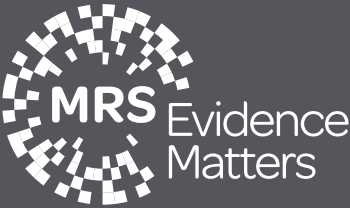


MRS Annual Review  
2021/22



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# Introduction

## Jane Frost, CEO, MRS



The period this annual review covers reflects the MRS financial year from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. However, life does not fit into neat little accounting cells, and these dates seem all the more arbitrary when assessing the momentous impact of the last few years on MRS, and on our members and customers. These times are not just fluid, they are rocked by a succession of crashing waves generated by global and local events; what some characterise as a succession of crises.

As anyone that knows me will testify, I'm not one to sink in a slough of despond. Upheaval presents opportunities for positive change. We've seen a lot of that in the last few years rippling across society, and some of the responsibility for change has landed squarely on the shoulders of the research sector.

In March 2022, *The Rise of the Insight Alchemist* was published by the MRS Delphi Group in response to this upheaval. The report begins to answer many questions raised about the future of the sector and the role of the insight professional. These questions have been percolating over the last ten years and were brought to boiling point during the pandemic.

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With focus now on the cost of living and climate crisis, we need to capitalise on the attention won over the last two years and **maintain momentum**. The spirit of innovation and speed that resulted, for example, in a flourishing of digital ethnography and other new online techniques must continue.

The report shows that the need to get closer to customers and understand their reactions to unprecedented events has led research and insight much closer to the boardroom. The need to create commercial and public policy responses to the sequence of crises we are encountering has created a demand for understanding of the lived experience behind the data. Suddenly the 'why' question has been asked just as much as the 'what'.

With focus now on the cost of living and climate crisis, we need to capitalise on the attention won over the last two years and maintain momentum.

The spirit of innovation and speed that resulted, for example, in a flourishing of digital ethnography and other new online techniques must continue. Organisations who are recruiting new talent into their insight teams should be looking for experience that is outside the typical researcher skillset (p.14). They need to start creating a transparent culture that breaks down barriers, between for example qual and quant, to enable them to take advantage of new opportunities. We also need to upgrade the semantics of how we present ourselves from transactional and short term, to becoming a strategic business partner. A partner who, by blending the sources of customer intelligence into actionable insight,

builds Intelligence Capital™ as a source of competitive or organisational advantage.

Just as MRS stood with the sector and represented it during the pandemic, we are continuing to build the resources to help our members meet these new challenges including reciprocal alliances via our international affiliates programme (p.29-2: ). MRS also provides resources to help deliver sustainable change and inclusion programmes which support the transformation we need to make to ensure we recruit and retain the right talent to deliver to all the opportunities that arise. We will continue to ride the roller coaster of the current political environment to lobby government and other stakeholders to ensure the policy environment in which we operate is as positive as possible (p6-13).

No one can claim to know what the next year will bring; we know it will be tough and probably full of surprises. 'Insight Alchemy' indicates there may be some opportunity for those who are creating change, but no one will have an easy time. Proving value in all aspects of what we do will be vital. MRS will of course continue to do what we can to protect, promote and connect research and the people who work in it. With growing individual and corporate

Just as **MRS stood with the sector** and represented it during the pandemic, we are continuing to build the resources to help our members meet these new challenges.

membership we have more opportunity and support than ever to create a positive voice for the sector.

My old boss at Unilever, when I was a newbie graduate trainee, taught me that value can be built that isn't all about cost, and that the brands that invested in order to change in difficult economic times tended to come out on top. I believe that by creating and using our new

voice we will be in a better place to weather the difficulties that are thrown at us. I hope you can dare to believe with me.



**Jane Frost CBE,  
CEO of MRS**



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# Life after Covid

## A review of MRS finances

**Debrah Harding, Managing Director, looks at the financial position of MRS at the year ending March 31, 2022.**



**A**fter the business reverberations of Brexit and Covid, 2021/22 was a year of recovery for MRS and for the research sector as a whole. The supply-side industry bounced back from the pandemic, which had resulted in a shrinkage of **-4.7%** in 2020, with a **13.4%** uplift. MRS now estimates that the UK research insight and analytics industry is worth in excess of **£8.050bn**.

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MRS now estimates that the UK research insight and analytics industry is worth in excess of **£8.050bn**.

MRS is also on the road to financial recovery. Whilst income levels have not recovered to pre-Covid levels, MRS had a good year with income of **£3,309k** circa **£400k** higher than 2020/21, a growth of **13.5%**. Recovery was seen across the MRS portfolio of products and services, with Membership, Company Partnership, qualifications, training, publishing, awards and commercial events all performing well, exceeding income

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We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back, with the annual **MRS awards dinner in December 2022** economic impact of the and annual conference, Impact 2023, will also be returning as an in-person event.

re-forecasts whilst other areas of the business showed signs of recovering from the pandemic.

Overall MRS trading broke even for the financial period. Following some balance sheet adjustments and provisions MRS' statutory position is a deficit of (**£72.9k**).

MRS continues to have very healthy reserves of **£4,608m** largely as a result of a strong property portfolio which has maintained its value. MRS also continues to have a healthy bank balance, partly because of the mortgage secured prior to the pandemic but also prudent cash and business management.

The MRS team has moved permanently to a hybrid working model optimising the safe workings benefits that the London office provides, whilst enabling staff the flexibility to work more at home. We have also resumed in-person events to maximize opportunities for our stakeholders

to connect the impact of decreasing business confidence on MRS and the research sector as a whole.

We are looking forward to welcoming everyone back with the annual MRS Awards dinner in December 2022, and next year's annual conference will also be returning as an in-person event. We will however continue to utilise digital options when these best serve customers, such as with the delivery of MRS training.

MRS has set an ambitious budget for 2022/23 which assumes further income recovery to pre-Covid levels whilst recognising the continued economic uncertainty, as a result of inflationary and cost of living pressures and the long-term impacts of the war in Ukraine. With the increasing fears about a global and domestic recession, MRS will continually review its budget assumptions assessing the impact of decreasing confidence on MRS and the research sector as a whole..

# Standards and policy

## An overview of activities

### The MRS Code of Conduct is the basis of the self-regulation framework for the research sector.

This works with the relevant legal framework via the UK's Data Protection Act, UK GDPR and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulation to ensure research is carried out in a professional and ethical manner. The MRS Market Research Standards Board (MRSB) continued to pro-actively review the self-regulatory framework to ensure it remained fit for purpose and that data protection advice and guidance provided to members was robust.

The demand for Codeline services decreased slightly this year, as the number of Covid-related queries reduced significantly from **282** in 2020/21 to **135** in 2021/22. The number of data protection related queries increased this year, from **199** in 2020/21 to **256** for 2021/22.

Overall, the number of written queries decreased from **633** in 2020/21 to **617** during 2021/22. Members of the team also provided telephone advice where requested, although in line with the approach taken in previous years, the volume of telephone queries is not recorded in the statistics. Members sought specific advice on data protection issues, incentives, data collection projects involving children, and observation techniques. The increased variety in the topics covered in the Codeline queries in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21 reflects in part the return of face-

The MRS Market Research Standards Board (MRSB) continued to pro-actively review the **self-regulatory framework** to ensure it remained fit for purpose and that data protection advice and guidance provided to members was robust.

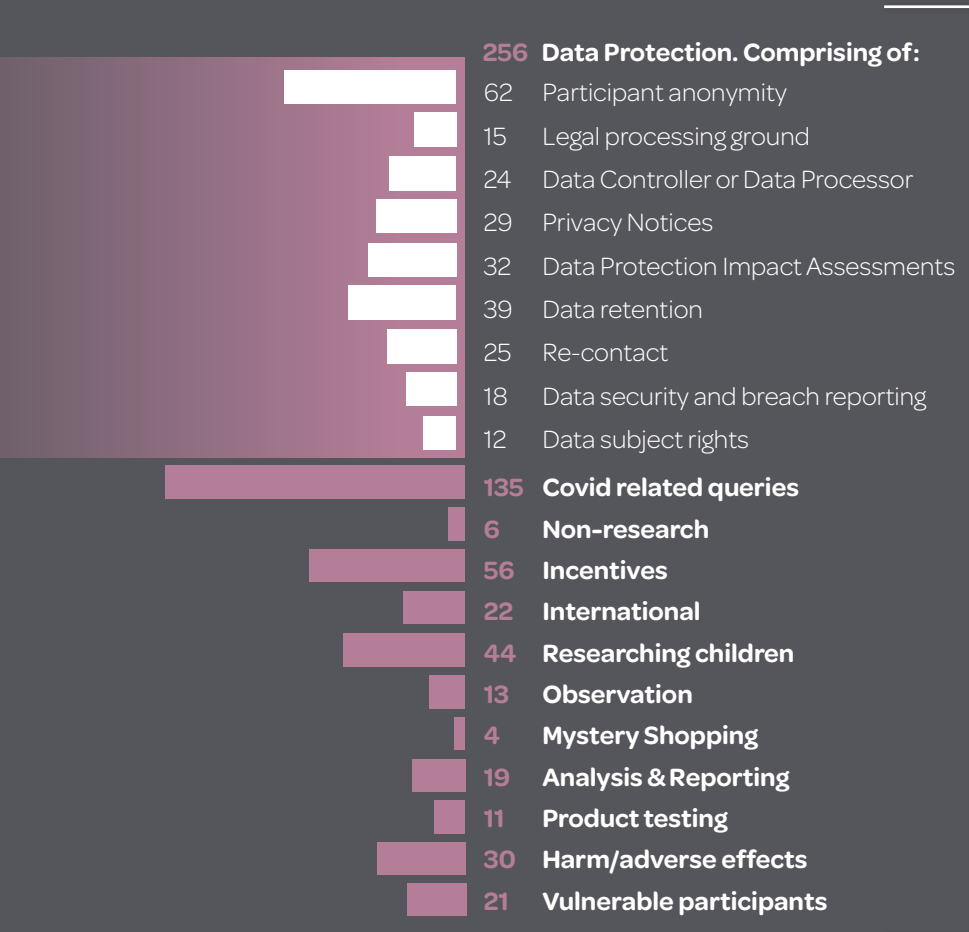
to-face data collection from April 2021, and the resumption of in-home data collection across the UK in September 2021.



# Standards and policy


## The sector in numbers

### Codeline queries:



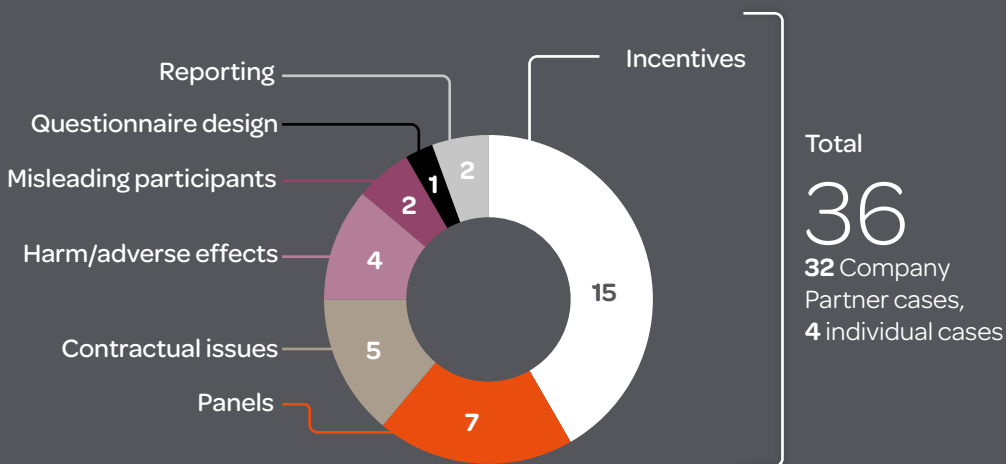
 **617**  
Codeline total\*

 **256**  
queries seeking guidance on data protection related issues

 **135**  
Covid related queries

 **3**  
New guidance on inclusive sample data added to supplement the existing inclusion guidance

### Complaints resolved by the standards department\*



### Disciplinary cases

**3**   
Company Partners

**2**   
Individual members

\*email enquiries only

# Standards and policy

## What is the future for the UK's data regime?

**Debrah Harding, Managing Director of MRS looks at the future of the UK's data regime.**

It is four years since GDPR was introduced and the UK has changed significantly over this period. Following the departure of the UK from the EU in January 2020, the UK Government announced plans to introduce a 'Brexit Freedoms Bill' to make it easier to amend or repeal retained EU law. Prior to this announcement the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) launched its consultation [Data: a new direction](#) to inform its development proposals to reform the UK's data protection laws as part of the UK's National Data Strategy.

Politicians were clearly signalling that GDPR was one area they had identified where the UK could benefit from Brexit freedoms if it moved away from the EU approach. So, is this happening? Well, sort of and sort of not.

The DCMS data consultation ran for 10 weeks, closing in November 2021. MRS submitted a [detailed 50 page response](#) in which MRS recognised that there are potential benefits in evolving the UK's data protection regime, but that it was important to note that the EU remains a key market for market, opinion and social research, and businesses have invested heavily in becoming GDPR-compliant. MRS emphasised the importance of EU data adequacy and the need to ensure that the UK data protection regime, whilst not necessarily requiring verbatim

Politicians were clearly signalling that GDPR was one area they had identified where the UK could benefit from Brexit freedoms

the same laws, does require equivalent outcomes, and the importance for UK business of the UK not diverging significantly from the EU's data protection regime.

The UK Government has clearly taken note of the concerns raised by MRS and others, as the DCMS response to the consultation, which was issued in June 2022, takes a largely pragmatic approach. Whilst the devil is always in the detail when it comes to legislation, it appears that the reform will be far less radical than first feared. There is a focus on clarification and simplification





of areas such as research and legitimate interest, and removal of specific requirements such as Data Protection Officers and Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) whilst retaining in essence the accountability measures that these requirements deliver.

In the year ahead MRS will be working with DCMS on the of the new data bill, to help deliver the best result for the UK research sector. With a significant amount of the proposed changes focusing on the research provisions, MRS is well placed to be central to these discussions.

Whilst the consultation dominated the past year it was not the only activity undertaken. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the regulator for

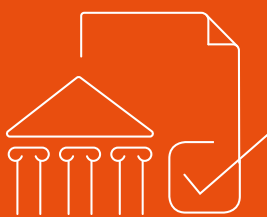
### In the year ahead MRS will be working with DCMS on the devilish detail of the new data bill, to help deliver the best result for the UK research sector.

data protection, had a very busy year issuing new guidance and new data transfer arrangements, which were required as a result of Brexit. Two areas of particular interest to MRS, were the new ICO anonymisation guidance and the new research provisions guidance. MRS issued detailed responses to the consultations for both of these documents and in the year ahead MRS will be liaising with the ICO on the finalisation of these important guidance documents.

The EU data protection regime has been equally busy, particularly the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) which has issued a number of new guidelines in

2021/22 including guidelines on Codes of Conduct as tools for data transfers, international data transfers, data subject rights and dark patterns in social media interfaces. MRS continues to lead public affairs activities with the EU, through MRS' provision of standards services to EFAMRO, and responded to all of these EDPB consultations in the year, ensuring that UK concerns were embedded into the sector's responses.

Meanwhile, the EU has also been steadily rolling out its digital future and strategy. The EU has defined the 2020s as, Europe's Digital Decade, and is pursuing a "...human-centric, sustainable vision for digital society through the digital decade to empower citizens and businesses...". As part of this the EU has developed an AI strategy, is proposing a new Data Act setting out who can use and access data generated in the EU and a new Data Governance Act creating the processes and structures to facilitate data sharing between companies, individuals and the public sector. MRS will be responding to these EU data developments to ensure that UK research, and the global research which the UK sector provides, can continue to flourish.



# Standards and policy

## In six themes

The MRS Standards and Policy Team has a wide remit, from ensuring new data legislation is fair and workable, to publishing guidelines for conducting research that is ethical and representative.

### 1

#### Inclusion

MRS is committed to providing practitioners with the necessary tools to ensure inclusive research, insight and data collection. In March 2021 the [MRS Representation in Research](#) group was established to determine how MRS can improve representation of often underrepresented groups in UK research projects.

Initially the group has been addressing the concept of 'Nationally Representative' (Nat Rep) samples and what this has traditionally meant, and what it needs to mean for the future. In the past, Nat Rep samples took into account characteristics such as gender, age, region, and possibly occupation, social class and ethnicity. MRS best practice recommendation, developed in 2021, is that for research and data collection to be inclusive of the population, all relevant personal characteristics should be included. This ensures that all participants are equally valued, and their opinions and attitudes are being gathered and represented. This means, for samples such as UK Nat Rep samples, to be inclusive of the population, characteristics such as age, gender identity, social

grade, region, ethnicity, physical disabilities and/or mental health conditions and sexual orientation should all be collected and recognised.

The Representation in Research group's activities cover a wide range of activities, beyond Nat Rep, with the development of professional standards and best practice at the heart of the project.

During 2020/21 a series of guidelines were issued to help practitioners understand how best to collect inclusive data. In

June 2021, [GDPR in Brief No 10](#) was issued which set out the data protection requirements when collecting ethnic data or other special category inclusive data. In early 2022 this guidance was supplemented with an update to the MRS [Best Practice Guide: Collecting data on sex and gender](#) helping practitioners to legally and ethically collect data and ask questions on biological sex, gender and gender identity, recognising the differences in language and approach since the guidance was



MRS will be updating the **MRS Code of Conduct** making explicit the need to increase transparency when reporting sampling parameters.

first issued in 2016. To supplement existing inclusion guidance, MRS also issued three new guidance documents in early 2022:

- ▶ [MRS best practice guide on collecting sample data on sexual orientation](#)
- ▶ [MRS best practice guide on collecting sample data on physical disabilities and/or mental health conditions](#)
- ▶ [MRS best practice guide on collecting ethnicity sample data](#)

During the period, the MRS Representation in Research group has also been talking to research practitioners across the UK about the issue of participant representation in UK research projects. Over the course of this process, the group developed [a range of FAQs](#) to support the guidance.

MRS also introduced a new training course in 2022 [Goodbye to Stereotypes – Designing Research that is Effective, Fair and Empowering](#) helping practitioners to address biases and blind spots, providing guidance on research design that will enable valid and effective results reflecting the new MRS guidance.

Looking forward to the 2022/23 period, MRS will be updating the MRS Code of Conduct making explicit the need to increase transparency when reporting sampling parameters. The MRS Code update will require the inclusion of sampling characteristics which have been used when providing or reporting 'National Representative' or 'City Representative' samples. This requirement will be provided as a Note expanding and interpreting the current MRS Code of Conduct (2019).

Further afield, MRS also wanted to ensure that other standards guidance addressed similar issues of inclusion and diversity. To support this aim, MRS contributed expertise to the development of a new British Standards Institution (BSI) guidance document developing inclusive BSI standards. The [BSI Flex 236 standard](#), the draft of which was published in January 2022, aims to help standards-makers address bias in data used in BSI standards development and to develop inclusive standards.

## 2

### Census and government statistics

Despite the challenges of Covid, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England and Wales and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) for Northern Ireland, stuck to their originals plans and undertook their data collection for the Census Day on 21 March 2021. Meanwhile in Scotland, the Census was delayed a year with the Scottish Census Day of 20 March 2022.

As a result of the delay in Scotland comprehensive census data for the UK will not be available until 2023. MRS and the MRS Census and Geodems Group (CGG) have been meeting with representatives from ONS about the Census data and the implications of the delay between Scotland and the rest of the UK, including potential population movements between the two countries between the Census days being measured.

For the first time some of the four nation's Censuses will be collecting data on gender identity and sexual orientation, plus more up-to-date information will be available on physical and mental health conditions and ethnicity. This data will be vital as part of MRS [Representation in Research](#) project.

MRS supported a small pilot testing the resumption of in-home data, collection, the first since Covid struck in March 2020, including introducing **new guidance** for in-home data collection

Separately MRS contributed to the ONS and Government Statistical Service (GSS) thinking on inclusion. MRS held meetings with ONS to discuss the activities of the [Inclusive Data Taskforce](#) (IDT) which had been tasked to improve the UK's inclusive data holdings and infrastructure. As part of this MRS also held a series of meetings with the GSS to share MRS inclusion guidance and to input into the GSS strategy in response to the IDT recommendations.

## 3

### COVID

Whilst 2021/22 was a better year in terms of the impact of Covid, its effects were still being felt throughout the period. MRS' Covid guidance remained in place and was updated on numerous occasions as Government policies and approaches to the pandemic evolved and eased across the four nations.

From April 2022 limited face-to-face data collection resumed when no other alternative methodology could be used, and over the summer further requirements were eased. In August 2021, MRS supported a small pilot testing the resumption of in-home data collection, the first since

Covid struck in March 2020, including introducing new Covid-19 guidance for in-home data collection. Following the successful pilot, in-home data collection resumed across the UK in September 2021.

With rising infections in December 2021 and January 2022 and the reintroduction of some new restrictions, some limits were reintroduced for in-home data collection, with only essential government funded projects being undertaken in-home. Mercifully, this pause was for a relatively short period and since the end of January 2022 all modes of face-to-face data collection have been able to take place. If the situation continues MRS hopes to withdraw all MRS Covid guidance and protocols by the end of 2022.

Throughout the period MRS continued to offer expert guidance to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) working group responsible for ISO/PAS 45005:2020 *Occupational health and safety management – General guidelines for safe working during the COVID-19 pandemic* ensuring this ISO standard was compatible with the MRS Covid guidance and suitable for the research sector including remote workers such as interviewers.

## 4

### International standards

MRS continued to take the lead within the Global Business Research Network (GRBN), including the development of GRBN guidance in collaboration with ESOMAR. During 2021/22 MRS' data protection expert Debrah Harding contributed to three new joint guidelines, with the Guideline for Researchers and Clients Involved in Primary Data Collection and the Guideline on Duty of Care issued in the period, and the third, Guideline When Processing Secondary Data for Research issued in June 2022.

As a result of Covid, the MRS MRQSA Board announced an extension for companies to become certified to the updated ISO 20252 standard, extending the deadline for migrating from the 2012 version to the 2019 from February 2022 to February 2023. To assist businesses with the migration MRS developed a new document, [ISO 20252: 2019 Certification – 23 Steps to Certification](#), which is based upon a document originally drafted by The Research Society in Australia.

MRS continues to value its strong connections with other national associations via the GRBN. MRS has also entered into separate

For the last 10 years MRS has been **working with the UK Government** and public sector to improve research procurement practices.

agreements with The Research Society plus the Insights Association in the US and the Japan Marketing Research Association, sharing resources, offering reciprocal rates and also hosting events on issues of mutual interest. During 2021/22 MRS joined with Insights Association and The Research Society to host two international commissioner and supplier roundtables. The first in June 2021 explored the measurement of business impact and how this could be improved; the second was a Language Lab workshop determining how to elevate the role and status of insights via language use.

## 5

### Procurement

For the last 10 years MRS has been working with the UK Government and public sector to improve research procurement practices. This includes monthly meetings with Crown Commercial Service (CCS), the biggest public procurement organisation in the UK which is responsible for the Research & Insight Marketplace Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), the main research procurement vehicle for the public sector.

MRS expertise was sought when

the new Research & Insight Marketplace DPS was introduced in December 2021 (replacing the Research Marketplace DPS which had expired). MRS provided recommendations on changes to the filter system, the GDPR settings and the administrative arrangements. Once launched, members and Company Partners reported some further issues. In February 2021 MRS together with the Social Research Association (SRA) hosted a roundtable with suppliers to discuss the issues with the DPS. As a result, MRS and SRA issued a report to CCS, which was also shared with the Cabinet Office and the Government Social Research profession (GSR) with further recommendations to improve evaluation processes, the low success levels, the quality and complexity of ITTs, the high number of bids, timeframes to respond to ITTs, the pipeline visibility and management, budgets and social value evaluation.

The social value requirements are causing considerable difficulties for suppliers. Social value is at least 10% of the evaluation for all UK Government research contracts and yet it remains unclear what social value means in the research context. To assist practitioners, MRS is drafting new social value guidance and is working with CCS to deliver a social value and research webinar later in 2022.

## 6

### Skills

Throughout the year MRS has been working with the Advertising Association and members of the Professional Business Sector Council to explore how we can engage productively, as a group, with the UK Government and have an ongoing dialogue with both the government departments for business (BEIS) and for education (DfE) to determine ways in which professional and trade association skills programmes can be recognised more widely by government, including through public sector funding programmes. The aim being to improve affordability of training and development opportunities for all individuals and businesses, particularly when cost-of-living and inflationary pressures are increasing.

Also, during 2021/22, MRS joined forces with Daughters of Sailors and Vela, and conducted some research to understand attitudes in the research and insight sector and what is driving the current talent shortages. The initial [top line figures](#) were published in February 2021 with the full report issued in June 2022.

[See page 14](#)

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# Industry insight

## Working practices and talent shortages



Sinead Jefferies, founder of Vela and chair of the MRS Main Board, presents research findings.

Anyone who has worked in the research and insight sector for any length of time will agree that 'it's all about the people'. The value we bring is in the human intelligence that helps design, interpret, frame, and bring to life the insights that fuel business decision-making and inform public sector policymaking. Our people are – by far – our most precious and valuable assets.

In collaboration with **Daughters of Sailors**, MRS conducted research during Q3/Q4 2021/22, focusing specifically on what lies behind ongoing resource shortages across the sector. This research has highlighted some critical challenges our people are currently facing, and therefore that all of us are facing as a sector. That there is huge demand for people to fill insight roles at the moment points to a vibrant and thriving research world. That there are not enough people to fill them is worrying.

There were four key themes that came through in the findings, drawn from in-depth interviews with people across all levels of seniority and from small to very large agencies, as well as those who work freelance or have left the sector.

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### 1

#### **The ongoing impact of the pandemic**

The pandemic has left its mark in numerous ways, and all of these continue to shape the workplace. One of the most obvious is the shift to remote working, which is still a noted feature in the sector. For some it brings huge benefits, but it is challenging for others, both in the impact on mental wellbeing and the ability for more junior people to feel comfortable in their learning and development. But the financial impact of the pandemic has also played a part, with many organisations having had to place people on furlough or make redundancies. Even where revenues have since recovered, it is taking time to catch up to re-fill those vacant roles.

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### 2

#### **Culture of long working hours and feeling under pressure**

One of the biggest areas that people struggle with is the long working hours and feeling of constantly working under intense pressure. The impact of this has been worsened by working from home, with some struggling to manage boundaries effectively. However many people state that it has been a reality within the research and insight sector for a long time, and that the pandemic has been a catalyst to bring these challenges to the fore.

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That there is **huge demand for people to fill insight roles** at the moment points to a vibrant and thriving research world. That there are not enough people to fill them is worrying.

# 3

## Salaries not competitive with other sectors

Several people flagged that they see salaries within this sector as being significantly lower than others where the same skillsets can be applied. While there is enormous job satisfaction through the rewarding work that we do, for some, the pressures, demands and long working hours meant they were re-evaluating the rewards they got for the effort they put in.

# 4

## Challenges of recruitment and resourcing gaps

The research sector is facing a situation where there are too few good candidates across all levels, a high number of vacancies and no let-up in the demand for excellent research and insight. This not only stretches current resources within teams, but impacts development through people having to operate at either too senior or too junior a level, relative to their experience. This can be demotivating and frustrating, leaving people to seek a move elsewhere.

## What next?

These key themes run beyond the individual responsibilities of employers, and it is important that, through MRS, we use our collective brainpower, energy and determination to identify the best practices, the new ideas and the support and resources that are needed to ensure we have a stream of new and exciting talent entering our workplaces – from all walks of life and at all stages of their careers – and that they find this an enriching and rewarding place to stay and work.

MRS has now set up a new programme of work to look at people and talent across the sector. This comprises four key workstreams, each of which will have specific areas of focus to drive action and achieve real change. Notwithstanding the findings of the report, there are some great examples of success

in retention and workplace culture across the sector, and our aim is to put the right support and inspiration in place to allow this to flourish more broadly. The workstreams are:

- ▲ New and returning talent
- ▲ Wellbeing
- ▲ Professional learning and development
- ▲ Agency culture and leadership

This programme of work started in June 2022 and MRS will provide regular updates on progress and initiatives driven by the individual workstreams to give guidance and support to the sector, and provide opportunities for us all to take collective action to address the challenges we face.

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“Listen to your employees and then try to change a bit of what’s wrong - if everyone did that we’d be in a better position. Sometimes **small changes can make a big difference**... and are often not difficult to implement.”

Freelancer, previously

# Councils and committees

As well as MRS Main Board (p.29), there are numerous groups, councils and committees that provide MRS with strategic direction and operational support.

<b>ACP Council</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Census and Geodemographics Group</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Delphi Group</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Diversity, Inclusion &amp; Equality Council</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Fellows Advisory Board (FAB)</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Fair Data Accreditation Board</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Market Research Quality Standards Advisory Board</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Market Research Standards Board</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Representation in Research Steering Committee</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Senior Client Council</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>
<b>Sustainability Council</b>	<a href="#">View current membership</a>



# Membership Initiatives



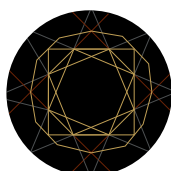
## Professional Webinars

Free to MRS members, Professional Webinars, are a key membership resource. Throughout the year our interactive events attracted over **2,600** participants from all around the world. Topics included unleash your superpowers, devil in the detail of language and chatbot and voice technology. All of our webinars are recorded and members can access the recording on-demand within the webinar library.

The benefit of the London speaker evenings programme going online was that these events became easily accessible to members across the country, with **2,979** attendees from outside the South East accessing the webinars on demand.

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Throughout the year our interactive events attracted over 2,600 participants from all around the world.



## Awards

The first in-person MRS event post lockdown was the Excellence Awards lunch, held at The Langham in September. **106** guests attended the socially-distanced gathering, which doubled as a celebration of MRS' 75th anniversary. The Operations Awards (Oppies) and main MRS Awards were both held as virtual events in September and December respectively, hosted by Bruce Pont. Overall **481** people registered to view these, which was just over **20%** fewer than the previous year, but entry numbers were up **3%**.



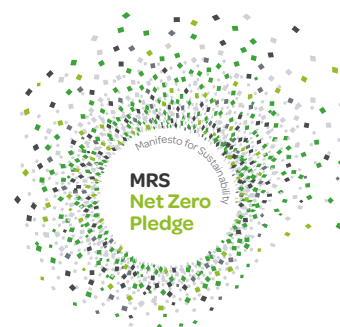
## MRS Pride

MRSpride, the network for LGBTQ+ researchers and allies, held two important virtual events.

**395** people watched June's Beyond Binary Platform and January's Intersectional Platform either live or on demand. The latter was a collaboration with Colour of Research (CORe) stemming from a joint qual project which resulted in the production of a short film, 'Brown people can't be gay,' exploring the experiences of researchers living at the intersection of LGBTQ+ and ethnic minority communities. This has been viewed over **900** times on YouTube. October 2021 saw the launch of MRS Unlimited, a new network exploring issues around disability.

A five day virtual launch festival attracted over **80** registrants per day. The year culminated in a virtual panel of business leaders discussing the MRS Inclusion Pledge, a follow-up to a similar event the previous year. Almost **100** people registered to watch this live.

## Membership Initiatives



### &more

&more, the practitioner network for new entrants into the research sector, continued to grow in 2021/22:

- ▲ **120** attendees participated in the &more conference joining online for 11 sessions throughout the day - the most successful &more conference to date
- ▲ the &more Lunchtime Bite series of webinars continued, and additional online events were held in association with the AMSR and the AQR Young Disruptors
- ▲ an in-person event was held at Zappi HQ to facilitate the formation of a Young Person's Sustainability Collective, which will create sustainability initiatives for the sector and work alongside the MRS Sustainability Council
- ▲ &more members were also part of the speaker team at the launch of the Market Research Executive Apprenticeship at BAFTA in February 2022, giving the perspective of young people in the sector.

### MRS &AQR University Roadshow

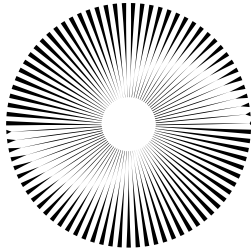
The MRS &AQR University Roadshow continued to expand in 2021/22:

- ▲ over **1,000** students attended **17** online sessions across the UK
- ▲ including sessions for the first time at Birkbeck, University of London and the University of Greenwich
- ▲ the Roadshow also made return visits to regular supporters, including Oxford Brookes, the University of Strathclyde, and the University of Plymouth
- ▲ the Roadshow continued to attract great support from volunteer speakers, with over thirty volunteers, both senior researchers and those new to the sector, presenting at a University Roadshow session.

### The Sustainability Initiative

In June 2021, the MRS Net Zero Pledge was launched to ensure that the research sector moves towards being carbon neutral by 2026. By the end of the financial year over **50** research organisations had signed the Pledge. In April and May 2021, a survey designed by the Insight Climate Collective (ICC) and supported by MRS, probed the attitudes of professionals in the research sector in a personal and work capacity. Unsurprisingly the results showed climate anxiety is widespread amongst research professionals with **95%** seeing climate change is an urgent issue and **47%** concerned that employers are not doing enough to tackle climate change in the sector. The results of the survey were released in a webinar held in July attracting **97** sign ups.

**Membership Initiatives**



**The Flex Forum**

The MRS FLEX Forum is a collection of research and professional development practitioners set up before the pandemic to explore flexible working, providing guidance to the sector to help create a fairer, more productive workplace in today's society. The Flex Forum hosted a range of webinars in 2021 including 'Let's talk about pressure', 'Creating Balance' and 'Unleash Your Superpowers' attracting **382** delegates.



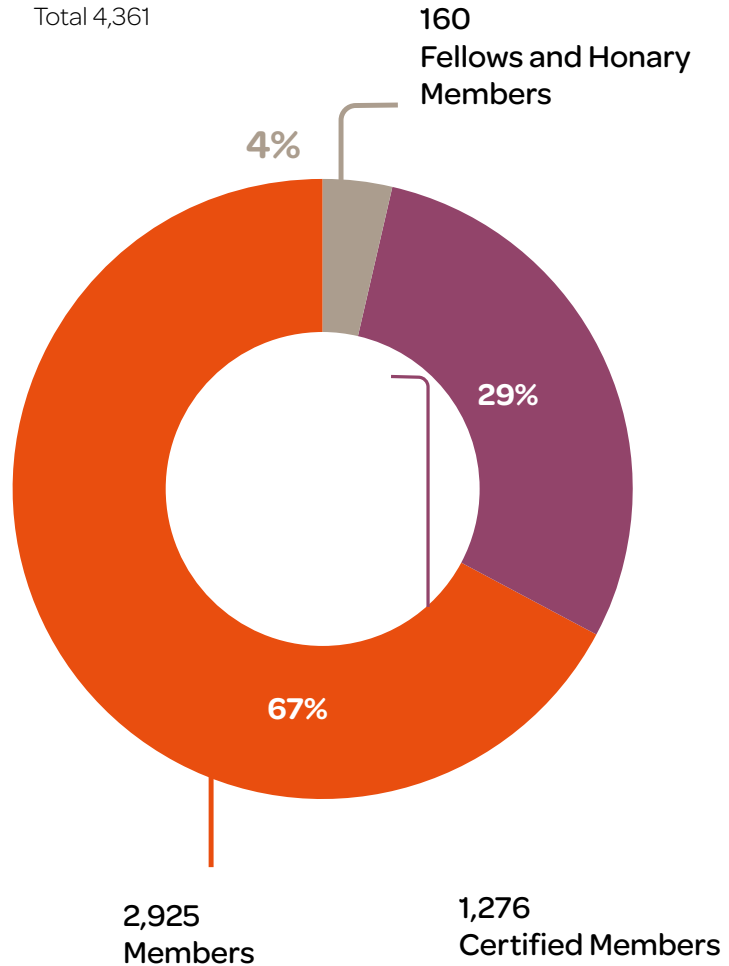
**MRS Unlimited**

October 2021 saw the launch of MRS Unlimited, a new network exploring issues around disability. A five day virtual launch festival attracted over **80** registrants per day. The year culminated in a virtual panel of business leaders discussing the MRS Inclusion Pledge, a follow-up to a similar event the previous year. Almost **100** people registered to watch this live.

**MRS members**

As of 31 March 2022

Total 4,361



# Professional Development Qualifications and Training

## Training

- ▲ **1,386** individuals received some form of training from MRS during 2021/22.
- ▲ **129** training courses were delivered via MRS's online training programme
- ▲ New courses were introduced on subjects such as diversity & inclusion in research, gamification, bias
- ▲ In December 2021, MRS piloted a return to face-to-face courses at the MRS training suite in London, resulting in a resumption of some face-to-face training in 2022
- ▲ **38 days** of bespoke in-company training were delivered to blue chip clients, academia, central government, government agencies and research businesses across the UK plus in countries such as Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, and Saudi Arabia.

## Qualifications

- ▲ **159** candidates participated in assessment for the Advanced Certificate qualification
- ▲ **111** candidates were awarded the qualification – a **70%** pass rate
- ▲ The online assessment method, introduced during the pandemic, continues to be successful and is the approach that will be used going forward for Advanced Certificate Examinations
- ▲ **338** candidates achieved the introductory level **MRS Certificate in Market & Social Research** via the online multiple-choice exam
- ▲ **263** enrolled onto the 'Foundation Course in Market Research'.

## MRS/AQR Recruiter Accreditation Scheme (RAS)

RAS raises the profile and status of individual recruiters, recognising their knowledge, skills and competence.

- ▲ **400** recruiters achieved RAS Accreditation by the end of March 2022.

## Apprenticeship

The Market Research Executive Apprenticeship was launched at BAFTA in February 2022. The first cohort of 12 apprentices were enrolled onto the standard. MRS fully supports the apprenticeship initiative not only as a stepping-stone into the research profession, but to promote social mobility and to continue to build a diverse and inclusive sector.

## CPD

The MRS CPD programme continues to attract registrations, providing members with a framework to demonstrate their achievements, gain recognition for their professionalism and take control planning their careers. The programme has enabled **90** membership upgrades to Certified Member (CMRS).

## Mentoring

The MRS Mentoring Scheme continues to support participants to think through strategic decisions as well as manage day-to-day work challenges more effectively. **284** individual members have now benefitted from the scheme as mentees, and **177** members have been trained as mentors.

# Publishing

## News and thought leadership

### Content partnerships and advertising

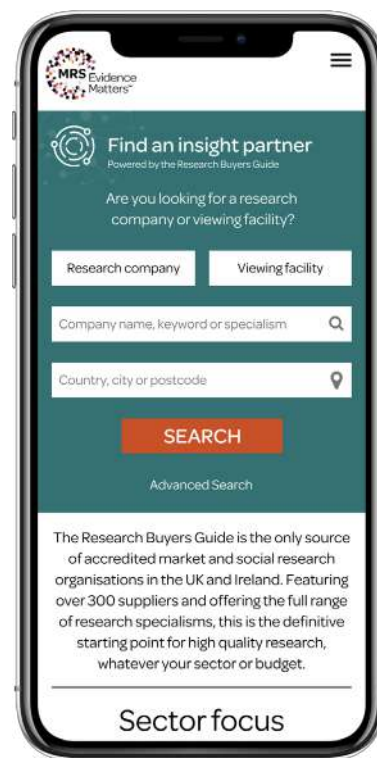
With several decades of in-house B2B publishing and editorial expertise, MRS is the leading provider of news and case studies to the research sector. MRS has a long standing partnership with the Festival of Marketing providing conference sessions on topics of interest to the broader marketing community. Throughout 2022, MRS is working with Accenture on a primary research and thought leadership initiative on the topic of brand purpose and data analytics.

### Impact magazine

The quarterly magazine is the jewel in the crown of MRS publications and since its launch nine years ago has built a reputation for high quality journalism exploring cutting edge trends and issues across the research sector and beyond. Sent to over **5,000** members and VIPs from the broader marketing community, the magazine's combination of special reports, case studies and CEO profiles and columns, makes the arrival of each issue an important event in the research calendar.

MRS has a wide variety of **opportunities for advertisers** across its various content channels including display advertising and sponsored content.

MRS has a wide variety of opportunities for advertisers across its various content channels including display advertising and sponsored content. Clients over this period included Britain Thinks, Ipsos, Toluna, Forsta, Foreign Tongues, Made in Surveys, Schlesinger, Foreign Tongues, One Poll and Quantilope.



### The Research Buyers Guide

This online directory of research suppliers has enjoyed growth to over **4,000** unique visitors every month, with a **214%** increase in traffic from Asia, notably India and China, and a **47%** more traffic from Europe, on the previous year. Buyers of research can refine their search by specialisms, geography and respondent location, and new filters were added to highlight listed companies that have won MRS Awards, and those that have signed the MRS Inclusion and Sustainability pledges.

### Research Live

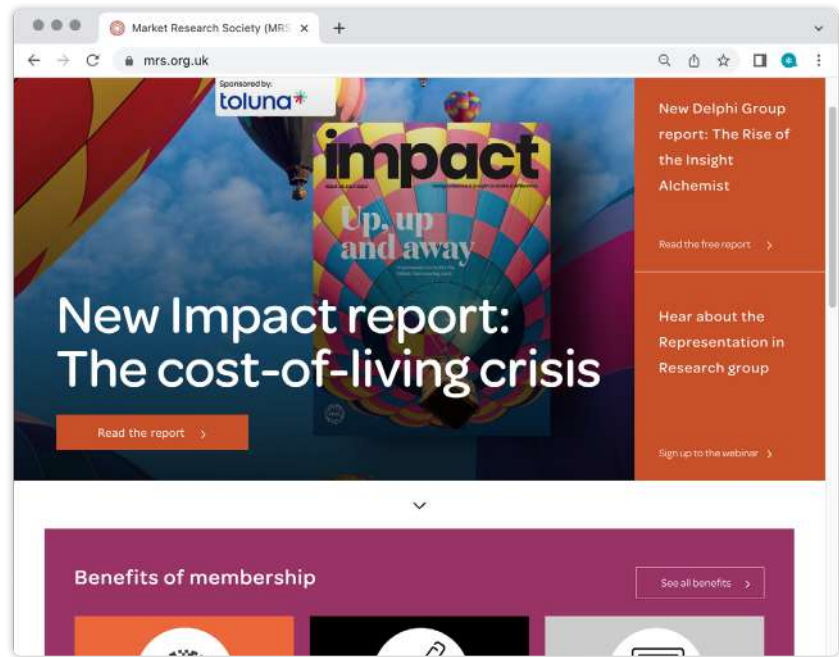
With a dedicated editorial team, the website continues to be the first port of call for research, insight and data news and opinion with **22,000** unique visitors every month. High points included the publication of the Research Live Industry Report

**Publishing**  
**News and thought leadership**

2022, live coverage of MRS annual conference, and the launch of a new annual campaign to celebrate unsung heroes of the sector – Research Heroes.

**IJMR and SAGE**

Members have free access to SAGE Publications’ Research Methods suite as part of their membership benefits. Sage Publications also publishes on behalf of MRS the bi-monthly peer-reviewed journal, the IJMR (International Journal of Market Research), which is part of the membership package for MRS Fellows and Certified members. IJMR has seen a significant increase in its impact factor which is now at an all-time high, at **2.513**.



**mrs.org.uk**

With all MRS products and services available online **mrs.org.uk** is the home of MRS, supporting both members and customers from increasingly international locations, with traffic averaging **29,000** unique visits every month.

**MRS Delphi Group**

The group is the think tank for the research sector and includes experts from brands and agencies. The chair is **Colin Strong** from Ipsos. Report topics this year included *The Rise of the Insight Alchemist: how the data explosion has created a new breed of insights professional*.

All MRS Delphi Group reports are available [here](#).

**mrs.org.uk**

averages **29,000**  
**unique visits**  
every month.

**Research Jobfinder**

After a turbulent period in the recruitment market the jobs website has rebounded with increased traffic – **2,500** unique visitors every month. The website is particularly valuable to reach out to the widest possible pool of candidates to counter a shortage in talent across the sector.

# Company Partnership Accreditation

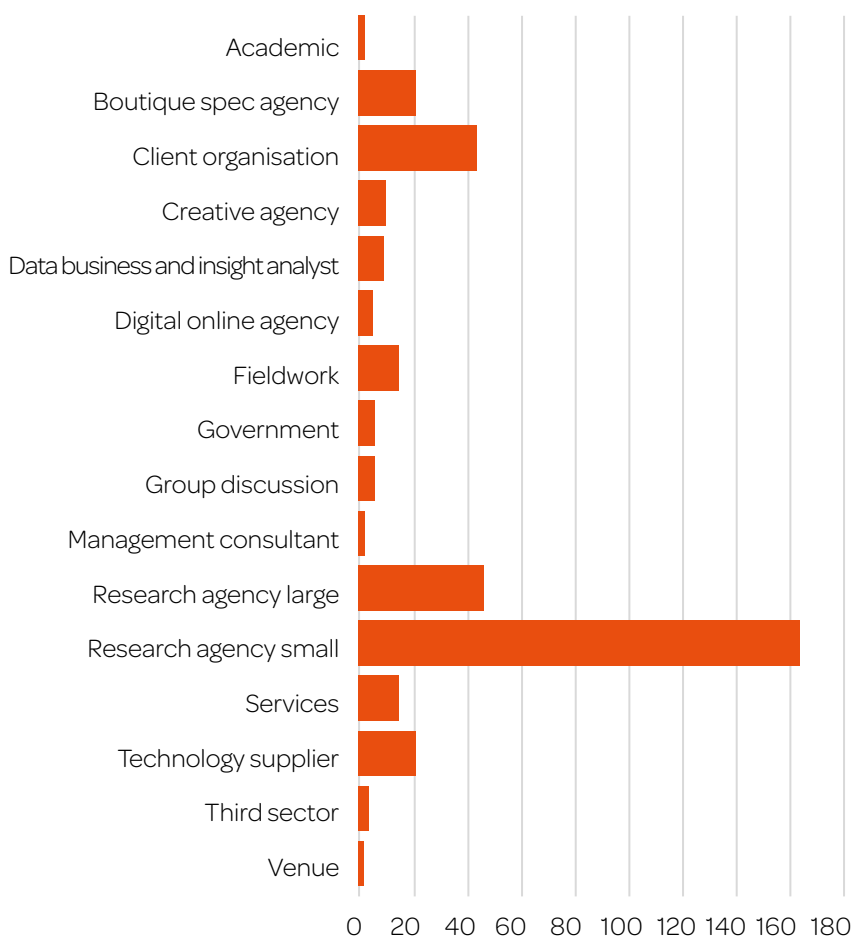
The strength of MRS Company Partnership continues to grow year on year. In the 2021/22 period MRS welcomed **48** new Company Partners, including client-side insight teams from Tesco Mobile, The Co-Operative Group, The Prudential, Deliveroo and agencies such as The Nursery, YouGov and PRS In Vivo.

There were **12** new International Affiliates included as Company Partners this year. We pride ourselves on bringing research professionals together and international delegates contributed to our 'International Month' as well as participating in MRS conferences, networks, training course and creating bespoke domestic training programmes.

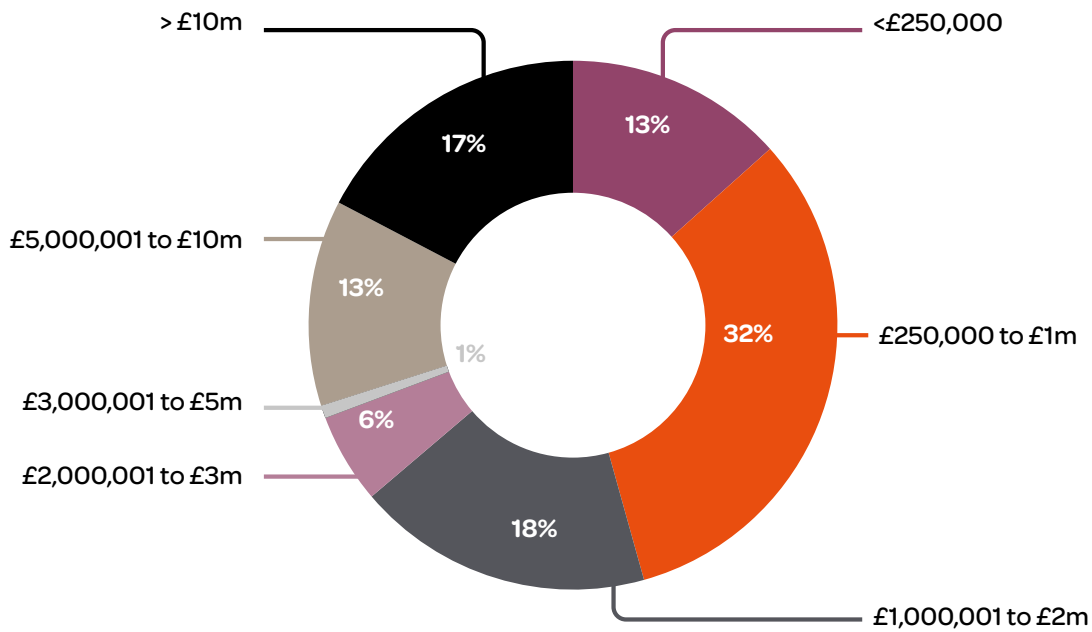
The benefits of upskilling, professional recognition and the need for accreditation continue to drive increased engagement of Company Partners. Our Partners are benefiting more than ever from discounts on our training and conference schedule. Company Partner employees are also continuing to benefit for services such as the CPD program, our networks and having memberships built into their packages.

Deepening the relationship between MRS and the employees of our **Company Partners** has been an important focus of the work of the Company Partner Team this year.

**Company Partners by type**  
Total: 755



Company Partners by turnover



Deepening the relationship between MRS and the employees of our Company Partners has been an important focus of the work of the Company Partner Team this year. To this end MRS has considerably increased the number of induction sessions that we have carried out this year. MRS has also created a range of products, such as short videos and surveys, that allow MRS to gauge and inspire interest in all the benefits available to them.

In September the Company Partner Team launched the Wellbeing Space on the on [mrs.org.uk](https://mrs.org.uk). This consists of a

MRS **Fair Data partners** find the trust mark valuable to reassure their customers and stakeholders of their commitment to the Fair Data principles.

suite of resources developed exclusively for Company Partners in recognition of the challenges, both physical and mental, that their employees face whilst carrying out their jobs. Resources have included a series of webinars on subjects such as mindfulness, valuing your values and emotional intelligence.

MRS Fair Data partners find the trust mark valuable to reassure their customers and stakeholders their commitment to the Fair Data principles. MRS supports Fair Data partners by providing detailed and practical advice on the application of key legislation. During 2021/22 MRS welcomes Giraffe to the growing list of Fair Data companies in addition to four other organisations who are undergoing the Fair Data process.



# Pledge to make a difference in 2022

A circular graphic composed of many small, multi-colored squares (grey, orange, white) arranged in a spiral pattern. The text 'Manifesto for Opportunity' is written in a light grey font along the inner curve of the spiral. In the center, the text 'MRS Inclusion Pledge' is written in a bold, white font.

## MRS Inclusion Pledge

### A manifesto for opportunity

The research sector is taking steps to ensure that it is representative of the world around us.

- ✓ Publishing annual pay statistics
- ✓ Diversity at board level

Sign up the MRS Inclusion Pledge.

### A manifesto for sustainability

The research sector is taking steps to be part of the solution to the growing climate emergency.

- ✓ Delivering net zero by 2026
- ✓ Publishing carbon emissions

Sign up to the MRS Net Zero pledge

A circular graphic composed of many small, multi-colored squares (green, purple, white) arranged in a spiral pattern. The text 'Manifesto for Sustainability' is written in a light grey font along the inner curve of the spiral. In the center, the text 'MRS Net Zero Pledge' is written in a bold, white font.

## MRS Net Zero Pledge

[www.mrs.org.uk](http://www.mrs.org.uk)



# Conferences

## Virtual networking

### Impact 2022

The MRS Annual Conference, whose theme was *Reinvention*, was a two-day, multistreamed online event taking place on 15-16 March 2021. Due to the pandemic, the event was hosted on a virtual event platform and delegates were able to benefit from a number of digital and video networking opportunities.

Keynote speakers included **Lady Hale**, Former President of the Supreme Court and author of *Spider Woman*, **James Timpson** OBE, Chief Executive, The Timpson Group, **Paul Polman**, Former CEO Unilever, Chair of Imagine and author, and **Professor Dan Breznitz**, author of *Innovation in Real Places: Strategies for Prosperity in an Unforgiving World*.

The conference welcomed over **450** participants from a diverse spread of practitioners across the spectrum of clients, suppliers, specialists, consultants, academics and the wider media. Given the digital format, the speaker and delegation profile saw an uplift in international participation.

### One day conferences

MSR ran 12 one-day conferences in 2021/22, attracting over **1,000** participants. The Behavioural Science conference in September 2021, was hosted over two days and attended by **200** delegates. Two new events were launched in 2021/22, Big Qual and Semiotics. The successful events from 2020/21, Digital Ethnography and UX/CX/MR were run again in 2021/22 and saw an uplift in attendance.

The conference welcomed over **450 participants** from a diverse spread of practitioners.



**impact** 2022

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# Media

## Highlights

During the period 2021/22, 52 pieces of media coverage were achieved in titles including the Financial Times, Marketing Week and Retail Gazette.

Highlights from MRS' media and public affairs activities include:

**Proactive media engagement to support MRS' strategic priorities**

including feeding into national debates on the Government's data protection proposals, encouraging best practice use of research (such as the reporting of opinion polls), and promoting the importance of research to business and government decision-makers.

**Support on the drive to attract more talent to the research sector**

by promoting the launch of the Market Research Executive Apprenticeship – securing an interview with *Marketing Week* for an apprentice on the programme to highlight its benefits – and advising on the creation of an MRS TikTok account to reach younger audiences.

**Developing, in conjunction with the MRS team, an overarching campaign theme (#StartMakingSense)** to reflect the post-Covid landscape. Looking at ways to utilise the theme through social media and wider external communications.

**Working with the Office for National Statistics to develop promotional videos on the Census 2021.**

Organising and advising on interviews with Rebecca Cole, chair of the MRS Representation in Research Group, and Jane Frost, CEO of MRS, for material on the value policy makers, government, business and social enterprises place on the Census.

**Considering ways to showcase how the media relies on research for its news articles.**

Implementing a programme of media monitoring to establish the proportion of articles reliant on research – either directly driven by research or quoting research to back up the point and provide credibility.

**Communicating the role that MRS plays supporting government procurement,** including its advice on best practice.

**Supporting MRS' campaign for business rates relief**

for viewing facility companies, including organising an interview for the *Ham & High* with the CEO of Illuminas, John Connaughton.

**Leading on the announcement of key MRS updates**

including revealing the new MRS President Saj Arshad, the MRS 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary Honorary Fellowships and the MRS Gold Medal.

**Building profile and expectation for Impact 2022**

including creating a series of preview clips of the virtual sessions for use on social media. Securing the attendance of journalists throughout, including from *Marketing Week, Retail Gazette and WARC*, resulting in a number of pieces of coverage and social media engagement.

**Driving engagement with the MRS Awards 2022.**

Developing a script of the host and a book of the night. Securing media coverage about the awards and profiling the winners through virtual vox pops interviews. Creating video content for MRS' digital channels by identifying soundbites from the vox pops interviews.

**Driving MRS's international activity**

by announcing a new partnership with the JMRA (Japan Marketing Research Association), sustainability activity by promoting the launch of the MRS Net Zero Pledge and diversity activity by communicating the results of a global diversity and inclusion survey.

**Contributing to Research Live's Review of 2021 and Preview of 2022 series,**

including the recovery from Covid-19, achievements of the sector and industry developments.

# Financial

## Statutory accounts

The following summary of key financial information is extracted from the statutory accounts for the year 2021/22

A copy of the statutory report and accounts which is submitted to Companies House is available to members on request.

### Summary Income and Expenditure Account (£'000)

Income	2021/22	2020/21
Individual membership subscriptions	687	695
Company Partner Service	531	527
Publications & information services	529	491
Training & qualifications	847	659
Conferences & seminars	295	278
Other services	419	262
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,308</b>	<b>2,912</b>

Expenditure	2021/22	2020/21
Cost of activities	728	658
Employment	1,895	1,559
Other administration less sundry income	710	758
Net financing charges & taxation	39	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,372</b>	<b>2,979</b>

Recognised gains and losses	2021/22	2020/21
Net deficit	(64)	(67)
Adjustment on property value (after tax)	(9)	(209)
<b>Contribution to reserves</b>	<b>(73)</b>	<b>(276)</b>

### Summary Balance Sheet (£'000)

	2021/22	2020/21
Tangible assets	6,062	6,082
Net current liabilities	(629)	(552)
<b>Long term liabilities inc. deferred tax</b>	<b>(825)</b>	<b>(849)</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>4,608</b>	<b>4,681</b>

Property revaluation reserve	3,572	3,597
Income & expenditure account	1,036	1,084
<b>Reserves</b>	<b>4,608</b>	<b>4,681</b>

# Company details

## MRS Main Board and Officers 2021/22



Jane Frost, CBE  
Chief Executive Officer, MRS



Jan Gooding, MMRS  
President



Dr. Nick Baker, CMRS  
Chair of Main Board



Crispin Beale  
FMRS



Rebecca Cole  
CMRS



Babita Earle  
CMRS



Geoff Gosling  
CMRS



Sinead Jefferies  
Chair Designate, CMRS



Nick North  
CMRS



Jennifer Perry  
CMRS



Zoe Ruffels  
CMRS



John Haworth  
MMRS  
Honorary  
Secretary/Treasurer

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# Company details

## Further information

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### 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 and in market analysis, customer insight and consultancy.

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### 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. 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.

### MRS Research-Live

[research-live.com](https://research-live.com)

### IJMR

[mrs.org.uk/ijmr](https://mrs.org.uk/ijmr)

### Research Buyer's Guide

[www.mrs.org.uk/researchbuyersguide](https://www.mrs.org.uk/researchbuyersguide)

### Impact Magazine

[www.mrs.org.uk/resources/impactmagazine](https://www.mrs.org.uk/resources/impactmagazine)

### Research Jobfinder

[researchjobfinder.com](https://researchjobfinder.com)

### Fair Data

[mrs.org.uk/fairdata](https://mrs.org.uk/fairdata)

### Recruiter Accreditation Scheme

[ras.mrs.org.uk](https://ras.mrs.org.uk)

### GeoDems Knowledge Base (GKB)

[www.mrs.org.uk/geodemographics](https://www.mrs.org.uk/geodemographics)

### The Market Research Society

(Limited by Guarantee)  
Company Number 518685

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### Solicitors

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The Market Research Society (MRS) is the world's leading research association. For all those who need, generate or interpret evidence for making good business and policy decisions.

[Click here to find out more about us](#)

