AGENDA

12:30 – 12:35   Welcome and brief introduction to the context of the research

12:35 – 12:50   Shift Insight presentation on report and findings

12:50 – 13:15   Reflection on findings – Sponsors and Partners

13:15 – 13:25   Audience Q&A

13:25 – 13:30   Next steps, thank you and close

INTRODUCTION

PRESENTATION OF REPORT FINDINGS

- The project led by Newcastle University looked at a situational analysis of the current engagement with policy initiatives across the country's research and HE sector. It aimed to highlight experiences of and barriers to policy engagement amongst the allied academic community.

- A survey was co-designed with a range of stakeholders and commissioned to engage with the widest possible audience.

- The survey was followed up by a workshop with stakeholders from organisations involved in co-designing the survey.

Research objectives

| To explore experiences with policy engagement	To explore the drivers and barriers to policy engagement	To gain understanding from across the sector	To consider support and solutions needed to encourage policy engagement

Q: What kinds of policy engagement activities have you been involved in within the last 3 years, if any?

Activity	Percentage
Meeting	62%
Survey / questionnaire	62%
Online discussions	48%
Committee	43%
Conference	39%
Roundtable discussion	38%
Other in-person event	28%
Call for written evidence	27%
Social media campaigns	25%
Green paper consultation	13%
Hearing	4%
Other - advisory activities	3%
Unsure	2%
Other	1%
I've never been involved	10%

Base n = 268. Multi choice

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

■ Disagree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Agree

	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
Inclusivity – Consultation/activity felt inclusive to a wide range of voices and perspectives	28%	16%	54%
Accessibility – Consultation/activity was accessible to varied stakeholder types, including the users affected by the policy	32%	19%	46%
Transparency and openness – The scope and aim of the consultation as well as its role in the wider policymaking process was transparent	26%	17%	54%
Effectiveness – I felt my participation in the consultation process was treated as an integral part of policy development and could make a difference	27%	24%	46%
Clarity – The consultation process was clear, well communicated and provided necessary information to facilitate my engagement	18%	17%	63%
Accountability and impact – I was informed of the response to, and the impact of, the consultation process I participated in	36%	18%	43%

Digital exclusion

Staff who don't regularly use technology may be excluded from policy activities, despite the wealth of knowledge they can contribute.

Language

The language used should be accessible – not overly academic or intimidating.

Centralisation

The hierarchical structure of HE institutions can hinder change.

Potential impact on career

Raising issues could have a negative impact on reputation or career. Intersectionality is particularly important to consider here.

Potential solution to improve access and openness:

Universities having dedicated policy engagement webpages that are frequently mentioned across all communication channels with staff.

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree

74% — I understand the policy landscape (including current policy issues and interventions) relevant to my sector or work (17% Disagree, 9% Neither agree nor disagree, 74% Agree)

83% — I think people in roles similar to mine have valuable contributions and experiences to inform policy development (8% Disagree, 6% Neither agree nor disagree, 83% Agree)

84% — I am interested in being involved in policy activities or consultations (8% Disagree, 7% Neither agree nor disagree, 84% Agree)

Base n = 268. Not applicable = 0-2%.
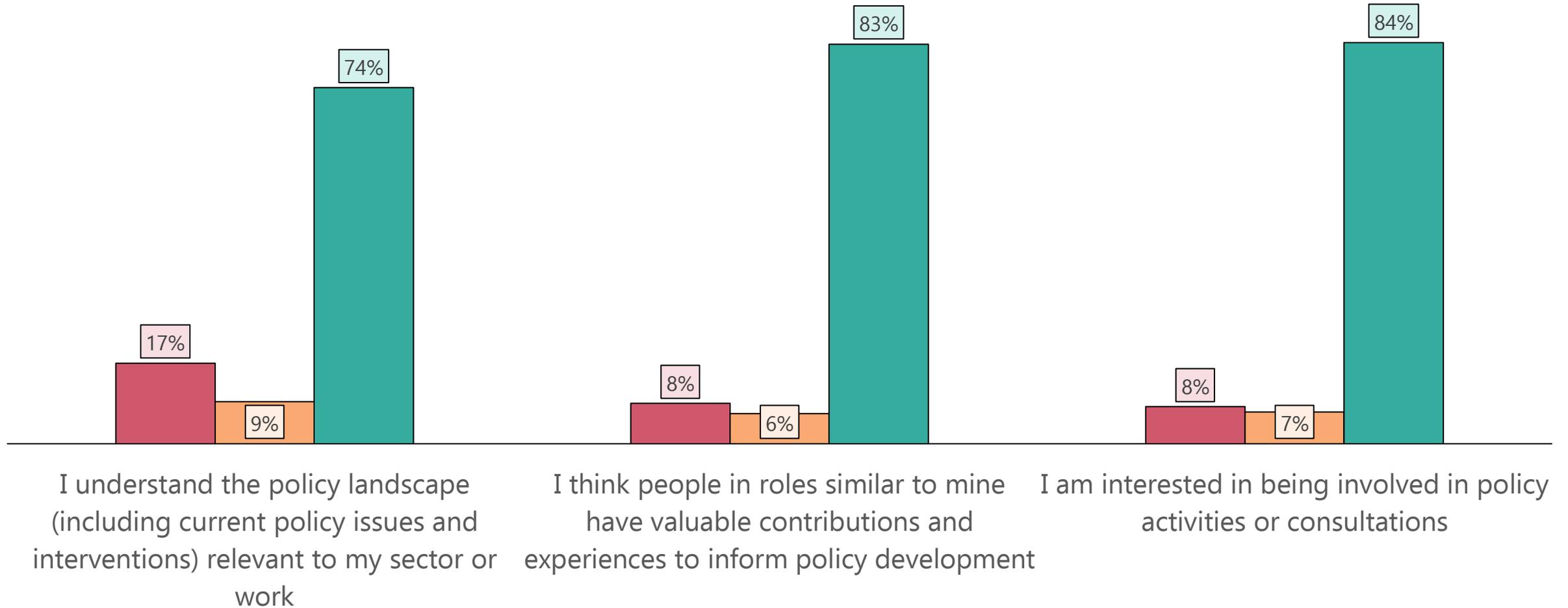
38% of respondents felt excluded from policy activities

Feeling excluded or overlooked, and simply insufficient opportunities and awareness, were key barriers impacting levels of participation.

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree

I feel overlooked or excluded from policy activities or consultations relevant to my sector or work
- 42%
- 19%
- 38%

My employer is supportive of staff engagement in policy*
- 18%
- 19%
- 61%

I am interested in receiving more guidance and training on policy engagement
- 12%
- 12%
- 74%
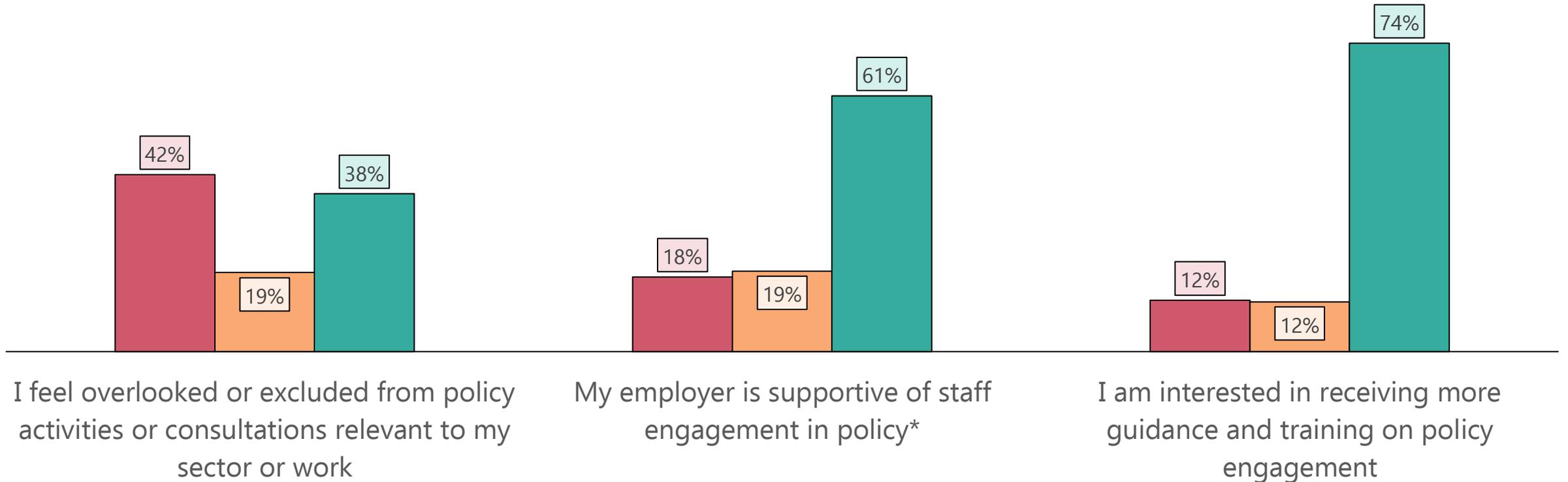
Base n = 268. Not applicable = 0-2%. *(this might include providing training, consultation opportunities, giving time for policy engagement or other forms of support).

Q: What kinds of policy engagement training have you received within the last 3 years, if any?

55% **No recent training**	**Informal training or guidance 35%**		**One-off training**	**19%**
	Access to written resources and guides	Informal 1-2-1 from a colleague	Single class or seminar organised internally by my organisation / employer	Single class or seminar external to my organisation
			Structured training	**13%**
			Internal multi-session course	External multi-session course
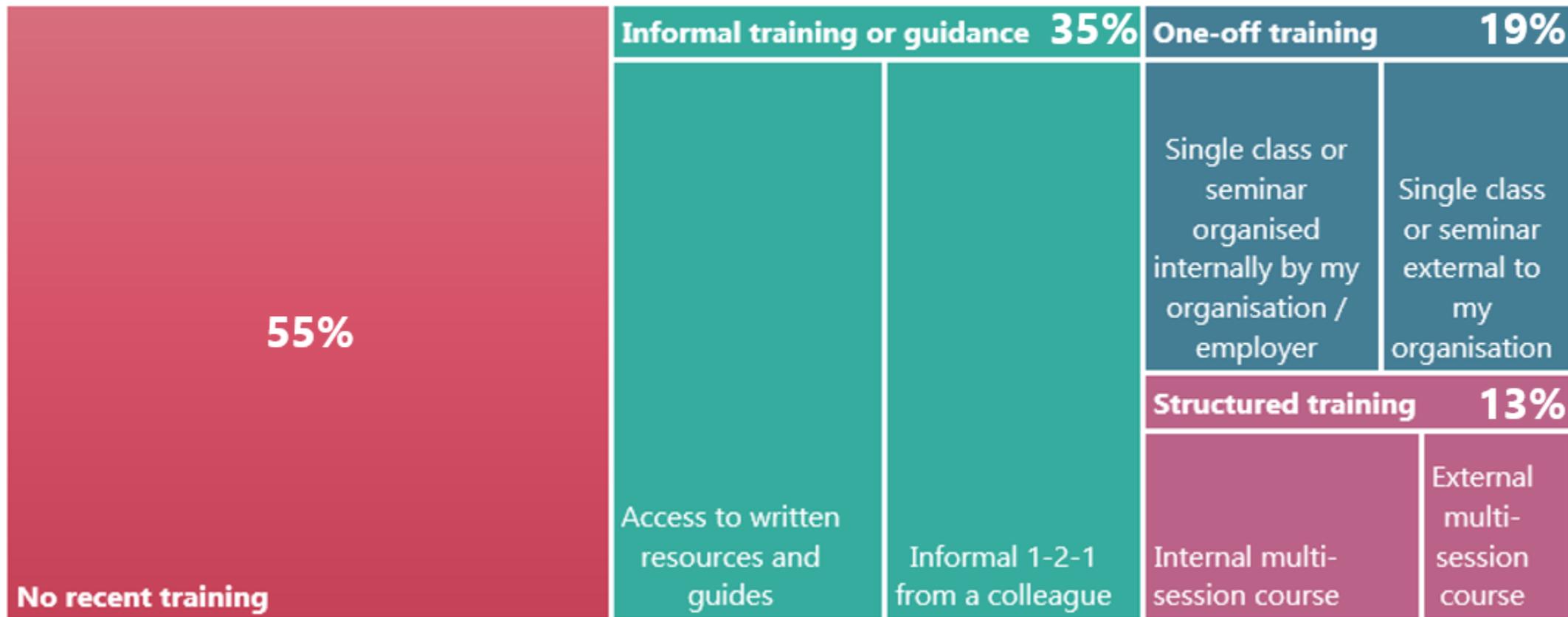
Base n = 286. Multiple choice question. The size of squares reflects the relative proportion of different training activities undertaken.

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Proportion of respondents agreeing with the following statements about policy engagement training they took part in*

Training gave me new tools or knowledge to inform my policy engagement
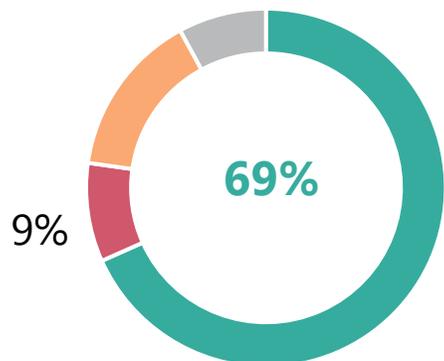
Training increased my interest in being involved in policy activities
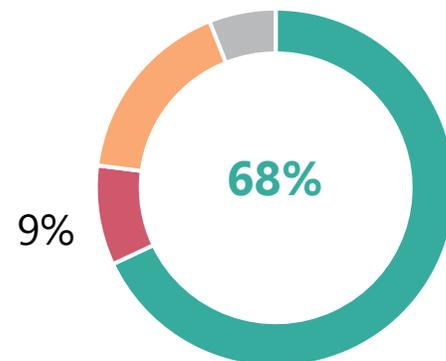
Training increased my confidence around being involved in policy activities
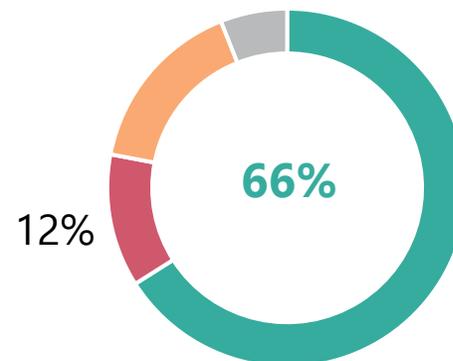
Training was open to diverse roles (e.g. not just academic staff)

69%

9%

68%

9%

66%

12%

57%

16%
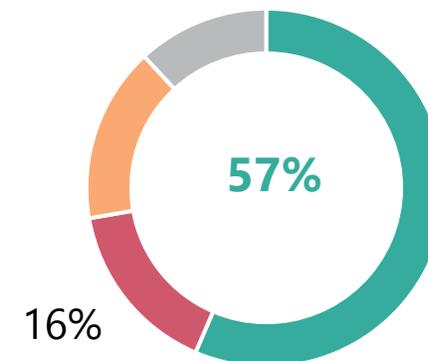
■ Agree   ■ Disagree   ■ Neutral   ■ N/A

*Q13. We'd like to find out more about your experience with policy training. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Base n = 129, asked only to those who took part in any policy engagement training in the last three years.

Many didn't get an opportunity to take part in policy engagement training

The main barrier preventing respondents from taking part in policy engagement training was simply a lack of opportunity – 73% reported that no policy training was offered and 41% said they weren't even aware they could receive it.

Q: Why have you not received any policy engagement training?

Category	Percentage
Lack of opportunity	73%
Lack of awareness	43%
Pragmatics / capacity	13%
Self-exclusion	7%
Lack of interest	4%
No need	2%
Impact on job	1%
Other + Prefer not to say	4%
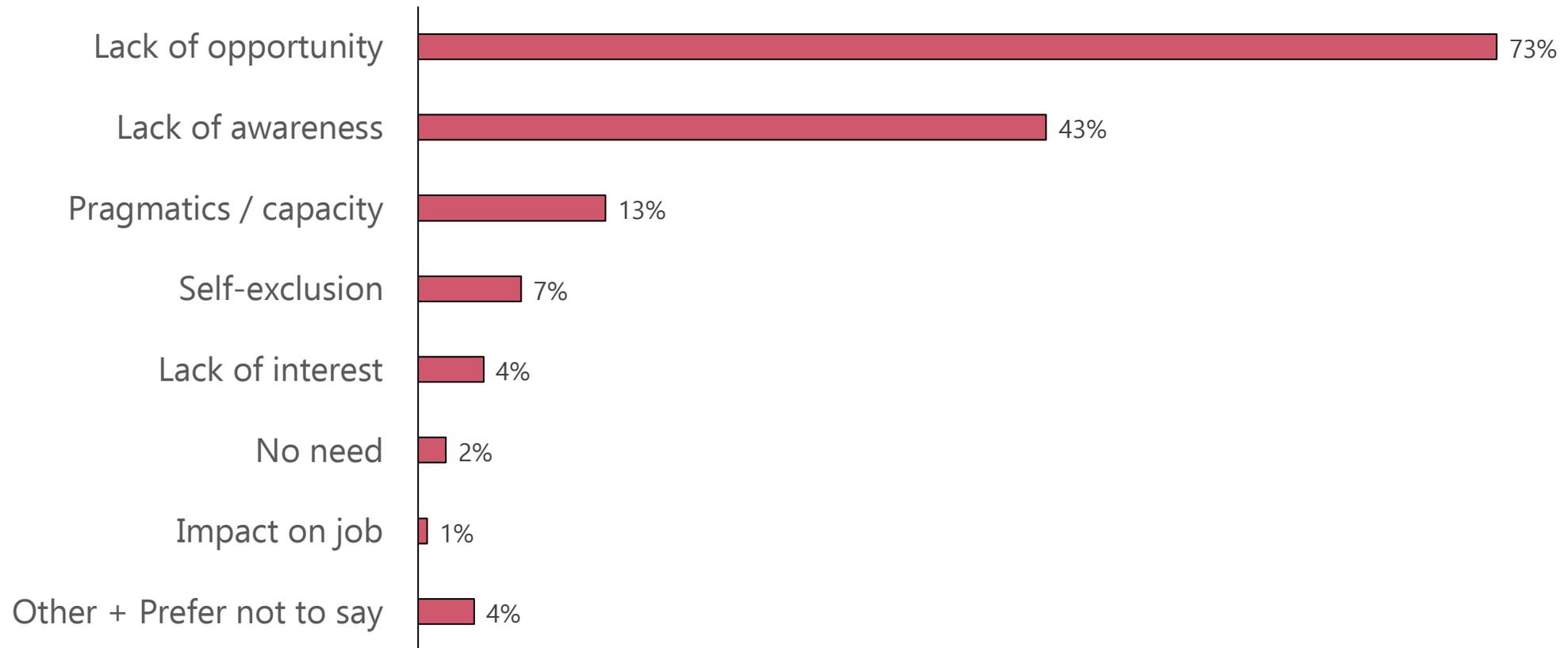
There was appetite for online primers on effective policy engagement

This list suggests the sector is primarily interested in **understanding the policy landscape** and its processes better, as well as knowing how to effectively contribute towards it.

Q: What policy training topics would you be interested in, if any?

IN DESCENDING ORDER

How to effectively get involved in policy engagement (n=16)

Policy communication (n=10)

Collaboration with policy-makers / Government (n=9)

Relationships between research and policy (n=9)

Policy landscape, stakeholders and processes (n=8)

Inclusive policy development (n=7)

Policy advocacy (n=6)

HE or education policies (n=5)

Organisational / internal policies (n=4)

Sustainability and climate change (n=4)

Engagement with business and industry (n=3)

Policy implementation (n=3)

When asked about format, respondents favoured **online training**:
- 69% selected online lectures of talks.
- 67% selected online interactive workshops or webinars.

All other formats were selected by fewer than 60%.

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Base n = 84. Open field responses coded into thematic codes. Top 12 most frequent themes only.

Base n = 258, multiple choice question. Asked only to those interested in receiving more guidance and training on policy engagement

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ENSURING ACTIVITIES ARE MORE OPEN

Make policy engagement more inclusive to various roles and groups

Communicate better and engage with staff more

Give / Recognise time to be spent on policy engagement activities

Provide training, guidance and information on how to engage meaningfully

ADDRESSING SKILLS GAPS

Respondents wanted support with gaining the following skills and practical knowledge:

- ✓ How to prepare for policy consultation
- ✓ How to apply to be on advisory committees
- ✓ How to align research to policy
- ✓ How to word consultation responses
- ✓ What lobbying techniques are effective
- ✓ What guidance is already available and where to access it
- ✓ How to support academics in embedding policy matters into research applications
- ✓ How to engage with policy around research and innovation funding
- ✓ How to make yourself heard

Engaging technicians and professional services staff as leads

Recognising time and work-life balance impact

Challenging convention and conservative thought in organisations

Using events to exchange practices and have deeper conversations

Utilising people who have a brokering role with policy-makers

Stressing no academic background is needed

Sharing good practice in a way that moves away from competing with other organisations

Using accreditation to add credibility to people's voices

Building networks to amplify underrepresented voices and individual views

Getting a say in conversations that decide on UK research and innovation policies

The survey findings indicate there is an existing capacity for policy engagement in the sector.

There is potentially a sizeable and engaged audience, but this capacity could be better harnessed to include underused talent and expand the range of contributions and perspectives that inform policy processes.

Transparency, effectiveness and impact

Ensuring a sense of being listened to.

Incentives, accessibility and affordability

Creating real and realistic opportunities.
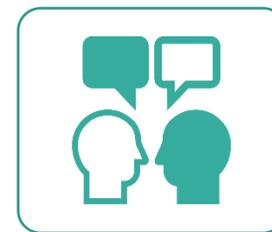
Inclusion and representation

Giving everyone a chance to speak.

AUDIENCE Q&A

Panel Members:
- **Anja Roeding** Professional Research Investment and Strategy Managers (PRISMs)
- **Suzanne Nestor-Robson** Newcastle University Policy Academy
- **Simon Breeden** The Technician Commitment
- **Annette Bramley** N8 Research Partnership

REFLECTION ON FINDINGS – SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

FOLLOWED BY AUDIENCE Q&A

NEXT STEPS, THANK YOU AND CLOSE