



Reimagine Research

**What researchers think about the cultures they
work in and what's up next....**

November 2021



Who we are



‘Wellcome supports science to solve urgent Health Challenges for everyone’



We want everyone to benefit from science’s potential to improve health and save lives.

This is supported by an underlying principle:
‘sustainable, innovative, open, **diverse and inclusive research cultures**’ are integral for enabling people and ideas to thrive

“Excellence”

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

What researchers think about the culture they work in

Key findings from 2020 Wellcome survey of global research community (n=4,267)

84% are proud to
work in research

but only

29% feel secure in
pursuing this career



Poor research culture is leading to unhealthy competition, bullying and harassment, and mental health issues

78% of researchers think that high levels of competition have created unkind and aggressive conditions.

Nearly two-thirds of researchers have witnessed bullying or harassment, and 43% have experienced it themselves.

Just over half of researchers have sought, or have wanted to seek, professional help for depression or anxiety.



Women and minority groups often more disadvantaged



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

Women (22%) were less likely than men (30%) to believe their concerns relating to these issues would be acted on appropriately


Women (38%) and non-binary respondents (66%) were significantly more likely to have sought help than men (25%).

**The system can
favour quantity over
quality, and
creativity is often
stifled**


Creativity is one of the most commonly cited features of an ideal research culture, but 75% of researchers believe it's currently being stifled.

One in five junior researchers and students have felt pressured by their supervisor to produce a particular result.

Only 14% of researchers agree that current metrics of success have had a positive impact on research culture.



Excellence isn't translating through into good management practices



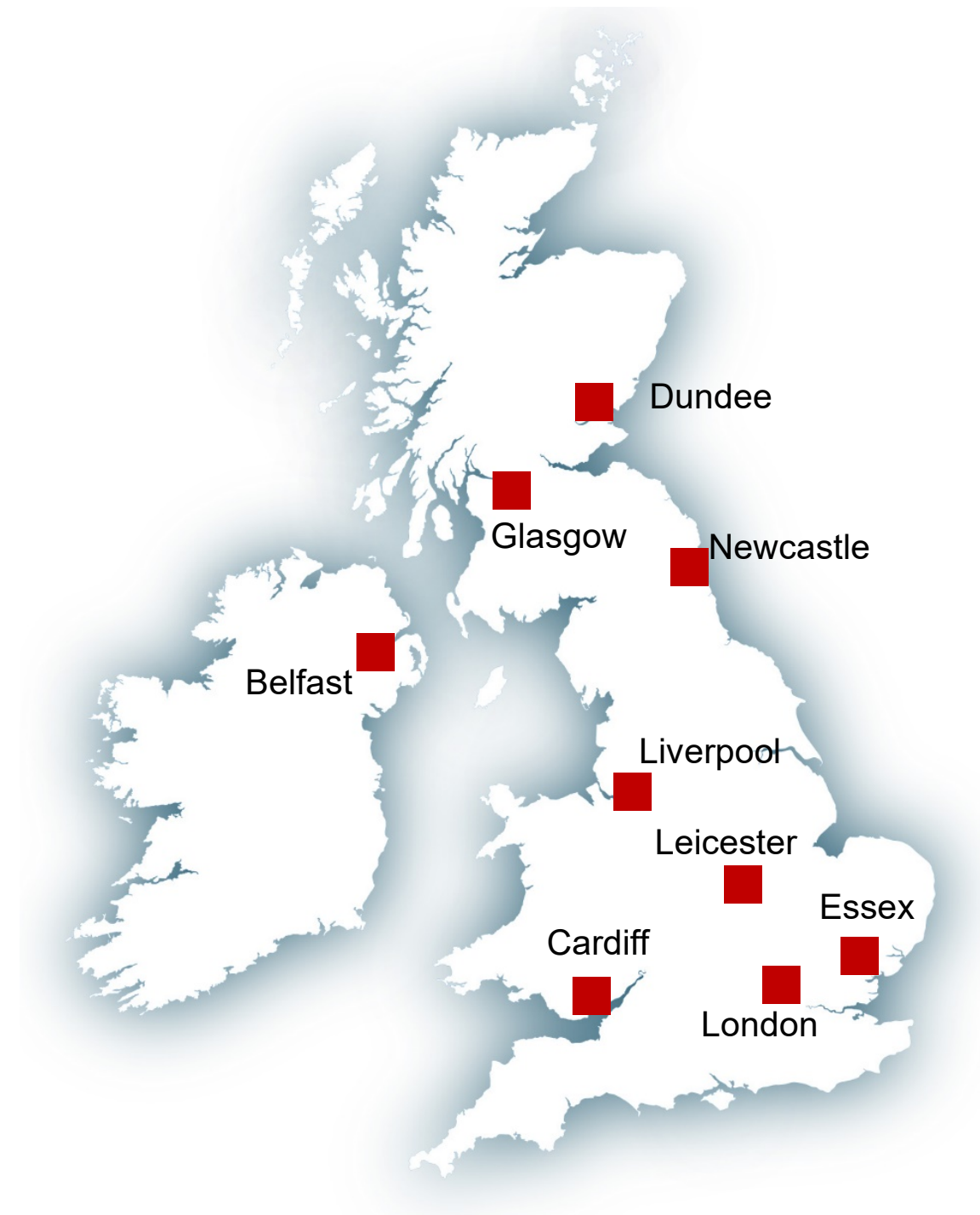
80% of researchers who manage people say they have the knowledge and skills to manage a diverse team, but only 48% have received any training.

Those being managed often miss out on critical aspects of good management – only half have received feedback on their performance (55%) or had a formal appraisal (49%) in the past year.

Engaging with the research
community

Town Halls

- 9 Town Hall events
- Spoke directly to 760+ people
- “Anyone who makes research happen”
- Facilitated small group discussions
- Q&A with Wellcome representative



Town Halls – findings



1.

Unstable
contracts &
careers

2.

Bullying &
harassment

3.

Unhealthy
Competition

4.

Poor
management

5.

Deteriorating
mental
health

6.

Long hours
culture

7.

Inaction on
diversity &
inclusion

8.

Mistrust of
complaints
procedures

9.

Early career
challenges

10.

Pressure to
publish

11.

Lack of
recognition
& promotion

12.

Gender
inequality &
personal
sacrifices

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After 15 years of short term funding I had two 3-month periods of bridging funding - not much fun with a mortgage to pay. We also delayed starting a family due to this insecurity (something I regret).

PARTICIPANT AT LONDON TOWNHALL

Café Culture

- Reach a broader audience
- 500+ sign ups, globally
- Seeking practical solutions



Reimagine Research Festival



1,350+ delegates from 56 countries

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What are we aiming for?

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Community's vision for a positive research culture

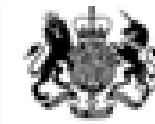
- Describe what we want to create
- Use this to hold ourselves to account
- Follow SDG model



Gaining momentum

Throughout our work, we've:

1. Openly shared our evidence
2. Worked with, and learned from, other advocates in our community
3. Pushed for political commitment
4. Accepted this is a long-term process



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy



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What actions do we
need to take?

—

What we're doing

Require

We already require our grantholders to do their research with honesty and integrity, and we will not tolerate any bullying or harassment.

Reward

We want to build a system which incentivises the time and energy required to do research well, both in Wellcome's operation and across the system.

Support

We want to support the research community as they make their own changes locally, and ensure Wellcome is seen as an active partner.

Wellcome's vision for the future

Wellcome's new vision for Research Culture

In our first suite of actions to positively influence research cultures we have:

- designed new schemes for open-mode Discovery Research funding to incentivise skills necessary to create a positive research environment.
- updated our funding policies and are currently redesigning our application process.

We also have a brand new Research Environment Team!

- Research Culture & Communities
- Open Access
- Bioethics
- Public/researcher-led engagement



Thank you!



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