Education Support

Teacher Wellbeing Index
2021

Teacher Wellbeing Index

2021

Notes on the methodology

All differences found in this Index always refer to a percentage point increase/decrease

Full details on the methodology, including the research aims and links to Education Support's previous Teacher Wellbeing Index reports, can be found in Appendix A

Chief Executive's Foreword

Education Support began this programme of research in 2017 to understand more about the mental health and wellbeing experiences of staff working in education. This report is the most important one yet. It gives us an insight into the working lives of educators under the ongoing shadow of Covid-19. It also contextualises that experience within five years of primary data.

There is good news to note. The sense of purpose that motivates teachers is alive and well. Schools and colleges have made notable improvements in implementing visible wellbeing policies and in supporting staff who experience poor mental health. While workload and the lack of a work-life balance drive stress in the sector, the data show some improvements over five years.

Overall however, this report is a wake-up call for anyone who cares about the future of education in the UK. Three quarters of the workforce experience behavioural, psychological or physical symptoms of poor wellbeing due to work. Our education workforce has relatively high levels of anxiety and depression compared to the general population, and levels of exhaustion and acute stress are rising.

There are plenty more data points of concern in this report: the need for greater support for trainee and early career teachers, the extent of presenteeism, the pernicious spectre of long hours, the lack of trust in line management relationships, and many more.

There is no simple answer to the issues raised by this research. There are complex drivers at play, affecting individuals, particular organisations and differing regional and national contexts. But there are meaningful actions that can be taken immediately by governments, schools, colleges and individuals to drive positive change.

These findings represent the experience of school and college support staff, teachers, lecturers and leaders. This is their story. If we fail to act on these findings we are complicit in the damage to the lives and opportunities of those responsible for teaching, guiding and inspiring our nation's next generation.

Please share this report. We stand ready to work with anyone who wants to improve this picture.

Sinéad Mc Brearty
Chief Executive Officer

#TWIX2021

Contents

Executive Summary

Key Findings 2017–2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Staff who had experienced behavioural, psychological or physical symptoms due to their work	75%	76%	78%	74%	77%
Staff who describe themselves as stressed	66%	67%	72%	62%	72%
What staff thought their symptoms were a sign of	45%	43%	46%	44%	44%
	32%	30%	29%	21%	29%
	32%	37%	35%	32%	28%

● Anxiety
● Exhaustion
● Depression

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Staff who have considered leaving the sector over the past two years due to pressures on their mental health and wellbeing	56%	57%	57%	53%	54%
Staff who are aware their workplace has a health and wellbeing policy	38%	36%	44%	58%	52%
Staff who receive sufficient guidance about their health and wellbeing at work	25%	26%	31%	47%	39%
Staff who feel well supported by their organisation when experiencing mental health or wellbeing problems	36%	34%	41%	50%	44%
Who at work staff turn to first about problems at work	27%	25%	25%	29%	31%
	8%	12%	10%	16%	18%
	24%	26%	27%	17%	15%

● Their colleagues
● Line manager
● No one at work
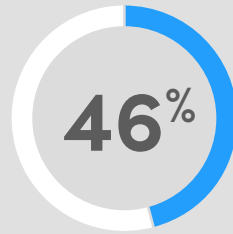
The Challenges in 2021

35% of staff work **51+** hours a week on average (**66%** of senior leaders)
> **Section 2, page 25**

46% of staff **always** go into work when unwell (**54%** of senior leaders)
> **Section 2, page 25**
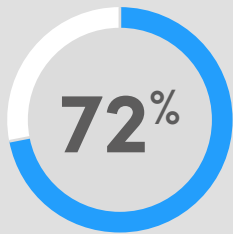
72% of staff are stressed (**84%** of senior leaders, **69%** of school teachers)
> **Section 2, page 26**
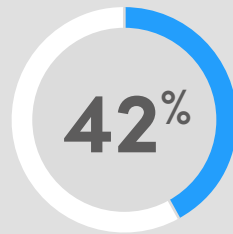
42% of staff consider their organisation's culture has a negative effect on their wellbeing
> **Section 2, page 28**

> **Section 2, page 28**

44% of staff feel fully trusted by their line manager to carry out their job well (**91%** of those who feel distrusted feel it negatively impacts on their wellbeing)
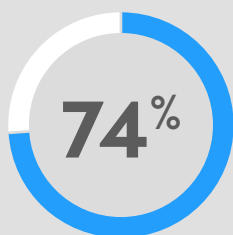
74% of teachers consider their Initial Teacher Training courses did not prepare them well to manage **their own** wellbeing
> **Section 2, page 30**
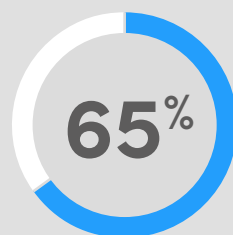
65% of teachers consider their Initial Teacher Training courses did not prepare them well to manage their **pupils'/students'** wellbeing
> **Section 2, page 32**

> **Section 2, page 34**

77% of teachers had a clear sense of purpose when they started working, for most this remains

Mental Health
of Education staff
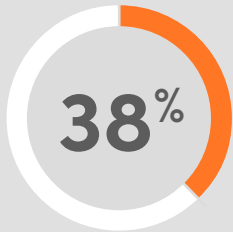
38% of staff have experienced a mental health issue in the past academic year

> **Section 3, page 41**
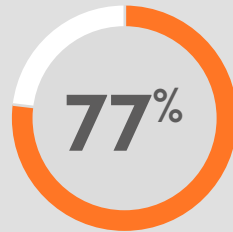
77% of staff experienced symptoms due to their work (**84%** senior leaders, **77%** school teachers)

> **Section 3, page 48**

44% thought they could be signs of anxiety – higher than the national figure provided by the ONS (**37%**). Of this group **44%** were diagnosed by their General Practitioner (GP)

> **Section 3, pages 46 and 47**

28% thought they could be signs of depression – higher than this year's figure provided by the ONS (**21%**). Of this group **54%** were diagnosed by their General Practitioner (GP)

> **Section 3, pages 46 and 47**

29% thought they could be signs of exhaustion (**38%** for senior leaders, **27%** for school teachers)
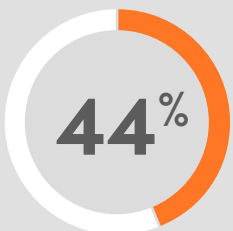
> **Section 3, page 45**

44% of education staff would turn to family and friends for support when experiencing problems at work

> **Section 3, page 51**

43.9 Staff wellbeing score, lower than the national population scores for

| England **52.4** | Wales **51.4** | Scotland **49.4** |

> **Section 3, page 53**

Staff Retention
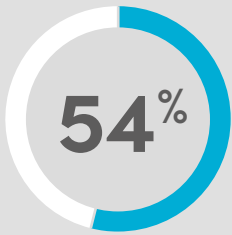
54% of staff have considered leaving the sector in the past two years due to pressures on their mental health and wellbeing (**63%** senior leaders, **53%** school teachers)

❯ **Section 4, page 63**
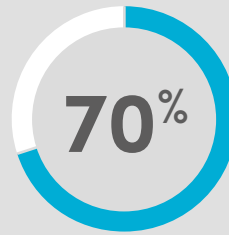
70% of staff cited volume of workload as the main reasons for thinking about leaving their jobs (senior leaders **80%**)

❯ **Section 4, page 64**

27% of staff feel the relationship they have with the Senior Leadership Team affects their wellbeing the most negatively

❯ **Section 4, page 66**

52% of staff consider their mental health can best be improved by working with their line managers to reduce workload (**60%** senior leaders)

❯ **Section 4, page 67**

Improving Staff Mental Health

50% of staff who spoke to someone at work about their mental health problems said it gave them perspective and helped them realise they are not alone

❯ **Section 5, page 76**

29% of staff consider there is a stigma (feeling of shame) which prevents them from talking to others at work about their mental health problems

❯ **Section 5, page 76**

47% of staff consider having a working culture that encourages people to talk openly is the best way to tackle mental health stigma
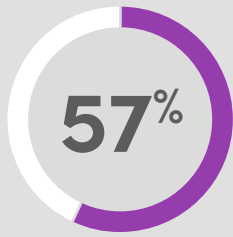
❯ **Section 5, page 78**

57% of staff are not confident in disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health issues to their employer

❯ **Section 5, page 79**
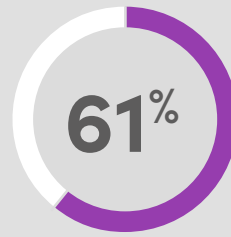
61% of staff do not receive sufficient guidance about their mental health and wellbeing at work (**59%** senior leaders, **64%** school teachers)

❯ **Section 5, page 81**
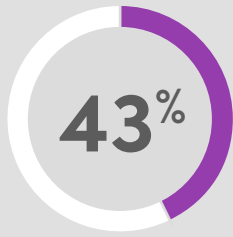
43% of staff feel their organisations do not support employees well who have mental health and wellbeing problems (**41%** of senior leaders, **44%** of school teachers)

❯ **Section 5, page 83**
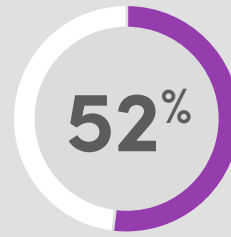
52% of staff are aware their organisation has a staff health and wellbeing policy (**56%** senior leaders, **49%** school teachers)

❯ **Section 5, page 87**
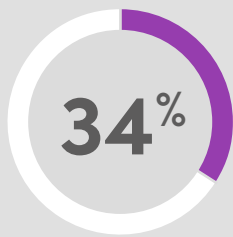
34% of organisations regularly survey their staff to establish levels of employee wellbeing

❯ **Section 5, page 88**

The top three ways the Government can improve wellbeing at work

48% Reduce the burden of unnecessary paperwork/data gathering
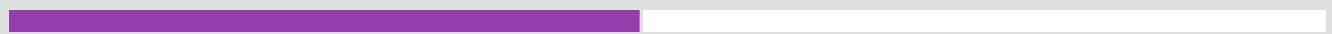
❯ **Section 5, page 90**

43% Reduce the volume of workload

❯ **Section 5, page 90**

41% Recognise the high intensity or high pressure work environment which exists in education settings

❯ **Section 5, page 90**

Section 1

5-Year Comparisons
2017–2021

For the past five years we have asked teachers and education staff questions about their mental health and wellbeing. We have found there are long-term, sustained issues both in the workforce and in the workplace, the most important are:

❯ **Levels of stress and anxiety remain unsustainably high**

❯ **Excessive workload and the lack of a work-life balance remain key issues at work which drive poor mental health or wellbeing**

❯ **Covid-19 has become an important factor affecting staff wellbeing**

❯ **A consistently high percentage of staff consider leaving the profession each year**

❯ **Staff's ability to talk to others at work when experiencing a mental health issue has increased**

❯ **Staff who do not speak to anyone at work about mental health or wellbeing issues are mainly concerned it would negatively affect people's perceptions of them**

❯ **Organisations have improved staff awareness of policies, their implementation and amount of guidance given to staff**

Throughout the Index, all footnotes appear at the end of each section.

1. Changes in the workforce

Changes were observed in symptoms (and the work issues related to them), stress levels and staff retention.

Behavioural, psychological and physical symptoms

The number of staff reporting any behavioural, psychological and physical symptoms due to work has remained broadly consistent over the five-year period.

Symptoms experienced by staff due to work
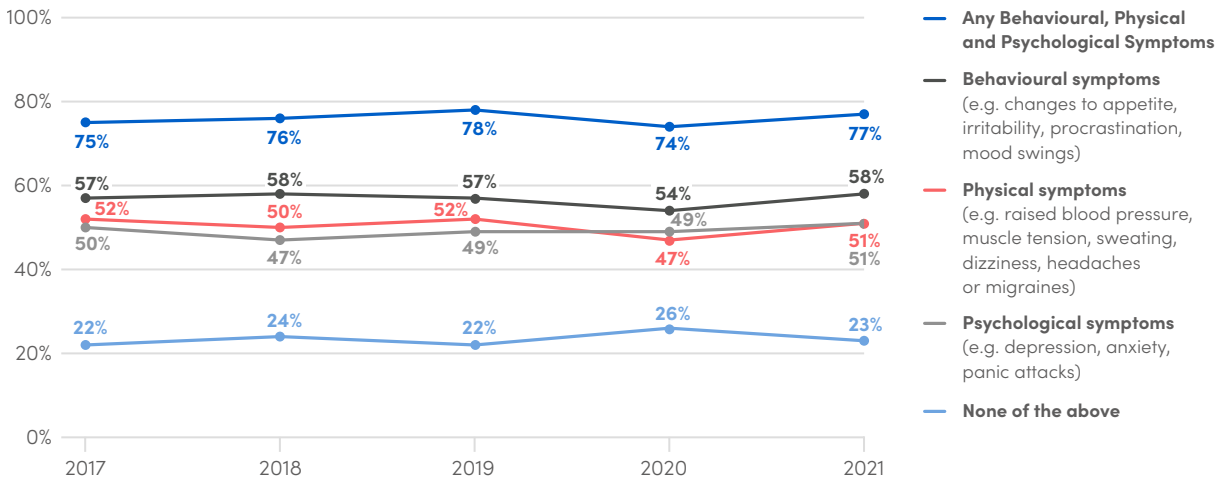
Legend:
- **Any Behavioural, Physical and Psychological Symptoms**
- **Behavioural symptoms** (e.g. changes to appetite, irritability, procrastination, mood swings)
- **Physical symptoms** (e.g. raised blood pressure, muscle tension, sweating, dizziness, headaches or migraines)
- **Psychological symptoms** (e.g. depression, anxiety, panic attacks)
- **None of the above**

n. 1 (All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n. 1 refers to note 1, and so on.)

Three-quarters of staff reported at least one symptom due to work every year for the past five years

Stress levels

In the last five years, levels of stress experienced by education staff have fluctuated. Between 2017–2019 they increased, during 2020 they reduced, and in 2021 are now at approximately 2019 levels. Senior leaders consistently experience higher levels of stress than school teachers and support staff.

How education staff describe their current level of stress at work   ■ Stressed   ■ Not Stressed

n. 2

Senior leaders   School teachers   Support staff
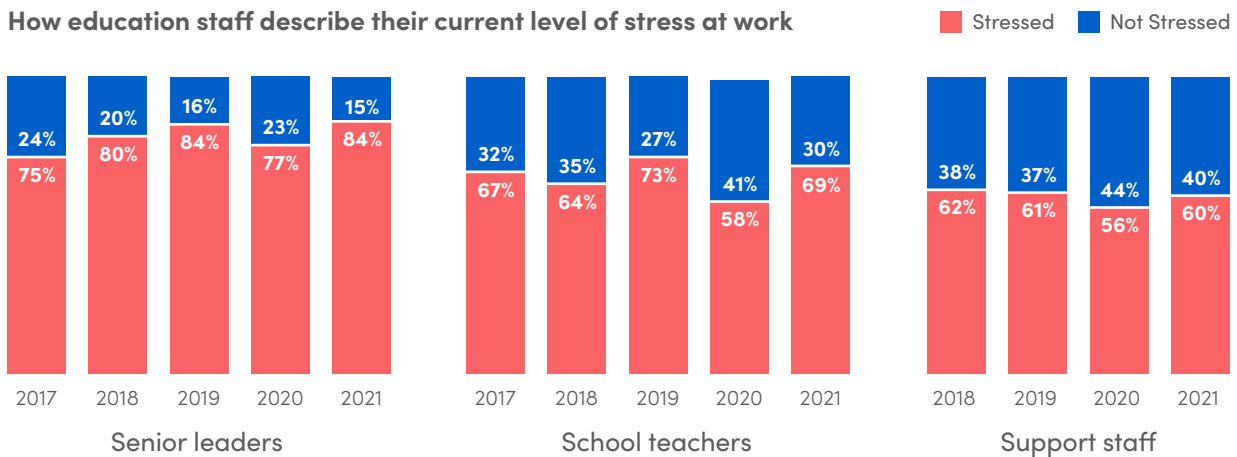
Stress levels at work remain very high for senior leaders

Staff wanting to leave the profession

The number of staff who considered leaving the profession has remained broadly consistent – between **53-57%** across the five-year period.

n. 3

■ had not considered leaving
■ had considered leaving

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
had not considered leaving	44%	41%	43%	47%	44%
had considered leaving	56%	57%	57%	53%	54%
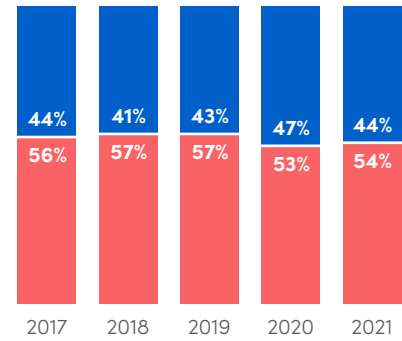
Just over half of staff have wanted to leave the profession for the past five years

Symptoms related to possible signs of mental health disorders

The number of staff reporting symptoms as possible signs of anxiety has remained broadly constant in the last five years. Given the pressures felt by staff in the last two years due to the pandemic (eg school closures, staff absence due to Covid-19, teaching online, assessment difficulties etc), working in the education sector has equated to working in a pressurised, or stressful, environment. The symptoms seem to persist regardless of whether or not there is a pandemic.

Symptoms experienced at work which could be signs of:

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Anxiety	45%	43%	46%	44%	44%
Depression	32%	37%	35%	32%	28%
Exhaustion	32%	30%	29%	21%	29%
None of these	32%	27%	27%	32%	29%
Acute stress	32%	27%	25%	18%	20%
*Burnout (New category for 2021)					24%*

n. 4
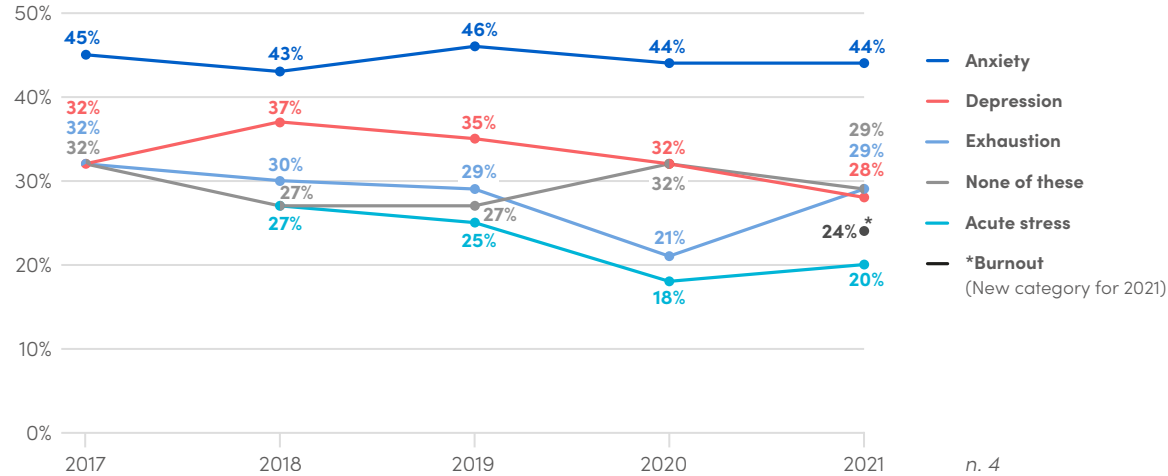
Levels of anxiety remain unsustainably high

Symptoms related to work issues

Work–life balance and excessive workloads are persistent issues that are related to symptoms of poor mental health.

Top six work issues related to the symptoms experienced by education staff

Legend:
- Excessive workload
- Work/life balance
- Pupils'/students' behaviour
- Covid-19
- Unreasonable demands from managers
- Lack of trust from managers

n. 5
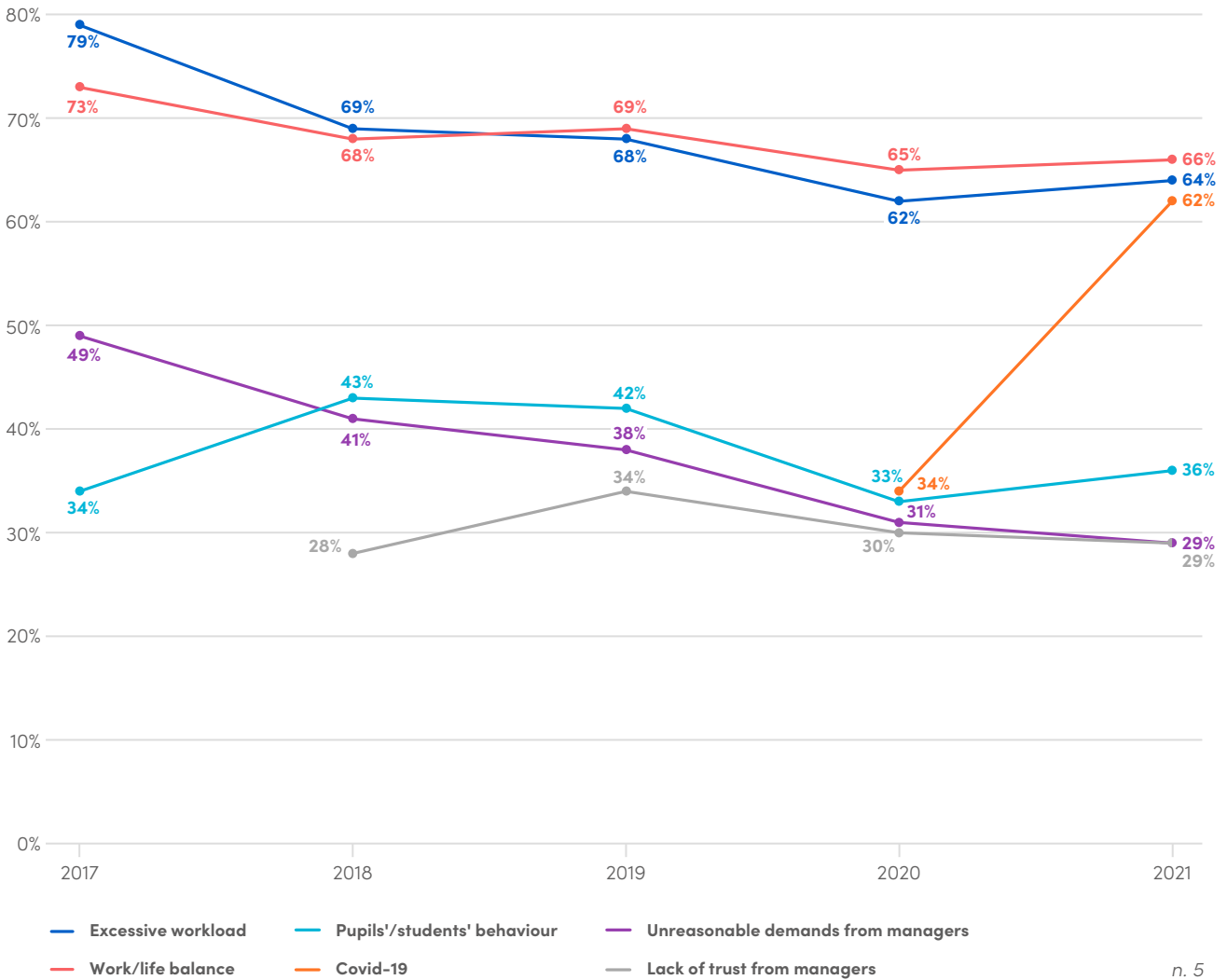
The two main factors at work affecting wellbeing are excessive workload and the lack of work–life balance

2. Changes in the workplace

Staff reported improvements in awareness of and access to policies and guidance on mental health and wellbeing issues. Improvements were also found to the levels of support provided for employees experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems at work.

Awareness of wellbeing policies

Education staff have increased awareness of their organisation having a staff wellbeing policy. This has improved by **14%** in five years.

Level of awareness of wellbeing policies

n. 6

- Aware
- Not Aware
- Don't know
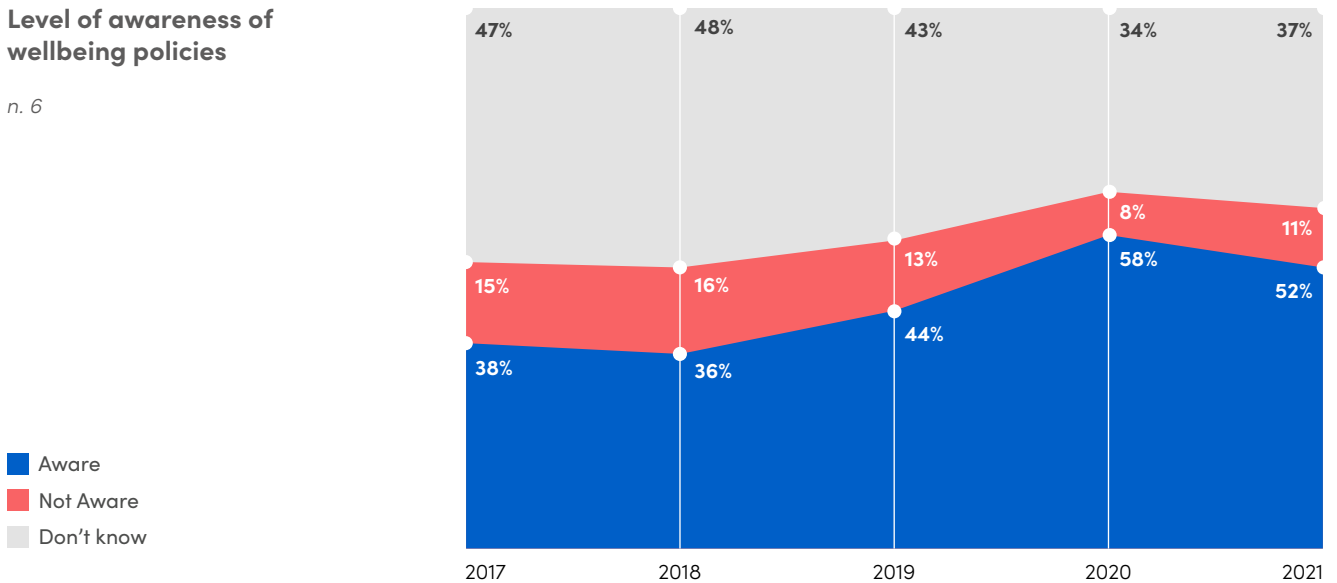
There is an increase in awareness of organisational wellbeing policies

Implementation of wellbeing policies

There has been a continual increase in the number of staff who consider their organisation's wellbeing policies were properly implemented which reached a high point of **76% in 2020.** There has also been a decrease in the number of staff stating that their wellbeing policy was never implemented.

There are increased levels of policy implementation by organisations

2021 | **7%** | **33%** | 31% | **16%** | 12%
2020 | **12%** | **34%** | 31% | **12%** | 12%
2019 | **9%** | **30%** | 31% | **17%** | 13%
2018 | **6%** | **29%** | 30% | **22%** | 13%
2017 | **10%** | **39%** | | **32%** | 20%
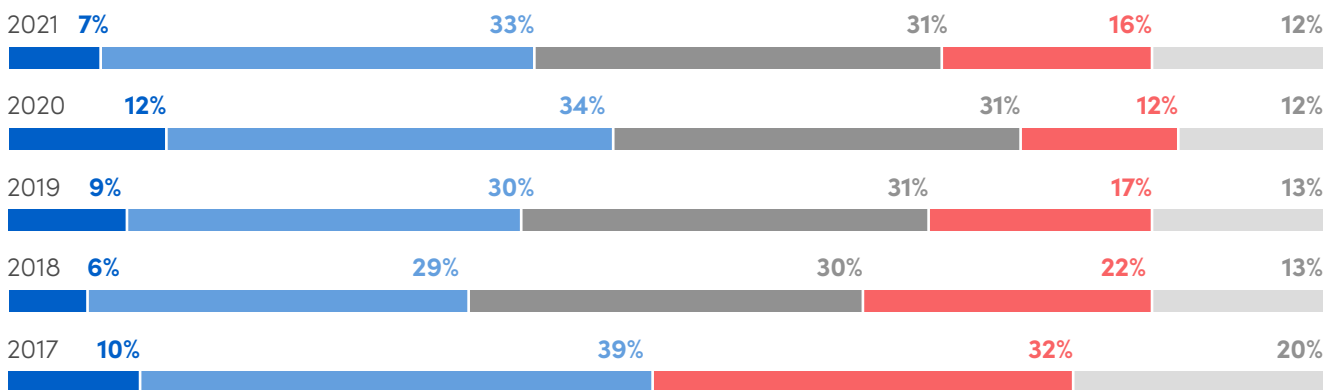
Yes, always ■   Yes, most of the time ■   Yes, some of the time ■   No, never ■   Don't know ■   *n. 7*

Receiving sufficient wellbeing guidance

There has been a consistent upwards trend in the number of staff who feel they are receiving sufficient guidance about their health and wellbeing, with a very positive spike in 2020. **In 2021, 39%** of staff felt they had sufficient guidance, compared with **25% in 2017**.

Increased levels of guidance are given to education staff

n. 8

- ■ receive sufficient guidance
- ■ do not receive sufficient guidance

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
receive sufficient guidance	25%	26%	31%	47%	39%
do not receive sufficient guidance	75%	74%	69%	53%	61%
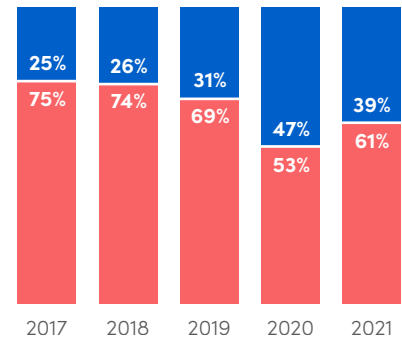
Support provided for employees experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems

Staff perceptions about how well their organisation supports employees who are experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems has increased. This increased from **36% in 2017** to **44% in 2021**. Again, there was an upwards spike in **2020 to 50%**, which might indicate that organisations gave this a much higher priority at the time.

Organisational support for staff experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Don't know	18%	13%	16%	13%	14%
Feel not well supported	46%	53%	43%	36%	43%
Feel well supported	36%	34%	41%	50%	44%

- ■ Feel well supported
- ■ Feel not well supported
- ■ Don't know

n. 9
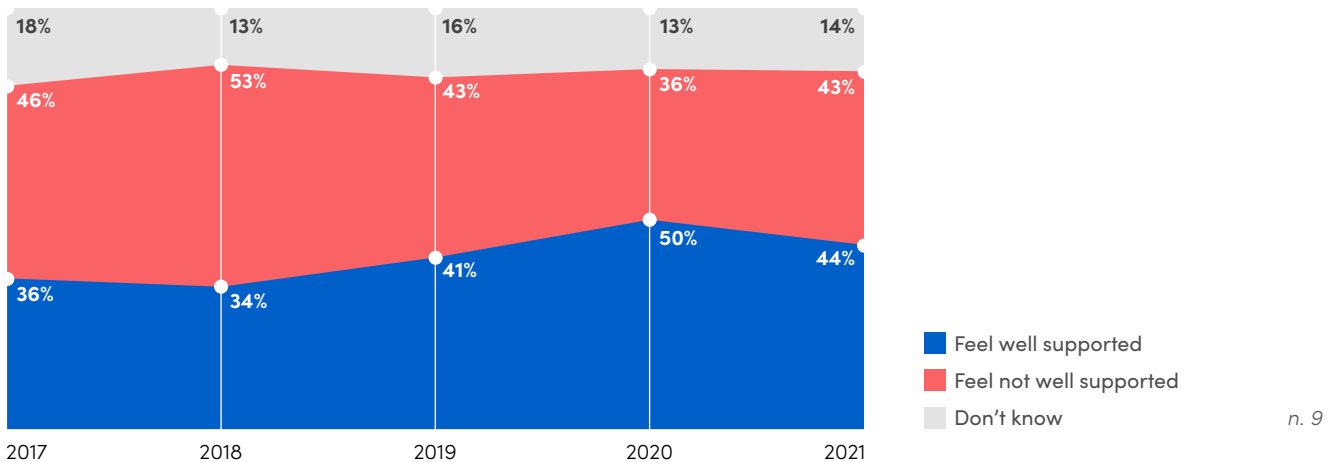
Increased levels of support are provided to staff experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems at work

3. Sources of support

The sources of support accessed by education staff when experiencing mental health issues, who staff spoke to and the reasons why staff did not speak to anyone were investigated.

Sources of support accessed by staff

Subtle changes were noticed over time with access to, and use of, support. Speaking with family and friends was found to be the key source of support used by staff experiencing problems due to work. Talking to a partner/spouse was also popular, decreasing in 2020, and has since remained stable. The number of people talking to their GP, the NHS or health professionals has reduced.

Top five sources of support accessed by those who experienced mental health problems at work

n. 10
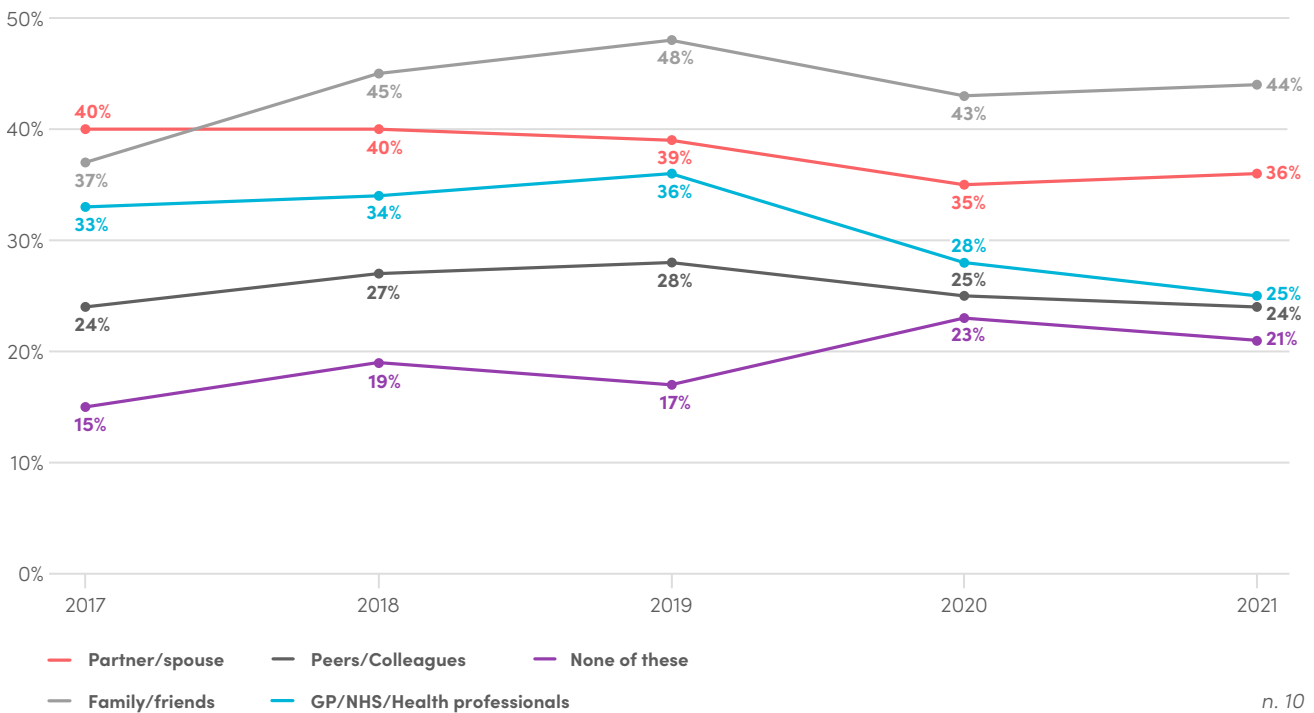
Family and friends remain a key source of support for education staff

Who staff spoke to when experiencing mental health issues at work

There appears to be a small increase in the number of staff reaching out and speaking to someone when experiencing mental health issues at work. It may be that the increased guidance and support given by organisations may help to explain these changes. There was also a decrease in the number of staff who would not speak to anyone about mental health issues at work.

Who education staff would speak to first when experiencing mental health issues at work
(only top four shown)
Note: this question was altered in 2020 (combining 'who did you speak to' and 'who would you speak to first').

Legend:
- **Somebody outside of work**
- **Colleague**
- **I did not speak to anybody about it**
- **Line Manager**

n. 11
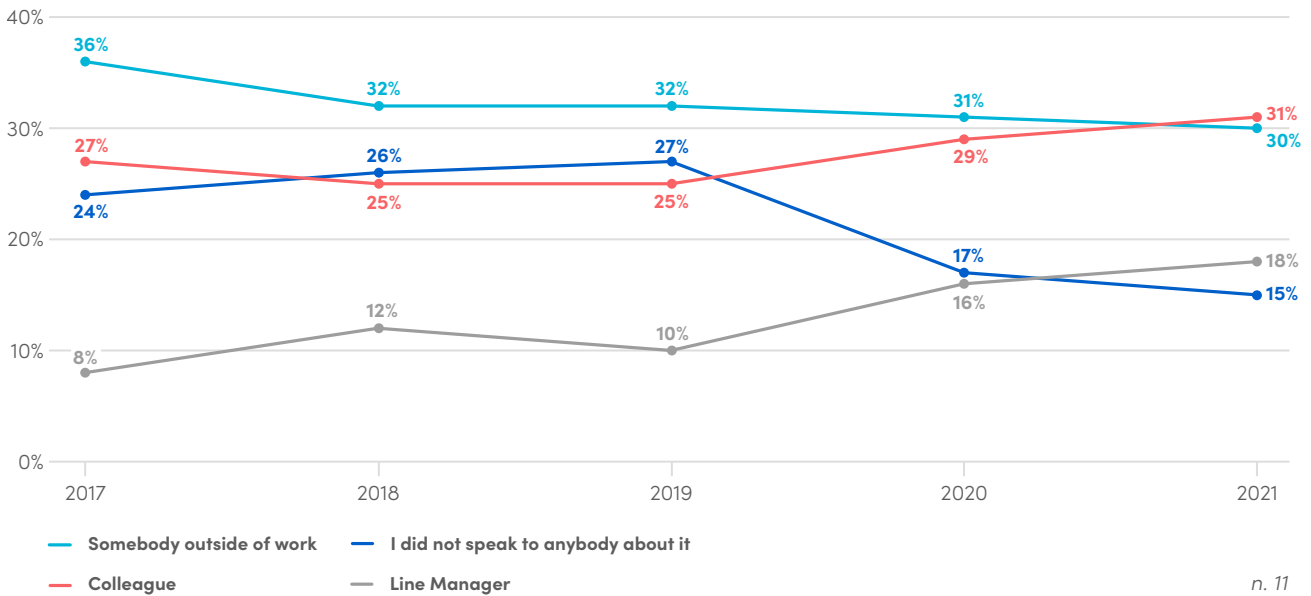
Staff are increasingly turning to colleagues and line managers when experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues at work

Reasons for not speaking to anyone at work

Those staff who did not speak to anyone at work indicated the reasons for this. The most common reason was "it would negatively affect the perception of me", however this has remained stable since 2020. There was little change over the five year period for the other two most common reasons, ie it "being seen as a sign of weakness" and "a stigma which stops me from talking to anyone at work".

Top six reasons why education staff did not speak to anyone at work when experiencing mental health and wellbeing issues

It would negatively affect their perception of me

They would see it as a sign of weakness

I would be worried about losing my job

I prefer to seek support from people outside of work

There is a stigma (eg a feeling of shame) which stops me from talking to anyone at work

They wouldn't be supportive

n. 12
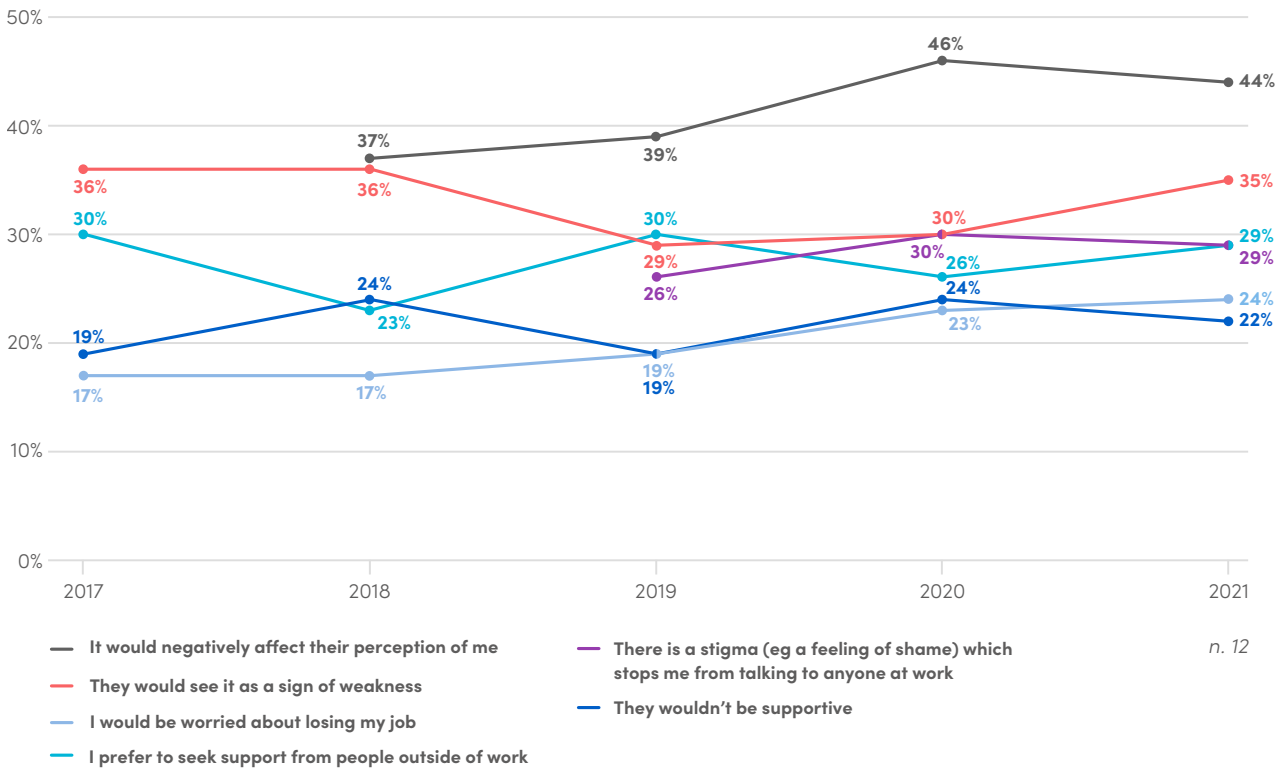
Staff are increasingly concerned they will be perceived negatively if seeking support for mental health or wellbeing issues

Sample profile

n. 1   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,257); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 2,976); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 2,929);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 1,256); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 1,045)

n. 2   2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2251), Support staff (n = 225) ;
2020 Base: Senior leaders (n = 749), School teachers (n = 2010), Support staff (n = 184);
2019 Base: Senior leaders (n = 545), School teachers (n = 1,842), Support staff (n = 474);
2018 Base: Senior leaders (n = 267), School teachers (n = 834), Support staff (n = 76);
2017 Base: Senior leaders (n = 253), School teachers (n = 583). NB In 2017 Support staff not included

n. 3   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 3,034); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 3,019);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 1,278); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 1,250)

n. 4   2021 Base: All education staff who experienced symptoms (n = 2,006);
2020 Base: All education staff who experienced symptoms (n = 1,722);
2019 Base: All education staff who experienced symptoms (n = 1,725);
2018 Base: All education staff who experienced symptoms (n = 718);
2017 Base: All education staff who experienced symptoms (n = 924)

n. 5   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 1,062); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 725); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 815);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 345); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 129)

n. 6   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 3,034); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 3,019);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 1,187); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 987)

n. 7   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 1,688) 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 1,721); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 1,253);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 426); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 493). NB In 2017 the option to state "some of the time"
was not available.

n. 8   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 3,034); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 1,669);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 657); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 572)

n. 9   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 3,034); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 3,019);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 1,187); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 987)

n. 10   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,505); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 2,208); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 2,239);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 932);2017 Base: All education staff (n = 802)

n. 11   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,533); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 2,224); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 2,266);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 852); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 802)
NB In 2020 the question was re-worded, the options remained the same

n. 12   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 389); 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 371); 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 608);
2018 Base: All education staff (n = 249); 2017 Base: All education staff (n = 199)

The next section explores the challenges in 2021

Section 2

The Challenges
in 2021

We asked teachers and education staff questions about the challenges that affect their mental health and wellbeing.

Our main findings:

> **Long working hours persist across all job roles**

> **Nearly half of all staff always feel compelled to come to work when unwell**

> **Stress levels increased in 2021, compared to 2020**

> **There is an increase in staff reporting that organisational culture has a negative effect on their wellbeing**

> **Less than half of all staff feel fully trusted by their line manager**

> **Three-quarters of all teachers think their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses did not prepare them well to manage heir own wellbeing**

> **Two-thirds of all teachers think their ITT courses did not prepare them well to manage their pupils' or students' wellbeing**

> **Three-quarters of all teachers (including senior leaders) have a clear sense of purpose when starting work as educators. Most have kept this sense of purpose during their careers**

1. Working hours

Long working hours persist across all job roles
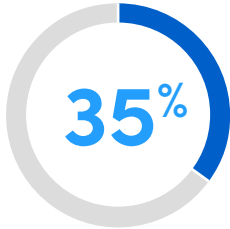
35% of **all staff** worked **51+** hours a week on average.
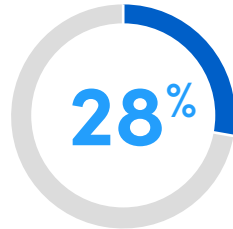
28% of **school teachers** worked **51+** hours per week despite **0%** being contracted to do so.

66% of **senior leaders** worked **51+** hours per week, despite only **4%** being contracted to do so.

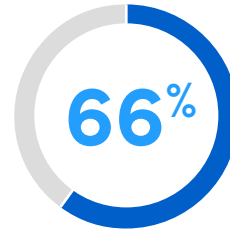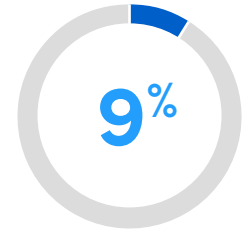**9%** of support staff worked **51+** hours per week, despite **1%** being contracted to do so.

n. 1 (All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n. 1 refers to note 1, and so on.)

2. Presenteeism

Nearly half of all staff feel compelled to come to work when unwell

Presenteeism is a term used to describe people coming into work even when they are ill.

46% of **all staff** surveyed felt compelled to always come to work when unwell.

45% of **school teachers** felt compelled to always come into school when unwell.

54% of **senior leaders** felt compelled to always come into work.

33% of **support staff** felt compelled to always come into school when unwell.

n. 2

What drives presenteeism?

Perceptions of organisational culture appear to have a link with presenteeism. The figures below show the percentages of education staff who felt compelled to **always** come into work when experiencing problems with their mental health and wellbeing, categorised by how they perceive their organisation's culture:

54% of staff who felt their organisations **did not** support them well

40% of staff who felt their organisations **did** support their employees well

52% of staff working between **41–60 hours** per week

n. 3

3. Stress at work

Stress levels increased in 2021

We asked teachers and education staff to describe their level of work-related stress. Overall, stress levels have increased when compared to 2020.

72%   **28%**

2020   2021

said they were stressed
(10% increase on 2020)

said they
were not stressed
(10% decrease on 2020)

n. 4

Stress by job role

Senior leaders	**84%**
School teachers	**69%**
Support staff	**60%**

n. 5
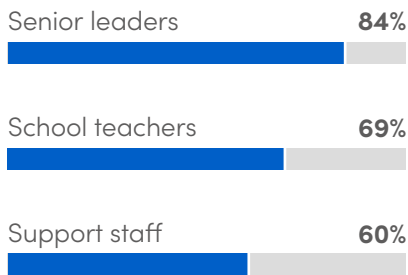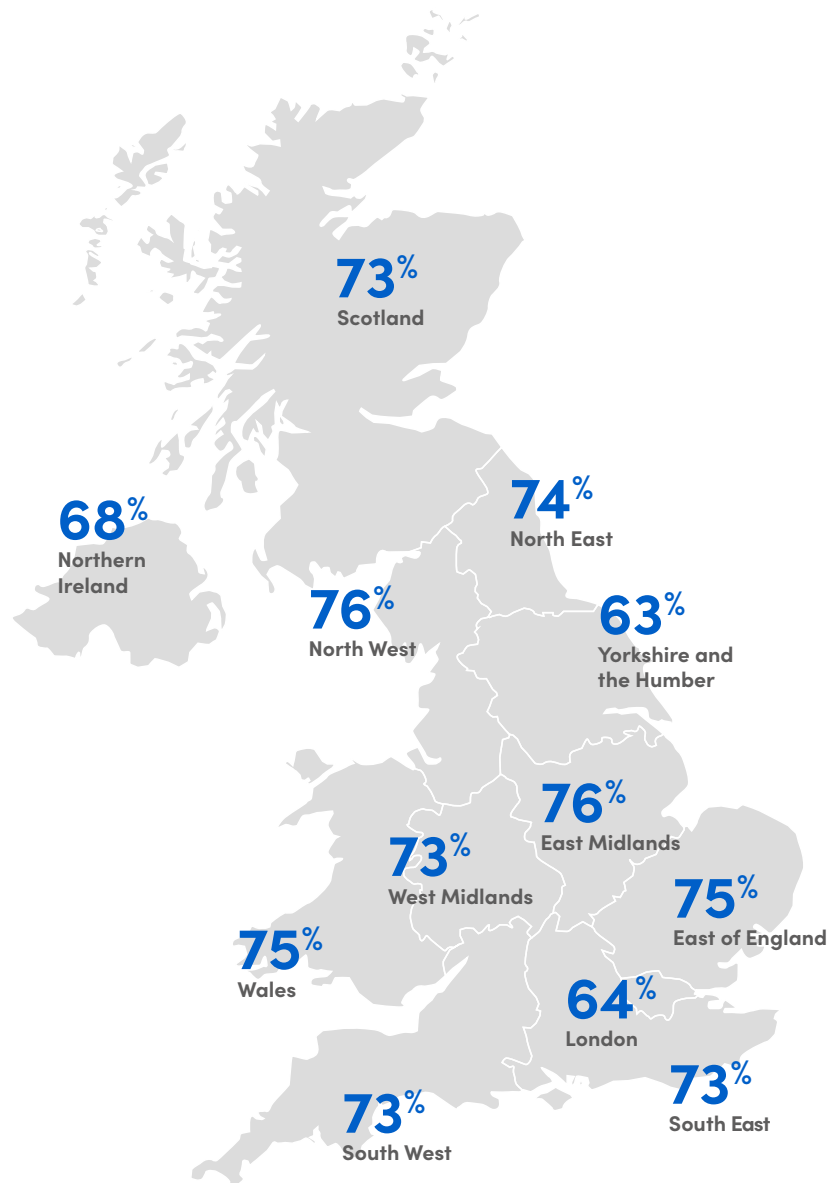
Stress levels of staff by education phase

Primary schools	**77%**
Secondary schools	**76%**
Early years	**76%**
Further education colleges	**65%**
Sixth form colleges	**60%**
Vocational /adult education	**49%**

n. 6

Stress by region

73% Scotland

68% Northern Ireland

74% North East

76% North West

63% Yorkshire and the Humber

76% East Midlands

73% West Midlands

75% Wales

75% East of England

64% London

73% South West

73% South East

n. 7
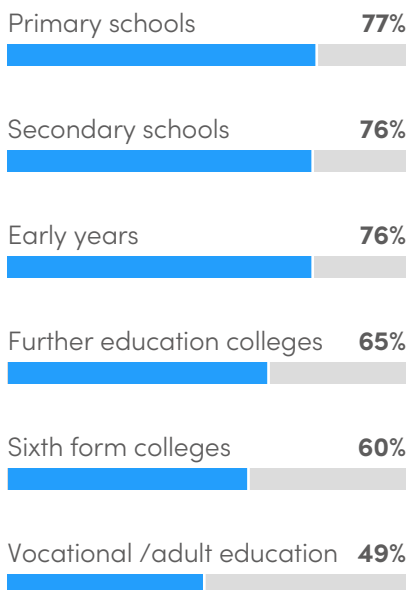
What drives stress?

Stress levels are higher for staff who are not supported well by their organisations.

85% **Not supported well**
by their organisations

n. 8

Stress and longer working hours appear to be closely linked

Stress levels generally seem to increase incrementally with the number of hours typically worked.

81% of those who work **41–60 hours** per week are stressed

93% of those who were **61+ hours** per week are stressed

There appears to be a relationship between presenteeism and stress.

54% of those who are stressed would always turn up to work when ill

n. 9

In 2019/20 stress, depression and anxiety accounted for **51%** of all work-related ill health cases and **55%** of all working days lost due to work-related ill health. (HSE, 2020)[1]

4. Work culture and mental health

There is an increase in school teachers reporting that their organisational culture is having a negative effect on their wellbeing

Percentage of education staff who reported their institution's organisational culture had a **negative effect** on their wellbeing:
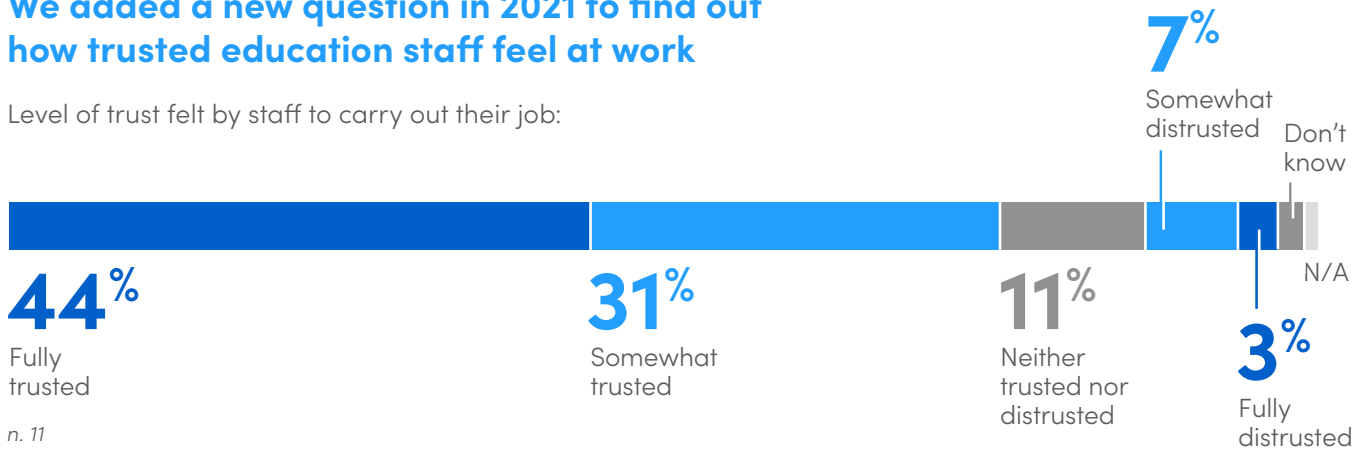
	2020	2021	% change
All staff	**38%**	**42%**	**+5%**
Senior leaders	42%	45%	+3%
School teachers	37%	43%	+6%
Support staff	38%	36%	−3%

Percentage of education staff who reported their institution's organisational culture had a **positive effect** on their wellbeing:

	2020	2021	% change
All staff	**30%**	**26%**	**−4%**
Senior leaders	29%	30%	+1%
School teachers	30%	26%	−5%
Support staff	30%	22%	−8%

n. 10

5. Feeling Trusted

We added a new question in 2021 to find out how trusted education staff feel at work

Level of trust felt by staff to carry out their job:

7%
Somewhat distrusted

Don't know

N/A

44%
Fully trusted

n. 11

31%
Somewhat trusted

11%
Neither trusted nor distrusted

3%
Fully distrusted

Differences were found in the level of trust felt at work

Support staff
felt the most trusted

83% **5%**

Senior leaders

78% **10%**

School teachers

72% **11%**

Trusted
Distrusted

n. 12
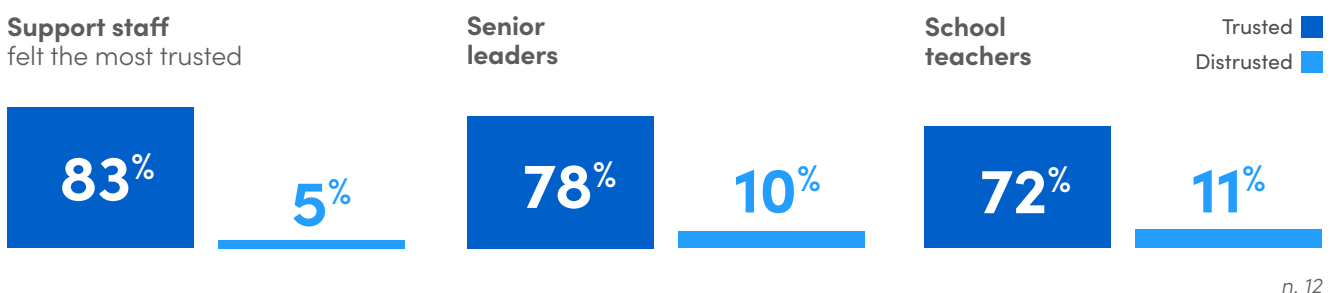
Less than half of all education staff feel fully trusted by their line manager

We asked teachers and education staff how the level of trust affects their mental health and wellbeing. This is what they told us.

47%
Positively

24%
Negatively

21%
It doesn't

9%
Don't know

n. 13
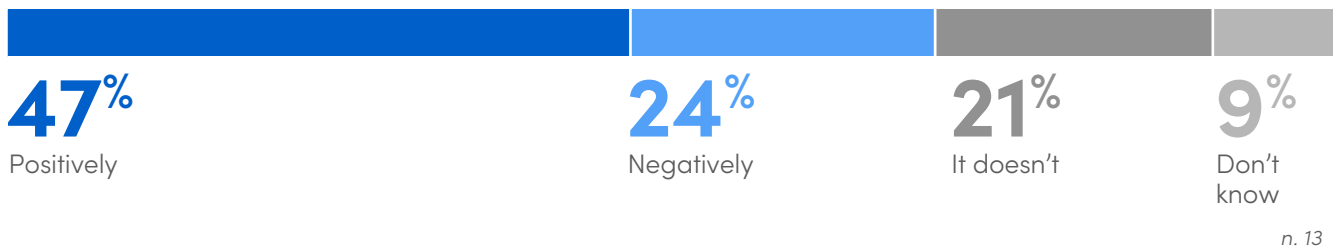
We asked staff whether the level of trust they felt affected their mental health and wellbeing

91%
of those who **felt distrusted** by their line manager felt this distrust negatively affected their wellbeing

60%
of those who **felt trusted** by their line manager felt this trust positively affected their wellbeing

63%
of staff who **felt distrusted** by their line manager always turns up for work when unwell

n. 14

6. Preparing teaching staff to prioritise wellbeing

Three-quarters of teachers think their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses do not prepare them well to manage *their own* wellbeing

We asked teachers how well their ITT courses prepared them to manage their own mental health and wellbeing. We introduced this question in 2020.

74%   **14%**   **12%**

of all teachers felt their ITT   felt well prepared   did not
courses did not prepare them well   by their ITT courses know

n. 15

Senior leaders

2020

85%   **8% 7%**

2021

86%   **8% 6%**

School teachers

2020

72%   **14% 14%**

2021

70%   **16% 14%**
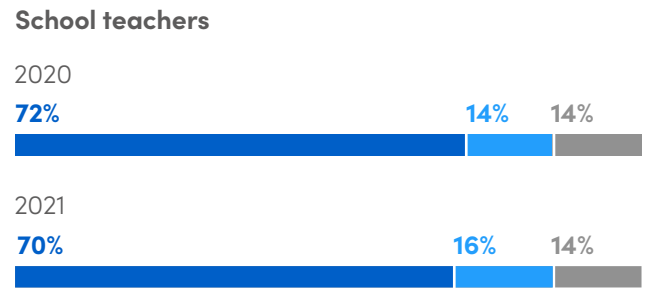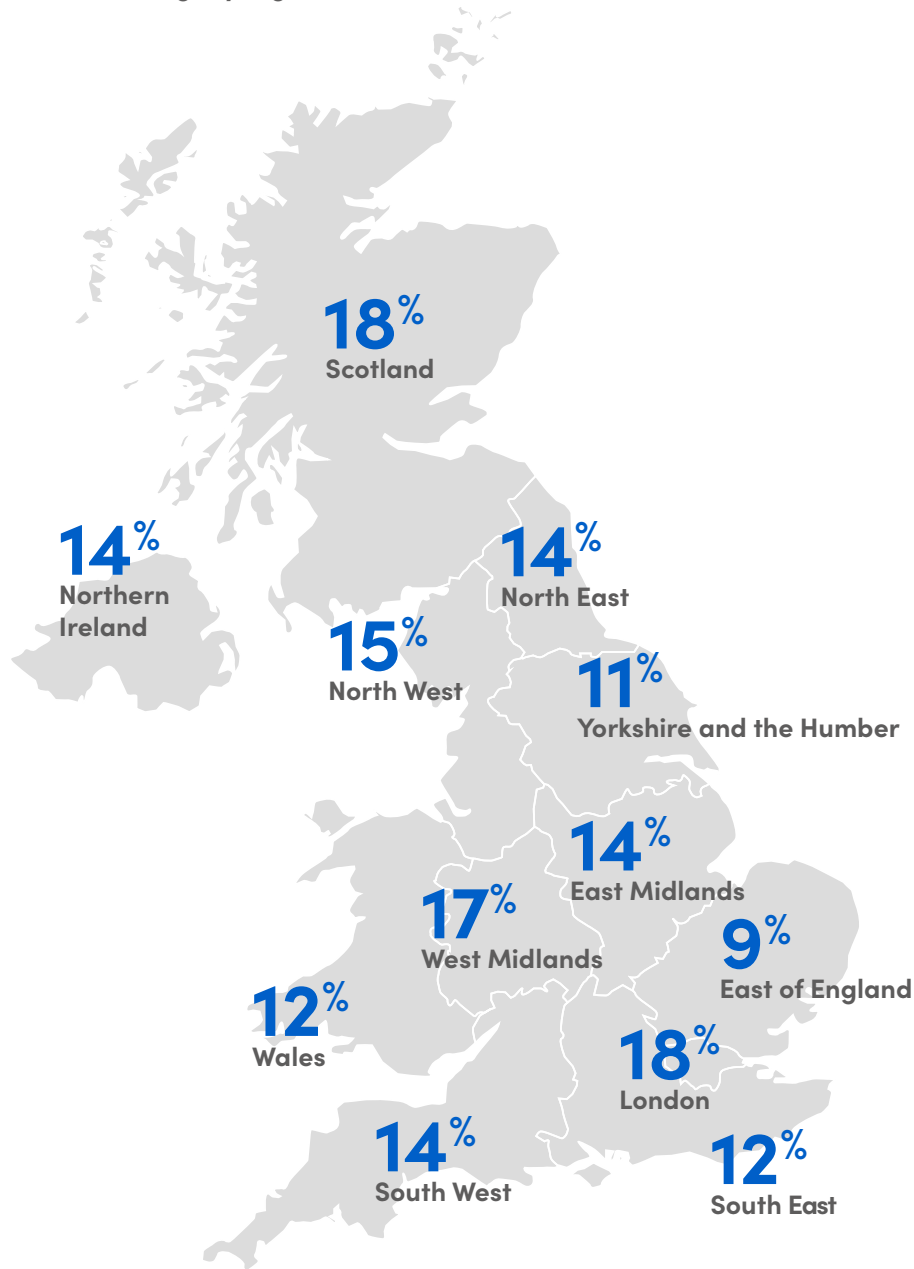
Not well ■   Well ■   Don't know ■

n. 16

School teachers in both 2020 and 2021 felt better prepared than senior leaders to manage their own mental health and wellbeing

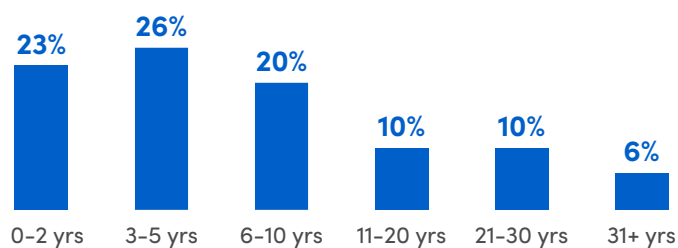# How well ITT courses prepare teachers to manage *their own* wellbeing (continued)

Percentage of teachers who felt their ITT courses prepared them well to manage *their own* wellbeing (by region)

18%
Scotland

14%
Northern Ireland

14%
North East

15%
North West

11%
Yorkshire and the Humber

14%
East Midlands

17%
West Midlands

9%
East of England

12%
Wales

18%
London

14%
South West

12%
South East

n. 17

Percentage of teachers who felt their ITT courses prepared them well to manage their own mental health and wellbeing (by length of service)
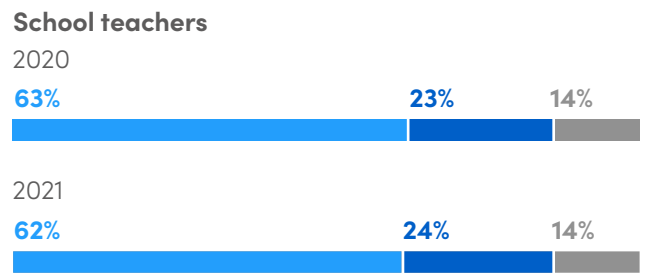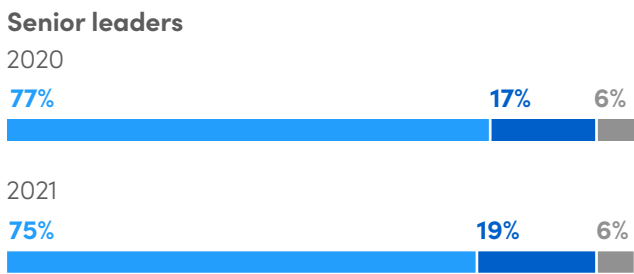
In 2021, teachers working for up to 5 years felt better prepared to prioritise their own wellbeing than those working longer.

0–2 yrs	3–5 yrs	6–10 yrs	11–20 yrs	21–30 yrs	31+ yrs
23%	26%	20%	10%	10%	6%

n. 18

Two-thirds of trainee teachers feel unprepared to manage their *pupils'/students'* wellbeing

Teachers were asked how well their ITT courses prepared them to manage their pupils'/students' mental health and wellbeing.

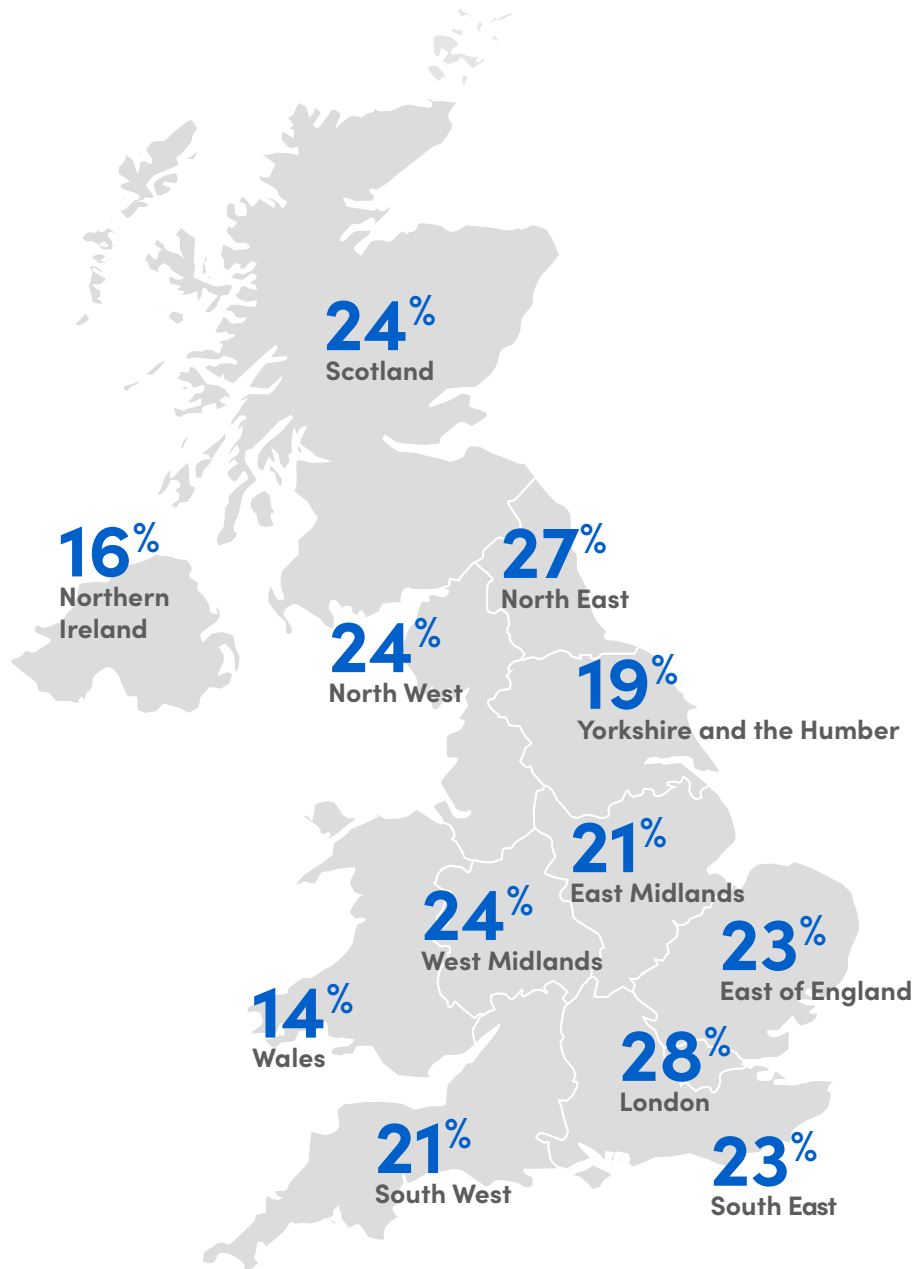**65**%   **23**%   **12**%

of all teachers felt their ITT   felt well prepared   did not
courses did not prepare them well.   by their ITT courses   know

n. 19

Senior leaders   **School teachers**
2020   2020
77%   **17%**   6%   **63%**   **23%**   14%

2021   2021
75%   **19%**   6%   **62%**   **24%**   14%

Not well ■   Well ■   Don't know ■

n. 20

Again, school teachers in both 2021 and 2020 felt better prepared than senior leaders

How well ITT courses prepare teachers to manage their *pupils'/students'* wellbeing (continued)

**Percentage of teachers who felt their ITT courses prepared them well to manage their pupils'/students' mental health and wellbeing (by region)**

24% **Scotland**

16% **Northern Ireland**

27% **North East**

24% **North West**

19% **Yorkshire and the Humber**

21% **East Midlands**

24% **West Midlands**

23% **East of England**

14% **Wales**

28% **London**

21% **South West**

23% **South East**

n.21

Percentage of teachers who felt their ITT courses prepared them well to manage their pupils'/students' mental health and wellbeing: by length of service

In 2021, teachers working up to 5 years considered they were better prepared to manage their pupils' or students' wellbeing than those who had been working for a longer period of time. There is also a variation across the UK regions.

0–2 yrs	3–5 yrs	6–10 yrs	11–20 yrs	21–30 yrs	31+ yrs
33%	37%	29%	20%	16%	13%
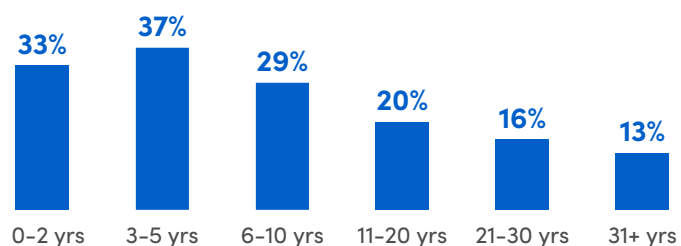
n.22

7. Maintaining a sense of purpose

We asked respondents to reflect on whether a sense of purpose brought them to their career in education, and whether it remains in place.

A clear sense of purpose can help people create meaning in life and re-focus when times are hard. A healthy sense of purpose can help people to thrive and enjoy life. We know that many people working in education are motivated by a clear sense of purpose, but we also know that it's been an incredibly challenging year, so what did they say?

We wanted to understand if teachers

• had a strong sense of purpose when they started working in the education profession

• what were the most important aspects underpinning their sense of purpose

• if they still felt connected to that original sense of purpose

Percentage of staff who had a clear sense of purpose when they started working in the education profession

Senior leaders			School teachers		
79%	**14%**	**6%**	**76%**	**14%**	**9%**
Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know
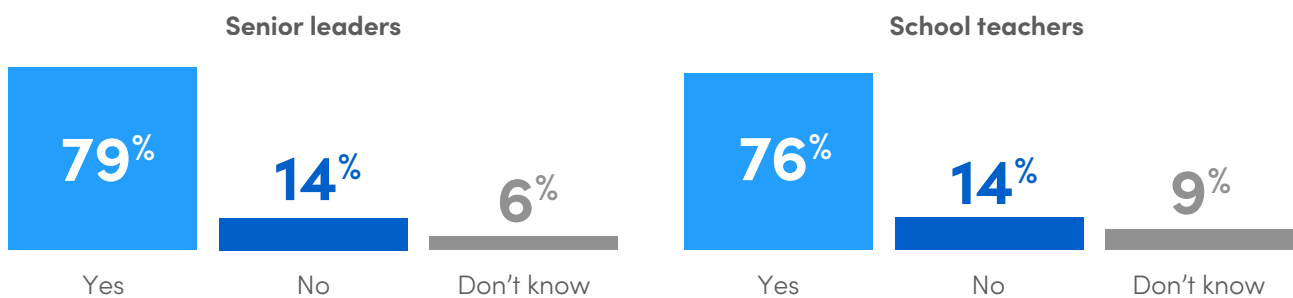
n. 23

More than three-quarters (**77%**) of all teachers have a clear sense of purpose when starting work as educators. Most have kept this sense of purpose during their careers.
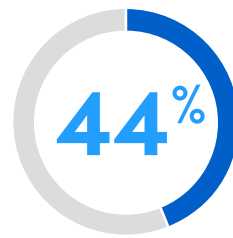
The most important aspects underpinning the sense of purpose were found to be:
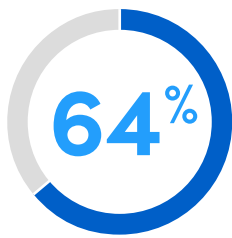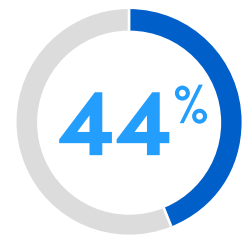
64%
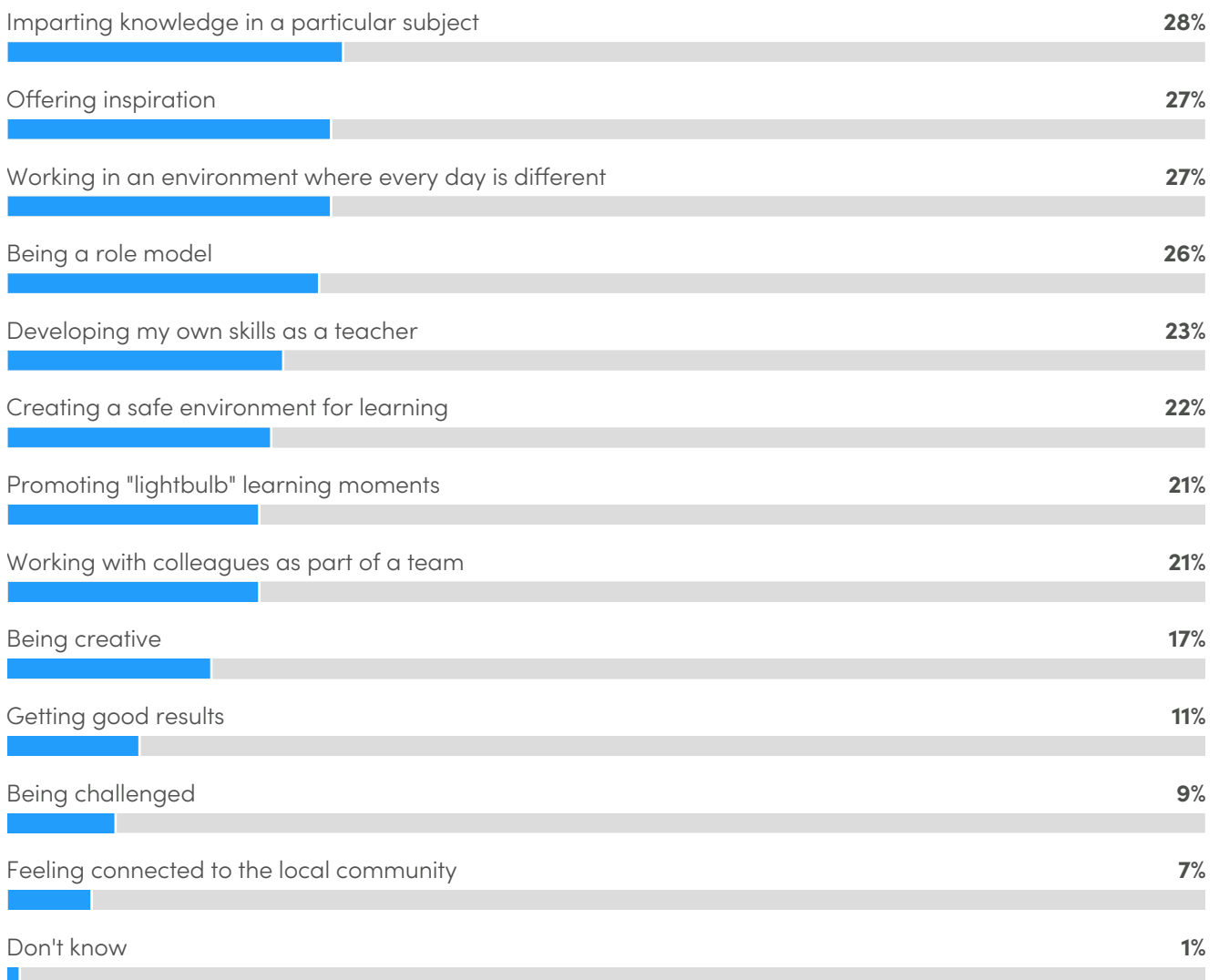Making a difference/impact
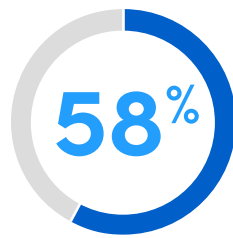
58%
Helping learners progress/achieve their goals

44%
Working with children /young people

44%
Nurturing young learners

The other aspects underpinning the sense of purpose were

Aspect	%
Imparting knowledge in a particular subject	**28%**
Offering inspiration	**27%**
Working in an environment where every day is different	**27%**
Being a role model	**26%**
Developing my own skills as a teacher	**23%**
Creating a safe environment for learning	**22%**
Promoting "lightbulb" learning moments	**21%**
Working with colleagues as part of a team	**21%**
Being creative	**17%**
Getting good results	**11%**
Being challenged	**9%**
Feeling connected to the local community	**7%**
Don't know	**1%**

n. 24

Observations

Small differences were found when the top three purposes were broken down by job role.

The largest percentage point differences between staff in the primary and secondary schools related to:

Making a difference or impact

Senior leaders   **65%**

School teachers   **63%**

Imparting knowledge

Secondary   **45%**

Primary   **9%**

Helping learners progress or achieve their goals

Senior leaders   **56%**

School teachers   **58%**

Nurturing young learners

Secondary   **37%**

Primary   **53%**

Working with children or young people

Senior leaders   **41%**

School teachers   **45%**

Creating a safe environment for learning

Secondary   **18%**

Primary   **28%**

n. 25

Of those who stated having a clear sense of purpose

90% still felt connected to their original sense of purpose always, most or some of the time

n. 26

Sample profile

n. 1   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)*

n. 2   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,308), Senior leaders (n = 770), School teachers (n = 2,214), Support staff (n = 223)*

n. 3   *2021 Base: Well supported (n = 1466), Not well supported (n=1407), 41-60 hours (n = 1442)*

n. 4   *2021 Base: All education professionals (n = 3354)*

n. 5   *Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2251), Support staff (n = 225)*

n. 6   *2021 Base: Primary schools (n = 1417), Secondary schools (n = 1407), Early years (n = 147), Sixth form colleges (N = 87), Further education colleges (n = 142), Vocational/Adult education*

n. 7   *2021 base: East Midlands (n = 257), North West (n = 377), Wales (n = 123), East of England (n = 249), North East (n = 127), West Midlands (n = 319), South East (n = 535), South West (n = 302), Scotland (n = 269), Northern Ireland (n = 65), London (n = 435), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296)*

n. 8   *2021 Base: Well supported (n = 1481), Not well supported (n = 1430)*

n. 9   *2021 Base: 41-60 hours (n = 1461), 61+ (n = 571), Presenteeism and stressed (n = 2483)*

n. 10   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354)*

n. 11   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354)*

n. 12   *2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2251, Support staff (n = 225)*

n. 13   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,223)*

n. 14   *2021 Base: Trusted (n = 2507), Not trusted (n = 367)*

n. 15   *2021 Base: All education professionals (n = 3129)*

n. 16   *2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251)*
        2020 Base: Senior leaders (n = 749), School teachers (n = 2,010)

n. 17   *2021 Base: London (n = 390), Scotland (n = 257), West Midlands (n = 305), North West (n = 349), North East (n = 116), East Midlands (n = 239), South West (n = 285), Northern Ireland (n = 50), South East (n = 507), Wales (n = 116), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 280), East of England (n = 235)*

n. 18   *2021 Base: (0-2 years (n = 111), 3-5 years (n = 347), 6-10 years (n = 637), 11-20 years (n = 1,148), 21-30 years (n = 666), 31+ years (n = 220)*

n. 19   *2021 Base: All education professionals (n = 3129)*

n. 20   *2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251)*
        2020 Base: Senior leaders (n = 749), School teachers (n = 2,010)

n. 21   *2021 Base: London (n = 390), North East (n = 116), North West (n = 349), West Midlands (n = 305), Scotland (n = 257), East of England (n = 235), South East (n = 507), East Midlands (n = 239), South West (n = 285), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 280), Northern Ireland (n = 50), Wales (n = 116)*

n. 22   *2021 Base: 0-2 years (n = 111), 3-5 years (n = 347), 6-10 years (n = 637), 11-20 years (n = 1,148), 21-30 years (n = 666), 31+ years (n = 220)*

n. 23   *2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,240)*

n. 24   *2021 Base: All teaching staff (n = 2,445)*

n. 25   *2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 623), School teachers (n = 1741); 2021 Base: Primary (n = 1070), Secondary (n = 1054)*

n. 26   *2021 Base: All teaching staff (n = 2,445)*

Footnotes

[1]HSE (2020). "Health and Safety Executive – Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain, 2020".
4 November 2020. Available at https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf

The next section explores the mental health of education staff

Section 3

Mental Health of
Education Staff

We asked teachers and education staff about symptoms and signs of poor mental health, the work and personal issues they relate to and who they turn to for help.

Our main findings:

❯ **More than three-quarters (77%) of all staff experienced symptoms of poor health linked to their work**

❯ **Staff reported a seven percent increase in mental health issues in the past academic year**

❯ **The most common symptom of poor mental health is insomnia, or difficulty sleeping**

❯ **Symptoms linked to signs of anxiety and depression are higher than the general population**

❯ **Levels of exhaustion have considerably increased**

❯ **A lack of work-life balance, excessive workload and the Covid-19 pandemic are the three main work issues linked to symptoms of poor mental health**

❯ **Staff experiencing mental health problems at work are most likely to turn to their family and friends for help**

❯ **Family issues, health concerns and financial worries are the three most common personal reasons for symptoms of poor mental health**

❯ **The wellbeing score for staff is 43.90 – lower than last year's Index and lower than the general population scores for England, Scotland and Wales**

1. Mental health issues in the past academic year

We asked all teachers and education staff if they had experienced a mental health issue in the past academic year

38% of teachers and education staff reported experiencing mental health issues in the past academic year **(7% increase on 2020)**
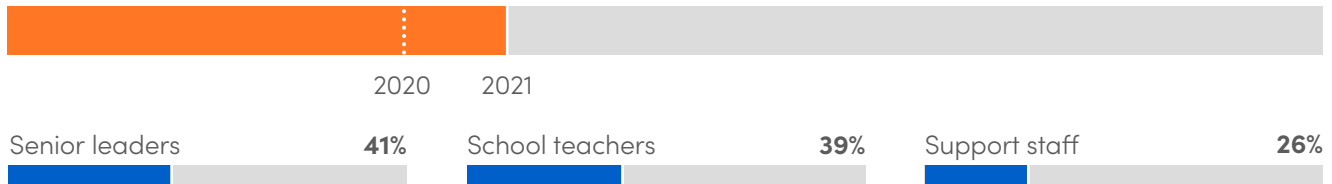
2020   2021

Senior leaders   **41%**

School teachers   **39%**

Support staff   **26%**

n. 1 (All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n. 1 refers to note 1, and so on.)

Staff who had experienced a mental health issue had problems

Whilst working   **27%**

Outside work in their personal life   **13%**

Combination of problems at work and in their personal life   **57%**

n. 2
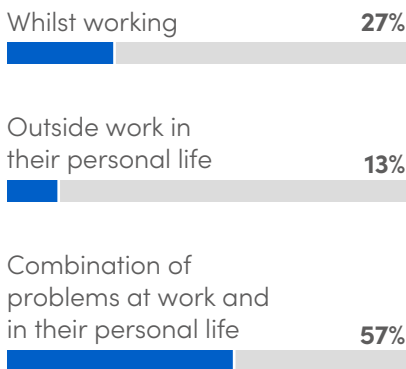
Percentage of staff who experienced any mental health issue in the past year

41% Scotland

42% North East

28% Northern Ireland

47% North West

36% Yorkshire and the Humber

32% East Midlands

39% West Midlands

45% East of England

30% Wales

37% London

n. 3

37% South West

33% South East
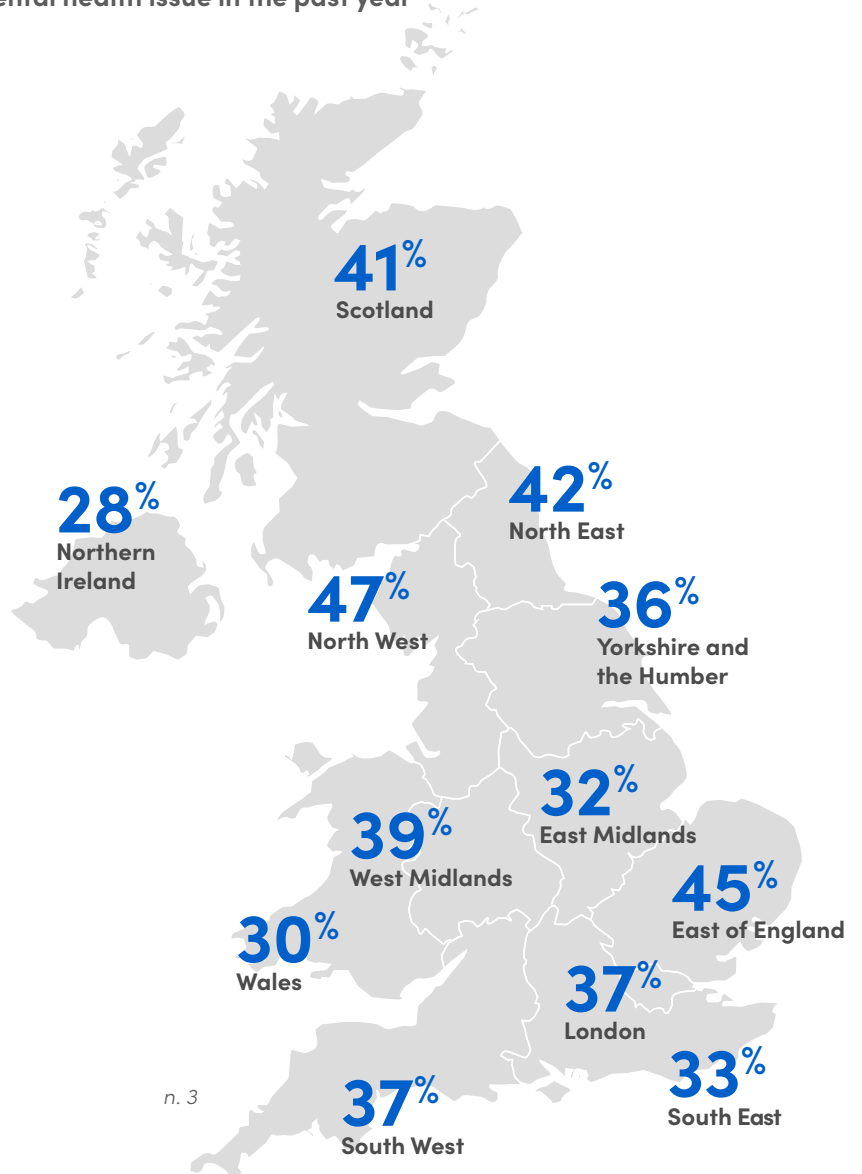
2. Symptoms of poor mental health experienced in the last year

Staff reported experiencing increased symptoms of poor mental health, compared to last year. The most common was insomnia, or difficulty sleeping. *(Note: This question asks all respondents in the 2021 survey for their perceptions relating to both 2021 and 2020.)*

52% experienced insomnia or difficulty sleeping **(13% increase on 2020)**

2020   2021

Symptom	2020	Change
Irritability or mood swings	45%	12% ↗
Difficulty concentrating	44%	19% ↗
Over-eating	44%	12% ↗
Tearfulness	43%	16% ↗
Forgetfulness	40%	16% ↗
Muscle tension	35%	11% ↗
Recurring headaches/migraines	34%	10% ↗
Dizziness	23%	11% ↗
Changes to appetite	22%	9% ↗
Panic attacks	19%	—
High blood pressure	12%	1% ↗
Under-eating	11%	4% ↗
Staff reporting 'none of these'	14%	-5% ↘

n. 4
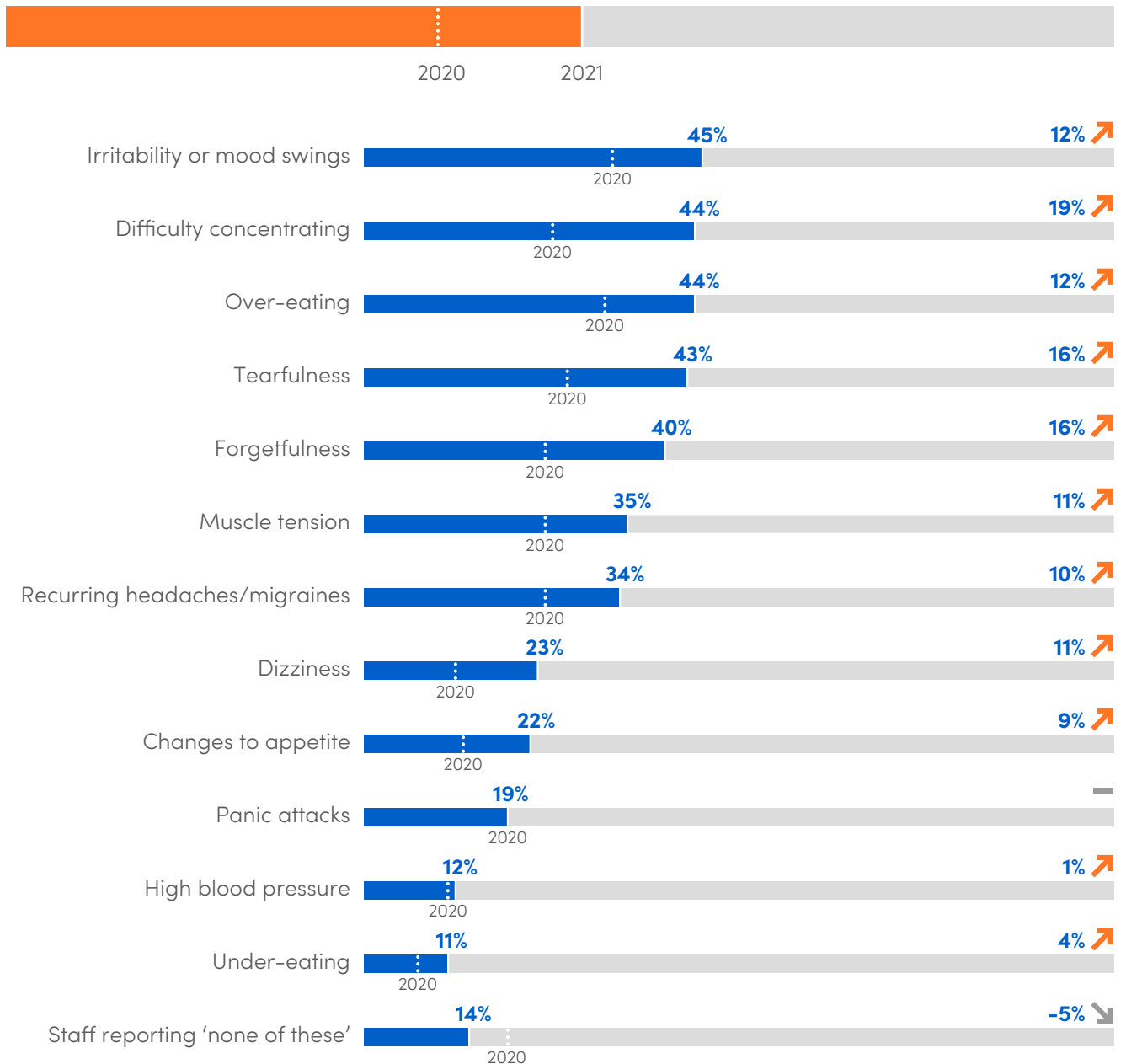
Symptoms by job role in 2021

Insomnia
- Senior leaders: 57%
- School teachers: 51%
- Support staff: 48%

Irritability or mood swings
- Senior leaders: 49%
- School teachers: 45%
- Support staff: 34%

Over-eating
- Senior leaders: 46%
- School teachers: 45%
- Support staff: 29%

Difficulty concentrating
- Senior leaders: 45%
- School teachers: 44%
- Support staff: 42%

Muscle tension
- Senior leaders: 37%
- School teachers: 34%
- Support staff: 32%

Tearfulness
- Senior leaders: 41%
- School teachers: 46%
- Support staff: 28%

Forgetfulness
- Senior leaders: 40%
- School teachers: 41%
- Support staff: 36%

Recurring headaches or migraines
- Senior leaders: 36%
- School teachers: 36%
- Support staff: 22%

Dizziness
- Senior leaders: 22%
- School teachers: 24%
- Support staff: 15%

Changes to appetite
- Senior leaders: 22%
- School teachers: 23%
- Support staff: 15%

Panic attacks
- Senior leaders: 18%
- School teachers: 20%
- Support staff: 13%

Under-eating
- Senior leaders: 11%
- School teachers: 12%
- Support staff: 6%

High blood pressure
- Senior leaders: 12%
- School teachers: 12%
- Support staff: 13%

No symptoms
- Senior leaders: 12%
- School teachers: 14%
- Support staff: 20%

n. 5

Senior leaders
School teachers
Support staff

Senior leaders experienced the highest rates of insomnia or difficulty sleeping. They also experienced slightly higher levels of irritability or mood swings and muscle tension.

School teachers experienced the highest levels of tearfulness. They experienced slightly higher levels of dizziness and panic attacks.

Support staff had the highest levels of experiencing no symptoms.

Symptoms by length of time working in education

Early career staff (working up to 0–2 years) experienced the highest levels of symptoms in seven areas.*

Symptoms	Length of service					
	0–2 yrs	3–5 yrs	6–10 yrs	11–20 yrs	21–30 yrs	31+ yrs
Panic attacks	26%	23%	20%	17%	20%	14%
Dizziness	30%	25%	21%	23%	22%	20%
Changes to appetite	29%	23%	21%	22%	22%	16%
Over-eating	49%	39%	44%	46%	43%	38%
Irritability, mood swings	57%	48%	48%	45%	44%	28%
Tearfulness	50%	43%	44%	45%	42%	27%
Forgetfulness	45%	38%	39%	41%	43%	30%

n. 6

Observations

Staff working more than **60 hours per week** experienced more symptoms than those working 40 hours per week or less.

Staff who indicated their organisations did not support them well experienced more symptoms in all categories than those who indicated their organisations supported them well.

Staff who reported feeling stressed experienced more symptoms than those who were not stressed.

Data is based on percentage point scores which are not statistically significant, with the exception of irritability/mood swings.

3. What do the symptoms mean?

The most common signs of poor mental health that the symptoms could be attributed to were anxiety, exhaustion, depression, burnout and acute stress.

Anxiety

44% of education staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of anxiety

37% of adults in the general population report high levels of anxiety according to the Office for National Statistics in 2020[1]

The signs of anxiety were highest among school teachers

School teachers	**46%**	Senior leaders	**40%**	Support staff	**39%**

n. 7

Exhaustion
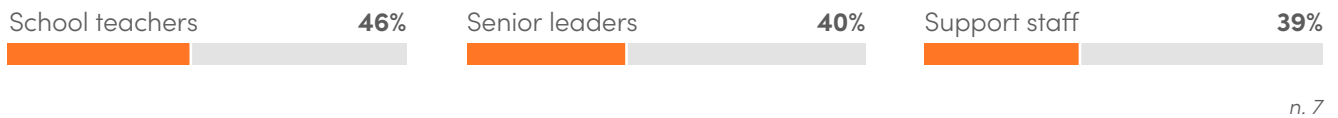
29% of education staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of exhaustion
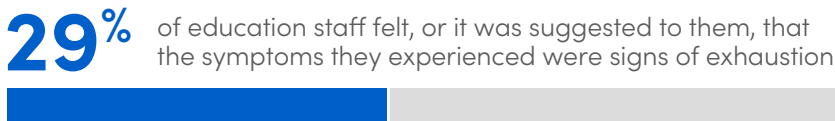
The signs of exhaustion were highest amongst senior leaders

Senior leaders	38%	2020	2021	11% ↗
School teachers	27%	2020	2021	9% ↗
Support staff	21%	2020	2021	4% ↗

n. 8

Depression

28% of education staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of depression

21% of adults in the general population experience some form of depression according to the Office for National Statistics in 2021[2]
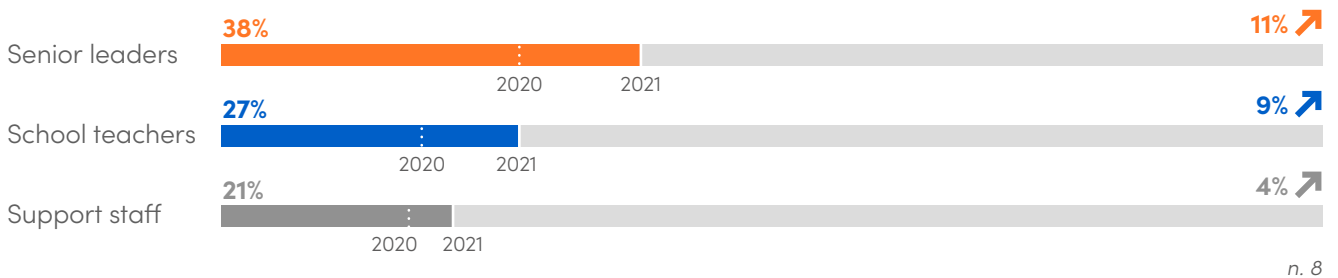
The signs of depression were highest amongst school teachers

Senior leaders	**22%**	School teachers	**30%**	Support staff	**26%**

n. 9
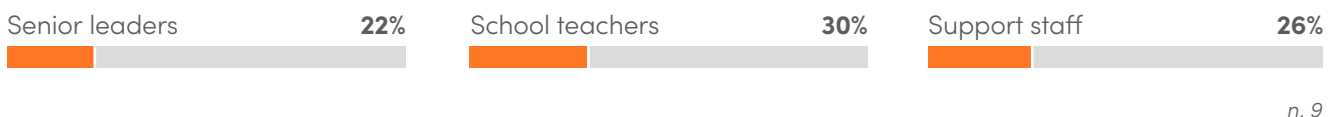
Burnout

24% of education staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of burnout
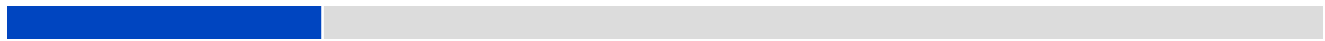
The signs of burnout were highest amongst senior leaders

| Senior leaders | **32%** | School teachers | **22%** | Support staff | **21%** |

n. 10

Acute stress

20% of education staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of acute stress

The signs of acute stress were highest amongst senior leaders

School teachers — **19%**   2020   2021   ↗**3%**

Senior leaders — **28%**   2020   2021   ↗**5%**

Support staff — **19%**   2020   2021   ↗**1%**
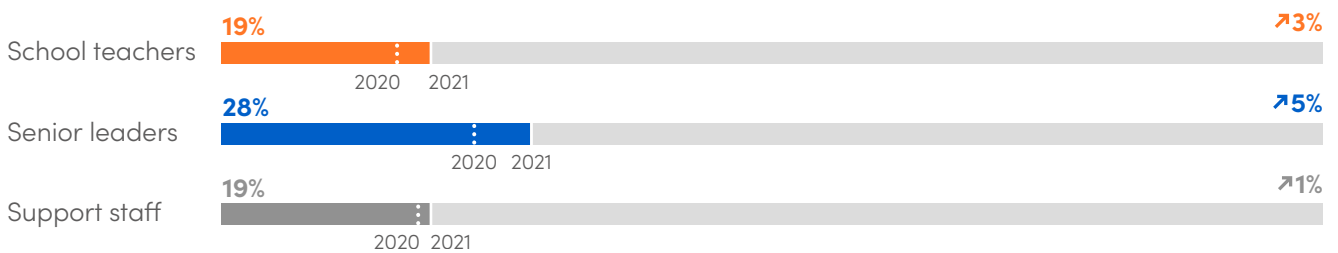
n. 11

9,570

calls to Education Support's free and confidential helpline in 2020-21[3]

Formal diagnosis

Many of the staff who exhibited signs went on to consult with their General Practitioner (GP), or doctor, for a diagnosis. Support staff have not been included in the breakdowns below due to the small sample set.

Anxiety

44% were diagnosed

Senior leaders	47%
School teachers	45%

Exhaustion

10% were diagnosed

Senior leaders	13%
School teachers	9%

Depression

54% were diagnosed

Senior leaders	46%
School teachers	59%

Burnout[4]

9% were diagnosed

Senior leaders	8%
School teachers	8%

Acute stress

22% were diagnosed

Senior leaders	20%
School teachers	24%

n. 12

4. Levels of resilience

Levels of staff resilience
(their ability to adapt and recover after experiencing difficulties or challenges in life)
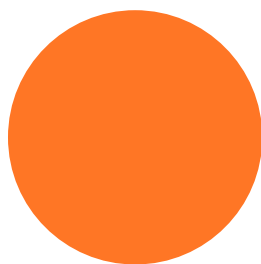
62% stated as having very or fairly high resilience
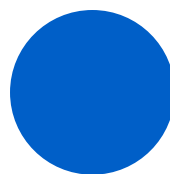
26% medium resilience

11% fairly low or very low resilience

Of those with very or fairly high resilience:

Senior leaders	73%	School teachers	58%	Support staff	62%

n. 13

Staff with low levels of resilience were more prone to experience signs of mental ill–health

Level of resilience

High   Medium   Low

	Depression	Anxiety	Exhaustion	Acute Stress	Burnout
High	20%	35%	28%	20%	24%
Medium	33%	54%	25%	18%	20%
Low	53%	64%	41%	31%	36%

n. 14
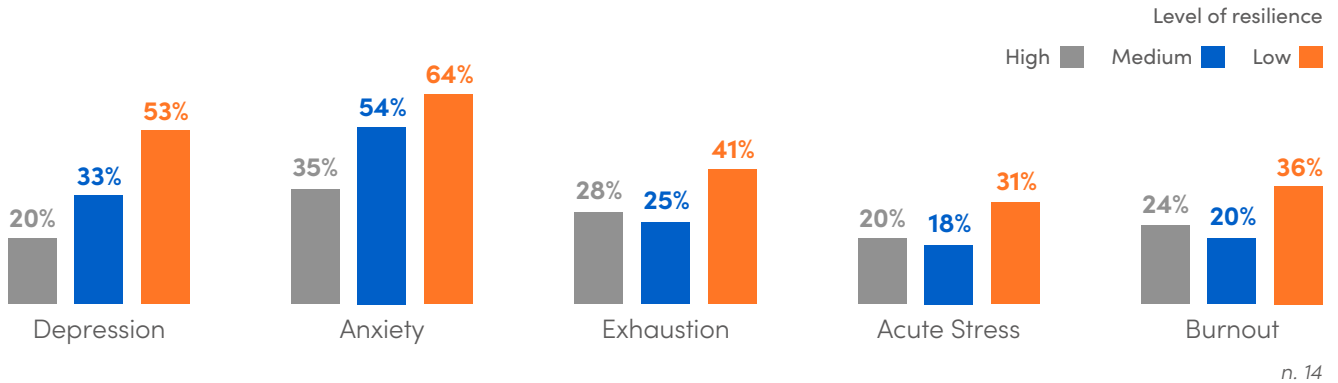
5. Symptoms of poor mental health due to work

77% of all staff experienced at least one behavioural, psychological or physical symptom linked to their work **(3% increase on 2020)**

2020 2021

Behavioural symptoms

(eg changes to appetite, irritability, procrastination, mood swings)

4% ↗

Increased by **4%** from last year to **58%**. They were the most common type of symptoms

Psychological symptoms

(eg depression, anxiety, panic attacks)

2% ↗

Increased by **2%** from last year to **51%***

Physical symptoms

(eg raised blood pressure, muscle tension, sweating, dizziness, headaches or migraines)

4% ↗

Increased by **4%** from last year to **51%**

Symptoms of poor mental health due to work – by job role

Senior leaders	84%	School teachers	77%	Support staff	67%

n. 15

Not statistically significant

Observations

Staff who were stressed were more likely to experience symptoms than those who were not stressed.

Staff who felt well supported by their organisation were less likely to experience symptoms than those who were not well supported.

Stressed staff experienced the most physical symptoms, followed by behavioural and psychological symptoms.

Staff who felt trusted were less likely to experience symptoms than those who were not trusted.

We asked staff who had experienced behavioural, psychological or physical symptoms linked to their work about its impact

45% Work performance suffered

Senior leaders	**47%**
School teachers	**46%**
Support staff	**39%**

43% Personal relationships suffered

Senior leaders	**52%**
School teachers	**41%**
Support staff	**28%**

26% Work relationships suffered

Senior leaders	**30%**
School teachers	**24%**
Support staff	**28%**

24% Taking time off work

Senior leaders	**19%**
School teachers	**27%**
Support staff	**18%**

23% None of these

Senior leaders	**21%**
School teachers	**24%**
Support staff	**27%**

12% Felt they had to leave their job

Senior leaders	**6%**
School teachers	**14%**
Support staff	**11%**

11% Felt suicidal

Senior leaders	**11%**
School teachers	**11%**
Support staff	**6%**

7% Personal relationships broke down

Senior leaders	**8%**
School teachers	**7%**
Support staff	**3%**

n. 16

6. Symptoms related to work issues

The most common work-related issues for staff who had experienced symptoms were work-life balance, excessive workload and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Work-life balance

66%

Senior leaders	**78%**
School teachers	**63%**
Support staff	**49%**

Excessive workload

64%

Senior leaders	**78%**
School teachers	**58%**
Support staff	**64%**

Covid-19 pandemic

62%

Senior leaders	**63%**
School teachers	**61%**
Support staff	**62%**

n. 17

7. How do teachers and education staff seek support?

Teachers and education staff who experienced mental health problems at work sought support from four main sources – their family and friends, their partner or spouse, their GP, the NHS or Health professionals, and their peers or colleagues.

Family and friends

44%

Senior leaders	41%
School teachers	46%
Support staff	32%

Partner or spouse

36%

Senior leaders	42%
School teachers	35%
Support staff	34%

GP, NHS or Health professionals

25%

Senior leaders	21%
School teachers	28%
Support staff	17%

Peers or colleagues

24%

Senior leaders	24%
School teachers	25%
Support staff	16%

n. 18

8. Personal issues which are linked to the symptoms of poor mental health

The three most common personal reasons for symptoms of poor mental health were family issues, health concerns and financial worries.

Personal issues linked to symptoms of poor mental health*

Senior leaders ■ School teachers ■ Support staff ■

n. 19

	Family issues	Health concerns	None of these	Financial worries	Other	Trauma	Bereavement	Housing Problems	Problems with neighbours
Senior leaders	42%	27%	19%	19%	16%	13%	10%	7%	7%
School teachers	48%	37%	11%	31%	15%	21%	20%	10%	6%
Support staff	37%	34%	19%	28%	28%	11%	6%	13%	4%
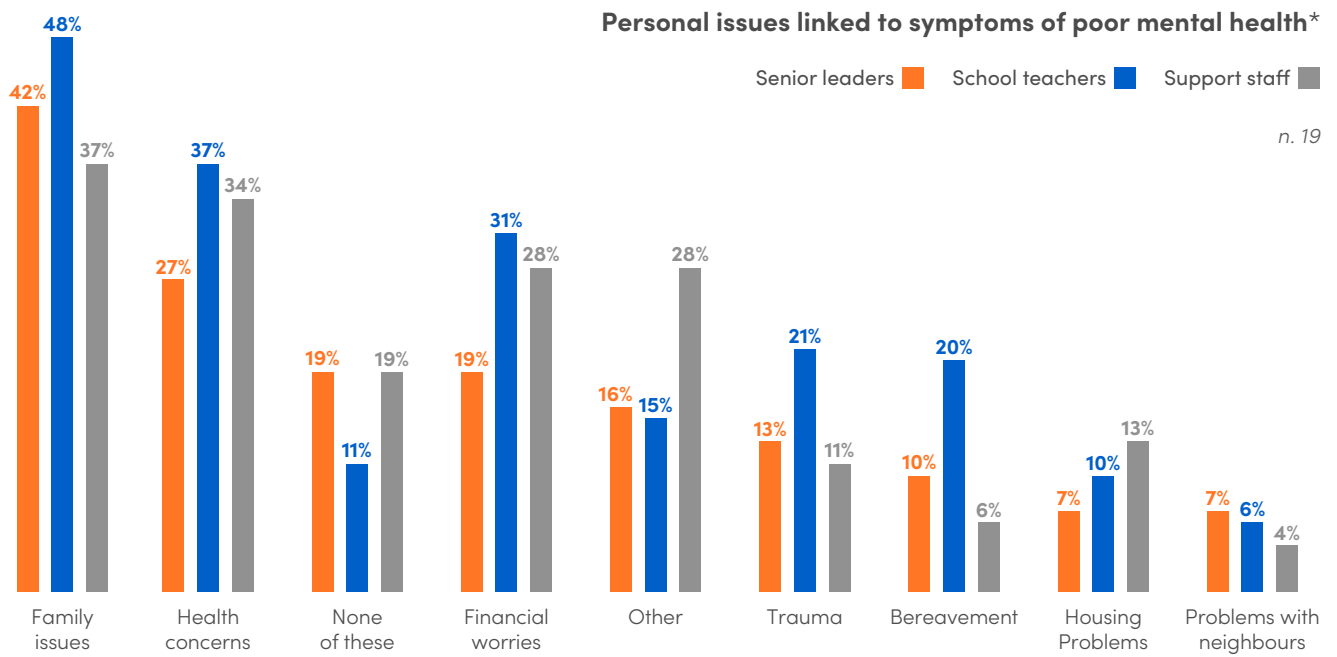
In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, Education Support received **726** grant applications from education staff in financial difficulties. The most prevalent issue was housing.[5]

*Due to small dataset for support staff, the findings can only be treated as indicative

9. Wellbeing scores

We use an established questionnaire to determine the wellbeing score for teachers and education staff, namely the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). To understand more about this, go to Appendix [D].

Scores below 40 suggest an individual could be at high risk of major depression and should be advised to seek help (Taggart et al, 2015)[6].

Those with scores between 41 and 45 should be considered at high risk of psychological distress and increased risk of depression.

The overall wellbeing score of the education workforce was

43.90 ↘

(**3%** decrease on 2020)

This score is lower than the scores recorded by this Index in both 2020 and 2019

2019	**44.7**
2020	**45.7**
2021	**43.9**
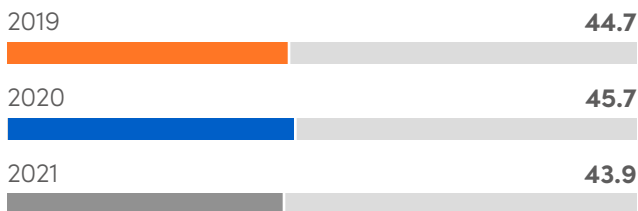
The full scores for 2021 and 2020 can be found in Appendix D.

In addition to the overall score, other findings include:

10% ↘ **(29% to 18%)**

decrease in respondents saying they feel relaxed all of the time or often (Q3)

9% ↘ **(52% to 44%)**

decrease in respondents saying they have been thinking clearly all of the time or often (Q7)

8% ↘ **(56% to 48%)**

decrease in the number of respondents saying they have felt loved all of the time or often (Q12)

n. 20

Comparisons with published wellbeing data for the UK adult population

National WEMWBS scores are available for the adult populations in England[7], Scotland[8] and Wales[9]. When the scores from the Teacher Wellbeing Index are compared with the most recent nationally available scores for 2021, they are found to be much lower[10].

National Teacher Wellbeing Index Score

43.90

Scotland

43.97

49.40

Northern Ireland

47.26

N/A

Wales

44.30

51.40

England

43.79

52.40

■ Teacher Wellbeing Index score

□ National Adult Population score

Country and regional comparisons – 2021

Staff working in Northern Ireland were found to have the highest wellbeing scores, followed by staff working in Wales. Staff working in Scotland and England had broadly similar results.

On a regional basis, we found the highest wellbeing in South West and South East, and the lowest wellbeing in the West Midlands and the North West.

43.44 North East

43.33 Yorkshire and the Humber

42.58 North West

43.88 East Midlands

42.94 West Midlands

43.95 East of England

43.59 London

45.36 South West

44.82 South East
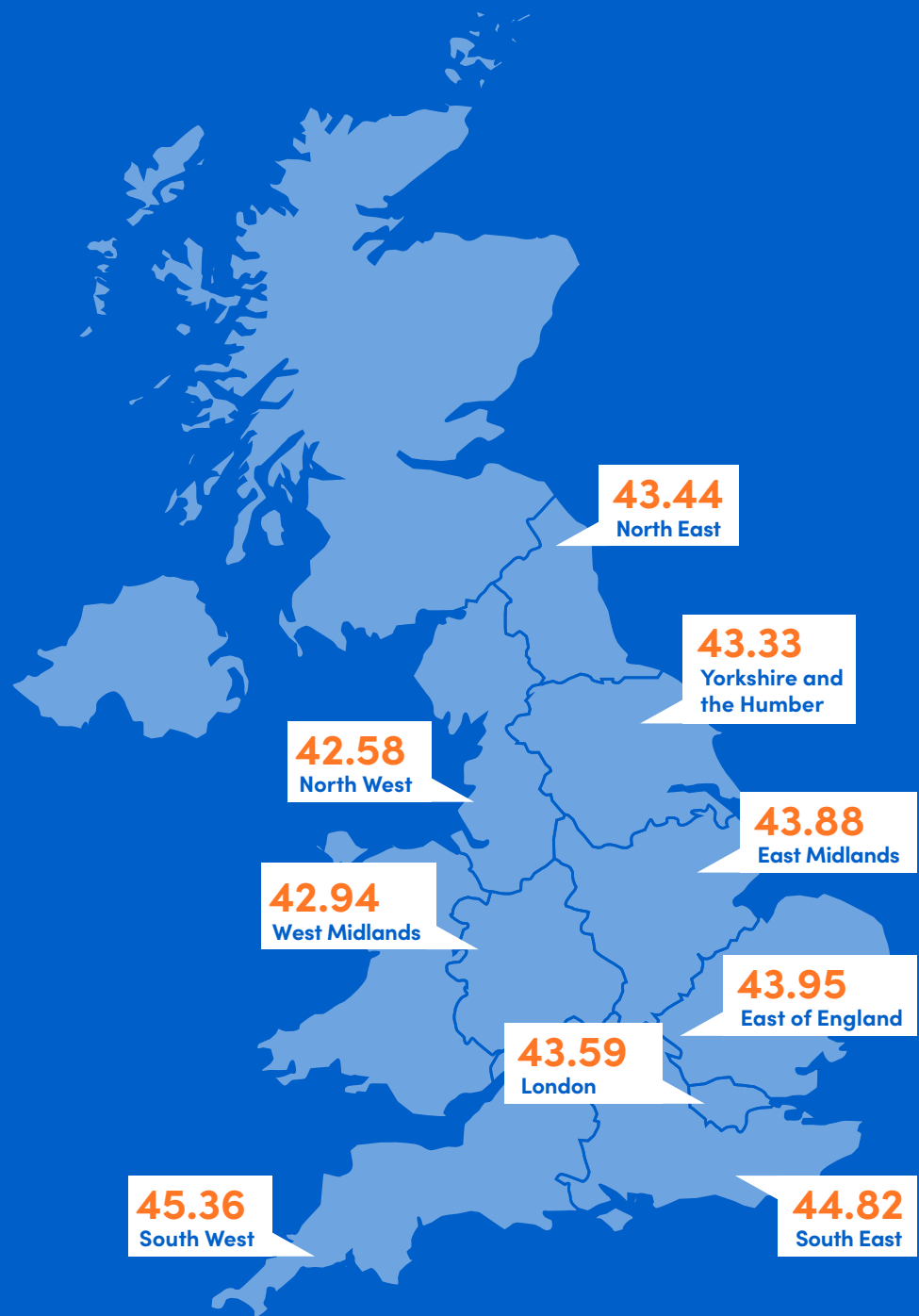
n. 21

n. 22

Over the past three years, we found that the wellbeing of staff working in Northern Ireland has improved, while the wellbeing of staff working in the other nations has declined.

Teacher Wellbeing Index WEMWBS Scores by country 2019–2021
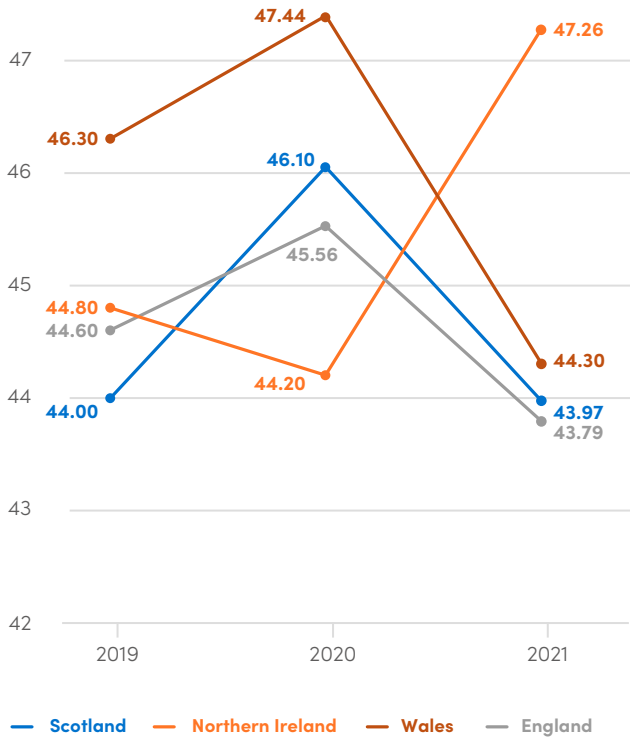
n. 23

We have found that the wellbeing of staff working in the English regions is now lower in 2021 than in 2020 and 2019.

WEMWBS Scores by English Region 2019–2021
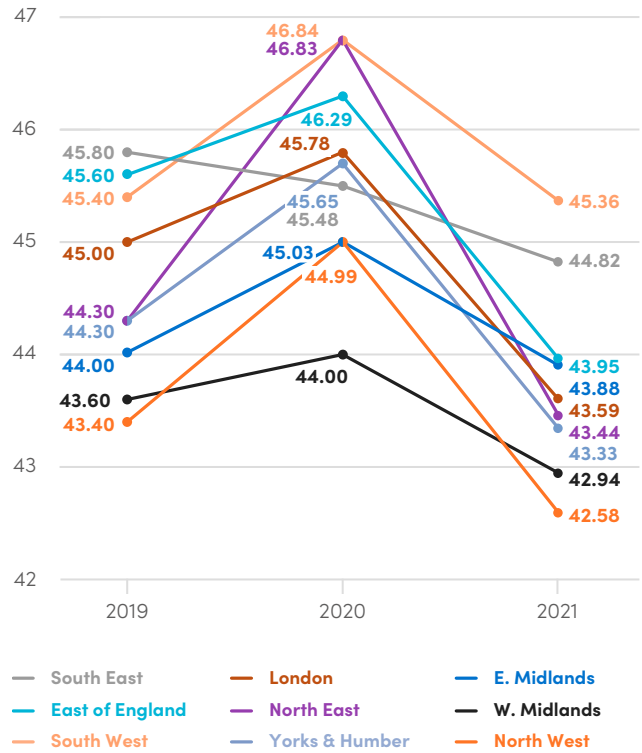
n. 24

Comparison by job role

In the last three years, the wellbeing of senior leaders and school teachers rose in 2020, but in 2021 dropped lower than 2019 levels. The wellbeing of support staff also rose in 2020, but in 2021 was marginally higher than in 2019.

WEMWBS Scores by Job Role 2019–2021

Legend:
— Senior Leaders — School Teachers — Support Staff

n. 25
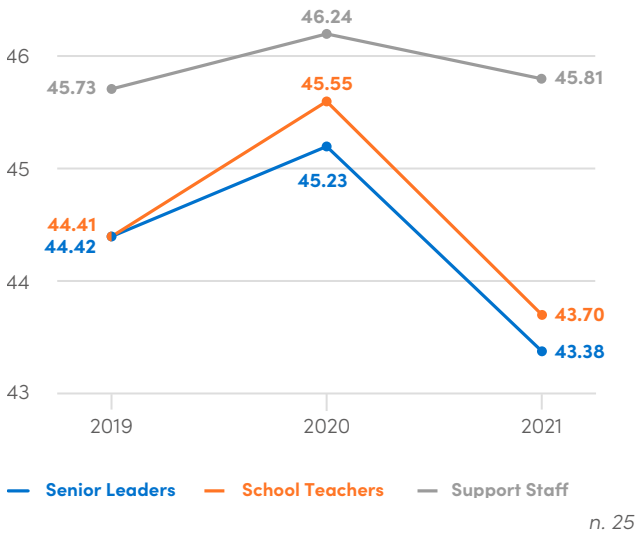
Comparison by education phase

The wellbeing of staff working in the early years, primary, secondary, sixth form college, further education and vocational education sectors is now lower in 2021 than 2020 and 2019. Staff working in the adult education sector showed a marginal improvement on both 2020 and 2019 levels, and staff working in other sectors an improvement but it was not as high as in 2020.

WEMWBS Scores by Education Sector 2019–2021

Legend:
— Early Years — Primary Ed — Adult Ed
-- Vocational Ed — Further Ed — Secondary Ed
— Other — Sixth Form

n. 26
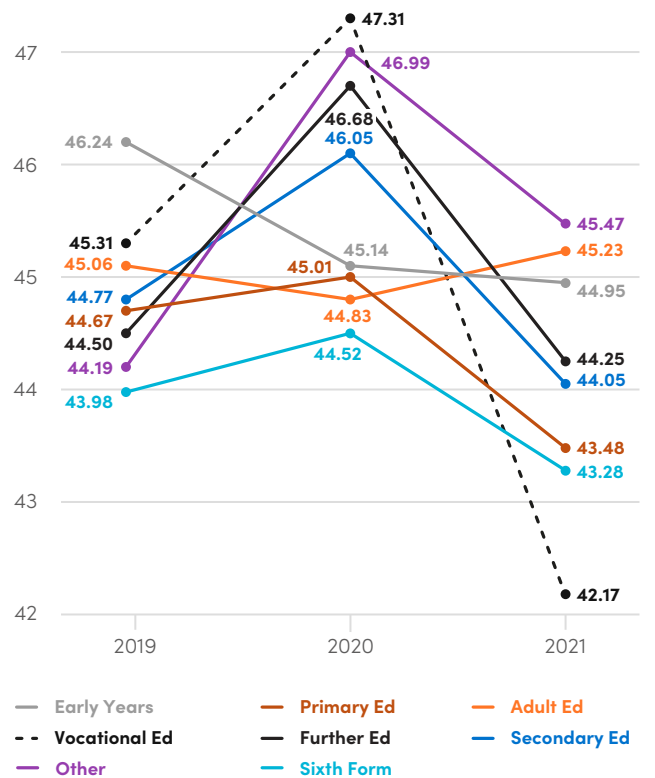
Observations

32.9% of staff had a WEMWBS score of **40** or below, which indicates probable depression.

Staff working for **31+** years had the highest WEMWBS score **(45.25)** and staff working **6–10** years the lowest **(43.24)**.

Staff who consider they are well supported by their organisation have a higher WEMWBS score **(46.94)** than those who consider they are not well supported **(40.75)** by their organisation.

Staff who are stressed have a much lower WEMWBS score than staff who are not stressed (**41.71** compared to **49.63** who are not stressed – the latter is much closer to the national average figures).

Staff who felt trusted at work have a higher WEMWBS score **(45.47)** than those who feel distrusted **(36.78)** at work.

Staff who rate themselves with higher levels of resilience, also have a higher WEMWBS score (**46.82**) when compared to those with medium **(41.15)** or low levels of resilience **(33.91)**.

Sample profile

n.1   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,318), Senior leaders (n = 771), School teachers (n = 2,224), Support staff (n = 221)*

n. 2   *2021 Base Where the problem was: All education professionals (n = 1,258)*

n. 3   *2021 Base: 2021 base: East Midlands (n = 257), North West (n = 377), Wales (n = 123), East of England (n = 249), North East (n = 127), West Midlands (n = 319), South East (n = 535), South West (n = 302), Scotland (n = 269), Northern Ireland (n = 65), London (n = 435), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296)*

n. 4   *2021 Base: All education staff in the last year (n = 3,077), in the last two years (n = 2,480)*

n. 5   *2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 717), School teachers (n = 2,065), Support staff (n = 202)*

n. 6   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,077): 0-2 years (n = 114), 3-5 years (n = 347), 6-10 years (n = 624), 11-20 years (1,129), 21-30 years (n = 647), 31+ years (n = 216)*

n. 7   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,006), Senior leaders (n = 469), School teachers (n = 1,347), Support staff (n = 125)*

n. 8   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,006), Senior leaders (n = 469), School teachers (n = 1,347), Support staff (n = 125)*

n. 9   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,006), Senior leaders (n = 469), School teachers (n = 1,347), Support staff (n = 125)*

n. 10   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,006), Senior leaders (n = 469), School teachers (n = 1,347), Support staff (n = 125)*

n. 11   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,006), Senior leaders (n = 469), School teachers (n = 1,347), Support staff (n = 125)*

n. 12   *2021 Base: Anxiety (n = 866), Exhaustion (n = 595), Depression (n = 536), Burnout (n = 484), Acute stress (n = 413)*

n. 13   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251). Support staff (n = 225)*

n. 14   *2021 Base: High resilience (n = 1,202), Medium resilience (n = 538), Low resilience (n = 250)*

n. 15   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,257), Senior leaders (n = 761), School teachers (n = 2,178), Support staff (n = 218)*

n. 16   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,505), Senior leaders (n = 629), School teachers (n = 1,663), Support staff (n = 142)*

n. 17   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 1,062), Senior leaders (n = 282), School teachers (n = 693), Support staff (n = 51)*

n. 18   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,505), Senior leaders (n = 632), School teachers (n = 1,658), Support staff (n = 143)*

n. 19   *2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 179), School teachers (n = 576), Support staff (n = 49)*

n. 20   *2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354); 2020 Base: All education Staff (3,034), 2019 Base: All education staff (3,019)*

n. 21   *2021 Base: England (n = 2,897), Wales (n = 123), Scotland (n = 269), Northern Ireland (n = 65)*

n. 22   *2021 Base: North East (n = 127), North West (n = 377), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296), East of England (n = 249), West Midlands (n = 319), East Midlands (n = 257), London (n = 435), South East (n = 535), South West (n = 302)*

n. 23   *2021 Base: England (n = 2,897), Wales (n = 123), Scotland (n = 269), Northern Ireland (n = 65)*

n. 24   *2021 Base: North East (n = 127), North West (n = 377), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296), East of England (n = 249), West Midlands (n = 319), East Midlands (n = 257), London (n = 435), South East (n = 535), South West (n = 302)*
2020 Base: North East (n = 116), North West (n = 349), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 263), East of England (n = 254), West Midlands (n = 278), East Midlands (n = 243), London (n = 330), South East (n = 513), South West (n = 286),
2019 Base: North East (n = 135), North West (n = 367), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 290), East of England (n = 237), West Midlands (n = 277), East Midlands (n = 228), London (n = 326), South East (n = 462), South West (n = 280),

n. 25   *2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)*
2020 Base: Senior leaders (n = 749), School teachers (n = 2,010), Support staff (n = 184)
2019 Base: Senior leaders (n = 545), School teachers (n = 1,842), Support staff (n = 474)

n. 26   *2021 Base: Early years (n = 147), Primary (n = 1,417), Secondary (n = 1,407), Sixth form college (n = 87), Further education (n = 142), Adult education (n = 43), Vocational education (n = 12), Other (n = 99)*

Footnotes

[1] ONS (2020). "Coronavirus and anxiety Great Britain: 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020". Office for National Statistics. Release date 15 June 2020. Available at https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/coronavirusandanxietygreatbritain/3april2020to10may2020/

[2] ONS (2021B). "Coronavirus and depression in adults, Great Britain: January to March 2021". Office for National Statistics. Release date 5 May 2021 https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/coronavirusanddepressioninadultsgreatbritain/januarytomarch2021/

[3] Education Support (2021). "Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts – for the year ended 31 March 2021". Available at https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/yrib5iwi/education-support-annual-report-2021-final-september-2021.pdf

[4] Although burnout is not a medically diagnosable mental disorder, it is an occupational condition. Therefore, GPs can still make an assessment on a patient having burnout.

[5] Education Support (2021). "Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts – for the year ended 31 March 2021". Available at https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/media/yrib5iwi/education-support-annual-report-2021-final-september-2021.pdf

[6] Taggart, F et al (2015). "Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)". User Guide – Version 2. Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick and NHS Scotland.

[7] The 2019 national WEMWBS score for England is 51.4, as communicated to Education Support by NHS Digital's Lifestyles Team on 23 August 2021.

[8] Scottish Government (2020). "The Scottish Health Survey Dashboard, September 2020. Available at https://scotland.shinyapps.io/sg-scottish-health-survey/

[9] Welsh Government (2019). "National Survey for Wales". StatsWales. September 2019. Available at http://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Population-Health/Mental-Health-and-Wellbeing/

[10] The 2019 national WEMWBS score for England is 51.4, as communicated to Education Support by NHS Digital's Lifestyles Team on 23 August 2021.

The next section explores issues relating to staff retention

Section 4

Staff Retention

We asked teachers and education staff if they have considered leaving their jobs and the reasons for this. We also explored the work relationships which are most detrimental to mental health and wellbeing. We asked how the mental health of the workforce could be improved.

Our main findings:

❯ **54% of all staff have considered leaving the education sector in the last two years (63% of senior leaders and 53% of school teachers)**

❯ **Volume of workload was the main reason for staff wanting to leave their jobs**

❯ **Staff relationships with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is the relationship which affects staff wellbeing most negatively**

❯ **Managers working with their staff to reduce workload is seen as the best approach for improving the mental health of the workforce**

1. Staff considering leaving the education sector

What mental health pressures have caused staff to consider leaving the education sector in the last two years?

54% of all staff have considered leaving the sector in the last 2 years **(2% increase on 2020)**

2020 2021

Differences were found in staff considering leaving the education sector by job role

| Senior leaders | **63%** | School teachers | **53%** | Support staff | **41%** |

n. 1 (All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n. 1 refers to note 1, and so on.)

Differences were also found by sector and UK region

Percentage of staff who had considered leaving in the last two years by sector

Early years	**52%**
Primary schools	**56%**
Secondary schools	**57%**
Sixth form colleges	**52%**
Further education	**46%**
Vocational /adult education	**42%**

n. 2
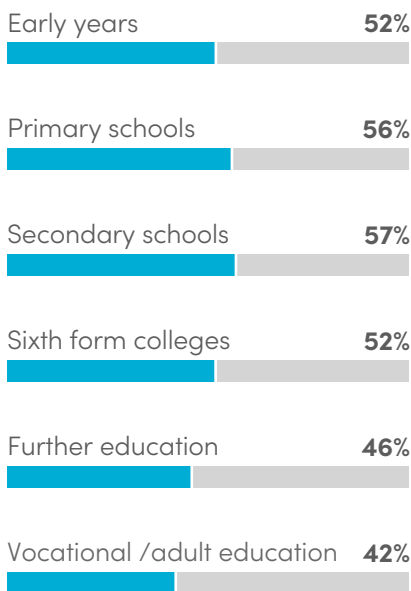
Percentage of staff who had considered leaving in the last two years by region

53% Scotland

31% Northern Ireland

58% North East

60% North West

51% Yorkshire and the Humber

51% East Midlands

57% West Midlands

55% East of England

50% Wales

53% London

52% South East

53% South West
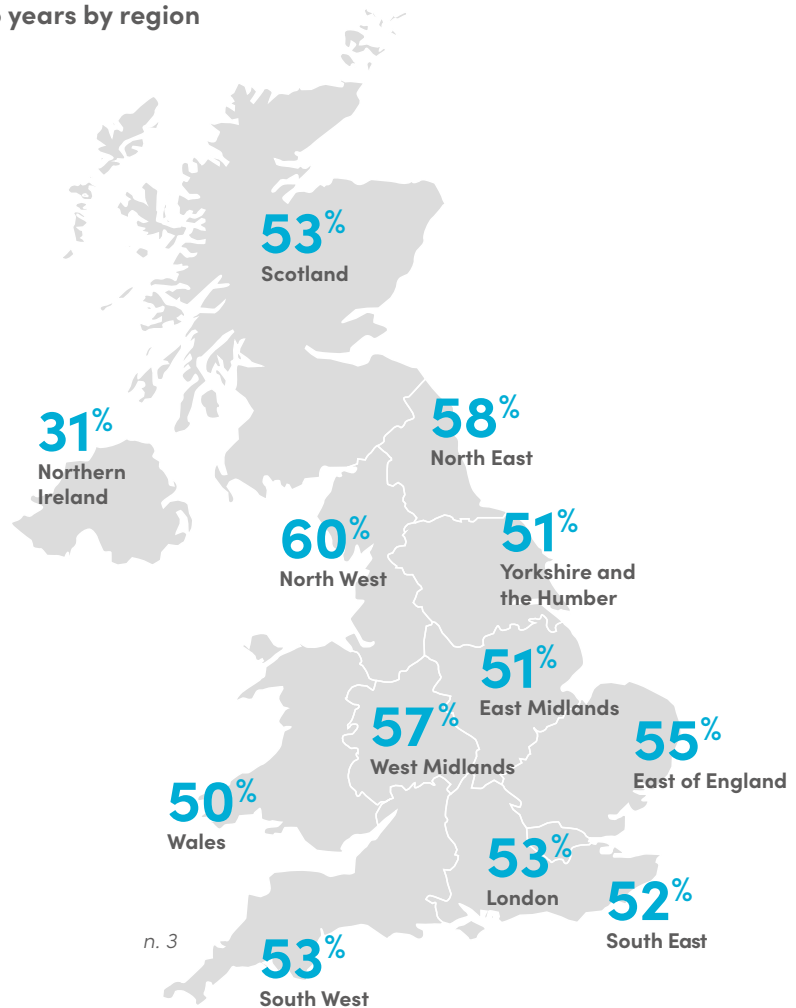
n. 3

Observations

Staff with greater levels of resilience have less desire to leave the sector than those with lower levels of resilience (**46%** with high resilience, **62%** with medium resilience and **77%** with low resilience had considered leaving the sector).

Staff who feel well supported appear less likely to consider leaving than those not well supported (**39%** who were well supported had considered leaving, whereas **73%** who were not well supported had considered leaving).

Staff who feel trusted by their line manager have less desire to leave the sector than those who feel distrusted (**47%** of staff who felt trusted had considered leaving compared to **83%** of those who felt distrusted).

Staff with a strong sense of purpose have less desire to leave the sector (**34%** who had a sense of purpose always/most of the time, **54%** who had a sense of purpose at least some of the time and **77%** some of the time/never had considered leaving).

2. Reasons why staff want to leave

Teachers and education staff gave four main reasons for thinking of leaving their jobs
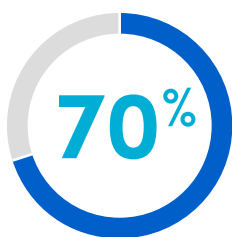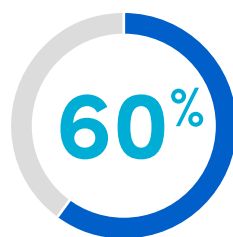
70%	60%	58%	55%
Volume of workload	Not feeling valued	Seeking a better work–life balance	Unnecessary paperwork or data gathering
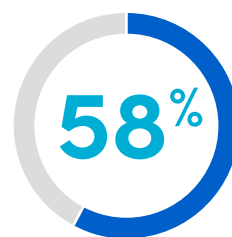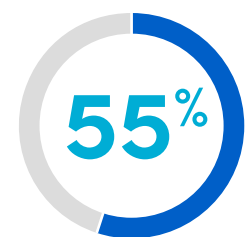
Other reasons for considering leaving the education profession

In the last two years, staff who have experienced pressures on their health and wellbeing cited the following additional reasons:

Unreasonable demands from managers **45%**	Target-driven culture **42%**	Lack of resources **40%**
Pupils/student's behaviour **35%**	Mental health concerns **29%**	Seeking higher pay **24%**
Rapid pace of organisational change **20%**	Physical health concerns **17%**	Retiring from sector **7%**
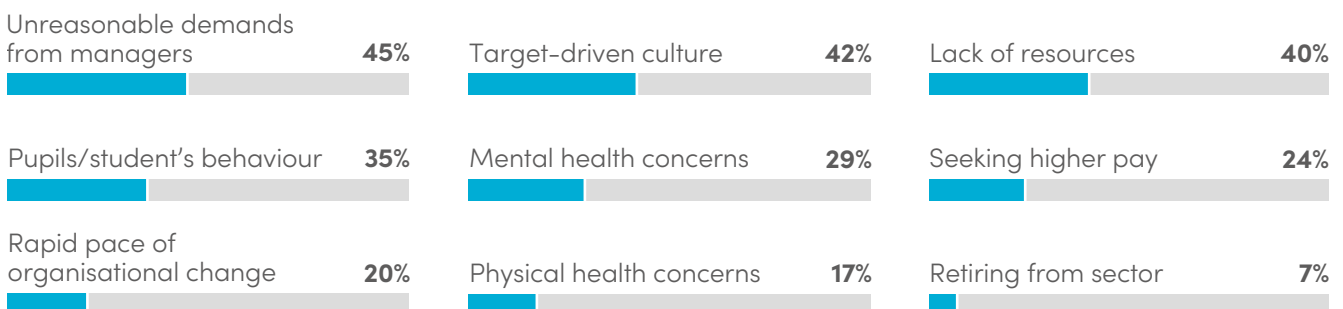
n. 4

Reasons for thinking of leaving the sector in the last two years differed by job role

Volume of workload
- **80%**
- **66%**
- 63%

Seeking better work/life balance
- **68%**
- **56%**
- 44%

Unnecessary paperwork/data gathering
- **58%**
- **56%**
- 35%

Not feeling valued
- **52%**
- **62%**
- 62%

Target-driven culture
- **45%**
- **43%**
- 14%

Unreasonable demands from managers
- **43%**
- **45%**
- 45%

Lack of resources (staff and general)
- **39%**
- **38%**
- 52%

Pupils' / students' behaviour
- **25%**
- **42%**
- 18%

Mental health concerns
- **24%**
- **31%**
- 22%

Rapid pace of organisational change
- **23%**
- **19%**
- 18%

Seeking higher pay
- **16%**
- **24%**
- 37%

Physical health concerns
- **14%**
- **17%**
- 16%

n. 5

Retiring from profession/sector
- **9%**
- **6%**
- 12%

Senior Leaders

School Teachers

Support staff

3. Relationships at work which negatively affect wellbeing

Which relationships at work most affect wellbeing in a negative way? This is a new question for 2021

The relationships that most negatively affect wellbeing at work are:

27% Relationships with the Senior Leadership Team

Senior leaders	**27%**
School teachers	**28%**
Support staff	**20%**

17% Relationships with the Head Teacher/Principal

Senior leaders	**18%**
School teachers	**18%**
Support staff	**9%**

16% Relationships with line managers

Senior leaders	**15%**
School teachers	**17%**
Support staff	**15%**

16% Relationships with colleagues

Senior leaders	**16%**
School teachers	**15%**
Support staff	**19%**

15% Relationships with parents/guardians/carers

Senior leaders	**24%**
School teachers	**14%**
Support staff	**8%**

15% Relationships with pupils/students

Senior leaders	**13%**
School teachers	**17%**
Support staff	**8%**

3% Relationships with Governors

Senior leaders	**4%**
School teachers	**2%**
Support staff	**2%**

n. 6

4. How can the mental health of the workforce be improved?

52% indicated managers working with their staff to reduce workload would be the best option **(3% increase on 2020)**

2020 2021

| Senior leaders | **60%** | School teachers | **51%** | Support staff | **41%** |
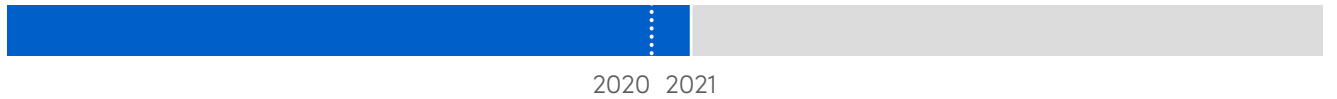
n. 7

The three other main suggestions were

30%	**28%**	**28%**
Changes being better communicated to staff by managers	The leadership team being more approachable	My employer offering flexible working hours to fit with other commitments
Senior leaders **28%**	Senior leaders **19%**	Senior leaders **29%**
School teachers **31%**	School teachers **31%**	School teachers **27%**
Support staff **28%**	Support staff **30%**	Support staff **31%**
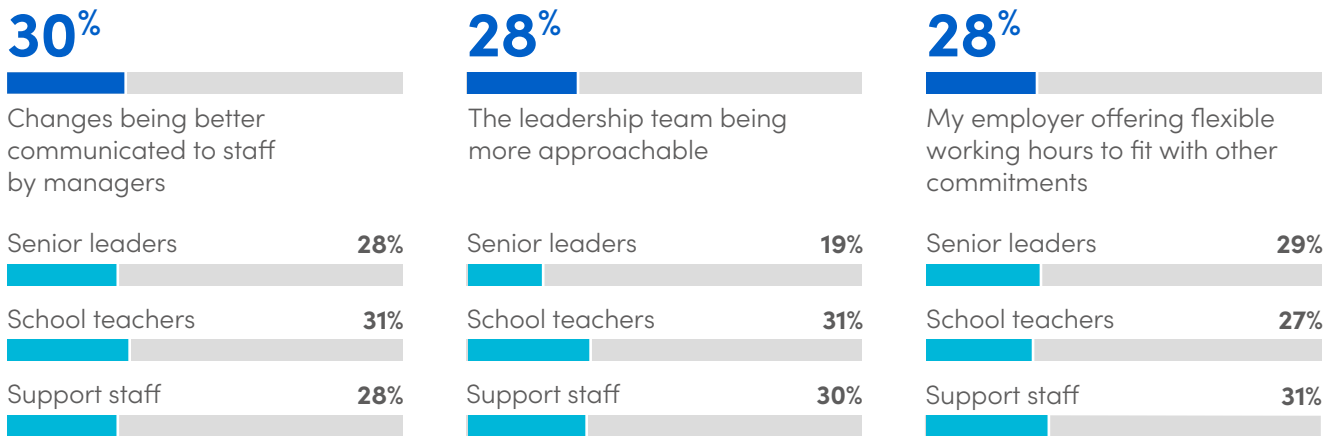
n. 8

Other suggestions were

26%	**24%**	**24%**
My employer having to meet high standards of health and wellbeing provision for staff, regulated by an independent body	Colleagues being more understanding and accommodating of each other's needs and feelings	My employer having a well-implemented pupil behaviour policy
23%	**16%**	**13%**
My employer implementing a structured staff health and wellbeing programme	My employer making us more aware of the support available (e.g. Employee Assistance Programme)	My employer having robust procedures for tackling bullying and harassment

n. 9

We asked education staff to tell us the best ways to improve the overall mental health of the workforce. This is what they told us, by job role

Senior leaders
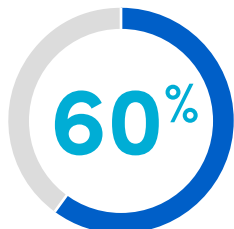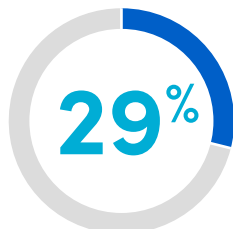
60% Managers working with their staff to reduce workload

29% My employer having to meet high standards of health and wellbeing provision for staff, regulated by an independent body
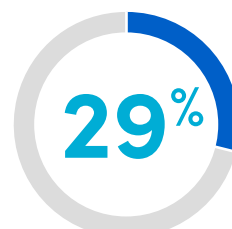
29% My employer allowing flexible working hours to fit with other commitments

School teachers

51% Managers working with their staff to reduce workload

31% Changes being better communicated to staff by managers
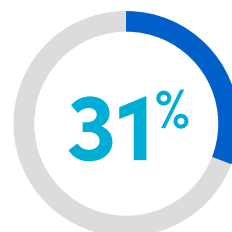
31% The leadership team being more approachable

Support staff
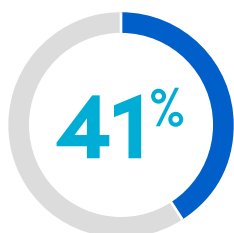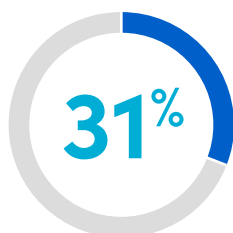
41% Managers working with their staff to reduce workload

31% My employer allowing flexible working hours to fit with other commitments

31% Colleagues being more understanding and accommodating of each other's needs and feelings

n. 10
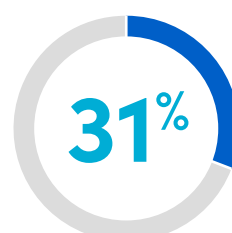
Sample profile

n. 1   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (776), School teachers (2251), Support staff (225)

n. 2   2021 Base: Early years (n = 147), Primary (n = 1,417), Secondary (n = 1,407), Sixth form college (n = 87), Further education (n = 142), Vocational and adult education (n = 55)

n. 3   2021 Base: North East (n = 127), North West (n = 377), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296), East of England (n = 249), West Midlands (n = 319), East Midlands (n = 257), London (n = 435), South East (n = 535), South West (n = 302), Wales (n = 123), Scotland (n = 269), Northern Ireland (n = 65)

n. 4   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 1,855)

n. 5   2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 495), School teachers (n = 1,218), Support staff (n = 93)

n. 6   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 7   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 8   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 9   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 10   2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

The next section explores how the mental health of education staff can be improved

Section 5

Improving Staff
Mental Health

We asked teachers and education staff how they manage their own mental health. How do they deal with stress and anxiety? Who do they talk to first when feeling stressed?

We sought views on how best to tackle stigma at work. We wanted to find out how confident staff are in disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems. We asked what support is available to them.

We also investigated how many staff have wellbeing policies at work and if they are properly implemented. Finally, we asked what action the Government should take to enhance staff wellbeing at work.

Our main findings:

› **The top three coping strategies used by education staff to handle workplace stress or anxiety are food or eating, physical exercise, and alcohol**

› **More than half of staff (57%) would not be confident in disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems to their employer**

› **At work, staff turn to a colleague first if they are experiencing stress or a mental health issue**

› **Staff who do not speak to anyone at work about mental health or wellbeing issues are mainly concerned it would negatively affect people's perceptions of them**

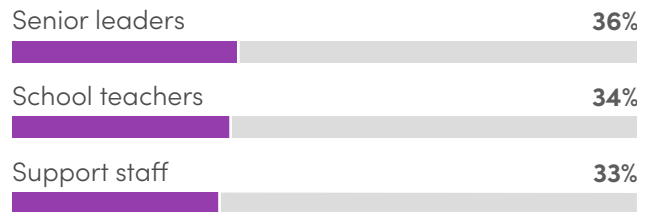› **Respondents feel that having a working culture that encourages people to talk openly is the best way to tackle mental health stigma**
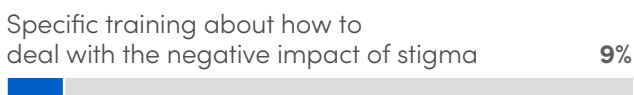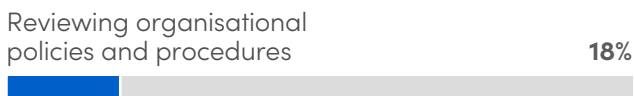
› **More than six in ten staff (61%) feel they do not receive sufficient guidance about their mental health and wellbeing at work**

❯ **More than four in ten staff (44%) feel their organisation supports employees well when experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems**

❯ **The three most common methods of support available are:**

- Encouragement to speak up when struggling
- Counselling or psychotherapy
- Union support

❯ **More than half (52%) of all staff are aware their organisation has a staff health and wellbeing policy**

❯ **Just over a third (34%) of all staff are regularly surveyed to establish levels of wellbeing**

❯ **The three biggest issues the Government should focus on to improve the workforce's wellbeing are:**

- Reducing the burden of unnecessary paperwork or data gathering
- Reducing the volume of workload
- Recognising the high intensity or high pressure work environment which exists in education settings

1. Dealing with stress or anxiety

How do teachers and education staff cope with workplace stress or anxiety? The three most common coping strategies reported were
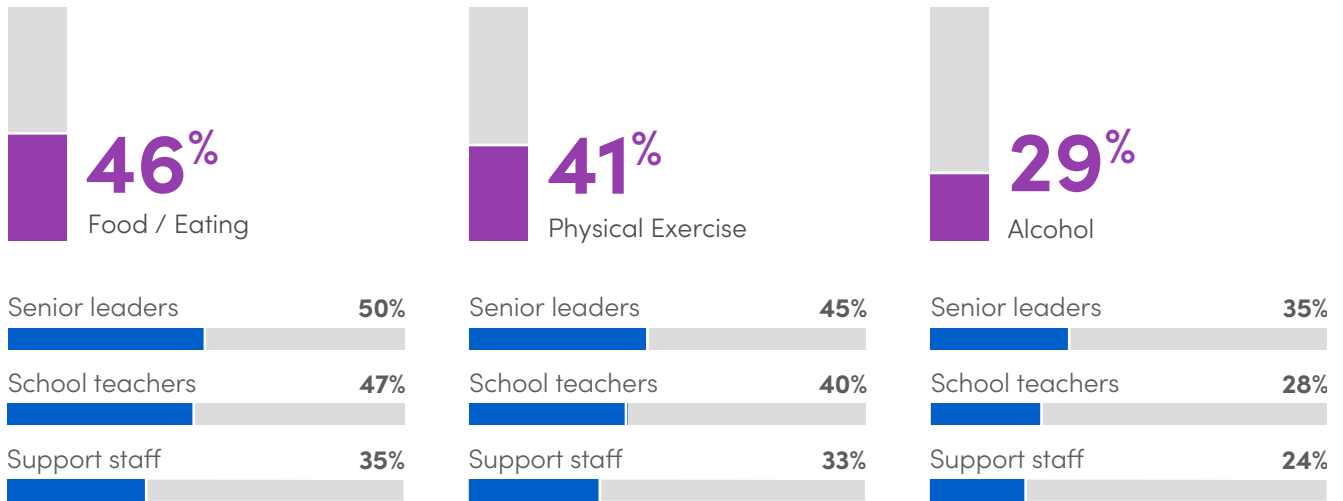
46%
Food / Eating

Senior leaders	**50%**
School teachers	**47%**
Support staff	**35%**

41%
Physical Exercise

Senior leaders	**45%**
School teachers	**40%**
Support staff	**33%**

29%
Alcohol

Senior leaders	**35%**
School teachers	**28%**
Support staff	**24%**

n. 1 (All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n. 1 refers to note 1, and so on.)

How education staff coped with workplace stress or anxiety in 2021 (remainder of responses)

Meditation / mindfulness	**23%**	Unneccesary spending	**21%**	None of these	**20%**
Self-medication*	**16%**	Therapy / counselling	**12%**	Other	**5%**
Drugs	**3%**	Gambling	**2%**	Don't know / can't remember	**1%**
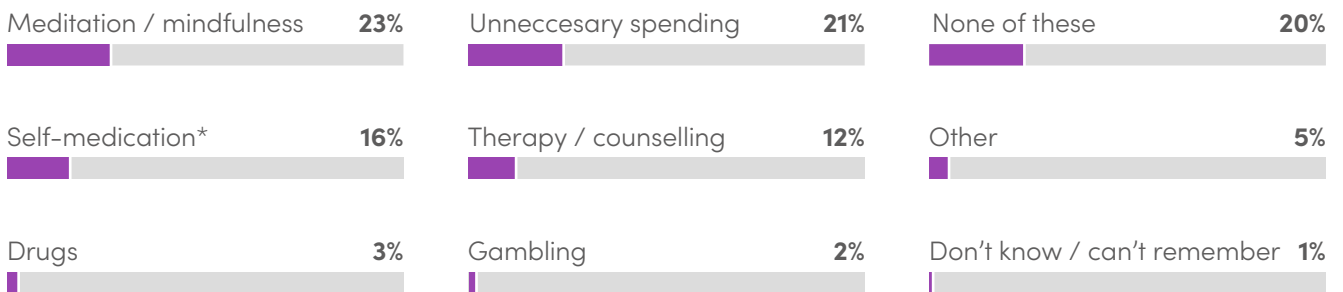
n. 2

20% of education staff told us that they used no coping strategies mentioned to alleviate workplace stress or anxiety

Senior leaders	**14%**	School teachers	**20%**	Support staff	**31%**
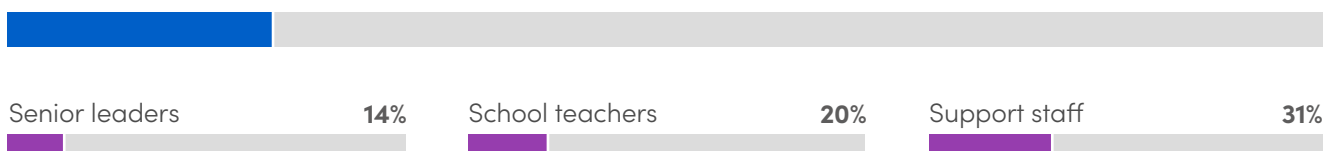
n. 3

*(eg over the counter drugs, vitamins, etc)

2. Who do staff talk to at work?

We asked teachers and education staff who they talk to first at work when experiencing stress or a mental health issue

31% of all staff would speak to a colleague first
(This was the same percentage in 2020)

| Senior leaders | **28%** | School teachers | **34%** | Support staff | **14%** |

30% Somebody outside of work

Senior leaders	**30%**
School teachers	**30%**
Support staff	**25%**

18% Line manager

Senior leaders	**18%**
School teachers	**17%**
Support staff	**28%**

15% I did not speak to anybody about it

Senior leaders	**17%**
School teachers	**14%**
Support staff	**19%**

3% Other

Senior leaders	**2%**
School teachers	**2%**
Support staff	**5%**

2% Human resources/ central office

Senior leaders	**3%**
School teachers	**1%**
Support staff	**2%**

2% Employee Assistance Programme

Senior leaders	**2%**
School teachers	**1%**
Support staff	**7%**

n. 4

The benefits of talking to someone

We asked those who experienced stress or a mental health issue at work how speaking to someone (either at work or outside of it) had helped them.

50% said it gave them perspective and helped them realise they are not alone

Senior leaders	53%	School teachers	50%	Support staff	41%

29% said it restored confidence in their abilities

Senior leaders	35%
School teachers	27%
Support staff	27%

22% said it equipped them with practical advice

Senior leaders	20%
School teachers	22%
Support staff	30%

n. 5

Why did some choose not to speak to anyone?

We asked teachers and education staff who did not speak to anyone why that was.

44% said it would negatively affect their perception of me

Senior leaders	36%	School teachers	46%	Support staff	46%

35% They would see it as a sign of weakness

Senior leaders	38%
School teachers	36%
Support staff	13%*

29% There is a stigma which stops me from talking to anyone

Senior leaders	34%
School teachers	29%
Support staff	17%*

29% I prefer to seek support from people outside of work

Senior leaders	37%
School teachers	28%
Support staff	18%*

Due to the small datasets, the figures can only be treated as indicative

n. 6

Observations

The issue of stigma was higher for staff who stated they were not well supported by their organisations **(33%)** compared to staff who identified as well supported by their organisations **(18%)**.

Staff who felt distrusted by their line manager were more unlikely to speak to anybody at work because it would be seen as a sign of weakness **(49%)** compared to those who felt trusted by their line manager **(30%)**.

Differences between primary and secondary school staff

Comparisons were made between primary and secondary school staff. All other phases were not compared due to low response rates. The three biggest differences are shown.

% of staff who considered they would not speak to anyone because they wouldn't be supportive

18% Primary Schools

29% Secondary Schools
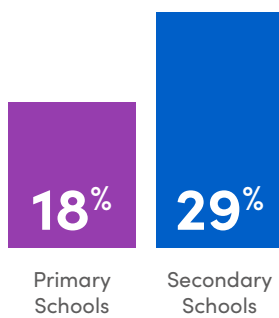
% of staff who prefer to seek support from people outside of work

25% Primary Schools

32% Secondary Schools
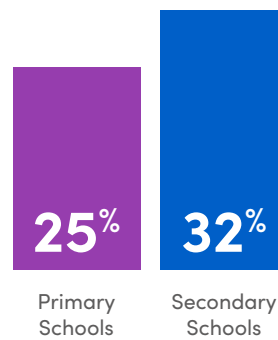
% of staff who felt there is a stigma stopping them from talking to anyone at work

27% Primary Schools

32% Secondary Schools
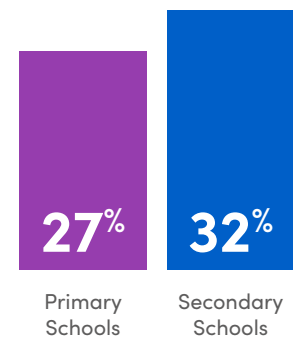
n. 7

3. Being open to new challenges

We asked how teachers and education staff think mental health stigma should be tackled at work

47% said a working culture that encourages people to talk openly

Senior leaders	**49%**	School teachers	**46%**	Support staff	**45%**

38%

Effective line management

Senior leaders	**35%**
School teachers	**38%**
Support staff	**38%**

35%

Active engagement by the Senior Leadership Team

Senior leaders	**36%**
School teachers	**34%**
Support staff	**33%**
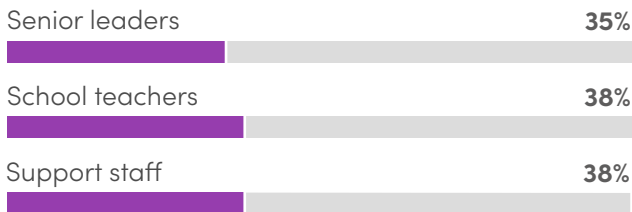
Other ways to tackle mental health stigma at work*

Having safe spaces to speak	**24%**
Having better staff relationships	**22%**
Reviewing organisational policies and procedures	**18%**
Positive role modelling	**11%**
Specific training about how to deal with the negative impact of stigma	**9%**

Mental health campaigns or communications that raise awareness of stigma	**8%**
Specific training to recognise the signs of stigma	**8%**
Challenging instances of stigma	**7%**
Not applicable – I do not believe there is stigma in the workforce	**7%**

(Note: responses of 5% or below have not been shown)

n.8

4. Confidence in disclosing issues to employers

We asked teachers and education staff how confident they felt disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems to their employer

57% stated they were not confident

38% that they were confident

5% Don't know
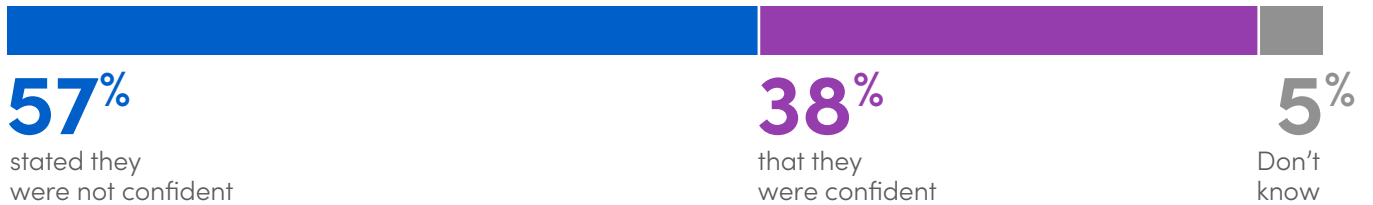
Staff who did not feel confident by job role:

Senior leaders   **54%**

School teachers   **59%**

Support staff   **51%**
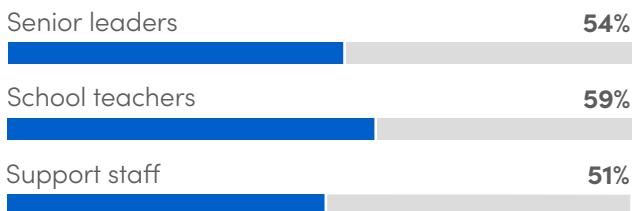
Staff who felt confident by job role:

Senior leaders   **44%**

School teachers   **35%**

Support staff   **44%**
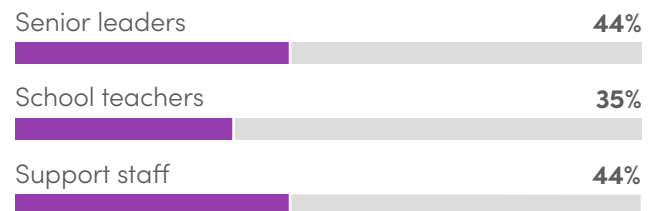
n. 9

Confidence disclosing unmanageable stress by region

We found staff working in the East Midlands, the South West and Wales to be the **most confident**, and staff working in the West Midlands, Scotland and the North West to be the **least confident**.

Confident ■
Not confident ■
Don't know ■

Any discrepancies in percentages are due to rounding differences

30% **62%** **8%**
Scotland

42% **55%** **3%**
Northern Ireland

37% **59%** **4%**
North East

37% **57%** **6%**
Yorkshire and the Humber

36% **62%** **2%**
North West

48% **45%** **7%**
East Midlands

30% **65%** **5%**
West Midlands

40% **55%** **5%**
East of England

43% **50%** **7%**
Wales

38% **57%** **5%**
London

45% **50%** **5%**
South West

39% **57%** **4%**
South East
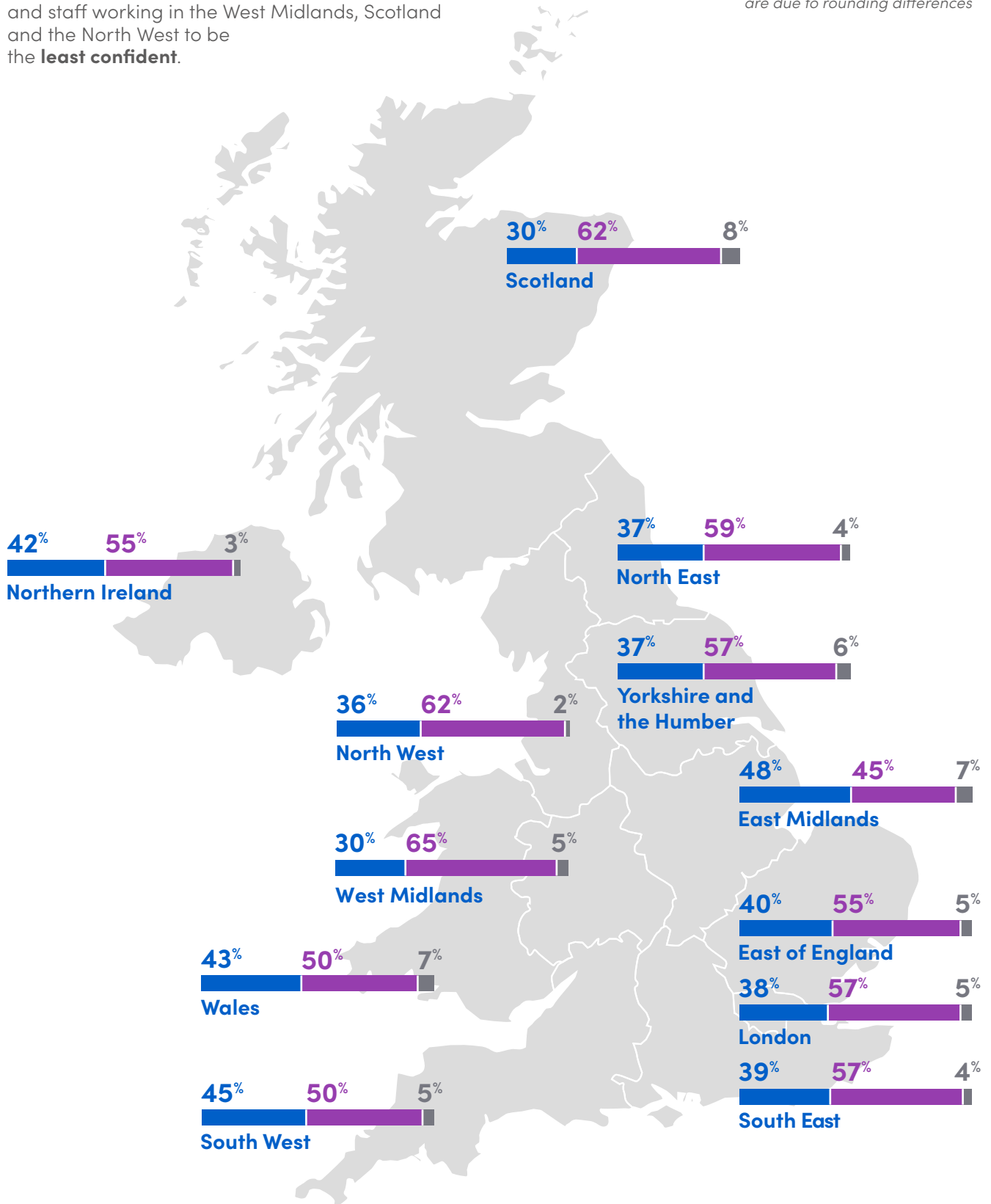
n. 10

Observations

Organisational culture

Staff who have good organisational support feel more confident in being able to disclose unmanageable stress or mental health problems.

67% of staff with good organisation support feel confident with such disclosure compared to **29%** with good support but who do not feel confident with such disclosure.

Feeling Trusted

Staff who do not feel trusted by their line manager feel less confident in being able to disclose unmanageable stress or mental health problems.

88% of staff who do not feel trusted do not feel confident with such disclosure compared to **10%** who do not feel trusted but are confident with such disclosure.

Wellbeing policies

Staff whose workplace does not have a wellbeing policy (or they are unaware of it) feel less confident in being able to disclose unmanageable stress or mental health problems.

70% of staff whose organisation does not have a policy do not feel confident with such disclosure compared to **25%** who do not have a policy and are confident with such disclosure.

5. Help and support available

We asked teachers and education staff if they received sufficient guidance about their mental health and wellbeing at work

61% stated they did not receive sufficient guidance

(7% increase on 2020) ↗

39% stated they received sufficient guidance

↘ **(7% decrease on 2020)**

By job role

Senior leaders	**59%**
School teachers	**64%**
Support staff	**47%**

By job role

Senior leaders	**41%**
School teachers	**36%**
Support staff	**53%**
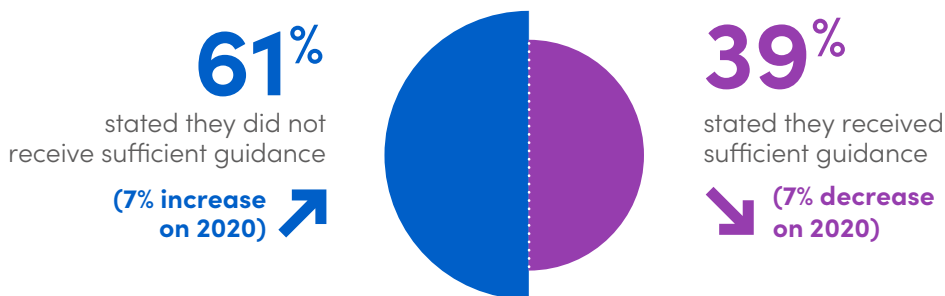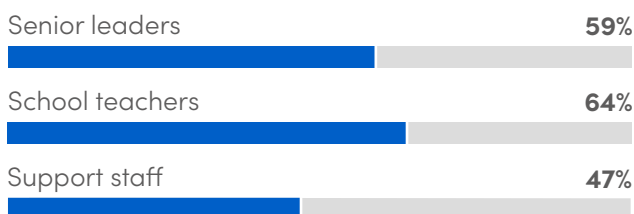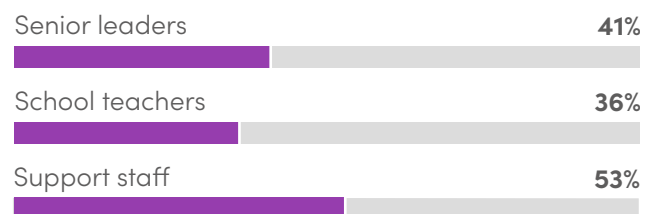
n. 11

Receiving guidance on mental health and wellbeing at work, by region

On a regional basis, we found that the highest number of staff who **considered they received sufficient guidance** were working in Northern Ireland, the South West and the East of England, and the highest number of staff who did not receive sufficient guidance were working in the North West, Scotland and London.

Received Sufficient Guidance

Do Not Receive Sufficient Guidance

Any discrepancies in percentages are due to rounding differences

34% **66%**
Scotland

52% **48%**
Northern Ireland

42% **58%**
North East

38% **62%**
Yorkshire and the Humber

30% **71%**
North West

41% **60%**
East Midlands

40% **60%**
West Midlands

43% **57%**
East of England

39% **61%**
Wales

37% **63%**
London

48% **52%**
South West

40% **60%**
South East
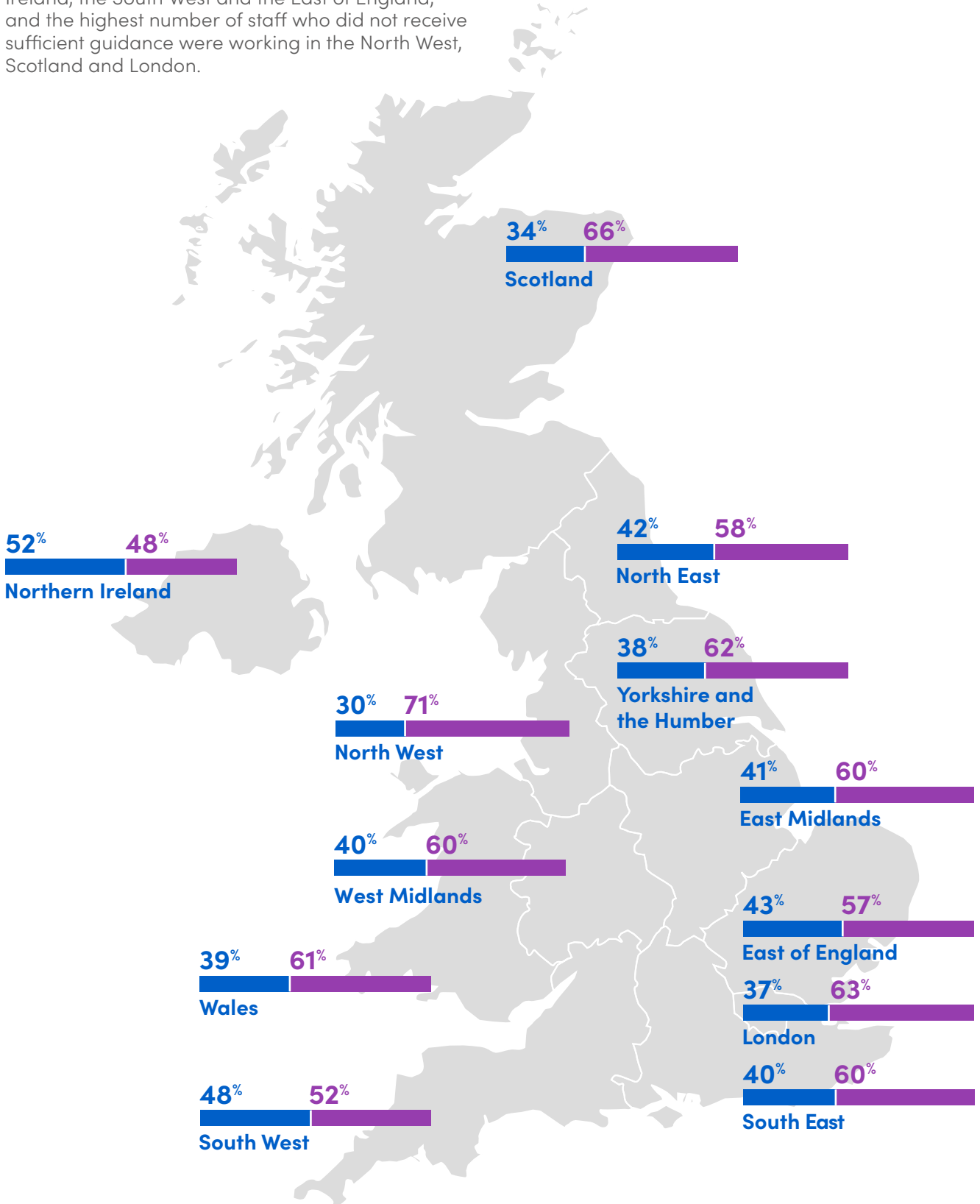
n. 12

We also asked staff how well they thought their organisation supports employees who experience problems with mental health and wellbeing

44^%

felt well supported by their organisation when experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems

(7% decrease on 2020)
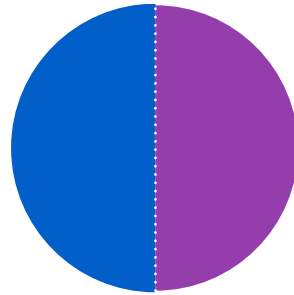
43^%

felt not very well supported

(7% increase on 2020)

By job role:

Senior leaders **50%**

School teachers **41%**

Support staff **43%**

By job role:

Senior leaders **41%**

School teachers **44%**

Support staff **38%**
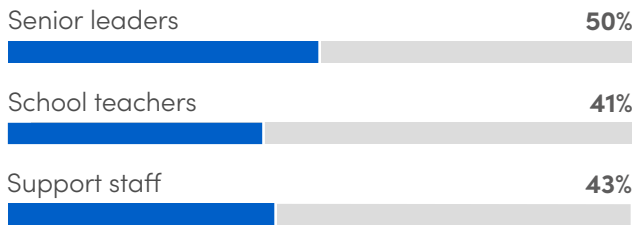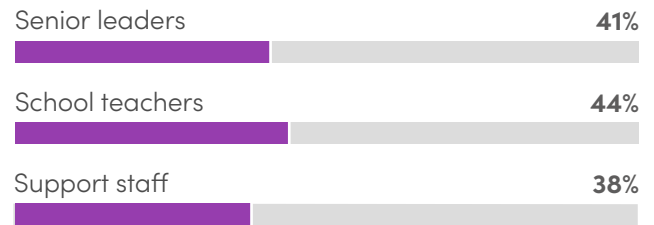
n. 13

Organisational support for employees who experience problems with mental health and wellbeing, by region

On a regional basis, we found that the highest number of staff who **felt they were well supported** by their organisations worked in the East Midlands, South West and the East of England. The regions with the highest incidence of not feeling well supported worked in the North East, West Midlands and the North West.

Well supported ■
Not well supported ■
Don't know ■

Any discrepancies in percentages are due to rounding differences

Scotland
40% 48% 12%

Northern Ireland
43% 46% 11%

North East
34% 51% 15%

Yorkshire and the Humber
43% 36% 21%

North West
39% 50% 10%

East Midlands
52% 36% 12%

West Midlands
37% 46% 17%

East of England
48% 38% 14%

London
44% 43% 13%

Wales
43% 38% 19%

South East
46% 40% 14%

South West
50% 40% 11%
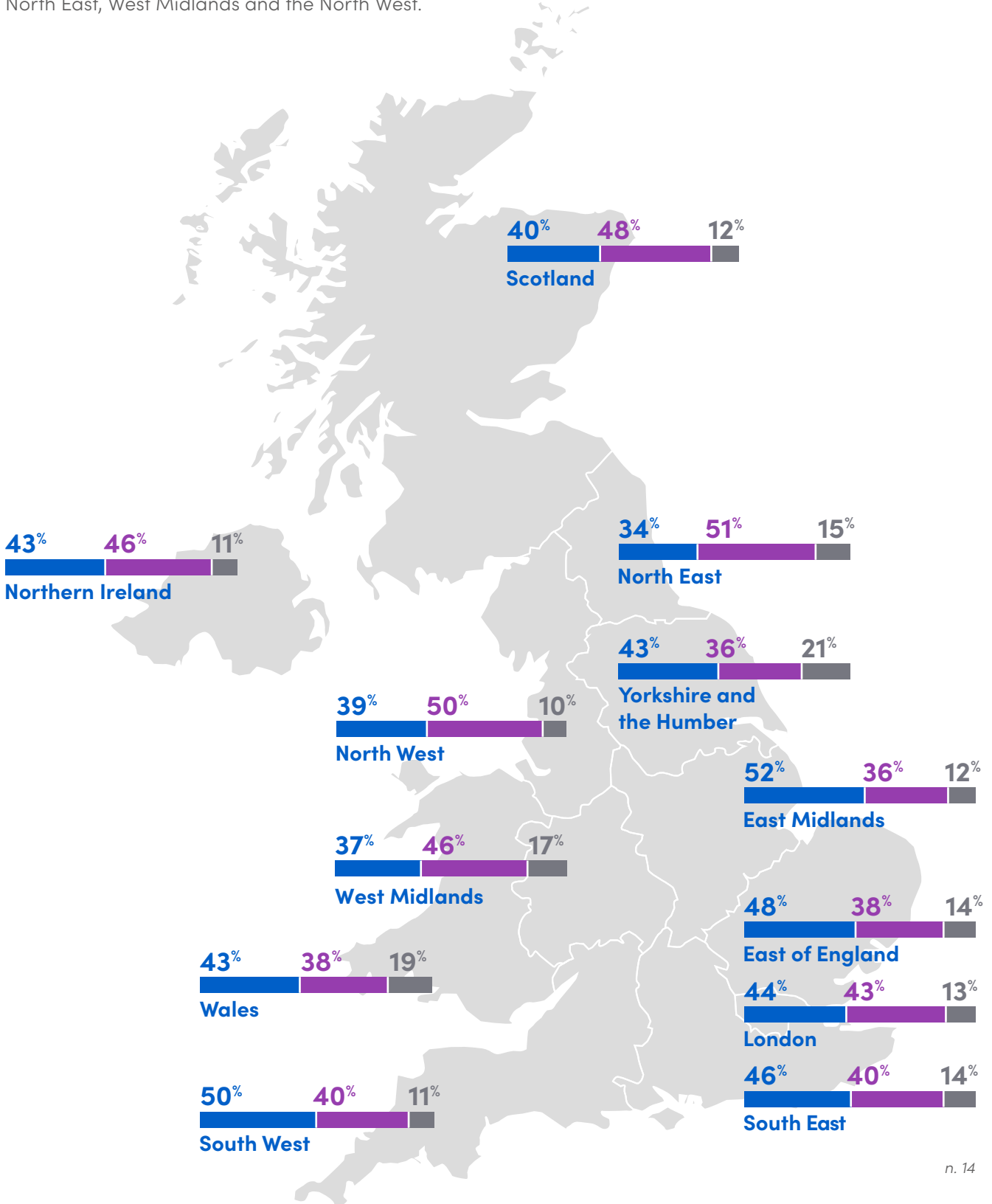
n. 14

The mental health and wellbeing support available to staff at work

The three types of support that are most available to staff:
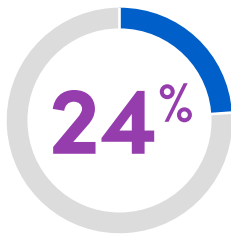
24%

Encouragement to speak
up when struggling

Senior leaders	**30%**
School teachers	**23%**
Support staff	**21%**

22%

Counselling/psychotherapy
(online or in person)

Senior leaders	**29%**
School teachers	**20%**
Support staff	**22%**

22%
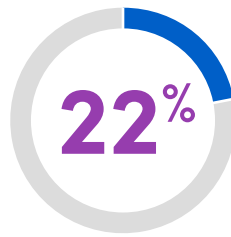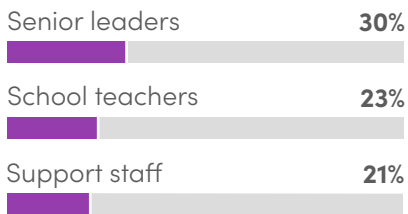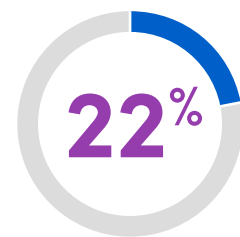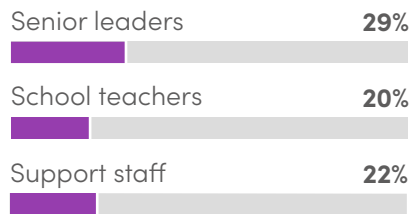
Union people
we can talk to

Senior leaders	**28%**
School teachers	**21%**
Support staff	**16%**
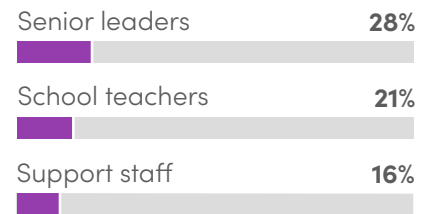
n. 15

24% of staff told us they did not have access to any of the types of support listed (up **4%** from 2020)

School teachers have either less access to, or knowledge of, the different types of support compared to senior leaders

The remaining types of support available to staff are

Employee assistance programme
- 25%
- 16%
- 28%

HR staff we can talk to
- 25%
- 15%
- 24%

Mental Health First Aid training
- 23%
- 12%
- 23%

Wellbeing sessions
- 22%
- 16%
- 24%

Exercise classes, groups or programmes
- 13%
- 9%
- 11%

Training on common mental health conditions
- 13%
- 9%
- 9%

Professional coaching
- 13%
- 4%
- 2%

Health related support staff we can talk to
- 12%
- 8%
- 7%

Mentoring
- 11%
- 8%
- 7%

Individual supervision as professional support provided outside of the line management relationship
- 10%
- 5%
- 5%

Mindfulness classes or programmes
- 8%
- 8%
- 16%

Animals in the workplace
- 7%
- 4%
- 3%

Facilitated peer group support
- 4%
- 2%
- 3%

Resilience, energy or stress management classes or programmes
- 3%
- 3%
- 7%

n. 16

Massages or relaxation classes or programmes
- 2%
- 2%
- 3%

Senior leaders ■
School teachers ■
Support staff ■

6. Workplace mental health and wellbeing policies

We asked teachers and education staff if their current workplace has a staff health and wellbeing policy

52% of education staff are aware their organisation has a staff health and wellbeing policy **(6% decrease on 2020)**

11% are not aware of such a policy
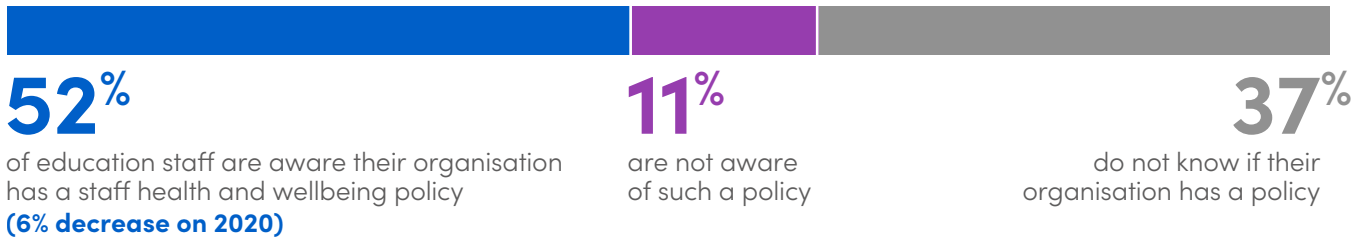
37% do not know if their organisation has a policy

Staff who are aware their organisation has a policy

Senior leaders	**56%**
School teachers	**49%**
Support staff	**61%**
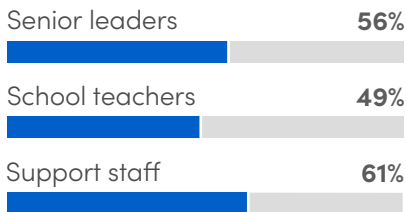
Staff who told us they did not have a policy

Senior leaders	**13%**
School teachers	**11%**
Support staff	**8%**
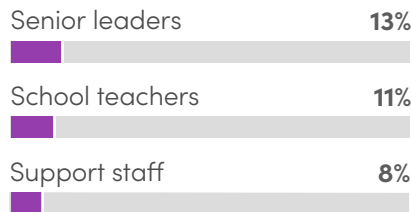
Staff who did not know if their organisation has a policy

Senior leaders	**31%**
School teachers	**40%**
Support staff	**31%**
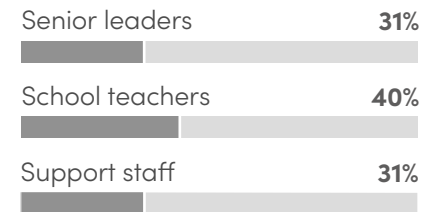
n. 17

Differences found by education sector

Staff working in the further education sector were more aware of their organisation having a policy than staff working in early years, primary and secondary schools.

Education staff's awareness of their health and wellbeing policy

	Yes	No	Don't know
Early years	**49%**	**12%**	**39%**
Primary schools	**50%**	**12%**	**38%**
Secondary schools	**49%**	**10%**	**41%**
Sixth form colleges	**55%**	**11%**	**33%**
Further education	**64%**	**8%**	**27%**

Yes ■ No ■ Don't know ■
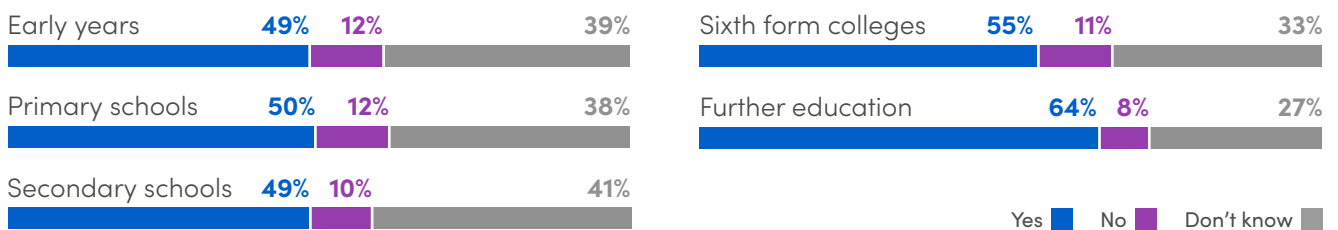
n. 18

We asked those teachers and education staff who had a staff health and wellbeing policy how well they considered it had been implemented

7%
consider it is always implemented properly
(4% decrease on 2020)

64%
consider it is properly implemented most or some of the time

16%
said it is never implemented properly

12%
Don't know

n. 19
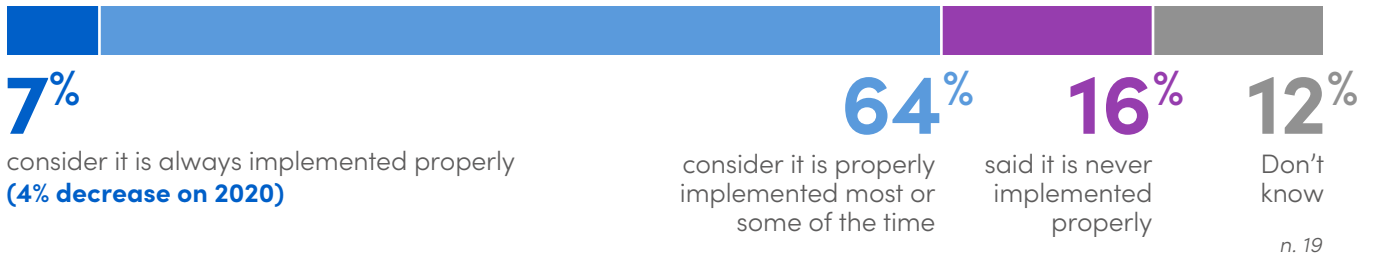
7. Keeping track of staff wellbeing

Do organisations survey their staff regularly to establish levels of employee wellbeing?

34%
of education staff are regularly surveyed

54%
are not regularly surveyed

11%
Don't know

Those who are regularly surveyed:

Senior leaders	**39%**
School teachers	**33%**
Support staff	**32%**
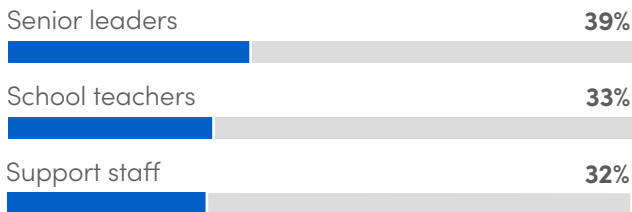
Those who are not regularly surveyed:

Senior leaders	**54%**
School teachers	**56%**
Support staff	**47%**
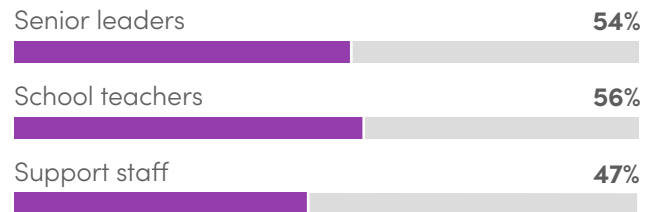
n. 20

Differences were found by education phase

Staff working in further education were more regularly surveyed than staff working in sixth form colleges, secondary and primary schools and early years.

	Yes	No	Don't know		Yes	No	Don't know
Early years	**57%**	**32%**	11%	Sixth form colleges	**45%**	**40%**	15%
Primary schools	**60%**	**30%**	10%	Further education	**38%**	**50%**	12%
Secondary schools	**60%**	**29%**	11%				

Yes ▮ No ▮ Don't know ▮
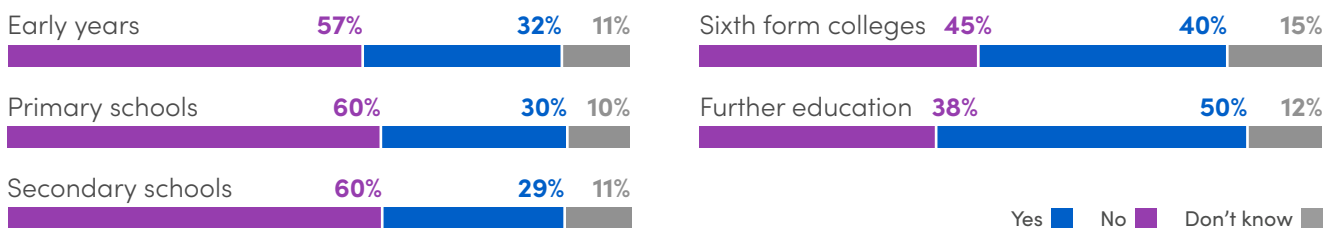
n. 21

Organisations surveying their staff regularly to establish levels of employee wellbeing

On a regional basis, we found that the highest number of staff wellbeing surveys was in Yorkshire and the Humber, East of England and the South West, and the lowest number in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

24% Scotland

37% North East

39% Yorkshire and the Humber

25% Northern Ireland

35% North West

34% East Midlands

33% West Midlands

39% East of England

20% Wales

34% London

37% South East

37% South West
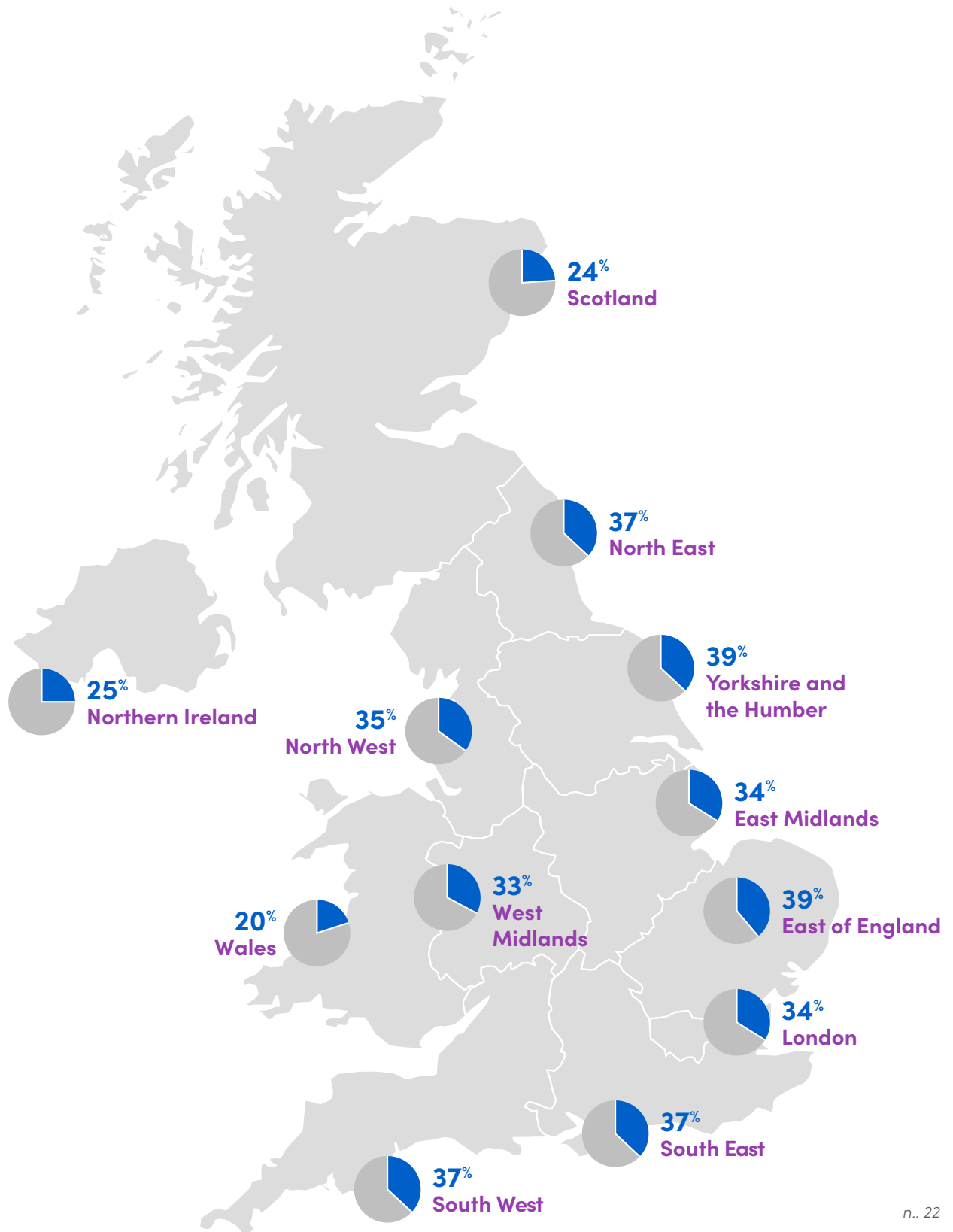
n.. 22

8. Government action

How can the Government act to improve teacher and education staff wellbeing at work?

48%
reducing the burden of unnecessary paperwork/ data gathering
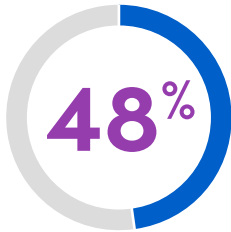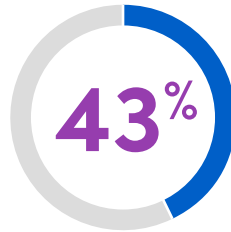
43%
reducing volume of workload
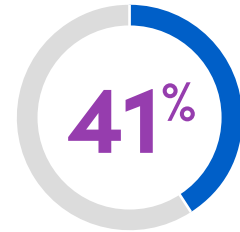
41%
recognising the high intensity/high pressure work environment

Senior leaders	**49%**
School teachers	**49%**
Support staff	**35%**

Senior leaders	**55%**
School teachers	**41%**
Support staff	**29%**

Senior leaders	**49%**
School teachers	**39%**
Support staff	**33%**
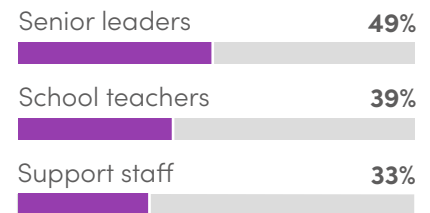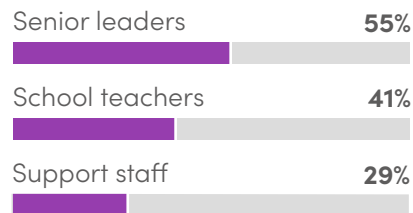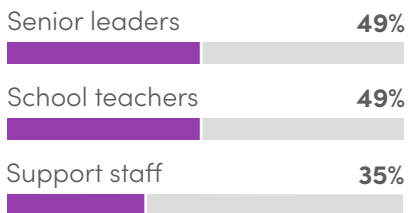
n. 23

Whilst senior leaders and school teachers both agreed on the top three items above (albeit in different orders), the top three issues for support staff were low pay **(39%)**, reducing the burden of unnecessary paperwork/data gathering **(35%)** and increasing work/life balance **(35%)**

The remaining ways that teachers and education staff think the government should act*

Increasing work/life balance   **38%**

Increasing its trust in educators   **38%**

Increasing funding   **36%**

Increasing low pay   **34%**

Reducing long working hours   **29%**

Reducing inspections   **27%**

Giving more support for pupils/students with special needs   **25%**

Reducing poor pupil/student behaviour   **22%**

Giving more support for pupils/students with mental health issues   **20%**

Reducing accountability   **12%**

Assessment issues   **12%**

Increasing mental health awareness   **11%**

Confirming its catch-up plans (may include working longer days)   **8%**

Responses at 7% or less have not been shown.   *n. 24*

Sample profile

n. 1   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,287), Senior leaders (n = 766), School teachers (n = 2,198), Support staff (n = 221)

n. 2   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,287), Senior leaders (n = 766), School teachers (n = 2,198), Support staff (n = 221)

n. 3   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,287), Senior leaders (n = 766), School teachers (n = 2,198), Support staff (n = 221)

n. 4   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,533), Senior leaders (n = 635), School teachers (n = 1,682), Support staff (n = 144)

n. 5   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 2,144), Senior leaders (n = 521), School teachers (n = 1,440), Support staff (n = 115)

n. 6   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 389), Senior leaders (n = 114), School teachers (n = 242), Support staff (n = 29)
For support staff the dataset is small and therefore the findings can only be treated as indicative

n. 7   2021 Base: Primary schools (n = 157), Secondary schools (n = 180)

n. 8   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 9   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 10   2021 Base: East Midlands (n = 257), South West (n = 302), Wales (n = 123), Northern Ireland (n = 65), East of England (n = 249), South East (n = 535), London (n = 435), North East (n = 127), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296), North West (n = 377), Scotland (n = 269), West Midlands (n = 319)

n. 11   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 12   2021 Base: Northern Ireland (n = 65), South West (n = 302), East of England (n = 249), North East (n = 127), East Midlands (n = 257), South East (n = 535), West Midlands (n = 319), Wales (n = 123), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296), London (n = 435), Scotland (n = 269), North West (n = 377)

n. 13   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 14   2021 Base: East Midlands (n = 257), South West (n = 302), East of England (n = 249), South East (n = 535), London (n = 435), Wales (n = 123), Northern Ireland (n = 65), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296), Scotland (n = 269), North West (n = 377), West Midlands (n = 319), North East (n = 127)

n. 15   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 16   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354). Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 17   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 18   2021 Base: Early years (n = 147), Primary schools (n = 1,417), Secondary schools (n = 1,407), Sixth form colleges (n = 87), Further education (n = 142). NB Data for the Adult and vocational education has not been included due to small sample set

n. 19   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 1,688), Senior leaders (n = 421), School teachers (n = 1,077), Support staff (n = 134)

n. 20   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 21   2021 Base: Early years (n = 147), Primary schools (n = 1,417), Secondary schools (n = 1,407), Sixth form colleges (n = 87), Further education (n = 142). NB Data for the Adult and vocational education has not been included due to small sample set

n. 22   2021 Base: Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 296), East of England (n = 249), South West (n = 302), North East (n = 127), South East (n = 535), North West (n = 377), East Midlands (n = 257), London (n = 435), West Midlands (n = 319), Northern Ireland (n = 65), Scotland (n = 269), Wales (n = 123)

n. 23   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)

n. 24   2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354)

Conclusion & Recommendations

Our conclusions

1. Long-term mental health trends require further improvement

Our five year data shows that although good work is taking place many long-term trends in teacher and education staff mental health are not meaningfully improving. Stress levels have remained high for the last five years. Workload remained a concern and is consistently one of the most cited reasons for symptoms of poor mental health. Add to this the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and our data shows that the education sector is exhausted, over-worked and unsustainably stressed.

2. Senior leader experiences

Senior leaders work increasingly long hours as their roles have expanded during the pandemic. They reported the highest levels of stress, insomnia and burnout. They cited their work-life balance to be a major cause of their symptoms of poor mental health. Their levels of exhaustion were up eleven percent compared to last year, which was during the height of the pandemic. They were more likely to use specific coping strategies and prefer to seek support from outside of work.

The overall wellbeing score (WEMWBS) of teachers and education staff has been lower than the general population for three years

3. School teacher experiences

School teachers experience similar challenges regarding workload, work-life balance and stress, having also seen an expansion in their role during the pandemic. They are most likely to report symptoms which are signs of depression when compared with senior leaders. Over four in ten reported symptoms as signs of anxiety. They are also most likely to seek support from colleagues for problems at work. Early career teachers struggle with panic attacks, tearfulness and mood swings and more training is required to help them manage their own as well as their pupils' mental health. Although earlier career teachers are more likely to report feeling prepared (to manage their mental health) by their ITT training than later career teachers.

Improving the mental health and wellbeing of teachers will support the government's aims to recruit and retain more talented teachers and leaders at the time we need them most

4. Support staff experiences

Support staff are most likely to feel trusted by their line managers. When compared to school teachers, they are less likely to feel that the culture of the organisation negatively affects their wellbeing and are also more comfortable disclosing mental health challenges to their employer. When compared to senior leaders, they are more likely to report experiencing no symptoms of poor mental health. Compared to both groups, they are least likely to report psychological symptoms and least likely to report working more than 41 hours a week. The issues affecting mental health most reported by support staff are low pay, reducing unnecessary paper work or data gathering and work–life balance.

5. Organisational culture

Organisational culture has a significant impact on staff wellbeing. Trust, relationships and a sense of being supported (or not) all had an effect on presenteeism and overall wellbeing. Good relationships between teachers and their leadership, and feeling trusted by line managers are important drivers for improved workplace wellbeing. Improving the organisational culture is more important than ever as school teams rally to deliver on ambitious education recovery plans.

We applaud the work being done by schools, colleges and training providers. We are heartened to see the improvements relating to mental health policies and their growing awareness among education staff. We can also see that the institutional leaders responsible for driving cultural change are themselves under immense pressure. The interrelationship between personal and institutional wellbeing is complex and leaders must be provided with the support required to deliver wellbeing improvements for their staff.

6. Focusing on pupils

The mental health impact of the pandemic on children and young people is still being understood, but can affect their readiness to learn. The mental health of their teachers cannot be viewed as a separate issue, or a luxury. The teachers and education staff responsible for guiding and inspiring children and young people need to be mentally well themselves to get the best out of their learners who are struggling.

No one can do their best work when they are emotionally depleted and the cost of teachers and education staff being unwell is simply too high

Our recommendations

For government and policymakers:

Educator mental health must be at the heart of education recovery plans and all education policy

Teacher and education staff mental health must be central to education recovery plans. It cannot be seen as separate from the mental health and wellbeing of our young people. Teachers and education staff need to be well enough themselves to guide their students through an intensive phase of catch up and recovery. We welcome the publication of the Department for Education's Wellbeing Charter and call on the Department to ensure its principles are consistently implemented throughout all new policies. In particular, when announcing new policies, all departments should consider the impact of implementation timeframes on teacher workload and wellbeing.

Inspection bodies must adapt to the current challenging context

In previous editions of the Teacher Wellbeing Index we have called for the accountability system to be reviewed to reduce undue pressure on school staff, and keep them focused on teaching and learning. Given the current circumstance, we call on inspection bodies to examine the level of empathy they show during inspections. They must also take into consideration the realities of running a school during the Covid-19 pandemic. For many school and college leaders, the effects of the pandemic continue to take their toll on the day to day running of their organisations, despite significant effort and already working beyond full capacity.

Existing frameworks present opportunities for improvements

Newly qualified teachers are at risk of experiencing a range of symptoms of poor mental health. A consistent approach to quality training that prioritises mental health and wellbeing must be adopted. In England, existing training frameworks including the Initial Teacher Training Core Content framework, Early Career Framework and National Professional Qualifications provide a real opportunity for improvement. We invite all Education Departments and training providers to work with us to ensure that mental health and wellbeing is consistently prioritised within all frameworks and teachers feel prepared to face the challenges of the profession.

Recruitment and retention of senior leaders must be prioritised

Education Departments must have a dedicated recruitment and retention plan for senior leaders. Our Teacher Wellbeing Index consistently shows that senior leaders are the most stressed and work the longest hours. A clear plan must be established to retain the talent needed to marshal us through the education recovery, and to signal to today's teachers that leadership is an appealing path to take.

For schools and colleges:

Prioritise a culture of wellbeing and reduce stigma

There is a persistent culture of stigma that hasn't gone away over the last five years. In every Teacher Wellbeing Index many education staff report avoiding talking to colleagues about their mental health challenges due to how they will be perceived at work. Creating a culture where it is safe and beneficial to discuss the emotional effects of work is a crucial first step towards improving your staff's mental health. Visit our website for more information on how to get started: educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/

Look after your leadership

There can be no doubt that the leadership community is exhausted and many are on the brink of burnout or resignation. We recommend that governors, academy boards, parent councils and local authorities put plans in place to protect this cohort and regularly ask questions to understand their level of wellbeing. Regularly reviewing workloads and proactively supporting good relationships between senior leadership are also vital areas of focus. Senior leaders need opportunities to work with peers in other organisations, so they can receive support away from concerns about affecting team morale or exposing their own vulnerability. You can read more about our support services for senior leaders (funded by Welsh Government and DfE) here: eduationsupport.org.uk/leaders

Support your staff

Although stigma persists, staff outside of leadership roles are more likely to seek support from colleagues. This means key staff, and especially line managers, must be able to safely and confidently respond if a colleague discloses a mental health challenge. We recommend regularly addressing wellbeing issues in line manager and departmental meetings. Awareness of resources and appropriate sources of support outside of your organisation is also important for staff in line management and head of department roles. You can read more about our resources for individuals here: educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-individuals/

These recommendations for schools and colleges depend on the availability of sufficient resources. Insufficient funding is one of the drivers of excessive workload, which in turn is a key wellbeing driver. The Government's extra £4.7bn core funding and £1.8bn for education recovery is welcome. However, many schools and colleges still lack sufficient resources to meet the needs of their communities. This is particularly true for smaller schools, and those in areas of increased need. The funding model must evolve again to provide schools and colleges with the capacity to recover, deliver and improve.
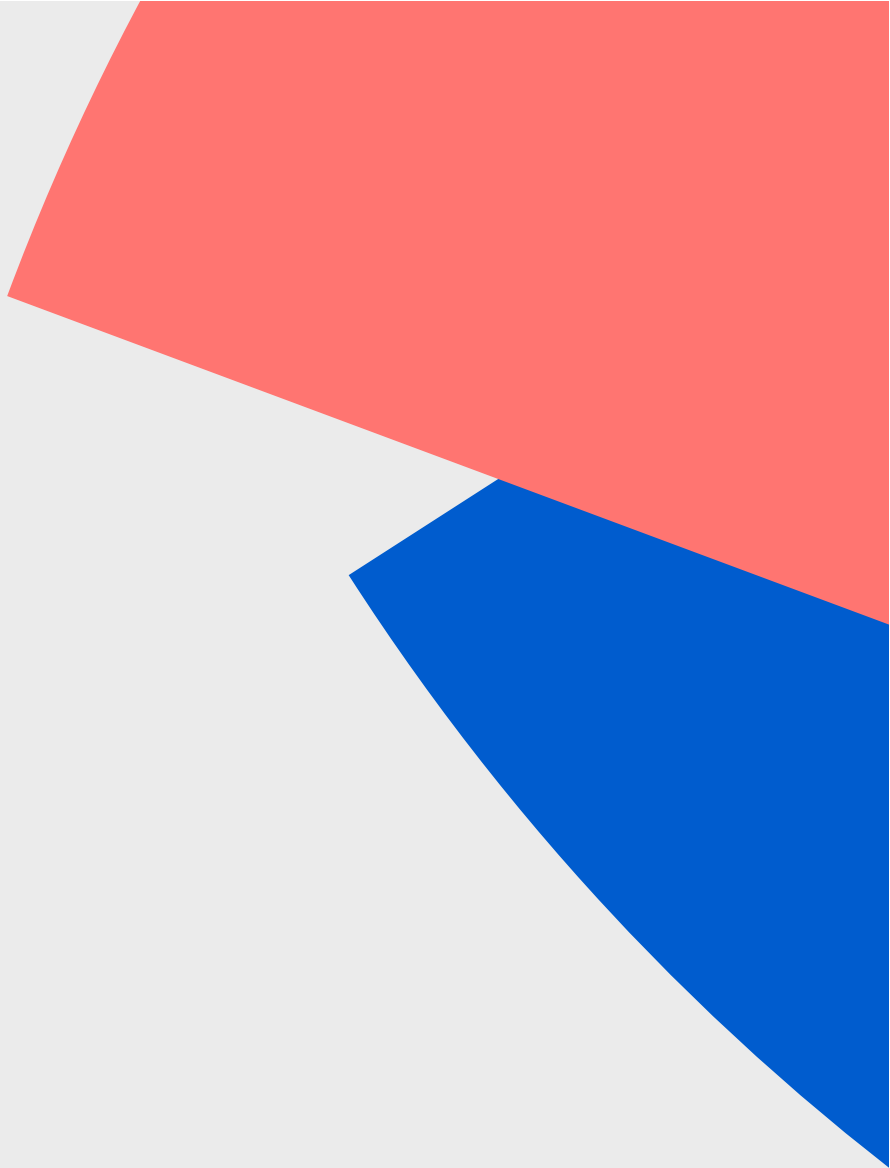
Appendices

A. Methodology

This research study had three main aims:

1. **Provide a description of the mental health and wellbeing of education staff using data collected in 2021.**

2. **Analyse trends over time.**

3. **Identify differences found between the mental health and wellbeing of senior leaders, school teachers and support staff working in the education sector.**

The research was conducted using an online survey of education staff drawn from YouGov's panel. A total of **3,354** education staff completed the survey, which was conducted between **15 June and 20 July 2021**. The sample included all job roles within the education profession from senior leaders through to support staff. Respondents worked in a variety of settings including early years, primary, secondary, further, adult and vocational education sectors. Any differences found in the analysis are based on percentage point increases/decreases. A detailed breakdown of the respondents by sector, region, gender, age, and time spent working in education can be found in Appendix B.

As a result of GDPR legislation, all YouGov respondents taking part from 2018 onwards were given the option to opt-out of questions which gathered sensitive personal data, including questions which captured information about their health. In the analysis these were coded as 'refused', or 'preferred not to say'. Where index comparisons have been made with 2018 or 2017 data, the figures are based on those who responded to the questions (ie excluding 'refused' and 'preferred not to say').

This is the fifth large-scale survey that Education Support has conducted. In 2018-2020, the surveys were published as the **"Teacher Wellbeing Index"** and in 2017 as **"Health Survey 2017 – The mental health and wellbeing of education professionals in the UK"**. The 2020 and 2021 indices relate to staff mental health and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic. The publications are available on the Education Support's website, or by clicking on the image below.

Click on the cover images below to view previous reports.

B. Sample Profile

A total of **3,354** responses were received to the overall survey. All respondents were drawn from the YouGov panel of people that have signed up to undertake research with YouGov. The data has been weighted to be representative of the wider education population by phase, organisation, type and respondent age to ensure generalisations can be made to the wider education population. The table below provides a summary of the achieved sample profile by key demographics.

Role	Number	Proportion
Senior Leaders	776	23%
School teachers	2251	67%
Support staff	225	7%

Phase		
Early Years	147	4%
Primary	1417	42%
Secondary	1407	42%
Sixth Form College	87	3%
Further	142	4%
Adult	43	1%
Vocational	12	0%[1]
Other	99	3%

Gender		
Male	831	25%
Female	2523	75%

Age		
18–34	768	23%
35–49	1573	47%
50+	1013	30%

Ethnicity		
White	2984	89%
BAME	300	9%

Region	Number	Proportion
North East	127	4%
North West	377	11%
Yorkshire and the Humber	296	9%
East of England	249	7%
West Midlands	319	10%
East Midlands	257	8%
London	435	13%
South East	535	16%
South West	302	9%
Wales	123	4%
Scotland	269	8%
Northern Ireland	65	2%

Length of Time Working in Education		
0–2 years	124	4%
3–5 years	380	11%
6–10 years	674	20%
11–20 years	1232	37%
21–30 years	704	21%
31+ years	240	7%

[1]*Small measurable number, less than 1%*

C. Index Comparison of 2017–2021

(NB: The results 2021 and 2020 relate to staff wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic)

This summary allows the reader to compare possible differences in mental health and wellbeing statistics across the years. A heatmap table indicates any changes found, and an arrow within the cell indicates whether this is an increase or decrease (the colour key can be found at the bottom of the page). The percentage point change is shown next to the category, and a summary descriptive term is included for clarity.

The Challenges

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Impact of presenteeism						
Feeling compelled to come into work when unwell – yes (always, most or some of the time				–	–	Similar findings
Feeling compelled to come into work when unwell – no/never				–	–	Similar findings
Stress levels at work						
Stress levels at work **(+10%)**		–	↗	↘	↗	Getting much worse
Work culture and mental health: How organisational culture related to education staff's mental health and wellbeing						
Positive effect				↗	–	Similar findings
Negative effect **(+5%)**				↘	↗	Getting worse
No effect				–	–	Similar findings
Don't know				–	–	Similar findings

Key:
- ▮ Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)
- ▮ Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)
- ▮ Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)
- ▮ Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)
- ▮ Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)
- ▮ No data
- ↗ Increase
- ↘ Decrease

The Challenges — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary

Teacher training for staff and pupil/student wellbeing

How well Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses prepared teachers to manage their pupils'/students' mental health and wellbeing

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Well					–	Similar findings
Not very well					–	Similar findings

How well Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses prepared teachers to manage their own mental health and wellbeing

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Well					–	Similar findings
Not very well					–	Similar findings

▇ Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)	▇ Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)	▇ Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)	↗ Increase
▇ Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)	▇ Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)	▇ No data	↘ Decrease

Mental health of education Staff

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary

The symptoms experienced and the signs in the last year
(NB a reflective question asked in 2021 for perceptions relating to both 2021 and 2020)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Insomnia/difficulty sleeping **(+13%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Irritability/mood swings **(+12%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Tearfulness **(+16%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Over-eating **(+12%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Forgetfulness **(+16%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Difficulty concentrating **(+18%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Muscle tension **(+11%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Recurring headaches/migraines **(+10%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Dizziness **(+11%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Changes in appetite **(+9%)**					↗	Getting worse
Panic attacks					–	Similar findings
Under-eating					–	Similar findings
High blood pressure					–	Similar findings
None of these **(–5%)**					↗	Getting worse

Legend:

- 🟩 Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)
- 🟩 Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)
- 🟥 Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)
- 🟥 Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)
- 🟦 Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)
- ⬜ No data
- ↗ Increase
- ↘ Decrease

Mental health of education Staff — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary

Symptoms experienced linked to possible signs of mental health issues – Self-defined or suggested by someone else[1]

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Anxiety		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Depression		↗	–	–	–	Similar findings
Exhaustion **(+8%)**		–	–	↘	↗	Getting worse
Acute stress			–	↘	–	Similar findings
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Eating disorder (including Anorexia, Bulimia, Binge Eating Disorders)		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Personality disorder		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Bipolar disorder		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Schizophrenia/psychosis		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
None of these		↘	–	↗	–	Similar findings

[1]The 'Burnout' category is not listed here as it was introduced in 2021 and as such has no prior data

▮ Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)	▮ Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)
▮ Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)	▮ Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)

▮ Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)	↗ Increase
▮ No data	↘ Decrease

Mental health of education Staff — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Formal diagnosis by a General Practitioner (GP) following mental health signs displayed *(NB: highest four signs only)*						
Anxiety		↗	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Depression			–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Exhaustion			–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Acute Stress				–	↘	–	Similar findings
Education staff experiencing mental health issues in the last year						
Yes **(+7%)**				–	–	↗	Getting worse
No **(–8%)**				–	↗	↘	Getting worse
Prefer not to say				–	–	–	Similar findings
Mental health symptoms at work: Issues experienced by education staff due to work where work was a contributing factor						
Behavioural (eg changes to appetite, irritability, procrastination, mood swings)			–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Physical symptoms (eg raised blood pressure, muscle tension, sweating, dizziness, headaches or migraines			–	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Psychological symptoms (eg depression, anxiety, panic attacks)			–	–	–	–	Similar findings

Legend:

- Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)
- Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)
- Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)
- Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)
- Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)
- No data
- ↗ Increase
- ↘ Decrease

Mental health of education Staff — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Work issues that symptoms were related to						
Excessive workload		↘	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Work/life balance		↘	–	–	–	Similar findings
Pupils'/students' behaviour		↗	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Covid-19 **(+27%)**					↗	Getting much worse
Low income		–	↘	↘	–	Similar findings
Unreasonable demands from managers		↘	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Inspections **(–10%)**		–	–	–	↘	Getting much better
Rapid pace of change (eg National Curriculum)		↘	–	–	–	Similar findings
Problems with pupils'/students' parents		↗	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Bullying by colleagues		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Redundancy/restructure		–	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Lack of opportunities to work independently		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Lack of trust from managers			↗	–	–	Similar findings
Discrimination		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Retirement		–	–	–	–	Similar findings

Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)

Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)

Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)

↗ Increase

Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)

Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)

No data

↘ Decrease

Mental health of education Staff — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Impact of experiencing psychological, physical or behavioural problems as a result of work						
My personal relationships suffered		–	–	↘	–	Similar findings
My work performance suffered		–	↗	↘	–	Similar findings
I had to take time off work		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
My work relationships suffered		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
I felt suicidal		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
I had to leave my job		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
My personal relationships broke down		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
None of these		–	–	↗	–	Similar findings
Levels of resilience working in the education sector						
Levels of resilience working in the education sector				–	–	Similar findings

| | Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change) | | Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change) | | Similar findings (+/- 0-4%) | ↗ | Increase |
| | Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change) | | Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change) | | No data | ↘ | Decrease |

Mental health of education Staff — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Sources of support accessed by those who used substances or behaviours to cope with workplace stress and/or anxiety (NB only those with 10%+ responses are shown)						
Family/friends		↗	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Partner/spouse		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
GP/NHS/Health professionals		–	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Peers/colleagues		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
None of these		–	–	↗	–	Similar findings
Employer/line manager/senior staff member at work		↗	–	–	–	Similar findings
Websites/a general internet search		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Counsellor/psychiatrist/psychologist		–	–	–	–	Similar findings

■ Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)

■ Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)

■ Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)

■ Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)

■ Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)

■ No data

↗ Increase

↘ Decrease

Mental health of education Staff — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Mental health issues experienced by education staff due to personal reasons						
Family issues **(-6%)**		↘	–	–	↘	Getting better
Financial worries		↘	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Health concerns		↘	–	–	–	Similar findings
Bereavement		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Trauma		↘	–	–	–	Similar findings
Housing problems **(+5%)**		–	–	–	↗	Getting worse
Problems with neighbours		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
None of these		↗	↘	–	–	Similar findings
Measuring wellbeing – WEMWBS score						
Measuring wellbeing – WEMWBS score (all education staff)			44.7	45.7	43.9	Getting worse

Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)

Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)

Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)

↗ Increase

Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)

Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)

No data

↘ Decrease

Staff retention

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Education staff who had considered leaving the profession due to health and wellbeing issues in the last two years						
Yes		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
No		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Reasons given for considering leaving the education profession in the last two years by staff who have experienced pressures on their health and wellbeing						
Volume of workload		↘	–	–	–	Similar findings
Seeking better work/life balance **(–5%)**		↘	–	–	↘	Getting better
Unreasonable demands from managers		–	↘	↘	–	Similar findings
Pupil/student behaviour		↗	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Mental health concerns		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Seeking higher pay		↗	–	↘	–	Similar findings
Rapid pace of organisational change		↘	↘	–	–	Similar findings
Physical health concerns		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Retiring from profession/sector		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Target-driven culture **(–11%)**				–	↘	Getting much better

Legend:
- Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)
- Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)
- Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)
- Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)
- Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)
- No data
- ↗ Increase
- ↘ Decrease

Staff retention — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Reasons given for considering leaving the education profession in the last two years by staff who have experienced pressures on their health and wellbeing — *continued*						
Lack of resources (staff and general)				↘	−	Similar findings
Unnecessary paperwork/ data gathering **(−6%)**				−	↘	Getting better
Not feeling valued				−	−	Similar findings
How educational organisations could improve the mental health and wellbeing of their workforce (NB only those with 15%+ of responses are shown)						
Managers working with their staff to reduce workload		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
Changes being better communicated to staff by managers **(−6%)**		−	−	−	↘	Getting better
My employer having a well-implemented pupil/student behaviour policy		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
The leadership team being more approachable		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
My employer implementing a structured staff health and wellbeing programme (eg stress management workshops, support groups etc)		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
My employer allowing flexible working hours to fit with other commitments		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
My employer having to meet high standards of health and wellbeing provision for staff regulated by an independent body		↘	−	−	−	Similar findings
My employer making us more aware of the support available (eg Employee Assistance Programmes)		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
Colleagues being more understanding and accommodating of each other's needs and feelings		−	−	−	−	Similar findings

Legend:

- Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)
- Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)
- Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)
- Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)
- Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)
- No data
- ↗ Increase
- ↘ Decrease

Improving staff mental health

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
How education staff coped with workplace stress or anxiety						
Food/eating			–	↘	–	Similar findings
Alcohol			–	–	–	Similar findings
Unnecessary spending			–	–	–	Similar findings
Drugs			–	–	–	Similar findings
Gambling			–	–	–	Similar findings
Self-medication[1]					–	Similar findings
Meditation/mindfulness[1]					–	Similar findings
Physical exercise[1]					–	Similar findings
Therapy/counselling[1]					–	Similar findings
Other			–	–	–	Similar findings
None of these					–	Similar findings

[1]*For the 2020 Index onwards, the possible responses to two questions have been combined. Those responses marked with a 1 above previously reported findings on how education staff alleviated/solved mental health issues at work (this question was removed). Due to the question alteration, these categories were reported from 2020 onwards.*

🟩 Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)	🟥 Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)	🟦 Similar findings (+/- 0-4%) ↗ Increase
🟩 Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)	🟥 Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)	⬜ No data ↘ Decrease

Improving staff mental health — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary

Who education staff would speak to first at work about mental health

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Somebody outside of work		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
I did not speak to anybody about it		−	−	↘	−	Similar findings
Colleague		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
Line Manager		−	−	↗	−	Similar findings
Human Resources/central office		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
Employee Assistance Programme		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
Other		−	−	−	−	Similar findings

Why educational staff did not speak to anyone at work

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
They wouldn't be supportive		↗	↘	↗	−	Similar findings
They would see it as a sign of weakness		−	↘	−	−	Similar findings
I prefer to seek support from people outside of work		↘	↗	−	−	Similar findings
There is a stigma (eg a feeling of shame) which stops me from talking to anyone at work				−	−	Similar findings

■ Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)	■ Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)	■ Similar findings (+/- 0-4%) ↗ Increase
■ Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)	■ Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)	■ No data ↘ Decrease

Improving staff mental health — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Why educational staff did not speak to anyone at work — *continued*						
I would be worried about losing my job		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
People at work have been the cause of my difficulties in the past		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
No-one talks about their problems at work		↘	−	↗	−	Similar findings
It would negatively affect their perception of me		−	−	↗	−	Similar findings
Other		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
Confidence in sharing mental health issues at work						
Confident		−	−	↗	−	Similar findings
Not very confident		−	↘	−	−	Similar findings
Education staff who spoke to someone at work or outside work and how this helped						
It gave me perspective and helped me realise I am not alone		↘	↗	−	−	Similar findings
It restored my confidence in my abilities		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
It equipped me with practice advice		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
It enabled me to seek professional support		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
I don't think it helped		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
I gained permission to seek help/ it removed the stigma		−	−	−	−	Similar findings
Other		−	−	−	−	Similar findings

Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)

Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)

Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)

Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)

Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)

No data

↗ Increase

↘ Decrease

Improving staff mental health — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
Help and support available: Mental health and wellbeing guidance available at work						
Sufficient guidance **(–7%)**		–	↗	↗	↘	Getting worse
Insufficient guidance **(+7%)**		–	↘	↘	↗	Getting worse
Levels of support received at work by those who experienced mental health and wellbeing problems						
Well supported **(–7%)**		–	↗	↗	↘	Getting worse
Not very well supported **(+6%)**	↗	↘	↘	↗		Getting worse
The help available at work						
Union people to talk to **(–5%)**		–	–	–	↘	Getting worse
Employee assistance programme **(–7%)**		–	↗	–	↘	Getting worse
Encouragement to speak up when struggling **(–6%)**		–	↗	↗	↘	Getting worse
HR staff to talk to		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Exercise classes, groups or programmes		–	↗	–	–	Similar findings
Mindfulness classes or programmes **(–5%)**		–	–	–	↘	Getting worse
Training on common mental health conditions **(–5%)**		–	–	–	↘	Getting worse
Mentoring		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Health-related support staff to talk to		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Mental health first aid training		–	↗	–	–	Similar findings

Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)

Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)

Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)

Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)

Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)

No data

↗ Increase

↘ Decrease

Improving staff mental health — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
The help available at work — *continued*[1]						
Resilience, energy or stress management classes or programmes		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Massage or relaxation classes or programmes		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Individual supervision as professional support provided outside of the line management relationship[2]					–	Similar findings
Counselling/psychotherapy – online or in person					–	Similar findings
Wellbeing sessions					–	Similar findings
Animals in the workplace					–	Similar findings
Other		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
None of these		–	↘	↘	–	Similar findings
Workplace mental health and wellbeing policies						
Has a policy **(–6%)**		–	↗	↗	↘	Getting worse
Does not have a policy		–	–	↘	–	Similar findings

[1]The 'professional coaching' and 'facilitated peer support group' categories are not listed here as they were introduced in 2021 and as such have no prior data

[2]In 2020 defined as 'Supervision as a safe space to discuss issues'

Getting much better (+/– 10% and over improving change)

Getting better (+/– 5-9% improving change)

Getting worse (+/– 5-9% worsening change)

Getting much worse (+/– 10% and over worsening change)

Similar findings (+/– 0-4%)

No data

↗ Increase

↘ Decrease

Improving staff mental health — *continued*

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021 Summary
How well mental health and wellbeing policies were being implemented						
Always		–	–	–	–	Similar findings
Most/some of the time			–	–	–	Similar findings
No/never		↘	↘	↘	–	Similar findings
Keeping track of staff wellbeing: Educational organisations regularly surveying their staff						
Yes			↗	–	–	Similar findings
No			↘	–	–	Similar findings

Overall tally of data changes identified between 2020–2021

Category Tally		Number	% of total
+/– 10%+: getting much worse		11	6%
+/– 5-9%+: getting worse		20	11%
+/– 0-4%: similar findings		140	80%
+/– 5-9%: getting better		5	3%
+/– 10%: getting much better		1	1%

Getting much better (+/- 10% and over improving change)

Getting better (+/- 5-9% improving change)

Getting worse (+/- 5-9% worsening change)

Getting much worse (+/- 10% and over worsening change)

Similar findings (+/- 0-4%)

No data

↗ Increase

↘ Decrease

D. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scores

Background to the use of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) is a measure used by a variety of different organisations, including governments, to gauge the mental wellbeing of a population.

The WEMWBS Questionnaire

The WEMWBS is a self-administered questionnaire of subjective wellbeing and psychological functioning. There are 14 questions, each with five response options on a Likert scale. The options for selection are 'all of the time', 'often', 'some of the time', 'rarely' and 'none of the time'. The questions refer to a person's feelings over the preceding two weeks. The scores are summed together to provide a single score that ranges from 14–70, which are then aggregated to form a total score for each group.

Scores between 41 and 45 should be considered in high risk of psychological distress and increased risk of depression. Scores below 40 suggest an individual could be at high risk of major depression and should be advised to seek help (Taggart et al, 2015).

The table below summarises all WEMWBS scores for 2021 with comparisons to 2020.

	WEMWBS Score		Number		SD		Difference (rounded)
	2020	**2021**	**2020**	**2021**	**2020**	**2021**	
Total							
All educational staff	45.66	43.90	3034	3354	8.64	9.33	–1.76
Role							
School teachers	45.55	43.70	2010	2129	8.77	9.27	–1.85
Senior leaders	45.23	43.37	749	766	7.89	9.20	–1.85
Support staff	46.24	45.81	184	333	9.14	9.41	–0.44
Phase							
Early Years	45.14	44.95	128	64	8.09	8.82	–0.18
Primary	45.01	43.48	1197	1122	8.96	9.04	–1.52
Secondary	46.05	44.05	1368	1114	8.38	9.08	–2.00
Sixth Form Colleges	44.52	43.28	71	299	7.62	10.07	–1.24
Further Education	46.68	44.25	116	488	8.77	10.17	–2.44
Adult Education[1]	44.83	45.23	30	148	9.12	9.18	0.40
Vocational Education[1]	47.31	42.17	10	41	9.76	7.47	–5.14
Other	46.99	45.47	114	78	8.97	9.74	–1.52

[1]*Due to the small dataset for both 2020 and 2021, the figures can only be treated as indicative*

	WEMWBS Score		Number		SD		Difference (rounded)
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	
Region							
North East	46.83	43.44	116	153	9.24	9.63	–3.39
North West	44.99	42.58	349	403	8.33	9.39	–2.41
Yorkshire and the Humber	45.65	43.33	263	322	7.88	9.62	–2.32
East of England	46.29	43.95	254	251	9.97	8.80	–2.34
West Midlands	44.00	42.94	278	320	7.99	9.46	–1.06
East Midlands	45.03	43.88	243	232	8.41	8.55	–1.15
London	45.78	43.59	330	448	9.31	9.09	–2.19
South East	45.48	44.82	513	490	8.26	9.38	–0.66
South West	46.84	45.36	286	306	8.53	9.33	–1.48
Wales	47.44	44.30	123	119	8.32	9.69	–3.13
Scotland	46.10	43.97	252	234	8.92	9.03	–2.12
Northern Ireland[1]	44.20	47.26	27	76	7.93	10.41	3.06
England	45.56	43.79	2632	2924	8.63	9.30	–1.81
Gender							
Male	46.10	44.49	790	912	8.28	9.93	–1.61
Female	45.49	43.68	2244	2442	8.77	9.09	–1.81
Age							
18–34	44.63	43.27	707	718	8.59	9.02	–1.36
35–49	45.22	43.08	1437	1505	8.38	9.25	–2.15
50+	46.93	45.40	890	1131	8.9	9.46	–1.54
Time working in education							
0–2 years	44.91	43.38	121	128	9.31	9.34	–1.53
3–5 years	45.38	43.31	358	407	8.94	8.84	–2.07
6–10 years	44.95	43.24	590	654	8.11	9.29	–1.71
11–20 years	45.78	44.07	1120	1192	8.52	9.17	–1.71
21–30 years	45.74	44.19	627	726	9.19	10.02	–1.55
31+ years	47.40	45.25	218	246	7.92	9.33	–2.15

[1]*Due to the small dataset for both 2020 and 2021, the figures can only be treated as indicative*
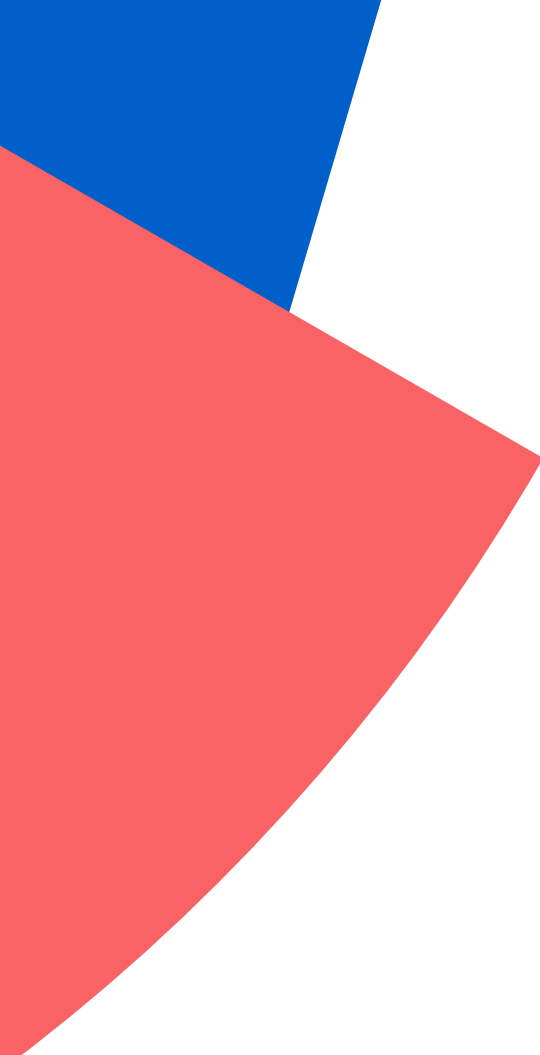
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