

LESSONS FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

Access to mental health services for LGBT+ people in Lancashire and South Cumbria

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1. SYSTEMATIC MAPPING REVIEW

Understanding inequalities in access to adult mental services in the UK

Background

- ❖ Differential access to timely and quality mental health care for some population groups can lead to unmet mental health needs and inequalities. There remains a lack of understanding of inequalities in access to adult mental health services in the UK.

Review questions

- ❖ How has access to adult mental health services been measured?
- ❖ What research methods and theoretical frameworks have been used?
- ❖ What does the evidence suggest about the nature and extent of inequalities?
- ❖ How has routinely collected patient data been used?

Review methods

- ❖ Conducted systematic mapping review to categorise and map out the current evidence base
- ❖ Searched 7 electronic databases for relevant studies
- ❖ Used Levesque's Conceptual Framework for Healthcare Access in framework synthesis

Key findings

- ❖ Identified 152 studies for inclusion in the review
- ❖ Access mostly measured by "healthcare utilisation"
- ❖ Most frequently considered dimensions of inequality - age, gender, and ethnicity
- ❖ Least frequently considered dimensions of inequality - social capital, religion, and sexual orientation
- ❖ Population groups poorly served by access to mental health services remain largely unchanged
- ❖ Barriers to access influence individuals' "ability to seek" (e.g. stigma) and "ability to reach" (e.g. language)
- ❖ 69 studies (45%) used routinely collected patient data

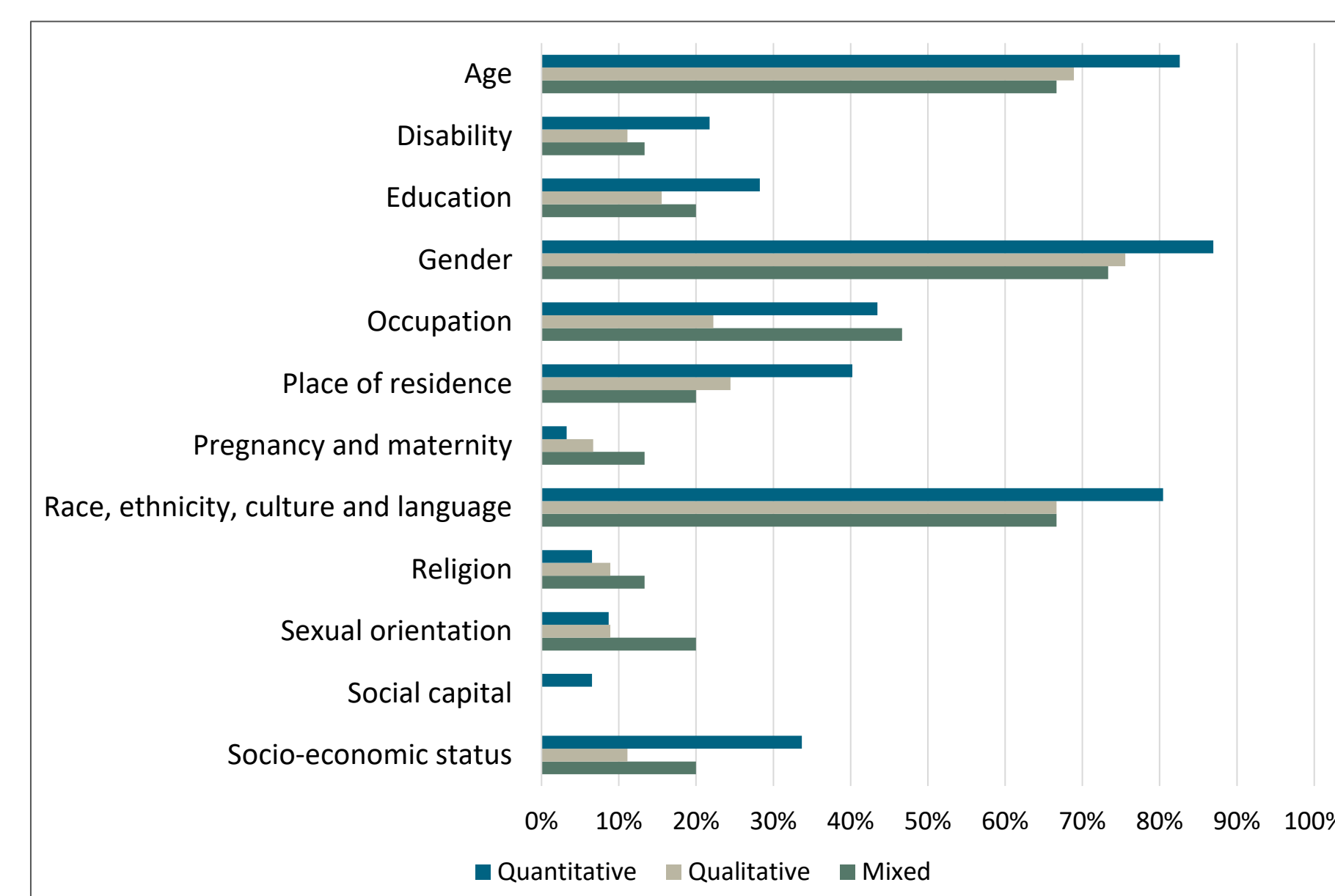
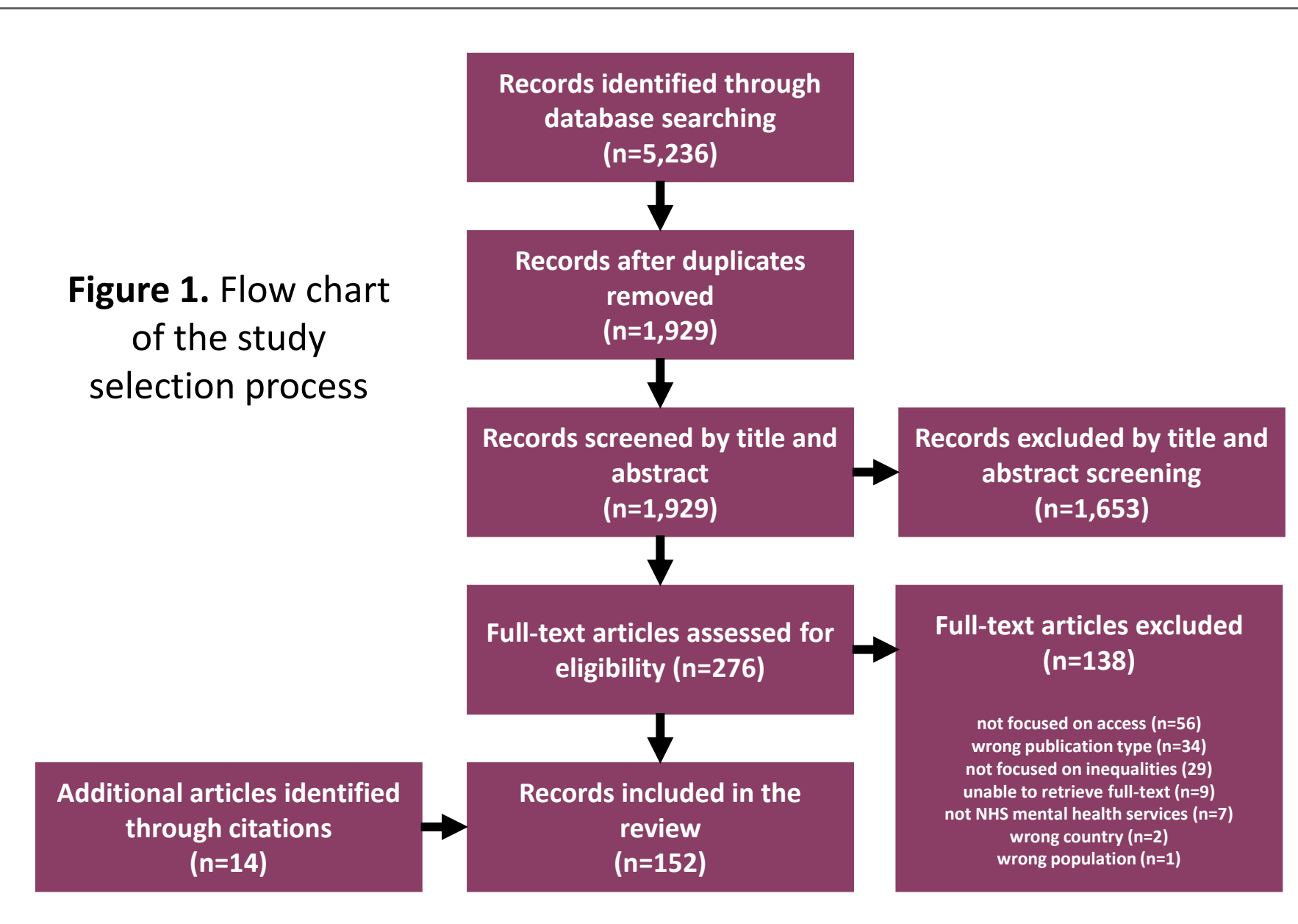


Figure 2. % of studies that collected data for each dimension of inequality

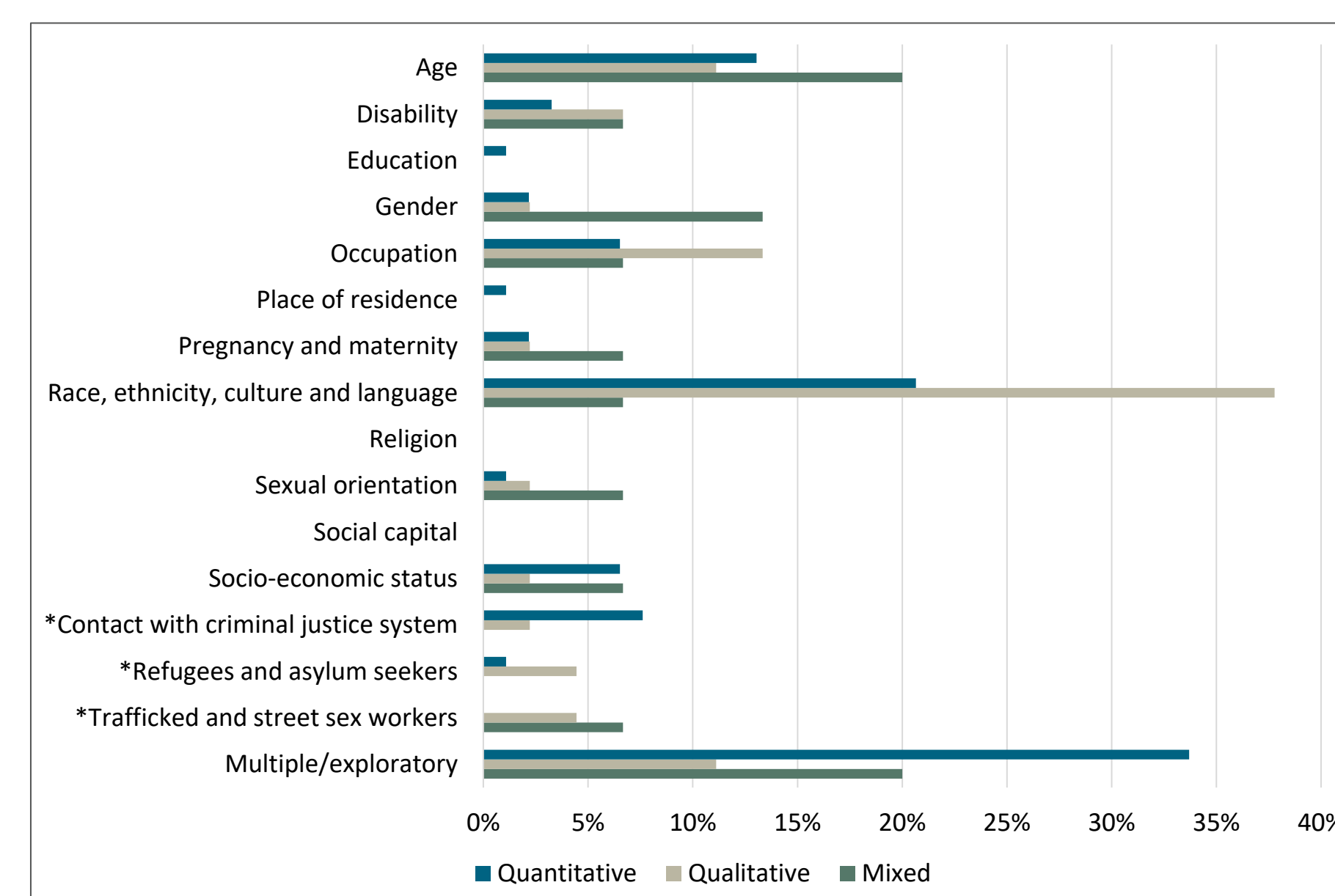


Figure 3. Main dimensions of inequality examined by included studies

2. ANALYSIS OF ROUTINELY COLLECTED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE DATA

Access to adult mental health services for LGBT+ people during COVID-19

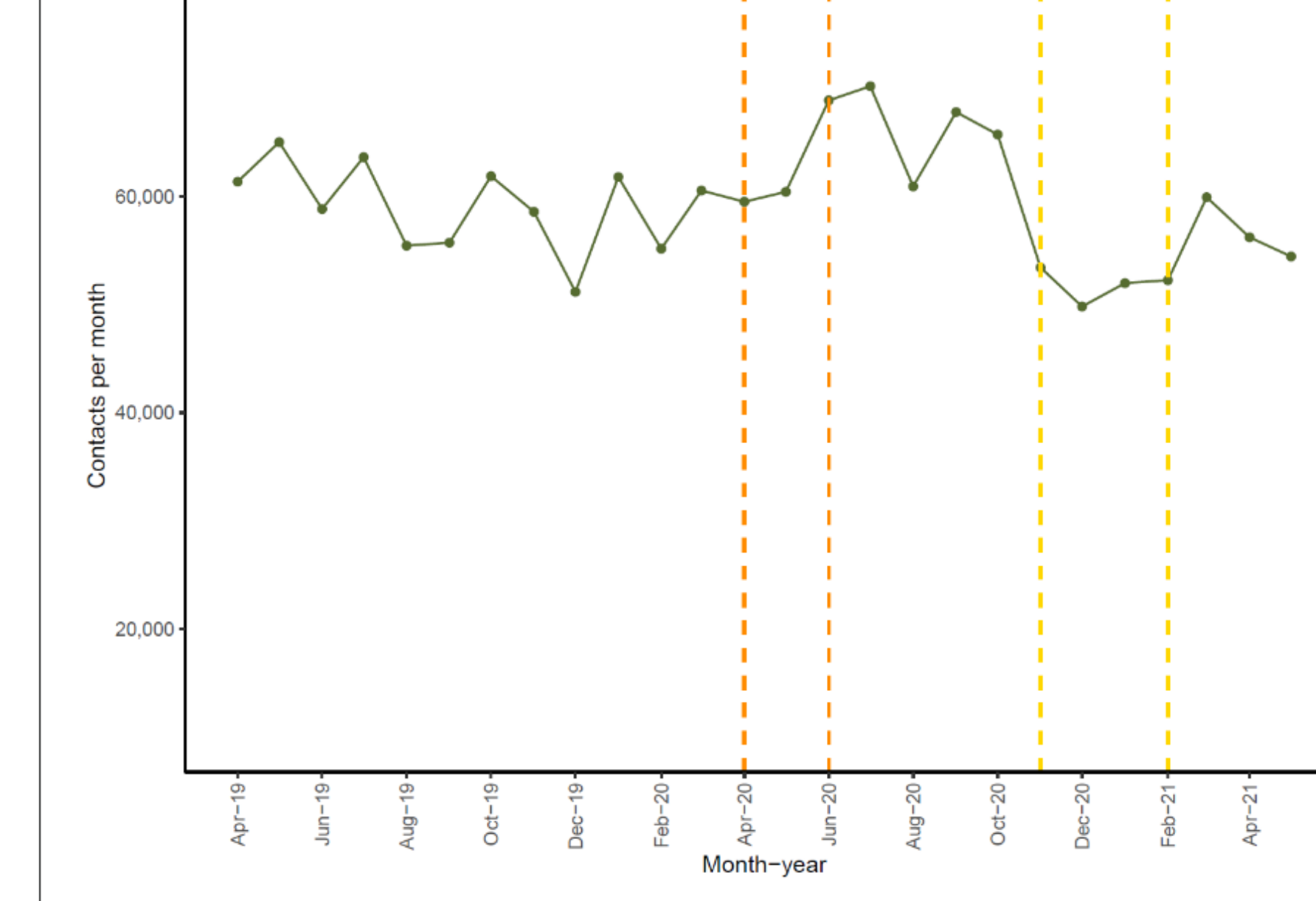
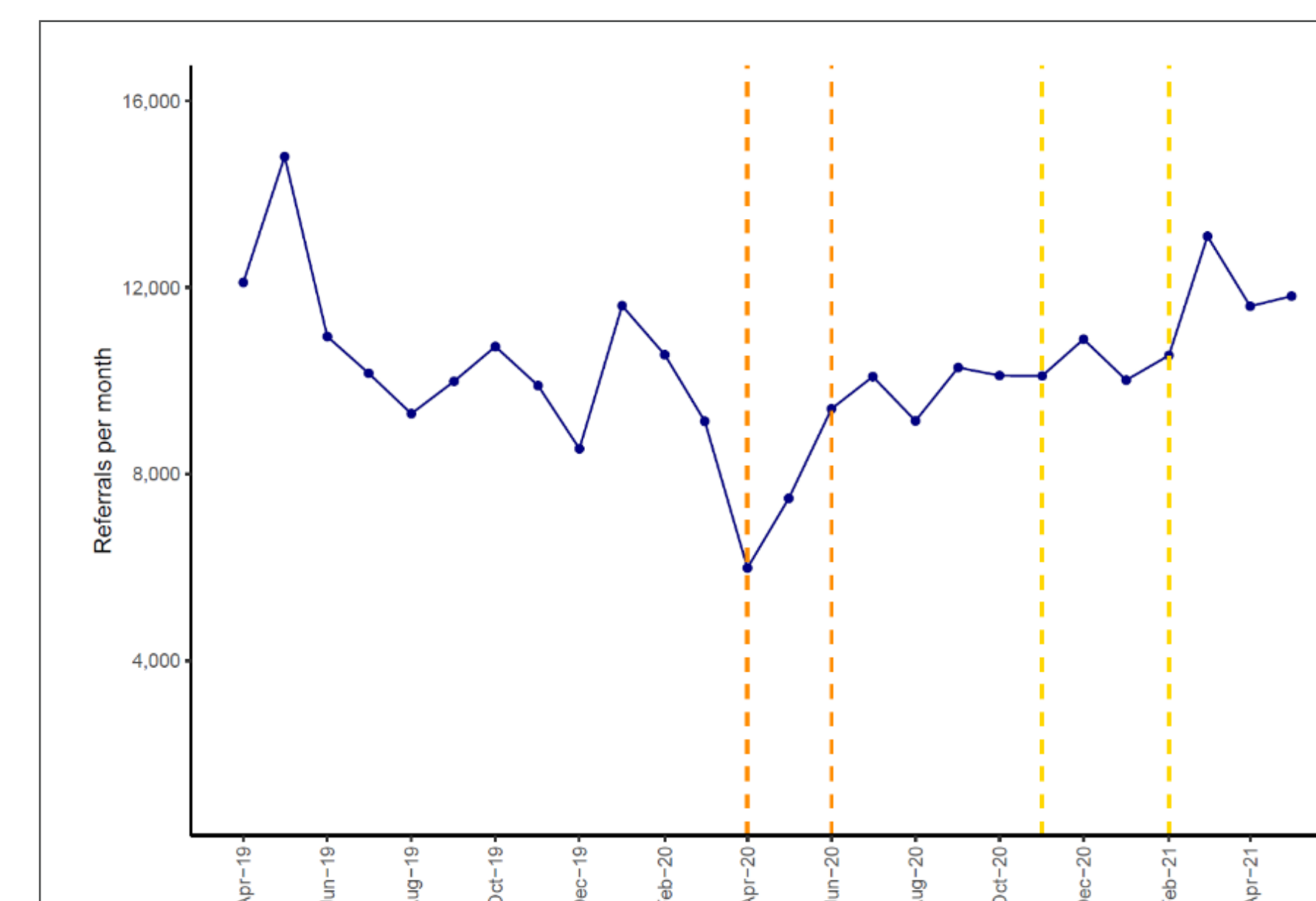
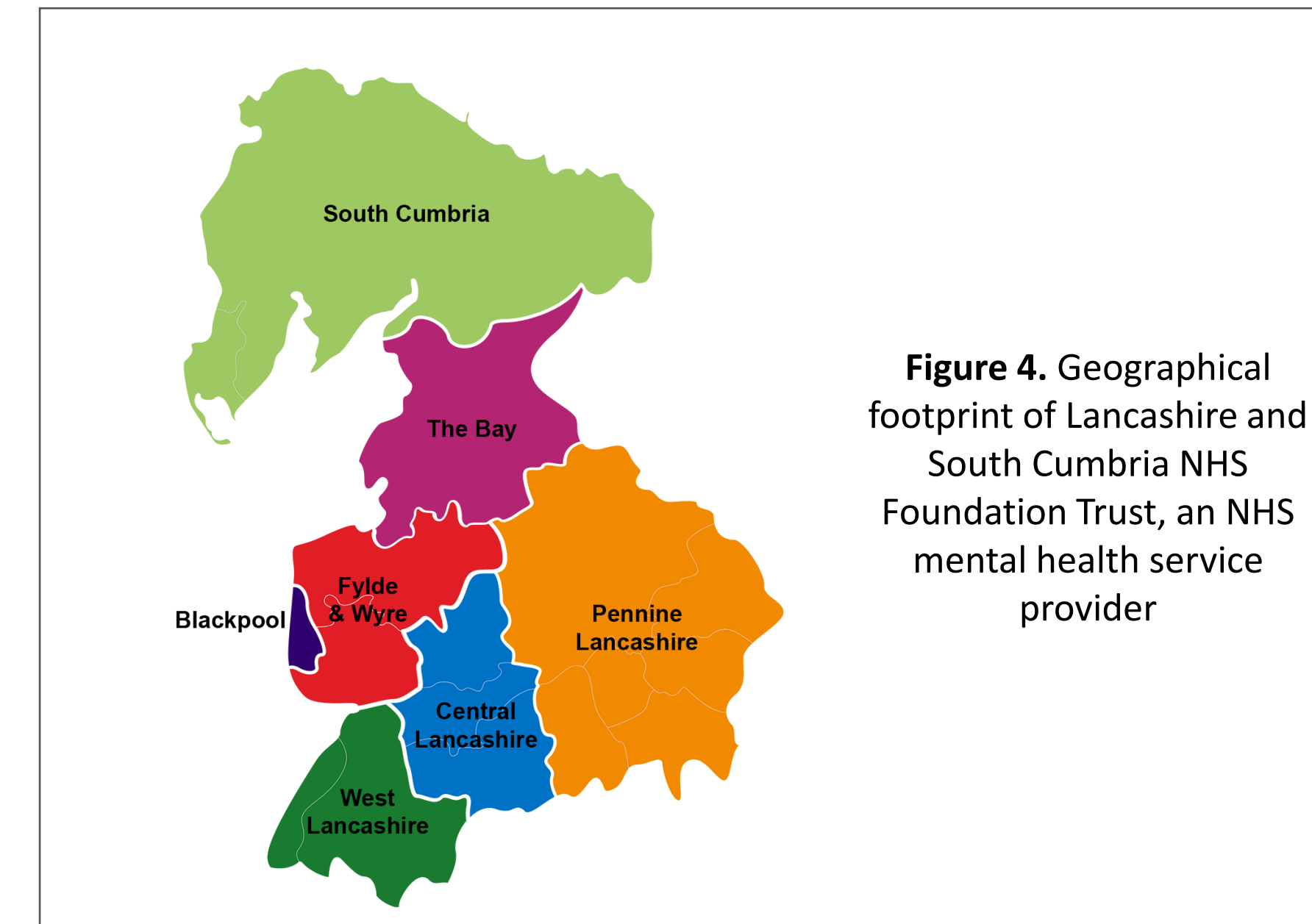


Figure 5. Changes in monthly mental health service referrals and contacts from April 2019 to May 2021, vertical dotted lines show onset and release of national lockdowns

Background

- ❖ COVID-19 had a significant impact on mental health service provision and population mental health. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) population groups have a higher risk of mental health conditions and may have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and the associated restrictions. Opportunities to understand LGBT+ inequalities in access have been missed so far.

Research question and objectives

- ❖ How has access to adult mental health services changed for LGBT+ people during COVID-19?
- ❖ To describe characteristics of service users, to understand patterns of missing data, to understand changes over time, and to describe patient journeys through services

Study methods

- ❖ De-identified patient-level referral and contact data from Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
- ❖ Exploratory analysis with descriptive statistics, chi-square analyses, geographical mapping, time-series visualisation, regression, patient flow visualisation

Key findings ... so far

- ❖ Significant reduction in referrals in April 2020, compared with March 2020 (-34%) and April 2019 (-51%) – similar reduction was not observed in subsequent lockdowns
- ❖ Contacts remained unchanged in April 2020, compared with March 2020 (-2%) and April 2019 (-3%) – decreased in second lockdown in November 2020
- ❖ Significant impact of COVID-19 on mental health services
- ❖ Demographics of service users – average age 45 years, 53% female, 64% White British, 96% heterosexual
- ❖ Understanding missing data – 0% age, <1% gender, 28% ethnicity, 75% sexual orientation