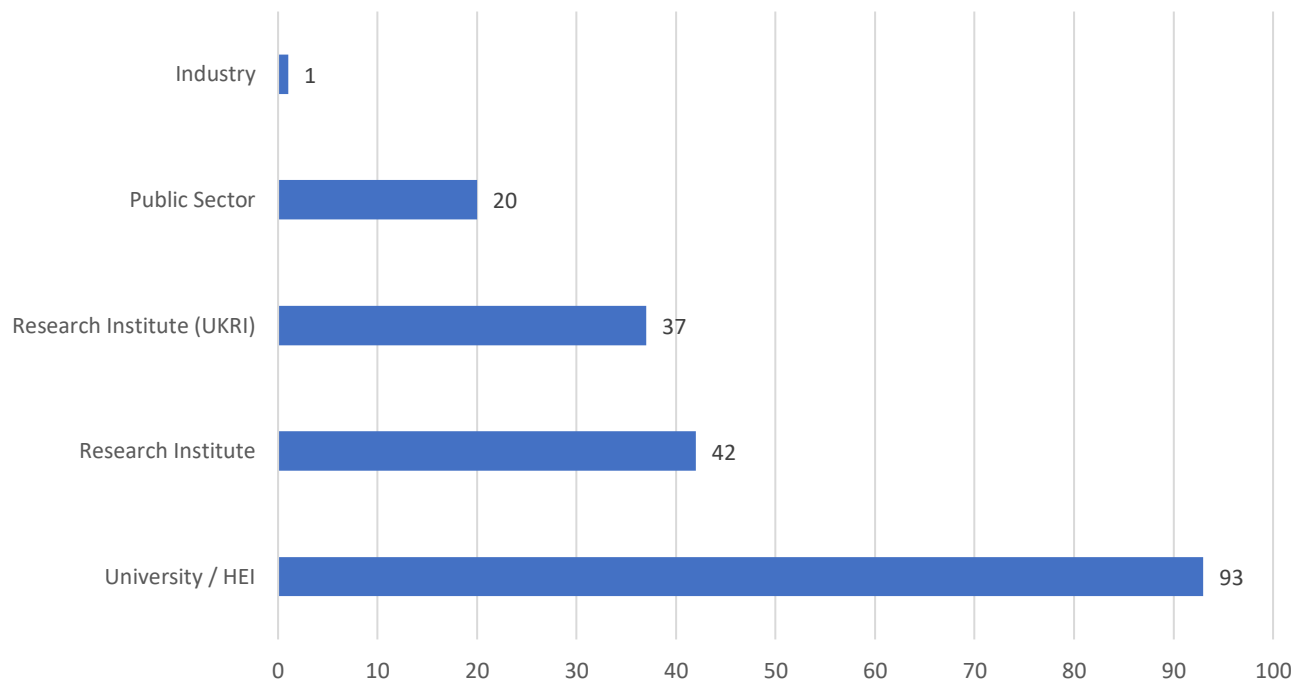


COVID-19 WORKING GROUP IMPACT SURVEY

In October 2020 representatives of the UK marine science community conducted a survey to assess the impact of COVID-19. The results from 193 responses are summarised below and include recommendations for science leaders, particularly with respect to Early Career Researchers (ECRs) and staff on fixed term appointments (FTAs), that may help to enhance the working environment for scientists in a post-pandemic world.

SURVEY RESPONDANTS BY SECTOR



SURVEY INSIGHTS

FIELDWORK

84%

of planned marine fieldwork in UK cancelled or postponed.

LABWORK

> 90%

of marine science labwork impacted either moderately or severely.

Most strongly impacted

ECRs & FTAs and their supervisors

University sector

Researchers with caring duties

Researchers with a disability

GRANTS

> 50%

of those planning on writing a grant proposal were negatively impacted.

Most strongly impacted

Mid-career

University sector

Researchers with caring duties, and/or pastoral care duties for Postgraduate students.

NATIONAL CAPABILITY (NC)

~ 33%

of end-users found access negatively impacted.

CONFERENCES AND NETWORKING

> 50%

of respondents attended fewer conferences

TEACHING AND EDUCATION

> 35%

of those concerned about education reported cancelled/postponed field teaching

> 50%

reported that face-to-face teaching was cancelled/postponed

MENTORING

~ 50%

of ECRs reported a drop in mentoring and supervision

17%

ECRs don't feel they have a mentoring and supervising programme

CAREER PROGRESSION

> 33%

feel their career progression will be negatively impacted

~ 33%

don't know if career progression and promotion has been cancelled or postponed

OTHER

> 50%

find it hard to work from home

> 50%

feel more isolated

25%

have declined in mental health

40%

have increase in administrative workload

Negative impacts felt most strongly by

ECRs and FTAs

Scientists with disabilities

Women

Scientists in full-time employment

SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS – FOCUS ON ECRs AND UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

- The recommendations are focused on supporting marine scientists to transition to new ways of working post-COVID-19, and reassure them that the impacts of COVID-19 will be considered and addressed as part of standard recruitment, career planning and promotion(s).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HEIs AND INSTITUTES INVOLVED IN OCEAN SCIENCE*

- Provide mentoring schemes & mentoring training.
- Raise awareness of mental health issues and contact details for key support groups.
- Raise awareness of career progression mechanisms and ensure the long term impact of COVID-19 are addressed as standard within recruitment, career progression and promotion processes.
- Plan for changes in post-COVID-19 working practice including transition period, flexible working rules and implications for ECRs & FTAs in an increasingly virtual meeting space.
- Facilitate access to field samples, data, labwork for ECRs and FTAs who have been impacted by COVID-19, and support completion of key activities that have impacted science delivery and career progression, where possible.
- Work with NERC to enhance opportunities for informal networking to allow ECRs and FTAs to build partnerships and engage in sea-going activities.
- Maintain the ability to access online conferences, seminars, meetings and learning.
- Re-institute or replace internal small institutional funding opportunities/allocations.

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE CHALLENGER SOCIETY

- Set up a working group of ECRs and FTAs to generate ideas for networking in the future where there may be a reduction in face-to-face events or large meetings.
- Generate a best practice guide for flexible working or working from home.

RECOMMENDATION FOR NERC FACILITIES

- Raise awareness of NERC facilities including booking procedures.

Respondents were based at marine research institutes from across the UK. The COVID-19 Working Group was led by Dr Kate Hendry of the University of Bristol and supported by Jackie Pearson of the NOC Association of Marine Science National Capability Beneficiaries (NOCA).

*Many organisations may be implementing similar recommendations and best practice already, but sharing understanding and examples of best practice will benefit staff and students in terms of consistency, equality and equity. We believe all recommendations benefit staff, students and employers.