



## Knowledge Exchange Seminar Series (KESS)

*...is a forum that encourages debate on a wide range of research findings, with the overall aim of promoting evidence-based policy and law-making within Northern Ireland*



## ***Gender Equality at the Executive Level of the Northern Ireland Public Sector***

**Professor Joan Ballantine (Ulster University)**

**Dr Graeme Banks (formerly Ulster University)**

**Tony Wall (Ulster University)**

**Professor Kathryn Haynes (Newcastle University)**

**Dr Melina Manochin (Aston University)**

# Context for the Research

- The issue of gender equality at senior levels within organisations is receiving increasing attention
- Some limited data is available for specific segments of the Northern Ireland public sector
- A significant gap in data exists regarding gender equality at executive level across the Northern Ireland public sector
- The research project addresses this important gap and in doing so aims to advance our understanding of the effectiveness of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988

# Objectives of the Research

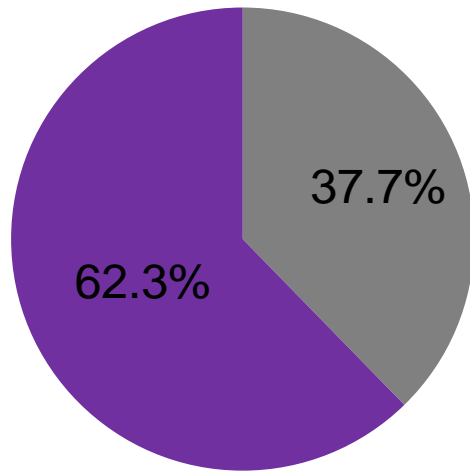
- Establish a baseline for gender equality at executive level within organisations which comprise the Northern Ireland Public Sector
- Investigate barriers and enablers for achieving gender equality at executive level of the Northern Ireland public sector
- Identify examples of best practice re gender equality in the Northern Ireland public sector

# Research Project

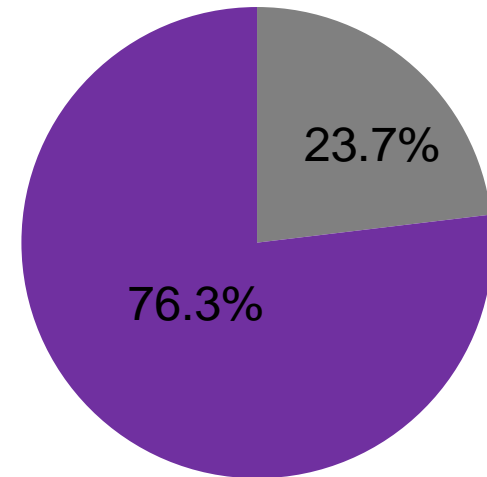
- Stage 1 – collection and statistical analysis of secondary data (143 organisations)
- Stage 2 – survey of male and female executives/senior managers in public sector organisations (3,186 usable responses)
- Stage 3 – interviews with a sample of current and aspiring executives in public sector organisations (100+)

# Monitored Northern Ireland Workforce, Public Sector - 2012

## Full-time Employees



## Part-time Employees

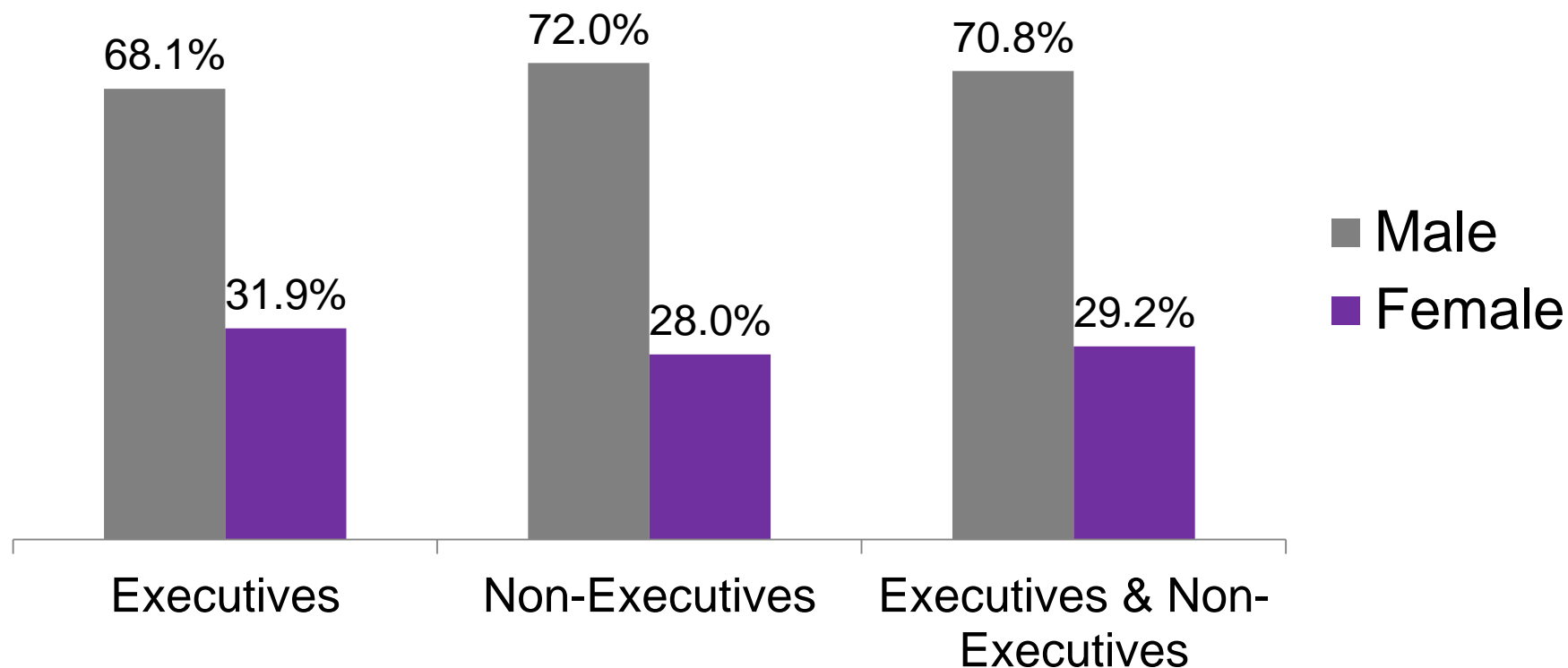


■ Male  
■ Female

# Key Findings: Stage 1

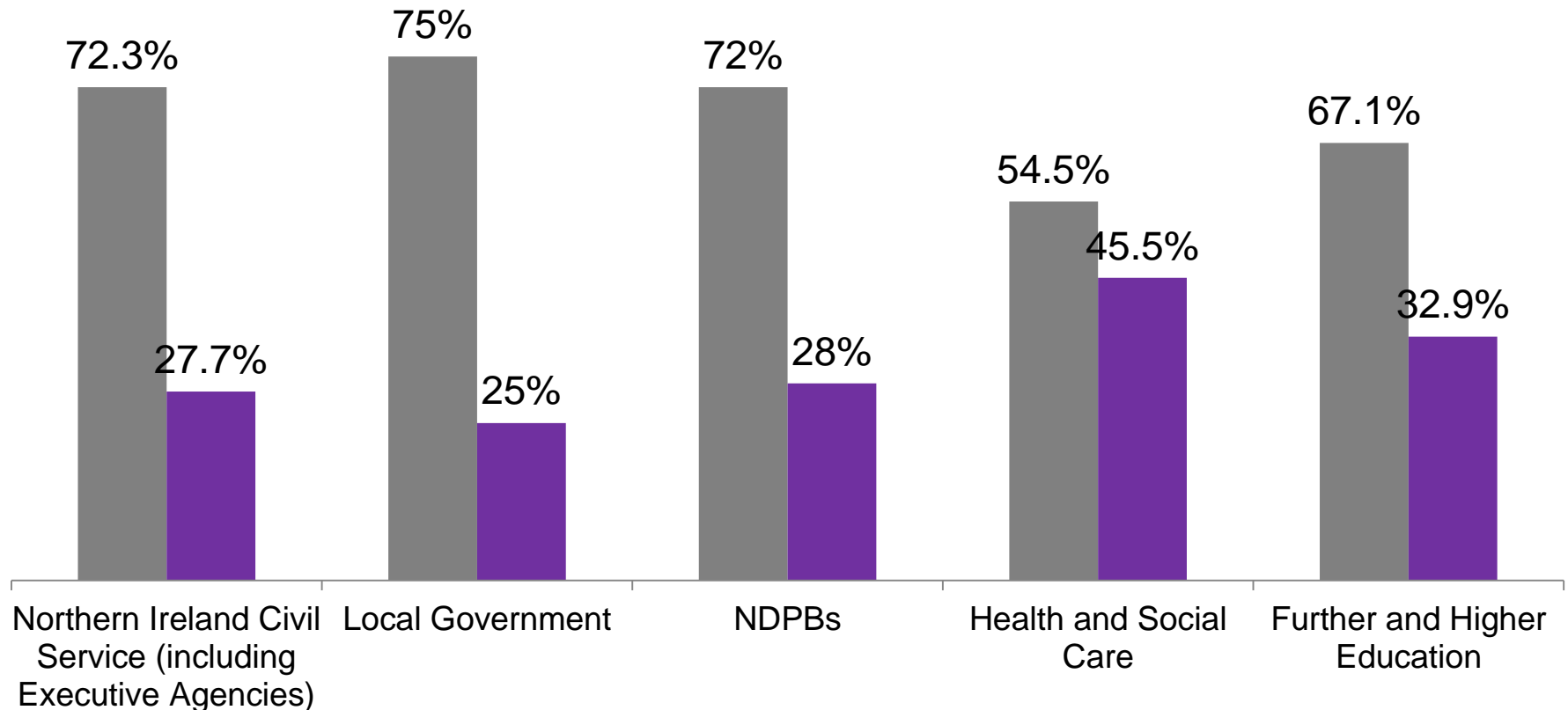


# Overall Gender Composition of the Northern Ireland Public Sector (n=2,308)

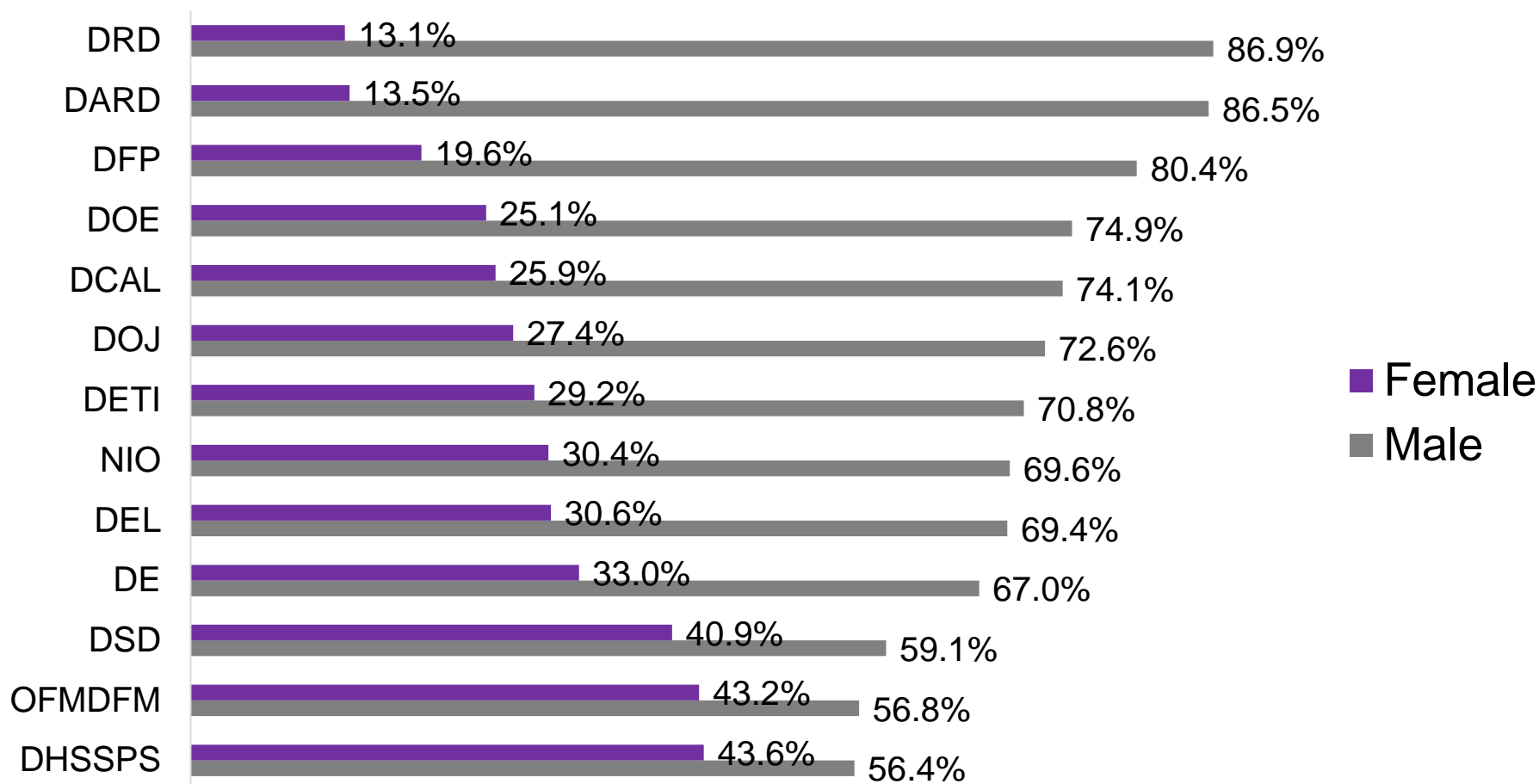


# Gender Composition for all Executives by Organisational Type (n=2,308)

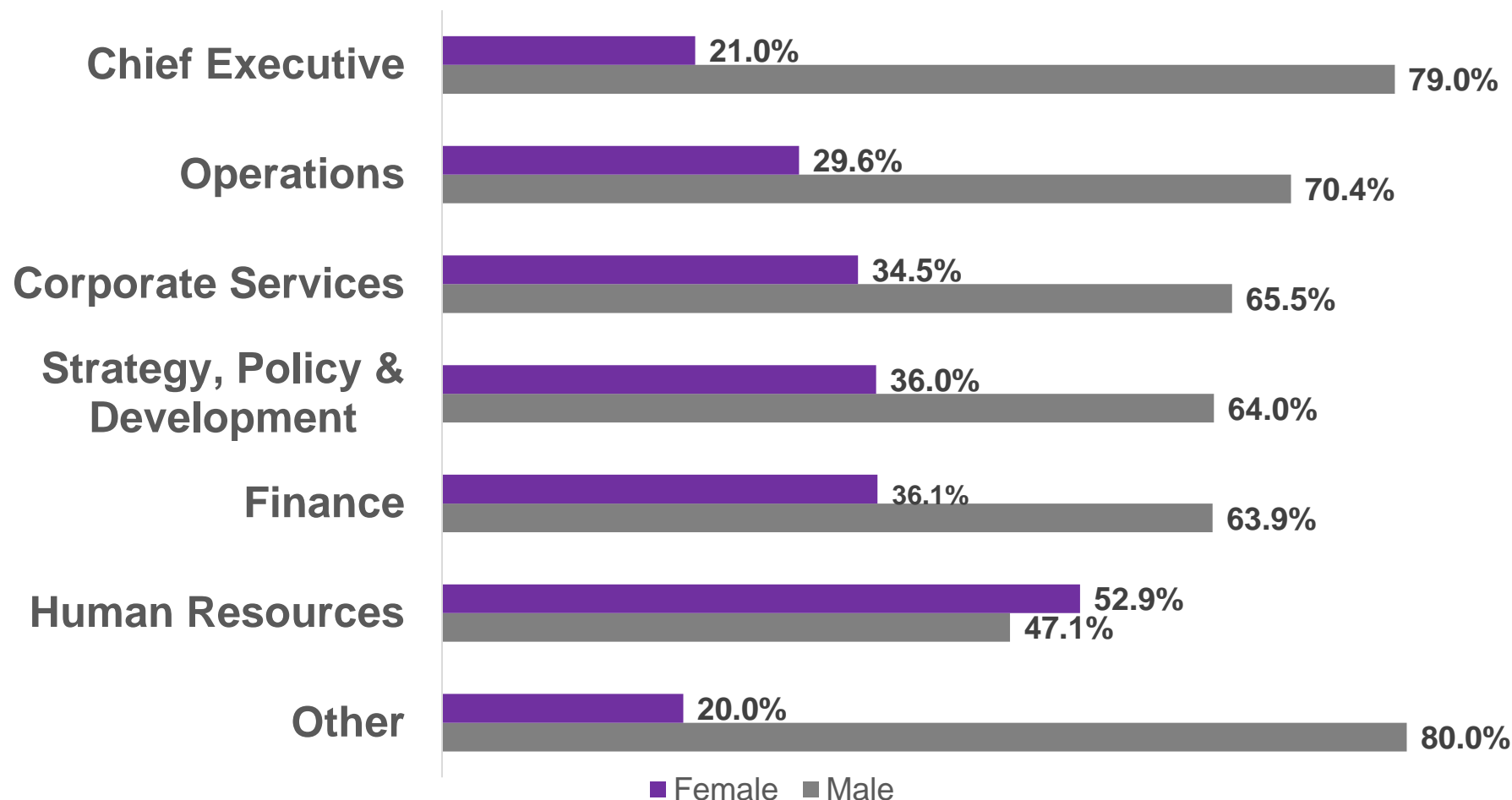
■ Male ■ Female



# Gender Composition for all Executives by Sponsoring Government Department (n=2,308)



# Gender Composition by Executive Role (n=722)

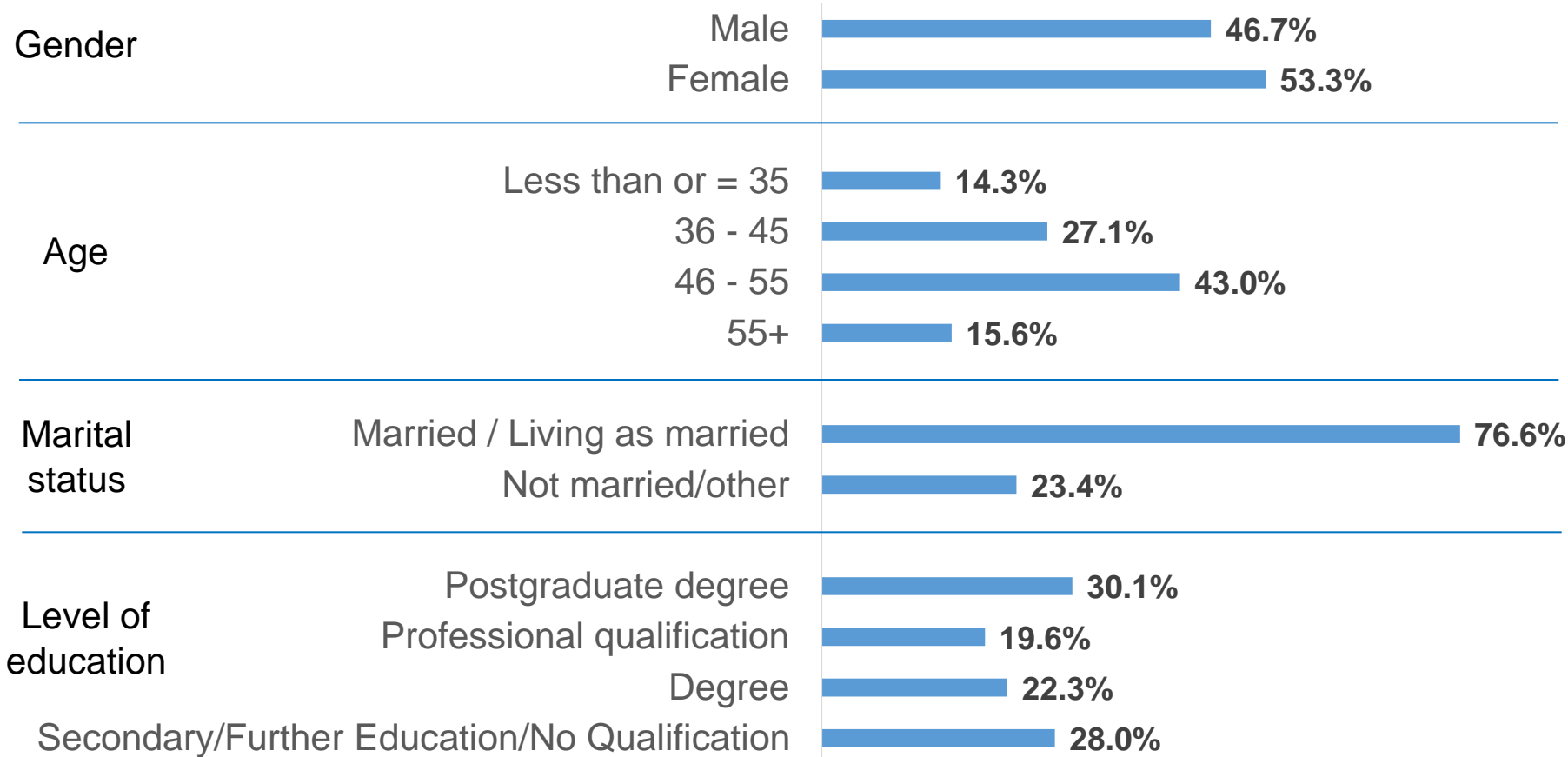


# Key Findings: Stage 2



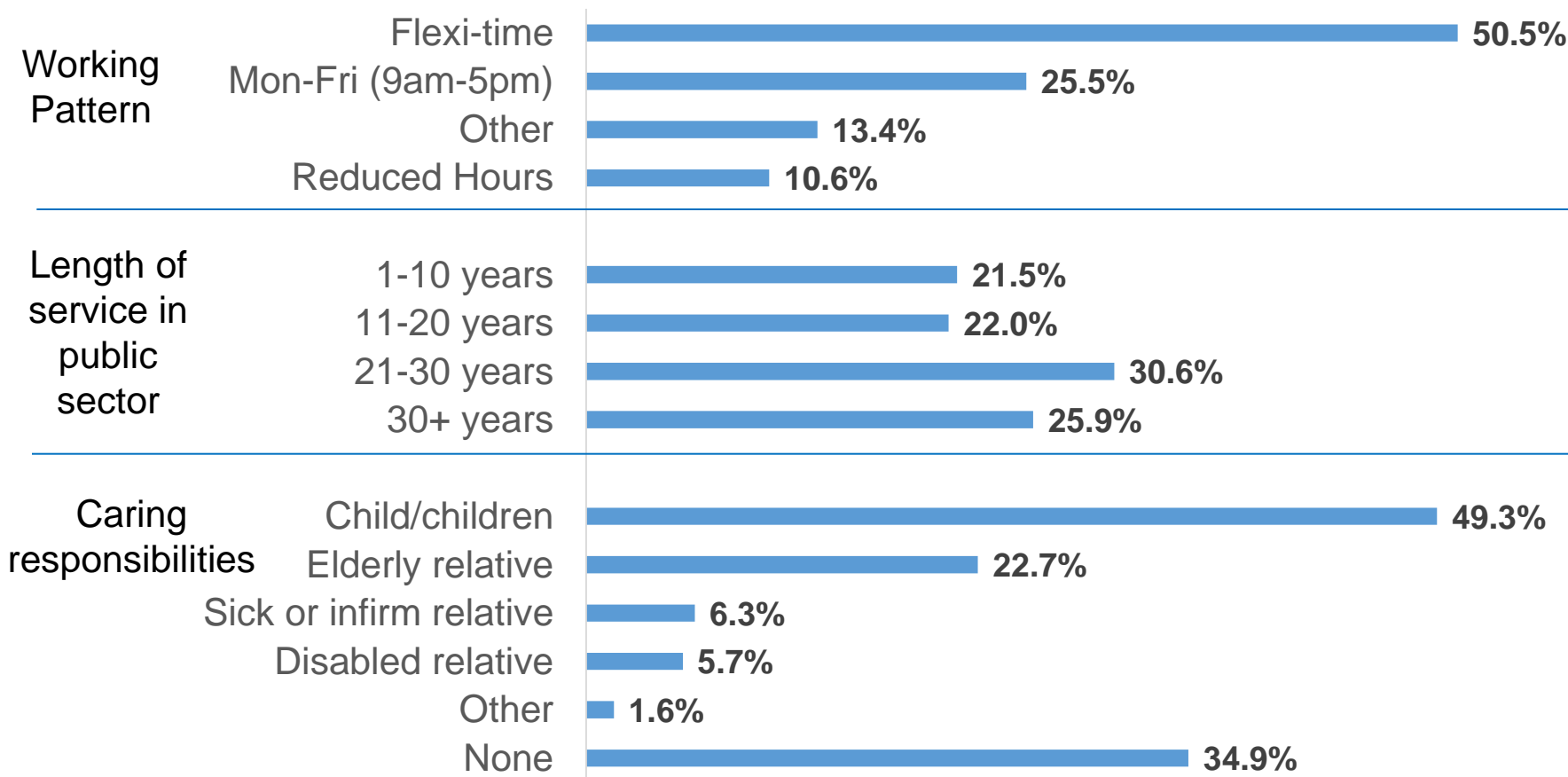
# Demographics of Respondents (n=3,186)

■ % of Respondents



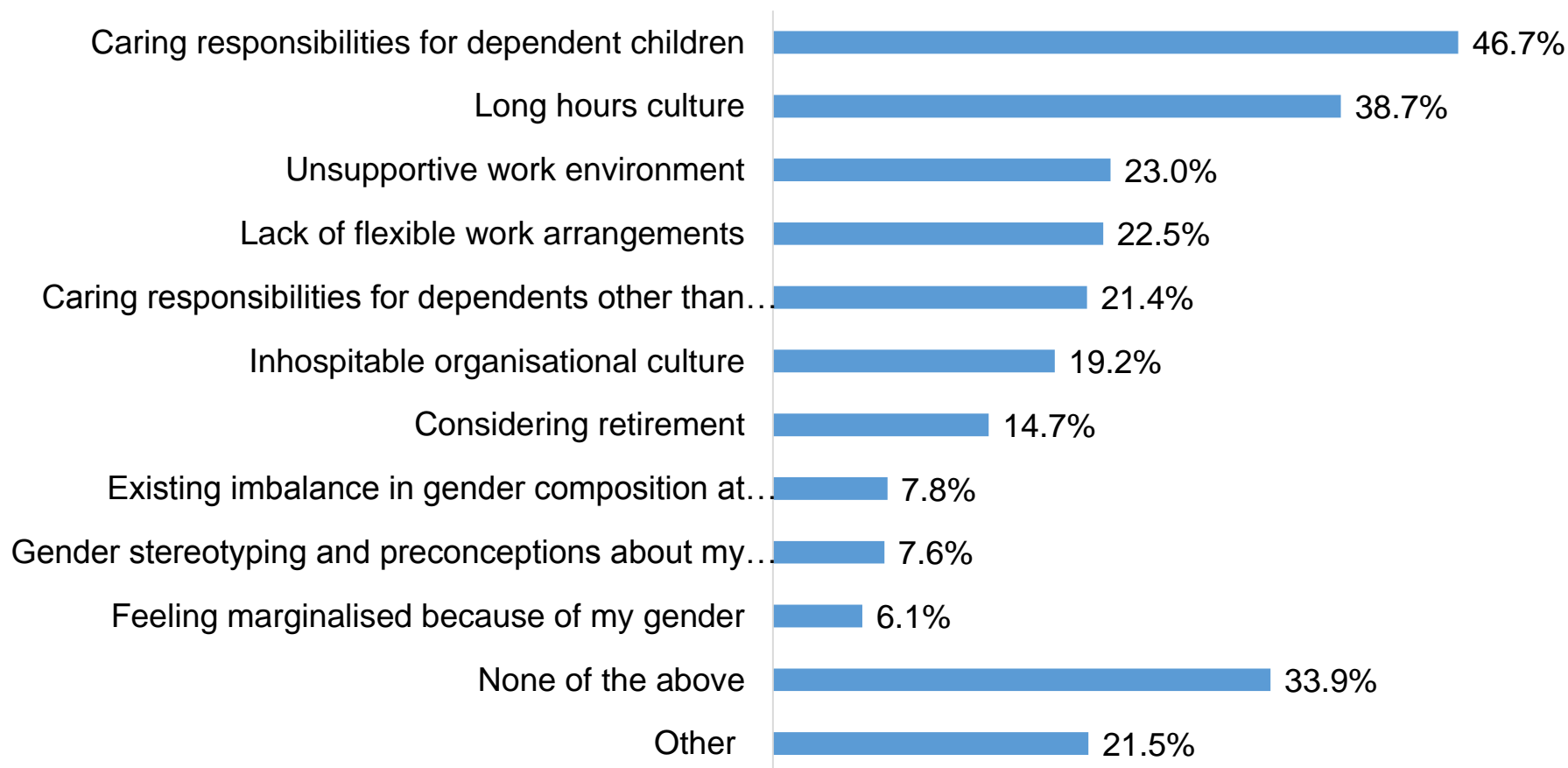
# Demographics of Respondents (n=3,186)

■ % Respondents



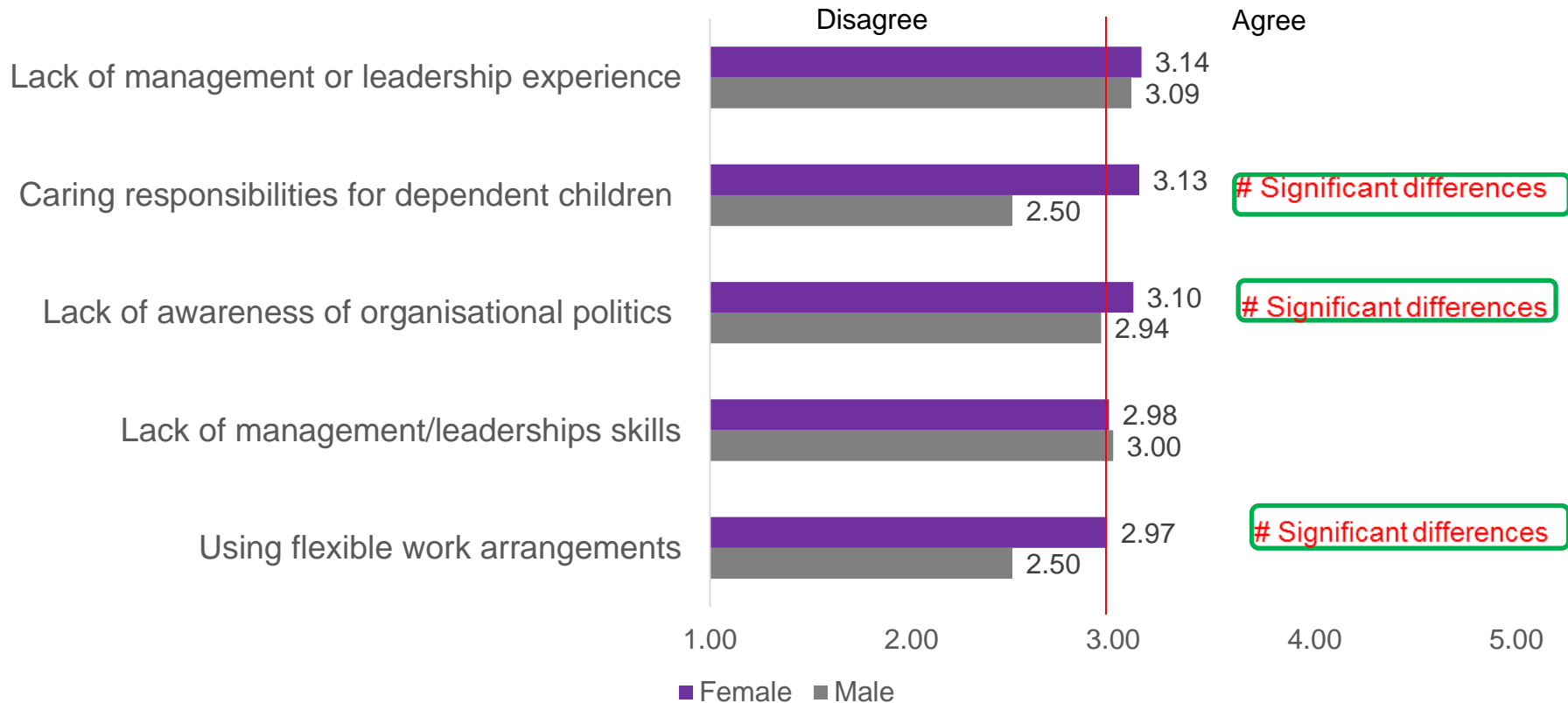
# Reasons for opting out of career progression (n=1,058)

% Respondents opting out



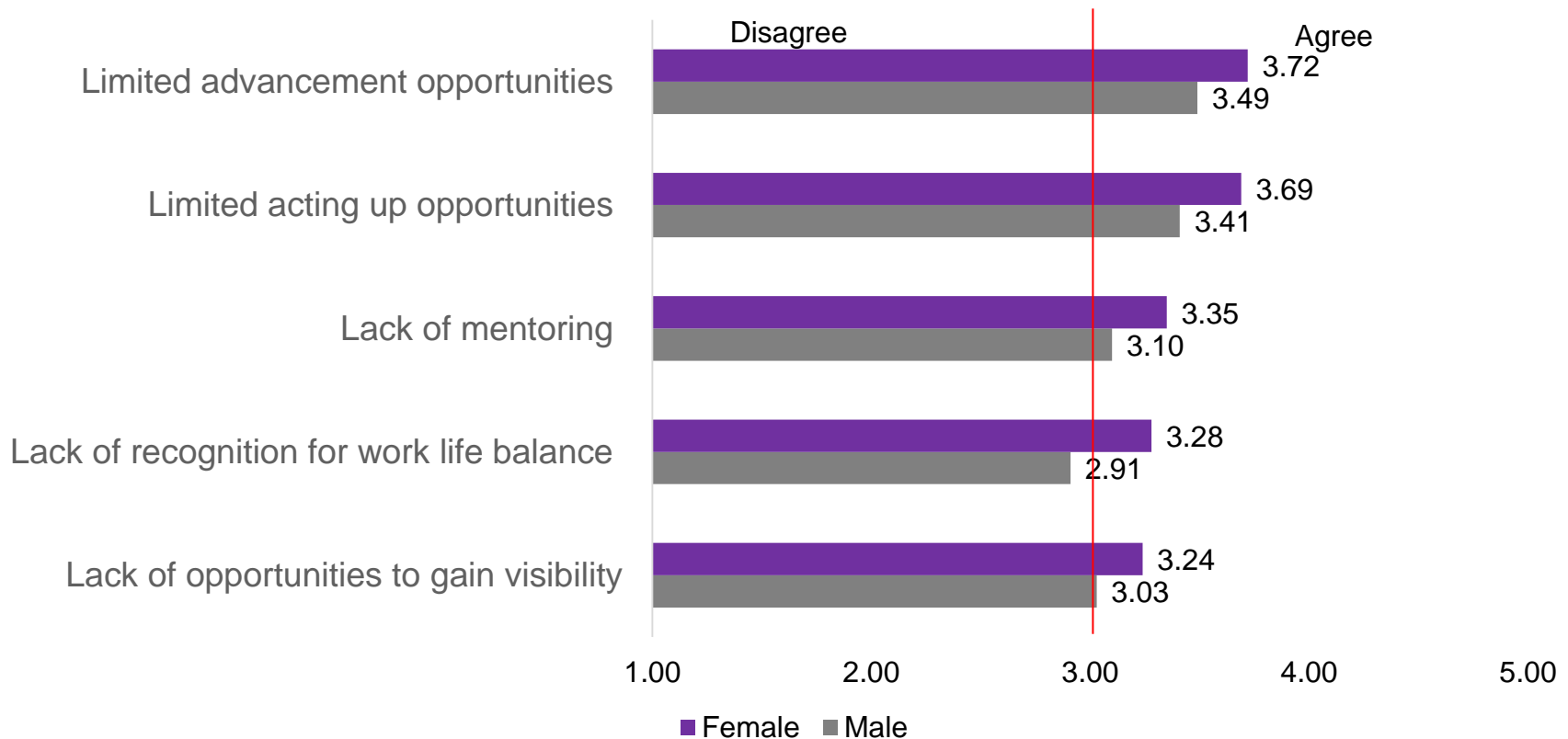
# Top Five Barriers to Career Progression Related to Me as an Individual

Mean score for male and female respondents (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



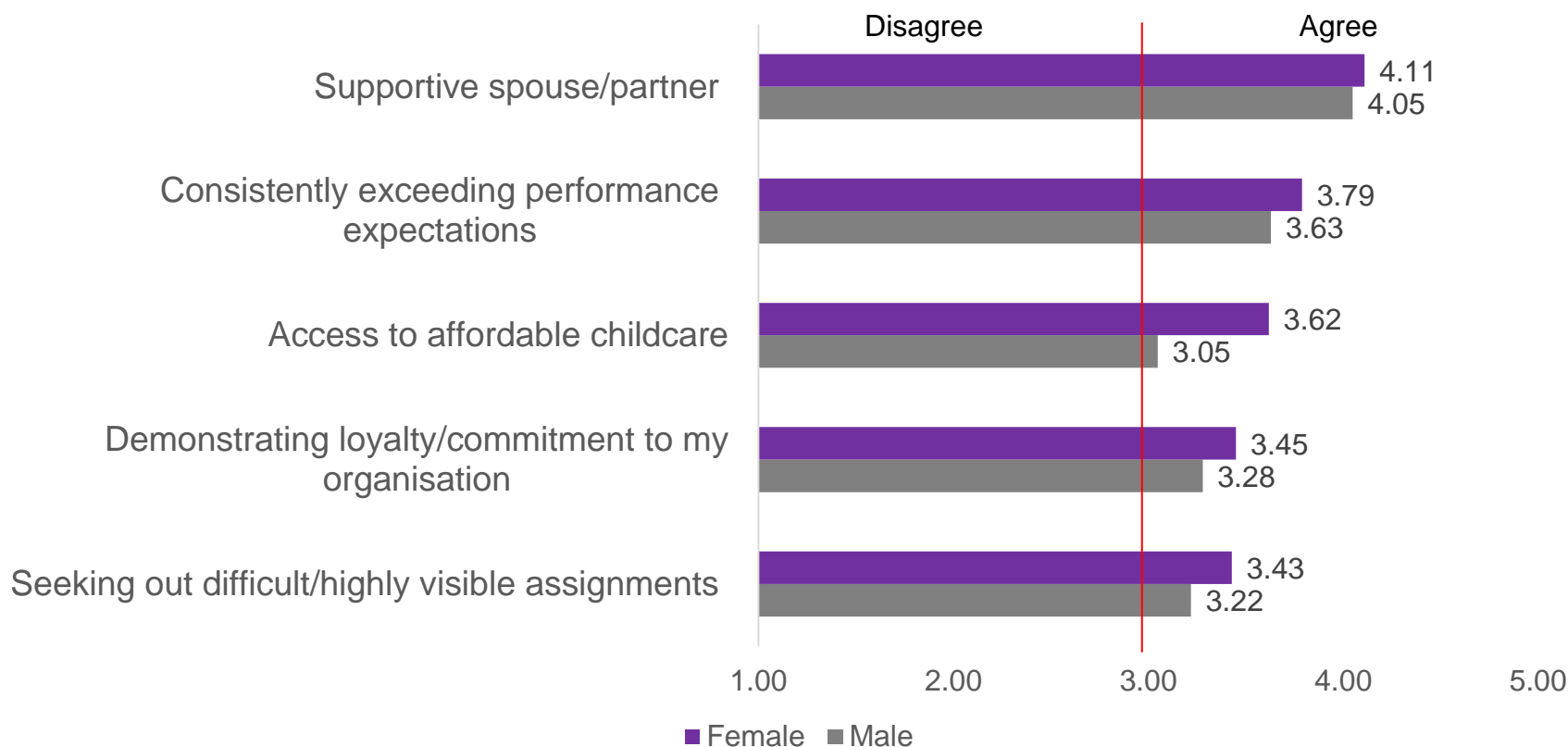
# Top Five Barriers to Career Progression at an Organisational Level

Mean score for male and female respondents (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



# Top Five Enablers/Facilitators of Career Progression: Individual Strategies

Mean score for male and female respondents (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

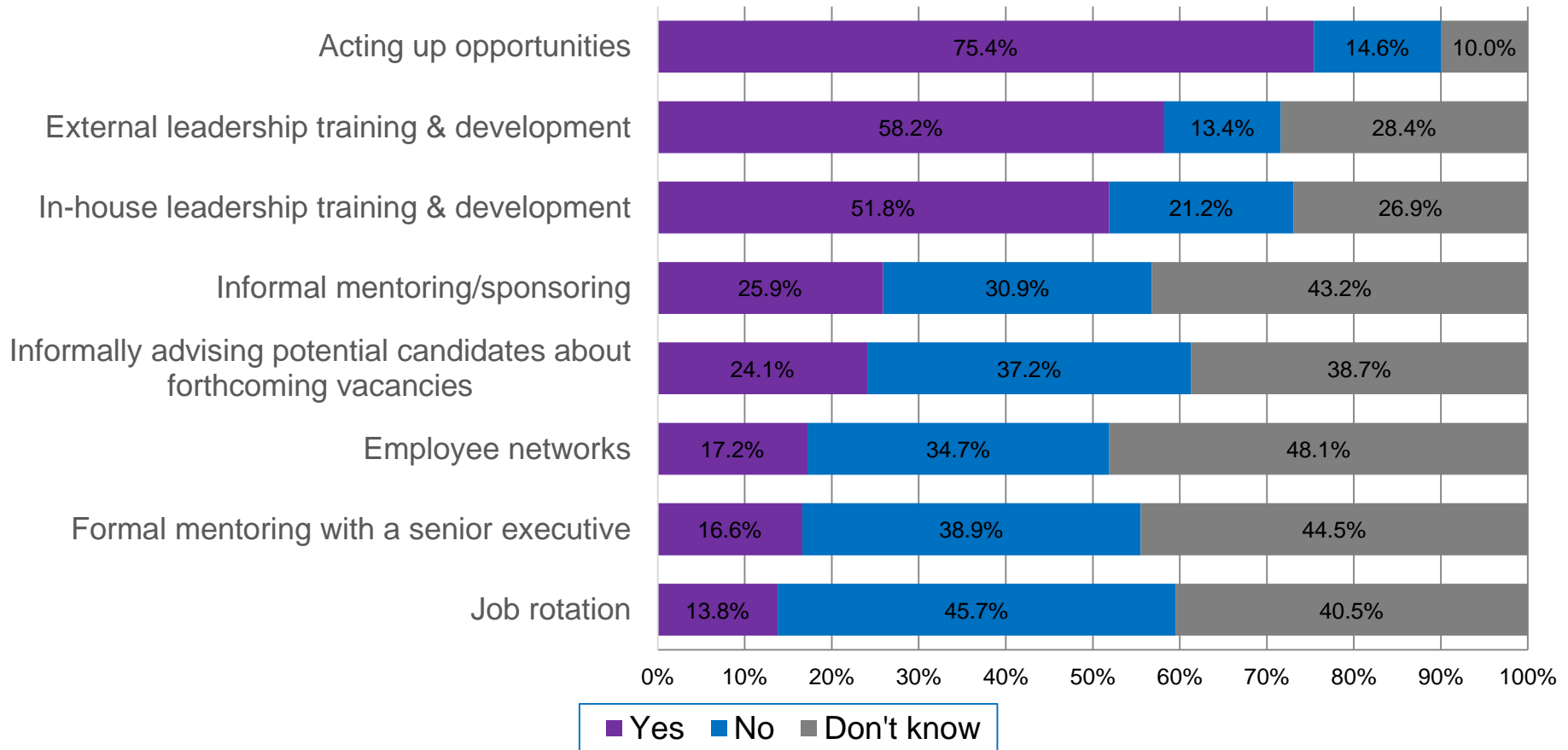


# Top Five Enablers/Facilitators of Career Progression: Organisational Strategies

Mean score for male and female respondents (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



# Career Progression Opportunities Offered for Aspiring Executives



# Top Five Policies and Practices to Increase Gender Equality at Executive Level

Mean score for male and female respondents (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



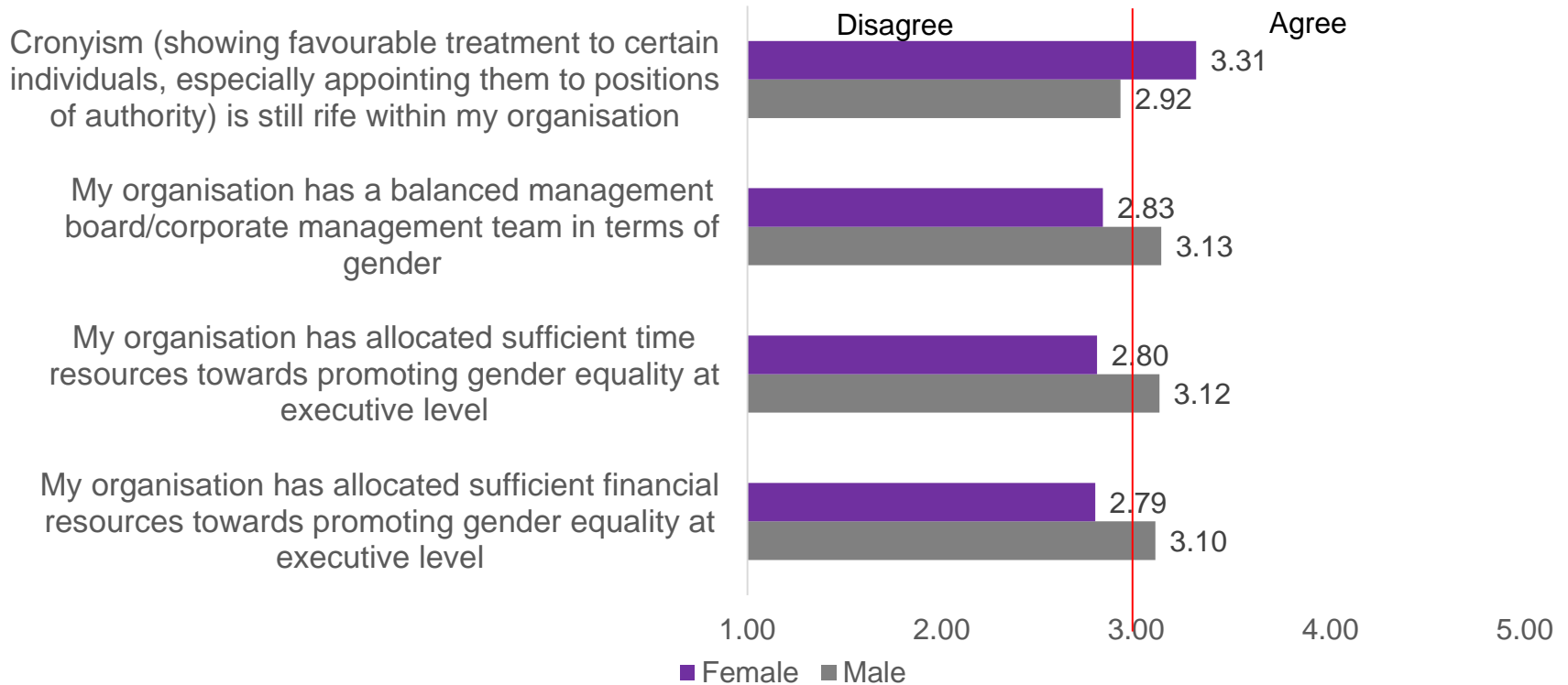
# Top Five General Statements about Gender Equality/Stereotyping

Mean score for male and female respondents (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



# Views about Gender Culture in the Northern Ireland Public Sector

Mean score for male and female respondents (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)



# Conclusions

- Gender imbalances exist at executive level in the Northern Ireland public sector
- Large numbers opting out of career progression
- Low take-up of flexible work arrangements
- Different perceptions exist between males and females regarding some barriers, facilitators and policies and practices to improve gender equality
- Career progression opportunities not provided/fully understood by respondents
- Negative attitudes regarding gender culture still exist within the Northern Ireland public sector



Northern Ireland  
Assembly



The Open  
University



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