

Teacher Wellbeing Index **2021**

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.

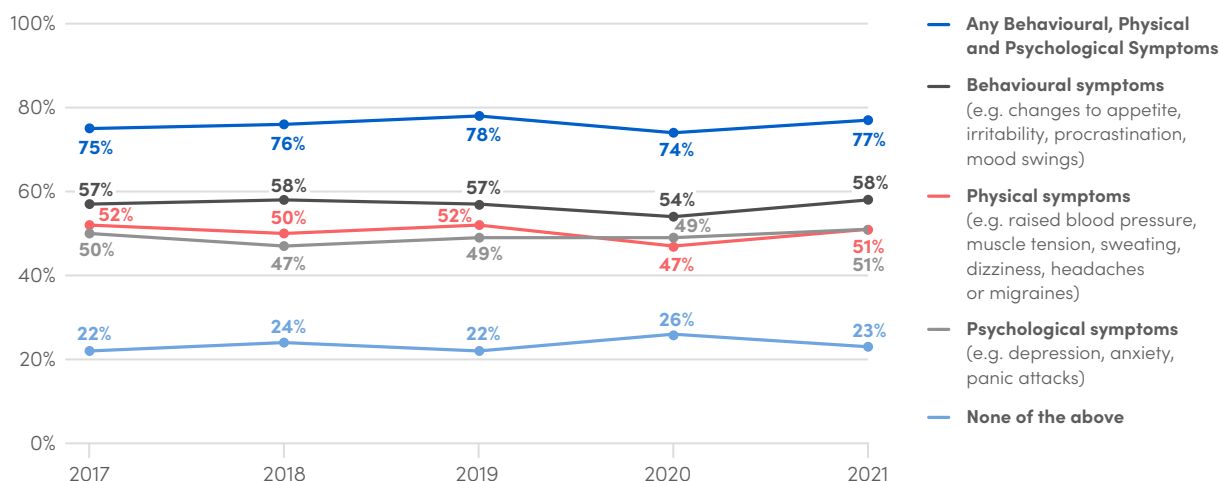
1. Changes in the workforce

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



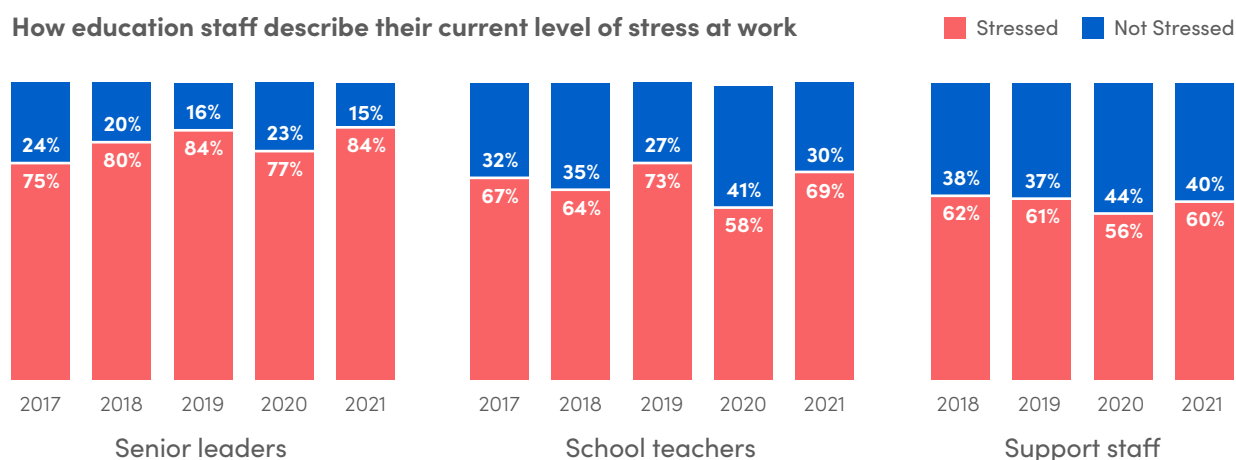
n. 1 (All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n. 1 refers to note 1, and so on.)

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



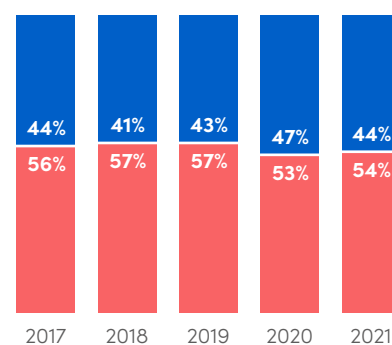
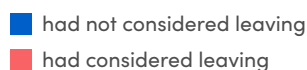
n. 2

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.

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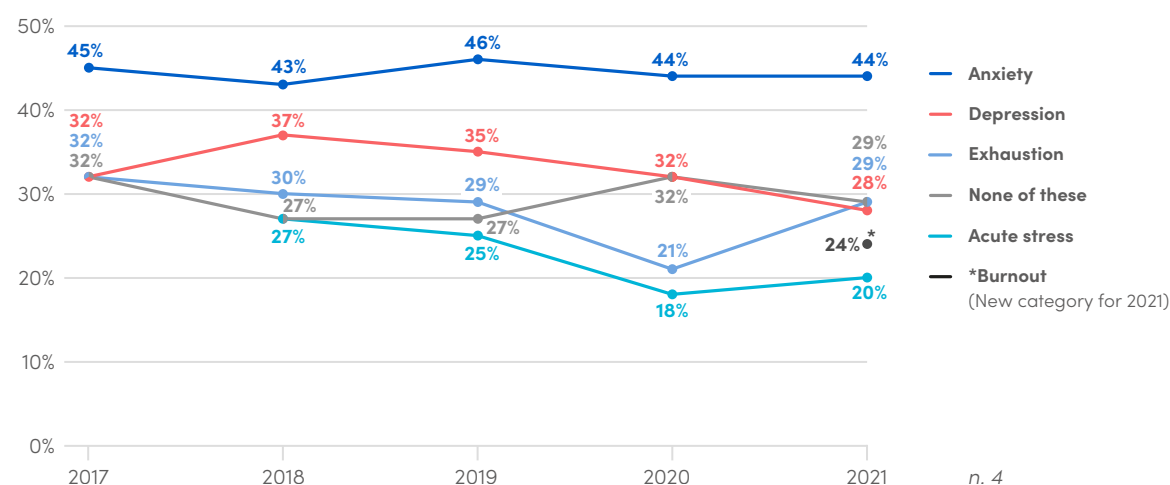


Just over half of staff have wanted to leave the profession for the past five years

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:

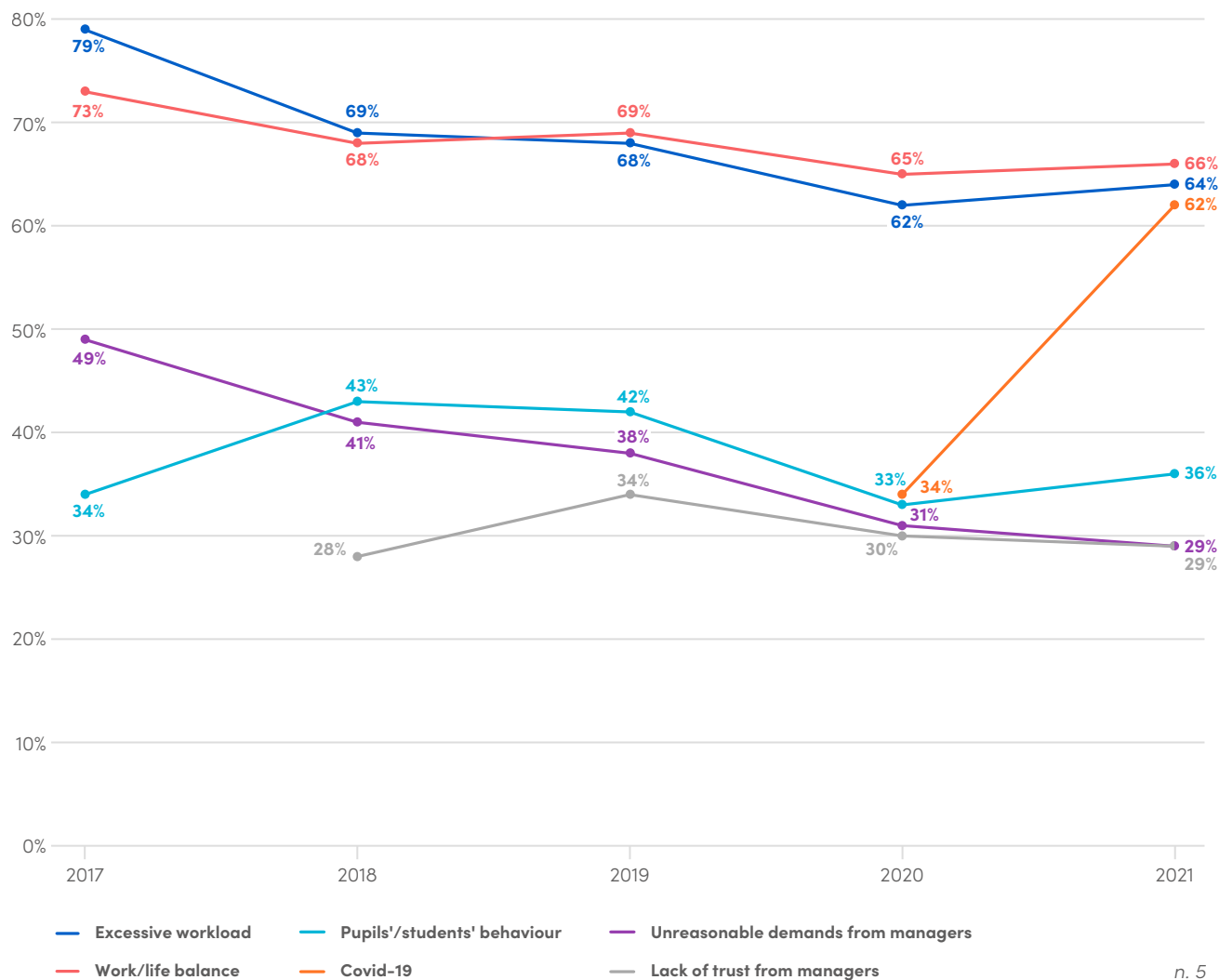


Levels of anxiety remain unsustainably high

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



The two main factors at work affecting wellbeing are excessive workload and the lack of work-life balance

2. Changes in the workplace

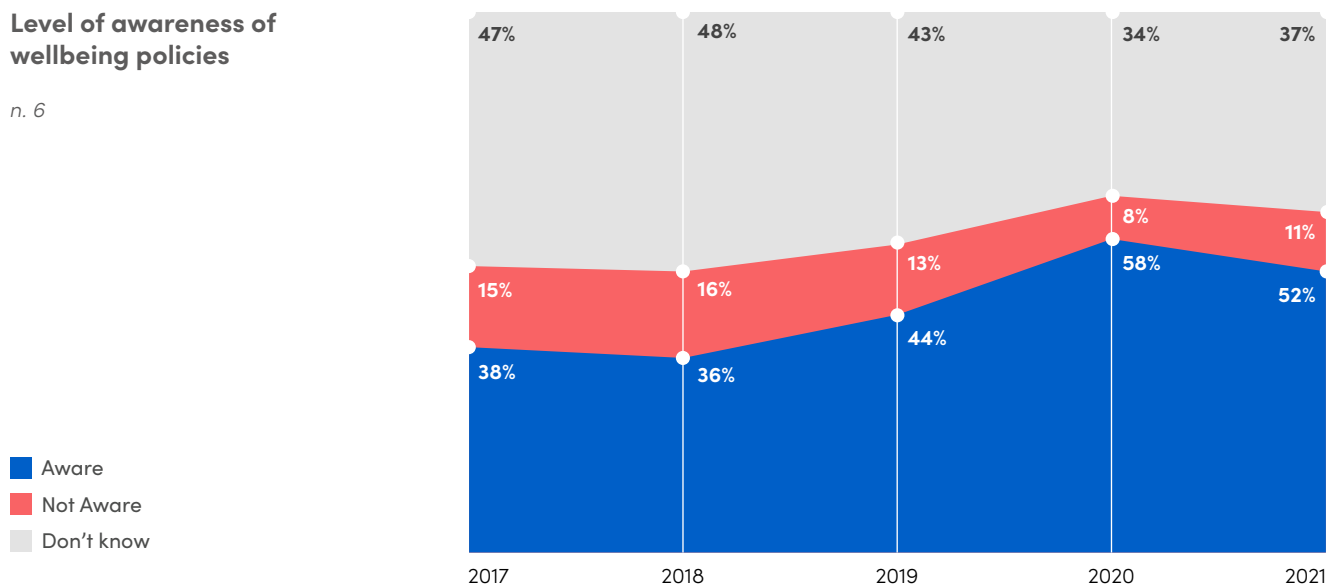
Staff reported improvements in awareness of and access to policies and guidance on mental health and wellbeing issues. Improvements were also found to the levels of support provided for employees experiencing mental health and wellbeing problems at work.

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

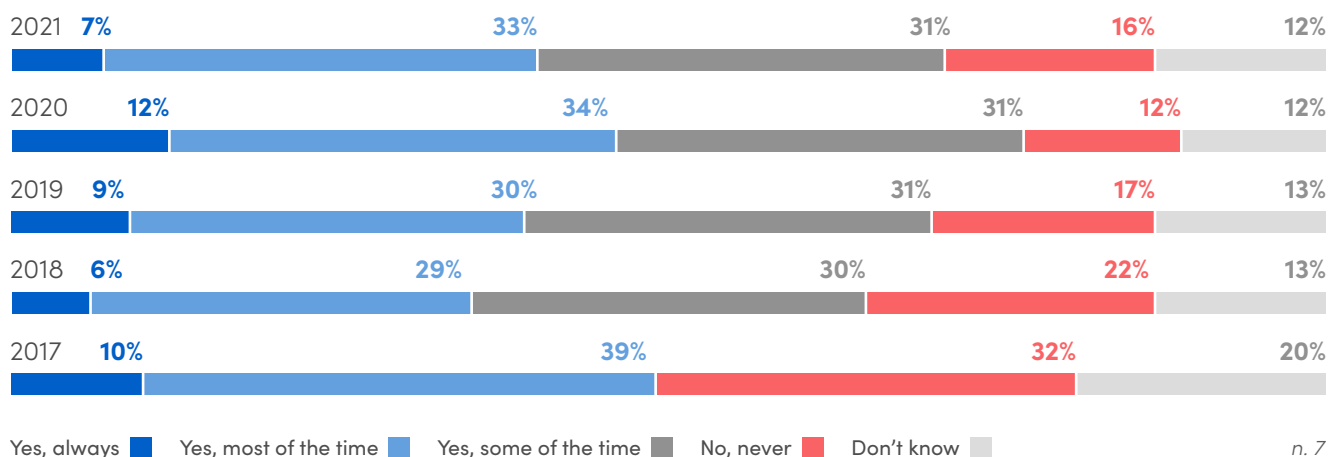


There is an increase in awareness of organisational wellbeing policies

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



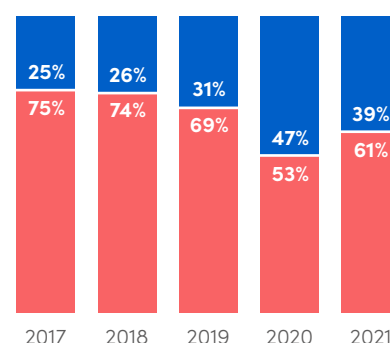
Receiving sufficient wellbeing guidance

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

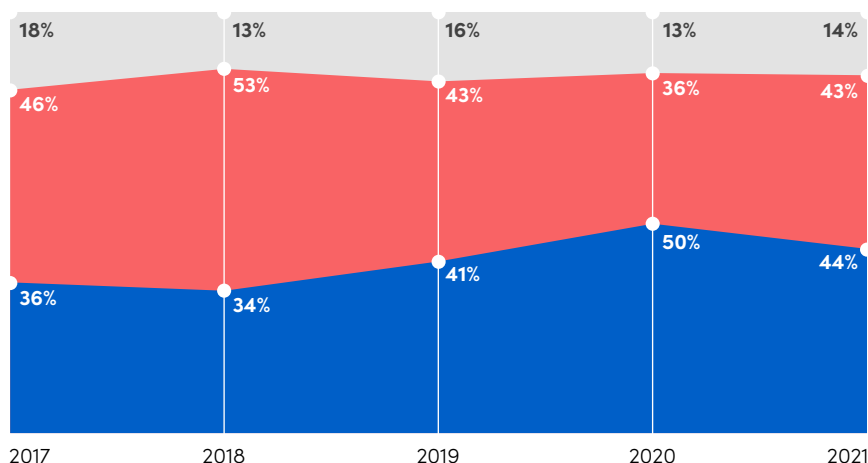
■ receive sufficient guidance
■ do not receive sufficient guidance



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



■ 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

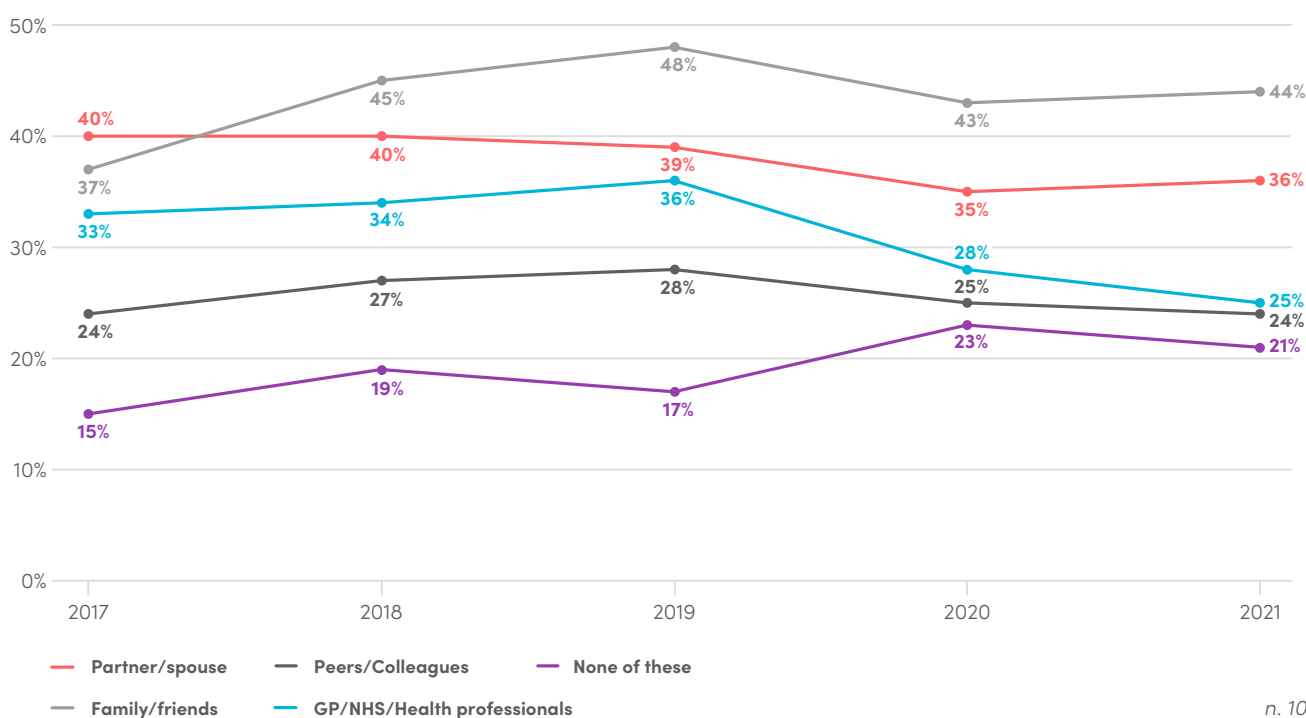
3. Sources of support

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



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

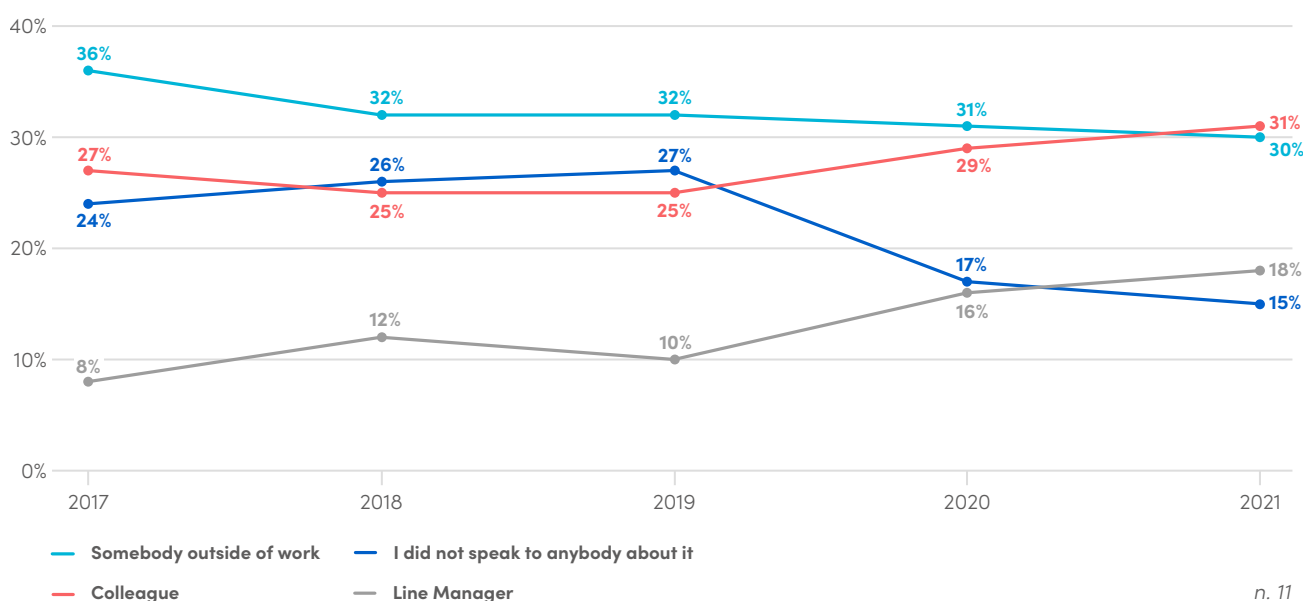
Who staff spoke to when experiencing mental health issues at work

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').



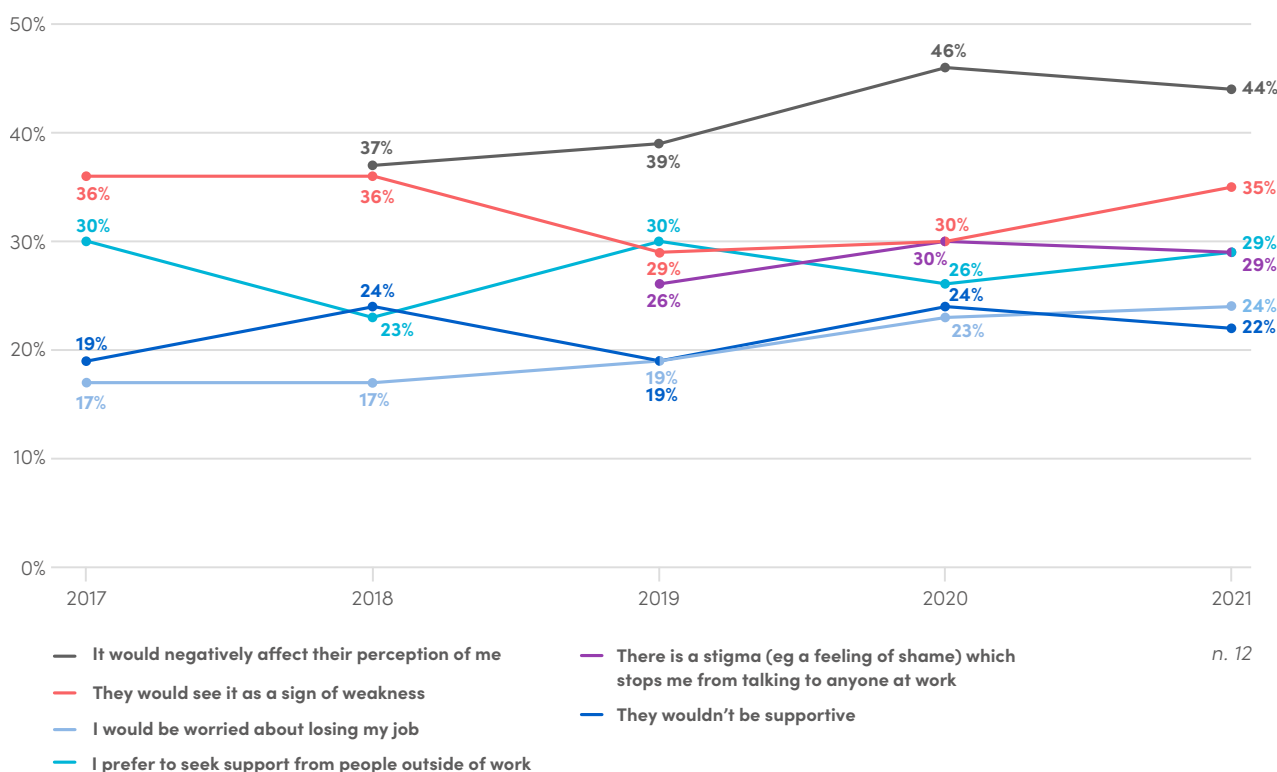
Staff are increasingly turning to colleagues and line managers when experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues at work



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



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)



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