.
- On March 23rd the UK government enforced a complete 'lockdown'.
- The Covid-19 pandemic and response has impacted research activities and outputs of the UK's Research and Development (R&D) sector in ways that are hard to measure.
- Since lockdown universities and funders have worked hard to support researchers.
- This research aimed to support BEIS, UKRI, Vitae and UUK to develop their response to help the research sector. Specifically, this research aimed to:
 - Quantify the current and expected impact of Covid-19 on research activity
 - Understand the implications of Covid19 to inform R&D People policies
- These slides were put together by BEIS, supported by UKRI and Vitae, and are being used by BEIS and UKRI as a source to inform R&D policy development.
- On June 27th BEIS announced its 'Stabilising University Research Expertise' package¹

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-for-university-research-and-innovation-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Fieldwork conducted 26th May - 9th June; After QR reprofiling, but before the University Research Support Package announcement



BEIS and Vitae promoted this survey widely with help from UKRI and UUK, aimed at all UK-based researchers

- What data has been collected?
 - Data was collected on the past impact and predicted impact of Covid-19, and associated social distancing requirements, on researchers in the UK.
 - Questions asked were predominantly multiple choice and covered individual researchers perspectives as well as having a wider focus of the impacts on research groups.
- How has data been collected?
 - An online survey was sent to researchers in UK universities, research institutes, charities and companies using contacts of Vitae*, UKRI*, UUK* and BEIS. The survey relied on researchers being willing to respond.
- Why has data been collected?
 - To assess the current and expected impact of Covid-19 on research activity and the researcher community. This is to inform potential interventions that Government and others could make to help support UK researchers, research institutions and facilities.
- How can this data be used?
 - The survey provides **indicative** data. It is not fully representative of all UK researcher's experiences of Covid-19, and data is unweighted, however it is a snapshot of views from 10,408 UK researchers, and is relatively balanced sample by discipline, gender, nationality and career stage.

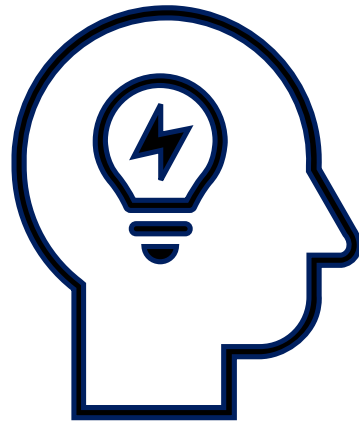
*Vitae is a global leader in researcher development, with experience in research on researchers - see <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/>

*UUK is the collective voice of universities, see <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/>

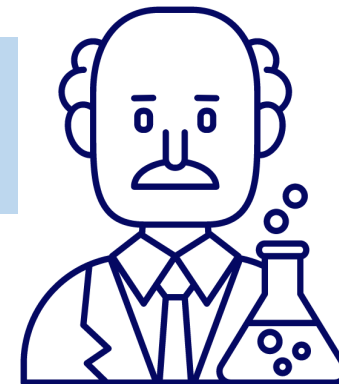
*UKRI brings together the seven Research Councils, Innovate UK and Research England to fund research and innovation via partnerships with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government, see <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/>



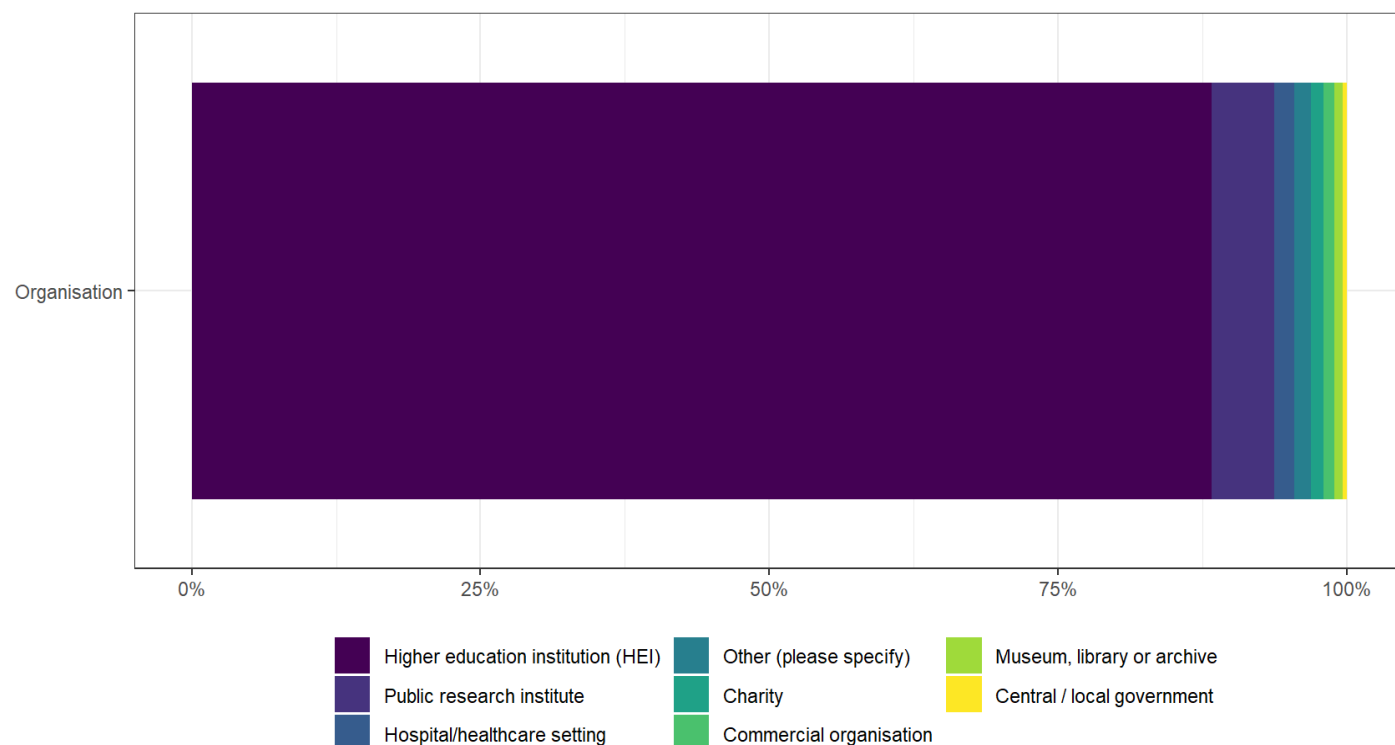
Which researchers were covered by this survey?



10,408 researchers responded!



Researchers who responded were predominately from Higher Education Institutions and these were largely representative of the research population when compared to key characteristics¹ from the HESA Staff Record 2018/19 dataset.



n = 10408

1. These were nationality, ethnicity and contract type. Relative to HESA data women, those at Russell Group universities, those in TRAC groups A and B, those in full time employment and staff reporting a disability are more slightly more heavily represented in this survey. However none of these categories exceeded a 10% divergence from HESA (aside from researchers at Russell Group universities, which were overrepresented by 13%).

To ensure a consistent sample population to analyse, these first findings only look at **HEIs, PRIs** and **non-PGRs**

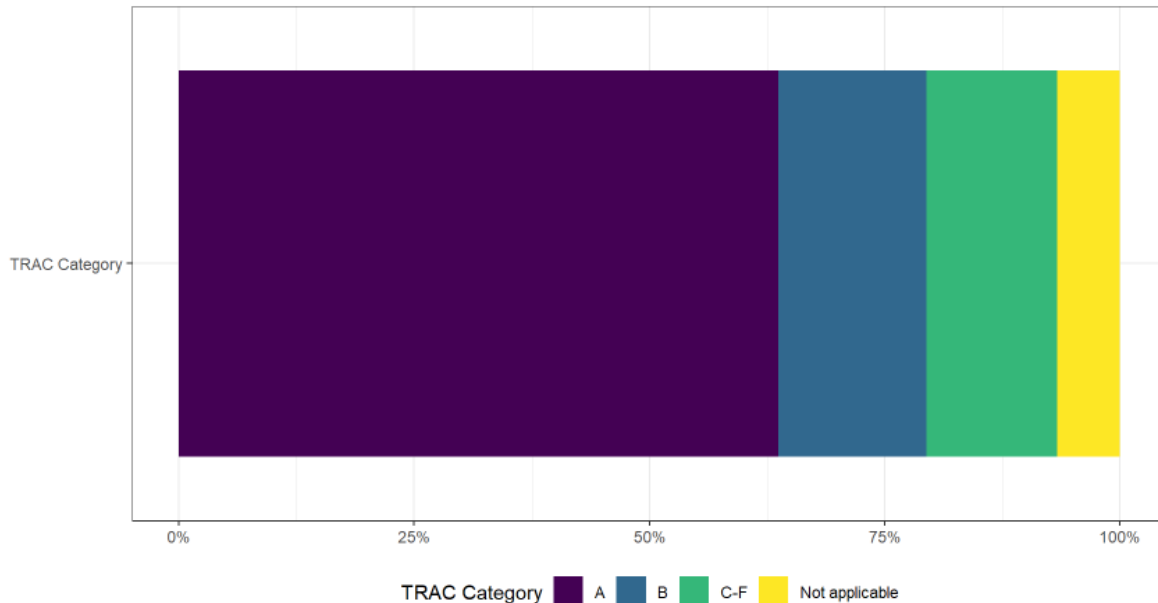
- The responses were heavily dominated by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Many of the other types of organisation are likely to respond differently to HEIs, and as the number of responses from each of the other types of organisation were much lower, this made it difficult to isolate them without disclosing individual responses.
- **The rest of these slides will therefore only look at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Public Research Institutes (PRIs) - the two most similar sub groups.**
- Additionally, due to a lower response rate from postgraduate researchers (PGRs) who are likely to have more differing responses compared to the other levels of researcher, **the remaining slides will also exclude postgraduate researchers (PGRs).**
- The resulting sample covers **81% of all responses, and we will separately analyse the remaining researchers** outside of this pack, to ensure all survey responses feed into BEIS R&D policy. For example using text analysis methods to identify key themes.



8,416 researchers from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Public Research Institutes (PRIs) responded

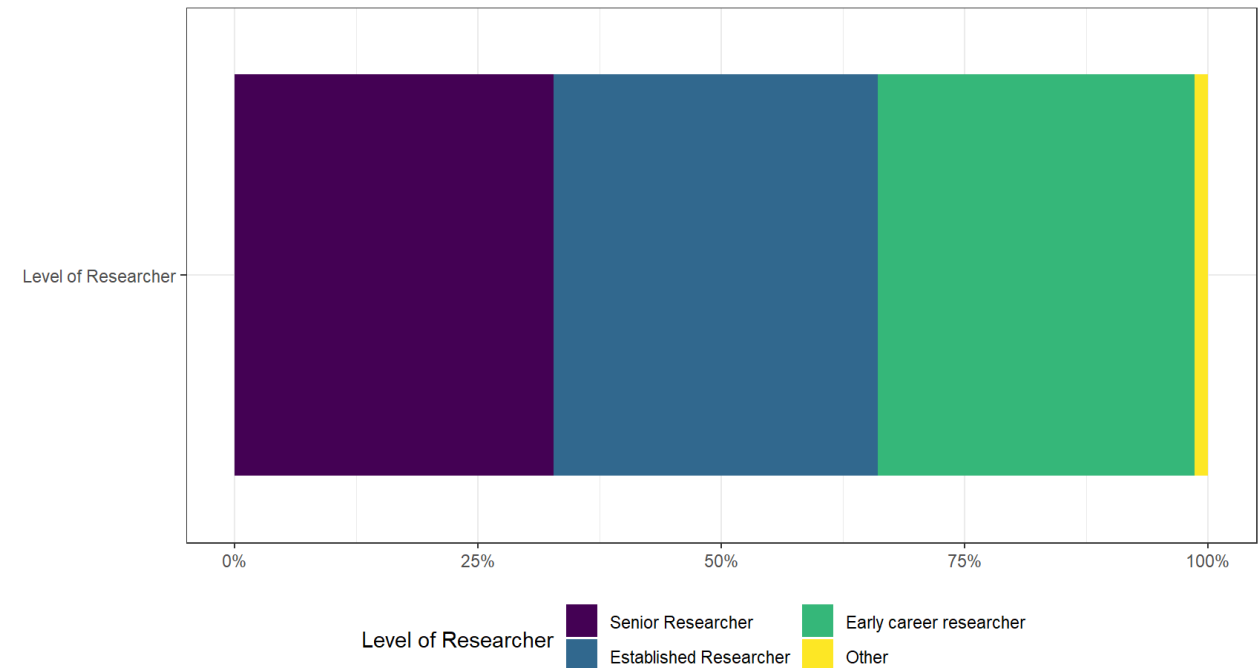
This slide pack presents data on respondents employed in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and Public Research Institutes (PRIs). These categories provide a sufficiently homogenous population for meaningful analysis.

Six in ten (64%) of the respondents were from 'research-intensive' universities (where 20% or more of total university income was research income¹)



n = 8416

Researchers of all levels of experience responded to the survey.



n = 8416

1. There are 6 TRAC groups, which HEIs are classified into based on: courses taught, % income from research and total income. A list of all institutions' groups and criteria in full is available at: <https://www.trac.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Annex-4.1b-TRAC-Peer-groups-2017-18.pdf>

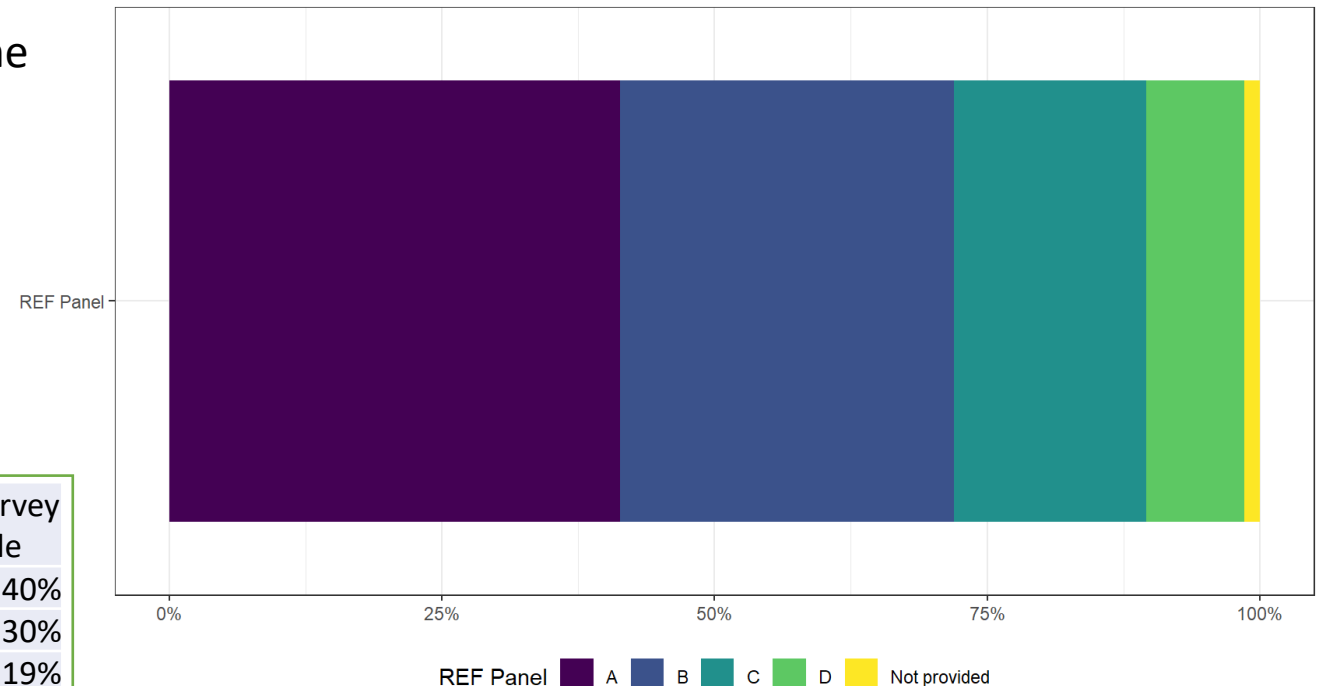
Over 70% of respondents were from highly numeric and health-based disciplines¹

Throughout these slides, we analyse data by discipline using the Research Excellence Framework Panels:

- A: Medicine, health and life sciences;
- B: Physical sciences, engineering and mathematics;
- C: Social sciences; and
- D: Arts and humanities.

Here we compare Higher Education (HE) Stats Authority data from 2018/19 with our sample of HE researchers and see a broad balance but with Panels C and D underrepresented:

REF Panel	HESA population	HE survey sample
A	34%	40%
B	26%	30%
C	22%	19%
D	18%	10%



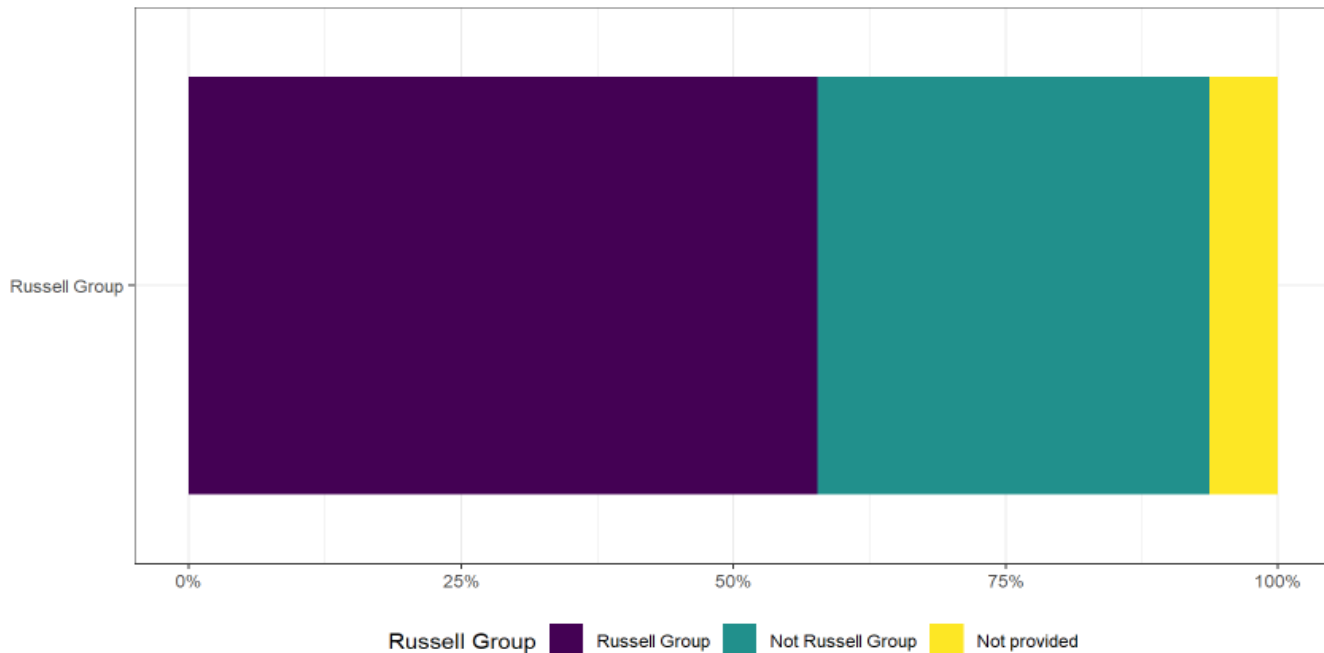
n = 8416

A greater proportion of researchers from STEM subjects (Panels A and B) responded to the survey than seen in population estimates which, as this survey found out, could be due to STEM disciplines being more impacted by social distancing and receiving higher levels of funding which was deemed at risk, compared with other disciplines

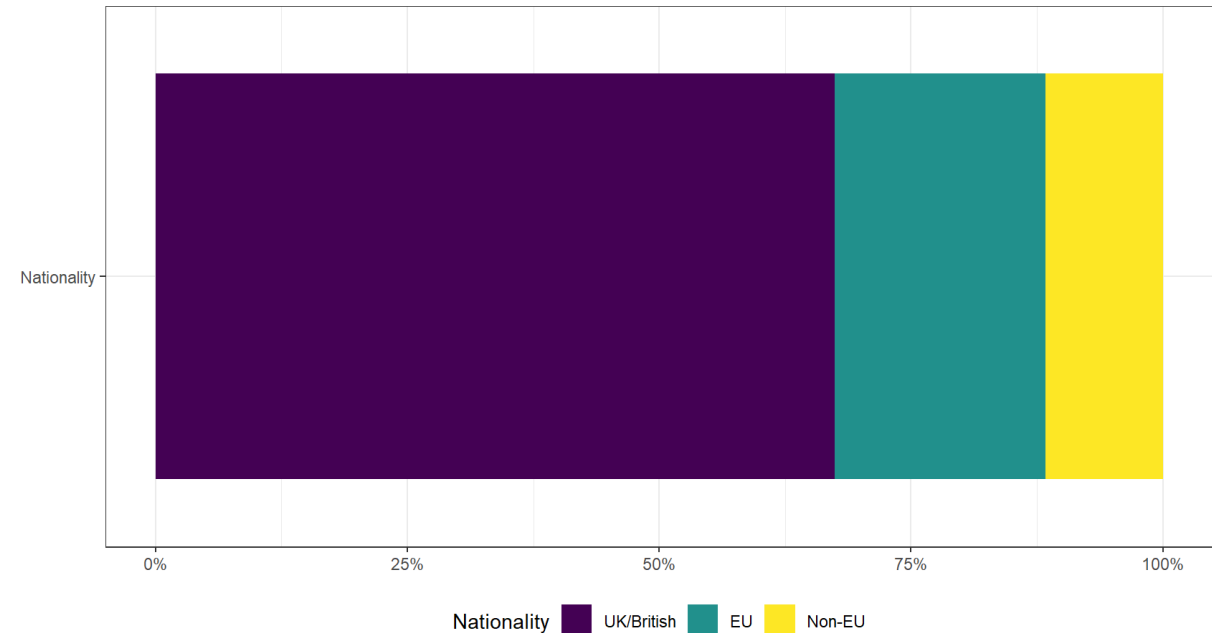
1. The 70% is all subjects under REF Panels A and B. Panel A includes medicine, health, psychology, biology and agriculture; Panel B includes maths, chemistry, physics, engineering and computer science. For the full taxonomy see: <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1402/all-panel-members-v29-100720b.pdf>

46% of respondents were responsible for a team of researchers

And **60%** of the sample are researchers in Russell Group institutions.



n = 8416

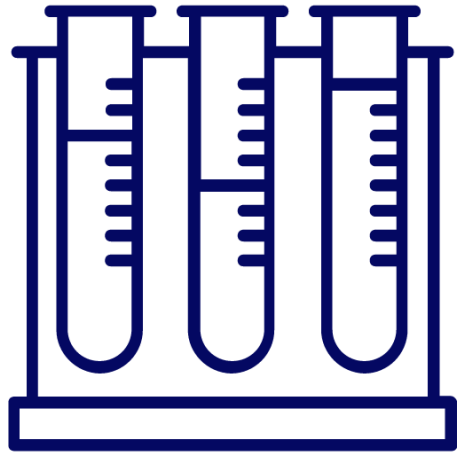


n = 7175

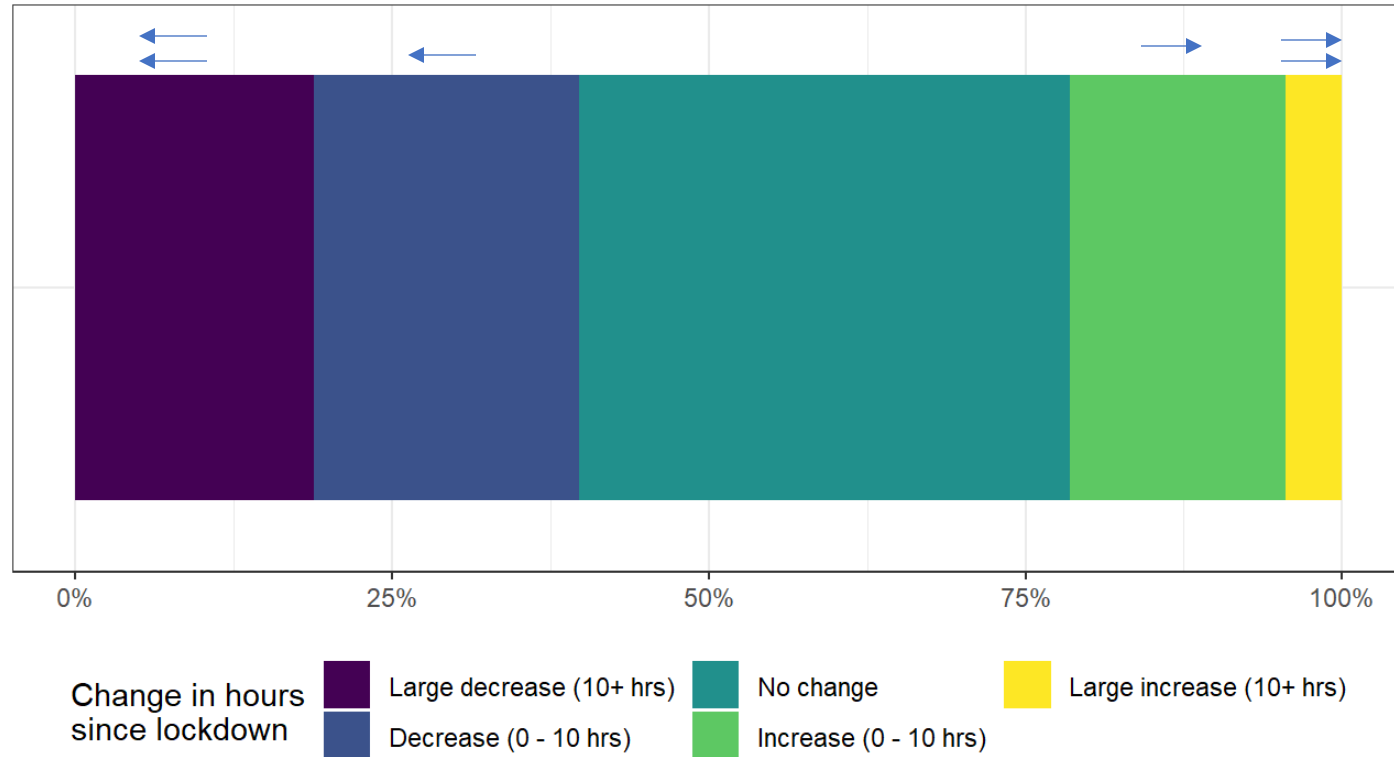
The survey results offer insight for the UK's international and domestic R&D talent policy - 67% identified as UK/British.

1. The 70% is all subjects under REF Panels A and B. Panel A includes medicine, health, psychology, biology and agriculture; Panel B includes maths, chemistry, physics, engineering and computer science. For the full taxonomy see: <https://www.ref.ac.uk/media/1402/all-panel-members-v29-100720b.pdf>

How have research activities been affected by Covid-19 since the lockdown?



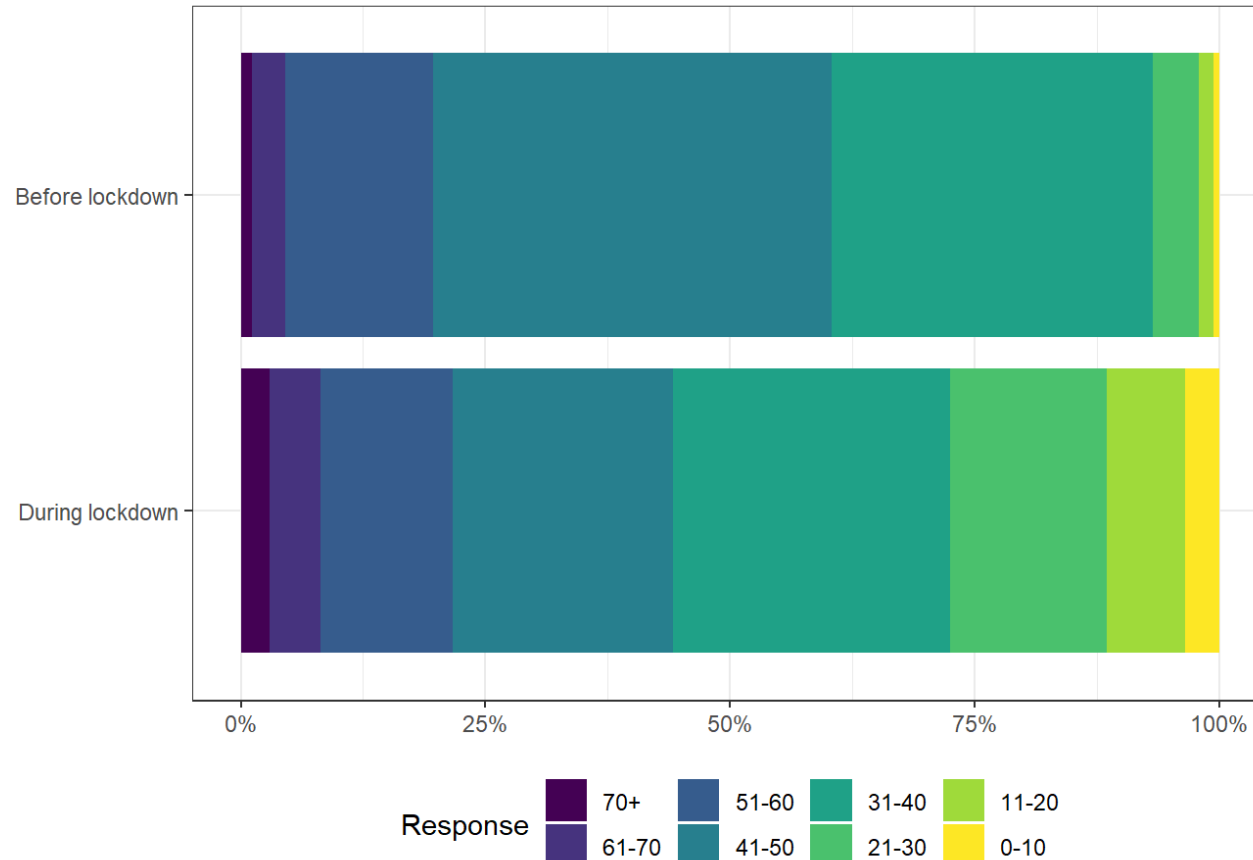
Average researcher working hours have decreased only slightly



n = 7320

- Before the lockdown, **full time** respondents reported working an average of **44 hours** per week whilst **part time** reported an average of **30 hours** per week.
- Since the lockdown has been implemented **full time** respondents reported working an average of **40** hours per week whilst **part time** respondents reported an average of **28** hours per week.
- Overall this is a 10% reduction in research hours worked but this chart shows increases/decreases in hours varied a lot by researcher.

More researchers are working very few or very many hours, with fewer in the middle ground



n = 7367; 7325

89% of the sample worked full time

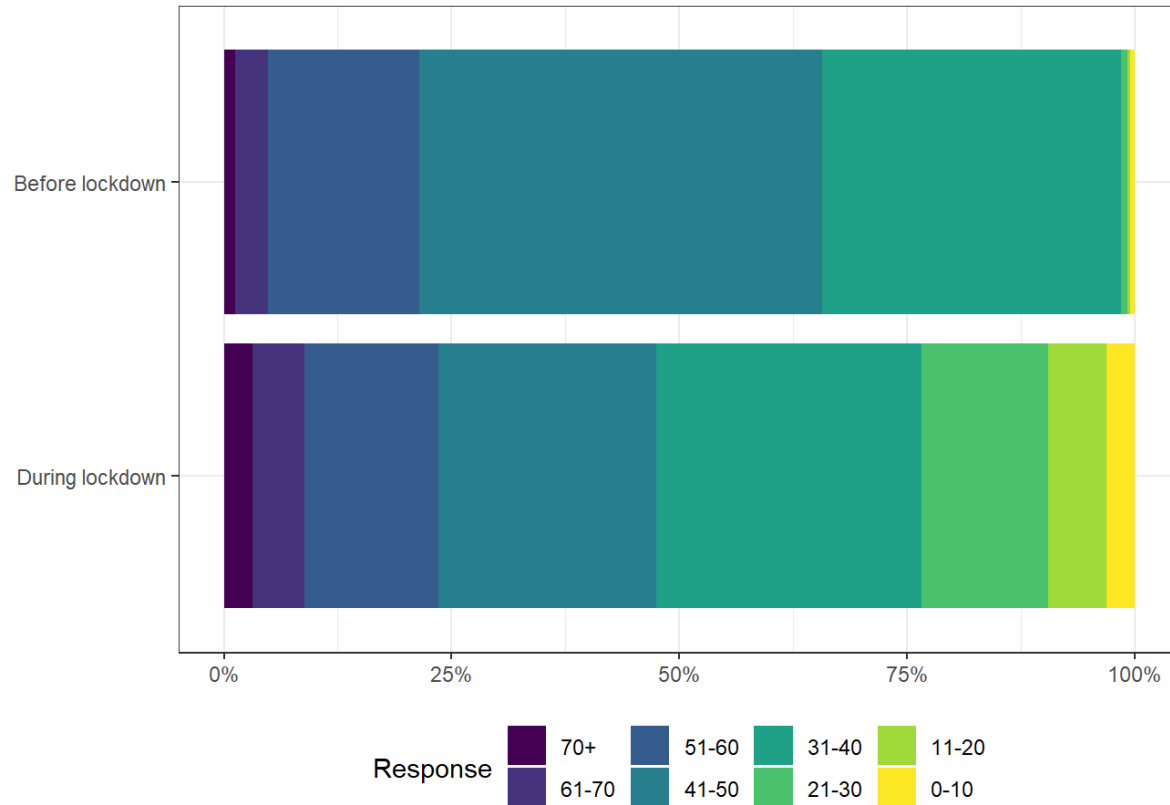
While overall average working hours have decreased, the proportion of researchers working over 60 hours per week has increased from 7% to 12%

On the other hand, the proportion of researchers working under 20 hours per week has increased from 2% to 9%

The proportion working 41-50 hours per week has decreased from 37% to 21%

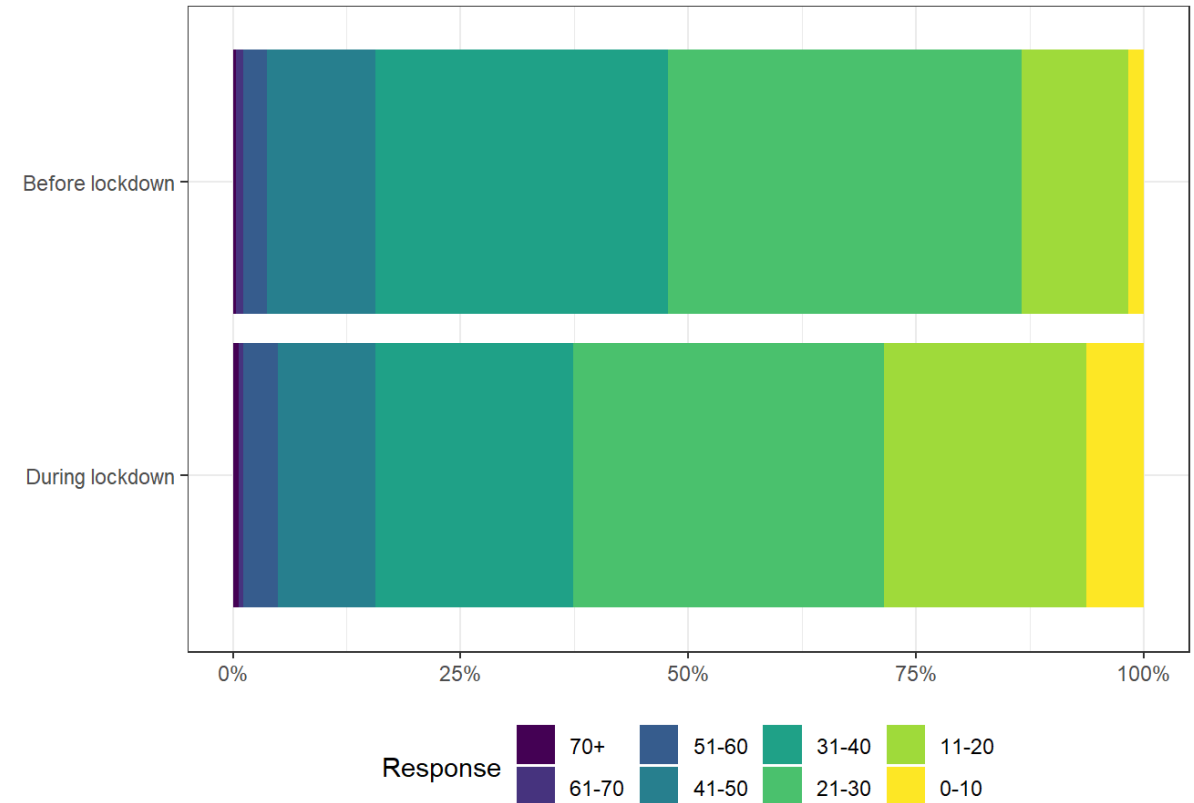
This “extremization” of working hours was true for both full and part time researchers, though more so for full-time

Full-time researchers



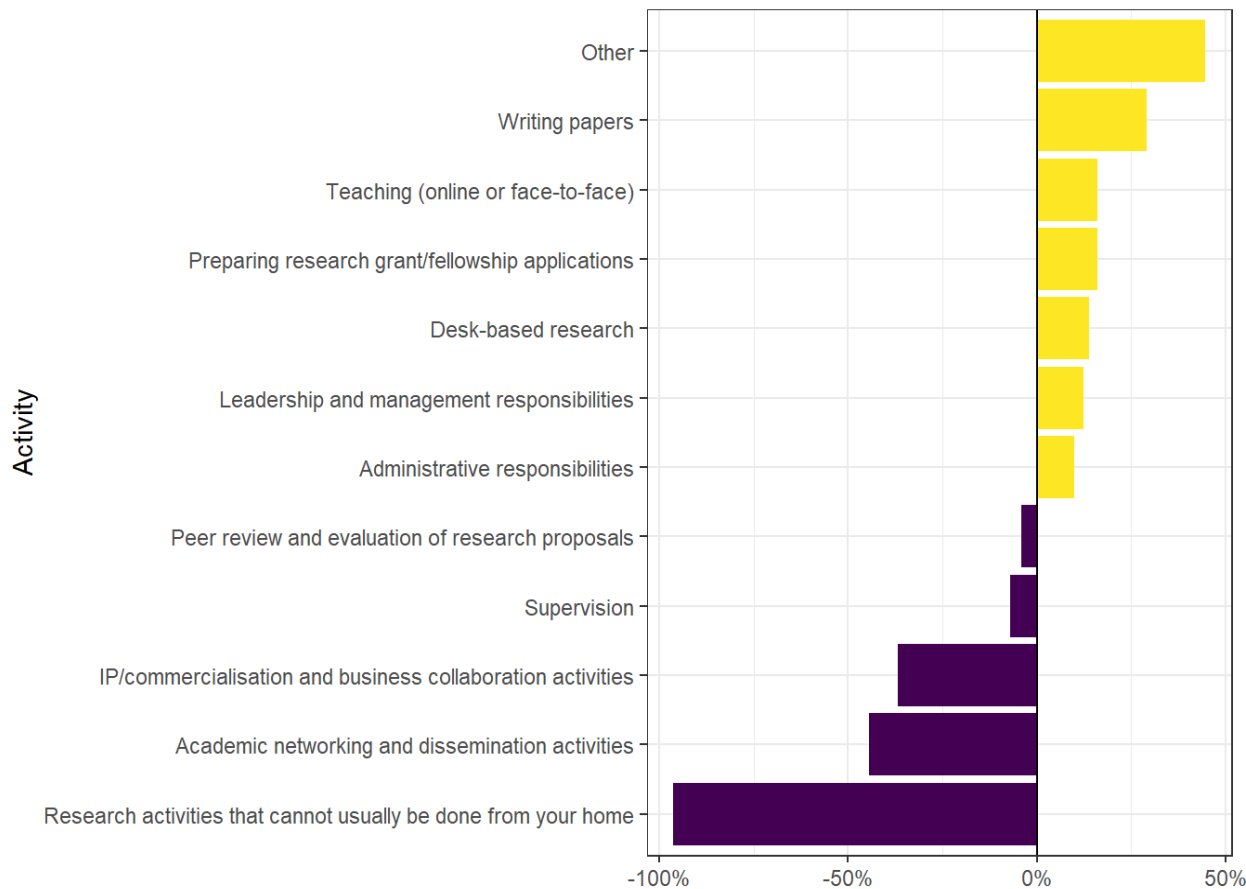
n = 6501; 6462

Part-time researchers



n = 768; 765

How researchers spend their working time has changed considerably since lockdown began



There has been a 96% decrease in the time researchers spend doing research in facilities such as laboratories and archives (which cannot be done from home). Prior to lockdown this occupied 19% of the average researcher's time (just **over xx hours**)¹

Researchers are also spending far less time doing academic networking and dissemination (from 6% to 3% of the week, a drop of 1 hour)

Researchers are spending an extra xx hours per week writing papers (11% to 15% of the week), **xx** extra hours teaching (12% to 15%), **xx extra hours** preparing grant and fellowship applications (7% to 8%), and **xx extra hours** doing desk based activities.

Average time spent on supervision decreased by 7% (13 minutes per week)

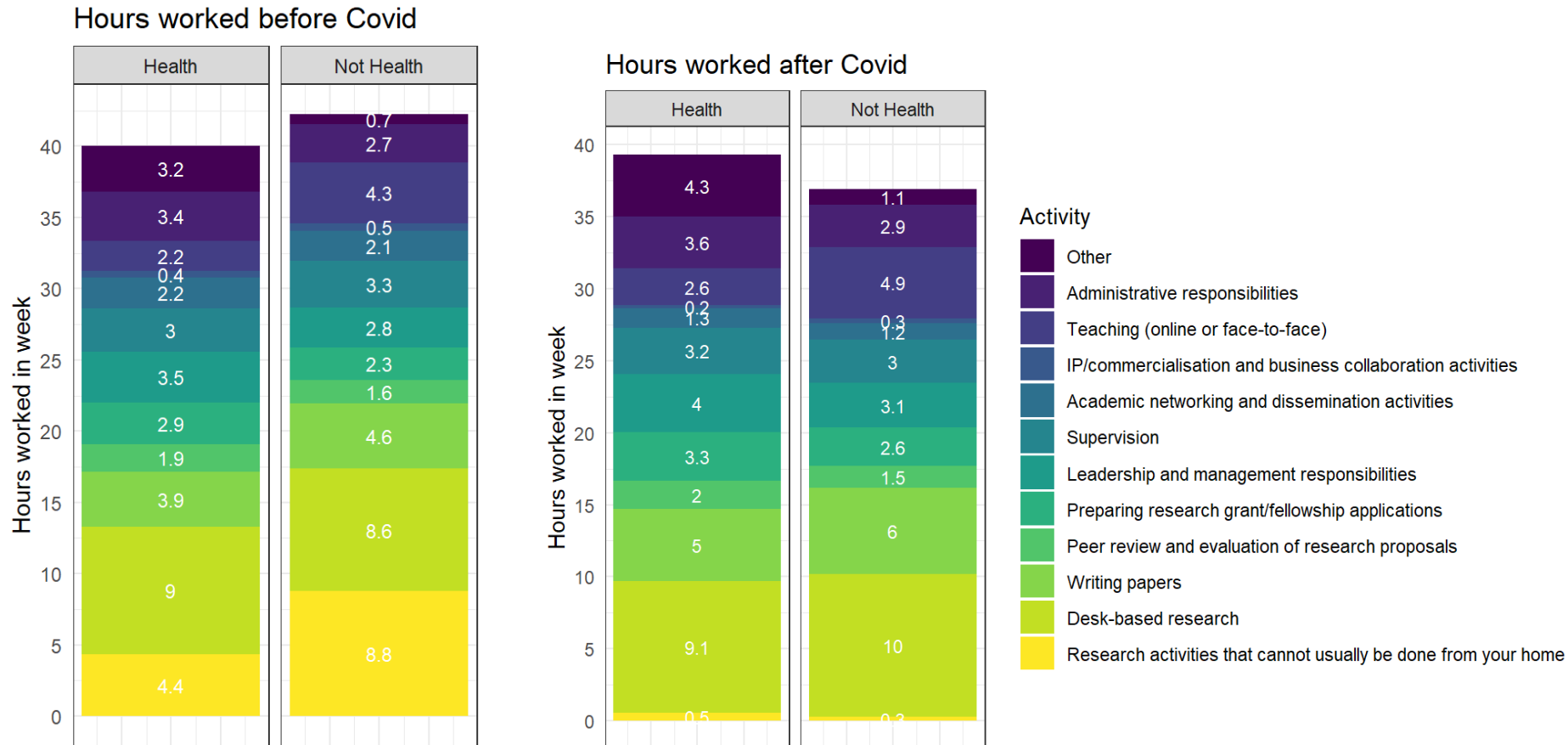
1. As with all other figures on this slide, this covers both full and part time researchers
2. Included in "other" (using free text responses) were "training and professional development activity", "clinical work", "updates from colleagues" and "knowledge exchange activities"

Most of the decrease in hours is due to activities which can't usually be done from home (experiments, fieldwork, archive access, etc)



No activity has increased by more than 2 hours on average, with writing papers and desk-based research being the only activities to increase by over an hour on average

Changes in how time is spent before and after Covid are different for health disciplines



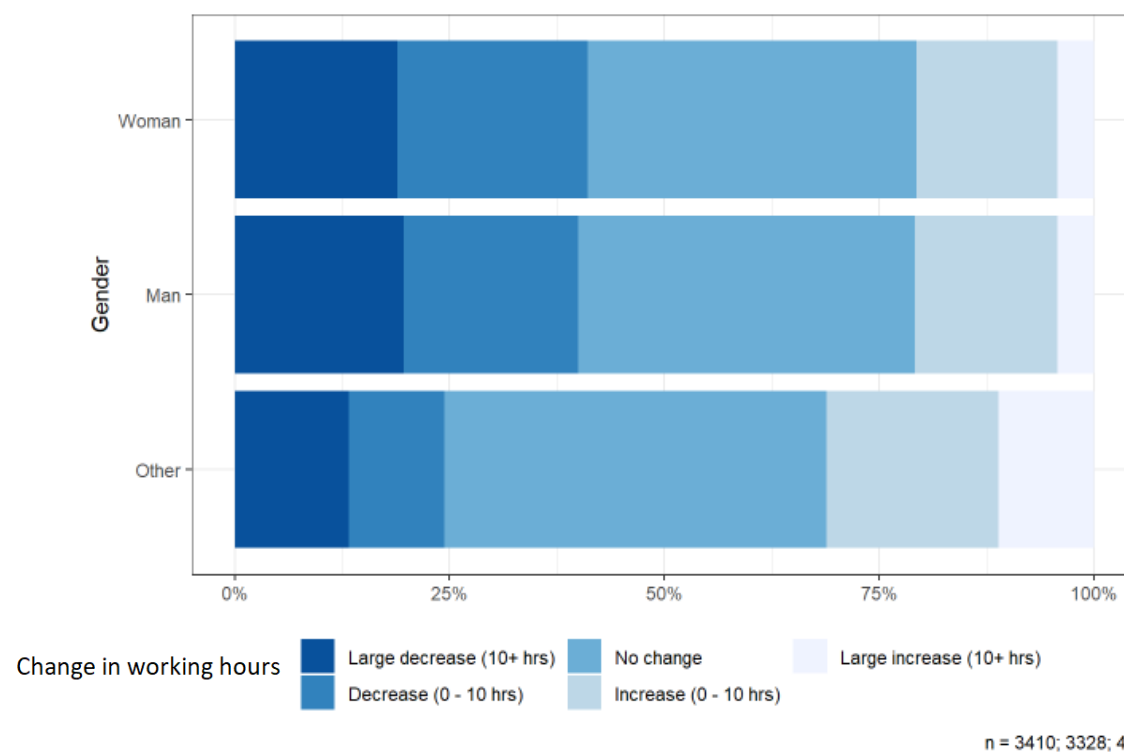
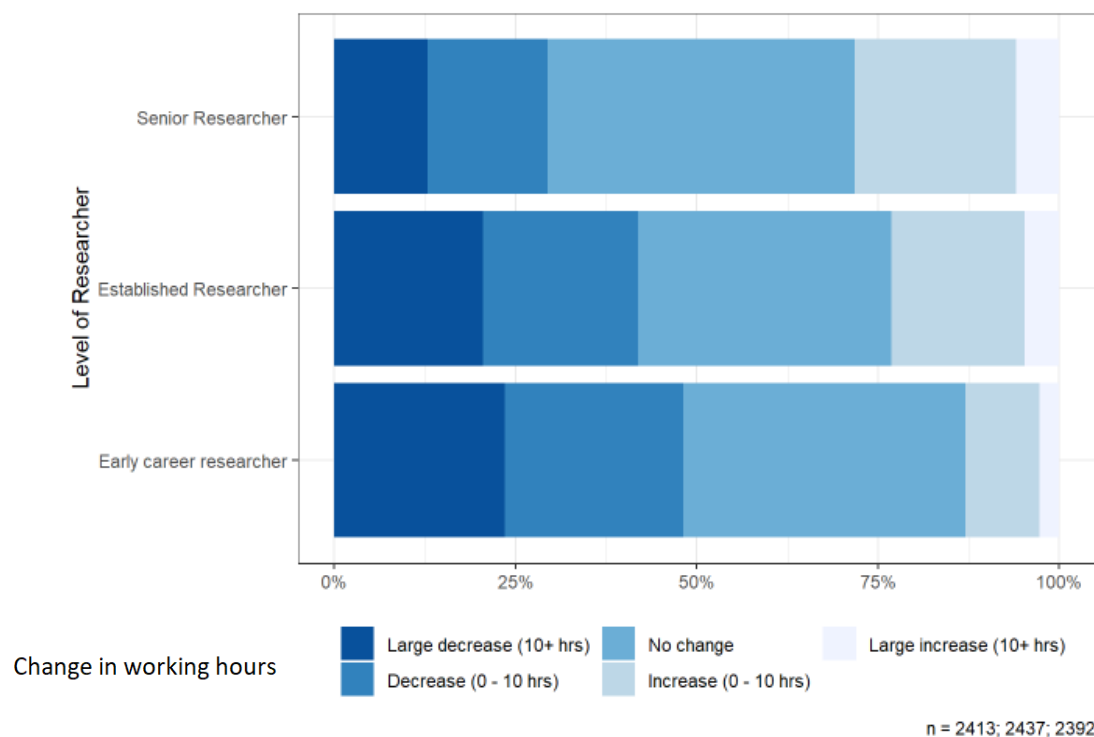
The length of the working week decreased for both groups, but more so for non-health disciplines (13% against 2% decrease)

“Research activities that cannot usually be done from your home” decreased for both groups, but occupied half as much time beforehand for health disciplines (4.4 hrs against 8.8 hrs)

Changes in working hours vary by researcher seniority

Early careers researchers were more likely to report a decrease in working hours whilst senior researchers were most likely to report an increase.

Men and women appear to be experiencing the same changes in working hours. They have also reported the same level of disruption in capacity due to caring responsibilities.

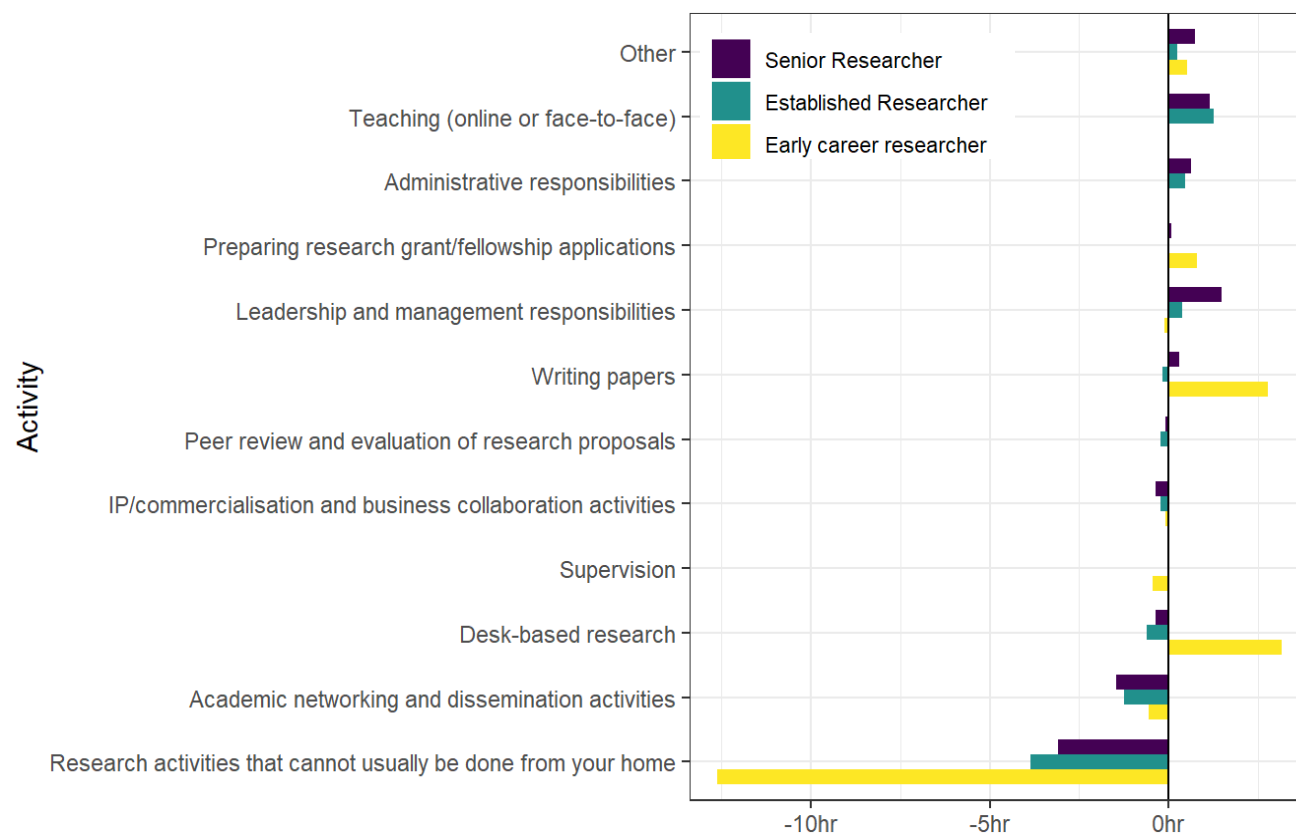


Changes in how time is spent vary by researcher seniority

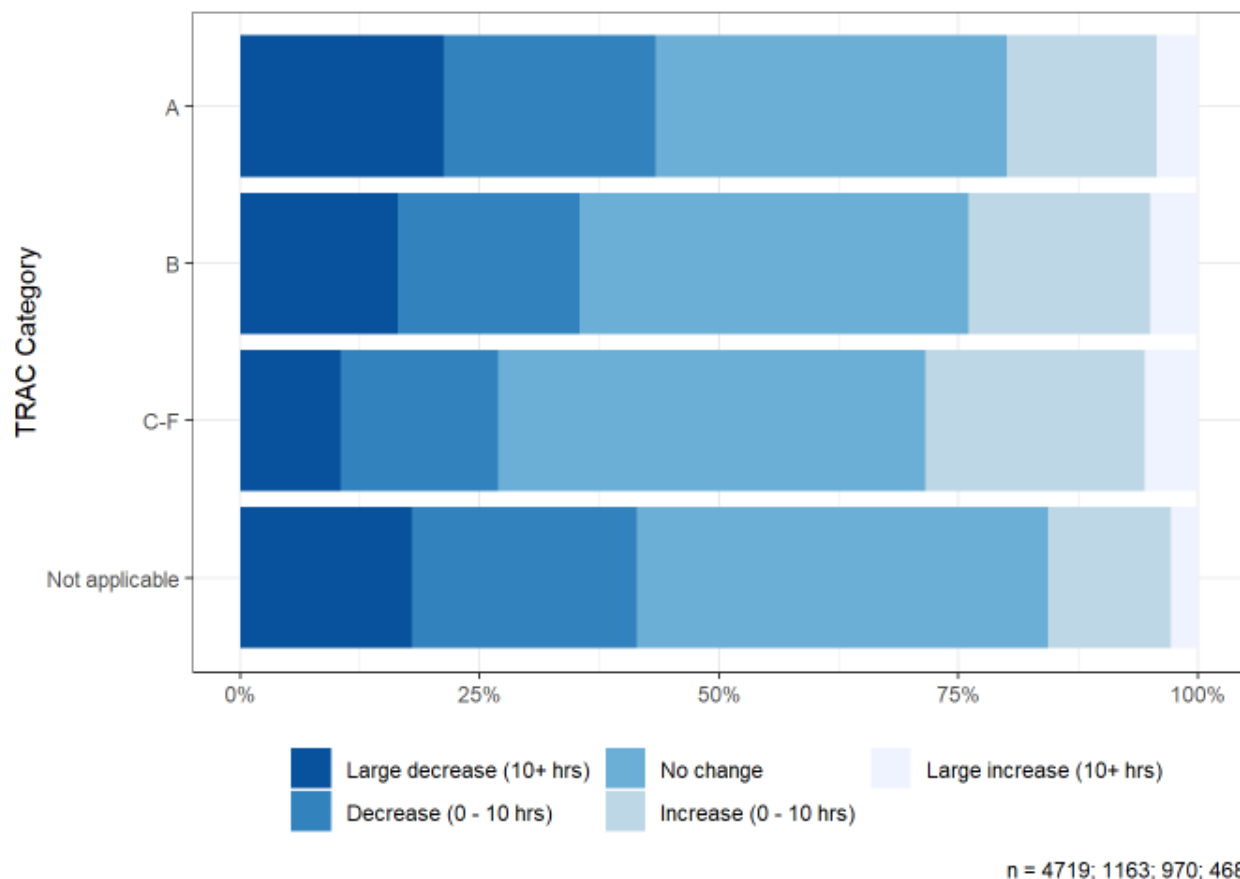
Early careers researchers appear to be the hardest hit by the lockdown, with a reduction in over 12 hours for “research activities that cannot usually be done from your home”

More senior researchers carry out a wider variety of activities, some of which increased during lockdown (teaching, and leadership and management responsibilities)

Though the absolute value varied (most likely a reflection of the proportion of time spent on research activities at different career stages), the % drop for “research activities that cannot usually be done from your home” is close to 100% for all levels of seniority



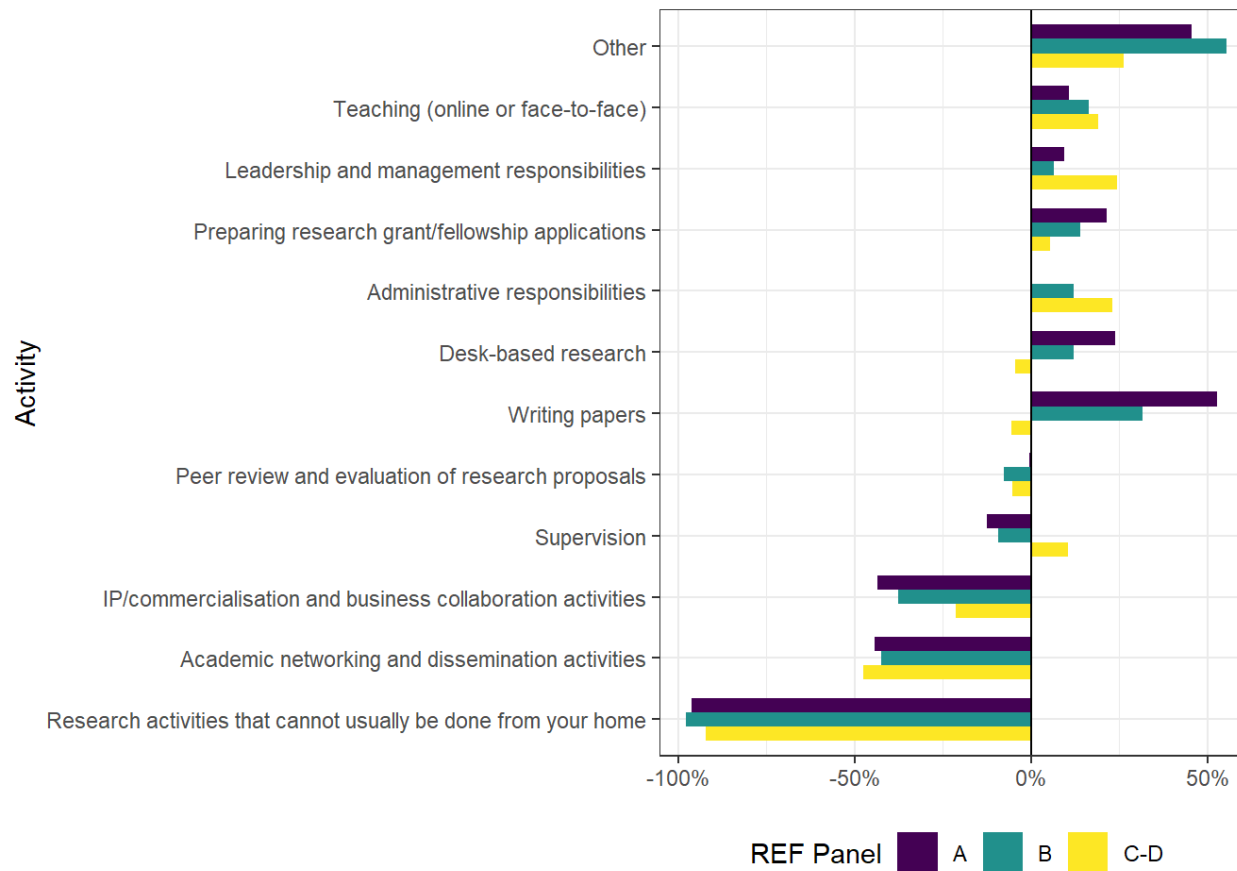
Researchers in the most research intensive universities (TRAC A) reported the biggest decrease in working hours



Researchers were asked to indicate the number of hours in their working week before and after lockdown (23rd March)

Working hours for researchers decreased more and increased less the more research intensive the university employer was. I.e. Researchers in TRAC group C – F reported smaller decreases and biggest increases in hours compared with the more research intensive universities in TRAC A and TRAC B peer groups.

Some changes in activity vary by REF panel



Of all the activities captured, writing papers varied the most by REF Panel¹, with an increase in over 50% for researchers in Panel A and a slight decrease for researchers in Panels C & D

The increase in writing papers seen in REF panels A and B could be due to disciplinary differences in types of research outputs, of which writing papers is only one

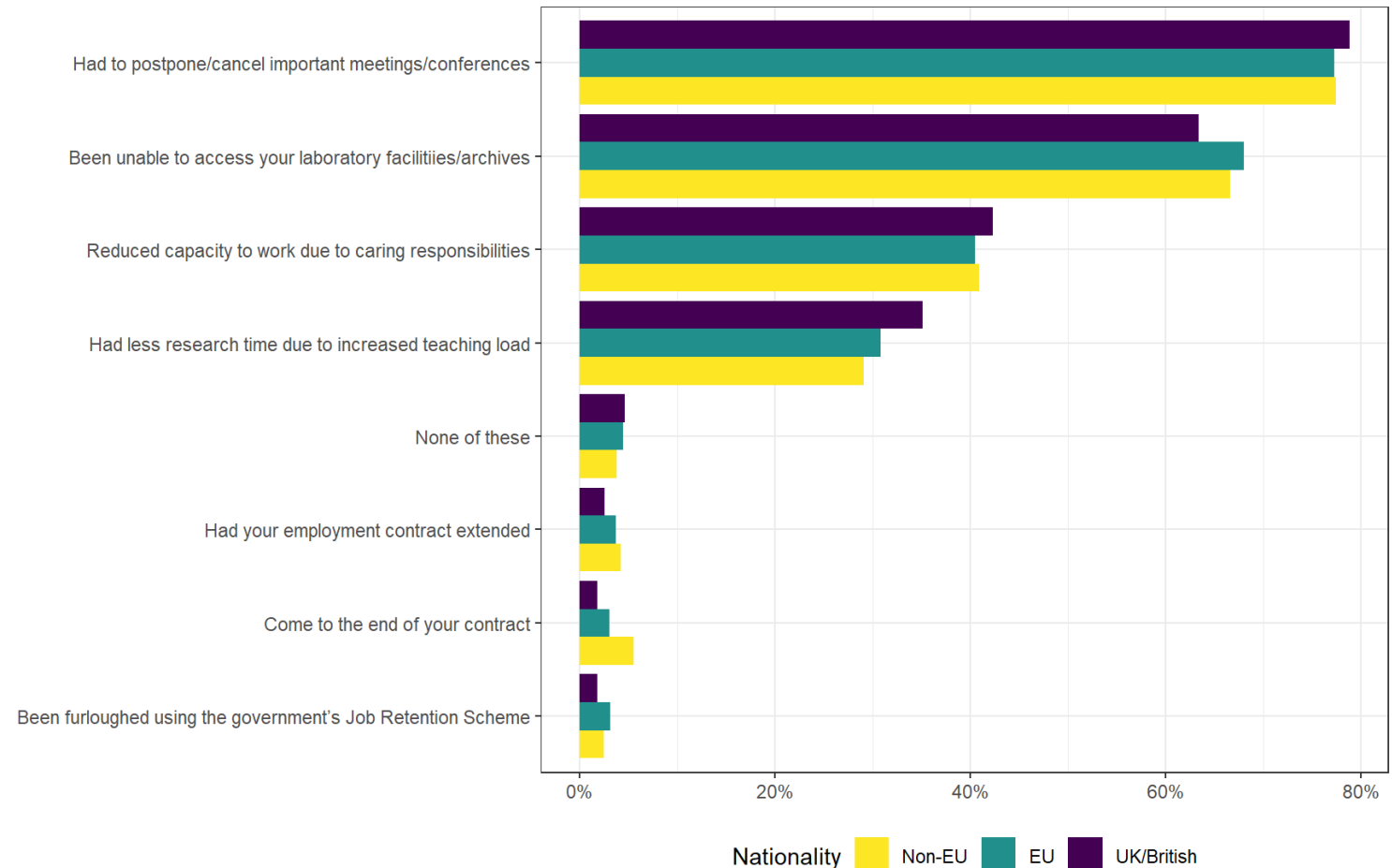
1. REF Panels are four overarching groupings of disciplines (or “Units of Assessment”). For the full taxonomy: <https://www.ref.ac.uk/2014/panels/unitsofassessment/>

Researchers were asked “have you been affected in any of these ways since 23 March 2020, when ‘lockdown’ came into effect?”

There were four key barriers to research activity in lockdown:

1. Eight in ten of all researchers cited 'Conference and meeting cancellation'.
2. Six in ten reported being unable to access laboratory facilities/ archives.
3. Four in ten reduced research capacity due to caring responsibilities.
4. Over three in ten had to reduce research to manage an increased teaching load.

This chart shows that none of these barriers varied greatly by the nationality of researcher.



n = 833; 1491; 4800

Decreases in future funding opportunities and feeling that their job is under threat is more common in early career researchers

Researchers were asked “to what extent have you experienced the following disruptions to your research, since 23 March 2020..”

Research has been delayed for most respondents across all levels of seniority

Far fewer early career researchers have been spending time converting teaching to online delivery

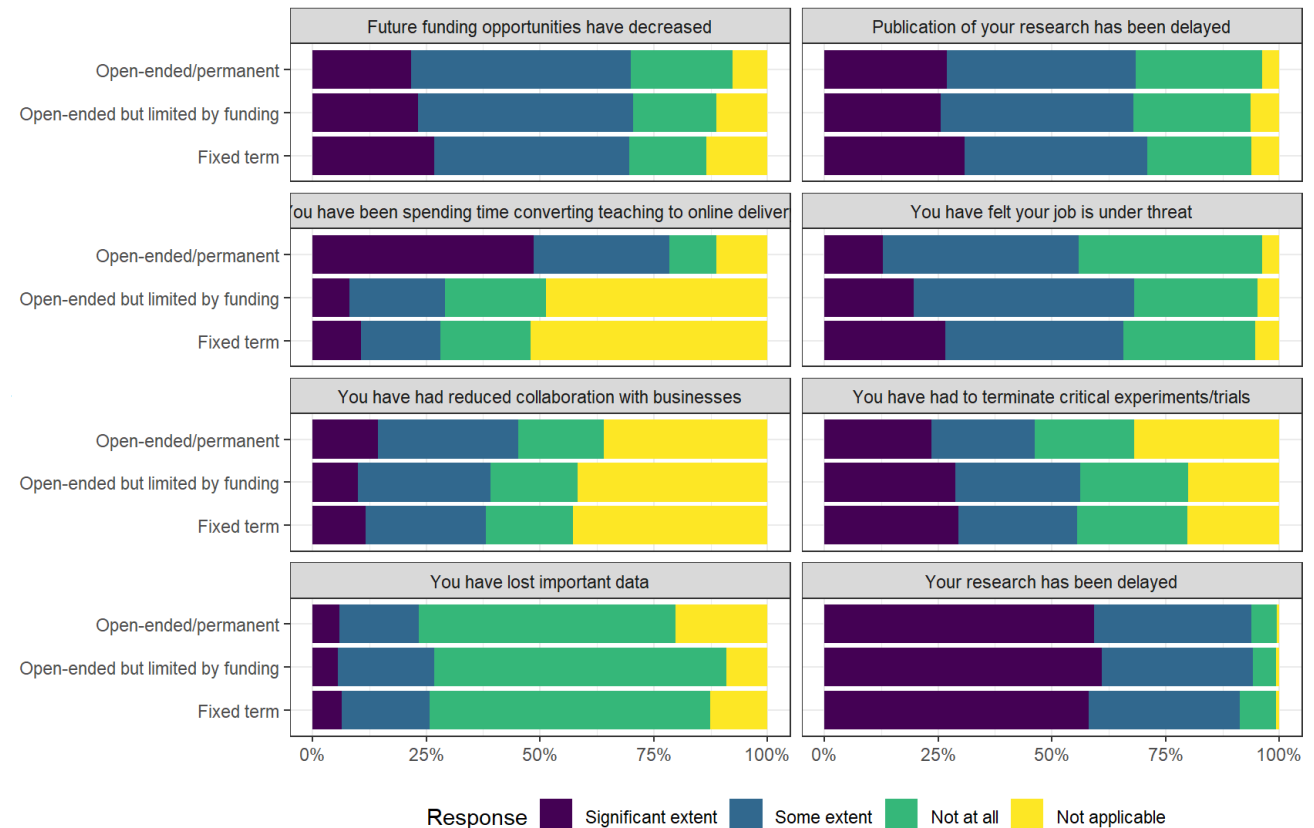
A higher proportion of early career researchers had to terminate critical experiments. Delays in research publication have been experienced less frequently for senior researchers



Researchers on fixed term contracts are more concerned that their job is under threat (65% are concerned to some extent or more)

Additionally 55% of researchers on open ended/permanent contracts have felt that their job is under threat to some or a significant extent

Over 75% of researchers on open ended/permanent contracts have spent time converting teaching material for online delivery, compared to 28% of researchers on fixed term contracts and open contracts but limited by funding. This is likely to reflect the dual research and teaching roles of permanent academic researchers.



Researchers reported lack of access to lab and archives as the biggest challenge

A thematic analysis of a random sample of 200 free text responses¹ to the question "What has been most challenging about sustaining your research since 23 March 2020, when 'lockdown' came into effect?" revealed the following themes:

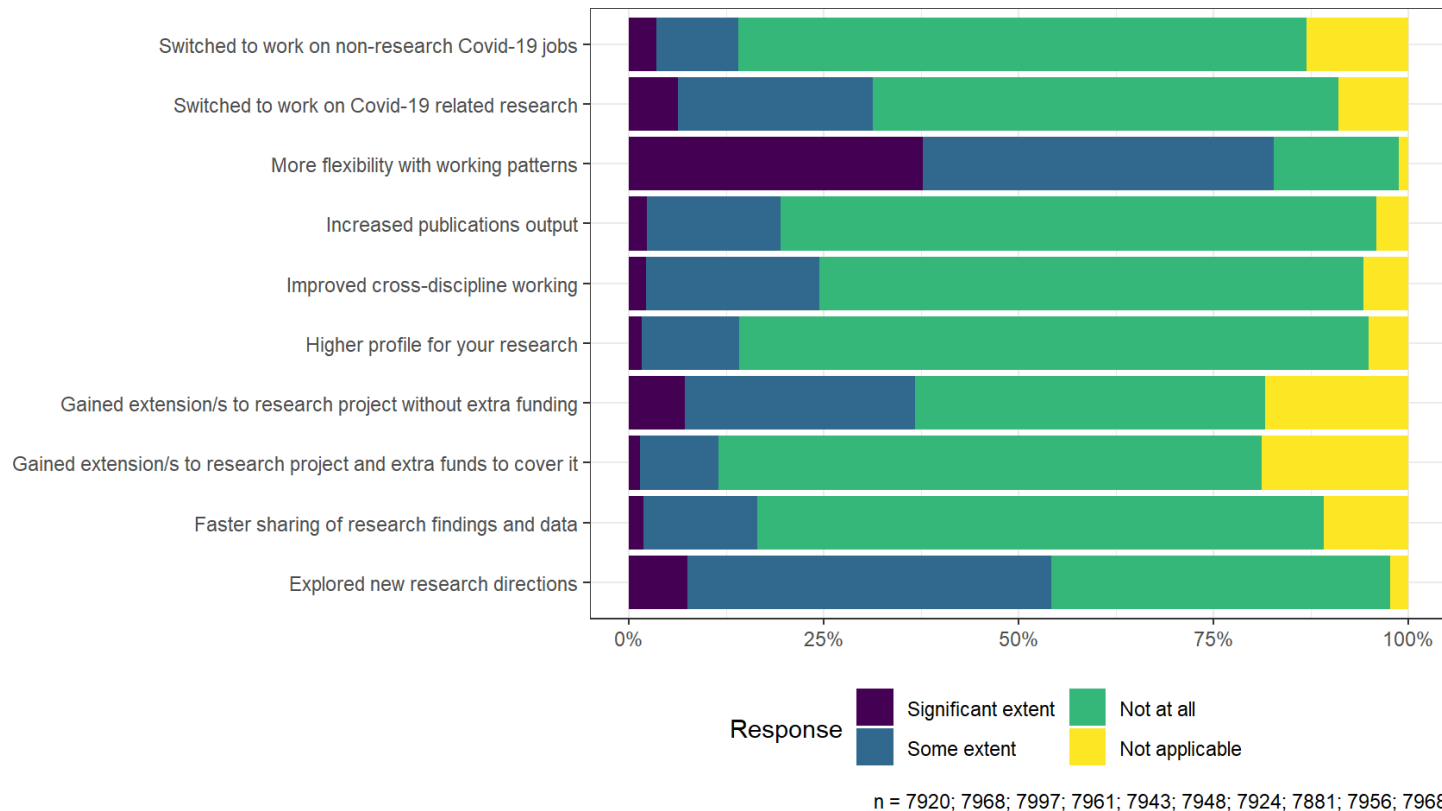
- Sudden withdrawal of access to laboratories, archives and office space has been the biggest challenge. Researchers have lost samples and had to delay data collection.
- The next biggest challenge (almost 25% of the sample) reported was struggling with mental health.
- The uncertainty around the granting of extensions, was a commonly cited challenge.
- Another frequently identified challenge was unsuitable home office conditions, including lack of office equipment such as desks and inability to access software or appropriate IT kit.
- Some researchers also reported caring responsibilities as a barrier to progressing their research from home.

1. This includes researchers of all levels of seniority and responsibility

Are new ways of
working emerging?



Most researchers have experienced an increase in flexible working since lockdown began

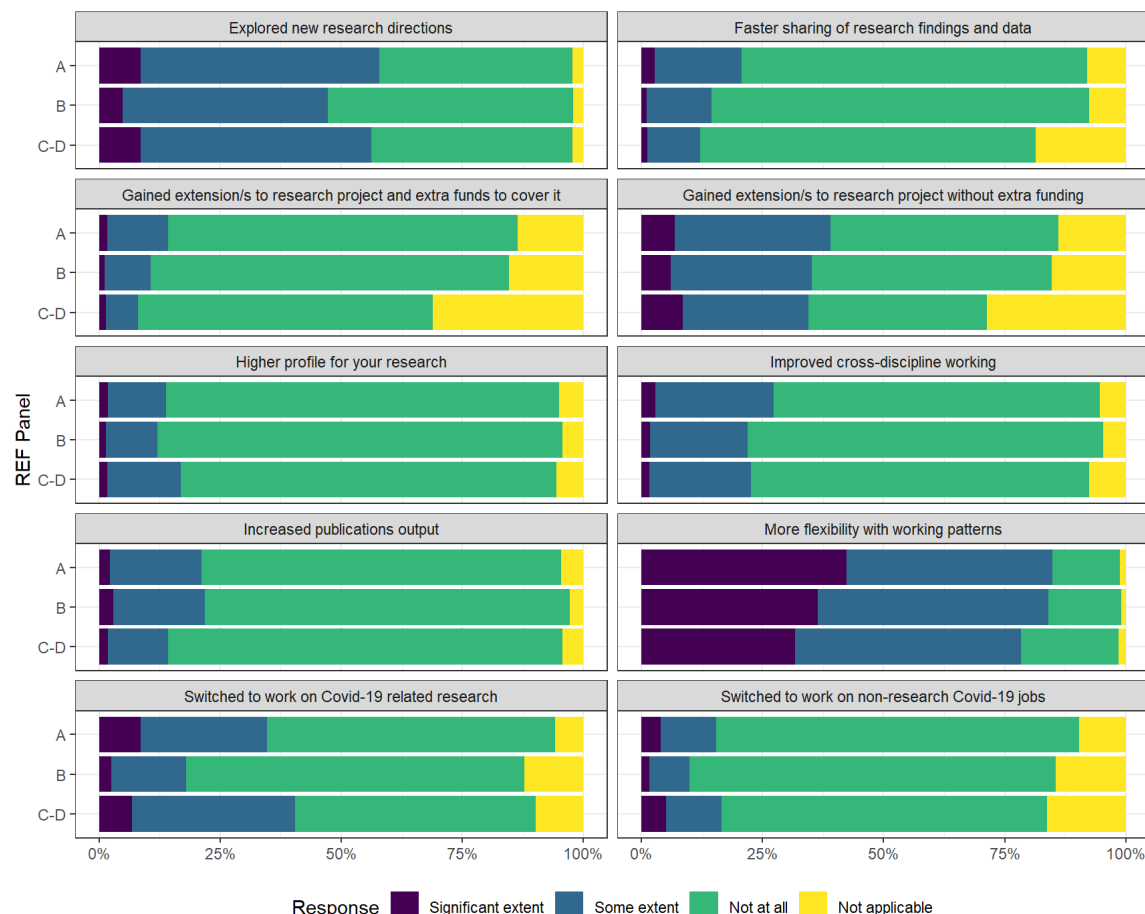


And since lockdown started (23rd March 2020):

- Over 50% of researchers reported exploring new research directions
- Extensions to research projects have been granted, though without extra funds to cover it in more cases than not¹

1. This was before the announcement of the 'Sustaining University Research Expertise' package and UKRI costing-grant extensions

There is some variation by discipline in new ways of working emerging



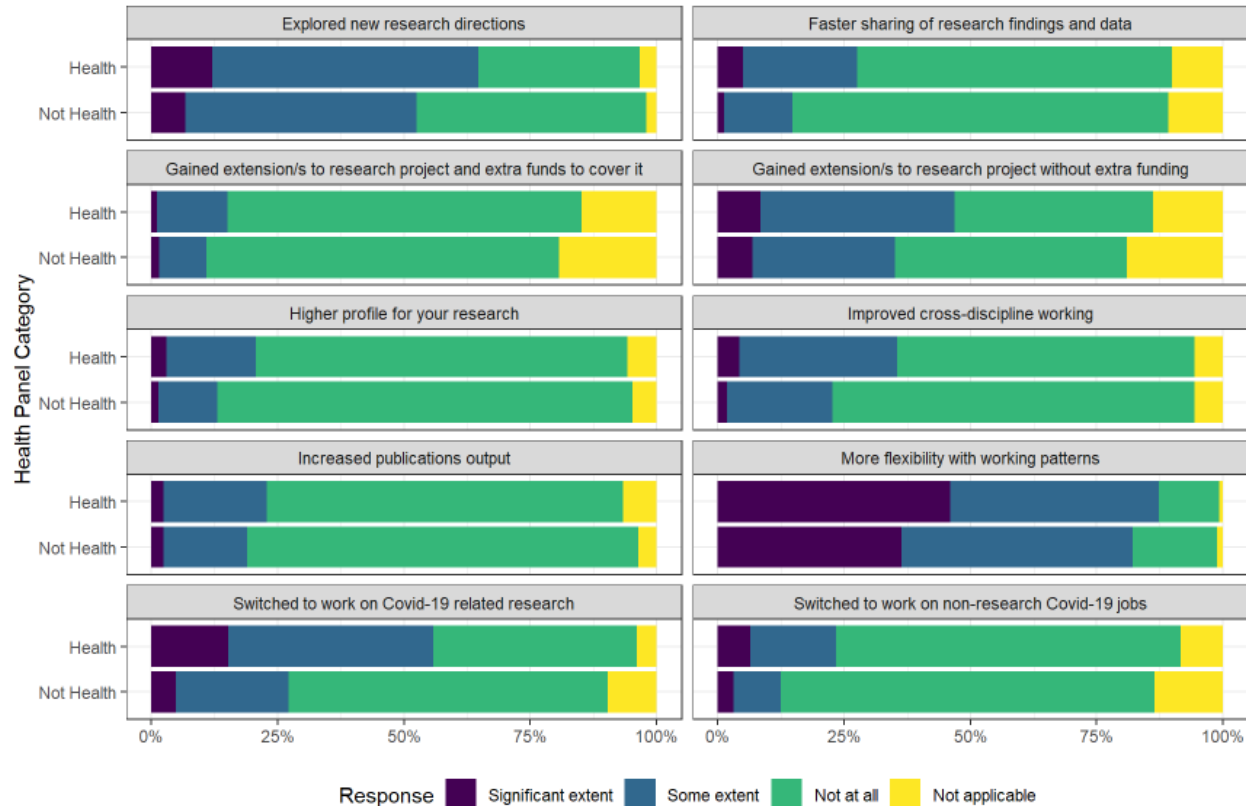
Respondents in disciplines under REF Panel A had the highest proportion of respondents who experienced “faster sharing of research findings and data” (26% compared to 15 and 16% for Panels B and C & D)¹

REF Panel B saw the lowest proportion switched to work on Covid-19 related research (20% compared to 37% and 45% for Panels A and C & D)¹, which may reflect the medical and social interest in Covid-19

1. Excluding responses of “Not applicable”

Many changes are more prevalent in health-related disciplines

“Will need much more collaboration - may need other groups/depts. to do some experiments if we can't get access/training ourselves.”



For all 10 of the categories shown in this plot, researchers in health-related disciplines report experiencing these changes more often (compared to respondents from all other disciplines combined)

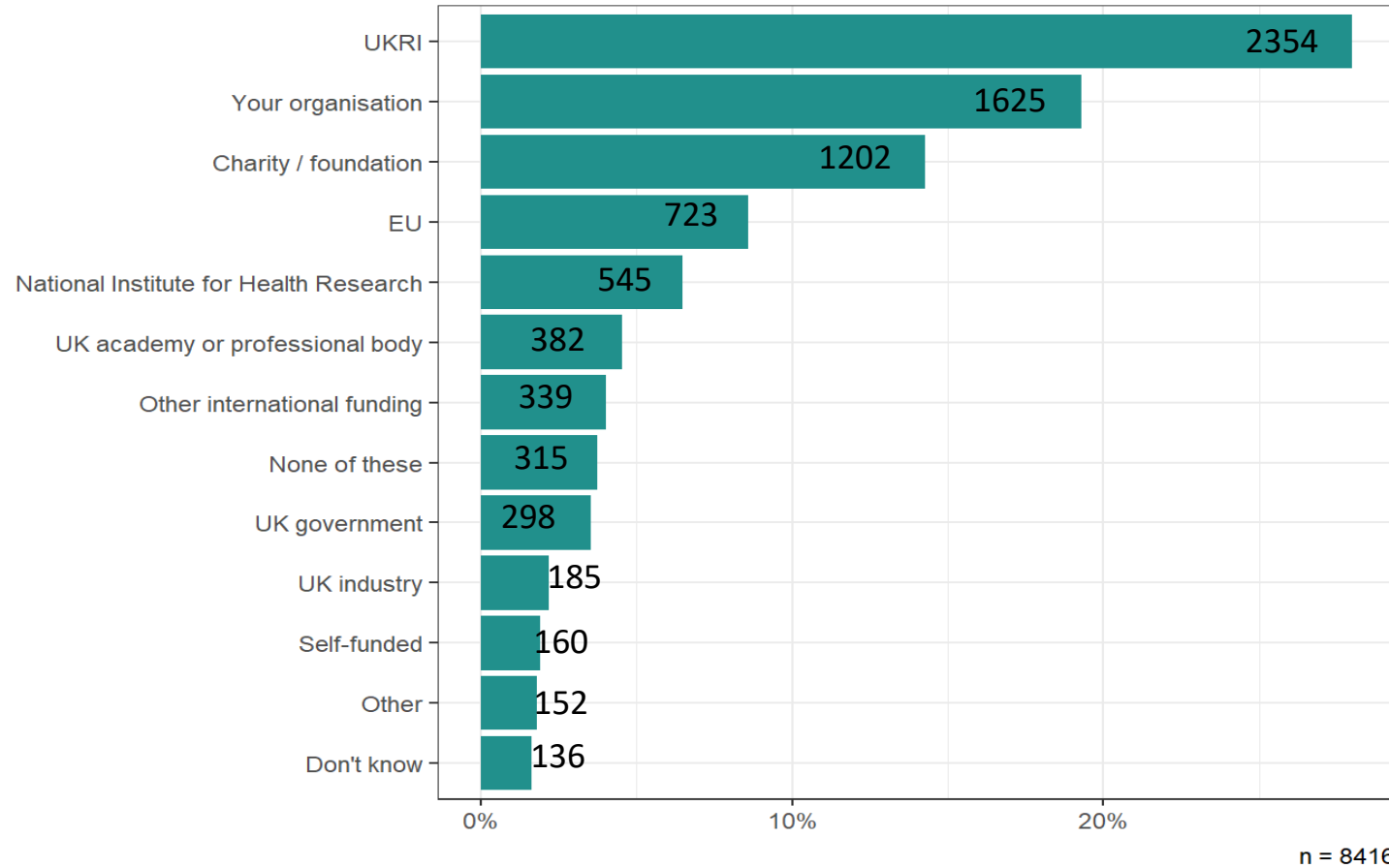
In some cases the difference is narrow (e.g.: Gained extensions to research project and extra funds to cover it)

In other cases the difference is greater (e.g.: Switched to work on Covid-19 related research – perhaps unsurprisingly)

What is the anticipated impact of Covid-19 on research funding?



UKRI was the main source of funding for over a quarter of respondents

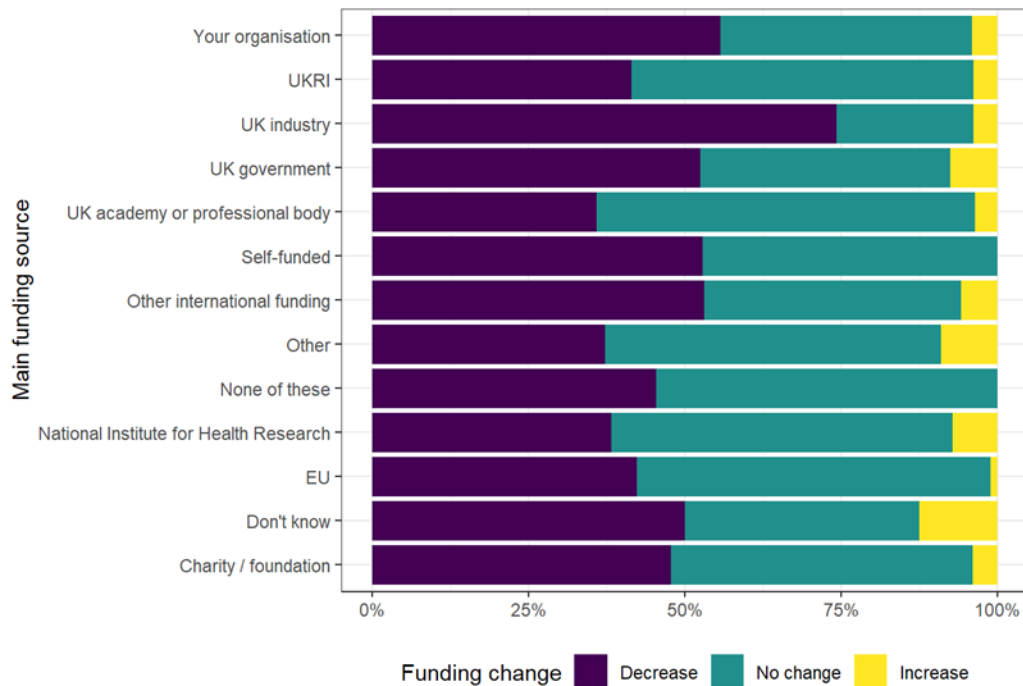


Other prevalent sources of funding included:

- Respondent's organisation (19%),
- Charities and foundations (14%),
- The EU (8%)

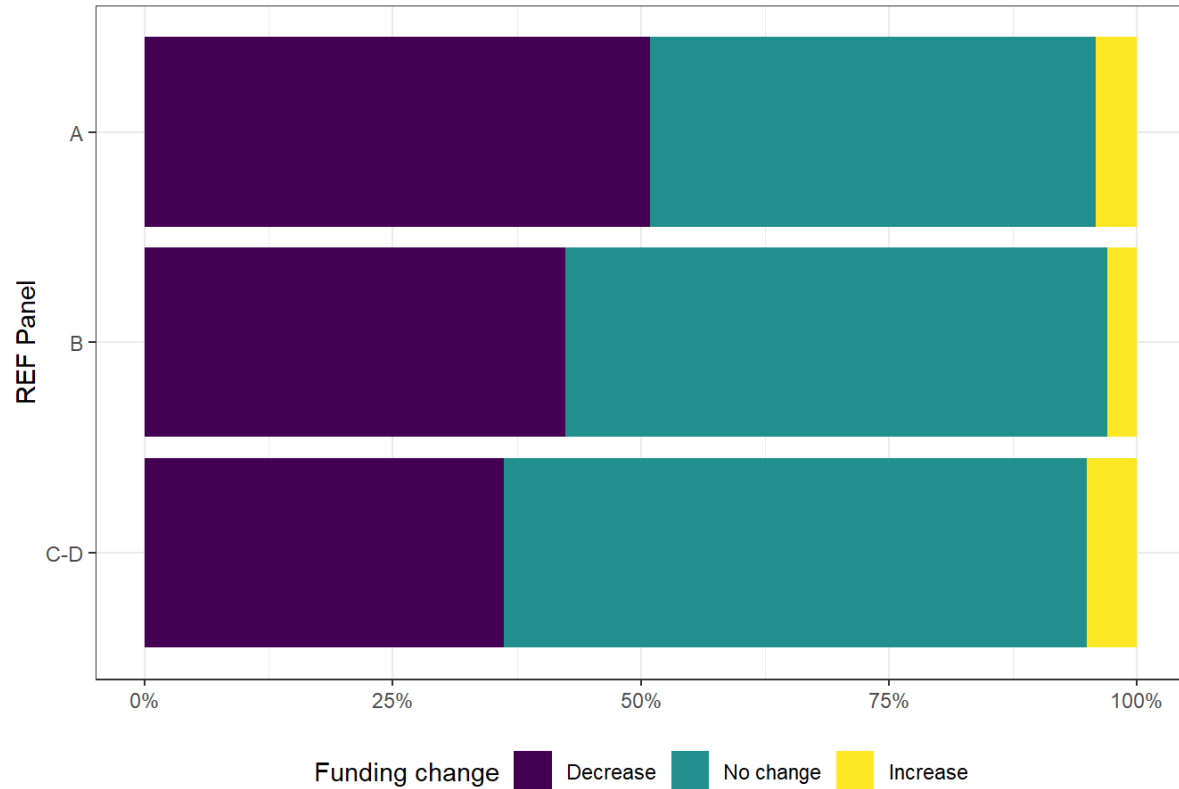
Whilst just over half of researchers did not anticipate their funding to change, 45% anticipated a **decrease**

45% (1666) of respondents anticipated a decrease to their funding over the next year (Mar 2021). 4% (152) anticipated an increase and 51% (1899) did not anticipate a change.



- Researchers funded by UK Industry most frequently reported an anticipate decrease in their funding (70%).
- Slightly over half of self-funded researchers, researchers funding by their organisation, the UK government and other international funding anticipated a decreased to their funding.
- Early career researchers anticipated a decrease in funding slightly less frequently than senior researchers and established researchers.

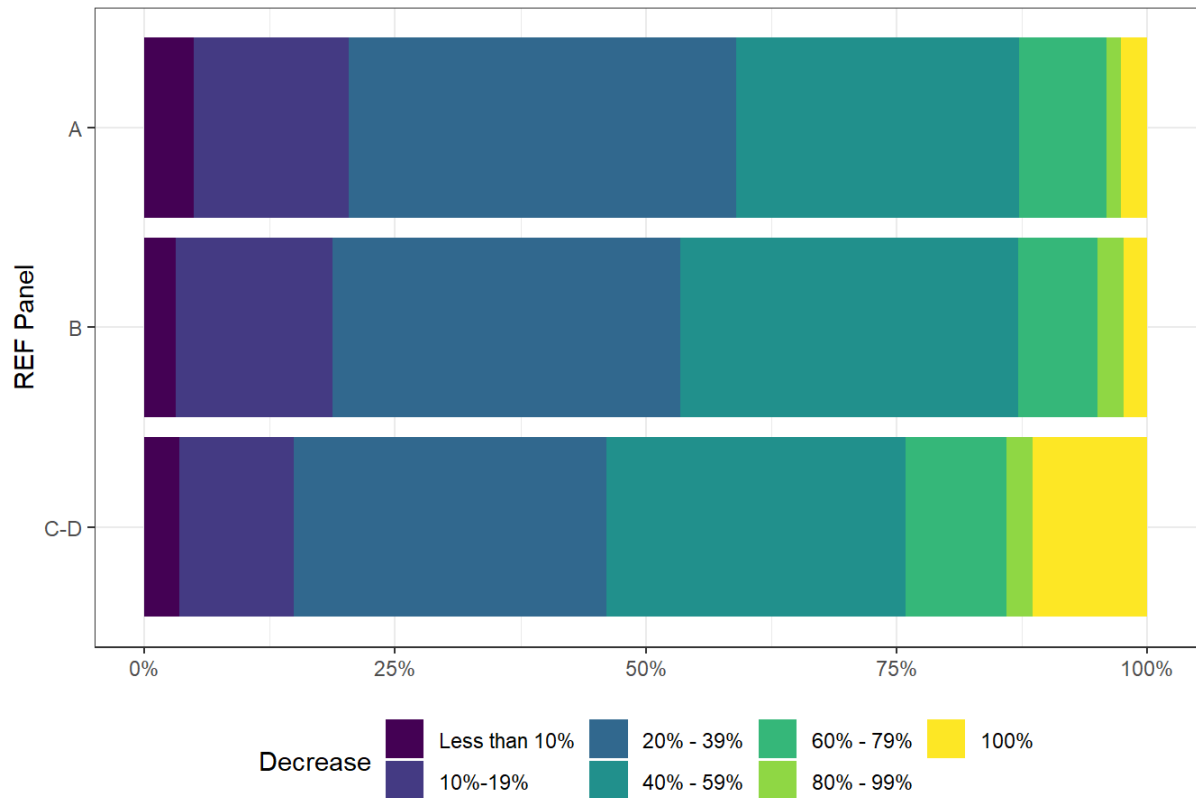
Predictions of funding decreasing vary by discipline



n = 1669; 1231; 768

Researchers in REF Panel A predicted decrease in funding more often (49%, compared to 36% for REF Panels C & D)

Predictions of funding decreasing also vary by research intensity of the university and main funding source



n = 688; 421; 228

Research group leaders in the most research intensive universities (called TRAC A) reported the highest expected loss (£71k), compared with £42k for TRAC B and £35k for TRAC C – F (the least research intensive universities)¹

The mean expected loss by main funder was highest for UK industry (£127k), followed by UK government (£96k). UKRI was lower (£68k) and above charity / foundation (£57k)

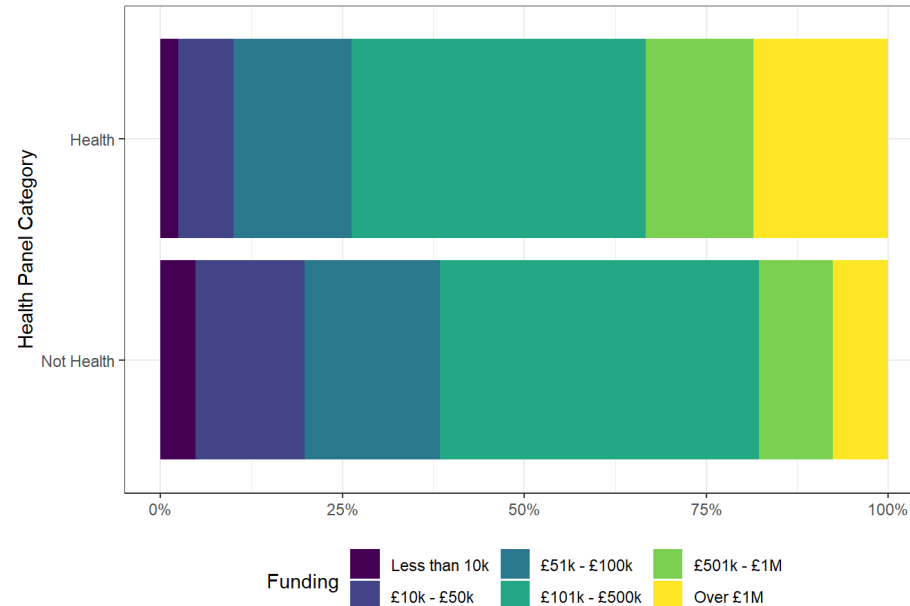
Losses are expected to be highest by research group team leaders at REF Panel A (£83k), compared to Panel B (£66k) and Panels C&D (£23k)

1. These figures assumed that researchers managing over £1 million in annual project funding managed, on average, £3 million

Funding for researchers in medical disciplines tends to be higher than for researchers in other disciplines.

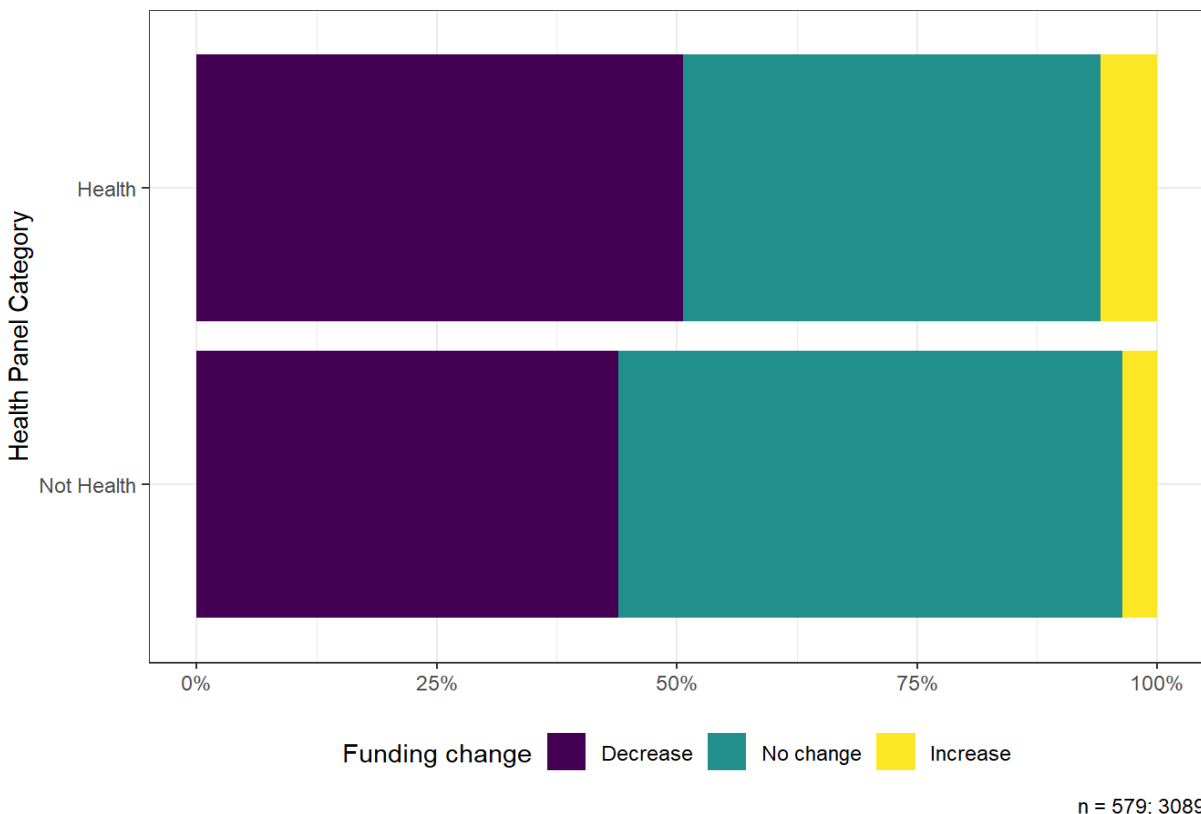
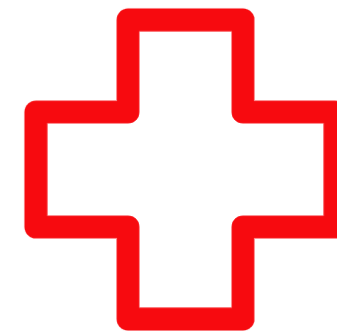


- 16% of respondents of funding questions were researchers in medical/health disciplines.
- More than 1 in 4 researchers in medical disciplines reported funding of over £500k, compared to 1 in 5 for other disciplines.



n = 579; 3089

Researchers in medical disciplines anticipated a decrease to their funding more frequently than researchers in non-medical

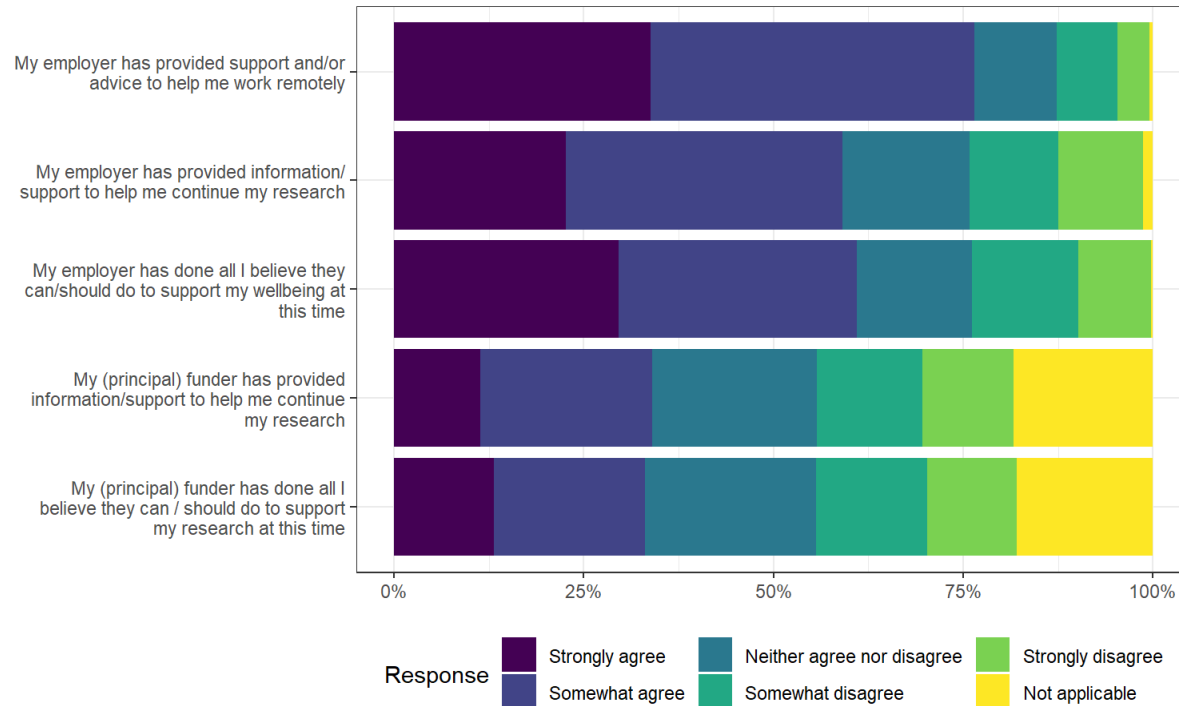


- Just over half (51%) of researchers in medical disciplines anticipated that their funding would decrease, with 6% anticipating it would increase.
- On the contrary, 44% of researchers in non-medical disciplines anticipated that their funding would decrease¹, with 3% anticipating it would increase.
- Some researchers in medical disciplines expressed frustration at the prioritisation of Covid-19 over other health research. This may explain the increased anticipation of funding decreases in this discipline.

Medical disciplines are counted as: Clinical Medicine, Public Health, Health Services, Primary Care, Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy

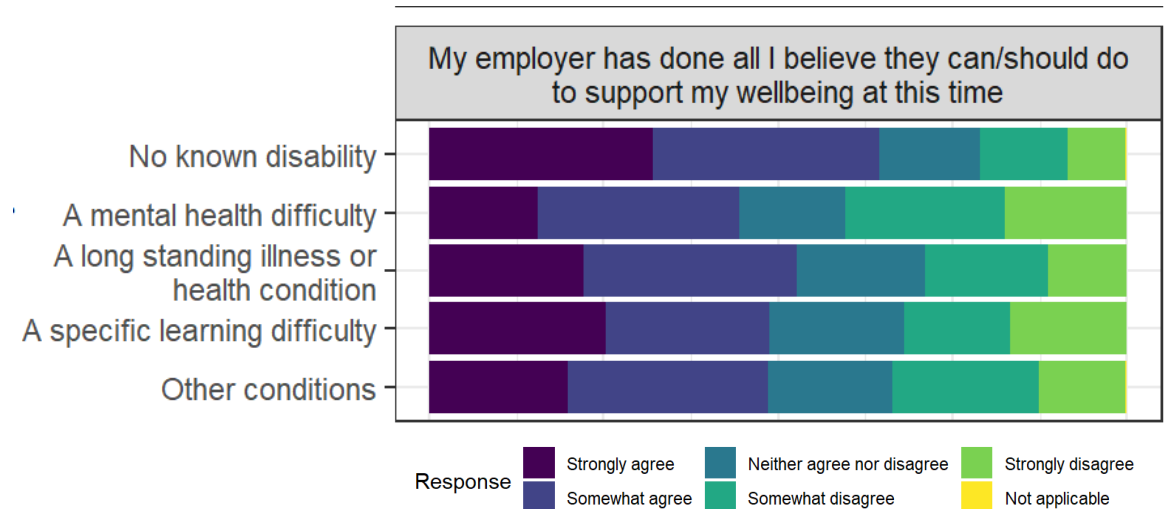
1. The difference in proportions of respondents between the two groups expecting a decrease in funding is statistically significant ($p=0.027$). However this should be treated as indicative only, as the test assumes the survey is representative of the broader researcher population, which it will not be due to the snowball sampling method used.

Over half of respondents agreed that their employer had supported them during the lockdown



There was very little variation in the experience of support from employers across gender and race.

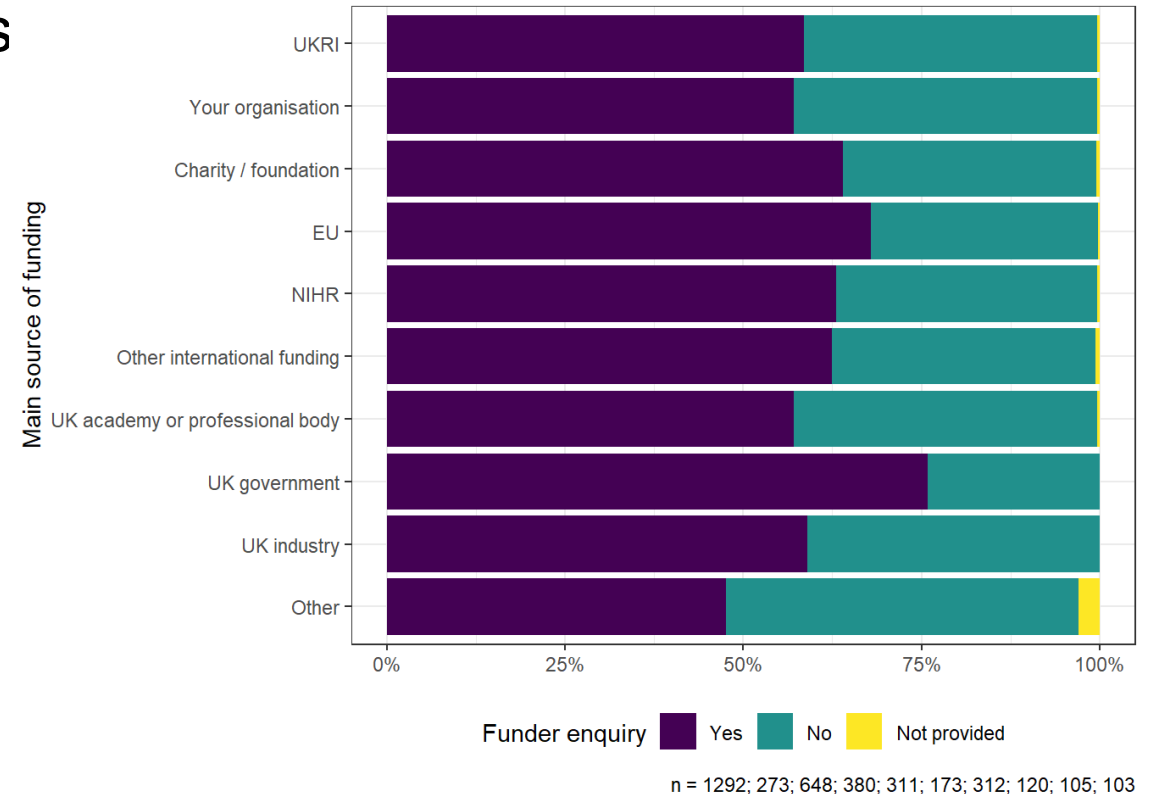
However, researchers with disabilities disagreed with the statement that employers had sufficiently supported their wellbeing more frequently than those without disabilities.



61% of respondents have made enquiries to funders about additional funding or extensions because of the Covid-19 pandemic

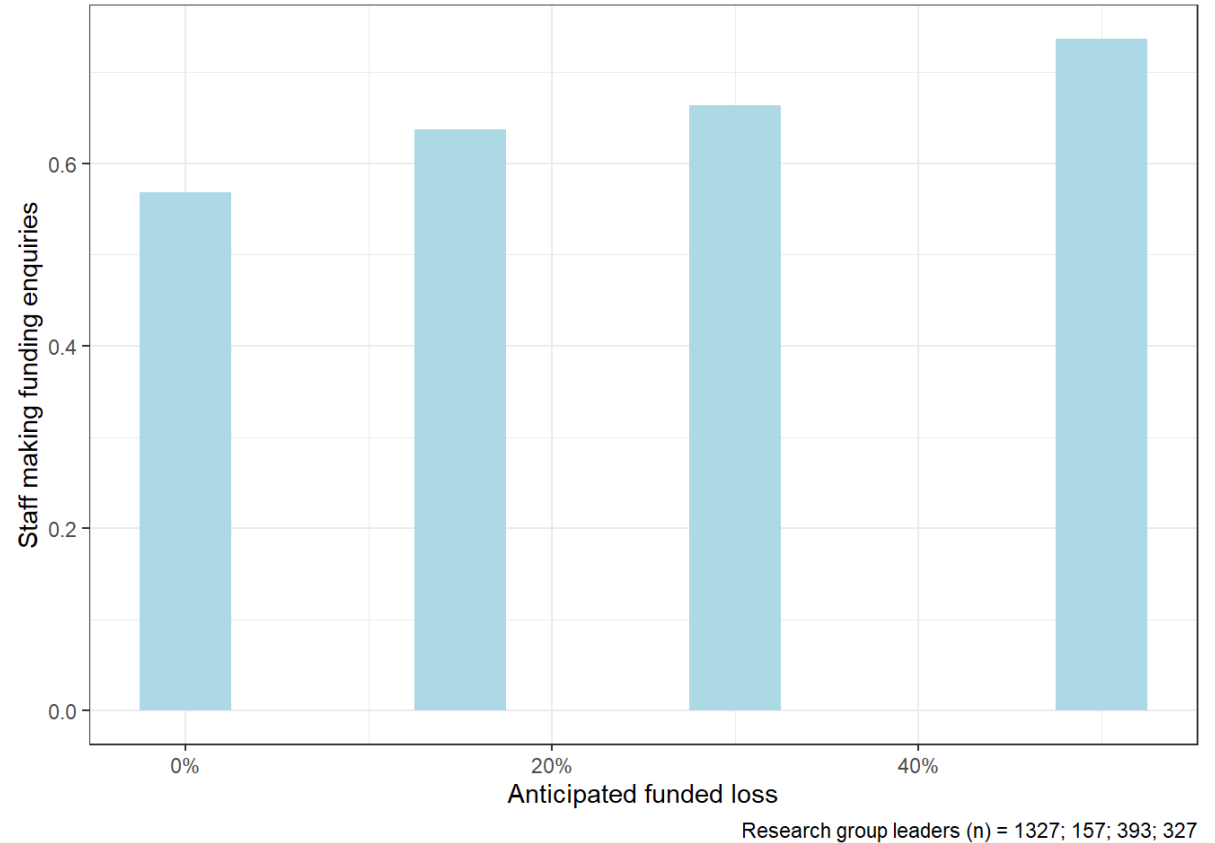
This was highest for the 120 respondents for whom the UK Government was the main source of funding (76%)

“Due to financial difficulties, the charity which funds my research project, paused the funding. However, luckily [my employer] supports us during this time. Otherwise, I would have no salary at all.”



The more funding research group leaders are expecting to lose, the more likely they are to enquire into additional funding or extensions

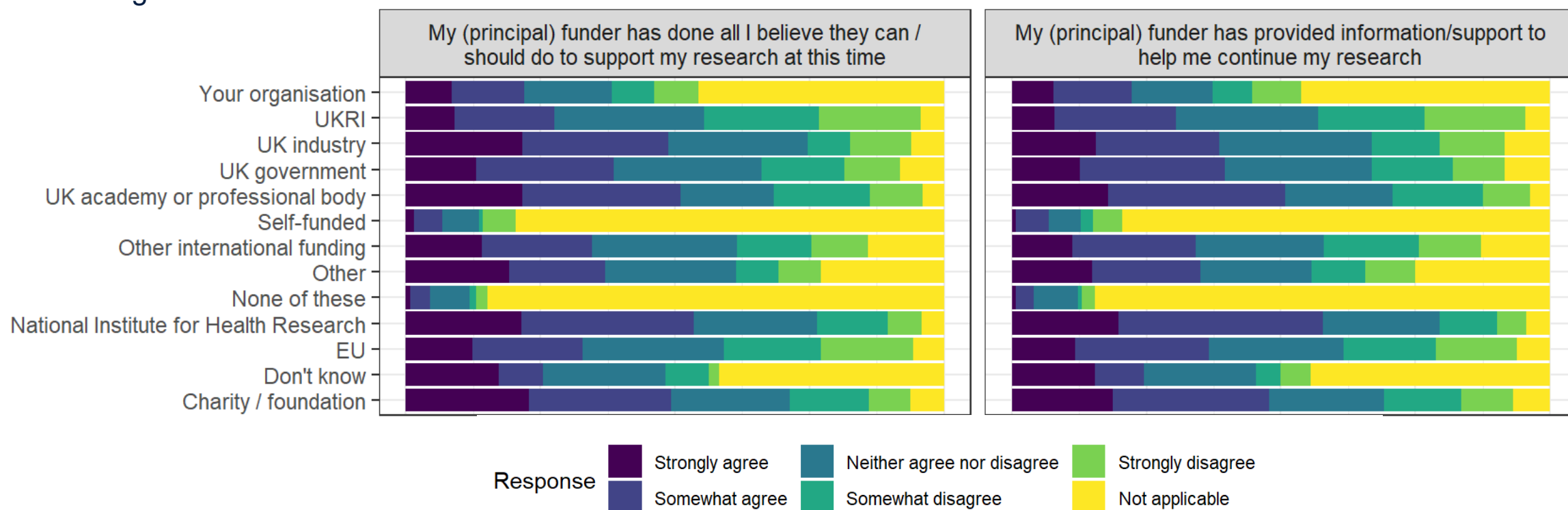
75% of research group leaders expecting to lose half of their funding made funding enquiries, compared to 57% of those not expecting any loss in funding¹



1. While some research group leaders did expect larger losses or an increase in funding, the sample size was too small (under 100) to draw conclusions from.

Researchers felt more supported by some funders than others

A greater percentage of researchers agreed UK industry, the National Institute for Health Research and UK academies/professional bodies had done 'all they can' (52%, 55% and 54%), with fewer agreeing that government (42%) and UKRI (29%) had done 'all they can' at the time of the survey -although this was before the UKRI costed-grant announcement¹.



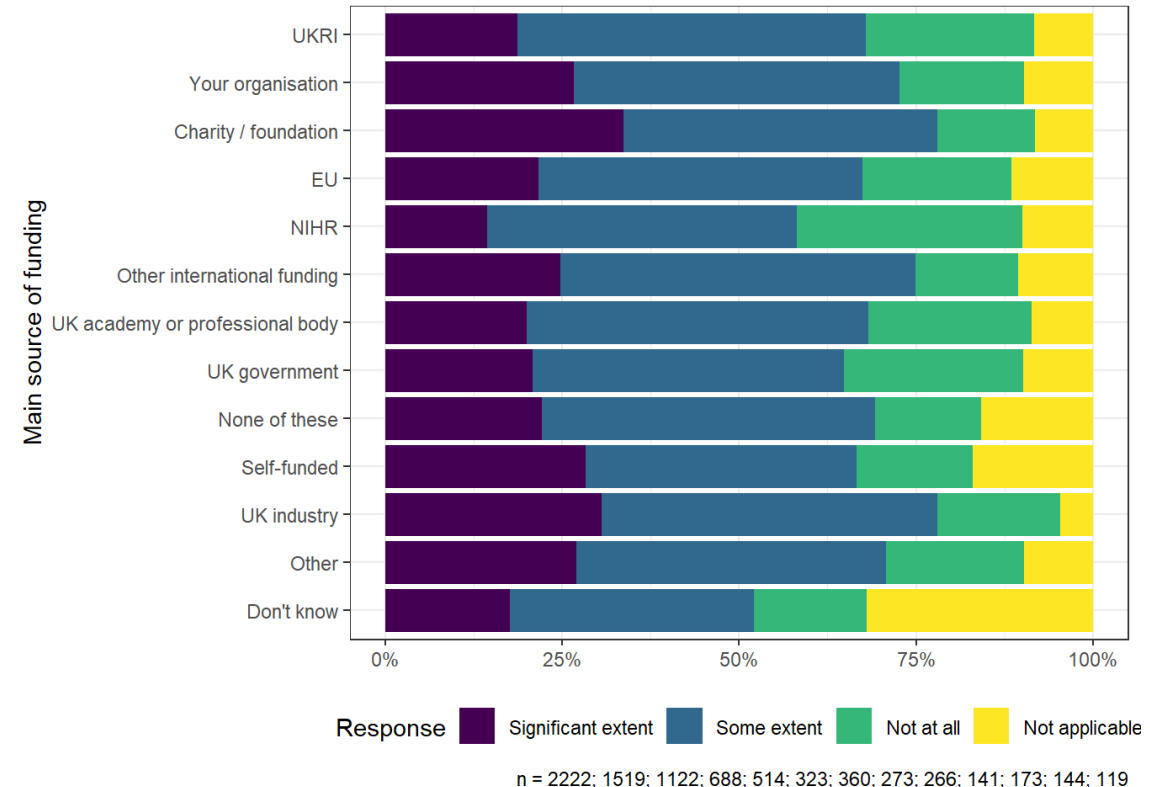
1. The survey took place before the announcement of the 'Sustaining University Research Expertise' package and UKRI costed-grant extensions

70% of researchers reported that they felt their future funding opportunities have decreased to an extent

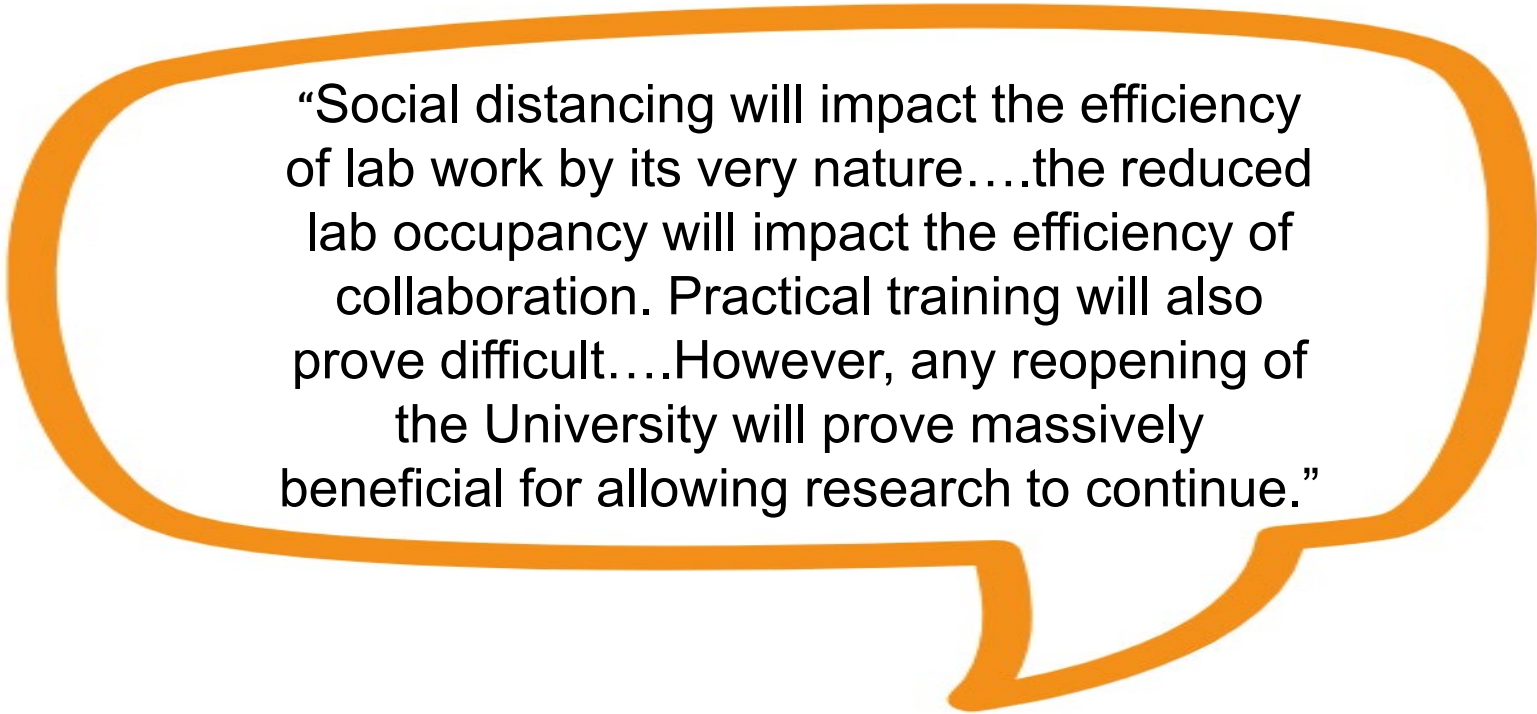
The percentage was highest where the main source of funding was a Charity/foundation, UK industry or Other international funding

This concern was lowest where the main source of funding was UKRI or the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR)

“..the uncertainty for future jobs and research”

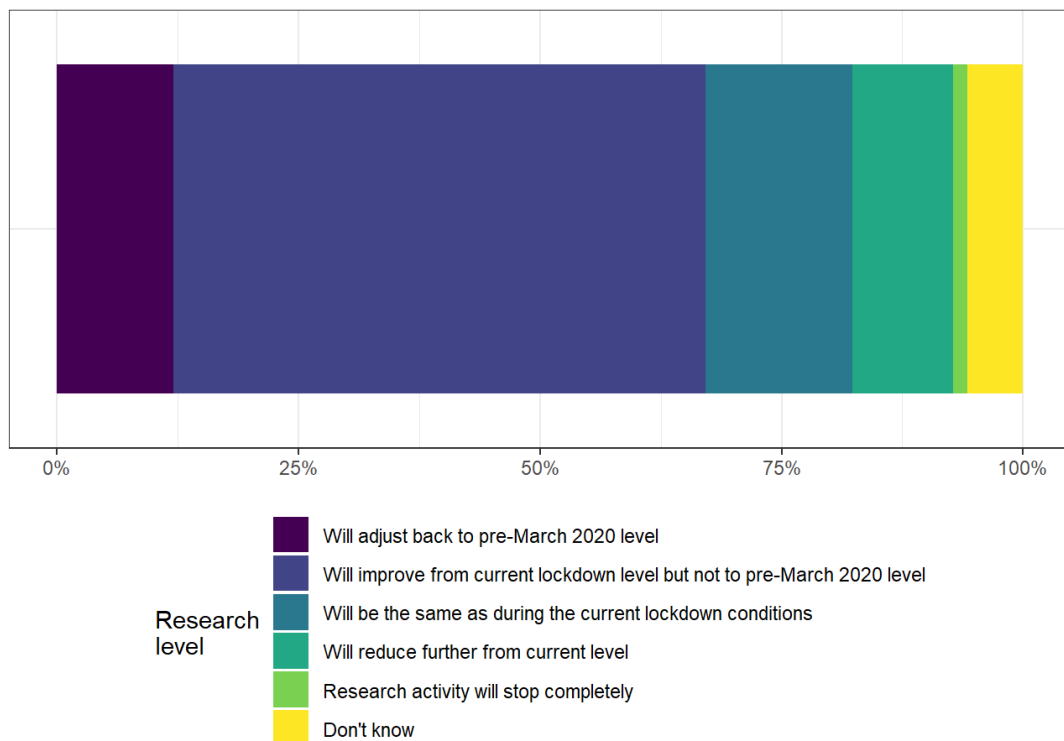


What are the implications of continuing social distancing requirements for 6 months?



“Social distancing will impact the efficiency of lab work by its very nature....the reduced lab occupancy will impact the efficiency of collaboration. Practical training will also prove difficult....However, any reopening of the University will prove massively beneficial for allowing research to continue.”

For the majority of researchers, returning to work with social distancing will allow research to continue but it will not improve their capacity to pre-lockdown levels



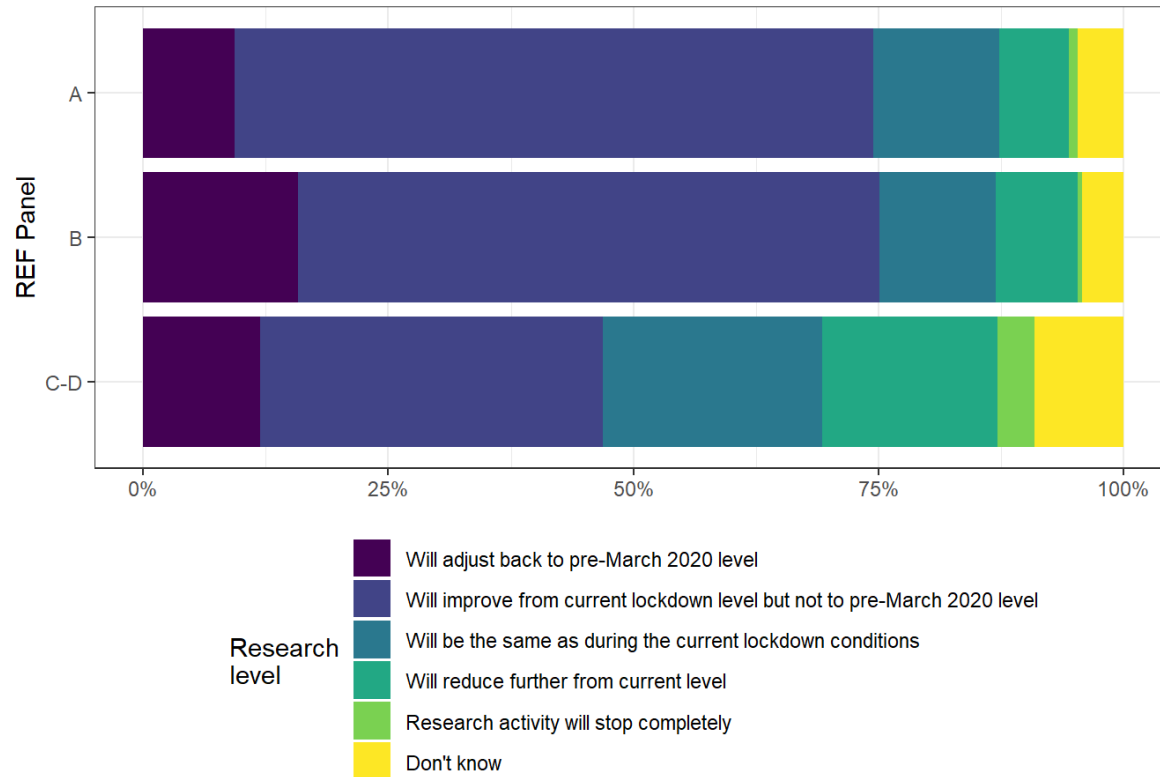
n = 7266

For **4 in 5** researchers, returning to work with social distancing in place will not improve capacity to pre-March level.

For almost **1 in 2** researchers, returning with social distancing will improve capacity but for 1 in 10 researchers said that returning with social distancing in place will not improve their capacity compared to the lockdown.

However, for **7%** of researchers returning with social distancing in place will reduce their capacity from its current level.

Returning to their (socially distanced) workplace will improve the capacity of researchers in REF panel A and B the most

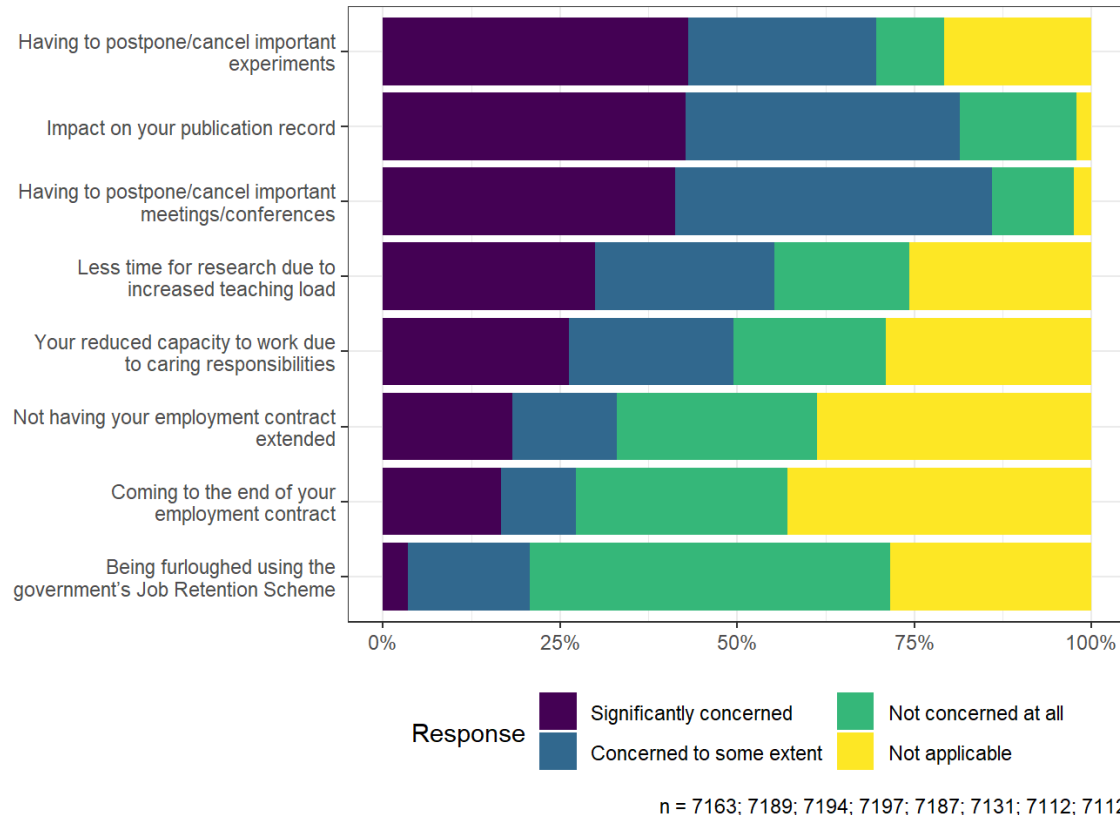


n = 3032; 2237; 1913

65% and 56% of researchers in REF panels A and B respectively said that returning to their (socially distanced) workplace would improve their capacity but not to pre-lockdown levels. This is compared to 36% in REF panels C and D.

Researchers in REF panels C and D were also most likely to identify that such a workplace return would lead to either a complete stop in research activity or a reduction in capacity from the current level.

If 6 months of social distancing were required (from the survey date), **researchers** would be most concerned about **postponing meetings/conferences** and the impact on their **publication record**



3 in 4 researchers were concerned about cancelling meetings/conferences and an adverse impact on their publication record¹.

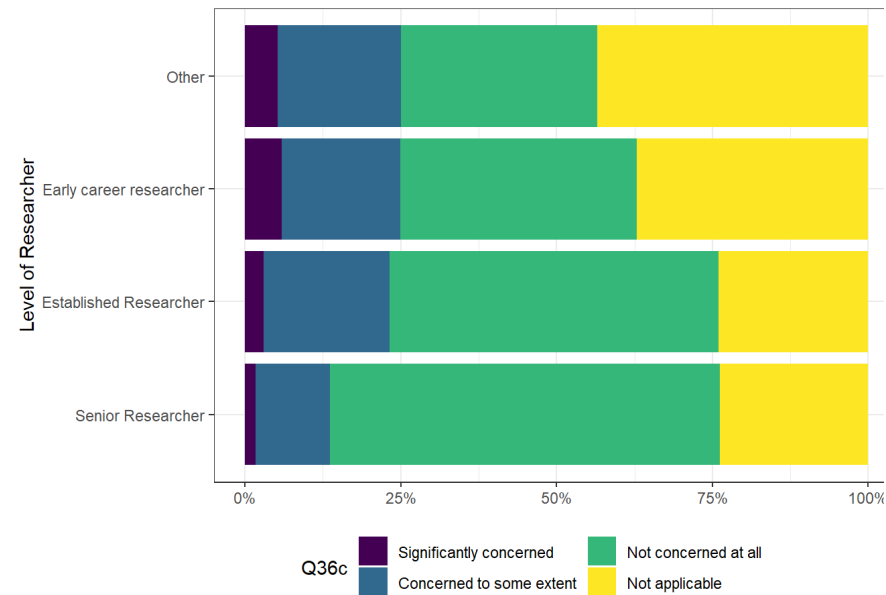
More than **70%** were concerned about having to postpone or cancel experiments,

1 in 2 of researchers were concerned to some extent about having less time for research due to increased teaching and caring responsibilities.

Of all the outcomes asked about, the lowest proportion of respondents were concerned about being furloughed

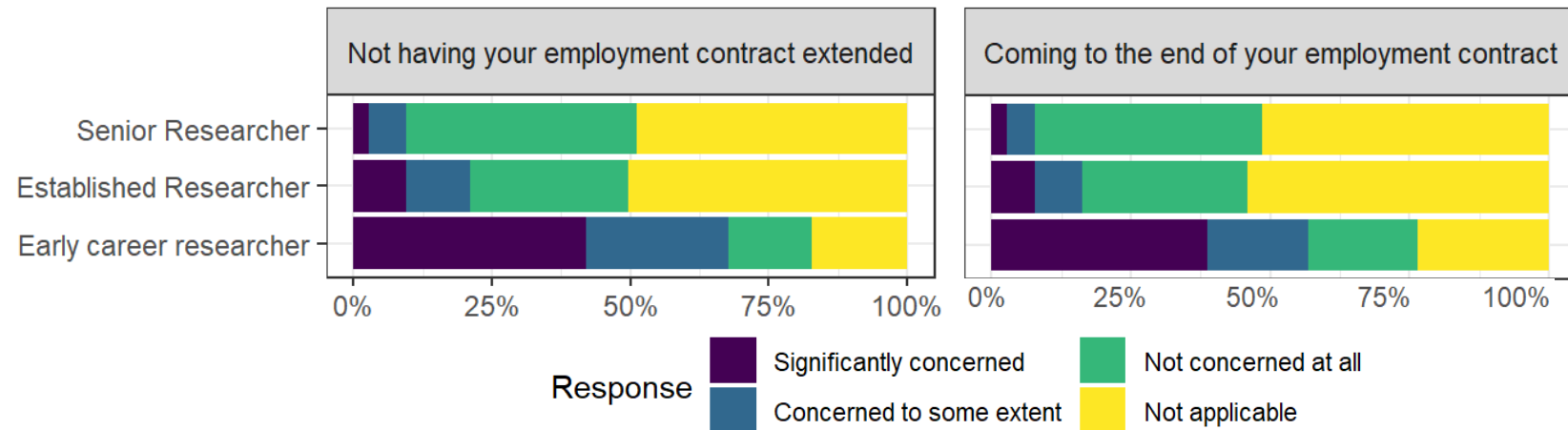
1. For this question responses of "Not applicable" are assumed to be synonymous with "Not concerned at all"

Early career researchers were more concerned about being furloughed if social distancing continued (25%)

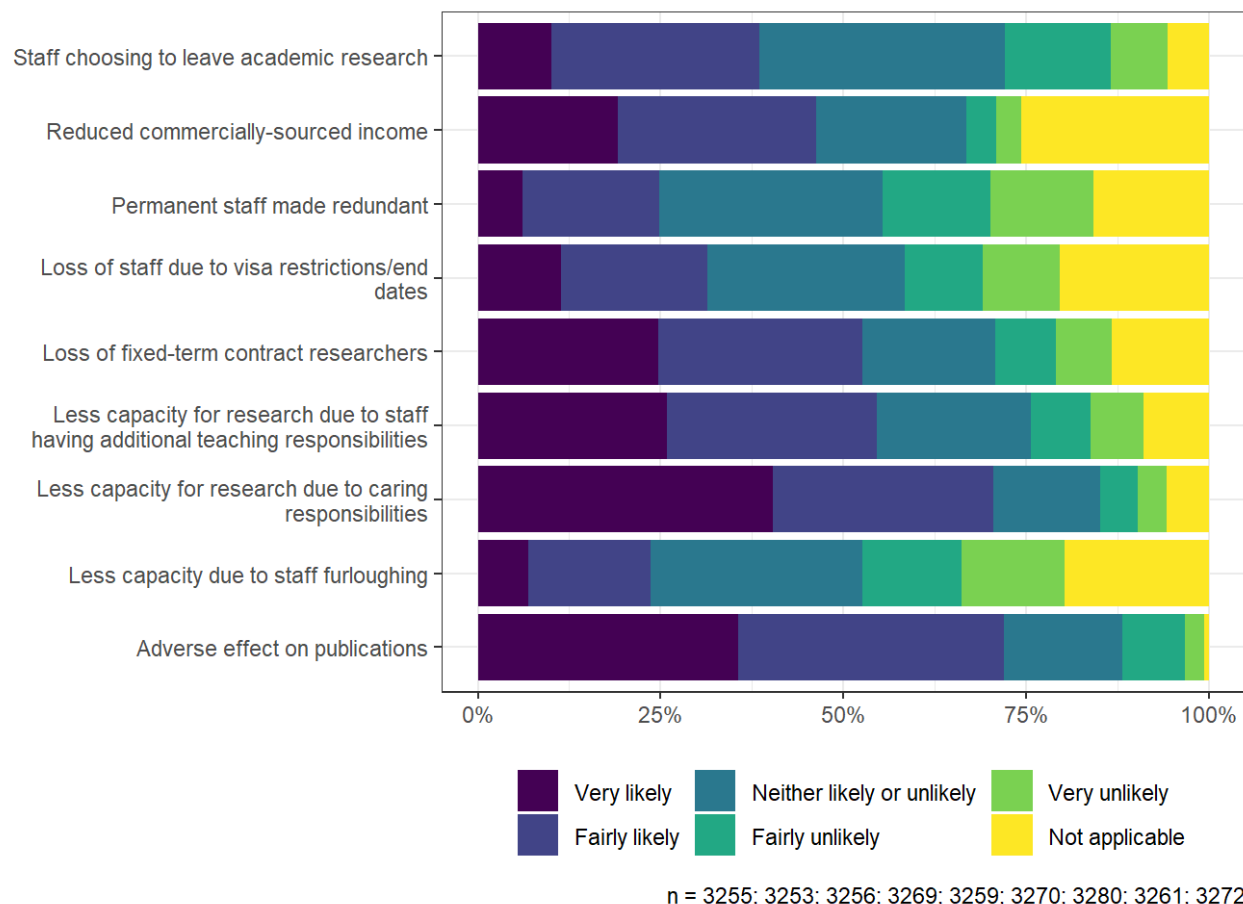


And senior researchers were the least concerned (14%)

Early career researchers were also most concerned about having their employment not being extended (69%) or contract ending (55%) (*shown below*)



Research group leaders were most concerned about an adverse effect on publication records and reduced capacity of their groups due to caring responsibilities



Almost **3 in 4** research group leaders said that if social distancing continued it was likely that their research group would have reduced capacity for research due to caring responsibilities and an adverse effect on publications would be observed¹.

1 in 2 said it was likely that their researchers on fixed-term contracts would be lost, their group would have less capacity for research due to an increased teaching load and commercially sourced income would decline.

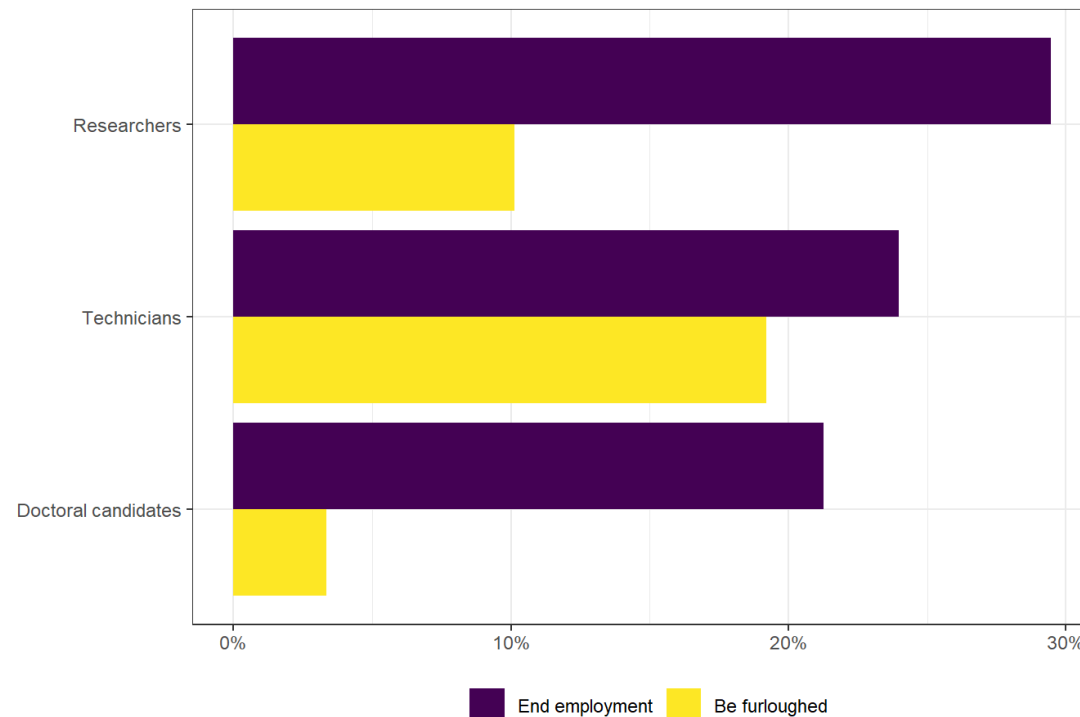
More than **1 in 3** said it was likely that group members would choose to leave academic research.

1 in 4 said it was likely that permanent staff would be made redundant and they would lose staff due to visa restrictions.

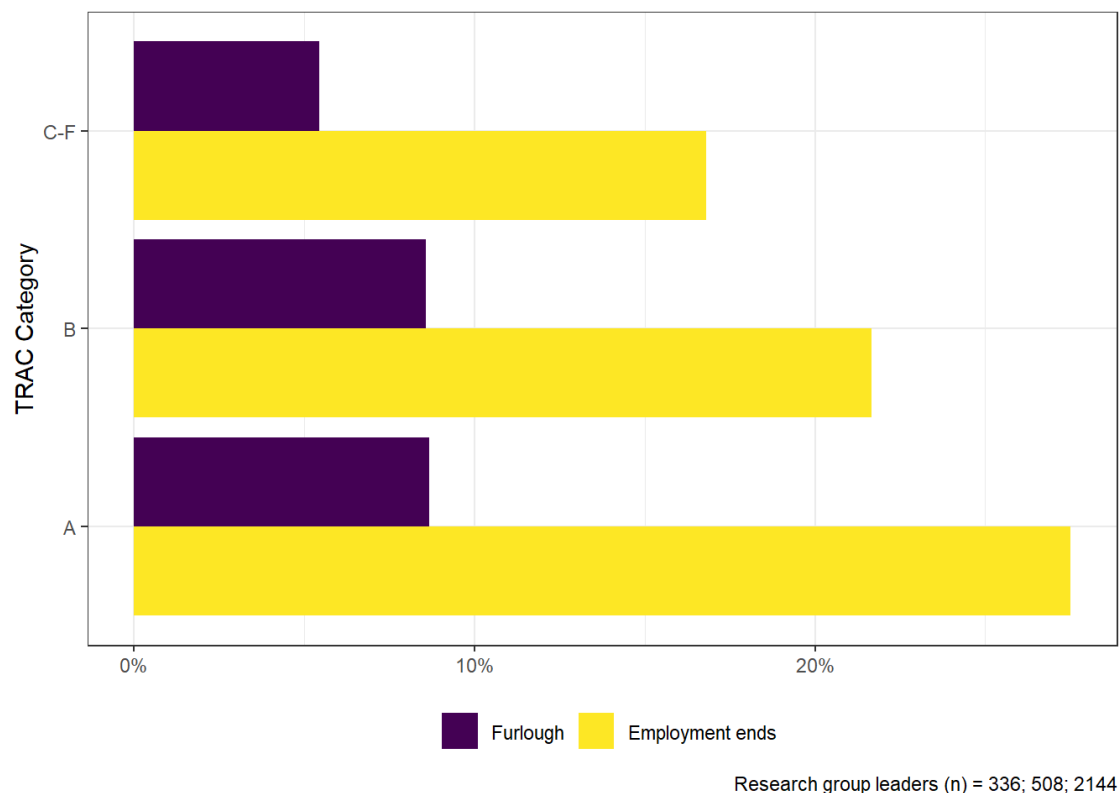
1. The question for this: "If social distancing restrictions are required for another six months from now, please estimate the likelihood of the following potential risks to your research group"

If social distancing is required for another 6 months **research group leaders** estimated that 1 in 4 of their group's employment would end and 8% would be furloughed

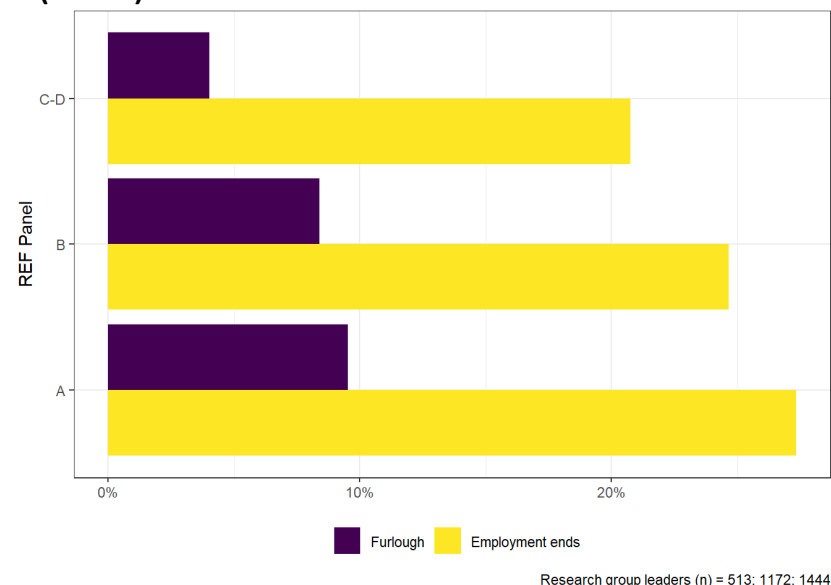
Researcher positions were viewed as the most vulnerable to their contracts ending (29%), but technicians were viewed as most vulnerable to being furloughed (19%, compared to 10% for researchers).



Research group leaders at TRAC C-F universities have the lowest expected furlough (6%) and employment ending rates (17%) if social distancing continues for another 6 months



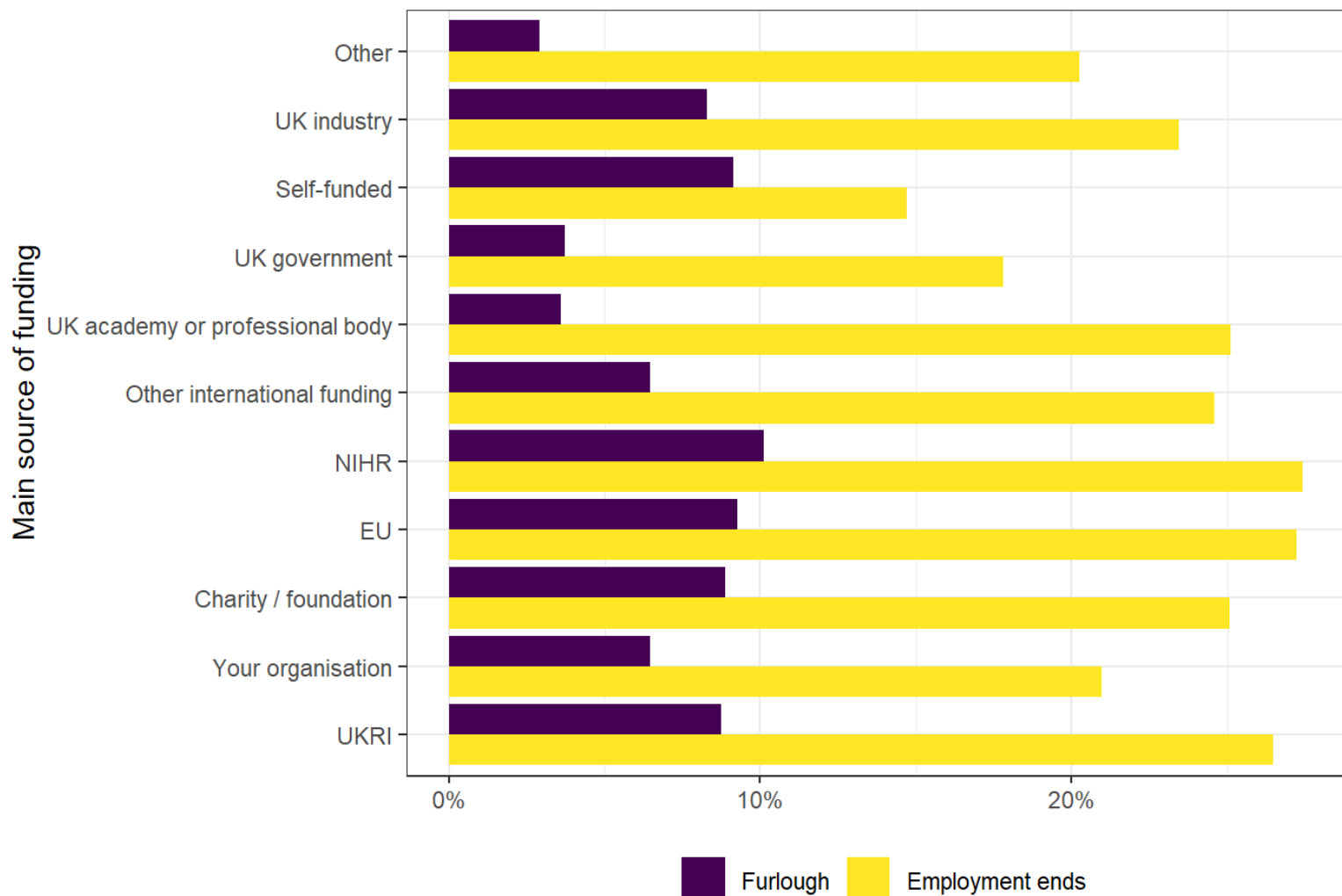
And REF Panel A research leaders ~~universities~~ are expected their groups to have the highest rates of furlough (9%) and employment ending (28%)



And rate of employment ending is highest for NIHR (27%) and EU (26%) funded research

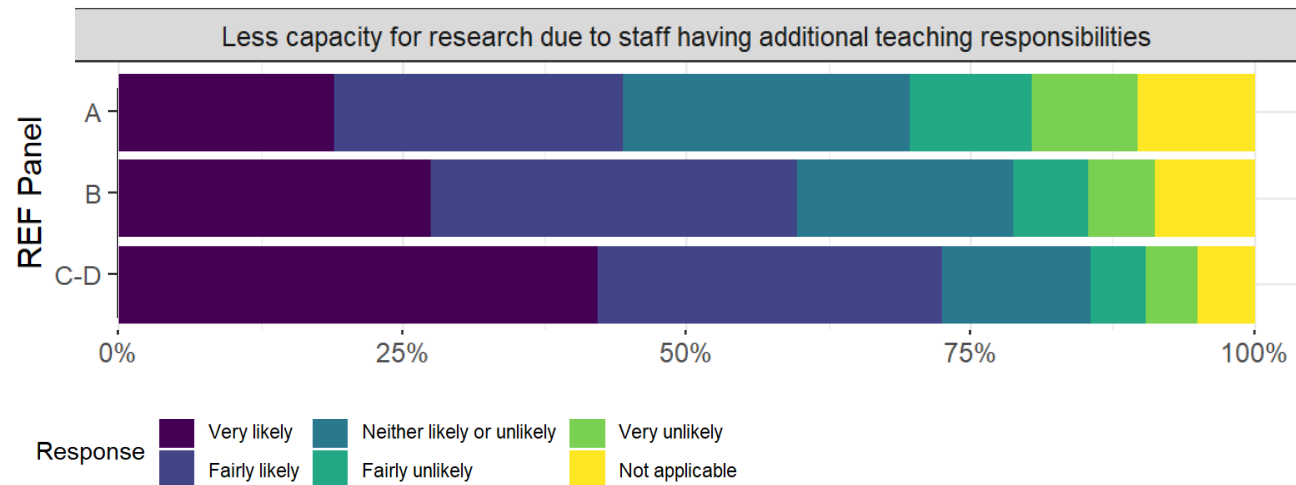
The expected furlough rates are be highest for the same funders: NIHR (10%) and EU (9%)

Ignoring “other”, furlough rates are expected to be lowest where the UK government or a UK academy / professional body is the main funder (both at 4%)



Research group leaders (n) = 53; 100; 27; 111; 165; 146; 253; 299; 482; 318; 1173

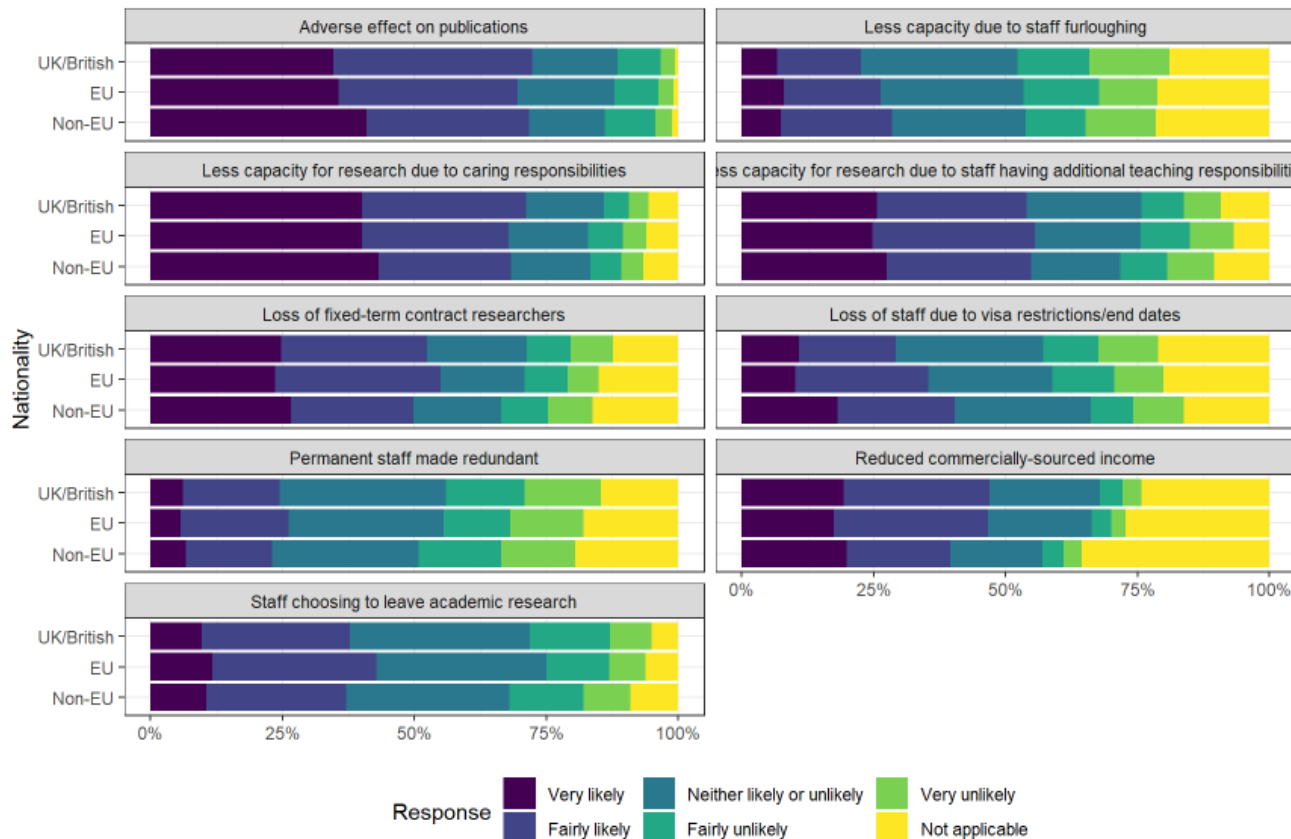
Research group leaders in REF groups C and D predicted less capacity for research due to additional teaching responsibilities (73%)



n = 13496; 10879; 4659

Whereas only 45% of REF Panel A research group leaders and 60% of Panel B expected such a drop in research

Researcher group leads of all nationalities share concerns if social distancing were to continue for 6 more months



Non-EU researchers reported higher concern of an adverse effect on publications less capacity due to caring responsibilities and (most noticeably) loss of staff due to visa restrictions/end dates

There were more concerns which were significantly more prevalent for UK/British research group leaders than their non-EU equivalents

1. The exact question was “If social distancing restrictions are required for another six months from now, please estimate the likelihood of the following potential risks to your research group”

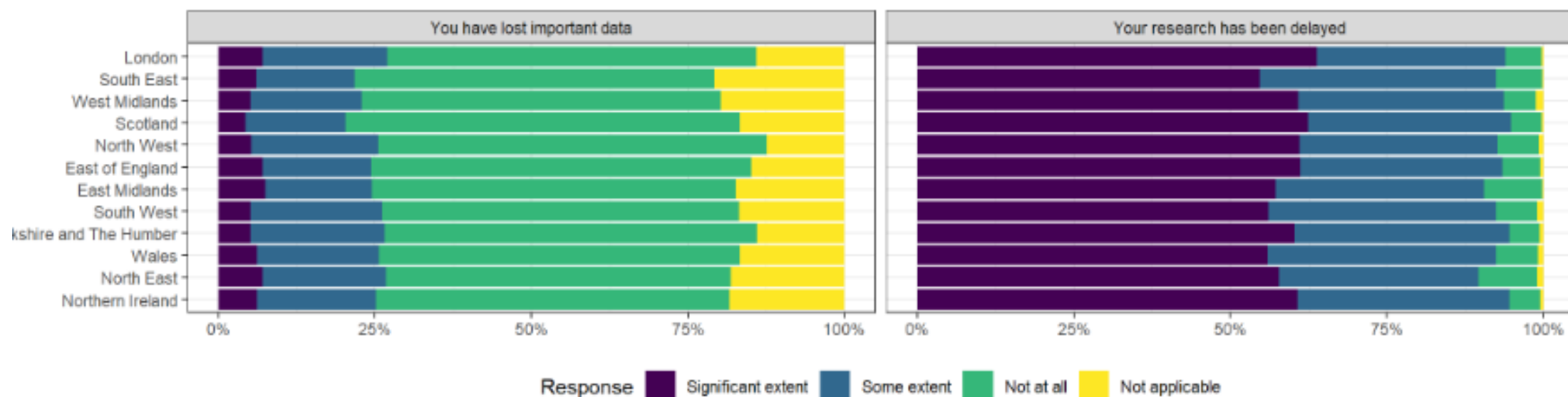
What did researchers suggest might help them?

- Several key themes emerged from a random sample 200 free text responses:
 - increasing access to laboratories, and other research facilities, by extending their hours to allow for night and weekend working,
 - encouraging collaboration across research groups to make the most of limited access to equipment for experiments,
 - extensions to projects and funding,
 - recognising and making concessions for reduction in research quality and,
 - provision of equipment and access to e-resources and software for working at home.

What does this mean for
place?

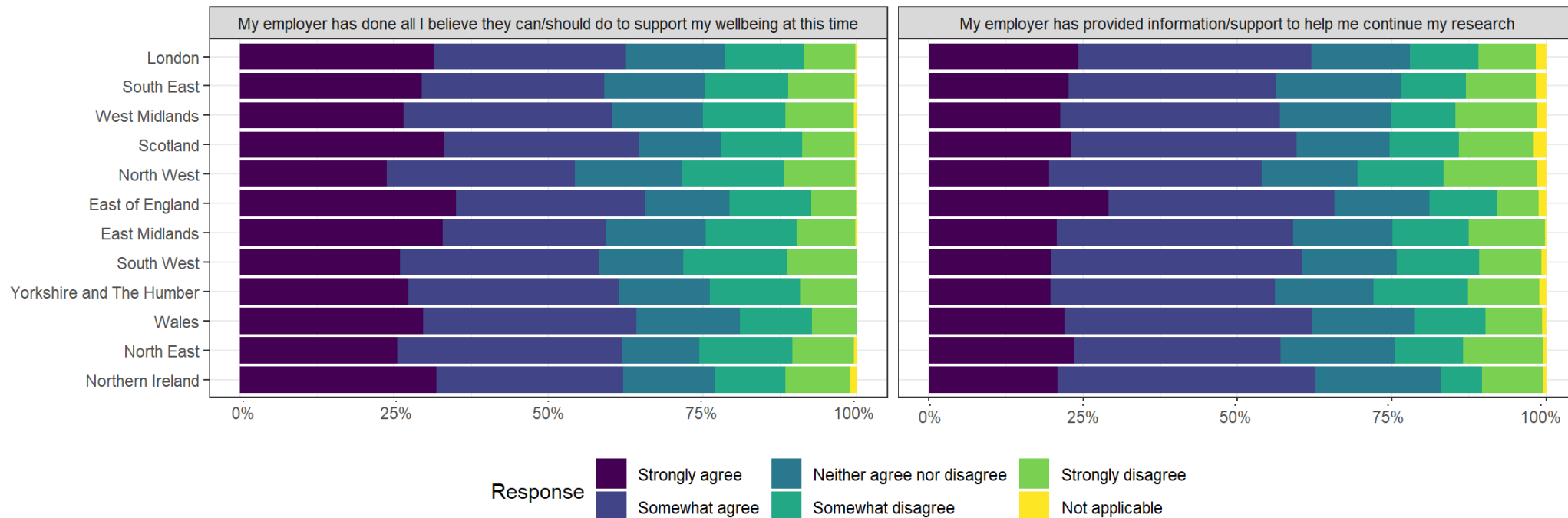


Researchers in all regions have lost important data and had their research delayed



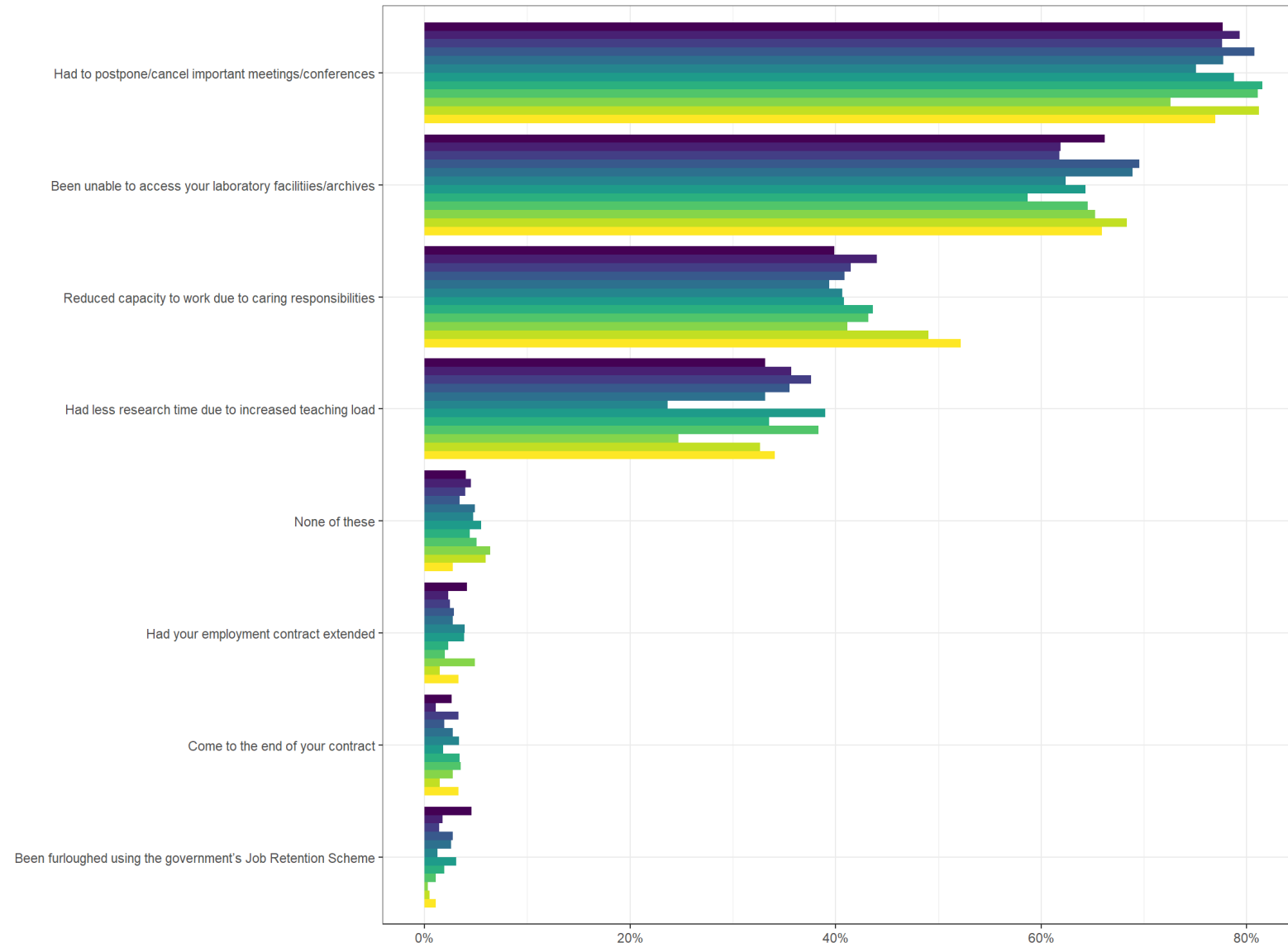
Researchers in the East of England reported the highest provision of information/support to continue research

And researchers in the East of England most strongly supported the statement “my employer has done all I believe they can/should do to support my wellbeing at this time”



Various impacts are felt across all regions

Aside from a few standout cases (e.g.: “Had less research time due to increased teaching load” is much lower in Wales and the East of England), concerns across regions if social distancing continues for another 6 months are generally consistent



UK Region

Northern Ireland	Yorkshire and The Humber	East of England	West Midlands
North East	South West	North West	South East
Wales	East Midlands	Scotland	London

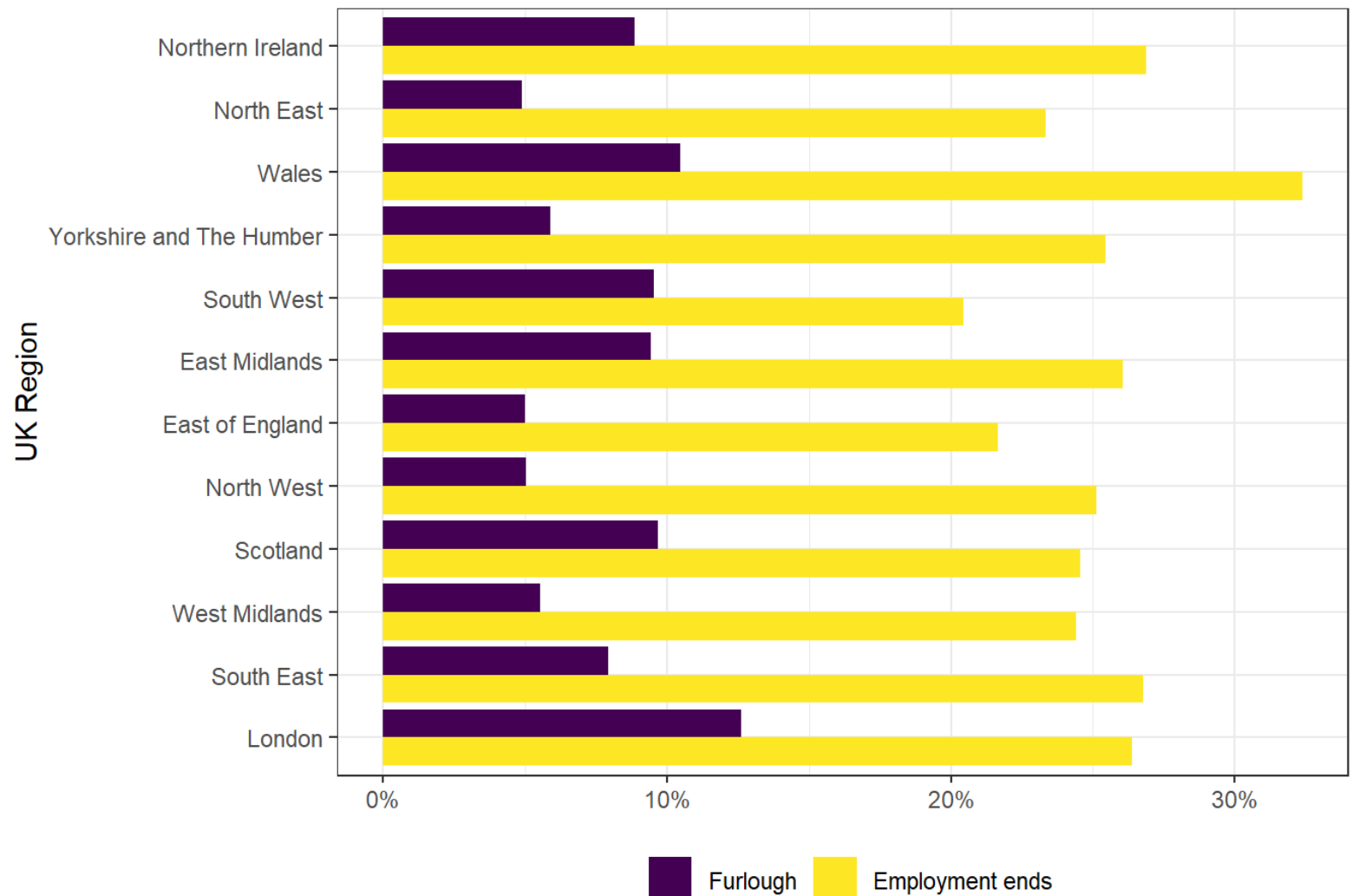
n = 182; 202; 328; 454; 525; 490; 718; 691; 873; 853; 913; 990

If social distancing continues, the highest proportion of research leaders expecting staff employment to end is in Wales (32%)

While London is expected to have the highest rate of furlough (13%)

The East, North East and the Midlands are expected to have the lowest rates of furlough (all around 5%)

Research group leaders in the South West (20%) and East (22%) are expecting to see the lowest rate of employment ending



Research group leaders (n) = 76; 103; 111; 218; 238; 195; 270; 294; 426; 321; 377; 444

What does this mean for Diversity and Inclusion?



EDI: Respondent overview

- 51% of respondents are women
- 7% of respondents are from minority ethnic groups
- 16% of respondents have a known disability
- 44% of respondents have caring responsibilities¹

To ensure each group had a large enough sample to report, some groups are aggregated (wherever there were fewer than 100 respondents). These low figures reflect the low numbers of people in these group in the UK researcher population:

Ethnicity: Black (30 respondents), Other (51), and Mixed (57), become “Other ethnicity”

Disability: Multiple conditions, Physical impairment, Deaf or hearing impairment,

Social/communication impairment, Blind or visual impairment and Other condition, become “Other condition(s)”

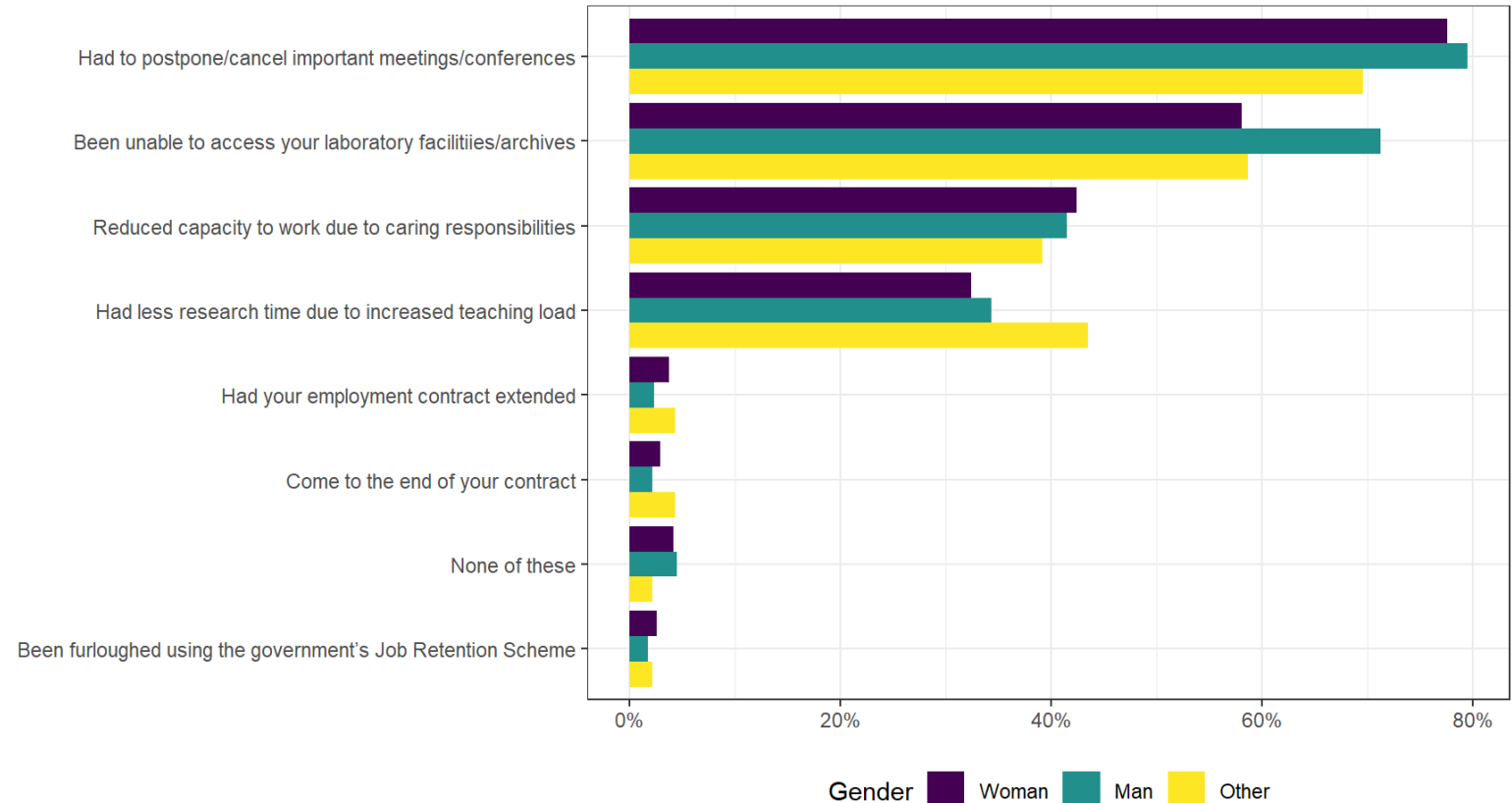
1. This includes acting as the primary or secondary carer for a child, disabled person or older person

Reduced capacity to work due to caring responsibilities was cited equally often for men and women

However if social distancing continues more women are concerned about a reduced capacity to work due to caring responsibilities (41% women and 30% men)¹

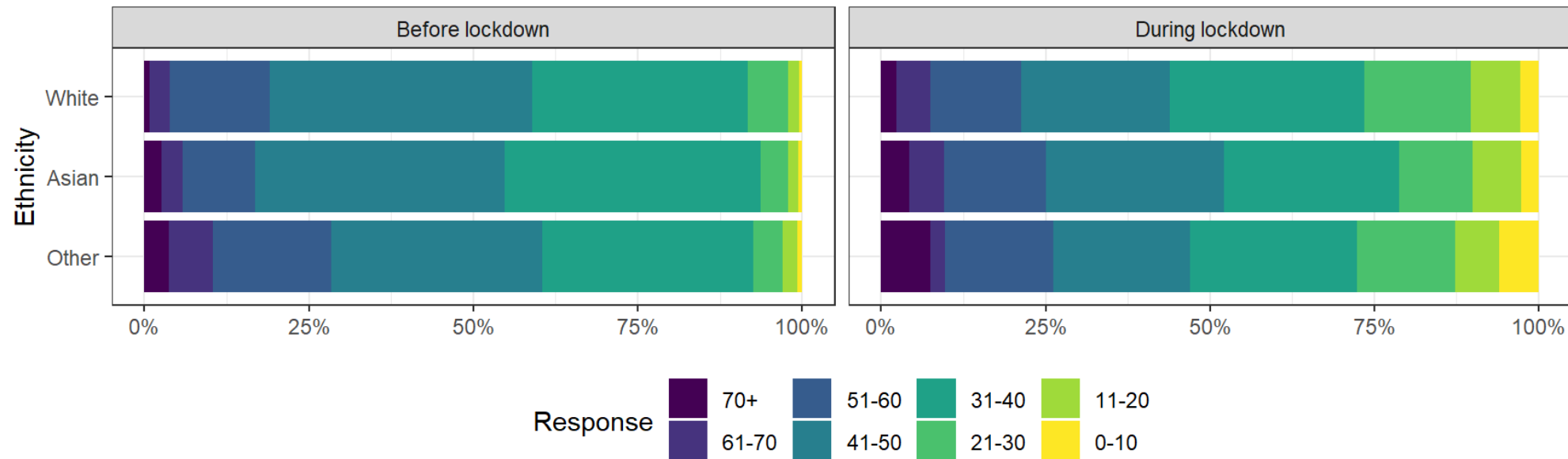
Postpone/cancel important meetings/conferences was cited highest (78% women, 80% men)

Men cited being unable to access laboratory facilities/archives more commonly than women (71% against 58%). This may be a reflection of the gender prevalence of fields requiring access to labs and/or archives



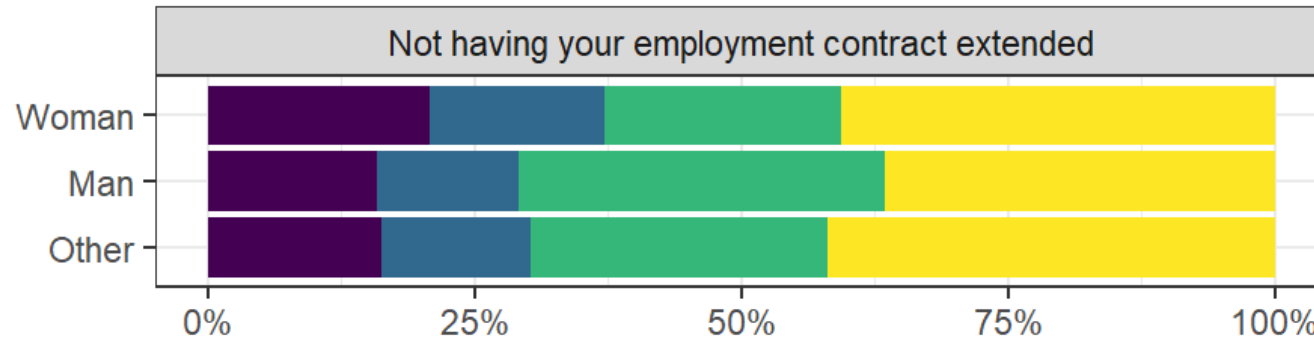
Gender, ethnicity and disability don't have a large effect on change in hours

A higher proportion of people in **all gender, ethnicity and disability categories** are working many or few hours (over 60 or under 20 hours), with fewer in the middle ground (30 – 50 hours). The plot below illustrates this for different ethnicities.



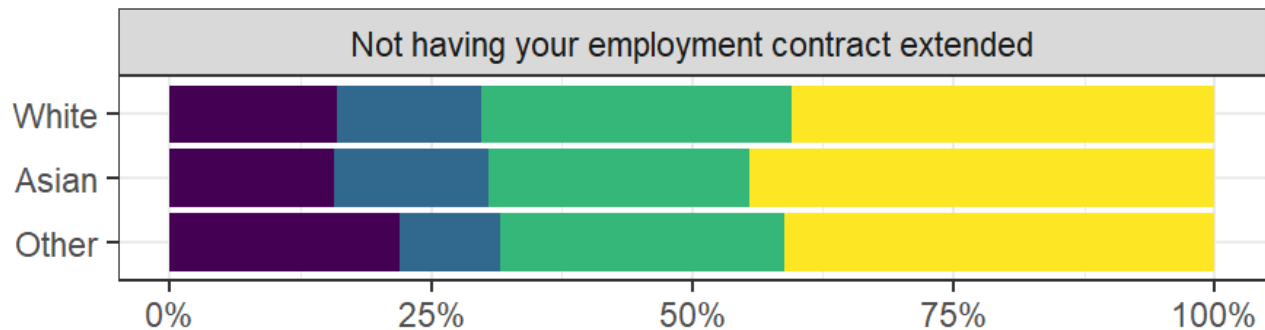
The sample size for other ethnicities is low enough that each percentage point corresponds to fewer than two respondents, so granular conclusions cannot be drawn

If social distancing continues, women are more concerned about their contracts ending



36% of women are concerned about not having their employment contract extended, compared to 26% of men¹

35% of researchers of other ethnicities are concerned about not having their employment contract extended, compared to 29% Asian and 28% white

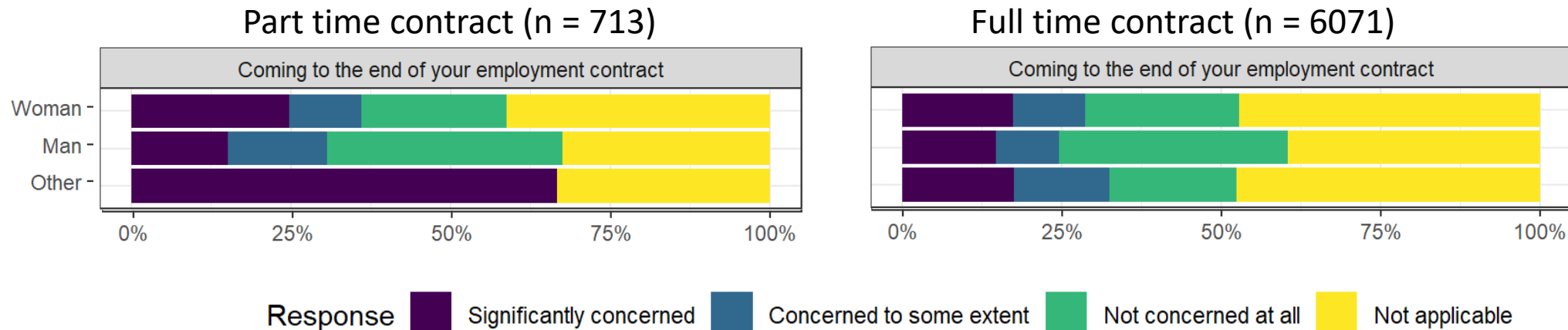


Response Significantly concerned Concerned to some extent Not concerned at all Not applicable

1. Includes staff on both full and part time contracts

This is more true for researchers on part time contracts

25% of women on part time contracts are significantly concerned about coming to the end of their employment contract (compared to 14% of men on part time contracts and 18% of women on full time contracts)



Analytical Notes



How did we collect the data?

- BEIS contracted Vitae to administer the survey to researchers in HEIs using survey monkey in May 2020
- 10,408 researchers completed the survey
- The survey questionnaire can be found at www.vitae.ac.uk/impact-and-evaluation/impact-of-covid-19-on-researchers-and-the-uk-research-base
- The survey used a 'snowball' sampling approach as opposed to a purposive or targeted sampling approach.
- The data was filtered for this set of first findings¹ to only include HEIs and PRIs, and excluded postgraduate researchers
- For questions on % of time spent on different activities, we included total percentages that added to between 90-110%, and rescaled the accepted responses to sum 100%

1. Doctoral candidates were excluded from the results due to a low number of responses

How robust is the data?

- The use of an online survey is a quick and efficient way of reaching a large group of survey participants. It facilitates the ability to gather preliminary information on an issue, which is the aim of the research.
- Using a snowball sampling approach makes the data susceptible to self-selection bias by requiring people to choose if they respond to the survey or not. The people that choose to respond may be inherently different to those who choose not to.
- Consequently, the results in this pack may not be representative of the broader population. It is not, therefore, possible to make definitive generalisations about the entire research population based on these results.
- As with most surveys, this methodology relies on participants self-reporting their behaviour and experiences. It does not measure actual or observed behaviour/experiences. Thus, the survey relies on the participant's accurate recollection and honesty.
- Withstanding these limitations, the data in this slide pack is sufficient to give us **indicative data** of the experience of researchers in HEIs and PRIs.

Uses for the survey data

- BEIS is using the data for the development of policies in response to Covid, including the aforementioned Stabilising University Research Expertise announcement
- Contribute to understanding of the UK R&D landscape and the government's R&D Strategy, including policies on Talent, Place and, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Vitae will use the results to inform their work, especially on research culture
- The findings will also inform policy and delivery by wider organisations, such as UKRI, UUK, Royal Society