Volcanic and Magmatic Studies Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2024

Authored by Katie Preece (VMSG EDI Officer) and the VMSG Committee

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Foreword

The Volcanic and Magmatic Studies Group (VMSG) aims to provide a constructive, supportive, inclusive and professionally stimulating environment for all members, where all in the community are welcome and valued.

In 2020, VMSG published the first VMSG Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report, which summarised statistics about the gender of attendees and presenters at annual meetings between 2016 and 2020, and presented results of a members survey which asked questions about gender, sexual orientation, place of residence, and career stage of members. The report outlined numerous recommendations for future VMSG meetings, aimed at ensuring the conference encourages and supports equality, diversity and inclusion in our community. However, the 2020 report highlighted that there was a lack of data on important characteristics of the community, such as ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic background or disability.

Following the 2020 report, and in the wake of the COVID pandemic, which saw large changes in working practices and conference organisation, VMSG re-surveyed its members in October – November 2023. The survey asked questions linked to respondents' career, protected characteristics, experiences of discrimination and harassment at VMSG and in everyday work or study, and asked questions to gain opinions and suggestions related to VMSG events and policies.

The following report reviews progress on the recommendations which were outlined 2020, presents the results from the recent 2023 survey, and makes some updated recommendations in light of survey responses.

If you have any comments, suggestions, ideas or questions, we welcome your input. Please feel free to contact:

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Acknowledgements

VMSG would like to thank all participants of the 2023 EDI survey for taking the time to respond and for sharing their personal experiences, opinions and suggestions. VMSG would like to thank Kevin Murphy and Laura Kelly (Mineralogical Society of UK and Ireland) for thoughtful and constructive feedback regarding the format of survey questions. Past VMSG committee members Janine Kavanagh and Jazmin Scarlett are acknowledged for early input into the survey design and for their extensive work on the committee around the area of EDI.

Executive Summary

- In 2020, VMSG published its first Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) report. Following the 2020 report and the COVID pandemic, which saw large changes in working practices and conference organisation, VMSG re-surveyed its members in 2023. The following report reviews progress on recommendations which were outlined in 2020, presents the results from the 2023 survey, and makes some updated recommendations considering survey responses.

- There has been significant progress actioning the recommendations outlined in the 2020 report, which are related to conference organisation and design. There remains some scope to revisit a few of the actions for future events.

- The 2023 survey was completed by 92 respondents, with 64 % having attended a VMSG meeting or event within the last three years. The majority (83 %) of respondents were residing in the UK or Ireland at the time of the survey. Responses were acquired from all career stages, from Undergraduate students to retired members, with 80 % of participants studying or working in academia. Responses were gathered from all age groups (under 25 to 75+) but the majority of were from younger members of the community (50 % under the age of 35).

- In addition to age, respondents shared information about their other protected characteristics, including gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity and nationality, and disability. In addition, respondents provided information about caring responsibilities and about their socio-economic background.

- Of those who have attended a VMSG event within the last 3 years, 2 % reported experiencing one incident of prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or other forms of discrimination or harassment at the event. In addition, 5 % of respondents who have attended a VMSG event within the last 3 years said that they have witnessed prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or other forms of discrimination or harassment, whilst involved with the event.

- During everyday work or study, 52 % report having experienced prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or any other form of discrimination or harassment within the last 3 years, and 63 % have witnessed these issues during everyday work or study within the same time period.

- Participants were asked about their preferences for attending future VMSG conferences. The most popular preference was to have the option to attend in-person or virtual attendance depending on factors such as cost, locations, facilities available, rather than solely in-person or online options.

- Participants were asked their opinions on alcohol provision at meetings, and responses indicate mixed opinions, with many indicating a preference for limited alcohol and the provision of a wide range of non-alcoholic drinks options.

- Respondents provided comments and suggestions regarding the possibility of widening the diversity of VMSG prizes and awards (e.g. widening the types of scientific achievement that are recognised). Comments were broadly supportive of widening the types of work that are awarded.

- Considering survey responses, new recommendations are outlined around the collection of data to assess the effectiveness of policies, the format of the VMSG annual conference and the revision of existing General Guidance Document for LOCs, as well as the breadth of awards and the nomination process.

Recommendations actioned from the VMSG EDI Report 2020

The 2020 VMSG Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) report proposed and outlined many recommendations aimed at enhancing EDI and the experience of all participants at VMSG meetings. Progress on these actions is outlined below.

1: Create a dedicated EDI Officer role on the local organising committee

Due to the sensitive nature of demographic data collected at VMSG conferences, there was a recommendation to have an appointed EDI Officer role on the local organising committee (LOC). Whilst there has not been a formal officer role created, for recent VMSG conferences, there has been one person in charge in collating data and liaising regularly with the VMSG EDI Officer, Secretary or Chair before, during and after the event. There is ongoing opportunity to create a dedicated role on the LOC for future VMSG conferences.

2: Conference Scientific Programme Design

The LOC have significant control and influence over many aspects of the conference programme, including the choice of session chairs, keynote speakers, as well as oral and poster presentation allocation. The 2020 report emphasised that whilst decisions regarding scientific programme design should be based on the science, the decision-makers should be trained in diversity and equality issues and the role of unconscious bias. EDI considerations are always discussed between the LOC and VMSG committee when planning the conference programme. In addition, VMSG has created a General Guidance Document for LOCs, which is publicly available on the VMSG website and intended to help LOCs organise the meeting, including EDI aspects.

3: Conference Social Programme Design

The 2020 report outlined several proposals aimed at ensuring that the design of the social events programme during the annual VMSG conference is inclusive. Due to the COVID pandemic, VMSG meetings in 2021 and 2022 were virtual, which necessitated some changes to the usual programming, including the use of virtual social platforms and events. Recommendations from the 2020 report including the following:

- *Ensuring ample time for social interaction during the day, for those unable to attend evening events:* this has been implemented by LOCs, within reason, considering the wider programming and budget available.
- *Making sure there is a wide variety of non-alcoholic drinks at evening receptions:* a wider range of non-alcoholic drinks has been served at recent conference diners (e.g., non-alcoholic cocktails).
- *Having a seating arrangement at the conference dinner that enables delegates to meet new people:* this has been implemented recently, although informal feedback on this from delegates has been mixed.

- *Consider running a 'meet the VMSG council' event:* this has not been done, therefore there is scope to revisit this.
- *Consider running ECR-targeted events:* ECR forums and various ECR workshop events have been run at recent conferences, with positive feedback from participants. Beyond the annual conference, various events including PhD application Q&A sessions, and GIS training sessions have been held.
- *Consider how carers can be included in social events:* In some respects, virtual VMSG events in 2021 and 2022 allowed participants a greater degree of flexibility. As in-person conferences have resumed, LOCs have been endeavouring to allocate ample time for social interaction during the day. Moving forward, it is important to consider how hybrid aspects might be beneficial for future conferences, bearing in mind any cost implications and workload for LOCs.

4: Other recommendations to promote EDI at VMSG meetings

- *Allocating a quiet room:* this was implemented at VMSG2023 and was used by a number of people.
- *Communicating childcare options:* There is some scope to revisit this action.
- *Identify areas that are suitable for the Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme:* There is some scope to revisit this action.
- *Displaying diversity by having stickers that delegates can use to display pronouns if desired:* there is an option during registration to display pronouns on conference name badges.
- *Providing blank stickers and markers for adding any further information to name tags if desired:* sometimes this has been implemented, but there is scope to re-visit this.
- *Print name badges double-sided and in large font for increased visibility:* this has been implemented.
- *Supporting the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard Scheme:* this has not been implemented, so there is opportunity to revisit this, bearing in mind any cost implications and workload for LOCs.
- *Introducing a buddy or mentor system for those attending VMSG events:* this was created by the Student and ECR reps and has now been in place for several years. This has worked well, but requires input from the mentors and mentees, with support from the VMSG committee to continue to work well.
- *Consider providing clearly marked all-gender toilets:* this depends on the venue, however, if there are such facilities available, they can be used and signposted during the conference.
- *Bring public engagement and outreach activities into the meeting programme which promote EDI:* various public engagement and outreach events have been run at recent meetings, including in London 2023 and Bristol 2024, which proved to be very well-attended and successful.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey 2023

This section presents the results from the VMSG EDI Survey 2023. The survey was distributed via the VMSG mailing list and was open for approximately one month during October – November 2023. The survey was open to all involved with VMSG and its activities. A total of 92 responses were received, although not everyone answered all questions. This response rate represents < 10 % of the VMSG mailing list, although it represents ~ 50 % of the active VMSG members (approximately 200 people attend the VMSG annual meeting each year). Therefore, whilst these data provide a good indication of who is in our community, as well as their experiences and opinions, it is important to consider that the survey respondents represent a limited and self-selecting group of a wider community.

EDI Survey Results – who completed the survey?

VMSG attendance

Of the people who completed the survey, nearly two thirds have attended a VMSG meeting or event within the past three years (Fig. 1). The remaining 36 % have not attended a VMSG meeting or event within the last three years, either because they are new members who had not yet attended an event, or are longer-term members who had not attended recently.
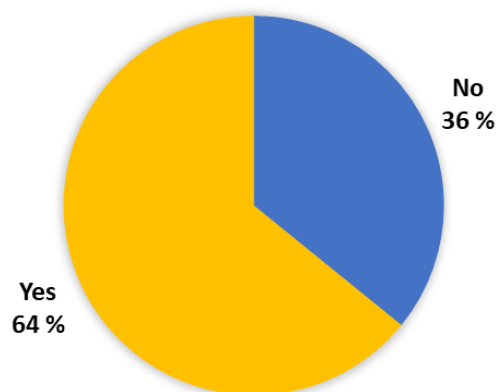

Fig. 1: "*Have you attended a VMSG meeting or event within the past three years?*"

Career

Respondents were asked about both their career stage (Fig. 2a) and their job type (Fig. 2b). Responses were acquired from all career stages, from Undergraduate students to retired members. The modal response was from early career members (up to 10 years full-time equivalent experience since terminal degree), with 29 % of respondents in this category. The majority of respondents (80 %) reported that they work or study in academia, with other respondents working in a research institute (13 %), and fewer within government / state / local authority, industry, self-employed / consultant, not currently employed / between contracts, or retired.
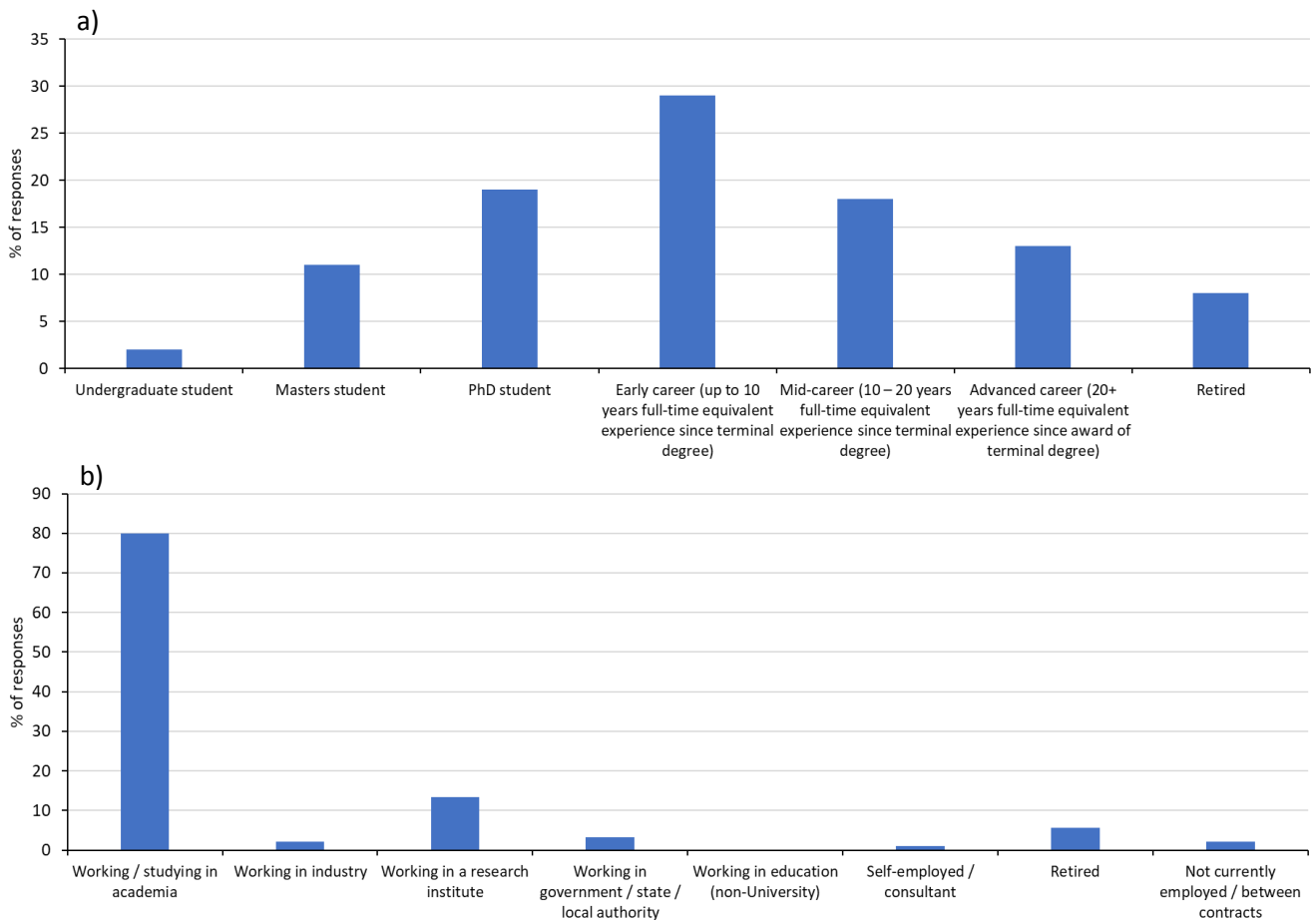
a)

b)

Fig. 2: *a) "What is your career stage?", and b) "Which of the following best describes your job? Please select all that apply."*

Respondent characteristics

Survey respondents were asked to share information about their protected characteristics. These data provide important insights into the make-up of our community and enable analysis of other questions with respect to characteristics. In formatting the questions related to protected characteristics, guidance was followed from multiple organisations, including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Science and Health (EDIS), the Social Mobility Commission, Advance HE, and the Office for National Statistics. However, we acknowledge that language used to describe protected characteristics varies and may change rapidly as best practice continues to develop in this area.

Age

Survey responses were received from respondents in all age categories, from Under 25 to 75+ (Fig. 3). However, many survey responses were from younger members of the community, with 50 % from members under the age of 35, and with most responses from members aged 25 – 34 (36 %).
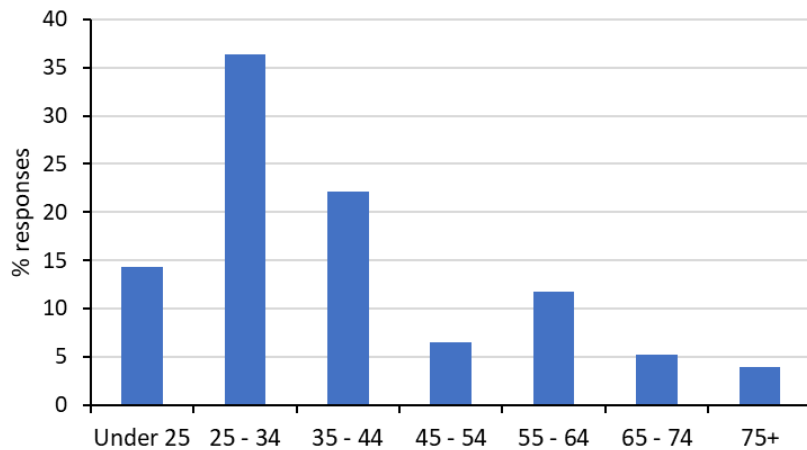
Fig. 3: *"What is your age?"*

Gender and gender identity

The majority of respondents were female (53 %), with 43 % of responses from men, and 1 % from non-binary members. The remaining 3 % preferred not to say (Fig. 4). A larger percentage of women completed the survey compared to in 2020 (40 %). When asked about gender identity, 4 % of respondents are trans, 93 % are cisgender and 3 % preferred not to say (Fig. 5). This question was not asked in 2020, so it is not possible to compare data.
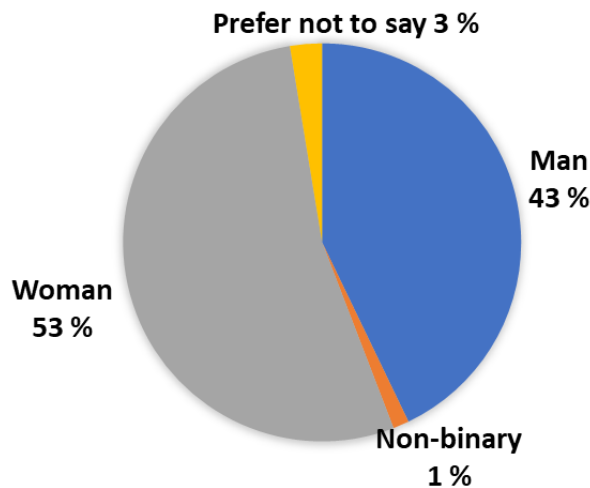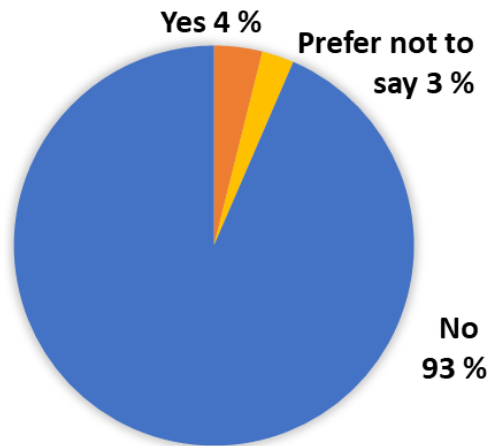

Fig. 4: *"How would you describe your gender?"*

Fig. 5: *"Do you identify as trans?"*

Sexual orientation

When asked "Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?", 71 % of respondents identify as heterosexual, 12 % as bisexual, 4 % as queer, 1 % as gay man, 1 % as gay woman / lesbian, and 1 % prefer to identify in another way (Fig. 6). Just over 9 % preferred not to say. In comparison, the 2020 report, the biggest changes are in the percentage of heterosexual respondents (85 % in 2020) and bisexual respondents (3 % in 2020). Whilst these data may indicate some changes in the make-up and diversity of the VMSG community in, it is difficult to directly compare, as not all categories were included in the 2020 survey question, and changes may reflect different people completing the two surveys.
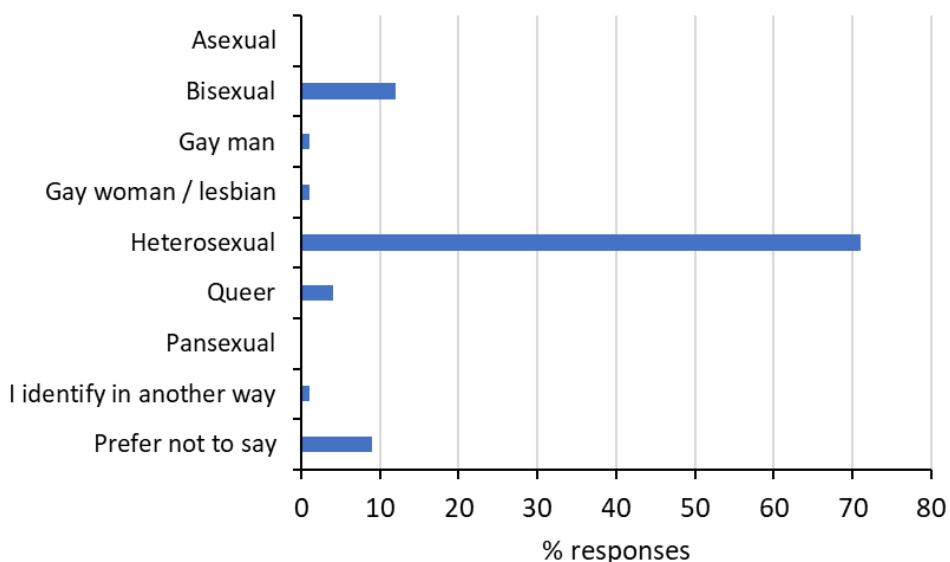

Fig. 6: *"Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?"*

Religion

Nearly 56 % of respondents reported that they have no religion or belief, 22 % are Christian, with nearly 12 % agnostic, 3 % Jewish, 3 % Muslim, 1 % Buddhist, and 1 % Sikh. Additionally, 3 % of people preferred not to say (Fig. 7). Data about religion of VMSG members have not been previously collected, so it is not possible to compare to the 2020 survey.
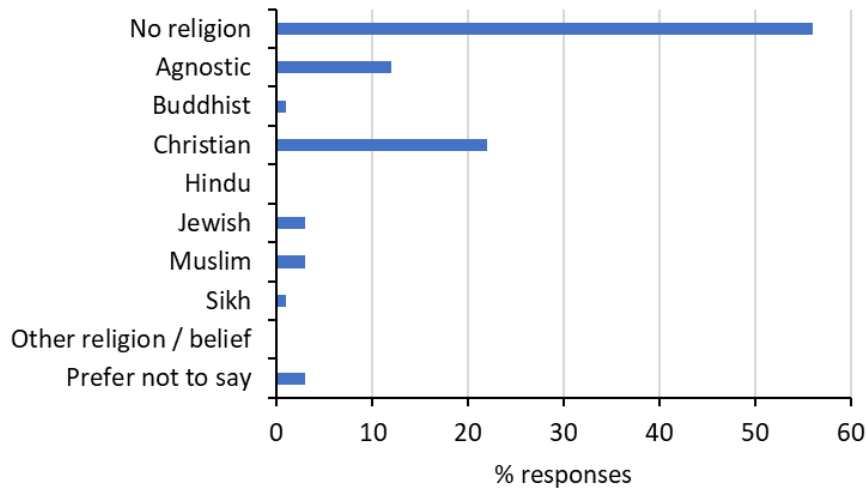

Fig. 7: "What is your religion or belief, if any?"

Ethnicity, nationality and country of residence

Members were asked about their ethnicity or ethnic group, with options based on the 2021 Census categories (Fig. 8). 85 % of respondents have White ethnicity, including 'White: English, Northern Irish, Scottish, Welsh or British' (66 %), 'White: Irish' (5 %), and 'White: any other white background' (14 %). 'Asian or Asian British: Indian' ethnicity was reported by 4 % of respondents, with 1 % of members recording 'Asian or Asian British: Other Asian background' ethnicity. 1 % of respondents have 'Black, Black British, Caribbean or African: African' ethnicity and a further 1 % selected 'Black, Black British, Caribbean or African: Any other Black or Black British background'. 1 % of members report 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean' ethnicity, 1 % 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African', and 3 % 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: Any other Mixed or Multiple background'. 'Other ethnic group' was chosen by 3 % of respondents and 4 % preferred not to say. Respondents could select as many categories as they feel best reflected their ethnicity (hence total is more than 100 %).
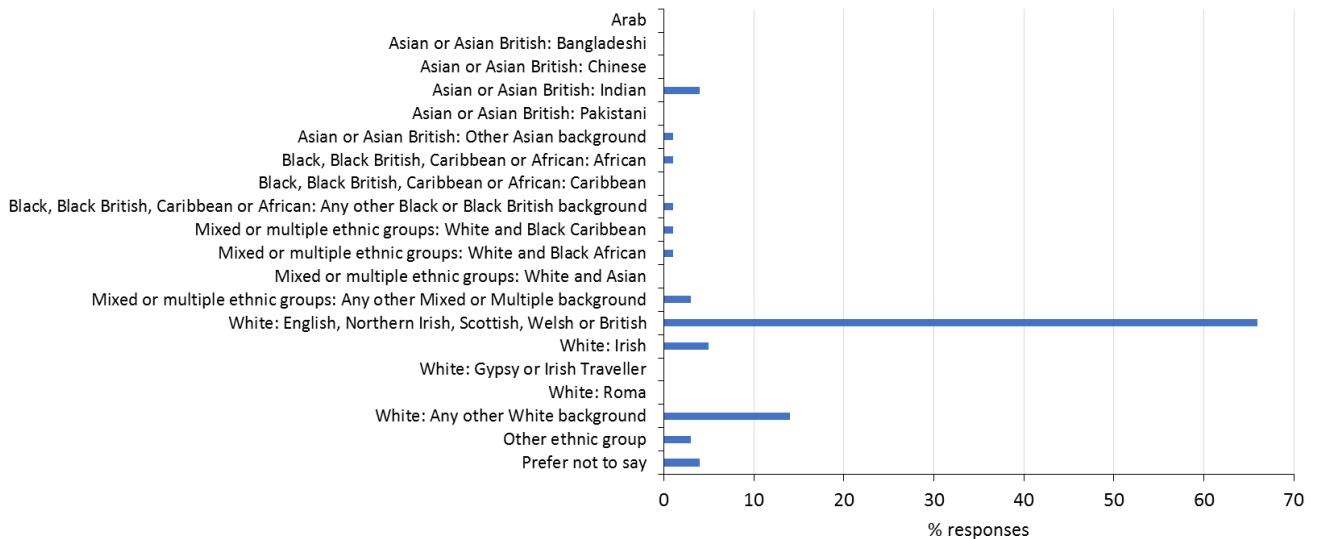
Fig. 8: *"What is your ethnicity or ethnic group? The options are based on the 2021 Census categories. Please select as many as you feel apply."*

The survey also asked members about their nationality. Due to single responses for many nationalities, responses here have been grouped to protect anonymity (Fig. 9). Responses from all UK countries and Ireland have been grouped into one category, with other nationalities grouped by continent. UK and Irish members form 81 % of responses, with other European nationalities (12 %), African nationalities (4 %), Asian nationalities (1 %), North American nationalities (1 %) and South American nationalities (1 %).
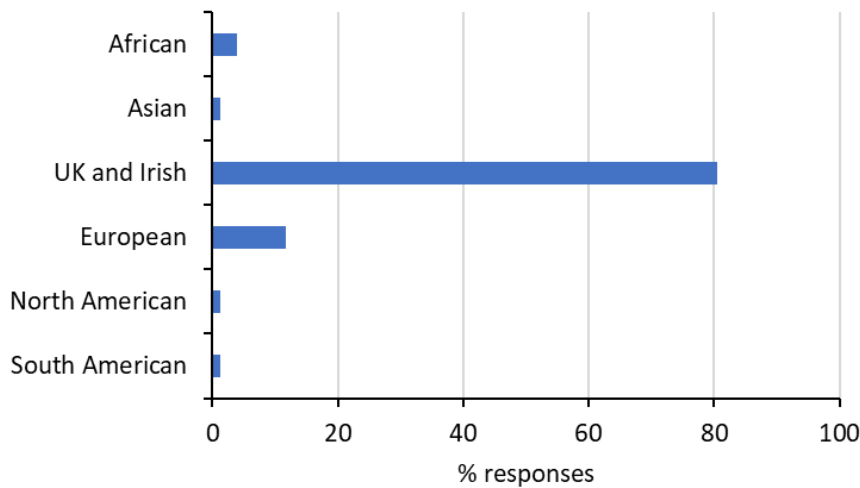

Fig. 9: *"What is your nationality?". Answers have been grouped here in order to protect anonymity.*

Members were asked "What is your current country of residence?" Again, answers here have been grouped to protect anonymity. Responses from all UK countries and Ireland have been grouped into one category, with other countries grouped by continent (Fig. 10). The majority of responses are from UK and Ireland residents (83 %), with other respondents residing in the rest of Europe (7 %), Asia (4 %), Australia and Oceania (4 %), Africa (1 %) and South America (1 %). Compared to the report in 2020,

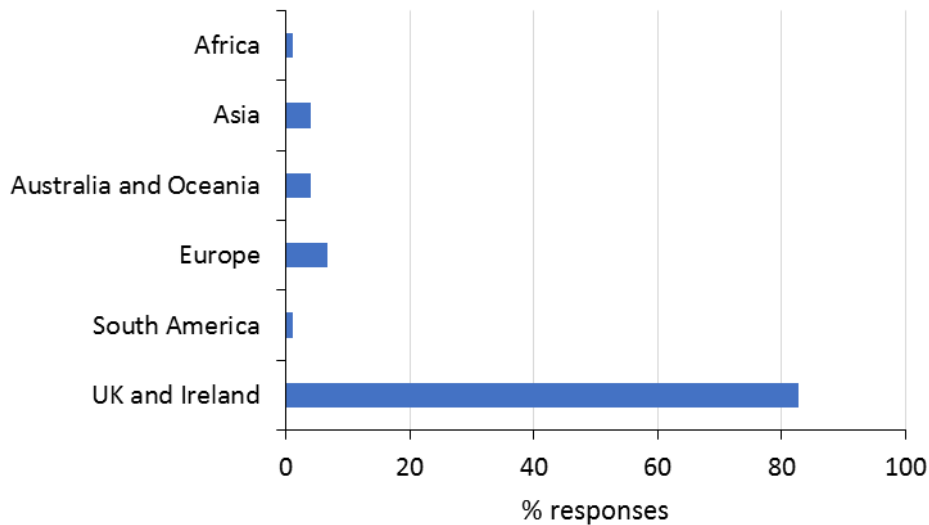a similar percentage of respondents are from UK and Ireland (81% in 2020) compared to the rest of the world.

Fig. 10: "What is your current country of residence?" Answers have been grouped here in order to protect anonymity.

Disability

The survey asked "Do you experience barriers or limitations in your day-to-day activities related to any disability, health conditions (including mental health), physical, sensory or cognitive differences, or impairments?" Figure 11 shows that 25 % of respondents do experience barriers or limitations in their day-to day activities, with 17 % experiencing some / small barriers or limitations, and nearly 8 % stating that they experience substantial barriers or limitations.
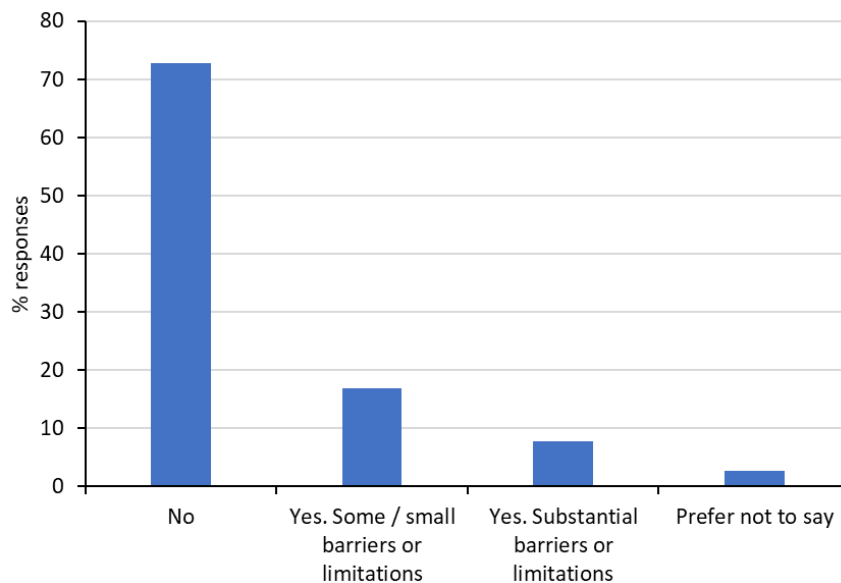

Fig. 11: "Do you experience barriers or limitations in your day-to-day activities related to any disability, health conditions (including mental health), physical, sensory or cognitive differences, or impairments?"

The respondents who stated that they do experience barriers or limitations in their day-to-day activities were then asked a follow-up question, in order to gain more information about the nature of the barriers faced (Fig. 12). Attitudinal barriers or limitations (e.g., discriminatory attitudes, negative or incorrect assumptions) were faced by 56 % of those who answered. Social barriers, such as expectations around social interactions were also experienced by 56 %. Physical barriers or limitations, such as step-free access to buildings and physical expectations of participating were experienced by 33 % of respondents. Issues around communication, such as lack of information in different accessible formats were reported by 33 % of those who answered. Organisational barriers or limitations, such as length of time and when meetings are scheduled, are experienced by 28 %. 'Other' barriers or limitations are faced by 17 % of respondents. Respondents who selected 'Other' were then invited to provide more information as a free-text comment – the following information was provided by members:

- *"Sensory (overstimulation from light/sound/PGR office environment)"*
- *"This is a personal issue, but one which can affect others. I have hearing difficulties, even though I have hearing aids, in some situations it is very difficult to distinguish what is being said."*
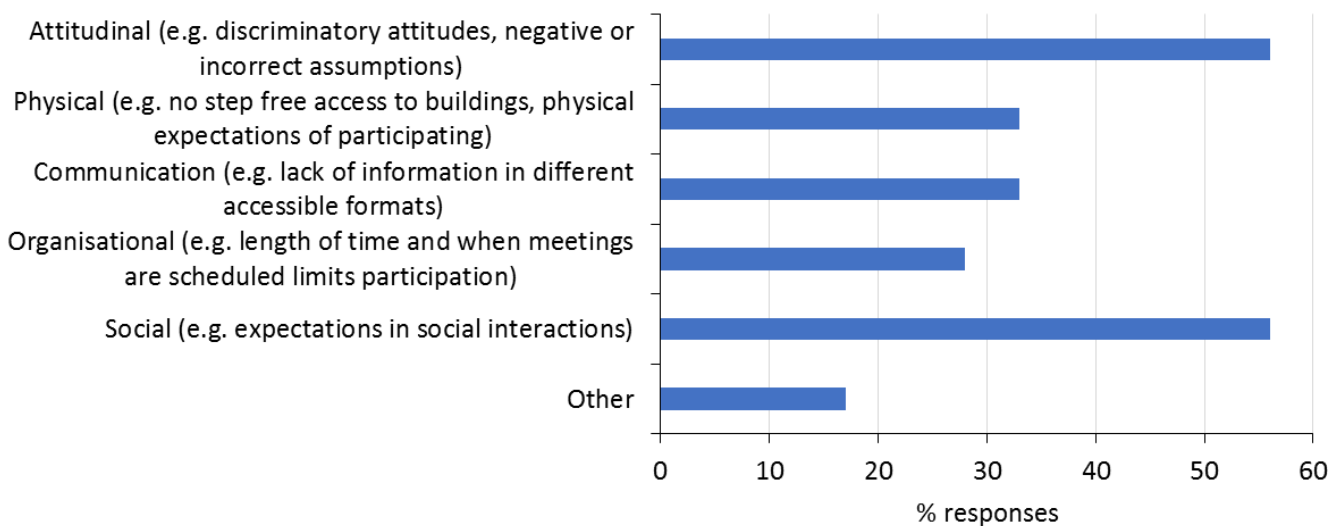

Fig. 12: *"What type of barriers or limitations do you face? Please select all that apply."*

Caring responsibilities

When asked about caring responsibilities (Fig. 13), 65 % of respondents stated that they had none; 19 % are 'primary or joint primary carer of a child or children (under 18)'; 8 % are 'primary or joint primary carer, or assistant, for an older person or people'; 8 % are a 'secondary carer where another person carries out the main caring role'; 5 % have caring responsibilities but preferred not to state what they are; and 1 % are 'primary or joint primary carer, or assistant, for a disabled adult (18 years and over)'. In addition, 1 % of respondents preferred not to say.
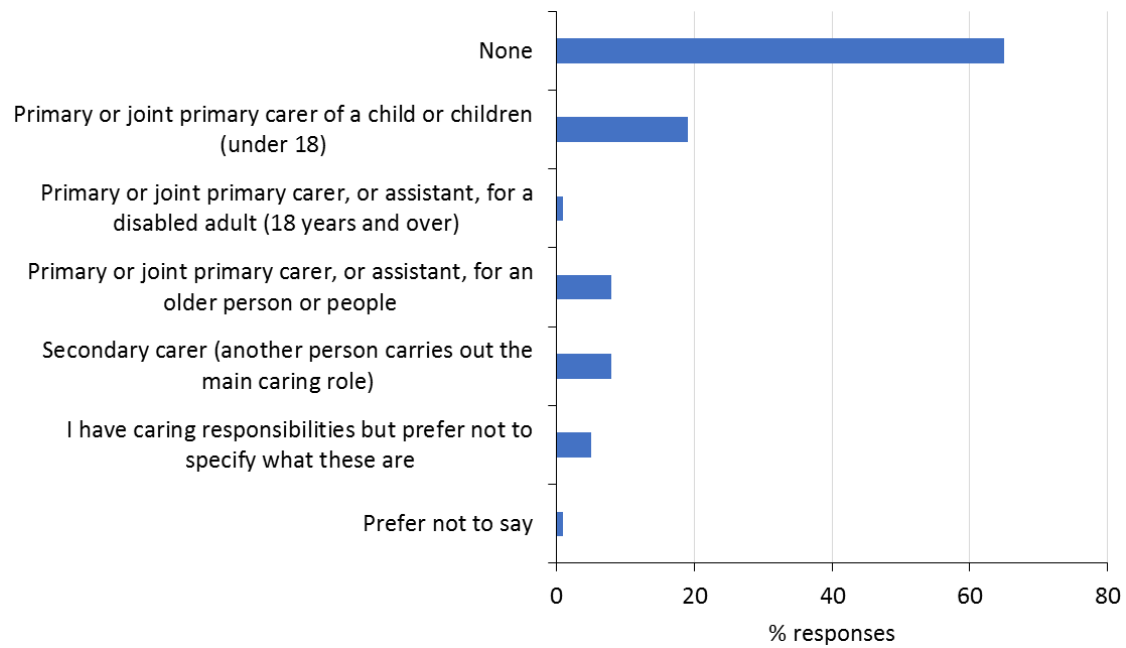
Fig. 13: *"Do you have any caring responsibilities? Please select all that apply."*

Socio-economic background

In order to gain information about socio-economic background, respondents were asked two questions, following guidance from the Social Mobility Commission. The first of these questions (Fig. 14), *"What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were aged about 14?"*, has been used to map occupational groups to 'Professional background', 'Intermediate background', or 'Lower socio-economic' background, using the UK Government's definitions, Office of National Statistics classifications and guidance from EDIS. Using this scheme, more than half (55 %) of members come from a 'Professional background', with the main household earner either in a 'modern professional & traditional professional occupation' (45 %) or working as a 'senior, middle or junior manager or administrator' (just over 9 %). 'Intermediate background' occupations formed 9 % of responses, where the main household earner was in either a 'clerical and intermediate occupation' (4 %) or a 'small business owner' (5 %). 'Lower socio-economic background' occupations formed 23 % of responses, with the main householder earner employed in 'technical and craft occupations' (9 %), 'routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations' (6 %), 'long-term unemployed' (8 %). 'Other' was reported by 9 % of respondents, and 4 % preferred not to say.
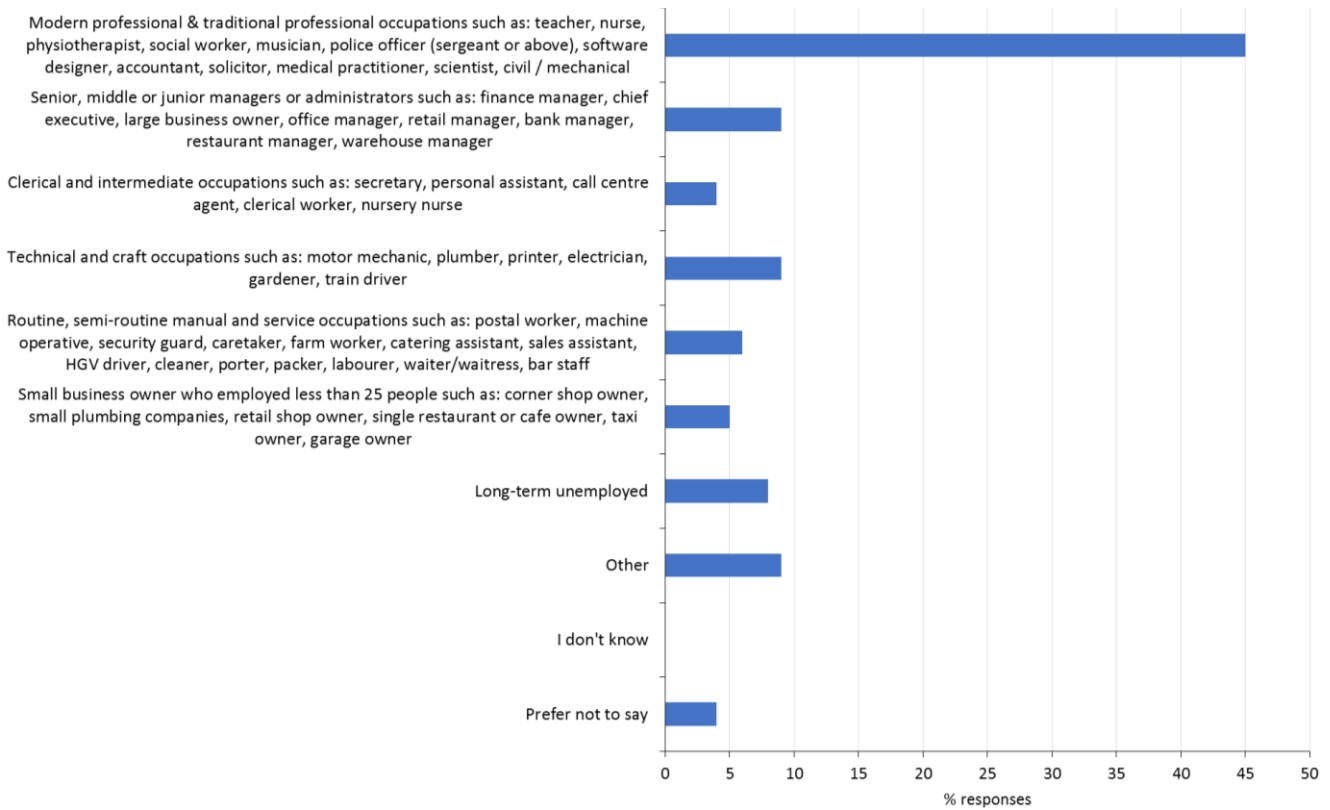
Fig. 14: *"What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were aged about 14?"*

In answer to the second question based around socio-economic background, *"What type of school did you attend for the majority of your time between the ages of 11 - 16?"*, just over half (51 %) attended a state-run or state-funded school that was non-selective (Fig. 15). In addition, 31 % attended a state-run or state-funded school that was selective on academic, faith or other grounds. Nearly 15 % went to an Independent or fee-paying school, where nearly 3 % of these respondents received a means-tested grant covering 90 % or more of the total cost. 'Other' was selected by 3 % and 1 % of members preferred not to say.

Fig. 15: "*What type of school did you attend for the majority of your time between the ages of 11 - 16?*"

EDI Survey Results – discrimination and harassment
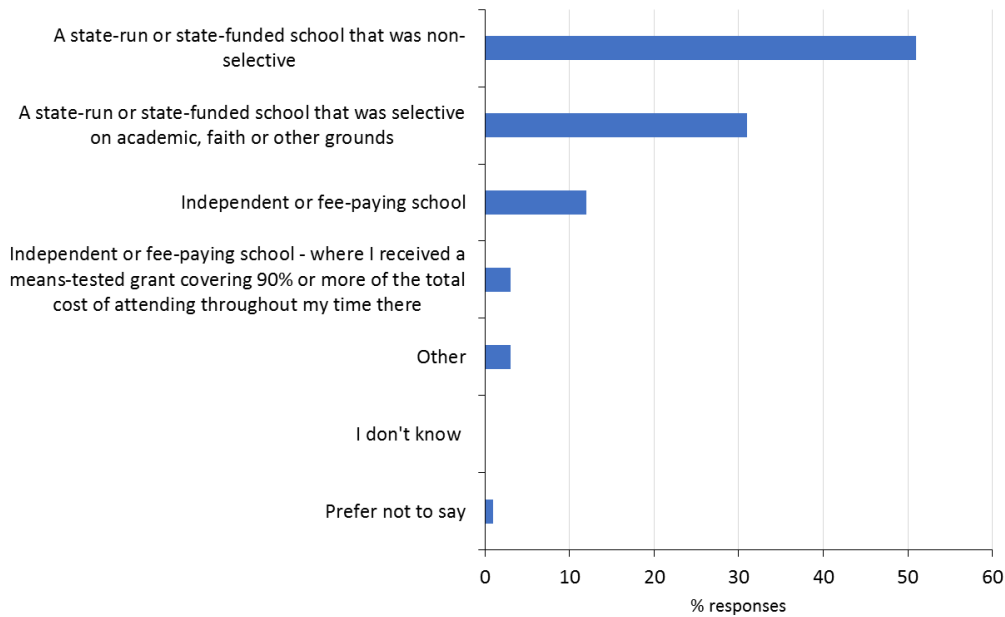
The survey asked questions related to members experiences of discrimination and harassment at VMSG-related events, as well as during everyday work or study. Questions were aimed at understanding the nature and extent of any discrimination and/or harassment taking place within, or related to, the VMSG community, and to potentially help VMSG improve meeting planning.

Members were asked whether they had experienced or witnessed prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or any other forms of discrimination or harassment whilst involved with or attending a VMSG-related event within the last 3 years (Fig. 16). Whilst some members who answered this question (34 %) had not attended, or been involved with, a VMSG related event within the last 3 years, 98 % of those who have attended (65 % of responses) said that they have not experienced prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or any other forms of discrimination or harassment. The remaining 2 % reported that they had experienced one incident. Follow-up questions determined that the experience(s) were related to ageism and sexism and were classed by respondents as 'mild'. When respondents were asked about witnessing prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or any other forms of discrimination or harassment whilst involved with or attending a VMSG-related event, 95 % of those who have attended a VMSG event (63 % of respondents), had not witnessed any incidents within the last 3 years (Fig. 16). The respondents who did report witnessing incidents, all said they had witnessed a few (< 3) incidents. Follow-up questions revealed the incidents were related to ageism, sexism, profession/job status, socio-economic status, and drinking/not drinking alcohol. Incidents were classed as 'mild' or 'moderate' by respondents, and all said that either they or another bystander intervened by speaking out.
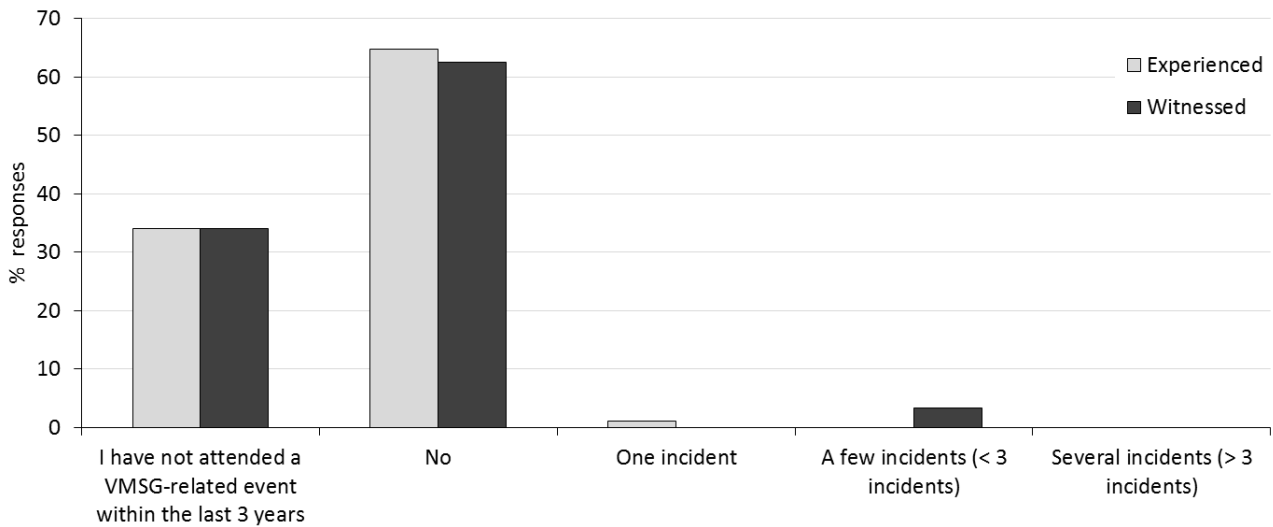
Fig. 16: *"Within the last 3 years, have you **experienced / witnessed** prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or any other forms of discrimination or harassment against you whilst involved with or attending a VMSG-related event?"*

In order to collect more information regarding experiences of VMSG, a free-text question allowed participants to add any further follow-up comments. All answers received are copied below:

Is there any other information you would like to share related to discrimination and/or harassment that you've experienced or witnessed whilst involved with, or attending, a VMSG-related event?

- I have not experienced or witnessed discrimination at VMSG. However, if anything I would gently suggest that some of VMSG's communications can sometimes feel a little intolerant of those who hold more "traditional" views on concepts such as gender, which would make me extremely reluctant to discuss my own views and experiences - I would simply keep my head down.
- Institutionalised discrimination. There is a massive drinking problem in academia where people are expected to drink alcohol or else are marginalised
- Many cases of casual sexism and similar discrimination could and should be called out by senior academics, not just early career attendees.
- I've not attended VMSG in a long time. Perhaps things have changed since my last visit back in 2010 / 2011, but there used to be a whisper network between female PhD students to ensure we all knew which male academics were not safe to be left alone with. Now that we are in a Post-Me-Too world, I really hope that this sort of environment isn't still in action.
- Have overheard middle-aged established males being disparaging to female PhD students
- Consider EDI in speaker selection to include speakers from a diverse range of backgrounds and institutions
- This is a pointless exercise - focus on more important things
- Although not direct discrimination, as a minority who has attended several events, I did not feel very welcome by majority of attendees.
- I have witnessed (and experienced) discrimination in the past (~10 years ago), but not for several years, particularly since the society has stressed the importance of inclusive practice.

In line with the VMSG Code of Conduct, if an incident of unacceptable conduct occurs (either within or outside the premises for in person events, or online) during a meeting or event, then the aggrieved person or witness to the unacceptable conduct is encouraged to report it promptly to a member of the VMSG Committee either in person or via email. Incidents may be reported to the VMSG Committee email address (vmsg.reporting@gmail.com), or via direct email to one of the VMSG committee members, or verbally. VMSG committee members now wear badges to identify them at the meeting.

When members were asked about their everyday work or study, 52 % report having experienced prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or any other forms of discrimination or harassment within the last 3 years (Fig. 17). Follow-up questions revealed that these experiences were related to ableism/disability, ageism, caring responsibilities, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, nationality, pregnancy/maternity, profession/job status, political orientation, sexism, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. Within the last 3 years, 63 % of respondents have witnessed prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or any other forms of discrimination or harassment during their everyday work or study (Fig. 17). Follow-up questions revealed these negative experiences were related to ableism/disability, ageism, caring responsibilities, ethnicity, gender identity, religion or belief, nationality, pregnancy/maternity, profession/job status, sexism, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.
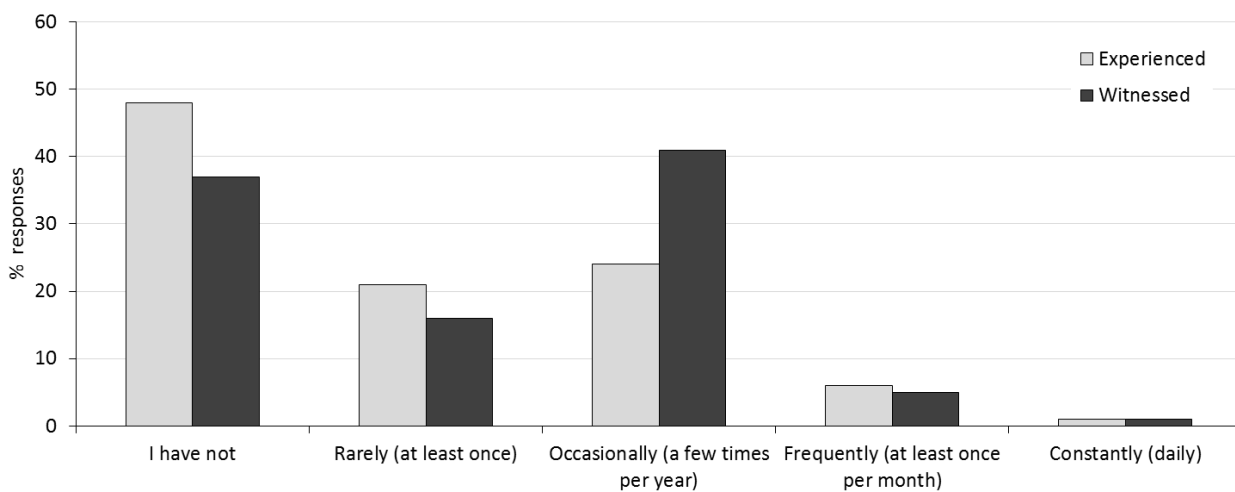
*Fig. 17: "Within the last 3 years, have you **experienced/ witnessed** prejudice, inequity, bias, exclusion, or any other forms of discrimination or harassment against you during your everyday work or study"*

A free-text question allowed participants to add any further follow-up comments. All answers received are copied below:

Is there any other information you would like to share related to discrimination and/or harassment that you've experienced or witnessed during your everyday work / study?

- For the one experienced I'd describe it more as bullying than harassment.
- Soft sexism ('you're a delicate type' etc etc.) very common.

- In my workplace I occasionally feel that I have been dismissed or talked down to because I am female and not a professor. However it is extremely difficult to assess whether this is true, or whether it is me reading too much into the situation. So I have never made any kind of formal or informal complaint.
- Passive aggressive remarks about 'ethnic food being too smelly' from administrative staff, endemic drinking problem where every event must include alcohol whether appropriate or not.
- I no longer work at an institution where this is commonplace.
- Why is disability not listed already? It's a protected characteristic! Yet another example of disability being ignored and forgotten.
- Conflicts about intersectionality (e.g., benefits or disadvantages between working-media white people versus rich BAME people).
- Treated differently due to race, same opportunities not provided as others, comments made by colleagues.
- Discriminatory actions most often visible by senior members of my institution rather than the main body of students and staff.
- Because I am young and female, some (usually middle aged men) assume I don't know how to do my job and they talk down to me. Which is already infuriating, but just that bit more annoying when they're *wrong*

EDI Survey Results – VMSG and EDI

Participants were asked their views on how much they think VMSG is doing to promote EDI (Fig. 18). The majority of respondents (59 %) thought that the amount that VMSG is doing is 'about right', whereas 14 % thought VMSG are doing 'too little', and 8 % thought 'too much' is being done to promote EDI. A further 19 % of respondents stated that they were 'not sure'.
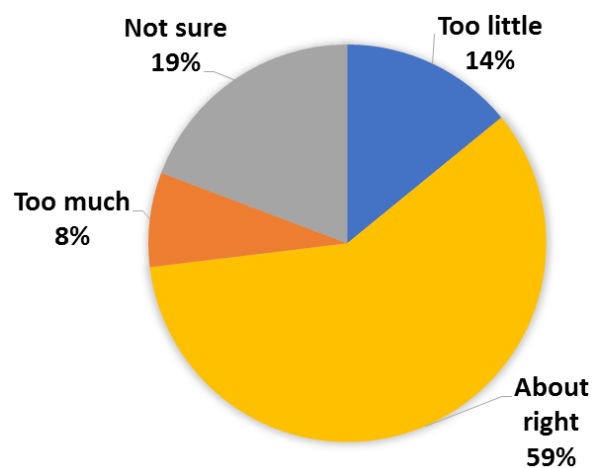
Fig. 18: *"How much do you think VMSG is doing in terms of promoting equality, diversity and inclusivity?"*

As also outlined in the 2020 report, it is possible to identify differences of opinion on this issue with respect to other participant characteristics. Notably, no students thought that VMSG is doing 'too much' to promote EDI, and students account for 64 % of those who thought that VMSG is doing 'too little' (34 % of overall survey respondents were students, Fig. 2a). Of the respondents who think that VMSG is doing 'too little', 91 % are women or non-binary, compared to 17 % who responded 'too

much' being women (54 % of overall survey respondents were women or non-binary, Fig. 4). Differences in opinion are also apparent in terms of people's reported experiences of discrimination and harassment during their everyday work or study, with 73% of those who responded 'too little' also reporting experiencing these issues, compared to 17 % of those who think that 'too much' is being done (52 % of overall survey respondents have experienced discrimination and harassment during their everyday work or study, Fig. 17). In addition, only 17 % of those who think that 'too much' is being done, have attended VMSG within the last 3 years, compared to the overall survey rate of 64 % (Fig. 1).

Participants were asked about their awareness of both the VMSG and the Mineralogical Society Codes of Conduct for Meetings and Events. With respect to the VMSG Code of Conduct for Meetings and Events, 76% of respondents were aware of it (Fig. 19a). The VMSG Code of Conduct has recently been updated, and applies to all participants in VMSG activities, including VMSG-organised conferences, workshops and fieldtrips, and their ancillary events and social gatherings, whether held in person or online. VMSG expects all participants including, but not limited to, attendees, speakers, volunteers, exhibitors, staff, service providers and representatives of outside bodies, to uphold the principles of this Code of Conduct. There seems to be less awareness of the Mineralogical Society Code of Conduct for Meetings and Events, with 54% unaware of the code of conduct (Fig. 19b).
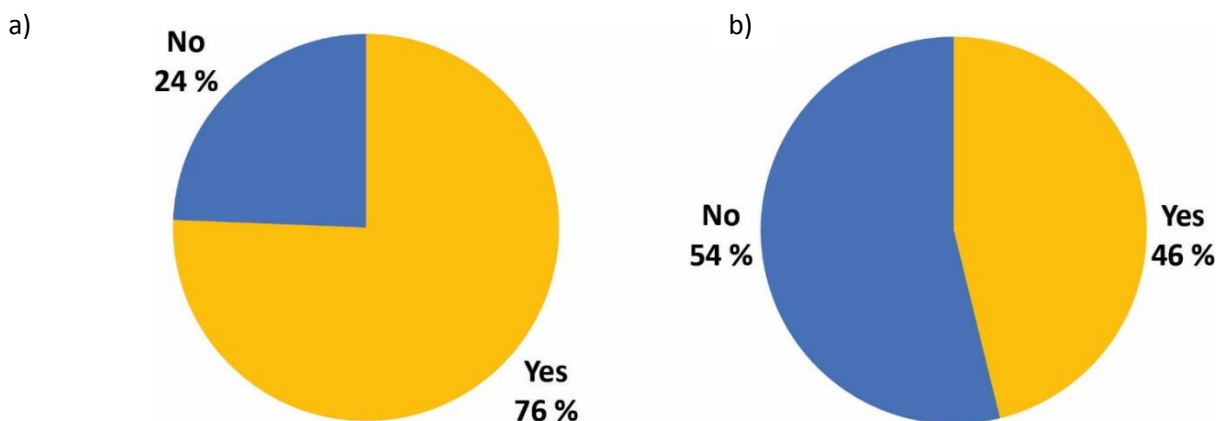
Fig. 19: a) "Are you aware of the VMSG Code of Conduct for Meetings and Events?"; b) "Are you aware of the Mineralogical Society Code of Conduct for Meetings and Events?"

VMSG annual meeting - hybrid conferences and EDI

Considering the COVID pandemic and the implementation of virtual and hybrid technologies to host and attend conferences, VMSG wanted to ask participants about their conference preferences. Participants were asked to rank their preference regarding how they would like to attend future VMSG conferences (Fig. 20), if conferences were to be held in hybrid format (i.e., the possibility to attend in-person or virtually). In terms of the most preferable option, 49% of respondents stated that they would prefer to choose in-person or virtual attendance depending on factors such as cost, locations, facilities

available, where 43% stated that they would prefer to attend a future hybrid conference in person, and 8% would prefer to attend a hybrid conference virtually (Fig. 20).

Fig. 20: "If future VMSG meetings were to be held in hybrid format (i.e. possibility to attend in-person or virtually), please list in order of preference the ways in which you would prefer to attend VMSG."
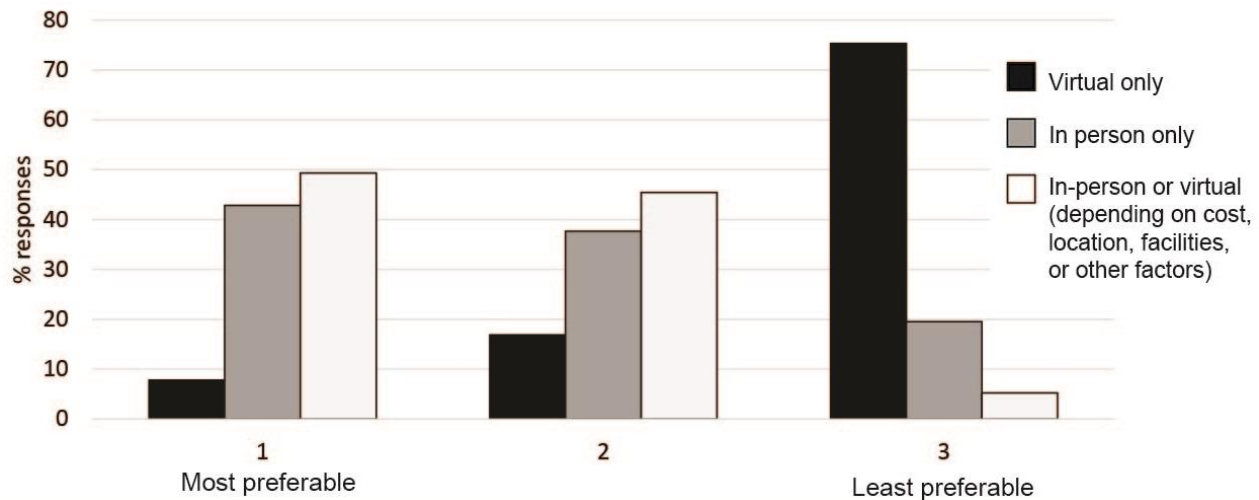
A free-text question allowed participants to add any further follow-up comments. All answers received are copied below:

Do you have any comments or suggestions relating to the format of future VMSG meetings?

- I would prefer to attend in person, but it's good to have the option to attend remotely if there are travel or financial constraints. I understand that this is extra work for the organizers though and don't feel that online attendance offers that same experience as in-person attendance.
- Maintain human contact
- In person should always be prioritised
- Hybrid options are great for people with caring commitments
- Maintaining virtual attendance would be really beneficial, sharing in person posters with people attending online would be really beneficial too
- I have not attended VMSG virtually but my experience is that the in-person community building is almost more important than the science. So I would not choose to attend virtually, unless there were some external factors at play.
- A dedicated time slot during the conference for virtual posters.
- Virtual conferences don't work well
- Hybrid is almost a must
- I do think hybrid (if done well) provide an excellent opportunity for inclusion of people with different accessibility needs.
- Virtual attendance is useful from an EDI perspective and to reach a wider audience. Could restrict to virtual attendance only, with all presentations being in-person.
- I think having an option to attend virtually is good but there needs to be effort made to include the virtual participants and host some virtual only events (as there are obviously in person only events).
- There should be no charge for virtual attendance.
- Offline interaction and networking are a key reason to attend conferences

- Online attendance is not as good, but better than nothing
- These need to be inclusive and capture a wide audience
- Maybe not so close to Christmas/New Year
- Hybrid or online format would be perfect however, the cost of online attendee should be drastically low compared to physical.
- Hybrid meetings are difficult to run and hybrid attendance cannot be equivalent to in-person attendance. However, streaming talks and making digital poster available at a much reduced registration can allow people to access the science remotely while keeping the logistics tractable and affordable.
- I think it is a very excellent opportunity to promote an international students and researchers like Ethiopia. Good job.

VMSG annual meeting - alcohol

VMSG has previously received some comments and suggestions centred on the serving and consumption of alcohol at meetings. To gauge the community opinions around alcohol being served at events, the survey asked the following optional free-text question. The question and all responses that were received are copied below:

Previous suggestions received by the VMSG committee from members have proposed that alcohol should not be served at meetings. Do you have any comments or suggestions on this issue?

- I personally would like to see choice. I enjoy a beer or wine with a poster session, but it is important there are good non-alcoholic options too and that people don't drink too much. People need to remember that they're at a work event.
- Agree
- I think alcohol is at someones personal discretion, noone is forcing anyone to drink and in a professional setting such as VMSG event the people drinking tend to behave appropriately. There are plenty of activities at the conference that don't serve alcohol and the few that do can also be attended sober. I don't think imposing such rules will be of particular benefit to anyone but may discourage people from attending the networking and social events in the evenings which is one of the most useful parts of these meetings.
- I really don't see alcohol as essential to making the meeting a successful event, and it might feel excluding to some persons or can create situations more prone to harassment to I'd be supportive of this proposition. Maybe not the place but I'd also suggest making any catering 100% vegetarian to lower the carbon budget of the meeting and promote vegetarianism in the VMSG community.
- Alcohol should be served, but a restricted amount should be provided. For example, 2 drinks at an icebreaker and 1/2 bottle wine at dinner. The icebreaker could be in a non-pub setting to ensure those who want to get drunk can do so (as is their right) but they must leave and find a pub/bar to do so.
- Alcohol is not inherently a problem.
- I would be happy with an alcohol free event if it made it more comfortable for others.
- A balance between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- At VMSG 2023 the selection of non-alcoholic drinks at the meal was brilliant but at the drinks reception the options weren't very good
- Yes it would make the environment more accessible for anyone who's had alcohol related problems in the past

- For meetings that are social, such as a casual talk, get together or catch up I think alcohol being present is fine- obviously if everyone in attendance is required to be 18 or older
- I wouldn't support this. I think it's fine to have alcoholic drinks as an option, and for people to be able to choose what kind of drinks they would like. What does matter to me is removing any culture of drunkenness or any expectation to drink. I normally choose not to drink alcohol and I have never experienced any pressure from VMSG to do so.
- I don't see why alcohol should not be served. If both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are available, then attendees can choose their options.
- I disagree. Some of the best discussions and ideas come up over a glass of wine or beer.
- Completely agree
- I disagree, I believe people should be able to limit themselves with alcohol and the amount served at meetings/dinners is never enough to encourage inappropriate behaviour.
- I would support removing alcohol from poster sessions. I feel moderate amounts of alcohol should be permitted at social events.
- I support no alcohol - nice food should be sufficient!
- I enjoy alcohol, especially in the company of colleagues who I rarely get the opportunity to reconnect with. However, I do not think that alcohol-based events should be the default. At a recent (non-VMSG) conference, the organisers provided alcoholic beverages on odd-numbered days and free ice cream on even-numbered days. On the odd-numbered days, there were also high-quality non-alcoholic options (in equal abundance to the alcoholic options). Many attendees who would have otherwise been drinking alcoholic beers etc. at the poster sessions instead opted for the non-alcoholic beers.
- I don't have any strong feelings against drinking alcohol, but I appreciate that making sure everyone is happy and comfortable makes the conference a better experience for everyone.
- Neutral
- I agree that alcohol is not needed at VMSG meetings.
- I think allow alcohol but have very strict rules on behaviour.
- As someone who doesn't drink, I think this is a nice idea and would help people like myself feel a bit less overwhelmed as well as avoiding the awkward conversation when being asked why you're not drinking. However, so long as there is a decent selection of non-alcoholic drinks (as opposed to just water being provided as an afterthought), I have no issues with alcohol being available in moderation e.g. a couple of bottles of wine per table at the dinner. I do appreciate when a program is designed such that maybe event A has no alcohol but transitions into event B with alcohol as the night goes on, or in a way that if alcohol is available at event A then a different event B with no alcohol runs simultaneously. This way there are options that suit either preference, and non-drinkers feel less pressure to put themselves in situations they maybe aren't comfortable with, without feeling like they're missing out on opportunities to meet people and make new connections.
- I'm ambivalent. I recognize that alcohol has some disinhibiting effect which some people do not enjoy (either experiencing themselves or in relation to a environment where work is discussed), but I do think its disinhibiting powers might be problematic only for those who are already assholes. I think a lot of people enjoy a limited bit of alcohol for enhancing conviviality. Do the majority of the community want a no-alcohol meeting? I think "majority rule" might work here. Personally I'd favour a 'low alcohol' meeting, where alcohol is not removed entirely but is limited, and those who want to enjoy more can make their own plans outwith the conference.
- Small amount but with commensurate non-alcoholic alternatives
- Good idea
- I think that would be sensible

- I can see the reasons for this and if alcohol was not served at future VMSG events I would not mind, but I felt like the event at the NHM was a good compromise with the really nice alcohol free cocktail options.
- Fully agree. Some of the behaviour I've witnessed and experienced due to alcohol over the years is appalling, especially in a professional context. The drinking culture is one of the reasons I've moved the edge of the field, and it excludes those who can't or just don't want to revolve around alcohol.
- I think serving alcohol is good for collaboration and innovation. However, it should only be in moderation and should not be a prominent part of the conference.
- My personal opinion (as someone who does drink alcohol) is that a limited amount of alcohol should only be provided directly by VMSG at non-academic setting such as an icebreaker and conference dinner. Active networking such as poster sessions are not a necessary place to host alcohol in a space where all should feel comfortable to present without being subject to those under the influence of alcohol. All meetings have the ability for people to drink externally after conference hours, so there should never be a significant issue with reducing alcohol provisions in a professional setting.
- I do not think alcohol should be served at poster sessions - everyone should feel comfortable in an area where lots of scientific discussion is the focus. But I think it important to maintain things like icebreaker events, and a conference dinner where alcohol is available.
- I do not have a problem with alcohol being served at meetings, however I feel it is important that several non-alcoholic options be provided (not just soft drinks!).
- I don't mind if others drink, but could we have non-alcoholic drinks that are of equivalent quality - orange juice or water is not really an equivalent substitute.
- Icebreakers should be held in spaces that are more inclusive for those that choose not to drink. More non-alcoholic drink options should be made available.
- I think alcohol should be served as long as a non-alcoholic alternative is available
- No issue with modest amounts of alcohol being served, as long as there are also non-alcoholic drinks.
- Personally I have no issue with alcohol being at conferences. I think having two drinks vouchers at a poster session is absolutely fine and wine/beer with the conference dinner is also acceptable. However, there should be better non-alcoholic options (including alcohol free beer and nice seltzers for example). Also make very clear in the VMSG code of conduct over consumption of alcohol is not acceptable and to respect those who don't drink for whatever reason. My worry with removing alcohol completely from poster sessions and dinners is that it will encourage socialising in pubs separate from the organised conference leading to segregation and exclusion of those with who don't already have a wide network. I do understand people are worried about cultural sensitivities, people with addiction or substance related sensitivities and poor behaviour. However, all issues arising in relation to those areas listed are clearly against the existing code of conduct so we just need to ensure it is followed and enforced. Everyone is an adult attending a conference in a country that consumes alcohol, bad behaviour results from individuals not the beverage itself.
- This is a ridiculous idea
- Alcohol in moderation is beneficial at meetings
- That is a terrible idea and will not solve any of the problems, as it will drive socialising involving alcohol away from event receptions and to areas which may be more unsafe and discriminatory.
- Suspect it will reduce length and attendance at associated events.
- Sad to say, but alcohol is strongly related with violence and harassment. To be coherent, it should be avoided in VMSG meetings.
- I think provision should be made so that everybody can attend but I don't think this means banning alcohol. Alcohol free tables or seating can be provided for those who cannot be around it, and/or a variety of socials, but I think on the whole the icebreakers are received positively.

- This should be available together with non-alcoholic drinks (but not in excess - a voucher system works well).
- I agree with the comments.
- Having run events involving alcohol before, I have found the best way to provide alcohol, but make it explicitly clear there is no expectation to drink it while also providing many non alcoholic options. People don't want to drink for a variety of reasons, and accommodating that is the best way forward.
- Yes that makes the event more accessible for alcoholics, religious reasons and should reduce the escalation of existing discrimination alcohol often relates to.
- I do not support a ban on alcohol but I also do not think it should be served at core academic activities (WHICH INCLUDE POSTERS!). Do have drinks receptions but separate them from the academic events.
- Whilst I'm a drinker I know many who aren't. Either it shouldn't be served, or there should be an equal or larger number of non-alcoholic drinks available.
- Yes, not recommended. I dislike it nature.
- I do not think alcohol should be served at academic events (e.g. poster sessions, talks) because they are work events. I also think there should be a mixture of social activities including some that are not in alcohol-based locations.

VMSG prizes and awards

The VMSG committee has recently updated the bursary application and awards nomination paperwork and deadlines, with EDI considerations central to these updates. There have been recent discussions within the VMSG and wider communities (e.g., the Mineralogical Society), about the diversity of annual prizes. The survey asked the following optional free-text question to capture participant opinions around prizes. The question and all responses that were received are copied below:

Previous suggestions received by the VMSG committee from members have proposed that the prizes we award should be more diverse (e.g. widen the types of scientific achievement for which prizes are awarded). Do you have any comments or suggestions on this issue?

- A lot of emphasis is put on publication and whilst this is very important, I do feel that other contributions to the community should be recognized, such as working with monitoring agencies, and service to the discipline (e.g. outreach, inspiring the next generation of volcanologists etc).
- Agree
- I think that sounds good.
- I think people should first nominate people and if they're never accepted, then complain.
- Since it is a volcanic and magmatics study group I think it makes sense of the main focus was on volcanology/seismology as there are already other groups who provide prizes for other fields of study.
- It rather depends on exactly what the proposal is. In principle this seems ok, but the devil is in the details.
- I would suggest to add more awards for postgraduate students apart from the VMSG oral/poster presentation prizes. Perhaps a best paper/thesis award for postgraduate student category.
- No, hollow awards mean nothing and may be perceived as insulting i.e. I got this award just because I'm different and not for my actual merit. Diversity should be in the form of actively investing in scholarship for talented people in minority and disadvantaged socio economic groups.
- I do not know enough about the prizes to comment.
- Widening the types of award would be awesome!

- While I understand the rationale (VMSG being a UK-based group), the only paper-based award is relatively niche: for a paper published in applied volcanology by someone who has recently graduated from a UK institution. This does not reflect the diversity of excellent research published by VMSG attendees, nor does it account for the increasingly international nature of the conference and community. In addition, service to the VMSG community in terms of, say, outreach, editing, disaster management, mentoring, or board positions are incredibly important for maintaining a healthy and diverse research environment. This is an aspect where VMSG could broaden their scope of what constitutes a "scientific achievement".
- Yes, more diverse awards would be great. Perhaps things like different career stages, or awards for sub groups within VMSG. As a relatively early career researcher, a small award now would boost my CV far more than waiting for a larger awards later in my career.
- Agree with proposal.
- I think prizes should be given for a wide variety of contributions.
- I think this could be promising. Consider this year's batch of IAVCEI awards: while some were awarded for lifetime achievement, or the classic 'paper publishing machine', [*name removed*] was deservedly recognized for their contributions to supporting and mentoring students and equitable practices in fieldwork and geology. Moving towards this kind of recognition - starting to incorporate it in awards - would be fab.
- Think there will always be issues with not enough or the right type of prizes and they have a high admin load to administer.
- It would be awesome if we could recognise those who are doing work in the EDI / engagement /communication & outreach space, through different career stages.
- I'd be biased as I've moved sideways (mainly to escape the culture) so would mainly think of my own new home. But fully support a more diverse perception of volcanology.
- I agree with this as success should not only be measured in terms of papers.
- I would agree. The game is changing, academic jobs fewer and harder to get for ECR members, and the sector of academia as viewed by university management becoming less appealing. So we should ensure that our members know that success is not only measured by the success of a publication record or recent paper - something that can be bias to subject area and the "size" of that field relative to the whole of VMSG. We need to make sure we equally value external efforts that uplift, support our own community, and also communication, advocacy and public service.
- People from diverse backgrounds want to be awarded prizes based solely on scientific merit. However, the lack of inclusion/ recognition may warrant the need for more diverse awards.
- It might be useful to encourage more nominations or think about other ways of selecting people for an award. Does the "Zeiss Post-doctoral Keynote Award" have to be restricted to PDRAs and linked necessarily to an outstanding paper??
- Absolutely. A service award would be brilliant. This could be good supervision, good outreach or community building efforts but definitely we need more recognition beyond publications. Also I think there should be extended talks given by "senior" ECR researchers. No offence but the winners of the late career stage awards are often not very good whereas the plenary sessions by ECRs at IAVCEI were all fantastic and offer an opportunity to spotlight ECRs rather than those already professors and award winners.
- Are prizes really necessary for a special interest group
- Do you mean prizes awarded at meetings? These should be based solely on quality of presentation/poster.
- Awards can be given for wide-range of reasons. perhaps need to encourage nominations on wider range of criteria.

- I think VMSG can be a little inward looking in terms of awards. I think widening them is a good idea and also encouraging the nomination process more strongly to broaden the types of people nominated.
- I agree with the comments
- I concur to prizes being more diverse
- I agree. Many from non-privileged backgrounds have to work twice as hard for half the results, so widening the pool for awards would allow for more to be given to non white, male, straight, cis, and upper class individuals.
- I agree with the idea. Very appreciated.
- Perhaps an award specifically for technical roles, and those that recognise wider non-academic skills (e.g. relationship building, scientific communication, EDI work).

Other suggestions and comments

Before finishing the survey, participants were given the opportunity to add any further comments. All responses are copied below:

If you have any other suggestions or comments relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and the VMSG, please use the free-text space below.

- You're doing a great job!
- When asking about caring responsibilities an option for caring for disabled children would be good, it's very different to the 'normal' caring responsibilities a parent has.
- Disability should be included within the survey in the first few questions to do with discrimination against you or others.
- Meet-ups aimed at BAME, LGBT+, disabled, and neurodivergent members should be held.
- I would very much like the question on sex and gender to be phrased as such. I would love to tell you my sex, but the questions do not afford me this opportunity.
- Volcanology is still dominated by a 'rich white colonial saviour' demographic. Collaborate and invest in countries and scholars who are directly vulnerable to volcanic hazards. Provide more funding and grants for those people rather than neo-colonial rich British scientists.
- I think that a useful exercise would be to survey, map out, or otherwise assess the career trajectories of a selection of VMSG members, from school-level through graduate study to their current position. It would be illuminating to see the distribution of academics in "good" positions now in terms of the ranking of the schools and universities they attended. Similarly, the length of time from school entry to permanent academic position would be interesting to compare generational differences. I think this kind of information or exercise would shed light on the impact of socio-economic status and geography on career trajectories.
- I think VMSG is doing an excellent job in the EDIA area. Thank you.
- I am pleased to see that attendees are being asked if they would like to include pronouns when they register. But, I noticed you ask for "preferred pronouns" which implies they are the ones we like the best but gives some impression of it being optional. It would be great to just remove the word preferred on future registration forms and just ask "If you would like to share your pronouns, do so here" or something similar. Here is a quick article explaining the difference it makes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleefowlkes/2020/02/27/why-you-should-not-say-preferred-gender-pronouns/?sh=2e33b1571bd6. It's a small thing and this is definitely not intended as a big criticism, just as you state in this questionnaire that the way we use language changes.

- I've tried to offer support previously as this is a large part of my new role. I hope others who've offered their experience and expertise have been taken up on their offers.
- I do have positive suggestion which just this platform is good to promote our careers like Ethiopian students by providing this good platform and training.
- There is definitely a leaky pipeline in terms of gender from MSc-PhD (woman often over represent within VMSG) to permanent academic (still seems to skew to men), we need to figure out why that is happening. Also, please make sure the EDI work is not always carried out by woman, they often take on these roles in higher proportion than men.
- Stop wasting time on this nonsense.
- More needs to be done to promote ethnic minorities within the volcanology community. There are very rare opportunities if any for ethnic minorities to progress or event get involved within this field.
- Prefer the annual meeting not to overlap with School holidays - major factor in non-attendance for me personally due to caring responsibilities.

Recommendations

In addition to the recommendations from the 2020 report around conference design and organisation, which VMSG continues to implement, there are further recommendations now to be made, which consider survey responses.

1. Data collection:

For VMSG to best serve the whole VMSG community, it is important to understand who our community are and how the demographics may, or may not, change over time. We therefore recommend the continued collection of EDI data during conference registration, and the continued presentation of these data during the conference. In addition, in order for VMSG to measure the effectiveness of any EDI measures implemented, to ensure that any future recommendations are data-informed, and to gauge ongoing community opinion on a range of issues, we recommend that a comprehensive VMSG Survey and Report be produced every 3 – 4 years, to be led by the VMSG EDI Officer.

2. Conference format:

The COVID pandemic has opened new ways of working and the possibility of using new technologies to enable hybrid conference participation, thereby increasing accessibility for participants. We encourage the continuation of the possibility to attend VMSG online, and this is a current requirement of the Mineralogical Society who have guidelines for events available on their website. We recommend that the LOC provide links to online sessions for all participants (online and in-person) and consider the cost and social interaction opportunities for online participants. Regarding alcohol at events, a wide variety of non-alcoholic drinks should continue to be served, as already outlined by the General Guidance Document for LOCs. VMSG will review the existing General Guidance Document for LOCs,

which was last updated in 2020, and update if/where necessary, bearing in mind available resources and workload for the LOCs.

3. VMSG Prizes and Awards:

The survey responses suggest that there is some desire within the community to ensure that broad contributions to volcanology are recognised, and that excellence in areas beyond traditional journal publications are also rewarded. Although there have been recent changes to assessment criteria of the existing awards to ensure broader contributions to the community are recognised, the VMSG committee will continue to evaluate how well the current awards and bursaries cover the breadth of work and contributions across the VMSG remit and will discuss if this should / can be expanded. VMSG has also recently reformed the application and evaluation processes and timeline, with the aim of increasing accessibility, as well as to ensure processes continue to be fair and transparent. Diversity in nominations remains an issue, so VMSG will continue to discuss how to encourage nominations. For example, the application procedure for the Zeiss Post-doctoral Keynote Award has recently been changed to trial combined self-nomination and nomination by others, and the committee will monitor if and how this affects nominations.