

1,243 Voices: Live Performance Artists' Hopes for a Post-Covid Future

November 2021




**JERWOOD
ARTS**

Report Commissioner

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Jerwood Arts is the leading independent funder dedicated to supporting UK artists, curators, and producers to develop and thrive.

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Foreword

One year ago, Jerwood Arts launched the £660,000 Live Work Fund in partnership with Wolfson Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and The Linbury Trust. It was created in response to the devastating impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns on the livelihoods of freelance artists, creatives, and producers who relied on live performance for their work and income. Rather than adding to the invaluable emergency funds made available by others, the Live Work Fund offered 33 awardees a substantial grant of £20,000 and mentoring support. Reflecting the uncertainty of the time, it asked not for a project plan, timeline, and budget, but a vision and ideas for the future of their artistic or creative practice. No specific outcomes were expected, and the awardees have been encouraged to respond to the emergent opportunities of 2021.

In the time that's passed since the fund was advertised in 2020, as a country, we've gone into and come out of lockdown (more than once), made ground-breaking medical advances, and rolled out a national vaccination programme. As we have moved through stages of the government's reopening roadmap, we've reconnected with family and friends, rediscovered the pleasures of haircuts and restaurant dining, and maybe even had a chance to travel abroad again. More recently, we've finally had the chance to experience the thrill of live performance again, whether as a performer or as an audience member.

As the music and performing arts sector starts to come back to life, we wanted to reflect on what we heard from Live Work Fund applicants this time last year about their hopes for a post-Covid future. What did they wish for the sector to look like beyond the pandemic? What changes did they want to see to improve the sector, and what elements of the pre-Covid normal did they want to leave behind?

The Live Work Fund application was accompanied by a survey which asked these questions. We hope this report will honour the insights people gave us. We are publishing it now because as we start to find our way into a future with and beyond Covid-19, there are signs that we are settling back into old, familiar patterns and that artists' hopes and aspirations for change risk being ignored. If Covid-19 is to have a silver lining for the arts, it must be to better represent and live up to the values of this next generation of artists, curators, and producers. The responses from over 1,200 early-career practitioners in this report paint a clear picture of artists' needs across music and the performing arts and resonate as powerfully now as they did 12 months ago.

Lilli Geissendorfer
Director, Jerwood Arts

Executive summary

This report presents the findings of a qualitative survey of early-career artists, creatives, and producers based across the UK, whose practices pre-Covid had focused and relied on live performance, about their hopes for a post-Covid future.

The survey was conducted between October and November 2020, drawing on applicants to the Live Work Fund, a Covid-19 response fund designed to support early-career artists, creatives, and producers to adapt their approach to making and sharing live work. It received 1,243 responses from artists representing a wide range of backgrounds, circumstances, and identities, and from every nation and region of the UK.

The findings reveal how artists' working lives could be improved, painting a powerful picture of an overarching desire for a more humane, empathetic, and collaborative sector. Underpinning this theme is a sense that the current system is broken, that it does not serve everyone fairly, and that there is an urgent need to fix it so that everyone has an equal shot.

Drawing on the survey responses, this report focuses on three particular areas in the working lives of artists where they have called for change:

- **The nature of funding and support for individuals** – Artists described an uneven playing field that makes it difficult for those from marginalised backgrounds to establish and develop themselves professionally. They called for this to be redressed through better representation at all levels of the sector, rebalancing power between artists and institutions, and fairer approaches in how funding and opportunities are awarded.
- **Pay and working conditions** – Artists reported that their professional lives were often fragile and unpredictable, creating precariousness across numerous aspects of their lives and making it difficult for them to deliver their best work. They believed that better and more stable pay as the root solution that would allow them to develop more sustainable livelihoods and create more exciting artistic outputs.
- **Wider perceptions of the value of artists to society** – Artists felt that their work was undervalued and taken for granted, and that the wider public was unaware of the social, health, wellbeing, and economic benefits of the arts. They wanted to feel valued for their contribution to society, both in practical terms such as government support and in terms of a wider shift in social attitudes toward the arts and artists.

Taken collectively, the survey responses highlight the challenges experienced by independent artists and the changes that funders and commissioning organisations could make to improve their working lives. These changes range from quick wins to more systematic changes that require wider shifts in arts ecology, but all have the potential to make a profound and transformative impact on the working lives of artists. As the sector starts to come back to life, these findings present a powerful invitation to those in positions of power to build back better so that the next generation of artists, creatives, and producers can thrive.

Introduction

When we launched the Live Work Fund, we saw an opportunity to deepen our understanding of how Covid-19 had impacted artists professionally. Alongside their application, we asked applicants to also complete a brief survey. This survey asked how Covid-19 had affected their artistic/creative practice and livelihood, what financial and non-financial support they had been able to access throughout the pandemic, and whether they saw a future for themselves in the sector beyond Covid-19. We invited applicants to complete as much or as little of the survey as they liked and received 1,243 responses (97% response rate) from artists representing a wide range of backgrounds, circumstances, and identities, and from every nation and region of the UK. A full breakdown of the respondents can be found in Appendix A. The survey's findings about the impact of the pandemic on their professional lives are published in a separate report.¹

Beyond the immediate impact on their own professional lives, the survey also asked about their wider reflections on how they hoped Covid-19 would change the sector. Specifically, it asked what one change they most wanted to see to improve the sector beyond the pandemic and what one element of the pre-Covid normal they hoped would not return. Applicants had plenty to say on these topics, with 940 responses to the first question and 876 to the second. Some kept their response to a single point, whereas others had a longer list of shifts that they wanted to see in the sector or provided more context about why that change was so important.

We saw these two questions as being fundamentally linked to each other and combined their responses to develop a picture of early-career artists' hopes for a post-Covid future. Three Jerwood Arts staff each reviewed a subset of the responses with a view toward identifying key ideas that emerged from the data. We then met to decide the most pertinent ideas that came out in the responses. Through this discussion, we identified eight overall categories (see side box on the next page), which were also broken down into sub-categories. We then reviewed the responses again and tagged them with these codes. A total of 2,187 codes were applied to the 1,816 responses across both questions (see Appendix B). Finally, we commissioned an independent researcher to review both the responses and our coding of the responses. Through further discussion with the researcher, we interrogated these categories and identified overarching themes that linked them together. This work together has resulted in this report.

Throughout this process, the starting point for all our analysis and discussions has been the voices of the artists who responded to this survey. We constructed our analytical framework based on the ideas and categories that emerged from their responses, rather than interpreting the data through the lens of our own assumptions or an existing framework. As a result, it is grounded entirely in their perspectives,

Coding categories

- Improved equality, diversity, and inclusion
- More and improved funding/financial support/opportunities for individuals
- More funding to different parts of the sector
- Improved wellbeing
- Making the most of digital opportunities
- Improving environmental responsibility
- Value of the arts and culture to all/society
- Other

¹ Jerwood Arts, *1,243 Voices: Live Performance Artists' Experiences of Covid-19*, <https://jerwoodarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Live-Performance-Artists-Experiences-of-Covid-19.pdf>.

interests, and concerns, which we believe has given us a better understanding of their lives and worlds.

Their individual responses were often highly personal and reflected the specificities of their particular discipline, circumstances, and experiences. Collectively, their responses reveal how artists' working lives could be improved, painting a powerful picture of an overarching desire for a more humane, empathetic, and collaborative sector. Underpinning all their responses was a sense that the current system is broken, that it does not serve everyone fairly, and that there is an urgent need to fix it so that everyone has an equal shot.

This report presents the findings of the Live Work Fund applicant survey and explores this theme of humanity within the working lives of artists, particularly how it could improve the nature of funding and support for individuals, pay and working conditions, and wider perceptions of the value of artists to society.

We are hugely grateful to all the applicants who took the time to respond to this survey and help inform our understanding of how Covid-19 is transforming what it means to be a freelance artist. We appreciate the trust that they have placed in us by sharing these responses, and we will aim to honour this trust by using the findings of this survey to shape our thinking about our work at Jerwood Arts. By using our platform to amplify their voices, we hope that we can help create a sector that is more responsive to their needs.

Findings

Improved funding and support for individuals

A prominent concern that emerged from artists' responses to the survey was the need for improved systems of funding and support for individual artists.

What was the situation pre-Covid? What was the impact of that situation on artists?

Despite what a Scotland-based artist called 'the illusion of an equal playing field', the reality that many artists described is one of a significant disparity in both opportunities and outcomes depending on who you are and what you do. Their responses suggest that this gap exists between 'high art' and 'low art' forms, between marquee names and new faces, between artists based in London and those who work in other regions or nations, between artists from working-class families and those from more privileged backgrounds, and between artists who fit into the mainstream and those who are marginalised and underrepresented because of their identity – whether that be their age, gender identity, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, or some combination of these characteristics. Taken collectively, these responses painted a picture of a sector that was divided between the haves and the have-nots.

Beyond the disparities between individual artists, there was a greater concern about the disparity between individuals and organisations. One North West-based artist expressed frustration over what they saw as a 'disproportionate focus on maintaining arts infrastructure rather than the creation of art by artists'. Another artist from the same region agreed with this criticism and highlighted its negative effect on artists:

The investment in buildings does not create great new art – it facilitates their presentation but also does a lot to remove investment in artists and brave ideas.

North West-based artist

With limited funding going directly to artists, they are largely dependent on these institutions for approval, support, and commissions to succeed. As a result, several artists felt that they had no choice but to work within this system to secure funding and get their work to audiences, which one Yorkshire-based artist noted limited her creative autonomy. This creates an imbalanced relationship in which a commissioning organisation has the power to make or break an artist's career.

This power imbalance affects artists in a wide variety of ways. Several artists felt that work is too often awarded based on 'who you know, not what you know', and a Northern Ireland-based artist reported that she had 'seen and connected with so many artists that haven't been able to share their voices through "closed shop" systems'. A number of artists also described a lack of transparency and accountability about funding and

hiring processes and decisions. These ways of working make it difficult for artists without existing networks or contacts to get their foot in the door and prevent them from establishing or developing themselves professionally.

Even when they land opportunities, these opportunities aren't necessarily well-paid or meaningful ones that will advance their careers, especially for artists from outside the cultural mainstream.

For example, a South East-based artist griped about 'artists from diverse or low-income backgrounds getting tokenistic work as also-rans rather than meaningful opportunities within festivals and the like'. A London-based artist took this criticism further, seeing it as a box-ticking exercise and 'instrumentalisation of minority identities for [an organisation's own] cultural capital'.

Some artists reported a significant disparity between the highest and lowest paid in their sector, with household names commanding sky-high fees while others are encouraged to play for exposure, or worse. For example:

I think the pay gap between artists, especially at festivals, is absurd. Of course some acts are worth a lot more, but I think it is vastly unfair that some artists get paid a ridiculous amount of money while some of us essentially pay to play. In my opinion, I don't think you can afford to pay a headliner an unfathomable fee if you can't pay everyone else first.

South West-based artist

Several artists felt that organisations are overly driven by commercial and financial considerations, which make them reluctant to take artistic risks. In the experience of these artists, organisations are unwilling to hire or stage unfamiliar names, especially those who don't fit into the mainstream mould, leading to safe and repetitive programming. However, one artist warned that this seemingly safe approach carries with it an even bigger risk:

The real risk to our industry is a lack of opportunities for all. We shouldn't avoid offering opportunities to people who are yet to 'prove themselves' because they are a 'risk'. Artists are not a risk. New artists are not a risk. Ignoring new voices and refusing to take a chance on new creatives risks losing meaningful change and desperately needed diversity.

Yorkshire-based artist

The underlying message behind these concerns is that many artists felt organisations play too much of a gatekeeper role within the sector. In their view, this dynamic is particularly problematic given that those who work within arts organisations are, by and large, not representative of wider society, which makes it particularly difficult for those who have historically been underrepresented in the sector to break through. Despite what many saw as entrenched attitudes and systems that resisted difference and risk, several artists pointed out the difficulty of challenging organisations on their practices without potentially risking their entire livelihood.

What changes do artists want to see? How would these changes make their lives better?

When asked about their hopes for the future, many artists revealed a desire for meaningful changes to make the system work better for everyone, rather than just a privileged few. Some artists felt that there needs to be better representation of people from marginalised backgrounds in positions of power and influence, including on stage, in leadership, and within decision-making bodies. These artists believed that greater diversity at the top would lead to more inclusive policies and practices, which would ultimately create fairer outcomes for people of all backgrounds and in all parts of the sector. For example:

We need people from all walks of life to be able to create and have a voice in the arts. From top to bottom, so those that are making the decisions will be advocating for those from similar circumstances/ backgrounds. We need a wider, more diverse spread, across all arts platforms.

South East-based artist

Others wanted to see the system revamped entirely to promote bottom-up and artist-centred approaches that would redress the imbalance of power between artists and organisations. For example:

I hope funding systems will be revised so that more funding goes directly to artists and those artists take the funding to a chosen venue or community, rather than the majority of funding going to buildings. I think this is a good opportunity to re-address the power imbalance between venues and individual artists / small companies.

South West-based artist

More agency for artists, less for institutions, in what type of work is being made and shown.

East Midlands-based artist

On a more immediate level, a number of artists simply wanted a fairer approach to the way that funding and work opportunities are awarded. For these artists, this meant open callouts, auditions, or application processes with transparency and accountability about the selection criteria and rates of pay. They believed that this approach would help ensure that opportunities are awarded based on talent and ideas, rather than on contacts and networks.

I hope that true creatives will be able to proceed without using contacts and networks but through their original talent, ideas and how well they know the craft.

London-based artist

Others simply wanted systems that would make funding more accessible and help reduce the amount of time they spent on applications instead of practicing their craft. For one North West-based artist, this looked like 'clearer, shorter application processes'. Another North West-based artist also expressed the importance of receiving 'proper feedback to be able to build from' so that she could improve for the future.²

Focus on the art, not the ability to fill in applications.

South West-based artist

Taken together, these responses point to a desire for a world in which opportunities are shared more equitably across a wider range of artists, in which artists of all stripes have a fair shot and are supported to take risks and fulfil their creative potential, and in which those with power, influence, and resources use their platforms to lift up those who are unrepresented and unheard.

² Over the last year and even prior to the Live Work Fund, we have been thinking carefully about the role and value of feedback to applicants in our opportunities. We have documented our reflections on our experiences of providing feedback to date in a blog post on our website: Jerwood Arts, 'Jerwood in Practice: On Feedback', 3 August 2021, <https://jerwoodarts.org/2021/08/03/jerwood-in-practice-on-feedback>.

Better working conditions and quality of life

A significant portion of respondents spoke up about the need for better working conditions and quality of life for independent artists.

What was the situation pre-Covid? What was the impact of that situation on artists?

Many artists reported that, prior to Covid-19, their professional lives were fragile and unpredictable, which created risk and vulnerability across numerous aspects of their lives. Funding and gigs were often one-off and short-term, and one London-based artist told us that his pre-Covid normal was characterised by **'constant hustling for work in order to stay afloat financially'**.

The precariousness of artists' financial situation had an impact on both their mental and their physical health, with a Yorkshire-based artist sharing that she lived in **'constant financial fear for the future'** and a North West-based artist admitting to **'overworking through illnesses'**. A number of artists also reported that they needed to balance their creative practice alongside work outside the sector in order to make ends meet, including one London-based artist who noted that **'having to work horrible "other" jobs to support my creativity [is] frankly hugely detrimental to my mental health'**.

Artists commonly described their work as characterised by long hours, rushed timelines, and pressure to produce. However, the pay often did not reflect the level and amount of work required:

You can work for long hours for little money, or continue working outside the time you're paid for just to be able to achieve what's asked of you.

East Midlands-based artist

As a result, several artists reported what a London-based artist described as a **'treadmill feeling of rushing from one gig/performance/workshop to another'**, whether to make ends meet or simply to sustain and progress their career.

The immediate impact of these working conditions was a feeling of being stressed and overworked. But on a deeper level, several artists also expressed concern about the normalisation of this pace and intensity of work:

You are expected to run yourself into burnout if you are passionate and committed to what you do.

South West-based artist

We need to defeat the stereotype that it's okay to suffer for one's art. It is absolutely not.

North West-based artist

In addition to the negative impact of these working conditions on their mental health and wellbeing, several artists expressed concern about the impact of the pace and intensity of work on their creative practice, especially:

The rushed creation and research phase of having to have a product before you have the means and funding to research an idea.

Scotland-based artist

The extremely fast and stressful pace where it was virtually impossible to be truly creative, without the thorough reflection time to assess projects and ideas.

North West-based artist

As one respondent suggested, this pressure made it difficult for artists to deliver their best work:

I have always felt rushed in developing live performance in the past. I have always wished to have more time to reach my full potential.

London-based artist

What changes do artists want to see? How would these changes make their lives better?

For many of those who spoke out about the fragility, unpredictability, and intensity of their pre-Covid working lives, the solution was simple: better and more stable pay for artists' work.

There's a lot of talk in the arts about mental health support or community that implies artists have welfare problems, when really everything is exacerbated by poor pay and unstable working conditions.

London-based artist

For some artists, this means rates of pay that are commensurate to their level of expertise and that fully account for the time that goes into each project. This includes ensuring that they get paid not only when they are producing an output, but also for preparatory work such as research, rehearsals, and meetings.

For other artists, this means implementing mechanisms to offset the risk of freelance work with more consistent, reliable forms of income. This might take the form of a universal basic income or core funding for individuals, instead of linking funding to the delivery of a specific output. Or it might take the form of a shift from short-term projects to longer-term funding, commissions, and contracts.

We need more time to take risks, develop our ideas, research, experiment so we know what the work needs, rather than having to budget to an idea of what the work is and should be delivered when you don't even know yet what the work is, apart from the initial idea.

Scotland-based artist

Overall, many artists felt that better pay and longer-term opportunities would give them a more stable financial existence, which would allow them to better look after themselves mentally and physically. It would also reduce the need to take on work, whether inside or outside the sector, simply to pay the bills. In turn, this would give them the space to properly explore, experiment, and create, which would ultimately lead to more exciting and challenging work.

I want musicians and artists to be able to take more space for their lives and practice, to be able to nurture this. I want funders to support artists and musicians to genuinely thrive by supporting artistic practice time, engaging with research, and not having to produce a commodity. And also to understand that if [they] take care of this nurturing, that artists will absolutely produce lots and lots of products for the world to experience.

South East-based artist

These calls for better pay and working conditions are ultimately just one facet of a wider hope that the sector will take a more humane approach to work as it bounces back from the pandemic:

Post-Covid-19, I want the industry to return with a deepened sense of compassion for people, a healthier and safer approach to the general pace and intensity of working in the music industry.

West Midlands-based artist

Taken collectively, these responses suggest that, given the role that the arts play in reflecting the human experience, these artists felt that the sector could do a better job of protecting the humanity of the people within it. As one artist put it:

We are all just humans trying to make life work – freelancers are not a service; we are people and artists.

South West-based artist

Greater recognition of the value of the arts to society

Beyond the need for immediate changes to their working lives, a number of artists expressed their hope for greater recognition of the value of the arts to society.

What was the situation pre-Covid? What was the impact of that situation on artists?

A number of artists noted that the UK has a rich cultural sector but felt that their work was undervalued and taken for granted before Covid-19 – by funders, commissioning organisations, government, and the general public. For these artists, this attitude was reflected in their poor pay and working conditions, in the low levels of government support for the arts, and in what a London-based artist described as a general view that **'the arts and cultural sector is unnecessary and a luxury rather than a fundamental part of our society'**.

Yet, as several artists pointed out, when the country went into lockdown, in the uncertainty of the unfolding situation, a large swath of the population turned to the arts as a refuge. The arts played a critical role in keeping up spirits, with many people watching online performances, streaming films and TV shows, curling up with a book, immersing themselves in a video game, listening to the radio, or working on a crafts project to keep them engaged, connected, and inspired during those difficult times.

In the view of these artists, the contribution of the arts to the public morale during lockdown underscores what they have always known: that the arts play an essential role in society, culture, and wellbeing. As one artist argued, beyond simply mitigating the negative effects of lockdown, art enriches lives and brings people together:

The connection and truth [that] art cultivates is not something that can be replaced.

London-based artist

Some saw the arts as instrumental to creating a better, healthier society, especially through its community engagement and participation elements. Others felt that there needed to be better recognition of the economic contribution of the arts, not only in terms of employment and productivity, but also in attracting investment, providing cultural exports, and driving tourism.

The government and private sector need to acknowledge the importance of the creative industries in terms of economic exports, growth, and the positive impact that the arts have in terms of mental health and wellbeing.

London-based artist

The arts enhance society and life in all ways every day! Without the arts, a huge void would be left in life for those who consume as well as those who create.

London-based artist

While several artists noted that cultural consumption during lockdown led to increased public appreciation for artistic products, they noted that this did not translate into a corresponding appreciation for artists themselves or for the arts as a profession.

The idea that the arts are 'non-essential' has been perpetuated throughout the lockdowns, even though people have depended on technology, music, film, arts and literature to endure the incredible isolation and boredom of the situation.

East Midlands-based artist

A number of artists observed a lack of awareness about the level of training and skill required to succeed in their field, while others expressed a frustration that the arts is seen as a 'just a hobby' rather than a valid or viable career path. For one artist, this was most strongly evinced by what he saw as a pointed message from government to creative workers whose jobs were affected by Covid-19:

Even within a pandemic while we were all watching programming, listening to the radio or our favourite artists, our government was unabashedly telling Fatima to retrain.³

London-based artist

What changes do artists want to see? How would these changes make their lives better?

Across a sizable portion of responses, artists sent a clear message that they just wanted to feel valued for their contribution to society. In practical terms, this might look like 'regular government support for artists' or 'more safeguards put in place to protect the artistic community'. But beyond this immediate financial support, they also hoped for a wider shift in the way that the arts and artists are treated in society.

[I long for] a shift in how creative practices are perceived in wider society. A world where creativity is as important as maths and science.

London-based artist

³ In Autumn 2020, as part of a long-running campaign to promote cyber security jobs, the government released an ad with image of a ballerina lacing up her shoes that said, 'Fatima's next job could be in cyber. (She just doesn't know it yet.)' The ad was widely interpreted as suggesting that arts workers should retrain into new careers, which for some added insult to injury given that the arts sector was already experiencing significant difficulties as a result of the pandemic. Following a spate of criticism online, the ad was quickly taken down.

I would like to see people who work in the arts industry be treated with the same respect as those who work in any other industry. Arts and entertainment [are] incredibly important, and it is just as valid as any other career choice.

South West-based artist

Conclusion: A more humane, empathic, and collaborative sector

In our survey of early-career artists, creatives, and producers who applied to the Live Work Fund, we asked what one change they most wanted to see to improve the sector beyond the pandemic and what one element of the pre-Covid normal they hoped would not return. The changes that they named varied widely, ranging from improved systems of funding and support for individuals to better pay and working conditions to greater recognition of the value of the arts to society. On the surface, these hopes may seem appear disparate, but as we have seen throughout this report, what ties them together is a desire for a more humane, empathetic, and collaborative sector.

A significant number of artists who responded to the survey characterised the sector pre-Covid as individualistic, competitive, and even cutthroat. A London-based artist described an environment in which everyone was only out for themselves, **'fighting for every bit of work available'**, while a West Midlands-based artist noted that people were **'in competition with each other to get to the top'**.

Based on the picture that they painted, it seems that these artists saw the sector as a zero-sum game, in which someone else's success was their own demise. Another London-based artist observed that, as a result, the sector was **'scared of sharing because of scarce resources'**. Others felt that this atmosphere of individualism and competition compounded the loneliness and isolation of being an independent artist. However, these artists recognised that this competition was unhealthy, not only for their wellbeing but also for their work:

The competition within the industry only detracts from the creative process.

London-based artist

This all changed when Covid-19 hit. Faced with an existential threat to their livelihoods, artists started working together instead of against each other.

Covid has really brought out people's willingness and desire to support and connect with one another and to lift each other up, both in general and in the industry.

London-based artist

In some cases, this has taken the form of artist-to-artist advice and support:

Since Covid, artists have been working together to help each other out, [whether] that's mental health-wise or just helping with advice within the industry.

West Midlands-based artist

In other cases, it has helped break down the power imbalance between individuals and organisations, with a small number of artists reporting that they have seen more organisations opening their doors to independent artists and sharing their skills and resources with them.

Overwhelmingly, though, what many artists seemed to appreciate most about the changed culture of the sector since the start of the pandemic wasn't any specific actions or initiatives but the greater sense of kindness and humanity in the way that people from all parts of the sector have treated each other more generally. For these artists, it has meant that they are no longer seen just as workers but as fully fleshed out people whose capacity for creative work is shaped by their wider lives and circumstances, and that collaborators, commissioners, and funders have recognised the need to accommodate different types of circumstances.

I have seen greater compassion and flexibility in the sector for people's immediate circumstances, and a desire to adapt and make work around what's possible for artists right now. I want that to continue until we have working structures that work for everyone, and enable artists often excluded by their circumstances – care givers, artists with disabilities, artists from more economically deprived backgrounds, etc. – to work without fear they'll be discounted.

Northern Ireland-based artist

I have really enjoyed seeing the universal solidarity between everyone in this industry. The barriers that are usually up have been knocked down, and it feels like for once, we are always working together to bring theatre back and help each other out in this dark time.

North West-based artist

These accounts suggest that many artists and organisations alike recognised that they could not go it alone and that they would be stronger working together than on their own. A number of artists reported that they hoped the sector would retain this sense of community and support beyond Covid-19. Instead of competition, they said that they wanted to see more cooperation and collaboration across the sector:

Before it seemed more like people are in competition with each other to get to the top, but it should be about collaboration and pushing each other to succeed.

West Midlands-based artist

Implicit in these hopes for the future is the belief that collective action is an indispensable tool for ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all, especially those who have historically been marginalised, underrepresented, or treated unfairly within the sector because of their background, circumstances, or identity.

Moreover, these responses suggest that this ethos of more humanity, empathy, and collaboration needs to be a sustained, year-round approach, rather than a momentary shift in response to a global crisis or a trending hashtag on social media. This report paints a clear picture of the values that the next generation of artists, curators, and producers wants to live and thrive by. As the sector starts to come back to life, we must resist the urge to fall back into old, familiar patterns. We must take these insights to heart and work to create a sector that lives up to their hopes and aspirations.

About the Live Work Fund

Live Work Fund 2021

The Live Work Fund was a new fund, worth £660,000, which has supported 33 exceptional individuals over 12 months with awards of £20,000 to adapt their approach to making and sharing live work. It was for artists, creatives, and producers with no more than 10 years' experience, based anywhere in the UK, whose practice pre-Covid-19 focused and relied on live performance. This included those with artistic/creative practices based in music, theatre, opera, circus, dance, live art, and performance, as well as those who worked in the gaps between these disciplines. Application was free, and the deadline was 16 November 2020. All applicants were notified by 10 December 2020, and awardees were announced in February 2021.

The Live Work Fund brought together Jerwood Arts, Wolfson Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and The Linbury Trust, four independent funders who shared a common aim to substantially support individuals whose work relied on live performance following the impact of Covid-19. They strongly believed that artists/creatives hold the key to discovering and forging new ways forward, and were committed to creating a vibrant future for live work and ensuring that right across the country outstanding artists, creatives, and producers were able to transform and develop their practice to survive and thrive.

The Live Work Fund was designed to help prevent exceptional talent of all backgrounds from abandoning their practice due to the impact of Covid-19 and create the space for reflection and experimentation. It provided substantial support throughout 2021 to enable the selected artists, creatives, and producers to take the time to think ambitiously about how they could adapt their artistic/creative practice and make a vital contribution to the future of their artistic/creative community.

Awardees have also been able to call upon Jerwood Arts' expert staff for advice and introductions; access a series of workshops; and connect with established artistic/creative mentors and other experts to support career development, answer discipline-specific questions, and signpost opportunities. Independent evaluation is currently underway, and reports will be available in 2022.

www.jerwoodarts.org/projects/live-work-fund

**JERWOOD
ARTS**

ef Esmée
Fairbairn
FOUNDATION

The Wolfson*
Foundation

THE
LINBURY
TRUST

Jerwood Arts

Jerwood Arts is the leading independent funder dedicated to supporting outstanding UK artists/creatives, curators, and producers to develop and thrive. We collaborate with organisations across art forms to imagine a more sustainable sector. Our programmes provide transformative opportunities for early-career individuals through awards, fellowships, and commissions, and we present exhibitions in our gallery in London and on tour nationally.

www.jerwoodarts.org

Wolfson Foundation

The Wolfson Foundation is an independent charity with a focus on research and education. Its aim is to support civil society by investing in excellent projects in science, health, heritage, humanities, and the arts.

Since it was established in 1955, some £1 billion (£2 billion in real terms) has been awarded to more than 11,500 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.

www.wolfson.org.uk

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve our natural world, secure a fairer future and strengthen the bonds in communities in the UK. We unlock change by contributing everything we can alongside people and organisations with brilliant ideas who share our goals.

The Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. In 2019 we made grants of £36 million towards a wide range of work within the arts, children and young people, the environment and social change. We also have a £45 million allocation to social investments for organisations with the aim of creating social impact.

www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

The Linbury Trust

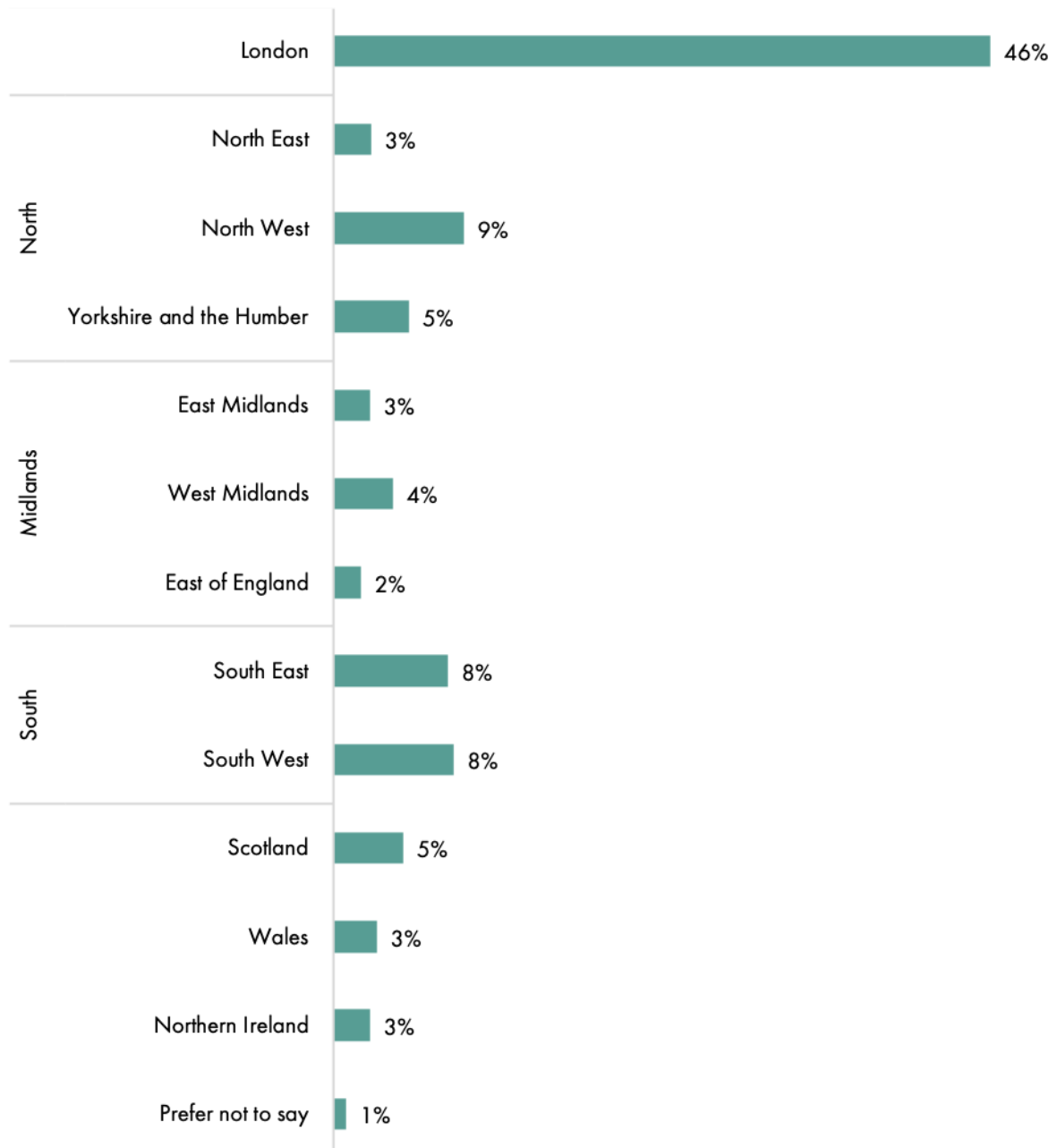
The Linbury Trust is an independent grant-making trust established in 1973 by Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover, and his wife Anya, Lady Sainsbury CBE. The Trust supports a wide variety of compelling and exciting projects across the world in the fields of arts, heritage, and culture; the environment; and social and medical welfare.

www.linburytrust.org.uk

Appendix A: Breakdown of respondents

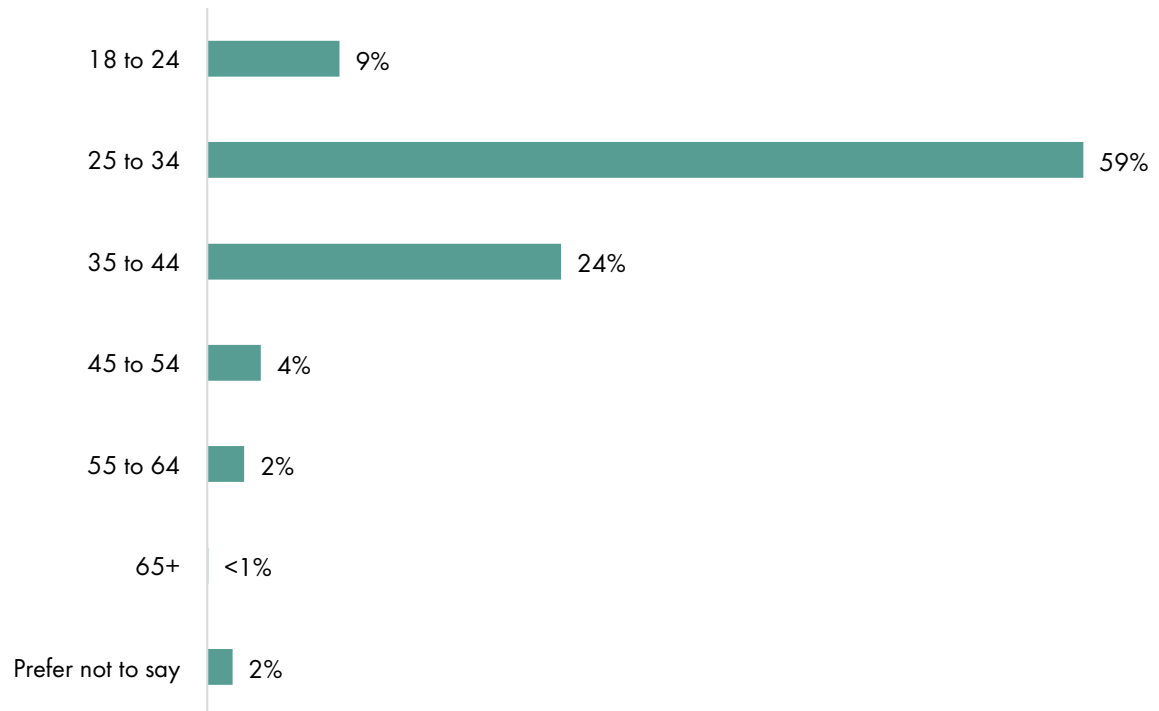
Location

Figure A1: Where are you currently based? (n=1242)



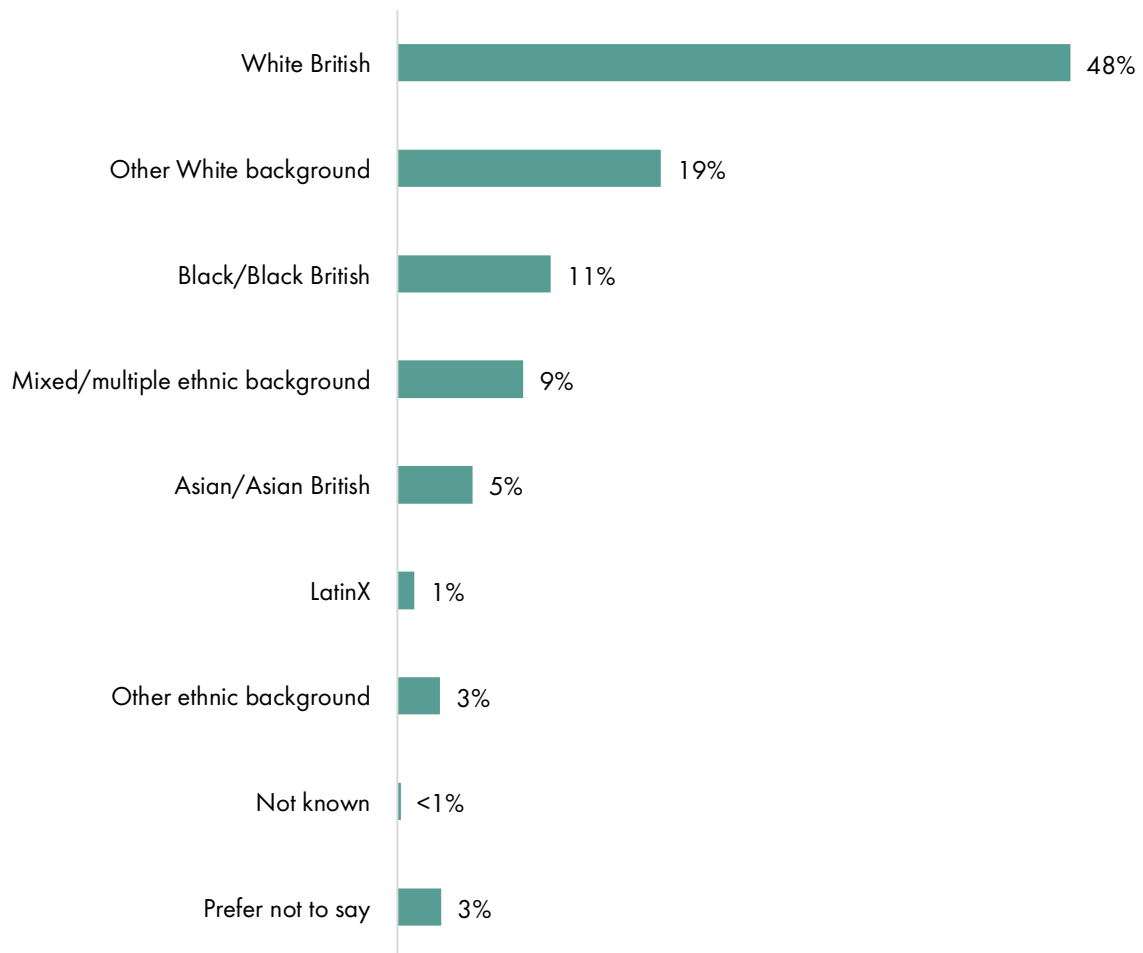
Age

Figure A2: What is your age range? (n=1242)



Ethnicity

Figure A3: What is your ethnicity?⁴ (n=1242)



⁴ Respondents were also offered the opportunity to self-describe, which 37 of them chose to do (3 per cent). These responses were coded according to the categories in this figure and are included within the breakdown provided.

Disability or long-term health condition

Figure A4: Do you identify as disabled, or do you have a long-term health condition? (n=1241)

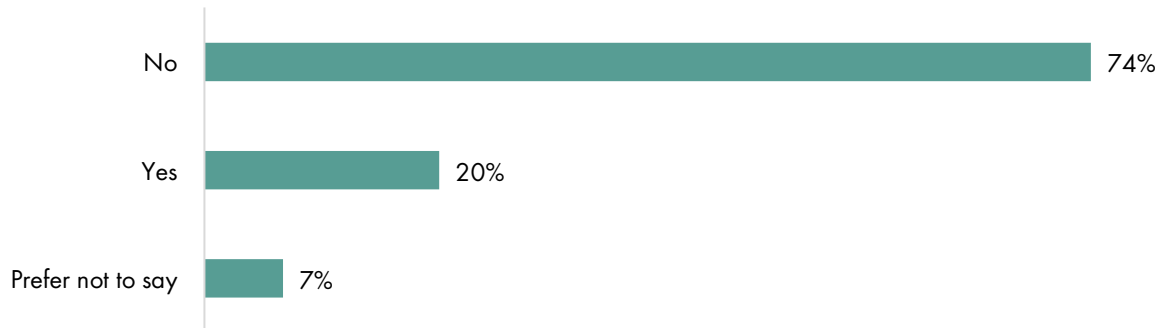
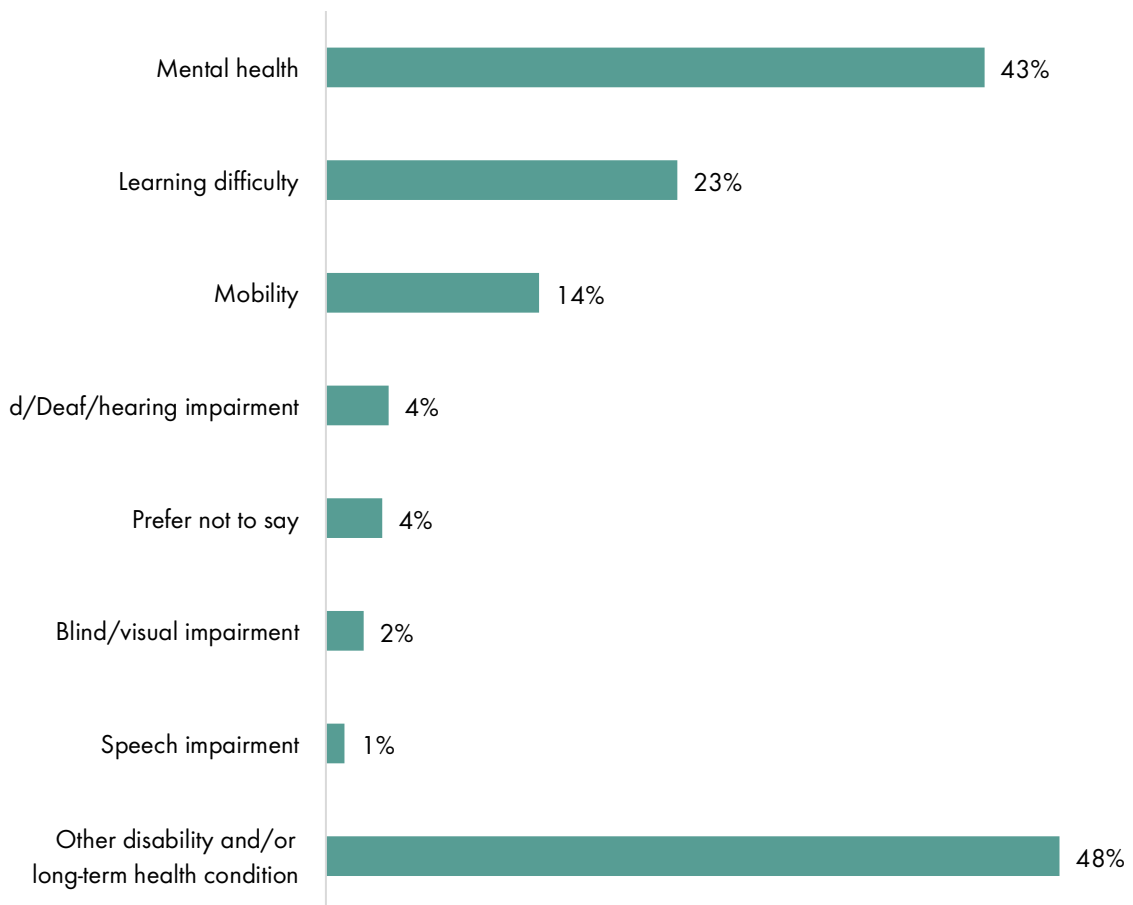


Figure A5: Breakdown of reported disabilities and long-term health conditions (n=243)



Gender

Figure A6: How would you describe your gender? (n=1240)

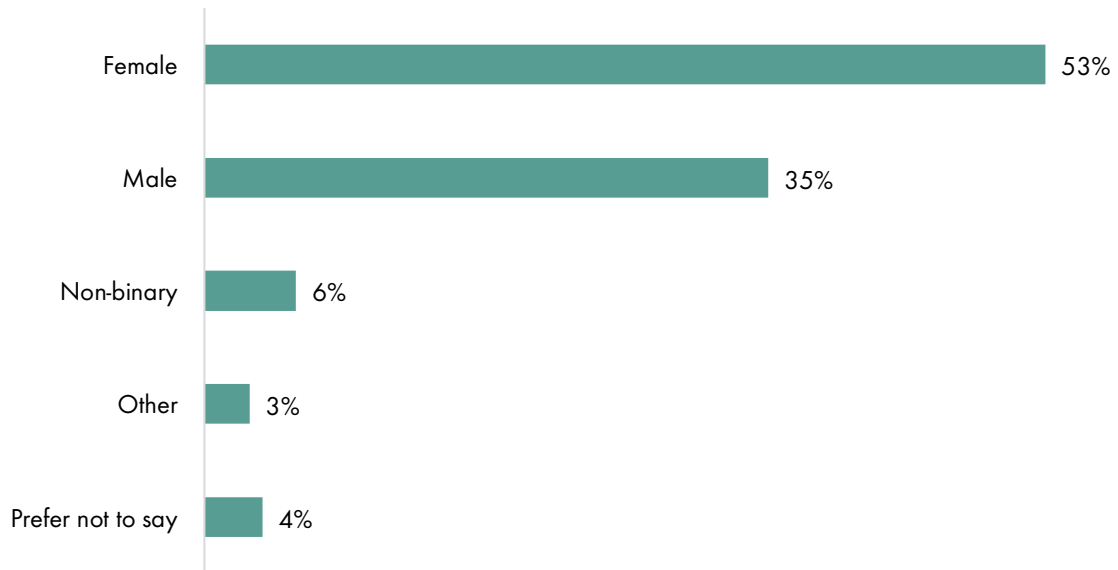
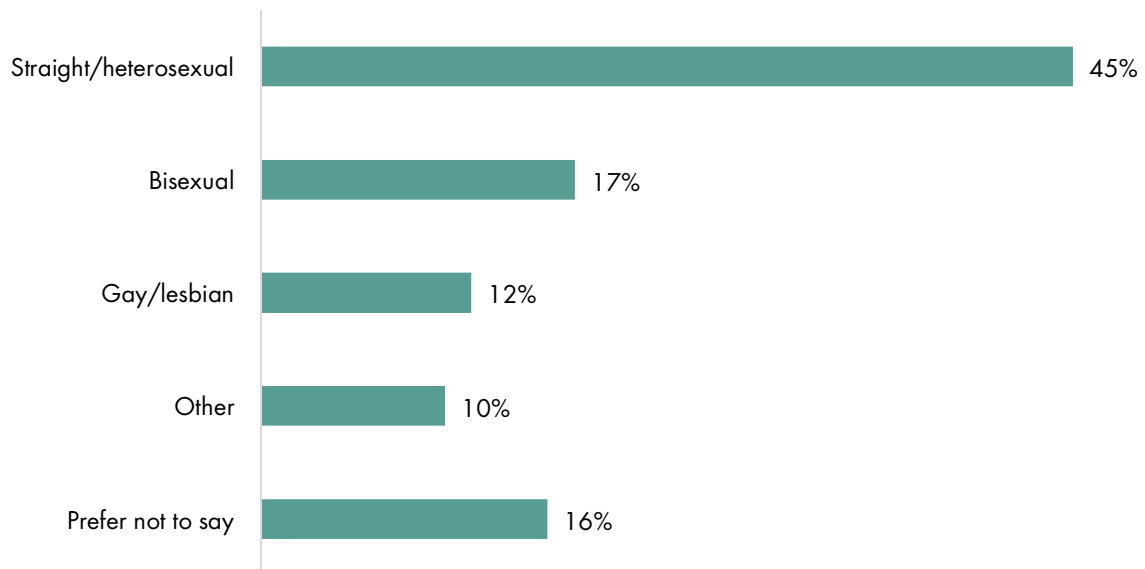


Figure A7: Is your gender identity the same as the one assigned to you at birth? (n=1237)



Sexual orientation

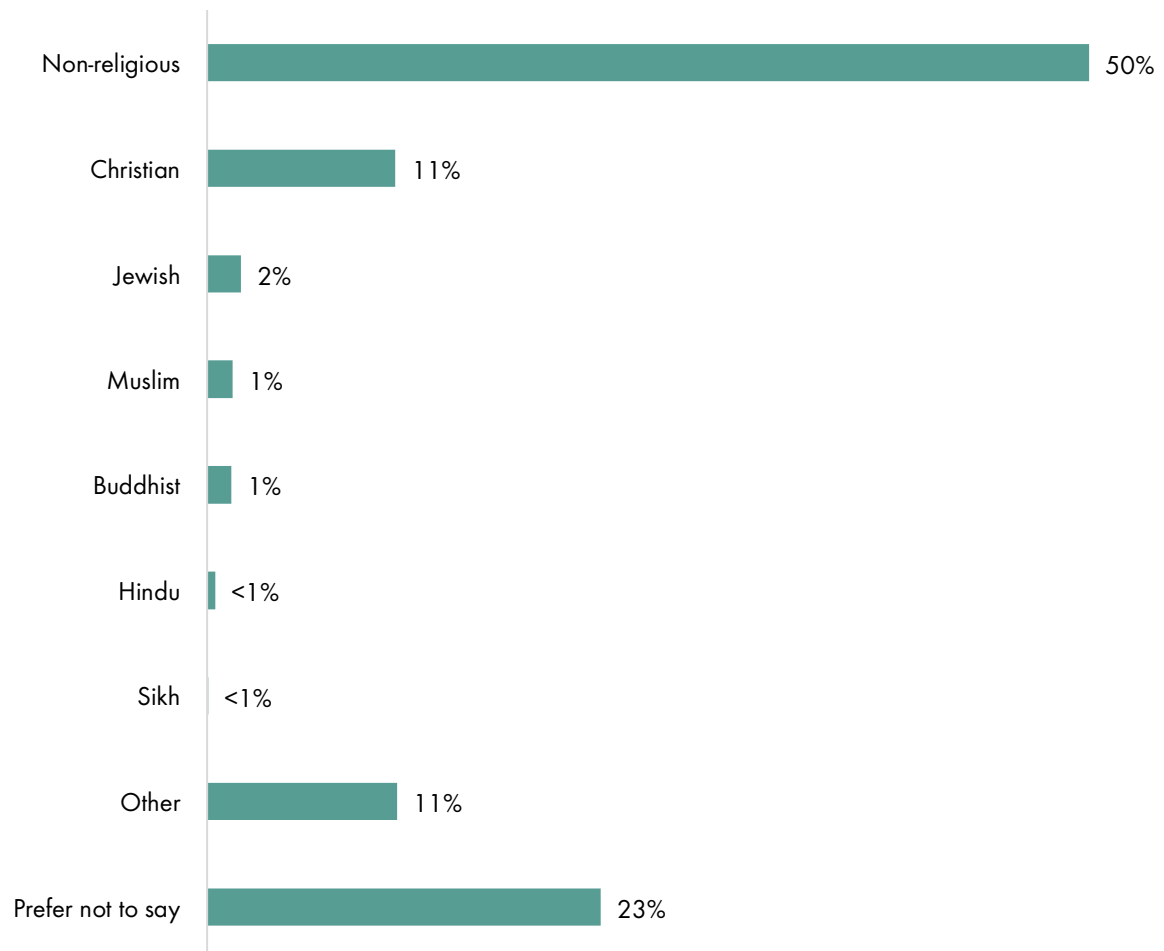
Figure A8: How would you describe your sexual orientation?⁵ (n=1237)



⁵ Respondents were also offered the opportunity to self-describe, which 140 of them chose to do (11 per cent). These responses were coded according to the categories in this figure and are included within the breakdown provided. A substantial proportion of those who chose to self-describe identified as queer, possibly in part because several of the options provided required respondents to choose a gendered sexual orientation (i.e. bi man, bi woman, gay man, gay woman/lesbian).

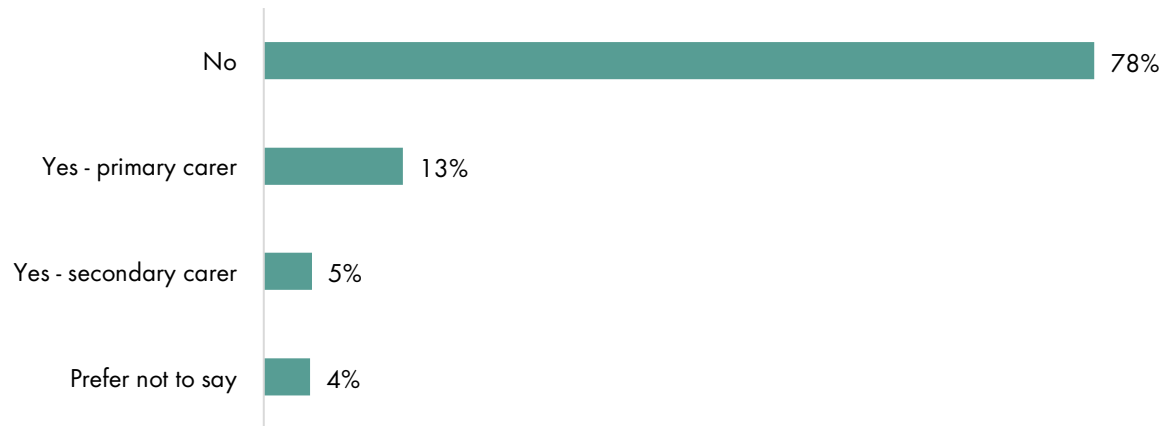
Religion or belief

Figure A9: What is your religion or belief? (n=1234)



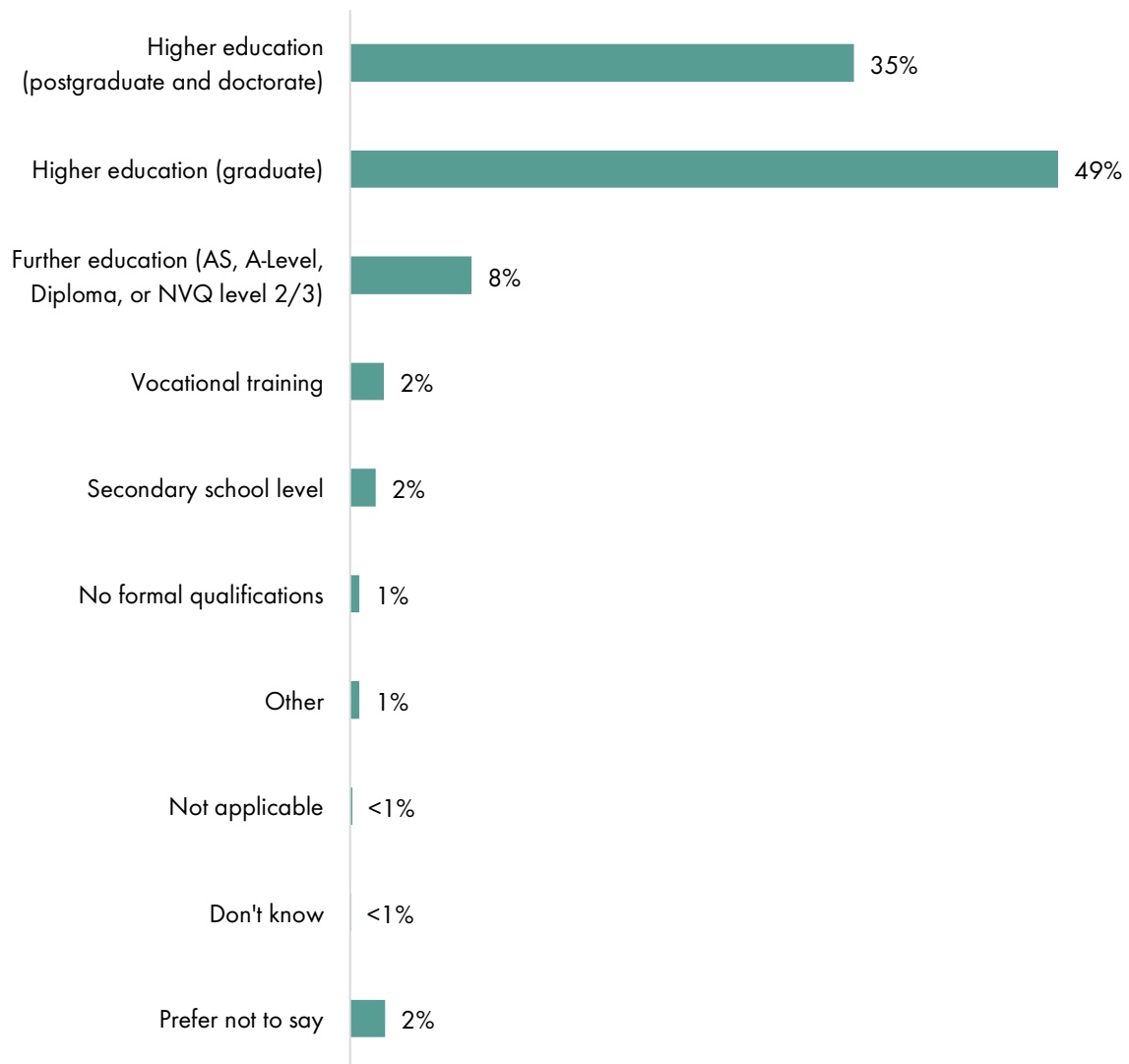
Caring responsibilities

Figure A10: Do you have caring responsibilities? (n=1240)



Qualifications

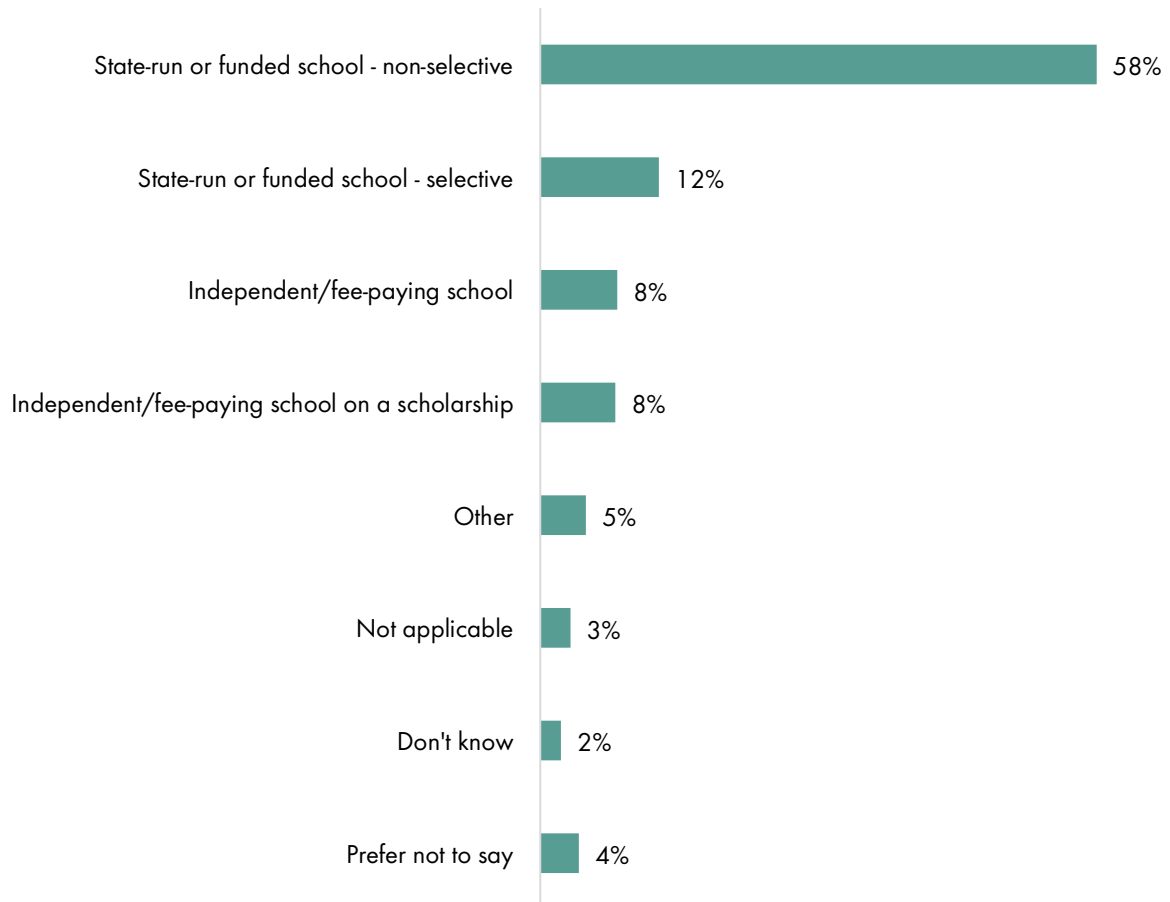
Figure A1 1: What is your highest qualification?⁶ (n=1241)



⁶ Respondents were also offered the opportunity to specify their highest qualification, which 18 of them chose to do (1 per cent). These responses were coded according to the categories in this figure and are included within the breakdown provided.

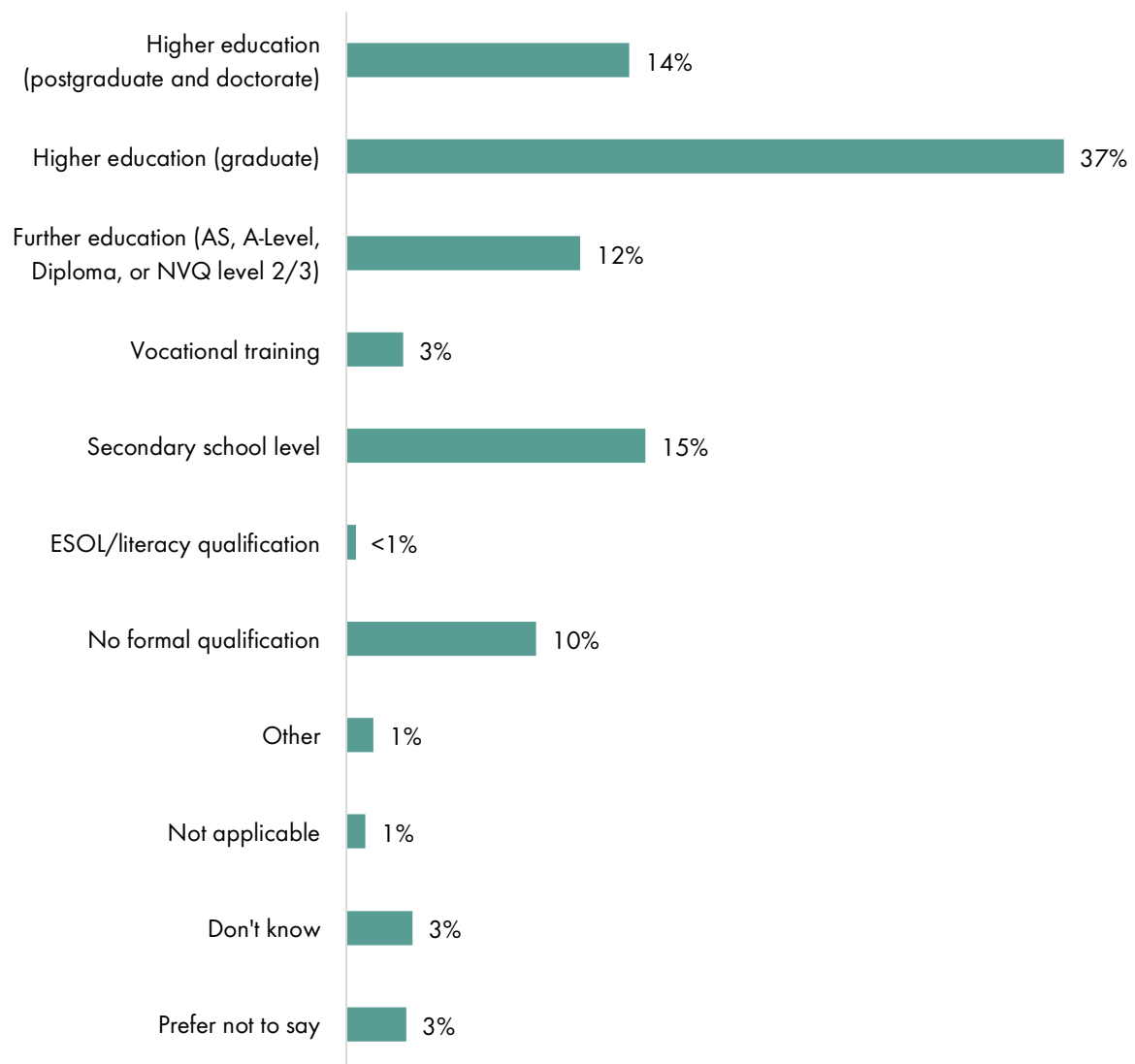
Socioeconomic background

Figure A12: What type of school did you go to?⁷ (n=1241)



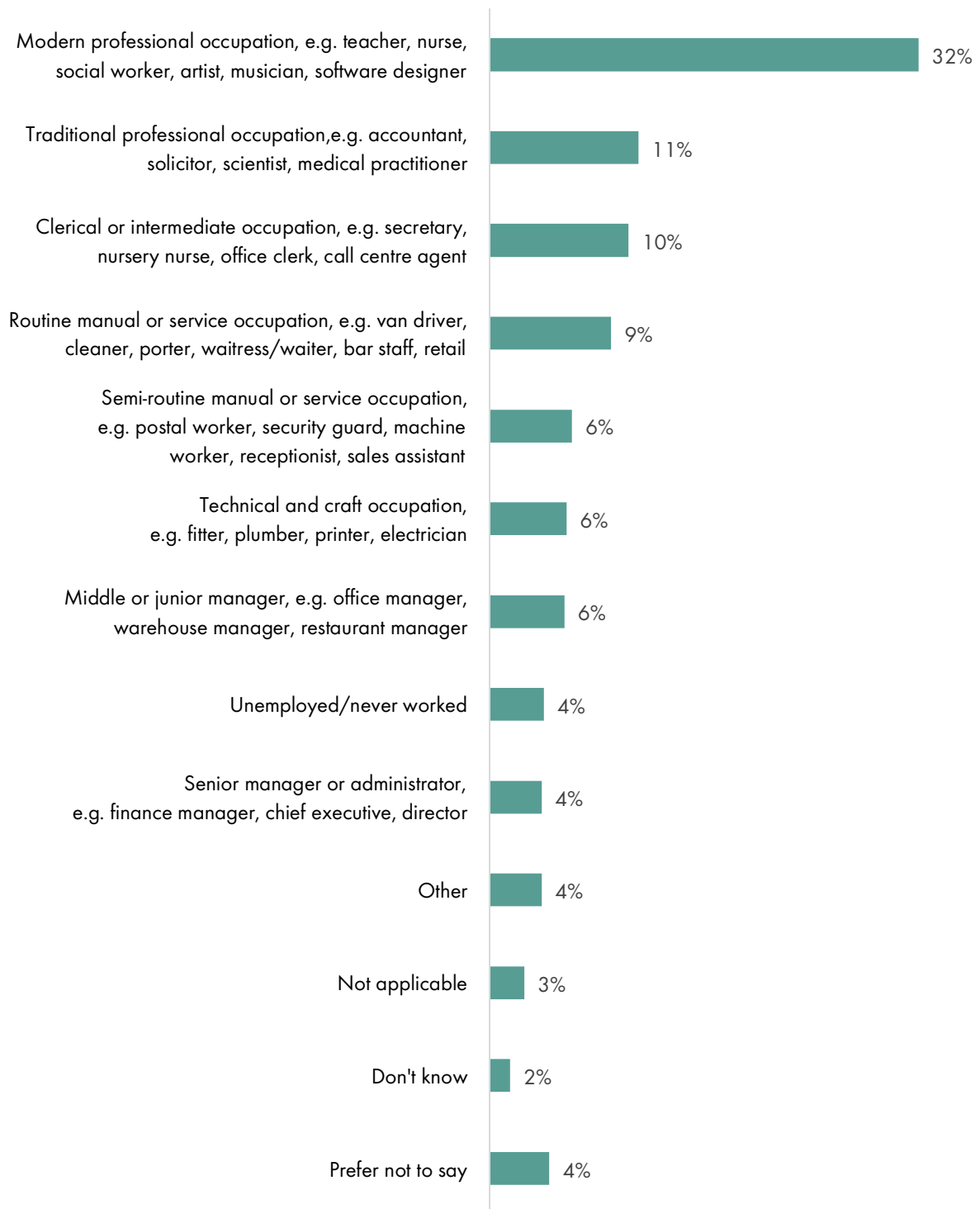
⁷ Respondents were also offered the opportunity to specify what type of school they attended, which 64 of them chose to do (5 per cent). These responses were coded according to the categories in this figure and are included within the breakdown provided.

Figure A13: What was the highest level of qualification of your parent(s)/caregiver(s)?⁸
(n=1241)



⁸ Respondents were also offered the opportunity to specify the highest level of qualification of their parent(s)/carer(s), which 23 of them chose to do (2 per cent). These responses were coded according to the categories in this figure and are included within the breakdown provided.

Figure A14: Think about your parent(s) or other primary caregiver when you were 14 years old. What did this parent/caregiver do?⁹ (n=1240)



⁹ Respondents were also offered the opportunity to specify the occupation of their parent(s) or other primary caregiver when they were 14 years old, which 115 of them chose to do (9 per cent). These responses were coded according to the categories in this figure and are included within the breakdown provided.

Appendix B: Breakdown of coding decisions

The following figures show a breakdown of the coding decisions on the Live Work Fund survey questions about what one change artists most wanted to see to improve the sector beyond the pandemic and what one element of the pre-Covid normal they hoped would not return. While these figures provide a quantitative view of how many and what proportion of responses were coded against each category, they do not provide deeper insight into the qualitative content of the responses beyond the basic codes and should not be used on their own as conclusive findings from the survey. Rather, they are provided as context for this report to show how we arrived at the particular areas and overarching theme we have chosen to explore, which were identified through a combination of these coding decisions and further textual analysis.

Figure B1: Number of responses coded against each category

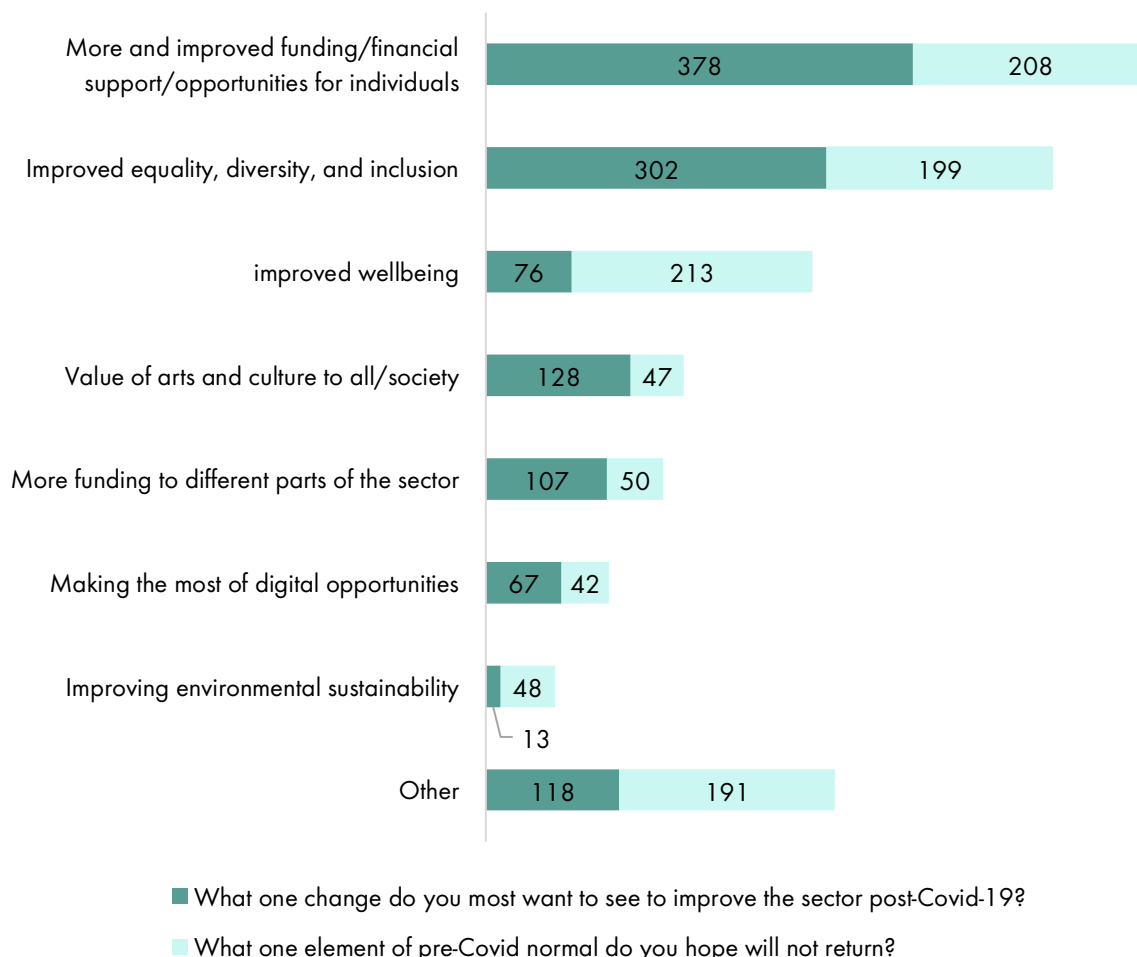


Figure B2: Percentage of responses coded against each category

