Education Support

Teacher Wellbeing Index **2021**

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)**
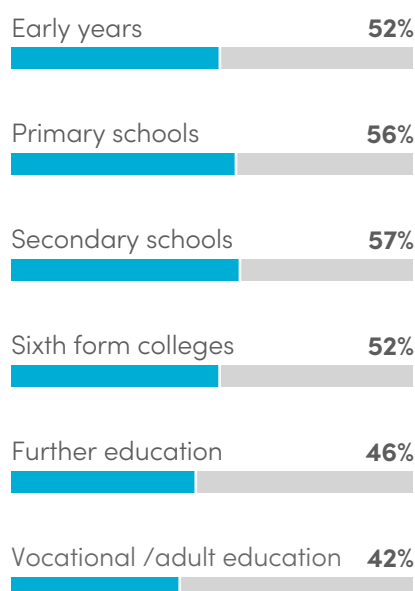
2020 2021

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.)

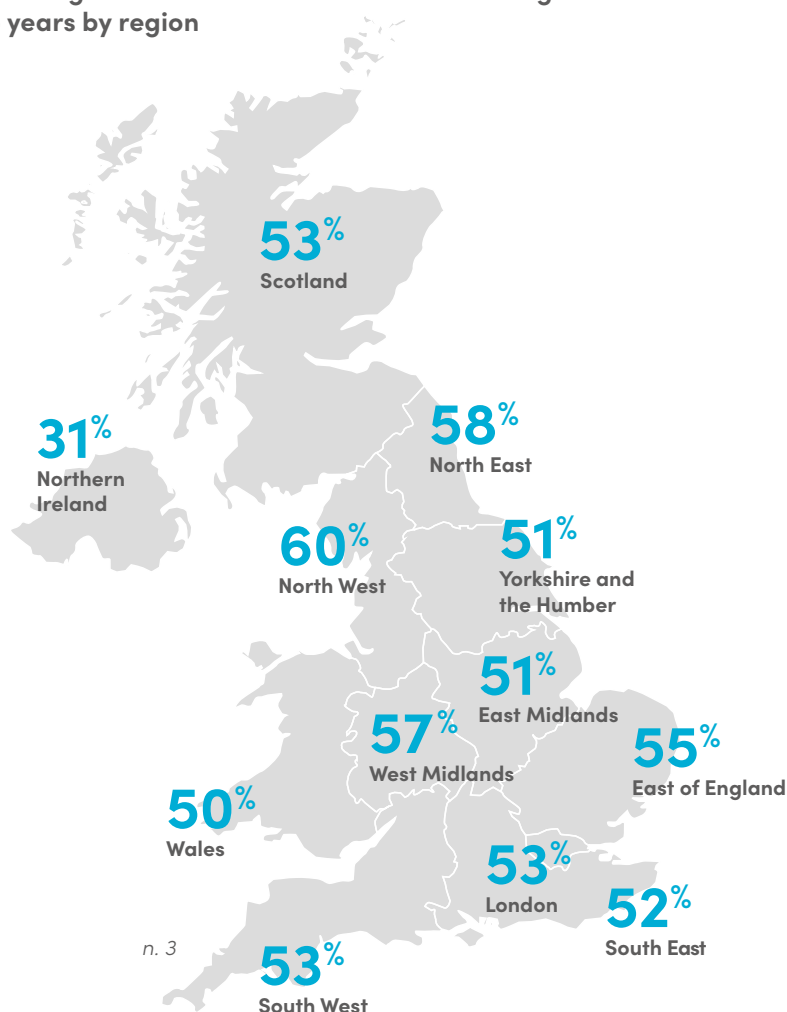## Differences were also found by sector and UK region

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).
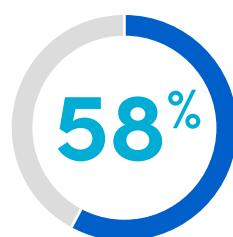
2. Reasons why staff want to leave

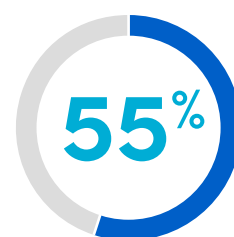## Teachers and education staff gave four main reasons for thinking of leaving their jobs

70%
Volume of workload

60%
Not feeling valued
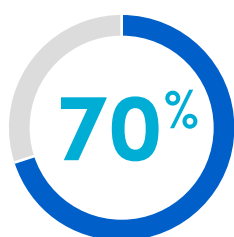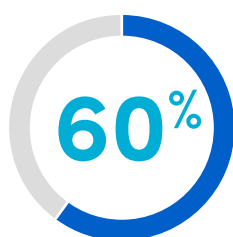
58%
Seeking a better work–life balance

55%
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
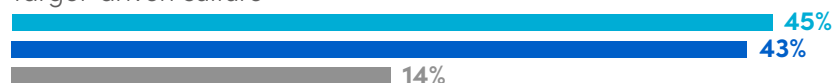
Volume of workload
- **80%** (Senior Leaders)
- **66%** (School Teachers)
- 63% (Support staff)

Seeking better work/life balance
- **68%** (Senior Leaders)
- **56%** (School Teachers)
- 44% (Support staff)

Unnecessary paperwork/data gathering
- **58%** (Senior Leaders)
- **56%** (School Teachers)
- 35% (Support staff)

Not feeling valued
- **52%** (Senior Leaders)
- **62%** (School Teachers)
- 62% (Support staff)

Target-driven culture
- **45%** (Senior Leaders)
- **43%** (School Teachers)
- 14% (Support staff)

Unreasonable demands from managers
- **43%** (Senior Leaders)
- **45%** (School Teachers)
- 45% (Support staff)

Lack of resources (staff and general)
- **39%** (Senior Leaders)
- **38%** (School Teachers)
- 52% (Support staff)
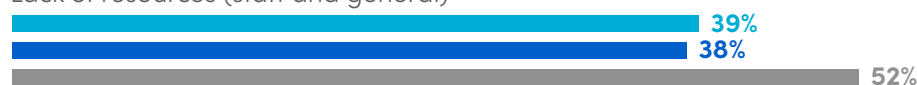
Pupils' / students' behaviour
- **25%** (Senior Leaders)
- **42%** (School Teachers)
- 18% (Support staff)

Mental health concerns
- **24%** (Senior Leaders)
- **31%** (School Teachers)
- 22% (Support staff)

Rapid pace of organisational change
- **23%** (Senior Leaders)
- **19%** (School Teachers)
- 18% (Support staff)

Seeking higher pay
- **16%** (Senior Leaders)
- **24%** (School Teachers)
- 37% (Support staff)

Physical health concerns
- **14%** (Senior Leaders)
- **17%** (School Teachers)
- 16% (Support staff)

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Retiring from profession/sector
- **9%** (Senior Leaders)
- **6%** (School Teachers)
- 12% (Support staff)
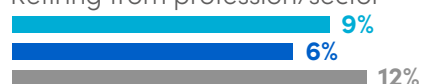
Legend:
- Senior Leaders
- School Teachers
- Support staff

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

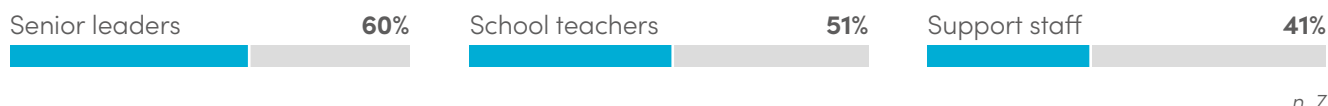|	
Senior leaders	**4%**
School teachers	**2%**
Support staff	**2%**

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%
Changes being better communicated to staff by managers

Senior leaders	**28%**
School teachers	**31%**
Support staff	**28%**

28%
The leadership team being more approachable

Senior leaders	**19%**
School teachers	**31%**
Support staff	**30%**

28%
My employer offering flexible working hours to fit with other commitments

Senior leaders	**29%**
School teachers	**27%**
Support staff	**31%**

n. 8

Other suggestions were

26%
My employer having to meet high standards of health and wellbeing provision for staff, regulated by an independent body

24%
Colleagues being more understanding and accommodating of each other's needs and feelings

24%
My employer having a well-implemented pupil behaviour policy

23%
My employer implementing a structured staff health and wellbeing programme

16%
My employer making us more aware of the support available (e.g. Employee Assistance Programme)
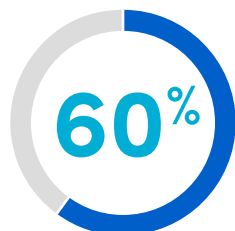
13%
My employer having robust procedures for tackling bullying and harassment
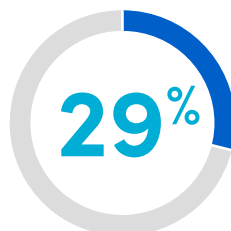
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We asked education staff to tell us the best ways to improve the overall mental health of the workforce. This is what they told us, by job role
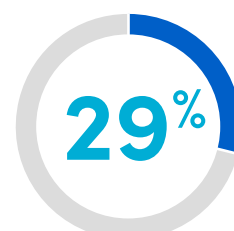
Senior leaders

60% Managers working with their staff to reduce workload
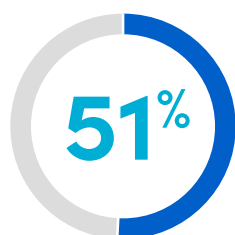
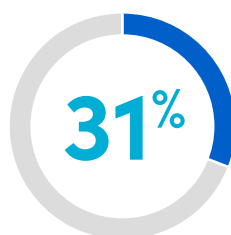**29%** My employer having to meet high standards of health and wellbeing provision for staff, regulated by an independent body

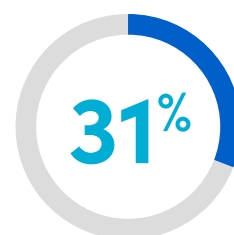**29%** My employer allowing flexible working hours to fit with other commitments

School teachers

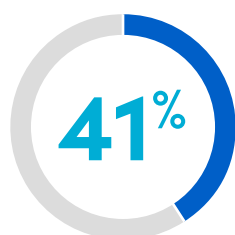**51%** Managers working with their staff to reduce workload

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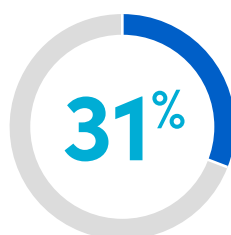
31% The leadership team being more approachable
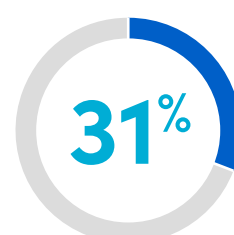
Support staff

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)

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