



Reimagine research

Why we need to reimagine how we work together

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“Warning lights on the dashboard...”

Jeremy Farrar, Wellcome

“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 and Shift Learning Report

Phase 1 Extended evidence review

Included published academic sources alongside a range of grey material found online to provide an initial view of the landscape of research culture.

Phase 2 Qualitative interviews

94 interviews (45 mins+) with academics across the UK. Sampled to provide a cross-section of:

- Institution type
- Discipline
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Geographic location
- Career stage

4 x co-creation groups in London, Manchester and Glasgow.

Phase 3 Quantitative survey

Substantial survey of **70 questions**, widely disseminated by Wellcome and partners.

Respondents were self-selected:

- 4,267 completions
- No weighting applied to the data
- UK-centric, but 25% global
- Broad disciplinary spread, with bias towards biomed
- Included industry researchers, and those who had left the research community within last 5 years

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 (61%) have witnessed bullying or harassment, and 43% have experienced it themselves.

Just one in three (37%) feel comfortable speaking up, with many doubting appropriate action will be taken.

Just over half of researchers (53%) 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%).

44% of women have experienced discrimination and 51% witnessed it.

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%).

“One individual commented that X would’ve done so much more if she hadn’t stopped to have two babies, and to my perennial shame, I didn’t call her out for that, but that kind of attitude is around in some of the higher areas.”

Male late-career researcher, Russell Group institution

The system favours 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 (23%) have felt pressured by their supervisor to produce a particular result.

Only 14% of researchers agree that current metrics have had a positive impact on research culture, and 43% believe that their workplace puts more value on metrics than on research quality.

Excellence isn't translating through into good management practices

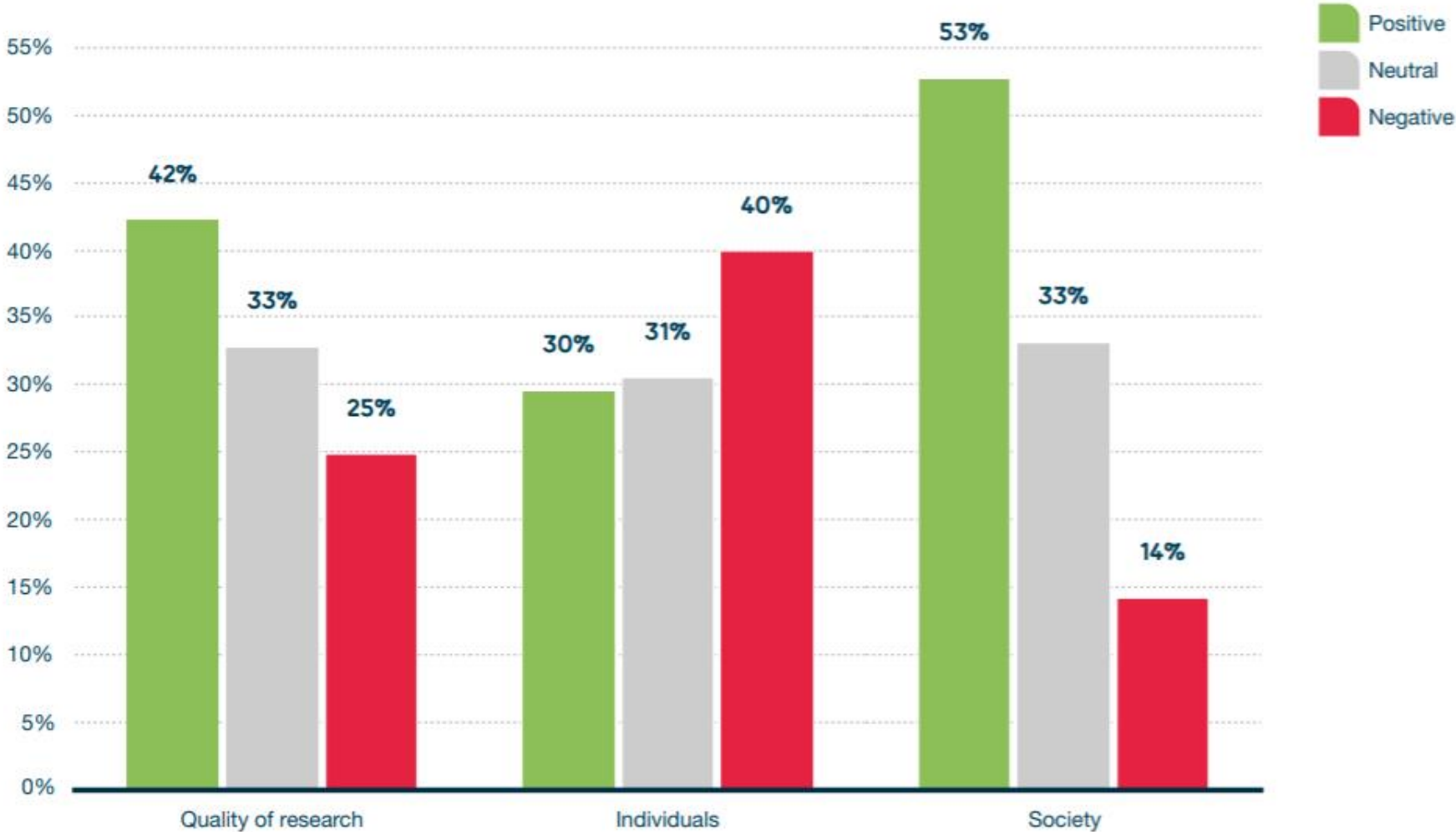
80% of researchers who manage people say they have the knowledge and skills to manage a diverse team, but only 48% have received any training.

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.

Impact of current research culture

Researchers' views on what effect research culture has on research quality, individuals and society

Survey, n = 4065 – research community, UK and international, excluding unemployed and retired.



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**“These results paint a shocking
portrait of the research environment
– and one we must all help change.”**

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Jeremy Farrar, Wellcome

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What comes next?

**Engaging with the research
community**

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Café Culture



WHO
Funders
e.g. research councils

WHO
Institution

WHO
Research leaders
e.g. principal investigators, professors

WHO
Publishers

WHO
Professional bodies
e.g. learned societies

WHO
Researchers
e.g. postdocs, PhDs, technicians

Challenge

What should be addressed

because

Good practice already happening

Idea for change

HOW
Reward

HOW
Require

HOW
Support



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 will launch a vision of a better culture linked to our strategy review at a summit in March 2020, then play a leading role in achieving this vision and encouraging others across the community to do so too.

Support

We are holding meetings at universities across the UK, supporting local discussion groups, and hosting an online forum for sharing ideas to create a healthier culture.

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We want to help build a better research culture – one that is creative, inclusive and honest.

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Thank you

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