DIVERSITY DATA IN OUR RESEARCH FUNDING

2022

CANCER RESEARCH UK

Together we will beat cancer

INTRODUCTION

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Research and Innovation

At Cancer Research UK (CRUK), we put discovery and research excellence at the heart of everything we do. To do that, we need the sharpest scientific minds to work with us – that's why it's so important that we foster and build research environments where the widest variety of people can thrive.

Understanding our diversity data is vital if we are to tackle any inequalities in our funding of researchers. And so, our second diversity data report builds on our inaugural publication last year which helped us uncover shortcomings and informed how we might improve diversity within our research community.

Last year our report showed a clear underrepresentation of researchers from an ethnic minority background both applying and receiving grants from us, particularly those from Black backgrounds. We have since made changes to improve diversity within our research careers pipeline. We now partner with In2scienceUK and Black in Cancer to mentor school children and undergraduates from low socio-economic backgrounds and Black backgrounds to offer them opportunities to build a career in cancer research. Later this year we will support the Black in Cancer partnership to hold its first in-person event, bringing Black researchers together from around the globe to share their science, and discuss equality and patient experiences. And this summer, we will be one of the first medical research charities to launch a PhD scholarship programme for Black students.

For the first time, we're now publishing combined diversity data for staff and PhD students across our four institutes to share the broader diversity picture of our research community.

We have also introduced a positive action scheme for researchers to observe our funding panels and committees, which prioritises places for underrepresented groups. We think this will help overcome the underrepresentation highlighted by our previous data report.

We are making incremental progress – notably a reduction in the difference in success rates between fellowship applicants from an ethnic minority background and White researchers.

Women and men now have equal membership across all our funding committees. We have exceeded our targets for ethnic minority committee membership which is encouraging, but we have more to do in recruiting committee members from Black backgrounds.

We invest in world-class research, and we know to remain world-class, it needs to be undertaken by a diverse and inclusive community – an incredibly complex problem like cancer demands diversity of thought.

We welcome your feedback on how we can work together to bring about systemic change and to improve cancer research for everyone.

OUR METHODOLOGY

For application and award data, we report on lead applicants from 22 September 2017 to 31 December 2021 when we made diversity reporting mandatory in our grants management system.

Where relevant, we compare our diversity data to Advance Higher Education (HE) analysis using the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data from 2021 for:

- the UK biosciences academic staff population [1]
- the UK biosciences postgraduate student population [2]

We have removed prefer not to say and unknown records from our data to compare to the Advance HE analysis which does not include these categories.

Where datasets are large enough, ethnicity is presented according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) list of ethnicity groups (Asian/Asian British, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups, Other ethnic group, White) [3].

Where numbers of awardholders from an ethnic minority background are small, these are aggregated into a single 'ethnic minority' group to avoid individuals being identifiable. This means we're unable to compare application or award data between individual ethnic groups because the numbers are too small. We recognise ethnic groups have distinct identities and challenges and we plan to present disaggregated ethnicity group data in the future. Across all our reporting in the future, we hope to include more granular analysis and intersectional data when we have a bigger dataset.

Further gender categories beyond woman and man are available to select in our grants management system including non-binary and prefer not to say.

In the future, we will review all our diversity data questions to align with the revised diversity and inclusion survey (DAISY) question guidance where possible [4].

Several data gaps were reported by our institutes, particularly for disability status and ethnicity. For future reports, we hope to improve data collection and reporting to close these data gaps.

Where appropriate, statistical significance has been tested using the Chi-Squared test for independence. In this report, p value ≤ 0.05 are considered significant. (*) used throughout this report denotes a statistically significant finding.

Although our data describe patterns of grant applications, they cannot be used to explain all differences we see. This report is just the beginning of an ongoing dialogue with the research community and other funders to understand the complex factors that influence equality, diversity and inclusion across the research ecosystem.

NOTE:

[1] Equality in higher education: staff statistical 2021 report. Advance HE 2021 (accessed July 2022).

[2] Equality in higher education: student statistical report 2021. Advance HE 2021 (accessed July 2022).

[3] Ethnic group, national identity and religion, Office for National Statistics (accessed July 2022).

[4] Diversity and inclusion survey (DAISY) question guidance working draft (v2), EDIS (accessed July 2022).

KEY POINTS

- Only 2% of our lead applicants declared a disability, lower than the proportion of UK biosciences academic staff who reported a disability at 3%.*
- Applications from researchers from an ethnic minority background have increased by 5 percentage points since 2018.
- Only 1% of all our applicants were from Black / African / Caribbean / Black British backgrounds which is slightly lower than the UK biosciences academic staff population at 2%.*
- The gap in success rates between fellowship applicants from an ethnic minority background and from a White background is still significant. White researchers who apply for a fellowship have a success rate of 24% which is 11 percentage points higher than researchers from an ethnic minority background at 13%.*
- Across all applications, success rates by gender are equal at 28% for men and women.
- Two-thirds of our lead applicants are aged 40 and over.
- Women and men have equal membership across all our funding committees. The proportion of researchers from an ethnic minority background on our funding committees is 21%.
- Over 50% of staff at our institutes are less than 40 years old.
- Over 50% of PhD students at our institutes are women whilst less than one-third are group leaders.

*Statistically significant finding

HEADLINE FACTS

Our applicants and awardholders

2%
of our lead applicants declared a disability (2021)

36%
proportion of grant awards made to women (2021)

13%
success rate for fellowship applicants from an ethnic minority background compared to 24% for White applicants (2021)

Our committee members

50%
of committee members are women (2021)

21%
proportion of committee members from an ethnic minority background (2021)

0%
committee members are Black /African / Caribbean / Black British (2021)

Our institutes

57%
of PhD students are women (2021)

29%
of group leaders are women (2021)

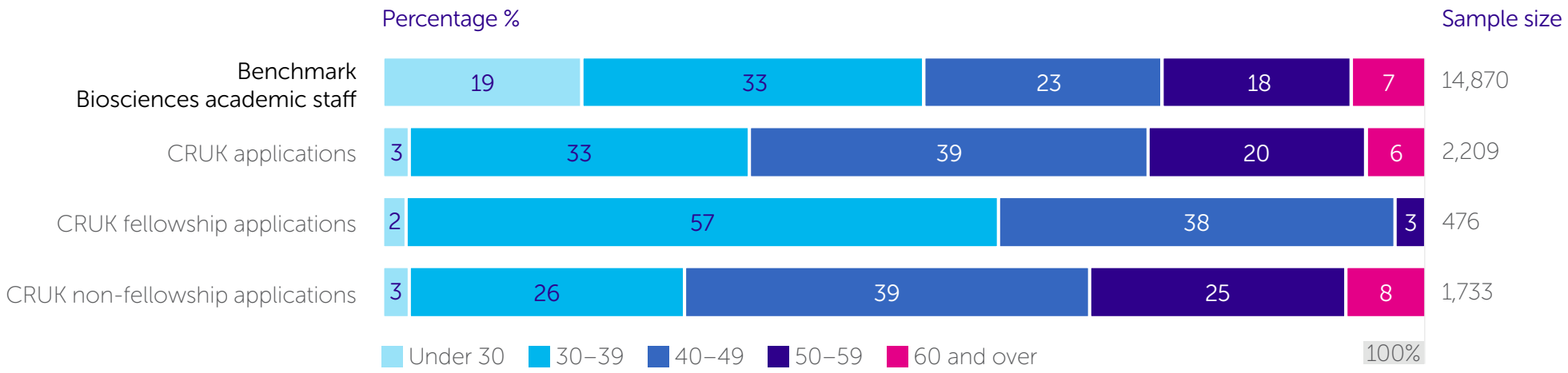
21%
of staff are from an ethnic minority background (2021)

APPLICATION RATES

AGE OF APPLICANTS

Two-thirds of lead applicants are aged 40 and over

Age of applicants (2017–2021),
compared with UK biosciences academic staff



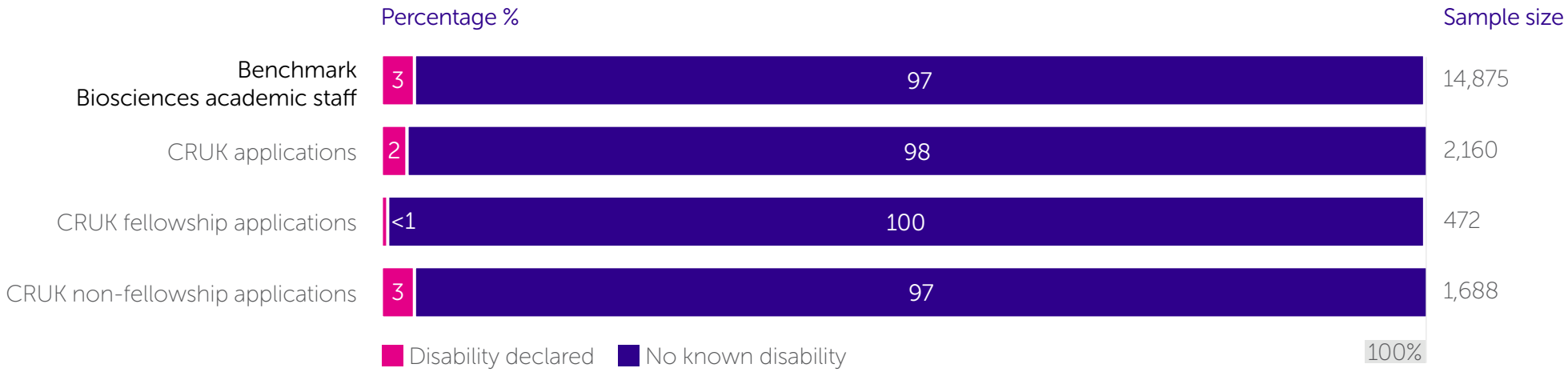
KEY FINDINGS:

- Researchers aged 40–49 years form the largest share of all our lead applicants at 39% of applications.
- Researchers aged 30–39 years form the largest share of fellowship applicants, accounting for 57% of applications.

DISABILITY STATUS OF APPLICANTS

The proportion of lead applicants declaring a disability remains low

Proportion of applicants declaring a disability (2017–2021), compared with UK biosciences academic staff



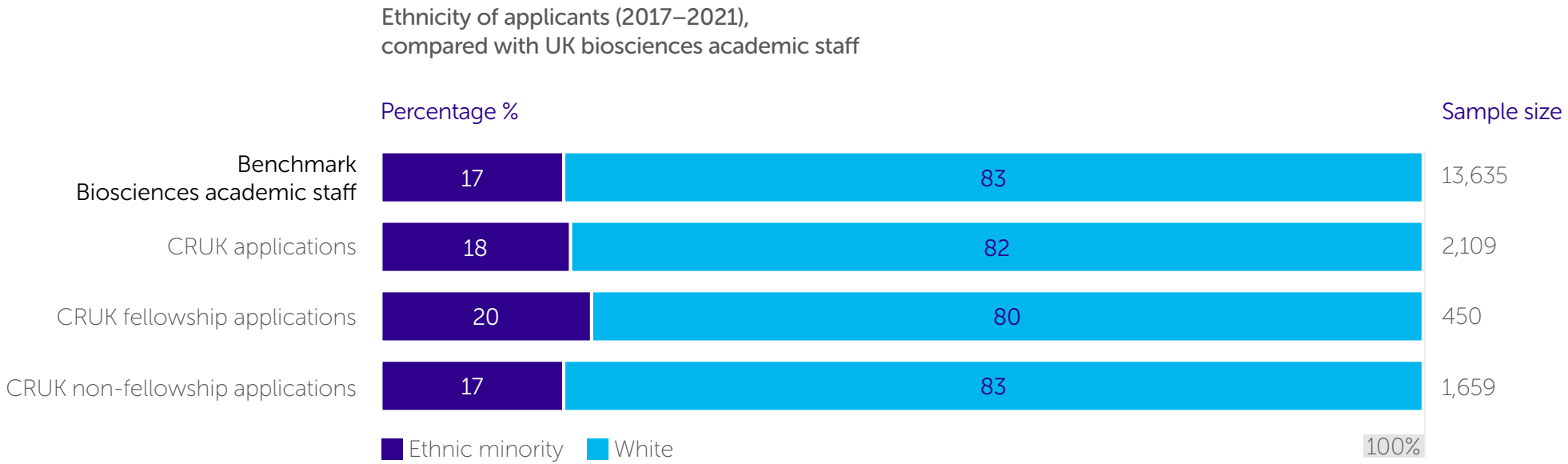
KEY FINDINGS:

- Only 2% of our lead applicants declared a disability. This is lower than the proportion of UK biosciences academic staff who declared a disability at 3%.*
- Around 13% of our lead applicants chose not to disclose their disability status by selecting 'prefer not to say' or did not complete the data.

*Statistically significant finding

ETHNICITY OF APPLICANTS

The proportion of lead applicants from an ethnic minority background reflects the academic sector



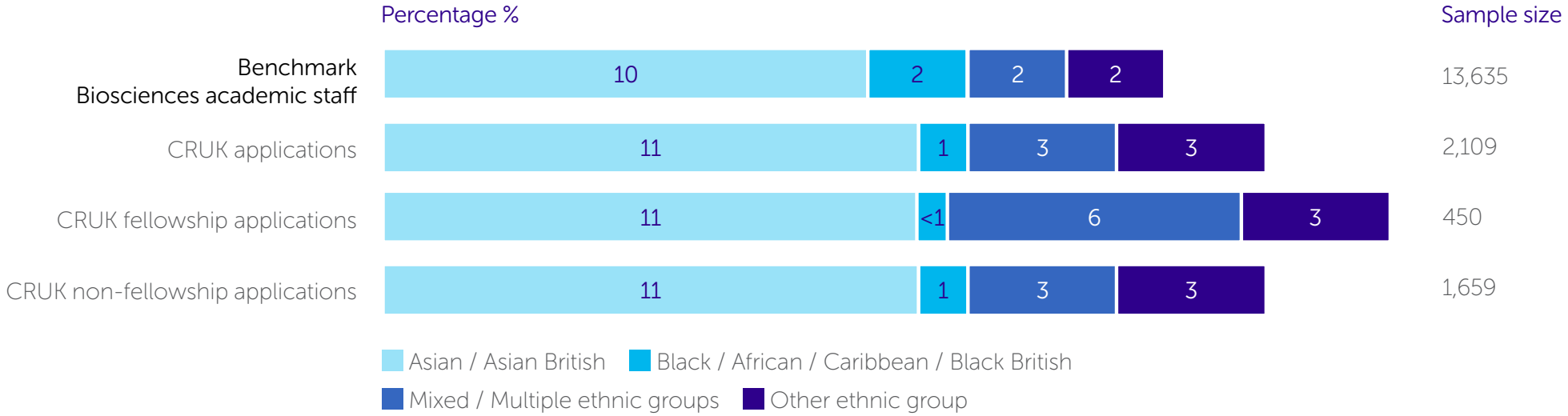
KEY FINDINGS:

- 18% of our lead applicants are from an ethnic minority background which is slightly higher than the UK biosciences academic staff population.
- 20% of our fellowship applicants are from an ethnic minority background.

ETHNICITY OF APPLICANTS

▶ Black researchers remain underrepresented among lead applicants

Ethnicity of applicants by ethnic group (2017–2021), compared with UK biosciences academic staff



KEY FINDINGS:

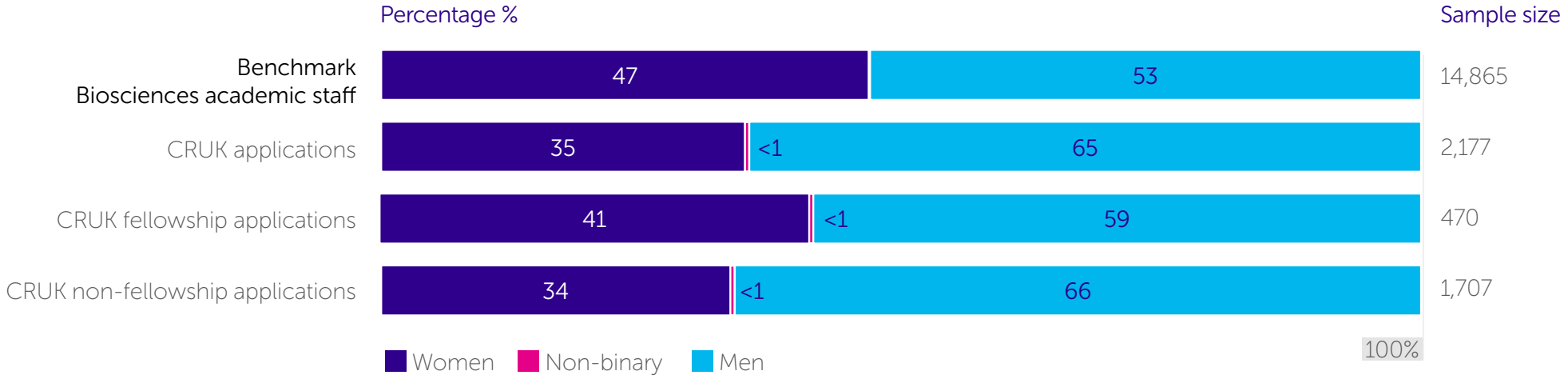
- Our lead applicants by ethnic minority groups are broadly representative of the academic sector population.
- Only 1% of all our applicants were from Black / African / Caribbean / Black British backgrounds which is slightly lower than the UK biosciences academic staff population at 2%.*

*Statistically significant finding

GENDER OF APPLICANTS

▶ 35% of lead applicants are women which increases to 41% for fellowships only

Gender of applicants (2017–2021), compared with UK biosciences academic staff



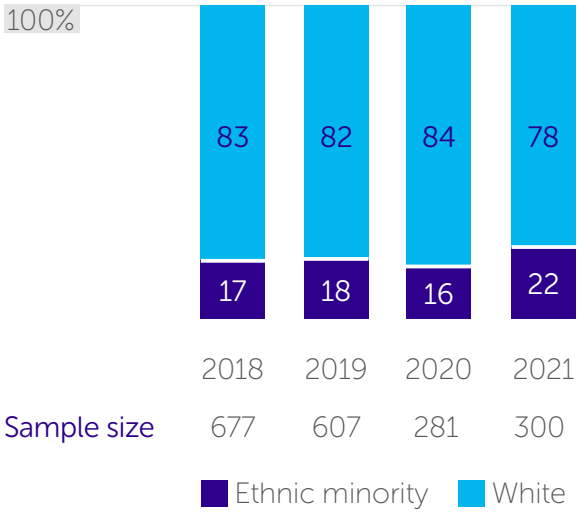
KEY FINDINGS:

- 35% of our lead applicants are women.
- The proportion of fellowship applicants who are women is 41%.
- These proportions remain lower than the 47% of academic biosciences population who are women.

APPLICATION RATES

Applications from researchers from an ethnic minority background are increasing, although the difference is not yet significant

Ethnicity of applicants (2018–2021)

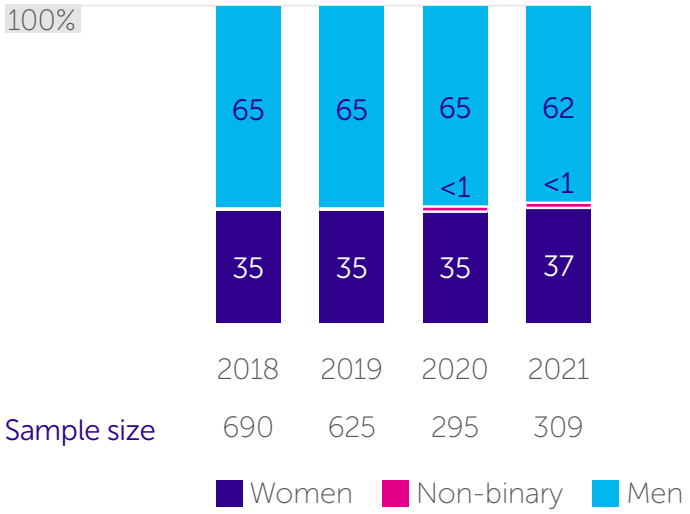


KEY FINDINGS:

- Applications from researchers from an ethnic minority background have increased by 5 percentage points since 2018.

Applications from women have been constant over time

Gender of applicants (2018–2021)



KEY FINDINGS:

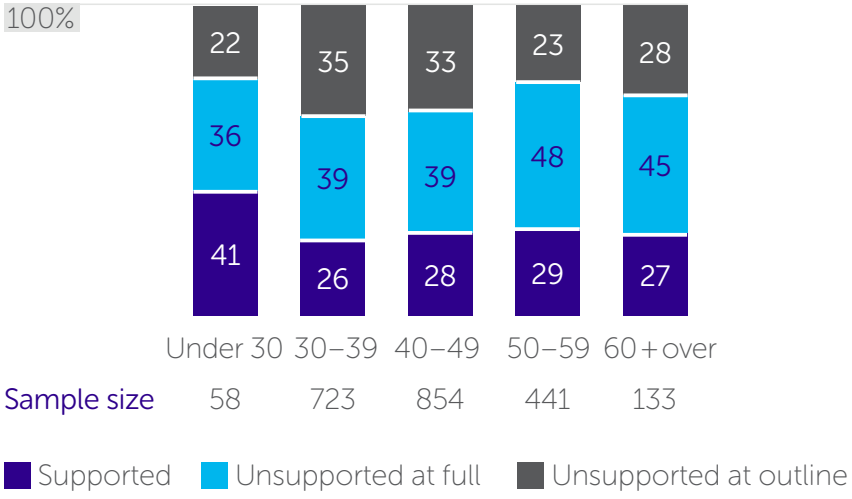
- Applications from women have been 35% each year since 2018, slightly increasing to 37% in 2021.

SUCCESS RATES

SUCCESS RATES

The success rates at full application stage for all age ranges from 30 are similar

Success rates of applicants by age (2017–2021), stratified by application stage.



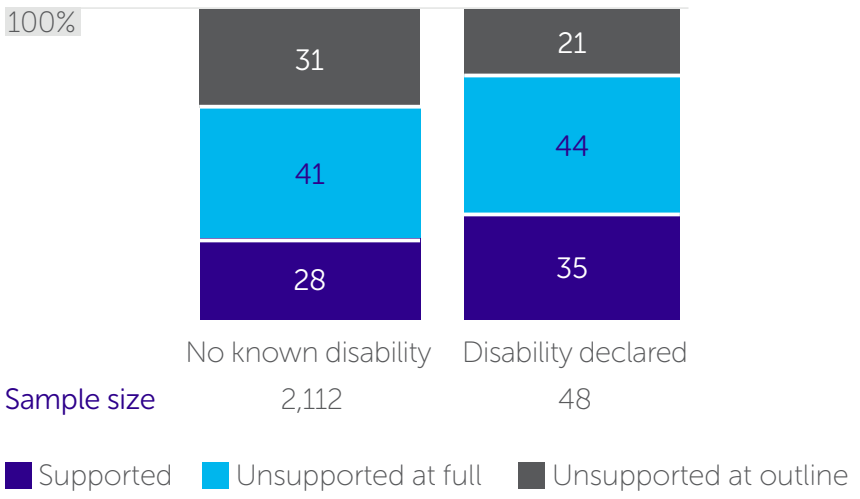
KEY FINDINGS:

- The success rate for researchers aged between 30–60 and over ranges from 26% to 29%, with those between 50–59 having a 29% success rate.
- Success rates are higher for those under 30 (41%) where most applications submitted are for bursaries.*

*Statistically significant finding

The success rate for researchers declaring a disability is slightly higher but disclosure rates are low

Success rates of applicants by disability status (2017–2021), stratified by application stage.



KEY FINDINGS:

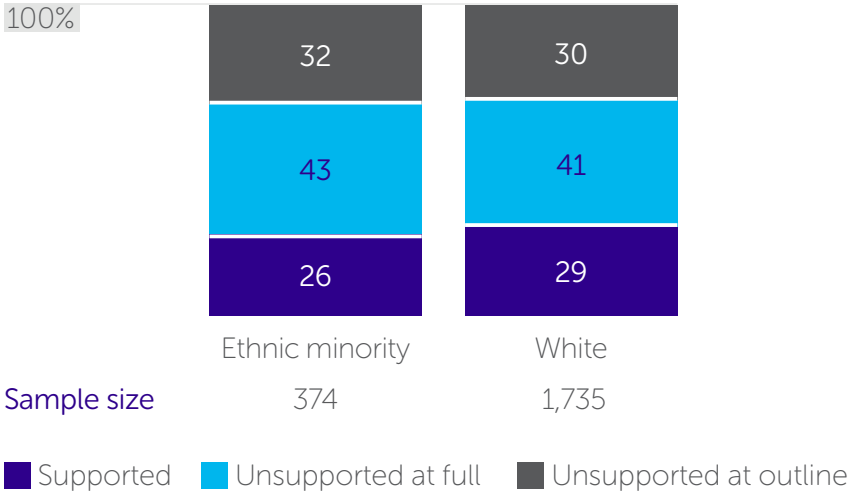
- The success rate for applicants who declared a disability is higher than for applicants who reported no known disability, at 35% and 28% respectively.

NOTE: These data do not include researchers who preferred not to say whether they had a disability.

SUCCESS RATES

Success rates for all researchers from ethnic minority backgrounds are not significantly different than for White applicants

Success rates of applicants by ethnicity (2017–2021), stratified by application stage.

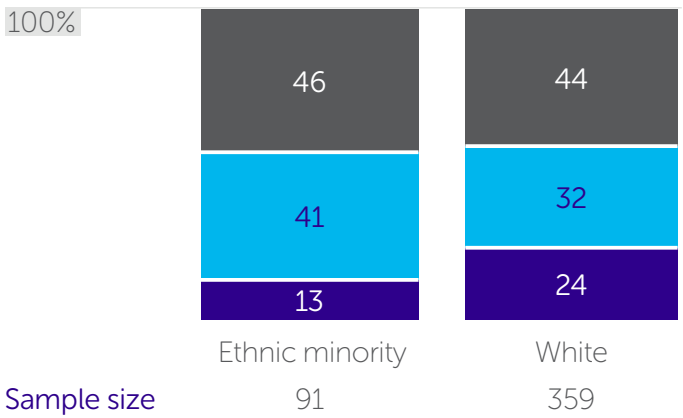


KEY FINDINGS:

- The difference in success rates between all ethnic minority and White applicants is 3 percentage points.

For fellowships, the gap in success rates between ethnic minority and White applicants is still large

Success rates of fellowship applicants by ethnicity (2017–2021), stratified by application stage.



KEY FINDINGS:

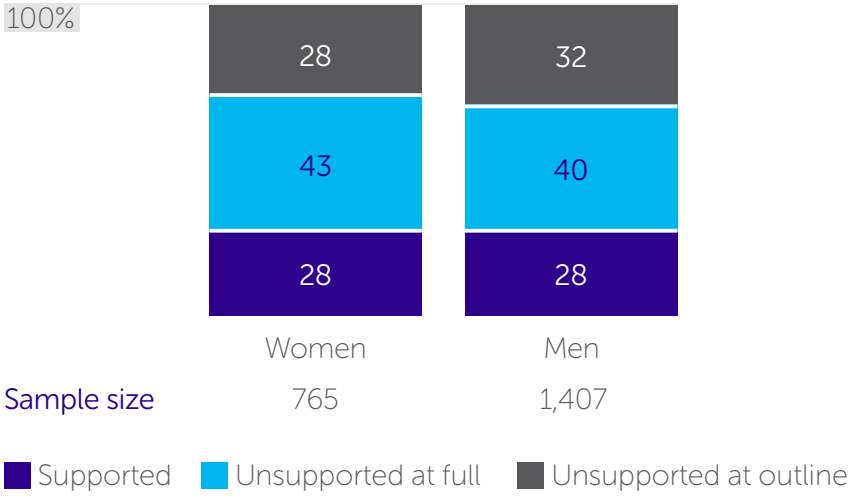
- White researchers who apply for a fellowship have a success rate of 24% which is 11 percentage points higher than researchers from an ethnic minority background at 13%.*

*Statistically significant finding

SUCCESS RATES

Overall success rates between women and men are equal

Success rates of applicants by gender (2017–2021), stratified by application stage.

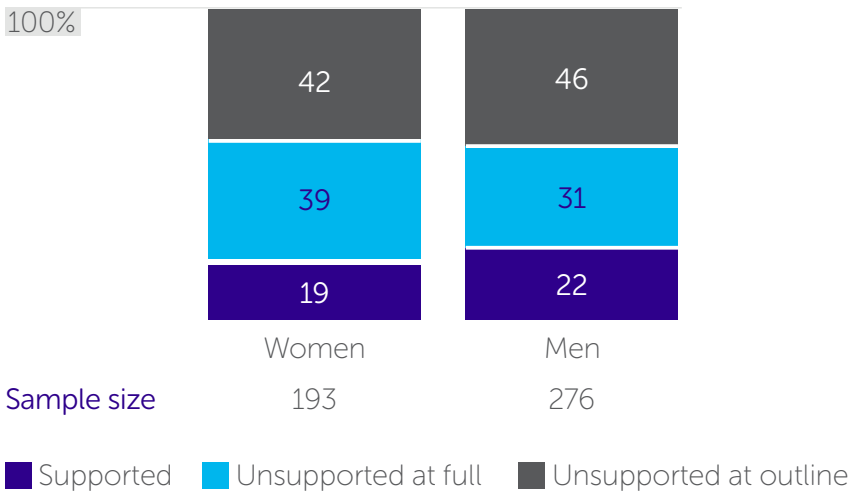


KEY FINDINGS:

- For all awards, the success rates of men and women is the same at 28%.

The gap in fellowship success rates between men and women is not statistically significant

Success rates of fellowship applicants by gender (2017–2021), stratified by application stage.



KEY FINDINGS:

- Men who apply for fellowships have a success rate of 22% which is 3 percentage points higher than women at 19%. This difference is not statistically significant.

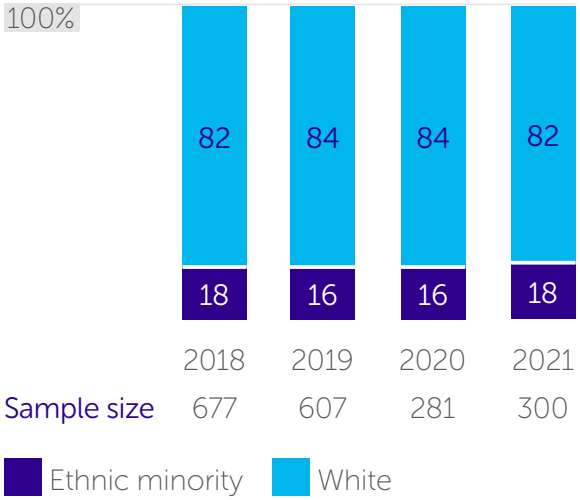
NOTE: Further gender categories are available to select in our diversity data collection form; numbers are too low to disclose.

AWARDS MADE

AWARDS MADE

The proportion of ethnic minority awardholders has not changed over time

Ethnicity of awardholders each year (2018–2021)

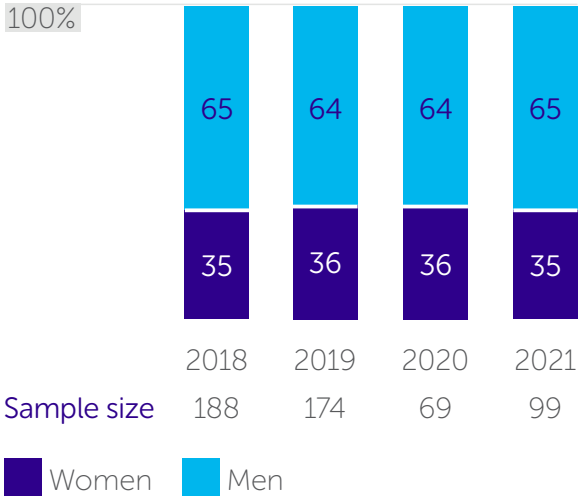


KEY FINDINGS:

- The proportion of awardholders from an ethnic minority background who received awards each year has remained constant between 16% and 18%.

Women receive just over one-third of awards each year

Gender of awardholders each year (2018–2021)



KEY FINDINGS:

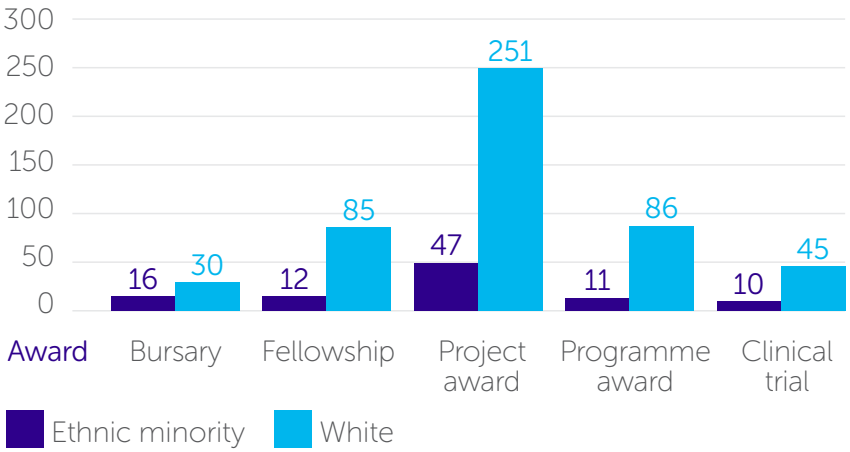
- The proportion of women who received awards each year has remained constant since 2018 at 35% or 36%.

NOTE: Further gender categories are available to select in our diversity data collection form.

AWARDS MADE

▶ Researchers from an ethnic minority background receive 16% of awards

Number and type of awards made by ethnicity (2018–2021)



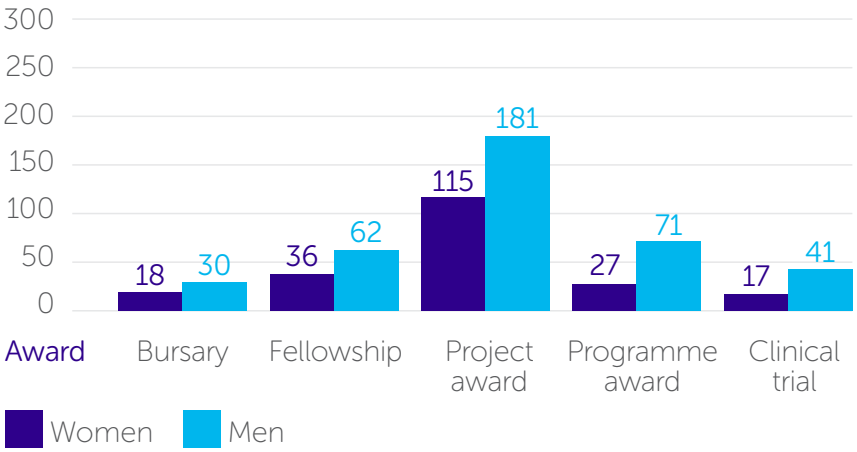
KEY FINDINGS:

Researchers from an ethnic minority background receive:

- 35% of bursaries
- 12% of fellowships
- 16% of project awards
- 11% of programme awards
- 18% of clinical trials

▶ Women receive 36% of awards

Number and type of awards made by gender (2018–2021)



KEY FINDINGS:

Women receive:

- 38% of bursaries
- 37% of fellowships
- 39% of project awards
- 28% of programme awards
- 29% of clinical trials

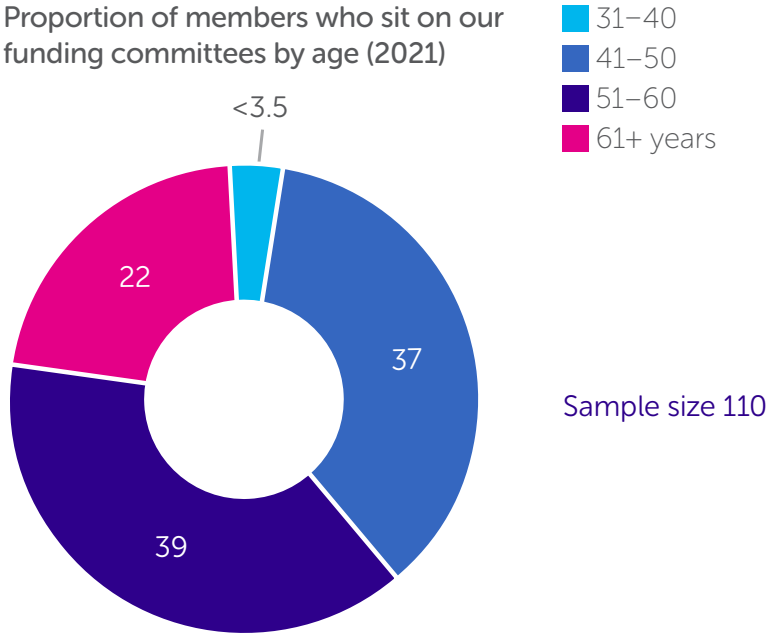
NOTE: Further gender categories are available to select in our diversity data collection form.

FUNDING COMMITTEES

FUNDING COMMITTEES

3 in 4 funding committee members are aged 41–60

Proportion of members who sit on our funding committees by age (2021)



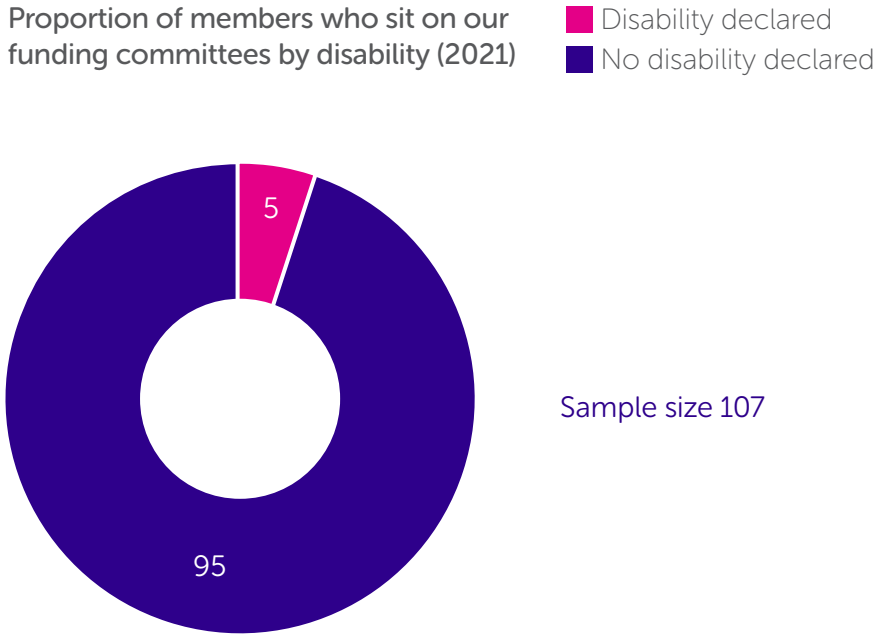
Sample size 110

KEY FINDINGS:

- The proportion of committee members in the 41–50 age range has increased to 37%.
- Less than 3.5% of committee members are under 40 years old.

The proportion of funding committee members declaring a disability reflects the sector

Proportion of members who sit on our funding committees by disability (2021)



Sample size 107

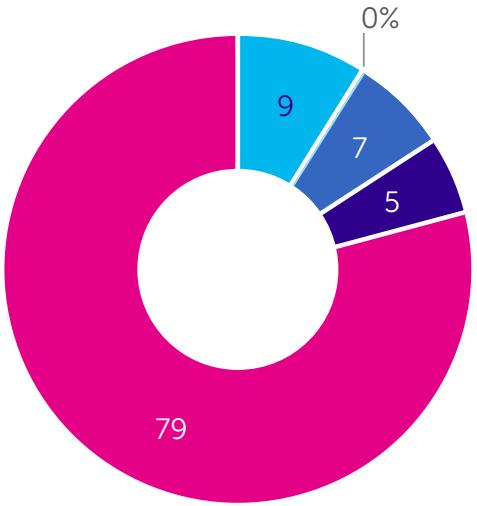
KEY FINDINGS:

- 5% of committee members disclosed a disability.
- This is slightly higher than the proportion of UK biosciences academic staff population who disclosed a disability, at 3.4%.

FUNDING COMMITTEES

We have surpassed our target of 20% membership from ethnic minority backgrounds across funding committees

Proportion of members who sit on our funding committees by ethnicity (2021)



- Asian / Asian British
- Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
- Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups
- Other ethnic group
- White

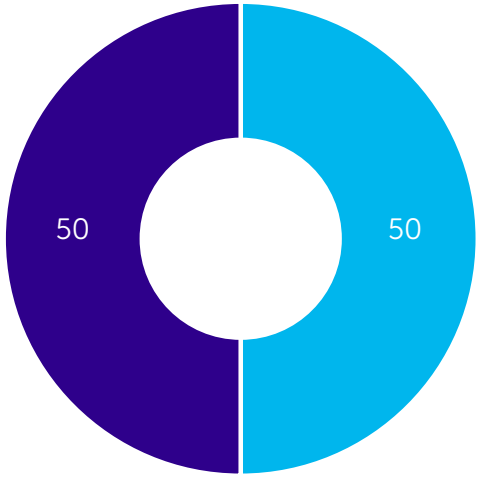
Sample size 107

KEY FINDINGS:

- We increased members from an ethnic minority background on all committees up to 21%, surpassing our 20% target.
- Each committee has members from ethnic minority backgrounds, however, no members are Black / African / Caribbean / Black British.

Women and men have equal membership across all funding committees

Proportion of members who sit on our funding committees by gender (2021)



- Women
- Men

Sample size 110

NOTE: Further gender categories are available to select in our diversity data collection form.

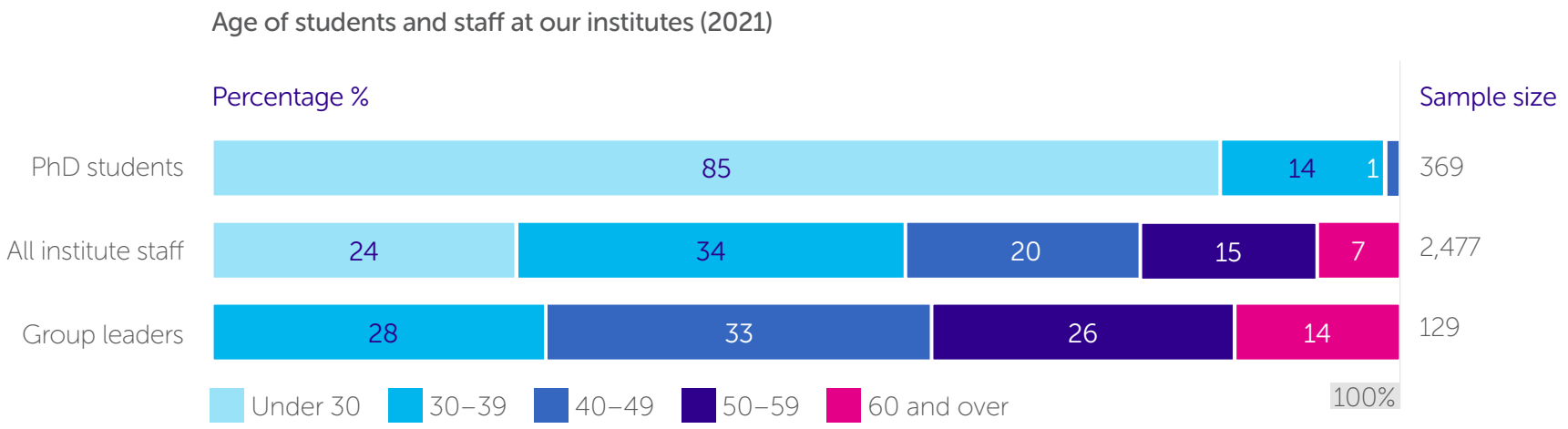
KEY FINDINGS:

- The proportion of men and women who sit on all our committees is equal.
- We will aim to maintain 50% women across our committees.
- We also aim to reach 50% women on each committee.

OUR INSTITUTES

AGE OF STUDENTS AND STAFF AT OUR INSTITUTES

▶ Over 50% of staff at our institutes are less than 40 years old



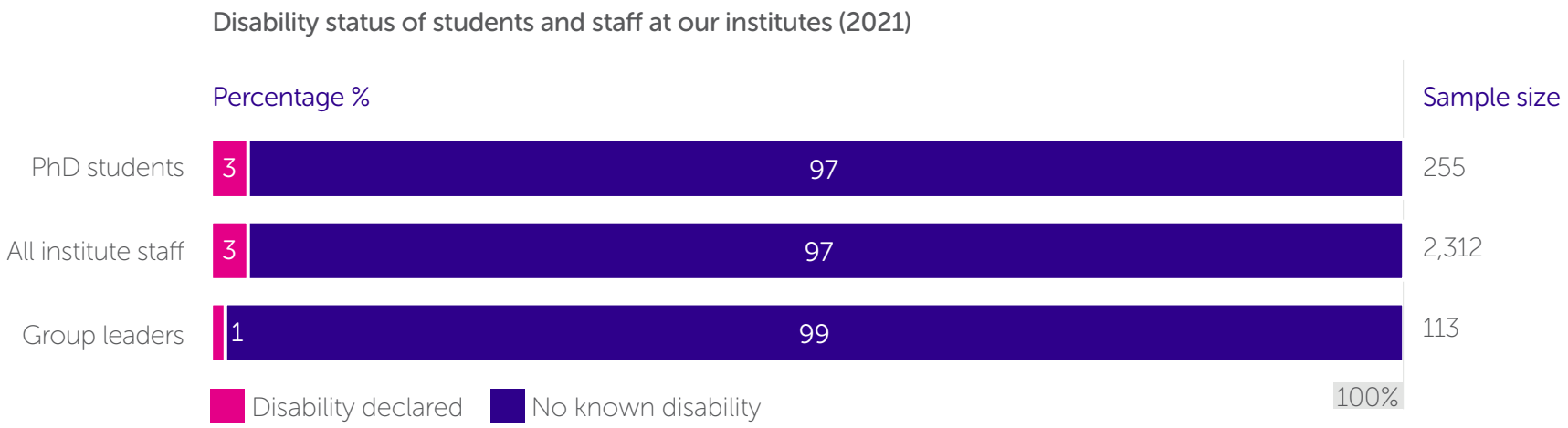
KEY FINDINGS:

- 85% of PhD students at our institutes are aged less than 30.
- The largest proportion of staff are in the 30–39 age range.
- The proportions of group leaders are similar across the age ranges of 30–39 (28%), 40–49 (33%) and 50–59 (26%).

NOTE: Our institutes are the Cancer Research UK Beatson Institute, Cancer Research UK Cambridge Institute, Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute and The Francis Crick Institute.

DISABILITY STATUS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF AT OUR INSTITUTES

The proportion of students and staff declaring a disability at our institutes reflects the sector



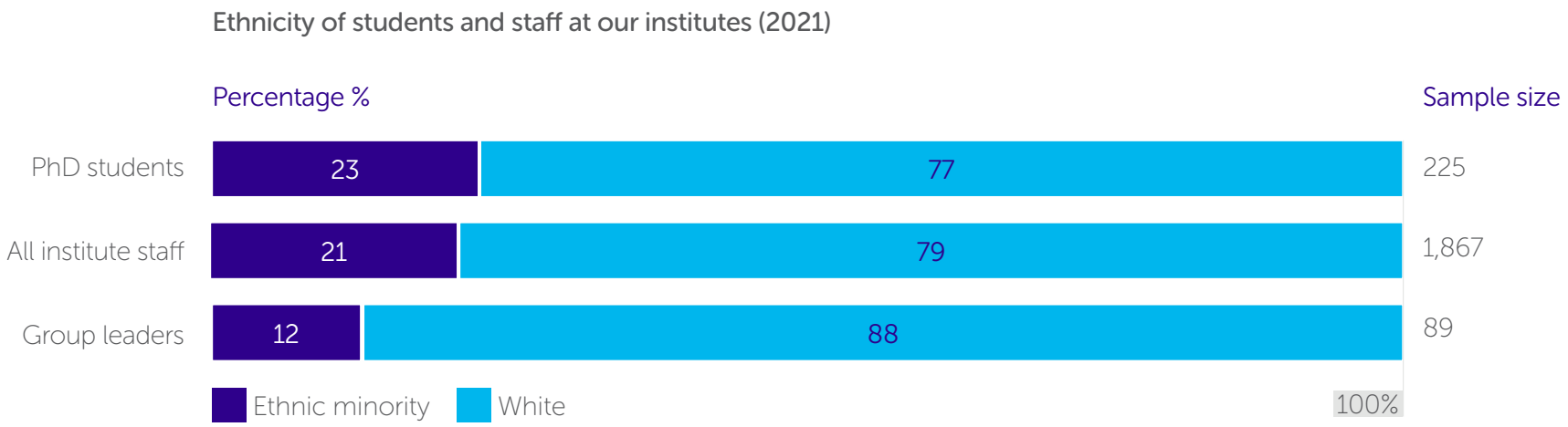
KEY FINDINGS:

- Across all career stages, the proportion of students and staff declaring a disability at our institutes stands at between 1% and 3%.
- This is similar to the proportion of biosciences academic staff population who disclosed a disability at 3%.

NOTE: Sample sizes for disclosure of disability status are lower compared to other categories due to unknown records.

ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS AND STAFF AT OUR INSTITUTES

Over 20% of students and staff at our institutes are from an ethnic minority background



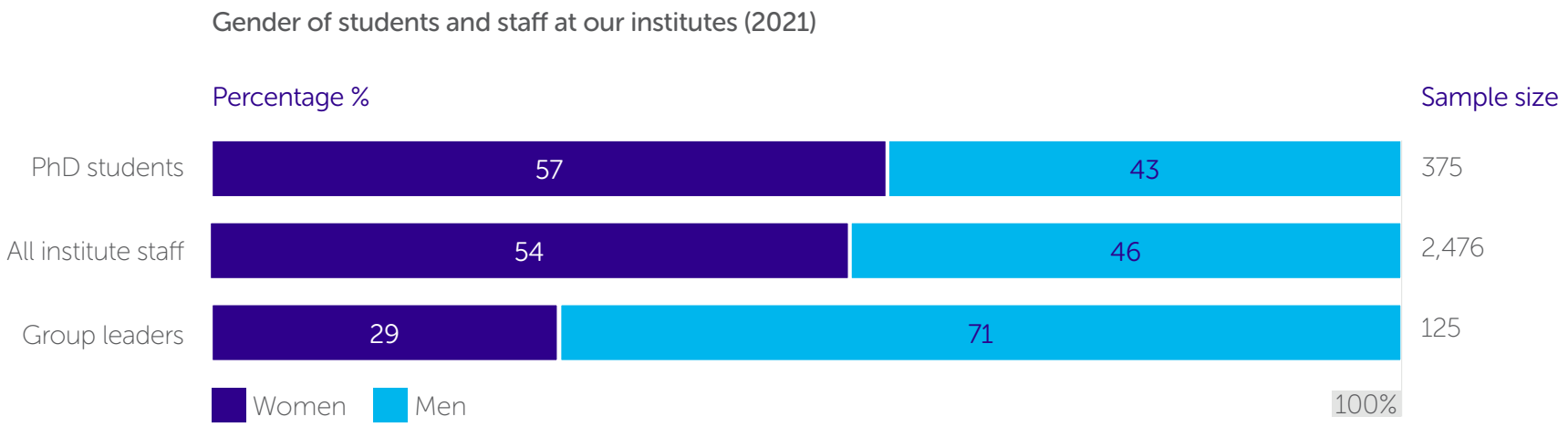
KEY FINDINGS:

- At 23%, the proportion of PhD students from ethnic minority backgrounds is higher than the postgraduate student biosciences proportion at 13%.
- 12% of group leaders are from an ethnic minority background.

NOTE: We do not currently collect disaggregated ethnicity data from institutes to avoid individuals being identifiable. Sample sizes for ethnicity are lower compared to other categories due to unknown records.

GENDER OF STUDENTS AND STAFF AT OUR INSTITUTES

Over 50% of PhD students at our institutes are women whilst less than one-third are group leaders



KEY FINDINGS:

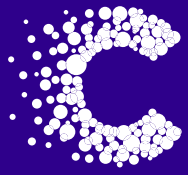
- Over 50% of PhD students are women.
- Less than one-third of group leaders are women. At 29%, this figure is higher than the proportion of professors who are women in the UK biosciences academic sector at 23%.

NOTE: Further gender categories are available to select.

OUR NEXT STEPS

What we're doing to improve diversity within our research community:

- We're aiming to reach and maintain our diversity data targets for research funding. We will ensure that:
  - as a minimum, application rates should reflect the academic pool of UK biosciences researchers
  - we increase grant applicants from diverse backgrounds from the 2021 baseline
  - we increase grant holders from diverse backgrounds from the 2021 baseline
  - we reach equal success rates for researchers, regardless of background
  - at least 45% of fellowships and 35% of programme awards are received by women
  - at least 15% of fellowships and 10% of programme awards are received by researchers from an ethnic minority background
  - we have at least 50% women on each funding committee
  - we have at least 20% of committee members from an ethnic minority background across funding committees
- We're rolling out a narrative-based CV to ensure we're attracting and retaining the full range of the most promising research and innovation talent. We want to ensure wider contributions beyond grant and publication records are recognised and valued.
- We've introduced a positive action scheme for researchers to observe our funding panels and committees, which prioritises places for underrepresented groups.
- We'll review the support we offer those who have any health conditions including mental health, physical, sensory or cognitive differences who apply for our funding to support them with the grant application process.
- Our Women of Influence scheme supports our fellows in tackling some of the barriers women may face when progressing to senior positions, empowering them to become leaders.
- We're partnering with In2scienceUK and Black in Cancer to mentor school children and undergraduates from low socio-economic backgrounds and Black backgrounds to offer them opportunities to build a career in cancer research.
- We're launching a new PhD scholarship programme for Black students to accelerate change and to develop the next generation of Black leaders in cancer.
- We're supporting the Black in Cancer partnership to hold its first in-person event, bringing Black researchers together from around the globe to share their science, and discuss equality and patient experiences.



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

Together we will beat cancer

If you have any questions or feedback about this report, get in touch by emailing ediinresearch@cancer.org.uk