

Teacher Wellbeing Index **2021**

The Challenges
in 2021



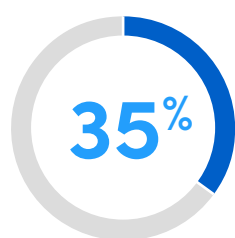
We asked teachers and education staff questions about the challenges that affect their mental health and wellbeing.

Our main findings:

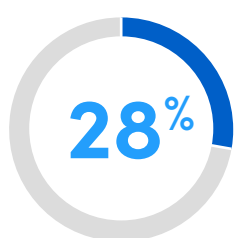
- **Long working hours persist across all job roles**
- **Nearly half of all staff always feel compelled to come to work when unwell**
- **Stress levels increased in 2021, compared to 2020**
- **There is an increase in staff reporting that organisational culture has a negative effect on their wellbeing**
- **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 their 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

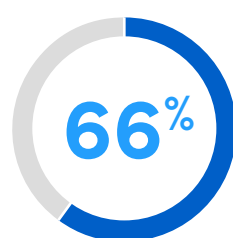
Long working hours persist across all job roles



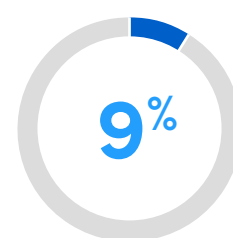
of **all staff** worked **51+** hours a week on average.



of **school teachers** worked **51+** hours per week despite **0%** being contracted to do so.



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



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.



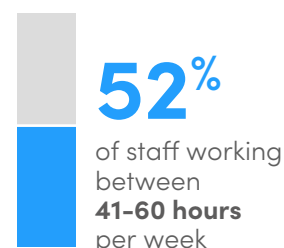
33% of **support staff** felt compelled to always come into school when unwell.



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:



n. 3

3. Stress at work

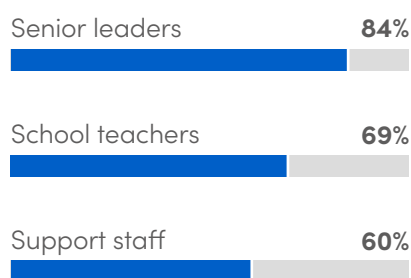
Stress levels increased in 2021

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



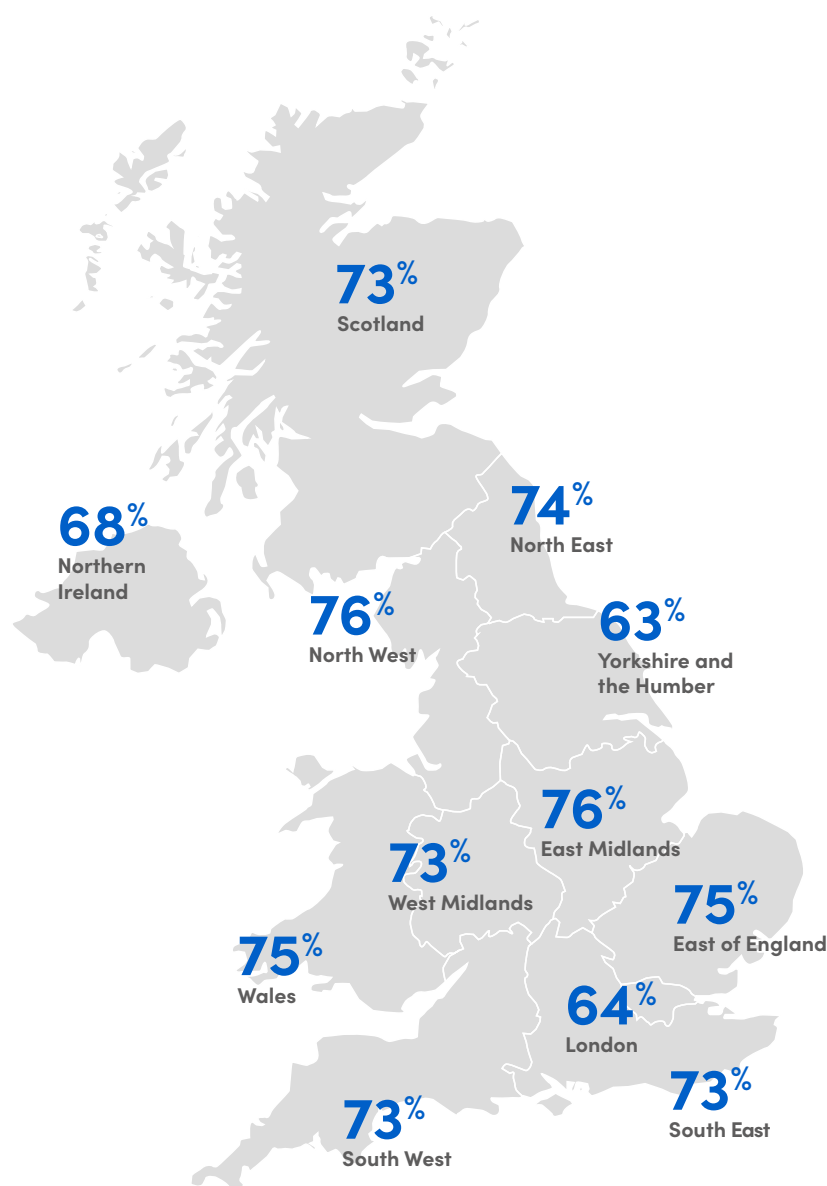
n. 4

Stress by job role

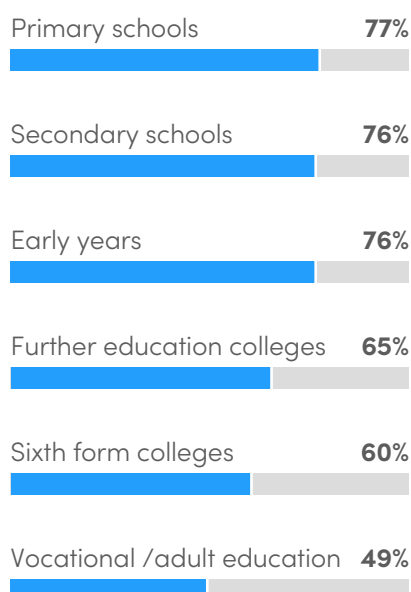


n. 5

Stress by region



Stress levels of staff by education phase



n. 6

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:

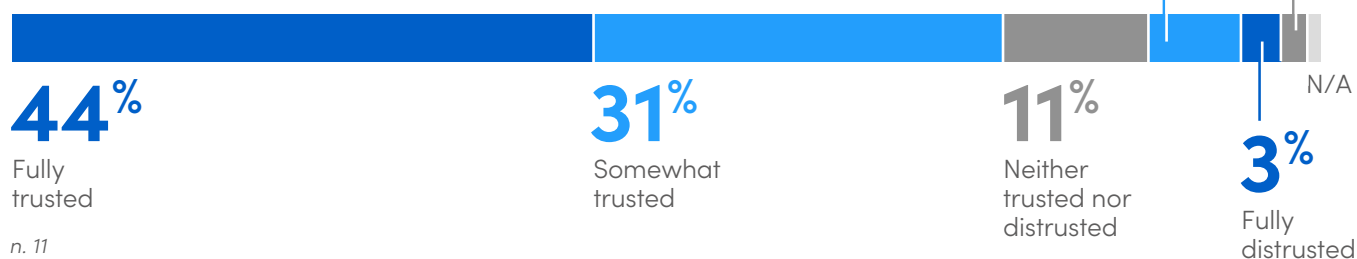
	2020	2021	% change
All staff	30%	26%	-4%
Senior leaders	29%	30%	+1%
School teachers	30%	26%	-5%
Support staff	30%	22%	-8%

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:



Differences were found in the level of trust felt at work

Support staff
felt the most trusted

Senior
leaders

School
teachers

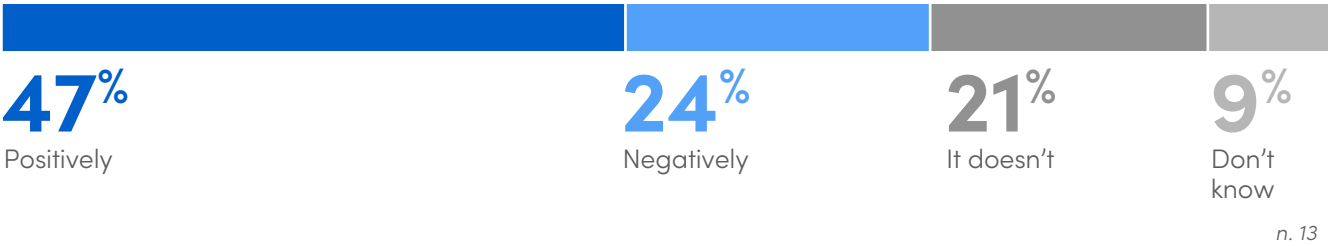
Trusted ■
Distrusted ■



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.



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



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.



Senior leaders



School teachers



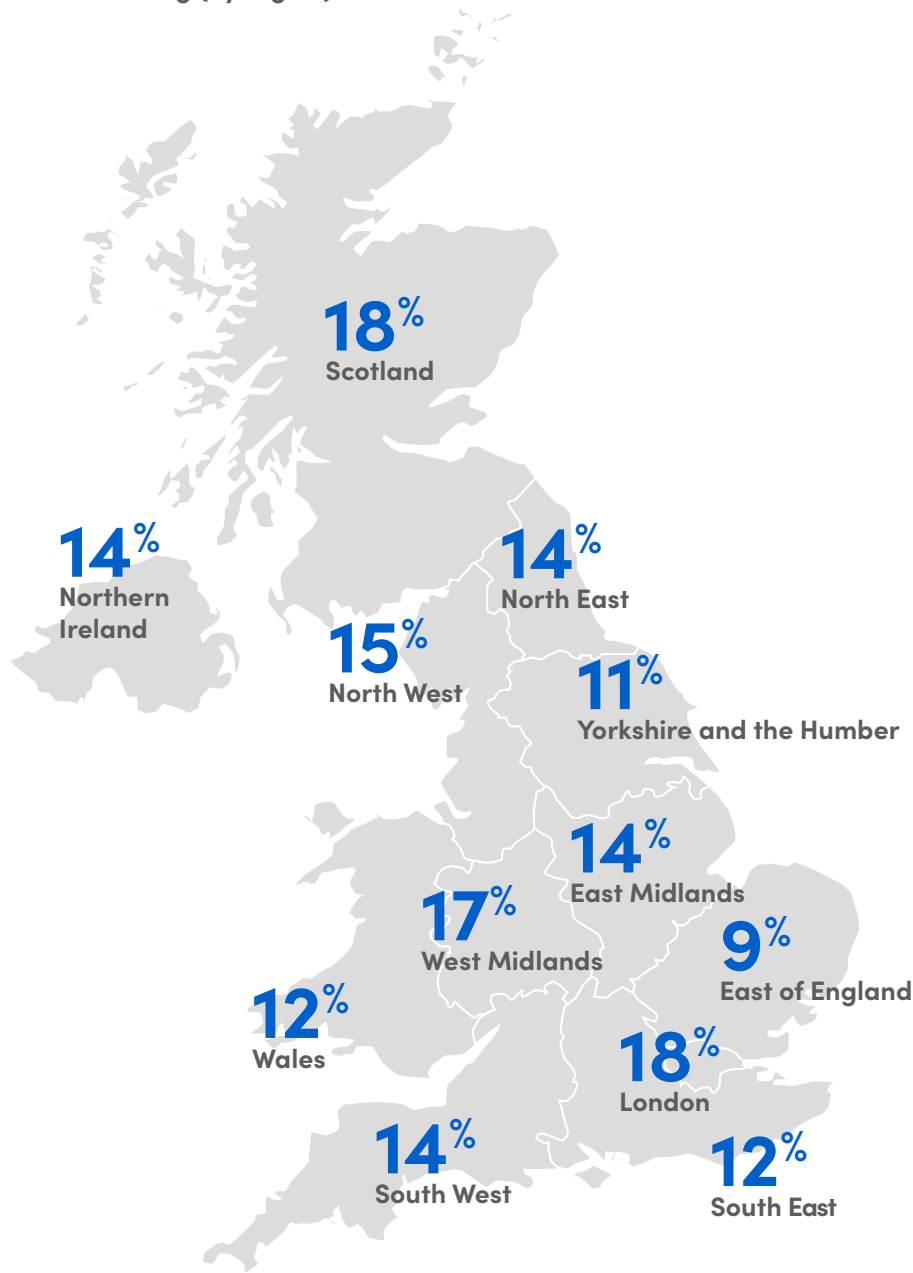
Not well ■ Well ■ Don't know ■

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)

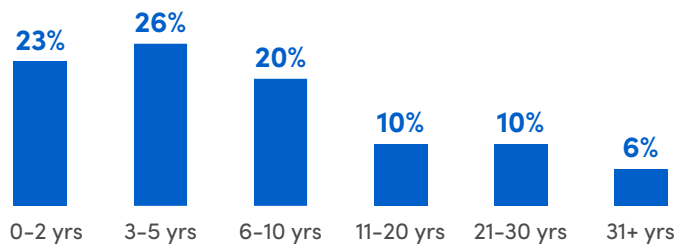
Percentage of teachers who felt their ITT courses prepared them well to manage their own wellbeing (by region)



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.



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.



Senior leaders

2020



2021



School teachers

2020



2021



Not well ■ Well ■ Don't know ■

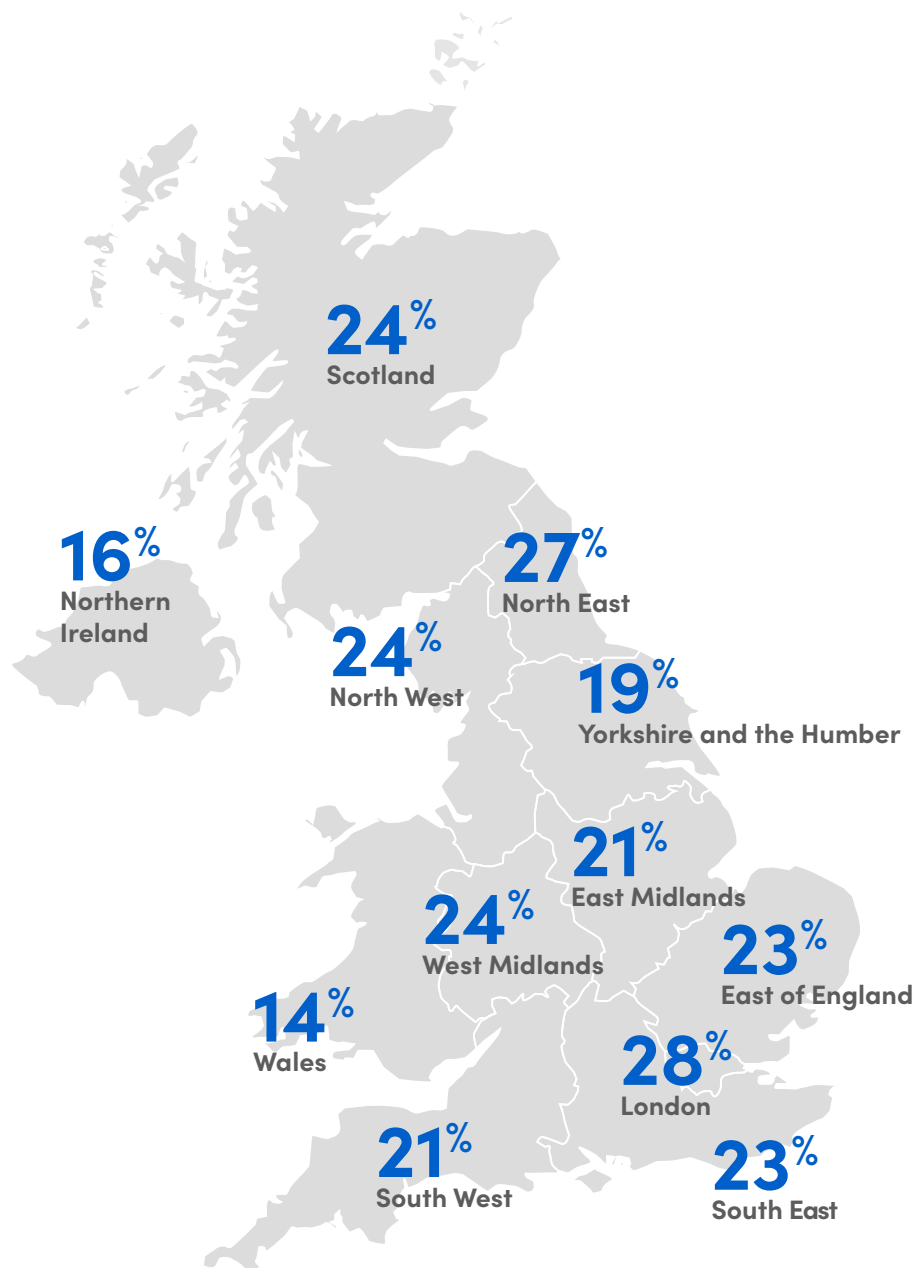
n. 20

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)

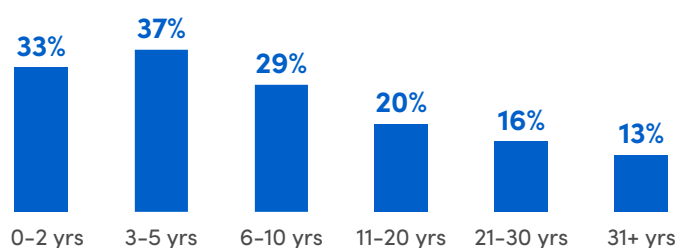
Percentage of teachers who felt their ITT courses prepared them well to manage their pupils'/students' mental health and wellbeing (by region)



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.



n.22

7. Maintaining a sense of purpose

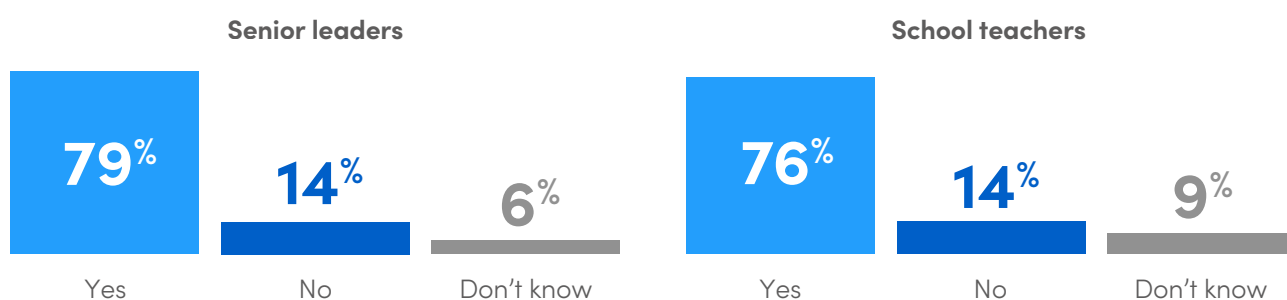
We asked respondents to reflect on whether a sense of purpose brought them to their career in education, and whether it remains in place.

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

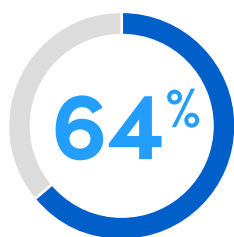
Percentage of staff who had a clear sense of purpose when they started working in the education profession



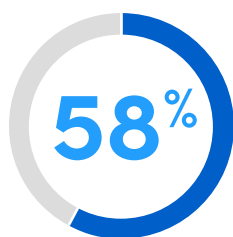
n. 23

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.

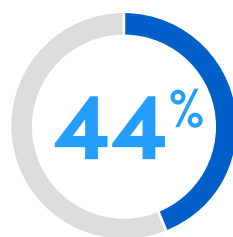
The most important aspects underpinning the sense of purpose were found to be:



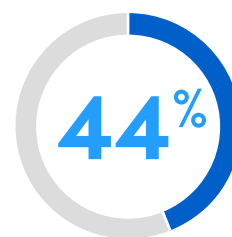
Making a difference/impact



Helping learners progress/achieve their goals

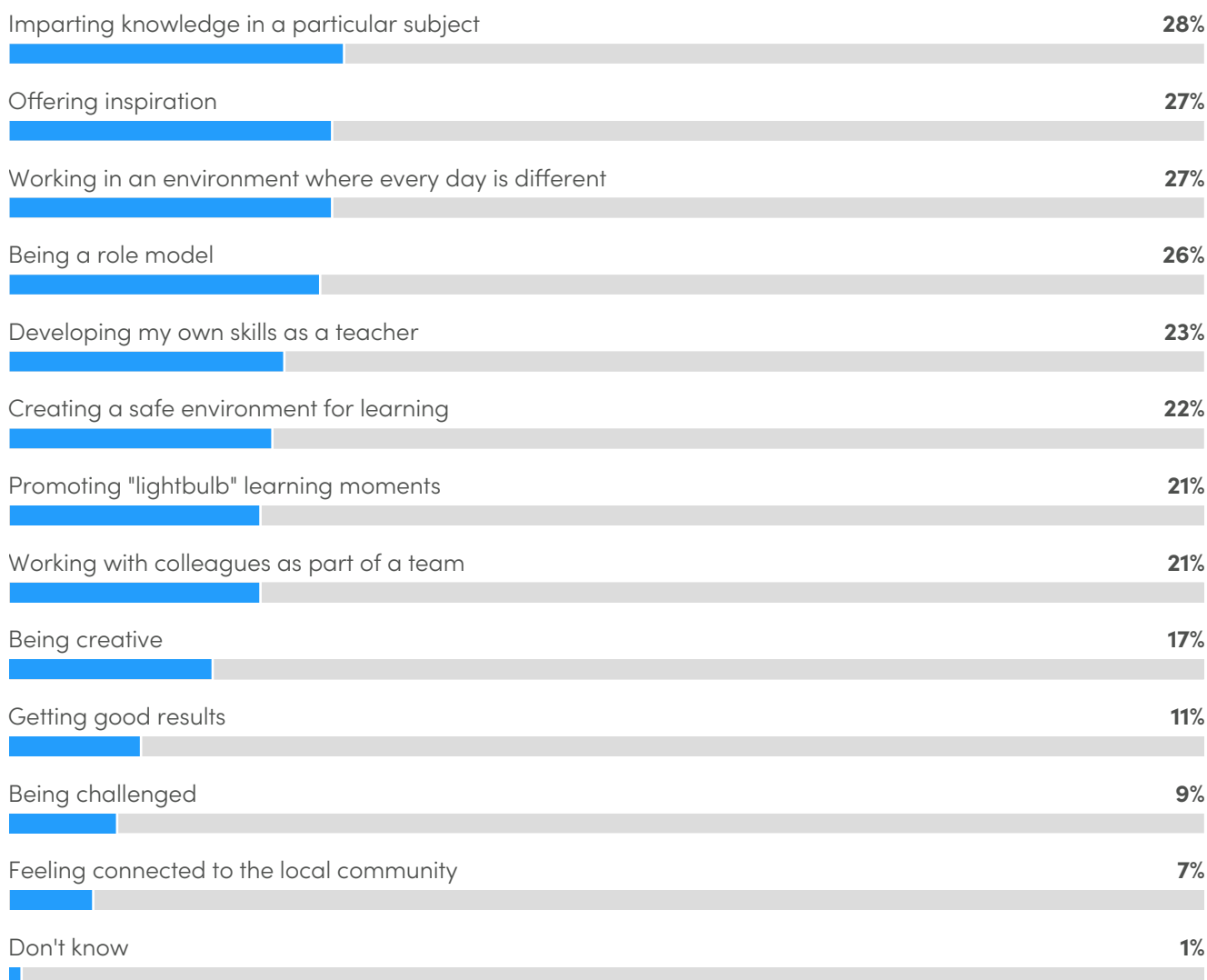


Working with children /young people



Nurturing young learners

The other aspects underpinning the sense of purpose were



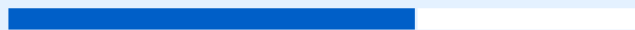
n. 24

Observations

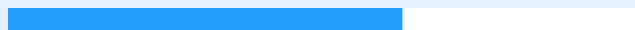
Small differences were found when the top three purposes were broken down by job role.

Making a difference or impact

Senior leaders 65%

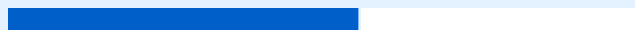


School teachers 63%

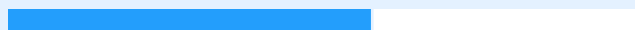


Helping learners progress or achieve their goals

Senior leaders 56%

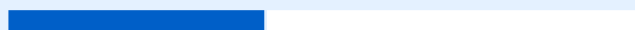


School teachers 58%

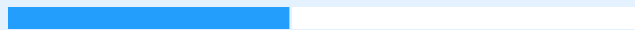


Working with children or young people

Senior leaders 41%



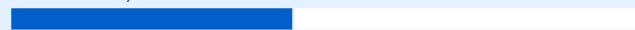
School teachers 45%



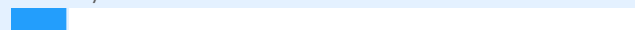
The largest percentage point differences between staff in the primary and secondary schools related to:

Imparting knowledge

Secondary 45%

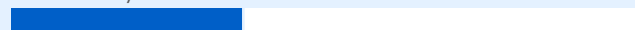


Primary 9%

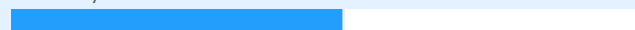


Nurturing young learners

Secondary 37%

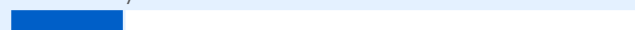


Primary 53%

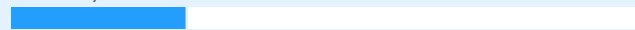


Creating a safe environment for learning

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

¹HSE (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>



#TWIX2021