

# Diversity, inclusion and equality in the market research sector, 2020

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# Foreword



**Jane Frost CEO, MRS**

In 2018, MRS pioneered its first annual survey to understand how diverse and inclusive the research sector was. Three years later, we continue to undertake this research, and MRS has embedded many initiatives that are improving representation and opportunities for the various groups that have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

My view has always been that the sector that is meant to shed light on people should also reflect them in its own make-up. Working with Kantar on that first piece of research, we felt if we got together and made big and bold moves, things would move further and faster. There was no time to waste to evolve the sector.

One such move was the creation of the CEO Pledge, which was created with the help of some really committed CEOs, and the driving support of Vanella Jackson of Hall & Partners. Several of the largest employers in the industry have now signed their commitment to a set of ethical and actionable principles. I'm delighted that, as it moves into its second year, the pledge is now becoming international in scope.

One of the other key initiatives born out of the annual research was MRS Pride, ably lead by UM's Michael Brown and MRS' very own John Bizzel. A finding from this year's report is that confidence is higher among LGBTQ+ constituents than any other group that falls within the protected characteristics definition. I am sure that the energy and pizzazz of MRS Pride has made a significant contribution to this sense of vigorous momentum.

Our research also identified very clearly the need to give voice within the research sector to ethnic minorities. MRS already works to a target of 50% representation for women speakers at our events. Now we have specified that 15% of speakers must include ethnic minorities. To help us, we welcome CORe – the Colour of Research group – with whom we are working to improve ethnic representation among research professionals. It's great to have their support for the CEO Pledge.

Our third year of research, kindly supported by Kantar, has brought in new expertise from our report author Dr Marie-Claude Gervais, and contributors Ruth France and Phyllis Macfarlane. The pandemic presented some difficult practical challenges which couldn't have been overcome without their help and experience. One of the things we've experimented with this time is developing an approach to understanding social class across the sector. This ongoing research will help us analyse access to education across the groups, in an effort to track social mobility. This will be the subject of a future MRS report.

The MRS Apprenticeship scheme will improve the sector's reach into less traditional areas of market research recruitment. It's an initiative born of the MRS and frankly is the reason the Society exists – to turn the mirror inwards onto our sector and ensure it is evolving as rapidly as it should.

Our first completely gender-balanced Main Board has created the MRS Diversity & Inclusion Council, which is a real indication of this commitment to change. The council is chaired by MRS Main Board member Babita Earle, and it has a remit to get things done quickly. The Black Lives Matter movement underlined this need for urgent action.

If the many tumultuous events this year have taught us anything, it's that people are frustrated by slow moving institutions that fail to evolve. MRS and the research sector will not be one of them.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jane Frost'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Jane Frost CBE,  
Chief Executive, MRS

# Contributors

## About the author



**Dr Marie-Claude Gervais, FRSA**  
Co-founder and Research & Strategy  
Director, Versiti

Dr Marie-Claude Gervais, is a cultural psychologist and research strategist with special expertise in diversity and inclusion.

She held the post of Lecturer in Social and Organisational Psychology at the LSE for seven years before joining the commercial insights sector in 2000, to have a more direct impact. Since then, she has been combining academic rigour, business acumen and a passion for social justice to generate evidence and insights.

In 2017, alongside Stephen Cribbitt, Marie-Claude co-founded Versiti, a research and consultancy agency specialising in understanding the experiences and needs of people from diverse minoritised communities. Collaborating closely with clients, Versiti works to align business strategy, organisational culture and consumer insight to make organisations and brands inclusive, innovative and more successful.

Marie-Claude straddles the public, private and third sectors, with clients that include central and local government, Jaguar Land Rover, Estée Lauder, Diageo, EY, Channel 4, Macmillan Cancer Support, Unicef, RNIB and many more.

As a member of the CIPD expert working group on Diversity & Inclusion, she is dedicated to identifying 'what works' in diversity, inclusion and equality.

A Québécoise by birth and Londoner by adoption, Marie-Claude is the mother of two children with a mixed heritage.

## About Kantar and the Kantar Inclusion Index

Data collection and data processing for the primary research underpinning this report were undertaken by Kantar, and led by its Inclusion Index Team, utilising Kantar's online interviewing and data processing resources.

The Kantar Inclusion Index is a proprietary tool to benchmark and address Inclusion and Diversity at a broader company level. It enables organisations to understand, track and measure their own progress in developing an inclusive and diverse workplace on a global scale.

## Other acknowledgements

MRS would like to acknowledge the considerable amount of time given to this programme by Ruth France (ex Main Board member, MRS) and Phyllis Macfarlane (ex Chair MRS Main Board) who have overseen the project on behalf of MRS.

## In partnership with:



# Introduction

## Why diversity, inclusion and equality (DI&E) matter

### Key definitions

**Diversity**-refers to the full spectrum of differences and similarities between individuals. While this report focuses primarily on socio-demographic variables, diversity is more encompassing: it includes things such as values and beliefs, life experiences and personal preferences.

**Inclusion**-refers to the overall culture of an organisation as well as to what an organisation does – the actions it takes – to ensure that all individuals feel welcomed, supported and valued as a member of the team.

**Equality**-in the workplace refers to having equal access to job opportunities, career progression, pay and rewards, and access to professional development.

**‘Protected characteristics’**-It is illegal in the UK to discriminate against a person because of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. These are ‘protected characteristics’ under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

It is worth pondering why getting diversity, inclusion and equality right is important. Often, people who are in positions of relative power and privilege who do not feel discriminated against or undervalued in any way think that DI&E is largely a matter for their human resources department: it’s just about getting sufficient representation of diverse people in the organisation. DI&E may be important from a moral point of view, but it remains a ‘nice to have’ that is unrelated to productivity and business performance and that might need to be sacrificed during tough times.

However, for people who are not in positions of relative power and privilege – and especially for women and people with various ‘protected characteristics’ – DI&E is much more

fundamental. It’s about feeling recognised, valued, understood and cared for as human beings, not just as employees. Working in an environment that is diverse and inclusive makes them feel that they belong, makes work more enjoyable, and increases motivation, creativity and productivity. It also increases their commitment to the success of the organisation and stops them from looking for work elsewhere – thereby improving retention and reducing the cost of hiring, training and onboarding new staff. This makes DI&E core strategic issues for the sector, not just for women and staff with various protected characteristics but for everyone and every business, especially during tough times.

Perhaps other sectors can afford to pay less attention to diversity, inclusion and equality. The research sectors’ raison d’être, however, is to understand different segments of society and to generate deep insights into consumers’ lives. We cannot do our job well if we don’t understand society and people from all walks of life within it. Given our remit, having a workforce that reflects modern society in all its complexity can only be a strong asset.

### The business case

The business case for diversity and inclusion is clear: diverse organisations perform better, have higher employee satisfaction, have better financial returns and are more creative, productive and innovative. As explained by [Business in the Community](#), these organisations see:

#### **Better financial results:**

Companies with as strong gender and ethnic backgrounds as 15% and 35% respectively are more likely to outperform their competitors (McKinsey)

#### **Increased innovation and creativity:**

When employees ‘think their organisation is committed to and supportive of diversity, and they feel included’, their ability to innovate increases by 83% (Deloitte)

#### **More attractive employer brand:**

54% of women and 45% of men surveyed said they researched if a company had D&I policies in place when deciding to accept a position (PwC)

### Large organisations are legally required to proactively promote equality

Prior to the introduction of the Equality Act in 2010, the emphasis of equality legislation was on rectifying cases of discrimination and harassment after they occurred, not preventing them from happening in the first place.

The new legislation was designed to shift the onus from individuals to organisations, placing an obligation on large organisations to positively promote equality, not merely to avoid discrimination.

With this in mind, it is lawful for employers to take 'positive action' to compensate for disadvantages that can reasonably be expected to be faced by people who share a particular protected characteristic.

## Focus and structure of the report

This report discusses the results of a survey to understand experiences and perceptions of diversity, inclusion & equality (DI&E) in the UK's research sector. The data collection took place in August and September 2020 - at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic was inflicting severe damage to the health and economic life of the nation.

Full technical details about the survey are set out in the Technical Appendix to this report.

In total, 470 people completed the survey, a smaller number than we might have expected. We therefore cannot use these data to extrapolate to the total MR sector or make bold claims about the extent to which the sector adequately represents the diversity of the research population. Further, data have not been pro rata'd to take account of participants who preferred not to answer any of the sensitive questions in this survey, and we have not compared the results with previous years since the samples are not comparable.

In future years, it is hoped that more and more people across the sector will take part in this survey so that progress can be tracked over time and lessons can be learned about what

worked, for whom, and where efforts need to be focused.

Despite the relatively small sample size overall, and for researchers with specific protected characteristics in particular, the findings do provide rich insights into the perceptions and experiences of researchers in our industry. They paint a consistent picture and contain important lessons.

Throughout the report, we mainly considered how discrete socio-demographic factors impact on the perceptions and experiences of researchers in the sector. However, in reality, each person combines a range of demographic attributes. Focusing on the overlapping and cumulative effects of ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation and social class - known as 'intersectionality' - brings into sharp relief how radically different experiences can be for some members of the research community based on their demographic profile.

To illustrate this, we have created a simple typology of researchers.

Analysing data by these three types of researchers reveals how various factors cohere and impact in different ways, and to varying extents, on the experiences and perceptions of different members of our professional community.

This typology is used mainly in the section specifically on intersectionality, though it is referred to in some earlier sections of the report.

The report also refers to 'minoritised groups'. This is grounded in the Equalities Act 2010 which protects individuals against discrimination on the basis of 'protected characteristics' which are these socio-demographic attributes:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Race (Ethnicity)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity.

We use the term 'minoritised groups' to embrace all sections of society which tend to have minority status, not in terms of demographic size but in terms of access to power.

# Main findings

## Perceptions of equal opportunities in the research sector

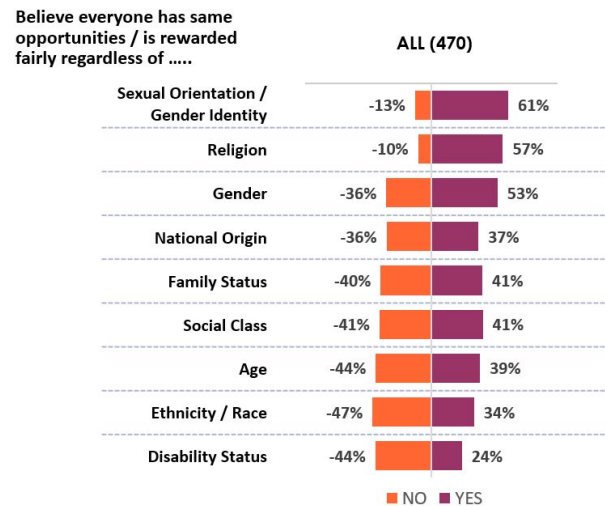
We asked researchers whether they believe that everyone in the market research sector has the same opportunities to progress and is rewarded fairly regardless of their age, gender, family status, ethnicity / race, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation / gender identity and social class.

Overall, a majority (i.e. more than 50% of all participants) believe that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and other people with non-conformist sexual orientations or gender identities (LGBTQ+), people of all faiths and women can progress fairly. They do not perceive that there may be specific barriers that might hinder their career opportunities and progression.

A minority (i.e. fewer than 50% of all participants) believe that everyone in the sector has the same opportunities to progress and is rewarded fairly regardless of their social class, caring responsibilities (family status), national origin, ethnicity or race, disability or age. They believe that these attributes do restrict their career opportunities and progression.<sup>1</sup> (See Figure 1)

The data in Figure 1 are based on answers from all survey participants. But what do women and people with specific protected characteristics think of the opportunities that are open to them?

Figure 1: Perceptions of fairness in the insight sector



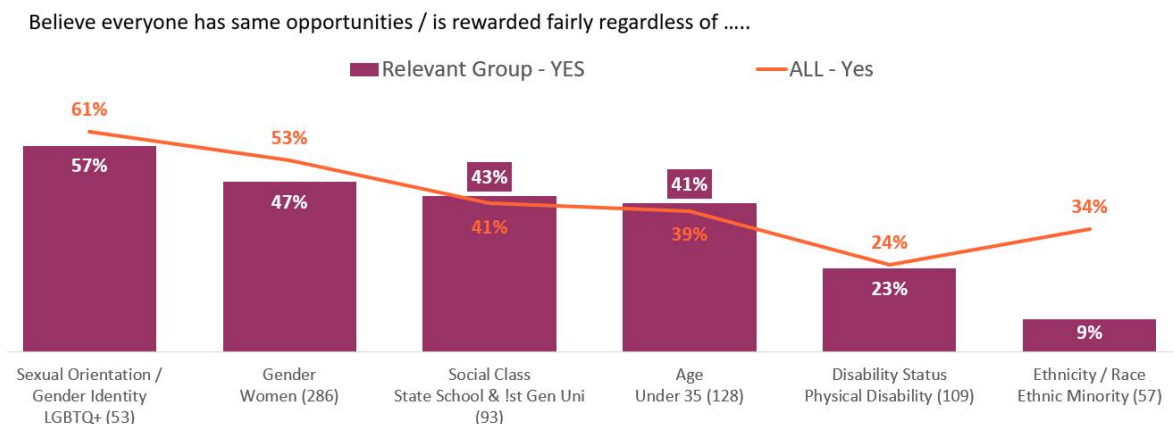
Base: All (N = 470)

Q21) Do you believe that everyone in the market research research/insight/data analytics sector has the same opportunities to progress and is rewarded fairly regardless of each of these factors?

Since they are the researchers most likely to be impacted by any lack of opportunities, it is worth considering their perceptions. The percentage of people in each group who believe that researchers with a profile similar to their own have equal opportunities to progress their career and are rewarded fairly are shown in Figure 2.

With the exception of LGBTQ+ researchers, the majority of women and people across all minoritised groups therefore believe that the sector does not treat them fairly nor give them equal opportunities to progress. The issue is by far the most acute among ethnic minority researchers: fewer than one in ten of ethnic minority researchers believe that the market research sector is genuinely meritocratic for people of colour.

Figure 2: Minoritised groups' perceptions of fairness in the insight sector



Base: All (N = 470) Base sizes for sub groups shown in axis labels.

Q21) Do you believe that everyone in the market research research/insight/data analytics sector has the same opportunities to progress and is rewarded fairly regardless of each of these factors?

## Experiences of researchers working in larger (6+ employee) companies

Self-employment, freelancing and employment in practitioner-led micro companies are fundamental parts of the market research sector. DI&E considerations are different for such researchers. The survey was structured to allow for this, with separate sets of questions for those in larger, more complex organisations and those working in micro businesses and the self-employed.

First, we examine how survey participants working in companies with over six employees assess how their current (or most recent) company performs in relation to DI&E.

### Perceptions of performance of larger companies on DI&E

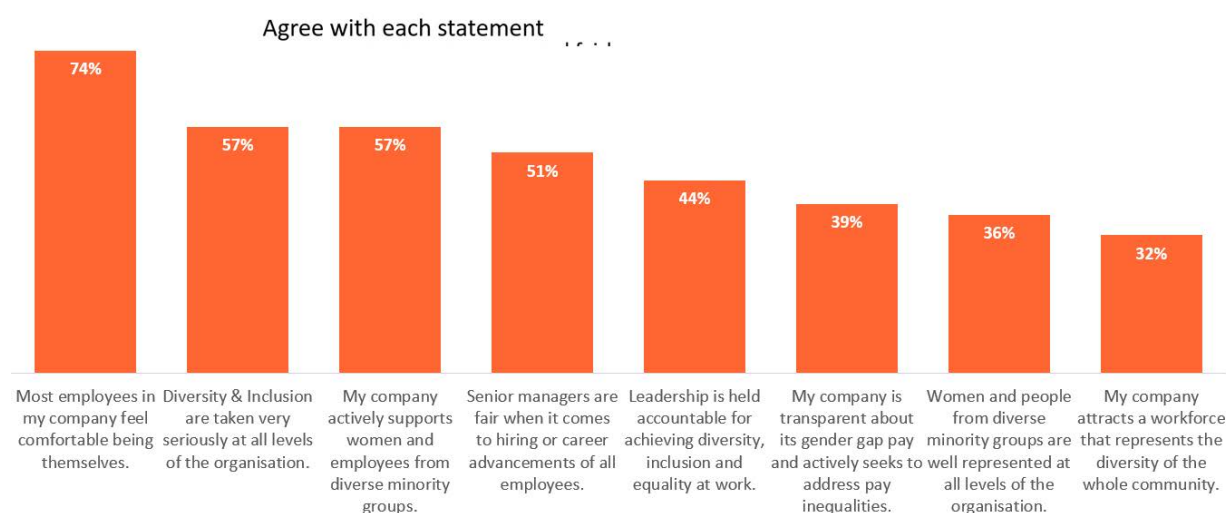
Overall, three-quarters of researchers agree that most employees in their company feel comfortable being themselves (74%). This is a strong positive result.

More than half believe that DI&E are taken very seriously at all levels of the organisation (57%); that their company actively supports women and employees from diverse minoritised groups (57%); and that senior managers are fair when it comes to hiring or career advancements of all employees (51%).

Fewer than half of participants agree that leadership is held accountable for achieving diversity, inclusion and equality at work (44%); that their company is transparent about its gender gap pay and actively seeks to address pay inequalities (39%); that women and people from diverse minoritised groups are well represented at all levels of the organisation (36%); and that their company attracts a workforce that represents the diversity of the whole community (32%).

If two-thirds<sup>2</sup> of the researchers surveyed believe that their company fails to reflect the diversity of the population and that it lacks diversity at all levels of the organisation, this strongly suggests that more work needs to be done to attract, retain, progress and reward fairly a more diverse array of talent.

Figure 3: Perceptions of employer's DI&E performance (larger companies)



Base: All in 6+ employee companies (N = 357)

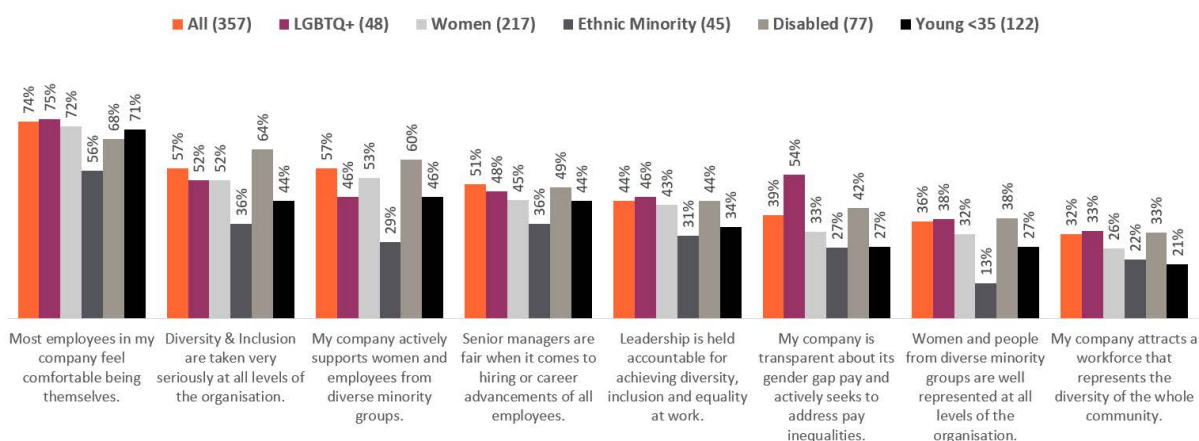
Q24) The following statements will allow us to gauge how you think your current (or most recent) company performs in relation to Diversity, Inclusion and Equality. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements?

When we consider the perceptions women and researchers from minoritised groups working in 6+ employee companies have of their company's performance on DI&E, the picture becomes more complex. (See Figure 4)

LGBTQ+ researchers are broadly in agreement with other employees on all issues. They are slightly less likely to agree that their company actively supports women and employees from diverse minoritised groups, but slightly more likely to think their company is transparent about its gender gap pay and actively seeks to address pay inequalities. Disabled researchers are also broadly aligned with other employees on all issues. They are more likely than the sector average to agree that DI&E are taken very seriously at all levels of the organisation; that women and people from diverse minoritised groups are well represented at all levels of the organisation; that their company actively supports women and employees from diverse minoritised groups; and that their company is transparent about its gender gap pay and actively seeks to address pay inequalities.

However, women, ethnic minority and younger researchers (under 35 years of age) rate their employers' performance lower than other employees on all issues. Researchers from ethnic minority backgrounds, in particular, are more negative than other employees about their company's performance: they are half as likely as their peers to believe that their company attracts a diverse workforce and that women and people from diverse minoritised groups are well represented at all levels of the organisation. Overall, they are the least positive of all groups about their company's performance on DI&E.

**Figure 4: Perceptions of employer's DI&E performance overall and by protected characteristics (larger companies)**



Base: All in 6+ employee companies with each characteristic. Base sizes shown in legend. Q24) The following statements will allow us to gauge how you think your current (or most recent) company performs in relation to Diversity, Inclusion and Equality. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements?

## Workplace experience

The survey explored everyday workplace experiences to tap into how it feels for different groups of people to work in their company. Overall, the results paint a positive picture of researchers' day-to-day lived experiences at work. A solid majority of researchers in the sector feel that:

- They are given the opportunities/resources to work flexibly (86%);
- They are a valued and essential part of their direct team (85%);
- They get recognition for work well done (73%);
- They belong at the company (70%);
- They are a valued and essential part of their company (66%);
- Their unique attributes, characteristics, skills, experience and background are valued in their company (66%);
- They are emotionally and socially supported at work (63%);
- They are given opportunities and support to learn and progress (61%).

There seems to be a greater sense of being appreciated by immediate colleagues than by the wider company, though researchers

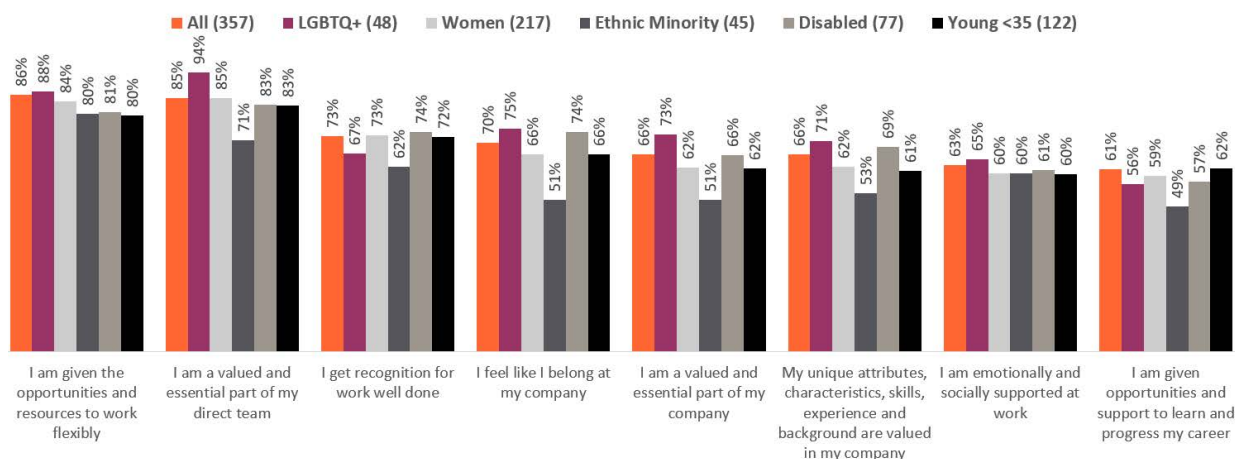
clearly appreciate the opportunities and resources they have been given to work flexibly (perhaps especially in the context of COVID-19). There is an appetite for more opportunities to learn and progress, which may be a particular challenge in the context of remote working.

As with other themes, there are also differences in the workplace experiences of researchers based on their protected characteristics. (See Figure 5) Women are significantly less likely than men to feel they belong to their company (66% versus 77%) are a valued and essential part of it (62% versus 74%) or that their unique attributes, characteristics, skills, experience and background are valued (62% versus 74%).

Compared to their white British colleagues, ethnic minority researchers are less positive on most measures, with the greatest deficit being for feeling they belong to their company (51% versus 76%). For disabled employees, results suggest that employers might improve on how well this group are given opportunities and support to learn and progress, and to work flexibly. Greater opportunity to work flexibly is also the factor which might be improved for younger researchers.

By contrast, LGBTQ+ researchers in our survey tend to report a more positive view of their workplace experiences, in particular being somewhat more likely than average to report feeling valued.

**Figure 5: Everyday workplace experiences overall and by protected characteristics (larger companies)**



Base: All in 6+ employee companies with each characteristic. Base sizes shown in legend.

Q23) The following statements will allow us to gauge how you feel in your current role within your current (or most recent) company. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements?

## Discrimination and inappropriate behaviour in larger companies

Despite positive workplace experiences overall, it seems that overt discrimination and inappropriate behaviour are still a part of working life for many in the industry<sup>3</sup>.

### Personal experiences

The majority of researchers surveyed have experienced or witnessed discriminatory and/or inappropriate behaviour at work in the 12 months prior to the survey. Indeed, only 41% of women and 48% of men reported not having witnessed or experienced such behaviour at work.

Overall, the most common experiences of workplace discrimination personally experienced by researchers were feeling undervalued compared to colleagues of equal competence (36%), colleagues taking sole credit for shared efforts (31%), being regularly made to work on tasks below their skills or pay (31%) and being unfairly spoken over or not listened to in meetings (30%) (See Figure 6)

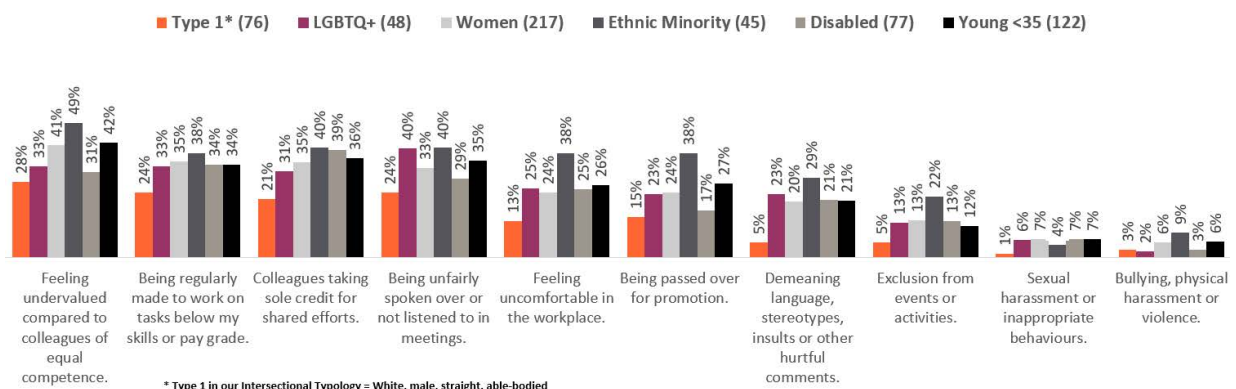
Between 10 and 30% of the market research workforce also reports being made to feel uncomfortable in the workplace (22%), being passed over for promotion (21%), experiencing demeaning language, stereotypes, insults and other hurtful comments (16%) and being excluded from events (11%)

Few researchers report bullying, physical harassment or violence (4%) or sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviours (5%). While we do not have data to compare with previous years, it would seem that bullying, physical harassment, sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour are perhaps less frequent than they might have been a decade ago. Such behaviours are now widely regarded as unacceptable.

As may be expected, there are significant differences in the types of discrimination most frequently experienced by researchers as a function of their protected characteristics. For instance, while only 5% of straight white men experience demeaning language, stereotypes, insults and other hurtful comments, 23% of LGBTQ+ people, 20% of women and 29% of ethnic minority researchers do so. Similarly, while 28% of straight white men report feeling undervalued compared to colleagues of equal competence, this proportion rises to 49% among ethnic minority researchers.

Women attribute discrimination to their caring responsibilities as well as their gender; people from other minoritised groups attribute discrimination to their specific protected characteristics, except in the case of ethnic minority researchers, for whom religion often adds an additional layer of discrimination. In addition, researchers aged under 35 (26%) or 45-64 (26%) are more likely than those aged 35-44 (14%) to attribute discrimination they have experienced to their age.

**Figure 6: Percent experienced discriminatory treatment overall and by protected characteristics (larger companies)**



Base: All in 6+ employee companies with each characteristic. Base sizes shown in legend.

Q25) The following section focusses on direct discrimination you might have personally experienced or witnessed in relation to others in your current (or most recent) place of work. Have you personally experienced any of the following within the last 12 months at work?

## Witnessed experiences

Generally, those who have personally experienced discrimination are also more likely to report witnessing discrimination in relation to their colleagues, perhaps reflecting a greater sensitivity to various forms of discrimination as well as differences in workplace inclusion. Therefore, while percentages are slightly higher for witnessed discrimination, the pattern for discrimination witnessed mirrors that for discrimination personally experienced. (See Figure 7) The only exceptions are for:

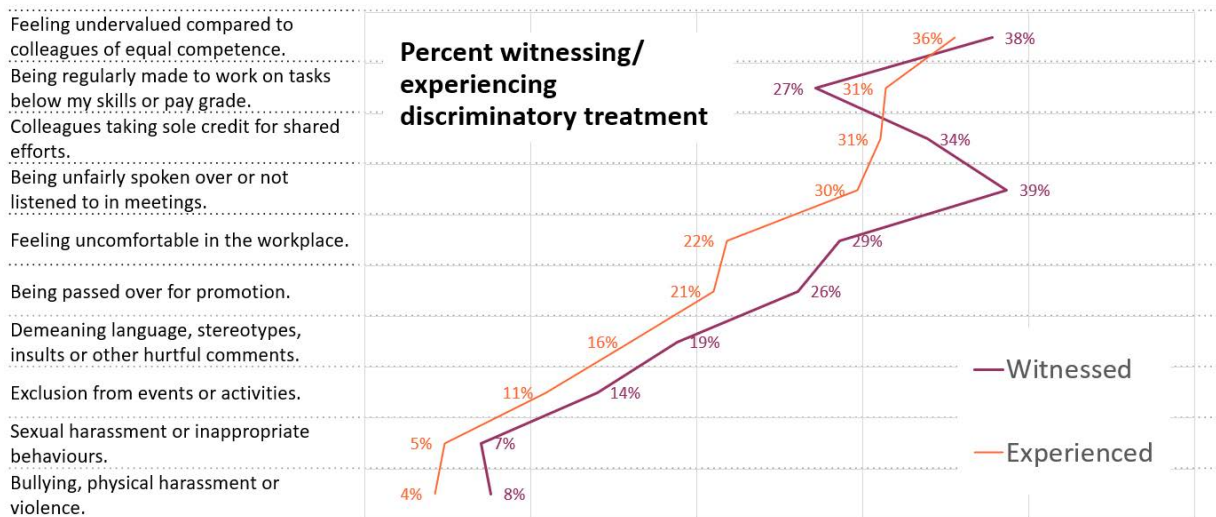
- 'being regularly made to work on tasks below their skills or pay', where personal experiences are more frequently reported than are experiences of witnessing such behaviour.
- 'being unfairly spoken over or ignored' which is more often reported as being witnessed than it is as being experienced.

### Reflections

How motivated and committed to the success of the organisation would you be if:

- you did not feel a valued member of the team?
- you saw your ideas taken by others and not properly acknowledged?
- you were regularly asked to do jobs beneath your role or pay grade?
- you did not feel you had equal access to career opportunities?
- you were paid significantly less than your colleagues for comparable work?

Figure 7: Witnessing compared to experiencing discriminatory treatment (larger companies)



Base: All in 6+ employee companies (N = 357)

Q25/26) The following section focusses on direct discrimination you might have personally experienced or witnessed in relation to others in your current (or most recent) place of work. Have you personally experienced any of the following within the last 12 months at work? Have you directly witnessed others in your organisation being subjected to any of the following within the last 12 months at work?

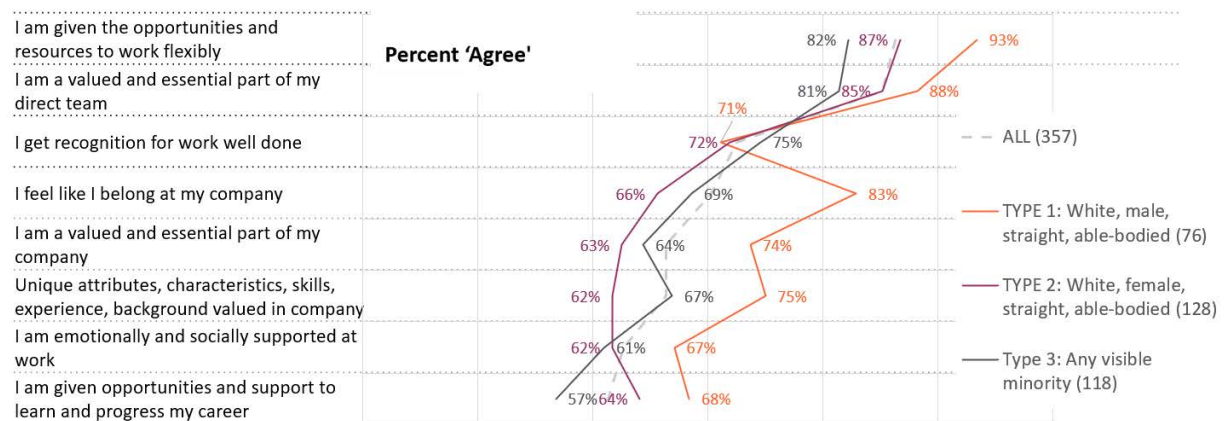
## Intersectionality: how advantages and disadvantages cohere

As explained in the introduction to this report, focusing on the overlapping and cumulative effects of different socio-demographic factors - or 'intersectionality' - emphasises just how different experiences can be for some members of the research community based on their demographic profile.

In this section we compare the experiences and perceptions of researchers who are white, male, straight and able-bodied (Type 1) with those of their colleagues who are white, female, straight and able-bodied (Type 2) and those who belong to any visible minority community (based on ethnicity, faith and/or disability) (Type 3).

The differences can be significant. Within large companies, Type 1 researchers feel a much greater sense of belonging and believe that they have greater access to resources than do Type 2 and Type 3 researchers. (See Figure 8)

**Figure 8: Everyday workplace experiences by intersectional typology (large companies)**

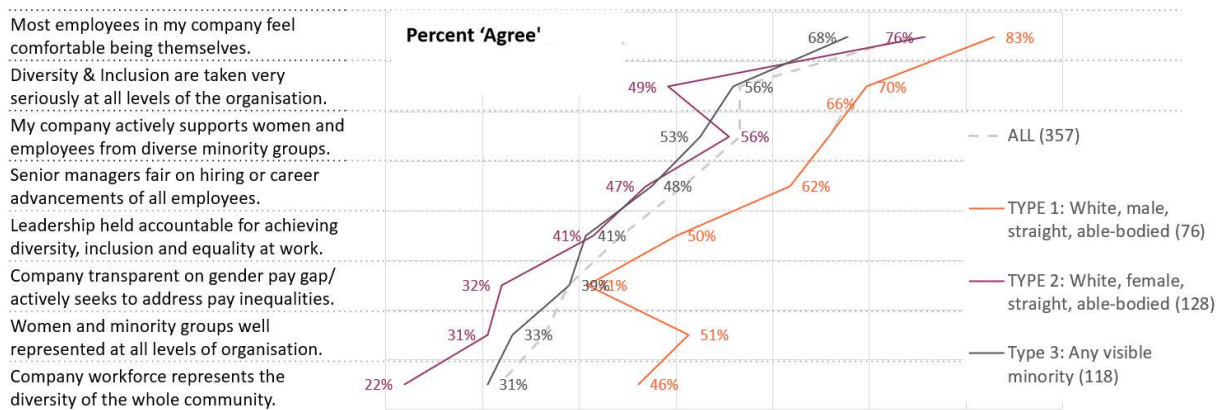


Base: All in 6+ employee companies by Intersectional Type. Base sizes shown in legend. Q23) The following statements will allow us to gauge how you feel in your current role within your current (or most recent) company. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Similarly, Type 2 and Type 3 researchers in large companies are much less likely to believe that their company performs well in relation to key aspects of diversity, inclusion and equality than are Type 1 researchers. For example, Type 2 and 3 researchers are much less likely to agree that DI&E matters are taken very seriously at all levels of the organisation or that their company's workforce reflects the diversity of the whole community. The perception gaps in are above 20% where we compare Type 2 with Type 1, and at least 14% for Type 3 versus Type 1. (See Figure 9)

This suggests that more efforts are needed to improve workplace experience, flexible working, recognition and opportunities particularly for women working in large companies in the sector. It also suggests that, far from being 'over-sensitive' to issues of discrimination - a charge often levelled against people from minority ethnic groups - Type 3 researchers are in fact less likely to report discrimination and to be 'disgruntled' at work than women.

**Figure 9 Perceptions of employer's DI&E performance by intersectional type segmentation (large companies)**

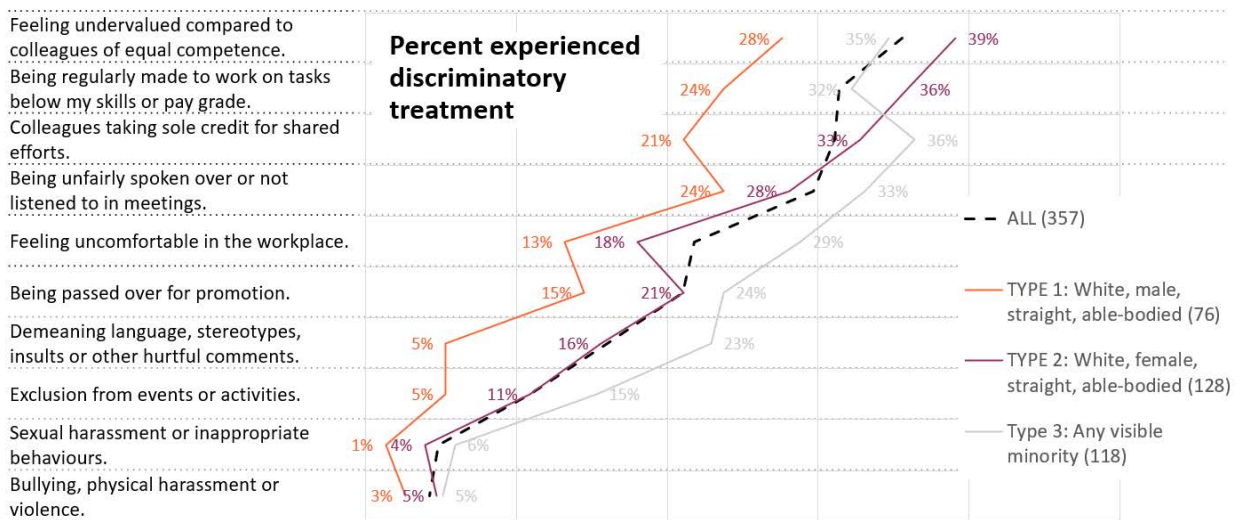


Base: All in 6+ employee companies by Intersectional Type. Base sizes shown in legend. Q24) The following statements will allow us to gauge how you think your current (or most recent) company performs in relation to Diversity, Inclusion and Equality. How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements?

Not surprisingly, Type 1 researchers are much less likely than others to have experienced any discriminatory treatment than their Type 2 and Type 3 colleagues. Type 1 researchers rarely feel uncomfortable in the workplace (13%, compared with 18% of Type 2 and 29% of Type 3). Similarly, they rarely experience demeaning language, stereotypes, insults or other hurtful comments compared to Type 2 or Type 3.

Type 2 researchers are the group most likely to have felt undervalued or to have been made to work on tasks below their skill level or pay grade. (See Figure 10)

**Figure 10: Percent experienced discriminatory treatment overall and by intersectional type segmentation (large companies)**



Base: All in 6+ employee companies by Intersectional Type. Base sizes shown in legend. Q25) The following section focusses on direct discrimination you might have personally experienced or witnessed in relation to others in your current (or most recent) place of work. Have you personally experienced any of the following within the last 12 months at work?

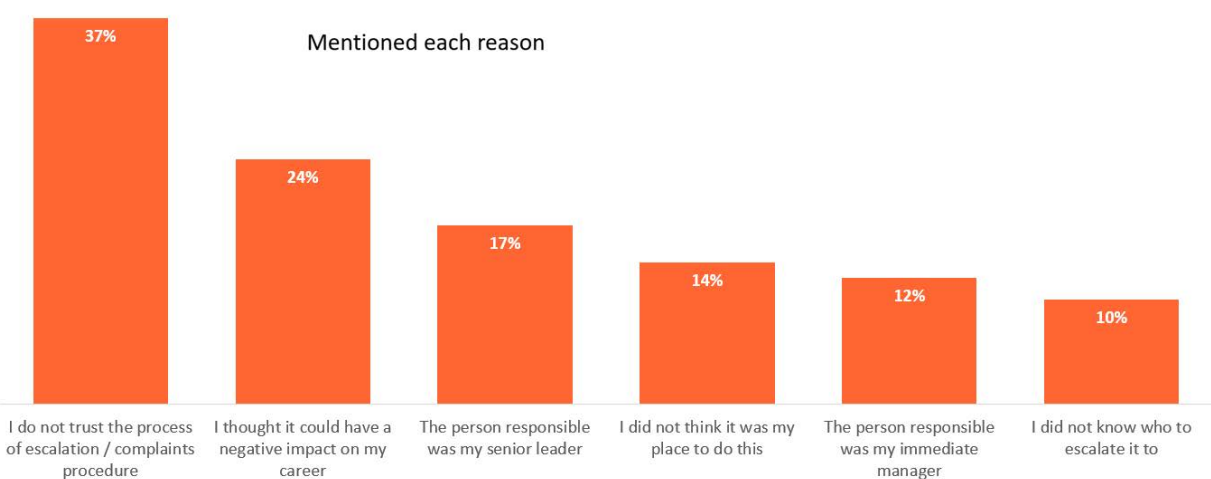
Reporting inappropriate behaviour in larger companies

Much of the discrimination and inappropriate behaviour goes unreported. The majority of researchers who experience or witness such behaviour do not raise the issue with their senior leaders or HR department. This is largely because they either do not trust the process for escalating and dealing with complaints, because the person involved was a line manager or senior leader, or because researchers feared that doing so might have a negative impact on their career. There is also a lack of clarity about what to do when discrimination or inappropriate behaviour is experienced or witnessed. (See Figure 11)

This suggests that organisations need to do more to manage inappropriate behaviour at work. This requires sharing and explaining complaints procedures, increasing confidence in them and making it clear that it is everyone’s responsibility to support staff directly affected.

Of those who did report their concerns, about a third (35%) were satisfied with the way in which the situation was handled while almost half (49%) were not. Our data on this issue for researchers with protected characteristics do not allow firm conclusions to be made, however they suggest that those from ethnic minority backgrounds, those in the youngest (<35) and oldest (65+) age groups and women were less likely to be satisfied with the outcome of their complaint than others.

Figure 11: Reporting inappropriate behaviour (larger companies)



Base: All in 6+ employee companies who have experienced or witnessed inappropriate behaviour and not reported it. (N = 139)  
Q27) If you have personally experienced or witnessed inappropriate behaviour at work, did you raise this with senior leaders or HR?  
Q27b) If not, why not?

## DI&E and staff retention

Diversity, inclusion & equality at work clearly matter to women and researchers from minoritised groups.

Compared with their white, straight, able-bodied male counterparts, women and researchers from minoritised groups are three to four times more likely to have thought (either 'sometimes' or 'often') to leave their job because of concerns linked to DI&E, and are about three times more likely to have actually left their work as a result of discrimination or inappropriate behaviour. (See Figure 12)

It is easy to imagine that motivation, commitment and productivity would be lower among these researchers and to realise the cost to the sector of failing to manage diverse talent.

Figure 12: Consideration of leaving job due to concerns linked to DI&E



Base all participants currently working<sup>4</sup>. Base sizes shown in axis labels.

Q.28 Have you ever considered leaving your current (or most recent) organisation or role because of concerns related to discrimination or to the lack of diversity, inclusion and equality?

## Experiences of independent researchers and those working in micro-businesses

Many people in our sector are 'indies' - independent researchers who are self-employed (often operating through a limited company) and freelancers - or work in micro-businesses<sup>5</sup>. This section looks at their specific experiences. It seeks to explore three main issues:

- how their perceptions of fairness in the sector compare with those of their peers in larger companies;
- whether concerns around DI&E were considerations in these researchers' decision to become independent, to join a small company or to start their own business; and
- whether, as independents and people working in micro-businesses, they believe that their opportunities are constrained or enhanced in any way because of their gender or other protected characteristics.

Answers to these questions are informative about the working lives of 'indies' themselves but they also shed light on the culture of larger organisations.

While numbers are small (n=100) and interpretation must be tentative, the analysis suggests that 'indies' and researchers in micro-businesses who moved from a large

company role to working independently are now more satisfied with their working lives generally. In particular they value the greater control they have over the work they do and the quality of their work products, as well as their work-life balance.

### Motivations for self-employment

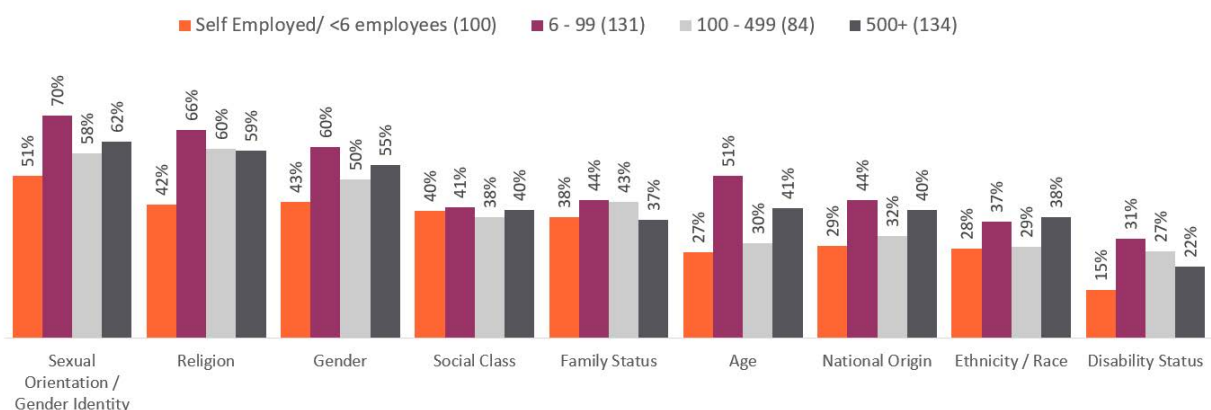
Many investigations into the drivers for self-employment among ethnic minorities have concluded that this choice is a coping strategy in response to poor DI&E experiences as employees<sup>6</sup>.

It would appear that this phenomenon is evident with the insight sector, with at least some researchers choosing self-employment or joining or starting a small research company in a response to poor workplace practices, poor career progression, lack of flexibility and other forms of discrimination and inappropriate behaviour while working in larger organisations. Family status and gender appear particularly relevant to this.

'Indies' and researchers in micro-businesses are considerably less likely than those working in larger companies to think that people have equal opportunities to progress in the market research sector regardless of their socio-demographic background. (See Figure 13)

**Figure 13: Perceptions of fairness in the insight sector by company size**

Believe everyone has same opportunities / is rewarded fairly regardless of .....



Base: All. Base sizes shown in legend.

Q21) Do you believe that everyone in the market research research/insight/data analytics sector has the same opportunities to progress and is rewarded fairly regardless of each of these factors?

Importantly, they are more than three times more likely to have left their previous employment because of discrimination (17%) than the sector average (5%). The results also indicate that considerations linked to DI&E factored in the decision to work independently in 29% of all cases.

Nearly three in five (58%) ethnic minority researchers who chose to be independent or to work in micro-businesses reported that these considerations impacted 'a little' or 'quite a lot' on their decisions. Nearly two in five (38%) women who chose to be independent or to work in micro-businesses also said that these considerations impacted 'a little', 'quite a lot' or 'very much' on their employment decisions. By contrast, only 10% of men chose to work independently or in micro-businesses because of considerations linked to DI&E.

Among women, the main reasons for 'going it alone', working part-time or joining smaller organisations were the desire to achieve better work-life balance; to decide what projects one takes on, to have flexible working hours; to be more present for their children; to manage the stresses and anti-social hours that often come with senior roles; to avoid office politics; and to manage the challenges linked to the chronic conditions (including the menopause) and common mental illness (stress, anxiety, depression) more satisfactorily. Some specifically mentioned age and sex discrimination as well as workplace bullying as reasons to work independently.

*"As a woman when the last recession happened all the women in our organisation were laid off. This was the trigger for me to set up on my own."*

*"As a mother of young children in a senior role in a corporate system there was no flexibility when domestic issues arose; as a small business owner I work close to home, with hours that have suited school timetables etc and I am able to put in more hours at work than in a corporate role."*

*"The market research agency I previously worked for tended to make older workers redundant first when downsizing. I was over 50 years old and there were only three others of that age left in a workforce of nearly 100."*

*"Setting up my own business offered the opportunity to make a difference and have flexibility to do pro bono work."*

*"It's easier to manage the aches and pains and other symptoms [of the menopause] if I am responsible for myself only. I know the in-office working situation has changed in the CV-19 era, but wanting to work from home, all the time, was a key part in the decision. If I need to sleep all day because any of the menopause symptoms are flaring up, I can do that. Being employed means always asking permission and/or explaining; I'm not prepared to do that any longer."*

*"The big boss in the place I worked was a bully - particularly towards women. He would shout and rant and bang tables and reduce me to tears."*

*"My last boss was an extreme misogynist. He was also unaware of racial and cultural issues that were rampant in our department."*

Among ethnic minority researchers, there are additional concerns about the lack of career progression open to staff of colour or from different national origins.

*"As a person of colour and female, you always think about how others in your organisation are being given more opportunities. It is something that is always at the back of your mind and is a real concern - not about having a chip on your shoulder."*

*"You often see nationality-based politics playing out in diverse organisations. Defeating the purpose of the diverse representation they enjoy."*

*"I was cast in a mould relating to the stereotypes of my ethnic origin i.e. strong at analytics but weak on synthesising a story. One reaches a stage both in terms of age and career when one loses patience and decides to strike out on one's own."*

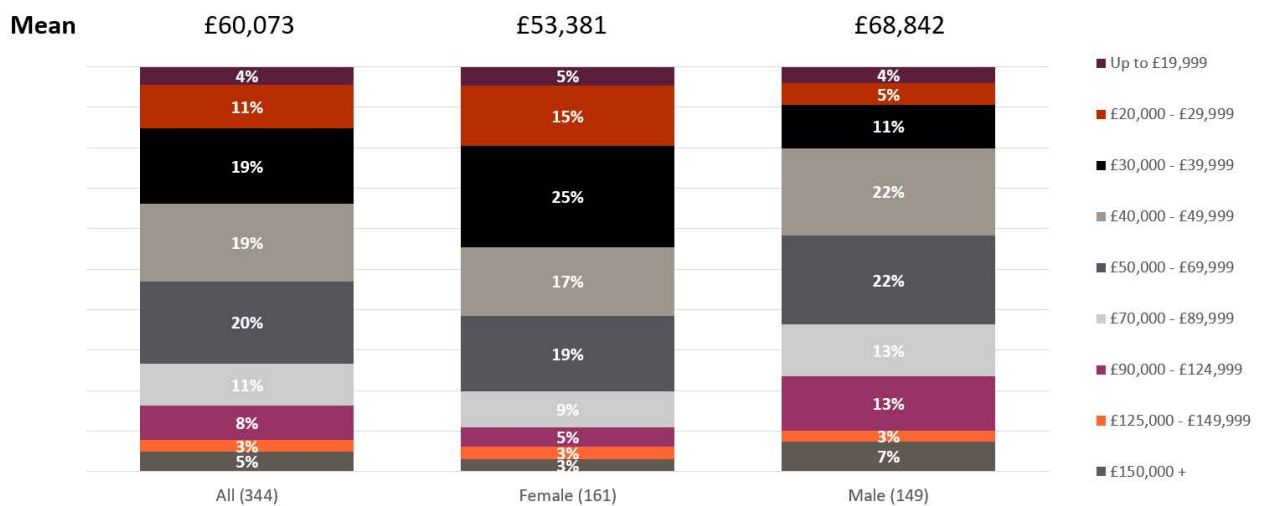
## Pay parity

To provide some broad indication on the level of pay parity in the sector, we asked all researchers to share their annual income bracket and compared these by socio-demographic groups. This way of measuring pay parity between men and women and between ethnic minority and white British researchers is not comparable to the government's approach to measuring the gender pay gap<sup>7</sup>.

To allow more meaningful comparisons across subgroups we also excluded the 22% of participants who work part-time.

We found that women's salaries were well below men's. While 58% of men earned £50K or more, only 38% of women did so. And while the mean annual salary (before tax) for the 12 months ending April 2020 was £60,073 across the sector as a whole, the average salary for men was £68,842 while the average salary for women was about 78% of this at £53,381. That is an average gender pay differential of almost £15,500 a year. (See Figure 14)

**Figure 14 Annual salary overall and by gender**



Base: All full-time workers answering. Base sizes shown in axis labels.

Q.20b) What was your salary / annual income from work before tax for the 12 months ending April 2020?

The gender pay gap is driven by differences between the pay of more experienced male and female researchers, those who have been working in the sector for 10+ years. For these, women's salaries are on average 84% of those of men. Although based on small sample sizes the indication from our data is that entry level salary levels, and pay levels for researchers with 3 – 9 years' experience are similar for women and men.

Women are not alone facing such inequalities. Ethnic minority staff also tend to have lower salaries than their white British counterparts. Even though they have typically worked in the sector for a similar number of years, they earn on average 80% of the salaries of their white British colleagues.

While 49% of white British researchers earn £50K or more, only 33% of ethnic minority researchers do so. (Low base sizes do not permit detailed analysis by number of years in the sector.) (See Figure 15)

Disabled staff also tend to have lower salaries than average though 42% have achieved annual pay of £50K or more. By contrast, LGBTQ+ researchers tend to be earning considerably more than average with nearly six in ten (58%) earning at least £50K. (See Figure 16)

Figure 15: Mean annual salary overall and by ethnicity



Base: All full-time workers answering. Base sizes shown in axis labels.

Q.20b) What was your salary / annual income from work before tax for the 12 months ending April 2020?

Figure 16: Mean annual salary overall and for LGBTQ+ and disabled workers



Base: All full-time workers answering. Base sizes shown in axis labels.

Q.20b) What was your salary / annual income from work before tax for the 12 months ending April 2020?

## Impacts of COVID-19 on DI&E in the market research sector

A key driver of our decision to conduct the survey when we did, was to allow us to investigate the work experiences of different groups of researchers during the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown, which began in March 2020. Given the scale of this global health and economic crisis, its ongoing nature and the particularly severe toll it is taking on the UK, it is hard to predict how COVID-19 will eventually affect the market research industry and inequalities within the sector<sup>8</sup>.

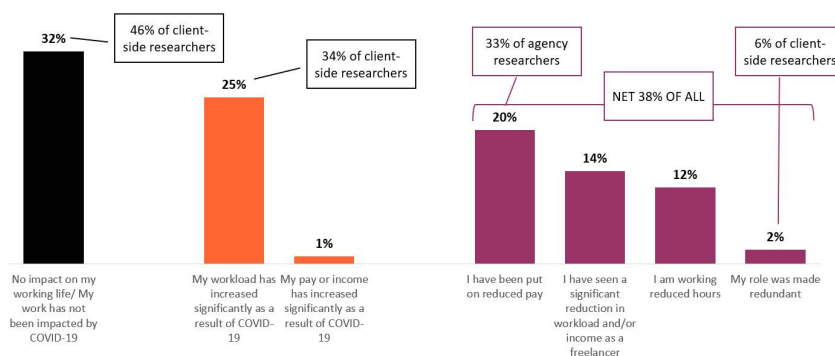
Overall, a third (32%) of market researchers in our sample report that their work and working life had not been impacted by COVID-19, at the time of completing the survey at least. A quarter (25%) had seen their workload increase; and almost four in ten (38%) had either been put on reduced pay, had seen their hours reduced, had been furloughed or made redundant. (See Figure 17)

Independent researchers and those working in micro-businesses (61% of whom are women) bear the brunt of the economic downturn: two in three (66%) of those in our survey have already seen their hours and pay cut down, been furloughed or made redundant.

Other researchers agree that this group of their peers face an unusually challenging time. About two-thirds of all researchers surveyed agree that the quality of working life and earnings of independent researchers can be expected to suffer disproportionately from COVID-19. This contrasts with client-side researchers, who seem to have been shielded from the worst effects of COVID-19 so far.

The survey results also suggest that people aged 55+ are much more likely to have been impacted by COVID-19, though this is driven by the fact that researchers in this age group are particularly likely to be independents (50% compared to 21% of all researchers). (See Figure 18)

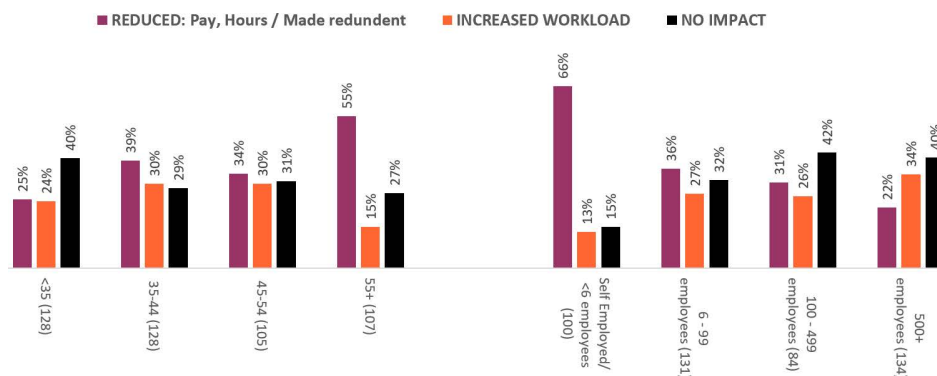
Figure 17: Impact of COVID-19 on working life



Base: All (N = 470)

Q.13) COVID-19 has impacted many people's working lives. Can you let us know how COVID-19 has impacted you?

Figure 18: Impact of COVID-19 on working life by age and company size



Base: All. Base sizes shown in axis labels.

Q.13) COVID-19 has impacted many people's working lives. Can you let us know how COVID-19 has impacted you?

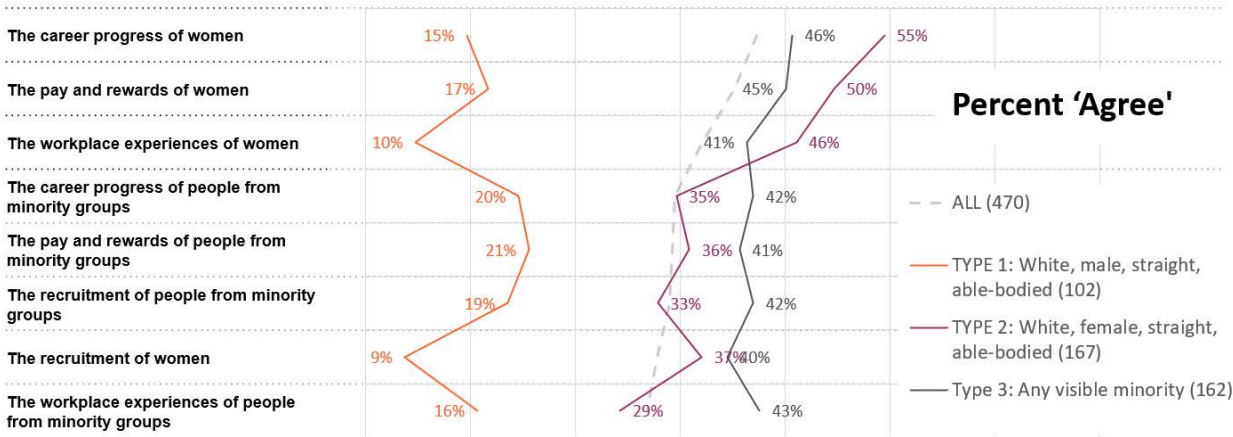
Despite their being no more likely to have been shielded from negative effects of the economic downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is worrying that most white, straight, non-disabled men do not recognise the scale of this challenge.

should ensure that challenges linked to COVID-19 are not allowed to make the situation for DI&E worse. Rather they should take action to ensure fairness to all their employees so our organisations come out stronger to face the post-COVID-19 world.

Fewer than one in five agree that COVID-19 is likely to have a more negative impact on the recruitment, pay, workplace experiences and career progression of women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is well below the percentage of women and people from minoritised groups who do anticipate such detrimental and unequal impacts on their working lives. (See Figure 19)

The sector as a whole must be alert to the disproportionate threat to older people, women, ethnic minority researchers and independent researchers of all backgrounds if it is to take action to avoid serious hardship, protect talent and ensure that any regressive impacts of COVID-19 are minimised and mitigated. At this time, leaders in the sector

Figure 19: Groups expected to suffer disproportionately due to COVID-19 by Intersectional Types



Base: All. Base sizes shown in legend.  
 Q.29: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: Compared to white British, middle-class, middle-aged, heterosexual, able-bodied men, I expect COVID-19 to have a disproportionate negative impact on:

## Driving change across the sector

While there is much work to be done to drive inclusion across the market research sector, it is also clear that many are prepared to take responsibility to accelerate change.

Young people, in particular, are keen to act as allies to their colleagues from minoritised groups, to learn about their own privileges and to embed a greater focus on women and diverse audiences and consumers in their day-to-day work. Many wish to develop evidence-based, tailored solutions to address the lack of diversity and inclusion they witness. They would also join an existing staff network and act as DI&E champions. These findings are consistent with a wealth of evidence that shows that DI&E are core values for young people. This energy and enthusiasm among younger researchers represents a real opportunity for organisations to embrace change.

But young people cannot lead on DI&E without the support - in terms of ideological and logistical support, protected time, resources - of older colleagues. They need their older colleagues to be prepared to invest in greater diversity, inclusion and equality. (See Figure 20)

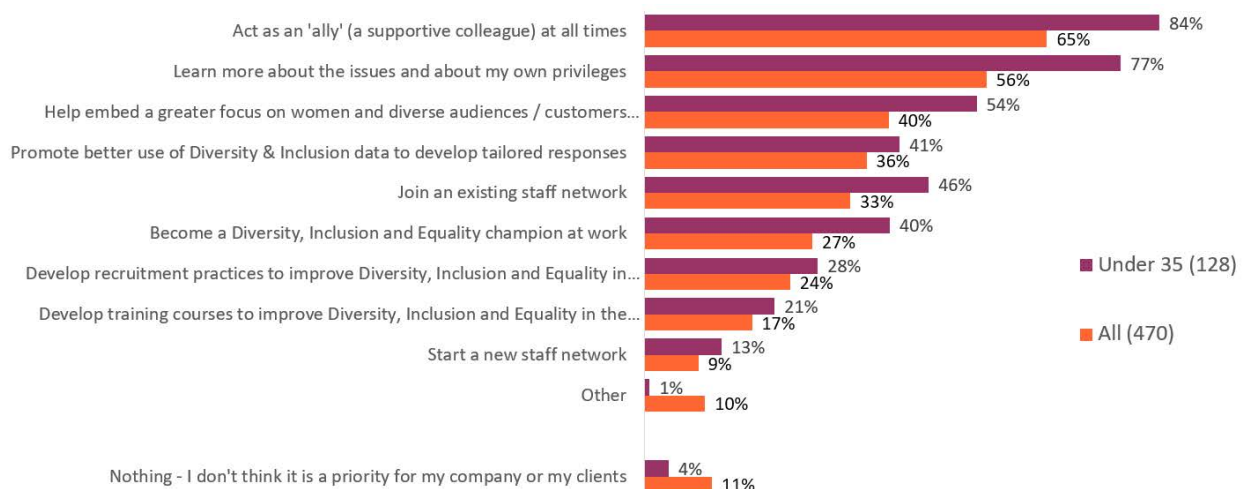
It is also reassuring that many people across the sector are aware of the activities and initiatives of the MRS to increase inclusion

across the sector. Efforts to promote LGBTQ+ inclusion have paid off: 66% of LGBTQ+ researchers who took part in the survey are aware of [MRS Pride](#) and their experiences of the sector are the most positive of all people with protected characteristics. Support from the MRS for [COrE](#) - a mentoring network from researchers from minority ethnic backgrounds - has also been noted: 21% of participants were aware of this initiative. However, this is not enough to address the scale of perceived discrimination.

The [CEO pledge](#) - an MRS initiative that asks CEOs to make commitments towards creating safer and more representative workplaces (publishing pay statistics annually, working towards government targets for women and ethnic minorities at board level and improving recruitment practices) - is also recognised by 21% of participants. Only 7% of the researchers surveyed were aware of two important initiatives to open doors to diverse talented young people: an apprenticeship programme and bursaries for professional training.

Overall, the results indicate that, while tailored initiatives are important and can make a positive impact on the perceptions and experiences of researchers with protected characteristics, moving the dial on DI&E across the sector as a whole will require a more cohesive and strategic approach.

**Figure 20: Actions researchers are prepared to take to improve DI&E at work**



Base: All. Base sizes shown in legend.

Q31. What are you personally prepared to do to improve Diversity, Inclusion and Equality in your day-to-day work? Please tick all that apply.

# Conclusions

Because of sample limitations this survey cannot provide an exhaustive and quantitative picture of how diverse the market research sector is. It does, however, bring into sharp relief the perceptions and experiences of people working in the sector.

The majority of researchers surveyed acknowledge that our sector as a whole does not represent wider British society and that we need to do more to improve diversity at all levels. They point to widespread problems in relation to recruitment, progression, pay, workplace culture, leadership and accountability in relation to Diversity, Inclusion and Equality (DI&E).

When discussing their personal workplace experiences, however, most researchers believe that they are given opportunities and resources to work flexibly, feel valued and recognised for the quality of their work, have a sense of belonging, believe that their unique attributes, characteristics, skills, experience and background are valued in their company. They also feel emotionally and socially supported and that they are given opportunities and support to learn and progress. Most have a positive sense of belonging.

Yet, discrimination and inappropriate behaviour at work are still commonplace. A majority of the researchers surveyed had personally experienced or witnessed such behaviour in the 12 months prior to the survey. This can take many forms, from colleagues taking sole credit for shared efforts to being regularly made to work on tasks below their skills or pay; from being unfairly spoken over or ignored in meetings to demeaning language and stereotypes; from bullying and harassment to exclusion from events. Much of this inappropriate behaviour goes unreported, largely because people do not trust the process for escalating and dealing with complaints, because the person involved was a line manager or senior leader, or because researchers fear that reporting concerns might have a negative impact on their career.

The survey identified important issues in relation to pay parity in the sector: women earned on average almost £15,500 less than

men in the year ending April 2020 - and this figure includes only people who work full-time. This gender pay gap is driven by differences in pay for those who have been working in the market research sector for 10+ years. For these researchers, women's salaries are on average 84% of those of men. Similarly, ethnic minority researchers earned on average £12,213 less than their white British counterparts, and disabled researchers earned on average £3,984 less than their able-bodied colleagues (despite physical disability being strongly correlated with age, itself being strongly correlated with higher salaries). The pattern is reversed for LGBTQ+ researchers: in the year ending April 2020, they earned on average £5,917 more than their straight colleagues.

It is hard to gauge the precise impact that these negative experiences have on staff morale, commitment, productivity, absenteeism, 'presentism' and other important business metrics. But we do know from this survey that concerns in relation to DI&E were part of the considerations of 30% of all researchers who have decided to become independent or to join or start micro-businesses. We also know that a significant proportion of those who have stayed in their current roles have thought of leaving but did not because they could not afford to be without work, or did not think that the situation would necessarily be better elsewhere in the sector. This should provide food for thought.

The survey reveals significant pay gaps by protected characteristics: women earn less than men, ethnic minority researchers earn less than their white British colleagues and disabled researchers earn less than their able-bodied peers. The one exception is in relation to LGBTQ+ colleagues who, on average, earn more than their straight colleagues. Such pay gaps may not cause the patterns of attitudes we observe but they are entirely consistent with them.

While it is too early to tell what the consequences of COVID-19 will be for the sector in general, and for DI&E in particular, it is already clear that, at the time of the survey, more than 80% of independent researchers and those working in micro-businesses had

seen their hours or pay reduced, been furloughed or made redundant. Related to this given their higher than average representation within the 'Indies' segment, older people (aged 55 and above) have also been disproportionately affected.

By contrast, at the moment at least, those working in large organisations seem to have been protected against the worst impacts of the pandemic.

The findings reveal important and consistent disparities in the perceptions and experiences of older, white, straight and able-bodied men compared with those of women and researchers with protected characteristics. By and large, the former are apparently less attuned to the reality of discrimination and its impacts. On all measures, they have more favourable perceptions and experiences of diversity, inclusion and equality in their workplace than do women and colleagues from most other minoritised groups - especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds, whose experiences are the most negative overall.

One minority group stands out for feeling much more positive about DI&E in the sector: LGBTQ+ people. While many factors may account for their more positive perceptions and experiences, these almost certainly reflect the strong and senior leadership on the MRS Main Board on matters of sexual orientation and gender identity and the creation of MRS Pride. This suggests that similar leadership and initiatives could succeed in shifting attitudes and experiences in relation to other researchers who have protected characteristics. It shows that the attitudes and perceptions of people from minoritised groups are responsive to change: efforts towards greater diversity, inclusion and equality will be rewarded.

This research shows that there is both widespread recognition of the issues and a keen appetite to drive change, especially among young researchers. With appropriate support and resources, the new generation can be a catalyst for change for the benefit of all.

# Recommendations

Action should be taken at different levels in the sector for meaningful change to occur.

## For organisations

Listening and understanding - using data and insights

As a sector, we are excellent at collecting and analysing data and at gathering insights. If you are in a senior management position, you could harness those research capabilities and consider:

- Asking all employees to complete a detailed DI&E form
- Carrying out regular anonymous workplace satisfaction surveys
- Listening to staff experiences to understand their experiences and needs through informal chats, formal workshops, specially commissioned research, etc.
- Interrogating key organisational data by gender, age and ethnicity (at minimum): job applicants' profiles, pay data, staff complaints, contract termination, etc
- Carrying out 'exit' interviews when you lose diverse staff to gain insight into their workplace experience and assess whether DI&E were factors in their decision to leave

Setting the vision and tracking progress. You could bring in outside experts to bolster your understanding of the issues. Using the evidence and insights gathered, you could consider:

- Setting and communicating the inclusive vision: an open culture where everyone needs to feel included and where there is zero-tolerance for discrimination
- Focusing more on inclusion and equality than on diversity as an end in itself
- Ensuring that the leadership team is held accountable for DI&E
- Setting realistic but stretching targets for greater diversity in recruitment, career progression, pay parity, etc.
- Creating KPIs related to DI&E for all line managers and employees in the business to share responsibility and increase accountability
- Implementing various DI&E initiatives: 'Lunch & Learn' sessions, diverse staff support networks, DI&E champions, mentoring and investing in talent, etc.
- Showcasing and celebrating exceptional achievements among diverse staff
- Training all employees to understand and engage with inclusion in their work - with a focus on developing practical ways of working that are inclusive - not Unconscious Bias Training
- Agreeing a review cycle and ownership for reporting to the senior leadership team
- Aiming for a culture of fairness, inclusion and transparency that ensures that merit, competence and potential are the basis for all decisions

Reviewing organisational processes

Looking at your processes through the lens of DI&E, you might ask whether, for instance:

- Your insights capabilities enable you to truly understand diverse audiences
- Your segmentation really reflects all your potential consumers
- Your approach to recruiting research participants (for both qualitative and quantitative work) reflects the diversity of consumers

### Monitoring and mitigating inequalities linked to COVID-19

- Monitor how furlough, redundancy, reduced hours and reduced pay are being implemented to ensure that they do not inadvertently impact on DI&E and widen inequalities
- Focus on the whole person: everyone - but especially women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, people living with mental illness and anyone with caring responsibilities - may need additional emotional support, flexibility and reasonable adjustments
- Ensure that line managers are confident and capable of managing diverse staff, even remotely, to create a sense of inclusion and belonging for all

#### Positive action

- Consider putting in place positive action schemes that can help address inequalities in your organisation, where there is a reasonable case to do so: there is no legal requirement to 'treat everyone the same' if people with protected characteristics can be shown to require reasonable adjustments, additional support or tailored and targeted initiatives.

## For individuals

### Taking personal responsibility for DI&E

Whatever your position and socio-demographic profile, you might consider:

- Taking part in future MRS DI&E Surveys so that all voices are heard, progress can be tracked and areas for improvement can be identified
- Joining or pressing for DI&E initiatives
- Acting as allies or becoming DI&E 'champions'
- Calling out and reporting discrimination or inappropriate behaviour experienced or witnessed to relevant authorities, and asking for an update on action
- Mentoring younger diverse staff / being 'reverse mentored' by someone
- Putting yourself or diverse colleagues forward for MRS Awards
- Being curious and reading about DI&E, privilege, discrimination and other related issues

## For MRS

- Create a DI&E taskforce whose remit is to build capacity across the sector in relation to DI&E: help with corporate strategy, policies, best practice, case studies, 'what works', target setting, etc
- Have strong DI&E Champions on the MRS Main Board
- Consult with the sector on how to accelerate change on DI&E
- Conduct regular DI&E surveys and actively promote participation
- Support the creation of an sector-wide ethnic minorities staff network, mirroring MRS Pride
- Create an Award for DI&E ('Best place to work')
- Create an Award for Exceptional Diverse talent
- Continue to promote the CEO Pledge
- Promote an Inclusion Pledge that everyone in the sector can sign, at all levels of seniority, and encourage sign up at Impact and elsewhere, to embolden all staff to press for DI&E in their respective organisations
- Continue to support and promote apprenticeships and bursaries

# Notes

1. It should also be noted that the proportion not answering was greater for some characteristics considered than for others. One in three (33%) did not answer the question in relation to religion, 27% in relation to national origin and 26% in relation to sexual orientation. This is possibly as these characteristics are not necessarily 'visible'. One in three (31%) were unable to respond to the question in relation to disability probably because many have no direct experience of any 'visibly' disabled colleagues.

2. Note that these data have not been pro-rata'd to reflect the proportion who did not answer the question, so here 'two thirds' embraces all who did not answer in affirmative.

3. Overt discrimination refers to discriminatory behaviour that is observable in personal interactions: in attitudes, languages, facial expressions, tone of voice, exclusionary behaviours, harassment, bullying or other means of demeaning a person based on their protected characteristics. It may include discrimination by omission or commission. Overt discrimination is distinct from institutional, structural or systemic discrimination, which refers to policies, processes and ways of working which have detrimental consequences for certain groups of people, even if those are not deliberate and intentional. These less 'visible' forms of discrimination may be enacted by individuals who have no intention to discriminate whatsoever.

4. A few participants had recently chosen to leave the MR sector, other than for reasons of redundancy or furlough. These were excluded from this question.

5. For our current purposes, we have grouped together freelancers, self-employed researchers, those who work in businesses with five employees or fewer.

6. For example, see:

Women's Progression in the Workplace - Laura Jones, Global Institute for Women's Leadership, Kings College London, for UK Government Equalities Office  
 Women in Self-Employment Report - Association of Independent Professionals and the Self-Employed  
 Ethnic minority self-employment - Poor paid employment prospects push minority workers into working for themselves, often in low-reward work - Ken Clark University of Manchester, UK, and IZA, Germany

7. The latter is calculated by adding up the wages of all male and female employees within an organisation and dividing it by the number of employees. The pay gap is the difference between the mean figures for men and women, which is reported as a percentage. Only organisations with 250 or more employees are required by law to publish their gender pay gap - and this requirement will be suspended this year as the government has stated that it does not wish to burden organisations with reporting on, and addressing, gender inequalities during COVID-19.

8. However, we know that the economic impacts of financial downturns are not evenly felt. In the 2008 recession, for instance, women with childcare responsibilities, single mothers, older women and disabled women were especially negatively affected. Young people, older people, people from minority ethnic backgrounds (mainly black men) and disabled people were more likely to lose their jobs. Demand for the labour of women and people with protected characteristics is often described as 'hyper cyclical': it is more affected by economic cycles than that of their middle-aged, white, able-bodied, male counterparts (EHRC, 2009). Early data on the impacts of COVID-19 suggest similar regressive effects on equality. These will have to be closely monitored and actively mitigated.

# Technical appendix

## Background

In 2017 and 2018, MRS and Lightspeed conducted three unprecedented pieces of research that looked at Diversity, Inclusion and Equality (DI&E) across the market research sector. A key finding of that research showed a lack of diversity and equality across our sector within senior management. Since the release of the first DI&E studies, MRS made a commitment to do all that it can to understand and proactively encourage change. In order to track how the sector is evolving, MRS and Kantar have conducted a further piece of research to gauge how behaviours have changed.

## Survey timing

The original data presented in this report are based on an online survey which was conducted during the period 20 August – 13 September 2020.

Originally our plan was to conduct the survey in Spring 2020. This was reviewed given the first national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With many researchers on furlough or under threat of redundancy we decided that it would be unhelpful to launch a survey focussed on workplace experiences at that time.

We decided to launch the survey in late Summer. This timing had the benefit of allowing us to investigate how different groups had fared during the pandemic.

## Survey universe, sampling frame and response rate

The 2016 PwC assessment of the size and impact of the UK research and evidence market, commissioned by the Market Research Society (MRS), established that the sector comprises some 73,000 employees across core research suppliers, data analytics, education, government, private sector and NFP organisations. It is this universe which we sought to represent in the survey.

The sampling frame used was the MRS's customer database. This database includes MRS members and others who have had a commercial or transactional relationship with the Society, for example attended a training course, signed up for a newsletter or downloaded content from [www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk). In line with data protection regulations, it was only possible to invite those on the database who are were eligible for market research communications to complete the survey.

Personalised email invitations to complete the survey were delivered to 16,351 records on the database and 470 participants completed the survey.

The personalised email invitations were supplemented with social media promotion of the survey, including a generic survey link. Of the total 470 participants, the vast majority (91%) accessed the survey via their personalised email. Strict confidentiality measures were adhered to given the sensitive nature of many questions in the survey. This means we do not know whether those who accessed via social media were included within the personalised mail out, though this is possible.

Response Rate	Delivered Email Invitation	Completed Survey TOTAL	
MRS Professional Members	3562	210	6%
Others on MRS Database	12789	260	2%
TOTAL	16351	470	3%

In considering this response rate it is important to bear in mind that, at the time the survey was launched many were facing uncertainty about their work situation. It is also possible that those on furlough were not accessing to work email addresses which has potentially also hit response rates. In addition, for operational reasons it was not possible to send reminders to complete the survey, as would have been normal practice.

Assessment of the response rate is also complicated by the fact that many of the 'others' (i.e. non-MRS members) on the MRS database do not have a close relationship with the Society which will have influenced their likelihood to respond to the survey. They may also be employed within any industry sector, so would not be eligible for the survey. Such individuals were screened out with the following question:

Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?

1. I am employed in a market research, insight, data analytics or similar role
2. I have been furloughed from a market research, insight, data analytics or similar role
3. I have recently been made redundant from a market research, insight, data analytics or similar role
4. I am self-employed in market research, insight, data analytics or similar activity
5. I have recently chosen to leave the market research/insight/data analytics sector (e.g. retired or moved to a different sector)
6. I have never worked in market research/insight/data analytics or a similar role

Only those giving responses 1 - 5 were routed to the main survey.

## Sample profile

The profile of the 470 participants by key descriptive variables is detailed below. Where numbers within a category do not total to 100% this is due to participants choosing not to answer the question.

<b>TOTAL</b>		470	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	286	62%
	Male	177	38%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Female Straight	250	53%
	Male Straight	149	32%
	LGBTQ+	51	11%
<b>Age</b>	<35	128	27%
	35-44	128	27%
	45-64	177	38%
	65+	35	7%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Ethnic minorities	57	12%
	White	406	86%
<b>Company Size</b>	Self Employed/ <6 employees	100	21%
	6 - 99	131	28%
	100 - 499	84	18%
	500+	134	29%
<b>Years in MR</b>	Up to 2	29	6%
	3 to 9	130	28%
	10+	308	66%
<b>Disability Status</b>	Any physical impairment / condition	109	23%
	Mental health conditions	130	28%
	Net ANY Impairments/ health conditions	199	42%
<b>Religion Status</b>	No religion	282	60%
	Christianity	128	27%
	Judaism	9	2%
	Indian Religions (Buddhism/Hinduism/Sikhism)	14	3%
	Islam	9	2%
<b>Region</b>	London & South East	295	63%
	Other UK	132	28%

# About MRS

## The Market Research Society (MRS)

With members in more than 50 countries, MRS is the world's leading authority for research and business intelligence. It's for everyone with professional equity in market, social and opinion research (whether you use it or provide it) and in market analysis, customer insight and consultancy.

## Evidence matters

Evidence helps build strategy and reduce risk; it's essential for good commercial and public policy decisions. If you need, use, generate or interpret evidence, MRS can help you. Our members have commissioned and provided evidence that has helped elections, launch global brands and understand profound trends in society. We support, promote and aim to enrich the research and business world. In consultation with our individual members and Company Partners, MRS supports best practice by setting and enforcing sector standards. The commitment to uphold the MRS Code of Conduct is supported by the Codeline service and a wide range of specialist guidelines.

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