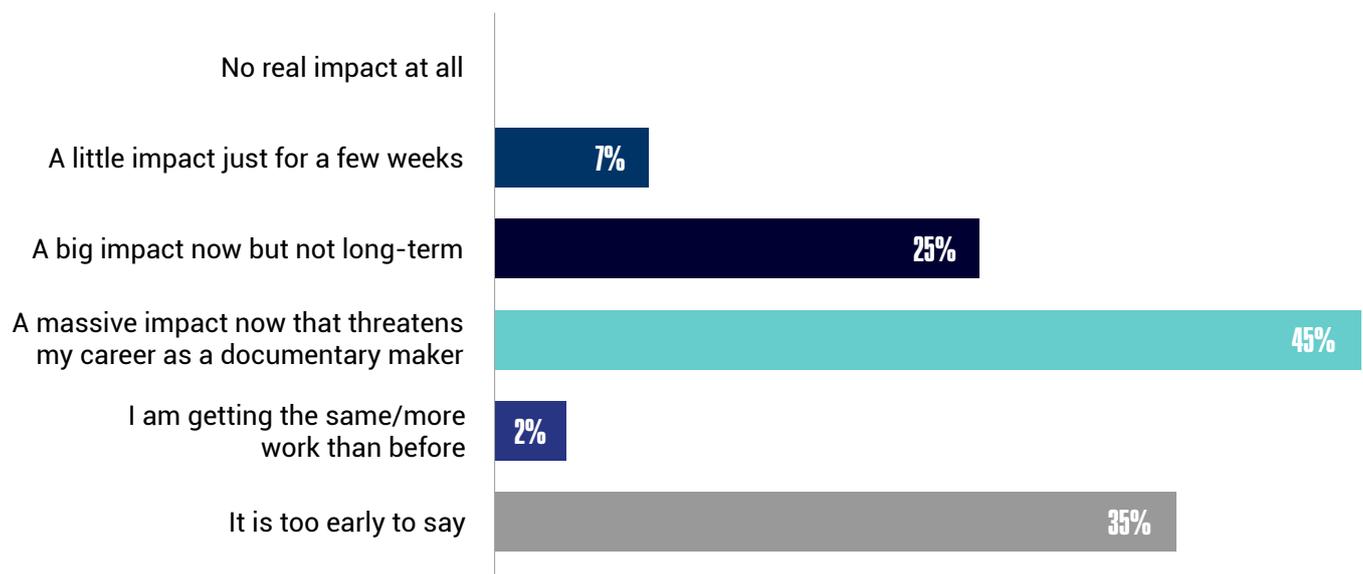


In addition to our work in funding and supporting emerging talent, The Whickers seeks to be a champion for documentary makers globally and to amplify their voices in the industry as a whole. The initial aim of our first annual Cost of Docs survey, back in 2016, was to ensure that our main funding award of £80,000 was still the game-changing amount that we wanted it to be. This year we added new questions on the impact of COVID-19 with the aim of evaluating and confronting the current challenges faced by filmmakers in these uncertain times.

The original intention was to publish the full results in the autumn. However, we have been encouraged to publish early a small selection of responses around the impact of COVID-19. The thinking here is to add weight to the publication and debate around the [UK Feature Docs Survey](#), carried out by researchers in the Film Studies team at the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol).

Our survey was completed anonymously by 146 self-selecting documentary makers, 60% of which were based outside of the UK. The majority of respondents were 'self-taught' directors and producers working in the Film and TV field for less than 10 years.

1. What impact, if any, do you think the current COVID-19 pandemic is having/will have on your ability to continue as a documentary maker? Tick the one that applies most closely:



Detail your observations here:

“I had to push back the filming dates for my film, but this gives me more time for research.”

“Financial instability and not being able to pay rent is currently a scarier thought than simply working in another area of filmmaking.”

“Being freelance is no longer an option for me when I have a family to support.”

“Right now, it’s disrupting my run in the festival circuit and could affect distribution.”

“All shoots were immediately cancelled. Animation is keeping us afloat as a business.”

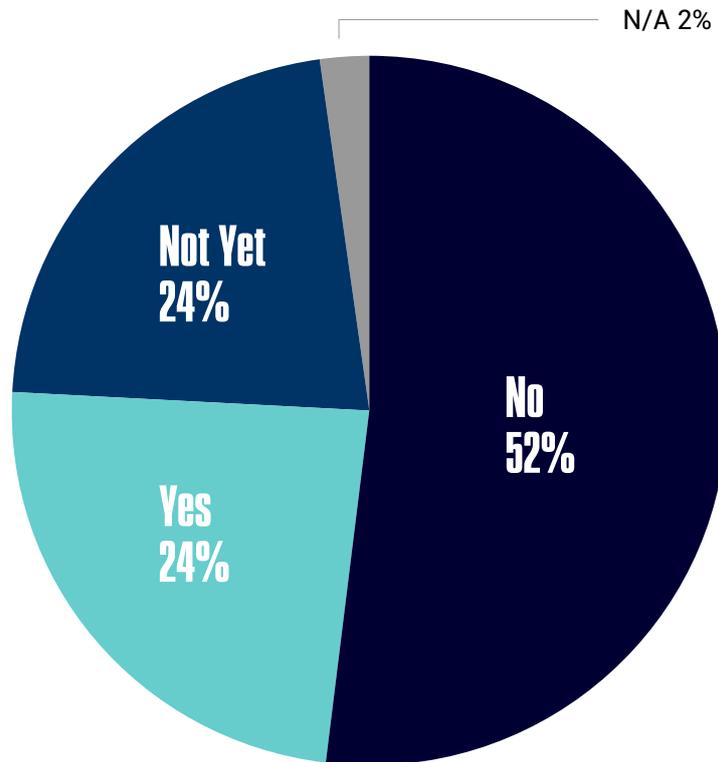
“Before it was a nightmare and now my whole life seems ruined.”

“Maybe with innovation and creativity we can make the film from home.”

2. What is your forecast for loss of earnings, if any, in the coming year due to the impact of COVID-19? (NB. This is just a snapshot of data received)



3. In light of COVID-19 many pitching forums and workshops have already been hosted in a virtual space, with many more following suit. Have you participated in any of these?



Detail your observations here:

“I am trying to cope up with what I can online. Actually that’s one of the few good things about COVID-19, that those kinds of information within the industry are getting more spread and more accesible to people.”

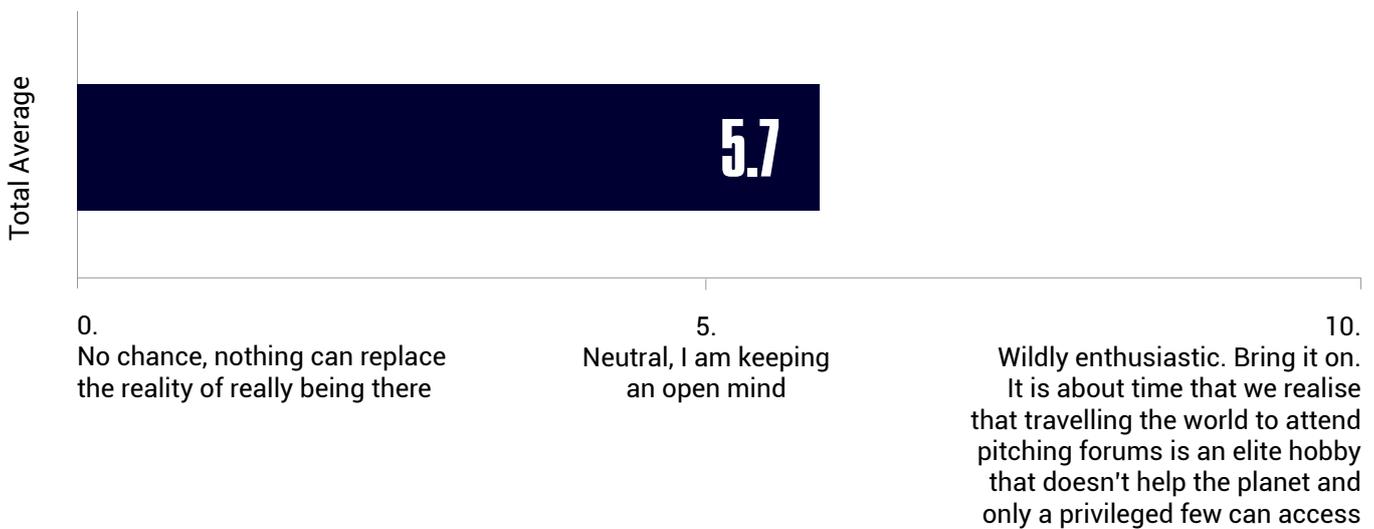
“It’s hard to justify the fees they charge when you have no idea if you’ll be able to pay your electricity bill.”

“I have not yet participated in a virtual pitching forum, however I would be more than happy to do this and I think that in a positive light, it would be fantastic if there were more virtual pitching forums. This would lessen the cost for filmmakers of having to travel to pitch our films and lessen all of our carbon footprint!”

“I think it is an excellent response to this crisis. Cinema must continue and adapt.”

“I am a producer and a director that prefers the face-to-face meeting impact and human approach.”

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend a move towards virtual pitching forums and workshops in the future?



5. Please feel free to add any comments about issues you face when making documentaries here:

“I struggle with support for early stage development. I feel I need to have the film pretty much in the bag before anyone will take a punt on it. This is especially tricky with investigative pieces.”

“Festival elitism is terrible. They charge so much and it makes filmmaking for the wealthy only. This is terrible as all voices make great stories.”

“Just more documentary funding for developing countries.”

“I find the filmmaking industry to be extremely prohibitive to break into without significant personal and financial sacrifices, making the scope of diverse perspectives extremely narrow.”

“I am proud to be a part of the documentary community. True stories feel more valuable every day.”

NB. Some questions invited respondents to select multiple options, whilst others were not applicable to all, therefore percentages may not always add up to 100%.