



# Grant funding data report 2018/19

March 2020

# Key points

- Wellcome's current **grant portfolio** has increased in total value by 31% (from £3,502m to £4,586m) since 2014/15.
- Our **international** grant portfolio has grown by 88% (from £663m to £1,245m) since 2014/15. 73% (£3,341m) of the total portfolio still supports UK-based activity.
- Our standard **response-mode** schemes accounted for 39% of funding committed (£360m of £927m) in 2018/19, and 42% (£1,898m of £4,486m) of total funding committed over the past five years.
- The number of **applications** has increased by 37% (from 4,886 to 6,745) since 2014/15, but the number of awards has fallen by 3% (from 1,173 to 1,134).
- Our funding is **concentrated within a few organisations**. 76% (£3,492m) of our grant portfolio is held by 20 organisations, and 41% (£1,897m) is held by University of Oxford, Sanger Institute, University of Cambridge and UCL.
- The impact of **Brexit** remains uncertain. Since the referendum, applications from non-UK EU nationals have fallen by 25% for early-career and intermediate fellowships, but have not changed for PhD and Master's studentships and senior-career schemes.
- Applicant success rates are similar by **gender** (18% for women applicants; 17% for men) but differ by **ethnicity** (18% for white applicants; 15% for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) applicants. Women and BAME applicants are more likely to apply for lower-value or early-career schemes.

# Headline facts and figures



## Current Portfolio

**£4.6bn**

Value of our current grant portfolio, an increase of 31% (£1.1bn) over the past five years

**£1.9bn**

42% of our grant portfolio funds people (Investigator Awards, fellowships, studentships)

**£3.5bn**

77% of our grant portfolio is in Science. 10% (£445m) is in Innovations; 4% (£200m) is in Culture & Society; 7% (£308m) is in priority areas and 2% (£93m) is cross-divisional



## Applications & Awards

**£3.9bn**

Requested in 2018/19 for grant funding, from 6,745 preliminary and full grant applications

**£927m**

Funding committed in 2018/19, on 1,134 grants

**12%**

Award rate in 2018/19, down from 19% five years ago (including preliminary and full applications)

**10%**

Increase in competitive grant award values over past five years



## People we fund

**15,000**

People supported on our grants (12,000 UK, 3,000 in other countries)

**51%**

Proportion of grant awards in 2018/19 made to women

**15%**

Award rate for UK-based BAME applicants over past three years, compared to 18% for white applicants



## Places we fund

**493**

Organisations funded in 92 countries, including 265 UK organisations (80 of which are HEIs)

**£1.2bn**

27% of our grant portfolio funds international research

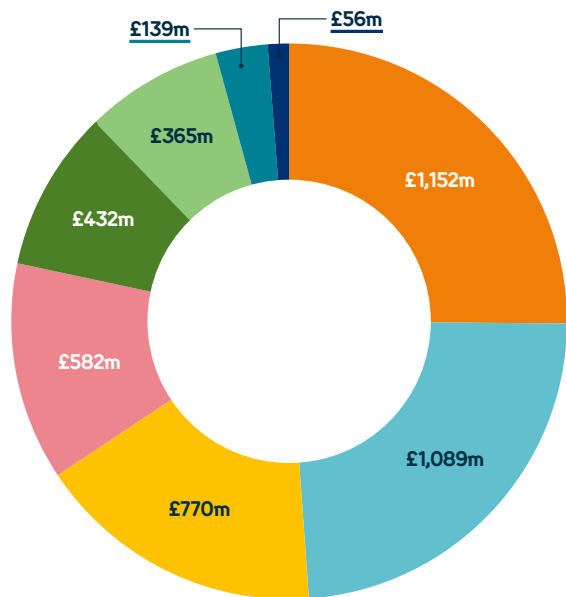
**£3.5bn**

76% of our grant portfolio is held by 20 organisations (41% of our grant portfolio is held by Oxford, Sanger, Cambridge and UCL)

# Current portfolio in 2018/19

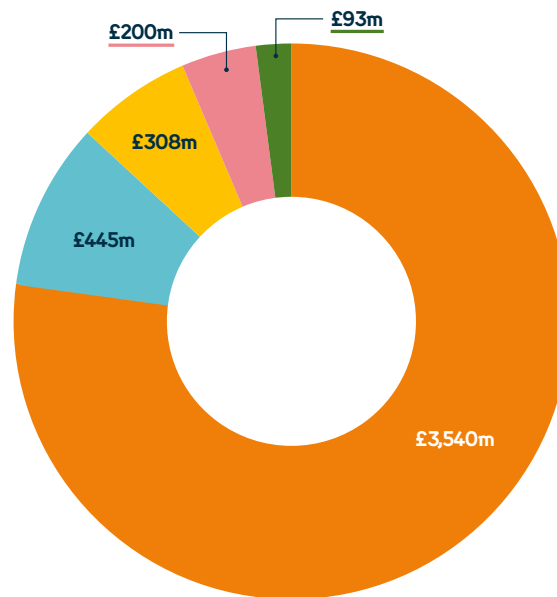


## Grant portfolio value by area of activity



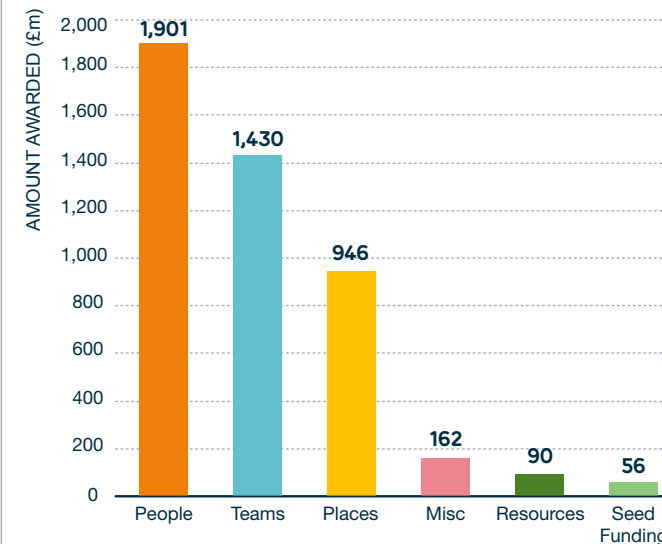
- Infectious disease and immunobiology
- Population, environment and health
- Genomics, genetics and epigenetics\*
- Cross-area activities\*\*
- Development and ageing
- Cultural and social contexts of health
- Neuroscience and mental health
- Public engagement and education

## Grant portfolio value by Division and budget



- Science (Primary Fund)\*
- Culture and Society (Primary Fund)
- Innovations (Primary Fund)
- Priority Areas (Reserve Fund)
- Cross-divisional (Primary Fund)

## Grant portfolio value by type



- People
- Teams
- Places\*
- Miscellaneous
- Resources
- Seed Funding

- The distribution of our grant portfolio between areas of activity and types of grant has changed little since 2014/15. Funding has risen by over 25% in all areas.
- Priority area funding is a growing element of the grant portfolio since the creation of our Reserve Fund in 2016.

- The distribution of funding between our Primary Fund areas – Science, Innovations, and Culture & Society – has changed very little over time.

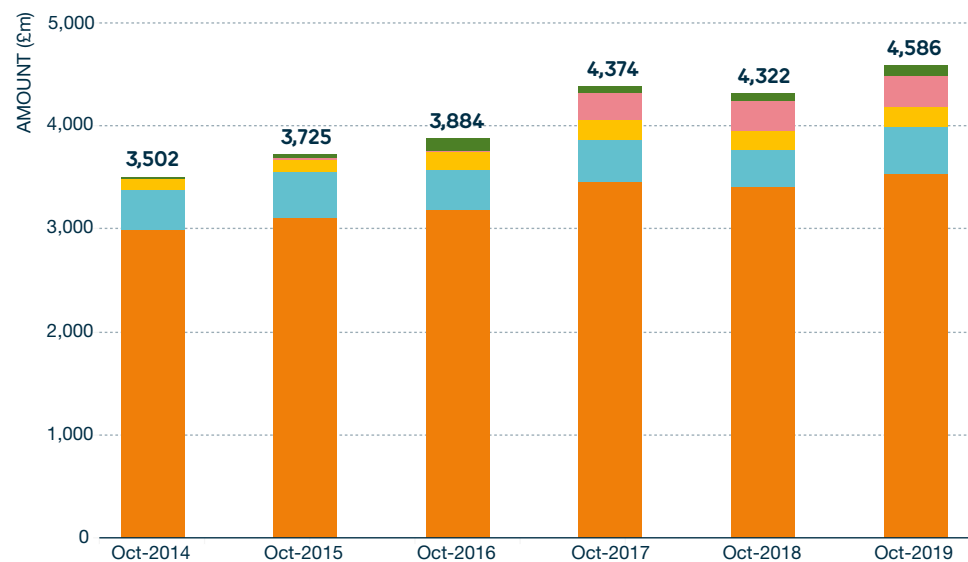
- \* Includes £548m in core support for the Sanger Institute.
- \*\* Includes India Alliance, Diamond Light Source, Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, Open Access block awards, Institutional Strategic Support Fund and Institutional Translational Partnership Awards.

# Portfolio trends



Our grant portfolio has risen steadily over time

Grant portfolio value at October 1st 2014-2019

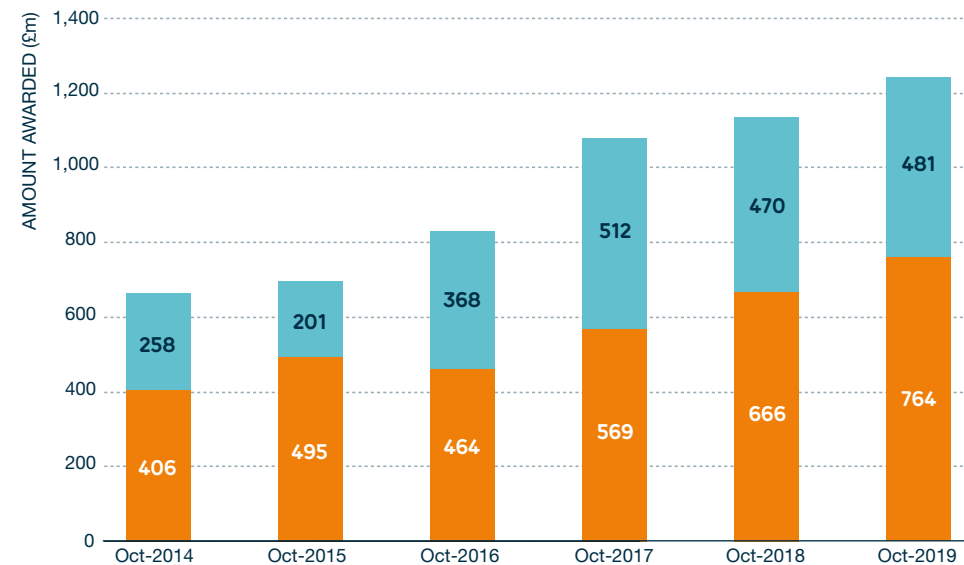


■ Cross-divisional      ■ Culture & Society      ■ Science  
■ Priority Areas      ■ Innovations

Our active grant portfolio has grown by 31% in value (from £3,502m to £4,586m) and 11% in number of grants (from 3,123 to 3,470) over the past five years.

An increasing proportion of funding is spent on international activities

International grant portfolio value at October 1st 2014-19

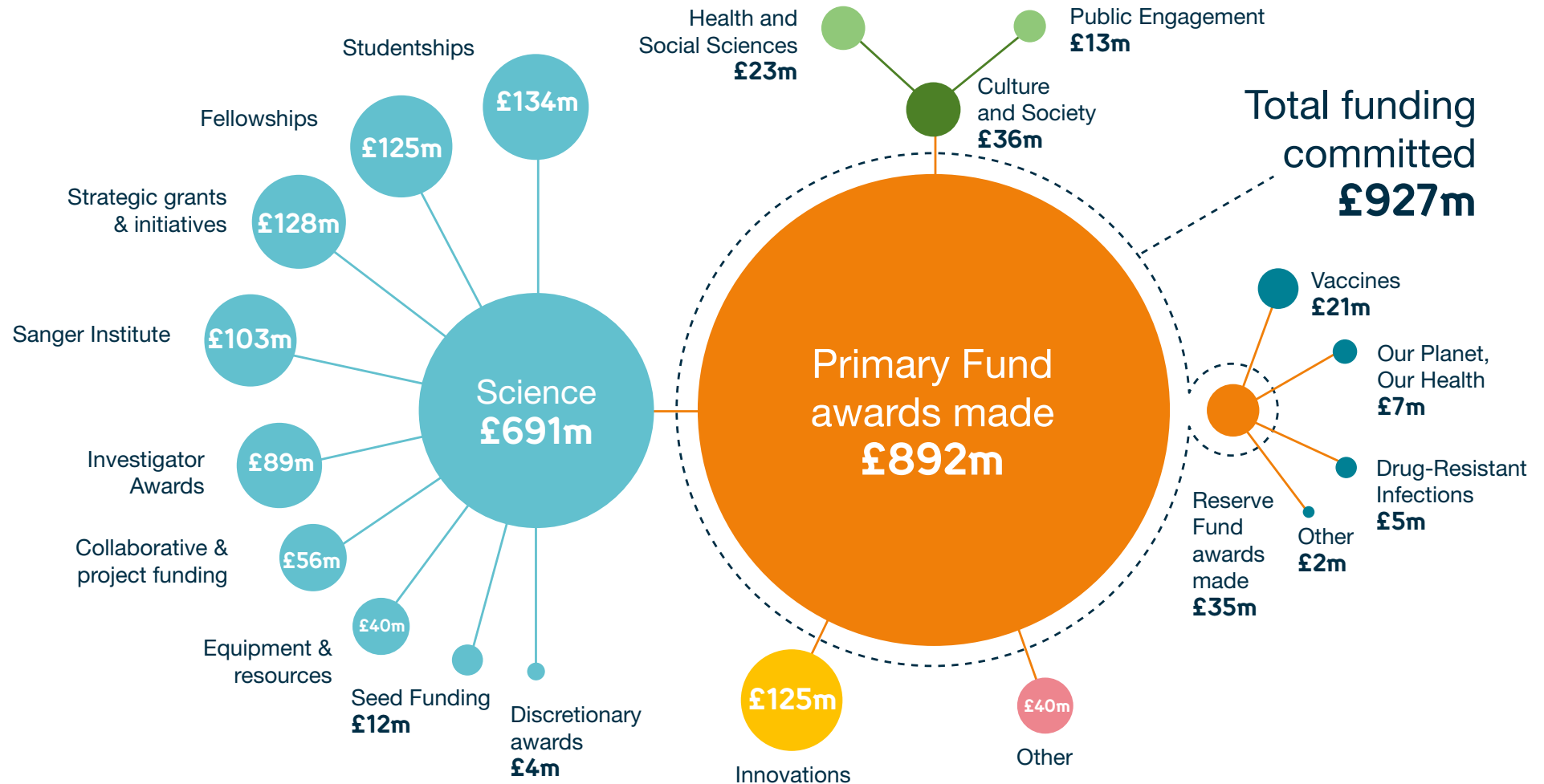


■ Indirect  
■ Direct

Grant support for research outside the UK has risen by 88% over the past five years, from £663m to £1,245m. This increase is largely driven by:

- larger-value core funding renewals for our Africa and Asia Programmes
- more one-off international initiatives (CEPI, CARB-X, DELTAS, H3Africa, Zika and Ebola research support initiatives)
- an increase in international team awards in Science and Innovations (e.g. Collaborative Awards)

# Funding committed in 2018/19



This data captures the activities we support through our grants and awards. The figures differ from those in our Annual Report and Financial Statements because they:

- include full commitment values for awards made as Programme Related Investments

- exclude directly funded activities, including Wellcome Collection
- exclude supplements, funds written back and other adjustments.

Full information about our funding each year is in our Annual Report and Financial Statements

# Funding trends



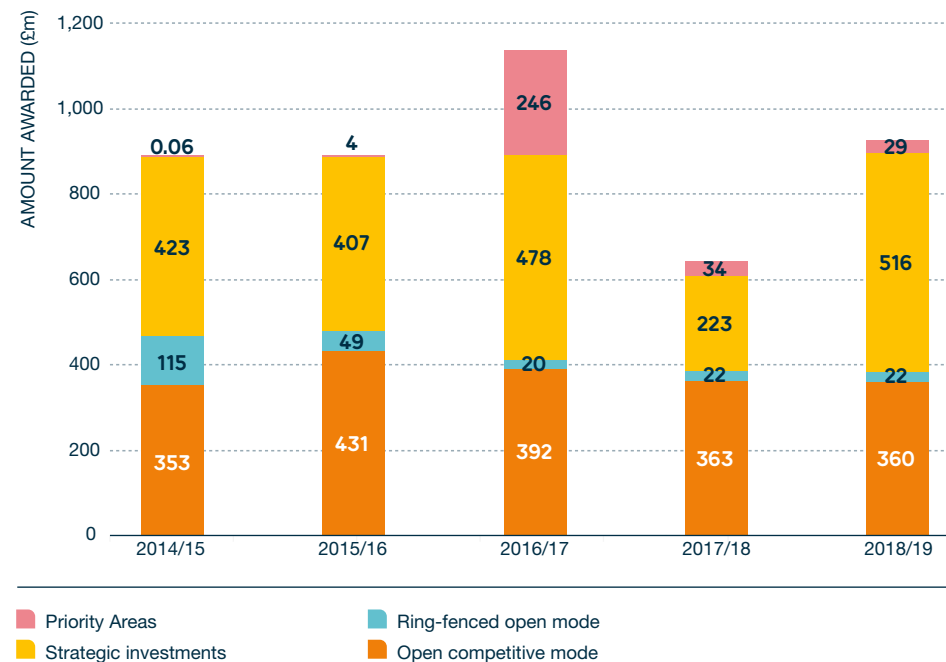
## Funding fluctuates from year to year depending on timing of major commitments

The total value of funding committed is £286m higher than in 2017/18. In 2018/19, Science funding increased largely due to funding for 5-year PhD programmes, and Innovations funding increased largely to support Flagship awards on psychosis and enteric disease.

Over the past five years our funding has been committed as follows:

- 42% (£1,898m) on **open competitive mode** calls (e.g. Collaborative Awards, Investigator Awards, Fellowships, Seeds, Public Engagement Fund)
- 5% (£227m) on thematic **ring-fenced open mode** funding (e.g. Global Health Trials, Ebola and Zika initiatives, Health Innovation Challenge Fund, Inspiring Science Fund)
- 46% (£2,047m) on long-term **strategic investments** (Sanger Institute, Hilleman Laboratories, Centres, Africa and Asia Programmes, Innovations Flagships and Priorities, India Alliance, Diamond Light Source, Biobank, PhD Programmes, Institutional Strategic Support Fund)
- 7% (£313m) on **priority areas**

## Funding committed by mechanism

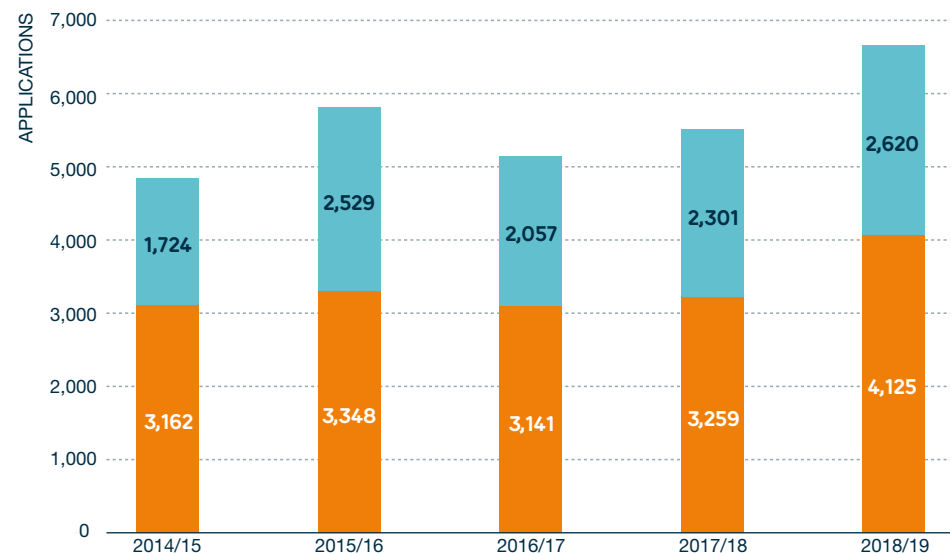


# Funding trends



## Application numbers rose in 2018/19 but will fall next year

### Application numbers

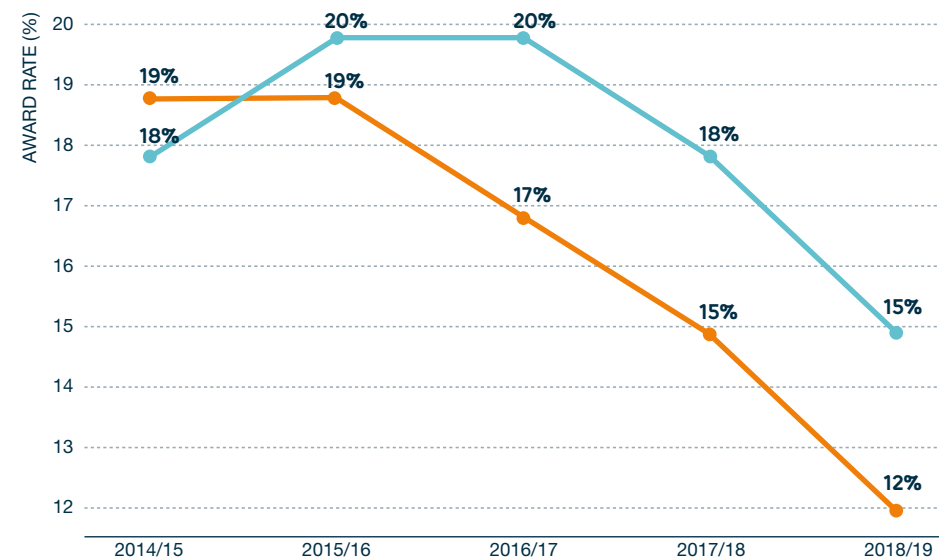


- Now discontinued schemes
- Current schemes

- The number of applications has increased by 37% over the past five years. We received 6,745 preliminary and full applications last year and made 1,134 awards.
- 2,620 applications in 2018/19 were for low-value award schemes: Vacation Scholarships, Seed Funding, Humanities & Social Science (HSS) Small Grants, Public Engagement Fund. These schemes are being discontinued from 2019/20 and the activities funded through different mechanisms, and consequently we expect total grant application numbers to fall in 2019/20.

## Award rates have declined over time

### Award rates



- All schemes (including those now discontinued)
- Current schemes

Over the past five years:

- The award rate for applications (including preliminary applications) has fallen from 19% to 12%.
- The award rate for full applications only has also fallen, from 24% to 16%.
- Award rates for Seed Funding, HSS Small Grants and Public Engagement Fund schemes – which are now discontinued – have declined significantly, reducing the overall award rate. Excluding these schemes, and taking into account preliminary applications, the overall award rate in 2018/19 was 15%.

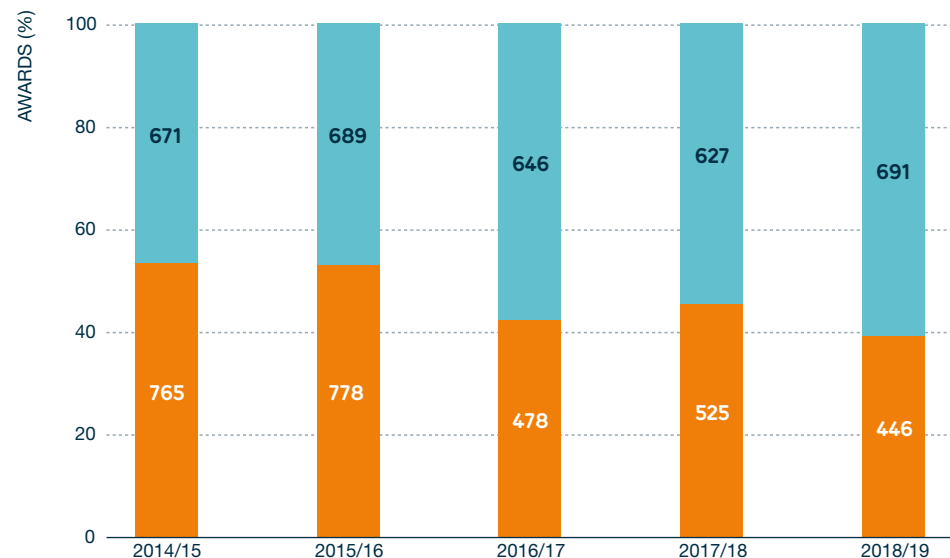


# Funding trends



## We fund fewer low-value grants

### Number and percentage of awards by value



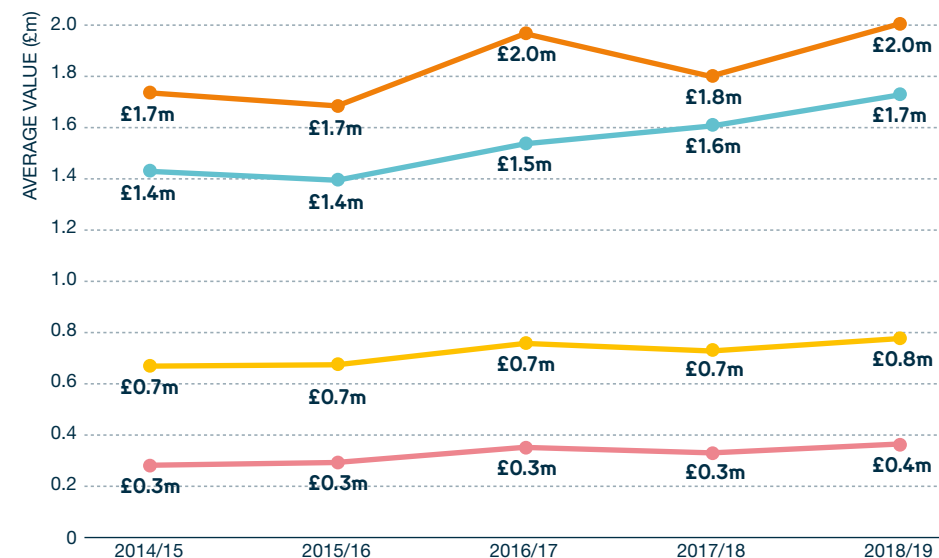
■ £100k or more  
■ Under £100k

Over the past five years:

- The proportion of awards made for less than £100,000 has fallen from 53% in 2014/15 to 39% in 2018/19.
- 67% of awards made for less than £100,000 in 2018/19 were for four schemes which will no longer run in 2019/20 (Vacation Scholarships, Seed Awards, HSS Small Grants, Public Engagement Fund).

## Grant values have risen by 10%

### Average award value by scheme



■ Senior Fellowships  
■ Investigator Awards  
■ Intermediate Fellowships  
■ Early Career Fellowships

Over the past five years:

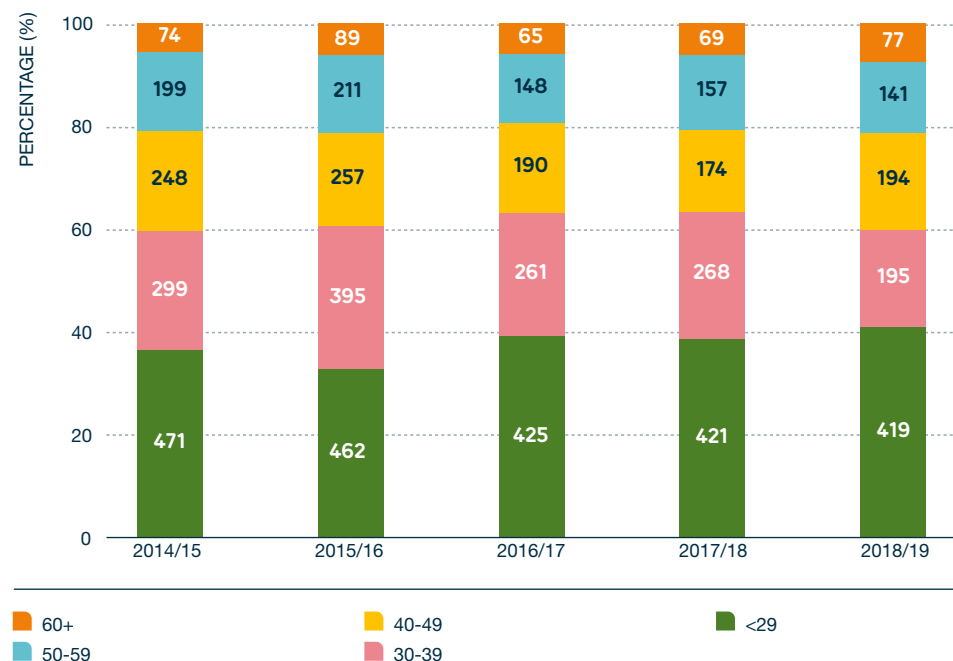
- The average value of Investigator Awards, Senior and Intermediate Fellowships has increased by 10%. Average award values have increased more on Science grants than on HSS grants.
- Costs requested on applications have shown the same trend.
- The average value of Early Career Fellowships has increased by more, as we have increased the set value of awards for non-clinical fellows and changed the way we support early career clinical fellows.

# People we fund



## The age profile of our awardees has not changed

### Number and percentage of awardees by age range

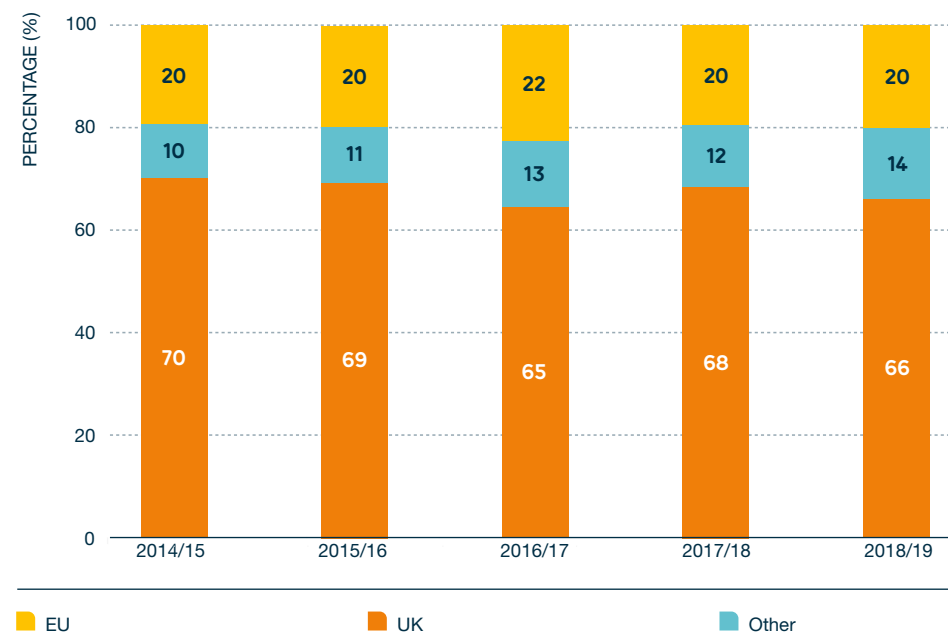


Over the past five years:

- The age distribution of all awardees has changed very little.
- The vast majority of awardees under 30 years old received PhD Studentships and Vacation Scholarships.
- The mean age of awardees for most schemes has hardly changed year on year (e.g. Investigator Award recipients 49-50, Senior Fellows 43-44, Intermediate Fellows 37-38, Early Career Fellows 32-34).

## Brexit has not had a major impact on applications

### Percentage of applicants by nationality



Over the past five years, 60% of Science applicants, 75% of Culture & Society applicants and 79% of Innovations applicants have been British nationals.

Since the 2016 referendum, for applicants based at UK organisations, the percentage of applications from non-UK EU nationals has:

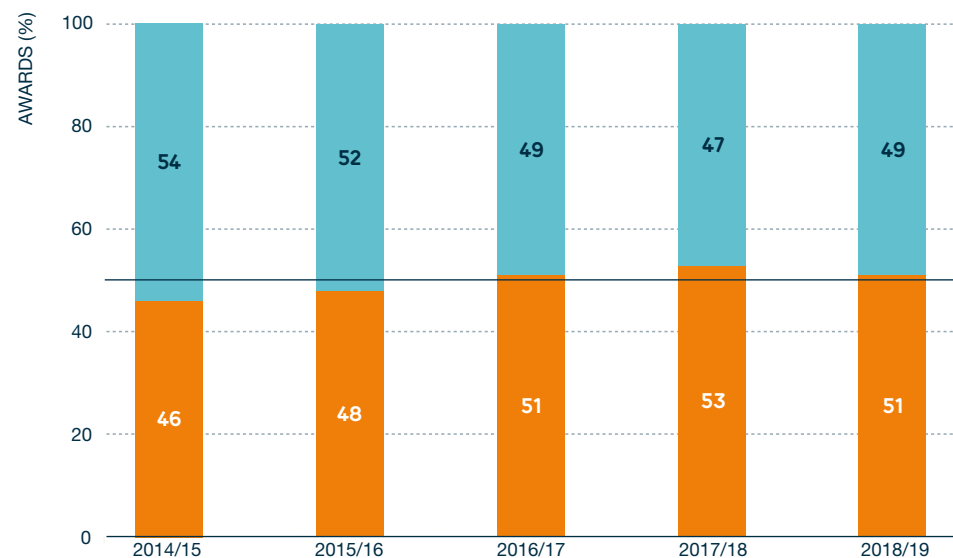
- remained stable for Studentships (c.20%)
- fallen for Early Career and Intermediate Fellowships (from 40% to 30% and from 30% to 25% respectively)
- risen for Senior Fellowships and Investigator Awards (from 20% to 25%)

# People we fund



## The proportion of awards made to women has risen

### Percentage of awards made by gender



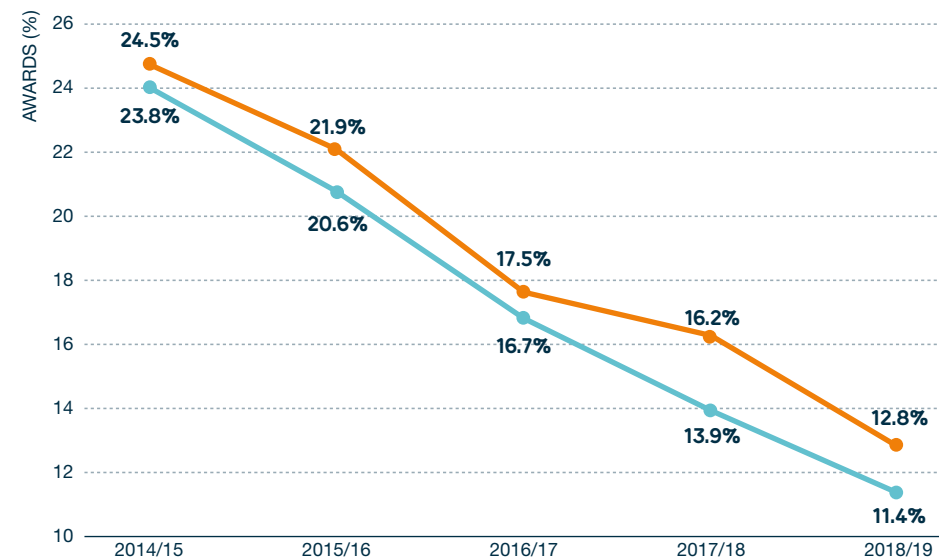
Women  
Men

Over the past five years:

- The proportion of all awards made to women rose from 46% to 51%. Awards in Culture & Society schemes are more likely to be made to women (59%), as are awards on schemes targeted at early and mid career researchers. Awards in Science schemes are less likely to be made to women (38%).
- For Science Collaborative Awards, Investigator Awards and Senior Fellows, the average award value for women was 5% lower than for men.

## Award rates for women are slightly higher than for men

### Award rate by gender



Women  
Men

Over the past five years:

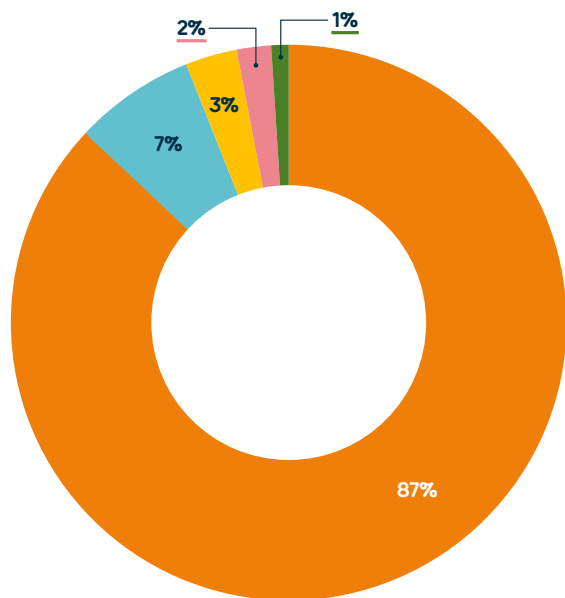
- The overall award rate for women is 18% and for men 17%. Women have higher award rates in Science, Innovations and Culture & Society.
- For Collaborative Awards, Investigator Awards and Senior Fellowships, 13% of women and 12% of men were successful. For Early Career and Intermediate Fellowships, women and men both had a 9% award rate.

# People we fund



## UK applicant ethnicity reflects society, but award rates differ by ethnicity

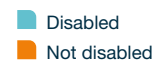
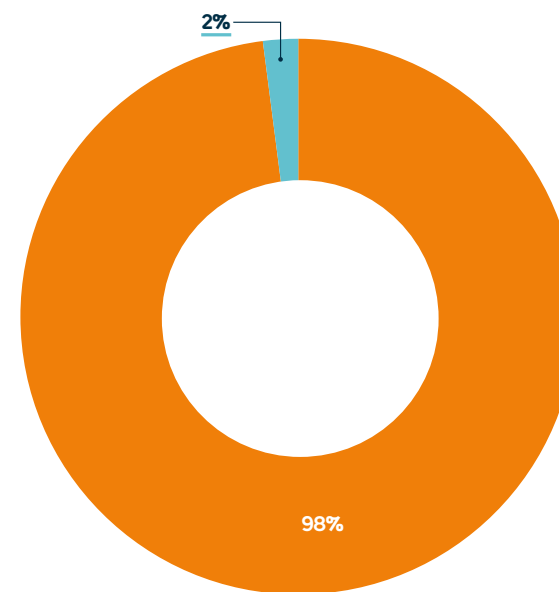
### Applicant ethnicity 2016/19



- The ethnic distribution of UK-based applicants is similar to the ethnic composition of the UK (2011 census data).
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups are more likely to apply for studentship and early career support schemes.
- Over the past three years the award rate for UK-based BAME applicants (15%) has been lower than for white applicants (18%). This trend exists for each BAME ethnic group, and when analysing award rates by year, by funding division, and by most schemes.

## Fewer UK applicants identify as disabled than the population average

### Applicant disability status 2016/19

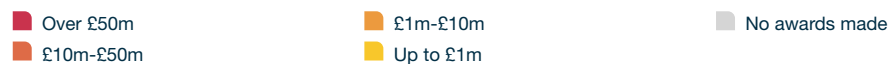
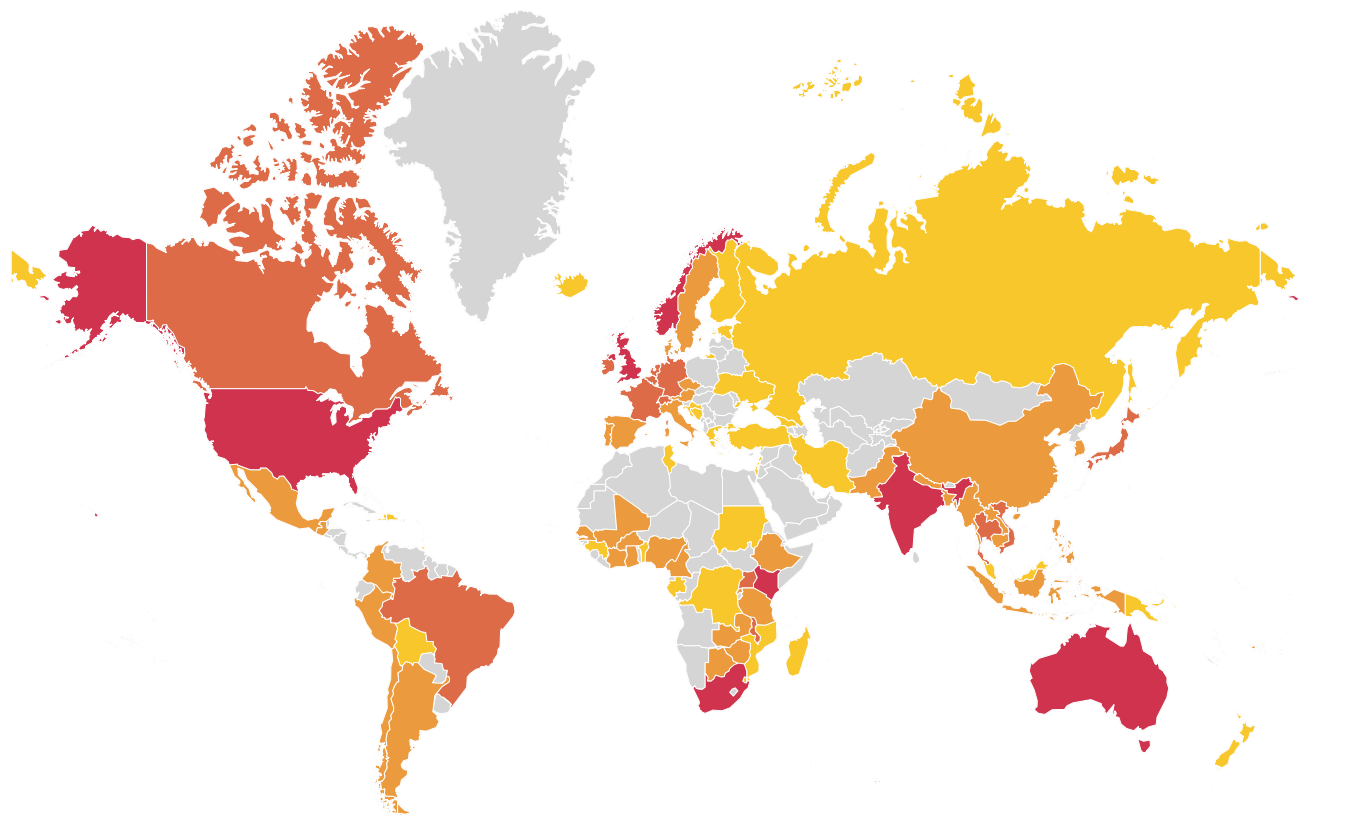


- 2% of UK-based applicants identified themselves as disabled. According to the UK Government family resources survey 2016/17, 19% of working-age adults are disabled.
- Over the past three years the award rate for disabled applicants (13%) has been lower than for non-disabled applicants (15%). But the small number of disabled applicants prevents us from making detailed analysis or statistically significant comparisons.

# Places we fund worldwide



## Funding by country



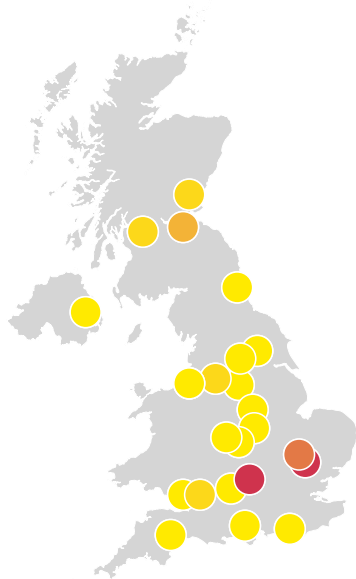
- 27% of our current grant portfolio (£1,245m) supports research in 91 countries outside the UK.
- 17% (£764m) has been awarded directly to organisations outside the UK (including £86m CEPI, £125m CARB-X, £120m India Alliance, £57m AESA and £45m Hilleman Laboratories).
- 10% (£481m) has been awarded indirectly through UK institutions for research carried out in other countries (including £156m to the Africa and Asia Programmes in Thailand, Vietnam, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa).

# Places we fund worldwide



## UK organisations holding more than £10m in grant funding

### UK funding by location

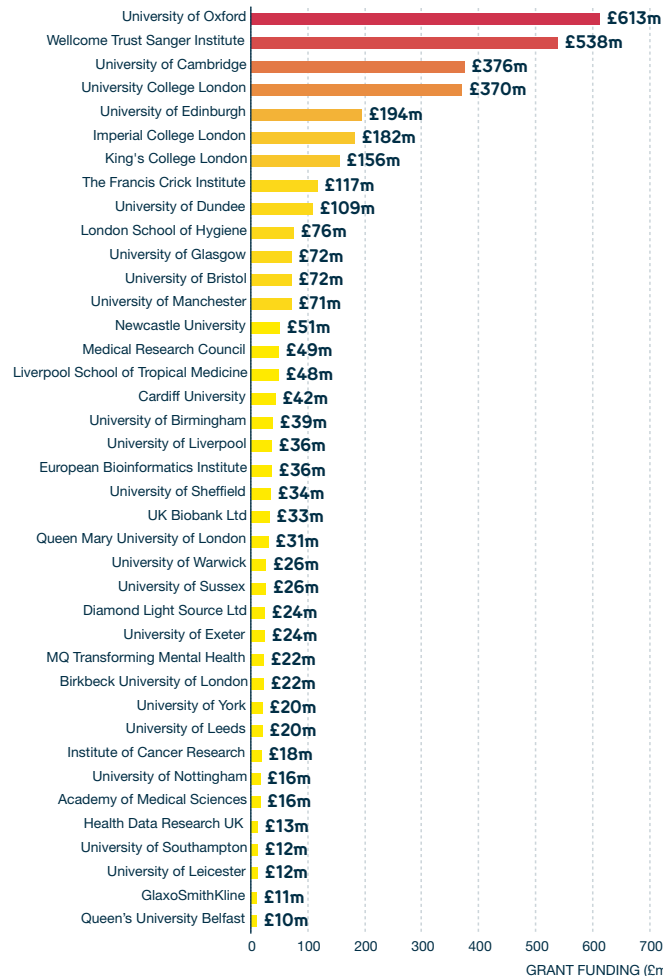


#### London organisation funding

- University College London – £370m
- Imperial College London – £182m
- King's College London – £156m
- The Francis Crick Institute – £117m
- London School of Hygiene – £76m
- Queen Mary University of London – £31m
- Birkbeck University of London – £22m
- Institute of Cancer Research – £18m



### UK funding by organisation



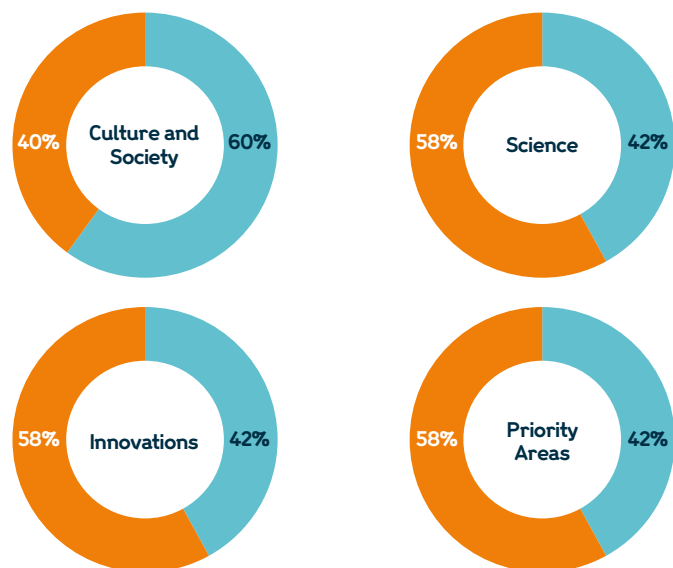
## 83% of our grant portfolio is held by UK organisations, and UK funding is concentrated in a few places

- 41% of our grant portfolio is held by 4 organisations: University of Oxford, Sanger Institute, University of Cambridge, University College London.
- The top 10 funded UK organisations hold 74% of our UK funding in Science, and 48% in Culture & Society.
- Several UK Universities – including Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, Dundee, Birkbeck, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine – receive at least 15% of their total research grant income from Wellcome.

# Advisory committees and peer review

## Women's representation on our committees has increased by 50%

### Gender of 2018/19 Advisory committee membership by Division

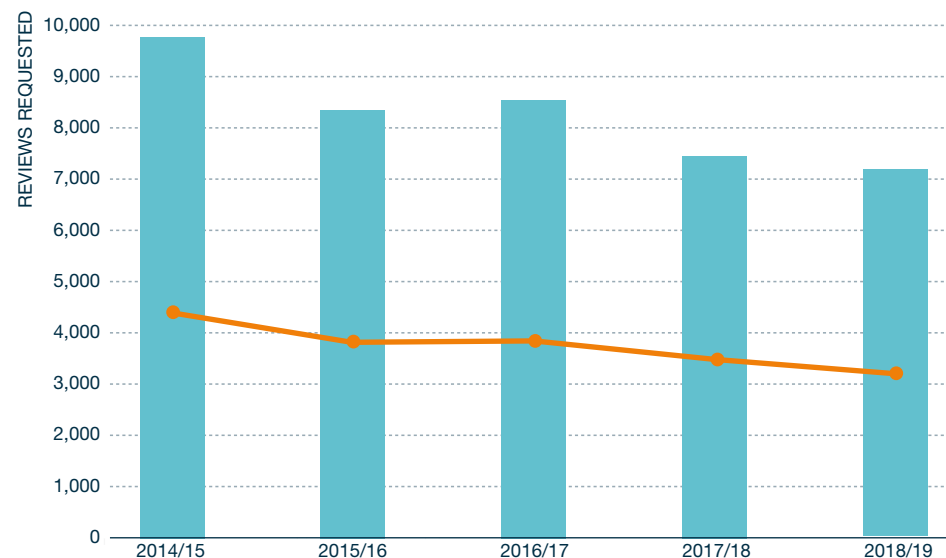


Men Women

- We currently have 437 members of 39 advisory committees.
- 45% of committee members are women (up from 29% in 2014), 11% are BAME (up from 9% in 2014), and 1% of members who disclosed their status identify as disabled (no change).
- The average age of a committee member is 52 (down from 55 in 2014),
- 71% of committee members are based in the UK (no change from 2014).
- We have recently agreed targets – for gender, age, ethnicity, disability and geographical location – to continue increasing the diversity of our committee members.

## Peer review requests are falling

### Peer review requests and reviews received



Peer review requests Reviews received

Over the past five years, the number of peer review requests has fallen because:

- For many schemes, we now use our Expert Review Groups to shortlist applications before seeking written external peer review.
- Written external peer review is no longer used for several small-value, high-volume schemes.
- 40% of peer review requests are sent to North American reviewers, 32% to UK reviewers, 19% to European reviewers and 9% elsewhere.
- We get the highest response rate from UK reviewers (59%) and the lowest from North American reviewers (35%).

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