

Teacher Wellbeing Index **2021**

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.

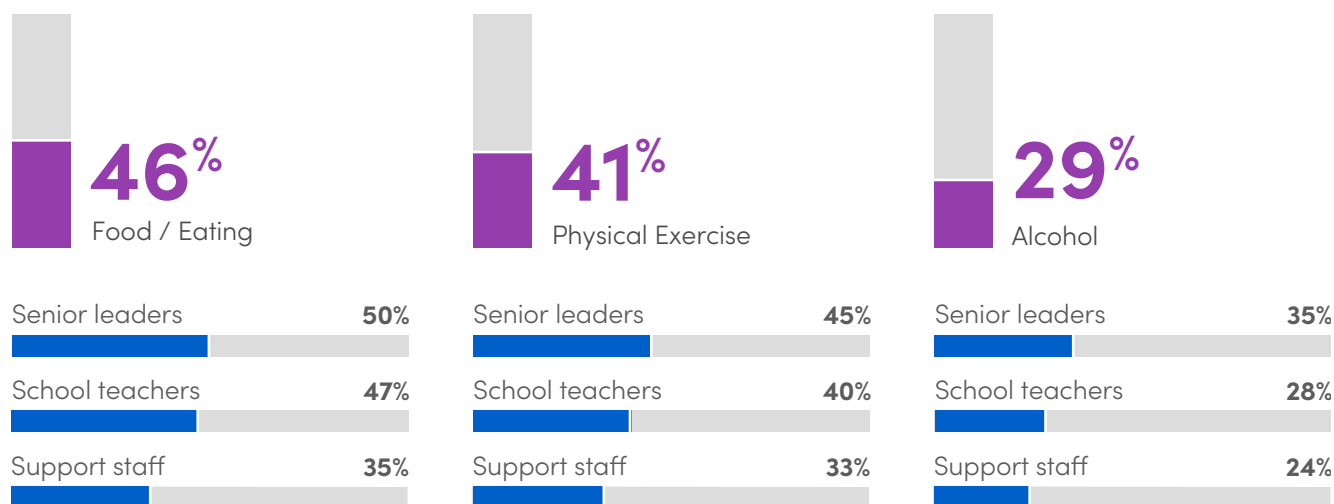
Our main findings:

- **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

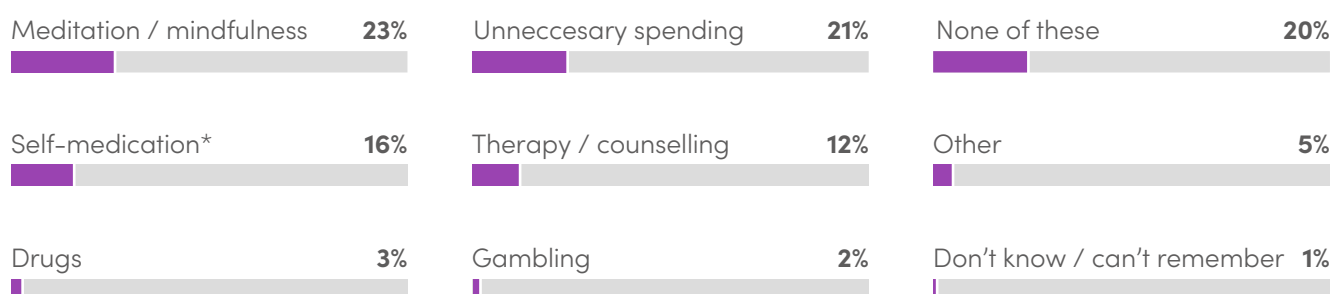
1. Dealing with stress or anxiety

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



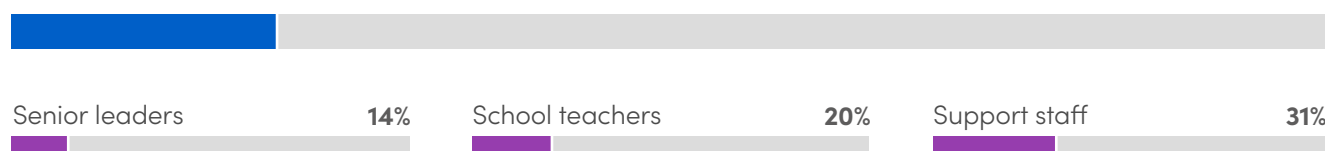
n. 1 (All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n. 1 refers to note 1, and so on.)

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



n. 2

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



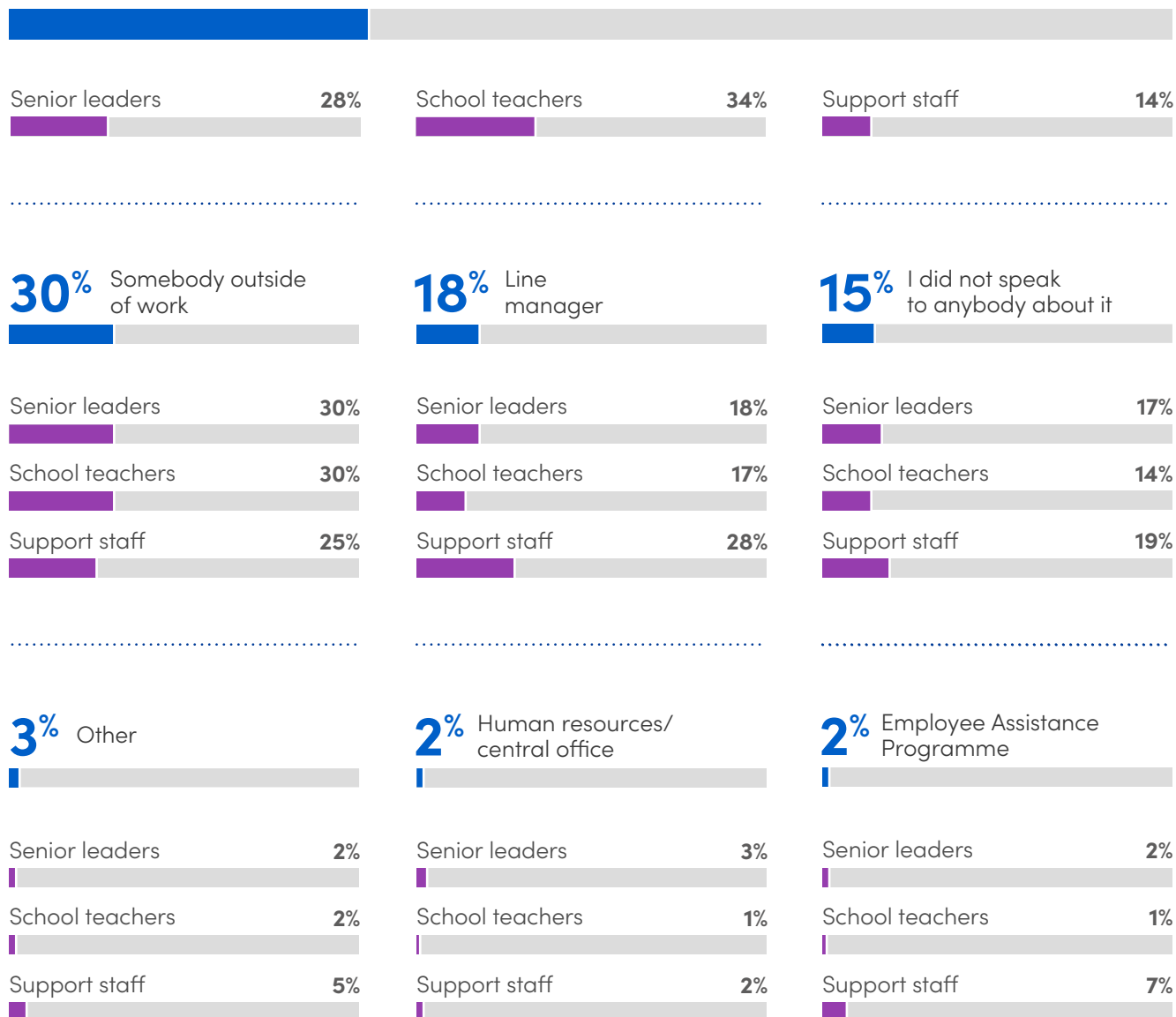
n. 3

**(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)



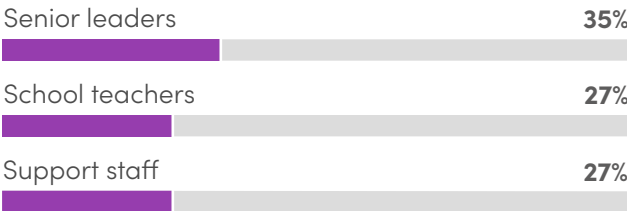
The benefits of talking to someone

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.

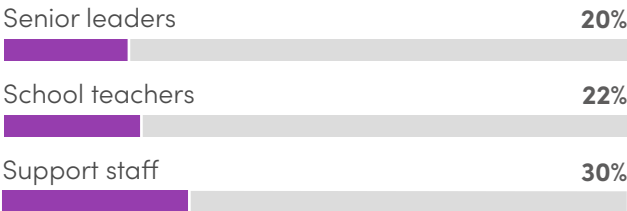
50% said it gave them perspective and helped them realise they are not alone



29% said it restored confidence in their abilities



22% said it equipped them with practical advice

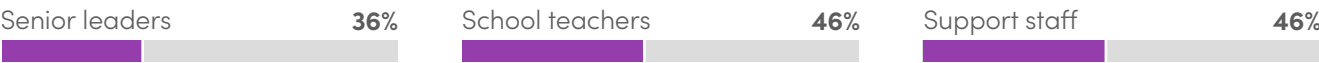
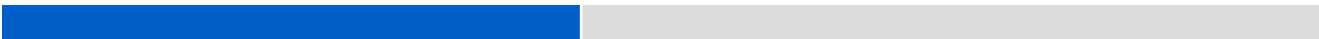


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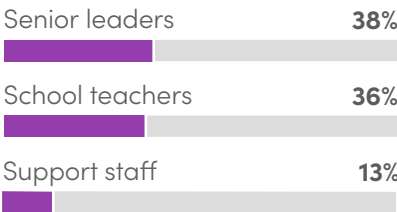
Why did some choose not to speak to anyone?

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

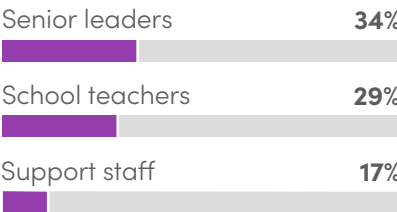
44% said it would negatively affect their perception of me



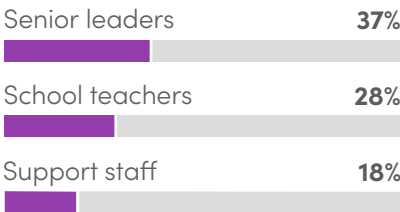
35% They would see it as a sign of weakness



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



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



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

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Observations

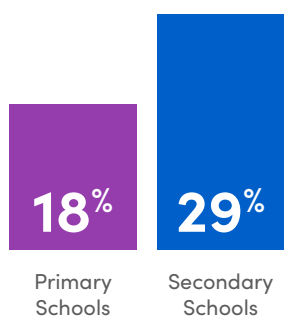
The issue of stigma was higher for staff who stated they were not well supported by their organisations **(33%)** compared to staff who identified as well supported by their organisations **(18%)**.

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%)**.

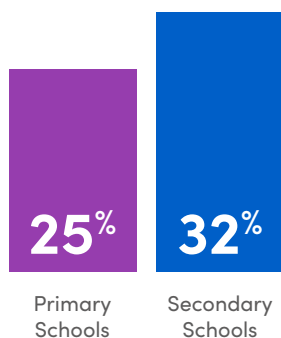
Differences between primary and secondary school staff

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.

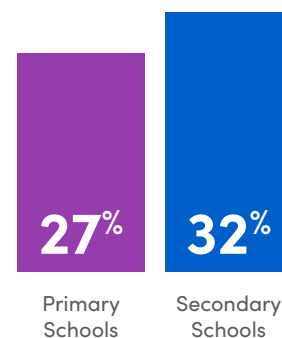
% of staff who considered they would not speak to anyone because they wouldn't be supportive



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



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



n. 7



3. Being open to new challenges

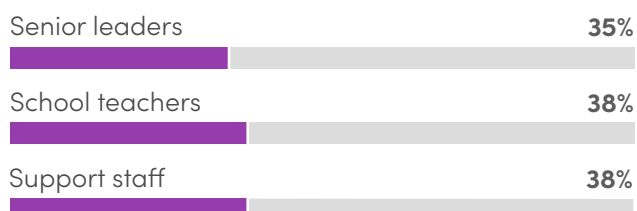
We asked how teachers and education staff think mental health stigma should be tackled at work

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



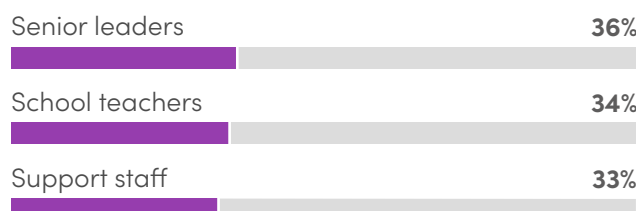
38%

Effective line management



35%

Active engagement by the Senior Leadership Team



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%**

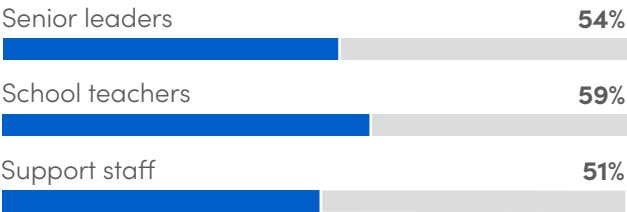
*(Note: responses of 5% or below have not been shown)

4. Confidence in disclosing issues to employers

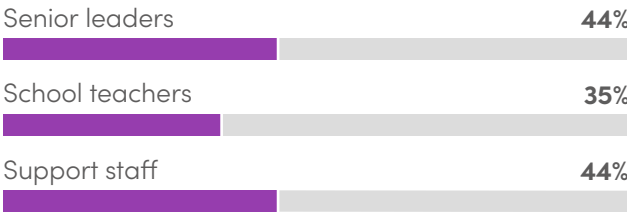
We asked teachers and education staff how confident they felt disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems to their employer



Staff who did not feel confident by job role:



Staff who felt confident by job role:



n. 9

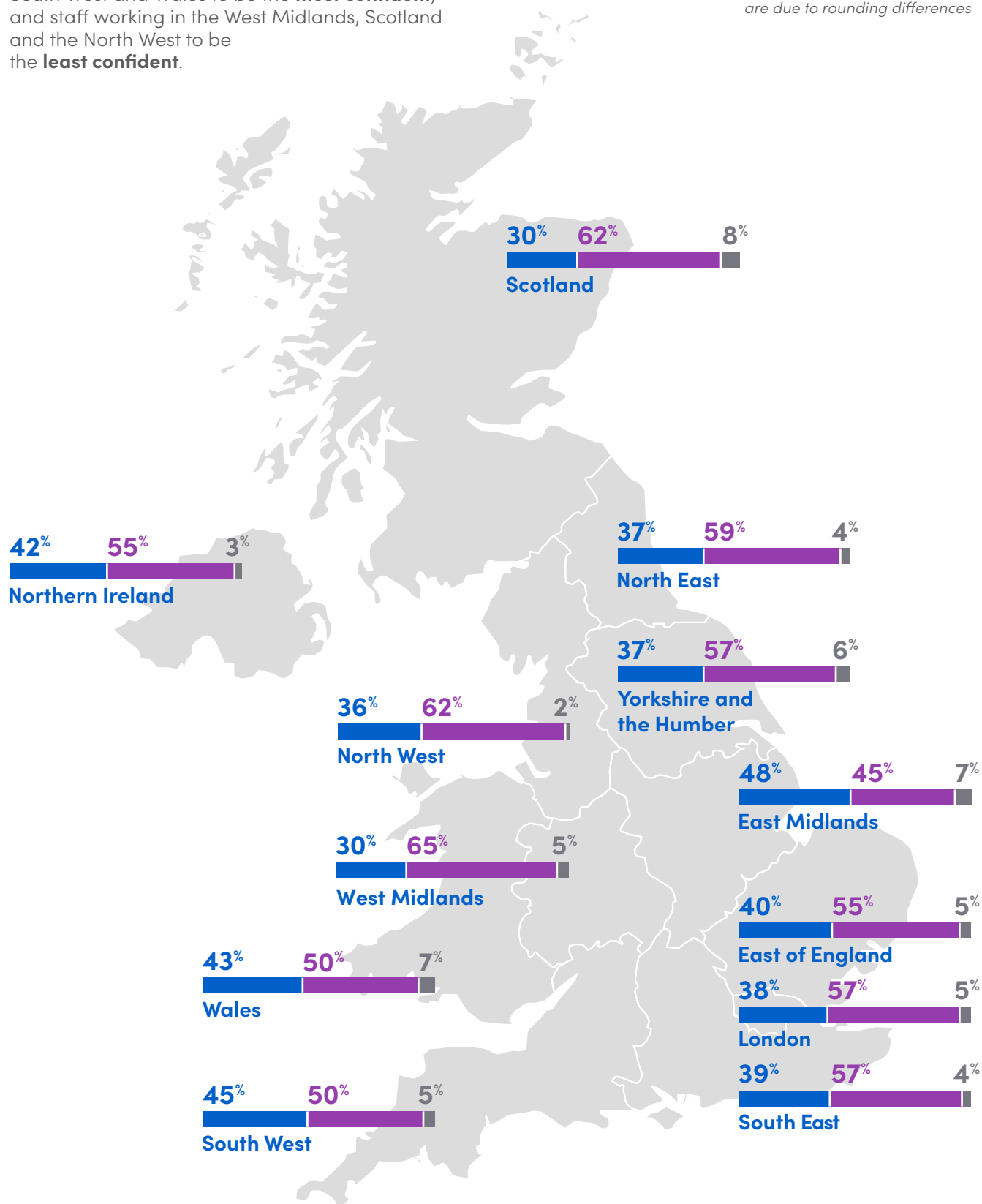


Confidence disclosing unmanageable stress by region

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



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.

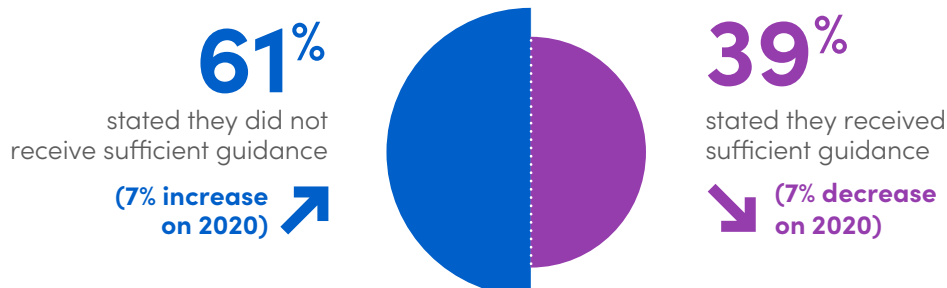
Wellbeing policies

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.

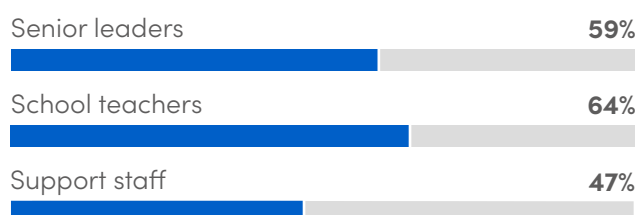
70% of staff whose organisation does not have a policy do not feel confident with such disclosure compared to **25%** who do not have a policy and are confident with such disclosure.

5. Help and support available

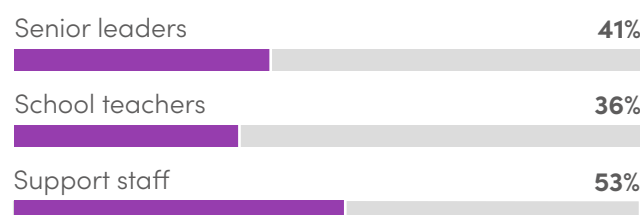
We asked teachers and education staff if they received sufficient guidance about their mental health and wellbeing at work



By job role



By job role

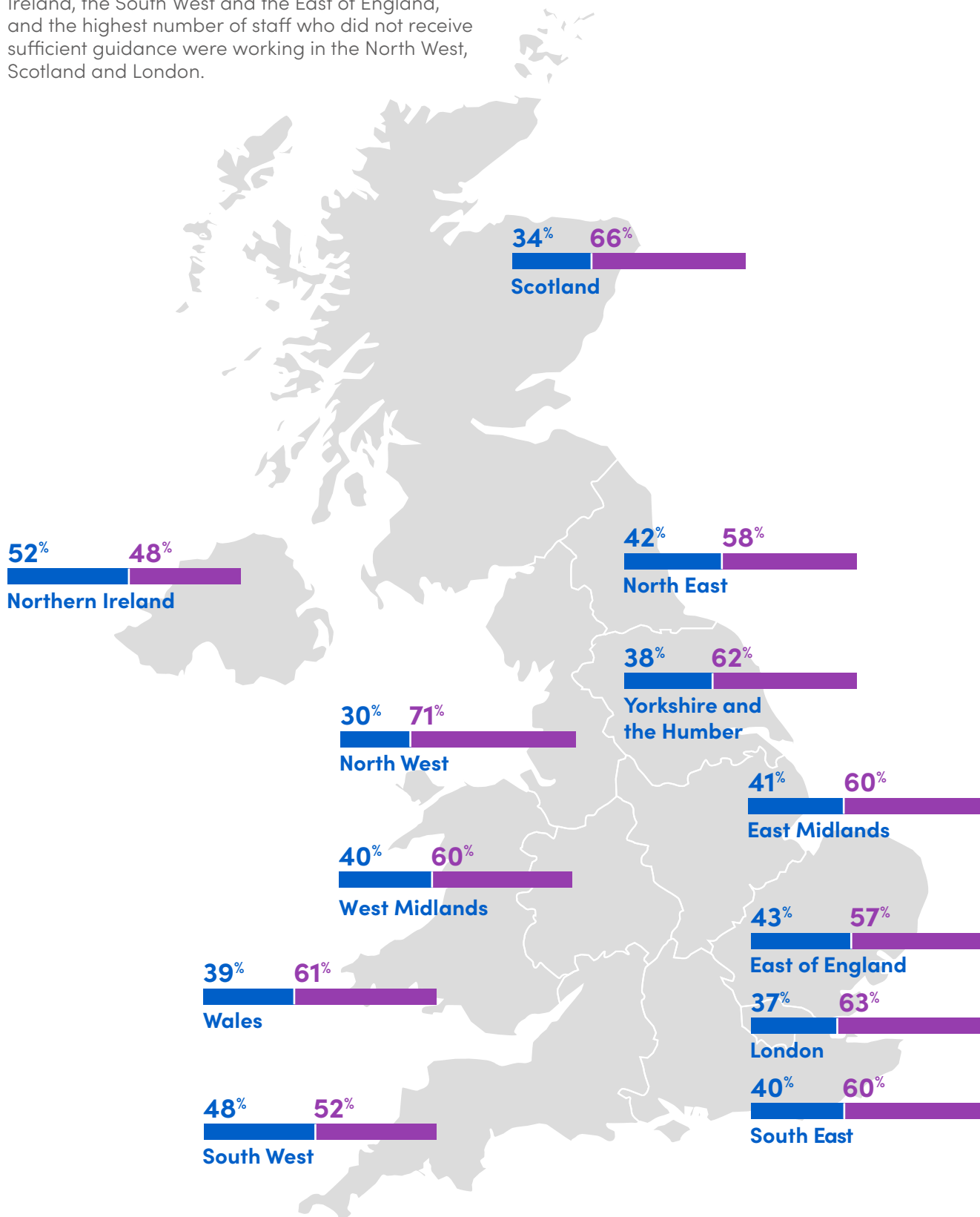


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Receiving guidance on mental health and wellbeing at work, by region

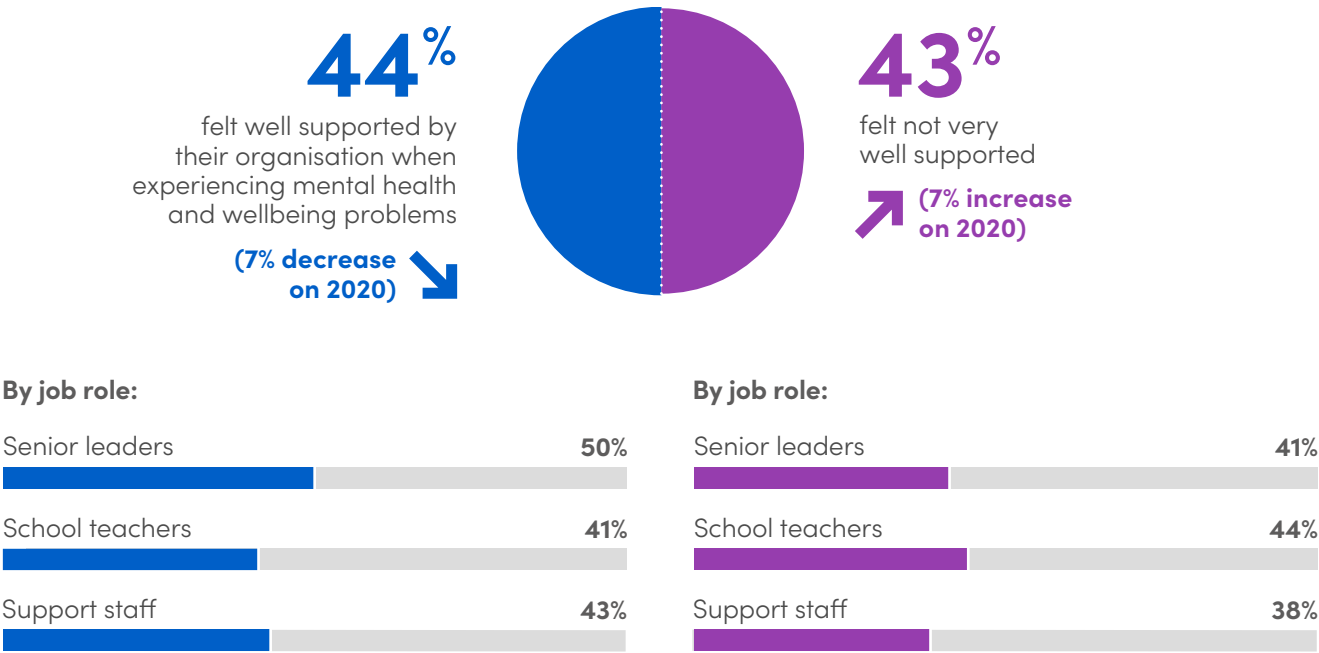
On a regional basis, we found that the highest number of staff who **considered they received sufficient guidance** were working in Northern Ireland, the South West and the East of England, and the highest number of staff who did not receive sufficient guidance were working in the North West, Scotland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

Received Sufficient Guidance ■
Do Not Receive Sufficient Guidance ■
Any discrepancies in percentages are due to rounding differences



n. 12

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



n. 13

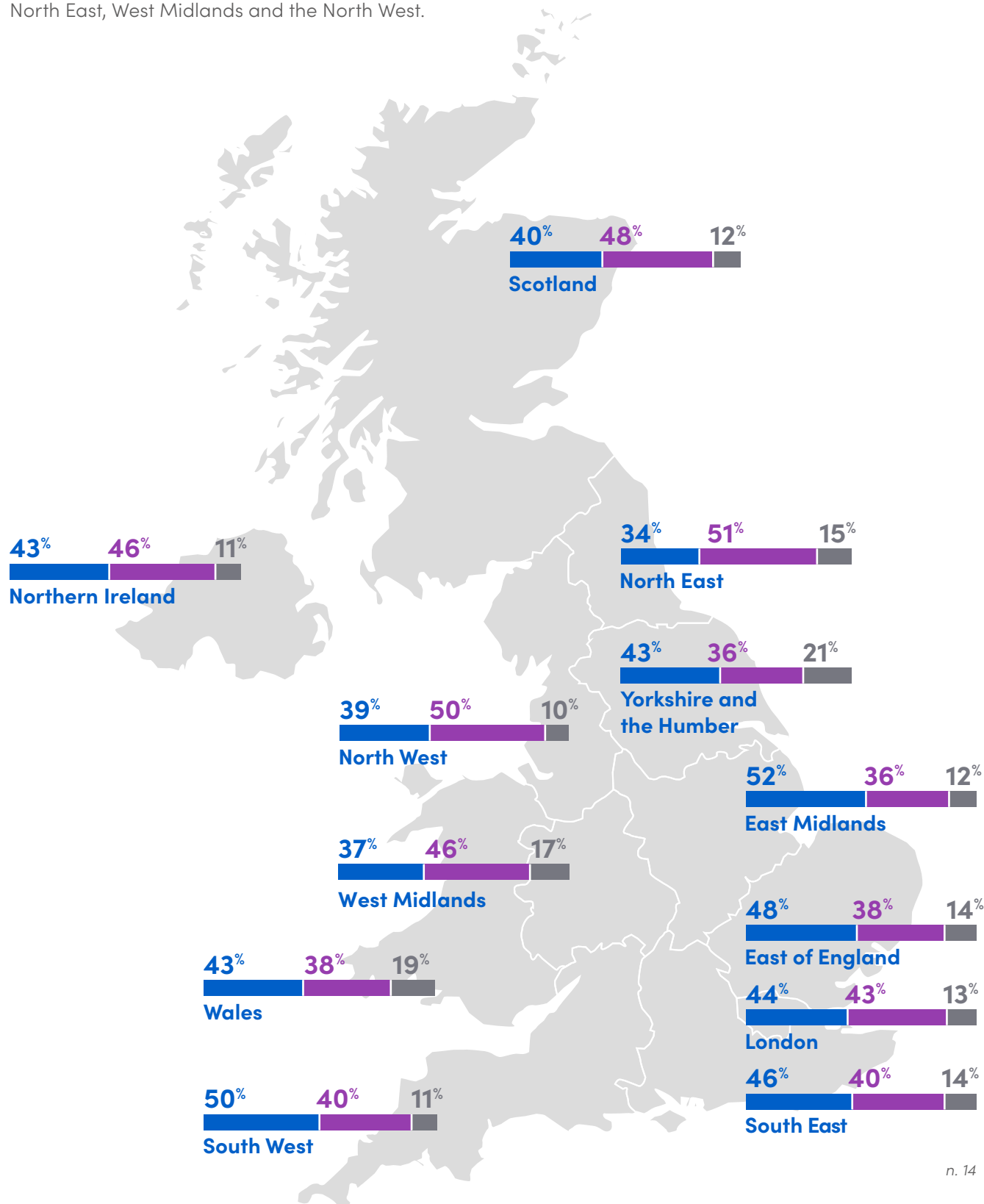


Organisational support for employees who experience problems with mental health and wellbeing, by region

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.

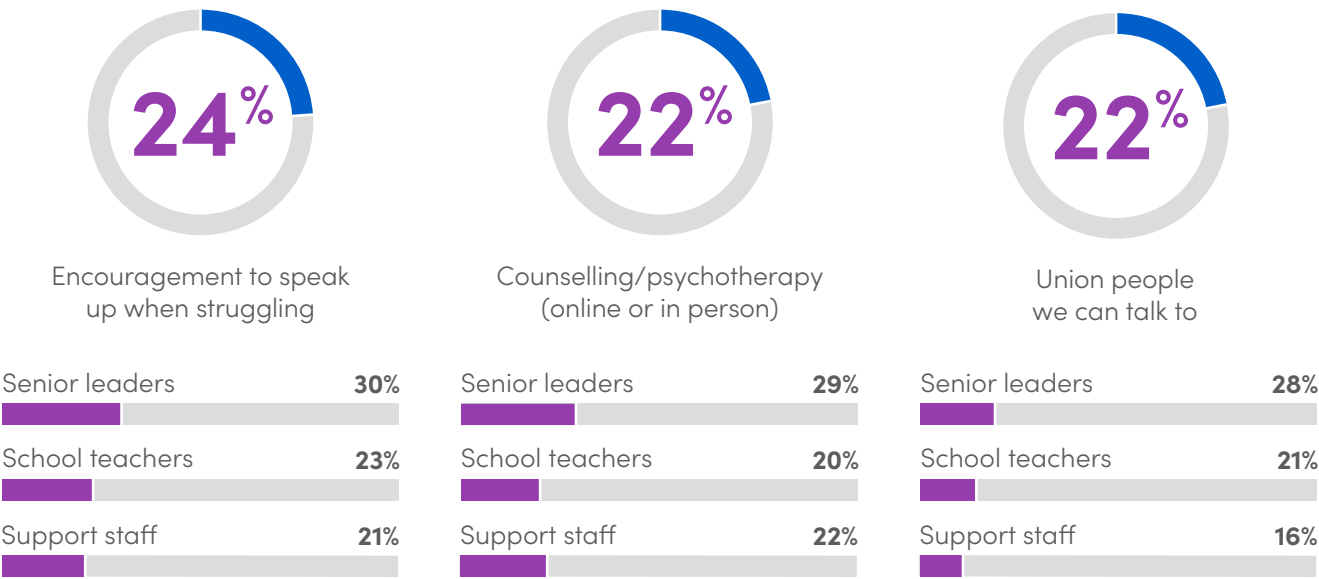
Well supported ■
Not well supported ■
Don't know ■

Any discrepancies in percentages are due to rounding differences



The mental health and wellbeing support available to staff at work

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



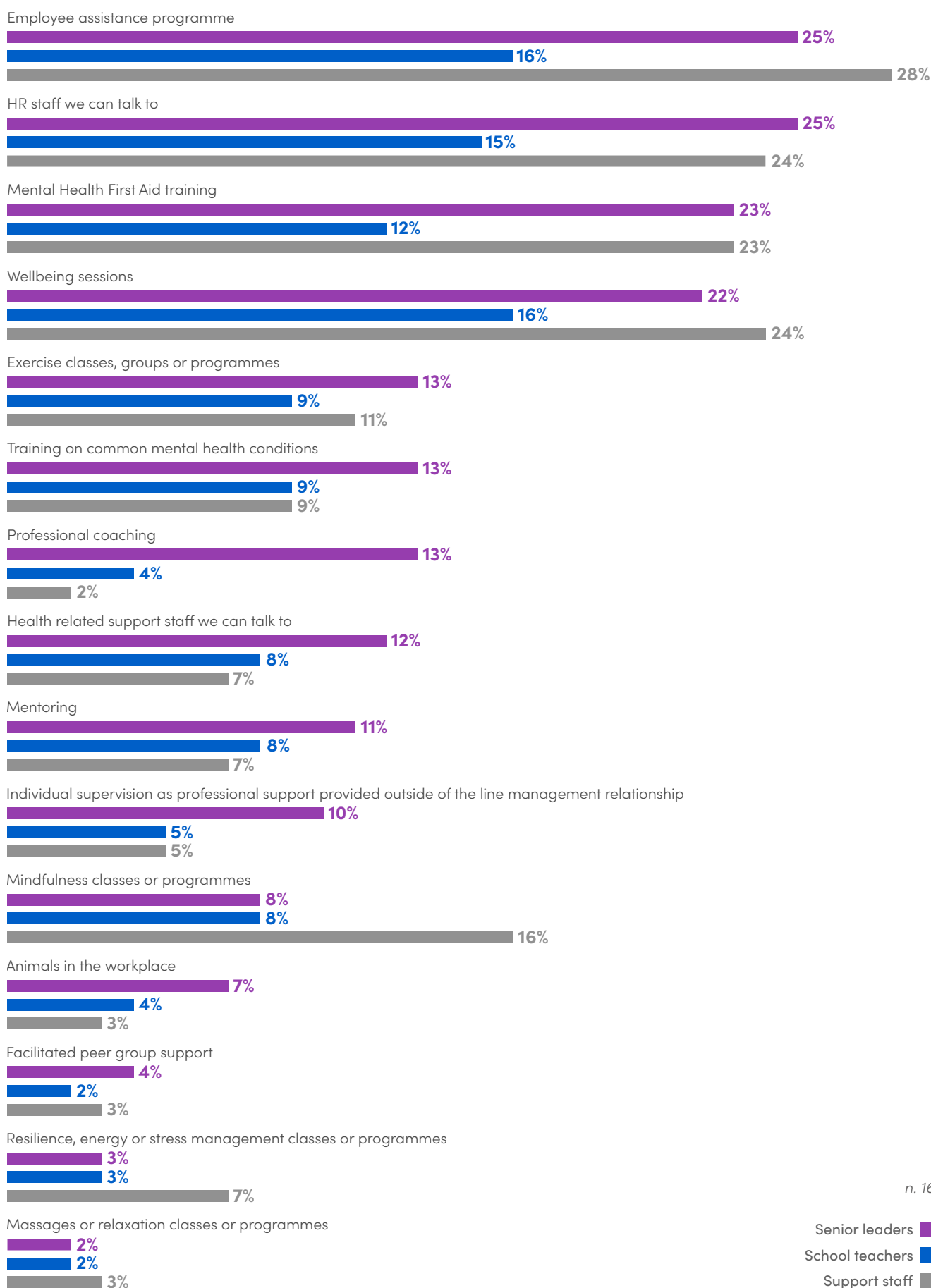
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24% of staff told us they did not have access to any of the types of support listed (up **4%** from 2020)

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

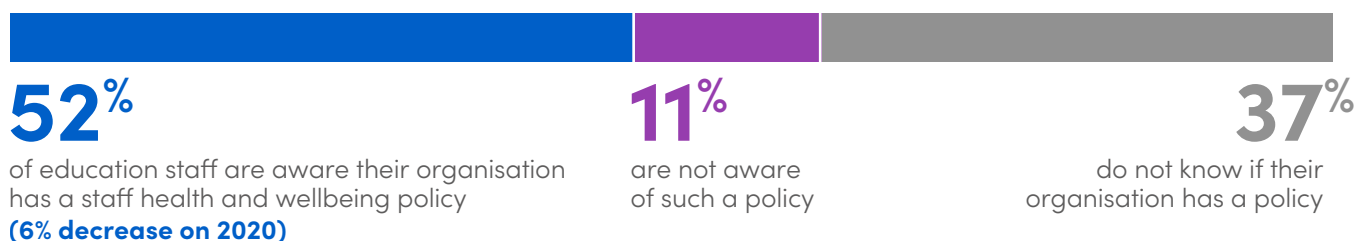


The remaining types of support available to staff are

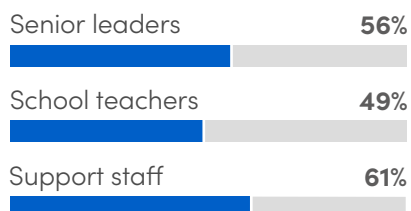


6. Workplace mental health and wellbeing policies

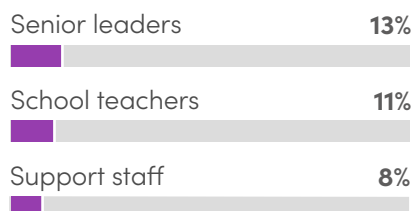
We asked teachers and education staff if their current workplace has a staff health and wellbeing policy



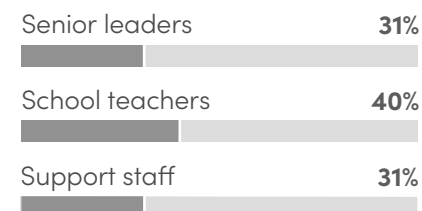
Staff who are aware their organisation has a policy



Staff who told us they did not have a policy



Staff who did not know if their organisation has a policy

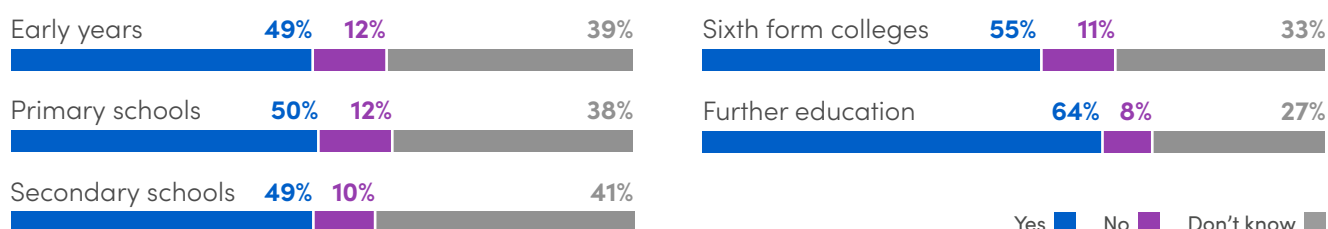


n. 17

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 ■

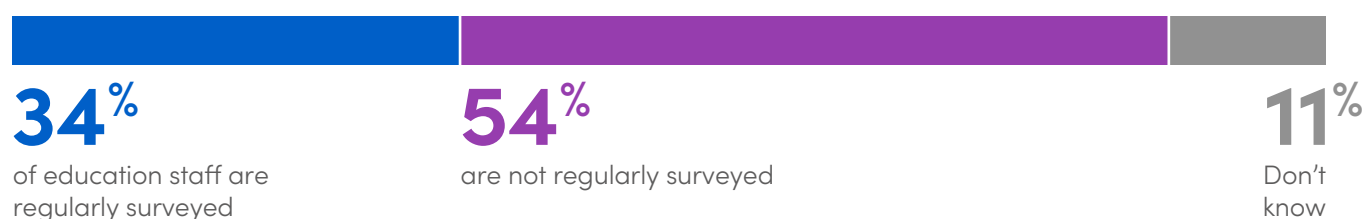
n. 18

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

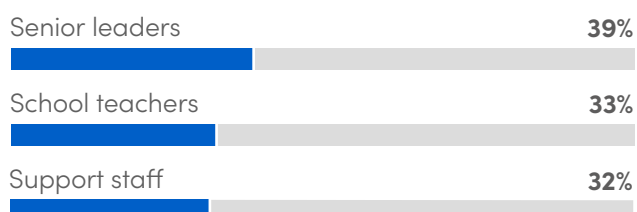


7. Keeping track of staff wellbeing

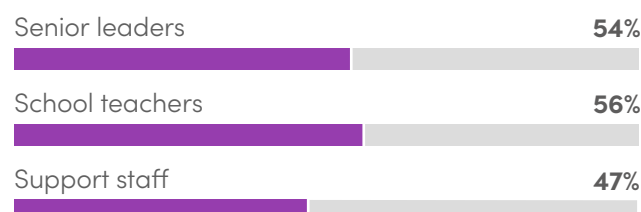
Do organisations survey their staff regularly to establish levels of employee wellbeing?



Those who are regularly surveyed:



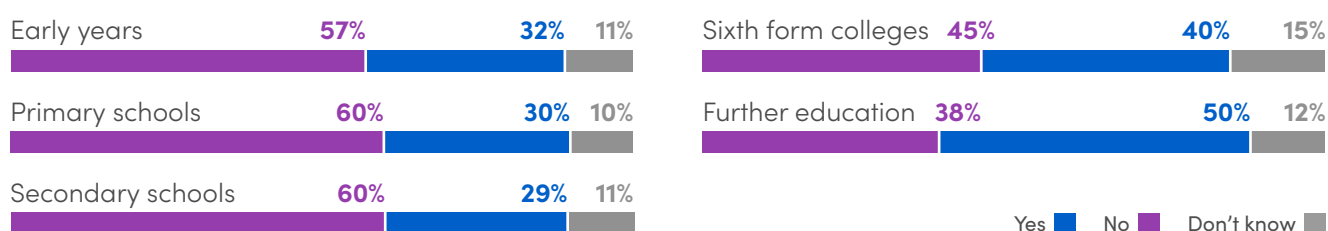
Those who are not regularly surveyed:



n. 20

Differences were found by education phase

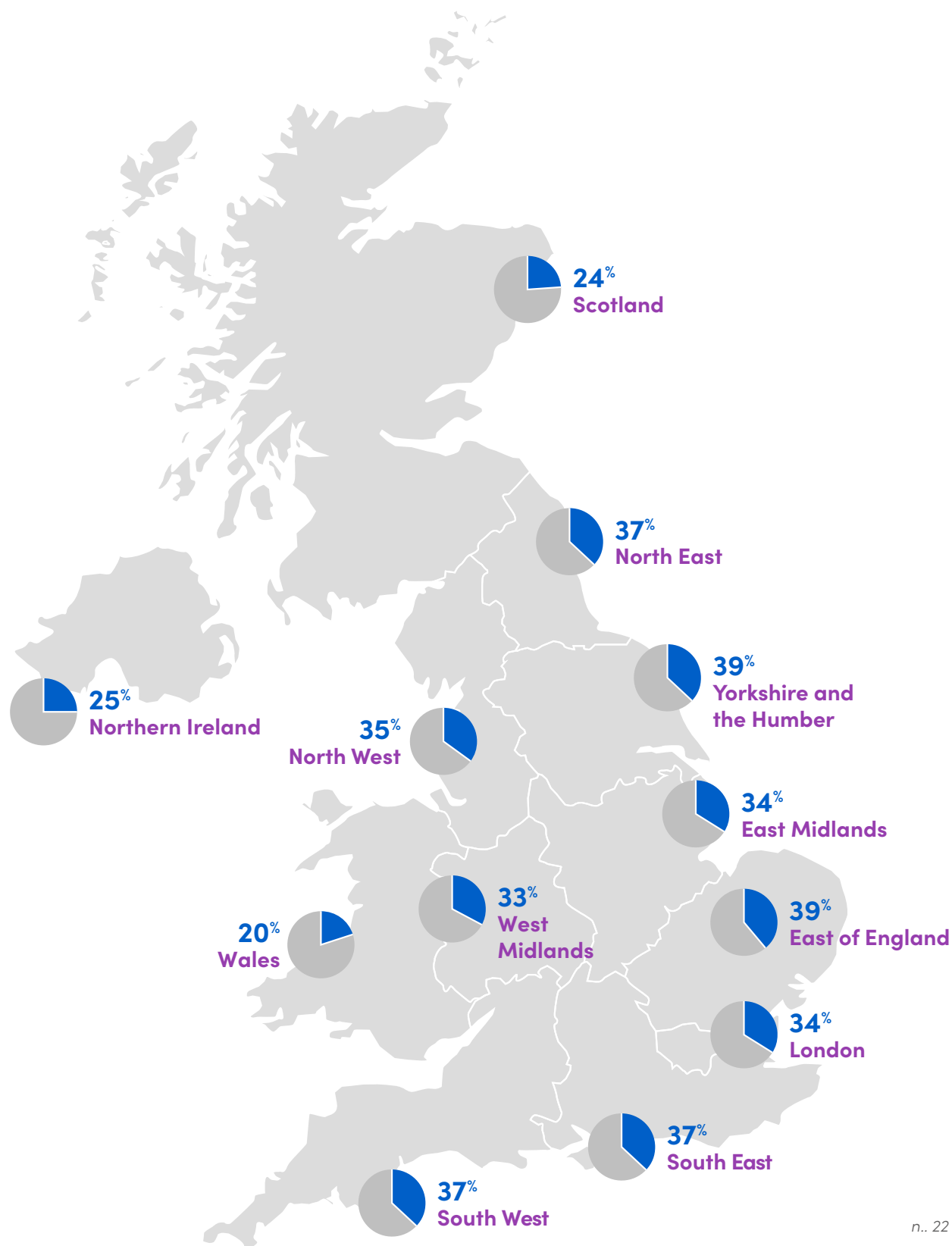
Staff working in further education were more regularly surveyed than staff working in sixth form colleges, secondary and primary schools and early years.



n. 21

Organisations surveying their staff regularly to establish levels of employee wellbeing

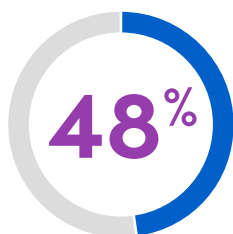
On a regional basis, we found that the highest number of staff wellbeing surveys was in Yorkshire and the Humber, East of England and the South West, and the lowest number in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.



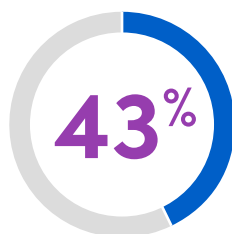
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8. Government action

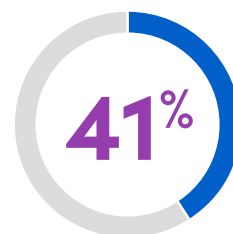
How can the Government act to improve teacher and education staff wellbeing at work?



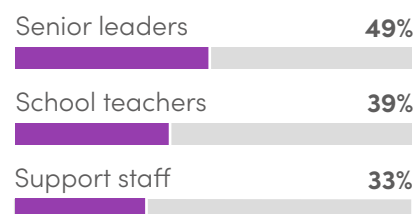
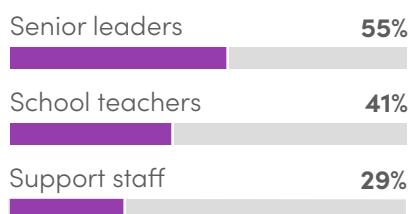
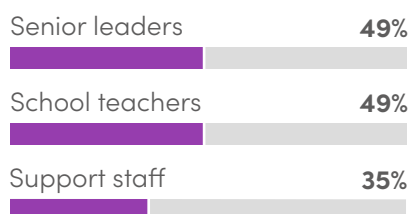
reducing the burden of unnecessary paperwork/
data gathering



reducing volume of workload

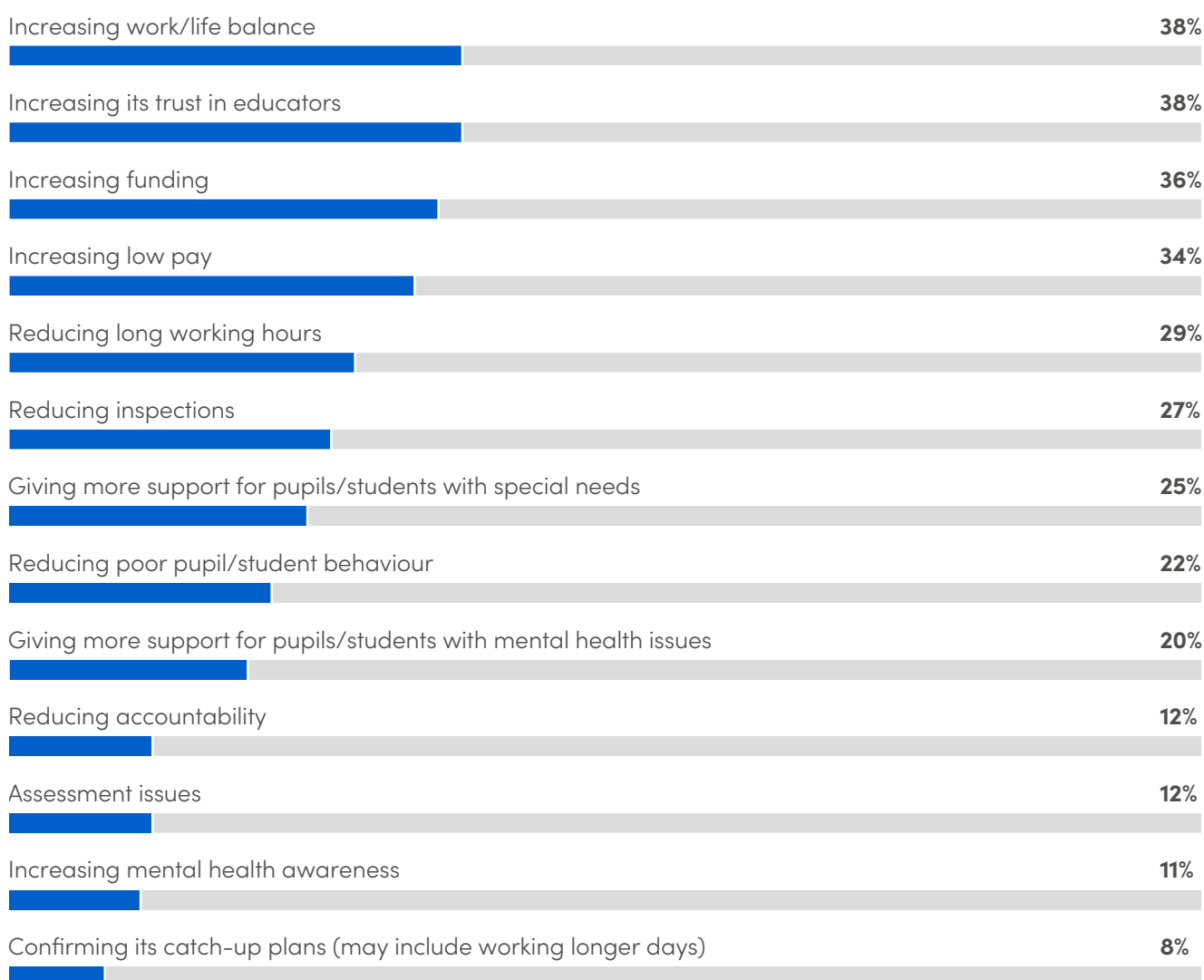


recognising the high intensity/high pressure work environment



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*

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

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)



#TWIX2021