

# 2023 Staff Survey Results

From the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and the Gender Equality Officers

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## Who created this report

We are officially (as of December 2023) the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. As such our focus is on attracting diversity to the MPI, supporting and including diverse people who are at the MPI, and improving diversity in our science. Our role is to both advise and push for changes within the MPI to support diverse people both to make it to the MPI and flourish here. We will give and ask for special support to those who come from underprivileged backgrounds in order to provide equity in opportunities. As a result and according to these ideals, we have already put some initiatives in motion to address the issues that have arisen in this survey and we provide specific suggestions for actions and steps to help reach these goals.

## How to read this report

In this report, we start by providing a methodology section that describes how the survey was organized and what kinds of questions it asked. After that, we provide an Executive Summary with practical suggestions and highlights of the information we believe stood out. In the sections following that, we provide short summary reports and comments at the beginning of each section of the survey, followed by graphs with the raw numbers reported within. We also include percentages in the comments to facilitate comprehension. Given the extensive use of free comments to provide personal testimony and suggestions in addition to quantitative data, we have also included summaries of these responses.

## Methodology

The survey consisted of approximately 80 questions divided into 8 sections. These sections were:

- *About you* (demographics and language comfort)
- *Newcomers or Non-newcomers section* depending on years of service at MPI (adjusting and belonging)
- *Getting Support* (access to HR and research support)
- *Supervisor Support* (questions about regularity of meetings, career advice, etc.)
- *COVID-19* (long-term impact of COVID on work-life)
- *Work-Life Balance*
- *Interactions within and between Departments at MPI* (current and desired)
- *Diversity and Inclusion* (training, inclusivity, and feelings of exclusion)

Each section contained a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. All questions were optional—and multiple choice questions all included a “prefer not to say” option. For this report, we combined the no responses with the “prefer not to say” responses. All questions also had a free-response comment section.

The first section was the *About you* section which included basic demographics (e.g., age and gender), work demographics (e.g., time at MPI and whether they work part- or full-time), and comfort with Dutch and English. The question of how long

participants had been working at MPI (less than 2 years, 2 to 5 years, or more than 5) redirected them to either the newcomers or non-newcomers section.

The *Newcomers* section was a bit more extensive than the *Non-Newcomers* section. Both asked about adjusting to and feelings of belonging in the Netherlands, as well as cultural differences. The *Newcomers* section additionally asked about their introduction at the MPI and adjusting to Nijmegen in practical terms (e.g., figuring out transportation or trash disposal).

The following section was on getting support and help at MPI. This section focused on questions about knowledge and the use of different HR resources as well as research support channels. We asked whether respondents had used different channels and/or had asked for support for HR issues (e.g., work-life balance, childcare, or leave) and for work-related issues (e.g., operations or TG). We also asked whether they knew how to get support for these issues if they needed to and whether they felt well supported by each of the departments.

Next was the section on supervisor support. We asked questions about how regularly they had meetings and received career advice, as well as how comfortable they felt going to their supervisor for support.

The *COVID-19* section focused on questions about the long-term impact of COVID-19 on work conditions as well as on work-life balance. We asked about how well they perceived the MPI dealt with the pandemic and how this affected their perspective and preference for working conditions (e.g., the regularity of home-office work).

The section on interactions within and between departments at MPI focused on questions of current and desired interactions at MPI. We asked about whether people would like more social and/or academic interaction within and between departments as well as whether they saw any impediments to this.

Finally, the *Diversity and Inclusion* section asked about issues concerning the DEI group and its initiatives. We asked questions about interest in diversity and inclusion training as well as how to make people feel more included. We also provided an open-ended space for people to share instances in which they saw either positive or negative interactions concerning inclusivity.

We also included a final textbox for respondents to fill in any last comments.

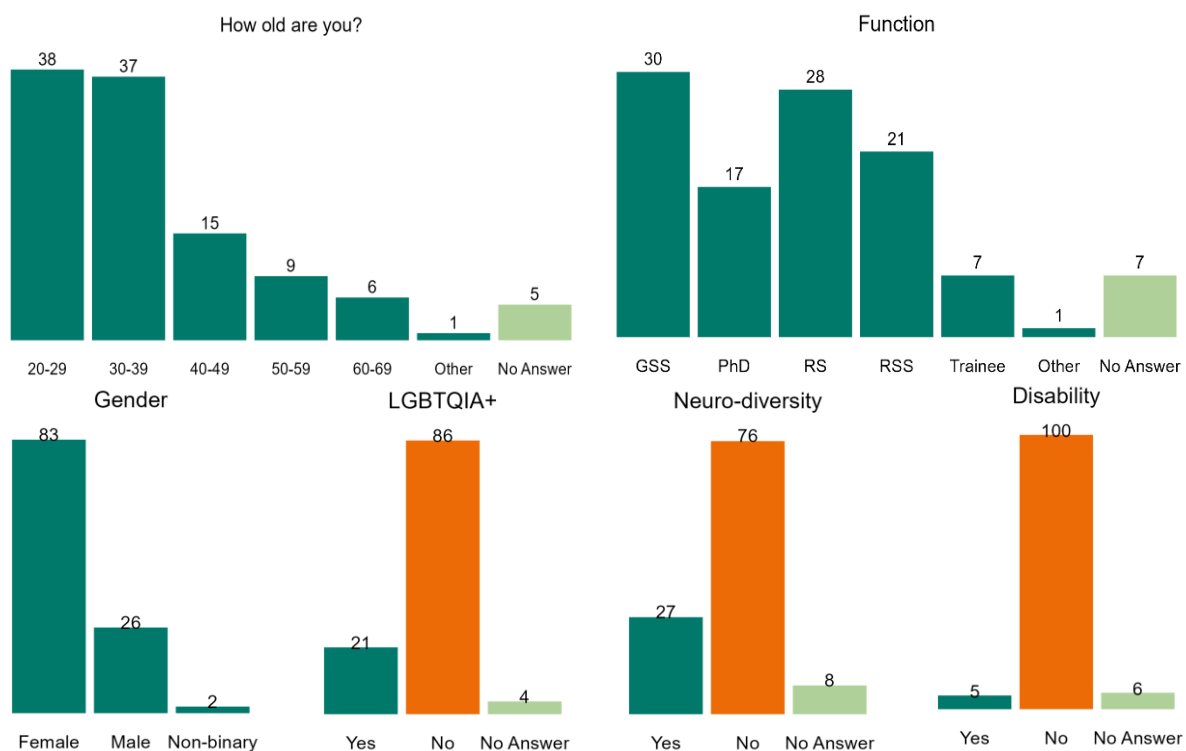
The survey was made available through the MPI internal newsletter. Participants could follow the link to the survey made using Limesurvey. They could save their responses and continue on a different day, but they were not able or allowed to fill in the survey twice. In one instance, we found that the same person had filled part of it twice and excluded the incomplete response. One hundred and seventy-eight (178) people were eligible to fill out the survey, of which 95 (plus 16 trainees and individuals who did not disclose their relationship to the MPI) completed it—approximately a 53% response rate. This means that over half of the MPI staff completed the survey. The responses of the members of the D&I survey committee (Vicky Fisher, Candice Frances, and Karin Kastens) were excluded from the analyses.

## Introduction, who responded?

### Demographics

A total of 111 colleagues (excluding trainees 104 out of 178 employees) filled out the survey. The majority of respondents identified as female and a higher percentage of females completed the survey—85 out of 116 presumably female employees totaling approximately 72% versus 26 out of 62 presumably male employees, reaching approximately 42%. Of the respondents, 19% identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. The majority of respondents (68%) ranged between 20 and 39 years of age.

Of the respondents, 29.7% identify as being neurodiverse and/or having a disability which approximates the expected average combining national physical disability in the Netherlands (12-13%, sources [1](#), [2](#)) and neurodiversity (based on people working in the UK and the US: 15-20%, sources [1](#), [2](#), and [3](#)). These responses—namely, disability and neurodiversity—had very little overlap.



## Cultural Background

We asked participants to report their nationality and their cultural background. We graphed the reported nationalities on a map (see below). The overwhelming majority of respondents were Dutch (53 – 50%), followed by German (15 – 14%). If we divide the data into continents, there were 88 (82%) respondents from Europe, 10 (9%) from Asia, 7 (7%) from North America, 1 (1%) from Africa, and 1 (1%) from Australia. There were no respondents from South America. This highlights our overrepresentation of Europeans and individuals from the Global North. With respect to cultural background, some identified with a language, others with a religion, with their origin, with race, or with a geographical region. Most people put multiple identities, but the following were the most common: Dutch (20), atheist or non-religious (12), European (8), and white/Caucasian (7). See the Wordcloud below.



Figure Responses to the question "What is your nationality/nationalities?"



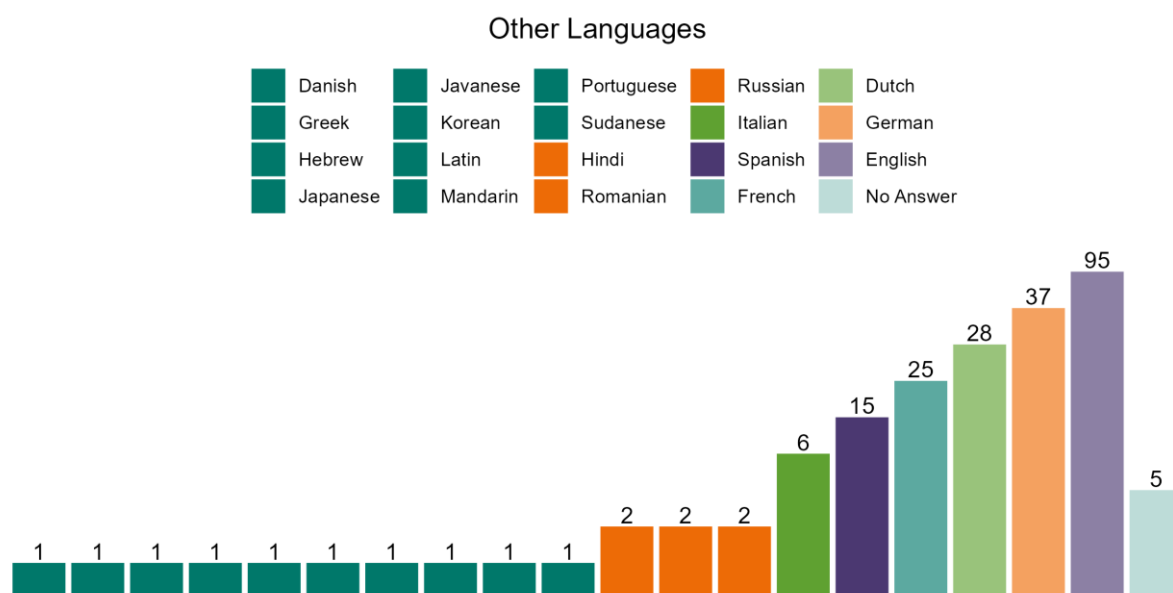
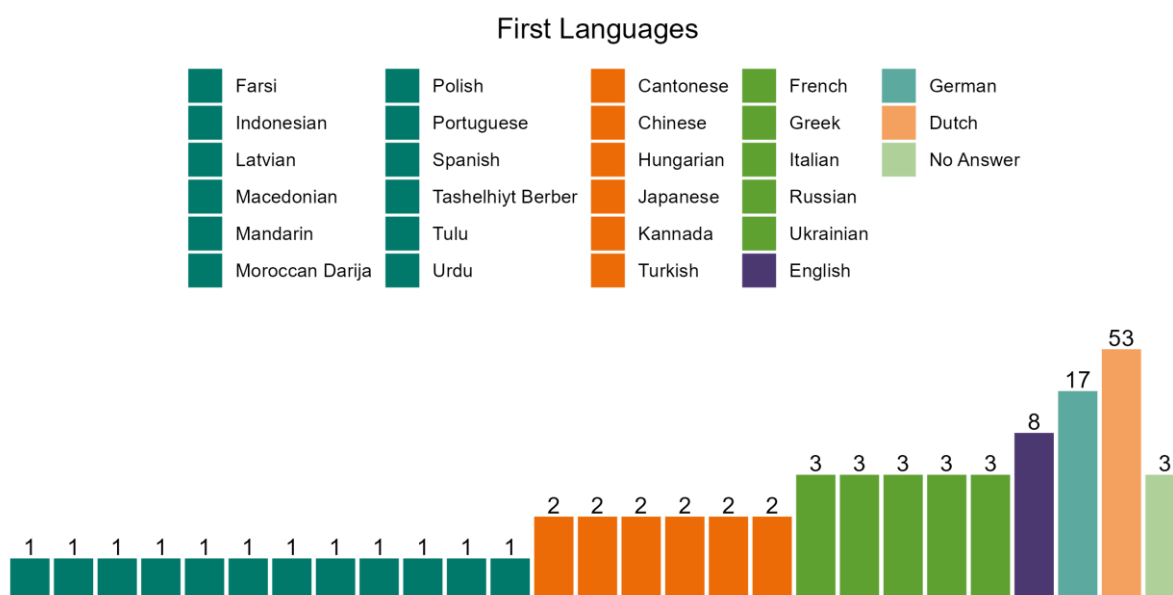
Figure Responses to the question "What is your cultural background?"

## Language background

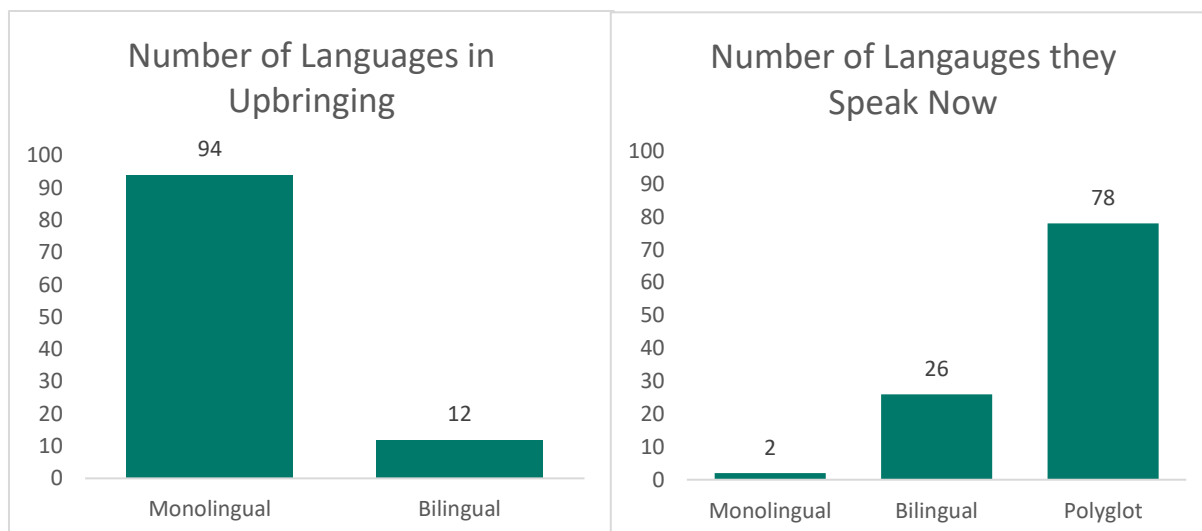
In the survey, we asked for “mother/first language/languages” and provided the following definition: “language you learned at home/spoke at home as a child”. For the sake of this report, we will unify these under the label of “native language”.

Dutch was by far (49%) the most common first language of those who responded, followed by German (15%), and English (7%). The most common additional language spoken by respondents was English (88%), followed by German (34%), Dutch (25%), closely followed by French (23%). It is important to note here that the majority of respondents reported speaking more than one additional language. The majority of respondents (78%) speak at least 3 languages.

These values point to quite a varied population with a strong majority of first-language speakers of Germanic languages (Dutch, German, and English—71%). This is likely biased by the location of the institute as well as the official language of it. Our population is also mainly bilingual and trilingual (98%).







### Use of languages within the MPI

For questions about Dutch, the 53 native Dutch speakers were excluded, leaving a total of 58 responses. For questions about English, the 8 native English speakers were excluded, leaving a total of 103 responses.

When asked how comfortable respondents were using Dutch in work settings, the majority of non-native Dutch respondents (73%) reported not being comfortable (responses of 1 or 2 on a scale of 1 to 5). Using Dutch socially was reported to be slightly less uncomfortable for non-native Dutch respondents, decreasing from 73% to 61%.

Contrastively, non-native speakers of English report being much more comfortable using this language both for work (89% responding 4 or 5) and in social settings (85% responding 4 or 5). Although these numbers seem high, it still means that 10 to 15% percent of people at MPI are not fully comfortable working or socializing in English.

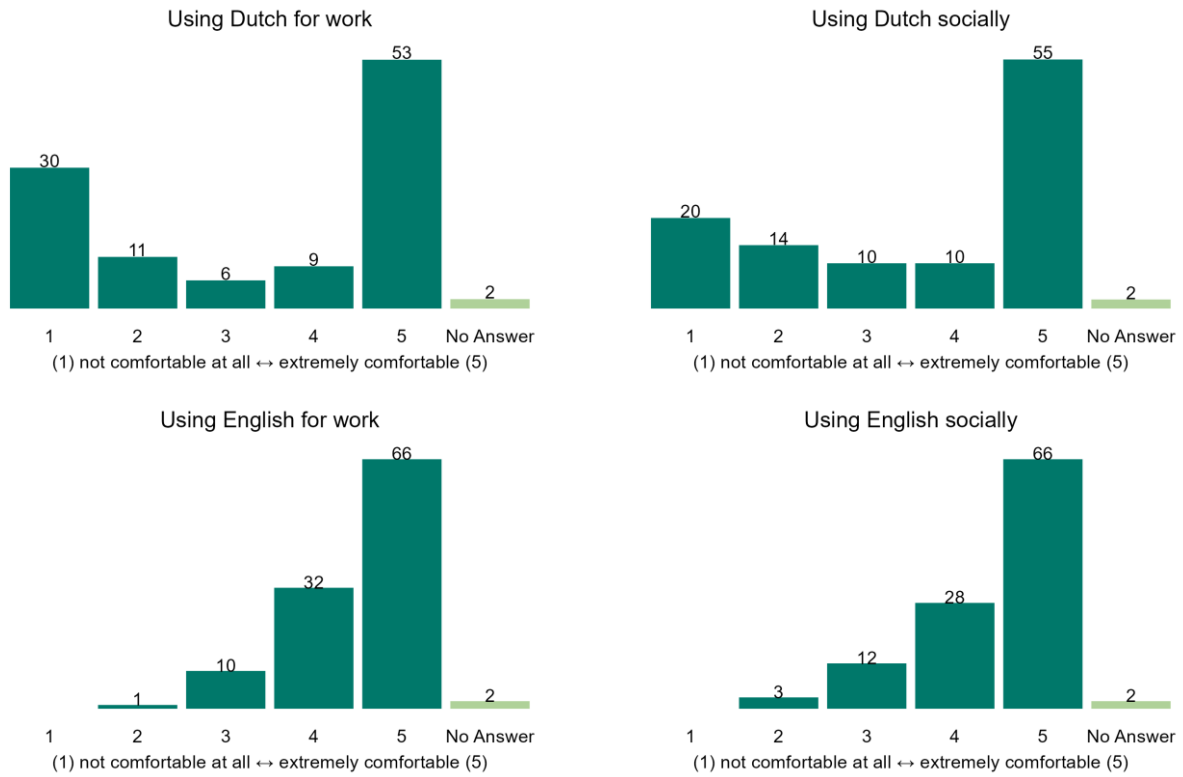
On average, general support staff were much more comfortable with Dutch in both the workplace (mean = 4.63) and socially (4.56) than PhDs (2.29 and 2.64), research staff (2.67 and 3.07), and trainees (2.57 and 2.71).

These values point to a clear gap in the availability of resources to learn Dutch, especially for those on temporary contracts. Perhaps making Dutch courses or practice available at the MPI would be beneficial for our workers to feel part of and comfortable in the greater Dutch community.

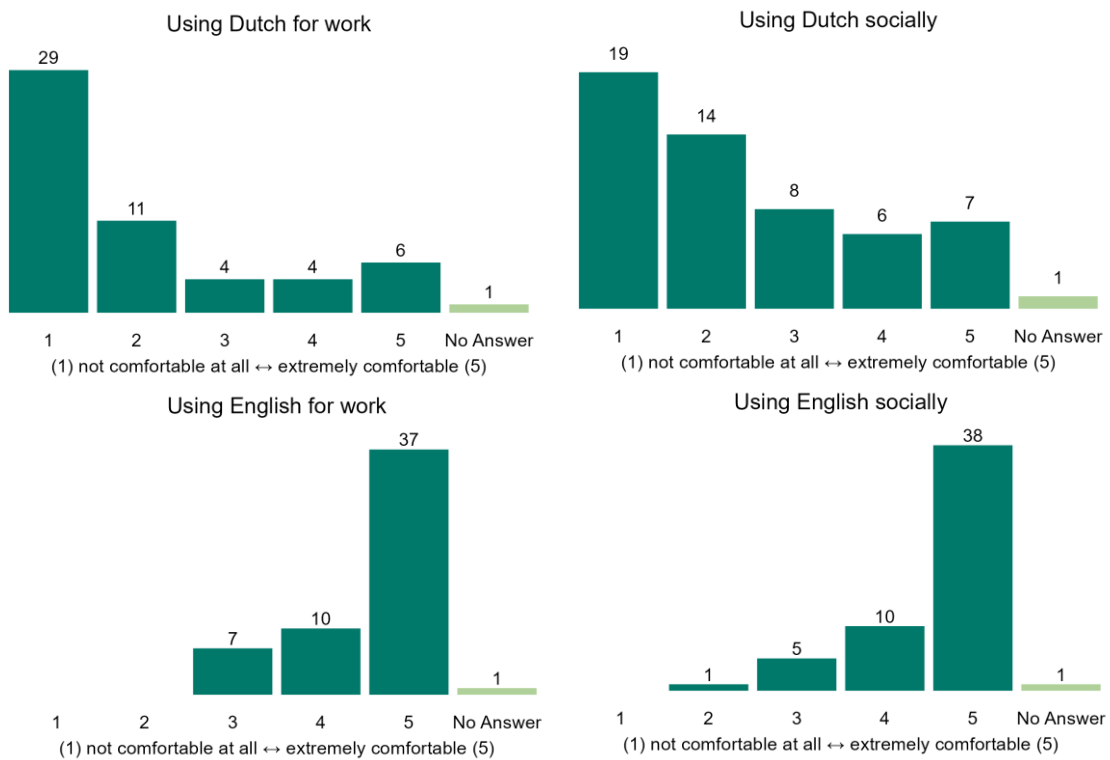
With respect to English, although most respondents were comfortable using it for work and socially, some were not (11 were not comfortable using English for work and 15 were not comfortable using it socially). Because this is the official work language at the MPI, it is important that we provide resources for *everyone* to be comfortable with its use—both at work and socially especially for foreigners.

Furthermore, more people feel okay using English for work but fewer feel comfortable using it socially, which may limit feelings of belonging.

### Language confidence overall



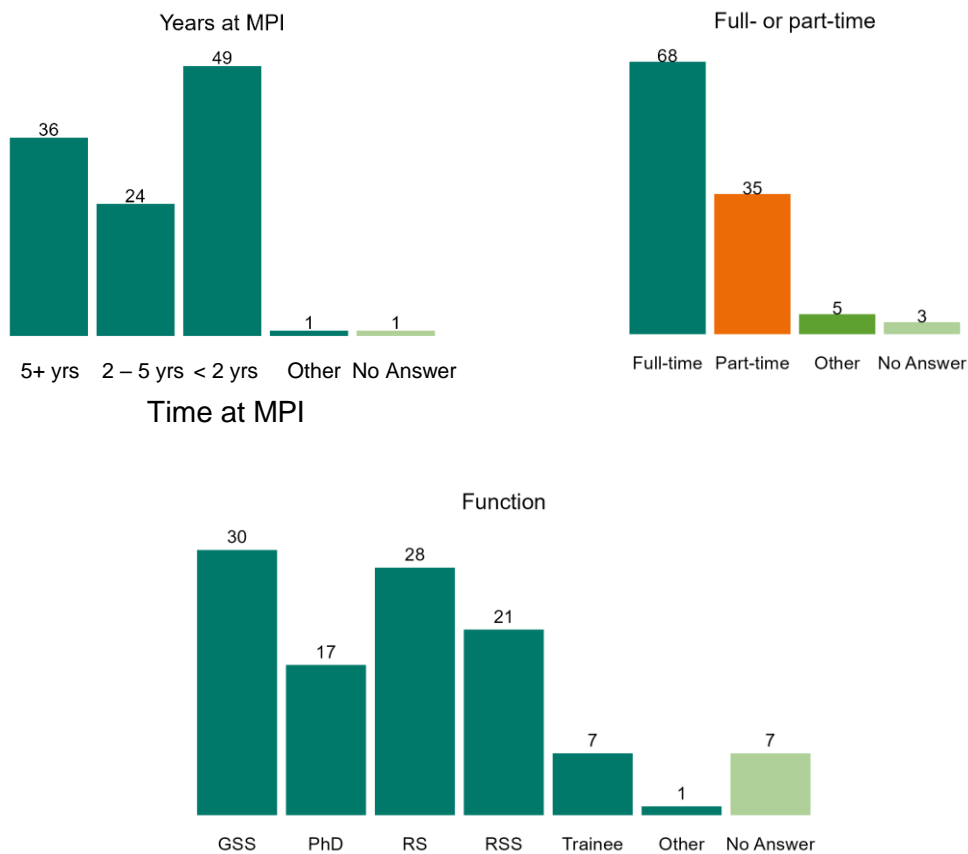
### Language confidence non-Dutch employees



## Employment characteristics

The majority of respondents were general support staff colleagues (27%; TG, Operations, secretaries), closely followed by our research staff colleagues (24%), research support staff (19%), and PhD candidates (15%). This means that 70% of the 43 general support staff, 59% of the 29 PhDs, 47% of the 58 research staff, and 44% of the research support staff responded.

Of those who responded, the majority (60%) reported working full-time. A large proportion of respondents (42%) can be classified as newcomers, as they started working at the MPI in 2022 or later. This is important to keep in mind, as the rapid turnaround rate affects the culture of the institute and necessitates better resources for newcomers to adapt quickly.



## Common questions between newcomers and non-newcomers

### **Integration and linguistic difficulties**

There were some questions we asked both newcomers and non-newcomers, particularly about linguistic difficulties and integration (within their department, the MPI, and the Netherlands). In general, employees feel integrated very well within their department and the Netherlands, but a bit less (although still quite well) within the MPI. When we exclude Dutch respondents, the level of integration within the Netherlands decreases a bit. One of the reasons given for lower belonging to the Netherlands is that it is difficult to meet and make connections with people outside of work. Several highlight that not speaking Dutch (well) is a large barrier to feeling integrated and leads to feelings of guilt and social difficulties. They highlight guilt around having poor Dutch skills and that leading to having to ask others to switch to English, although another highlights that people are excited to switch to English which also makes learning Dutch difficult.

In general, respondents do not seem to have struggled linguistically, but when we exclude Dutch respondents, 28% have struggled from somewhat to significantly (3-5). One highlights “Dutch English” as part of the reason, with some concepts being explained to them repeatedly when they use a different term because it is assumed they do not understand them. Several highlight difficulties in communicating (e.g., finding the right words, expressing emotions, or being more reserved) but say that others have been helpful and patient in this matter. Some also highlight issues with German (for administration and technical documents) and with the administration not being as available in English (with little support). Finally, several highlight that speaking a second language constantly can be very tiring.

We also asked respondents whether they had struggled with cultural differences. Here, there was a wider spread. In particular, when we removed Dutch employees, 33% of respondents struggled with cultural differences between somewhat and significantly (3-5). One respondent highlights that they often fill in information during interactions based on their own thinking, which is sometimes not ideal. They also highlight that in job interviews they struggle to differentiate between cultural and knowledge differences. Another respondent highlights that there are cultural differences that we overlook, like between European and North American cultures. Some respondents highlight systemic issues like the societal approach to medical care, the cultural approach to anxiety and worry, cultural treatment of racism, misogyny, and ableism. Others highlight practical issues like public transport and waste management. One more broadly highlights cultural beliefs or convictions that are not based on acceptance.

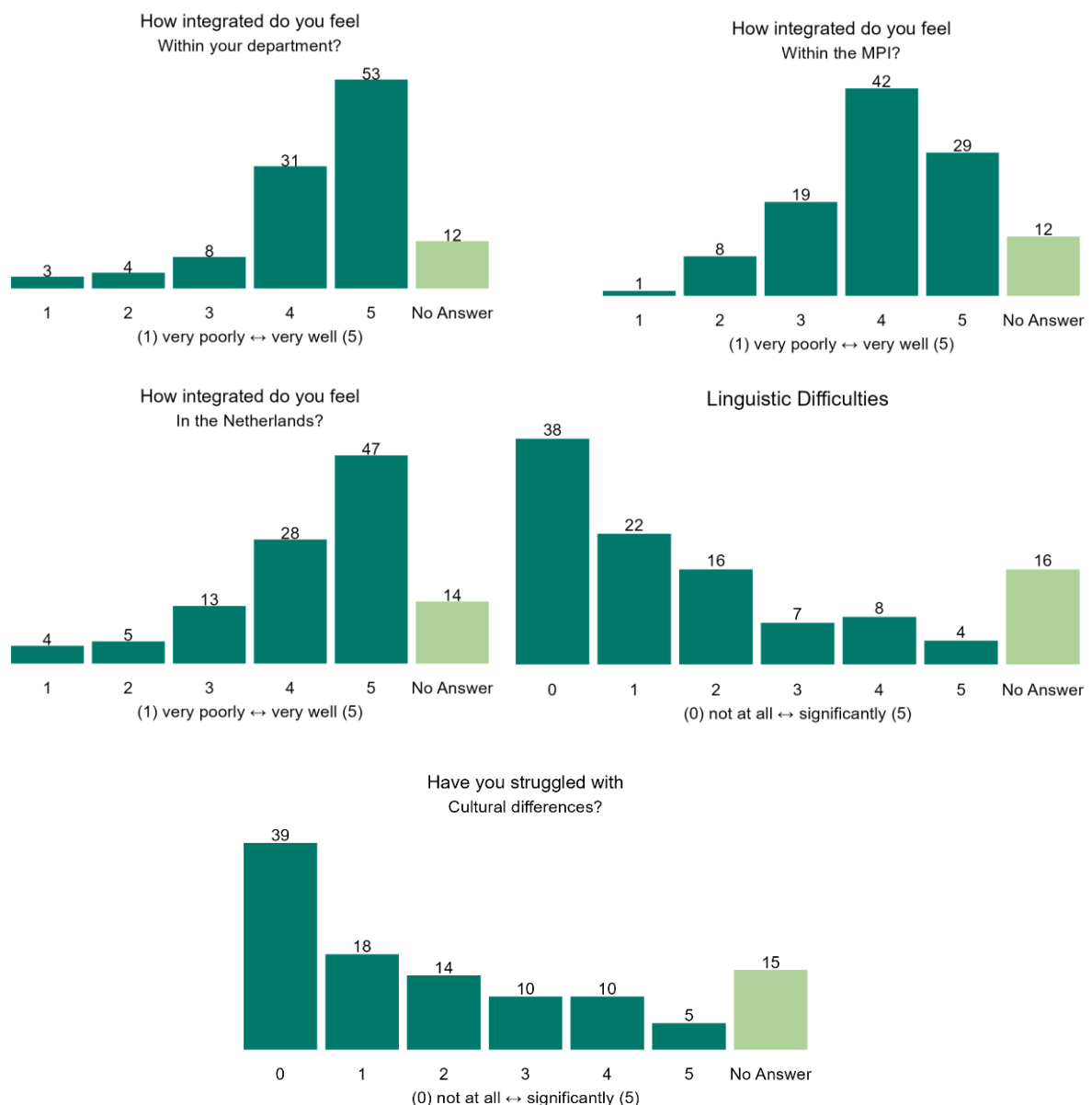
There are several comments on different communication styles (especially related to supervision), expectations of timeliness, and how people deal with hierarchy, with people from certain backgrounds struggling to speak up. From the side of Dutch respondents, some struggle to notice subtleties in communication that are important

in people from other cultures and another says they feel like they need to "put aside" their Dutch directness. Importantly, one highlights the tolerance and flexibility within people at the MPI, which alleviates some of these pressures.

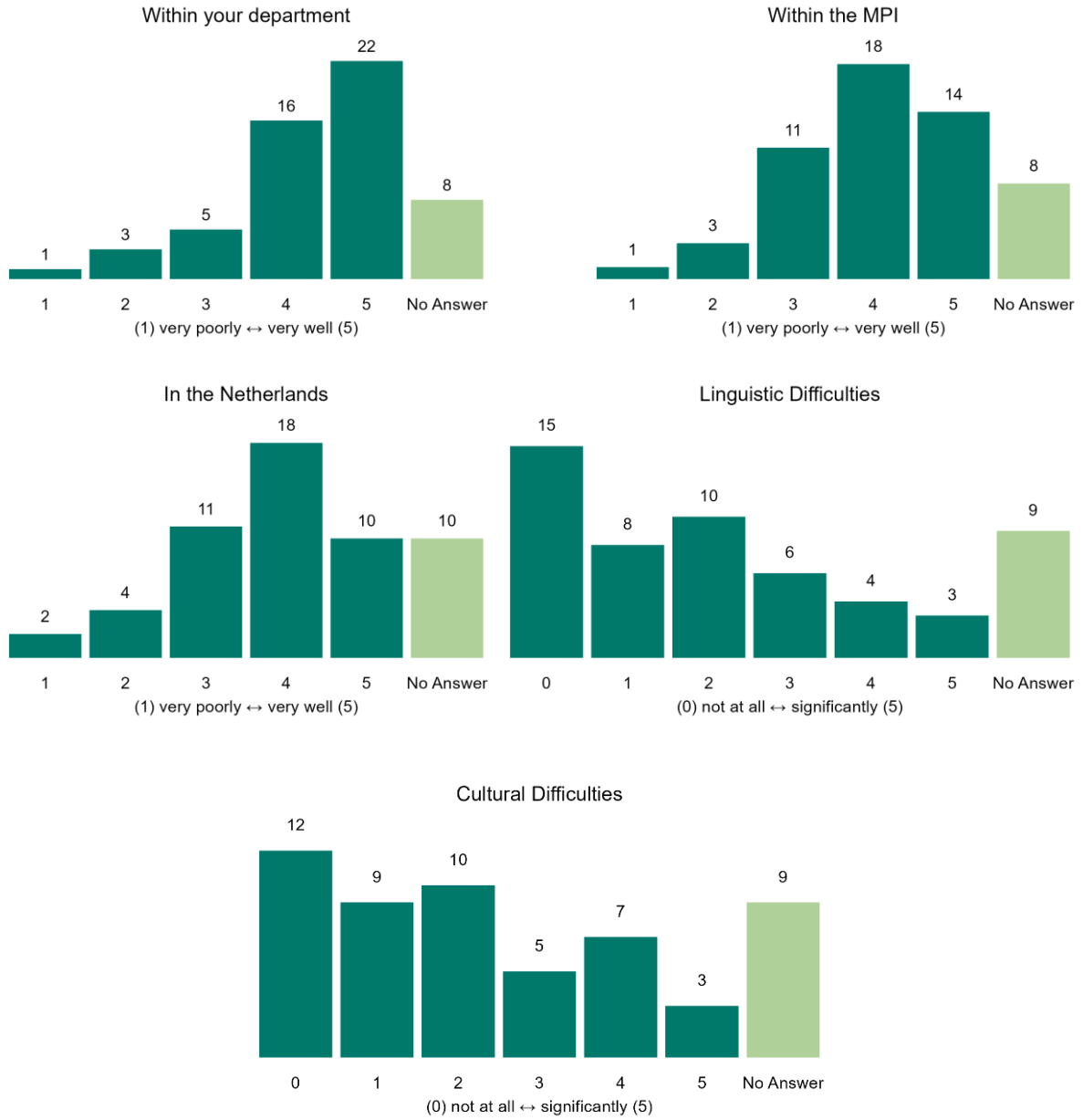
In general, there are some practical things that we can do to address this. First, we can provide Dutch courses and the possibility to practice Dutch within the institute (e.g., the already reintroduced Dutch lunches). Second, providing some explicit guidance with respect to both practical (e.g., transportation, waste management, and timeliness) and more cultural aspects (e.g., how the hierarchy works here, that asking questions is ok, and communicative expectations) particularly to our colleagues from abroad. Unfortunately, we cannot solve the systemic issues, but we can clarify that our support structures within the MPI can assist with issues outside of the institute to help alleviate these pressures (e.g., the equity officer, the buddy system, and even individual colleagues).

We will revisit these questions for newcomers and non-newcomers separately in later sections.

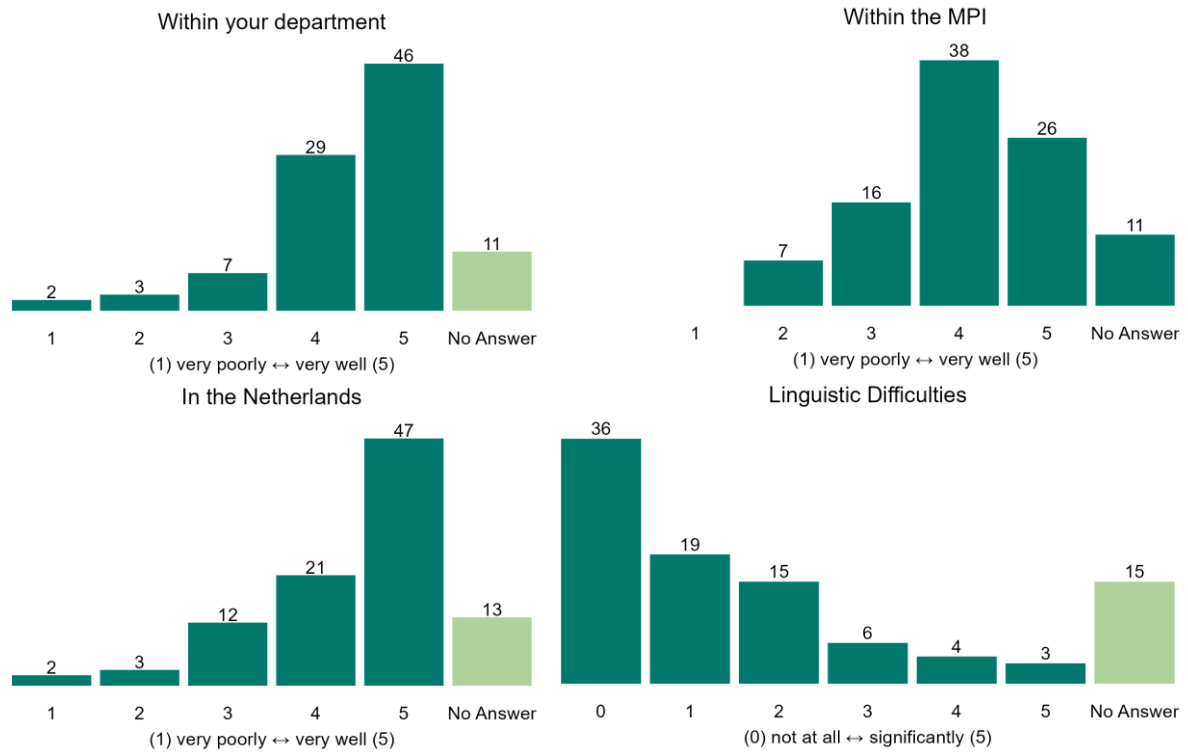
## Graphs of integration and linguistic difficulties overall



## Graphs of integration and linguistic difficulties overall excluding Dutch respondents



## Graphs of integration and linguistic difficulties overall excluding native English-speaking respondents



# Newcomers

## Introduction

The majority of newcomers (75%) reported having a good or very good introduction to our institute. At least 77% of them attended the Information for Newcomers event (only one respondent reported not attending) and reviewed the event as very useful. There were just a few practical suggestions to improve the events, which include the timing of the events (they suggested having the introduction before the other trainings, not starting before the Christmas Holiday, having it closer to their starting date), including a social event and a tour of the institute, more practical information about the technical infrastructure, sports facilities, or request forms. One person highlighted that it was not possible to remember all of the information so having a “who to ask for what” infographic might have been more useful. Another found it a bit slow.

Although the information respondents would have liked to see in the introduction is necessary and they should have access to it, such a short, limited event cannot provide all of it. It should be made clearer that the Newcomer events are a way of giving a broad overview of all support channels and that in-depth practical information will be given by the individual support channels separately. We still could include a social part after the newcomers' meeting and a tour of the institute.

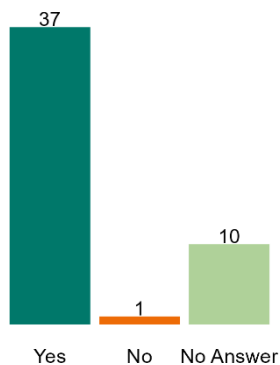


Figure Responds to the question "Did you attend the Information for Newcomers Event?"

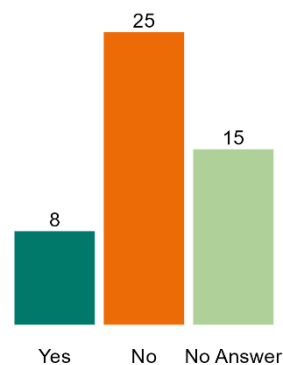
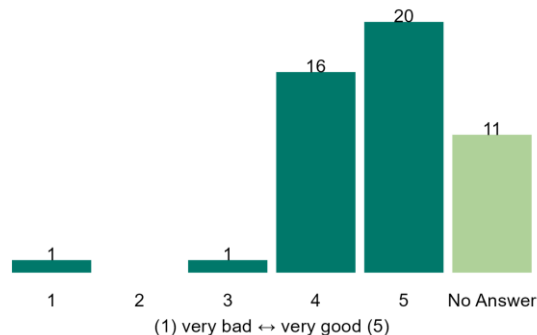


Figure Responds to the question "Was there information that you didn't get that you would have liked?"

How was your introduction to the institute?





## The buddy system

The majority of respondents (65%) reported being aware of the existence of the buddy system. Reasons for not using the buddy system were practical, like not being eligible, being Dutch, having been in the Netherlands before, or the buddy system not being available at the time of their arrival.

There were only 3 comments on the buddy system with 3 different views: Comments by those who did make use of the system ranged from not knowing exactly what it was, to thinking it was excellent, to not thinking it was helpful. The buddy itself was not commented on very much and numbers were too low to extract any meaningful result but we can make what is expected clearer.

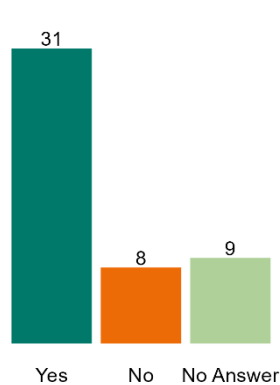


Figure Responds to the question "Do you know there is a buddy system?"

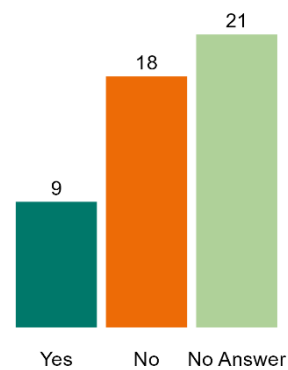


Figure Responds to the question "If you were eligible, did you use the buddy system?"

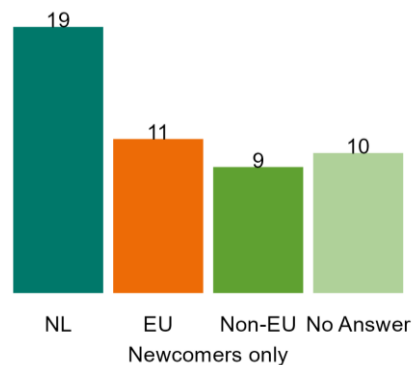
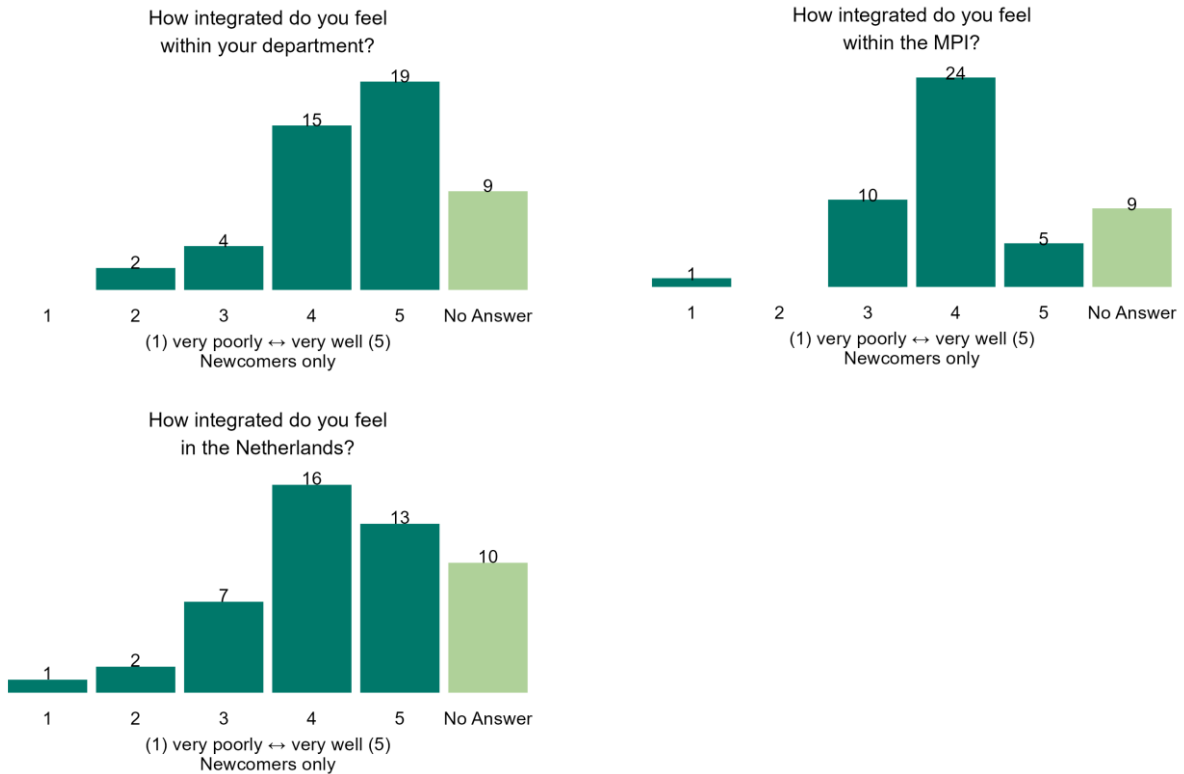


Figure Responds to the question "Where were you based before joining the MPI?"

## Integration in newcomers

Of those who responded, the majority (85%) feel well integrated (scores of 4 or 5) within their department. A sense of integration within the MPI as a whole is less positive (72%), but still with a median response of 4. In the figures below, we have excluded Dutch respondents.



## Difficulties in Adjusting to the Netherlands

Some respondents highlighted difficulties in adjusting to the Netherlands. For one, they struggled with Dutch documentation and bureaucratic requirements: medical insurance, residency permits, general practitioner, and banking. Some highlighted the difficulty in finding housing and affordable childcare as well as understanding the transportation system including cycling rules. Difficulties noted include the language barrier, lack of affordable housing, and knock-on effects of difficulty (time) in setting up a bank account. One person commented on the importance of ensuring information is presented in an accessible way for people who do not already live here. Although some respondents noted that the MPI is quite good at providing information, there is still room for improvement. Perhaps providing some of this information either by making it available in general or through the buddy system would help people adjust here.

Some people highlighted the difficulty of learning Dutch because people switch to English. Perhaps this can be addressed partially by our Social Activities Team (SAT) by planning language tables for people to practice. Furthermore, providing language classes at the MPI would reduce the necessary effort for learning the language.

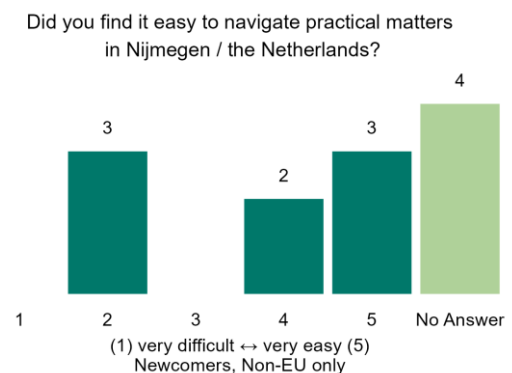
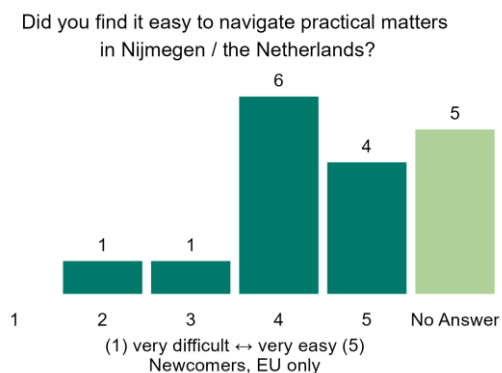
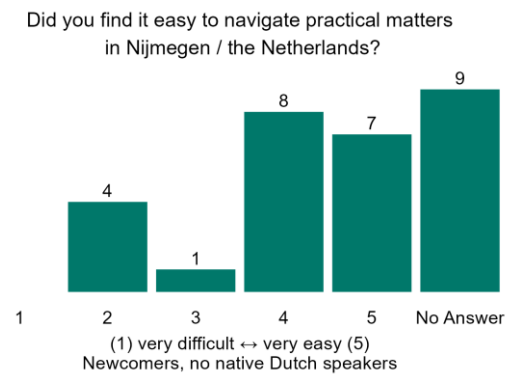
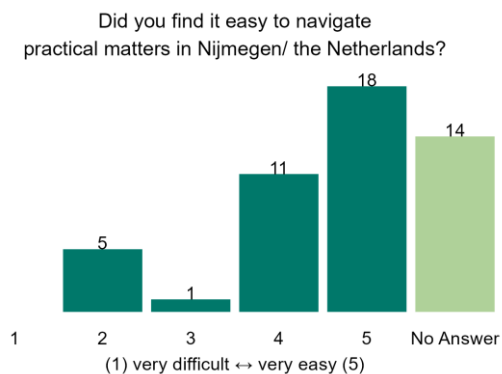
Nevertheless, many stated that they already lived in the Netherlands. Perhaps it is necessary to focus on those who come from abroad.

### Positive aspects of the process of settling in the Netherlands

Many commented on how helpful, welcoming, and friendly colleagues/staff at the MPI (and Dutch people in general) are. They also appreciated that much was in place before their contract began, such as their office being set up. Bureaucracy at MPI/NL is not overwhelming and is well supported. Introductory sessions on MPI services and key regulations such as data protection were noted as being helpful. Being able to interact in English also eased the process for employees.

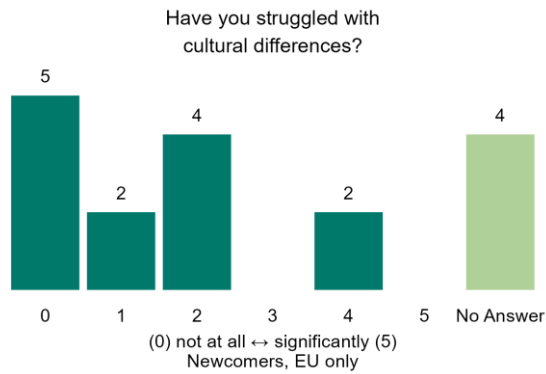
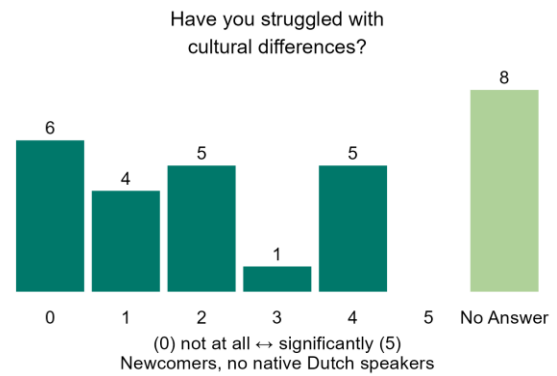
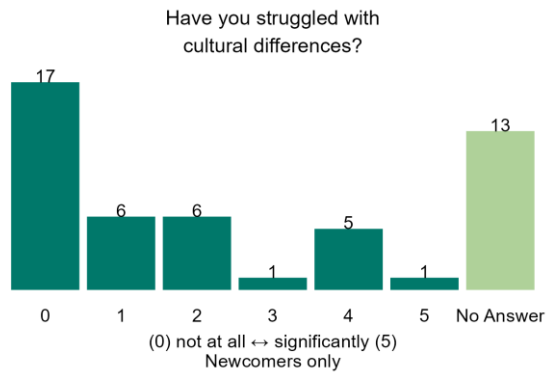
### Suggestions from respondents for the MPI to help employees settle in (15 responses)

- Institute-wide social events (monthly/twice yearly)
- Cross-departmental newcomers' social events/add more social element to newcomers' events – also with other staff
- Opportunities for more interaction between science and administration staff
- Expand the Buddy system (especially for non-EU)
- Simplify Maxintra
- Additional information re: step-by-step guide to settling into NL; transportation info
- Additional financial support for childcare; interns (e.g., stipend such as 300EUR/month as at other MPIs); travel cost for commuting



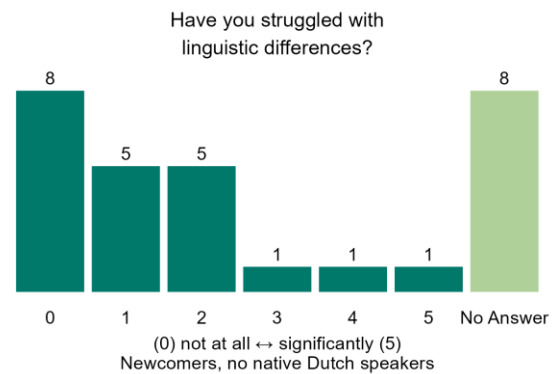
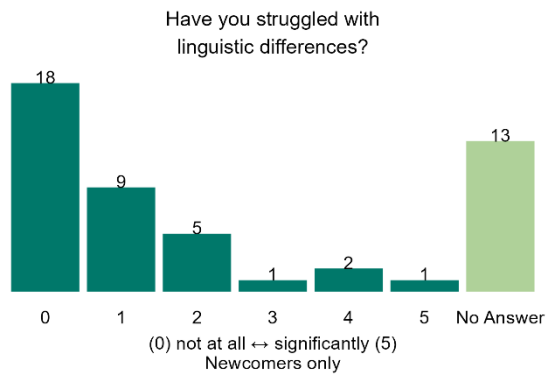
## Cultural differences – difficulties

Some found that Dutch (and German) directness took some getting used to, as did making social arrangements, and both knowing how to get information (different ways of asking) and understanding 'lines of communication' in different work environments. Others mentioned more organizational matters related to housing and the medical system, which are also culturally coded.



## Linguistic difficulties

Some respondents highlighted some miscommunication that arises from differences in terminology, sometimes arising from literal translations. Others highlighted that interacting, both socially and professionally, in a non-native language can be tiring and can impact how you present yourself e.g., being more reserved, or less eloquent. Finally, some respondents highlighted that there can be different expectations, procedures, and regulations for running experiments or writing articles in different institutions and countries.



# Non-Newcomers

(Employees in service before the start of 2022)

## Integration and cultural differences

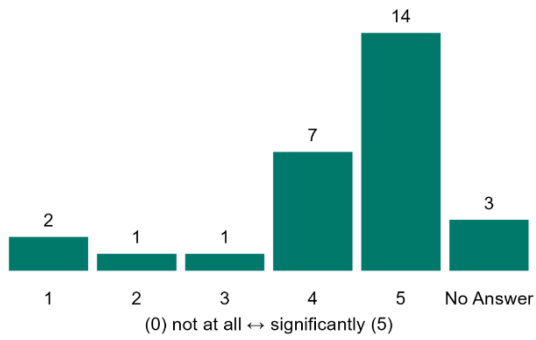


Figure Responds to the question "How integrated do you feel within your department?" Dutch respondents were excluded from this graph.

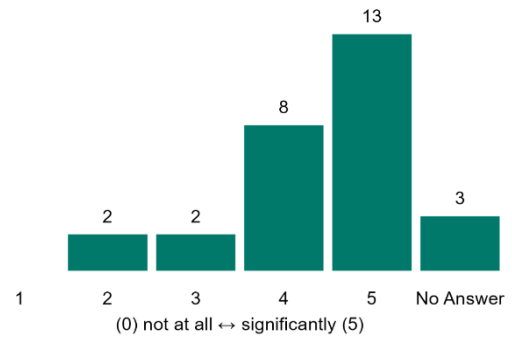


Figure Responds to the question "How integrated do you feel within the MPI?" Dutch respondents were excluded from this graph.

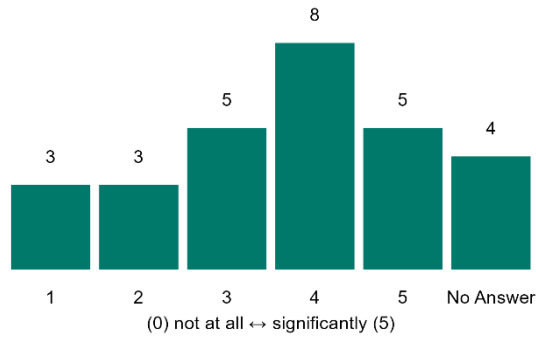
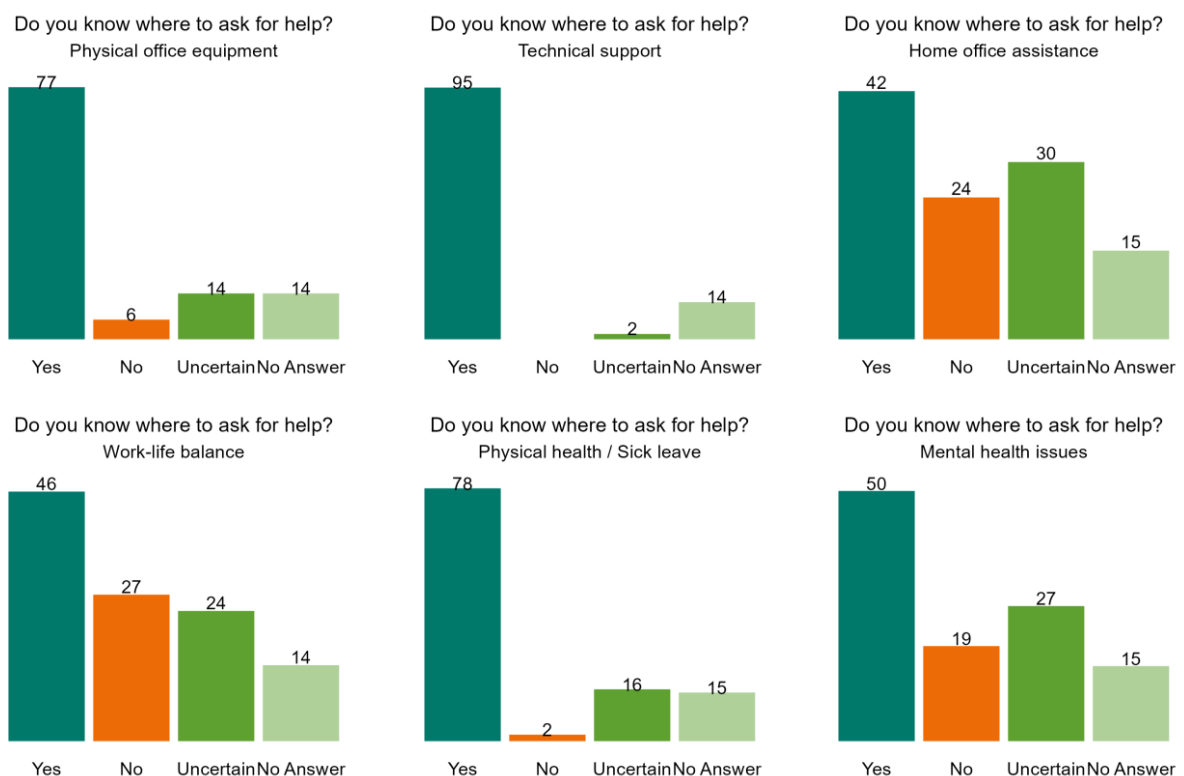


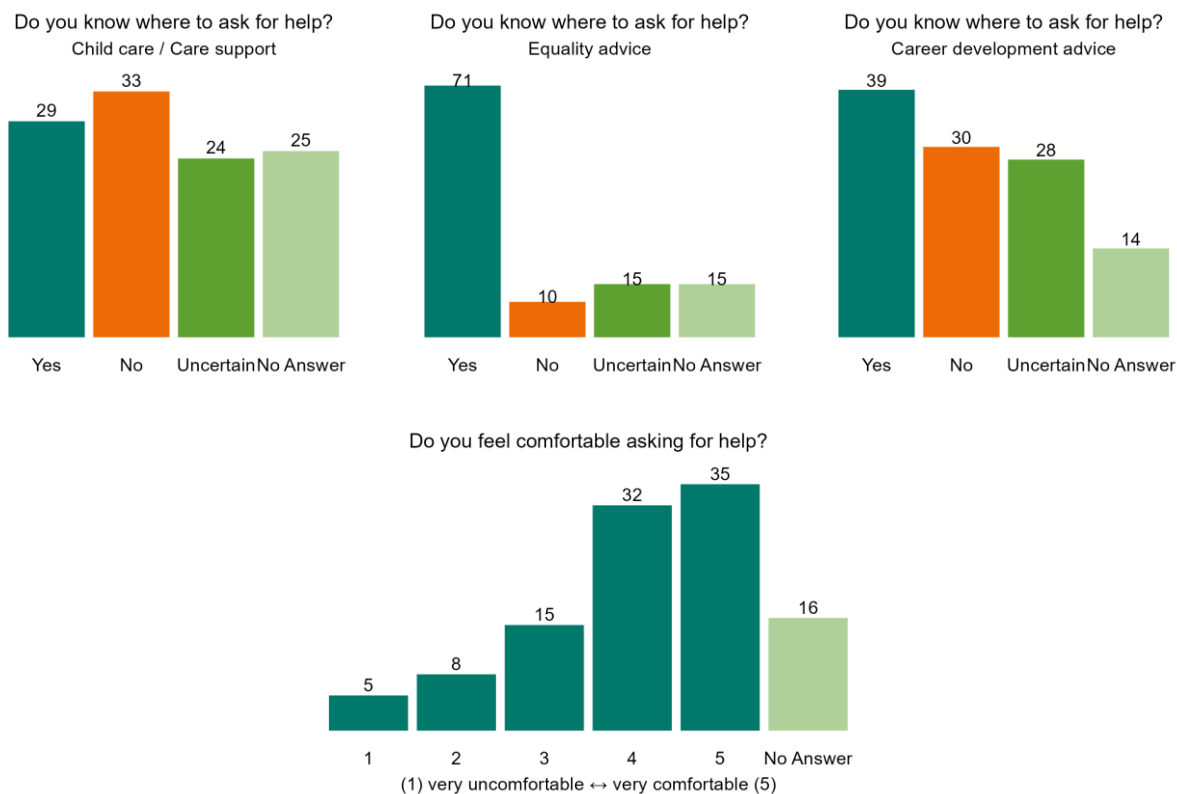
Figure Responds to the question "How integrated do you feel within the Netherlands?" Dutch respondents were excluded from this graph.

## Getting support/help

The vast majority of respondents were aware of where and how to ask for technical support (86%), office equipment (79%), equality advice (74%), and sick leave (81%). In contrast, they were unsure about home-office assistance (44%), mental health issues (52%), child care/care support (34%), work-life balance (47%), and career development advice (40%). This suggests that people are more aware of how to ask for help with practical issues but not so much with mental health and work-life balance-related issues. Although there might be a bias here with people probably having had to resolve more issues of the first than the latter kind, it is worth noting that there is a clear thematic division. Nevertheless, 77% of respondents claimed that even if they did not know where and whom to ask for help, they knew where to find this information.

It should also be highlighted that respondents were in general (70% selecting 4 or 5) comfortable asking for help (some even left positive comments of support). One colleague highlighted that for low-level support both departments (operations and TG) are very helpful, but not as much for high-level support. Another respondent highlights that they asked for support several times but the issues were only solved after they filed an official complaint, which they felt would have worsened the situation for them. They ended up resorting to RU channels. Overall, the evaluation speaks highly of our resource management and availability but marks some room for improvement. Additionally, there was one colleague who highlighted the difficulty of asking for care leave during a busy period and another expressed that being open about mental health would not reflect well on their career prospects. Another respondent highlights that for some employees with an unusual status, it is unclear what support they are entitled to. Perhaps we could address these issues more directly as an institution.





## Use of support and help within the MPI in the past year

In the past year, of the respondents, 91% asked for TG help, 13% for home office assistance, 40% for physical office equipment, 6% for mental health issues, 4% for child care responsibilities, 1% for other care responsibilities, 7% for work-life balance, 4% for equality advice, 9% for career development advice, and 13% for sick leave.

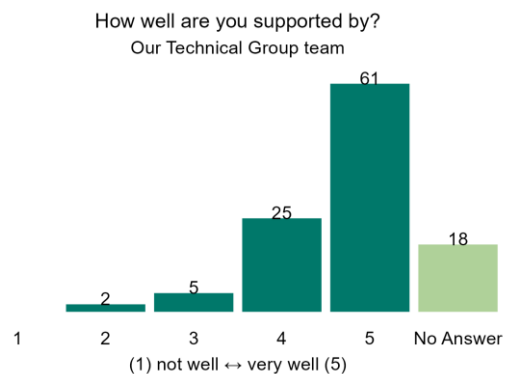
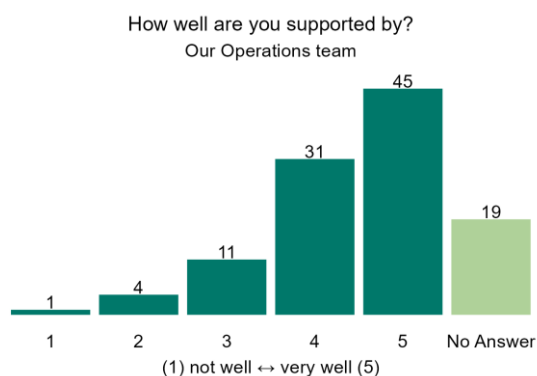
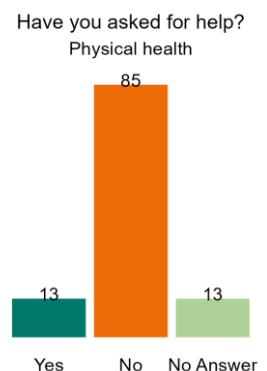
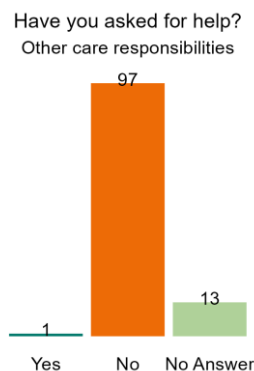
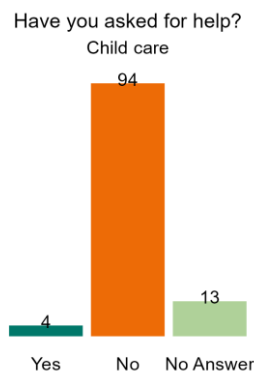
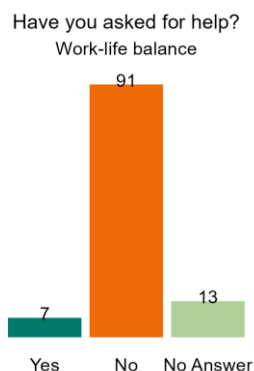
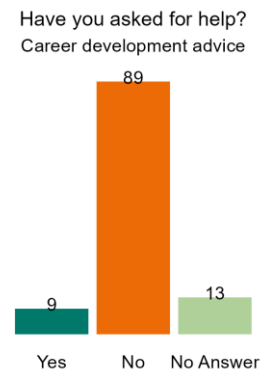
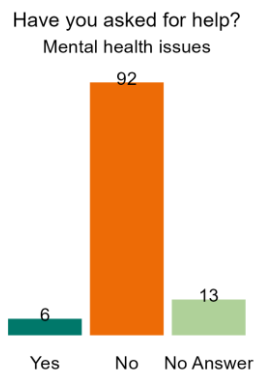
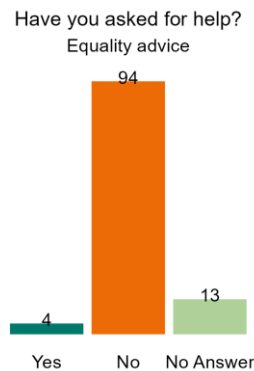
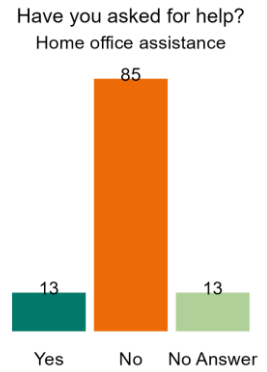
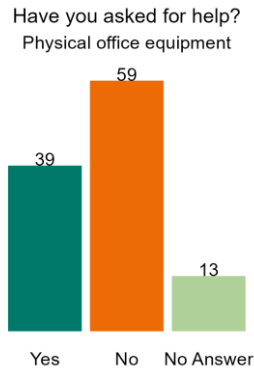
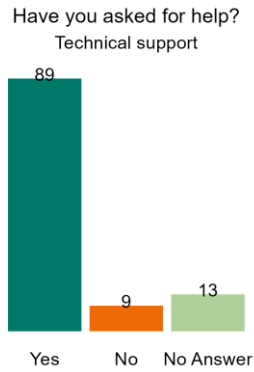
The overwhelming majority of respondents felt well supported by operations (83% well or very well) and TG (92% well or very well), suggesting a high level of general satisfaction with the work of these groups.

Five respondents did not feel supported by operations. Two highlighted that rules and policies limit their possibilities of helping. Another two highlight that the issues with the postdoc salaries put a dent in their trust, mostly because of a lack of open communication (which was mentioned in comments from other respondents, as well). Another respondent highlights late responses and inconsistent support from HR on work-life balance issues and childcare and a lack of information regarding maternity leave. There were practical complaints and suggestions about days off and reimbursements, with the process being old-fashioned, and that it would be useful to have online access to how many of our holidays we still have available. Another suggestion was that there be an institutional credit card for online purchases. This would also be extremely helpful for researcher using Prolific or other similar platforms. Currently, we have to pay out of your own pocket and request reimbursement only afterwards. This is not always doable depending on the amount of participants. Many did highlight the operations team's willingness to help and overall niceness.



Two respondents did not feel supported by TG. One respondent highlighted that although TG is helpful, they require some persuasion. The other 3 comments were all positive.

In general, this speaks well of our support departments but highlights some communication issues and some procedures that could be streamlined and made more transparent.



## Supervision

With respect to supervision, the overwhelming majority (92%) felt their supervisor was available often or always (*note*: there was one respondent who reported that their supervisor was never available, but did not comment). Several commented that the supervisors were not available in person but they were by email or rocketchat. The majority (73%) of respondents received more feedback than the mandatory yearly evaluation, with 59% receiving feedback at least once a month, suggesting frequent and regular interactions with supervisors overall. It should be noted that PhDs, research staff, and trainees tended to get more frequent feedback (the majority got monthly feedback: 71%, 48%, and 71%, respectively) than general (most common feedback was yearly with 41%, monthly 28%) and research support staff (most common monthly 29% followed by yearly 10%). It should also be highlighted that 34% (38) of respondents left this question blank, which suggests that the real values might be different and likely less positive. Two did comment that the feedback they receive is superficial (e.g., “Good job”) or non-specific, another commented that they found their monthly meetings to be too infrequent, and two said they had to actively ask for their meetings (only a yearly evaluation).

Most importantly, the overwhelming majority (81%) were happy—or very happy—with the amount of feedback they were receiving. Most groups responded on average above 4 except for the research support staff where the distribution was wider and the average was 3.8. One respondent who did not want to disclose their function or department reported being very unhappy with their feedback. Some (4 comments) did say they would like more and more in-depth feedback. It is also worth noting that 3 respondents were unhappy with the amount of feedback they were receiving. Only one commented and said they would prefer their supervisor to adapt their training/management to their PhD candidate.

Most respondents had regular discussions (or upon request) with their supervisor about career development, but 12% reported never having these discussions (these were 4 general support staff, 2 PhDs, and 3 research support staff). One said they would appreciate more in-depth discussions about this and another highlighted the need for more guidance especially on careers outside of academia. The latter also relates to supervisors addressing this possibility, particularly in terms of what skills would be useful for a non-academic job.

The overwhelming majority felt comfortable going to their supervisor to ask for work questions (91%), and while no one reported being very uncomfortable, 1 reported being uncomfortable (a PhD). The group that somewhat stood out was PhDs, who were comfortable in only 59% of the cases. The distribution did not seem to vary significantly between the other functions (between 4.3 for trainees to 4.6 for general support staff). Many added positive comments about their supervisor's help and availability. Some things people want to see from their supervisors: advice on things they might not have thought of, regular/structured supervision, clarity in tasks, clarity in the long-term vision of the job, constructive developmental goals, personal interest, team-building within the group, better guidance on projects (e.g., helping with decision-making rather than adding new questions), skills training suggestions,

helping with networking, and explaining their work to colleagues. These suggestions could be summarized into better guidance for professional growth and projects, and better long-term project and professional planning. They also highlight the need for financial support for interns. Finally, there seems to be one or two unique cases with a lack of availability and support.

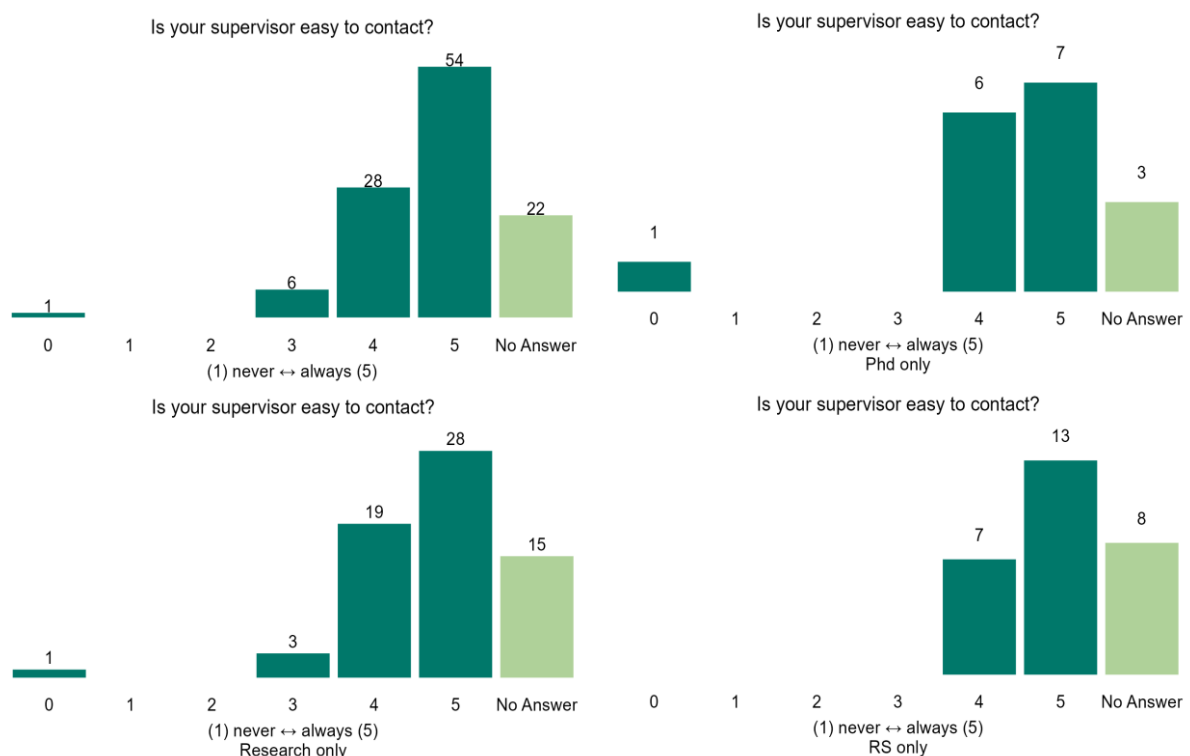
Fewer were comfortable going to their supervisor for personal concerns (63%) but it was still a majority. Of the ones that were uncomfortable, some reported that this discomfort came from themselves rather than their supervisors. Perhaps a bit concerning, 31% of respondents reported that if they had an issue with their supervisor they would not know who to turn to for help. After having unpleasant issues with their supervisor and going to HR, one respondent recommended that there be a clearer procedure/timeline for such things or a person to go to for conflict resolution and perhaps a mediator.

In addition to the positive rating of their supervisor's availability, 44 positive comments were made about the details of the support, which included anything, whether work-related or personal, about career advice, letters of recommendation, nominations, permission to take part in committees elsewhere, and feedback on papers, posters, and presentations as well as work-life balance arrangements.

There were only a few comments suggesting improvements and half of those (7) were people who would have liked more guidance in career support.

In general, these numbers are quite promising, with most supervisors providing more than the required/mandatory support and meetings. Perhaps, the only issue worth highlighting is that we need to make resources for dealing with supervision issues more available.

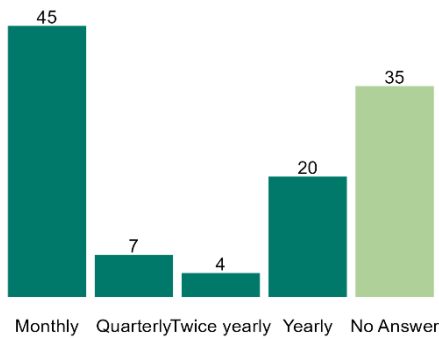
## Is your supervisor easy to contact?



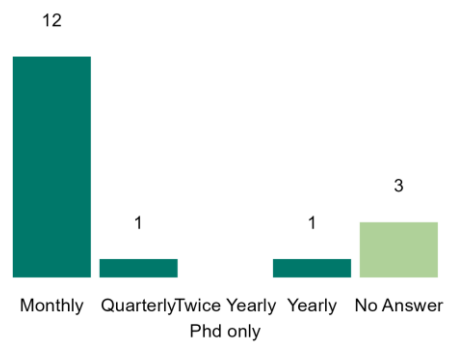


## How often does your supervisor provide feedback?

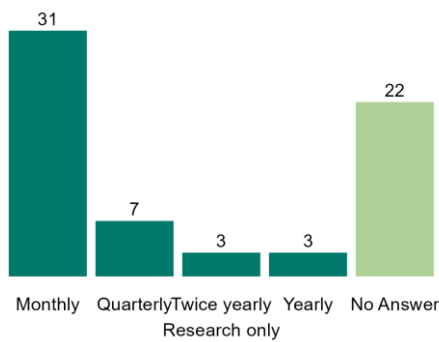
How often does your supervisor provide feedback?



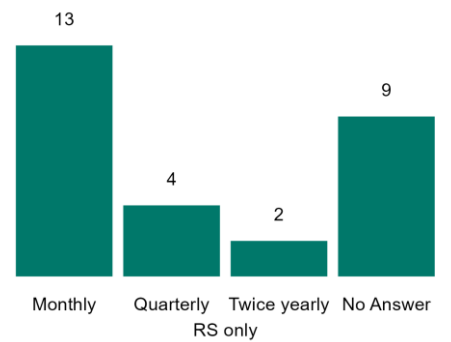
How often does your supervisor provide feedback?



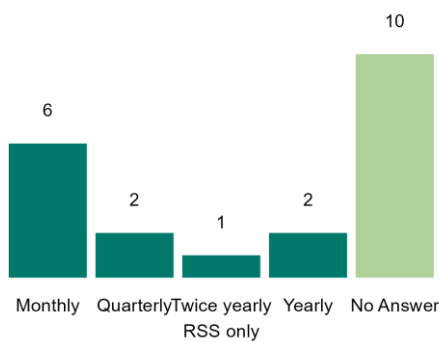
How often does your supervisor provide feedback?



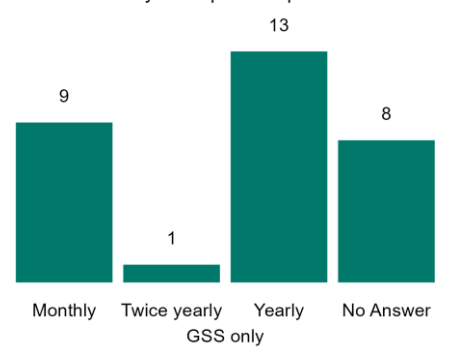
How often does your supervisor provide feedback?



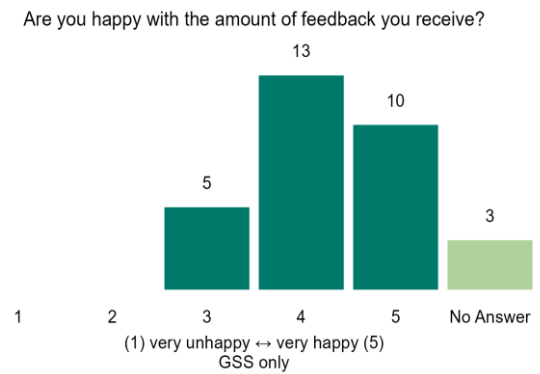
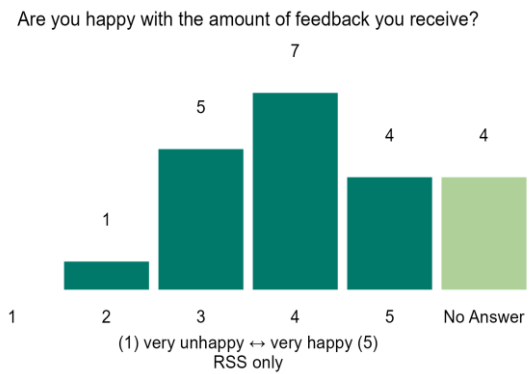
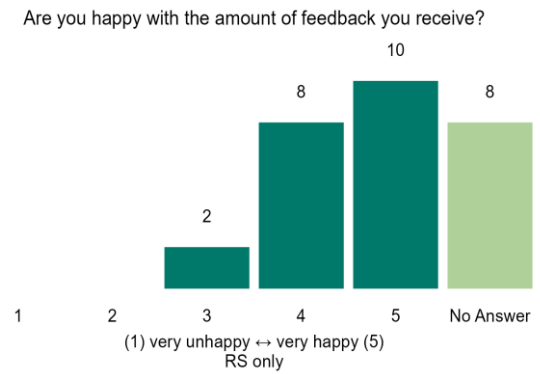
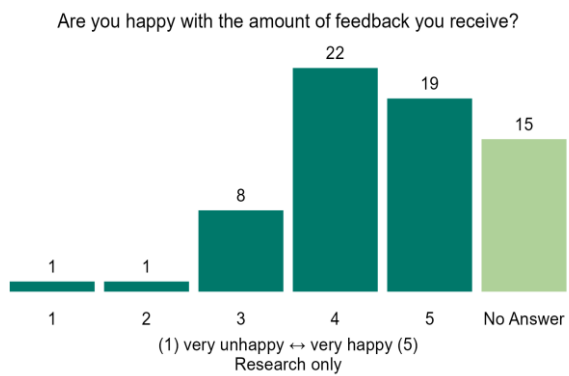
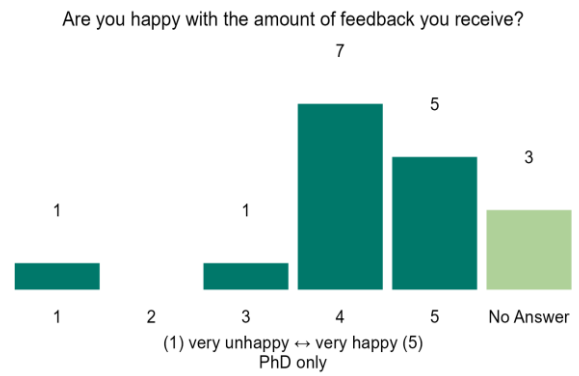
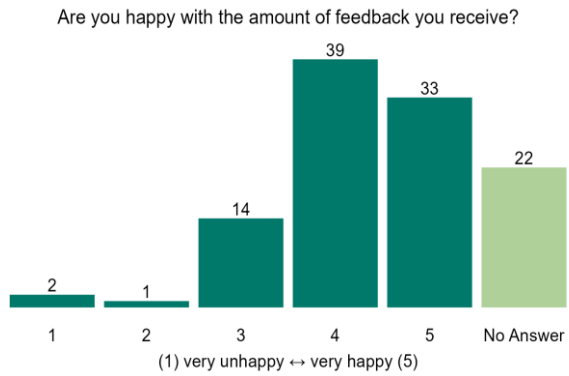
How often does your supervisor provide feedback?



How often does your supervisor provide feedback?

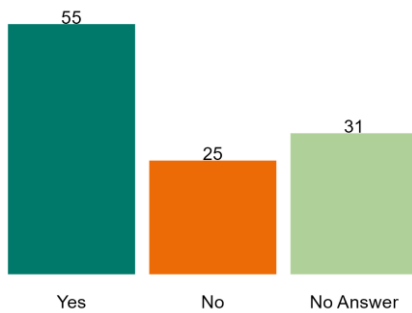


## Are you happy with the amount of feedback you receive?

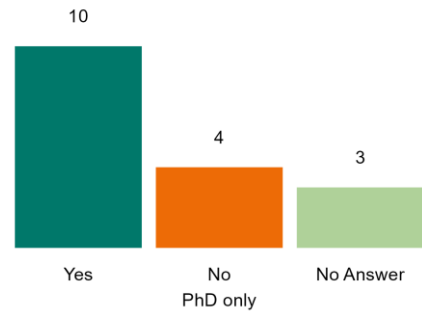


## How comfortable are you going to your supervisor for work-related questions or concerns?

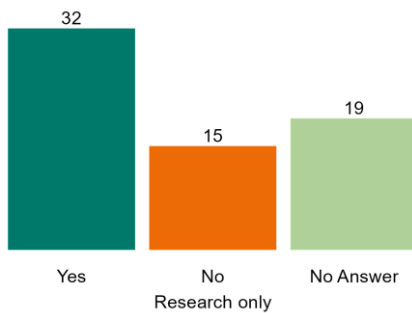
How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With work related questions / concerns



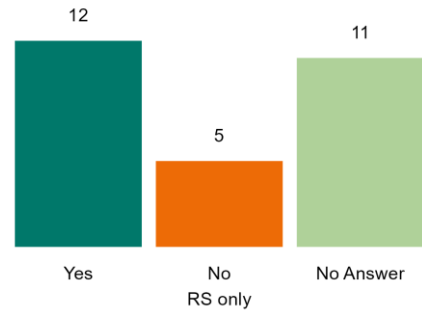
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With work related questions / concerns



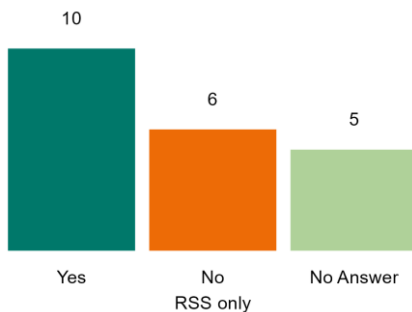
How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With work related questions / concerns



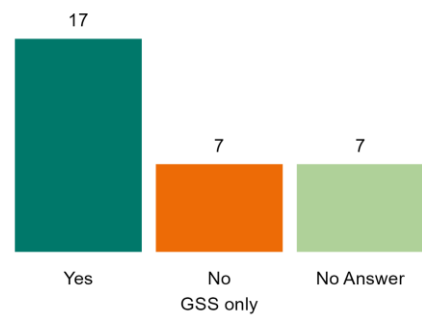
How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With work related questions / concerns



How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With work related questions / concerns

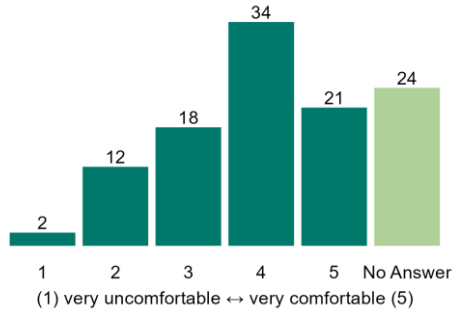


How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With work related questions / concerns

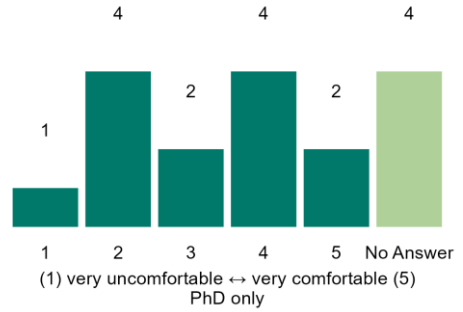


# How comfortable are you going to your supervisor for personal questions or concerns?

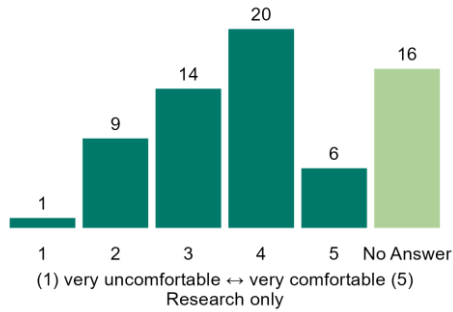
How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With personal questions / concerns



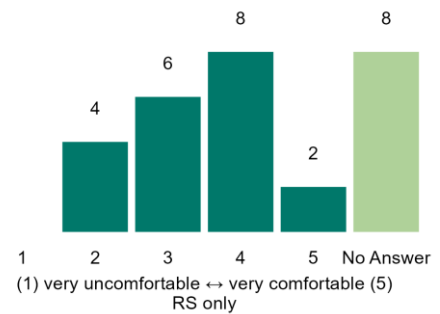
How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With personal questions / concerns



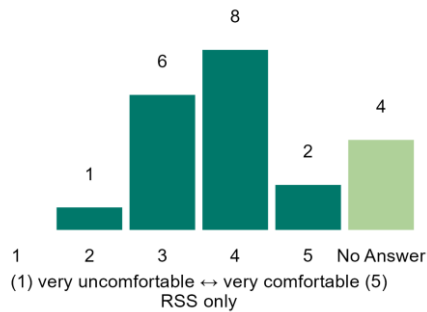
How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With personal questions / concerns



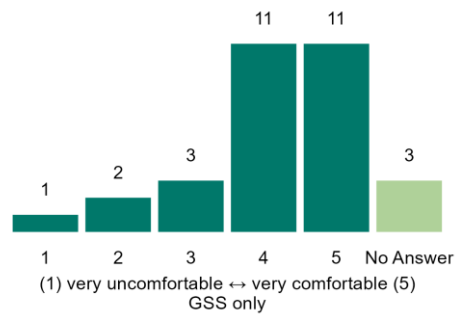
How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With personal questions / concerns



How comfortable are you going to your supervisor  
With personal questions / concerns

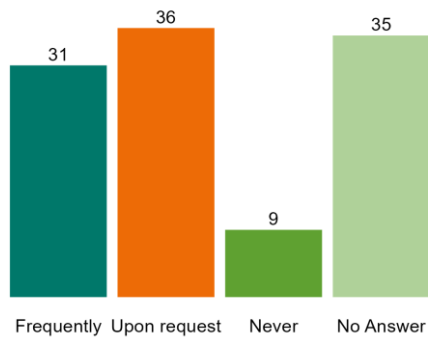


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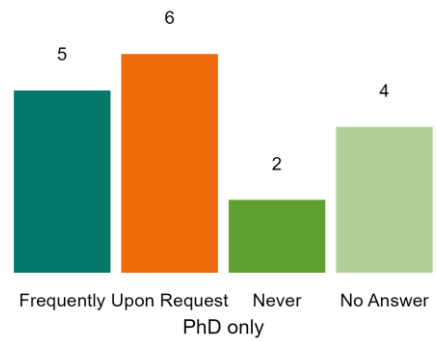


## How often do you discuss career development with your supervisor?

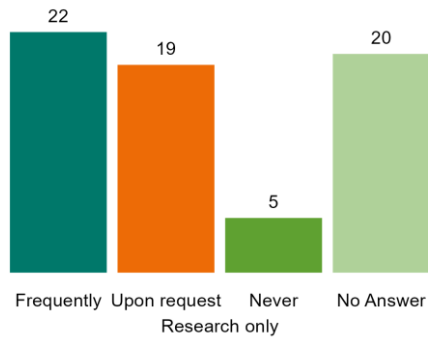
Discussing career development with supervisor



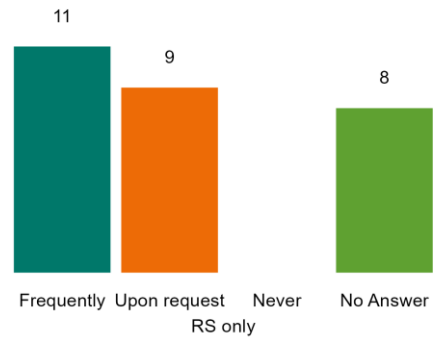
Discussing career development with supervisor



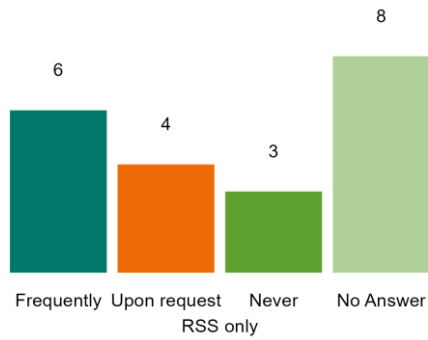
Discussing career development with supervisor



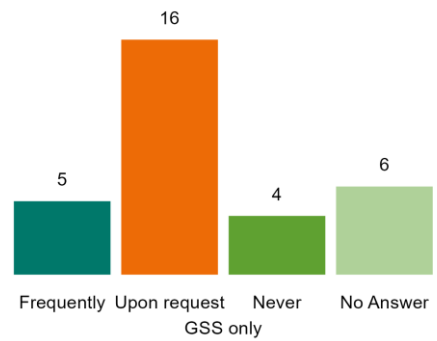
Discussing career development with supervisor



Discussing career development with supervisor



Discussing career development with supervisor

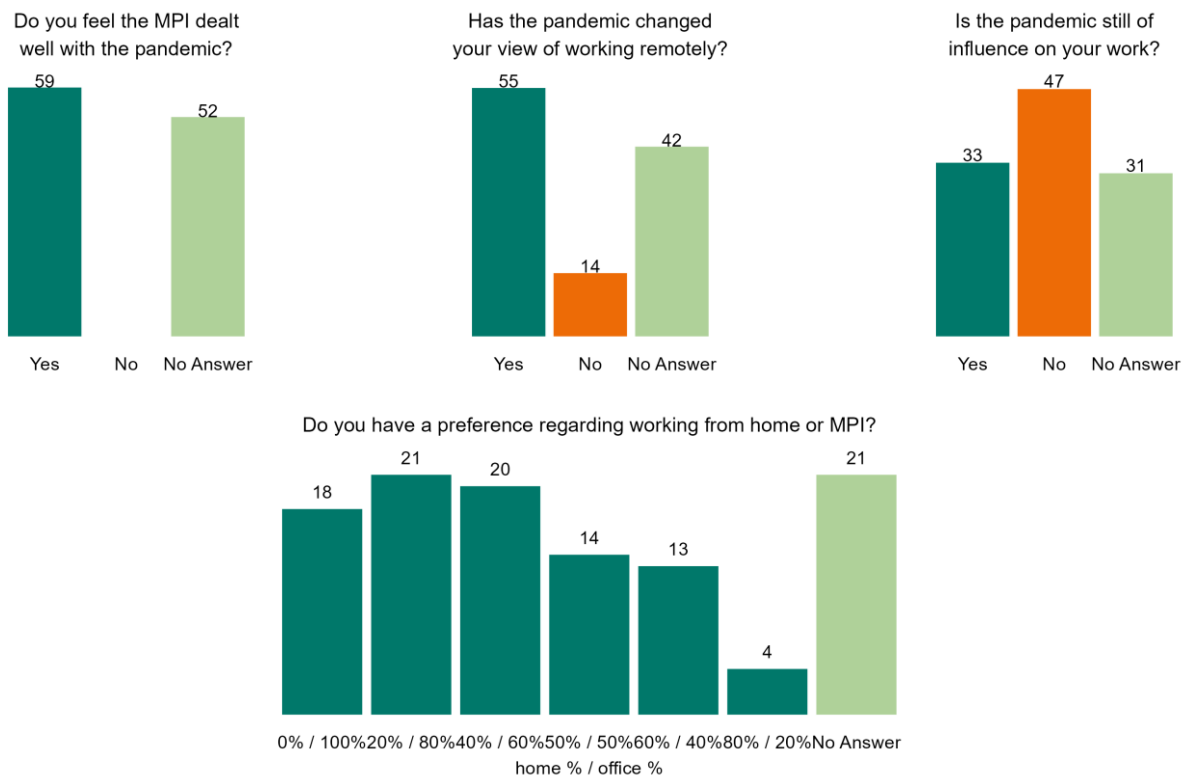




## COVID-19

A large group of respondents were not yet working at the MPI during the pandemic. Those who had been working here stated that the MPI dealt well with the pandemic. Most highlighted getting support and flexibility to work from home. Nevertheless, one highlighted that budgets for the home office were unclear, and another that there could have been more support for people arriving in Nijmegen during that time.

People also reported that they learned from and enjoyed the experience of working from home, it gave many of them a better work-life balance. This survey was done in spring 2023, therefore, there were some comments about the implications of the pandemic as having trouble with large crowds, and still needing to adjust to life at MPI. Others highlighted that they are happy that working from home and testing online have been normalized. This is clear from the fact that 80% of respondents would like to work at least 20% of the time from home.



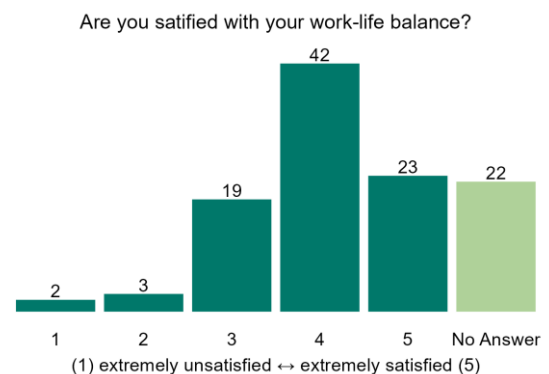
## Career help

The open question on what can the MPI do to help increase your (career) opportunities, was answered with 43 comments. Suggestions for more possibilities of career coaching, regular conversations on career steps, and information about vacancies in academia as well as information on possibilities outside academia were most often mentioned. In more detail, these responses ask for more skills training and career coaching, especially beyond the PhD stage, in aspects such as working outside of academia, preparing for job interviews, supervising, writing applications, grant writing, growth within the MPI, communications training, coaching on transferable skills, etc. Making career coaches available either through the MPI, RU, or even at the employee's cost, as well as providing training (including non-research staff). This is beginning to be addressed with the supervision course that is provided to postdocs. One proposed practical solution is to institute licenses and allocate time for video courses like Udemy, Coursera, or Codecademy.

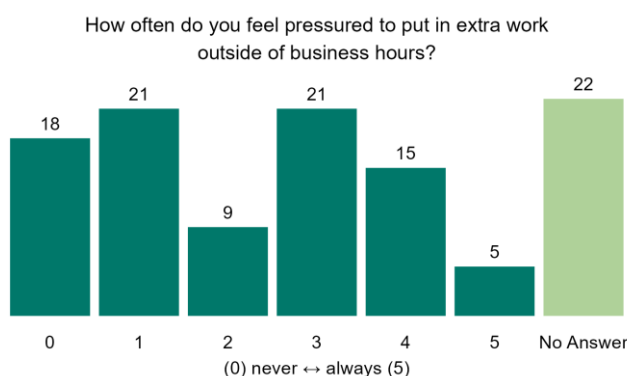
Additionally, information about child care, opportunities for management training, and other soft skills would be great and it would be helpful to get information about opportunities the Radboud University offers.

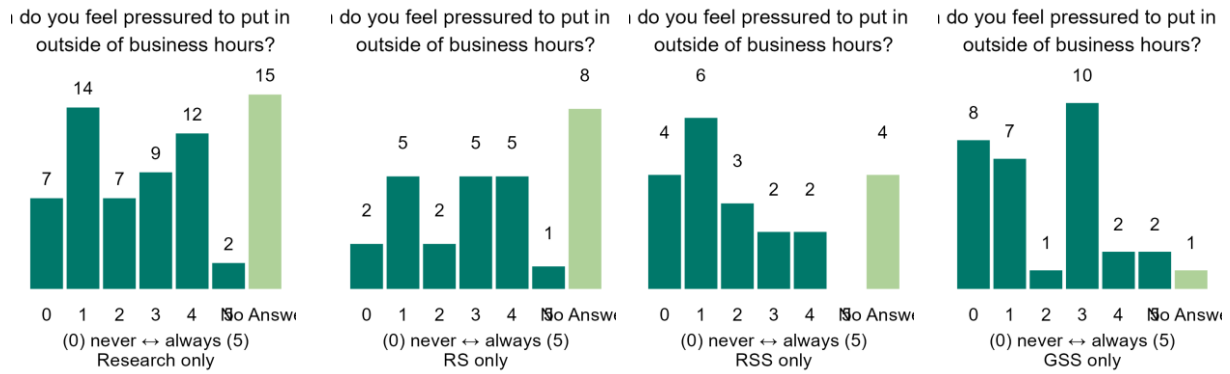
## Work-life balance

More than 70% of the respondents are very happy with their work-life balance. Most people are working outside office hours at some point but do state that they themselves decide when to do this, mostly because they need to finish work. Most of them say that it does not worry them at the moment and most of them also say that it does not affect them negatively. It feels like being part of the job. Sometimes it is due to the fact of collaborating with people on other continents. If we look at the distribution of how people from different departments answered this, it seems that research staff are disproportionately affected by this. Part of it also relates to the culture in science that, perhaps, we could address as an institute.



## How often do you feel pressured to put in extra work outside of business hours?





## Child care

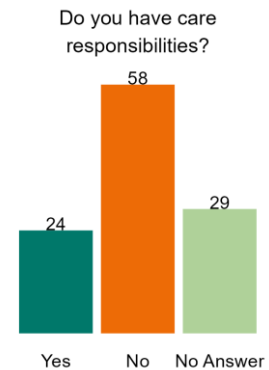
People using child care were at least reasonably satisfied, although they pointed out that it is expensive. Furthermore, ad hoc child care is missing.

## Improving work-life Balance

We asked if there are activities or other kinds of support the MPI could provide to help cope or further improve work-life balance. We got a lot of very concrete and practical comments.

Examples of activities mentioned were physical activities during the break (yoga, meditation), extending the bike plan with possibilities for people who live further away, and social activities. For support being flexible with online/hybrid meetings and flexible working hours would be very helpful. 10 respondents reported noticing improvements in their work-life balance and/or productivity, to work from home as well. This might particularly affect people from diverse populations more heavily, making it an important issue for us to address. Here are the concrete suggestions:

- **Activities** such as yoga and meditation; social events potentially for specific 'groups' such as interns;
- Promote/support **working from home** /flexible working patterns (but not as additional hours in order to complete work; also see following);
- **Hybrid meetings** as default (this varies by department/group);
- **Training** around work-life balance for both general staff and supervisors, to raise their awareness and help them support their teams; career guidance/support
- **Staff** specifically tasked to offer advice/support around this issue; action pathways if issues arise (such as the ability to change supervisor)
- **Financial-type solutions:**
  - reimburse staff for unused vacation days;
  - paid overtime;
  - Stipends for interns [our comment: this would also allow for a more diverse workforce – many people can't afford to do unpaid work]
  - hiring of additional support staff
  - subsidized or in-house childcare (e.g. sharing a nanny);
  - extending the bike plan to commuters to support cycling from station/beyond-city parking



## Intra- and Inter-departmental interaction at MPI

### Professional interactions

#### Supporting intra- and inter-departmental professional links

Just over 1/3 of respondents would value more professional links—a slightly higher proportion are happy with how things are and almost 1/3 did not respond.

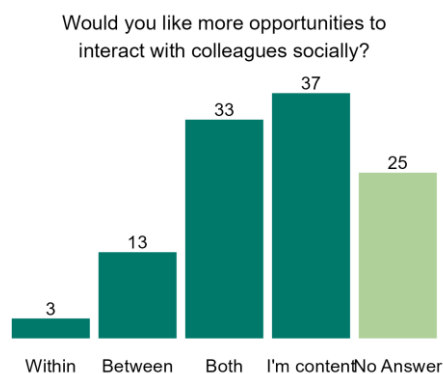
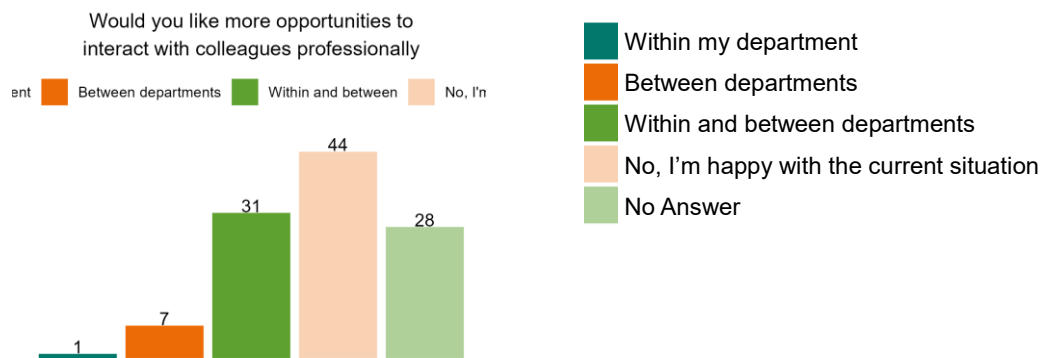
Suggestions were made for both formal and informal activities that could support and encourage intra- and inter-departmental links, some of which already occur but could perhaps be expanded. The Levelt award was mentioned as an example of existing good practice, and similar interdepartmental/team-science research projects at diverse levels including PhD were proposed both as one-off workshop events and longer-term/larger scale ventures. There was a suggestion to create a list of people who would be interested in interdepartmental collaborations, particularly in relation to the Levelt award. Also, both interdepartmental research projects and “team-science” projects (“Bring people with different qualities/skills together in one project and make them responsible for different tasks”) were suggested by multiple respondents as well as a desire for more interdisciplinary work. Multiple PhDs expressed the desire to collaborate on projects other than their main one and mentioned it had not been encouraged/facilitated and a third mentioned a desire to collaborate with other PhDs. Another (from support staff) described a desire to learn from colleagues but described their situation as an ‘island’ in terms of skills. An intern expressed their desire to meet interns from other departments and hear about their projects.

Opportunities to see the work of others either via Poster sessions (such as occur for the Fachbeirat) or through semi-public talks such as practice presentations for conferences, were proposed, although this is already the purpose of Proudly Presents. Networking/speed-dating sessions to informally learn about projects were also suggested. One respondent mentioned wanting more interactions with other MPIs.

Cross-departmental study groups on topics such as Bayesian statistics, Python, etc., as well as more general collective brainstorming and feedback opportunities, would be welcomed. It is noted that some such activities already take place within departments but perhaps these could be expanded across groups. Similarly, people advocated for the sharing of resources and successful practices, such as code reviews and ‘hackathons’. Some such resources are already available via Maxintra but awareness and access could perhaps be improved as well as expanding the range. One possibility is to encourage people to advertise more through the newsletter.

In order to help nurture a sense of community and build connections that could establish the foundations for collaborative work, informal events, including eating lunch together across departments, were suggested both in general and for target groups such as interns.

Many people specifically supported having set days when all members of a department are onsite.



### Impediments to intra- and inter-departmental professional links

We asked about factors that impeded professional links, in order to get insight into what might potentially be put in place to ease the process where it is desired. Time constraints related to busy lives/schedules and pressures of completing expected workload were the most cited issues. Cultural and financial barriers were also noted, at diverse levels, including the (isolationist) culture of academia, the existing lack of cross-departmental connections, as well as discouragement from some management/supervisors. At a more pragmatic level, a lack of existing models and structures was seen as a barrier with people not knowing how to start projects or who might instigate such work. Some people mentioned that being new or feeling like their work is disconnected from that of others (being “the odd one out”) made it difficult for them to take the initiative. Others mentioned that not knowing people from other departments personally made it difficult to collaborate; others phrased similar concerns in terms of being afraid to “waste people’s time” or being unsure that others wanted to collaborate. A PhD commented that the specificity of demands for their thesis made it difficult to collaborate unless it had a clear purpose for their own PhD and another mentioned their supervisor did not agree to it.

## Social interactions

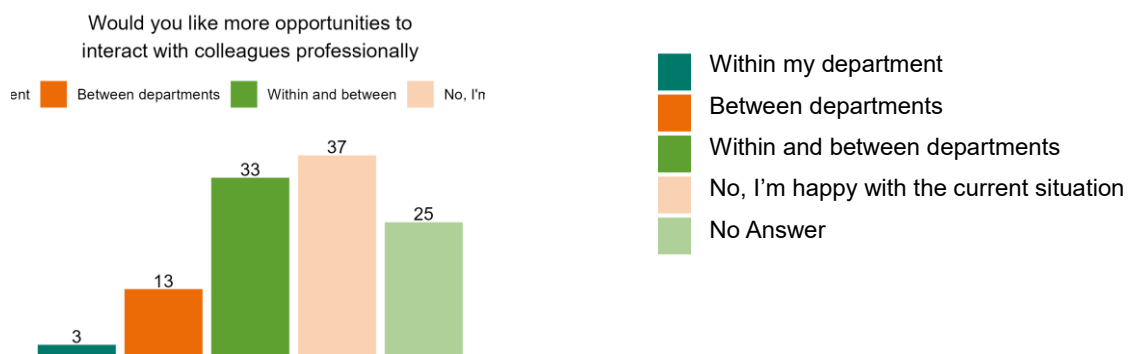
### Supporting intra- and inter-departmental personal interactions and suggestions for cultural events

Increased opportunities for social interactions are not desired by everyone but are by 44% of respondents. It was noted that some social activities already occur, especially within rather than between departments and groups. A wide range of activities were proposed, potentially within departments, within work 'types' e.g., interns, post-docs, or open to all.

The suggestions were:

- **Sports/exercise/well-being activities** e.g. volleyball, football, other (team) sports; climbing, yoga; campus walks; martial arts/self-defense; dancing; and mindfulness/meditation
- **A social activity space** with table football or table tennis
- **Language oriented:** language exchange (sharing & practicing together); courses
- **Regular or occasional cross-departmental events** (perhaps for small groups – facilitates interaction, less daunting for those with social anxiety, and lower language confidence):
  - **Activities:** board game evenings; gaming; workshops/team building; non-work-related days out e.g. cultural/arts event, theme park, escape room, etc.; movie night; trivia nights
  - **Food/drink based:** drinks - possibly combined with activities to encourage interaction; potluck/world food—perhaps with information/presentation + music; (vrijdagmiddag) borrel; monthly breakfast
  - **Parties** (like the Winter Party); cultural celebrations [see below]; music events; barbeque

The frequency suggested for social events varied widely and included weekly, monthly, and max bi-monthly. N.B. yoga and world food events seem very popular.



**Impediments to social interactions**

Whilst an extensive range of activities were proposed potential impediments to expanding the social program do need to be considered. Those included busy lives and home responsibilities, and financial limitations/restrictions from MPG—a degree of participant/self-funding is likely to be needed. It was noted that cross-mingling is not (yet) part of the set-up/culture—which is something that such activities are designed to change. Some indicated that they would participate if organized by others, highlighting the need/desire for a social committee.

As mentioned above, the D&I committee has created the SAT—Social Activities Team—which will try to increase social interactions between departments.

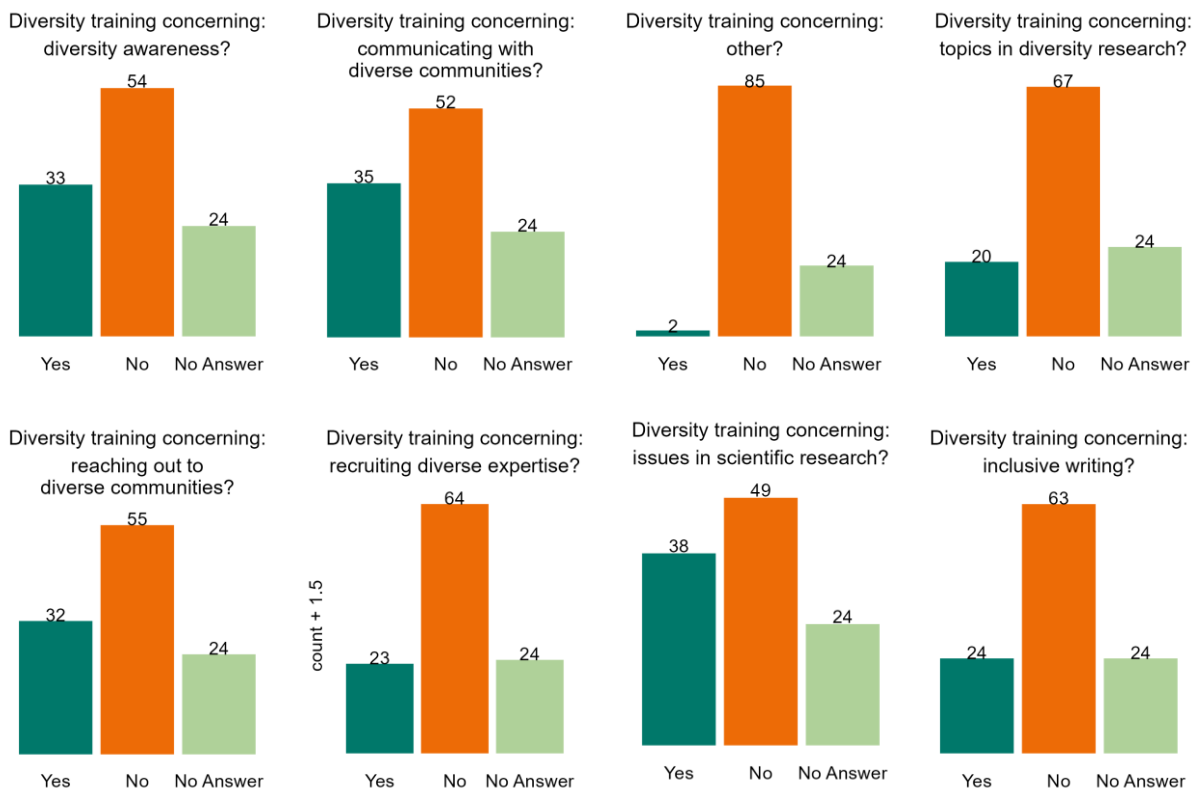
## Diversity and Inclusion

### Talks

Comments for this section were not extensive and generally expanded on the topics raised in the preceding questions. Regarding **general awareness** of diversity issues, respondents proposed topics such as cultural and neurodiversity, systemic racism, and unconscious biases. People also suggested including the issue of why diversity (awareness) is important, having opportunities to share and learn from personal experiences, and guidance on how to speak up/respond to issues that arise.

In relation to both **Scientific issues** and **public communication** input would be welcome regarding inclusive and respectful language; how to engage diverse audiences such as d/Deaf people/communities; how to consider gender beyond binary; and understanding the positive value of diversity & inclusion (beyond box ticking).

Others commented on a desire for trainings on preventing misuse of science for political/divisive ends; how cultural background (in its many forms) may impact behavior; and how to 'deal with' cultural differences.



### Personal experiences

We asked participants to share personal experiences—both positive and negative—regarding diversity and inclusion. Many commented on colleagues or themselves being interested in the cultures of other countries and learning from others as well as on the environment being quite positive and respectful at MPI. Another highlighted positively the sexual diversity within MPI.



Several shared specific situations they were uncomfortable with (of varying severity and types), one expressed concerns that language barriers sometimes prevent colleagues from joining social activities, another expressed concerns that there is a lack of awareness of neurodiversity, another pointed to difficulties because of a lack of cultural common ground (due to not being European), another highlighted disrespectful attitudes towards religion, and another highlighted concerns of a lack of awareness of the homogeneity within the MPI (i.e., lack of BIPOC representation). The latter comment is perhaps worth highlighting, as we can see from the “Cultural Background” section that the MPI is very strongly predominantly European and white, and several of those who are not have shared instances of feeling othered or made to feel uncomfortable. Additionally, there was a comment with respect to a lack of awareness that researchers from other countries do not have the financial support that the MPI expects—e.g., in terms of fronting costs. There were also two comments about the toilet signs and suggestions to change them to non-gendered signs. The issue of paying trainees came up multiple times throughout the survey. Finally, there were two comments on Wolfgang Klein’s email and how this makes the scientific environment feel unsafe.

## Increasing MPI inclusivity

### Participatory cultural events - Cultural celebrations

An extensive range of culture-specific and general cultural celebrations were referred to in the comments. These can be grouped under the categories of Religious/Cultural, Social/cultural, and non-affiliated (see full list below).

- **Religious/Cultural:** Christmas, New Year (various e.g. Chinese), Easter, Diwali, Keti Koti, Chanukah, Sinterklaas (modern), Halloween, Dia de los muertos
- **Social/cultural:** major football events, International Women's Day (8 March), 4daagse; non-religious e.g., [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square\\_Root\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Square_Root_Day)
- **Non-affiliated** - annual barbeque, Summer/Winter parties (possibly linked to MPI events as with Proudly Presents)

There is an interest in raising awareness of/celebrating less known cultures but without responsibility falling on representatives of those cultures. One way of ensuring low-key recognition of the diverse cultures of the Institute is to maintain a display board or include information in the newsletter. [This would require consideration of staff hours].

Another specific suggestion was that paid/extra vacation days could be taken for religious/cultural days.

Some staff indicated that, to them, cultural events were unnecessary. Two comments said that they felt that the term Christmas and its traditional colors had been informally banned, especially in regards to the end-of-year event last year. Whilst this perception did not reflect an official policy, care should be taken to avoid possible tensions in the future.

## General comments

A few general comments were included. The point was made that there is a **Gender imbalance** in some departments and that whilst this reflects societal trends it should be considered in relation to recruitment practices. Additionally, inequality was noted around permanent contracts.

Many people expressed gratitude for the survey and the MPI taking issues around diversity and inclusion seriously.

## Conclusion: Summary and suggestions from the survey

This survey was sent out in April 2023 and received responses from the majority of MPI employees (104 out of 178), which gives us a good basis for extracting conclusions from the data. It should be noted that the majority of respondents were female and that less than 50% of the male employees responded to the survey, so there may be a gender bias in the responses. It should also be highlighted that all functions were well represented (general support staff, research staff, research support staff, and PhDs), with over 40% of the employees in each group responding (reaching 70% for general support staff).

Our results show that we have a varied population in terms of neurodiversity, LGBTQIA+, cultural background, languages, and countries of origin. Of the respondents, almost a third identify as being neurodiverse and/or having a disability. Still, the general population of the center is somewhat homogenous: we are overwhelmingly female (also aligned with the HR data), European, and non-disabled. Most of our colleagues identify as white, European, and agnostic or non-religious. And, although many languages are spoken here, the vast majority of first languages are Western European. These results point to a strong need for initiatives that improve and increase our diversity. Some of these are already in motion (e.g., the D&I committee and the TALENT+ program), but we should remain aware of this and its possible causes. We also need to be aware of and provide support for our colleagues who are neurodiverse or have a disability, which is perhaps more than we a priori knew about.

Furthermore, in terms of languages, there is a large gap between how comfortable people are speaking Dutch according to their function, with PhDs and research staff really struggling with the language. We at the D&I committee have recently started the Dutch lunches which provide an opportunity for employees to practice Dutch in an informal setting. Nevertheless, this relies on them already having *some* knowledge of the language. Although there are courses available for our staff at Radboud, perhaps these are not as accessible in terms of timing, required dedication, and location. Perhaps providing short courses at the MPI for new employees or temporary employees would be helpful. With respect to English, most respondents were comfortable using it for work and socially but 11 and 15 respondents, respectively, were not. Although this is not numerically high, it is the main language of the institute and the way to communicate for foreigners. More people feel okay using English for work but fewer feel comfortable using it socially, which may limit feelings of belonging. Perhaps we should consider offering some English for work, scientific English, or social English support. We should keep in mind—as several respondents highlighted—that speaking a second language constantly can be very tiring. The stress of working every day in a second language (and living in a country that uses a 3rd) is something we perhaps should think about when we consider workload or work/life balance. Furthermore, this was not addressed in the survey because we received new employees since, but it might be useful to provide basic International sign language courses for those interested to improve the integration of our deaf colleagues. This is already in progress, initially via the IMPRS, for PhD students and those working directly with sign language research.

We also have a large proportion of people (44%) who have been here for less than 2 years and a quick turnover of employees. This highlights the importance of helping our newcomers settle in quickly into the country and the institute. While most people felt well integrated within their department and the MPI (although, not everyone), a large proportion of non-Dutch respondents not feeling integrated into the Netherlands and had some difficulties adjusting. Several highlighted the linguistic and cultural barriers as a factor for them not feeling comfortable or integrated into the local culture. Some highlighted the difficulty of meeting people outside of the MPI. Perhaps by providing Dutch courses in-house more catered to our population, we can help people both learn the language and understand the culture better, in order to feel more integrated. Furthermore, we could provide some explicit guidance with respect to both practical (e.g., transportation, waste management, and timeliness) and more cultural aspects (e.g., how the hierarchy works here, that asking questions is ok, and communicative expectations) particularly to our colleagues from abroad. This could be done through a stronger buddy system (building on our existing system) or some kind of informal information session about living in the Netherlands. This would also help make our center more accessible to people from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, we could perhaps increase participation and outreach to the community, which would benefit researchers both in terms of feelings of belonging and for helping their research reach the wider community. Unfortunately, we cannot solve the systemic issues, but we can clarify that our support structures within the MPI can assist with issues outside of the institute to help alleviate these pressures (e.g., the equity officer, the buddy system, and even individual colleagues).

On the plus side, most newcomers reported having a good introduction to the institute and attended the Information for Newcomers event. There were a few practical suggestions to improve the events. Some are more difficult to address such as the frequency of the event or its timing relative to other trainings. Others suggested having more practical information about the technical infrastructure, sports facilities, or request forms. Perhaps this might make the meeting too extensive, but we should find a way to make this information easily accessible. A possible suggestion to keep in mind is to include a social event and a tour of the institute after. One person also suggested a “who to ask for what” infographic. We could also collate all the information in the newcomers' meeting into an MPI manual that can be downloadable from Maxintra (and maybe on OwnCloud so it can be updated easily).

Many (a third of non-Dutch respondents) reported having struggled with cultural differences either somewhat or significantly (though few struggled linguistically) when moving here. This is perhaps difficult to address directly, but we should keep this in mind and think of ways to support our employees who are not local. In the comments, some brought up issues that might also be worth keeping in mind, such as how we “fill in” information in interactions which might be misunderstood across cultures or that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between cultural and knowledge differences, particularly in interviews. These issues also extend to society in general in the form of both systematic issues of values (like the societal approach to medical care, cultural approach to anxiety and worry, cultural treatment of racism, misogyny, and ableism) and practical issues (like with public transport and waste management). We should also be aware (as another respondent pointed out) of cultural beliefs or

convictions not based on acceptance. It should not be a surprise that there are several comments on different communication styles (especially related to supervision) but also expectations of timeliness, and how people deal with hierarchy, with people from certain backgrounds struggling to speak up. From the side of Dutch respondents, some also expressed struggles working with diverse colleagues. Some struggle to notice subtleties in communication that are important to people from other cultures and another says they feel like they need to "put aside" their Dutch directness. Importantly, one highlights the tolerance and flexibility within people at the MPI, which alleviates some of these pressures.

There were also several suggestions for how to help employees settle in more generally. These include more institute-wide social events, expanding the Buddy system, simplifying Maxintra, and adding information about moving to the Netherlands (e.g., on transportation, waste disposal, etc.), and additional financial support (e.g., for childcare, interns, or travel costs for commuting). Some of these suggestions cannot be carried out for legal or institutional reasons (e.g., paying for commuting costs) but others are more easily addressed. We have created the SAT (social activities team) within the D&I committee which organizes institute-wide events. For now, we have a monthly pub outing and are hoping to organize a monthly game night. Having funding for informal snacks/drinks at the MPI might be a good addition to this. This would also allow us to set up more cultural events at the MPI, particularly taking advantage of and highlighting the diversity we already have. The buddy system has also been expanded recently to all staff. The new Maxintra will hopefully be simpler and more accessible, but perhaps we could add more information to it about living in the Netherlands. Finally, more financial support for certain groups would be an asset as well. We can support interns from under-represented countries and/or who cannot afford an internship otherwise (not for interns who are already studying here in the Netherlands, completing the internship as part of their degree, and who do not incur extra costs over and above the normal costs they incur for their studies when interning here). We are looking into possibly supporting diverse interns through the TALENT+ program, but this issue has come up repeatedly in the comments. We should communicate this information at least to people who supervise interns so they are aware and can offer financial support to those who need it.

It should be highlighted and commended that most people know how to ask for help and support for practical work issues (e.g., technical support, office equipment, equality advice, and sick leave), were comfortable doing so, and felt well supported. In contrast, people were unsure about home-office assistance, mental health issues, child care/care support, work-life balance, and career development advice. Although this might be because people have not needed to resolve as many issues of the latter kind, it is worth noting that there is a clear thematic division. One respondent expressed that being open about mental health would not reflect well on their career prospects. This is perhaps something to address in the future and try to see whether this is the case in some departments/groups or if that is the perception—these two different interpretations require different solutions. Furthermore, it is unclear whether this comment refers only to their time here or possible repercussions in the future—e.g., having a prolonged sick leave or reduced hours affecting their CV. Overall, the

evaluation speaks highly of our resource management and availability but marks some room for improvement. Perhaps we could address some of the issues brought up in the “Getting support/help” section as an institution, including some comments about issues with communication and transparency. One suggestion would be looking into courses available at Radboud on professional communication.

With respect to supervision, the majority of respondents were happy with the feedback they got, although this varied somewhat by function (e.g., research support staff was less happy with the amount of feedback they got). There were, nevertheless, several comments about feedback being superficial and issues with supervisors being difficult to address (in particular not knowing who to go to for help). In general, the section on supervision was quite promising, with most supervisors providing more than the required/mandatory support and meetings. Perhaps, the only issue worth highlighting is that we need to make resources for dealing with supervision issues more available, as this issue came up in other sections, too.

Although most respondents had regular discussions about career development, some did not and several would appreciate more guidance. In the career help section, many gave comments and suggestions about what the MPI could do. The full list is in the career help section, but in general terms, they asked for more information and guidance on the next steps inside and outside of academia as well as training for different hard and soft skills (for both researchers and support staff). Since then, the IMPRS has provided some support by inviting the postdocs to their career events, but perhaps having similar MPI-wide events would be useful. This year there was also a supervisor training that received positive feedback. Perhaps expanding this would help address some of these issues. We could also look into making career coaches available (through the MPI, RU, or at the employee’s cost), as well as providing training for both research and non-research staff. Finally, most respondees felt comfortable going to their supervisor for work questions, but a significant portion of PhDs were not. This might be something we need to address as an institution.

In the COVID-19 section, respondents showed a positive view of the MPI's response to the pandemic but some expressed that the pandemic still had an influence on their work, and many that it had changed their view on working remotely. Most also expressed having a preference for working at least partially from home. This might particularly affect people from diverse backgrounds more heavily, making it an important issue for us as an institution to address.

With respect to work-life balance, it should be noted that many researchers (PhDs, researchers, and research support staff) felt pressured to work overtime. Although some highlighted that this was not pressure from the MPI directly but rather from academia, this is something that we should address as an academic institution. The lack of ad hoc childcare was something that came up. There were also many suggestions for improving work-life balance. For the full list, refer to the work-life balance section, but in general terms, there were suggestions for social and recreational activities at MPI, greater support for hybrid working, and greater overall support (e.g., training, specialized staff, and financial aid). It should also be noted that

some suggestions highlighted misinformation or lack of communication within the MPI. Most staff do not know that they should get reimbursed for unused vacation days and that we can provide stipends for interns. These issues need to be addressed and accurate, official information provided.

When asked about intra- and inter-departmental interaction, responses were quite mixed. The social aspects of this are already somewhat addressed with the SAT, but there were also many suggestions about having MPI-wide events and activities that the SAT could coordinate but it might be too much for them to organize. Some also suggested having a social activity space within the MPI to allow for low-effort socializing. Most of these initiatives would also require funding. There were some requests for more professional interaction between departments too. For the full list of suggestions, refer to the Intra- and Inter-departmental Interaction at MPI section, but in short, there were suggestions for ways to encourage interdepartmental projects and collaborations, to see each other's work (e.g., talks and poster sessions), and to learn and practice skills together. Several impediments were highlighted (see Impediments to intra- and inter-departmental professional links) which we should address as a community, such as cultural and structural barriers.

In the diversity and inclusion section, several people commented on their desire for training and greater awareness of a wide range of diversity issues. These trainings could be incorporated as part of regular events with guest speakers or could be organized by the D&I committee. The latter would require the committee to undergo training, which we are currently looking into. In terms of experiences, respondent's reports were quite mixed, with some reporting uncomfortable situations and others expressing gratitude for opportunities for personal growth. Some highlighted different events they felt would help increase inclusivity but some expressed issues with the end-of-the-year event from 2022 (e.g., that Christmas and its traditional colors were informally banned), suggesting further misinformation that should be addressed. It should be noted that there were two comments on Wolfgang Klein's email in response to the survey and how this makes the scientific environment feel unsafe. This is perhaps something the directorate could address—at least indirectly—maybe by emphasizing the values we hold as an institution as well as our diversity statement.

In general, many issues were raised. Some, the D&I committee has started to address, but others such as those regarding the local culture at the MPI and communication within the institution need to be addressed more thoroughly by other sections of the MPI.

## Survey action points

*The following is a list of recommended action points that emerged from the survey responses. Many of these include both general areas for attention and specific points of action, with recommendations for how these might be achieved and **by whom** (indicated in **bold**).*

*In general, information documents are or should be available on Maxintra and it is noted that the forthcoming, new version had been designed to be more accessible and user-friendly.*

### 1. Employment equity:

- 1.1. Consider initiatives to support employment of non-Western European first language speakers and people from Africa and with African heritage, and other under-represented regions and social groups (N.B. SES was not explicitly included in the survey, which perhaps itself reflects a gap in the diversity spectrum at the MPI);
  - 1.1.1. This partly comes under the remit of the **Talent+** program
  - 1.1.2. Broader, longer term action depends on systemic change that may benefit from the establishment of a **specific working/advisory group** – to be considered by the **Directorate**
- 1.2. Provide relevant support for colleagues who are neurodiverse and those with (visible and invisible) disabilities;
  - 1.2.1. **DEI committee** to address/investigate
  - 1.2.2. Training should be made available by the **DEI committee** ideally for all staff but minimally for staff representatives including DEI committee members, managers, and other supervisors
  - 1.2.3. Awareness raising through the **Newsletter**/etc
- 1.3. Consider potential barriers related to (lack of/limited) affordable and accessible child-care, and what the MPI might be able to do to mitigate the impact of this;
  - 1.3.1. **HR/Gender equality officer** to address within the MPG regulations
- 1.4. Look into provision of financial support for those who might need it, including (potential) interns.
  - 1.4.1. Ask the **Directorate/Operations** to provide guidelines
  - 1.4.2. **Talent+**

### 2. Language-based initiatives:

- 2.1. Consider offering language courses – Dutch, English, and International Sign Language (*the latter is already in progress*);
  - 2.1.1. Dutch and ISL lunches - *current*



- 2.1.2. Social Dutch and English --> courses are already available for free/discounted: <https://maxintra.mpi.nl/operations/information-from-a-to-z/Language%20courses> ; raise awareness through the **Newsletter** and perhaps facilitate group participation (**volunteer coordinator** needed)
- 2.1.3. Potentially provide/facilitate an on-site social Dutch class (through **Operations**—if agreed by **Directorate**)
- 2.1.4. Institutional subscription to online language learning e.g., ‘Rosetta Stone’ (as 2.1.3)
- 2.2. The impact of interacting in a second (or third...) language, and language support needs should be:
- 2.2.1. actively considered during annual reviews in the context of workload and/or work/life balance (**Supervisors** with guidance from **HR**)
- 2.2.2. catered for via **Operations**
- 3. (‘Cultural’) integration and social initiatives:**
- 3.1. Ensure accessible provision of
- 3.1.1.
- Practical guidance for living in Nijmegen/The Netherlands;
  - Cultural guidance/pointers related to the Institute and broader communities
- Via **Maxintra/OwnCloud, Human Resources, Newcomers events, and the Buddy System**;
- 3.1.2. Promote ‘Life-port welcome center’ via **Newsletter & MaxIntra**
- 3.2. Provide an infographic of “who to ask for what”;
- 3.2.1. To be prepared by the **DEI committee/Communications** (Julia)
- 3.3. Offer an Institute tour – **Operations (HR)** to monitor
- 3.3.1. Currently provided by most groups (via the **Secretaries**)
- 3.3.2. Upon request to the relevant secretary and/or develop a scavenger hunt/list - **DEI**
- 3.4. Offer a newcomers social event (to supplement the more formal introductory sessions);
- 3.4.1. **DEI Social Activities Team (SAT)** in liaison with **Operations** (Newcomers event’s organizers)
- 3.5. Expand the social activity program, offering diverse types of activities with varied times and structures (*already underway via the **Social Activities Team***);
- Monthly Pub nights
  - Monthly Games evening (beginning March 6th)

- 3.5.1. Increase publicity **Newsletter + (possibly) Posters**
- 3.5.2. To be added to new Maxintra
- 3.6. Provide a 'social activities' space;
  - 3.6.1. **Directorate** to consider the future
- 3.7. Budget/funding for some social events (*in addition to MPI Proudly Presents and the end of year party*);
  - 3.7.1. **SAT** will address this, possibly with the **RSC**; **Directorate** to advise
- 3.8. 'Cultural diversity/sensitivity training', to raise awareness of cultural diversity in relation to communication, working styles, social interactions etc. for all employees.
  - 3.8.1. **DEI committee** training is being planned for Spring 2024
  - 3.8.2. **Talent+** as a pilot to collect information on experiences, hurdles, and needs of people from underprivileged backgrounds, as well as for training of supervisors.
  - 3.8.3. Advertise MPG courses more widely – clarifying funding situation
- Operations/Communications**
- 4. **Cross-departmental interaction** (work/research oriented)
  - 4.1. Cross-departmental training events;
    - 4.1.1. **RSC** addressing this with April workshop
  - 4.2. Extend/add to cross-departmental initiatives such as the Levelt Award (*this has already been re-designed to encourage greater participation*).
    - 4.2.1. **RSC** addressing this
- 5. **Supervision and career guidance: (HR)**
  - 5.1. Increase supervision/feedback for **research support staff**;
    - 5.1.1. Increase supervisory frequency, beyond annual reviews—ideally, **HR** raise with relevant people/departments
  - 5.2. Provide occasional supervision training (continue/repeat recent provision), with a particular focus on supporting/empowering PhD candidates (via **HR**)
    - 5.2.1. Repeat/advertise/expand supervisor training
    - 5.2.2. PhD student training for supervision of Masters students (**IMPRS**)
  - 5.3. Expand career information and guidance resources, events, and possible training.
    - 5.3.1. Expanding **IMPRS** career event to all staff
    - 5.3.2. Advertise Radboud & MPG career events—'liaison officer' or more active interaction with the university needed
- 6. **Work-life balance:**

- 6.1. Consider an Institute-wide working-from-home policy to facilitate and support fair and effective practices;
  - 6.1.1. This would have to come from the **Directorate + HR** working together (+ **Gender Equality officer**)
- 6.2. Clarify and communicate overtime expectations – there is currently no policy available on MaxIntra
  - 6.2.1. Establish an Institute-wide policy, which can have Group/Department specific variations – **Directorate/HR?**; make available on **MaxIntra** and include in **On-boarding** process
  - 6.2.2. Clarify the specific expectations in lab/group handbooks/guides to. i.e. encourage **Directors/Lab Managers** leaders to create a handbook
  - 6.2.3. **All, especially senior staff** should clarify that they don't expect emails to be responded to at odd hours
  - 6.2.4. Address this informally in **department/group** meetings

## 7. **General:**

- 7.1. Ensure that **Maxintra** is up to date and user friendly, for all potential users. Information resources should include how to get help for home-office assistance, mental health issues, child care/care support, work-life balance, financial support and reimbursement opportunities, and career development advice;
  - 7.1.1. Add automated reminders for annual (or more frequent) updates
  - 7.1.2. Make 'send feedback' option clearly visible
- 7.2. Establish/strengthen links with resources at Radboud University and other relevant organizations – we propose specific **community links/liaison role** within the Communications team if this is not already covered