

# Teacher well-being at work in schools and further education providers

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While most teachers enjoy teaching and are positive about their workplace and their colleagues, self-reported well-being at work is generally low or moderate. Positive factors – such as school culture and relationships with colleagues – contribute to teachers’ well-being. However, they are counterbalanced by negative factors, such as high workload, lack of work–life balance, a perceived lack of resources and a perceived lack of support from leaders, especially for managing pupils’ behaviour.

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## Introduction

1. According to the UK's Health and Safety Executive, teaching staff and education professionals report the highest rates of work-related stress, depression and anxiety in Britain.<sup>1</sup> It came as no surprise, then, that when Ofsted asked teachers to contribute ideas for our research programme, teachers overwhelmingly wanted us to research teacher stress, workload and well-being.
2. In view of this request, the attested issues and a significant policy interest in teacher retention, stress and workload, this report is a detailed investigation of well-being in the education profession. We discuss levels of occupational well-being as well as positive and negative factors that influence well-being in the profession. Our aim is to better understand the issues and what causes them so that we can provide evidence-based recommendations for further action.

## Context of the results

3. Well-being at work has been identified by scholars as one of the most important dimensions of an individual's overall well-being,<sup>2</sup> but also as a contributing factor to the economic growth of a country through its workforce.<sup>3</sup> The International Labour Organization defines workplace well-being broadly as:

'all the related aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organization'.<sup>4</sup>

4. This is reflected in the What Works Centre for Wellbeing framework, which we used as a guiding framework in this study (see Appendix 1).<sup>5</sup> Its main elements are:
  - health (how we feel physically and mentally)
  - relationships with others at work
  - purpose (including clarity of goals, motivation, workload, ability to influence decisions)
  - environment (work culture, facilities and tools)

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<sup>1</sup> At a rate of 2,100 cases per 100,000 professionals compared with 1,320 cases for all occupational groups ('Work related stress, depression or anxiety statistics in Great Britain', Health and Safety Executive, 2018; [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/)).

<sup>2</sup> Rath, T and Harter, J, 'Wellbeing: the five essential elements', 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Allin, 'Measuring wellbeing in modern societies', pages 409–461, 'Work and wellbeing', 2014.

<sup>4</sup> 'Workplace health promotion and well-being', International Labour Organisation; [www.ilo.org/safework/areasofwork/workplace-health-promotion-and-well-being/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/safework/areasofwork/workplace-health-promotion-and-well-being/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>5</sup> 'Workplace wellbeing questionnaire: Methodology', What Works Wellbeing, 2018; <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/product/workplace-wellbeing-questionnaire-methodology/>

- security (financial security, safety, bullying/harassment).

So, well-being at work is more than just liking your own job.

5. Occupational well-being is like an eco-system. It consists of inter-related elements and is shaped by an individual as well as those around her. Levels of low or high well-being are rarely due to just one factor.

## **Executive summary**

### **Teachers enjoy teaching and are positive about their workplace and colleagues, but they are disappointed by the profession**

6. Our results show that teachers in both schools and further education and skills (FES) providers love their profession, overwhelmingly enjoy teaching, are generally very positive about their workplace and colleagues, and enjoy building relationships with pupils and seeing them flourish. However, these positive elements of well-being at work are counterbalanced by negative elements that lead to poor occupational well-being for many teachers. This report shows that teachers are suffering from high workloads, lack of work–life balance, a perceived lack of resources and, in some cases, a perceived lack of support from senior managers, especially in managing pupils’ behaviour. They sometimes feel the profession does not receive the respect it deserves. All these negative feelings in turn may lead to higher levels of sickness absence.
7. Teachers love being in the classroom and working with pupils. Their love of teaching arises from generally positive relationships with pupils and from teachers’ belief that teaching is worthwhile. Relationships with colleagues and work culture are generally positive factors that contribute to teachers’ well-being at work.
8. However, despite the positive feelings towards teaching as a vocation and towards their workplace, many teachers believe that the advantages of their profession do not outweigh the disadvantages and that their profession is undervalued in society. This is exemplified for some by the combination of limited policy influence (they feel ‘done to’ rather than ‘worked with’) and insufficient funding to deliver the goals they would like to. This leads to a sense of de-professionalisation.

### **Levels of satisfaction with life are higher among the general public than staff in schools and FES providers and overall levels of teachers’ occupational well-being are low**

9. Our respondents’ – and especially teachers’ – satisfaction with life is lower than that of the general public. This could, at least partially, be due to the impact of occupational well-being on general well-being in life, in view of the excessive amount of time that is spent on work-related tasks particularly by teachers and senior leaders.

10. The self-reported occupational well-being of most respondents from schools and FES providers is generally low or moderate. We found lower levels of well-being among more experienced teachers and those working in schools or providers graded requires improvement or inadequate. Low levels of occupational well-being are in turn related to (self-reported) health issues. Specific elements of well-being, such as excessive workload and work–life balance, coupled with perceived low pay, were also found to have led some teachers to leave the profession.

### **Workload is high, affecting work–life balance**

11. Working hours in schools and FES providers are long. Full-time school teachers reported working 51 hours on average during the given week, while senior leaders worked even longer – 57 hours on average. Our findings show that teachers spend less than a half of their time on teaching, while lesson planning, marking and administrative tasks take up a large part of their non-teaching time. Many respondents in both sectors do not have enough time to do the important aspects of their job. This is why they work in their free time: evenings, weekends or annual leave.
12. The main causes of heavy workload are: the volume of administrative tasks, the volume of marking, staff shortages, lack of support from external specialist agencies (such as for special educational needs and disabilities [SEND], or behaviour), challenging behaviour of pupils, changes to external examinations, frequently changing government policies and regulations, and in some cases, lack of skills or training.

### **Staff perceive lack of resources as a problem that stops them from doing their job as well as they can**

13. Shortages of human resources negatively impact on occupational well-being for several reasons: they are seen to increase the already high workload, decrease the ability to carry out work effectively and result in staff taking on extra responsibilities outside of their area of expertise.
14. The lack of physical resources (such as shortage or inadequacy of instructional materials, computers for instruction, library materials and audio-visual resources) is also perceived to hinder instruction.
15. There is a sense of disempowerment among respondents: they feel that despite having the skills and knowledge to deliver good quality education, the lack of resources does not allow them to reach their educational goals.

### **Poor behaviour is a considerable source of low occupational well-being, and teachers do not always feel supported by senior leaders and parents with managing it**

16. Pupils'/students' behaviour (such as low-level disruption in the classroom, absenteeism, intimidation or verbal abuse) is often a negative influence on teachers' well-being at work and will also impact on learning.
17. Senior leaders are not always seen as providing sufficient support for managing pupils' behaviour. According to many respondents, senior leaders do not work with teachers when it is necessary to solve discipline problems jointly and the issues are made worse by an inconsistent approach to managing behaviour. In addition, there is often a lack of parental support on this front.

### **Relationships with parents can be a negative factor and a source of stress**

18. This can be due to a range of reasons: unrealistic parental expectations for their child/children which could lead to excessive pressure on staff; the frequency of emails from parents and an expectation for an instant response; and parents raising concerns or complaints inappropriately.

### **Educators told us that they do not have enough influence over policy, which changes too quickly**

19. The impact of that is experienced as negative for two main reasons: frequent changes increase the already high workload; and the perceived lack of say leads to feelings of de-professionalisation.

### **Educators also feel that Ofsted inspections are a source of stress**

20. This is largely because inspections are reported to increase administrative workload (though part of this appears to be driven by senior leadership) or because there is an excessive focus on data/exam results, which narrows educators' focus to test outcomes rather than quality education.
21. Ofsted has been working on alleviating those negative effects through myth-busting campaigns and by revising the inspection framework.

### **Findings on overall support from senior leaders are mixed**

22. Senior leaders are seen to positively contribute to well-being by some. When this is the case, senior leaders support a positive work culture, are accessible to staff, listen to them, value them as professionals, recognise their work and support their autonomy.
23. In other cases, senior leaders are thought to contribute to low well-being. This is when there is poor communication with staff, an autocratic management style, workload pressure, and insufficient support and collaboration with staff. Addressing the issues would improve the workplace culture.

## Staff need more support from their line managers

24. Line managers in schools and providers positively contribute to occupational well-being when they are supportive, approachable and respectful.
25. However, our findings show that many do not receive enough line management support in the following areas: help with resolving issues such as heavy workload; recognition of a job well done; provision of useful feedback on work; and encouraging and supporting development.

## Recommendations

### For leaders

- Fully support teachers to implement behaviour policies consistently and ensure that the overall school culture helps to optimise pupils' behaviour.<sup>6</sup> Our findings show that teachers experience a relatively high prevalence of poor behaviour in schools. They do not always feel fully supported by senior leaders (nor parents) in managing pupils' misbehaviour.
- To reduce teachers' workload leaders should familiarise themselves with the Department for Education (DfE)'s guidance to reduce workload in the areas of marking, administrative tasks and lesson planning.<sup>7</sup> The DfE policy page on reducing teacher workload<sup>8</sup> and the workload reduction toolkit,<sup>9</sup> which contain practical advice and tools to help school leaders and teachers review and reduce

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<sup>6</sup> Bennett, T, 'Creating a culture: how school leaders can optimise behaviour', Department for Education, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools).

<sup>7</sup> 'Eliminating unnecessary workload around marking', Department for Education, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-marking-policy-review-group-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-marking-policy-review-group-report).

Other Department for Education materials on reducing feedback and marking workload include: 'Feedback and marking: reducing teacher workload', 2018;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/feedback-and-marking-reducing-teacher-workload](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/feedback-and-marking-reducing-teacher-workload);

'Ways to reduce workload in your schools', 2018; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ways-to-reduce-workload-in-your-school-tips-from-school-leaders](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ways-to-reduce-workload-in-your-school-tips-from-school-leaders); and 'Making data work: report of the Teacher Workload Advisory Group', 2018;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-advisory-group-report-and-government-response](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-advisory-group-report-and-government-response). Other Department for Education materials on data management include: 'Data management: reducing teacher workload', 2018;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-management-reducing-teacher-workload](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-management-reducing-teacher-workload);

'Eliminating unnecessary workload around planning and teaching resources', 2016;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-planning-and-resources-group-report](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teacher-workload-planning-and-resources-group-report); Policy page on reducing teacher workload, 2019;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teachers-workload/reducing-teachers-workload](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teachers-workload/reducing-teachers-workload) and 'Reducing workload in your school', 2018; [www.gov.uk/guidance/reducing-workload-in-your-school](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/reducing-workload-in-your-school).

<sup>8</sup> Policy page on reducing teacher workload, Department for Education, 2019;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teachers-workload/reducing-teachers-workload](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teachers-workload/reducing-teachers-workload)

<sup>9</sup> 'Reducing workload in your school', Department for Education, 2018;

[www.gov.uk/guidance/reducing-workload-in-your-school](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/reducing-workload-in-your-school).



workload, are particularly useful. The 'Making data work' report<sup>10</sup> sets out recommendations and principles to reduce the unnecessary workload associated with data and evidence collection. Local authorities and multi-academy trusts should follow DfE guidance and ensure they do not increase workload through unnecessary data requests.

- Senior leaders should ensure that parents are informed about the most appropriate ways of raising concerns and that they have appropriate mechanisms to respond to parents. Open access to email addresses of staff and an instant response culture often add to the already heavy workload, so senior leaders should consider alternative ways in which parents and staff could communicate, while continuing to ensure that the views of parents are heard.
- Develop staff well-being by creating a positive and collegial working environment in which staff feel supported, valued and listened to and have an appropriate level of autonomy.
- We found that a positive working environment is a predictor of staff well-being. Creating such an environment is one of the main ways in which we can improve well-being and enhance retention.
- Familiarise yourselves and your staff with the new education inspection framework (EIF) to avoid unnecessary workload.<sup>11</sup> Educators told us that they experienced high levels of workload through collecting data for Ofsted, and that our frameworks had led to too much emphasis on attainment. The EIF re-focuses inspection on quality of education with the curriculum at its heart. Unnecessary data should not be collected for inspection.

## For the Department of Education

- Continue to spread the message that teaching is a highly valued and important occupation and to communicate the many positives of teaching.
- Encourage the production and take-up of high-quality curricular materials and textbooks so that teachers can spend less time on lesson planning, which takes up a large part of non-teaching time.
- Continue to reduce administration in schools and providers, and disseminate successful strategies.
- Ensure consistency between all DfE teams and agencies on eliminating unnecessary data collection, as all data requests typically translate into additional workload for school leaders and teachers.

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<sup>10</sup> 'Making data work: report of the Teacher Workload Advisory Group', Department for Education, 2018; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-advisory-group-report-and-government-response](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-advisory-group-report-and-government-response).

<sup>11</sup> Education inspection framework, Ofsted, 2019; [www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework).

- Encourage effective leadership development for leaders in schools, multi-academy trusts and providers.
- Further encourage the take-up of tools for effective scrutiny of resource allocation and management of resources.
- Enable schools and providers to focus on what they should be responsible for by making sure that external support services (for example, for SEND and mental health issues) are properly resourced so that they can provide an adequate level of support to schools and providers.

### **What Ofsted is doing**

- We added behaviour and attitudes as a separate judgement area in the EIF, to ensure that inspectors take full account of this area on inspection. We will ensure that under this framework behaviour is rigorously monitored.
- Staff well-being forms part of the leadership and management judgement in the EIF. We will ensure that inspectors take this into account in coming to their judgements and monitor this through quality assurance and evaluation.
- Inspector training under the EIF focuses on quality of education. This will mitigate against the unintended culture of schools and providers producing large amounts of data.
- Evaluation of the implementation of the EIF will look at the extent to which the framework is leading to unnecessary workload, so that steps can be taken to alleviate any issues.
- We will continue to clarify that we do not expect schools and providers to produce documentation for inspection, to try to reduce administrative workload.

### **Methodology**

26. We used a mixed method research design in this study.<sup>12</sup> Within this design, we collected qualitative and quantitative data concurrently and analysed them independently. We analysed quantitative data – responses to fixed-choice questions – to get descriptive statistics (for example, raw counts and percentages) and to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between groups of participants. Through linear regression analyses (see Appendix 3), we identified which factors significantly predict the level of occupational well-being at work. We analysed qualitative data – open-ended questionnaire responses and focus group interviews – for main and recurrent themes. We then combined the quantitative and qualitative findings at the interpretation stage. The strength of this mixed method design lies in collecting complementary data in parallel. This allows us to take both a broad and a deep

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<sup>12</sup> JW Creswell and VL Plano Clark, 'Designing and conducting mixed methods research', SAGE publications, 2011; <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/designing-and-conducting-mixed-methods-research/book258100>.

snapshot of the research phenomenon (teachers' well-being at work) and triangulate the findings from the two types of data. For more detail on analyses, see Appendix 3.

27. We sent the link to the well-being questionnaire to a random sample of 1,000 schools and 250 FES providers. Random sampling is a technique in which each member of the subset (for example a school in this study) has an equal probability of being chosen. This is meant to achieve an unbiased representation of the population of around 22,000 schools in the country. The aim of sampling was to ensure a representative balance across education phases and types of schools and colleges.
28. In total, 2,293 staff from 290 schools and 2,053 staff from 67 providers responded to the questionnaire. We selected 19 schools and six FES providers for focus-group interviews and visits. They were chosen based on the reported levels of well-being at work, phase of education, type of institution and region. For more detail on our sample, see Appendix 2.
29. There was a rich variety of job roles among participants. From schools, for example, we had responses from teaching assistants, higher-level teaching assistants, teachers, middle leaders, senior teachers/lead practitioners, senior leaders, headteachers and governors. For the purposes of this report, we merged all school staff with the following roles into a single group named 'teachers': teachers, subject and pastoral middle leaders, senior teachers/lead practitioners, and higher-level teaching assistants. This group made up 70% of respondents from schools. In FES providers, the 'teachers' group includes: teachers, trainers, coaches, mentors, tutors and middle managers. They formed 84% of all respondents from FES providers (see Appendix 2).
30. We also conducted a review of the literature, existing well-being surveys (such as the 'European working conditions survey',<sup>13</sup> the 'Teaching and learning international survey' (TALIS),<sup>14</sup> and the Office for National Statistics survey on well-being)<sup>15</sup> and conceptual frameworks that fed into the development of the questionnaire and focus group interview protocols. We adopted the conceptual well-being framework from the What Works Centre for Wellbeing for this study. It informed our development of data collection instruments (see Appendix 4).

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<sup>13</sup> European working conditions surveys; [www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/european-working-conditions-surveys).

<sup>14</sup> Ainley, J. and R. Carstens, 'Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS)', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018; <https://doi.org/10.1787/799337c2-en>.

<sup>15</sup> 'Measuring national well-being: quality of life in the UK, 2018', Office for National Statistics, 2018; [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/qualityoflifeintheuk2018](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/qualityoflifeintheuk2018).

## Research questions

1. What are the current levels of teacher well-being in schools and FES providers?
  - a. Do levels of well-being at work vary across different dimensions (for example by job role or education phase)?
2. Which factors affect teacher well-being?
  - a. Which factors do teachers consider as most influential to their level of well-being?  
(This was based on a qualitative analysis of main themes in open-ended questionnaire responses and focus group interviews.)
  - b. Which factors could be linked to low or high levels of teacher well-being?  
(This was based on regression analyses of quantitative data – responses to fixed-choice questions.)

## Limitations of the research

31. The results of this study are based on the subjective measures of well-being and subjective perceptions of factors that influence it. This approach requires asking people to give their own perception of their well-being and report on what matters to them. Even though this gave us a rich insight into the levels of well-being in the education sector and the factors that influence it, the study does not include any objective measures of well-being. Having said that, using objective measures has disadvantages because many are only proxies for measuring well-being.
32. Measuring stress at work and the impact of the job on physical and mental health in this study was not based on a medical diagnosis. Questions were phrased in a way that allowed respondents to express their own perceptions of the impact of their job on their health.
33. The current public narrative of teachers being stressed might encourage individuals to report higher levels of stress than they might otherwise have done.

## Feelings about the profession and factors contributing positively to well-being in schools and FES providers

### Teachers are satisfied with their job and their workplace

34. Most respondents are satisfied with their job (77% from schools and 68% from FES providers) and would still choose this job if they could decide again (71% of schools respondents and 61% of FES respondents). Very few regret taking it (8% and 13% from schools and providers, respectively). This is a more positive picture than in the broader population, where 23% of people employed in the

UK regretted their current choice of career.<sup>16</sup> Differences in responses between teachers and senior leaders exist, however. For example, significantly fewer school teachers (but still a majority) are satisfied with their job (73%) than senior leaders (87%). Importantly, 27% (387) of school teachers and 44% (552) of teachers in FES providers are not satisfied with their job.

35. A large majority (86%) enjoy working at their workplace. Most would recommend their school/provider as a good place to work (77% of schools respondents and 62% of FES respondents). However, 23% of respondents from schools and 31% from FES would move to another school/provider.
36. Satisfaction with the job and the workplace are significant contributors to occupational well-being at schools and FES providers, according to our regression analyses. For example, the agreement and strong agreement with the following statements were linked to higher levels of overall occupational well-being:
  - All in all, I am satisfied with my job.
  - I enjoy working at this school/provider.
  - I would recommend this school/provider as a good place to work.
37. Disagreement and strong disagreement with the following statements were linked to higher levels of well-being:
  - I regret that I decided to take the current job.
  - I would like to move to another provider if that were possible.
38. However, occupational well-being is more than just job satisfaction and enjoyment of one's workplace, as will be shown later in this report.

### **Teachers overwhelmingly enjoy teaching...**

39. Almost all research participants (98%) enjoy teaching. This is a positive finding, especially because teaching is not the first-choice career of some of them (25% of teachers and 48% of teaching assistants). According to our focus groups, a love of teaching ('being in the classroom actually teaching') and working with pupils and students feature frequently among the top three positive factors that impact on occupational well-being. In part, this is because of pupils' character, attitudes and behaviour and the relationships they form with staff. They are described as lovely, positive, hardworking, polite, helpful, well behaved, eager to learn and enthusiastic. Staff value 'good relationships with pupils' and the 'fun and enjoyment' they have with them.

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<sup>16</sup> 'LSBF Careers Report: Are UK professionals looking to change careers?', London School of Business and Finance, 2015; [www.lsb.org.uk/infographics/career-change](http://www.lsb.org.uk/infographics/career-change).

40. The passion for the profession also originates from a belief that teaching is worthwhile and that it positively impacts on pupils'/students' learning, development and chances in life:

'Feeling you are making a difference...90% of the time you make a difference.'

'Possibility of teaching the engineer who may design the technology that could potentially cure the likes of cancer.'

'Seeing pupils achieve their potential.'

41. Relationships with pupils represent a largely positive influence on occupational well-being. This matches with teachers' passion for teaching and working with children or young people. However, poor behaviour and a lack of leadership support for managing such behaviour are issues that have a negative influence on staff well-being.<sup>17</sup>

### **Workplace culture positively contributes to well-being...**

42. Work culture is a strong positive contributor to occupational well-being, according to our qualitative findings. Everyone from teaching assistants to senior leaders, in both schools and FES providers, highly appreciates a strong sense of community at work, which impacts positively on their well-being. The sense of community arises from the following:

- a strong sense of team work – a culture of collaboration and planning as a team
- a supportive and no-blame culture
- shared values within a team
- positive, inclusive, compassionate and friendly ethos.

43. The following quotes from our qualitative data illustrate a combination of these characteristics:

'There's a friendliness wherever you go. People are very helpful. They want to share. There is a culture of openness and sharing.'

'This is informal culture. The school has a very compassionate ethos due to the children we are working with and this has been extended to the staff in this school. I have worked in schools with a punitive ethos before.'

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<sup>17</sup> See section 'Poor behaviour is a source of low occupational well-being and teachers do not always feel supported by senior leaders and parents in managing it' of this report.

44. The quantitative findings on the effect of work culture on occupational well-being in schools and FES providers support the qualitative findings. We found that shared values, as well as a collaborative, supportive, inclusive and fair work culture, significantly impacted on the level of occupational well-being in this study. Using regression analyses, we found that agreement and strong agreement with the following statements were linked to higher levels of occupational well-being in schools and FES providers:
- There is a collaborative culture, which is characterised by mutual support.
  - The staff share a common set of beliefs about teaching and learning.
  - Staff in this school/provider can rely on each other.
  - I feel like I belong in this workplace.
45. Also, we saw that the higher the frequency of fair treatment (I am treated fairly at my workplace... always/often/sometimes/rarely/never), the higher the well-being at schools and FES providers.
46. In schools and FES providers, staff share beliefs about teaching and learning according to most respondents (80% in schools and 77% in FES). A collaborative culture is characterised by mutual support (according to 76% of school respondents and 67% of FES respondents) and staff can rely on each other (as reported by 85% and 77% of respondents from the schools and FES sectors, respectively).

### **... as do relationships with colleagues**

47. For a large majority of respondents from schools, relationships with colleagues are positive. They have a sense of belonging (86%), feel that their colleagues care about them (85%) and often or always get on well with the rest of the staff (90%). The situation is very similar for FES respondents. According to our regression analyses, agreement and strong agreement with the statement 'I feel like people working in this school/provider care about me' were linked to higher levels of occupational well-being. This is also supported by qualitative findings: 'colleagues' and 'staff' are the most frequently mentioned factors that positively influence occupational well-being of our respondents across job roles.
48. Colleagues are described primarily as 'supportive'. Senior school leaders' top positive factors include feeling generally 'supported' by colleagues and 'listened to'. Teaching assistants particularly appreciate peer support in professional development. Teachers and middle leaders feel supported by lots of different people in different roles, which is vital in view of workload issues (see the 'Workload and work-life balance' section in this report).
49. Colleagues are also described as 'friendly' and 'caring'. Friendship at work was highlighted by many (for example 'Staff room colleagues' support and banter'; 'My colleagues are my friends'). This indicates that staff benefit from having some space and time for informal interaction with each other. Staff feel the

need to be appreciated by colleagues, and not just senior leadership, so some listed 'positive feedback from colleagues' and 'positive recognition for the work I do from colleagues' in their top positive factors.

50. There are cases where relationships with colleagues have broken down. Relationships are perceived to negatively impact on one's well-being at work when:
- support is missing, due to 'competitive staff room behaviour', 'not all staff pulling their weight with work', or 'staff with poor or bad time management'
  - values are not shared – 'different cultures amongst staff across this big organisation'; 'attitude of some staff towards following college rules'
  - respect is lacking – 'rude staff', 'staff bullying', 'being aggressively challenged by another member of staff'.
51. In summary, the enjoyment of teaching pupils, work culture and relationships with colleagues are important for the well-being of teachers at work.

### **However, teachers are also disappointed by the profession**

52. Fifty-three per cent of respondents from schools and providers wonder whether it would have been better to choose another profession (agreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement). Only 60% of them believe that the advantages of their profession outweigh the disadvantages. Our findings are similar to those from TALIS 2018, in which 52% of teachers in England wonder whether they should have chosen another profession, compared with 34% of teachers in other countries.<sup>18</sup>
53. We found big differences between teachers on the one hand and senior leaders and teaching assistants on the other. For instance, only 55% of school teachers believe that the advantages of their profession outweigh the disadvantages, compared with 75% or more of senior leaders and teaching assistants. Similarly, as many as 57% of school teachers wonder whether it would have been better to choose another profession, compared with 38% or fewer senior leaders and teaching assistants. This points to a greater dissatisfaction among teachers than the other professionals in the same sector.
54. The main factors that have a positive impact on teachers' well-being are not sufficient to lead to high levels of occupational well-being. Despite reporting highly positive feelings towards teaching as a vocation and towards their schools or providers, as the rest of this report will show, teachers' occupational well-being is worryingly low.

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<sup>18</sup> Ainley, J. and R. Carstens, 'Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS)', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018; <https://doi.org/10.1787/799337c2-en>.



55. Several main factors contribute to low levels of well-being according to respondents:
- high workload and limited work–life balance
  - a lack of funding
  - insufficient opportunities for development and progression
  - a lack of support from senior managers, particularly in terms of managing pupils’ behaviour.
56. Our findings also show that external bodies (such as the government/DfE and Ofsted) are perceived to contribute to some of those factors.
57. The published statistics and predictions indicate a current and growing crisis in the number of teachers in relation to the number of teaching posts.<sup>19</sup> The education sector needs to do more to attract and retain high-quality individuals whose vocation it is to educate. Importantly, it must act now on improving teachers’ occupational well-being at a school/provider and sector level.

## Levels of occupational well-being

### General life satisfaction is low

58. Our participants were asked how satisfied they are with their life nowadays. Their responses were compared with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) results for the general population in England (aged 16 and above between October 2017 and September 2018). We found that levels of satisfaction with life are higher among the general public than among staff in schools and FES providers.
59. Across all education staff in schools and providers, 46% of respondents reported low and medium levels of satisfaction with life (42% from schools and 50% from FES providers). Only 54% of staff (in schools and FES providers) report high or very high life satisfaction. In contrast, the general population in England is much more satisfied, with 82% reporting high and very high levels of life satisfaction and only 4% reporting low satisfaction and 14% medium. The fact that younger and older people were included in the ONS survey (aged 16 and above) could have partially impacted on higher reported levels of life satisfaction than our study.
60. It is concerning that 50% of teachers, specifically, in both sectors are not satisfied with their lives, reporting low (24%) or a medium (26%) levels of satisfaction. Their low satisfaction with life could be partially explained by their

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<sup>19</sup> ‘School workforce in England: November 2017’, Department for Education, 2018; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2017).

low well-being at work, given that full-time employees spend most of their day-to-day life working.<sup>20</sup> Most of the teachers who participated in this study are in full-time employment: 77% of school teachers and 69% of teachers in FES providers.

## **Occupational well-being is low**

61. Occupational well-being was defined as 'how you feel about your work at this school/FES provider.' Respondents were asked to rate their overall sense of well-being in their current role. The main finding is that the occupational well-being of most of our respondents is low or moderate at best.

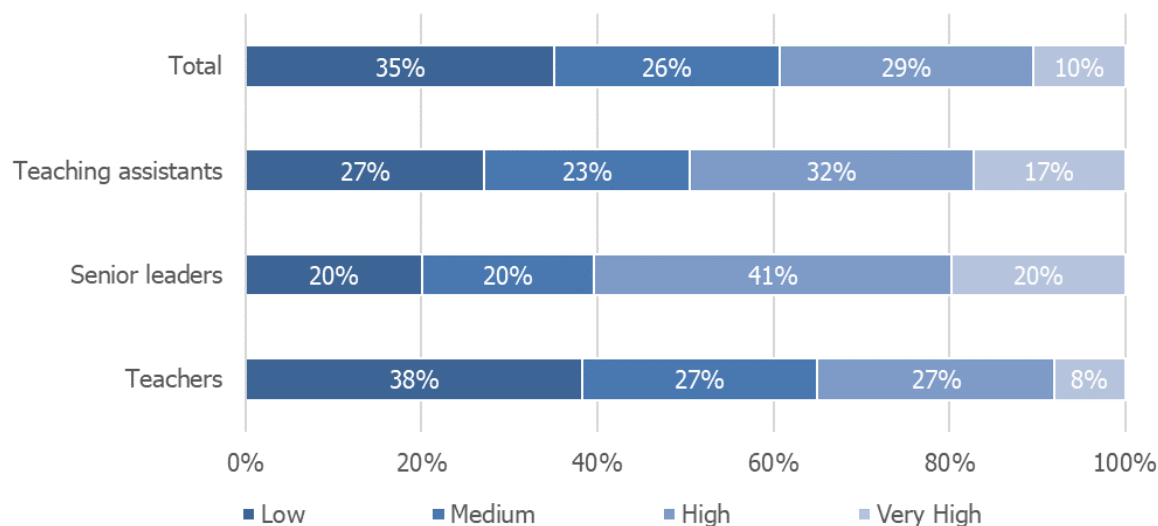
## **Occupational well-being differs across roles**

62. Overall occupational well-being is fairly low, with 35% of respondents reporting low levels of well-being, 26% moderate and only 39% high levels (see Figure 1).
63. While overall occupational well-being is low, senior leaders have higher occupational well-being than all other staff in both schools and FES providers alike (61% of senior leaders report high or very high well-being at work, compared with 35% of teachers and 49% of teaching assistants). Notably, teaching assistants also have higher levels of well-being than teachers.
64. In schools specifically, the following groups that made up the 'teachers' group in our study have the lowest level of well-being:
- 35% of subject middle leaders
  - 34% of teachers
  - 32% of pastoral middle leaders report their well-being at work as low.

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<sup>20</sup> See the 'Teachers and senior leaders work long hours' section of this report.

**Figure 1: Occupational well-being is the highest at senior levels and the lowest among teachers (schools and providers combined)**



## New teachers report higher occupational well-being than experienced teachers

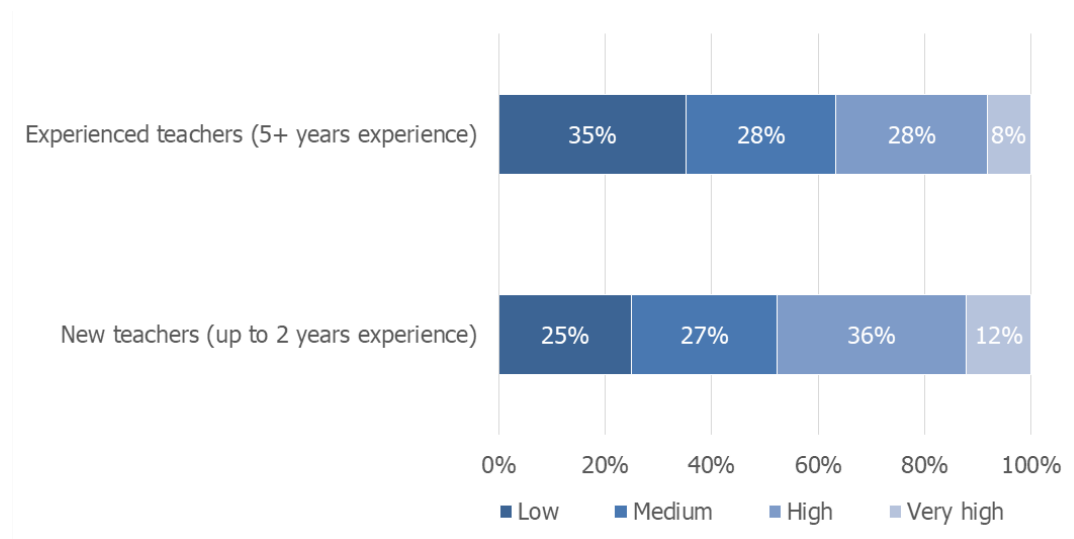
65. The challenge of retention in the profession is particularly pronounced among teachers who are early into their career: over 20% of new teachers leave the profession within their first two years of teaching and 33% leave within their first five years.<sup>21</sup> Among those with a work experience over five years, there is a more gradual decline. For example, 37% of teachers leave in the first nine years.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, we compared the levels of well-being of new and more experienced teachers.
66. New teachers, with up to two years of teaching experience, report having higher occupational well-being than teachers with five or more years of teaching experience (see Figure 2). This particularly points to the importance of supporting the well-being of those who have been in the profession for a while. It also indicates that the overall occupational well-being of new teachers may not be linked to them leaving the profession. Rather, it suggests that some specific factors within it could influence their decisions to leave.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Foster, D, 'Teacher recruitment and retention in England', House of Commons Library Briefing paper, 2019; <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7222>.

<sup>22</sup> 'School workforce in England: November 2017', Table 8, Department for Education, 2018; [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2017](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-november-2017).

<sup>23</sup> See the 'Low occupational well-being affects teacher retention' section of this report.

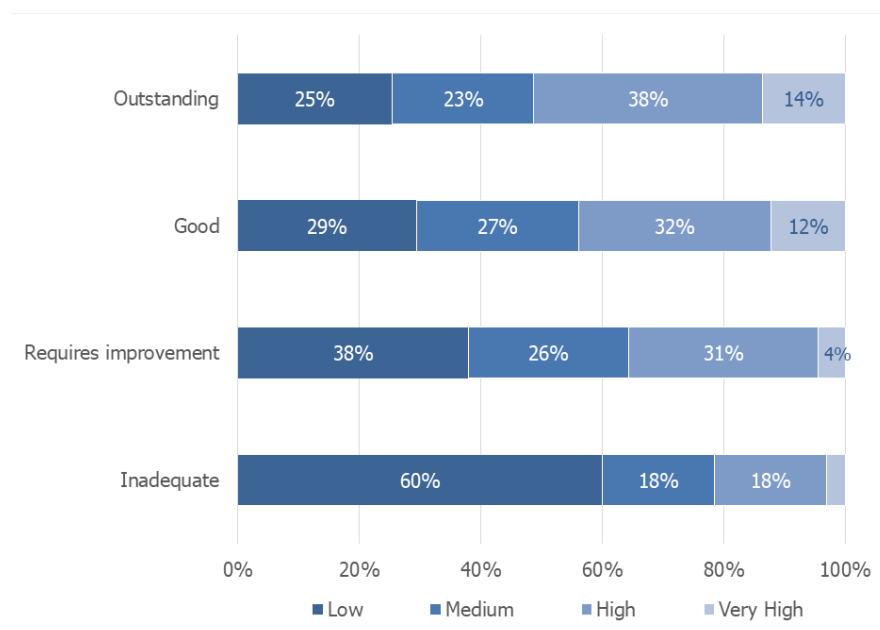
**Figure 2: Occupational well-being of experienced teachers is lower than that of new teachers (school sector)**



### Well-being is highest in outstanding schools and providers

67. There is a statistically significant difference in occupational well-being by Ofsted rating for overall effectiveness. Respondents from inadequate schools have the lowest occupational well-being, while those from outstanding schools have the highest (see Figure 3). In the FES sector, while respondents from outstanding providers have the highest levels of occupational well-being, it is those from providers rated as requires improvement who have the lowest.
68. These findings are generally what we would expect to see. In outstanding schools, where leadership is more likely to be strong, behaviour is well managed and students are thriving, we would expect that occupational well-being among the staff would be higher.

**Figure 3: Occupational well-being is the highest among outstanding schools and the lowest among inadequate schools**



## Impact of low occupational well-being

### Low occupational well-being is linked to health issues

69. Health-related issues discussed in this section are based on self-reporting, rather than medical diagnoses or staff absence records.
70. The low levels of occupational well-being in schools and FES providers are particularly concerning when set against staff absence figures. According to our findings, 25% (446) of schools' respondents and 28% (448) of FES respondents have been absent from their current workplace due to health problems caused or made worse by their work, excluding accidents.
71. In the last 12 months, 15% (637) of all school and FES respondents in the study were absent from the current workplace for 3.25 days on average. This is a total of 2,095 days of absence of respondents due to health problems caused or made worse by work, combined across the school and the FES sectors. If we also include respondents who have not reported days of absence, this is an average of 0.6 days per respondent. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)<sup>24</sup> for the sector of education had a similar finding: 0.6 days were lost 'per worker due to self-reported stress, depression or anxiety caused or made worse by the current or most recent job for people working in the last 12 months' during the period of 2015/16 to 2017/18. The HSE also noted that those average days lost

<sup>24</sup> 'Industry (LFSILLIND)', Table 11: Working days lost (annual, three-year and five-year average) – stress, depression or anxiety - for people working in the last 12 months, Health and Safety Executive, 2018; [www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/lfs/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/lfs/index.htm).

in the education sector are significantly higher than the average across all industries (0.4).

72. Certain aspects of health at work were statistically linked to occupational well-being through regression analyses:
- the frequency of stress experienced at work
  - worrying about work when not working
  - negative impact of the job on health
  - feeling of being drained of energy at the end of the working day.
73. Most respondents from the school and FES sectors (62%) report that they often or always experience stress in their work. As many as 70% report that they often or always feel drained of energy at the end of the working day, while many fewer experienced positive emotions or state of mind. Over the last two months at work, about half felt 'cheerful and in good spirits' on a regular basis (often/always), and a minority have often or always felt 'exhausted but positive' at the end of the working day, 'active and vigorous' or 'calm and relaxed'.
74. A minority working in schools report that their job often or always negatively impacts their mental (31%) and physical health (23%). Fewer respondents reported a regular positive impact of the job on mental and physical health (23% and 10%, respectively). These findings are similar to those seen in the FES sector.

### **Low occupational well-being affects teacher retention**

75. Some of the participants in our study left their teaching positions to become teaching assistants or left a full-time teaching job to become part-time teachers. Some had colleagues or staff who left the profession altogether. When asked about what led to those decisions, our respondents cited excessive workload and lack of work–life balance, coupled with low pay or quality of leadership in some instances as the main reasons.
76. Excessive workload leads to a lack of work–life balance that affects people's personal lives and families. Teaching is seen to make it difficult to raise a young family or sustain meaningful personal relationships. For example, one full-time teacher in our study changed schools to become a part-time teacher because the job was affecting her family. In the words of another former teacher, who is now a teaching assistant, 'You don't have a life.' Even those who have not left teaching overwhelmingly state that workload and no work–life balance would be reasons for them to leave the profession:

'Taking work home. My husband never takes work home. You work during the holidays and don't benefit. Family time – it's really hard to do this.'

'[Teaching is] predominantly a female role but doesn't fit with family life – too much marking, children in breakfast and after-school club – too long a day.'

77. Pay is another frequently quoted reason for leaving despite the love of the job: 'love the school but cannot afford to work on that salary.' The profession has lost some teachers due to pay, according to senior leaders. Teachers leave when, for instance, they find opportunities to 'earn more with a lot less work'.
78. Workload, work-life balance and low pay also put off people from joining the profession or cause them to leave early. Negative comments from colleagues – teachers – about the job, workload, paperwork and salary put off some teaching assistants from progressing their career in schools. Despite the high bursaries at the start of a newly qualified teachers' career (also referred to as a 'golden handshake'), senior leaders in the schools we have visited have seen newly qualified teachers leave. This is because 'pressure/workload is a shock' for them and because 'they are under the illusion when they start about how much is required for how much pay.'

### **In summary**

79. The findings suggest that action should be taken to improve occupational well-being in schools and FES providers nationally, as a matter of priority. This particularly applies to the well-being of teachers and middle leaders. Within this, senior leaders should be aware that the levels of occupational well-being among certain groups of teachers are very low, such as experienced teachers or those working in inadequate schools or in FES providers that require improvement.

## **Factors contributing to low occupational well-being**

80. Several factors are related to low occupational well-being in our study.

### **Educators feel that teaching is undervalued as a profession**

81. Sixty-eight per cent of teachers and 61% of senior leaders believe that the teaching profession is not valued in society. This is in contrast to 39% of teaching assistants.
82. The perceived lack of respect for education professionals in England stems from several issues, according to our main qualitative findings:
  - a lack of funding for resources, which does not enable schools and providers to complete their work to a high standard
  - a lack of funding into staff pay (particularly teachers' and teaching assistants'), resulting in low and static salaries that do not reflect staff members' skillsets or volume and quality of work

- an increased expectation to complete administrative work, which is not seen as commensurate with teachers' primary role and which decreases their capacity to do their main job effectively
- a lack of say in frequent changes to educational policy.

## Workload is high, affecting work–life balance

83. Workload is one of the main sources of teacher stress.<sup>25,26</sup> Work overload has been associated with aspects of burnout such as exhaustion and the coping mechanism of distancing oneself emotionally and cognitively.<sup>27</sup>

## Teachers and senior leaders work long hours

84. Our respondents were asked to report the total number of hours they spent on work-related tasks during the most recent complete calendar week, including tasks that took place during evenings, weekends or other out-of-classroom hours. The main finding is that senior leaders and teachers in both sectors work long hours. According to Table 1, full-time school teachers worked 51 hours on average, which is 10.2 hours per working day. Most of the teachers in our study (65%) worked excessively long – for 50 hours or more – during the most recent complete calendar week. Senior leaders worked even longer – 57 hours on average. Teachers' and senior leaders' working hours during the most recent calendar week **are far above the average weekly hours of full-time workers**, which range from just under 37 to just under 39 between 1992 and 2018.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Kyriacou, C, 'Teacher stress: directions for future research', Educational Review, pages 27–35, 2001; [www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00131910120033628](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00131910120033628).

<sup>26</sup> Wolgast, A and Fischer, 'You are not alone: colleague support and goal-oriented cooperation as resources to reduce teachers' stress', Social Psychology of Education, 2017; <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11218-017-9366-1>.

<sup>27</sup> Christina Maslach, Wilmar B. Schaufeli, Michael P. Leiter, 'Job burnout', Annual Review of Psychology, 2001; [www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397).

<sup>28</sup> 'Average actual weekly hours of work for full-time workers (seasonally adjusted)', Office for National Statistics, 2019; [www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/timeseries/yb/uy/lms](http://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/timeseries/yb/uy/lms).



**Table 1: Hours spent on work-related tasks during the most recent complete calendar week – full-time employees (schools)**

<b>Respondent group</b>	<b>Average number of hours</b>	<b>Mode (the most frequently reported number of hours)</b>	<b>Respondents working 50+ hours</b>
Teachers (n=1081)	51	50	703 (65%)
Senior leaders (n=258)	57	60	216 (84%)
Teaching assistants (n=161)	32	35	4 (3%)

85. Part-time teachers worked, on average, 31 hours during the most recent calendar complete week (see Table 2). A minority of part-time teachers (27%) worked full time (40+ hours) during the most recent complete calendar week.

**Table 2: Hours spent on work-related tasks during the most recent complete calendar week – part-time employees (schools)**

<b>Respondent group</b>	<b>Average hours</b>	<b>Mode (the most frequently reported number of hours)</b>	<b>Respondents working 40+ hours</b>
Teachers (n=315)	31	30 and 40	85 (27%)
Senior leaders	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teaching assistants (n=124)	22	30	1 (<1%)

86. Teaching takes up less than half of teachers' working hours compared with most of teaching assistants' hours:
- full-time teachers spent an average of 22 hours teaching during that week (43% of their working time)
  - teaching assistants spent 26 hours supporting teaching and learning (81% of their working time).

The findings for teachers align with TALIS 2018,<sup>29</sup> which found that teachers in England spend 20.5 hours (or 39% of their working time) on teaching tasks, while the rest of their time is spent on non-teaching tasks.

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<sup>29</sup> Ainley, J. and R. Carstens, 'Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS)', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018; <https://doi.org/10.1787/799337c2-en>.

87. When they were not teaching during the most recent complete calendar week, teachers spent most of their time on:

- lesson planning and preparation (13% of the time)
- marking and correcting pupils' work (11%)
- administrative work (7%).

The rest of the time was dedicated to pupil counselling, team work, extra-curricular activities, school management and communication with parents/guardians. According to TALIS 2018 findings, teachers believe that they spend too long on planning, marking and administrative tasks, which aligns with our findings.<sup>30</sup>

88. These findings confirm those of previous studies of teacher workload in England. Sellen (2016)<sup>31</sup> found that teachers in England are working longer hours than teachers in most other countries, according to the TALIS 2013 survey. Similarly, in the 2018 TALIS study, full-time teachers in England in 2018 worked an average of 49.3 hours a week.<sup>32</sup> According to the DfE's teacher workload survey,<sup>33</sup> teachers spend as many as 54.4 hours on average on teaching and other tasks related to teaching. Worth and Van den Brande (2019)<sup>34</sup> found that teachers' working hours over a year are similar to those of other professionals outside of the education sector. However, as teachers work for fewer days per annum, they work longer hours than other professionals during a typical working week, which is accompanied by a poorer work/life balance and higher stress levels.

### **Marking and administrative tasks contribute considerably to teachers' heavy workload**

89. Marking is among the top negative influences on workload. It is frequently described as 'heavy' or 'massive', taking place at weekends or over holidays. Some highlight 'marking workload for English literature and coursework' and some 'marking workload of long essays with large group sizes.'

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<sup>30</sup> See the next section.

<sup>31</sup> Sellen, P, 'Teacher workload and professional development in England's secondary schools; insights from TALIS', Education Policy Institute, 2016; <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/teacher-workload-professional-development-englands-secondary-schools-insights-talis>.

<sup>32</sup> Ainley, J. and R. Carstens, 'Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS)', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018; <https://doi.org/10.1787/799337c2-en>.

<sup>33</sup> Higon, J, Leonardi, S, Neil, R, Choudhoury, A, Sofroniu, N and Owen, D, 'Teacher workload survey 2016: brief', Department for Education, 2017; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-survey-2016](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teacher-workload-survey-2016).

<sup>34</sup> Worth, J., and Van den Brande, J., 'Teacher labour market in England – Annual Report 2019', National Foundation for Educational Research, 2019; [www.nfer.ac.uk/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2019](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2019).

90. In some cases, a heavy marking workload stems from large class sizes and staff shortage.<sup>35</sup> In some others, it stems from school practices of providing very extensive written feedback. To reduce the amount of time that teachers need to spend marking, some of the schools we visited have been changing their marking policies to encourage more effective forms of marking and feedback, which may take place during class time (such as 'over-the-shoulder marking'), while some providers are trying to keep class sizes small.
91. Mastin (2018)<sup>36</sup> acknowledges that a school's assessment culture can have a negative impact on workload, especially dialogic marking in which the teacher marks, the pupil responds and the teacher marks again.
92. Administrative tasks have a negative impact on occupational well-being in schools and FES providers for two main reasons:
- the volume of paperwork is reported to be large, which reduces the time available for the main job
  - a lot of it is deemed as unnecessary because it does not improve teaching and learning.
93. Teachers and middle leaders highlight administrative workload, including:
- emails
  - frequent reporting of pupils' progress (to parents and senior leaders)
  - form-filling where work is often duplicated
  - 'endless meeting after meeting'
  - 'weekly contact with parents'
  - data collection
  - ticking boxes.

Much of this is reportedly done for senior leaders or with Ofsted in mind. The amount of time spent on administrative work was reported to take away from the main job – lesson planning and preparation, teaching and feedback for pupils/students:

'The admin (chasing attendance, punctuality, achievement) taking away from teaching.'

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<sup>35</sup> See the 'Teachers and leaders feel they lack resources to do their job as well as they would like to' section in this report.

<sup>36</sup> Mastin, S., 'Senior leaders have the power to solve teacher workload', Schools Week, 2018; <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/senior-leaders-have-the-power-to-solve-teacher-workload>.

'Insufficient time to concentrate on what really makes a difference; planning interesting lessons and giving feedback on assignments.'

94. Importantly, a lot of administrative work is not seen to be a part of the teaching profession nor is it perceived to improve either teaching or learning:

'Data tracking, statistics are more important than the pupils.'

'Far too much admin and data-management. Wish we could go back to inspiring kids and teaching well, making sure they learn just as much as they can. No-one went into the teaching profession to monitor the ... "progress" of young people. We want to inspire, we want to fight for big ideas, we hope to help these young people. Not always convinced that knowing the progress they are making in all subjects helps us to do that.'

95. Most respondents see value in collecting progress data of individual pupils/students. They believe that this data is useful for understanding the progress of their pupils/students (66% of teachers and teaching assistants in schools and FES providers; 86% of senior leaders at schools and 92% of senior leaders at FES providers). At the same time, most respondents (60%) think that they spend too much or far too much of their time preparing pupils'/students' progress data for senior leaders.
96. The above findings suggest that administrative workload could be reduced and that data collection could become more efficient, so that only the data that can impact on teaching and learning is collected.

### **Many teachers feel insufficiently supported with workload issues by leaders and colleagues**

97. Only 47% of school teachers and teaching assistants report that their colleagues (including their line manager) always or often help them find a solution when their workload is too heavy. That kind of support comes rarely or never for 23% of school teachers and teaching assistants and 27% of those working in FES providers.
98. As far as distribution of workload is concerned, only 54% of school respondents and 43% of FES respondents believe that workload is often or always distributed fairly. There is a gap in views between teachers and senior leaders: only 48% of school teachers and 39% of FES teachers report that work is fairly distributed often or always, compared with 73% of senior leaders in schools and in FES providers.

### **The heavy workload and lack of work–life balance of teachers contribute to their low level of occupational well-being**

99. In open-ended questionnaire responses and focus group interviews, workload and lack of work–life balance often feature as top factors that negatively impact on the occupational well-being of our respondents from schools and FES

providers. From a statistical perspective, workload and work–life balance were also found to be significant contributors to occupational well-being, both in schools and FES providers, according to our regression analyses.

100. A heavy workload is a problem for many respondents: 57% report that they do not have an acceptable workload and 45% report that their workload is not appropriate for their skill set – in both sectors. This largely applies to teachers and senior leaders, and to a much smaller extent to teaching assistants. Some of the words used to describe workload were ‘unrealistic’, ‘unsustainable’, ‘excessive’, ‘increasing’ and ‘unfair’.

101. Lack of time is mentioned frequently. That includes:

- ‘lack of planning and preparation time’
- ‘lack of time to interact with other staff’
- ‘lack of time to discuss issues and plans for development’
- ‘not having enough teaching time allocated to teach my subject.’

Essentially, there is not enough time to do the important aspects of the job. The tension between being able to do a good job in theory and having to take too many shortcuts in practice results in a sense of frustration:

‘A sense of frustration knowing what needs to be done to do a good job – but not having the capacity to achieve those goals due to growing work load ... I am having to cut corners to stay afloat. There is a constant understanding of what I have not achieved and a persistent feeling of stress that someone is going to “judge” you to be inadequate as a result.’

102. As many as 53% of our school respondents and 56% of those from FES state that they rarely or never have enough time to get their job done. To meet work demands, 83% of school respondents (and 75% of those from FES) work in their spare time daily or several times per week. This applies to a large majority of teachers and senior leaders (90% and above in schools and 80% and above in FES providers), and to 43% of teaching assistants at schools and 30% of teaching assistants in FES providers. As a result, 52% of school and FES respondents do not achieve a good balance between their work life and their private life. Working in free time due to insufficient time and heavy workload is widespread in schools and FES providers:

‘Need to work outside of working hours, including annual leave periods.’

‘Expected to work outside of my contract hours all the time.’

103. Based on the qualitative findings, the main causes of heavy workload in schools and FES providers are the following:

- frequently changing government policies and regulations

- administrative tasks for senior leaders, often presented as being done for Ofsted
- marking
- staff shortages, resulting in increased contact time and teaching larger sized classes – the issue of increased teaching hours is particularly prominent in FES providers
- lack of support from external specialist agencies (for example, for pupils or students with SEND or behaviour or mental health issues) and the lack of skills in schools and providers to address those needs
- challenging and disruptive behaviour of pupils and students and inconsistently managed behaviour at school/provider level
- changes to external examinations and insufficient resource to prepare for them
- in some cases, lack of skills and training.

### **Teachers and leaders feel that they lack resources to do their job as well as they would like to**

104. The amount of funding for schools and FES providers influences the availability of resources for the day-to-day job as well as salaries. Our qualitative findings show that the availability of human and other resources is seen to impact on several aspects of occupational well-being, such as workload, effectiveness and agency (for example the ability to innovate and introduce improvements). Satisfaction with pay and opportunities for career progression impact on financial security, which is one of the aspects of well-being at work.
105. The availability of resources was investigated from the perspective of its impact on well-being at work and implications for the quality of education. One of the main themes arising from focus group interviews is a reported need for more funding. In conversations with senior leaders, ‘staff recruitment’ and ‘capacity issues’ feature, teachers and middle leaders talk about the lack of support staff, while teaching assistants frequently mention a lack of resources, including pedagogical resources as well as time.
106. The shortage of staff and other resources adversely affects occupational well-being at schools and FES providers for several reasons.
107. First, it increases workload because class sizes become bigger and contact hours longer, particularly in FES. Bigger classes and more contact hours increase marking and lesson preparation load and shorten the time that could otherwise be spent on other work-related activities:
- ‘Too much cover for absent staff takes away non-contact periods.’
- ‘Shortage of staff leading to extra contact time (29/35 periods taught per week) – by a head of department.’

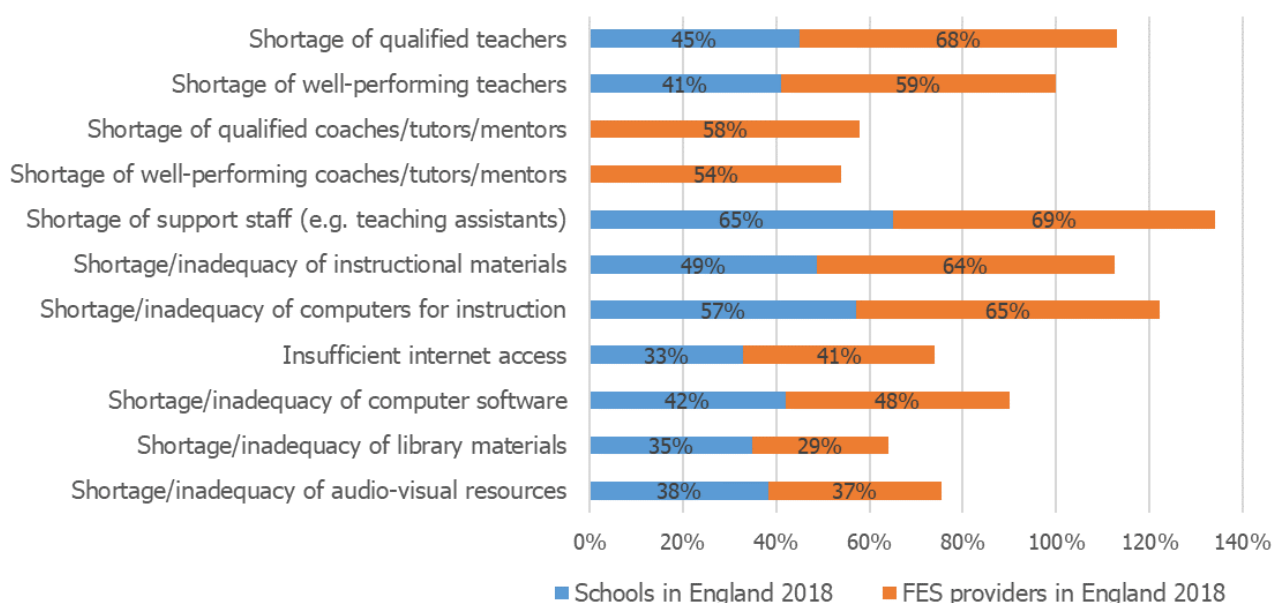
108. Second, the shortage of staff decreases the ability to carry out work effectively. For example, the 'lack of specialist subject staff' means that somebody not qualified to teach a subject may end up teaching it. Some FES providers state that they 'do not have enough staff to be outstanding.'
109. The shortages that negatively affect effectiveness at work could also have serious implications for the quality of education and support for pupils and students. For example, staff shortages have led some FES providers to reduce course hours, which is likely to negatively impact on depth and breadth of learning:
- 'Continued reduction of course hours due to funding cuts reduces the level of subject understanding by students.'
110. Respondents reported support provided to pupils/students with SEND (most frequently), to low attainers and for pupils'/students' well-being as lacking.
111. Third, respondents reported that funding cuts have reduced access to external specialist support. This results in staff taking on extra responsibilities outside of their area of expertise, which adds to workload and pressure:
- 'Teachers have to support pupils with some really serious home issues. It is emotionally draining.'
- 'Pressures caused by limited wider resources e.g. behavioural support, educational psychologists.'
112. Respondents from FES providers in particular highlighted the need for specialist support for students' mental health issues:
- 'Lack of meaningful support for staff and students with mental health issues, which is becoming a bigger factor.'
113. The qualitative findings are in line with our quantitative findings. Figure 4 illustrates the shortage of human and other resources as reported by the schools and FES respondents in this study.
114. As far as human resources are concerned, school respondents stated that their school's capacity to provide good-quality teaching and learning is hindered to some extent or a lot by a shortage of qualified teachers (45%) and a shortage of well-performing teachers (41%). This is similar to TALIS 2018 findings that 38% of senior leaders in England say that shortages of qualified teachers hinder instruction in their school. The issue is much more prevalent in England than in other countries, where only 21% of senior leaders report the same.<sup>37</sup> Shortages in human resources in the FES sector are even more pronounced

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<sup>37</sup> Ainley, J. and R. Carstens, 'Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS)', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018; <https://doi.org/10.1787/799337c2-en>.

(see Figure 4). Respondents also flag a lack of core textbooks, functioning computers and other equipment, as well as specialised technology to support pupils with SEND: 'lack of appropriate classroom technology for SEN' and 'lack of assistive software for students'. In some instances, this leads staff to 'spend own money on resources'.

**Figure 4: Is your school's/provider's capacity to provide good quality instruction hindered by any of the following issues? (A sum of 'a lot' and 'to some extent' responses, excluding 'very little', 'not at all' and 'not sure')**



115. Shortage of resources is sometimes accompanied by a shortage of basic facilities, such as toilets and a staff common room. Some raise the issue of 'laughably poor facilities (especially ICT), resources and physical environment', and some work in classrooms that are so small or badly equipped that they feel they are 'not able to provide good service to students due to poor classroom environment'.

### Teachers and leaders feel that current levels of pay are too low...

116. Teachers and leaders feel that levels of pay are too low. Only 44% and 30% of our respondents from schools and FES sectors, respectively, were satisfied with their salaries.

117. When asked how the government/DfE can help improve well-being at schools and FES providers, common responses across job roles were increasing salaries and school budgets.

118. Insufficient pay also emerges from focus group interviews as a factor that negatively influences occupational well-being in schools and FES providers.



Teaching assistants, teachers and middle leaders are primarily affected. Senior leaders themselves are aware that financial pressures on their staff, including pay, negatively affect the well-being of their staff. Teachers and teaching assistants do not believe that they are paid sufficiently for the work they are tasked with. They highlight the disparity between workload and level of responsibility on the one hand and static and low pay on the other hand. This suggests that low pay signifies a lack of recognition for the complexity and amount of the work being done:

'Lack of sufficient pay for what I actually do rather than my job title.'

### **...and teachers feel they have insufficient opportunities for development and progression**

119. The surveyed respondents are very confident in their professional ability. However, many feel they do not get sufficient opportunities to use their full range of knowledge and skills at work, nor to learn and grow. Opportunities and support for career development and progression are some of the main causes of moderate or high undue stress at work, as we found from our data analyses.
120. According to TALIS 2013 findings, teachers in England are reasonably confident in their own abilities compared with international standards.<sup>38</sup> Self-confidence is also widespread among the education professionals in our study. A vast majority of staff from schools and FES providers (92% and above) believe that:
- their teaching is effective and helpful
  - they are good at helping pupils/students/apprentices learn new things
  - they can provide an adequate level of learning challenge for everyone and motivate those who show low interest in learning
  - they can use a variety of assessment strategies
  - they can encourage an open and safe learning environment, besides having a strong sense of accomplishment in their current role.

This high level of confidence also stems from the fact that our respondents are very well-qualified for their jobs, with a majority also being experienced in their role, having done their job for at least three years or more.

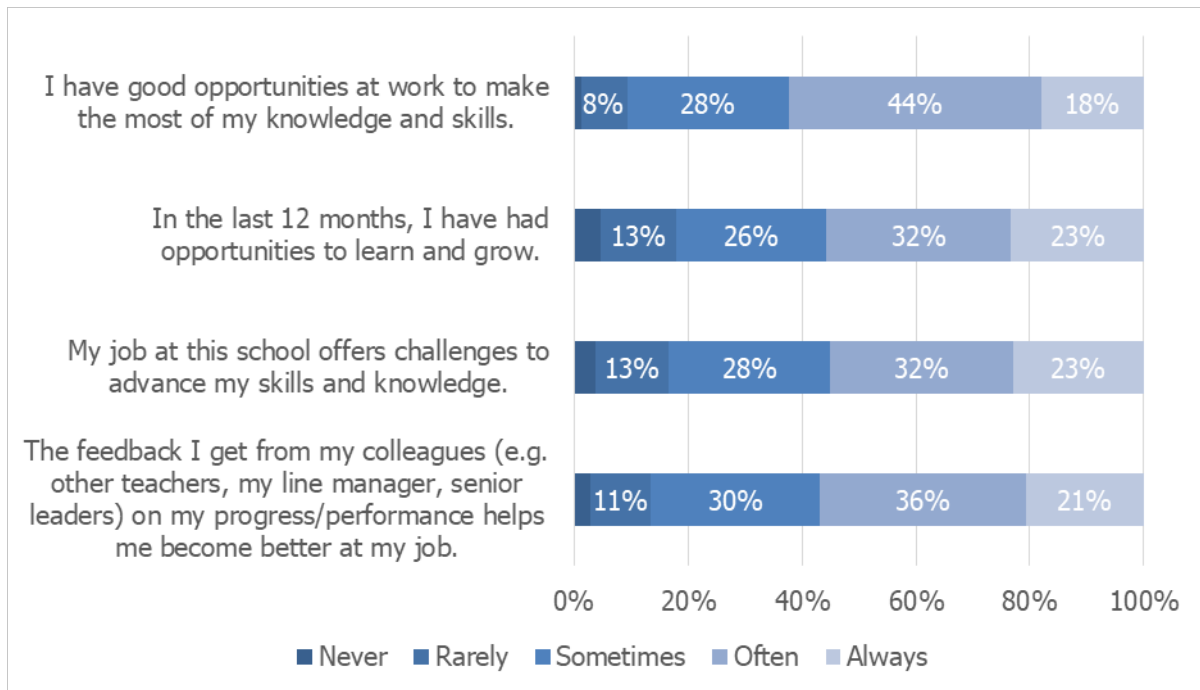
121. Despite the high levels of confidence in their ability to do the main aspects of their roles, only a small majority of school staff (62%) and staff from FES providers (59%) often or always have good opportunities to make the most of their knowledge and skills in their workplace. Moreover, only about half of

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<sup>38</sup> J. Micklewright, J. Jerrim, A. Vignoles, A. Jenkins, R. Allen, Illie, S, Bellarbre, E, Barrera, F, Hein, C, 'Teachers in England's secondary schools: Evidence from TALIS 2013', Department for Education, 2014; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-in-secondary-schools-evidence-from-talis-2013](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-in-secondary-schools-evidence-from-talis-2013).

respondents have often or always had opportunities to learn and grow in the last 12 months (55% of school staff and 47% of those working in FES sector; see Figure 5 for schools). These findings indicate that more could be done to use the existing knowledge and skills of the staff and create room for further learning and growth on the job.

**Figure 5: A small majority have opportunities to make the most of their knowledge and skills and to learn and grow on the job (schools)**



122. As far as training and development are concerned, most respondents from schools can access the right learning and development opportunities sometimes, often or always (81%), and, importantly, apply what they have learnt at their work (91%). A smaller percentage, but still a majority (71%), have a say in choosing their training and development sometimes, often or always. Very similar findings apply to the FES sector.
123. In the last 12 months, a majority of respondents discussed their progress or performance with a colleague at their school (87%) or their FES provider (82%) and their training needs with their line manager (69% in the school sector and 73% in the FES sector). Most also received training that is relevant to their job (83% in the school sector and 78% in FES). Conversely, in the last 12 months:
- 17% of school staff and 22% of staff in providers did not receive training relevant to their job
  - 13% of school staff and 18% of staff in providers did not discuss their progress or performance with a colleague at their workplace
  - 31% of school staff and 27% of staff in providers did not discuss training needs with their line manager.

124. The lack of relevant training for some could be partially attributed to limited school budgets. However, limited budgets do not justify the lack of discussions on progress, performance and training needs. The fact that many do not get sufficiently frequent opportunities to use their full range of knowledge and skills at work, nor to learn and grow, may be partially explained by a generally heavy workload. A heavy workload could focus attention on routine day-to-day work, thereby narrowing the range of knowledge and skills used, and not leaving much time for their own development on the job.

### **Poor behaviour is a source of low occupational well-being...**

125. In our qualitative data, poor behaviour of pupils often features as a negative influence on teachers' well-being at work. This behaviour ranges from 'low-level disruption' to 'mindless vandalism' and 'verbal and physical abuse'. Williams (2018)<sup>39</sup> states that persistent disruption, which is the most common reason for permanent exclusions in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools, is a serious problem that has a negative impact on teaching and learning as well as on the recruitment and retention of teachers.

126. According to our questionnaire findings (see Figure 6), the following behaviours were prevalent in schools and occurred on a weekly or daily basis:

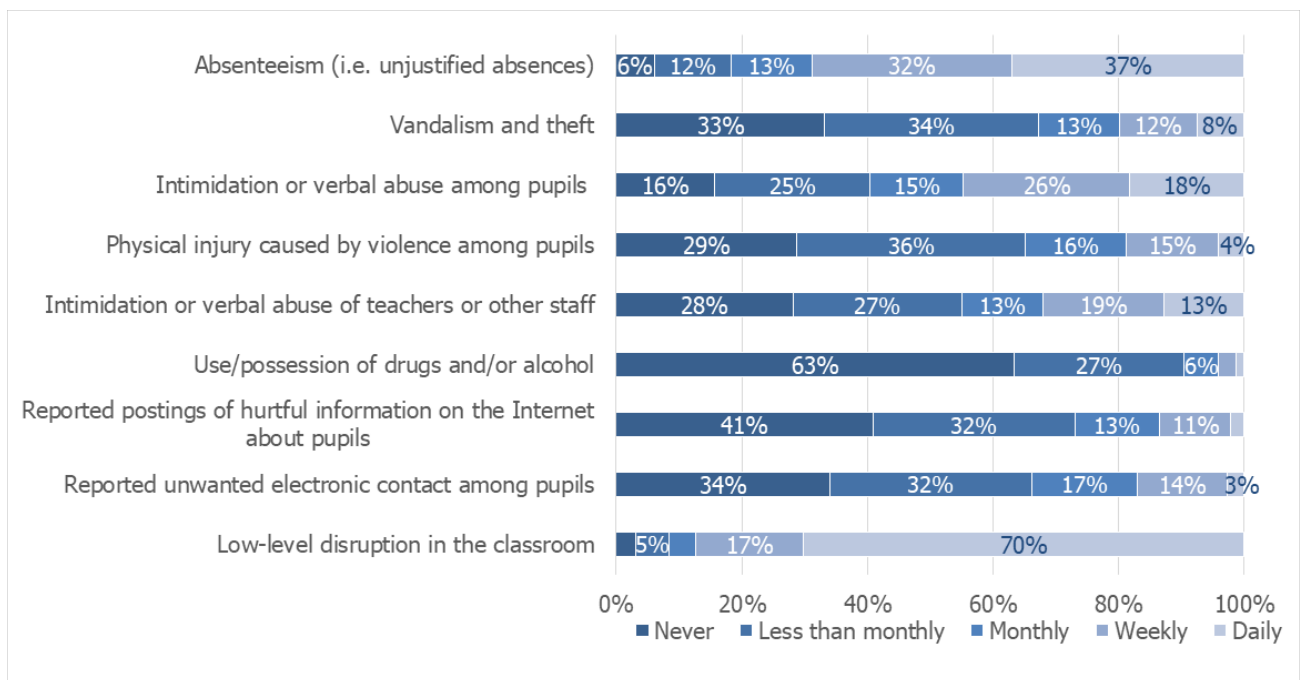
- low-level disruption in the classroom, such as humming, fidgeting or whispering (according to 87% of respondents)
- absenteeism (unjustified absences, as reported by 69% of respondents)
- intimidation or verbal abuse among pupils (45%) and intimidation or verbal abuse of teachers or other staff (32%).

127. Intimidation or verbal abuse is rarer in FES providers, perhaps due to the greater maturity of students. However, in the FES sector, there is a higher prevalence of more frequent use or possession of drugs or alcohol among students/apprentices. This happens monthly, weekly or daily according to 21% of respondents from FES providers compared with 10% of respondents from schools.

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<sup>39</sup> Williams, J., 'It Just Grinds You Down', Policy Exchange, 2018; <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/it-just-grinds-you-down>.

**Figure 6: Over the past 12 months, have the following occurred among pupils in your school?**



**... and teachers do not always feel supported by senior leaders and parents in managing it**

128. Lack of senior leadership support with managing poor behaviour is one of the main ways in which senior leaders negatively influence well-being in schools and FES providers. The issue is two-fold.

129. First, there is a lack of support from senior leaders:

‘Pupil behaviour – no visible SLT [senior leadership team] support during known ‘hotspot’ times.’

‘No behaviour policy.’

Only 45% of respondents from FES providers and 56% of respondents from schools report that senior leaders collaborate with teachers when they need to solve classroom discipline problems jointly (see Figure 7).

130. Second, there is an inconsistent approach to managing behaviour:

‘Behavioural policy that is not followed consistently, even by the people who wrote it.’

‘Lack of consistency among staff when dealing with poor behaviour.’

Just over a half of all respondents (53% in FES and 57% in schools) believe that rules for pupils’ behaviour are often or always enforced consistently throughout their provider/school. There is also a statistically significant

discrepancy between senior leaders and the rest of the staff in either sector: 86% of senior leaders in FES providers believe the rules for behaviour are consistently enforced, in contrast to only 52% of teachers and 54% of teaching assistants.

## **Relationships with parents are often a source of stress**

131. In both the school and the FES sector, relationships with some parents appear among the top causes of moderate or high undue stress at work. This is also confirmed by our qualitative findings.
132. Where parent–staff relationships work, parents are ‘supportive’, ‘appreciative’ and ‘positive’. In some cases, parents come to school to ask for help. All of this contributes to building positive relationships and allows schools to have a beneficial impact on the community. This is when staff feel ‘they are making a difference to the lives of many families.’
133. However, relationships with parents are much more often a source of stress and workload for a variety of reasons. Lack of support with pupils’ behaviour discussed in the previous section is one of them. Parental expectations are another. Expectations become a problem when they are perceived to be unrealistic or unfair – when parents expect the highest grades for their children despite their lack of effort. Staff are under pressure to ‘do everything under the sun for one child’ or help ‘all pupils get all A-star grades’.
134. In view of pressures to achieve academic success, respondents talked about their explicit and hidden accountability:
- Explicit accountability is the expectation at school level to ensure that students achieve their full potential.
  - This is different from ‘hidden accountability’ arising from excessive parental pressure and parental expectation that only the highest grades are acceptable.

The excessive pressures for success do not seem to be always matched by a heightened responsibility of parents and children, while senior leaders do not always act as a buffer between staff and parents:

‘The parents’ and senior leaders’ expectation is that we, teachers, got to get them their grades. All the pupils need to do is turn up.’

135. Communication between staff and parents represents another issue. An open access to staff email addresses creates an expectation and pressure for an immediate response from staff (including senior leaders and headteachers). Some schools even have a ‘culture of competition’ in which parents share schools’ response rates among themselves. As a result, the instant response email culture adds to workload and interferes with work–life balance:

'My email inbox is like a pit of death. My emails are incessant. I often receive 50-80 emails per day, even when I am ill. Some of these are important, but it means I have to sift through them to make sure I get to the important things.'

'Parents email at night and want an instant response that night. If you don't respond that night, they phone the school the next day'.

136. In view of the workload issues and lack of work–life balance discussed earlier, the 'instant response culture' is not trivial. Steps should be taken to address this problem.

137. Issues around communication become even more serious when it comes to parents raising concerns. A part of the problem lies in the trend of going straight to the highest authority. Staff point out that this is increasingly the case due to 'the culture in society of wanting to complain remotely at the highest level.' Skipping steps in the process of raising a concern has a clear impact on occupational well-being across staff roles. When the headteacher is the highest authority, parents circumvent teachers. In schools in which senior leadership does not act as a buffer in the process, teachers feel neither supported nor sufficiently respected:

'When a parent raises a concern, teachers are the last people to be considered. Teachers are not backed up. Incidents are investigated with pupils before teachers being asked for their opinions. Pupils are believed above teachers, which makes you feel vulnerable.'

138. Certain complaints are even more aggressive in nature, being described as 'abusive' or 'disrespectful'. Senior leaders clearly outline a vicious circle that starts with a parent shouting. They notice that the situation can easily escalate with other parents who witness the situation, which leads to a 'mob mentality'. Despite strategies to tackle this, senior leaders point out that 'it is the odd few parents who can bring a school down.' This kind of parental behaviour introduces another layer of complexity to the previously discussed issues of managing pupils' behaviour. Respondents sometimes mentioned parents in conjunction with their children ('abusive parents and children'), which suggests that children model their parents' behaviour. In one school, specifically, leaders pointed out that 40% of their children 'have social, emotional and mental health difficulties which often have its roots in the parents' behaviour'.

139. The discussed issues in the relationship between schools and parents are linked with two themes:

- the lack of parental respect
- the power of parents over school staff.

140. Lack of parental respect is manifested in different ways. The more extreme ways include inappropriate and aggressive behaviours described above, while

the subtler ones are 'not having trust in staff', 'disagreeing with teachers' decisions', 'parents not taking teaching assistants seriously', or not acknowledging the support or skill set of staff. Some staff believe that media portrayals of teachers are generally not helpful and feel that there should be 'more support for parents to appreciate the profession'.

141. Respondents reported a sense that there is an imbalance of power in parents' favour. Social media gives parents power to publicly express negative comments about a school. Ability to go straight to the highest authority and raise a complaint gives them further power. A culture of competition between schools does the same:

'This was less of an issue under the local authority ... schools are now more of a business. Open evenings are ridiculously pressured – now a marketing job. You can't drive educational improvement when you are competing for pupils.'

142. The findings indicate that some actions at a school level could help with issues with parents, such as informing parents about the most appropriate ways of raising concerns and providing support to staff when a complaint has been raised. Schools could also consider replacing email communication with parents with other forms of communication (such as face-to-face or phone communication) or restrict access to staff's email addresses. This may alleviate workload.

### **In our focus groups, educators told us they do not have enough influence over policy, which changes too quickly...**

143. Senior leaders, teachers and teaching assistants make explicit references to the fast pace at which educational policy changes, thereby 'moving the goal posts' for schools and teachers. This concern emerges in two ways:
- first, it is a significant cause of frustration for teaching staff, because it often results in an increase in workload that could otherwise be focused on teaching
  - second, and more pertinently expressed in the data, teaching staff rarely see their voice or educational evidence included in the method of policy change.
144. All three professional groups (but mainly teachers, middle leaders and teaching assistants) express a clear sense of exclusion from policy decisions. Senior leaders identify regular changes in policy direction as a factor negatively impacting on their well-being, especially when they do not agree with those changes but are still 'obliged to follow'. Not feeling consulted on important things that change and a complete lack of control is a general theme: 'External change that you have no control of and no input into.' The absence of teachers' voice is expressed in terms of a rejection, which effectively de-professionalises them. The lack of control over decisions that are important for work affects

staff autonomy, which is an important element of occupational well-being generally.

145. When asked how the government/DfE can support teacher well-being, interviewees expressed the following suggestions:

- Stop 'frequent changes' to education policy and 'changing for changing's sake' to allow for more consistency.
- Streamline bureaucracy in awarding bodies and reduce the frequency of changes to exam specifications:

'Specifications change before really thought through. Policies to implement at the same time.'

- Put more trust in the professional decisions, choices and opinions of teachers. 'Trust' was an emerging theme, with a number of senior leaders asking the government to 'trust us', coupled with a general sentiment to remove education policies from the political sphere. They want to be asked for their opinion by the government before important education decisions are made.

### **... and they also felt Ofsted inspections were a source of stress**

146. A lot of the language respondents used about Ofsted was emotional ('fear' or 'threat of Ofsted inspections'), and there is a sense of rising tension leading up to an inspection ('build up to an Ofsted inspection', 'waiting for the Ofsted phone call').

147. Inspections add to stress and workload because:

- they increase administrative workload (though part of this appears to be driven by SLT):

'Completing pointless Ofsted tick-box tasks devised by SLT'

'Very long hours required to keep up with the DfE/Ofsted 'evidence' culture

'Evidencing progress/data for governors/Ofsted'.

- misguided priorities are created through the focus on what Ofsted is perceived to want, rather than what pupils need:

'Working to Ofsted rather than student needs'

'Narrow focus on test outcomes'

'Pressure of progress for Ofsted'



'All the reading of policy and procedures and reporting and writing for OFSTED' and 'culture of what Ofsted wants'.

- there is an excessive focus on data/exam results that does not give a full or representative picture of the quality of education:

'Measures of the quality of schools are too blunt and inspections, which rightly carry much significance, are dependent on the view which is set prior to the visit.'

148. During focus group interviews, we asked school staff what Ofsted could do to improve their well-being. Two major themes revolved around:

- improving and changing the nature of a relationship between Ofsted and schools
- broadening inspection focus.

149. As far as the nature of relationship is concerned, the general theme is a desire for Ofsted to be less of a 'threatening' organisation and rather one with which professional, constructive and 'formative' relationships can be built. Schools and providers want to be advised rather than just inspected. Senior leaders reported wanting Ofsted to 'support and challenge in equal measure' and voices from across other job roles would like Ofsted to visit more regularly (not just for inspections) to develop relationships in schools and providers. In line with this, teachers and middle leaders were also asking for continuous professional development (CPD) to be led by Ofsted about inspections and how to make practice better in line with inspection framework:

'Would like staff CPD from Ofsted about what is expected as messages can be misunderstood by leaders.'

'More/better communication about how we are being judged.'

150. Interviewees would also like Ofsted to:

- continue with research projects addressing well-being and disseminate research within teaching communities
- develop strategies to avoid teacher stress and panic during inspections (such as explicitly recognising difficult working environments for teachers, as well as having realistic expectations in view of such difficult conditions)
- explicitly recognise teacher well-being within the inspection framework – this already forms part of the EIF.

151. Respondents also called for inspection focus to be broader and more comprehensive. This would entail considering pupils'/students' holistic experience and development (rather than just the grades), using different methods to judge education and taking into account context of the school, because 'one inspection framework does not fit all.'

## The role of managers and leaders

### Overall support from senior leaders

152. While views on colleagues were overwhelmingly positive, participants were more ambiguous with regards to senior leaders and line managers, who were seen by some as strong enablers of staff well-being, while in other cases perceived to be contributing to low levels of well-being.

### Leaders support teacher autonomy, and many listen to and trust their staff...

153. International scholars acknowledge that teachers as professionals should have enough autonomy in deciding how to proceed with their work tasks.<sup>40</sup> According to the findings from TALIS, autonomy in decision-making on classroom issues is partly associated with job satisfaction.<sup>41</sup> Here, our findings are very positive. Most staff:

- sometimes, often or always make or influence decisions that are important for their work (94% and 86% of respondents, respectively)
- apply their own ideas in their work (97%)
- play an important role in setting objectives for their work (87%).

Such a widespread sense of autonomy is supported by senior leadership. As many as 91% of senior leaders often or always trust their staff to do their work well. They also engage their staff in joint decision making. Only a small minority of leaders (25%) often or always make the important decisions on their own. According to 74% of the senior leaders, their school often or always provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions.

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<sup>40</sup> Guerriero, S and Deligiannidi, K, 'The teaching profession and its knowledge base', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2017; <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264270695-3-en>.

<sup>41</sup> 'Teaching in Focus Brief No. 14: Teacher professionalism', Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2016; [www.oecd.org/education/school/teachinginfocus.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/school/teachinginfocus.htm).

154. When relationships with senior leaders positively impact on well-being, this is because senior leaders are considered to:

- listen to their staff:

‘The head teacher will make time for you to listen to you, whatever time of the day.’

- communicate well with staff – communication is important to a sense of positive occupational well-being. All three professional groups identify regular meetings, both informal and formal, as an important part of registering concerns related to their occupational well-being. An open-door policy adopted by senior leaders is the most widely cited positive contribution to staff reporting concerns about their occupational well-being

- support their staff:

‘having an SLT team that cares about well-being’

‘genuine ethos of support from colleagues and managers’

- value their staff and their work:

‘Appreciation from senior leaders about hard work and good ideas.’

- trust their staff to complete their own work competently and effectively and give them an adequate level of autonomy; being given autonomy and responsibility is an important positive factor across all surveyed job roles in schools and FES providers:

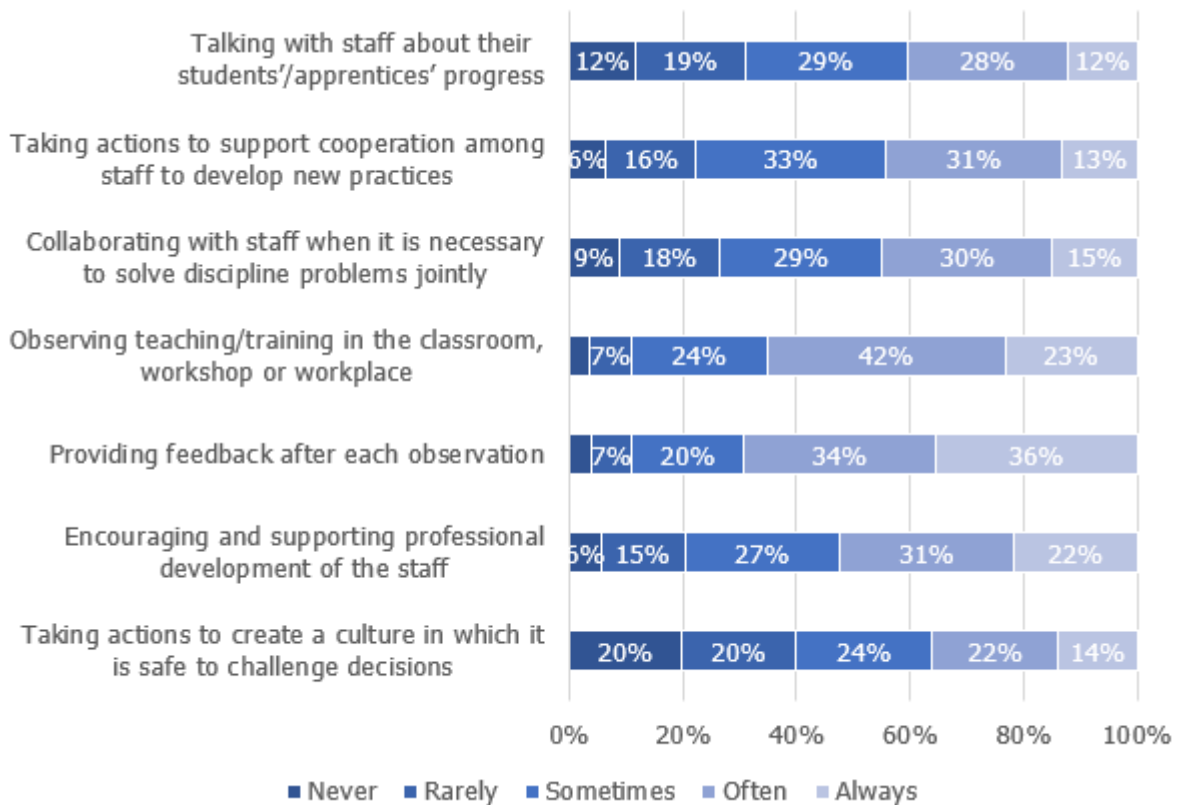
‘The fact that I am trusted as a professional. That means I am trusted to plan and teach, I can make decisions about how I want to mark work and deliver lessons and if I am not teaching I am trusted to make the most of my time on or off site.’

### **...but views on support from leaders are mixed...**

155. Figure 7 displays respondents’ views on the different types of support they get from senior leadership. It shows a mixed picture.

156. According to most FES respondents, senior leaders often or always observe teaching or training in the classroom, workshop or workplace (65%) and feedback after each observation (70%). This is very similar to the situation in schools, with 60% and 76% respondents, respectively, reporting the above. Observations by senior leaders are not always felt to be supportive, though.

**Figure 7: Senior leaders in FES providers support staff by...**



157. The remaining areas of senior leadership support could be strengthened in a lot of cases, such as talking with staff about students'/pupils' progress and taking actions to support cooperation among teachers to develop new teaching practices. Notably, only 36% of FES respondents and 51% of schools' respondents believe that senior leaders often or always take actions to create a **culture in which it is safe to challenge decisions**. Significantly fewer teachers (42% in schools and 33% in FES) and teaching assistants (55% in schools and 43% in FES) than senior leaders (90% in schools and 93% in FES) share this view. Freedom to influence decisions is one aspect of autonomy at work, which is an integral element of occupational well-being.

### **...and in some cases, leaders are seen as contributing to low levels of well-being**

158. The main reasons for senior leaders being viewed as negative influences on occupational well-being in schools and providers are:

- lack of communication or poor communication with staff:
  - 'Not being listened to by senior management'
  - 'Senior leaders not communicating well to staff'
  - 'secrecy of management'

- management style:
  - 'I have no control or input in management decisions which directly impact on me or my students.'
  - 'Zero tolerance towards having an opinion of the new structure or new regimes.'
- workload pressure from senior leaders:
  - 'short deadlines'
  - 'expecting more in less time'
- lack of praise, recognition and appreciation for the work done by staff or unpleasant behaviour indicating lack of respect for staff:
  - 'unfair treatment by some senior leaders'
  - 'higher management walk past teaching staff and do not even say hello'.
- lack of support from senior leaders and lack of collaboration:
  - 'lack of strategic view on workload, deadlines, etc.'
  - 'There are more people checking that I am doing a good job than supporting me, but I take the blame if my students' results are poor.'

159. In FES providers specifically, another aspect emerged:

- lack of clear direction and 'senior management making it up as it goes along'.

160. Addressing the identified issues with senior leadership support, particularly in terms of managing poor behaviour,<sup>42</sup> is likely to improve workplace culture and have a direct impact on the occupational well-being of staff in schools and FES providers.

### **Similar mixed views exist on line managers**

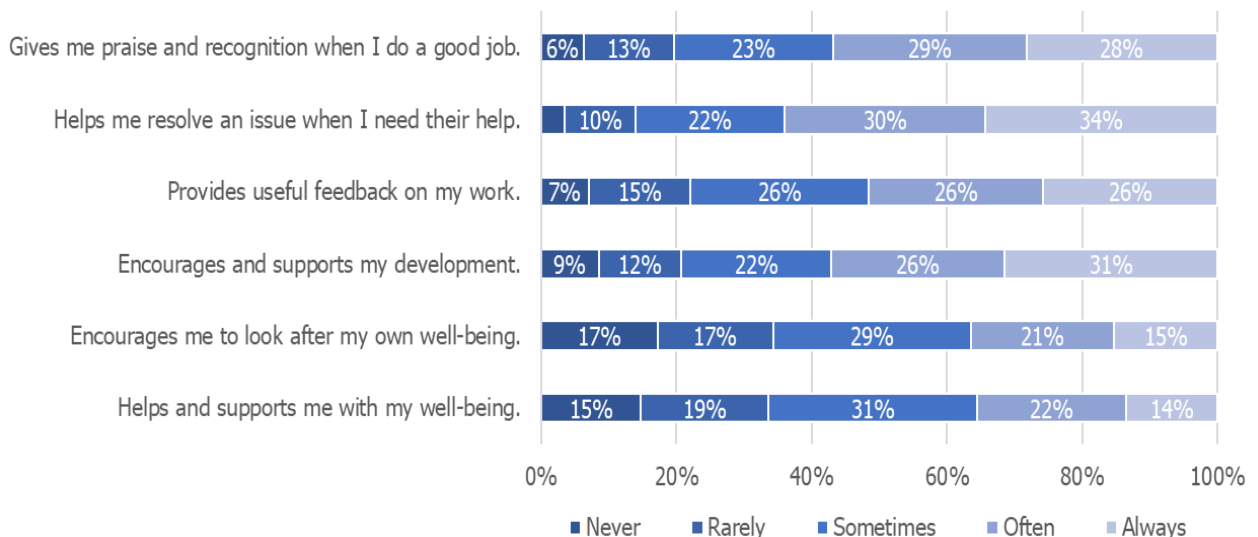
161. As with senior leaders, many educators feel well supported by line managers. 'Line manager' is frequently mentioned among the factors that positively impact on our respondents' occupational well-being. This is, however, not always the case. Our findings also show that many respondents are not receiving enough line management support.

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<sup>42</sup> See the section 'Poor behaviour is a source of low occupational well-being and teachers do not always feel supported by senior leaders and parents in managing it' of this report.

162. Respect, recognition and trust from line managers, as well as approachability, are the qualities that enable positive relationships between line managers and their managees, according to our findings. Supportiveness with work-related or personal matters was highlighted (for example 'support from my direct manager with any issues I may face in my role or personally'). Respect from line managers was also found to impact on occupational well-being of school staff, according to regression analyses.
163. Views on different aspects of line management support are displayed in Figure 8. Only a small majority of FES teachers and teaching assistants reported that their line managers often or always carry out the following responsibilities:
- give praise and recognition for a job well done (57%)
  - help to resolve an issue when necessary (64%)
  - provide useful feedback (52%)
  - encourage and support their development (57%).
164. Even fewer reported an explicit focus on well-being issues. For example, only 36% of teachers and teaching assistants stated that their line manager often or always helps and supports them with their well-being. Responses in the school sector were extremely similar.

**Figure 8: My line manager... (FES)**



165. Where line management is listed under top three negative factors, this is because it is seen as 'poor', 'ineffective', 'unsupportive' or 'non-existent'. Some respondents flagged micromanagement as a negative factor because it can indicate a lack of trust and result in staff's decreased sense of autonomy.
166. These findings suggest that line managers in schools and FES providers should provide more support to their direct reports and should always ensure that their staff feel respected by them.



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