

[REDACTED]

28 March 2025

Dear [REDACTED]

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2025/00090**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 27 January, and clarification received on the 6 March, in which you requested the following:

**Your request:**

*Please could I request the number of UKRI-funded researchers reporting bullying and harassment over the time period of 2019 to 2024, broken down by research council?*

*Could I also request the figures of UKRI-funded researchers reporting sexual harassment within the same period in the same time period, broken down by research council?*

*For both requests, please could I have both the number of cases reported and upheld, and the number of cases reported and not upheld?*

**Your clarification:**

*I confirm I'm happy with [the definition that is set out in the UKRI Preventing Harm policy, which states "To manage the risks associated with our funding, organisations must inform UKRI of any upheld allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence against staff, students or associated personnel directly involved in a UKRI funded activity."]*

*I'm just seeking data for researchers who have applied for and received grant-funding from UKRI, not [researchers who are employed by UKRI and work at UKRI funded institutes].*

**Our response:**

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) holds some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below.

UKRI does not investigate formal bullying complaints made about people funded by UKRI through its grant programmes. This reflects that employers are responsible for preventing and handling bullying and harassment.

The [UKRI Preventing Harm policy](#)<sup>1</sup> outlines that where an allegation is made to an organisation about any associated personnel involved in a UKRI-funded research and innovation activity, the allegation should be referred to their employing or enrolling organisation, which is responsible for following their own investigation and disciplinary procedures.

The terms and conditions of our funding, including as set out in the Preventing Harm (PH) policy, requires that organisations inform UKRI of any upheld allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence against staff, students or associated personnel directly involved in a UKRI funded activity. It is not a requirement for organisations to inform UKRI of any allegations that were not

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-050920-PreventingHarmSafeguardingInResearchAndInnovationPolicy.pdf>

upheld, however in some instances, UKRI is informed. This means that data held by UKRI on allegations that are not upheld is likely to be incomplete.

The following cases of bullying and harassment (B&H) and sexual harassment (SH) are recorded as having been reported between 2019 and 2024:

Year <sup>1</sup>	Reported to <sup>2</sup>	Reported as upheld <sup>3</sup>	Type
2018/19	MRC	Yes	B&H
2018/19	MRC	No	B&H
2019	EPSRC	Yes	B&H
2019/20	MRC	Yes	B&H
2020/21	MRC	Yes	B&H
2020/21	MRC	No	B&H
2022	AHRC	Yes	SH
2022	EPSRC	Yes	B&H
2022	MRC	Yes	B&H
2022	UKRI	No	B&H
2022	UKRI	No	B&H
2023	EPSRC	Yes	B&H
2023	MRC	Yes	B&H
2023	MRC	Yes	B&H
2023	MRC	Yes	SH
2023	NERC	Yes	B&H
2023	UKRI	Yes	B&H
2023	UKRI	No	B&H
2024	BBSRC	Yes	B&H
2024	BBSRC	Yes	B&H
2024	MRC	Yes	B&H
2024	MRC	Yes	B&H
2024	MRC	Yes	B&H
2024	MRC	No	B&H
2024	MRC	No	B&H
2024	Innovate UK	Yes	SH
2024	UKRI International	Yes	B&H

<sup>1</sup> Prior to 2022 UKRI did not collate this information centrally, therefore while some records are held, this may not be comprehensive. MRC do not hold specific dates for cases prior to 2022, so cannot be more specific on when they were reported than financial year.

<sup>2</sup> Cases marked as reported to UKRI cannot be confirmed as a specific council area or grant.

<sup>3</sup> The terms and conditions of UKRI funding requires that organisations inform UKRI of any upheld allegations. Where UKRI has been informed and the allegation was not upheld by the employing organisation, the record in the table above is marked 'No' – this also includes investigations that were concluded informally. However, this is unlikely to be a complete record.

The PH policy outlines the actions that UKRI may take against individuals or organisations. It is the responsibility of the employing organisation to determine the outcome of an upheld case of bullying or harassment, and UKRI expects the organisation to apply appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with their policies and procedures. This includes, where appropriate, removing the individual from a UKRI grant or application. Where an organisation removes an individual from a UKRI-funded activity or application for funding, UKRI will work with the organisation to minimise the impact on any other staff, student or any associated personnel involved in the affected grant(s). This may include transferring the grant to another grant holder.

UKRI reserves the right to take action against any organisation receiving funding from us in order to mitigate the risk of exploitation, abuse or harm occurring as a result of our funded activities while the organisation improves their systems and processes. The PH policy sets out the full set of actions that UKRI may apply against an organisation. UKRI has not employed any of these actions in the centrally identified reports.

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you

disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance

Email: [foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org)

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints procedure](#)<sup>2</sup>.

Yours sincerely,

  
Information Governance  
Information Rights Team  
UK Research and Innovation  
[foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org) | [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>