The magazine from

Education Supporter



Spring 2024



Supporting teacher and education staff wellbeing for 146 years



Inside this issue: The Teacher Wellbeing Index — our latest research findings

Welcome and thank you

Here we are well and truly emerged from winter into spring, and personally, I'm very happy to be watching the days getting longer and the prospect of some sunshine on the horizon.

We have weathered the storm of winter here at Education Support as best we could. We witnessed our highest-ever level of grant applications, as the cost of living crisis showed no sign of loosening its grip, Thank you for all that you did to support education staff during those bleak times. Your kindness over the Christmas period really did go a long way to helping us meet that increased need.

This Spring issue of our Supporter Magazine brings you the findings of our latest Teacher Wellbeing Index research report. Now in its seventh year, this vital research provides an evidence base for the experiences of education staff in the UK. It strengthens our policy work, and helps us call for change at Government level. As ever, it paints a troubling picture of the mental health of education staff. Year after year, they're being told to take on more responsibility and pressure at the expense of actually doing what they became a teacher to do — help children to learn and grow. This needs to change.

On a more positive note, we also bring you a few of the heart-warming stories directly from our beneficiaries, who continue to have their lives transformed by our financial grants and helpline. While we remain determined to influence change at Government level, we recognise the need for these critical services, which give education staff more immediate relief when they need it most.

As ever, we are astounded by the generosity of you, our loyal supporters. Many of you have been donating to us for many years. Your continued commitment to stand alongside us does not go unnoticed or unappreciated. We are immensely grateful that, of all the charities competing for your kindness, you choose us.

We remain optimistic that 2024 has the potential to bring about significant change at high level and we will never stop in our mission to achieve this.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the magazine and thank you once more.

Warmest wishes,

Sinéad Mc Brearty CEO, Education Support

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Please remember the helpline is there for you even if you've retired or no longer work in education.

Keep in touch

Address	40A Drayton Park, London, N5 1EW
Phone	020 7697 2750 (general enquiries)
Helpline	08000 562 561 (free, confidential 24/7 helpline)
Email	fundraising@edsupport.org.uk
Website	educationsupport.org.uk

The Teacher Wellbeing Index 2023 our latest findings

Towards the end of last year we launched the results of our seventh annual Teacher Wellbeing Index. We see this report as a very important part of our work as it shows us the current status of mental health and wellbeing in the sector.

This year's report sadly shows that wellbeing in the sector is poor and continues to decline. Senior leaders remain at particular risk, with a significant decline in the overall wellbeing of classroom teachers.

Staff experience significant feelings of loneliness and isolation, with teachers and education staff feeling twice as lonely at work compared to the general population. Our analysis finds that there is a small but vulnerable population that reports loneliness alongside stress and/or burnout, pointing to elevated risk of severe mental health problems and suicide.

Last year for the first time, we asked about educators' experience of inspections. They have little trust in the inspection system; raising questions about the effectiveness of inspections, the impact on school leader and staff wellbeing and implications for learner outcomes.





Some of our key findings are below:

The challenges



of all staff are stressed



say that their organisation's culture has a negative effect on their wellbeing



of staff say that employees who have mental health and wellbeing problems are not well supported by their organisations



Mental health of education staff

81% of all staff experienced symptoms due to their work (84% of senior leaders, 82% of school teachers)

39% of all staff have experienced a mental health issue in the past academic year (41% of school teachers, 37% of senior leaders)

45% of staff thought the symptoms could be signs of anxiety

28% of staff thought their symptoms could be signs of depression

35% of staff thought the symptoms could be signs of burnout (40% of senior leaders, 36% of school teachers)

Loneliness

Almost a sixth of education staff feel isolated at work, twice the rate of the general population.

14% of staff always, or often, feel lonely at work

of school teachers feel lonely at work

of staff from a global majority background feel lonely at work compared with 13% of white staff

of staff always, or often, feel isolated from others at work



Inspections

School and college staff have little trust in the inspection system, particularly in Englan

73% of staff think inspections are not fit for purpose



- 73%) of staff say inspections do not improve learner achievement
- 71% of staff say inspections negatively impact their mental health and wellbeing

64%) of staff feel inspections do not deliver reliable judgements

In response to this concerning report, our CEO Sinéad Mc Brearty commented:

- "These are not findings that anyone wants to see. Our education workforce is stressed and unhappy at work. Such high levels of burnout, overwork and loneliness will not lead to a world-class education system."
- "Working in schools and colleges is unsustainably demanding and not improved by the level of mistrust the profession has in the inspection process."
- "Children and young people need to be surrounded by energised and committed teachers to give them the best chances in life. Instead, the reality of working life in education is causing talented educators to leave the profession in their droves. We can and must do better."

To read the report in full, please go to www.educationsupport.org.uk/wellbeing-index

The lives you've changed...

Poppy's story

Poppy was finding it hard to adjust following the birth of her first child. She called our helpline and felt less alone at a really difficult time.

"About six months ago, following the birth of my first child and some struggles adjusting to the change in our family routine, I decided to seek support from the Education Support helpline."

"The Sixth Form college where I work as a Success Coach, provided sign-posting to the helpline number. The flexible opening hours of the helpline were great. Having access to support 24/7 meant I didn't have to wait for a GP appointment or struggle to fit in getting support around my other responsibilities. Help was there when I needed it the most."

"When I called the helpline, I was expecting to need several sessions with a counsellor, but in fact, I found the person was able to help me find so much clarity in such a short space of time, that one phone call with them was enough." "I felt like the person on the end of the phone just got it. She not only understood the education sector, but was also a mother herself. She helped me feel less alone at a really difficult time. After speaking with her, I instantly felt lighter, like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders."

"I hope by sharing my story I can encourage other education staff to have open and honest conversations, and ask for help when they need it. Sometimes it can really help to speak to someone outside of your immediate circle, to help you find some clarity and process what is going on for you."



Call us now

When you call you'll talk to a qualified counsellor. We'll offer you immediate, confidential emotional support. Don't wait for a crisis to call: 08000 562 561

The lives you've changed...

Rani's story

Financial support from us helped keep fresh food on the table for Rani and her son when she experienced a sudden illness.

"I have been a teacher for ten years. I relocated with my son following a divorce and domestic abuse. My new role involved teaching a different subject. I was excited to get stuck in and I was looking forward to a fresh start. Things were looking up and our future looked brighter!"

"Then, four months into my new role, and a few weeks before Christmas, I began to experience severe abdominal pain. Despite being in agony, I struggled into school. I did not want to let my colleagues or pupils down."

"A colleague noticed that I was barely able to walk and was in distress during the morning period. The head teacher was notified, and when they saw how much pain I was in, they said they wanted to call an ambulance. I agreed to go with a colleague to A&E."

"When I was seen at the hospital they said I was internally bleeding and I had suffered a rupture due to an ovarian cyst. They said they needed to operate that day and I had to have emergency surgery. A colleague arranged to care for my son, while my mum travelled to be with him."

"I was kept in hospital for 2 nights, but the doctors told me I had lost a huge amount of blood. I felt very weak and I was told my iron levels were extremely low. In the end, I needed to take a month off work to recover as instructed by the doctors."

"It was during this time that my relationship with the school became strained. They became slow to reply to my emails. Then they told me that as I was in my probation period I was not going to receive sick pay. This was extremely anxiety-inducing for me as I was trying my best to get better and wanted nothing more than to come back to work."



"It was then that my fridge freezer stopped working. It had been left in the property when I moved in and it was very old and not repairable. I had used all my savings on moving home and I did not have the funds to replace it. This felt like the final straw."

"Then I found Education Support's grant service. The grant I received from Education Support allowed me to buy a new fridge freezer. It came at a really difficult time and I can't thank them enough. I was so "Education Support helped by giving me one less thing to worry about during a really difficult time."

grateful as I was experiencing a lot of anxiety about how I was going to afford to keep fresh food on the table for myself and my son. Getting the new fridge freezer also helped to reduce my stress levels, which allowed me to rest and recover from the emergency surgery."

"Education Support helped by giving me one less thing to worry about during a really difficult time."

*pseudonym used to protect teacher's identity.

For more information about how to apply for one of our financial grants, please visit educationsupport.org.uk/grants

Retiring from <
the sector: how to enjoy it and stay connected



Recently we spoke to former teacher Anne Neville about her career in education and how she has managed to have a positive retirement from the profession.

"I worked in schools for over 30 years. My last full-time role was as Head of English which, as you can imagine, was a challenging role with a high workload. Rather than going from this role to retiring, I decided to go part-time to start to wind down my work before retiring completely."

"This decision was partly informed by my mother's experience. She was a full-time teacher until the age of 65. She then went from full-time working to retiring completely. She had not spent any time developing any interests outside of school. So when she retired, it was like jumping off a cliff. She had lost any sense of who she was outside of her 'teacher identity' and didn't know what to do. Consequently, she struggled with her mental health."

"Teaching is like a black hole. It takes a lot of time from us. We all feel the responsibility for the children and young people we

work with and it can become all-consuming."

"It is really important, for teachers particularly, as you live and breathe vour career, to have an identity outside of school. So I would advise developing an absorbing passion of your own outside of school, which you have to be present at and/or commit to. Otherwise you will cancel! You need your own life outside of education to allow you to be you and not just your teacher identity. For me, being a teacher is like playing a role, but you need to remember to be you, too. You're

a human first. a teacher second."

"I was very lucky to have an outside interest I was passionate about amateur dramatics - so when I retired I still had that and

devoted more time to it. Retirement gave me the time to direct — and I even became the artistic director of the biggest amateur theatre company in the country."

"I would recommend that all teachers develop an outside interest that they can focus on and spend time doing away from school. This is true for teachers and education staff throughout their career, but particularly as they near retirement."

"When I retired I certainly did not miss the marking — as an English teacher this was very timeconsuming - or the meetings and data inputting. But what I did miss was the contact with the students and seeing them grow and learn. My pupils have gone on to do amazing things and I have such pride in them. I also missed the connection with my colleagues."

"So along with spending more time on my interests, I have maintained some connections with education. One of the ways I do this is through private tutoring. This has kept me in touch with the curriculum, exams and more importantly, allows me to still have the joy of seeing my students' lightbulb moments!"

"I am also an exam invigilator. This has helped me to keep a connection with my school community and former colleagues. I can be a sounding board for them, allowing them to vent about the challenges they are facing."

"Several of my retired colleagues

and I have also formed a walking group. We meet every week to chat and gossip about school. It has also become a bit of a support network and those who have just retired



are also being invited to join, so there over 20 of us meeting now."

"I also keep up to date with what is going on in education by reading and watching the news. I subscribe to the Education Support monthly email newsletter to find out about the latest challenges facing colleagues in education and how they can be supported. I send this on to my friends and colleagues who are still working in education."

"It is amazing how much the charity does to help teachers and education staff with their mental health and wellbeing, I have set up a monthly donation and have pledged a gift in my Will to Education Support. It is my way of giving back to the profession I loved for so many years."

"So to all teachers who are thinking about retiring, or have retired remember you don't have to turn your back on teaching completely. There are ways of keeping connected, if this helps you to feel happy in your retirement. It certainly works for me."

Anne Neville

Your voice

In the last issue of this magazine, we revealed the results of some recent research into 'Teaching: the new reality'. The report brought to light the changing role of classroom-based staff, in particular the increased number of educators finding themselves fulfilling roles in their students' lives that take time away from the traditional role of teaching.

In response to this, one of our long-time supporters, Elizabeth Rees, wrote to us to share her own views on the topic:



To whom it may concern,

As an ex-teacher of thirty-six years in the secondary system, I feel great empathy with the present problems facing my colleagues.

I went on an exchange to Massachusetts, in another state secondary system. I was very impressed with the use of a pastoral/careers/guidance officer. Registration was less than ten minutes and thereafter each student had to register in the main office. Lateness was punishable by a detention, unless it was excusable.

Students were encouraged to seek advice from the guidance officer and teachers could refer a student if they felt their work was affected - a noticeable slump in standard, lack of attentiveness or a behavioural change within the classroom.

The beauty of this system was that teaching was the main and only focus. Feedback from the officer is essential if learning is to improve, but details of the problems need not be disclosed. The students were more inclined to go to the officer because confidentiality was of the utmost. The officer was a trained counsellor and had the authority to call in parents or other outside agencies.

Much as I liked the tutor period in my own school, I do feel that teachers need to direct their energy into subject only and leave other issues to another trained person like the counsellor/ guidance officer.

I know funding will be an issue, but if all agencies came together, there may be enough resources to make this happen. School psychologists use the referral system and have numerous interviews with student/tutor and teaching staff.

They too should embrace a counsellor/guidance officer as this would cause less disruption for teaching staff. I think if all agencies interact, monies could be found for the salary of the officer. It would be advantageous to all.

Yours sincerely, Elizabeth Rees One of our most generous supporters, Mrs Vera Cullimore, sent us a fabulous article about the time she'd taken her author son Stan's place for a school interview!

Bridging the Gap

"While staying with our youngest author son Stan in Bristol, he showed me a letter he'd had from a school in Sandwell asking if he would go to their Book Week. Being involved with the Longman Reading Scheme now used in many primary schools, he is used to being invited along to be interviewed by the children. Knowing he would not be able to accept this invitation, he asked me if I'd like to



go instead. Reading the address of the school I was amazed, it was the junior school literally round the corner from the infants school where I had begun teaching 48 years before.

After a very strange conversation with the teacher involved – the author can't come, but would his mother do instead? – I set out one morning three weeks later armed with two big bags of visual aids. We drove through the city centre, out along Hagley Road, through Quinton and Blackheath to Rowley Regis in the heart of the Black Country, an area that fully lived up to its name 48 years ago. But what a difference now, gone are the factories with tall chimneys belching out filthy smoke, and gone too are the terraces of little houses. In their place new estates, 30 years old being relatively new, and green open spaces, while the view from the staffroom windows was dominated by a mass of shed-like buildings: Merry Hill. But the infants school was no more, its place filled by a spacious special school.

My day's visit was divided into five sessions, starting with the youngest children before moving up the ages, and I was warned they'd all ask a lot of questions. About Stan, his family, his books, what he was like as a boy, and all sorts of other things. To help me answer, I'd taken two photos of him and his family, several of his books, a few copies of my own "The Elephant and the Pig", the two animals themselves, and a gold disc from Stan's days as a pop star.

By the time I'd taken all the visual aids out of my two bags, the children were goggle-eyed and the teachers said they had seldom known them so fascinated. After all, it was a very mixed collection, but then so were the questions, covering a span of 60 years.

So it was no wonder I felt quite confused by the end of the day, especially as the final session lasted an hour and the ten-year-olds were still wanting to know more at the close.

Letters written by the children since show that two things stayed vividly in their minds: That Stan who they know as a writer of books, was once in the Housemartins, a group many of their parents remember. And secondly, that while I made a sturdy elephant when I was ten, none of them did anything like that now, a good illustration of how children have changed in a technological age. On the other hand I had to admit that I certainly couldn't use a computer, they could teach me a lot in that respect.

From the comments from the teachers, it had obviously been a valuable day. The children had worked out my age as 66, mental arithmetic it's called, and many of them had never been in contact with anyone so old before. Even the children I had taught as infants nearly a half century before would now be older than most of their grandparents, but then we are in the second and third generation where teenage parents are not uncommon.

Going home I was unusually quiet, having very little voice left, and also thoughtful. It seemed sad that there is such a lack of contact between many children and older people, I'd felt quite ancient at times that day, but it had been a rare privilege to bridge the generation gap for a little while. Grateful too to my family, because it was the interest in them that had forged the link.

I've been invited back to take an assembly soon on the theme of 'using our talents', and this time the bags will contain the four puppets and a stuffed goose that have already appeared in our church. The question remains though: will the children think all old people are eccentric? At least it's one good way to go on bridging that gap.

Vera Cullimore

We'd love to hear from you. If you'd like to share your views or experiences please do write to us at Supporter Magazine, Education Support, 40A Drayton Park, London, N5 1EW or email magazine@edsupport.org.uk

The lives you've changed...

Lindsay's story

Our Christmas Appeal last year focused on the moving story of Lindsay, who was struggling to cope with cramped living conditions, rising costs and an 11-year-old son with ADHD. Lindsay was awarded a grant so that she could buy her son a new bike and helmet to help him burn off some energy and give him some freedom.

Your generosity overwhelmed us yet again. Because of your donations, we were able to grant so many more Christmas wishes during a time when our grants team was seeing its highest ever level of applications. Here's Lindsay's letter....



Ms A B Sample 55 Sample Street Sampleton Sampleshire S55 5SS

Mailsort/Tray No./Cell No.

Dear Ms A B Sample,

Thank you for granting our wish this Christmas I've just watched my son ride off down the street on his brand new bike.

Support

Your supporter number: xxxxx

November 2023

"Nothing remarkable about that" you might think. But for me, it's one of those defining moments that absolutely fills me with joy and means so much to both of us, after a few months of hell.

absolutely fills me with joy and means so find no set of the some time. My physical and mental health have been deteriorating for quite some time. As a single parent of an 11-year-old with ADHD, times have been tough, to say the least. I'm on a low income, working with special needs children and say the least. I'm on a low income, working thances. Then the menopause

say the least. I m on a low income, working will special needs of additional have been struggling to keep on top of our finances. Then the menopause came along and it hit me very hard. Something I'd never really expected to happen and have found hard to talk openly about. There seems to be a lot of stigma around those who suffer quite badly with the symptoms.

Currently our living conditions are very cramped. I haven't been able to afford storage for our clothes or even a table and chairs for us to eat at, so I've had to appeal to friends and family to lend me money to create a homely environment for us while I try to get myself back on an even keel.

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flat so that he could get rid or some excess crisis, and a some amazing Education Support was one of many organisations that I approached for help. I've had some amazing assistance from so many people since I took that huge step in admitting I couldn't do everything on

my own. <u>But the reason Education Support — and all of you — are special is that you've provided the</u> <u>icing on the Christmas cake. Amid all the spiralling costs, debts and difficult living conditions,</u> <u>you've given my son the best gift of all. You've granted his Christmas wish. You enabled</u> <u>Education Support to award us the grant that bought him his new bike and helmet and gave him</u> <u>the sense of freedom that he's been so desperately in need of.</u>

Continued overleaf



You helped us raise an amazing £30,000 which helped dozens more families like Lindsay's to have a happy Christmas. Thank you again.



Leave a legacy of learning

Children will always need brilliant teachers.

Make sure they always have them, with a gift in your Will to Education Support.



As a teacher, you helped countless children discover what they're capable of. That's quite a legacy. But as someone who'll never

stop caring about education, you know that it's getting harder for today's teachers to do the same. Year after year, they're being told to take on more responsibility and pressure at the expense of actually doing what they became a teacher to do — help children to learn and grow.

It's taking a heavy toll. Too many teachers are struggling with their mental health. Too many careers are being cut short. And too many children are missing out on the benefits of having a teacher who's at the top of their game at the front of the classroom.

More than ever, children need brilliant teachers. But if they're to cope with the challenges of modern teaching, teachers need a brilliant support network around them.

By leaving a gift in your Will to Education Support, you can give future teachers the best support possible — and leave a legacy of learning. Your gift will make sure teachers get emergency guidance and mental health support when they need it most. You'll help us work with schools to better support their teachers. And you'll help keep the pressure on government to free future teachers from the burden of box-ticking and form-filling.

Most importantly of all, you'll make sure that generations of children get to learn from brilliant teachers who love the work they do.

Don't let your teaching legacy end. Leave a legacy of learning with a gift in your Will to Education Support.

If you'd like more information about leaving a legacy to Education Support, please visit educationsupport.org.uk/legacy. You don't have to tell us about your intentions, but it's really useful for us to know if you intend to leave us a gift in your Will. Please let us know by emailing fundraising@edsupport.org.uk Taking care of your own wellbeing often means finding a helpful diversion and having a bit of fun. Which is why we always include a quiz for you. Good luck!

Break-time

- 1. How many breeds of elephant are there?
- 2. Which Disney Princess has the least amount of screen time?
- **3.** What is Shakespeare's shortest play?
- 4. In Gavin and Stacey, how many times has Stacey been engaged before Gavin, and can you name them?
- 5. What is Prince William's full name?
- 6. How many stars are on the national flag of the USA?
- 7. In terms of volume, which is the largest fresh lake in the world?
- 8. What year was Marmite invented? A) 1899 B) 1902 C) 1929

- 9. What's the average height of males in the UK?
- 10. Who has won the most Academy Awards?
- 11. In Harry Potter, where does Vernon Dursley work?
- 12. What is the capital of St. Lucia?
- **13.** How many letter tiles are there in a game of Scrabble?
- 14. Who won the first football World Cup and what year was it?
- **15.** Where in the human body would you find the medulla oblongata?

Let us know how you did or make a suggestion for the next issue by emailing us at magazine@edsupport.org.uk We know you already support us. But if you'd like to and feel able to send a gift, thank you so much. We promise to put it to good use as always

£25 could help fund a place to sleep

An increasing number of education staff apply for a grant because they're facing the threat of losing their home. Some even spend nights sleeping in a car. Your donation could make sure they have a bed for the night.

£50) could help someone at risk of suicide

Across our counselling services, we talk to many people every day who are assessed to be at risk of suicide. Your donation could make sure we're there to answer those desperate calls. Your donation could make sure we're there to answer those desperate calls.

£150 could provide household essentials

Many teachers or people working in education come to us when they can't afford to replace or fix essential items in the home during times of financial struggle. Your gift could replace a vital kitchen appliance or even a bed to make life easier for them and their family.

I would like to make a gift of:

£25 £50 £150 Other £
Please debit my 🗌 Visa 🗌 Mastercard
Card number

Expiry date

Or I enclose a cheque/postal order/CAF voucher made payable to Education Support

If you prefer, you can to donate online at **educationsupport.org.uk/donate**

Please complete in CAPS:	
Name	
Supporter number	(this can be found at the top of your covering letter)
Address	Postcode
Phone number	

Email ____

We will stay in touch to keep you up to date with information about the work your support is making possible, our news, impact, events, fundraising appeals and other ways you can get involved.

You are in control of how we communicate with you, and if you'd like to change what you receive, how you receive it, or stop all communications please tell us. You can change your preferences by emailing us on fundraising@edsupport.org.uk or calling 020 7697 2750.

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Make your gift worth 25% more

If you are a UK taxpayer, we can claim an additional 25p from each £1 you donate from HMRC. All you need to do is tick the box, sign and date below.

□ I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and would like this donation, any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to Education Support to be treated as Gift Aid donations.

I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature:	
Date:	/

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*Boundless will make a £10 charitable donation to Education Support for every new member that joins Boundless. To be eligible new members must join Boundless via **boundless.co.uk/es** or by calling Boundless membership services and quoting 'Education Support'. A new Boundless member is someone who hasn't previously been a Boundless member. Boundless reserve the right to withdraw the offer at any time. **See boundless.co.uk for phone lines opening times.







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