Integrity and culture: is the force with us?

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A very brief history

1st Concordat 2012
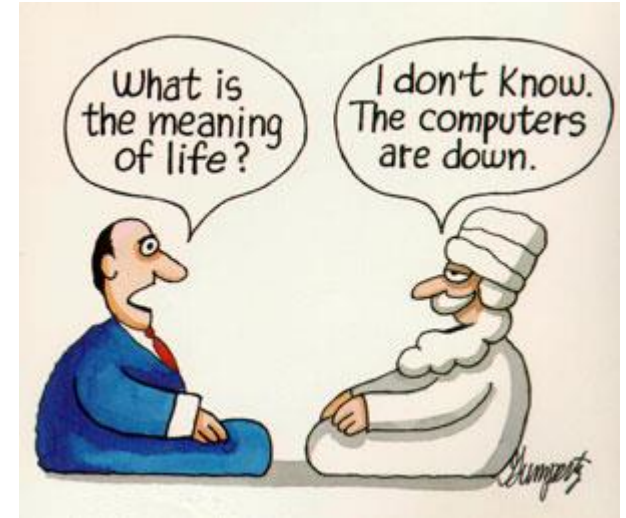
STC inquiry 2018

2nd Concordat 2019

So what changed?

Updated definitions

Integrity   Key addition is accountability

Misconduct
- Selectively choosing results
- Improper management of allegations of misconduct
- Improper conduct in peer review
- Misrepresentation of data, an individual's role and cv

For researchers

Standards: become a responsibility

Ethical/legal: has become a must

Culture

- keep up to date with standards and frameworks

- collaborate appropriately

- conduct research with integrity

Misconduct

- help to implement actions

- declare CoI

Integrity: help to develop in group and institution

For employers

Standards

- embed culture

- defend researchers

- demonstrate structures and procedures to manage and promote

Ethical/legal: support to adopt rather than reflect

Culture

- participate in annual monitoring exercise for compliance

- promote training and development

- identify named senior member to oversee and named staff member for first point of contact

For employers

Misconduct

- use external members
- have routes for appeal
- safeguard reputation
- avoid inappropriate NDAs
- report to funders and other bodies/provide info
- whistleblower contact

Integrity

- environment promotes it
- make annual statement public (details provided of what this includes)
- review processes periodically

For funders

Standards:

- publish clear statements of expectations
- think about during policy
- encourage adoption

Ethical/legal

- work together
- proportionate requirements and checks
- provide funding only to those who have structures in place
- codes of practice signposted

For funders

Culture

- identify senior person

- Identify a named lead

- partnership with organisations

Misconduct

- clear definitions

- work with employers to manage

- abide by data protection

- take appropriate action

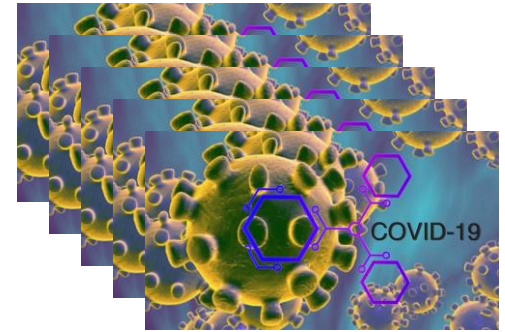**Integrity**: review to ensure no inappropriate incentives

Embedding the Concordat

Since publication, in progress…….

- Research integrity committee setup

- Report and information gathering mechanism

- Assurance process alignment

Integrity during a crisis

Honesty
- Exaggeration of contribution
- Poor study design
- Too rapid publication, with lack of peer review

Rigour
- Lack of available experts
- Running investigations remotely
- Media pressure
- Less willingness to criticise
- Replication reduced

Transparency and accountability
- Comment outside own area of expertise
- Work is less visible
- Assurance processes stalled

Care and respect
- Additional burden
- Lack of joined up approach
- Targetting by opportunists

Research culture: why do we think this is important?

should encompass not just ideas and the outputs of research, but also how research is done

Describing Research Culture

Impact on Researchers

Well-being, anxiety & mental health

Personal Relationships

Lack of diversity

70%
who were employed or students indicated they felt stressed on an average working day

34%
had sought professional help for depression or anxiety during their research career.

28%
Agreed that "my institution/workplace wellbeing initiatives are appropriate for my needs"

49%
had difficulty dealing with work-related set-backs

19%
wanted to seek help, but had not done so.

Experience of bullying and harassment

62% of disabled respondents reported experiencing bullying or harassment, whereas 73% had witnessed it.

Q: During your research career have you ever…?

Experienced bullying or harassment

43% Yes

Witnessed bullying or harassment

61% Yes

Women were more likely to have experienced bullying or harassment (49%) than men (34%).

33%
thought that leaders specifically often turned a blind eye to such behaviour

Impact on Research

Lower quality	Cut corners	Superficial outputs
Replicability/ reproducibility issues	Cherry-picking data	Data-massaging

Impact on Research

46%
of respondents agreed that their workplace could do more to ensure research practices do not cut corners

32%
My institution/workplace values speed of results over quality

46%
agreed they had a clear understanding of what their workplace considered compromised research to be.

"The REF system in the UK requires academics to have X papers of X quality by X time and as soon as you put that barrier on someone and the university starts snarling at you, you're inviting people to cut corners to meet those criteria."

Late career researcher, Russell Group institution

Impact on Society

Loss of talent from the sector	Lack of trust from the public	Lack of real innovation and impact for the future

37%

Of respondents said that they were considering moving to another part of the research sector within the next three years

36%

that they were considering leaving the research sector entirely within the next three years.

Townhalls

COVID-19: Paused half way

Dundee
Glasgow
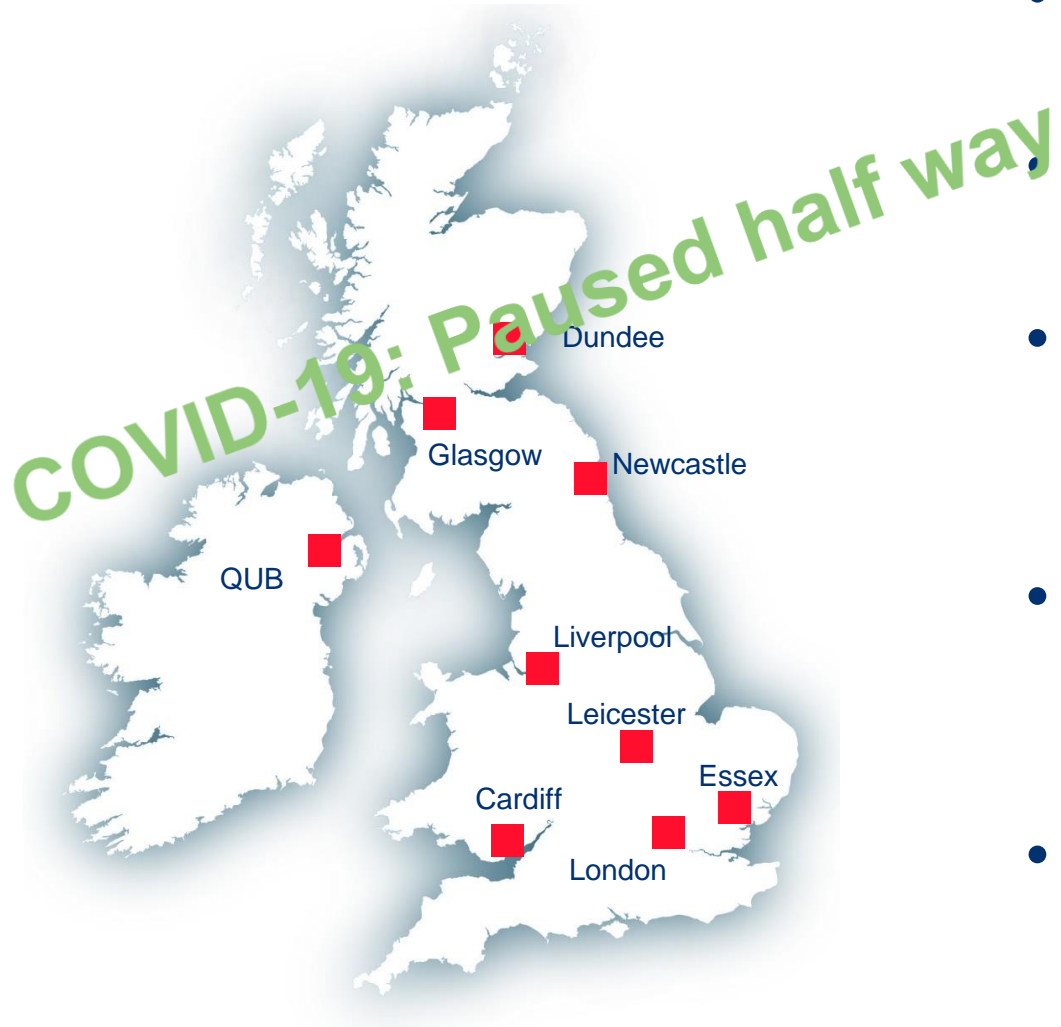Newcastle
QUB
Liverpool
Leicester
Cardiff
Essex
London

- 16th January-10th March

- 9 Townhall hosts

- Chaired by local senior lead on research culture
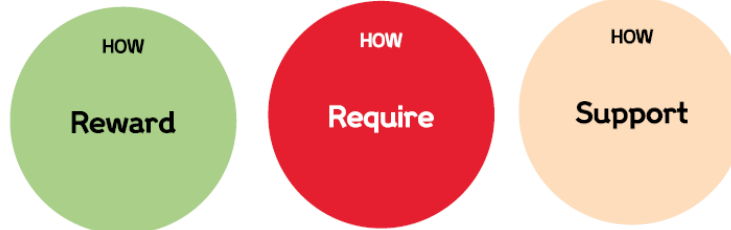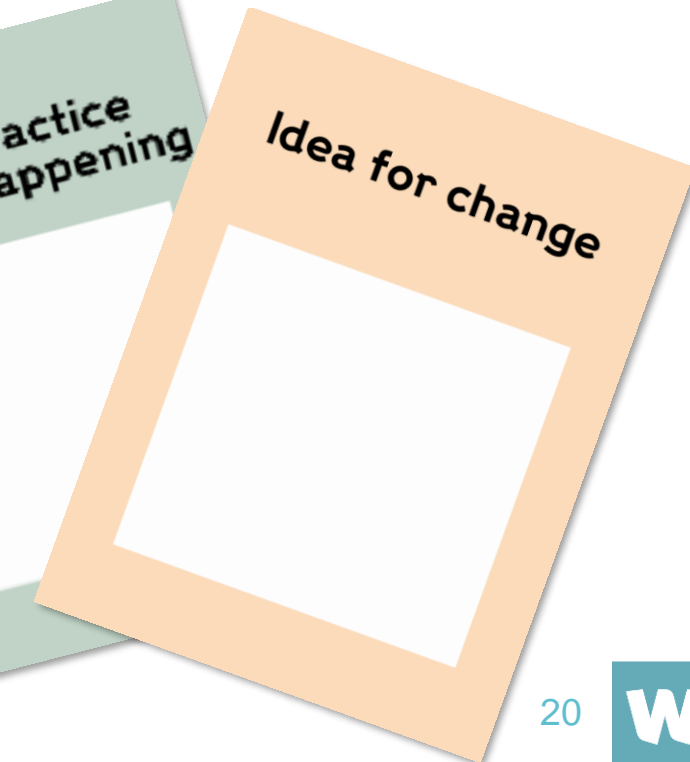
- Facilitated small group discussions

- Panel discussion and Q&A

Café Culture

Café Culture
#ReimagineResearch

COVID 19: Virtual in development

Research Culture
Ambassador Network

Challenge
What should be addressed

cause

Good practice already happening

Idea for change

WHO
Funders
e.g. research councils

WHO
Institution

WHO
Researchers
e.g. postdocs, PhDs, technicians

WHO
Research leaders
e.g. principal investigators, professors

WHO
Publishers

WHO
Professional bodies
e.g. learned societies

HOW
Reward

HOW
Require

HOW
Support

37%
would feel con...
speaking out ab...
or harass...

35%
would not feel...
reporting in...
compromis...
standards ar...
with...
personal

29%
feel secure in pursuing
a research career,
with early- and mid-career
researchers significantly
less likely to feel secure
than senior researchers

2...
think it w...
appropr...

"The problem one person's bullying is another perso... heavy-handed and constructiv... management"
Mid-career researcher

"As soon as people get a whiff of something that m... be an interestin... and positive... you need a... overwhel... amount... to ch... min... in..."

"Researchers... see their work as rather more important than a job. It's a vocation, it's a way of life... for an outsider that is not very easy to understand"
Mid-career researcher

20

Reimagine Research: Solutions Summit

Join the movement to
#ReimagineResearch

March 18, Barbican, London

COVID-19: New date in the autumn

Questions

References

What Researchers Think About the Culture They Work In'

Wellcome Trust and Shift Learning January 2020

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