



# Research Landscape Bulletin

## Issue 1: May 2023–February 2024

This bi-annual bulletin provides an overview of the UK Armed Forces community research landscape in terms of what research is being conducted, by whom, and what research evidence is being published. While this first bulletin covers a wider time period, each subsequent issue will cover the past six-month period. By providing this overview, the bulletin aims to identify trends and gaps in current research and highlight the kinds of research that is underway and therefore what evidence on what topics/issues may be expected. This will be beneficial to researchers, those who commission research, and those who use research to inform their work, policy, and practice. All information is taken from the [Research Community](#), [Ongoing Research](#), and [Repository](#) pages of our website.<sup>1</sup>

1

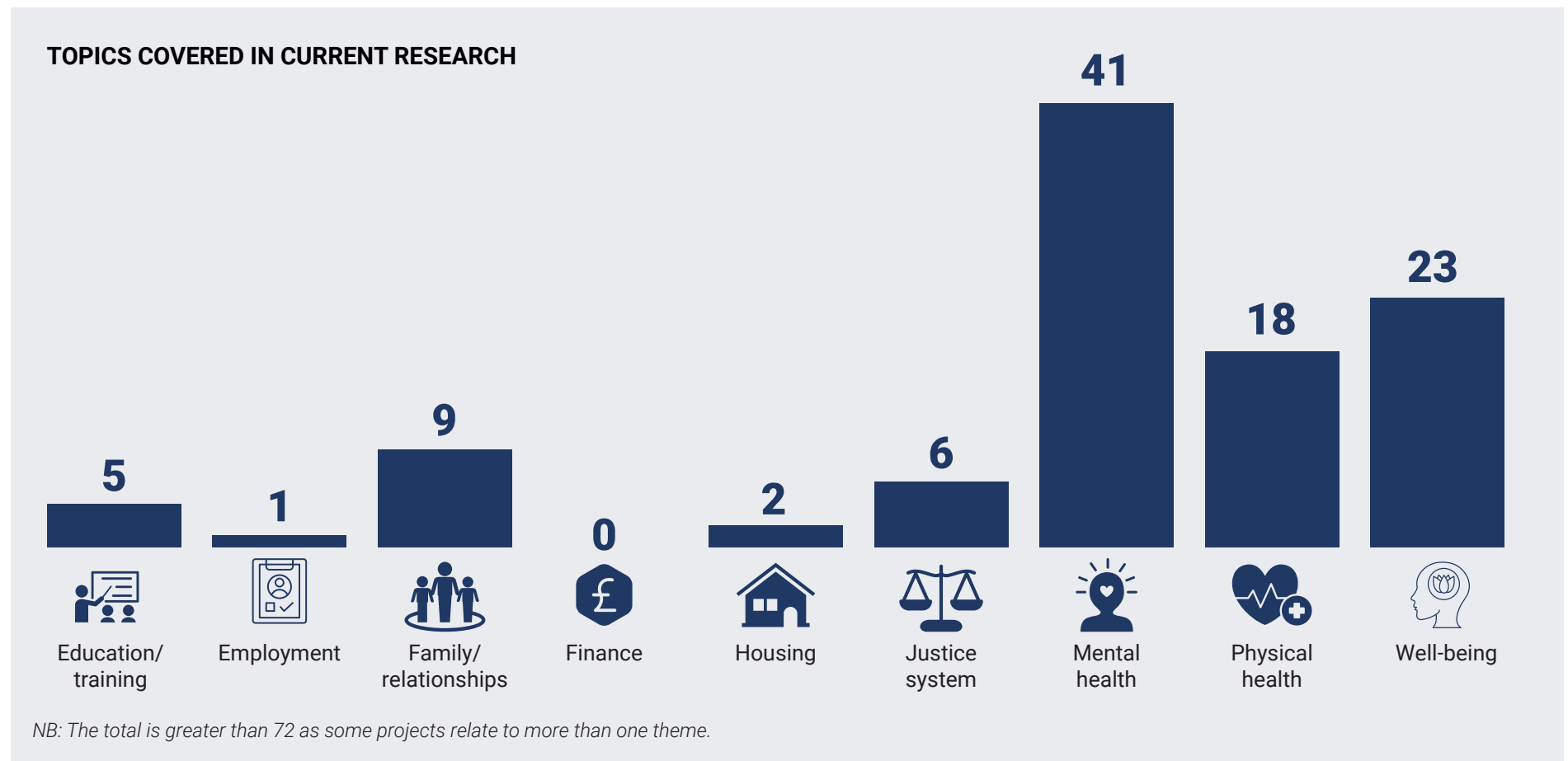
We rely on the comprehensiveness of the Research Community and Ongoing Research pages, and the repository to provide an accurate picture. If your profile and research, or that of others, are not included in the Research Community and Ongoing Research page, or your published research is not in our repository, please get in touch to include them and help us provide an accurate landscape.



## What research was conducted in this period?

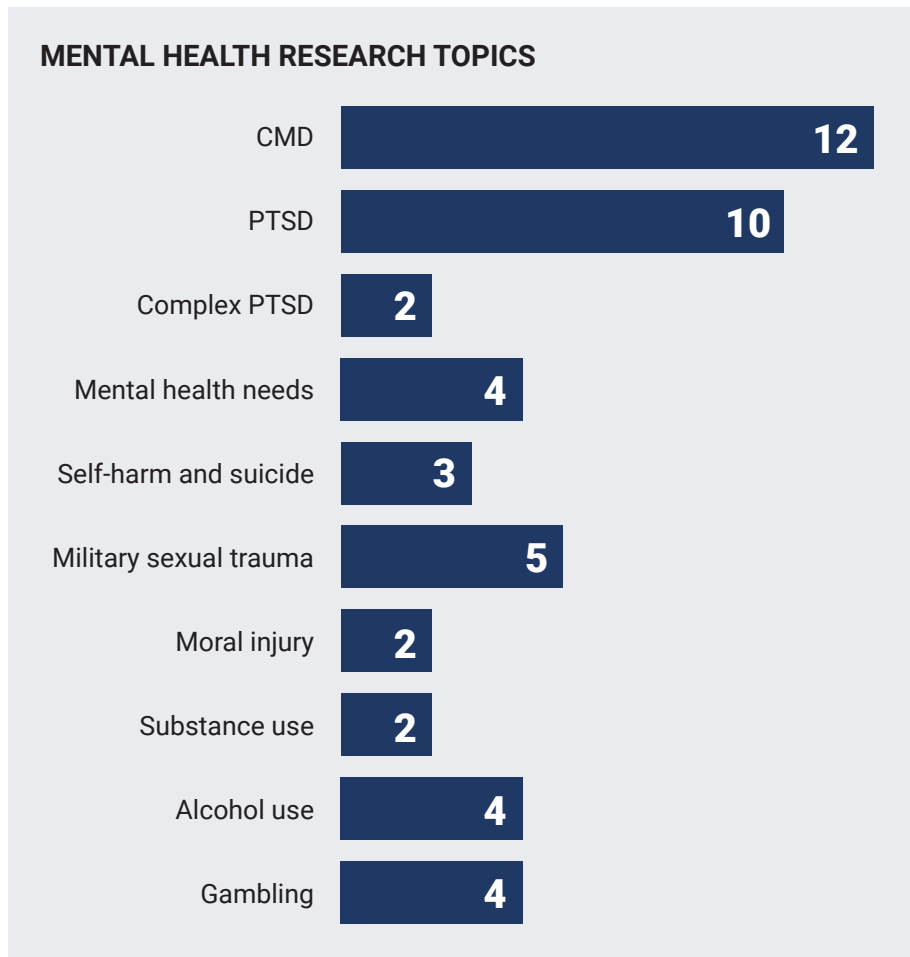
72 research studies about the UK Armed Forces community were being conducted between May 2023 and February 2024.

Mental health was the most researched area, followed by well-being, and physical health. The least researched area is finance, with no studies currently focused on this transition area, followed by employment with just one study focused on this in this period.

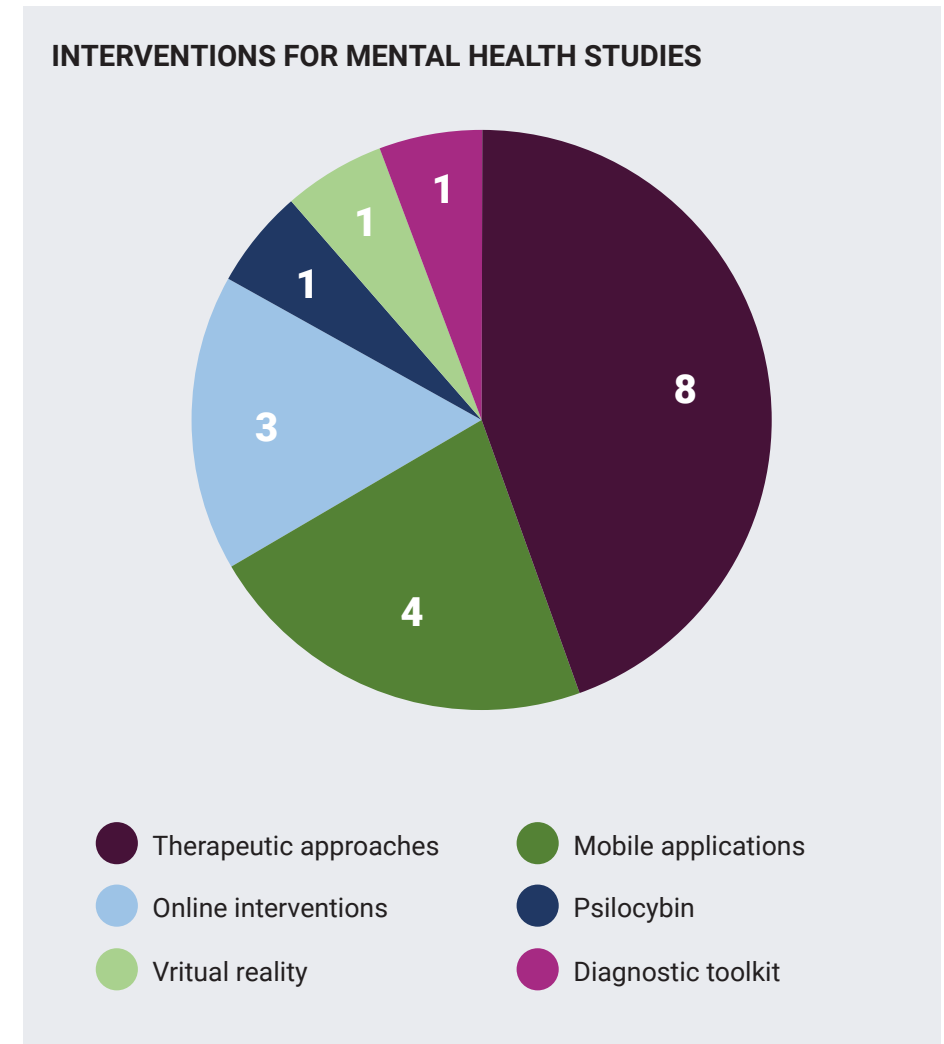


## Mental Health research

The most common conditions of focus were Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and common mental health disorder (CMD; including depression, anxiety, non-specified broad 'mental health').

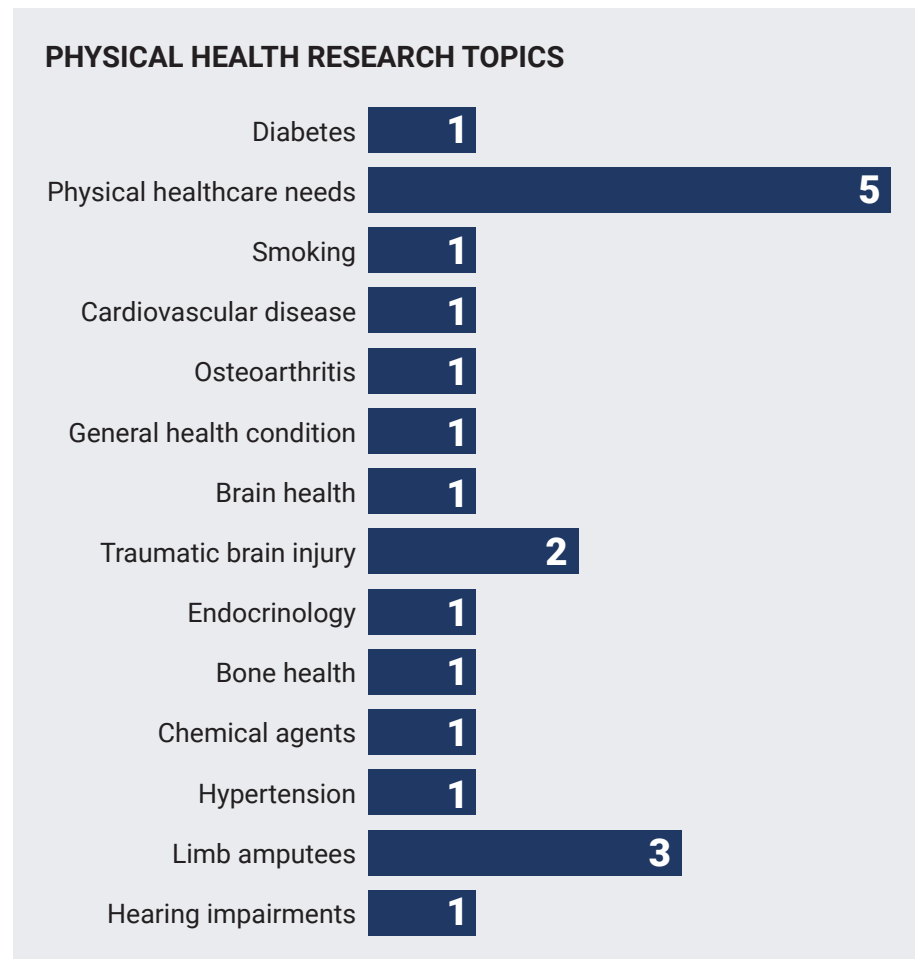


Interventions were a focus for 18 of the mental health studies.



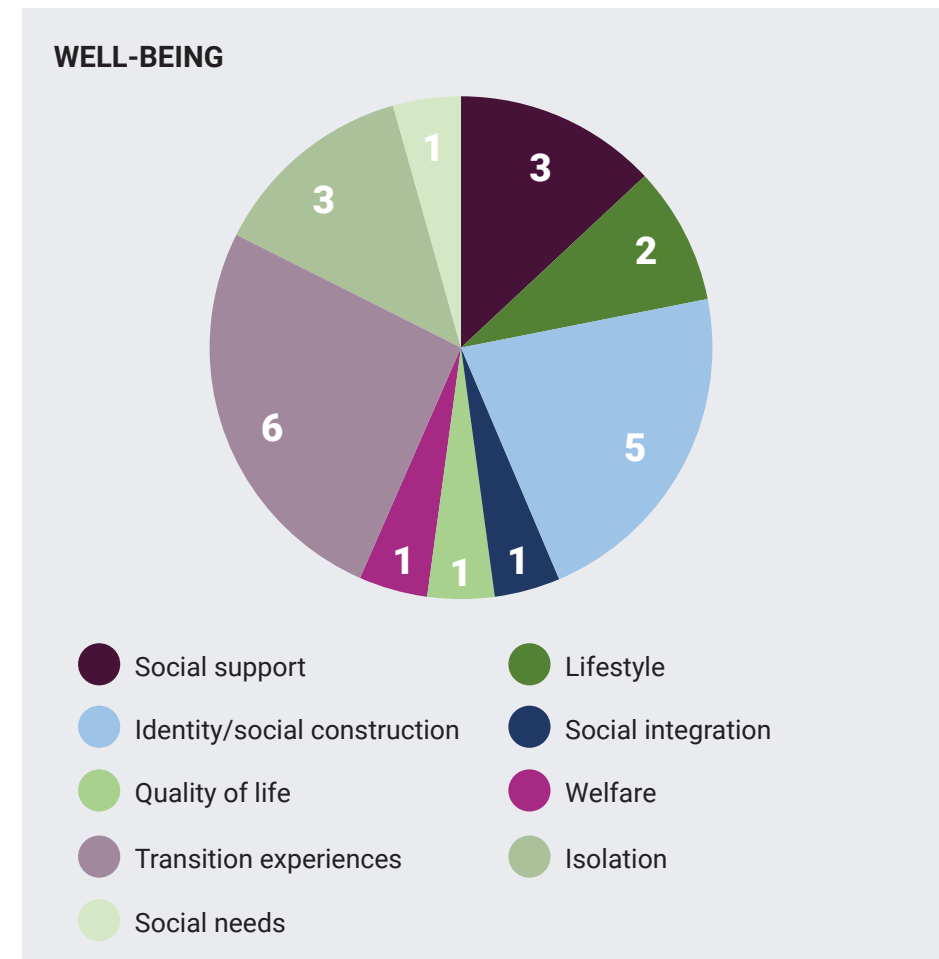
## Physical Health research

The most common area of focus is physical healthcare needs, followed by limb amputations.



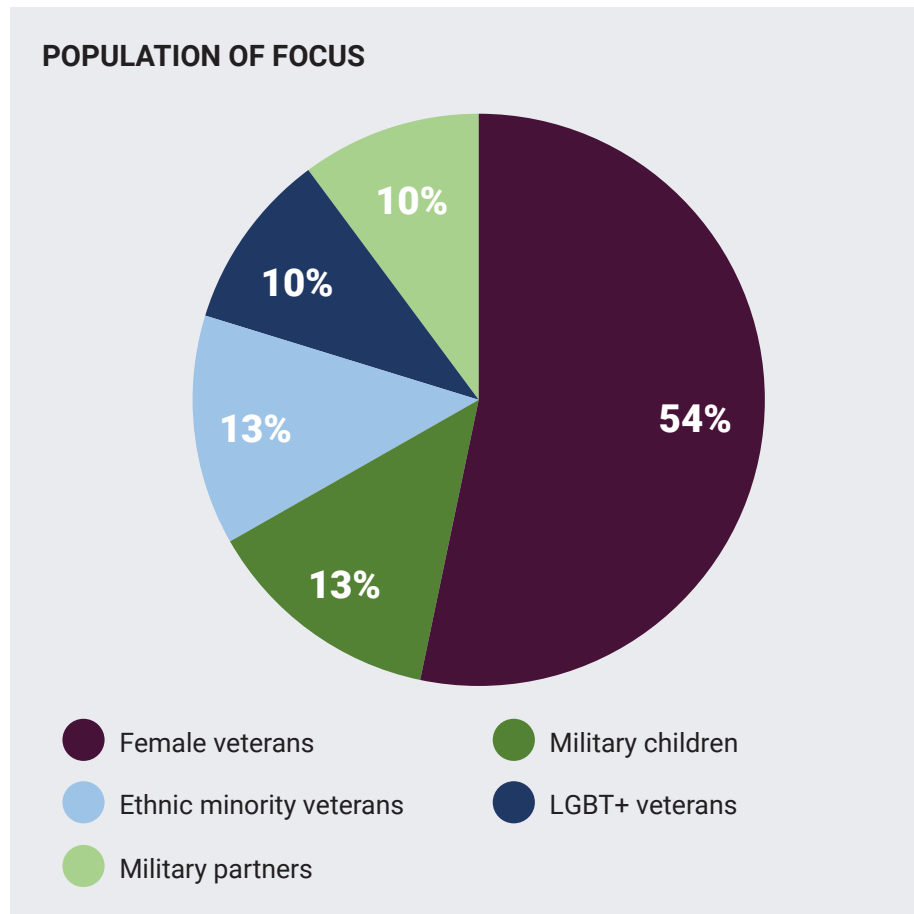
## Well-Being research

The most explored well-being topics were transition experiences and identity/social construction.



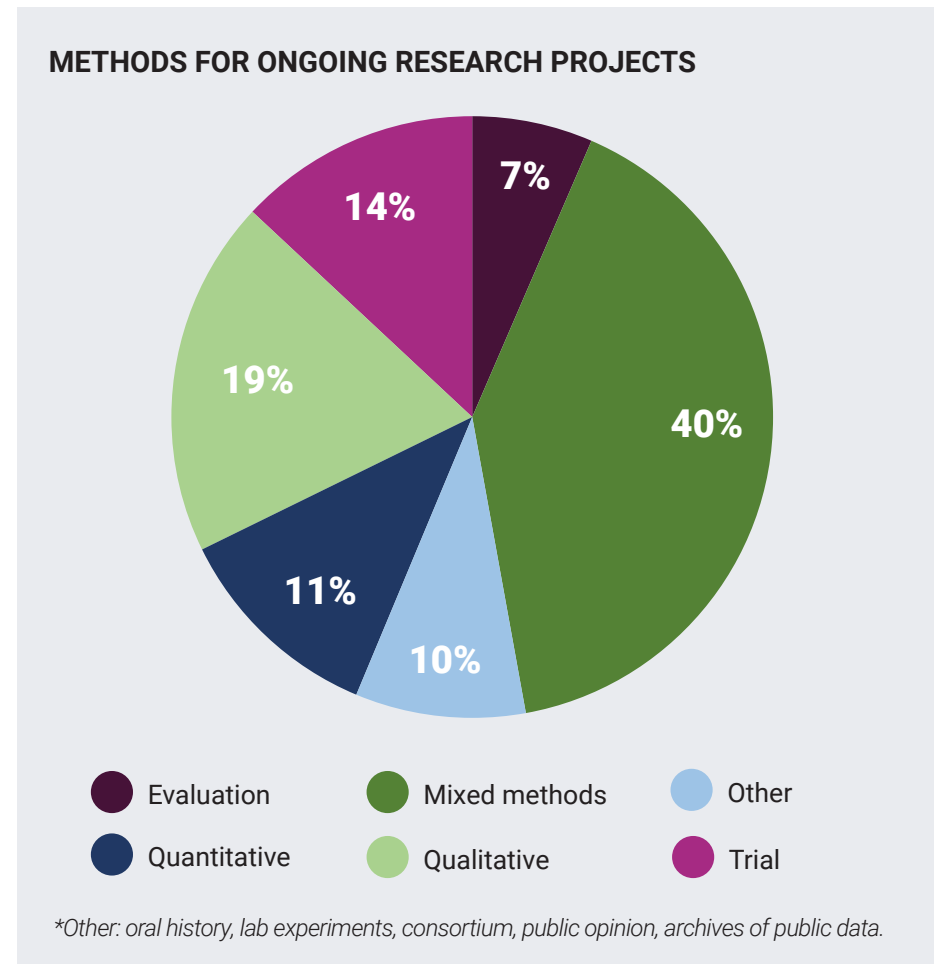
### Populations of focus

Across the 72 ongoing research projects, 30 focus on specific, often under researched, populations; 16 female Veterans, 4 military children, 3 military partners, 4 ethnic minorities, and 3 LGBT+ Veterans.



### Methods used in current research

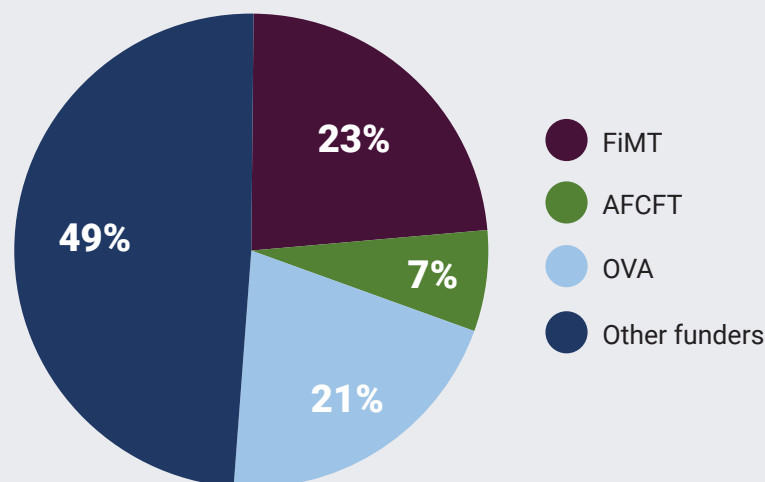
The most common approach was mixed methods, followed by qualitative studies and then quantitative studies.



## Research funders

Together, Forces in Mind Trust (FiMT), Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) and the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (AFCFT), funded most of the research conducted in this time period. However, there are also many other funders of UK Armed Forces community research.

### FUNDERS OF UK ARMED FORCES RESEARCH

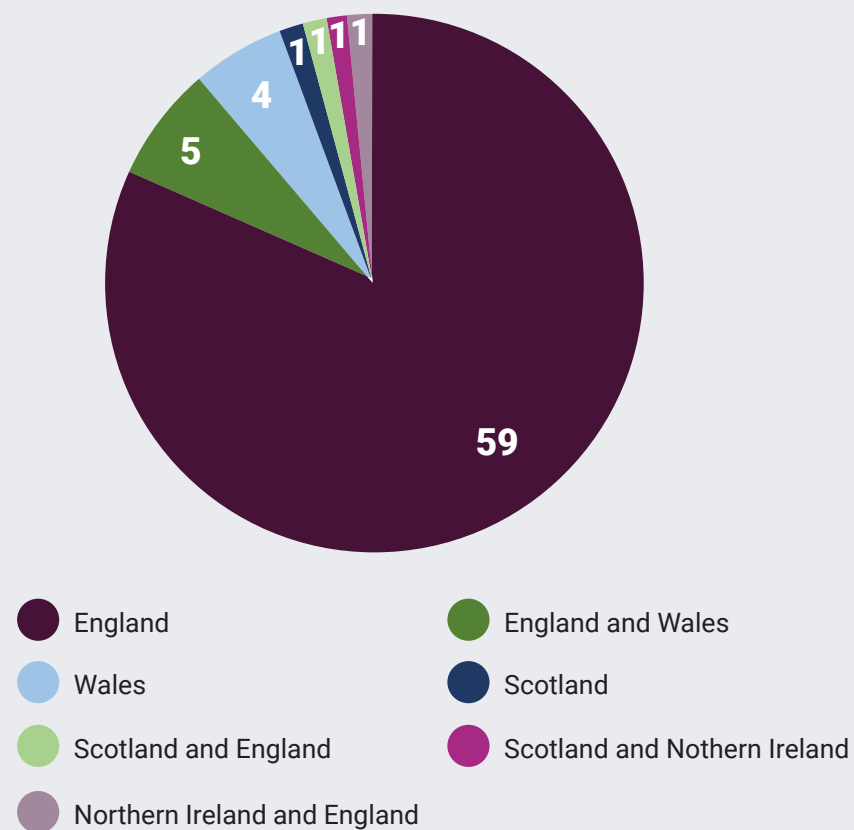


*\*Other funders: UK Medical Research Council, US National Institute of Health, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), The Watson Trust Foundation, Centre for Military Women's Research (CMWR), Anglia Ruskin University, HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), Gambling Commission Social Responsibility Funds, Gambling Research Exchange (GREO), ADVANCE Charity, London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (LISS-DTP), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC-CRSH) Department of National Defence MINDS Initiative Doctoral Award, Self-funded, NHS England, University of Cardiff, University of Essex, Royal British Legion, King's College London, Liverpool John Moores University.*

## Geographical distribution of research

The majority of the research captured in the ongoing research page is conducted in England, with research from the devolved nations being less represented.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH STUDIES



## Who is conducting the research?

In this period, 81 researchers were listed on the research community page who conduct research with the UK Armed Forces community. Of these, 18 were PhD students.

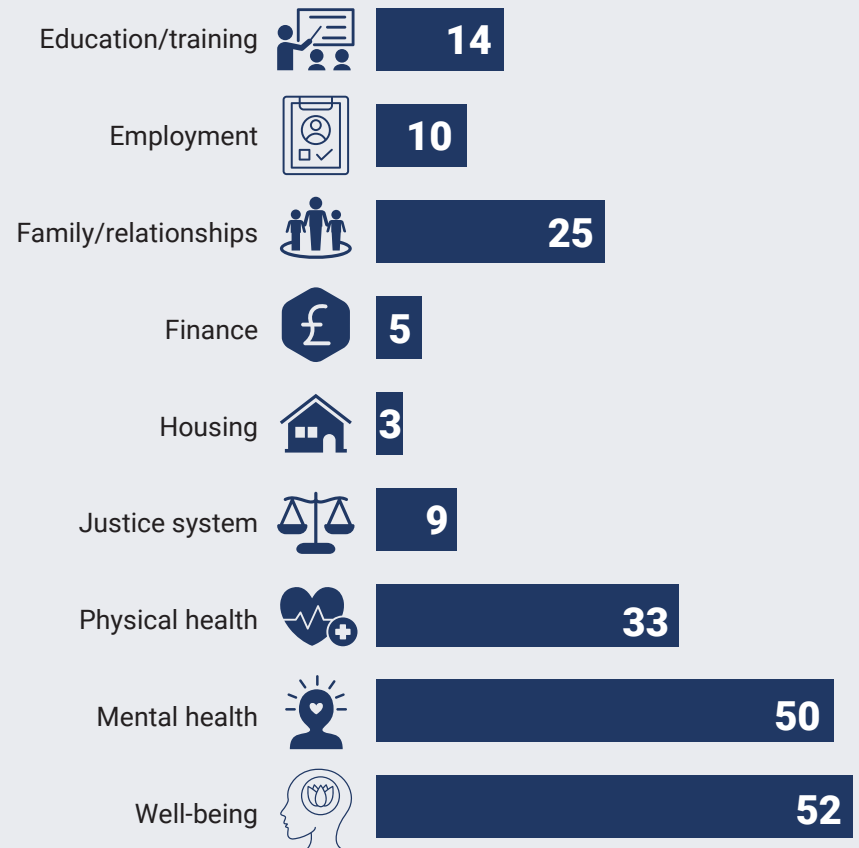
### NUMBER OF PhD STUDENTS CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITH THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY



## Researcher expertise

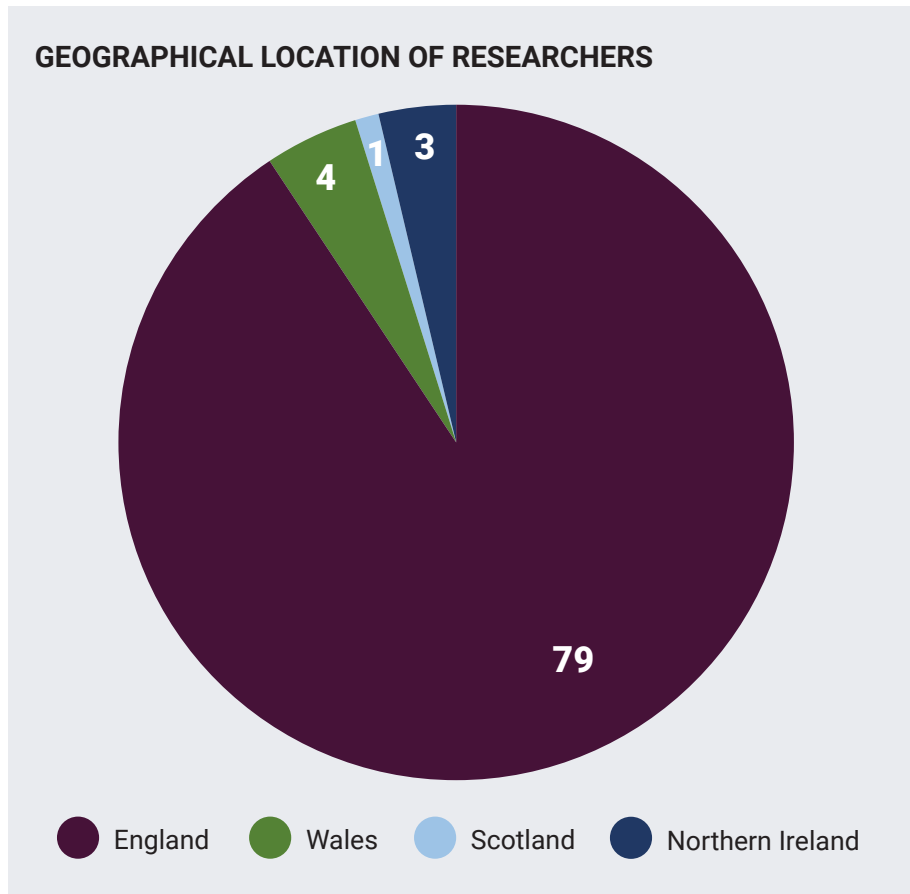
The most common areas of research expertise and focus are mental health and well-being, followed by physical health.

### RESEARCHER EXPERTISE AND FOCUS



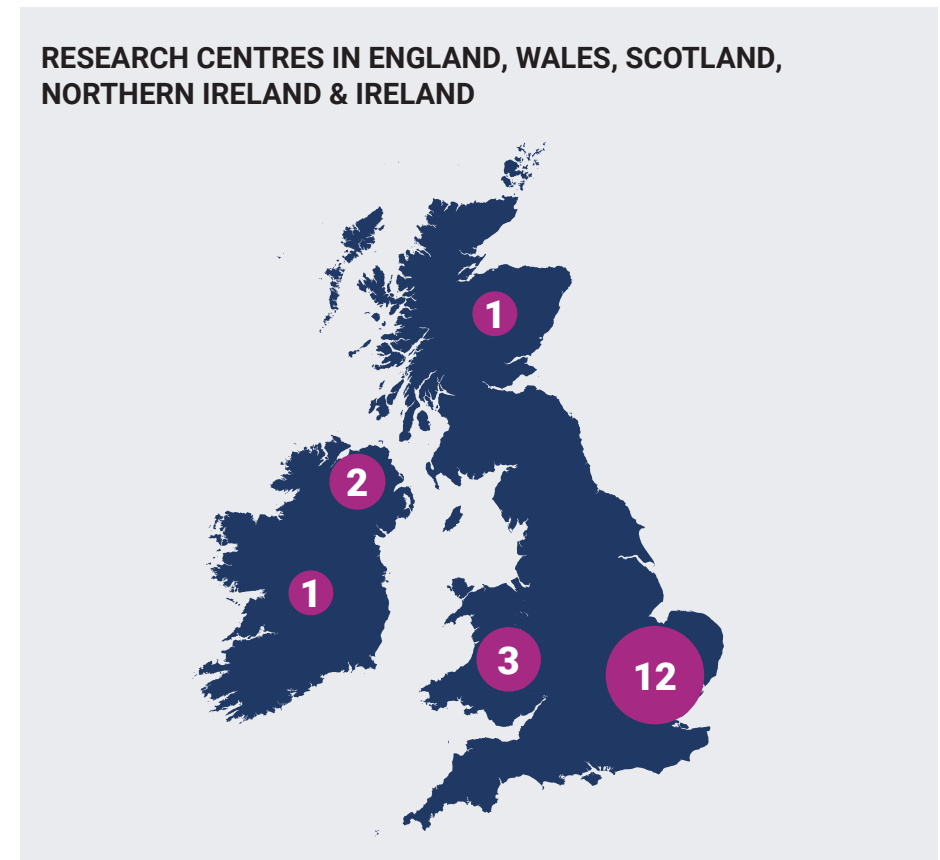
## Geographic location of researchers

The majority of researchers captured in the research community page are based in England, with fewer across the devolved nations.



## Research Centres

Our research community page includes 19 research centres specifically focused on conducting research with the UK Armed Forces community, the majority of these are in England.

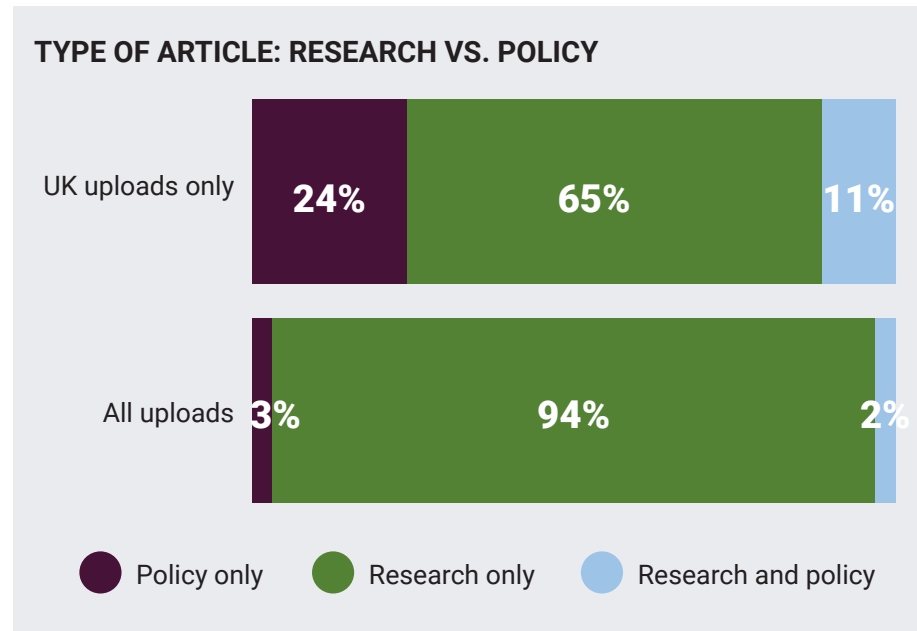




## What research has been published?

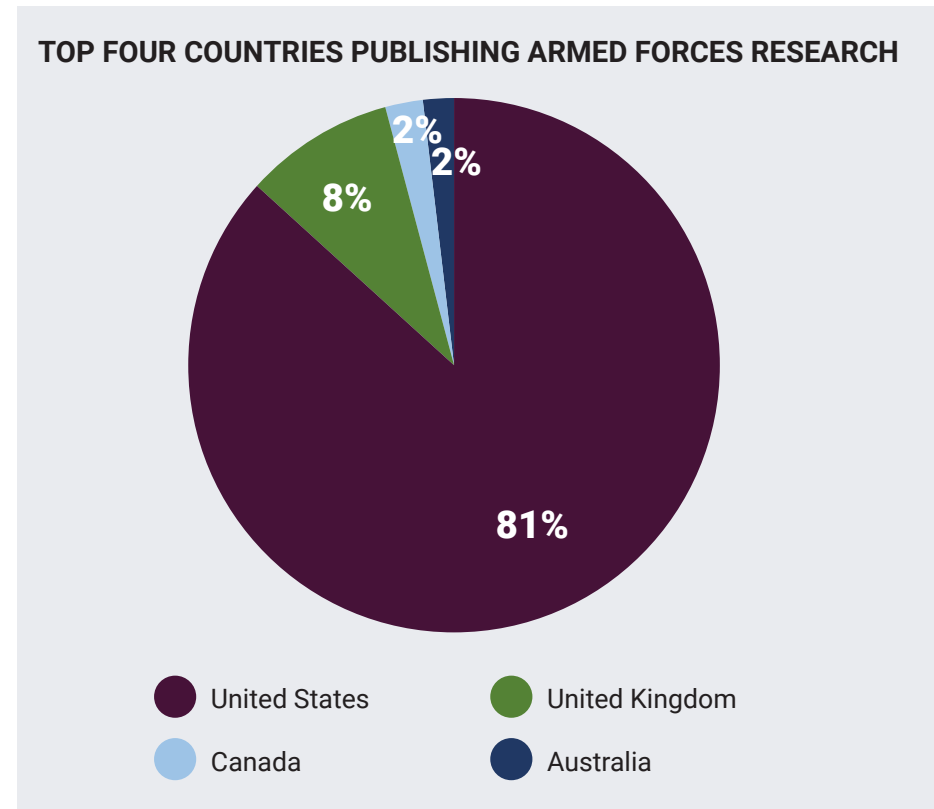
Our online repository is a searchable collection of international published and grey literature<sup>2</sup> of research evidence and policy documents about the Armed Forces community. The repository is updated each month using a robust methodology.<sup>3</sup>

In this period, 1,805 international resources were added to the repository. Of these, the majority were research papers.



## Countries publishing Armed Forces research

Research uploaded to the repository in this period covered 40 countries. Four countries are responsible for 93% of all included papers, with the United States (US) being the largest.<sup>4</sup> Publications from the UK were responsible for 8% of research and policy documents.



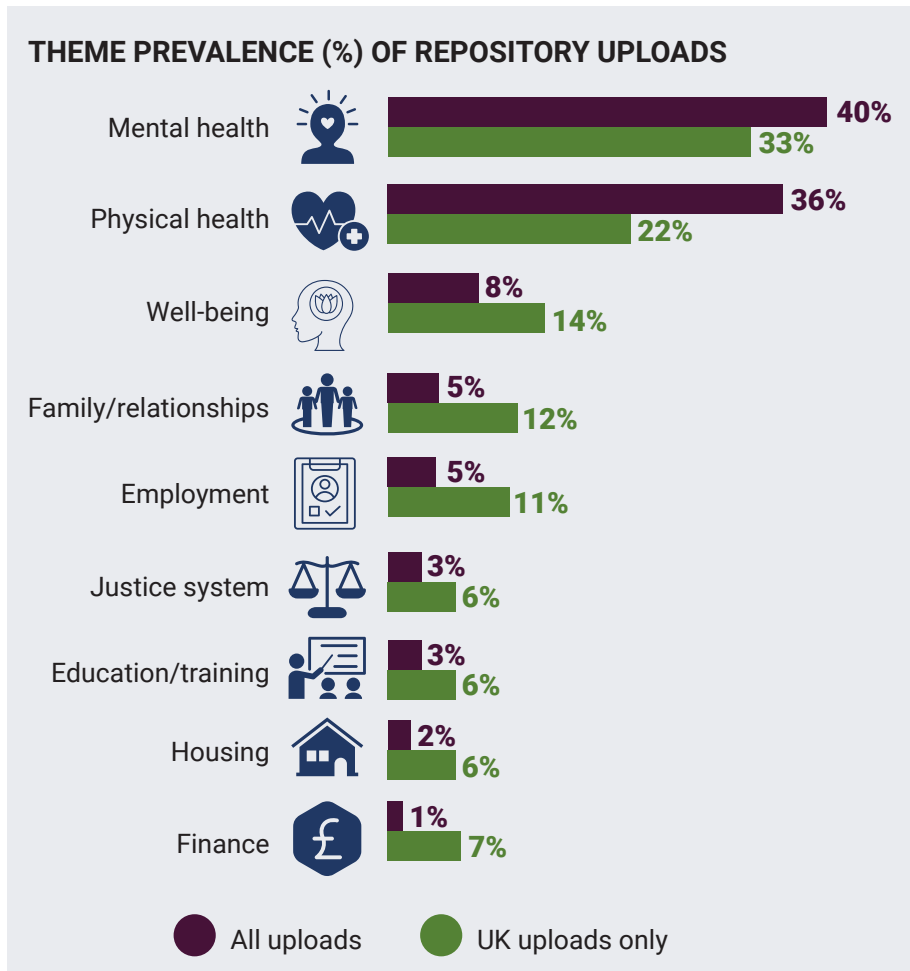
<sup>2</sup> Grey literature refers to documents and material that is produced outside of the traditional academic publishing and distribution channels. Examples of grey literature might include reports, working and policy papers, government documents, white papers, newsletters, and other types of documents that are otherwise hard to classify.

<sup>3</sup> Full details of the method can be found <https://www.fimt-rc.org/resources/method-for-updating-the-fimt-research-centre-online-repository/article>

<sup>4</sup> Other countries represented in repository uploads (listed in alphabetical order): Belgium, Brazil, Burundi, China, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Five Eyes, France, Germany, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates

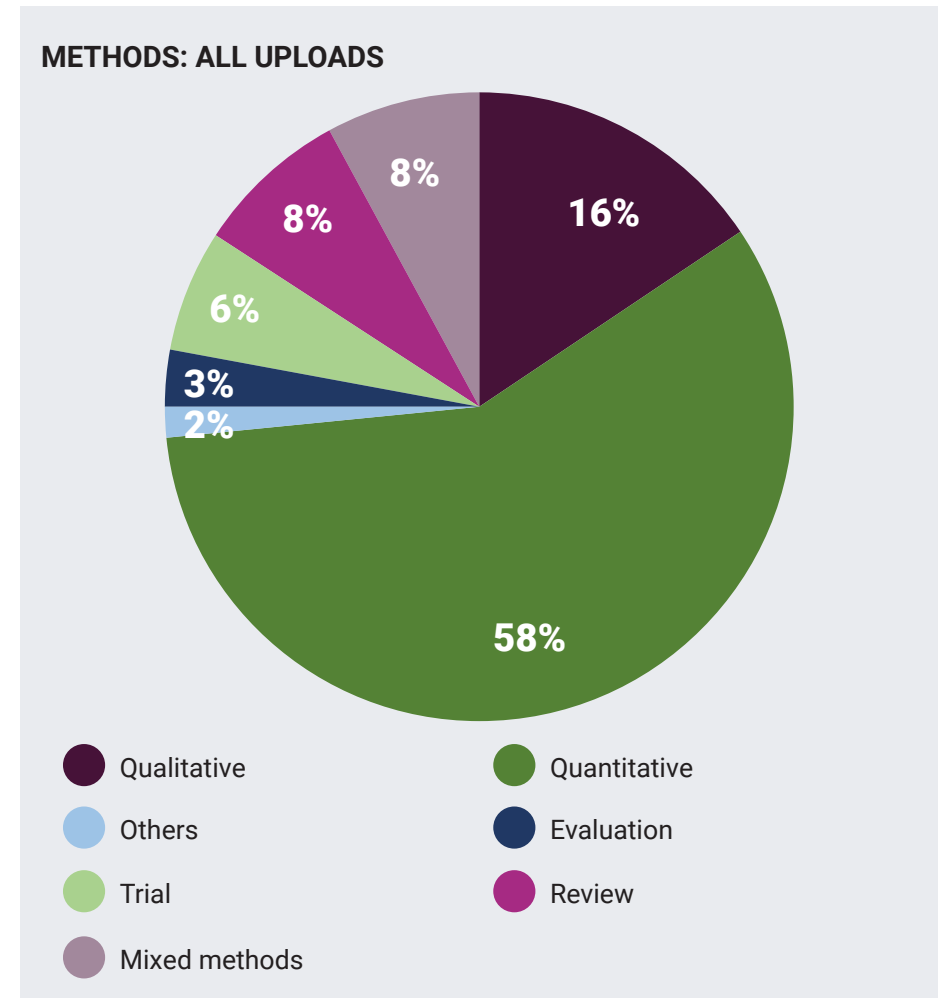
## Transition topics covered in published research

Between May 2023 and February 2024, most papers focused on mental health, with physical health being the second most common and Justice system the least. This distribution is mostly consistent internationally and in the UK.

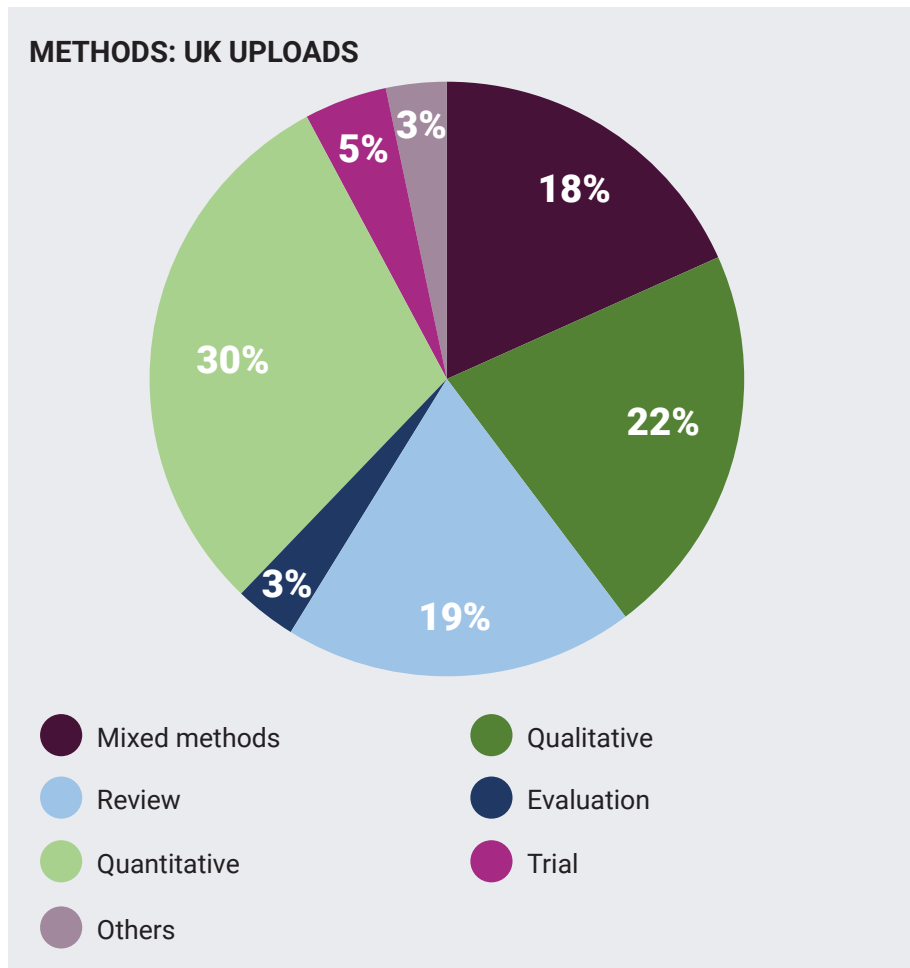


## Methods used in published research

The majority of published research used quantitative methods, less used qualitative and mixed methods approaches, with fewer trials and evaluations overall.



When considered alone, the distribution of the methods used by UK research uploaded to the repository differs: the UK has a more even spread of quantitative, qualitative, reviews, and mixed methods approaches. Similar to international trends, there are a fewer number of trials and evaluations.



## Summary

### Gaps in UK Research activity:

- *Employment* and *Finance* are seemingly under researched areas in the UK. It is important to explore if this is a gap that needs to be addressed.
- In the UK, most research activity captured in the 'ongoing research' and most researchers captured in the 'research community page' are in England. We encourage researchers from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales to share their research and details to provide a comprehensive picture of research and researchers across the devolved nations in order to identify potential gaps and to highlight where researchers with certain expertise are based.
- Research with female Veterans is increasing but there is less research with minority ethnic Veterans, Service children, military partners, and LGBT+ ex-Service personnel.

### Gaps in published research:

- Research relating to the *Justice System*, *Education/Training* and *Finance* are seemingly less researched, though these areas are better represented in the UK than internationally.
- Research on non-WEIRD<sup>5</sup> populations. The majority of research concerns WEIRD populations in the US and UK; with increasing diversity within the Armed Forces, this should be reflected in research.

<sup>5</sup> Coined by Henrich, Heine and Norenzayan (2010), WEIRD refers to populations that are Western/White, Educated, Industrialised, Rich and Democratic. This population is typically overrepresented in the research.