

Survey of research capacity in local authorities



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Key findings

An online survey was emailed to all LARIA members in England on 10 October 2011; an open link was also available to non LARIA members. The deadline for completion of the survey was 30 November 2011. The survey was completed by 286 respondents, 224 of whom were LARIA members and 62 non members. In total 28 per cent of LARIA members responded.

About respondents

- Most respondents worked within a council (62 per cent); for LARIA members, the greatest proportion were also from councils (71 per cent).
- Respondents most commonly identified themselves as working in a research role at an officer level (27 per cent), or a managerial or senior research officer level (20 per cent for each).
- On average, respondents spent over two thirds of their time (a median of 67 per cent) conducting research and analysis. Although, as expected, those identifying themselves as working within policy conducted less research on average (a median of 27 per cent of their time compared to 69 per cent for those working in a research setting).
- On average respondents working in the wider public sector spent more of their time conducting research and analysis than those working within councils (a median of 75 per cent compared to 56 per cent respectively).

Research settings within a local authority

- It was more common for respondents to be working in a corporate/cross authority/organisation research team than within a service team (52 per cent compared with 39 per cent). Forty per cent of all respondents (including all those who were not working in corporate/cross authority/organisation research team) stated that there were other researchers within their organisations working in such a set-up.
- Out of 40 respondents who stated they worked in a service team, just over a quarter of these selected that they worked in planning (28 per cent). A total of 62 respondents said they were not working in a directorate: of these, most likely area within their organisation where there were other researchers working was children's and education services (53 per cent).
- Those employed by local authorities worked with a range of local organisations in partnership on research and analysis. However there were strongest links to working with other local authorities, with 69 per cent conducting such partnership work.

Working arrangements

- Teams were relatively small in size; with a median average of one researcher and one member of staff conducting at least some research. However, some teams were larger. One team had 21 researchers in post, whilst a second had 40 members of staff employed conducting some research and 30 members of staff employed to undertake activities other than research.
- Many organisations had research specialists working within their organisation. Most often respondents worked with staff specialising in corporate performance management (79 per cent very regularly or sometimes).
- Respondents divided their time conducting varied research activities; however nearly all respondents were involved in reporting and disseminating research findings (90 per cent), although on average this only took up a median of 10 per cent of their time. Fewer respondents managed either staff or external contractors (45 and 42 per cent respectively).

Team managers

- Managers oversaw small teams (a median average of two researchers and one member of staff who conducted some research as part of their role). Generally it was felt that the number of staff within their teams had remained the same over the last 12 months.
- Managers generally thought they possessed adequate skills to carry out their roles, although nearly a fifth (19 per cent) felt that they did not adequately possess skills in managing budgets.

Commissioning and managing research conducted by external contractors

- 'Project management' and 'preparing research briefs and specifications' were most frequently considered to be skills that were very important when commissioning and managing research (by 74 per cent and 65 per cent respectively).
- The majority of respondents (60 per cent) who commission and manage research thought that they possessed adequate skills for this role, although nearly a quarter thought they lacked skills in evaluating tenders.

Research skills

- The category within which most respondents identified important skills for undertaking their current role was 'general research skills'. Within this, the skill that was considered very important by the greatest number of respondents (76 per cent) was the communication/presentation of research findings.

- Skills that were considered not important at all to job roles were generally more specialised: psychological and behaviour change analysis (30 per cent considered this skill not at all important), and using qualitative analysis software (27 per cent considered this skill to be not at all important).
- However, research skills which respondents did not feel they adequately possessed to carry out their role were again more specific: the three most frequently selected were using qualitative analysis software (42 per cent of respondents), predictive modelling (40 per cent of respondents) and financial analysis (37 per cent).

Research skills training

- Skills that managers most frequently stated their team could offer to other public and third sector organisations were those with a focus on data analysis (analysis of survey data selected by 71 per cent of managers and interpreting secondary data by 69 per cent of managers).

Continuing professional development (CPD)

- Generally respondents stated that their employers had or would pay for CPD in this financial year, with 73 per cent of respondents selecting at least one form of CPD.
- Respondents selected varied types of training delivery that they thought their employer had or would agree to pay for in the 2011/12 financial year; the greatest proportion selected 'attending research training courses' (44 per cent).
- Secondment opportunities and studying for academic qualifications were least likely to be considered to be training that employers would pay for (with 10 per cent and 19 per cent of respondents selecting these options respectively).
- Only six per cent of respondents thought that their employer would neither pay for time off nor pay expenses for free research training/CPD, although 17 per cent were unsure.
- Aside from LARIA, there were very few professional bodies which had a significant number of members completing the survey; 86 per cent of respondents were a member of LARIA, followed by 10 per cent each being a member of the British Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (BURISA) or the Royal Statistical Society.

Respondents' demographics

- Respondents were well qualified, with 66 per cent possessing a Level 5 qualification.
- The age category with the greatest proportion of respondents was 35-44 years (28 per cent), with 25 per cent of respondents being either aged 25-34 years or 45-54 years.

- Fifty one per cent of respondents were female, with 49 per cent male, with one per cent preferring not to say.

1 Introduction

This survey was undertaken by Local Authorities Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA) and the Local Government Association (LGA), in order to obtain key baseline information on LARIA members and potential members working within local authorities and other public sector organisations.

The findings of this survey will help LARIA to support members better by identifying potential training and development needs. It will assist LARIA to develop a package of support for LARIA members, such as a programme of continuing professional development (CPD). It will help the LGA to gain an understanding of the current research capacity in local government.

2 Methodology

An online survey was emailed to all 809 LARIA members in England on 10 October 2011; an open link was distributed through national and local channels within the local public sector research and intelligence arena, for example through LARIA's eNewsletter and website, through emails being forwarded to other non-LARIA members, and through links with organisations such as the Health Statistics User Group. The deadline for completion of the survey was 30 November 2011.

The survey was completed by 286 respondents. 224 of these respondents were LARIA members – a response rate of 28 per cent. Of these, 167 respondents worked in a council, fire service or police service.

The remaining 62 respondents were non-members – it is not possible to calculate a response rate for this group as the survey was distributed via an open link. For this reason, the results for non members should not be taken to be representative of any wider group; rather, they are a snapshot of the views of this particular group of respondents

The tables below show the response by LARIA members working within local authorities¹ by both organisation type and region to the survey.

¹ Please note this is only for those working in councils, fire services and police services.

Organisation type	Total number sent survey, by type	Number of respondents, by type	Response rate (%)
London borough	40	10	25
Metropolitan district	87	29	33
Shire county	75	27	36
Shire district	76	24	32
Unitary	212	68	32
Police	5	2	40
Fire authority	9	7	78
Other	305	57	19
Base	809	224	28

Region	Total number sent survey, by region	Number of respondents, by region	Response rate (%)
East Midlands	41	15	37
Eastern	47	18	38
London	40	10	25
North East	26	7	27
Northern Ireland	1	0	0
North West	71	16	23
Scotland	63	22	35
South East	59	19	32
South West	32	11	34
Wales	31	10	32
West Midlands	53	17	32
Yorkshire and the Humber	35	13	37
Unknown	310	66	21
Base	809	224	28

Where tables and figures report the base, this refers to the number of respondents who answered this question; please note that bases vary throughout the survey.

Throughout the report percentages in figures and tables may add to more than 100 per cent due to rounding. Where a ‘*’ is found in a table this represents under 0.5 per cent.

3 Respondent working environments

Region

Overall 16 per cent of respondents were based in the West Midlands for work, followed by 13 per cent in the North West and 12 per cent in London.

For LARIA members the greatest proportion of respondents were based in the West Midlands (14 per cent), followed by London (12 per cent).

Non LARIA members were predominantly located in the West Midlands (26 per cent) followed by the North West (18 per cent). This may be a result of the methodology used to disseminate the survey to non-members.

Table 3: Which of the following regions are you based in for work?			
Region	Member (%)	Non-member (%)	All respondents (%)
East Midlands	8	3	7
East of England	9	2	7
London	12	15	12
North East	4	5	4
North West	11	18	13
Scotland	11	5	9
South East	10	5	9
South West	8	13	9
Wales	5	3	5
West Midlands	14	26	16
Yorkshire and the Humber	8	6	8
International	*	0	*
Base	224	62	286

Current employment status

Overall 62 per cent of respondents worked in a council, followed by 11 per cent working for the local health service or National Health Service (NHS). One respondent was retired, and no respondents were 'not in employment'.

For LARIA members the greatest proportion of respondents also worked within a council (71 per cent). For all other types of employment status, the percentage of respondents was six per cent or less.

Non LARIA members who responded mainly worked in the local health service or the NHS (42 per cent of respondents), with 32 per cent working within councils. No non-members worked as consultants, or within a fire authority, or for the police, or were retired or were 'not in employment'. This may be a result of the methodology used to disseminate the survey to non-members.

Table 4: Table 3: Which of the following most reflects your current status?			
Employment	Member (%)	Non-member (%)	All respondents (%)
Retired	*	0	*
Working as a consultant	6	0	5
Working for a fire authority	3	0	2
Working for the local health service or the NHS	3	42	11
Working in a council	71	32	62
Working in central government	3	2	2
Working in higher education/university	1	10	3
Working in 'other' public sector organisation	6	10	7
Working in the charity sector	2	2	2
Working in the police	1	0	1
Working in the private sector	4	3	4
Base	224	62	286

Current roles

Of all respondents in employment (285 respondents) the greatest proportion were employed as researchers at officer level (27 per cent), followed by researchers at senior officer level and researchers at managerial level (20 per cent for each).

For LARIA members the greatest number of respondents were researchers employed at officer level (26 per cent), followed by researchers at managerial level (22 per cent) and researchers at senior officer level (21 per cent).

For non-members the greatest number of respondents were also researchers employed at officer level (31 per cent), followed by researchers at senior officer level (19 per cent) and researchers at manager level (15 per cent).

Table 5: Which of the following most closely describes your current role?			
Job title	Member (%)	Non-member (%)	All respondents (%)
Research			
Director/head	8	3	7
Manager	22	15	20
Senior Officer	21	19	20
Officer	26	31	27
Assistant	2	2	2
Other	1	5	2
Policy			
Director/head	3	2	3
Manager	4	8	5
Senior Officer	7	3	6
Officer	5	11	7
Assistant	1	0	1
Other	0	2	1
Base	223	62	285

Contracted hours

All respondents were asked how many hours they were contracted to work a week, and of these hours how much time they spent undertaking research and analysis; 283 respondents out of 285 supplied data.

On average, respondents worked a median of 37 hours a week, spending a median of 20 hours a week conducting research and analysis. Respondents spent in total 60 per cent of their time conducting research and analysis (calculated as an overall percentage of hours worked for all respondents).

Results were then analysed by those classifying their job as within a 'research' team and those classifying their job as being within a 'policy' team. Respondents working in a research team spent a greater percentage of their time on average conducting research and analysis than those respondents within a policy team (a median of 69 per cent of contracted hours conducting research, compared with 33 per cent of contracted hours respectively).

Results were also analysed by job type. On average research assistants conducted the most research (a median of 83 per cent), followed by research officers and senior research officers (a median of 81 per cent for both). Please note that the base for research assistants is small (only five respondents).

Within policy, directors conducted the greatest amount of research on average (a median of 41 per cent), followed by policy officers (33 per cent).

Please note the small base sizes for some of the categories, which makes these findings indicative rather than truly representative.

Table 6: Percentage of time spent on research analysis			
Job title	Median average (percentage of time)	Mean average (percentage of time)	Base
Research			
Director/head	50	62	20
Manager	66	61	58
Senior Officer	81	73	58
Officer	81	73	77
Assistant	83	72	5
Other	75	72	5
All research	69	78	223
Policy			
Director/head	41	43	8
Manager	15	27	14
Senior Officer	27	30	17
Officer	33	37	19
Assistant	23	23	2
Other	32	32	2
All policy	27	33	62
All respondents	67	61	283

Analysis was also conducted to examine the differences between those working within councils, and those working within the wider public sector. On average those working in the wider public sector (82 respondents) spent a median 75 per cent of their time undertaking research and analysis, with those working in the council (178 respondents) spending 56 per cent of their time undertaking research and analysis.

The lower percentage of time spent on undertaking research for those working within a council can be examined by those undertaking a research role and those undertaking a policy base role. For the 138 council workers with a research based role, the time that they spent undertaken research was broadly comparable to other respondents (67 per cent); for the 40 respondents working within a policy setting the percentage of time spent undertaking research was just 25 per cent.

4 Respondents in local authority settings

Research settings within local authorities

All respondents working within a local authority setting² were asked a series of questions on the type of team that best described their research setting, and in which other teams within their organisation researchers were located; 102 respondents out of 187 provided data to all questions and these respondents are used for the following analysis.

The majority of respondents (52 per cent) stated that they worked in a corporate/cross authority/organisation research team. The smallest proportion (three per cent) worked in a local partnership research team.

Table 7: Which of the following best describes the setting in which you conduct research or analysis?	
Team that best describes research setting	All respondents (%)
Corporate/cross authority/organisation research team	52
Directorate/service area research team within a council	39
Local partnership research team	3
Any other research team	6
Base	102

Those based within a directorate/service area (40 respondents) were asked to select which area that was. Twenty eight per cent were based in planning teams, followed by 15 per cent in children's and education services, and 13 per cent in economic development/regeneration teams.

Table 8: Which of the following most closely describes the service area within which your research team works?	
Service area where your research team works	All respondents (%)
Planning	28
Children's and education services	15
Economic development/regeneration	13
Adult services	10
Housing	10
Culture/leisure	5
Environmental service (including transport/highways)	3
Public health	3
Other	15
Base	40

² Please note that this included councils, police, fire authorities and other local authority settings.

Finally the 102 respondents were asked to select teams in which other researchers within their organisation worked. Fifty three per cent of respondents selected children’s and educational services, followed by 50 per cent selecting economic development/regeneration. Forty per cent selected corporate research teams.

Ten per cent of respondents (10 respondents) stated that there were no other researchers or research teams within their organisation. It should be noted that all but one of these respondents worked within a corporate research team in their local authority/organisation.

Table 9: Aside from you/your team in which other areas do researchers, or those conducting research as part of their job, work within your organisation?	
Teams that other researchers in your organisation are based in	All respondents (%)
Local authority research setting	
Corporate research team in your authority/organisation	40
Local partner research team	29
Other type of research setting	7
Local authority service area	
Children's and education services	53
Economic development/regeneration	50
Adult services	43
Housing	43
Environmental service (including transport/highways)	39
Planning	33
Public health	33
Culture/leisure	25
No other researchers	
No other researchers/research teams	10
Base	102

Please note that respondents could select multiple options therefore percentages add to more than 100.

Working in partnership in a local authority setting

All local authority respondents were asked to select who, if anyone, they had worked in partnership with to deliver research and analysis projects in the last 12 months.

Most frequently selected was other local authorities (69 per cent), followed by public health (60 per cent) and the police or other criminal justice service (50 per cent).

Least frequently selected were hospitals and acute health (10 per cent), whilst nine per cent had worked with ‘other’ partners. Other partners included universities and regional government.

Five per cent of respondents had worked in partnership with none of the organisations listed, and two per cent did not know.

Table 10: In the last 12 months with which of the follow local organisations, if any, have you worked in partnership with on local research and analysis?	
Local organisations	All respondents (%)
Local authorities	69
Public health	60
Police or other criminal justice service	50
The third sector	43
Fire and rescue	31
Primary health	25
Private sector	25
Jobcentre Plus	16
Hospitals and acute health	10
Other	9
None of the above	5
Don't know	2
Base	187

5 Working arrangements

Number of staff within teams

All respondents were asked to detail the number of other staff who worked in their team (including themselves); this included staff employed as researchers, those conducting some research as part of their role and those staff who do not conduct any research.

Two hundred and eleven respondents provided detail for each element and this information has been used for the analysis below.

On average each team employed a median of one member of staff as a researcher, one member of staff to conduct some research, and did not employ any staff who were not conducting research.

Within a research team setting, there were on average a median of two members of staff employed as researchers, one employed to conduct some research, and no staff within the team not conducting any research.

For those based in policy teams, on average no staff were employed as researchers, a median of two were employed to conduct some research and one member of staff was employed within the team but did not conduct any research.

The maximum number of staff employed as researchers within a team was 21 (within a university/education setting). The maximum number of staff conducting some research as part of their role was 40 (within a council), and the maximum who were members of the team but did not conduct any research was 30 (within a council)³.

³ This team also employed researchers and staff undertaking some research as part of their role.

Table 11: Please provide details of the number (headcount) of staff who work in your team, carrying out each of the following roles:

		Headcount of staff employed as researchers within your team	Headcount of staff conducting some research as part of a role within your team	Headcount of staff who do not conduct research within your team
Research	Median	2	1	0
	Mean	3	2	2
	Minimum	0	0	0
	Maximum	21	40	30
	Base	163		
Policy	Median	0	2	1
	Mean	1	3	3
	Minimum	0	0	0
	Maximum	10	20	18
	Base	48		
All Respondents	Median	1	1	0
	Mean	2	3	3
	Minimum	0	0	0
	Maximum	21	40	30
	Base	211		

Specialist research staff

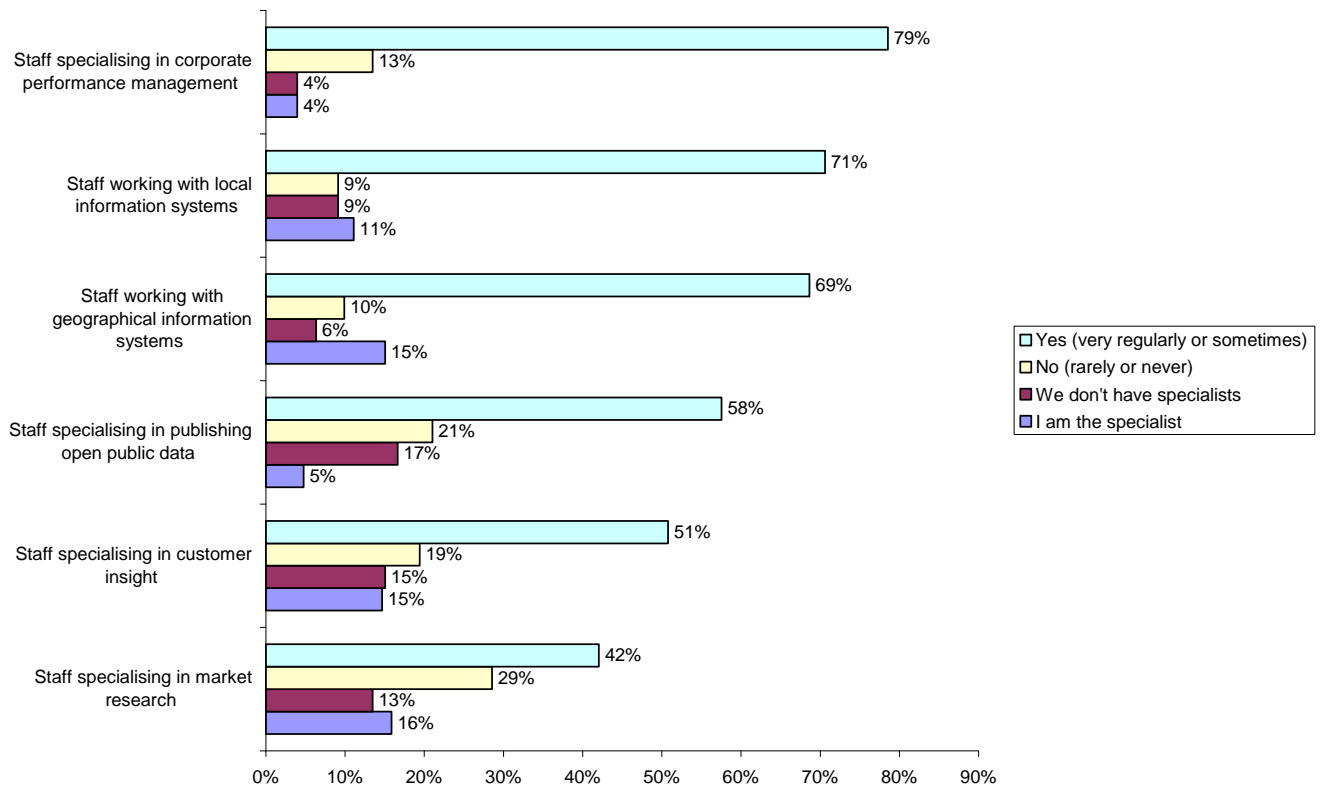
All respondents were asked a series of questions about the type of research staff they worked alongside to carry out their work, and how frequently they worked together. Two hundred and fifty two respondents provided detail.

Most frequently respondents (79 per cent of respondents) were working very regularly or sometimes with staff specialising in corporate performance management. The specialists they were least likely to report working with very regularly or sometimes was staff specialising in market research (42 per cent).

Nearly one fifth of respondents (17 per cent) stated that their organisation did not have staff specialising in publishing open data, with 15 per cent stating that their organisation did not have staff specialising in customer insight and 13 per cent stating their organisation did not have staff specialising in market research.

Sixteen per cent of respondents were their organisation's specialists in market research, with 15 per cent being their organisation's specialist for either customer insight or geographical information systems.

Figure 1: How often do you work with the following specialist staff in your organisation?



Base: all respondents providing detail (252)

Research activities in an average week

All respondents were then asked to select the research activities that they carried out in an average week, and state what percentage of their time they typically spent on each activity.

Most frequently respondents said they carried out reporting and disseminating research findings activities (90 per cent); this accounted for a median 10 per cent of their time.

Eighty five per cent of respondents said they carried out secondary analysis (accounting for a median 20 per cent of their time on average), and 72 per cent carried out non research related work activities (accounting for a median 15 per cent of their time on average).

'Other' types of activities were carried out by 15 per cent of respondents (taking up a median 20 per cent of their time on average). These activities included:

- data work (e.g. data collation, cleaning, developing data tools).

- providing advice and support to colleagues (on an ad hoc or a regular basis).
- feeding into wider team or organisational strategy.
- participating in other elements of research work (such as literature reviews, project managing research elsewhere in the organisation, working with toolkits).

Table 12: Which of the following activities, if any, do you carry out within your current role and roughly what percentage of your time is dedicated to these activities over a typical month?

Activity	Percentage undertaking	% Time spent on activity (median)	% Time spent on activity (mean)	Base for average
Reporting and disseminating research findings	90	10	14	256
Carrying out secondary analysis	85	20	26	241
Carrying out non research related work activities	72	15	24	205
Conducting policy analysis	68	10	14	194
Conducting quantitative research yourself	60	15	17	169
Conducting qualitative research yourself	50	10	12	141
Monitoring and reporting organisational performance	46	10	14	131
Managing staff within your team	45	10	17	128
Commissioning and managing research that is conducted by external research contractors	42	5	11	118
Other	15	20	24	42
Base (for percentage undertaking only)	284			

6 Team managers

All respondents stating that they managed staff (as part of their research activities) were asked to provide detail on the type and number of staff that they managed (in the form of full time equivalents – FTE); 114 out of 128 provided detail.

On average respondents managed a median of two FTE researchers, one FTE member of staff who conducted some research as part of their role, and no other staff.

Table 13: How many of the following types of employees do you directly manage in your current role?

	Researchers (FTE)	Staff who conduct research as part of their role (FTE)	All other staff (FTE)
Median	2	1	0
Mean	2.2	1.2	0.9
Base	114	114	114

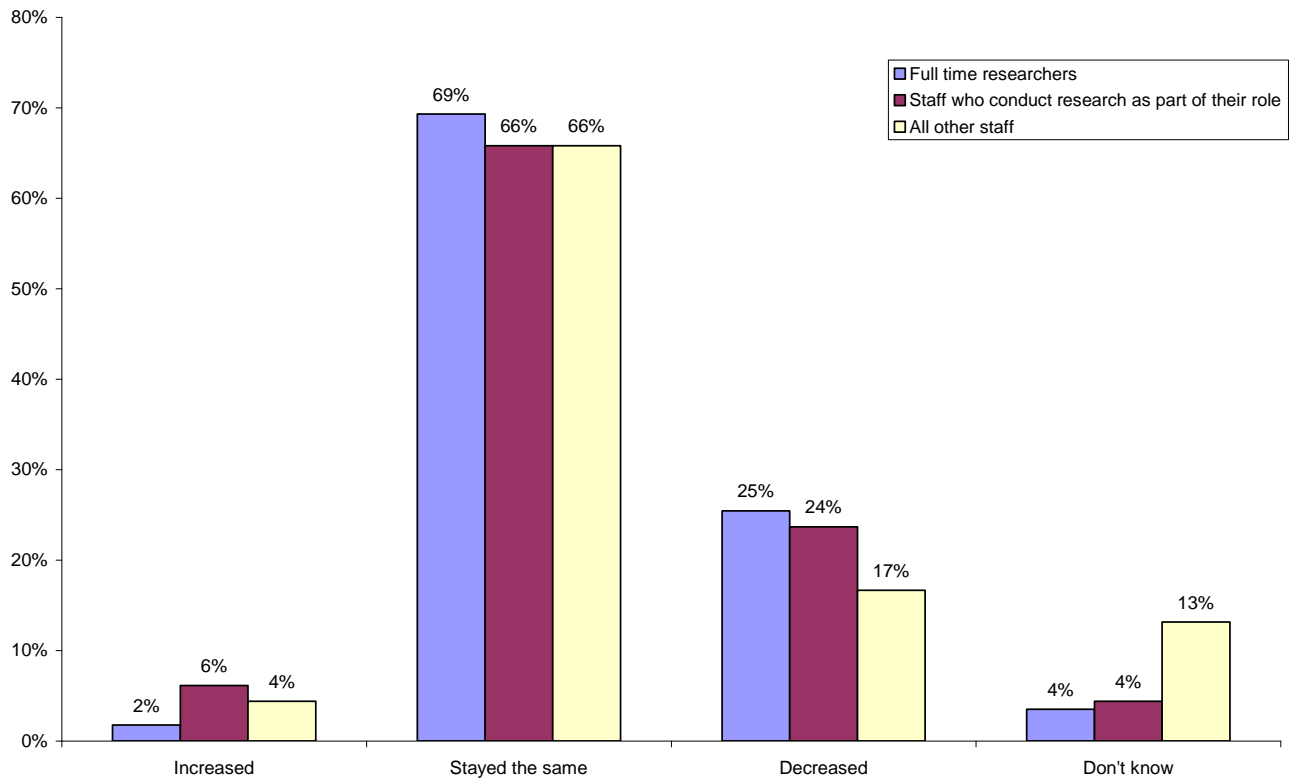
Managers were asked to state whether the number of FTE staff undertaking each role within their team had increased, decreased or remained the same over the last 12 months.

For all types of employees the majority thought that the number of FTE staff had stayed the same (69 per cent for full time researchers and 66 per cent for both staff conducting research as part of their role and all other staff).

A quarter (25 per cent) thought that the number of research staff had decreased, with 24 per cent thinking the same for staff who conduct some research as part of their role.

A small percentage of respondents thought that the number of FTE staff had increased (six per cent for FTE staff conducting research as part of their role, four per cent for all other FTE staff and two per cent for FTE researchers).

Figure 2: Over the last 12 months has the total number of full time equivalents for each of the following types of your employee within your team increased, stayed the same or decreased?



Base: 114

A small number of respondents provided data on the scale of increase or decrease for each staff type over the last 12 months. The results for those reporting a decrease are shown below (only one respondent could provide data on increases). Please note the small base sizes for all categories make the findings indicative rather than representative. Data for those reporting an increase was only available from one respondent, therefore has not been included.

Table 14: Please provide the change in FTE for each type of employee within your team in the last 12 months:

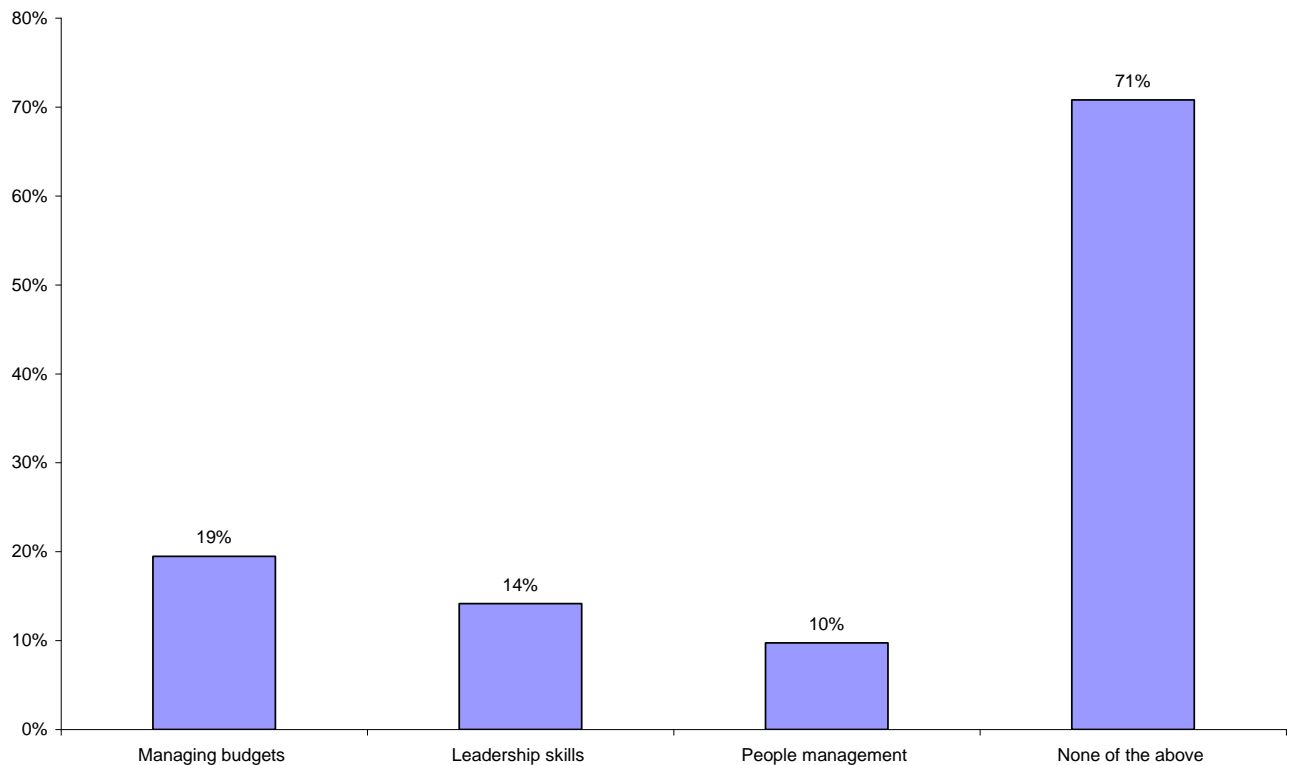
		Researchers (FTE)	Staff who conduct research as part of their role (FTE)	All other staff (FTE)
Median	Decreased	1	2	2
Mean	Decreased	4.9	4.3	3.3
Base		20	11	8

Respondents managing staff were asked to provide detail on the skills that they thought they did not adequately possess to carry out their role; 113 respondents provided detail.

The majority of respondents (71 per cent) thought that they adequately possessed all of the stated skills to carry out their management roles.

Nearly a fifth (19 per cent) thought that they did not possess adequate skills in managing budgets to help them carry out their role, with 14 per cent stating leadership skills and 10 per cent of people reporting a lack of management skills.

Figure 3: Of these skills which, if any, do you feel you do not adequately possess to carry out your role of managing staff within your team?



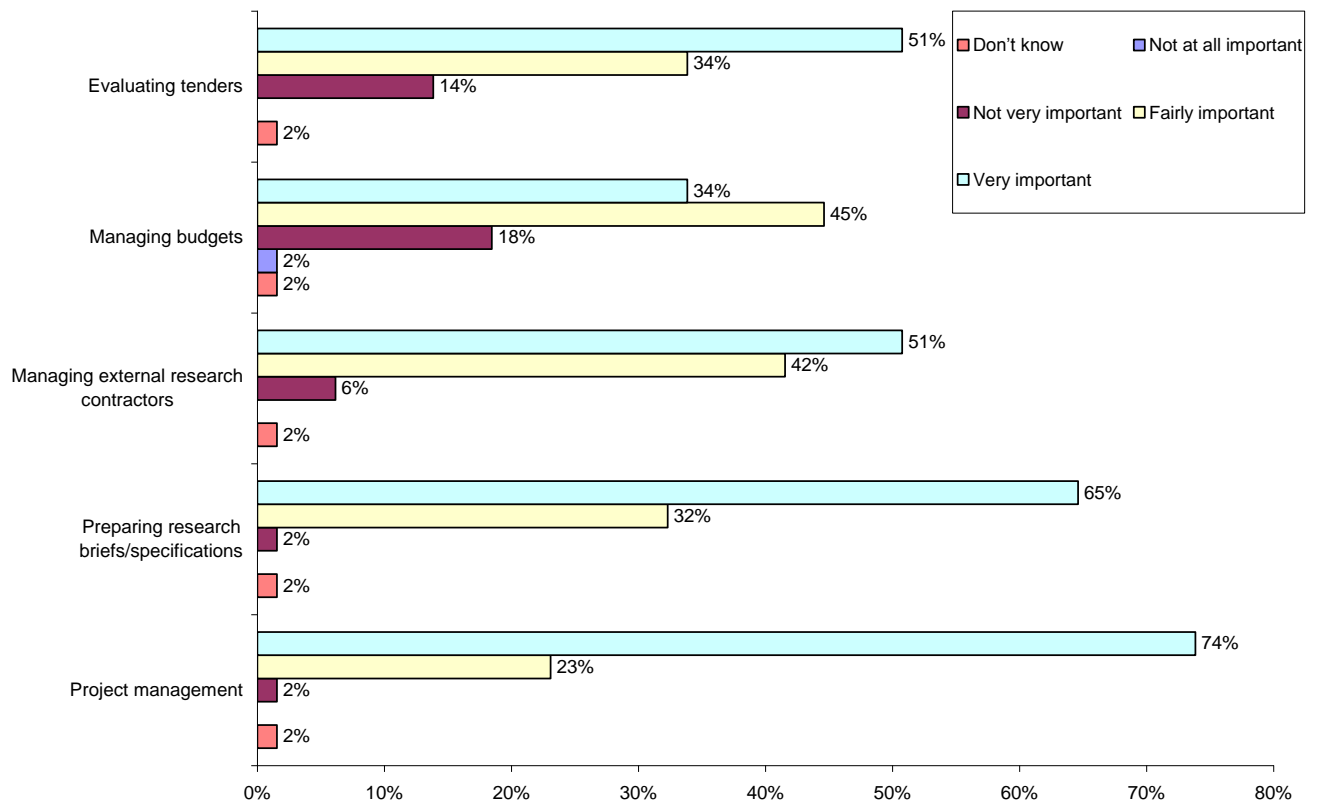
Base: 113

7 Commissioning and managing research conducted by external contractors

Respondents who commissioned and managed research conducted by external contractors were asked questions on the skills that they thought were important to carrying out their role; 65 out of 118 provided detail for both elements and have been included in the following analysis.

The skill that the most respondents thought was very important to their role was project management (74 per cent), followed by preparing research briefs and specifications (65 per cent). Fewest felt that managing budgets (34 per cent) was very important to their job role.

Figure 4: How important is it for you to have the following skills for your role of managing and commissioning research?

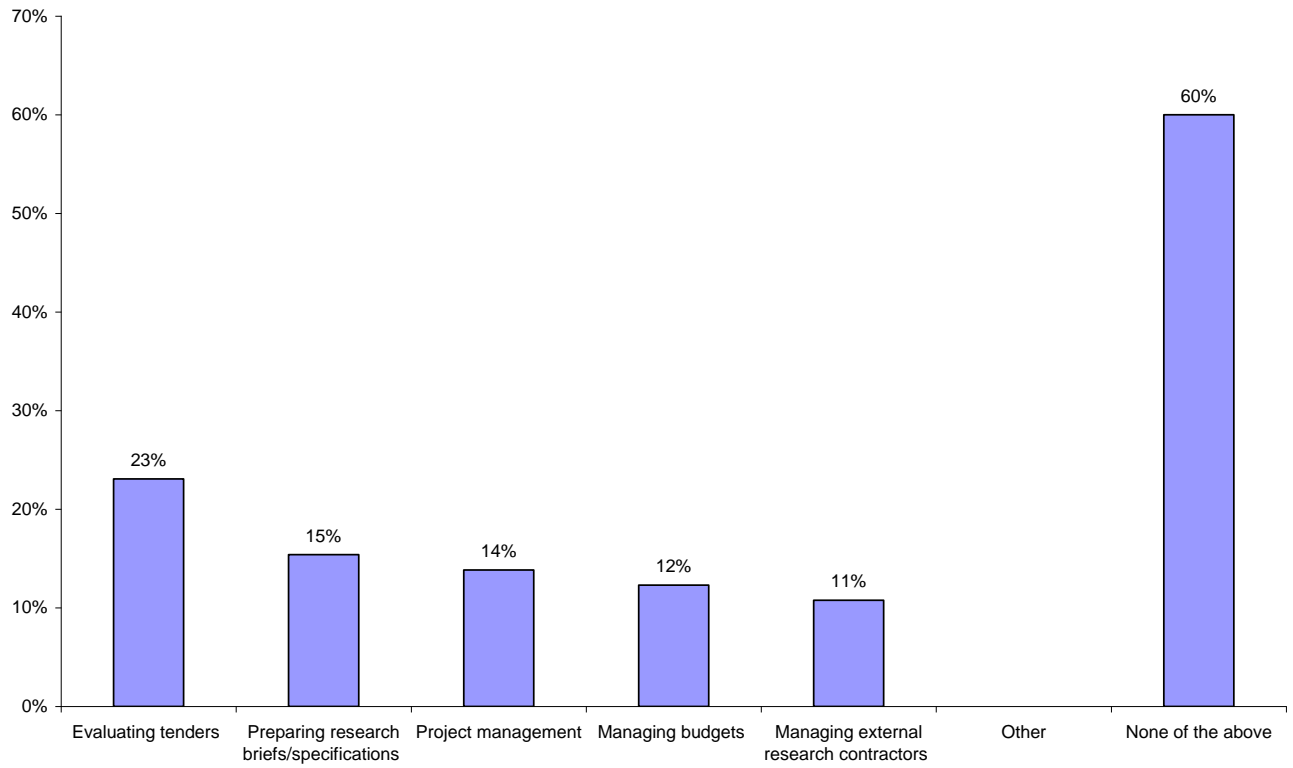


Base: 65

These respondents were then asked which skills they thought that they did not adequately possess to carry out their role. The majority reported that they were not lacking any of the skills listed (60 per cent).

Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) selected evaluating tenders.

Figure 5: Of these skills which, if any, do you feel you do not adequately possess to carry out your role?



Base: 65 respondents

8 Research skills

All respondents were asked to select how important specific research skills were for them to carry out their role, and which skills they felt they did not adequately possess.

Research skills were separated out into following different categories:

- General research skills
- Quantitative research skills
- Qualitative research skills
- Using research software
- Other research skills

Tables 15 and 16 provide an overview for all research skills; the following section provides a summary.

General research skills

The general research skills that the greatest number of respondents thought were very important to their job role was communication/presentation of research findings (76 per cent of respondents), followed by writing/reporting research findings (74 per cent) and interpreting secondary data (72 per cent).

Managing those who conduct research was considered to be very important to 34 per cent of respondents; interestingly two fifths of respondent stating that is was very important neither managed staff within their team or commissioned and managed research that was conducted by external research contractors

Fewest respondents (22 per cent) considered conducting literature reviews to be very important to their job role.

When asked which skills they did not adequately possess to carry out their role, the greatest proportion selected 'none of the above' (39 per cent). Twenty seven per cent selected influencing and informing decision making, followed by designing evaluations (26 per cent) and conducting policy analysis (23 per cent).

Quantitative research skills

For quantitative research skills, interpreting and applying statistics and analysis of survey data were most frequently selected as very important to job roles (69 and 68 per cent of respondents respectively).

Fewest respondents (10 per cent) considered financial analysis to be very important to their job role.

When asked which skills they did not adequately possess to carry out their role, the greatest proportion selected predictive modelling (40 per cent), followed by financial analysis (37 per cent) and economic analysis (35 per cent). Twenty six per cent of respondents felt they were not lacking any of the skills listed.

Qualitative research skills

For qualitative skills, analysis of qualitative data had the greatest number of respondents considering it to be very important to their jobs (45 per cent).

When asked which skills they did not adequately possess to carry out their role, the greatest proportion selected 'none of the skills listed' (64 per cent), whilst nearly a quarter (24 per cent) selected conducting focus groups.

Using research software

Quantitative research packages (i.e. SPSS, SAS, SNAP, STATA etc) were most frequently considered to be very important to job roles (by 45 per cent of respondents).

Fewest considered using qualitative analysis software (i.e. NVIVO, NUDIST etc) to be very important to their job (six per cent).

When asked which of these skills they did not adequately possess to carry out their role, the greatest proportion (42 per cent) selected using qualitative analysis software (i.e. NVIVO, NUDIST etc). However the percentage of people who considered that qualitative analysis software was important to their role (31 per cent) should also be noted in Table 17. The other skill that respondents felt they did not adequately possess was using demographic analysis tools (e.g. PopGroup, SASPAC) (35 per cent).

Thirty two per cent thought they lacked none of the skills listed.

Other research skills

Twenty five per cent of respondents listed either spatial analysis or benchmarking/reporting organisational performance information as very important to their job role.

Across all of the research categories, the skill most commonly selected by respondents as not at all important to their job was psychological and behaviour change analysis (selected by 30% of respondents).

When asked which 'other' research skills they did not adequately possess to carry out their role, the greatest proportion (30 per cent) selected making use of online tools and techniques for visualising data (e.g. Googlemaps, Googlecharts, etc),

followed by designing schemas, databases and queries to produce open data (29 per cent) and psychological and behaviour change analysis (28 per cent). Thirty four per cent thought they lacked none of the skills listed.

Table 15: How important is it for you to have the following research skills for your current role?					
Research skill category	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know
General research skills					
Communicating/presentation research findings	76	20	4	0	*
Writing/reporting research findings	74	21	4	*	*
Interpreting secondary data (both quantitative and qualitative)	72	21	6	0	*
Influencing and informing decision making	61	32	6	1	*
Sourcing and evaluating data for research use	56	34	8	2	1
Managing those who conduct research	34	27	19	17	4
Designing evaluations	32	39	20	4	4
Conducting policy analysis	28	38	26	6	1
Conducting literature reviews	22	44	28	5	1
Quantitative research skills					
Interpreting and applying statistics	69	25	4	2	0
Analysis of survey data	68	25	5	2	*
Survey design	43	34	16	7	*
Sampling	36	38	19	6	1
Customer segmentation skills	24	35	28	8	5
Predictive modelling	22	33	29	12	3
Economic analysis	21	33	32	11	2
Financial analysis	10	28	41	17	3
Qualitative research skills					
Analysis of qualitative data	45	32	16	6	1
Conducting face to face interviews	23	19	40	17	*
Conducting focus groups	22	26	38	13	1
Research software					
Using quantitative research packages (i.e. SPSS, SAS, SNAP, STATA etc)	45	27	20	8	1
Using Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	38	27	27	8	1
Using online surveying software (i.e. Survey Monkey, Conconfirm etc)	33	30	29	7	1
Using Local Information Systems (LIS)	26	32	22	12	9
Demographic analysis tools (e.g. PopGroup, SASPAC)	16	23	31	19	12
Using qualitative analysis software (i.e. NVIVO, NUDIST etc)	6	16	42	27	9

Other research skills					
Spatial analysis	25	31	22	15	8
Benchmarking/reporting organisational performance information	25	40	23	9	3
Designing schemas, databases and queries to produce open data	16	31	32	18	3
Making use of online tools and techniques for visualising data (e.g. Googlemaps, Googlecharts, etc)	15	39	29	13	3
Psychological and behaviour change analysis	9	23	32	30	6
Base			285		

Table 16: Of these skills which, if any, do you feel you do not adequately possess to carry out your role?	
Research skill category	All respondents (%)
General research skills	
Influencing and informing decision making	27
Designing evaluations	26
Conducting policy analysis	23
Managing those who conduct research	15
Conducting literature reviews	11
Communicating/presenting research findings	11
Sourcing and evaluating data for research use	9
Interpreting secondary data (both quantitative and qualitative)	7
Writing/reporting research findings	6
None of the above	39
Quantitative research skills	
Predictive modelling	40
Financial analysis	37
Economic analysis	35
Customer segmentation skills	25
Sampling	19
Interpreting and applying statistics	14
Survey design	12
Analysis of survey data	9
None of the above	26
Qualitative research skills	
Conducting focus groups	24
Analysis of qualitative data	18
Conducting face to face interviews	15
None of the above	64
Research software	
Using qualitative analysis software (i.e. NVIVO, NUDIST etc)	42
Demographic analysis tools (e.g. PopGroup, SASPAC)	35
Using Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	27
Using quantitative research packages (i.e. SPSS, SAS, SNAP, STATA etc)	21
Using Local Information Systems (LIS)	19
Using online surveying software (i.e. Survey Monkey, Conconfirm etc)	13

Table 16: Of these skills which, if any, do you feel you do not adequately possess to carry out your role?	
Research skill category	All respondents (%)
None of the above	32
Other research skills	
Making use of online tools and techniques for visualising data (e.g. Googlemaps, Googlecharts, etc)	30
Designing schemas, databases and queries to produce open data	29
Psychological and behaviour change analysis	28
Spatial analysis	24
None of the above	34
Base	285

The following table shows the 10 research skills (from across each of the different skills categories) which the greatest proportion of respondents felt they did not possess adequately to undertake their roles, and the percentage of those not possessing this skill who felt it was very or fairly important for their role.

Although the skills most respondents (42 per cent) felt they were lacking was using qualitative analysis software, the skills that the greatest number thought that they were lacking which was very or fairly important to their job role was influencing and informing decision making (92 per cent), followed by making use of online tools and techniques for visualising data (71 per cent) and using GIS (65 per cent).

Table 17: List of 10 research skills which the greatest proportion of respondents felt that they did not possess adequately to undertake their roles, and percentage of these respondents who felt that these skills were very or fairly important to their roles		
Research skill	Respondents not possessing adequately (%)	Percentage of those not possessing the skill who felt it was very or fairly important to their role (%)
Using qualitative analysis software (i.e. NVIVO, NUDIST etc)	42	31
Predictive modelling	40	54
Financial analysis	37	45
Economic analysis	35	55
Demographic analysis tools (e.g. PopGroup, SASPAC)	35	44
Making use of online tools and techniques for visualising data (e.g. Googlemaps, Googlecharts, etc)	30	71
Designing schemas, databases and queries to produce open data	29	56
Psychological and behaviour change analysis	28	49
Using Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	27	65
Influencing and informing decision making	27	92
Base	285	

9 Research skills training

All respondents who stated that they managed staff within their team were asked which of the skills listed, if any, their team could offer to other public or third sector organisations. One hundred and sixteen out of 128 provided detail, and these responses have been used for the analysis below.

Across all the different categories, the skill that managers most frequently suggested that their team could offer was analysis of survey data (71 per cent), followed by interpreting secondary data (69 per cent) and writing/reporting research findings (65 per cent).

Fewest suggested that they could assist with financial analysis (nine per cent), using qualitative analysis software (eight per cent) and psychological and behaviour change analysis (seven per cent).

Table 18: Looking at the following list of skills which, if any, do you feel your team could offer to other public or third sector organisations?	
Research skill category	Managers stating their team could offer (%)
General research skills	
Interpreting secondary data (both quantitative and qualitative)	69
Writing/reporting research findings	65
Communicating/presenting research findings	59
Sourcing and evaluating data for research use	53
Influencing and informing decision making	45
Managing those who conduct research	44
Designing evaluations	40
Conducting policy analysis	37
Conducting literature reviews	35
Quantitative research skills	
Analysis of survey data	71
Interpreting and applying statistics	56
Quantitative survey design	53
Quantitative sampling	50
Customer segmentation skills	36
Predictive modelling	29
Economic analysis	21
Financial analysis	9
Qualitative research skills	
Qualitative analysis of data	39
Conducting focus groups	36
Conducting depth interviews (face to face or by phone)	33
Research software	
Using geographical information systems (GIS)	51
Using quantitative analysis packages (e.g. SPSS, SAS, SNAP, STATA etc)	47
Using online surveying software (e.g. Survey Monkey, Confirmit etc)	42
Using local information systems (LIS)	34
Demographic analysis tools (e.g. PopGroup, SASPAC)	27
Using qualitative analysis software (e.g. NVIVO,	8

Table 18: Looking at the following list of skills which, if any, do you feel your team could offer to other public or third sector organisations?

Research skill category	Managers stating their team could offer (%)
NUDIST etc)	
Other research skills	
Spatial analysis	27
Benchmarking/reporting organisational performance information	26
Designing schemas, databases and queries to produce open data	21
Making use of online tools and techniques for visualising data (e.g. Googlemaps, Googlecharts, etc)	17
None of the above	10
Psychological and behaviour change analysis	7
Other	2
Base	116

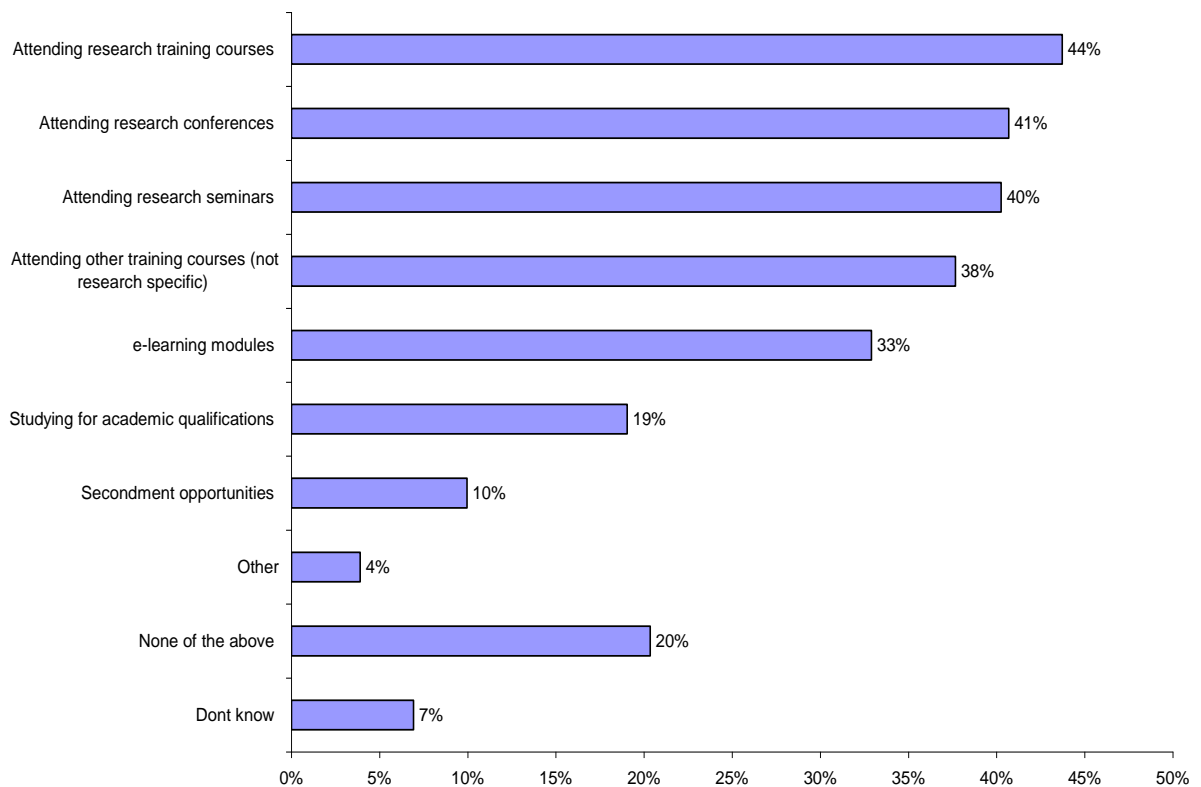
10 Continuing professional development and membership of professional bodies

All respondents (who had an employer) were asked which continuing professional development (CPD) courses their employer would or had paid for in this financial year (2011-12).

Nearly half (44 per cent) selected attending research training courses, with 41 per cent selecting attending research conferences and 40 per cent attending research seminars.

Fewest respondents selected secondments (10 per cent), whilst a fifth (20 per cent) selected none of the above.

Figure 6: Which of the following paid for continuing professional development (CPD) courses would your employer pay for, or has your employer paid for, in this financial year (2011-12)?

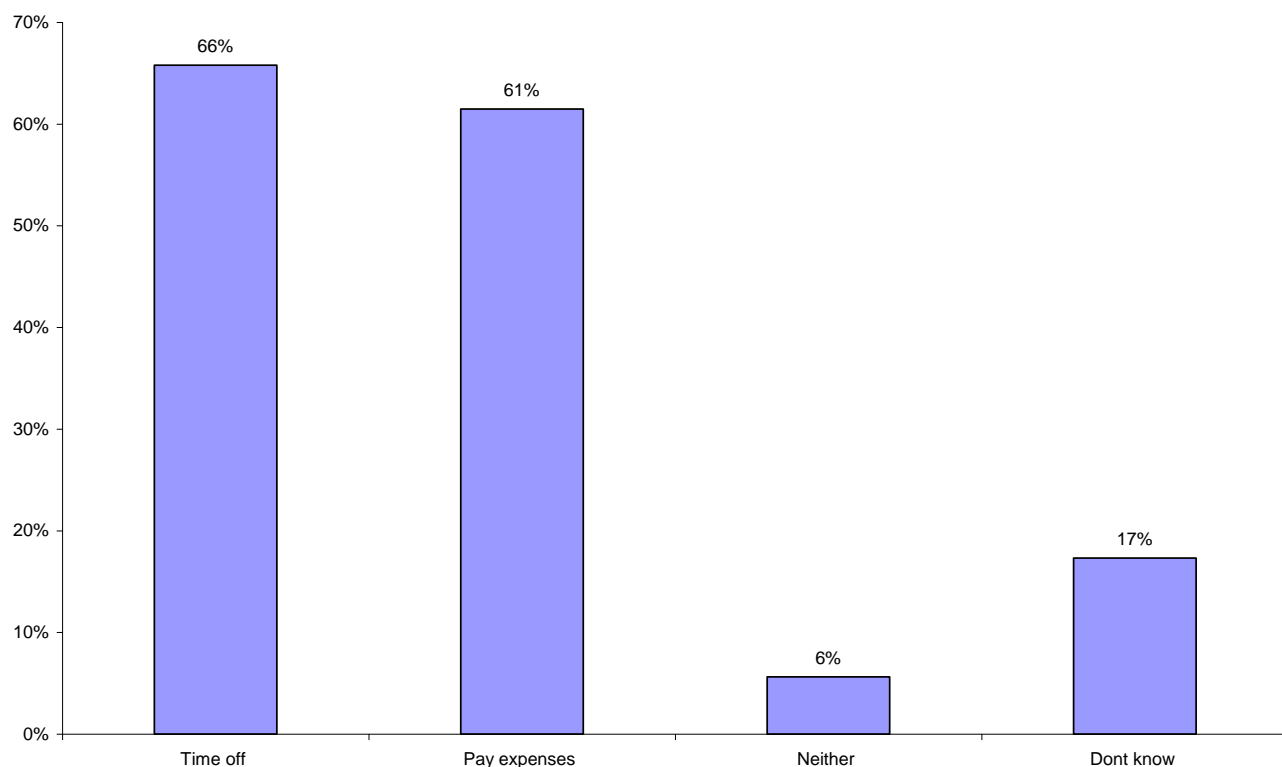


Base: 231

Respondents were then asked whether their employer would give them the time off or pay expenses to travel to free research training/CPD.

The majority stated that they would be given time off (66 per cent) or would be paid expenses (61 per cent). Six per cent selected neither, with 17 per cent being unsure.

Figure 7: Would your employer give you the time off or pay expenses for you to travel to free research training/continuing professional development?



Base: 231

All respondents were asked to select which professional bodies that they were members of: 259 respondents provided detail.

Most frequently respondents were members of LARIA (86 per cent). This was followed by the British Urban and Regional Information Systems Association and the Royal Statistical Society (10 per cent for both).

Least frequently selected was the Association for Geographical Information, Local Information Network and the Market Research Society (all at three per cent).

Nineteen per cent of respondents were members of other professional bodies; most frequently these included:

- the Royal Town Planning Institute
- the British Society for Population Studies
- the Consultation Institute.

Twelve per cent of respondents were not a member of any professional body.

Table 19: Which of the following professional bodies, if any, are you a member of?

Professional Body	Percentage
Local Authorities Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA)	86
The British Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (BURISA)	10
Royal Statistical Society (RSS)	10
Social Research Association (SRA)	7
Association for Geographical Information (AGI)	3
Local Information Network	3
Market Research Society (MRS)	3
Social Services Research Group (SSRG)	2
Geographical Information Systems (GIS) National Network	*
Other	19
None of the above	12
Base	261

11 About respondents

Finally, respondents were asked to provide some information about themselves.

Qualifications

Respondents were asked to select all the qualifications that they possessed: 261 provided detail.

Most frequently respondents selected that they had a level 5 qualification (64 per cent). However, it is possible that respondents selected only the highest level qualification that they had rather than all qualifications, as half of those stating they had a level 5 qualification, selected that they had a level 5 qualification only.

Therefore the data was analysed so that only the highest qualification selected by respondents was included in the analysis. This showed that for the majority of respondents the highest level achieved was a level 5 qualification (66 per cent), followed by 31 per cent achieving a level 4 qualification.

Three per cent had achieved a level 3 qualification as their highest qualification and one per cent a level 2 qualification as their highest grade. No respondent had no qualifications.

Level	Respondents achieving level as their highest qualification (%)
Level 5 (Postgraduate qualification or equivalent)	66
Level 4 (First degree or equivalent)	31
Level 3 (A-Levels or equivalent)	3
Level 2 (GCSEs or equivalent)	1
Base	261

Twenty one per cent of respondents stated that they had professional qualifications in addition to their other qualifications. Professional qualifications most commonly held included:

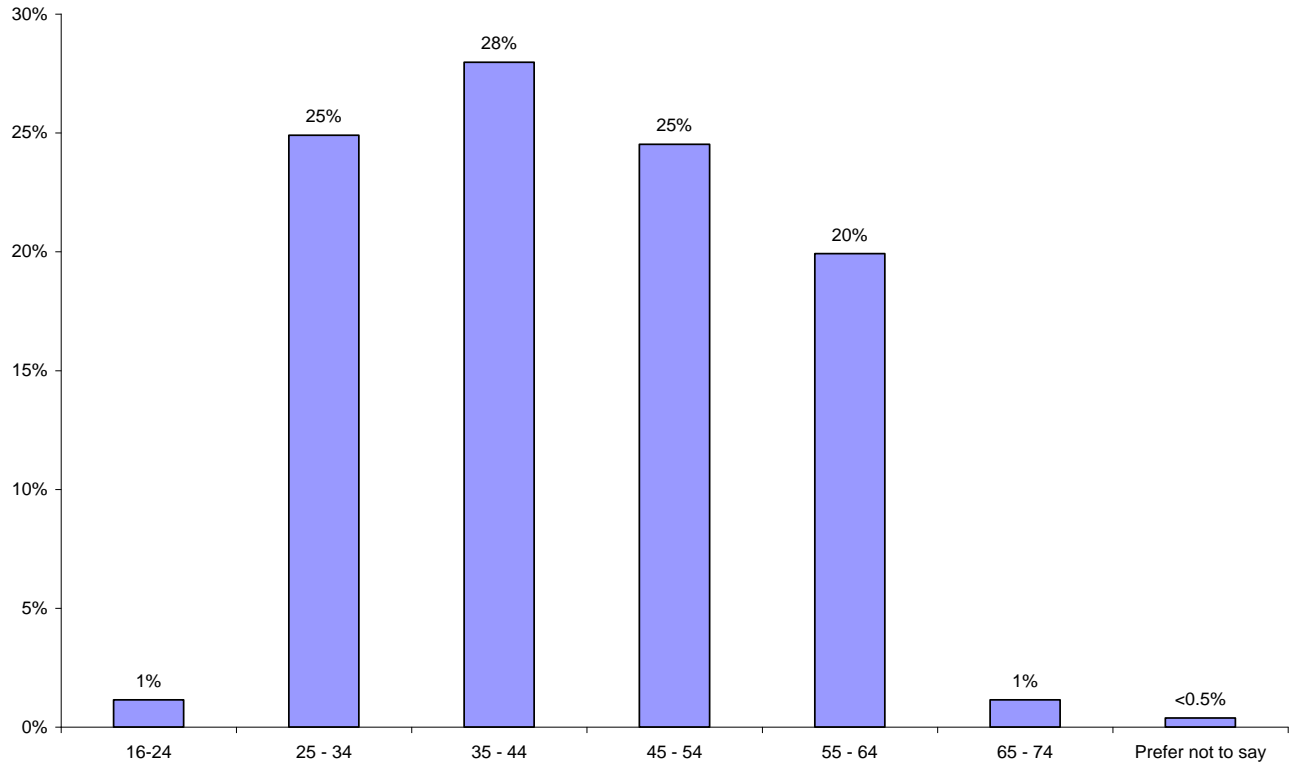
- town planning (from the Royal Town Planning Institute)
- market research (from the Market Research Society)
- diplomas in management (from varied management institutes)

Ages

The greatest proportion of respondents were aged between 35-44 years old (28 per cent), followed by those who were aged between 25-34 years old and 45-54 years old (25 per cent for both).

The smallest number of respondents were aged between 16-24 years old and 65-74 years old (one per cent for both).

Figure 8: Please select your appropriate age bracket

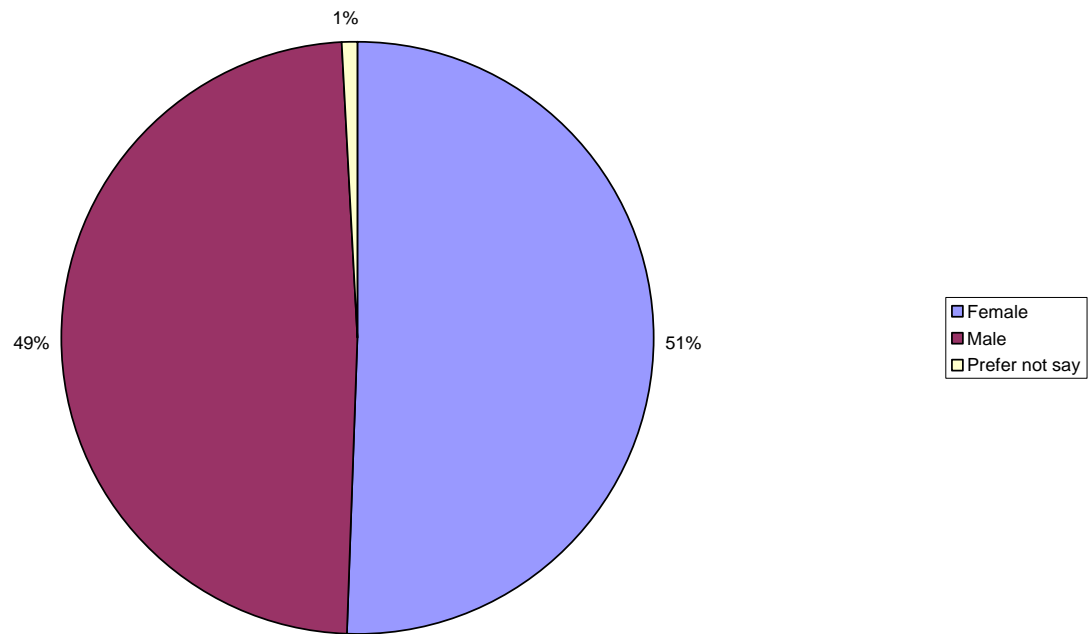


Base: 261

Gender

There was a broadly even split in terms of gender with 51 per cent of respondents selecting female and 49 per cent of respondents selecting male; one per cent preferred not to say.

Figure 9: Please select your gender...



Base: 261



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