

06/08/2018

# Wellcome's Open Access Policy Review

Q3 2018

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# Open Access Policy Review

Consultation Phase

Researcher Survey – Results and Analysis

Open Research, Q2 2018

# Executive Summary

As Wellcome reviews its Open Access (OA) policy, stakeholder consultation forms a key part of the review process in order to understand the potential appetite for, and impact of, policy changes. A core part of the consultation phase has been to engage the community of Wellcome grantholders to both elucidate their experiences thus far of complying with Wellcome's OA policy, as well as their views towards OA more generally and, crucially, the future of the OA policy.

Over 400 of Wellcome's current grantholders responded to this survey and the majority had experience of complying with our policy for research articles and/or book chapters and monographs. There was strong support for OA in general and the flexibility that Wellcome's current policy affords.

There was a greater level of compliance with the policy for articles and most agreed that they had positive experiences of publishing research articles – however, this was more pronounced when using the gold OA route as opposed to green routes. When publishing book chapters and monographs researchers cited lesser awareness of the policy (both amongst academics and publishers) as primary factors contributing to the lower compliance rate.

Researchers raised clear concerns about the cost of OA publishing, whilst acknowledging that they consider OA as an essential research cost. However, researchers preferred the flexibility that the current OA policy affords them in choosing OA routes and publication venue. Furthermore, researchers also encouraged Wellcome to expand the scope of the OA policy.

As Wellcome consolidates both this and other stakeholder consultation, researchers will be further engaged in the review process through focus groups in order to better understand views towards policy scenarios.

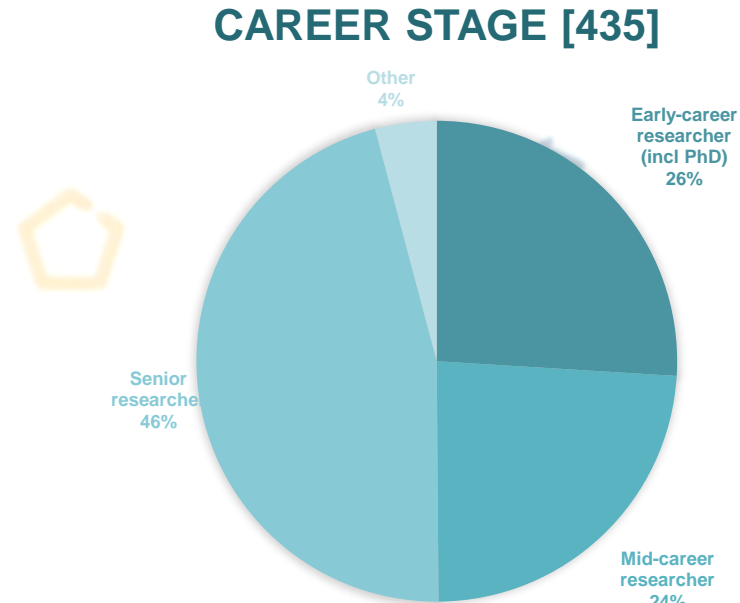
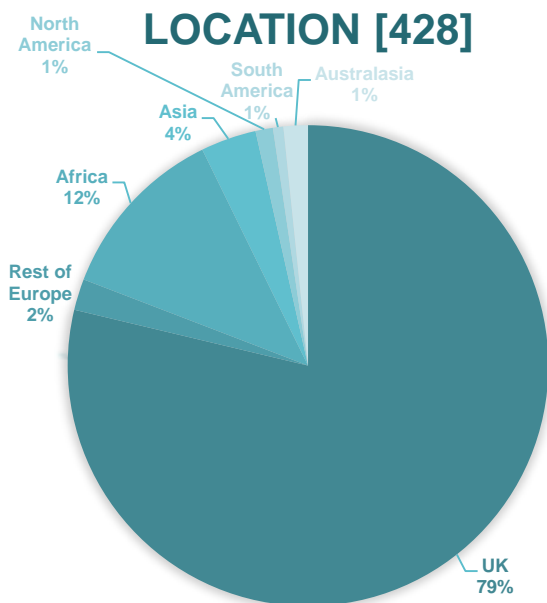
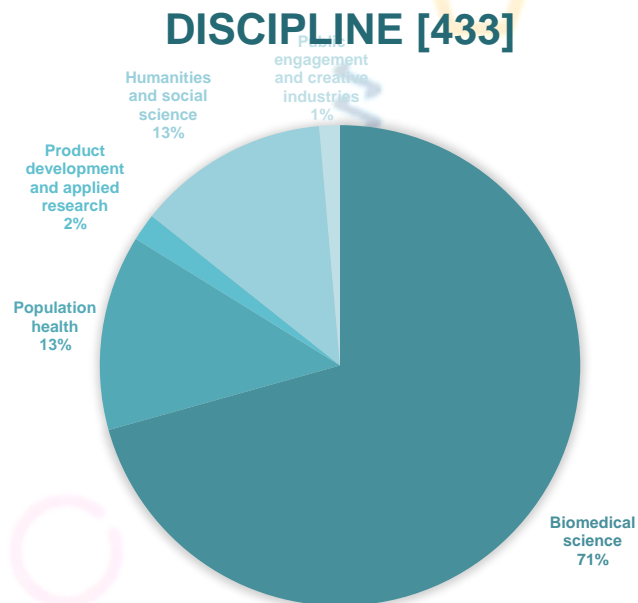
Wellcome will announce any policy changes in Autumn 2018, with a transitional period incorporated into any change.

# Methodology

- The survey was shared with all current Wellcome grant-holders (3498 emails sent).
- After a series of basic demographics questions, the survey was split into blocks. Survey participants were invited to respond to specific blocks based on their prior experiences of publishing under Wellcome's OA policy: journal articles only; journal articles and book chapters/monographs; or book chapters/monographs only.
- All respondents including those with no experience of publishing under our current OA policy were asked to respond to the final block of questions about general views of OA as well as the future direction of Wellcome's OA policy.
- We received a total of 435 usable responses
- Where significant differences in responses from different disciplines were found, this has been acknowledged and discussed.

# Demographics

The career stage, discipline and location of the survey respondents broadly represent the demographics of Wellcome-funded researchers, based on 2016-2017 grants data [1]:



[1] <https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/managing-grant/grant-funding-data-2016-2017>



# Experience of publishing Wellcome-funded original research articles

**77%** had experience of  
publishing Wellcome-funded  
original research articles



# 94% said all their research articles complied with Wellcome's OA policy

n = 305

The most frequent reasons cited for non-compliance were:

- **The publisher didn't offer compliant options**
  - Such as capacity to deliver OA, embargo periods and compliant licences
- **They were unaware of the policy requirements**

n = 13

**92% agree** that Wellcome's OA policy enables them to maximise the audience their research reaches

**80% agree** that complying with Wellcome's OA policy for articles is simple and straightforward.

**83% agree** that Wellcome provides them with sufficient information and support to enable them to comply with the OA policy.

**74% agree** that Wellcome's OA policy provides them with freedom to choose where and how they publish their research.

*\*Strongly agree **and** somewhat agree*

# Experience of other funders OA policies for articles

59% had experience of complying with 42 others funders OA policies. The 5 most commonly cited organisations were:

n = 306

UK Research and Innovations	75%
National Institutes of Health	10.2%
National Institute for Health Research (UK)	9.1%
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	8.0%
European Research Council	6.3%

84.5% agreed that Wellcome's OA policy is sufficiently similar to other funders policies to enable them to comply with multiple policies at once. n = 180

*Wellcome's policy is less complex* because there is a greater degree of flexibility within Wellcome's OA policy

Most common reason given, where n = 12

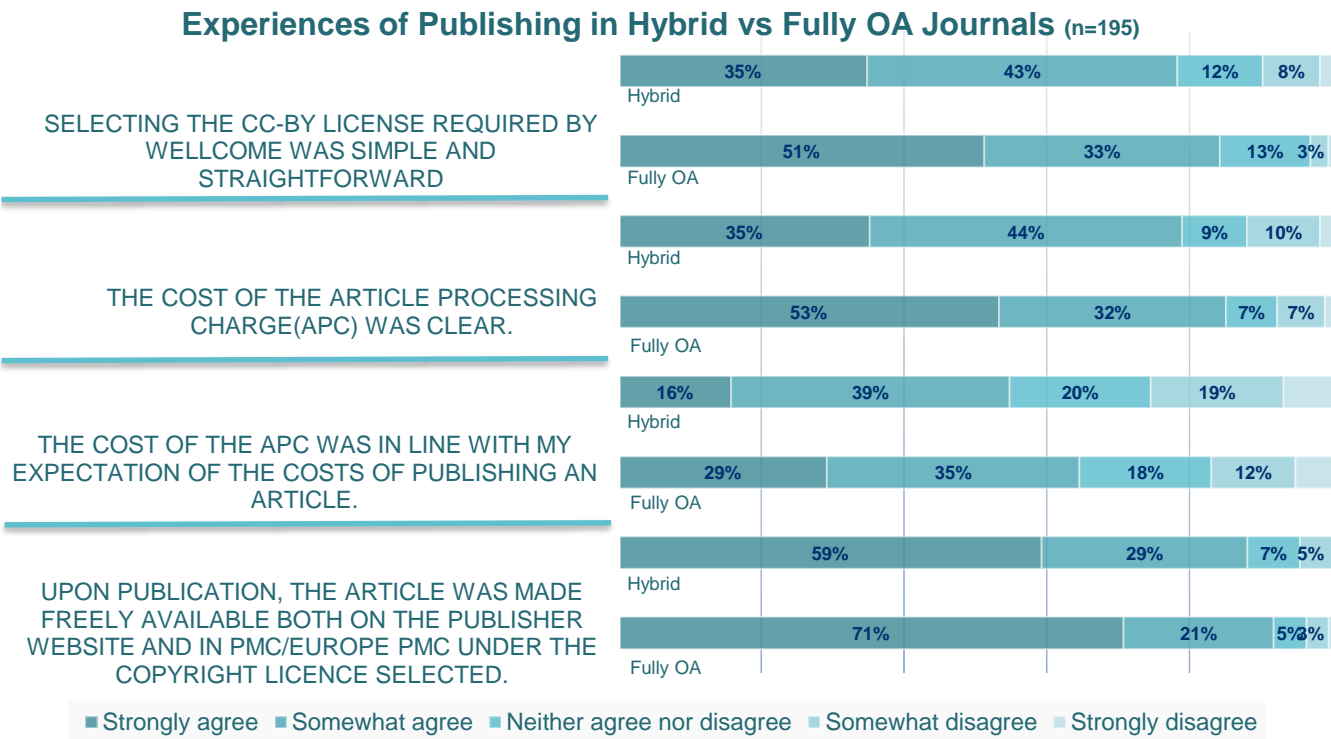
*Wellcome's policy is more complex* because desired publication venue did not offer publication options compliant with Wellcome's OA policy

Most common reason given, where n = 11



# Experiences of gold OA

Most researchers\* reported publishing in both fully OA and hybrid journals via the gold OA route



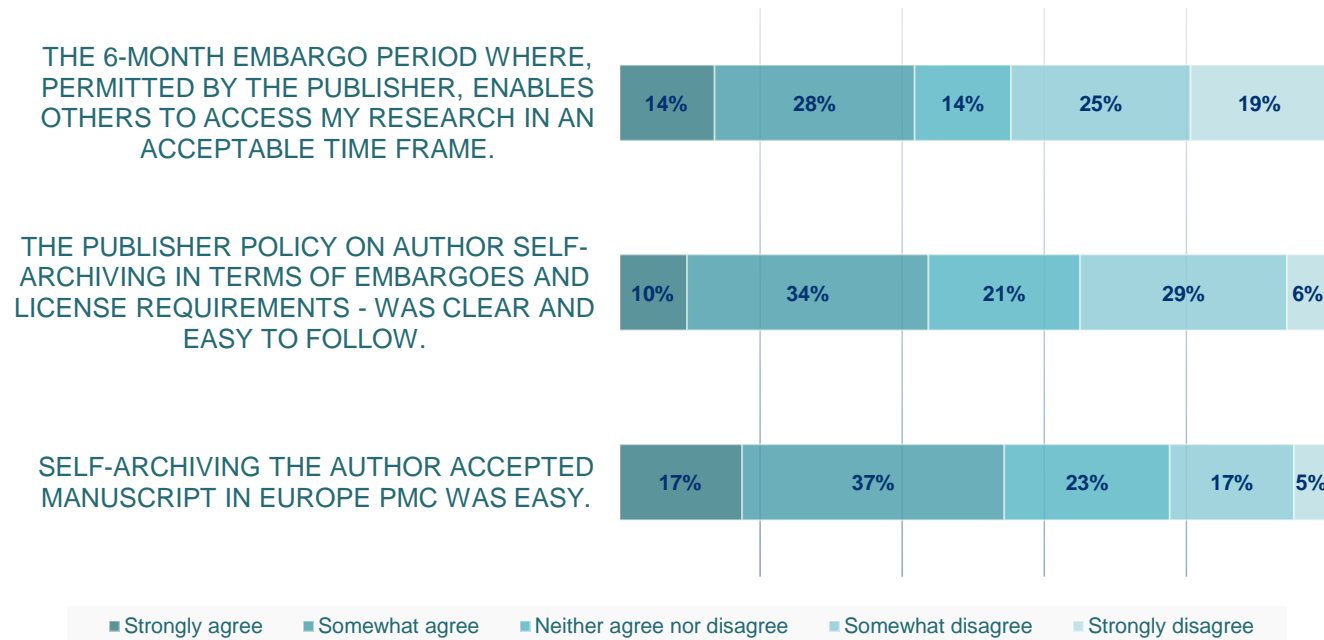
- Overall, a strong majority of researchers agreed that their experiences of publishing in fully OA and hybrid journals was straightforward and met their expectations
- Researchers experiences of publishing in fully OA journals was more likely to be straightforward than when publishing in hybrid journals

\*67% had experience of publishing fully OA journals; whilst 13% had published in hybrid only. n = 305

# Experiences of green OA

Fewer researchers\* had experience of publishing via the green OA route.

## Experience of using the green OA route (n=103)



- Researchers reported mixed experiences when publishing via the green OA route when compared with gold OA routes
- They were more likely to disagree than agree that the 6-month embargo period enables others to access research in a timely manner
- Over 50% of researchers agreed that self-archiving in Europe PMC was easy

\*35% had experience of publishing via the green OA route where n = 295

# Views on Wellcome's OA policy for articles

76 individuals provided free text comments on their experiences of complying with Wellcome's OA policy for articles. The most frequently cited themes are noted here.



# Conclusions

- The compliance rate for Wellcome's OA policy is high
- Most researchers have positive experiences of Wellcome's current OA policy
- A small number of researchers raised concerns with the current OA policy and experiences of complying with it
- Over half of researchers that Wellcome fund also comply with another funder's OA policy
- Researchers were positive about their experiences of publishing via gold OA routes, whereas were more mixed when thinking about their experiences of publishing via green OA



# Experience of publishing Wellcome-funded book chapters and monographs



**28%** had experience of  
publishing Wellcome-funded  
book chapters and monographs

**35%** said all their book chapters  
and monographs complied with  
Wellcome's OA policy n = 104

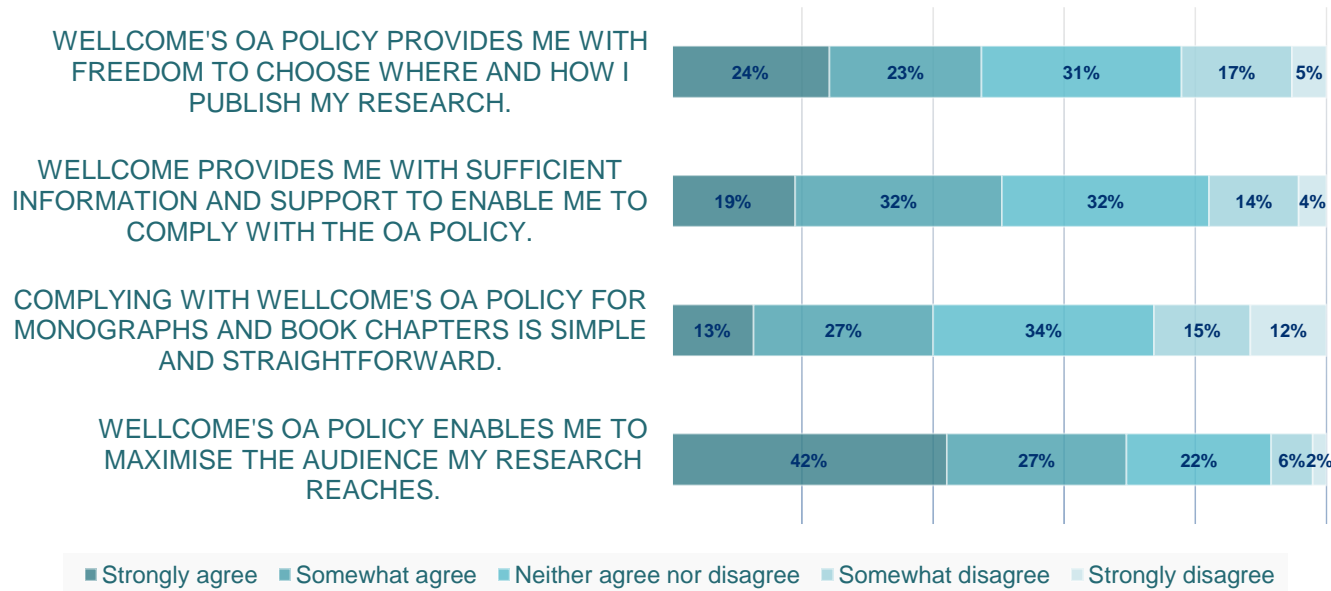
Common reasons cited for non-compliance were:

- Researchers were **unaware of the policy requirements** (28%)
- The **publisher didn't offer compliant publication options** (26%)

n = 40

# Experiences of Wellcome's OA policy on book chapters and monographs

## Experiences of publishing Wellcome-funded book chapters and monographs



- Researchers were more likely to have mixed attitudes towards Wellcome's OA policy for book chapters and monographs when compared with Wellcome's OA policy for articles
- Researchers were more likely to feel neutrally as to whether the policy is straightforward, which may reflect the lower compliance rate in relation to books and monographs
- However, researchers agreed that the policy enables their research to reach wider audiences

# Experiences of gold OA

**20% had used the gold OA route when publishing book chapters and monographs** n = 98

**60% agree** that arranging for the title to be published OA was simple and straightforward

**70% agree** that ensuring the OA version was published under a Creative Commons licence of their choosing was simple and straightforward

**65% agree** that the cost of making the chapter or monograph OA was clear

**60% agree** that the cost of making the chapter or monograph OA was in line with their expectations of the costs of publishing a book chapter or monograph.

**60% agree** that arranging for payment of the OA fee was simple and straightforward.

**75% agree** that securing the funding from Wellcome to reimburse these costs was simple and straightforward

**80% agree** that upon publication an electronic version of the chapter or monograph was made freely accessible both on the publishers website and in NCBI Bookshelf/Europe PMC under the copyright licence selected.

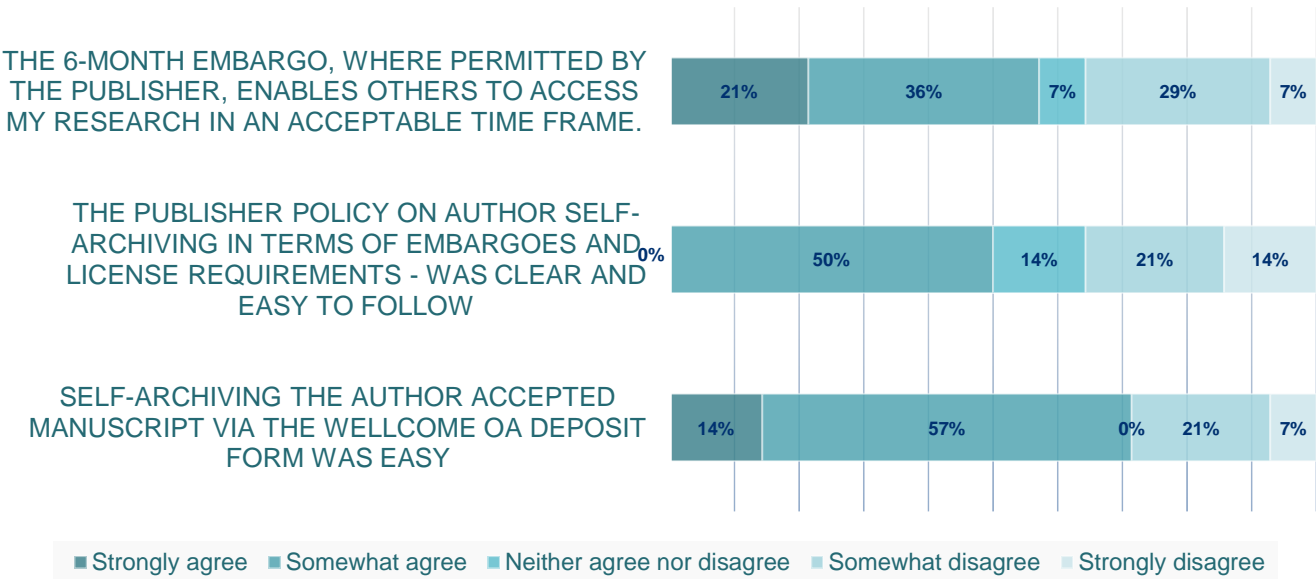
*\*Strongly agree **and** somewhat agree*

# Experiences of green OA

15% had experiences of using the green OA route when publishing book chapters and monographs n = 96



## Experience of publishing book chapters and monographs via green OA



- Whilst the majority agreed with the statement on their experiences of green OA publishing, a significant minority disagreed
- When publishing book chapters and monographs, researchers were more likely to agree that the embargo period enables others to access their research in acceptable timeframe, when compared with views on research articles
- Researchers found the self-archiving process easier for book chapters and monographs than for research articles

# Conclusions

- Researchers are less aware of the policy requirements for book chapters and monographs than for articles
- Publishers are also less engaged with open access publishing for book chapters and monographs



# Open Access and the Future of Wellcome's OA Policy

# General attitudes towards OA

**94% agree** that it is important that research publications are made OA to maximise the societal benefit of research.

**84% agree** that the costs associated with publishing and reading research (including OA publishing costs) are an essential research cost.

**86% agree** that the cost of publishing and reading research via the subscription model is too high.

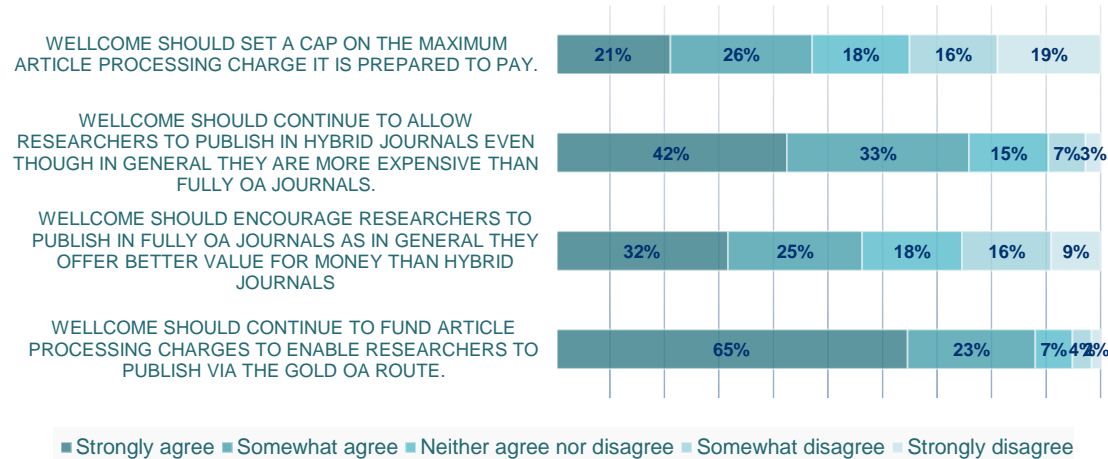
**76% agree** that the cost of publishing research OA via article or book processing charges are too high.



**64% believe Wellcome's OA policy  
should be broadened to include all  
types of research literature**

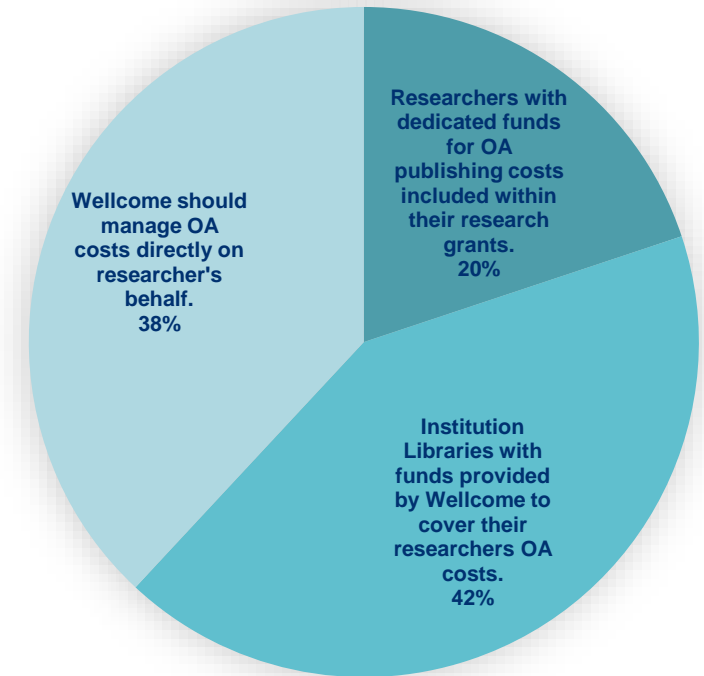
# Views towards gold OA

## Views towards the future of gold OA publishing within Wellcome's OA policy (n=365)



- There is support from researchers for maintaining publication avenues in both hybrid and fully OA routes in future
- However, researchers were divided on whether their institutions or Wellcome would be best placed to manage the payment of OA charges

## Views towards who is best placed to manage the payment of OA charges (n=352)



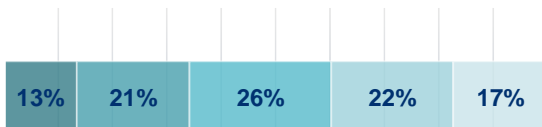
# Views towards green OA

**58% agree** that Wellcome should continue to support the green OA route despite its limitations in terms of the embargo period and licence restrictions.

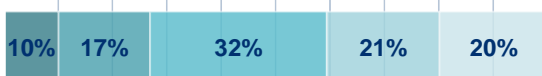
**58% agree** that Wellcome should continue to support the green OA route with a 6 month embargo period but should require a licence that enables greater reuse.

## Views towards the future of green OA within Wellcome's OA policy

WELLCOME SHOULD DISCONTINUE ITS SUPPORT FOR GREEN OA TO ENSURE THAT ALL THE RESEARCH IT FUNDS IS MADE FREELY AVAILABLE AND REUSABLE AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION.



WELLCOME SHOULD PROMOTE THE GREEN OA ROUTE OVER GOLD OA AS THE WAY TO REALISING ITS OA AMBITIONS.



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Despite mixed experiences of publishing via the green OA route, researchers felt it should continue to be offered as an OA route whilst maintain other OA options under the policy

\*Strongly agree **and** somewhat agree

# Views towards pre-prints

**53% agree** that publishing a preprint should be an acceptable way of complying with Wellcome's OA policy.

**53% agree** that publishing a preprint should be an acceptable way of complying with Wellcome's OA policy in cases where the cost of gold OA is above a price cap.

**58% agree** that publishing a preprint should be an acceptable way of complying with Wellcome's OA policy in cases where the embargo period for green OA is longer than that permitted by Wellcome.

# Views towards gold and green OA for book chapters and monographs

Of HSS researchers: n = 45

76% agreed that the flexibility provided by the current OA policy is important in enabling researchers to comply with policy when publishing long form texts.

56% agreed that the flexibility provided by the current OA policy is important in encouraging publishers to experiment with OA options.

53% neither agreed nor disagreed that Wellcome should only support the gold OA route for long form texts as it ensures immediate access to the research.

44% neither agreed nor disagreed that Wellcome should only support the green OA route for long form texts as the cost of gold OA is too expensive.

Researchers were supportive of having greater restriction on licence choices available when publishing book chapters and monographs, however were divided on the types of licences that should be provided for within the policy.

# Future of Wellcome's OA Policy

**176 grantholders told us the one thing they would change  
about Wellcome's OA policy**

(See Annex 2 for full table of responses)

# 28% feel that Wellcome should exert downward pressure on the cost of OA publishing

- Many were concerned about the cost of OA publishing and Wellcome's spend on OA publishing
- This was often in the context of hybrid journals, however some cited gold routes more broadly
- There was strong feeling that Wellcome is in a unique position to leverage impact and influence the landscape of OA

# 10% encouraged us to incorporate more rigid requirements into the OA policy

- Most individuals suggested restricting the OA routes that are available through Wellcome's OA policy, although were divided on preferred routes
- Many researchers felt that this would be a way to reduce Wellcome's spend on OA fees
- A small but significant proportion felt that this would increase the simplicity of the OA policy and therefore aid researchers in complying with it



# 7% encourage Wellcome to reduce the complexity of OA payment systems

- Many suggested that the payment systems could be simplified and streamlined
- A similar proportion felt that block grants administered through their institution added a level of complexity to complying with the OA policy
- Some researchers were unsure when their publication was eligible for OA funding

# 7% suggested that we share practical guidelines on complying with the OA policy

- Some researchers were unsure of the policy requirements
- Researchers told us that clearer guidelines would be helpful on aspects such as:
  - Rationale for the policy (including Wellcome's view on the relative benefits of different publishing routes)
  - Step guidance for each publishing routes
  - Case studies (for example, when a Wellcome-funded researcher is a co-author)

# 7% encouraged us to promote OA platforms, such as Wellcome Open Research

- Those who encouraged us to promote OA platforms recognised the benefits of open access journals and platforms as a way of making research more findable, and reducing the financial burden of OA
- It was suggested that encouraging such OA platforms may reduce the burden of OA on researchers



# Conclusions

# Conclusions

- There is strong support amongst Wellcome-funded researchers for Open Access, and for Wellcome's OA policy in its current form
- Researchers feel that the costs associated with OA publishing are an essential research cost, however many feel that OA costs are currently too high
- Overall experiences of publishing journal articles are positive
- There is greater support for gold OA routes as opposed to green OA
- There is support for pre-prints forming a part of Wellcome's OA policy
- Researchers do feel that OA costs are too high, however also wish to maintain flexibility over OA routes within the policy



# Annex I: Researcher Survey

[\[Link to survey\]](#)



# Annex 2: Full Responses on the Future of Wellcome's OA Policy

Annex: Q59 “If there was just one thing you would encourage us to change about Wellcome’s OA policy, what would it be?”

Total Respondents	175	ECR	MID	SENIOR	OTHER%	Q response	% Total Response (403)	BIOMED	HSS	POPULATION HEALTH	APPLIED
Total Answers	199										
Exert downward pressure on the cost of OA publishing	49	6	15	27	1	28.00%	12.16%	41	6		2
Incorporate more rigid requirements into the OA policy	17	6	3	6	2	9.71%	4.22%	15	2		
Reduce the complexity of OA payment systems	13	2	5	6		7.43%	3.23%	12	1		
Promote OA platforms such as WOR	12	1	3	7	1	6.86%	2.98%	8	2		2
Share practical guidelines on complying with the OA policy	12	3	4	5		6.86%	2.98%	7	5		
Improve reliability of systems used to deliver Wellcome's OA policy	10	3	2	4	1	5.71%	2.48%	8	1		1
Reduce the burden for monitoring and compliance	9	1	2	6		5.14%	2.23%	6	2		1
Increase alignment of OA policies across funders	8			8		4.57%	1.99%	6	1		1
Nothing	8	1	2	5		4.57%	1.99%	7			1
Encourage the use of pre-prints	7	2	2	3		4.00%	1.74%	6			1
Expand the scope of the OA policy	7	1		5	1	4.00%	1.74%	5	1		1
Advocate for reduced emphasis on impact factor	5	1	1	3		2.86%	1.24%	4			1
General support for current OA policy	5	1		4		2.86%	1.24%	4	1		
Continue to ensure OA funding for researchers and institutions	4	2		2		2.29%	0.99%	1			3
Encouraging non-APC models of OA	4		1	2	1	2.29%	0.99%	3	1		
Limit the scope of the OA policy	4		1	3		2.29%	0.99%	4			
Promote the transition of hybrid journals to become fully OA	4		1	2	1	2.29%	0.99%	4			
Exert downward pressure on cost of subscriptions	3	1	1	1		1.71%	0.74%	3			
Reduce the complexity of the OA policy	3			3		1.71%	0.74%	2	1		
Reduce/remove embargo period for green OA	3		1	2		1.71%	0.74%	3			
Tackle the issue of predatory journals	3		1	2		1.71%	0.74%	2	1		
Advocate for wider adoption of OA beyond academia	2	1		1		1.14%	0.50%	1			1
Encourage the use of pre-prints with green OA	2			2		1.14%	0.50%	2			
General support for open access	2		1	1		1.14%	0.50%	2			
Reduce emphasis on pre-prints	1			1		0.57%	0.25%	1			
Relax the requirements for the OA policy	1			1		0.57%	0.25%				1
Response out of scope of the question	1			1		0.57%	0.25%	1			







**06/08/2018**

**Version 1**

**Wellcome exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to thrive. We're a global charitable foundation, both politically and financially independent. We support scientists and researchers, take on big problems, fuel imaginations and spark debate.**

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