Understanding our network communities survey[1]

A. Background. This survey was rolled out to UKAN+ members from July to early September 2021. The survey was organised (with our input as a member) by the Network of Networks, a network of mainly EPSRC-funded networks including UKAN+, which is organised by the Nottingham-based Connected Everything Network.

In the case of UKAN+ the survey was advertised locally to our members through UKAN+-focussed messaging, through our newsletter, reinforced by emails from Kirill and Richard. But the survey was ran from (and went through ethics approval at) the University of Southampton, overseen by Dr Samantha Kanza, Enterprise Fellow+ Coordinator of the AI Science Discovery Network. Thus the raw data sits at Southampton: we have in our hands the UKAN+ responses to all of the questions, but any requests for additional analysis (for example we've asked for a breakdown of the response to the perceptions of inclusivity question by protected characteristics) have to be made to Southampton.

B. Responses. Responses to the survey were received from 19 Networks. For UKAN+ we received 187 responses, which comprised 70% of the total responses received. We have 1396 members on our mailing list, so this equates to responses from 13.4% of our membership.

C. Overview of the Results. The survey results are a mix of tick box and free text responses and are shown in the Appendix, with the free text responses categorised as far as possible. The survey asked:

- A question about how inclusive our networks and their activities are (see section 1 of the appendix)
- Questions about the diversity characteristics of the respondents (section 2)
- Questions about travelling and Covid, barriers and enablers for attendance at events, and what does/doesn't work with blended events (section 3)
- For any other comments.

D. Inclusivity of the Network (Section 1). The responses here are positive:

- **28%** call UKAN+ **Very Inclusive**, **72% Very Inclusive/Inclusive**
- **25%** call our events **Very Inclusive, 67% very Inclusive/Inclusive**

These responses are very similar to the averages **across all networks** (including UKAN+), which are:

- **27%** call their network **Very Inclusive**, **71% Very Inclusive/Inclusive**
- **24%** call their events **Very Inclusive, 70% very Inclusive/Inclusive**

But we don't yet have a breakdown of the UKAN+ responses by protected characteristics (this has been requested). Across all the networks we do have some information. E.g., here are the data for all networks but for **just female respondents** (excluding all the responses not from men):

[1] This report has been prepared by Simon Chandler-Wilde, the UKAN+ EDI lead. This is an updated (10/3/22) version of the report following discussion at the UKAN+ Academic Management Team meeting on 24/2/22 and subsequent discussion within the UKAN+ EDI core team (Simon + Zoë Morris (Network Manager) + Hasina Begum (Early Career EDI Champion)) and with the UKAN+ Director and Deputy Director.

- **17%** call their network **Very Inclusive**, **62% Very Inclusive/Inclusive**
- **11%** call their events **Very Inclusive, 56% very Inclusive/Inclusive**

Thus, while 27%/24% of respondents as a whole perceive their networks as very inclusive, this drops to 17%/11% for women. This type of effect is expected: it is usual, for example, that white men perceive inclusivity, on average, with rosier spectacles.

E. Data on the Diversity of our Membership (section 2). Tables of data on split of membership by:

- Academia/Industry
- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation
- Caring Responsibilities
- Socioeconomic disadvantage

This data is the only data we have available on the composition of the UKAN+ membership. It is imperfect because of the response rate: 13.4% of the membership responded.

With this proviso, potential uses of this data are many. We can, if we repeat this (or a similar survey) benchmark changes in the composition of the network over time. We can make comparison of this data with, e.g., Institute of Acoustics data, data for science/engineering/maths nationally, UK Census data, etc. We can use this data internally in our own work (e.g. this informed discussion regarding the UKAN+ Diversity of Speakers Policy that was recently adopted at the Academic Management Team meeting on 24/2/22).

This data speaks for itself, but let us flag, for example, that:

- The Academia/Industry/Both split is 61%/30%/7%
- 20% identify as women
- 43% report caring responsibilities for children/dependent adults
- 82% of respondents are white (compared to 86% 2011 Census, England and Wales)
- Ethnic groups underrepresented compared to the 2011 Census, England and Wales, include: Black (UKAN+ 0.5%, Census 3.4%), Pakistani (0.5%, Census 2.0%)
- While only 3% of respondents identify as disabled, 3.2% report blind/visual impairment, 3.2% deaf/hearing impairment, 2.1% learning difference, 2.7% long-term illness/health condition, 3.2% mental health condition, 2.7% social communication condition, 2.1% other condition

Actions prompted by this data should include:

- Work to improve diversity of our network (and our subject areas), for example in relation to male/female balance, particular ethnicities. Concretely, actions in this direction can include:
  - projecting an inclusive, welcoming, and diverse network at all our meetings and through our website, newsletter and other communications
  - work done through our outreach and public engagement activities
  - our recently adopted Diversity of Speakers Policy is an action in this direction
- Thinking through inclusivity of our events for all the impairments/conditions listed above. Concretely, the UKAN+ EDI Team will, following discussion on this with the Director/Deputy Director, produce materials to signpost to best practice.

F. Feedback on Events (section 3). Again, the data and detailed comments largely speak for themselves. There is a wealth of feedback here on barriers and enablers for events, and what works and what doesn't in running blended events, and on enthusiasm or not (as at September) for travelling/staying overnight/online/blended events.

The major barriers identified, which overlap to some extent, are, in order of number of responses indicating these as barriers:

- Location/Travel-Related (39%)
- Financial (33%)
- Caring Responsibilities/Family Constraints (22%)
- Clashes with other activities (21%)
- Time pressures (18%)
- Health concerns including Covid (6.3%)

The main enablers to attendance at meetings identified were, in order of number of responses:

- Financial (remove reduce costs/financial support) (59%)
- Location-Related (7%)
- Use online/hybrid meetings (7%)
- Childcare facilities/funding (6%)
- Good timing for event (5%)
- Sufficient notice (4.3%)
- Remove Covid risks (3.7%)

Support adjustments suggested included: subtitles (2.1%), induction loop, rest spots/quiet zone, gender neutral language, adjustments as alternative to socialising (each suggested by one person). An obvious action is:

- That we seek to provide these where feasible so as to make our events as inclusive as possible to all our members.

Other messages from the data in this section taken as a whole would seem to include:

- Given the considerable interest shown in hybrid events (e.g., 83% very comfortable or comfortable with blended events), the considerable constructive feedback on how to run these effectively, and the benefits in terms of inclusivity and sustainability, we should look to trial these within UKAN+ as soon as possible, e.g. for any future all-UKAN+ meeting.

- Where we run events, particularly online/hybrid events, we should use the wealth of advice provided in section 3 below on what works and what doesn't
- For a significant proportion of the members financial barriers are important, so that events with low or zero cost desirable
- For a significant proportion of our members health concerns around Covid are flagged, so that good practice in relation to Covid at events continues to be important
- There is significant interest in the possibility of funding for childcare costs, and we are exploring whether we can incorporate the claiming of additional childcare costs necessarily incurred by attendance at an event into our existing travel cost claim scheme.

Appendix: Results Tables

1. Data on Inclusivity

Please answer the following questions about inclusivity with relation to the network(s) you belong to (by inclusive we mean of people rather than domain/subject matter)	Very Inclusive	Inclusive	Neutral	Exclusiv	Very Exclusiv	Don' t Know
How would you describe the network(s) you belong to?	28%	44%	16%	4%	1%	7%
How would you describe the network events you attend (online and in person)?	25%	42%	16%	2%	1%	14%
How would you describe the networks funding calls	11%	22%	22%	4%	2%	40%
How would you describe the networks other activities (such as internships, mentoring, summer schools, sandpits, etc)	21%	29%	13%	3%	0%	34%

2. Data on the Diversity of the Membership of UKAN+

Do you work in academia or industry?	%
Academia	61%
Industry	30%
Both	7%
Prefer not to say	2%

How would you describe your gender?	%
Man	76%
Non-binary	1%
Woman	20%
Prefer not to say	3%

Please indicate your age group	%
19 and under	0%
20 - 24	1%
25 - 29	9%
30 - 34	11%
35 - 39	15%
40 - 44	10%
45 - 49	18%
50 - 54	13%
55 - 59	8%
60 - 64	6%
65 and over	6%
Prefer not to say	2%

How would you describe your ethnicity or ethnic background?	%
Arab: Arab or Arab British	0.5%
Arab: In another way (specify, if you wish)	0%
Asian: Bangladeshi or Bangladeshi British	0.5%
Asian: Chinese or Chinese British	3.7%
Asian: Indian or Indian British	2.7%
Asian: Pakistani or Pakistani British	0.5%
Asian: In another way (specify, if you wish)	1.1%
Black: African or African British	0.5%
Black: Caribbean or Caribbean British	0%
Black: In another way (specify, if you wish)	0%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White or White British and Asian or Asian British	1.1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White or White British and Black African or Black African British	0%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White or White British and Black Caribbean or Black Caribbean British	0%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background (specify, if you wish)	1.6%
White: British, English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish	52.9%
White: Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Traveller or Roma	0%
White: Irish	2.7%
White: Polish	0.5%
White: In another way (specify, if you wish)	25.1%
Prefer not to say	4.3%
In another way (specify, if you wish)	2.1%

Do you identify as disabled?	%
Yes	3%
No	94%
Prefer not to say	3%

Do you have an impairment, health condition, or learning difference that has a substantial and long-term impact on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities? (Select all that apply)	%
Blind or have a visual impairment uncorrected by glasses	3.2
Deaf or have a hearing impairment	3.2
Development condition that you have had since childhood which affects motor, cognitive, social and emotional skills, and speech and language	0
Learning difference such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D	2.1
Long-term illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy	2.7
Mental health condition, challenge or disorder, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety	3.2
Physical impairment, mobility or dexterity issues, which might require you to use a wheelchair or crutches	0.5
Social/communication conditions such as a speech and language impairment or an autistic spectrum condition	2.7
No known impairment, health condition or learning difference	79.1
Prefer not to say	4.8
An impairment, health condition or learning difference not listed above (specify, if you wish)	2.1

How would you describe your sexual orientation?	%
Asexual	1
Bisexual	3
Gay or Lesbian	3
Heterosexual/straight	78
Queer	0
In another way	1
Prefer not to say	14

What is your religion or belief?	%
No religion (including atheist);	52
Buddhist	2
Christian - Catholic	10
Christian - other denomination	13
Hindu	2
Jewish	1
Muslim	2
Sikh	0
Any other religion or belief (specify, if you wish)	2
Prefer not to say;	16

Do you have caring responsibilities for a child/children and/or another adult(s)?	%
Yes	43
No	55
Prefer not to say	3

We would like to understand more about people in our networks who may experience socio-economic disadvantage, whereby they feel they have lived or currently live in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society. Do you feel that you have experienced this type of disadvantage?	%
Yes	19
No	74
Prefer not to say	7

3. Feedback on In-Person, Online, and Blended Events

When travel restrictions are lifted how do you feel about:	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Neither	Not Comfortable	Very Uncomfortable
Taking time to travel for an event (daytime only)	29%	46%	16%	9%	0%
Staying overnight for a multi-day event	22%	44%	17%	15%	2%
Having blended event where you can attend online and /or in person	43%	40%	10%	5%	1%
Online events being mainly used	23%	35%	22%	19%	1%
How would you feel about paying for in person events?	9%	43%	30%	15%	3%

Barriers to attending events in person	Number	%
COVID (health concerns/related travel restrictions)	**8**	**4.2**
TRAVEL-RELATED	**73**	**39.0**
Location/travelling far	44	
London-centric location	1	
Travel time	15	
Public transport (availability to venue/crowding)	9	
Travelling/transport	3	
Travel hassle	1	
CARING RESPONSIBILITIES/FAMILY CONSTRAINTS	**41**	**21.9**
Caring responsibilities/childcare/family-related	33	
Home life disruption	2	
Staying overnight/family	1	
School drop off/collect	1	
Difficult if outside core hours	1	
Dog care	1	
Clash with school holidays	1	
Social schedule clashes	1	
FINANCIAL	**62**	**33.2**
Cost/funding availability/finances	61	
Not earning money is attending event	1	
CLASHES	**40**	**21.4**
Date clashes	32	
Clash with teaching	7	
Part-time – clash with other 50% job	1	
TIME	**34**	**18.2**
Time pressure/schedule/time constraints/work pressure	27	
Time off work	1	

Work responsibilities/pressure	4	
Balancing time with professional commitments	1	
Relevance/value versus cost/time	1	
HEALTH (non-Covid)/DISABILITY-RELATED	**4**	**2.1**
Horror of/difficulty of socialising associated with Autism	2	
Amount of people attending	1	
Health	1	
Rationing energy	1	
APPROVAL TO ATTEND	**2**	
Time approval	1	
Employer priorities	1	
BUREAUCRACY (e.g. Uni admin to recover expenses)	**3**	**1.6**
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL	**3**	**1.6**
Disliking air travel for short stay	1	
Visa	2	
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT	**2**	**1.1**
MISCELLANEOUS		
Food	1	
Prefer not to attend too many	1	
Enough notice	1	
Ability to attend multiple meetings in one day	1	
NONE	**4**	**2.4**
NO RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION	**31**	**16.6**

Enablers to attending events	Number	%
COVID and other health concerns	**7**	**3.7**
Option to attend remotely to avoid Covid risks from public transport, meeting in enclosed spaces	1	
Remove/reduce risks from Covid (eg proper protocols and no overcrowding)	3	
Reductions in travel restrictions/no restrictions	2	
Flow and space that reduce crowds	1	
LOCATION-RELATED	**13**	**7.0**
Location/Close Location	4	
Easy to get to by public transport	4	
Central location	1	
One-day events in central locations accessible by public transport	1	
Geographical spread of locations (e.g. not always London)	2	
Variable (or multiple connected) locations to enable more local attendance	1	
CHILDCARE OR RELATED	**7**	**3.7**

Childcare facilities	4	
Funding for childcare	5	
Childcare is an interesting suggestion	1	
Depends on hubby availability TBH	1	
FINANCIAL – Travel and Event Fee Costs	**110**	**58.8**
Subsidised event fees	50	
Subsidised travel fees	56	
Subsidised event/travel depending on seniority, e.g. negligible for students, reduced for retired	2	
Early bird fees	1	
Accommodation arranged by the event (therefore cheaper)	1	
TIMING-RELATED (MUCH OF THIS ALSO CHILDCARE-RELATED)	**9**	**4.8**
Date not in the 1st week of school year	1	
Later start/earlier finish times for travel/getting back for childcare	1	
Events scheduled during core hours	1	
Schedule out of working hours	1	
Avoiding school delivery/collection times	1	
Timetable feasible for those not living in middle of England	1	
Meeting outside academic term time	2	
More flexible scheduling to avoid clashes	1	
SUFFICIENT NOTICE/AVOIDING CLASHES	**8**	**4.3**
Sufficient advanced notice	7	
Doodle poll to avoid clashes	1	
PROPOSING ONLINE/HYBRID EVENTS	**13**	**7.0**
Use online events (eg “More online events”)	5	
Use hybrid events	8	
BUREAUCRACY (“Easier systems in the University”)	**1**	**0.5**
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL (“Entry visa arrangement”)	**1**	**0.5**
QUALITY OF EVENT	**4**	**2.1**
Highly focused event	1	
Attractive topics/content, interesting/worthwhile Event	3	
MISCELLANEOUS	**2**	**1.1**
Easy access to varied food and diet	1	
(More) time	1	
NONE	**10**	**5.3**
NOT SURE	**2**	**1.1**
NO RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION	**51**	**27.3**

Examples of Successful Blended Events/What Important to Success	Number	%
EXAMPLES (of successful blended events)	**9**	**4.8**
VCCA2021	1	
ANC and IoA Meetings have both worked well	1	
The IoA have great facilities to facilitate blended meetings	1	
Internoise 2021	1	
Urban Sound Symposium 2021	1	
ASA Meeting 2016 or 2017 (with free watching).	1	
Informal meeting at Cambridge University including online international participation worked very well	1	
Taught blended classes for a decade	1	
Research proposal iterations with partners	1	
WHAT WOULD BE/IS IMPORTANT TO GET RIGHT?		
Technical	**20**	**10.7**
Good technology (generally)	3	
Room acoustics/good quality audio/sound setup (eg all speakers, including Qs, must be able to be heard remotely)	5	
Video conference technology/use	1	
Use wireless microphones	1	
Quality of recording	1	
Good camera, camera technology, and its use (e.g. AI based camera for tracking suggested)	3	
Good lighting	3	
Consider connectivity limitations of online participants	1	
Ease of communication	1	
Good to record at least some activities (eg talks) at least for all attendees	1	
Organisational	**51**	**27.3**
Allow/ensure equal participation/interaction of in-person and online attendees (onus on organisers/chairs, in particular to pro-actively include online).	7	
Chair give equal opportunity to online/in-person to ask questions (eg choose online Qs first, and start with a Q from minority group.)	3	
Sufficient time for: Q&A, networking, social interaction, exhibitor opportunities	1	
Networking time, even if via Zoom	1	
Use online apps/platforms to give similar in-person event experience, eg gather.town works well for networking/coffee breaks	3	
Have been at event with same platform for in-person and online participants, with talks all together, networking/group work separated.	1	
Have sessions for meeting people outside presentations/formal meetings	1	
Recommend in-person event first, then online later with recorded sessions. Needs to be reason for being there in-person.	1	
Some presentations in-person, some online	3	
Have greatly enjoyed online conferences which I wouldn't normally have time/funds to attend	1	

Record event for those who cannot participate	1	
Circulate the event documents etc after the event	1	
Should be possible, but care needed to ensure online not excluded from group discussions	1	
Suggest online participants network in rotating groups of 2-4	1	
Keep online participants involved as much as they want, but without negatively impacting in-person experience.	2	
I think a mix of online for talks, in-person to reconnect (socialise after 18 months of virtual) is way forward for 2021-22	1	
Facilitated engagement between online and in-person, using virtual tools for networking/engagement	1	
Make free for online, as less than the full in-person experience	1	
Blended should work if people know each other well	1	
[Blended] work well with a light enough programme to avoid online fatigue	2	
Online events should not be all day	2	
Collators of online Qs needed/Moderator to feed in online Qs/Multiple coordinators (one looking for Qs online, one in the room and controlling conversations between room and online)	3	
Ensuring online guests have sense of being in the room, able to make contributions	1	
Consider accessibility from beginning, enough breaks, not too intense schedule	1	
Ability to see the presenter (whether in-person/online) as well as slides helps you feel you are attending	1	
Ensuring everyone can see/hear everyone	1	
A clear purpose	1	
Good organisation	1	
Critical mass of in-person necessary	1	
Don’t try to force networking as not very effective online	1	
I gave online lecture to in-person audience and it worked very well (using Zoom)	1	
In person should have air circulation and changes, plus mandatory masks in enclosed spaces, as per Covid requirements	1	
Online event	2	
SHORTCOMINGS, ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL, OF BLENDED EVENTS	**24**	**12.9**
Only work well for talks/presentations	2	
Can’t see how can reproduce in person interactions in hybrid event	1	
Exclusion from breaktime networking would be extremely difficult to avoid	1	
Online OK, but inferior to in-person, little chance of networking.	4	
Not sure blended work that well, wholly online or in-person better	3	
Discussion doesn’t go well	2	
Have yet to see a good/effective example of blended interaction, eg/especially interaction with and connection to those onsite (networking/meeting people challenging online)	3	
Purely online events are much easier to attend [than in-person], but much less engaging.	1	

Probably blended gives inferior experience (eg networking) for online, but maybe hybrid can still be justified on inclusivity grounds, as long as coupled with support for people to attend in person.	1	
Would be difficult to mix in-person and online participants.	1	
My blended experience limited but negative	1	
My experience is blended worse than in-person – in-person the most productive time is unscheduled (eg chats in breaks)	1	
Difficult to make online participants included	1	
Teaching has been tricky in this way	1	
My preference in-person as long as no quarantine	1	
NONE, NO, N/A, NO EXPERIENCE, OR NOT SURE	**19**	**10.2**
MISCELLANEOUS	**4**	**2.1**
My acoustics network talk received high international attention, but didn't result in joint project	1	
Online events have mostly worked well	1	
Overseas conference	1	
UKAN Summer School 2018 Justine Jones, Presentation Trainer (Science Communication) amazing at helping this in-person event work well	1	
NO RESPONSE TO THIS QUESTION	**89**	**47.6**

Support Adjustments Suggested	Number	%
SUBTITLES HELPFUL (eg if online participants in noisy environment)	**4**	**2.1**
MISCELLANEOUS	**6**	**3.2**
Better acoustics in meeting rooms	1	
Induction loop	1	
Rest spots/quiet zones	1	
Informal socialising in a crowd (eg drinks reception) very difficult for me. Consider trying to mirror this in-person networking with some kind of mediated online interaction (eg Padlet for project ideas) so I am not disadvantaged.	1	
Large stick-on labels on a keyboard!	1	
Encourage gender neutral language	1	
NONE OR NO RESPONSE	**177**	**94.7**