

Education Supporter

Spring 2025

The magazine from



Behind the scenes
of the educator's
helpline

A guide
to burnout

Meeting the
Minister for
School Standards

A photograph of a woman with short, vibrant red hair and bangs, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark blue jacket over a red top. The background is a soft-focus indoor setting.

“Everything falls on schools”

A headteacher describes the impact of changing
public services and parental relationships

Welcome

to the Spring magazine from Education Support!

Like many, we've had such a busy year doing as much as we can to support everyone working in education.

Whether you're a teacher or support staff, from primary right through to university — Education Support is here for your wellbeing.

As a small charity, we're so grateful for our donors and supporters, without which none of this impact would be possible. This magazine is just a glimpse into the difference they make. As you can see from this magazine we work at the individual, workplace and government level to make change. Yes, yoga and reflection are important, but we know that wider change needs to happen for teachers and education staff to thrive in their roles, so we cover everything.

There are still plenty of people working in education

that haven't heard of us and our resources despite our sector-wide impact. If you can, it would be so helpful if you could let a friend or colleague know that free support is available through Education Support. We have guides online, a free counselling helpline, webinars and more! You could even mention us in a staff meeting, if that's not pushing our luck!

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with any feedback, thoughts or queries — we love to hear from you.



Kindest regards,
Sinéad Mc Brearty
CEO
Education Support

Contents

Individual

4 What's it like to work on the 24/7 educator's helpline

6 Avoiding burnout: top tips

Workplace

8 What is professional supervision?

System

10 A better system for teachers and education staff

12 How you've changed policy

13 Fancy a TWIX?

14 "Everything falls on schools"



16 New! Education Support in Northern Ireland and Scotland

18 Thank you for your festive support

19 Free staff wellbeing packs

20 When did you last feel relaxed?

21 Share some wisdom?

22 Crossword

23 You can make change
Big staffroom quiz launch

Keep in touch

Phone 020 7697 2766 (fundraising enquiries)
Helpline 08000 562 561 (free, confidential 24/7 helpline)
Email fundraising@edsupport.org.uk
Website educationsupport.org.uk



Registered charity
no. 1161436



What's it like to work on the 24/7 educator's helpline



Education Support's free, 24/7 helpline is a vital resource for teachers and education staff facing personal and professional challenges.

Many callers seek help with workplace stress, conflict, and mental health concerns, often finding that the support they need is not available in their workplace.

What happens when we get a call?

As a qualified counsellor working on Education Support's helpline, I never know what the next call will bring. But I do know that every caller is reaching out because they need support, understanding, and a listening ear. No matter their





**“If the helpline
hadn’t been there,
I wouldn’t be here.
It’s that simple.”**

Interview participant

situation, our role is to offer reassurance, practical advice, and a way forward.

Bryony* was one of those callers. After 17 years at the same school, she transitioned to a new role, only to feel overwhelmed and lost. Months of stress left her struggling to cope.

“At the time, I was feeling really lost and unsure of where to turn. Everything at work had been going wrong, and I was completely overwhelmed. Calling the helpline was a huge relief. The person I spoke to listened without judgment, and for the first time in a long while, I didn’t feel alone.”

Since that conversation, Bryony has regained control. “Speaking to someone gave me the confidence to take the next step. I applied for a new job — one that truly excites me — and I got it! I start in the Summer Term, and for the first time in months, I feel hopeful.”

It’s moments like these that remind me why our work is so important. The Education Support helpline isn’t just a number—it’s a lifeline for teachers and education staff facing their toughest moments. Every day, people like Bryony reach out, and every day, we are here to listen, support, and remind them they are never alone.



Contact us at educationsupport.org.uk/helpline

Avoiding burnout: top tips

1 Remember that your wellbeing is important

To be there for your students, you also need to be there for yourself. When did you last remind yourself that how you feel, and how you are coping, matters? Pause, get curious, and be kind to yourself.

2 Do things that make you feel like 'you'

It might be a hobby, seeing family or chatting with friends. It's important to remember that you are a person beyond your job. Engaging in our passions can energise us and help prevent burnout.

3 Be aware of your emotions, stress levels and mental health

Connecting with how we feel and noticing our stress levels is really important. Being aware of your feelings is the first step towards finding solutions to stressful problems.

4 Accept when you need to say 'no'

Accept that you can't do everything and there are times when it is better for you, your health and your students to say no. Can it be delegated? Is it in line with your own professional priorities?

5 Get support

You are not alone! Speak to colleagues, friends, family, or call our free, confidential helpline, staffed by qualified counsellors available 24/7 on **08000 562 561**.



You may already feel you are experiencing burnout. It is really important to be aware of the warning signs. If you do spot them, the good news is that you can recover.

Here are the main signs to spot in yourself or a colleague:

- Exhaustion
- Mental detachment from your work
- Problems with performance or relationships at work
- Increased cynicism and compassion fatigue
- Physical symptoms like disrupted sleep or head and stomach aches
- Increased cynicism and compassion fatigue

For more wellbeing tips and resources just like this one, sign up to **'Love Teaching'**.



What is professional supervision?

It's not coaching or therapy — but what actually *is* professional supervision?



Professional Supervision is a new concept in education but is well embedded with therapists and social workers. Sessions provide a safe, non-judgemental space where leaders can explore the complexities of their work. Whether it's the pressure of leadership, team dynamics, or personal wellbeing, supervision offers structured support that can make a real difference. We provide 6, 1-hour, online sessions over 6 months with a fully qualified supervisor who understands the education sector.

The impact of supervision is clear. Leaders who have accessed the service report feeling better equipped to manage stress, maintain their sense of purpose, and navigate difficult situations with greater confidence. The vast majority

“Unlike counselling, I found it refreshing that the supervisor was prepared to offer strategies or practice gratitude; another was to consciously challenge the negative narrative I have set for myself.”

“My supervisor just seemed to understand me and the context I work in. She helped me view things from the outside looking in, which helped me take some of the emotion out of what I was feeling. She empowered me and helped me realise I am a strong person.”



find supervision helpful, would recommend it to a colleague, and feel both heard and challenged to think differently about their approach.

This service is fully funded, ensuring that school and college leaders can access the support they need without financial barriers. If you're facing the pressures of leadership and need space to reflect, process, and grow, professional supervision could be the key to feeling more supported and resilient in your role.





A better system for teachers and education staff

At Education Support, we don't just work to support individuals or schools, we also work to drive broader change by advocating for improvements to Government policy for the benefit of the education workforce.

Why? Because many of the challenges facing education staff, such as SEND pressures, challenging parent and pupil behaviour driven by unmet needs, and a high-stakes

accountability system, can't be fully addressed through actions by individuals or schools alone.

Our research is at the heart of our work. By gathering insights from teachers and education

staff across the UK, we highlight the real-world impact of policy decisions on their wellbeing. Our research has shown that educators often feel left to fill the cracks in struggling public services, such as CAMHS and social services. This, in turn, negatively affects their own mental health and wellbeing, as well as that of the children and young people they support.

We use this evidence to influence policy and campaign for changes that can make a real, lasting difference. By influencing government policy, we aim to help shape a new vision for the education sector, which builds hope, rebuilds trust and reenergises the burnt-out education workforce.

Our mission is to improve the mental health and wellbeing of everyone working in education.

Some of the key changes we're calling for include:

- 🌀 A dedicated education staff retention strategy to counter the high levels of staff attrition in the sector.
- 🌀 High quality support for school and college leaders, including access to funded professional supervision.
- 🌀 Proper investment to tackle child poverty and wider children's and family services, so that teachers and education staff can ensure that their most vulnerable pupils get the support they need.



How you've changed policy

We've been proud to contribute towards improving wellbeing by influencing the Government.

Here are a few of our highlights:



Our Chief Executive, Sinéad Mc Brearty, was delighted to recently meet with the **Minister for School Standards, Catherine McKinnell MP**, to discuss the value of professional supervision for school and college leaders.



We were pleased to see some of our recommendations included in **Dame Christine Gilbert's independent learning review for Ofsted**.



Together with the Department for Education and members of the education sector, we co-created the **education staff wellbeing charter for education staff** in England.



We encouraged members of the public to write to their local MP calling for action on teacher mental health. So far, our campaign has resulted in us and **our issues being raised in Parliament 12 times!**



Right now, we're continuing to urge the Government to prioritise a dedicated education staff retention.

With your continued support, we'll keep pushing for changes to Government policy the education workforce truly deserves. **Thank you.**



Fancy a **TWIX**?

At Education Support our nickname for our annual research the Teacher Wellbeing Index is TWIX — this makes our emails shorter but also gives us constant snack cravings!

Our eighth annual report shines a light on the impact of pupil and parent behaviour on staff morale and mental health.



82%

of the workforce who told us that challenging behaviour by pupils and students had increased, said this negatively affected their mental health and wellbeing.

70%

who report a similar increase in challenging interactions by parents also said it had negatively affected their mental health and wellbeing.

84%

of staff who told us that verbal or physical abuse by pupils or students has increased believe it is due to the lack of provision for students' physical, emotional, and mental health needs.

Our report outlines key recommendations for change for UK education departments. We need immediate action to make teaching an attractive and satisfying career for talented graduates.

Download the full report from our website:
educationsupport.org.uk/twix





“Everything falls on schools”

Alex* is a Deputy Head in a primary school. He has shared his experiences with us in line with our TWIX report.

I've worked in primary education for 30 years, and it has changed hugely — particularly in recent years. Many parents now question our decisions and don't trust us as professionals. Complaints, once infrequent, have become the norm, and vexatious complaints are a growing issue, especially for school leaders. As the only compulsory universal service, everything falls on schools, leaving no boundaries between our work and the expectations placed on us.

Parental complaints have a huge impact on teachers' mental health. Long, frequent emails from parents, the pressure to respond immediately, and the constant worry about how they will react can be overwhelming.

At the same time, more pupils are struggling, and this understandably causes parents anxiety. As a parent of a child with SEND, I know firsthand how frustrating the lack of support can be. Schools are under immense financial pressure, making it even harder to provide the necessary resources for pupils with additional needs. Yet the curriculum remains rigid, assessing children by a narrow set of age-related expectations.

“I've heard of parents telling their children not to listen to teachers or insisting that teachers cannot speak to their child without them present.”

There needs to be a massive overhaul, with more trust placed in educators as experts rather than dictating how they should teach. This level of distrust would not be tolerated in any other profession, and it only fuels parents' lack of confidence in schools.

External support services, such as CAMHS, are another challenge. In my experience as a deputy head, multi-agency work is inconsistent and lacks true collaboration. Too often, these services set unrealistic expectations for parents, making promises that schools simply cannot meet. In some cases, they even undermine schools, creating further division rather than working together to support children effectively.

When parents are unhappy with a school, children pick up on it. It affects their behaviour and their respect for staff. I've heard of parents telling their children not to listen to teachers or insisting that teachers cannot speak to their child without them present. In general, children are being raised with fewer boundaries, and the

"Many parents now question our decisions and don't trust us as professionals... this level of distrust would not be tolerated in any other profession."



impact of COVID is still being felt — lower attendance, parents wanting control over what happens in the classroom, and a noticeable decline in respect for teachers.

Education is at a crossroads. Without proper funding, trust in educators, and clear boundaries between schools and parents, we risk further damaging the profession and, ultimately, the education and wellbeing of the children we are here to support.





Education Support in Northern Ireland and Scotland

Thanks to recent funding, we are thrilled to announce the expansion of our vital services into Northern Ireland and Scotland, ensuring that even more educators receive the support they need.

This expansion means that school and college leaders in these nations now have access to fully funded Professional Supervision, helping them navigate the pressures of leadership with expert guidance and emotional support.

One school leader who has seen the benefits of Professional Supervision first-hand is Geoff, principal of a primary school in Northern Ireland. A passionate advocate for Nurture Provision in Northern Ireland, Geoff has always prioritised the wellbeing

of his pupils. However, he acknowledges that school leadership itself comes with immense challenges and pressures.

“Before I signed up for professional supervision, I didn’t know much about it... but when I found out it was funded at no cost to our school, I figured I had nothing to lose!”

Like many school leaders, Geoff often found himself carrying the emotional weight of his role. He was aware that professionals in other high-pressure jobs, such as counsellors, regularly accessed supervision, and he saw the potential for school leaders to benefit in the same way.

“Even now, I find myself looking back at my notes and reflecting on the lessons I learned. I continue to use those insights to enhance my practice and maintain my wellbeing. For me, professional supervision has been incredibly valuable. It empowers you, helps you with personal growth and emboldens you on your journey as a school leader.”

With this new funding, more school leaders across Northern Ireland and Scotland will be able to access the same level of expert support. Professional Supervision provides a vital space for reflection, resilience-building, and personal growth, ensuring that those at the helm of our schools have the tools they need to thrive.

“Even now, I find myself looking back at my notes and reflecting on the lessons I learned. I continue to use those insights to enhance my practice and maintain my wellbeing.”



This service is making a tangible difference, ensuring that those who dedicate their lives to education are supported every step of the way.





Thank you for your festive support

Our 2024 Christmas Appeal focused on Charlotte's story — one that resonated with so many teachers facing unprecedented challenges from parents.

Once again, your generosity overwhelmed us. Thanks to your donations, **we raised over £36,000** — ensuring our 24/7 confidential helpline remained open throughout the festive period and beyond. Because of you, teachers had a lifeline

when they needed it most.

Our free, confidential services help teachers like Charlotte navigate difficult interactions and provide the emotional support they need to stay resilient.

**From all of us at Education Support, thank you.
Your support is changing lives.**



Free staff wellbeing packs

Emotionally healthy teachers and education staff make better learning possible. They are also more likely to remain in the profession, improving staff retention

Our FREE PACK of wellbeing resources and guidance help leaders make a meaningful difference to staff wellbeing.



Your pack includes:

Practical tools to start your school's staff wellbeing journey

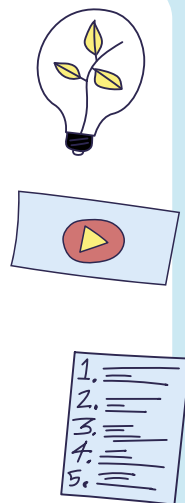
These tools can help you put staff wellbeing at the heart of your school.

An interactive staff wellbeing toolkit

A carefully selected range of wellbeing tips and exercises to keep your staff mentally well.

Free helpline and wellbeing services

Our pack includes posters about our services to pop around school, so your colleagues know support is always available.



If you love teaching,
it's time for change.

Use the QR code
to sign up now



When did you last feel relaxed?

Let's take some time now to pause, reflect and connect with yourself.

These questions may help you feel grounded, understand how you're truly feeling, or take appropriate actions to help and support yourself. Pick one or some and answer as truthfully as possible.

- 1 **When did you last feel relaxed?**
- 2 **What are your sources of joy and pleasure?**
What things make you feel like 'you'?



- 3 **Are you waking up in the morning ready to take on the day, or is getting up a challenge?**
- 4 **What truly motivates you and makes you feel like you're doing a good job?**
- 5 **Are you holding on to something you need to let go of?** If you struggle with this one, our counsellors can help talk things through with you. Call us on **08000 562 561**.

Can you take a moment to reflect on your answers?

To view the full list of questions, along with even more tips and resources, visit **educationsupport.org.uk/loveteaching**



Share some wisdom?

To help pass on the wisdom and experience of teachers, can you tell us:

“What advice would you give to a newly qualified teacher, starting their career in teaching today?”

Use the envelope included or email us at fundraising@edsupport.org.uk



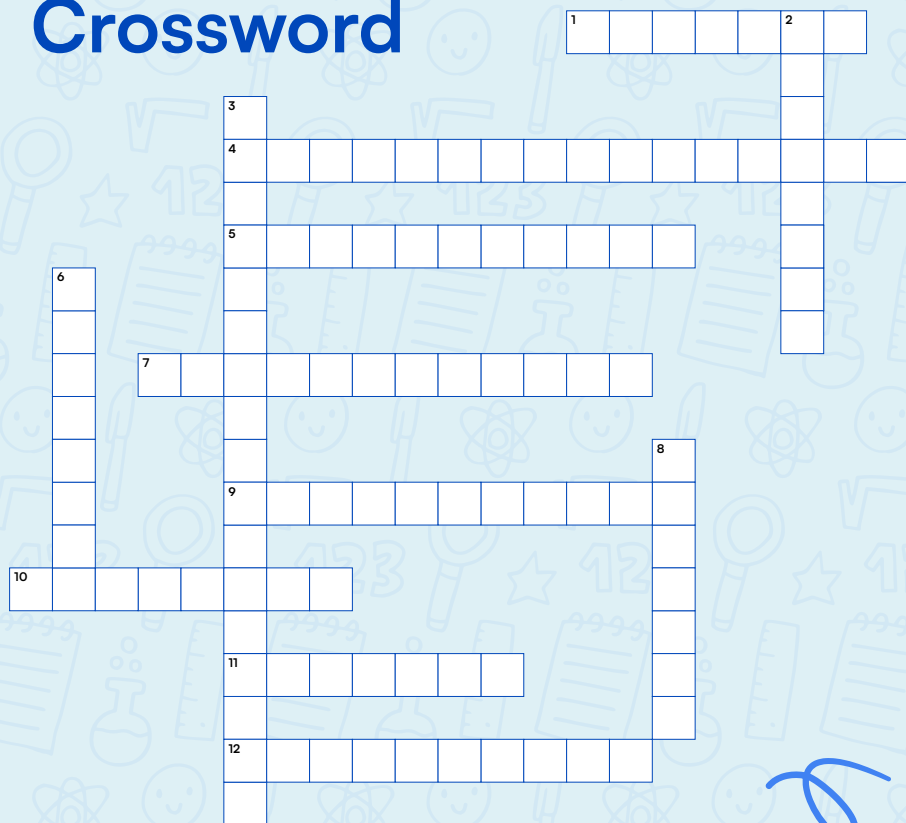
Resources for you

- 1 School leadership to retirement: how to prepare mentally and take care of yourself:**
Prepare for retirement and stay mentally well when it arrives.
- 2 Bullying and harassment guide:**
How to recognise bullying and harassment at work, and how to respond if it is happening to you.
- 3 Subscribe to our newsletter:**
The latest resources, straight to your inbox.
- 4 Webinars:**
Hear from industry experts on a wide variety of wellbeing topics.

Scan the QR code



Crossword



Across

- 1 A live event held online (7)
- 4 The only charity solely for educators (9,7)
- 5 Mindful of others' well-being (11)
- 7 A state of emotional and psychological well-being (6,6)
- 9 Professional _____ — Process of professional learning and development (11)
- 10 A service to access free, confidential, 24/7 counselling (8)
- 11 Useful collection of resources and tips (7)
- 12 Free, monthly tips and resources delivered to your inbox (10)

Down

- 2 Public support for an idea, plan, or way of doing something (8)
- 3 Person who provides support to pupils so that they can access the curriculum (8,9)
- 6 Practices for personal well-being (4,4)
- 8 A select committee's official investigation (7)

Answers: 1 Webinar, 4 Education Support, 5 Considerate, 6 Self-care, 8 Inquiry, 9 Supervision, 10 Helpline, 11 Toolkit, 12 Newsletter. **Down:** 2 Advocacy, 3 Teaching Assistant, 7 Mental health, 8 Inquiry, 9 Supervision, 10 Helpline, 11 Toolkit.

You can make change



Education Support are a small but mighty charity making a big difference to the wellbeing of teachers and education staff across the UK.

We're so grateful to our donors that support individuals, provide resources to schools, colleges and universities and improve the system as a whole.

If you're able to, you can support us by:

- **Donating to Education Support**
— donations mean our 24/7 helpline and expert-led resources remain free
- **Claim your free staff wellbeing pack**
— make a meaningful difference to wellbeing in your school
- **Free monthly resources** — sign up to our newsletter for brand new wellbeing resources, webinars and more

Find out
more



Launching our Big Staffroom Quiz!

Are you looking for a free
and easy all-staff activity?

Sign
up here



Working or retired from the public sector or civil service?

Introducing **Boundless Plus**, the new membership option for just £68 a year.



Boundless will donate **£10 to Education Support** for every new member.*



Unlock benefits like these and **save up to £599**** with your **Boundless Plus** membership

Royal Botanic Gardens
Kew

Unlimited admission to Kew Gardens and Wakehurst



HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES

Unlimited access to all HRP sites inc, Tower of London



KIDS PASS

Instant access to Kids Pass membership



tastecard

Instant access to tastecard, including Coffee Club



"I've been a member for over 30 years and wouldn't be without it."

Adrian, Torquay

"Great opportunities for lovely days out."

Mark, East Sussex

"Super value – lots of great offers, days out and online events."

Nigel, Surrey

Join today at
boundless.co.uk/educationsupport

boundless

*Boundless will make a £10 charitable donation to Education Support for every new Boundless member who joins using the exclusive Education Support link, boundless.co.uk/educationsupport. Terms and Conditions apply. Visit boundless.co.uk/educationsupport for more information. Offer valid until further notice. Boundless reserve the right to withdraw the offer at any time.

**The value of Boundless Plus instant benefits are calculated by combining comparable membership deals at RBG Kew, National Trust for Scotland, Kids Pass, tastecard including Coffee Club and the Ramblers, as well as equivalent admission offers at WWT Slimbridge and the Tower of London (HRP). Additionally, it includes annual Roadside Assist by LV= Britannia Rescue. Terms and conditions apply.