
The Kassandra Lauren Gordon Survey of Black Jewellers in the UK

REPORT OF THE SURVEY RESULTS AND FINDINGS
OCTOBER 2020

Supported by:



The
GOLDSMITHS'
Company



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Executive Summary

Executive Summary

1. Background and methodology

Kassandra Lauren Gordon instigated a national survey to understand more about black jewellers in the UK and their experiences in the industry, in order to help improve access, training and support for them. The survey was supported by The Goldsmiths' Company (a membership organisation and Livery Company that has contributed to national life for 700 years), and was promoted across the industry between 25th August and 8th September 2020.

2. Survey performance and respondent profile

A total of 94 completed responses were received, and the question response rate (92%), and survey completion rate (83%), were extremely high.

The majority of respondents were black, female, and based in London and the south of England. A broad range of ages and length of time working in the jewellery industry were represented in the sample.

Most of those who had started their career in the industry were working in their own micro-businesses which, combined with their business activities, suggests the survey sample consisted largely of designer makers and skilled craftspeople.

Compared with the national average for the jewellery manufacturing sector, survey respondent businesses tended to employ fewer staff and were significantly smaller by annual turnover, however this is typical of the designer maker/skilled craftsperson business.

Executive Summary (continued)

3. Experiences of racism in the industry

Just over half of respondents had experienced racism in the industry, and this was more common the longer they had been working in it. These experiences of racism had taken place in different settings and interactions across the industry.

For those who had not yet started working in the industry (i.e. were studying, or were developing their business but had not yet started it) these experiences were even more common. But whatever stage of career they were at, most respondents never reported their experiences. This was largely due a lack of awareness of how to do so, or a lack of confidence in what the outcome would be if they did.

The most common impacts of racism were on the mental health of black jewellers and/or on their career/business development. These impacts are brought to life through responses submitted during the survey itself.

Executive Summary (continued)

4. Skills, barriers and support

A lack of funds, a lack of business experience, and a lack of role models were the most common barriers faced when starting out, and 95% of respondents still face at least one type of barrier today.

Although only one third of respondents thought a lack of skills was a barrier, most respondents thought they had 'average' skills levels. This skills rating may reflect the route into the industry for many, which may not have provided a structured programme of learning, or qualifications to validate the skills level they had attained.

Respondents had a strong desire to address these skills shortages, particularly business skills and making/manufacturing skills. There was also a strong desire for support to make industry connections, develop supply chains, promote and sell their work.

However, seeking support or training from mainstream providers was low when compared to other more self-directed sources - this may, at least in part, be due to relatively low levels of awareness of industry/business groups and a very fragmented take-up of membership.

Overall, respondents want the industry to be more inclusive and to improve the visibility and representation of black people within it.

Executive Summary (continued)

5. Conclusions

Racism in the UK jewellery industry is a very real and damaging experience for those affected as well for the industry as a whole. In addition to mental health impact, it hampers the career and business development of black jewellers, and makes them less likely to engage in events and training. This not only means the industry misses out on their talent and energy, it is also likely to contribute to a lack of visibility, and so provide fewer role models for the next generation to be inspired by, so creating a vicious circle.

Mainstream provision of support and training is disconnected with black jewellers, whose needs do not appear to be so different from those of other jewellers. This suggests that the industry is not being sufficiently effective at either: reaching aspiring or established black jewellers, communicating what it has to offer to them, or making that offer appealing, relevant and accessible.

Learning skills outside of the mainstream, for example through short courses and self-directed learning, could mean that many black jewellers do not possess formal qualifications to evidence the skills and knowledge they have acquired. In turn this may exclude them from accessing further training or other opportunities, or could reduce their willingness to participate.

Experiences of racism in the industry, and issues around reporting and subsequent action, are also likely to contribute to this disconnect with mainstream provision. A lack of take-up of support or training could also constrain the career and business development of black jewellers, so these two issues would seem best addressed hand in hand.

Executive Summary (continued)

Based on the findings of the survey, three key areas have been identified for the jewellery industry to consider with regard to how it can improve access, training, and support for all black jewellers:

- i. **It takes more than a policy or procedure to tackle racism:** How can the industry ensure that not only are effective systems and processes in place for both the reporting of and acting upon racism; but that these are communicated effectively across the Industry, from suppliers to educators and small businesses? How can it enable black jewellers, and in particular aspiring black jewellers, to build confidence and trust in the industry in which they work or wish to work?
- ii. **The industry needs to look at how it engages black jewellers and aspiring black jewellers:** Black jewellers are more likely to approach other skilled craftspeople or go to a search engine for support or training than they are to go to trade bodies and associations or FE and HE providers. How can the industry reach and engage with black jewellers effectively, and ensure that provision (be that education, training, events, competitions, memberships, and so on) is appealing, relevant and accessible to them?
- iii. **Black jewellers have been largely invisible in the jewellery industry:** Respondents want the industry to be more inclusive and to improve the visibility and representation of black people, from promoting black jewellers and celebrating their work to using black models in campaigns. How can the industry improve the visibility and representation of black people (not only black jewellers)?

1. Background and Methodology

Kassandra Lauren Gordon instigated a national survey to find out the experiences of black jewellers in the UK

- In June 2020 Kassandra Lauren Gordon – a young black jeweller - wrote an open letter to the UK jewellery industry, calling for action to level the playing field for black jewellers in the UK. [The letter, first published by the Jewellery Cut](#), included some practical suggestions for the industry including conducting events and a survey as part of her ‘Amplify black voices’ suggestion. In tandem with the letter, Kassandra launched a fund to provide bursaries to black jewellers.
- The Goldsmiths’ Company (a membership organisation and Livery Company that has contributed to national life for 700 years) offered to provide support to Kassandra through hosting the application process for the Kassandra Lauren Fund bursary scheme, commissioning qualitative research into the experiences of black jewellers, and supporting the organisation and delivery of events and the survey (this survey).
- The survey questionnaire was developed by a small team comprising of Kassandra and representatives from the Goldsmiths’ Company and The Goldsmiths’ Centre; the survey was conducted by research consultants Private 2 Public Ltd. A focus group of black jewellers reviewed and provided feedback on the survey questionnaire prior to it being finalised and launched, as well as on this final report.
- The main aims of the survey were to understand more about black jewellers in the UK and their experiences in the industry, in order to help improve access, training and support for them.

The survey was promoted across the industry between 25th August and 8th September

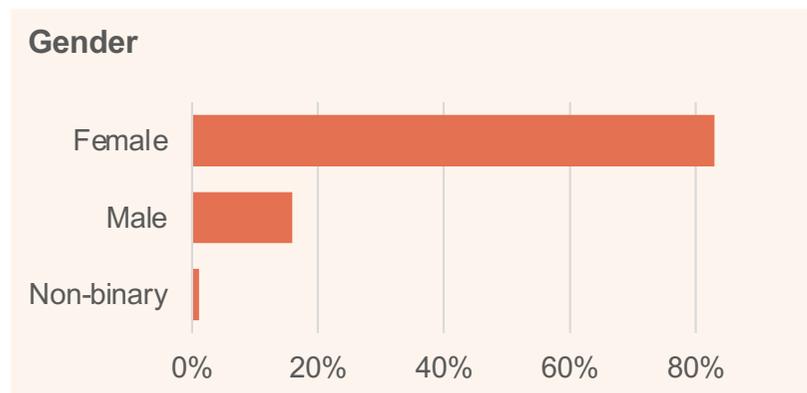
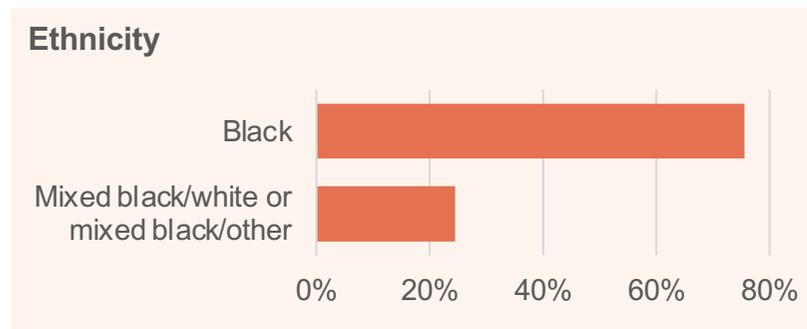
- The survey was promoted online, in the trade press, and more widely, by Kassandra Lauren Gordon, other black jewellers, The Goldsmiths' Company, The Goldsmiths' Centre, industry bodies, and other people working in the industry. All black jewellers in the industry whether business owners, self-employed or employees, were eligible to participate; as were black jewellers who had not yet started their business but intended to do so in future. Several screening questions at the start of the survey were designed to exclude those who did not meet all the criteria. The survey itself was conducted using SurveyMonkey, and only one response per device was permitted in order to minimise the risk of duplicate responses.
- An incentive for participation in the survey was provided by the Kassandra Lauren Gordon Fund in the form of a prize draw, with a random chance of winning one of five £100 vouchers to spend at Cookson Gold. Entry to the prize draw was optional.
- The survey received 165 responses, 68 of which did not pass the screening questions and were excluded automatically, and a further three were excluded manually as respondents had dropped out of the survey just after the screening questions. This left 94 completed responses.
- Answers to open-ended questions (including responses to 'Other – please specify'), were manually reviewed and categorised in order to present concise results for those questions. Answers to closed-ended questions were put through a process of segmentation, filtering and analysis.
- This report contains the final tables of survey results, commentary on findings, and conclusions. Percentage figures in the survey results tables relate to the number of respondents to each question rather than to the survey overall.

2. Survey performance and respondent profile

A total of 94 completed responses were received, and the question response rate and survey completion rate were extremely high

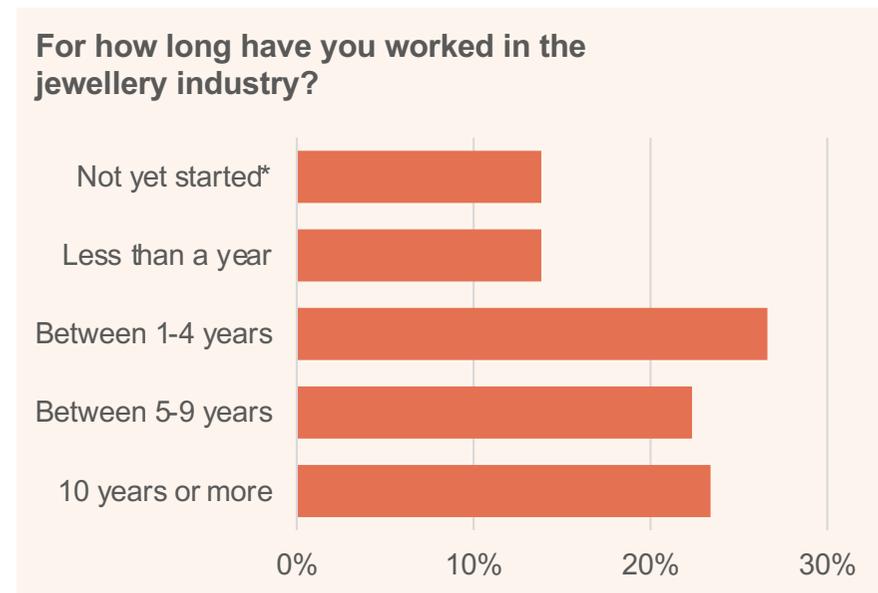
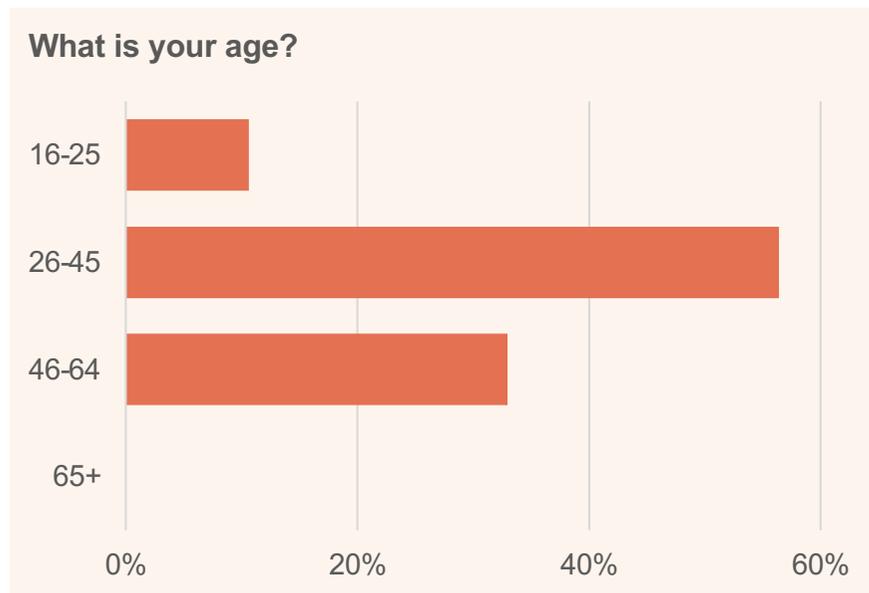
- A total of 94 completed responses were received over a 15 day period
- Response rates to closed-ended questions in the survey ranged from between 82%-100%, and for open-ended questions (which typically have lower response rates than close-ended questions) between 69%-87%. The overall average response rate for all questions was 92%. Questions relating to the prize draw are not included in these calculations.
- 83% of eligible respondents who started the survey, reached the end of the substantive section (i.e. answered the final substantive question, prior to the section relating to the prize draw)
- These rates compare favourably with other industry surveys conducted or supported by The Goldsmiths' Company or Centre in the past (many of which also included prize draw incentives), which typically also have high completion and response rates.

The majority of respondents were black, female, and based in London and the south of England



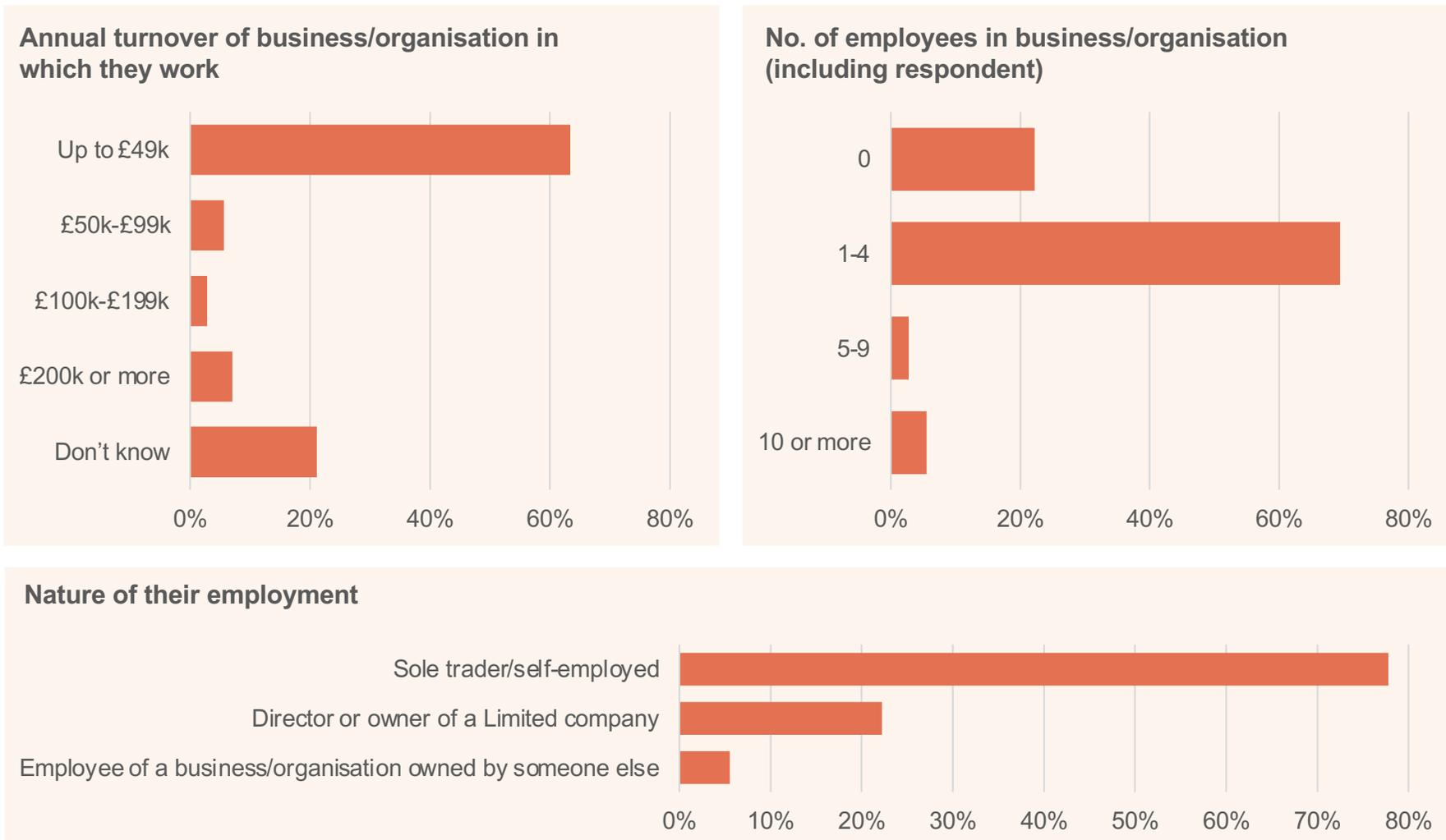
* This question related to where respondents were based at the time of completing the survey. They had previously indicated that their jewellery business or employment was in the UK

A broad range of ages and length of time working in the jewellery industry were represented in the sample

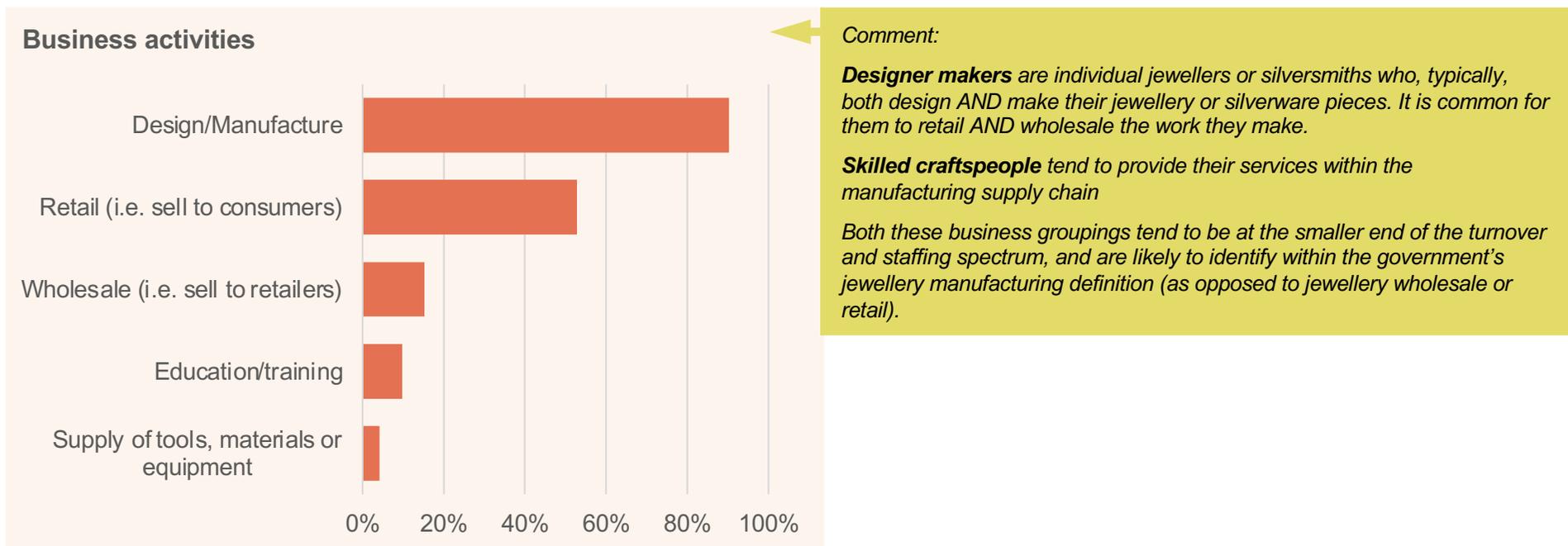


* e.g. studying or preparing for a career in the industry, or being in the process of changing careers or starting a business

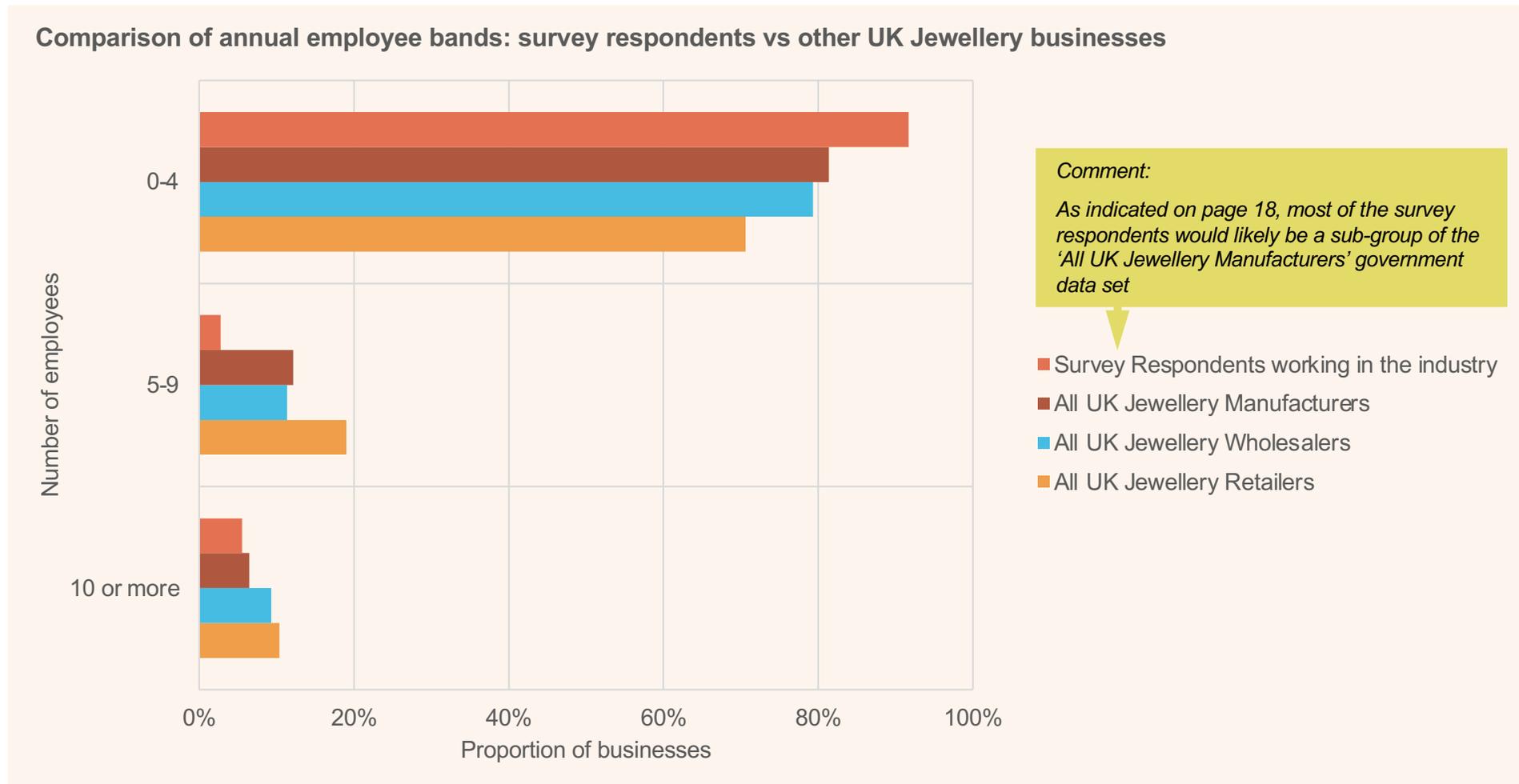
Most of those who had started their career in the industry were working in their own micro-businesses...



...which, combined with their business activities, suggests the survey sample consisted largely of designer makers and skilled craftspeople

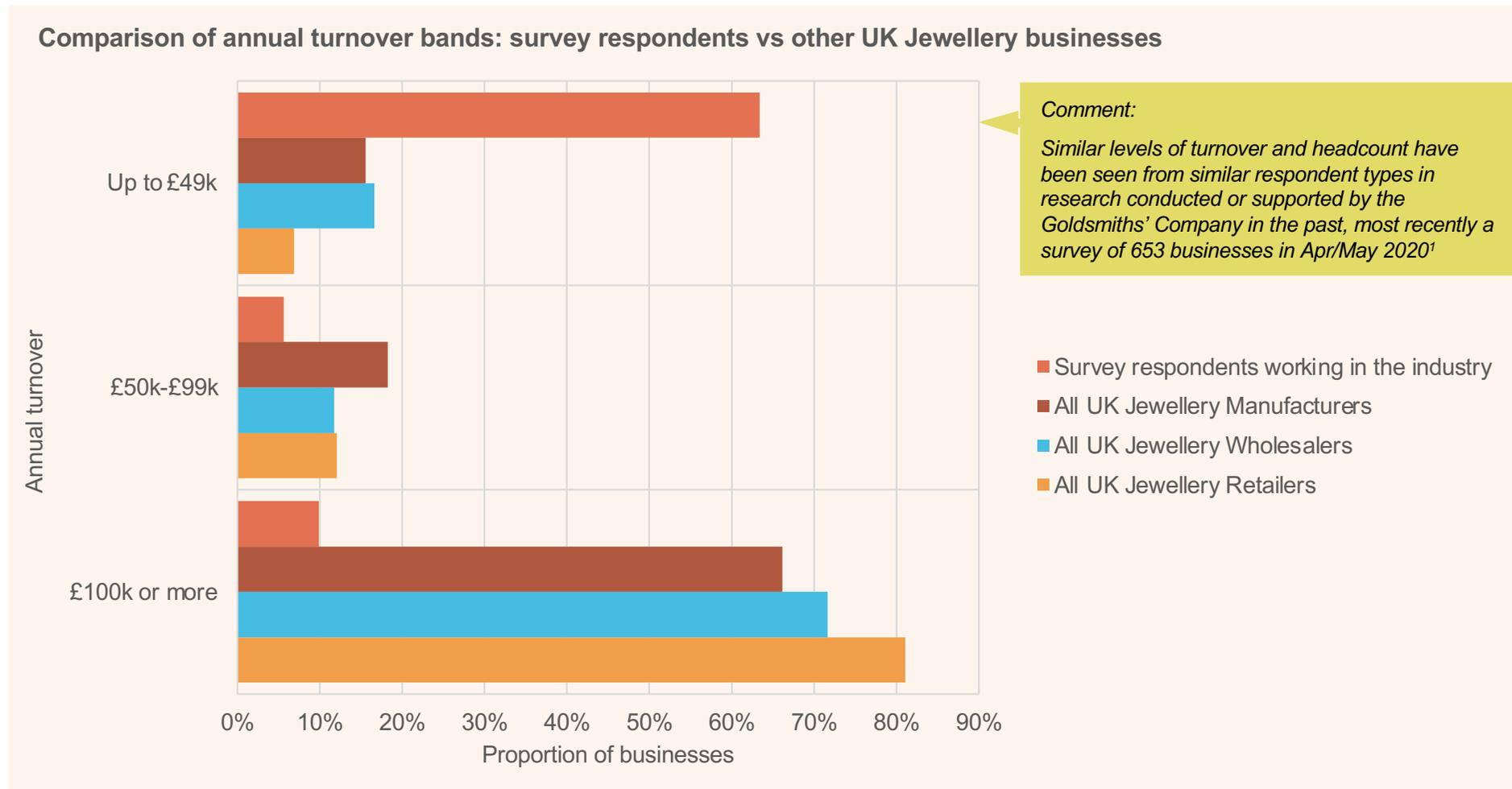


Compared with the national average, survey respondent businesses tended to employ fewer staff...



Source: Office for National Statistics, Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) taken on 13 March 2020 (released on 29 September 2020)

...and were significantly smaller by annual turnover, however this is typical of the designer maker/skilled crafts person business

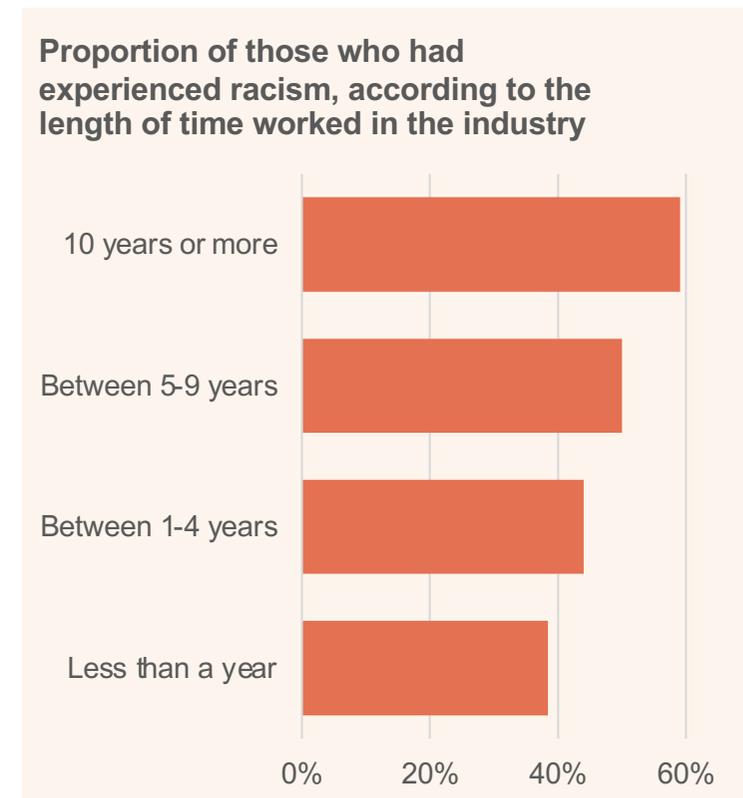
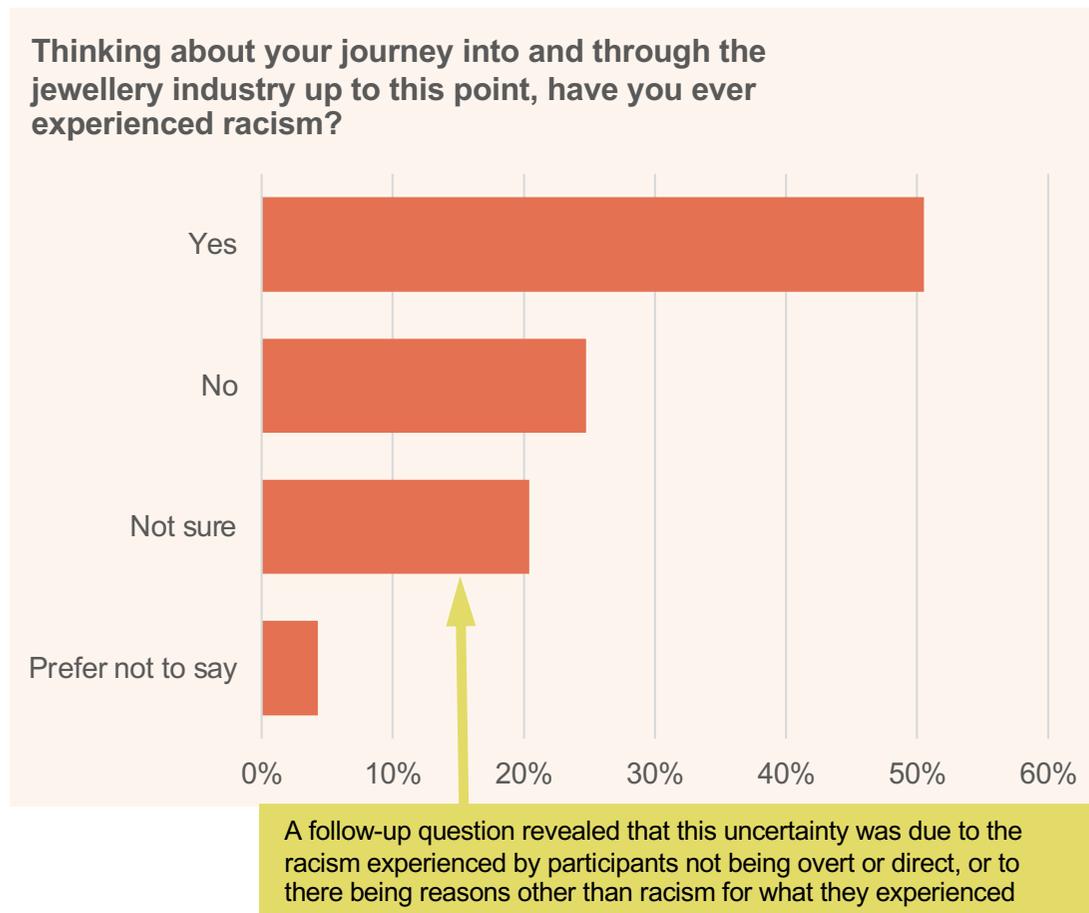


Source: Office for National Statistics, Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) taken on 13 March 2020 (released on 29 September 2020)

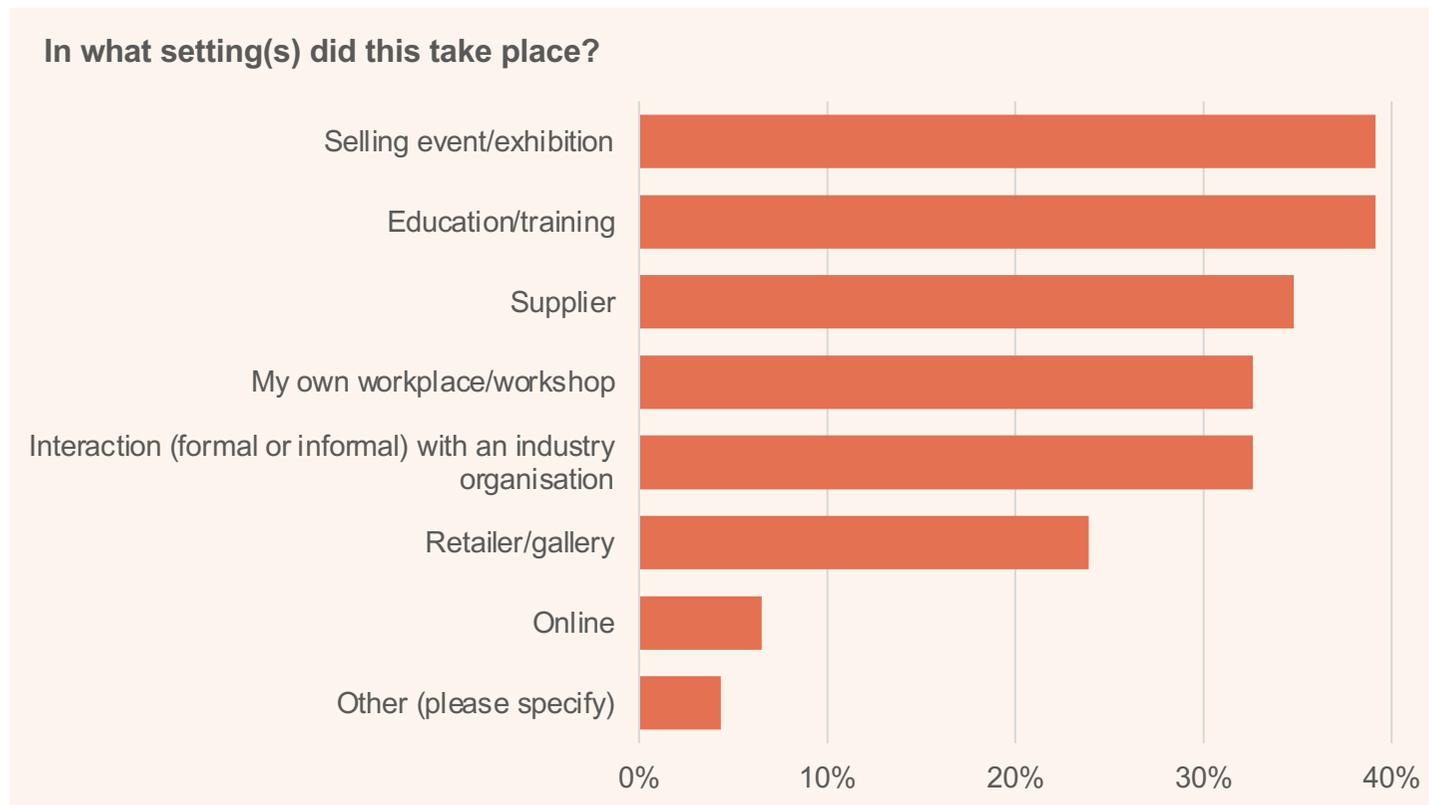
¹The Goldsmiths' Company COVID-19 Industry Impact Survey

3. Experiences of racism in the industry

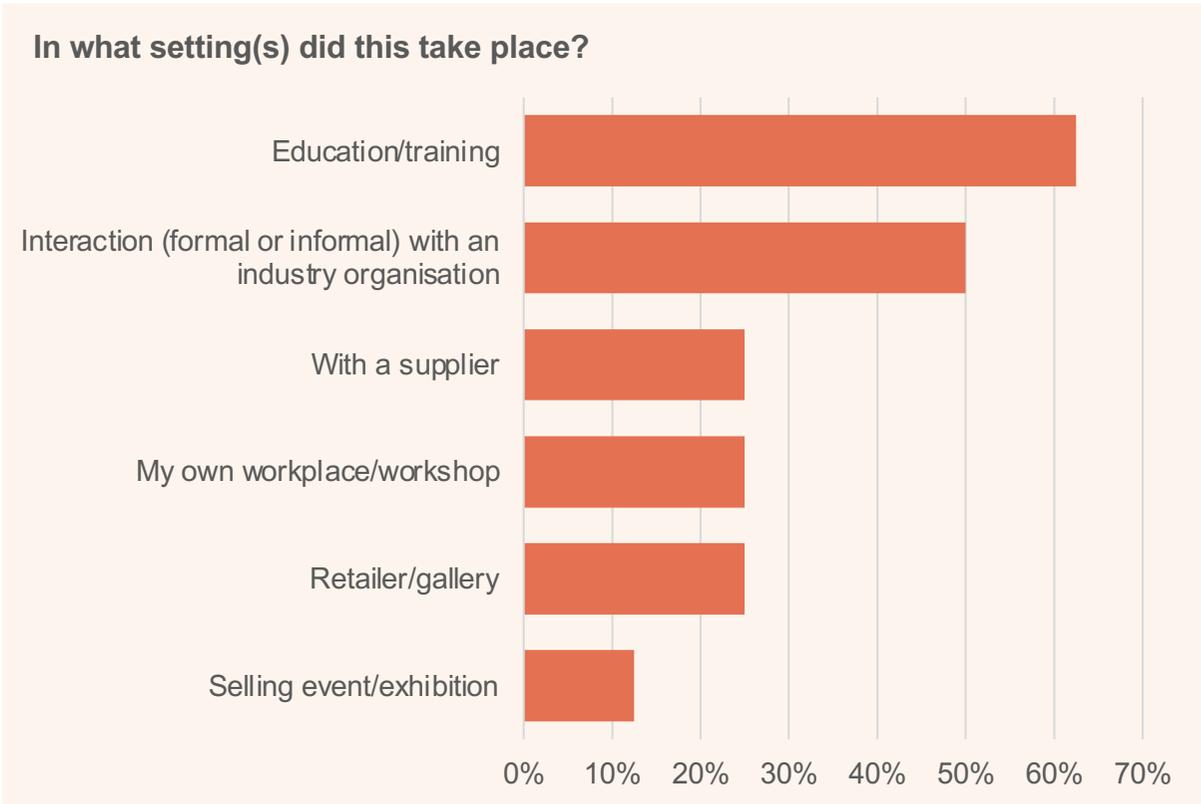
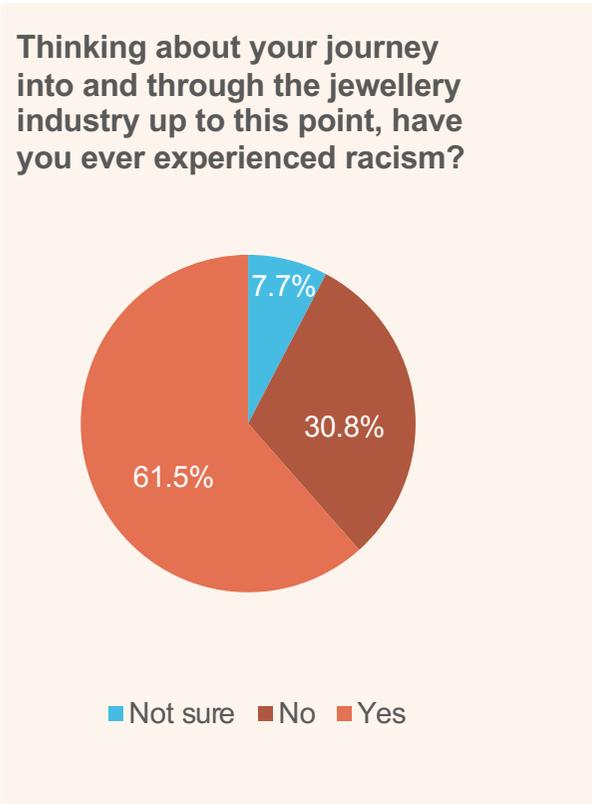
Just over half of respondents had experienced racism in the industry, and it was more common the longer they had been working in it



These experiences of racism had taken place in different settings and interactions across the industry

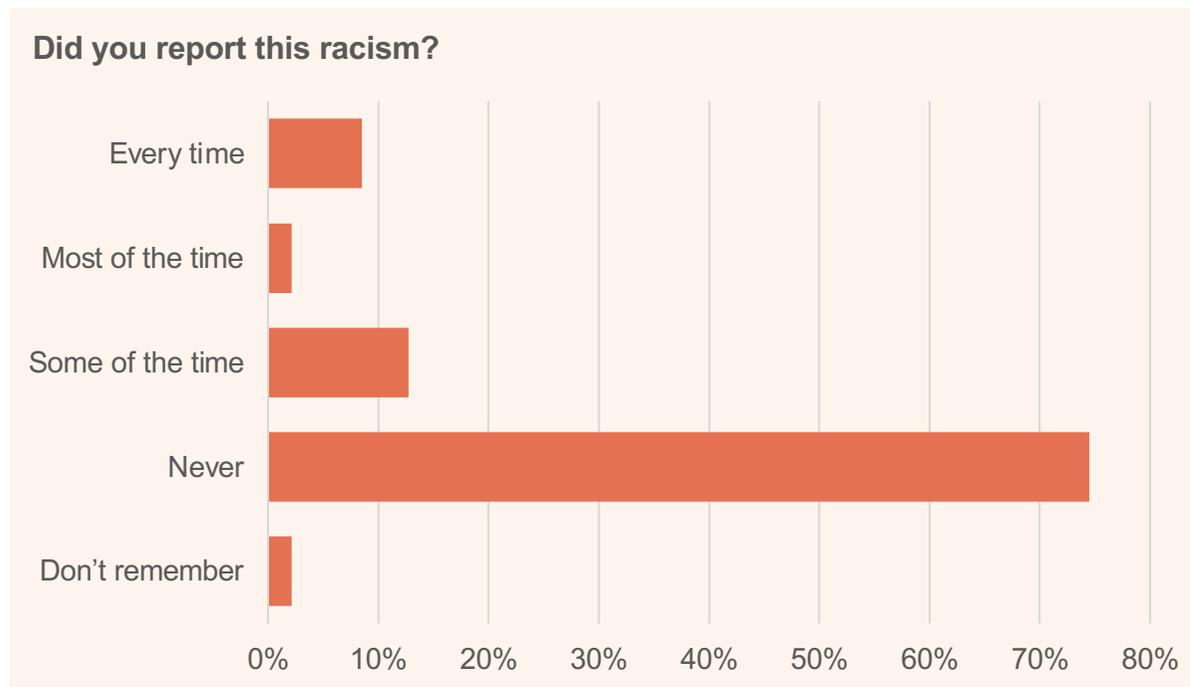


For those who had not yet started working in the industry, these experiences were even more common

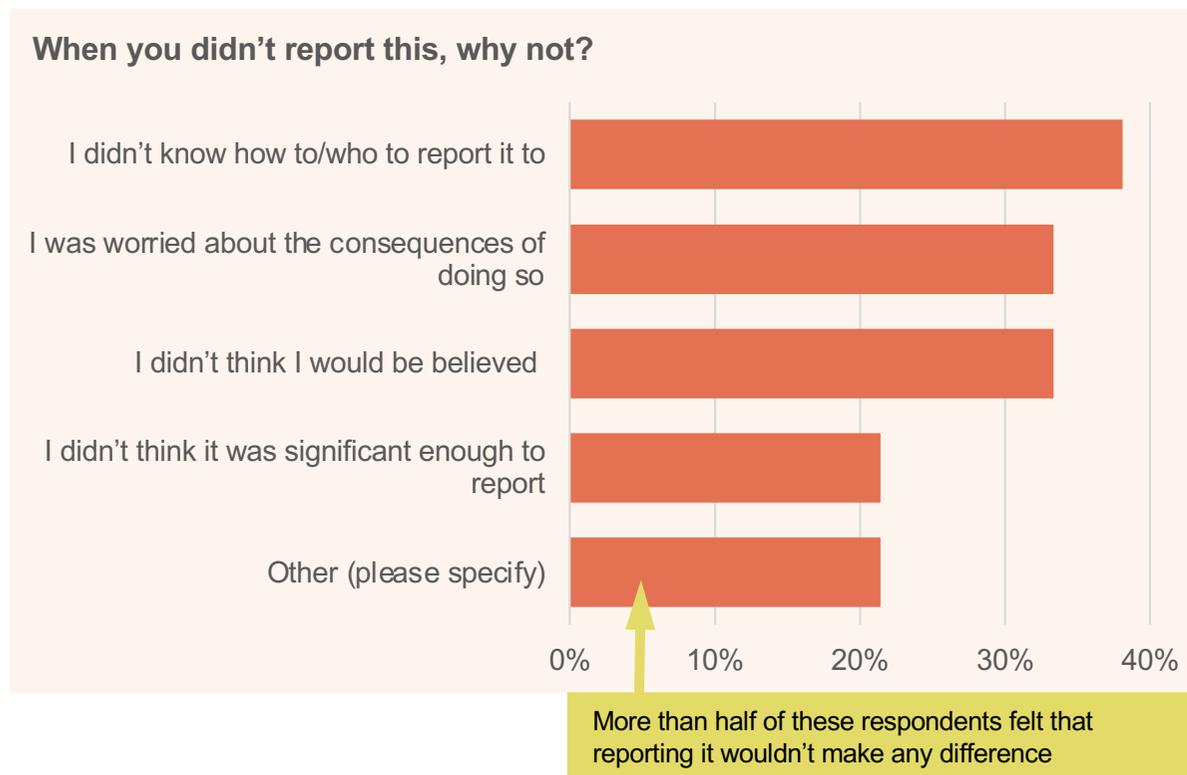


The charts above relate only to those respondents who stated that they had not yet started working in the industry, e.g. who were studying or preparing for a career in the industry, or being in the process of changing careers or starting a business. They are likely to have already been designing and making pieces of jewellery or silverware, hence the range of settings across which their experiences of racism took place extends beyond education and training.

Whatever stage of career they were at, most respondents never reported their experiences of racism...



...this was largely due to a lack of awareness of how to do so, or a lack of confidence in what the outcome would be if they did



The most common impacts of racism were on the mental health of black jewellers and/or on their career/business development

In brief, what impact did this experience of racism have on you, or on your career in the jewellery industry?
 (this was an open-ended question, the responses have been categorised in the chart below)



These impacts are brought to life through responses submitted during the survey itself

It basically stalled my career for a number of years and decreased my confidence in myself and my abilities. I felt I was actively discouraged from trying to learn new skills.

I'm reluctant to apply to events and exhibitions. I don't actively seek stockists. In fact for a long time I didn't do anything to raise my visibility and I feel looking back this has hampered my progress.

It caused me a lot of sadness and depression

I am wary of selling at craft fairs and public events.

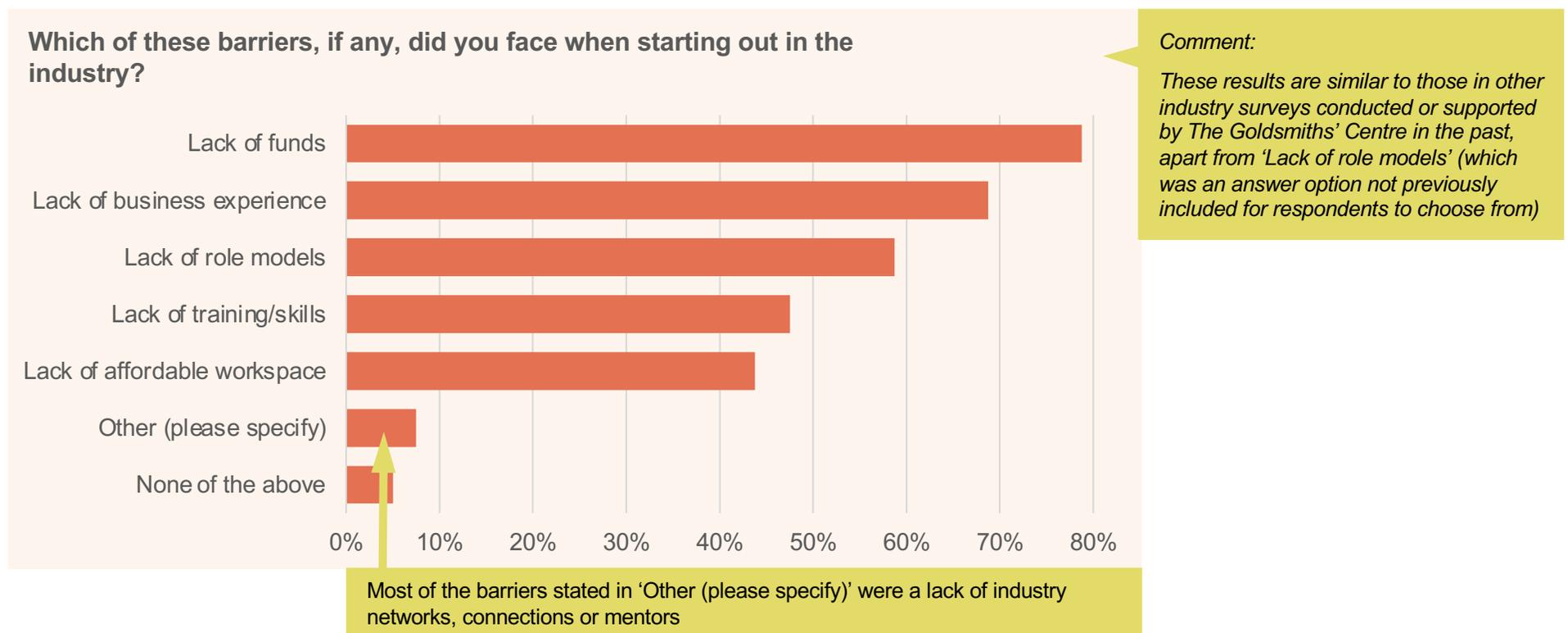
Made me realise no matter how talented you are my skin colour would be an issue

It made me reluctant to get further training in similar settings

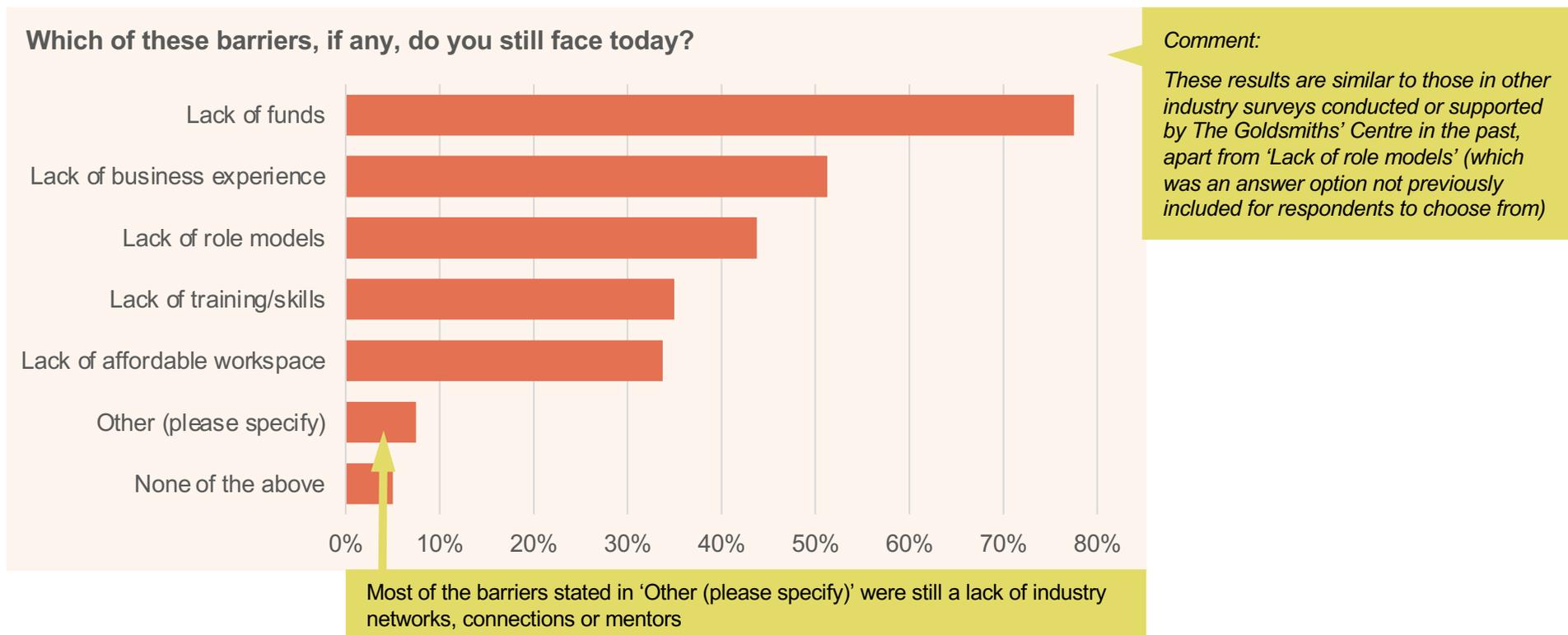
Racism is part of every day life for any black person living in the UK. I have learned to live with it.

4. Skills, barriers and support

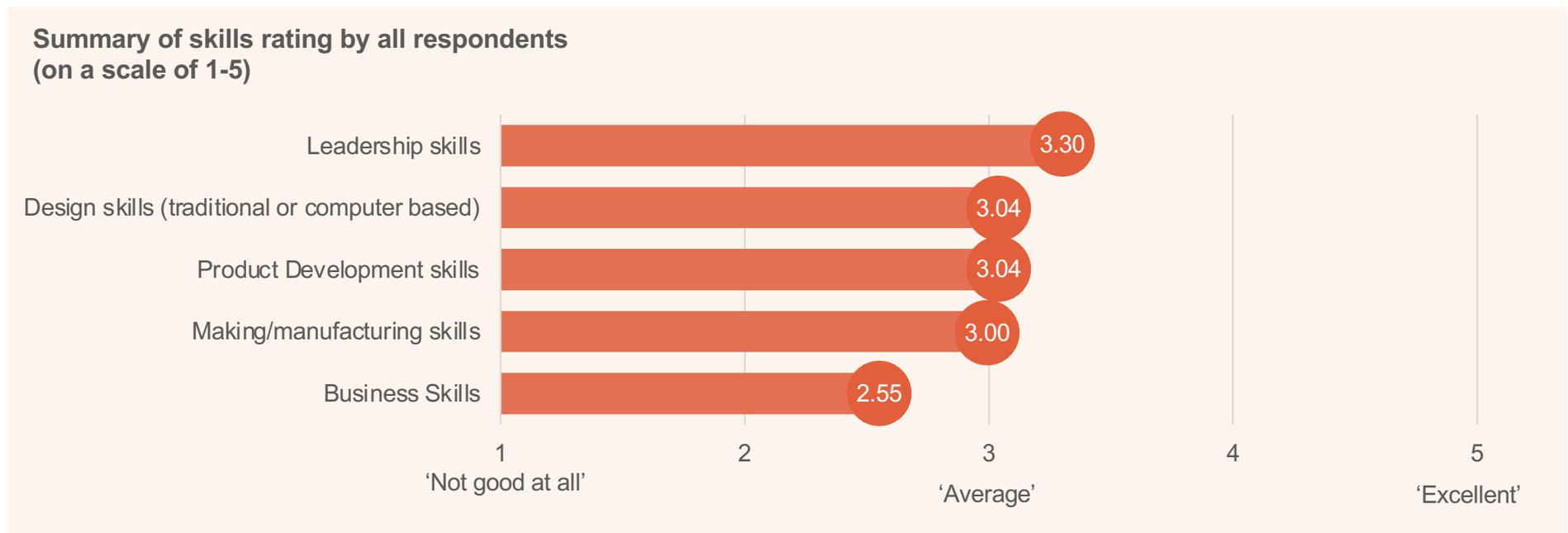
A lack of funds, a lack of business experience, and a lack of role models were the most common barriers faced when starting out...



...and 95% of respondents still face at least one type of barrier today

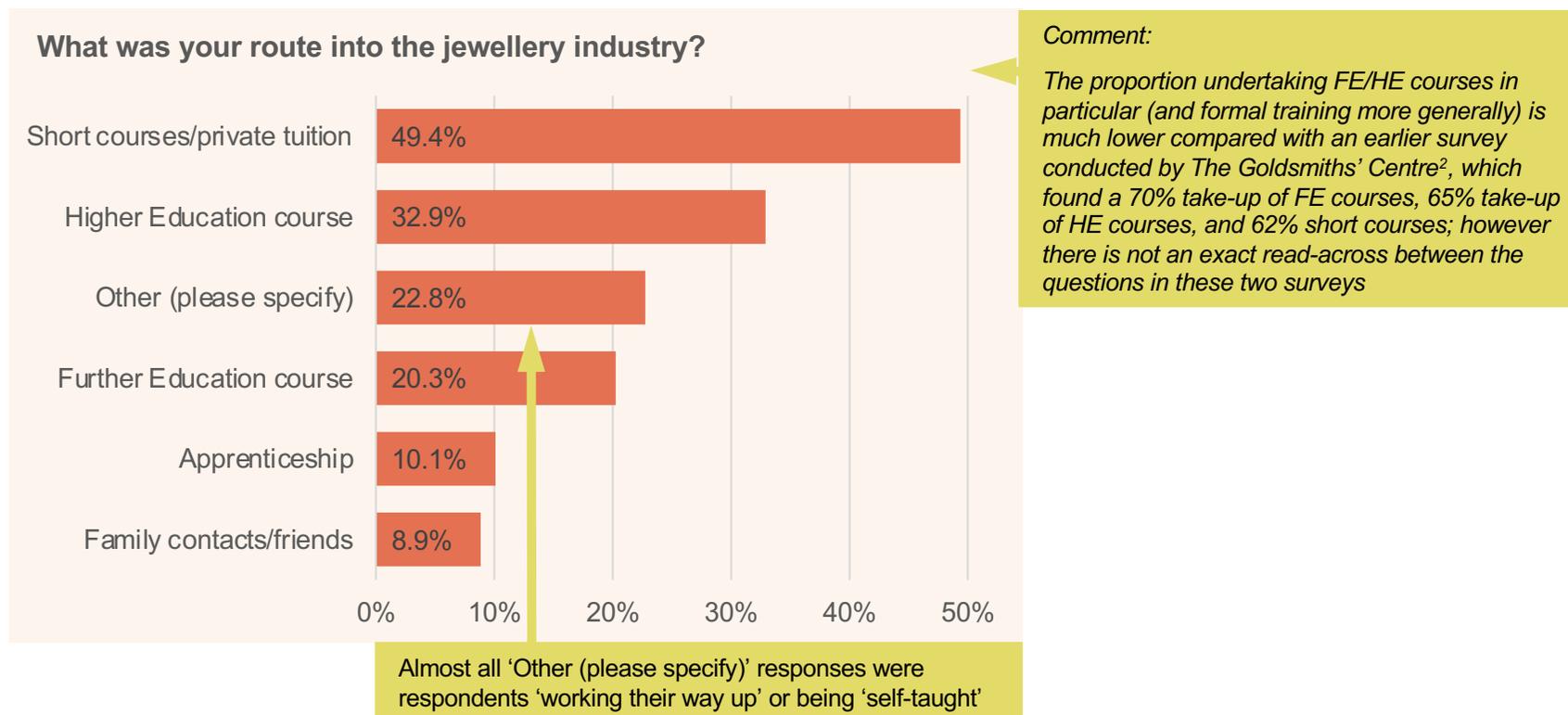


Although only one third of respondents thought a lack of skills was a barrier, most respondents thought they had 'average' skills levels



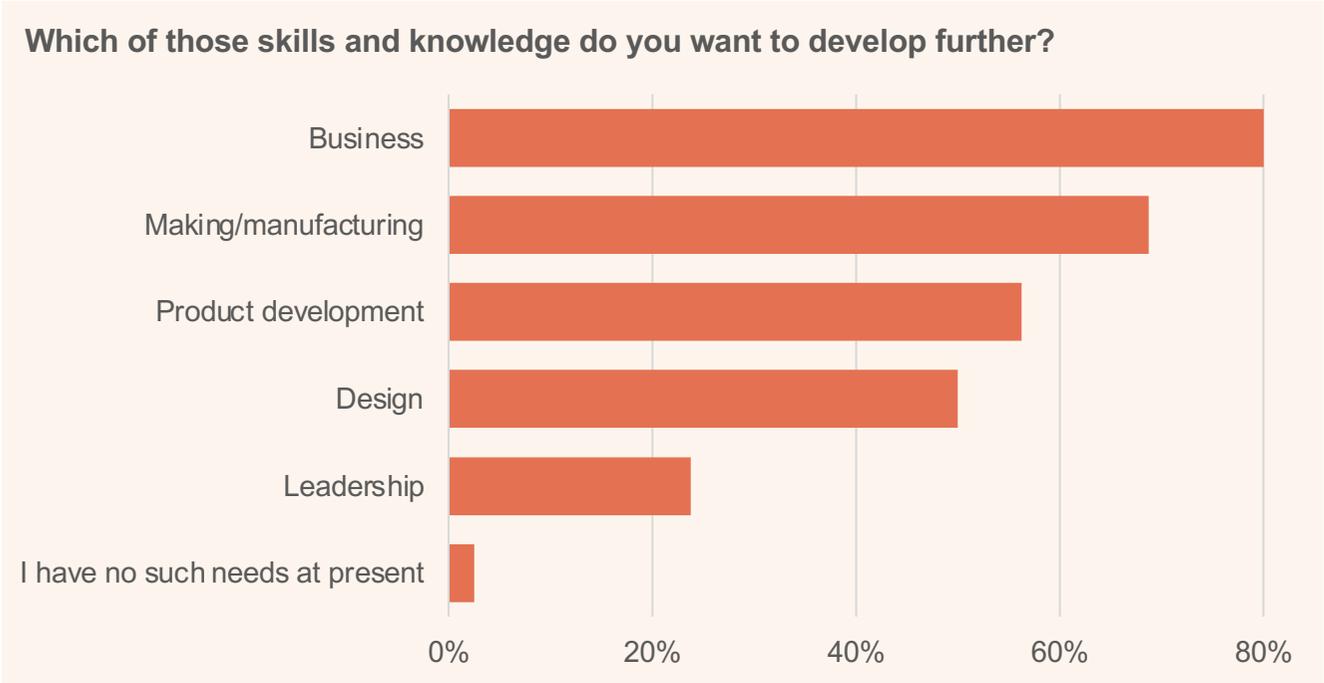
This chart was produced using a 'weighted average' calculation. For further information see: https://help.surveymonkey.com/articles/en_US/kb/Matrix-Question

This skills rating may reflect the route into the industry for many, which may not have provided a structured programme of learning, or qualifications to demonstrate the skills level attained



² Business Needs Survey of the Jewellery, Silversmithing and Allied Trades: The Goldsmiths' Centre, February 2017

Respondents had a strong desire to address these skills shortages, particularly business skills and making/manufacturing skills



There was also a strong desire for support to make industry connections, develop supply chains, promote and sell their work

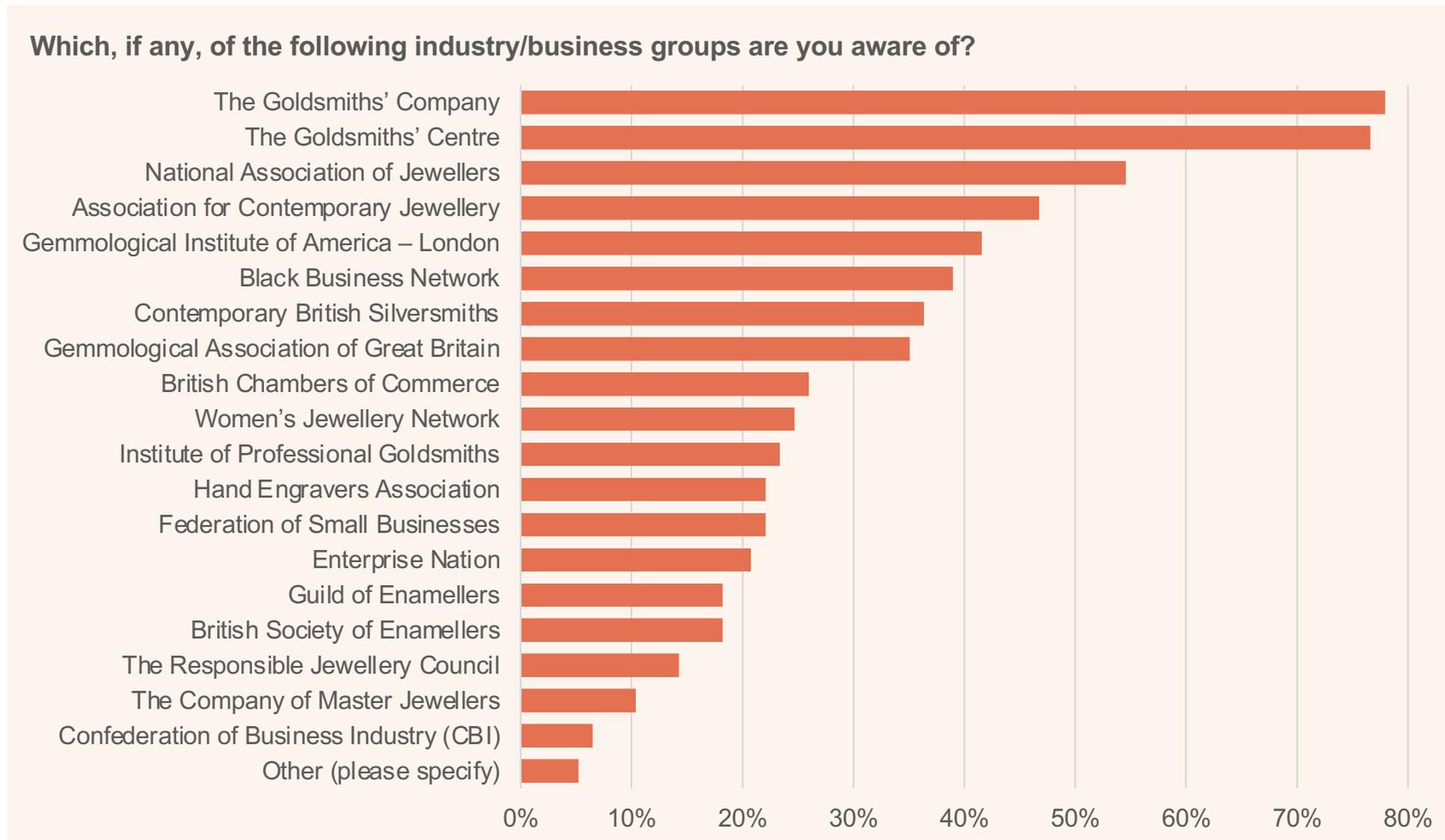
Apart from training, what other forms of support would help you to progress your ambitions over the next 12 months?



However, seeking support or training from mainstream providers was low when compared to other more self-directed sources...

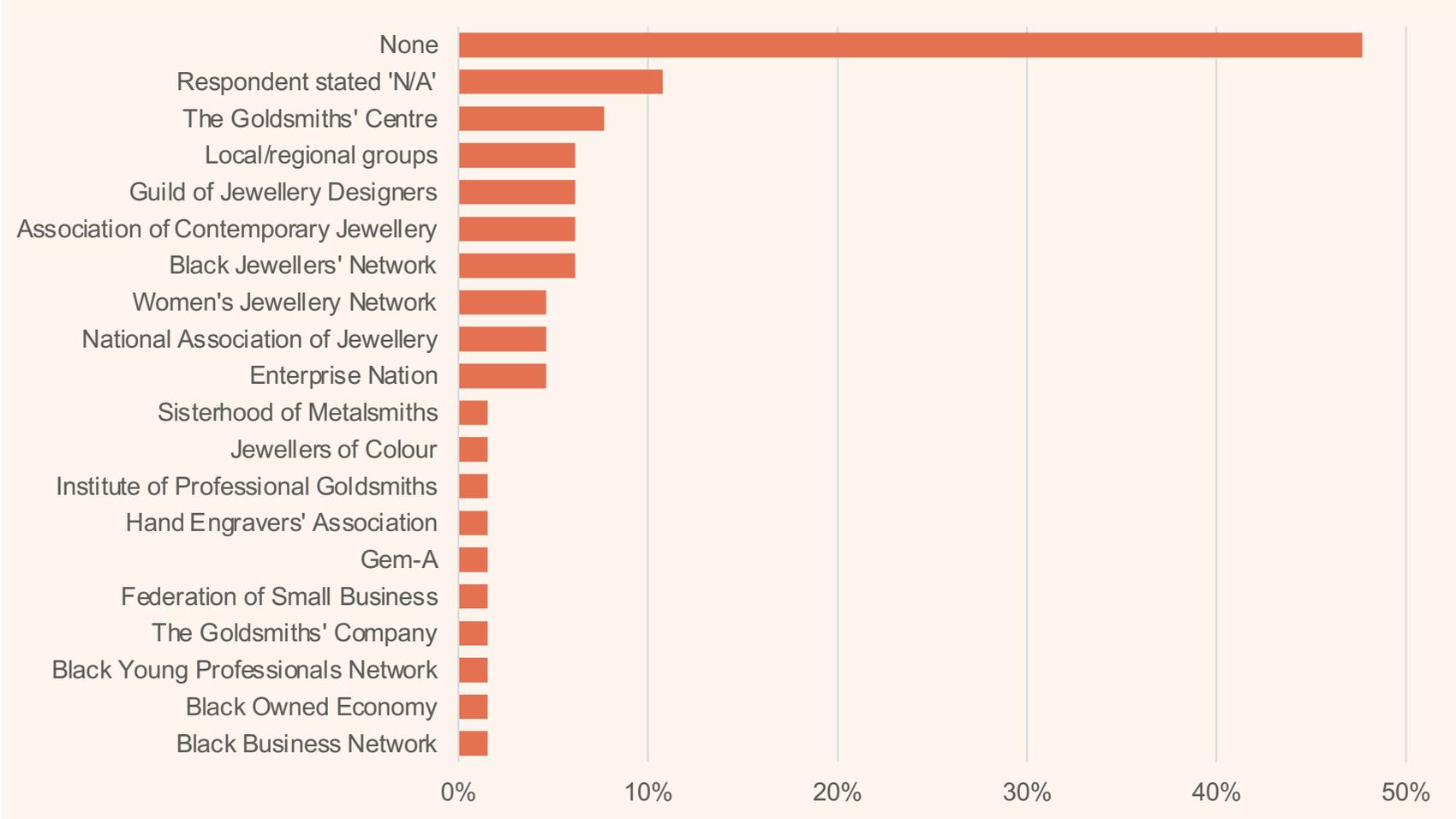


...and this may, at least in part, be due to relatively low levels of awareness of industry/business groups...



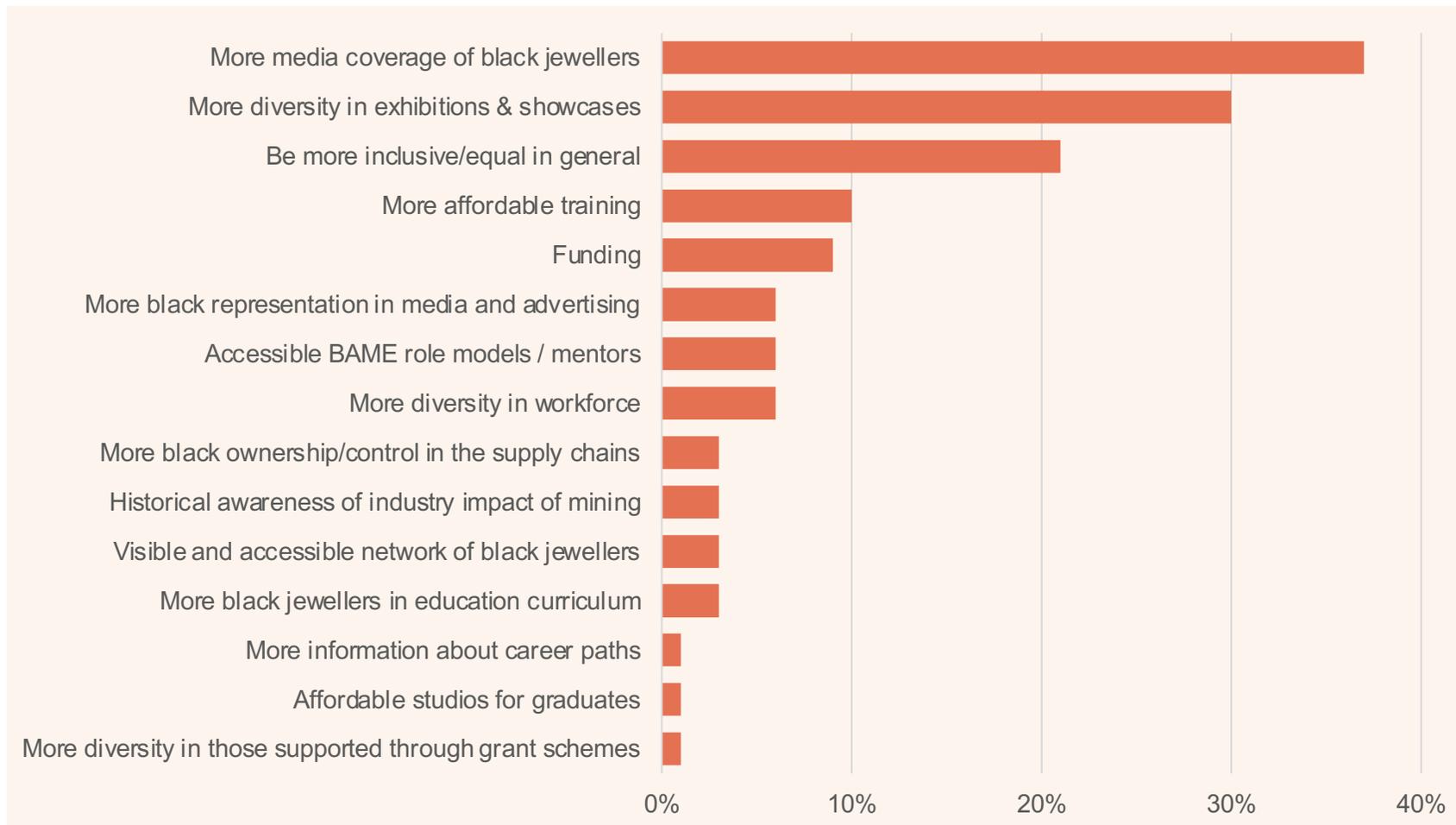
...and a very fragmented take-up of membership

Which, if any, industry/business groups are you a member of?
(open-ended question, the responses have been categorised in the chart below)



Overall, respondents want the industry to be more inclusive and to improve the visibility and representation of black people within it

If you could make the industry change one thing to promote inclusivity, or improve the outlook for black jewellers, what would that be? (open-ended question, the responses have been categorised in the chart below)



5. Conclusions

Racism in the UK jewellery industry is a very real and damaging experience for those affected as well for the industry as a whole

- More than half of respondents have experienced racism across different industry settings and contexts, and yet this was highly unlikely to be reported.
- In addition to mental health impact, this hampers the career and business development of black jewellers, and makes them less likely to engage in events and training.
- This not only means the industry misses out on their talent and energy, it is also likely to contribute to a lack of visibility, and so provide fewer role models for the next generation to be inspired by, so creating a vicious circle.

Mainstream provision is disconnected with black jewellers, whose needs do not appear to be so different from those of others

- The skills and support needs, and barriers faced, are similar to those identified in other research; and training and support is available from a range of mainstream providers across sectors and specialisms.
- However there is a lack of awareness of provision, a lack of engagement with it, and a lack of take up. This suggests that the industry is not being sufficiently effective at either: reaching aspiring or established black jewellers, communicating what it has to offer to them, or making that offer appealing, relevant and accessible.
- Learning of skills outside of the mainstream, for example through short courses and self-directed learning, could mean that many black jewellers do not possess formal qualifications to evidence the skills and knowledge they have acquired. In turn this may exclude them from accessing further training or other opportunities, or could reduce their willingness to participate.
- Experiences of racism in the industry, and issues around reporting and subsequent action, are also likely to contribute to this disconnect with mainstream provision. A lack of take-up of support or training could also constrain the career and business development of black jewellers, so these two issues would be best addressed hand in hand.

So, how can the jewellery industry improve access, training, and support for all black jewellers?

Based on the findings of the survey, three key areas have been identified for the jewellery industry to consider with regard to how it can improve access, training, and support for all black jewellers:

- i. **It takes more than a policy or procedure to tackle racism:** How can the industry ensure that not only are effective systems and processes in place for both the reporting of and acting upon racism; but that these are communicated effectively across the Industry, from suppliers to educators and small businesses? How can it enable black jewellers, and in particular aspiring black jewellers, to build confidence and trust in the industry in which they work or wish to work?
- ii. **The industry needs to look at how it engages black jewellers and aspiring black jewellers:** Black jewellers are more likely to approach other skilled craftspeople or go to a search engine for support or training than they are to go to trade bodies and associations or FE and HE providers. How can the industry reach and engage with black jewellers effectively, and ensure that provision (be that education, training, events, competitions, memberships, and so on) is appealing, relevant and accessible to them?
- iii. **Black jewellers have been largely invisible in the jewellery industry:** Respondents want the industry to be more inclusive and to improve the visibility and representation of black people, from promoting black jewellers and celebrating their work to using black models in campaigns. How can the industry improve the visibility and representation of black people (not only black jewellers)?

Appendix 1

Margin of error calculations

It was not possible to calculate precisely the proportion of black jewellers in the UK that the survey sample represented...

Various government data sets present information about businesses, employment and ethnicity in the UK, however it was not possible to find information on the ethnicity of employees (and the self-employed) within the jewellery manufacturing sector. For example:

- The Office for National Statistics [Inter-Departmental Business Register](#) (IDBR) holds information on the number of businesses according to a five digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code which represents the industry/sector e.g. Jewellery Manufacturing. However, the IDBR does not publish information on ethnicity of employees within those SIC codes.
- The ONS [Labour Market Review](#) contains estimates of employment and employment-related statistics for the UK, however this is not also broken down by SIC code.
- The government's '[Leadership of small and medium enterprises](#)', published 12 September 2019, provides data connecting ethnicity to SIC code, but only to the high level category SIC code. As such it contains data on the ethnicity of directors/owners and the self-employed within the manufacturing sector, but it does not break this down further to segment only those involved in *jewellery* manufacturing. The data is sourced from the 'Longitudinal Small Business Survey', which is an annual telephone survey of UK small and medium enterprises (SMEs). SMEs are businesses with fewer than 250 employees (the vast majority of this Black Jewellers Survey respondents fit in this bracket).

...although an assumption has been used to help us to estimate this proportion

According to the government's '[Leadership of small and medium enterprises](#)' mentioned on the previous page, *for UK manufacturing industries as a whole*, it reports that:

- <1% of businesses in the manufacturing sector with two or more owners or directors had at least one black owner or director or partner
- <1% of businesses in the manufacturing sector with one owner or director, had a black owner or director
- 3% of businesses in the manufacturing sector are minority ethnic group led ('majority led' refers to the ethnic make up of the business's leadership team including the owners).

It has previously been shown in this black jewellers survey report that:

- More than 95% of survey respondents were sole traders/self-employed or Director/owner of a Limited company (page 17)
- More than 80% of all businesses in the jewellery manufacturing sector have four or fewer employees (page 19)

We have therefore applied an assumption that between <1% to 3% of all workers in the *Jewellery* manufacturing sector are black.

Our estimate suggests that the survey sample size is significant, and that the results have a maximum margin of error of 9%

Number of people in employment in the UK Jewellery Manufacturing sector in 2020¹ 5,776
Of which black people (based on assumption of 1%-3% of total) Between 58-173

Number of survey respondents who indicated they had:
Started their career, and were either employed, self-employed, or owners or directors of a Limited company, and had a primary business activity in jewellery design/manufacture 69

Using [SurveyMonkey's margin of error calculator](#):

A population size of *Between 58-173*
A survey sample size of 69
A confidence level of 95%
Gives a margin of error range of *Between 0-9%*

i.e. we can be 95% certain that the survey results represent all black jewellers in the UK to a maximum margin of error of 9% for any one question result in the survey. Researchers typically use a confidence level of between 90%-99% and a margin of error between 4-8%.

¹ Source: IBISWorld Ltd, Jewellery Manufacturing in the UK - Market Research Report, July 2020 (from extract published on the IBISWorld UK website)