



# Teacher Wellbeing Index **2022**

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This report has been written by **Carol Savill-Smith** and **Daniel Scanlan**

We would like to thank colleagues at **Education Support** for all their help and assistance with this report. Particular thanks goes to **Charlie Behrens** and **Mark McClure** for the design of this report, and to **Simon Ellis** for the photography. Finally, we would like to thank **Sophie Webb, Phoebe Dobson** and **Laura Piggott** from **YouGov**

## **Notes on the methodology**

*All differences found in this Index always refer to a percentage point increase/decrease*

*Full details on the methodology, including the research aims and links to Education Support's previous Teacher Wellbeing Index reports, can be found in Appendix A*



## Chief Executive's Foreword

The Teacher Wellbeing Index 2022 presents another year of data on an exhausted workforce, with many scores flat-lining.

This cannot go on.

We have a duty of care to future generations of children and young people to retain passionate, talented teachers and leaders. Instead, stress and overwork has been normalised in the education sector. This will affect the lives and education of thousands of children and those in the least well-resourced areas will suffer most.

This issue must be a priority for everyone who cares about education.

Help make this the year of change.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sinéad Mc Brearty', with a long, sweeping tail.

**Sinéad Mc Brearty**  
Chief Executive Officer

**#TWIX2022**

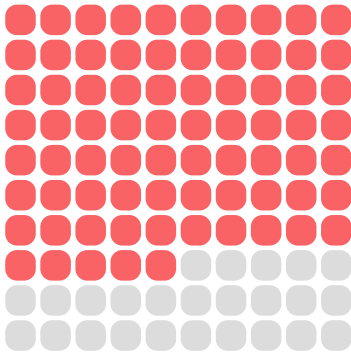
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# Key findings

# The Challenges

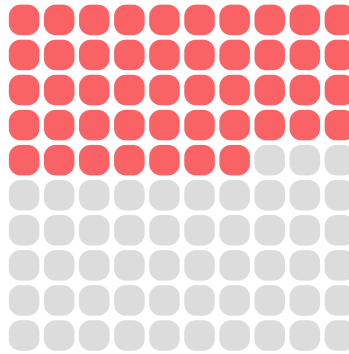
## 75%



of all staff are **stressed**  
(**84%** of senior leaders,  
**72%** of school teachers)

➤ Section 1, page 10

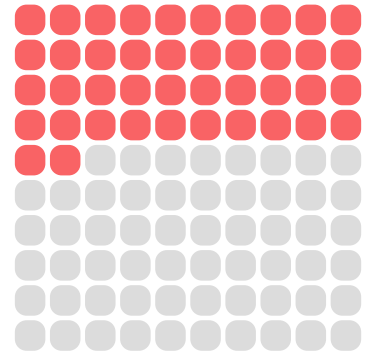
## 47%



of all staff **always go into work when unwell**  
(**61%** of senior leaders,  
**45%** of school teachers)

➤ Section 1, page 12

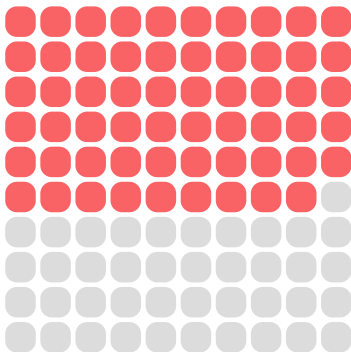
## 42%



of all staff consider **their organisation's culture has a negative effect on their wellbeing**

➤ Section 1, page 13

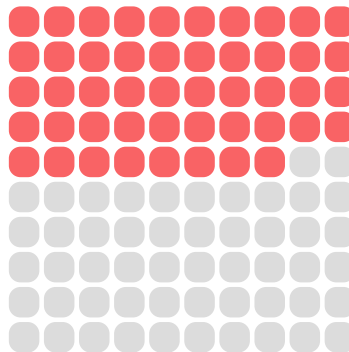
## 59%



of all staff are **not confident** in disclosing **unmanageable stress** or **mental health issues to their employer**

➤ Section 1, page 15

## 48%

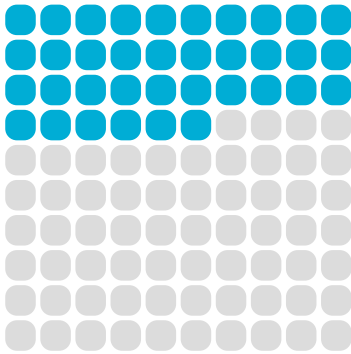


of all staff feel **their organisations do not support employees well who have mental health and wellbeing problems**  
(**51%** of senior leaders, **48%** of school teachers)

➤ Section 1, page 17

# Mental health of Education Staff

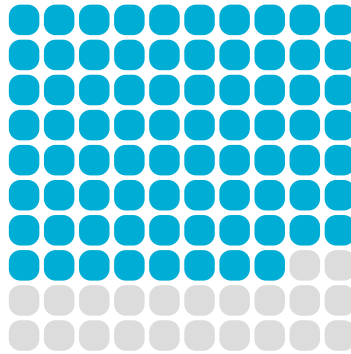
## 36%



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

➤ Section 2, page 21

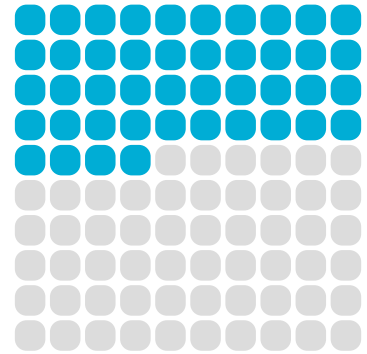
## 78%



of all staff **experienced symptoms due to their work** (87% of senior leaders, 76% of school teachers)

➤ Section 2, page 27

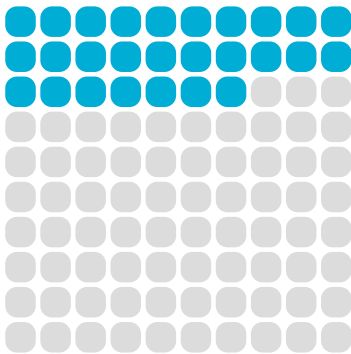
## 44%



thought the symptoms could be **signs of anxiety** – higher than the national figure provided by the ONS (37%)

➤ Section 2, page 24

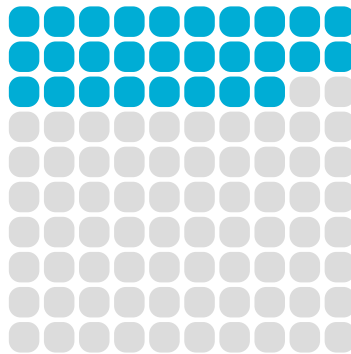
## 27%



thought the symptoms could be **signs of depression** – higher than the national figure provided by the ONS (17%).

➤ Section 2, page 25

## 28%



thought the symptoms could be **signs of burnout** (37% of senior leaders, 27% of school teachers)

➤ Section 2, page 25

## 44.01

**Staff wellbeing score**

Lower than the national population scores for:

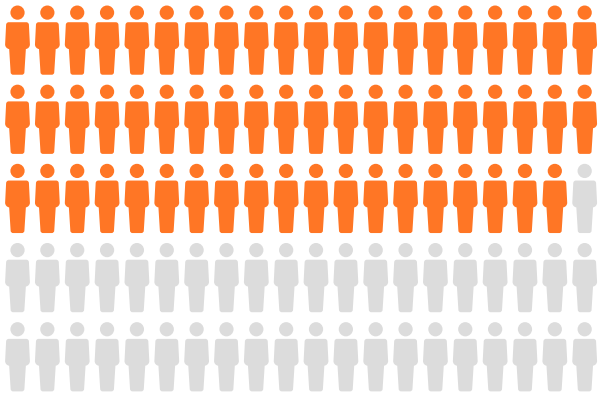
|          |       |
|----------|-------|
| England  | 52.40 |
| Scotland | 48.60 |
| Wales    | 48.90 |

➤ Section 2, page 29

## Staff Retention

# 59%

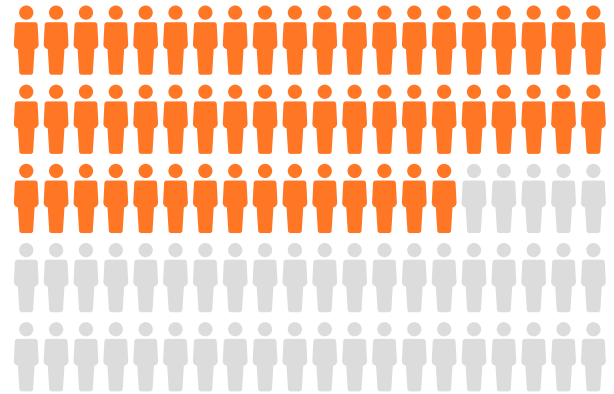
of staff have **considered leaving** the sector in the past academic year due to **pressures on their mental health and wellbeing** (67% of senior leaders, 59% of school teachers)



➤ Section 3, page 34

# 55%

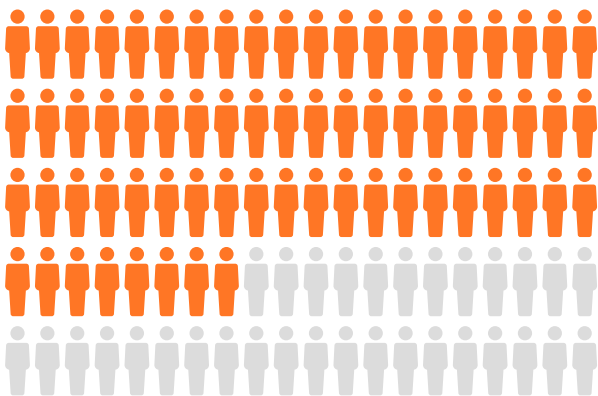
of staff have **actively sought to change or leave their current jobs** (58% of senior leaders, 53% of school teachers)



➤ Section 3, page 34

# 68%

of staff cited **volume of workload** as the **main reason** for thinking about leaving their jobs (83% of senior leaders, 66% of school teachers)



➤ Section 3, page 36





# Section 1

## The Challenges

# 1. Stress at Work

## Stress levels increased in 2022

We asked teachers and education staff to describe their level of work-related stress. Overall, stress levels have increased when compared to 2021.

**75%** of education staff described themselves as stressed  
(3% increase on 2021)



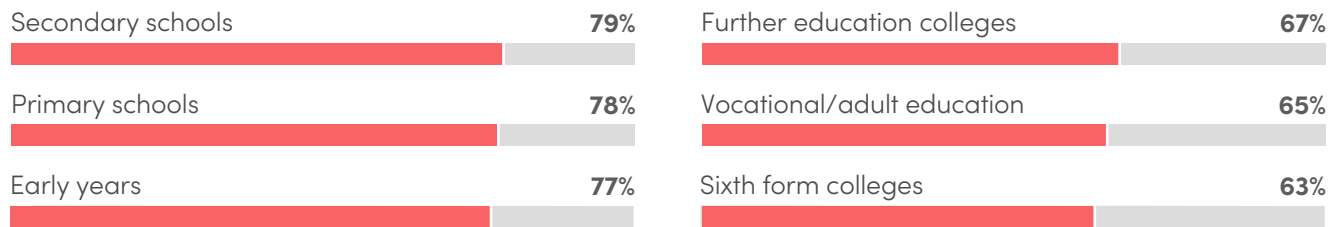
n. 1 (All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n. 1 refers to note 1, and so on.)

### Stress by job role



n. 2

### Stress levels of staff by education phase



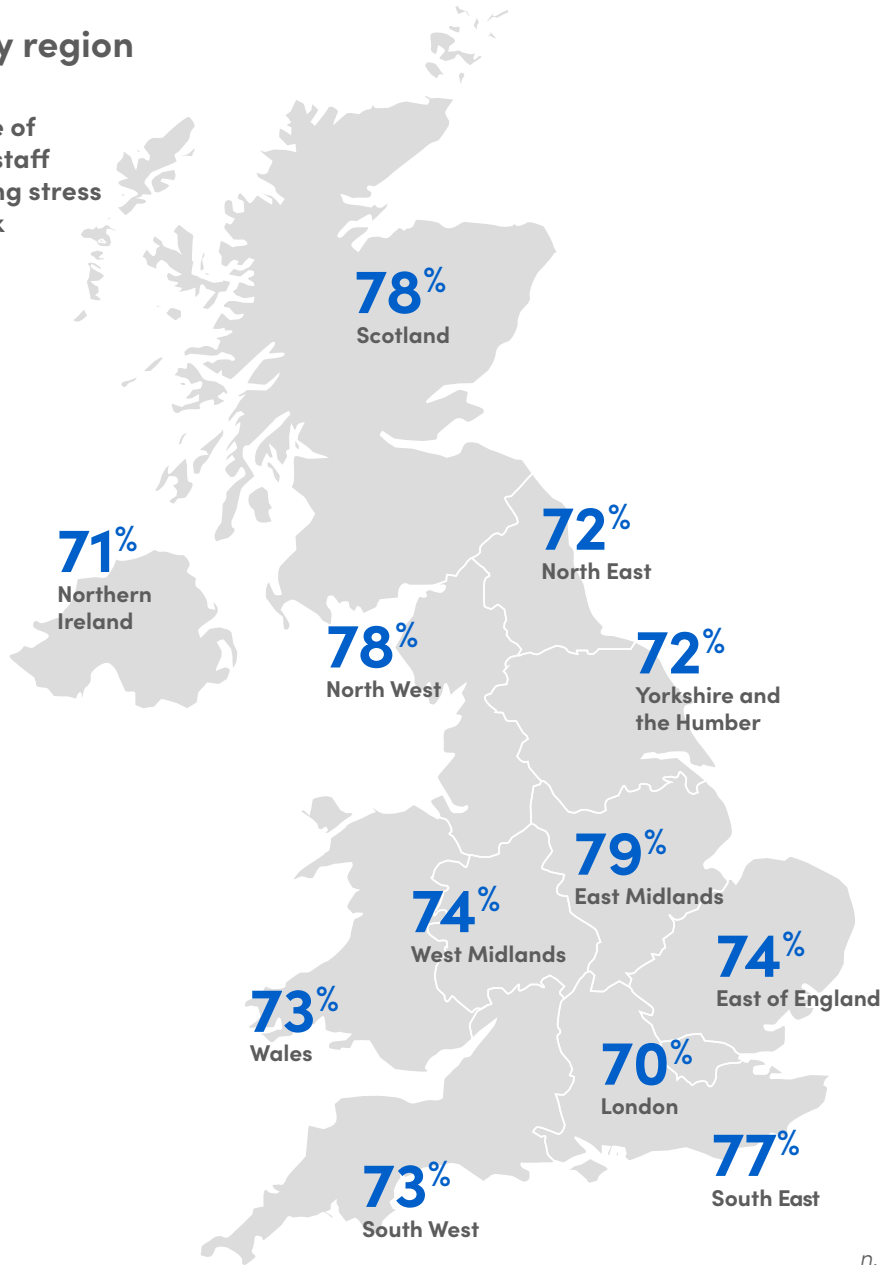
n. 3

In 2020/21 stress, depression or anxiety accounted for

**50%** of all work-related ill health<sup>1</sup>

## Stress by region

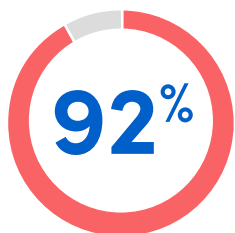
Percentage of education staff experiencing stress due to work



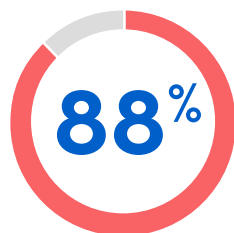
n. 4

## What drives stress in education workplaces?

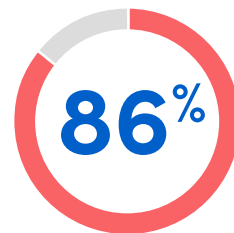
Trust, a negative team culture and support all have an impact on those who stated they were stressed



felt they were distrusted by their line manager



felt they had a negative team culture



felt they were not supported well by their organisations

n. 5

## 2. Presenteeism

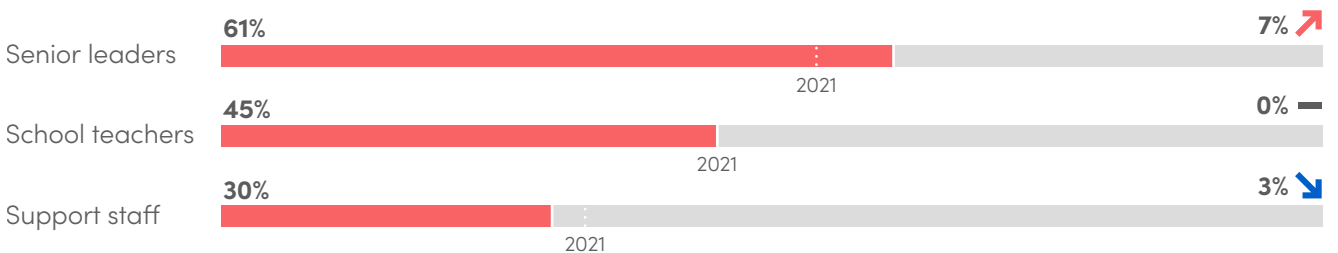
### Nearly half of all staff feel compelled to always come to work when unwell

Presenteeism is a term used to describe people coming into work even when they are ill. It is often associated with anxiety, high levels of workload and stress. If education staff are unwell, then they are unlikely to be able to provide and support a high quality education for their pupils.

**47%** of all staff surveyed felt compelled to **always** come to work when unwell (1% increase on 2021)\*



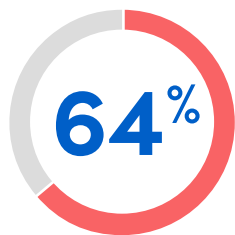
#### Staff who felt compelled to always come to work when unwell by job role



n. 6

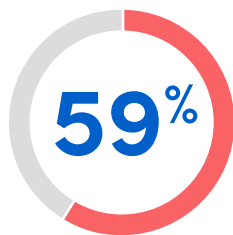
### What drives presenteeism?

Perceptions of trust, team culture, organisational support and stress are all factors which can contribute towards presenteeism. Of those who felt compelled to **always** come into work:

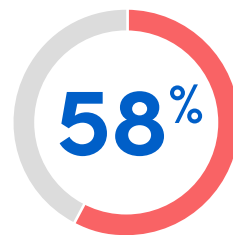


felt they were distrusted by their line manager

n. 7



felt they had a negative team culture



felt their organisations did not support their employees well when they experienced problems with their mental health and wellbeing

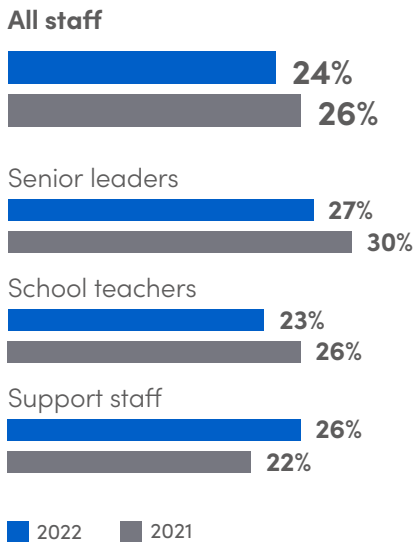
\*Not statistically significant

# 3. Work culture and mental health

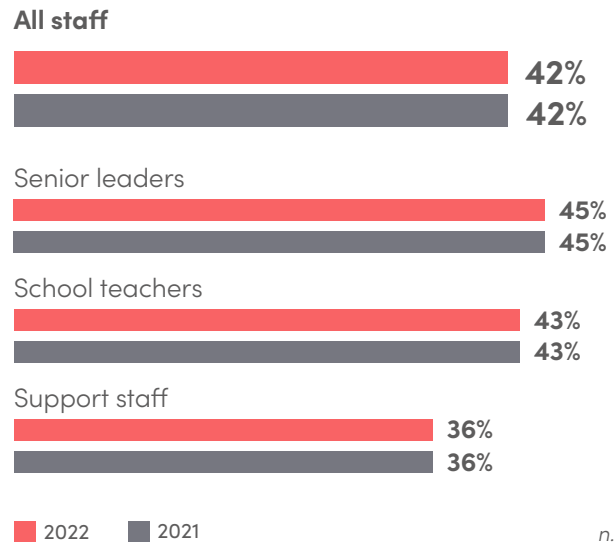
## Organisational culture

There was a decrease in the number of senior leaders and school teachers reporting their organisational culture had a positive effect on their wellbeing, while those reporting a negative effect remained the same.

Percentage of education staff who reported their institution’s organisational culture had a **positive effect** on their wellbeing:



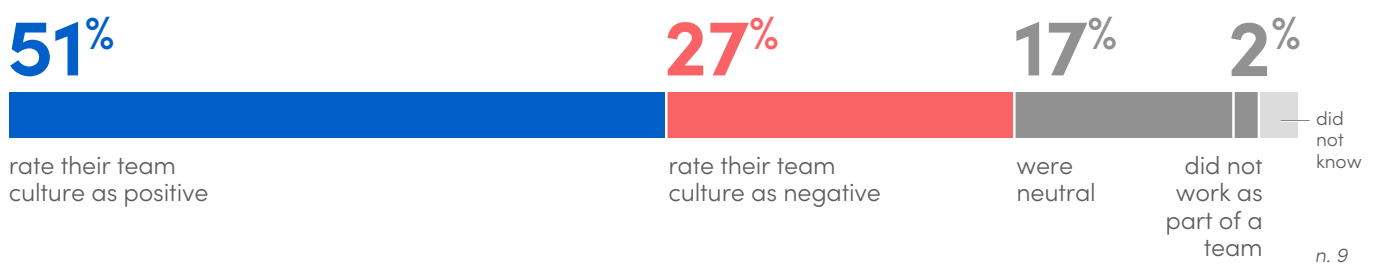
Percentage of education staff who reported their institution’s organisational culture had a **negative effect** on their wellbeing:



n. 8

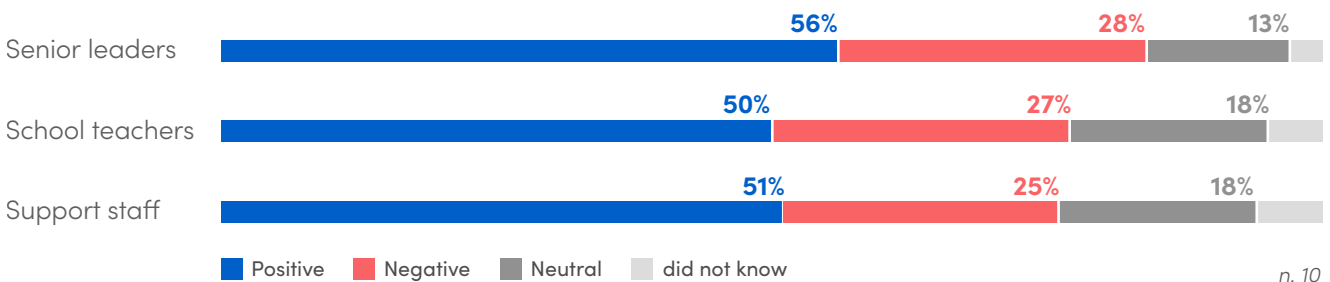
## Working team culture

More than half of education staff report they have a positive team culture:



n. 9

How education staff view their team culture by job role:



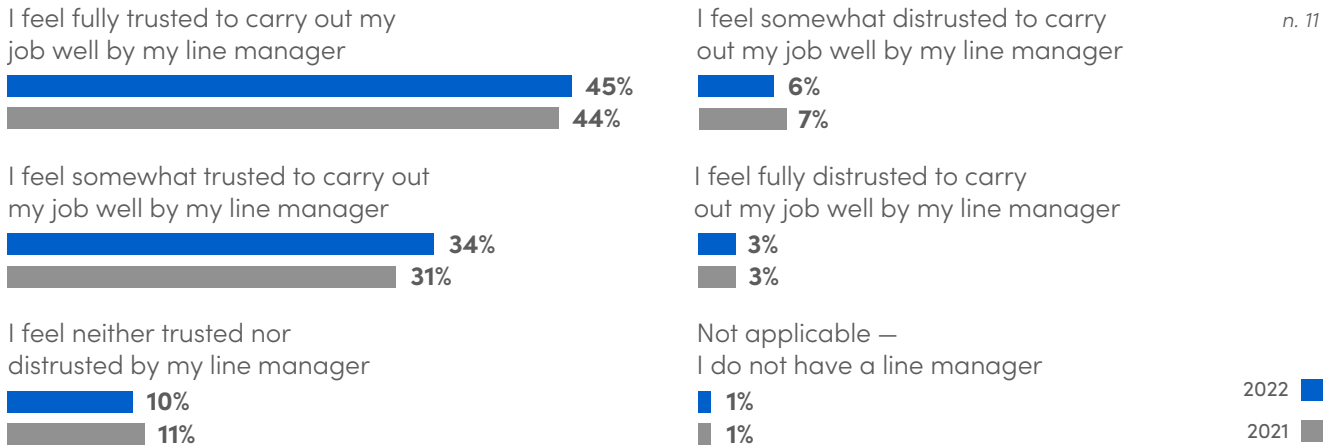
n. 10

More staff working in primary schools reported a positive team culture than staff working in secondary schools (55% compared to 46%).

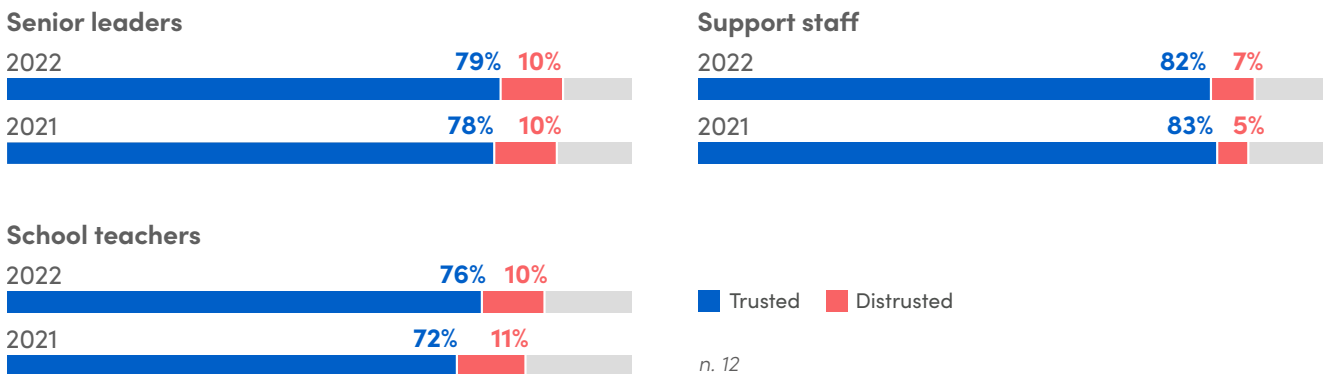
# 4. Feeling Trusted

We found that less than half of all education staff feel fully trusted by their line manager for the second year running

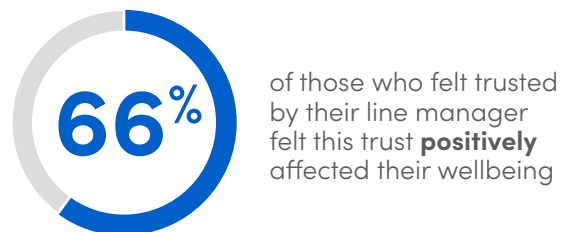
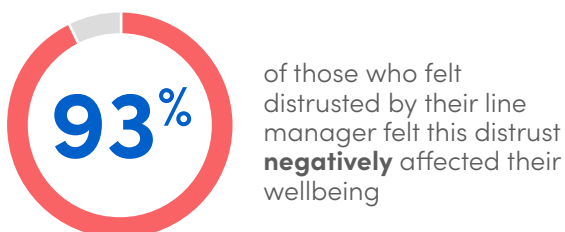
## Levels of trust felt at work 2022 and 2021



Statistically significant differences were found in the level of trust felt at work by school teachers



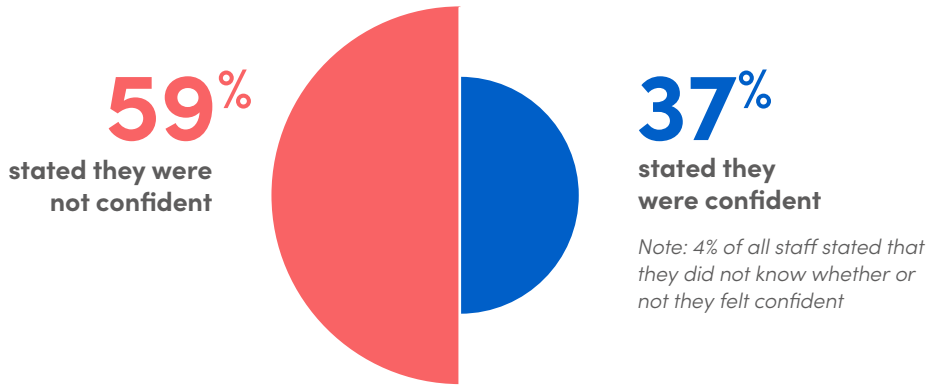
We also asked staff whether this level of trust they felt affects their mental health and wellbeing. We found:



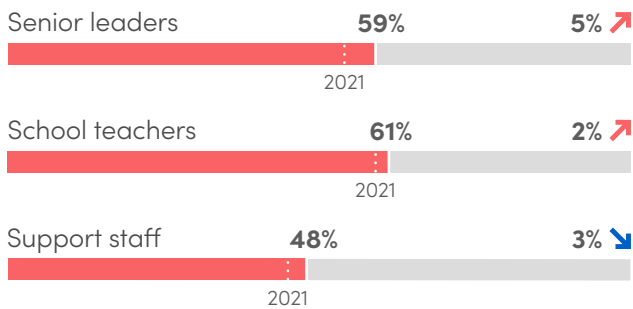
*n. 13*

# 5. Confidence in disclosing issues to employers

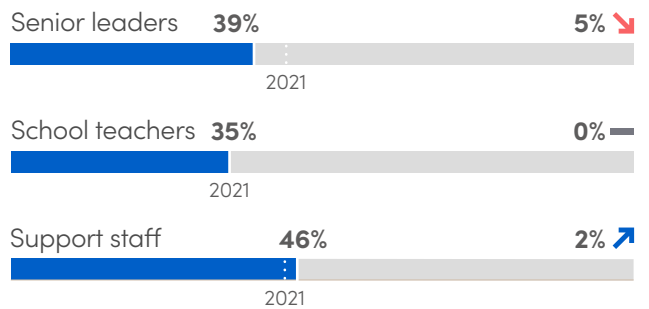
We asked teachers and education staff how confident they felt disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health problems to their employer



Staff who did not feel confident by job role



Staff who felt confident by job role



n. 14



## Observations

Staff who have good organisational support feel more confident in being able to disclose unmanageable stress or mental health problems.

- **69%** of staff with good organisational support feel confident with such disclosure compared to **29%** with good support but who do not feel confident with such disclosure.

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 **12%** who do not feel trusted but are confident with such disclosure.

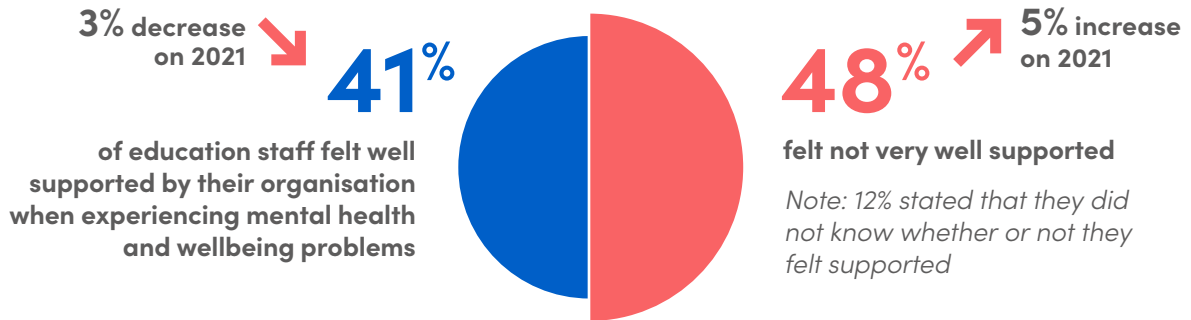
Staff who have a negative team culture feel less confident in being able to disclose unmanageable stress or mental health problems.

- **81%** of staff who have a negative team culture do not feel confident with such disclosure compared to **18%** who have a negative team culture and are confident with such disclosure.

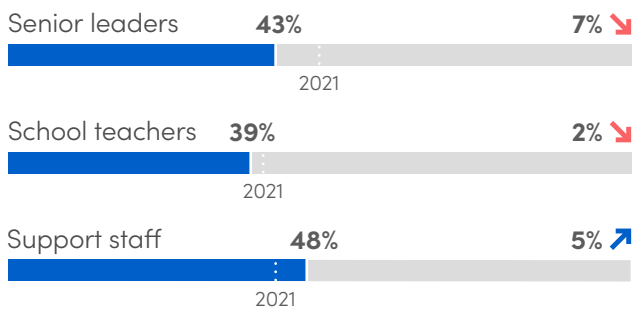


# 6. Feeling supported at work

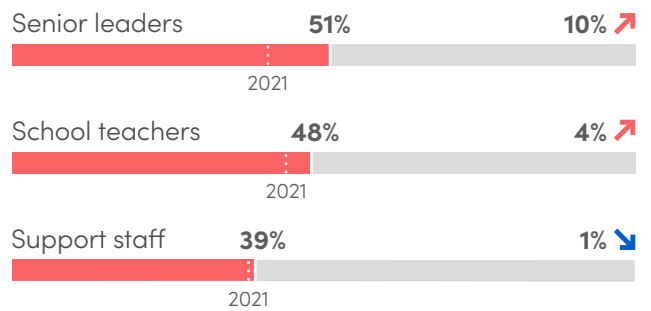
We asked staff how well they thought their organisation supports employees who experience problems with mental health and wellbeing



### Those who felt well supported by job role



### Those who did not feel well supported by job role



n. 15



## Observations

Staff who considered their organisations **supported them well** with their mental health and wellbeing:

- **59%** of staff had a positive team culture.
- **26%** had actively sought to change or leave their jobs (compared to **66%** who considered they were not well supported).

Staff who considered their organisations **did not support them well** with their mental health and wellbeing:

- **86%** of staff felt distrusted by their manager.
- **55%** were stressed.

## Sample profile

- n. 1 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082).
- n. 2 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082), Senior leaders (n = 707), School teachers (n = 2,039), Support staff (n = 215)
- n. 3 2022 Base: Primary schools (n = 1,240), Secondary schools (n = 1,294), Early years (n = 124), Sixth form colleges (n = 88), Further education colleges (n = 152), Vocational/Adult education (n = 66)
- n. 4 2022 Base: North East (n = 96), North West (n = 363), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 283), East of England (n = 237), West Midlands (n = 273), East Midlands (n = 232), London (n = 407), South East (n = 529), South West (n = 232), Wales (n = 119), Scotland (n = 233), Northern Ireland (n = 78)
- n. 5 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082)
- n. 6 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,056), Senior leaders (n = 703), School teachers (n = 2,022), Support staff (n = 211).
- n. 7 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,056)
- n. 8 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082), Senior leaders (n = 707), School teachers (n = 2,039), Support staff (n = 215)
- n. 9 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082).
- n. 10 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082), Senior leaders (n = 707), School teachers (n = 2,039), Support staff (n = 215).
- n. 11 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082), 2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354).
- n. 12 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082), Senior leaders (n = 707), School teachers (n = 2,039), Support staff (n = 215), 2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225)
- n. 13 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 2,993)
- n. 14 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082)
- n. 15 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082), Senior leaders (n = 707), School teachers (n = 2,039), Support staff (n = 215)

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>HSE (2021). "Health and Safety Executive – Work-related stress, anxiety or depression statistics in Great Britain, 2021". 16 December 2021. Available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.pdf>



**The next section  
explores the mental health  
of education staff**



## Section 2

Mental Health of  
Education Staff

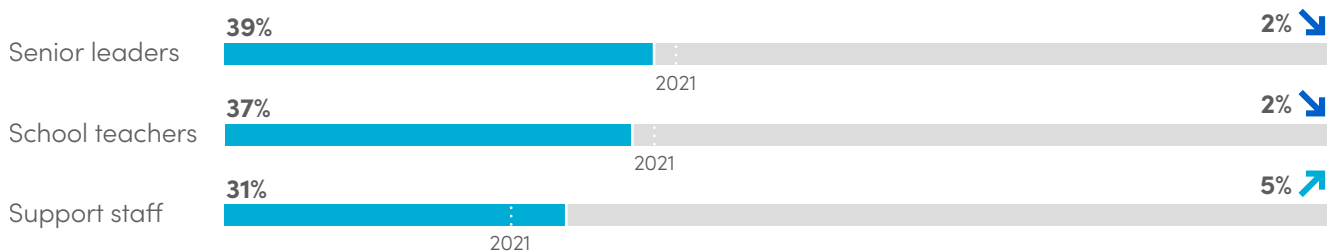
# 1. Mental health issues in the past academic year

We asked all teachers and education staff if they had experienced a mental health issue in the past academic year

**36%** of teachers and education staff reported experiencing mental health issues in the past academic year (2% decrease on 2021)\*



## Mental health issues experienced by job role



*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.)*

A marginal increase (**5%**) was found in the number of support staff experiencing a mental health issue. A marginal decrease (**2%**) was found in the number of senior leaders and school teachers experiencing mental health issues.

\*Not statistically significant

## 2. Symptoms of poor mental health experienced in the last year

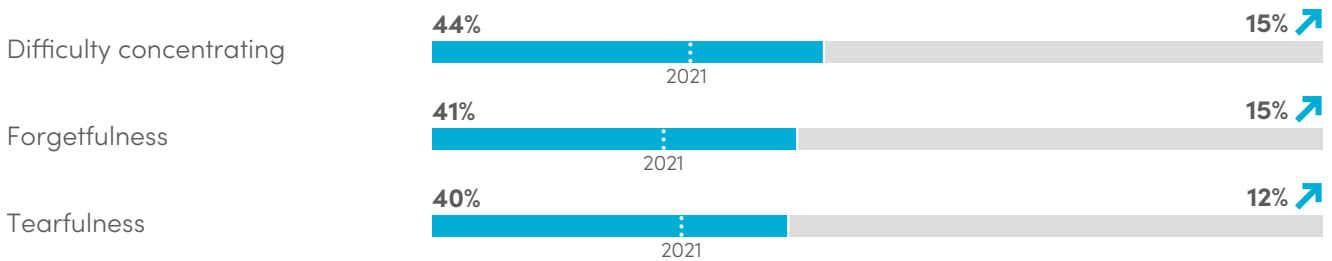
Staff reported experiencing many symptoms of poor mental health, which were broadly similar to those found in 2021. The most common was insomnia, or difficulty sleeping.

*Note: This question asks all respondents in the 2022 survey for their perceptions relating to both 2022 and 2021.*

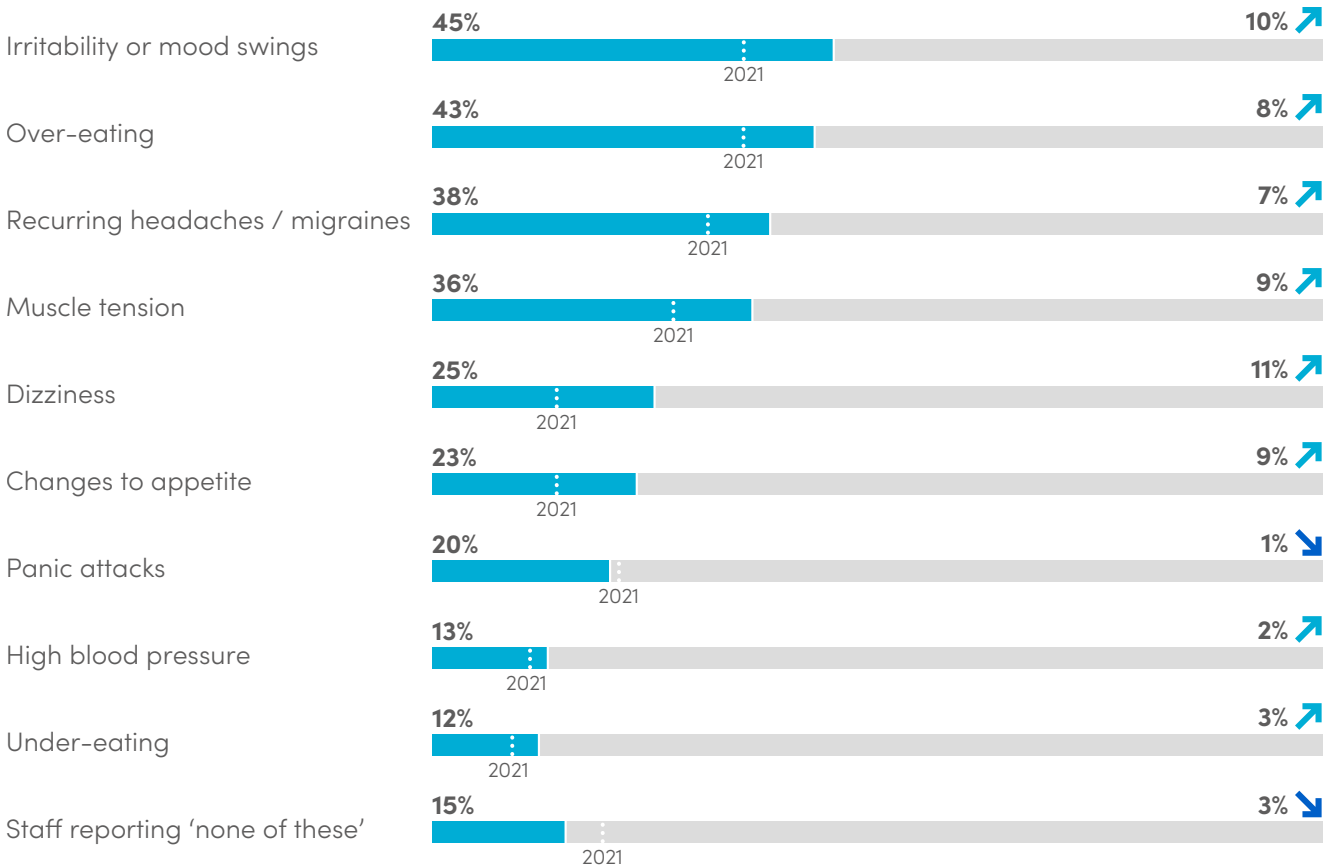
**50%** experienced insomnia or difficulty sleeping **(9% increase on 2021)**



### Large increases were also found in the levels of

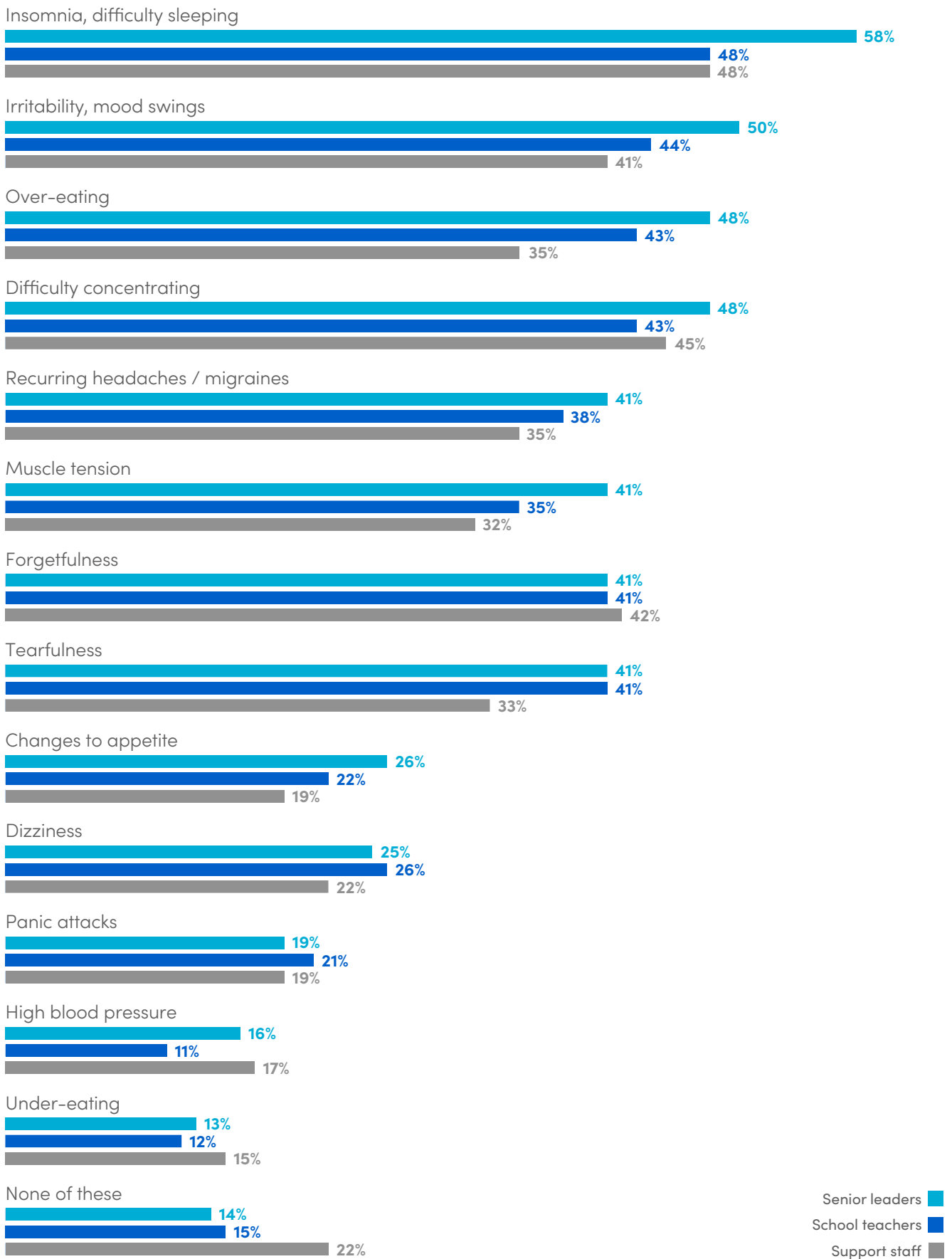


### Other symptoms compared between 2022 and 2021



n. 2

## Symptoms by job role in 2022



**Large increases** were found in the levels of **difficulty concentrating** (up **15%** from 30% in 2021), **forgetfulness** (up **15%** from 26%) and **tearfulness** (up **12%** from 29%).

## Observations

Half of all staff had experienced **insomnia** or **difficulty sleeping**. Senior leaders suffered the highest rates of these.

Senior leaders experienced the highest levels of **irritability** or **mood swings**, **over-eating** and **difficulty concentrating**.

Staff who indicated their organisations did not support them well experienced **more symptoms** than those who reported feeling supported in all of the categories.

Staff who felt their team had a negative culture experienced **more symptoms** than those with a positive team culture.

Staff who felt trusted by their line manager experienced **fewer symptoms** than those who felt distrusted.

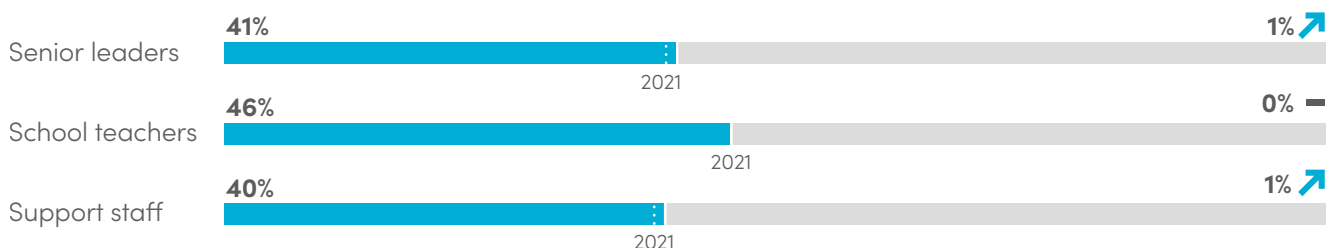
## 3. What do the symptoms mean?

The symptoms were considered to be signs of anxiety, exhaustion, burnout, depression and acute stress.

### Anxiety



### The signs of anxiety were directionally higher amongst school teachers



n. 4

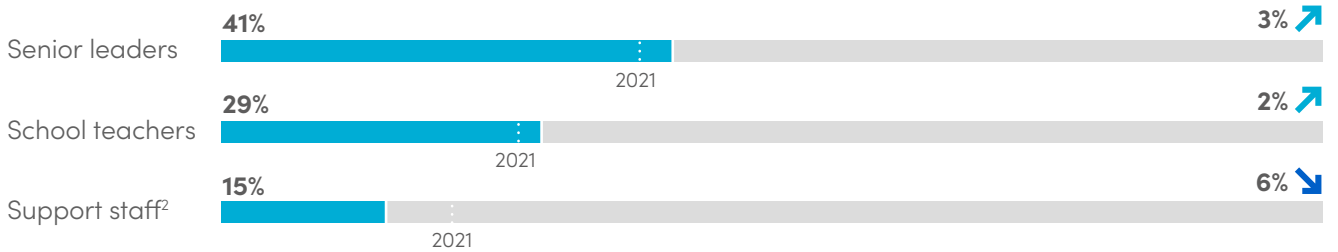


## Exhaustion

**30%** of education staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of exhaustion



The signs of exhaustion were highest amongst senior leaders



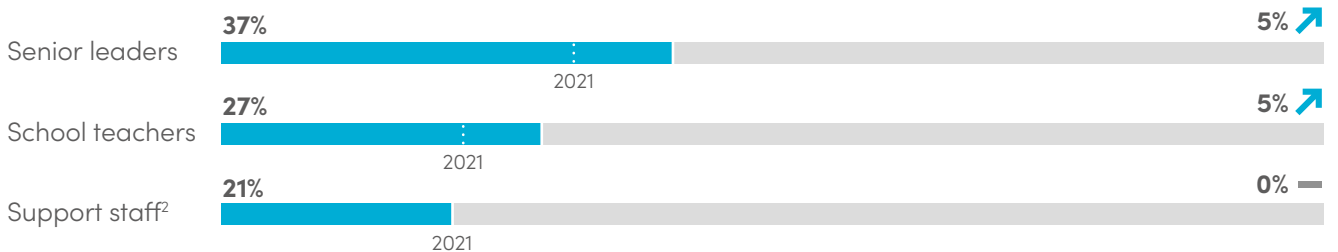
n. 5

## Burnout

**28%** of education staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of burnout



The signs of burnout were highest amongst senior leaders

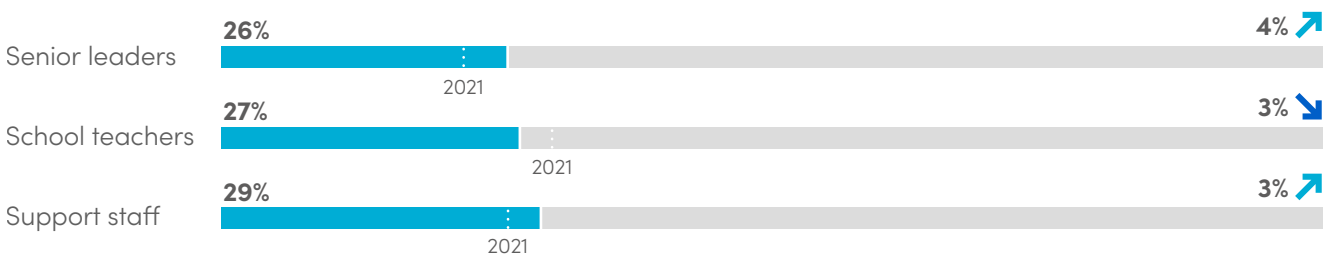


n. 6

## Depression



The signs of depression were directionally higher amongst support staff



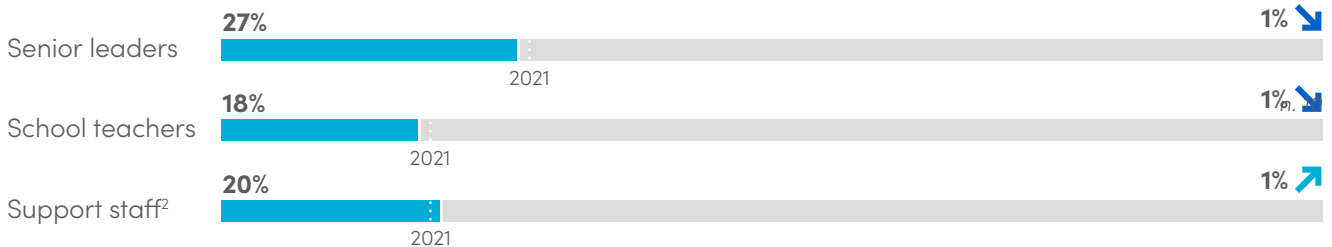
n. 7

## Acute stress

**20%** of education staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of acute stress



### The signs of acute stress were highest amongst senior leaders



n. 8

## Observations

Staff working in education experience higher levels of **depression** and **anxiety** than those reported in the general population.

**Senior leaders** experienced the **highest** number of signs of exhaustion, burnout and acute stress.

**School teachers** experienced the directionally **highest** number of signs of **anxiety**.

**Support staff** experienced the directionally **highest** number of signs of **depression**.

**9,532**

calls to Education Support's free and confidential helpline in 2021-22<sup>4</sup>

## 4. Symptoms of poor mental health due to work

**78%** of all staff experienced at least one behavioural, psychological or physical symptom linked to their work (1% increase on 2021)\*



### Behavioural symptoms

(eg changes to appetite, irritability, procrastination, mood swings)

**59%**

**1%** ↑ from last year  
They were the most common type of symptoms

### Psychological symptoms

(eg depression, anxiety, panic attacks)

**51%**

Remained unchanged from 2021

### Physical symptoms

(eg raised blood pressure, muscle tension, sweating, dizziness, headaches or migraines)

**53%**

**2%** ↑ from 2021

### Symptoms of poor mental health due to work - by job role



\*Not statistically significant

n. 9

### Observations

Both senior leaders and support staff reported a **3%** increase in behavioural symptoms (from **84%** and **67%** respectively in 2021). This is statistically significant for senior leaders.

Staff who were stressed were more likely to experience symptoms than those who were not stressed (**87%** compared to **51%**).

Staff who felt well supported by their organisation were less likely to experience symptoms than those who were not well supported (**87%** compared to **70%**).

Staff who felt trusted were less likely to experience symptoms than those who were not trusted (**76%** compared to **91%**).

## 5. Wellbeing scores

We use an established questionnaire to determine the wellbeing score for teachers and education staff, namely the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS). To understand more about this, go to Appendix C.

Those with scores of between **41** and **45** should be considered at high risk of psychological distress and increased risk of depression.

Scores **below 40** suggest an individual could be at risk of major depression and should be advised to seek help (Taggart et al, 2015)<sup>5</sup>.

The overall wellbeing score of the education workforce was

**44.01**  (0.11 increase on 2021)

This wellbeing score is 0.11 points higher than in 2021 and lower than the scores recorded by this Index in both 2020 and 2019.



The full scores for 2022 and 2021 can be found in Appendix C.

n. 10

**35.5%**

of education staff had a WEMWBS score of **40** or below, which indicates probable depression.

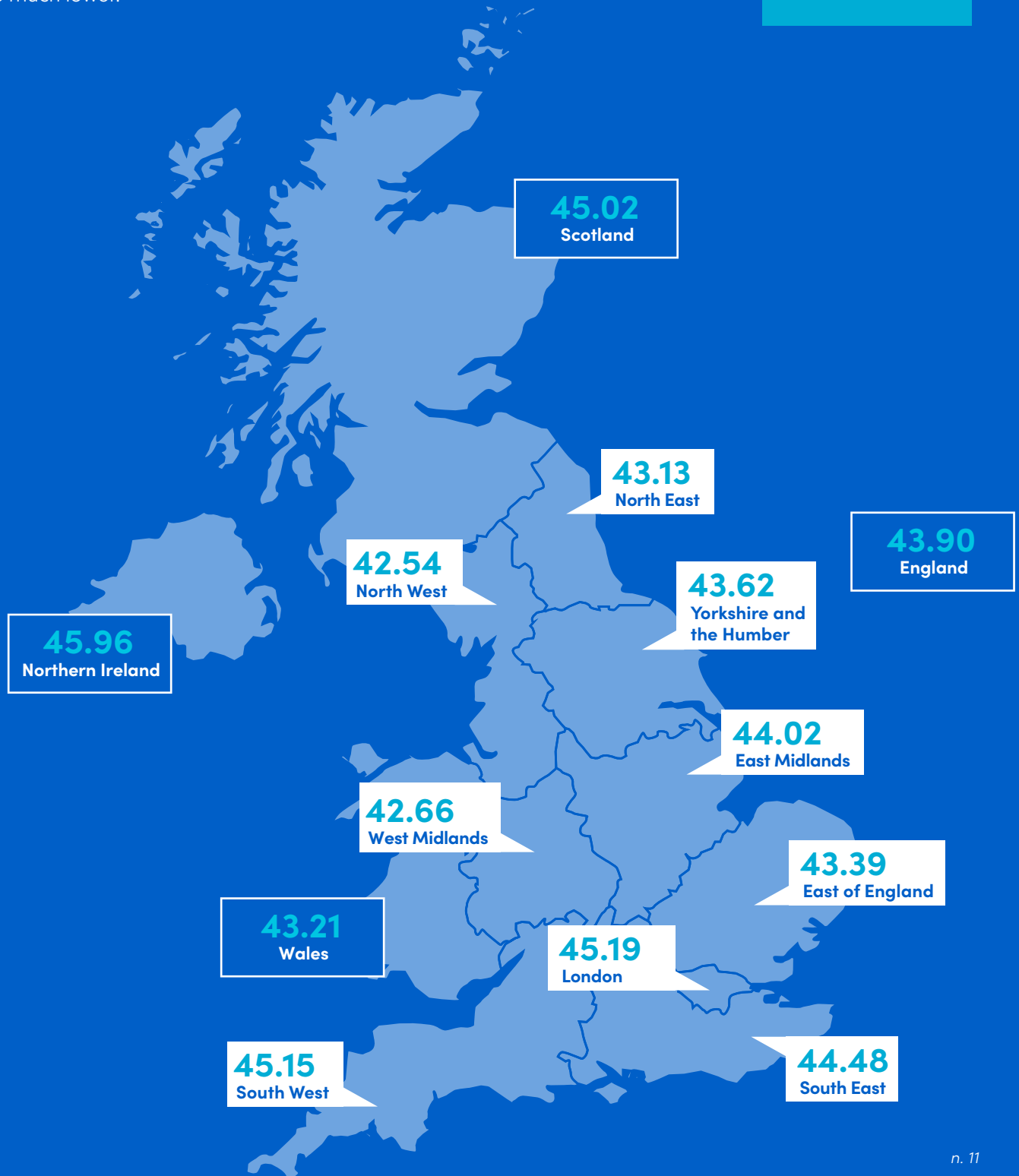
## Comparisons with published wellbeing data for the UK adult population

The wellbeing of teachers and education staff is much lower than the adult population in England, Scotland and Wales.

National WEMWBS scores are available for the adult populations in England<sup>6</sup>, Scotland<sup>7</sup> and Wales<sup>8</sup>. These are 52.40, 48.60 and 48.90. When the scores from the Teacher Wellbeing Index are compared with the most recent nationally available scores for 2022, they are found to be much lower.

National Teacher Wellbeing Index Score

**44.01**

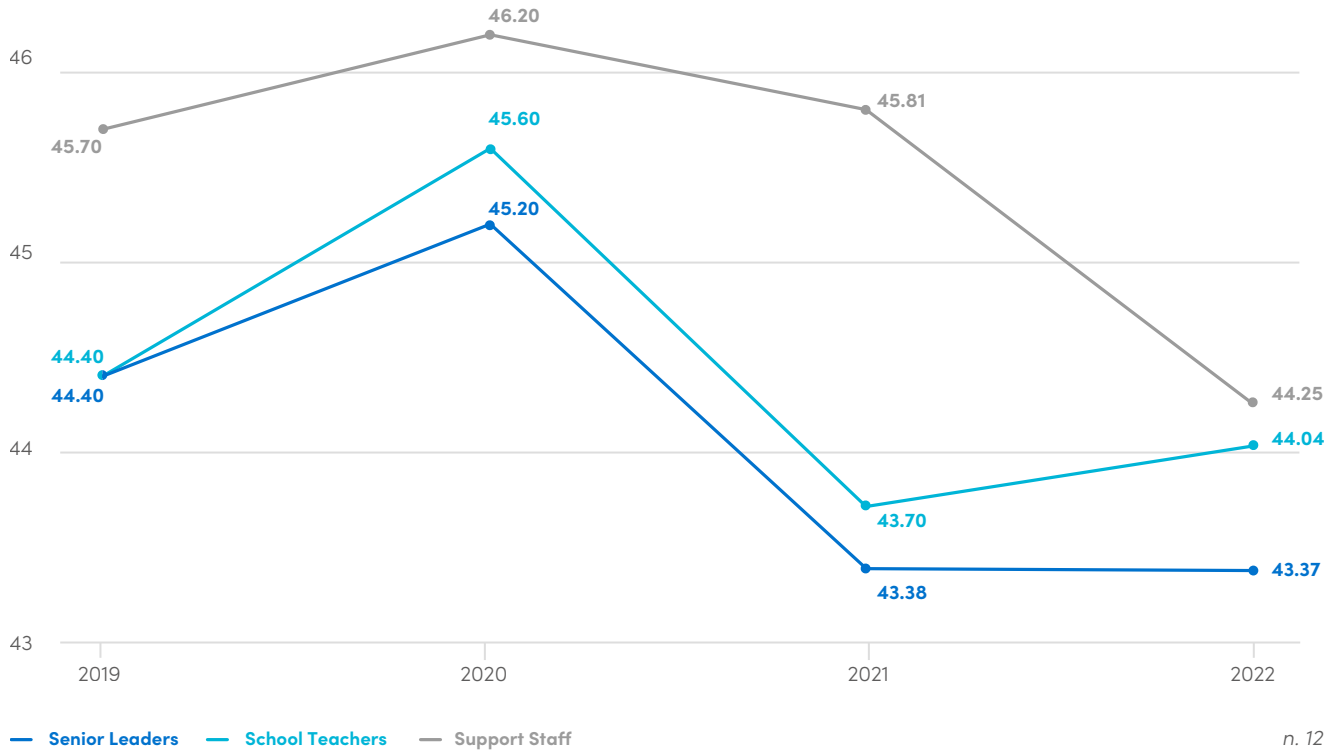


n. 11

## Comparison by job role

The wellbeing of senior leaders is now at its **lowest level for the past four years**. The wellbeing of both school teachers and support staff is lower in 2022 than in 2019 (ie before the Covid-19 pandemic).

### Teacher Wellbeing Index WEMWBS Scores by Job Role 2019–2022



## Sample profile

- n. 1 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,045), Senior leaders (n = 700), School teachers (n = 2,013), Support staff (n = 213)
- n. 2 2022 Base: All education staff in the last year (n = 2,743), in the last two years (n = 2,353)
- n. 3 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 2,743), Senior leaders (n = 637), School teachers (n = 1,805), Support staff (n = 188)
- n. 4 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,910), Senior leaders (n = 463), School teachers (n = 1,254), Support staff (n = 128)
- n. 5 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,910), School teachers (n = 1,254), Senior leaders (n = 463), Support Staff (n = 128)
- n. 6 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,910), School teachers (n = 1,254), Senior leaders (n = 463), Support Staff (n = 128)
- n. 7 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,910), School teachers (n = 1,254), Senior leaders (n = 463), Support Staff (n = 128)
- n. 8 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,910), School teachers (n = 1,254), Senior leaders (n = 463), Support Staff (n = 128)
- n. 9 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 2,981), Senior leaders (n = 692), School teachers (n = 1,962), Support staff (n = 208)
- n. 10 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082), 2021 Base: All education staff (n = 3,354), 2020 Base: All education staff (n = 3,034), 2019 Base: All education staff (n = 3,019)
- n. 11 2022 Base: North East (n = 96), North West (n = 363), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 283), East of England (n = 237), West Midlands (n = 273), East Midlands (n = 232), London (n = 407), South East (n = 529), South West (n = 232), Wales (n = 119), Scotland (n = 233), Northern Ireland (n = 78)
- n. 12 2022 Base: Senior leaders (n = 707), School teachers (n = 2,039), Support staff (n = 215), 2021 Base: Senior leaders (n = 776), School teachers (n = 2,251), Support staff (n = 225), 2020 Base: Senior leaders (n = 749), School teachers (n = 2,010), Support staff (n = 184), 2019 Base: Senior leaders (n = 545), School teachers (n = 1,842), Support staff (n = 474)

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>ONS (2020). "Coronavirus and anxiety Great Britain: 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020". Office for National Statistics.

Release date 15 June 2020. Available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/coronavirusandanxietygreatbritain/3april2020to10may2020>

<sup>2</sup>Due to small dataset for support staff, the findings can only be treated as indicative

<sup>3</sup>ONS (2021). "Coronavirus and depression in adults, Great Britain: July to August 2021". Office for National Statistics.

Release date 1 October 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/coronavirusanddepressioninadultsgreatbritain/julytoaugust2021>

<sup>4</sup>Education Support Partnership Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022 (forthcoming). Available at: <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/about/about-us/annual-report/>

<sup>5</sup>Taggart, F et al (2015). "Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)". User Guide - Version 2. Warwick Medical School, University of Warwick and NHS Scotland.

<sup>6</sup>The 2019 national WEMWBS score for England is 51.4, as communicated to Education Support by NHS Digital's Lifestyles Team on 23 August 2021.

<sup>7</sup>Scottish Government (2021). "The Scottish Health Survey 2021 - Chapter 2: Mental Wellbeing Tables. 8 November 2022. Available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2021-volume-1-main-report/>

<sup>8</sup>Welsh Government (2022). "National Survey for Wales". StatsWales. 3 August 2022. Available at <https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales-april-2021-march-2022>

 **The next section looks  
at staff retention**



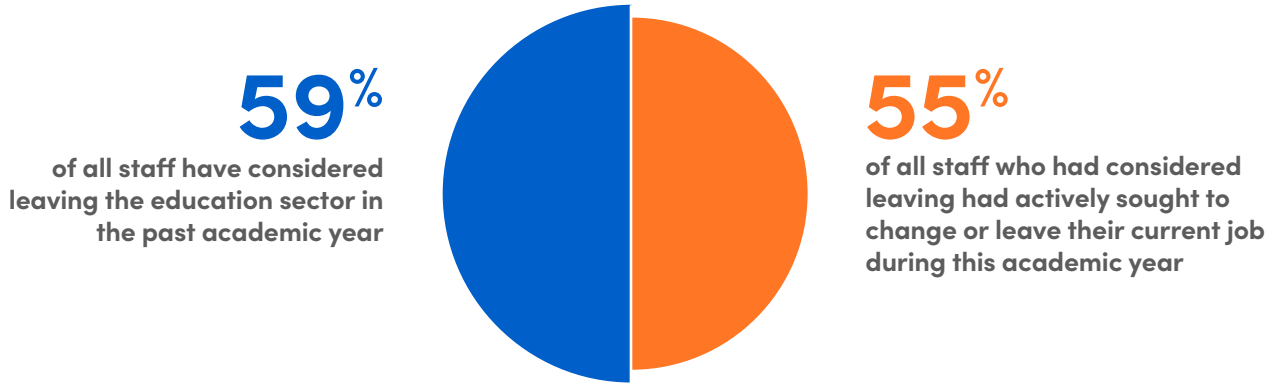


## **Section 3**

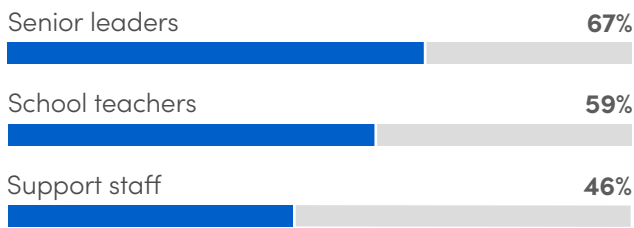
### Staff Retention

# 1. Staff considering leaving the education sector

We asked teachers and education staff if they had considered leaving the education sector during the academic year due to pressures on their mental health and wellbeing. For those who had considered leaving, we also asked them if they had actively taken steps to change or leave their current job, as an indicator of how likely they were to leave their jobs.

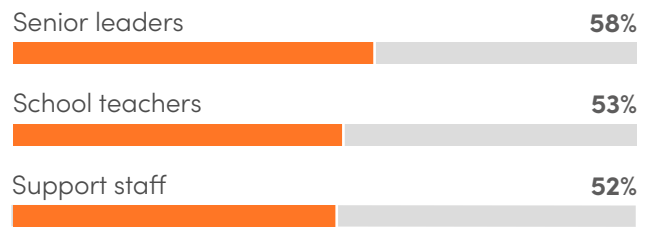


**By job role:**



n.1\*

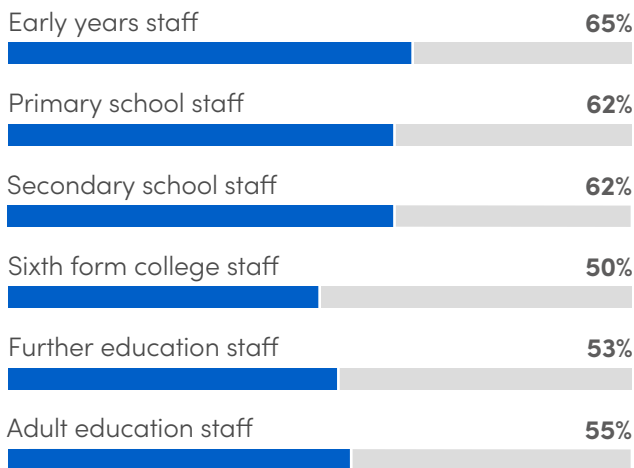
**By job role:**



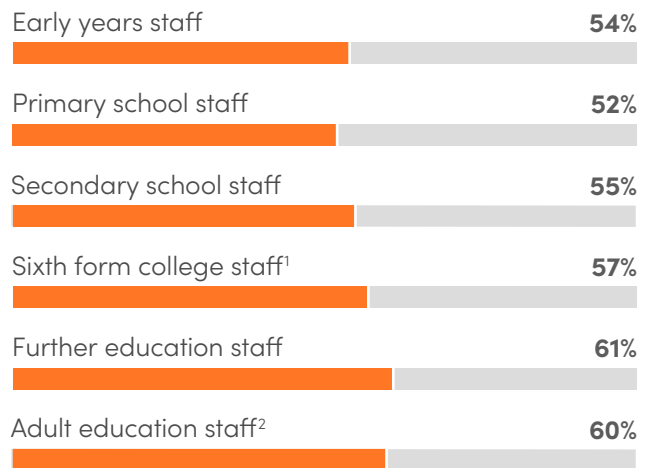
n. 2

## Differences by Sector

**Staff who had considered leaving their jobs shown by education sector** n. 3



**Staff who had actively sought to change or leave their current job shown by education sector** n. 4

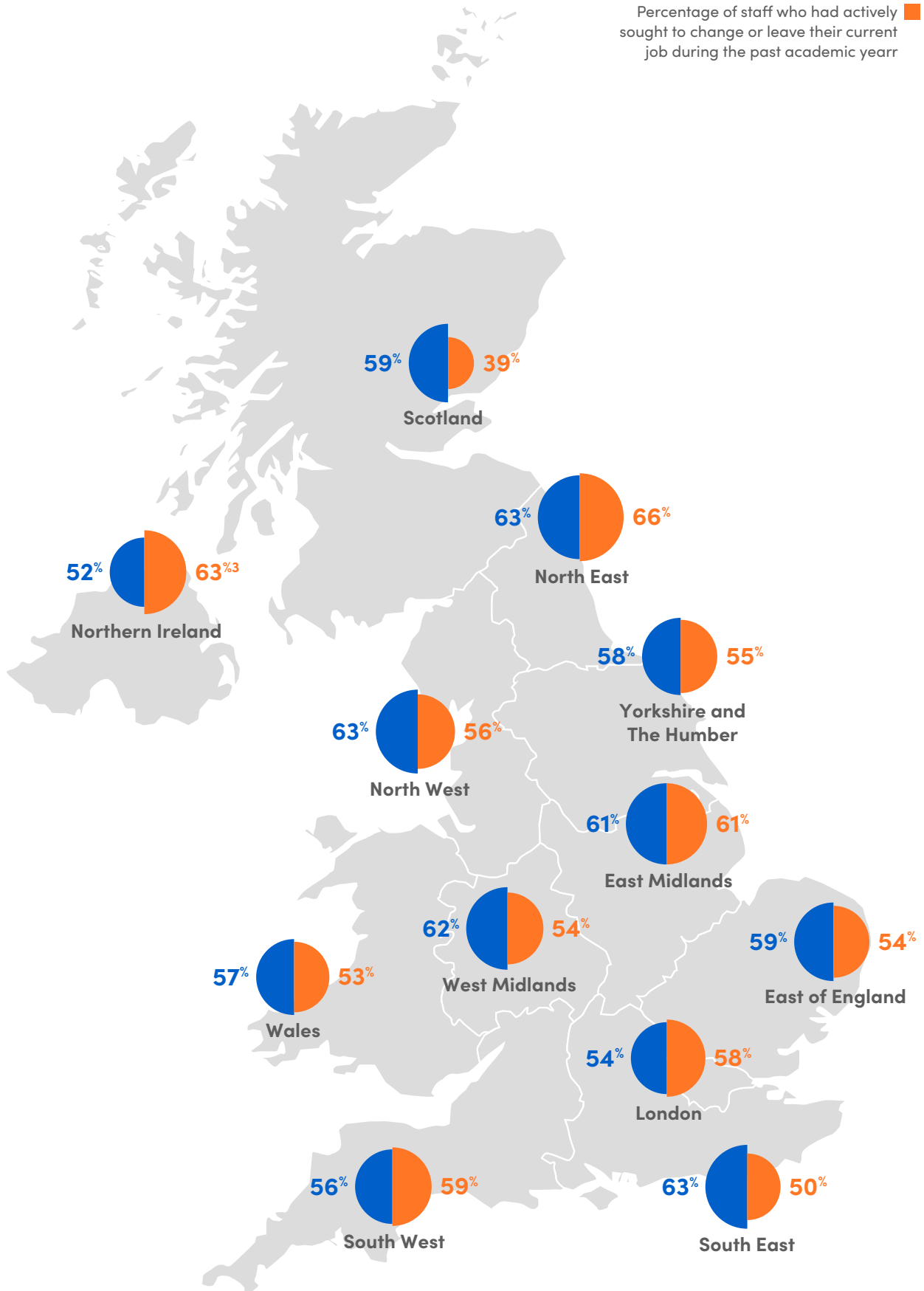


\*(All sample sizes for each chart (known as 'n' numbers) can be found at the back of the section. n.1 refers to note 1, and so on)

### Differences by UK region

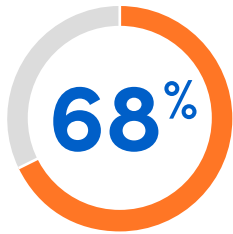
Percentage of staff who had considered leaving in the past academic year ■ n. 5

Percentage of staff who had actively sought to change or leave their current job during the past academic year ■ n. 6

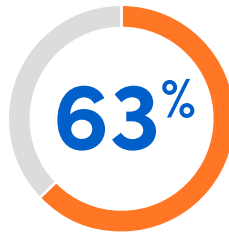


## 2. Reasons why staff want to leave

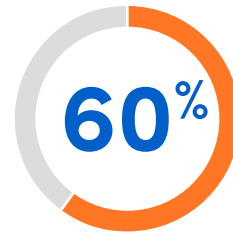
Teachers and education staff gave three main reasons for thinking of leaving the education sector due to pressures on their health and wellbeing:



Volume of workload



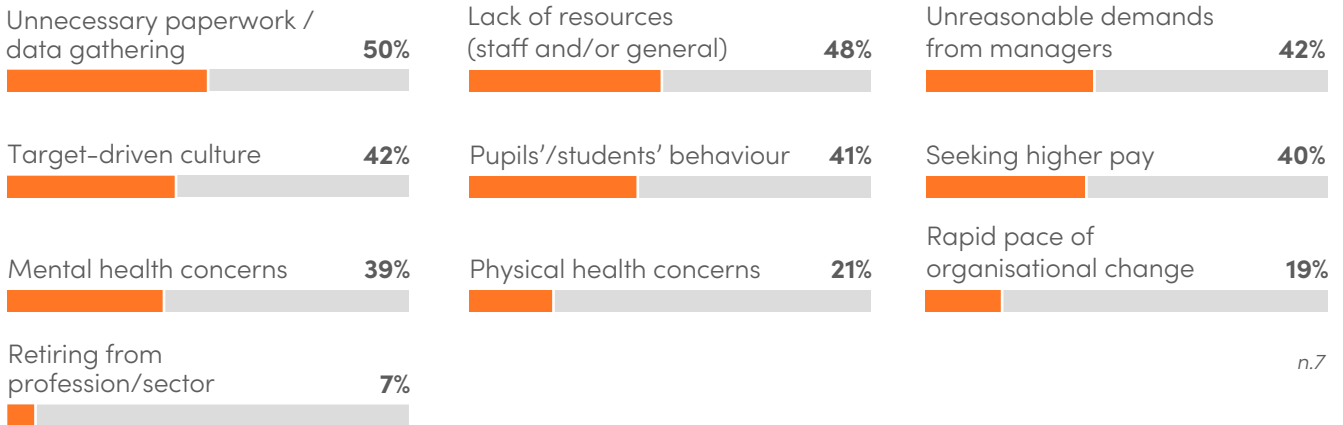
Seeking a better work-life balance



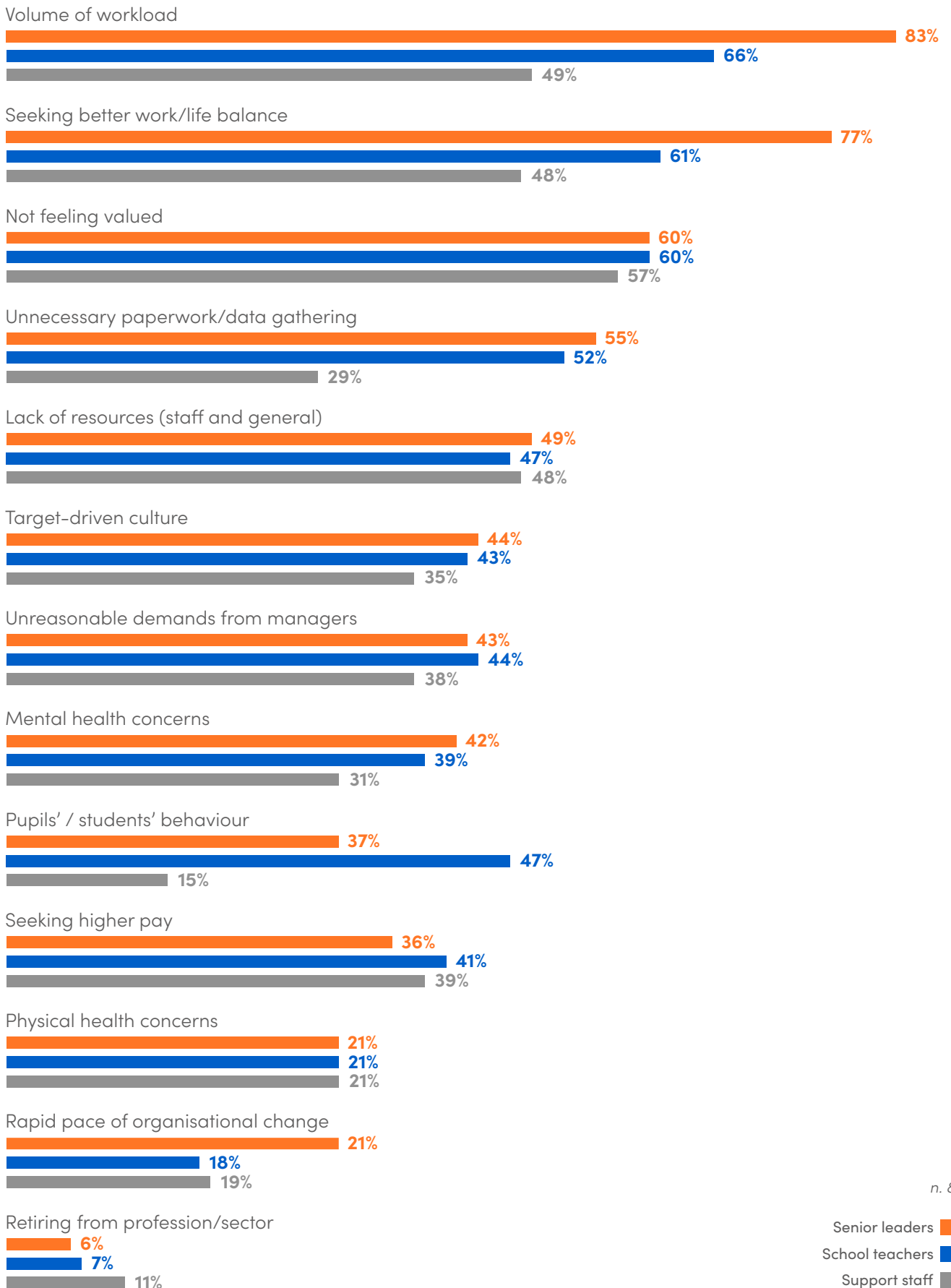
Not feeling valued

### Other reasons for considering leaving the education profession

Staff who have experienced pressures on their health and wellbeing cited the following additional reasons:



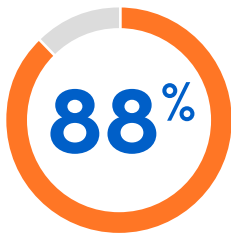
Reasons for considering leaving the sector in the past academic year by job role



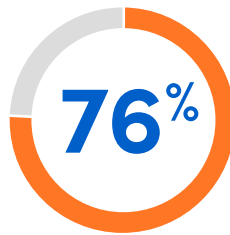
n. 8

## What influences staff to consider leaving?

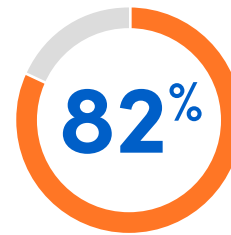
Trust, support and working culture all have an impact on whether staff consider leaving



of staff who felt they were distrusted at work by their line manager had considered leaving, compared to **54%** who felt trusted



of staff who did not feel well supported by their organisations had considered leaving, compared to **44%** who felt well supported

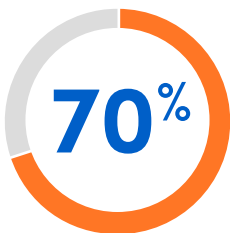


of staff who felt they had a negative team culture had considered leaving, compared to **47%** who had a positive team culture

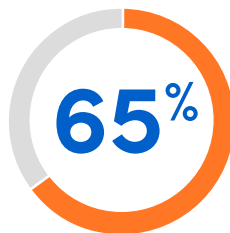
n. 9

## What influences staff to actively seek to change/leave their job?

Comparisons have been made with the levels of trust felt at work, and their workplace culture, both of which could influence staff to consider leaving their jobs



of staff who felt distrusted by their line manager had actively sought to change/leave their current job



of staff who felt they had a negative workplace culture had actively sought to change/leave their current job

n. 10

## Other factors which influence staff to consider leaving

Comparisons have been made with the levels of trust and support staff feel at work, and their team culture, all of which could influence staff to consider leaving their jobs

Senior leaders and school teachers gave the same top three reasons for wanting to leave, namely volume of workload, seeking a better work/life balance and not feeling valued.

The top three reasons for support staff wanting to leave were not feeling valued, volume of workload and the lack of resources.

Pupil/student behaviour was a more important reason for staff working in secondary schools (**51%**), compared to staff working in primary schools (**44%**).

Lack of resources (staff and general) was a more important reason for staff working in primary schools (**53%**), compared to staff working in secondary schools (**43%**).

## Sample profile

- n.1 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082), Senior leaders (n = 707), School teachers (n = 2,039), Support staff (n = 215)
- n.2 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,889), Senior leaders (n = 474), School teachers (n = 1,236), Support staff (n = 106)
- n.3 2022 Base: Early Years (n = 124), Primary (n = 1,240), Secondary (n = 1,294), Sixth form college (n = 88), Further education (n = 152), Adult education (n = 55)
- n.4 2022 Base: Early Years (n = 81), Primary (n = 770), Secondary (n = 806), Sixth form college (n = 44), Further education (n = 80), Adult education (n = 30)
- n.5 2022 Base: North East (n = 96), North West (n = 363), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 283), East of England (n = 237), West Midlands (n = 273), East Midlands (n = 232), London (n = 407), South East (n = 529), South West (n = 232), Wales (n = 119), Scotland (n = 233), Northern Ireland (n = 78)
- n.6 2022 Base: North East (n = 63), North West (n = 236), Yorkshire and the Humber (n = 176), East of England (n = 145), West Midlands (n = 171), East Midlands (n = 146), London (n = 225), South East (n = 342), South West (n = 132), Wales (n = 74), Scotland (n = 137), Northern Ireland (n = 42)
- n.7 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,889)
- n.8 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,889), Senior leaders (n = 474), School teachers (n = 1,236), Support staff (n = 106)
- n.9 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 3,082)
- n.10 2022 Base: All education staff (n = 1,889)

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Due to the small data set, the percentage figure for sixth form college staff can only be treated as indicative

<sup>2</sup>Due to the small data set, the percentage figure for adult education staff can only be treated as indicative

<sup>3</sup>Due to the small data set, the percentage figure for Northern Ireland can only be treated as indicative

➤ **The next section is  
the Conclusions &  
Recommendations**



The background features a large, light blue area on the left and a white area on the right, separated by a diagonal line. A darker blue shape is positioned in the upper right corner, overlapping the white area.

# Conclusions & Recommendations

# Our conclusions

## 1. Stress, depression and anxiety have all remained at an unsustainably high level

Three quarters (**75%**) of the workforce are stressed, rising to **84%** for school leaders. This figure has been well above **60%** for the last six years. Signs of depression and anxiety are also above the levels reported by the general population.

Over the lifetime of the Teacher Wellbeing Index, these figures have not meaningfully improved, painting a bleak picture of the workforce's long-term mental health.

## 2. Real term funding cuts bite

**55%** of staff are actively looking to leave the profession. For the first time, 'lack of resources' has become one of the top five reasons that staff, especially in primary settings, consider leaving the profession. This comes at a time when the **3%** real-terms cuts in school budgets (between 2010 and 2024) have resulted in school leaders reportedly cutting teaching assistant roles, classroom teachers, reducing spend on equipment and reducing spend on professional development for staff.<sup>1</sup>

## 3. There are long-term health implications for the education workforce

Nearly half of all staff (**47%**) report always working when unwell, and more than half of staff (**59%**) have a lack of confidence in talking about mental health challenges to their employer. High volume of workload remains the main reason for staff considering leaving their jobs. This points to a persistent culture of 'powering through' ongoing stress.

The health implications of chronic stress are well understood, including greater chances of heart disease and strokes<sup>2</sup> and increased morbidity and mortality risks<sup>3</sup>.

## 4. Schools support staff wellbeing has deteriorated

Support staff's levels of stress levels and depression have increased.

This demonstrates a saturation of stress at all levels of the school workforce. All staff roles are reporting wellbeing scores that are lower than the general population.

## 5. Workplace culture matters

Positive organisational culture, good quality support for staff and trusting line management relationships are linked with better individual wellbeing.

This is especially important to recognise right now. The current context – of financial and staffing challenges, Government and policy instability, as well as pressure from Ofsted – makes the creation of positive, productive and psychologically safe cultures incredibly challenging.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.headteacher-update.com/news/funding-crisis-13-things-school-leaders-may-be-forced-to-cut-naht-2023-24-1/248621/>

<sup>2</sup>Tawakol, A et al (2017). "Relation between resting amygdalar activity and cardiovascular events: a longitudinal and cohort study". *The Lancet* 2017; 389: 834–45. <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2816%2931714-7>

<sup>3</sup>Nagoski and Nagoski (2020). "Burnout – Solve Your Stress Cycle". Vermilion.

# Our recommendations

Without decisive action, the Government risks the acceleration of current worrying trends, including:

- **An increasingly burnt-out workforce, that is unable to deliver the quality of education that our children and young people deserve**
- **Intensification of the existing retention and recruitment crisis**
- **Decreasing health outcomes for our education workforce, at great cost to the NHS, at a time when it is stretched to breaking point**

The Government does not need to choose between prioritising children's futures or the wellbeing of school and college staff. The two are interconnected, as healthy teachers are better able to provide high quality education and support for pupils who have been through an extraordinary few years.

1. The scale of the Government's ambition needs to meet the scale of the challenge. We need ambitious, fully-funded initiatives that address the systemic drivers of stress and poor mental health in the education sector, including funding, intensification of workload and the status and autonomy of the profession. This is vital if we are to create a solid foundation for successful education and skills outcomes.

School funding remains materially below 2010 levels (Siebieta, 2022<sup>4</sup>). Research findings indicate that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on children and young people's mental health is not waning and we might expect this impact to be seen for years to come (EBPU, 2021<sup>5</sup>). Growth and productivity depend on the quality of education and learning that takes place in our schools and colleges. Whilst schools are cutting posts and operating foodbanks for their children and staff, educational success and pupil wellbeing remain seriously at risk.

2. Resourcing for the Department for Education's retention strategy (DfE, 2019<sup>6</sup>) needs to be reconsidered. While main of the ideas in the strategy are sound, without specific funding targeted at the most significant drivers of stress it has not delivered meaningful impact. Workload and work-life balance remain significant issues across the sector with staff almost twice as likely to experience a negative workplace culture than a positive one.
3. Ensure the Department for Education implements the wellbeing policy test that is outlined in the Wellbeing Charter (DfE, 2021<sup>7</sup>). The pace of future changes, new policies and additional demands on the workforce must be carefully considered to avoid further damage to workforce effectiveness and morale.
4. Ensure that the wellbeing requirements in all training frameworks are delivered consistently and effectively, across all training providers. Important frameworks including the Early Careers Framework and National Professional Qualifications make references to wellbeing that are easily overlooked, without intentional action.

<sup>4</sup>Siebieta, L (2022). "School spending and costs: the coming crunch". Institute for Fiscal Studies Briefing Note BN347. August 2022. Available at <https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-10/IFS-BN347-School-spending-and-costs-the-coming-crunch-1.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>EBPU (2021). "EBPU (2021). "Evidence Based Practice Unit – Key Findings 2021". Available at <https://www.annafreud.org/media/15046/ebpu-keyfindings-2021-final.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>DfE (2019). Teacher recruitment and retention strategy. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/786856/DFE\\_Teacher\\_Retention\\_Strategy\\_Report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786856/DFE_Teacher_Retention_Strategy_Report.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>DfE (2021). "The Education Staff Wellbeing Charter". November 2021. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1034032/DFE\\_Education\\_Workforce\\_Wellbeing\\_Charter\\_Nov21.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1034032/DFE_Education_Workforce_Wellbeing_Charter_Nov21.pdf)

➤ **The next section is  
the Appendices**



# Appendices

# A. Methodology

## This research study had three main aims:

1. Provide a description of the mental health and wellbeing of education staff using data collected in 2022.
2. Analyse trends over time.
3. Identify differences found between the mental health and wellbeing of senior leaders, school teachers and support staff working in the education sector.

The research was conducted using an online survey of education staff drawn from YouGov's panel. A total of **3,082** education staff completed the survey, which was conducted between **21 June and 29 July 2022**.

The sample included all job roles within the education profession from senior leaders through to support staff. The job category Senior Leaders includes Headteachers and Principals, Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and Principals and Head and Deputy Heads of Year and Departments. School Teachers includes Teachers, Supply Teachers, Newly-Qualified Teachers, Teaching Assistants and specialists working in the classroom (eg SEN staff). Support staff includes all non-classroom based roles, eg Cover Supervisor, Technician, Careers Advisor, Librarian, Youth Officer, Data Administrator, IT Support and Exams Officer etc.

Respondents worked in a variety of settings including early years, primary, secondary, further, adult and vocational education sectors. A detailed breakdown of the respondents by sector, region, gender, age and time spent working in education can be found in Appendix B.

As a result of GDPR legislation, all YouGov respondents taking part from 2018 onwards were given the option to opt-out of questions which gathered sensitive personal data, including questions which captured information about their health. In the analysis these were coded as 'refused', or 'preferred not to say'. Where index comparisons have been made in our publications below using 2018 or 2017 data, the figures are based on those who responded to the questions (ie excluding 'refused' and 'preferred not to say').

This is the sixth large-scale survey that Education Support has conducted. In 2018–2022, the results of the surveys have been published as the **'Teacher Wellbeing Index'** and in 2017 as **'Health Survey 2017 – The mental health and wellbeing of education professionals in the UK'**. The 2020 and 2021 indices relate to staff mental health and wellbeing during the Covid-19 pandemic. The publications are available on the Education Support's website, or by clicking on the image below.

Click on the cover images below to view previous reports.



2017



2018



2019



2020



2021

## B. Sample Profile

A total of **3,082** responses were received to the overall survey. All respondents were drawn from the YouGov panel of people that have signed up to undertake research with YouGov. The data has been weighted to be representative of the wider education population by phase, organisation, type and respondent age to ensure generalisations can be made to the wider education population. The table below provides a summary of the achieved sample profile by key demographics.

| Role               | Number | Proportion      |
|--------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Senior Leaders     | 707    | 24%             |
| School teachers    | 2039   | 69%             |
| Support staff      | 215    | 7%              |
| Phase              |        |                 |
| Early Years        | 124    | 4%              |
| Primary            | 1240   | 40%             |
| Secondary          | 1294   | 42%             |
| Sixth Form College | 88     | 3%              |
| Further            | 152    | 5%              |
| Adult              | 55     | 2%              |
| Vocational         | 11     | 0% <sup>1</sup> |
| Other              | 118    | 4%              |
| Gender             |        |                 |
| Male               | 757    | 25%             |
| Female             | 2325   | 75%             |
| Age                |        |                 |
| 18-34              | 783    | 25%             |
| 35-49              | 1569   | 51%             |
| 50+                | 730    | 24%             |

| Region                              | Number | Proportion |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| North East                          | 96     | 3%         |
| North West                          | 363    | 12%        |
| Yorkshire and the Humber            | 283    | 9%         |
| East of England                     | 237    | 8%         |
| West Midlands                       | 273    | 9%         |
| East Midlands                       | 232    | 8%         |
| London                              | 407    | 13%        |
| South East                          | 529    | 17%        |
| South West                          | 232    | 8%         |
| Wales                               | 119    | 4%         |
| Scotland                            | 233    | 8%         |
| Northern Ireland                    | 78     | 3%         |
| Length of Time Working in Education |        |            |
| 0-2 years                           | 143    | 5%         |
| 3-5 years                           | 320    | 10%        |
| 6-10 years                          | 705    | 23%        |
| 11-20 years                         | 1149   | 37%        |
| 21-30 years                         | 593    | 19%        |
| 31+ years                           | 172    | 6%         |

<sup>1</sup>Small measurable number, less than 1%

# C. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scores

## Background to the use of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) is a measure used by a variety of different organisations, including governments, to gauge the mental wellbeing of a population.

### The WEMWBS Questionnaire

The WEMWBS is a self-administered questionnaire of subjective wellbeing and psychological functioning. There are 14 questions, each with five response options on a Likert scale. The options for selection are 'all of the time', 'often', 'some of the time', 'rarely' and 'none of the time'. The questions refer to a person's feelings over the preceding two weeks. The scores are summed together to provide a single score that ranges from 14-70, which are then aggregated to form a total score for each group.

Scores between 41 and 45 should be considered at high risk of psychological distress and increased risk of depression. Scores below 40 suggest an individual could be at high risk of major depression and should be advised to seek help (Taggart et al, 2015).

The table below summarises all WEMWBS scores for 2022 with comparisons for 2021.

|                      | WEMWBS Score |       | Number |      | SD    |       | Difference (rounded) |
|----------------------|--------------|-------|--------|------|-------|-------|----------------------|
|                      | 2021         | 2022  | 2021   | 2022 | 2021  | 2022  |                      |
| <b>Total</b>         |              |       |        |      |       |       |                      |
| All education staff  | 43.90        | 44.01 | 3354   | 3082 | 9.33  | 8.97  | 0.11                 |
| <b>Role</b>          |              |       |        |      |       |       |                      |
| School teachers      | 43.70        | 44.04 | 2129   | 1940 | 9.27  | 8.90  | 0.34                 |
| Senior leaders       | 43.37        | 43.37 | 766    | 669  | 9.20  | 8.76  | -0.01                |
| Support staff        | 45.81        | 44.25 | 333    | 325  | 9.41  | 9.41  | -1.56                |
| <b>Phase</b>         |              |       |        |      |       |       |                      |
| Early Years          | 44.95        | 45.36 | 64     | 59   | 8.82  | 9.34  | 0.41                 |
| Primary              | 43.48        | 44.08 | 1122   | 994  | 9.04  | 8.89  | 0.60                 |
| Secondary            | 44.05        | 43.50 | 1114   | 1037 | 9.08  | 8.87  | -0.55                |
| Sixth Form Colleges  | 43.28        | 44.68 | 299    | 258  | 10.07 | 8.39  | 1.40                 |
| Further Education    | 44.25        | 43.80 | 488    | 446  | 10.17 | 9.10  | -0.45                |
| Adult Education      | 45.23        | 45.04 | 148    | 161  | 9.18  | 9.71  | -0.19                |
| Vocational Education | 42.17        | 46.55 | 41     | 32   | 7.47  | 11.39 | 4.38                 |
| Other                | 45.47        | 44.60 | 78     | 95   | 9.74  | 9.30  | -0.87                |



|                                  | WEMWBS Score |       | Number |      | SD    |      | Difference<br>(rounded) |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------|--------|------|-------|------|-------------------------|
|                                  | 2021         | 2022  | 2021   | 2022 | 2021  | 2022 |                         |
| <b>Region</b>                    |              |       |        |      |       |      |                         |
| North East                       | 43.44        | 43.13 | 153    | 110  | 9.63  | 9.21 | -0.31                   |
| North West                       | 42.58        | 42.54 | 403    | 390  | 9.39  | 8.88 | -0.04                   |
| Yorkshire and the Humber         | 43.33        | 43.62 | 322    | 306  | 9.62  | 8.98 | 0.29                    |
| East of England                  | 43.95        | 43.39 | 251    | 239  | 8.80  | 9.11 | -0.56                   |
| West Midlands                    | 42.94        | 42.66 | 320    | 256  | 9.46  | 8.72 | -0.28                   |
| East Midlands                    | 43.88        | 44.02 | 232    | 234  | 8.55  | 8.77 | 0.14                    |
| London                           | 43.59        | 45.19 | 448    | 418  | 9.09  | 9.60 | 1.60                    |
| South East                       | 44.82        | 44.48 | 490    | 484  | 9.38  | 8.88 | -0.34                   |
| South West                       | 45.36        | 45.15 | 306    | 244  | 9.33  | 8.58 | -0.21                   |
| Wales                            | 44.30        | 43.21 | 119    | 112  | 9.69  | 8.35 | -1.09                   |
| Scotland                         | 43.97        | 45.02 | 234    | 211  | 9.03  | 8.69 | 1.05                    |
| Northern Ireland                 | 47.26        | 45.96 | 76     | 80   | 10.41 | 8.44 | -1.30                   |
| England                          | 43.79        | 43.90 | 2924   | 2680 | 9.30  | 9.03 | 0.11                    |
| <b>Gender</b>                    |              |       |        |      |       |      |                         |
| Male                             | 44.49        | 44.18 | 912    | 814  | 9.93  | 8.93 | -0.31                   |
| Female                           | 43.68        | 43.95 | 2442   | 2268 | 9.09  | 8.99 | 0.27                    |
| <b>Age</b>                       |              |       |        |      |       |      |                         |
| 18-34                            | 43.27        | 42.99 | 718    | 720  | 9.02  | 8.80 | -0.28                   |
| 35-49                            | 43.08        | 43.43 | 1505   | 1477 | 9.25  | 8.81 | 0.35                    |
| 50+                              | 45.40        | 45.81 | 1131   | 885  | 9.46  | 9.15 | 0.41                    |
| <b>Time working in education</b> |              |       |        |      |       |      |                         |
| 0-2 years                        | 43.38        | 43.94 | 128    | 144  | 9.31  | 8.29 | 0.56                    |
| 3-5 years                        | 43.31        | 43.59 | 407    | 332  | 8.94  | 8.49 | 0.28                    |
| 6-10 years                       | 43.24        | 43.66 | 654    | 684  | 8.11  | 9.46 | 0.42                    |
| 11-20 years                      | 44.07        | 43.78 | 1192   | 1132 | 8.52  | 8.75 | -0.29                   |
| 21-30 years                      | 44.19        | 44.12 | 726    | 602  | 9.19  | 9.12 | -0.07                   |
| 31+ years                        | 45.25        | 47.11 | 246    | 188  | 7.92  | 8.86 | 1.86                    |

**#TWIX2022**



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Registered Charity No. 1161436  
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November 2022

ISBN 978-1-7399860-4-9