Department for Education

Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 5

Summary report

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IFF Research and UCL Institute of Education

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1. Introduction

The working lives of teachers and leaders study is an annual survey of teachers and leaders in state schools in England. The survey explores teachers and leaders':

- workload, wellbeing and flexible working arrangements
- attitudes to pay
- experiences of professional development
- views on pupil behaviour
- career reflections
- future career intentions

This summary presents headline findings from wave 5 of the survey, carried out between 27 January and 1 May 2026.[1]

Findings from wave 1(Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1 - GOV.UK), wave 2 (Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 2 - GOV.UK), wave 3 (Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK) and wave 4 (Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 4 - GOV.UK) are available at the links above.

[1] Previous waves took place in spring 2025 (wave 4), spring 2024 (wave 3), spring 2023 (wave 2) and spring 2022 (wave 1).

2. Methodology

In part, the working lives of teachers and leaders survey uses a longitudinal design. Those who took part in the preceding year are approached to participate in the following wave. All those who completed the wave 4 survey were invited to take part in wave 5. New participants are also invited to take part each year, ensuring a representative sample of at least 10,000 teachers and leaders.

Wave 5 participants

A total of 10,715 teachers and leaders participated in wave 5 of the survey, 6,135 of whom also completed the wave 4 survey (2025). Of these, 1,007 have participated in the research since wave 3 (2024), 734 have participated in the research since wave 2 (2023) and 2,197 have participated since wave 1 (2022). The new participants for wave 5 were sampled from:

- the School Workforce Census
- DfE's continuing professional development portal for early career teachers (ECTs)

In addition, 406 leavers (those who no longer teach in an English state school) completed a section of the survey, taking the total number of responses to 11,121.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was split into a core questionnaire and two shorter modules. All participating teachers and leaders were asked questions from the core questionnaire. Those who took part online were also shown a module.[2] In total, the modules received the following number of responses:

- work life and wellbeing (5,371)
- continuing professional development (2,701)

Weighting and margin of error

Survey data was weighted to the School Workforce Census to ensure that findings represent the population of teachers and leaders in England. Data presented from a sample of teachers and leaders, rather than the total population, is subject to sampling error.

[2] Those who participated in the research last wave were shown the same module as the previous wave. However, the module on pay was removed from the survey this wave, so, all those who previously responded to the pay module were allocated to the work life and wellbeing module instead. New participants were randomly assigned to a module with a 2/3 probability of being assigned to the work life and wellbeing module.

The sample of 10,715 teachers and leaders currently working in an English state school means that statistically, we can be 95% confident that the true value of a survey finding of 50% lies within a +/- 1.1% range, that is 48.9% to 51.1%. Results based on a sub-set of teachers and leaders surveyed are subject to a wider margin of error.

The wave 1, wave 2, wave 3 and wave 4 technical reports have more detail on the methodology.

Interpreting findings in this report

In this report we have:

- made comparisons from waves 1, 2, 3 and 4 against wave 5 where possible
- drawn out statistically significant differences between the five years

Differences between subgroups are only referenced where statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Unless explicitly noted otherwise, this is also the case for comparisons between 2026 and all previous years respectively.

Throughout the report, where there is a statistically significant difference, sometimes the scale of this difference will be indicated (e.g. ‘a small increase’). Where a difference between figures is not statistically significant this is described as ‘consistent’, even where the percentages or mean averages being compared are not the same.

Groups used in the analysis

Below is an explanation of the groups of participants used in the analysis and the number in each group.

Teachers

Includes all who specified they were:

- leading practitioners
- middle leaders
- classroom teachers (not early career teachers)
- classroom teachers (early career teachers)
- unqualified teachers

There were 8,583 participants in this group.

Middle leaders

Includes all who specified they were a middle leader, such as a:

- head of faculty
- head of subject or subject leader
- head of key stage
- head of phase
- head of year group

There were 2,011 participants in this group.

Senior leaders

Includes all who specified that they were:

- an executive headteacher
- a headteacher
- deputy headteacher
- assistant headteacher
- leading practitioner

There were 2,258 participants in this group.

Leaders

Includes all who specified that they were:

- an executive headteacher
- a headteacher
- deputy headteacher
- an assistant headteacher

There were 2,009 participants in this group.

Those with teaching responsibilities

Includes all who reported their current job role was best described as classroom teacher or who indicated that their responsibilities included classroom teaching. This includes those who specified that they were leaders but undertook classroom teaching.

There were 9,715 participants in this group.

3. Teacher and leader workload

Overall workload

The survey asked teachers and leaders to estimate their total working hours in their most recent term-time working week. In 2026, teachers continued to report working fewer hours on average than leaders (46.7 compared with 55.4). Both groups' average working hours were consistent with 2025, but lower than in the first three waves of the survey:

- teachers: 46.7 hours, consistent with 46.9 in 2025, and down from 48.1 in 2024, 49.4 in 2023 and 48.7 in 2022
- leaders: 55.4 hours, consistent with 55.5 in 2025, and down from 56.6 in 2024, 57.4 in 2023 and 56.8 in 2022

Full-time teachers reported working 49.9 hours on average in 2026, consistent with 50.1 in 2025, and down from 51.2 in 2024, 52.4 in 2023 and 51.9 in 2022. Full-time leaders worked 56.5 hours on average in both 2026 and 2025, lower than 57.6 in 2024, 58.2 in 2023 and 57.5 in 2022.

Distribution of working hours by band

Full-time teachers were most likely to report working 40 to 49 or 50 to 59 hours per week. Full-time leaders were most likely to report working 50 to 59 hours per week, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Distribution of working hours 2026 - full-time teachers and leaders

Hours worked	<20	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 or more	Don't know
Full-time teachers	1%	1%*	7%*	36%*	36%	14%	3%	1%	2%*
Full-time leaders	<1%	0%	1%	14%	42%*	33%*	7%*	2%*	<1%

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. D1. In your most recent full working week, approximately how many hours did you work? Single response. All full-time teachers (wave 5, 2026, n=6,788) and all full-time leaders (wave 5, 2026, n=1,807). *Indicates significant difference between teachers and leaders.

Average working hours by phase

Full-time teachers and leaders worked a consistent number of hours on average in 2026 compared with 2025. As in 2025, in 2026, primary teachers and leaders worked more

hours on average compared to those working in special schools, pupil referral units (PRU) or alternative provision (AP). Also in 2026, primary teachers worked more hours on average compared with secondary teachers.

Table 3.2 Average working hours by phase for full-time teachers and leaders, 2022-2026

Phase	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Primary teachers [a]	53.2*	53.9*	52.5*	51.4	51.2[bc]
Primary leaders [a]	57.2*	57.9*	57.5*	56.5	56.4[c]
Secondary teachers [b]	51.2*	51.4*	50.3*	49.3	49.1[c]
Secondary leaders [b]	58.6	59.1*	58.3	57.3	57.4[c]
Special/PRU/AP teachers [c]	48.2	49.3	48.3	47.4	47.4
Special/PRU/AP leaders [c]	54.7	55.5*	54.8	52.8	53.3

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. D1. In your most recent full working week, approximately how many hours did you work? Single response. All full-time primary teachers (wave 1, 2022, n=3,431, wave 2, 2023, n=3,339, wave 3, 2024, n=3,066, wave 4, 2025, n=3,383, wave 5, 2026, n=3,243). All full-time primary leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=967, wave 2, 2023, n=837, wave 3, 2024, n=983, wave 4, 2025, n=1,234, wave 5, 2026, n=1,173). All full-time secondary teachers (wave 1, 2022, n=3,340, wave 2, 2023, n=3,312, wave 3, 2024, n=3,086, wave 4, 2025, n=3,127, wave 5, 2026, n=3,199). All full-time secondary leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=610, wave 2, 2023, n=546, wave 3, 2024, n=462, wave 4, 2025, n=499, wave 5, 2026, n=456). All full-time special/PRU/AP teachers (wave 1, 2022, n=342, wave 2, 2023, n=294, wave 3, 2024, n=320, wave 4, 2025, n=303, wave 5, 2026, n=346). All full-time special/PRU/AP leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=118, wave 2, 2023, n=114, wave 3, 2024, n=126, wave 4, 2025, n=152, wave 5, 2026, n=178). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026. Letters denote significant differences between school phases in 2026.

Hours spent teaching

Full-time teachers with teaching responsibilities spent an average of 23.4 hours teaching in the reference week in 2026. This was consistent with the 23.3 hours reported in 2025 and 2024, but lower than 2023 and 2022 (24.0 and 23.7 hours).

In 2026 full-time leaders with teaching responsibilities reported spending 11.3 hours teaching on average in the classroom in the most recent reference week, consistent with the 11.8 hours in 2025, but lower than the 12.4 hours in 2024, the 12.8 hours in 2023 and 13.3 hours in 2022 for this group.

As shown in Table 3.3 below, full-time teachers were most likely to spend between 20 and 24 hours teaching in the reference week (38%). Consistent with previous waves, most full-time leaders spent less than 15 hours teaching in the reference week (70%).

Table 3.3 Distribution of teaching hours 2026 - full-time teachers and leaders with teaching responsibilities

Hours spent teaching	0	1 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 to 39	40 or more	Don't know
Teachers	<1%	4%	2%	12%	38%*	23%*	15%*	4%*	1%	2%*
Leaders	2%*	44%*	25%*	14%	10%	4%	2%	1%	<1%	<1%

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. D2. In your most recent full working week, approximately how many hours did you spend on teaching in the classroom (including online classes)? Single response. All full-time teachers (n=6,727) and full-time leaders (n=1,075) with teaching responsibilities. *Indicates a significant difference between teachers and leaders.

Average teaching hours for full-time teachers with teaching responsibilities in secondary schools (21.4) were lower than those in primary schools (25.5) and those in special schools, pupil referral units (PRU) or alternative provision (AP) (23.6).

Views on workload

In 2026, around a quarter (26%) of teachers and leaders agreed that they had an acceptable workload, consistent with 2025 (also 26%), but an increase from 22% in 2024, and 17% in both 2022 and 2023. Just under four-in-ten (38%) agreed that they had sufficient control over their workload in 2026. This was a small decrease compared with 2025 (39%), but an increase compared to all other previous years (34% in 2024, 30% in 2023 and 26% in 2022).

In total, 44% of teachers and leaders thought their workload was both not acceptable and that they did not have sufficient control over it, in line with 2025 (43%), but a decrease compared with 2024 (49%), 2023 (54%) and 2022 (57%). One-in-five (21%) teachers and leaders agreed with both statements, again, in line with 2025 (22%), but higher than the 18% who did so in 2024, and the 14% in both 2023 and 2022.

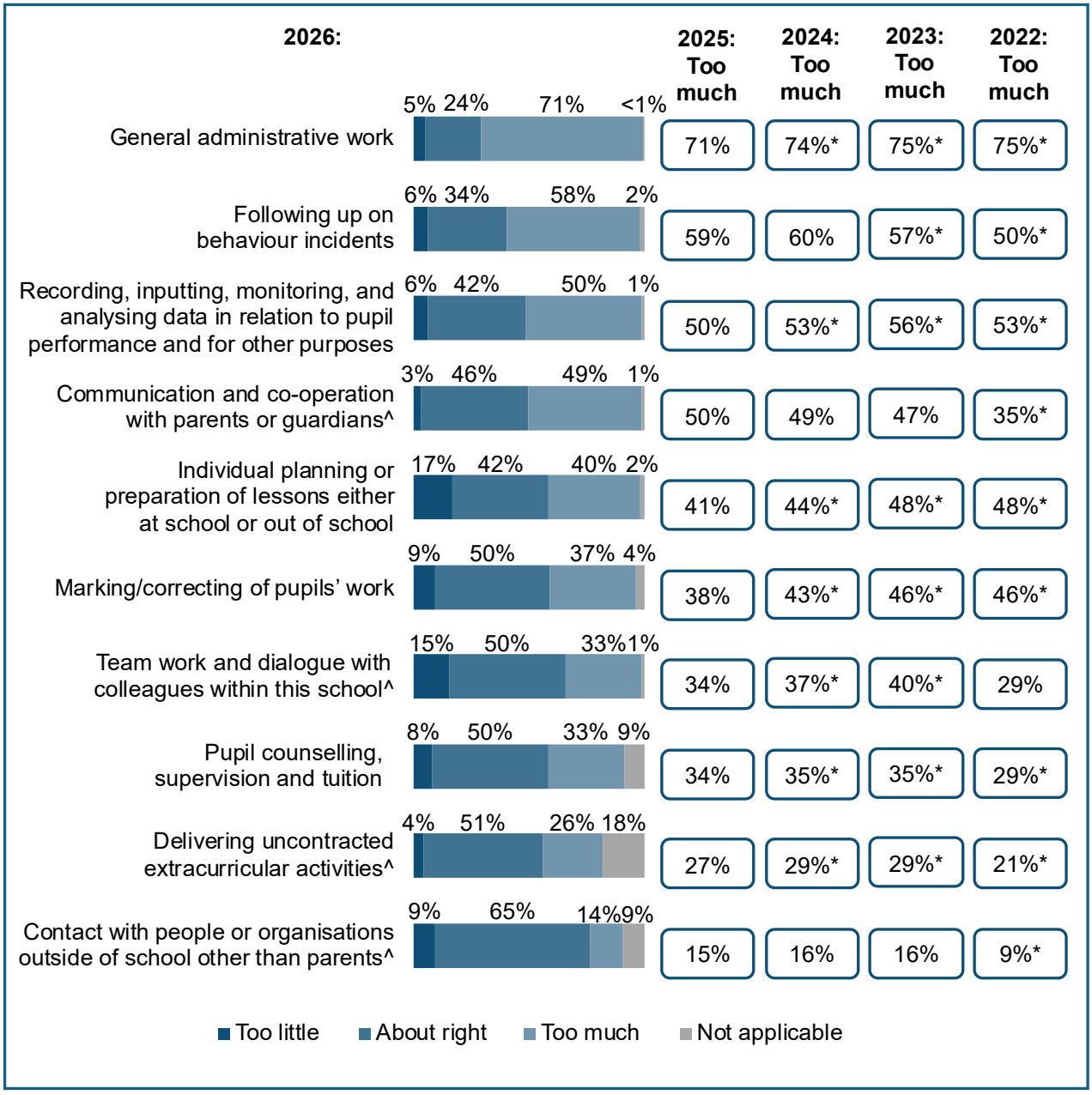
Time spent on non-teaching tasks

Teachers and middle leaders

The tasks teachers and middle leaders most commonly reported spending too much time on have been broadly similar year on year. For example, general administrative work[3] has consistently been reported by the most teachers and middle leaders in all years. Findings in 2026 were consistent with 2025, with similar proportions of teachers and middle leaders feeling they spent too much time on each task, as shown in Figure 3.1

[3] General administrative work was defined as including communication, paperwork, work email and other clerical duties undertaken.

Figure 3.1 Teachers and middle leaders' views on time spent on specific tasks



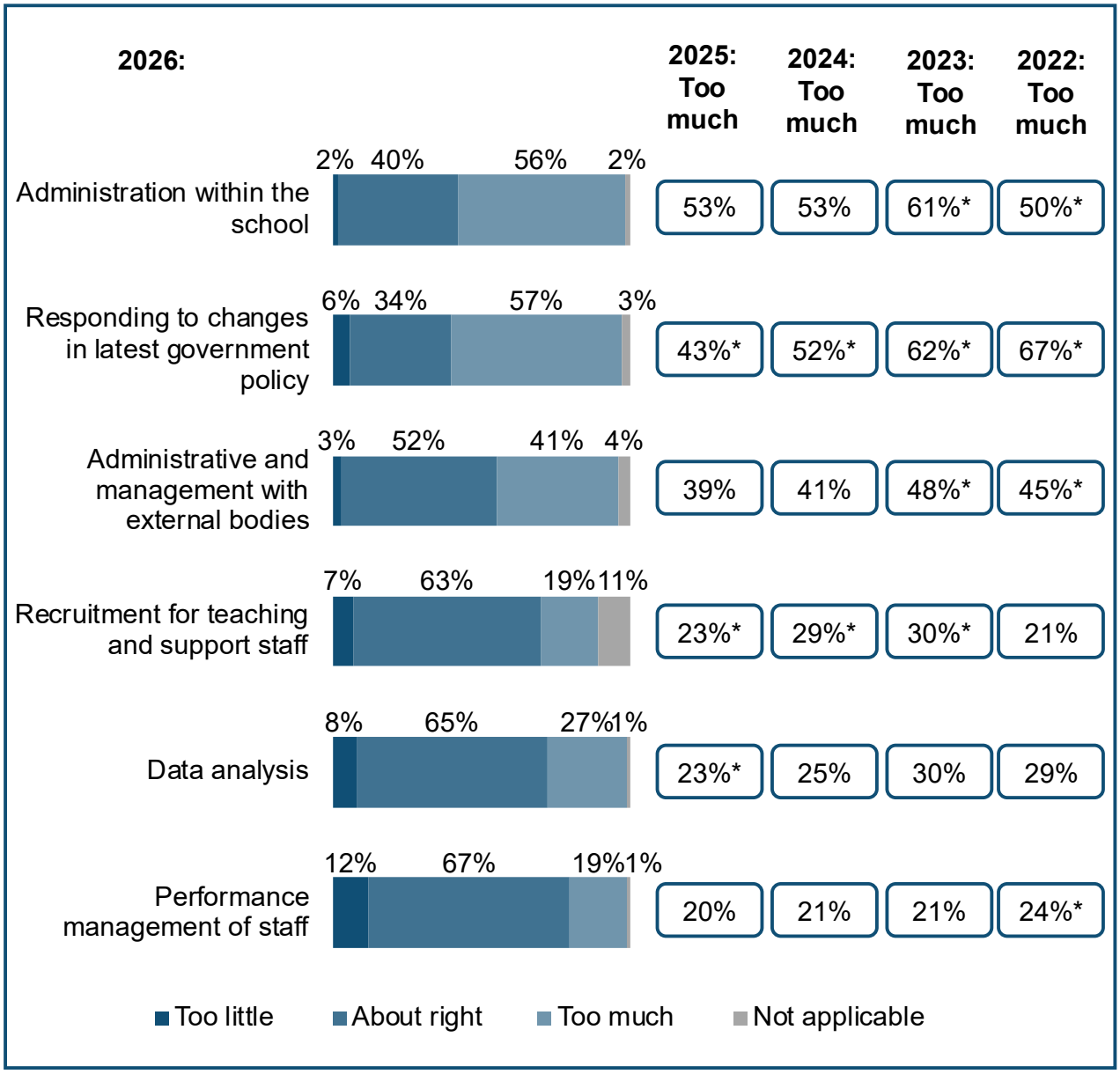
Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey D3_1-6/P1_1-4. Across the whole school year, is the amount of time you spend outside lessons on the following far too little, too little, about right, too much, far too much, or is the statement not applicable to you? "Too much" is the sum of too much and far too much" "too little" is the sum of too little and far too little. Single response. D3: All teachers and middle leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=8,960) (wave 2, 2023, n=8,476) (wave 3, 2024, n=8,001) (wave 4, 2025, n=8,434) (wave 5, 2026, n=8,457). P1: All module 1 teachers and middle leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=2,903) (wave 2, 2023, n=2,139) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,031) (wave 4, 2025, n=2,265) (wave 5, 2026, n=4,649). ^Indicates question asked at P1 to a smaller base of respondents randomly assigned to a module within the survey. *Indicates statistically significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Senior leaders

In 2026 responding to changes in latest government policy was the most common task senior leaders reported they spent too much time on (57%), an increase on 2025 (43%) and 2024 (52%), but still lower than earlier points in the time series (62% in 2023 and 67% in 2022). Administration within the school was the second most commonly reported task senior leaders said they spent too much time on (56% in 2026, consistent with 2025 and 2024, lower than in 2023 when it was 61% but still higher than in 2022 (50%).

The proportion who felt they spent too much time on recruitment for teaching and support staff (19%) was lower than in 2025 (23%), 2024 (29%) and 2023 (30%) but consistent with 2022 (21%). More senior leaders felt they spent too much time on data analysis in 2026 (27%) than in 2025 (23%), marking a return to levels seen in earlier years (25% 2024, 30% in 2023 and 29% in 2022). The full list of tasks are shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Senior leaders' views on time spent on specific tasks, 2022-2026

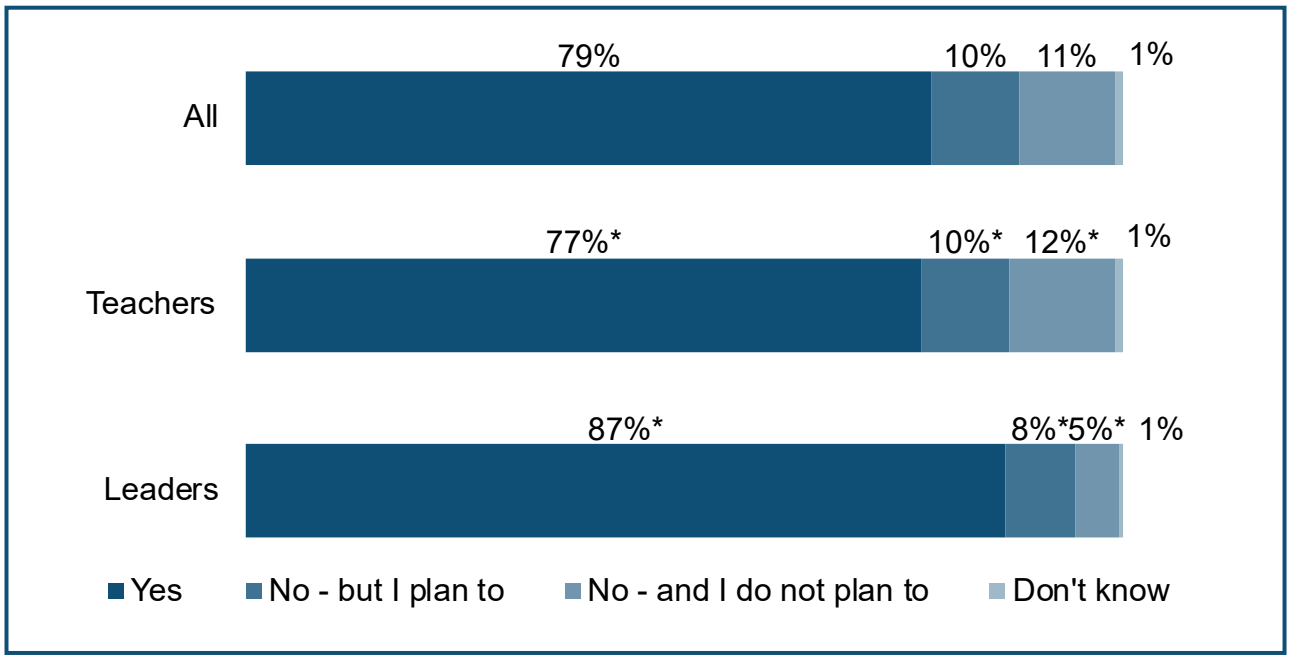


Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. D3_7-12. Across the whole school year, is the amount of time you spend outside lessons on the following far too little, too little, about right, too much, far too much, or is the statement not applicable to you? "Too much" is the sum of too much and far too much" "too little" is the sum of too little and far too little. Single response. All senior leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=2,213) (wave 2, 2023, n=1,892) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,019) (wave 4, 2025, n=2,374) (wave 5, 2026, n=2,258). *Indicates statistically significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

In 2026 new questions were added to the survey asking about use of artificial intelligence (AI). Around four-in-five (79%) teachers and leaders reported they had used AI in their roles. 10% had not used AI in their role but planned to, and 11% had not used AI and did not plan to, as shown in Figure 3.9. Leaders were more likely to have used AI in their role than teachers (87% vs. 77%). Teachers were more likely to say they did not plan to use AI in their role than leaders (12% vs 5%)

Figure 3.3 Teachers' and leaders' use of AI tools in their roles, by role, 2026



Source: Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey. D5. Have you used AI tools in your role as a teacher or leader? Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715; Leaders n=2,009; Teachers n=8,583). *Indicates significant difference compared to overall.

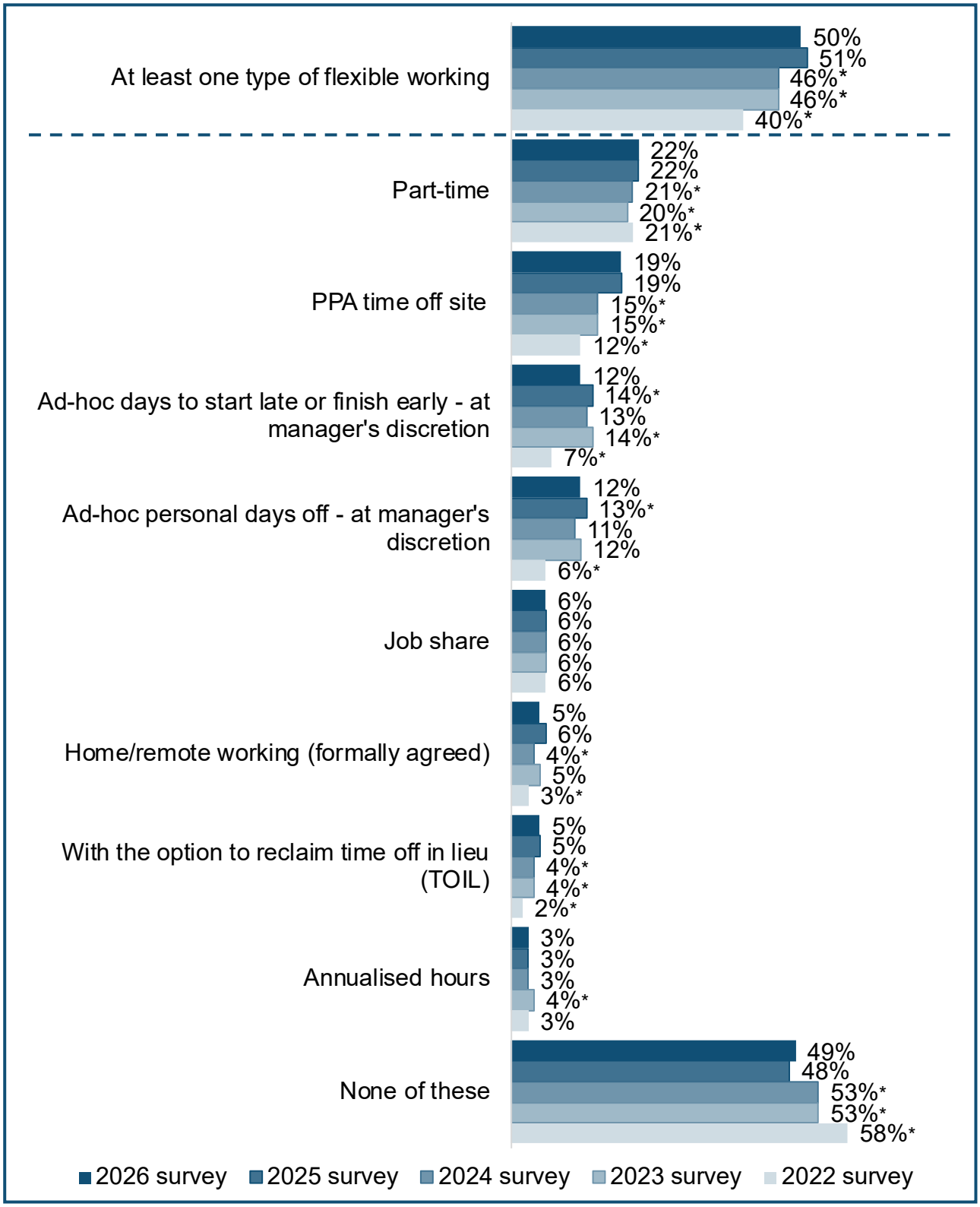
4. Flexible working

Types of flexible working arrangements

Half of all teachers and leaders had some form of flexible working arrangement in place in 2026 (50%), consistent with 2025 (51%) but higher than all preceding years (46% in 2024 and 2023, 40% in 2022).

Part-time working remained the most common form of flexible working arrangement (22%) consistent with 2025 (22%), but an increase compared with previous years (21% in 2024, 20% in 2023, 21% in 2022). This was followed by planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time offsite (19%), and ad-hoc days to start late or finish early and ad-hoc personal days off at their manager's discretion (both 12%). The full breakdown of different types of flexible working arrangements is shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Teachers' and leaders' flexible working arrangements

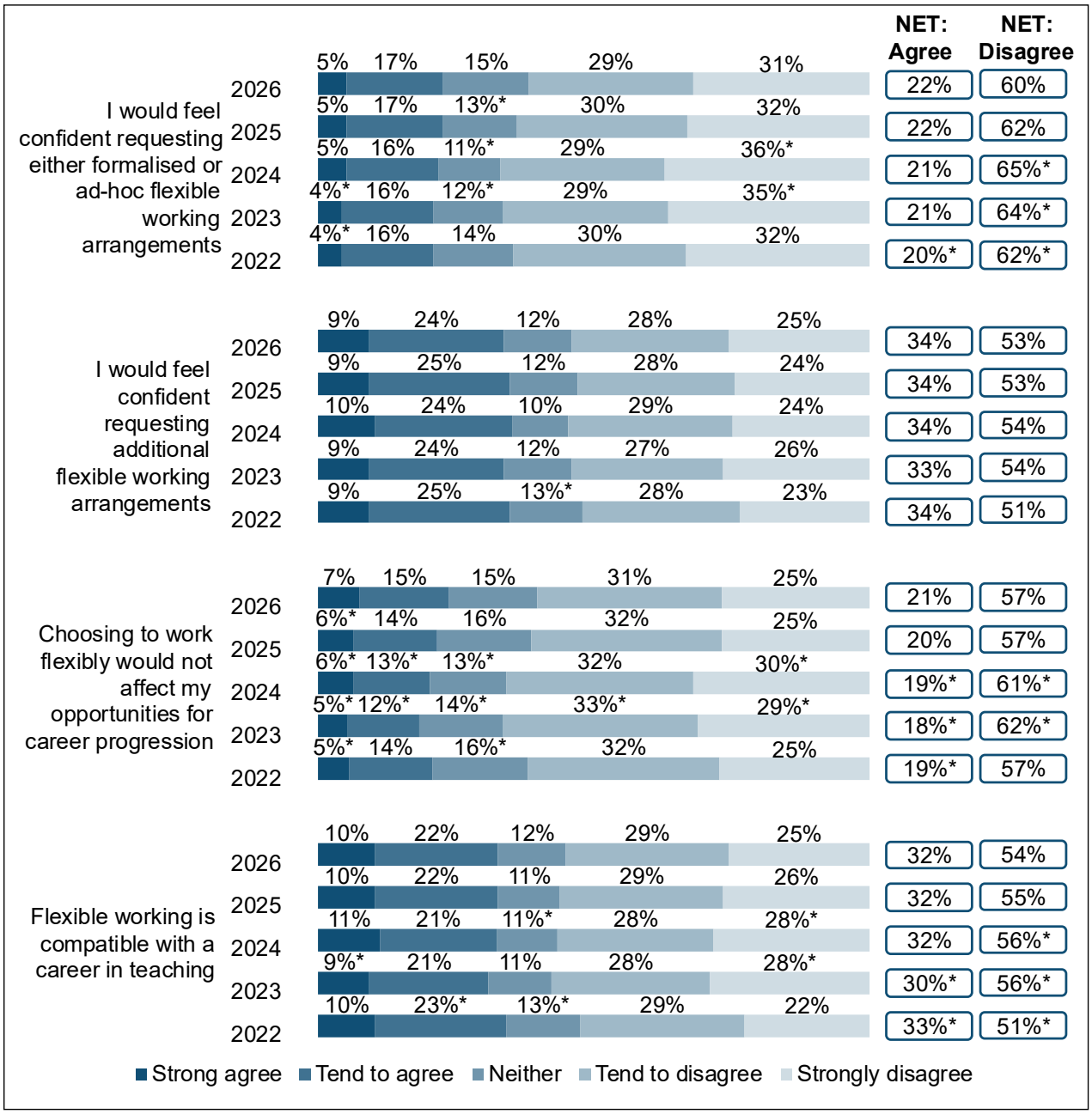


Source: Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey. K1. Do you currently work in any of the following ways? Multiple response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). Figures <2% in 2026 are not included in the chart. A small proportion (1% in 2026) said 'don't know' and are therefore not included as having 'at least one type of flexible working' or 'none of these'. *Indicates significant difference compared to findings from the 2026 survey.

Views on the compatibility and acceptability of flexible working were generally consistent with previous years (as shown in Figure 4.2). Where changes were observed, they typically indicated a trend towards slightly more positive views on flexible working since 2022. For example, around one-in-five (21%) agreed that choosing to work flexibly would not affect their opportunities for career progression, consistent with 2025 (20%), but an increase compared to 2024 (19%), 2023 (18%) and 2022 (19%).

Over four-in-ten (44%) agreed that their school's senior leadership team (SLT) was supportive of flexible working, an increase compared to all previous years (42% in 2025, 40% in 2024, 39% in 2023, 41% in 2022). Around a third (32%) disagreed that their SLT supported flexible working. This was consistent with 2025 (34%), lower than in 2024 and 2023 (both 35%), but slightly above 2022 (31%).

Figure 4.2 Teachers and leaders' views on flexible working arrangements



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. K2_1. Agreement that 'Flexible working is compatible with a career in teaching'. K2_2. Agreement that 'Choosing to work flexibly would not affect my opportunities for career progression'. Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). K2_3. Agreement that 'I would feel confident requesting either formalised or ad-hoc flexible working arrangements'. Single response. All not working flexibly or whose only flexible working is occasional days off or leaving early (wave 1, 2022, n=7,256) (wave 2, 2023, n=6,677) (wave 3, 2024, n=6,291) (wave 4, 2025, n=6,258) (wave 5, 2026, n=6,287). K2_4. Agreement that: 'I would feel confident requesting additional flexible working arrangements'. Single response. All those currently working flexibly (wave 1, 2022, n=3,921) (wave 2, 2023, n=3,734) (wave 3, 2024, n=3,729) (wave 4, 2025, n=4,550) (wave 5, 2026, n=4,429). *Indicates statistically significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

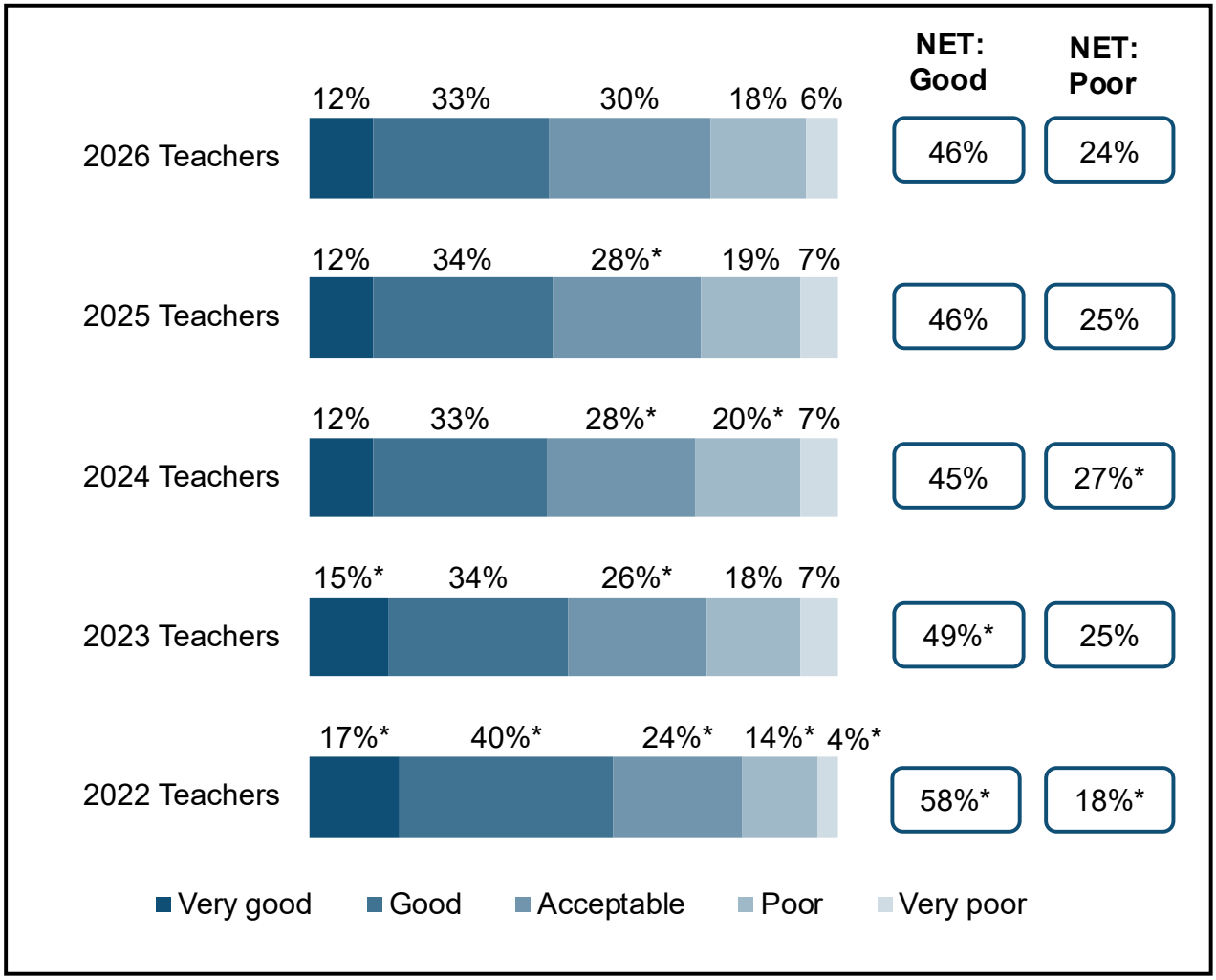
5. Pupil behaviour

Views on pupil behaviour

Half (50%) of teachers and leaders rated pupil behaviour at their school as good or very good. This was consistent with 2025 (51%) and 2024 (50%), but lower than in 2023 and 2022 (53% rated behaviour good or very good in 2023, and 62% did so in 2022).

Teacher agreement that behaviour at their school was good or very good remained consistent with 2025 and 2024 (46% in 2026, 46% in 2025 and 45% in 2024) but had fallen compared with 2023 and 2022 (49% and 58% respectively) (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Teachers' views on pupil behaviour at their school

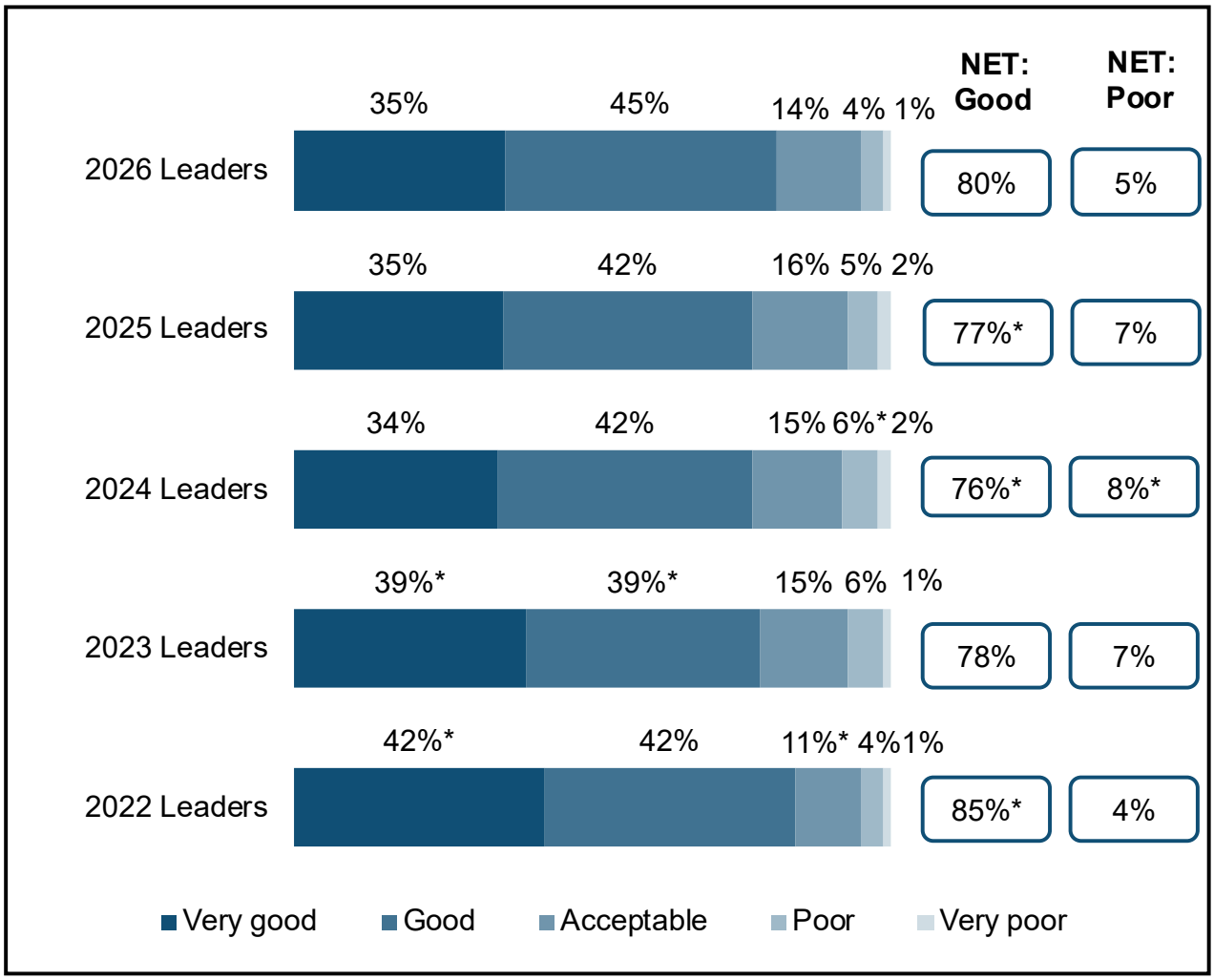


Source: Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey. F1. In general, how would you rate pupil behaviour in your school? Single response for each statement. All teachers (wave 1, 2022, n=9,094) (wave 2, n=8,557) (wave 3, 2024, n=8,099) (wave 4, 2025, n=8,539) (wave 5, 2026, n=8,583). The proportion of those answering 'don't know' was 1% or less. *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Around half (49%) of teachers with teaching responsibilities reported feeling always or mostly supported when dealing with disruptive behaviour. This was consistent with 2025 (50%) and 2024 (49%), but lower than the 52% in 2023 and the 58% in 2022.

Four-fifths (80%) of leaders rated pupil behaviour as good or very good. This was more positive than in 2025 and 2024 (where 77% and 76% respectively said behaviour was good or very good).

Figure 5.2 Leaders' views on pupil behaviour at their school



Source: Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey. F1. In general, how would you rate pupil behaviour in your school? Single response for each statement. All leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=1,857) (wave 2, 2023, n=1,637) (wave 3, 2024, n=1,755) (wave 4, 2025, n=2,117) (wave 5, 2026, n=2,009). The proportion of those answering 'don't know' was 1% or less. *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Over eight-in-ten (82%) leaders with teaching responsibilities reported that they felt always or mostly supported to deal with disruptive behaviour. This was consistent with 2025 (80%), 2024 (79%) and 2023 (80%), but lower than 2022 (85%).

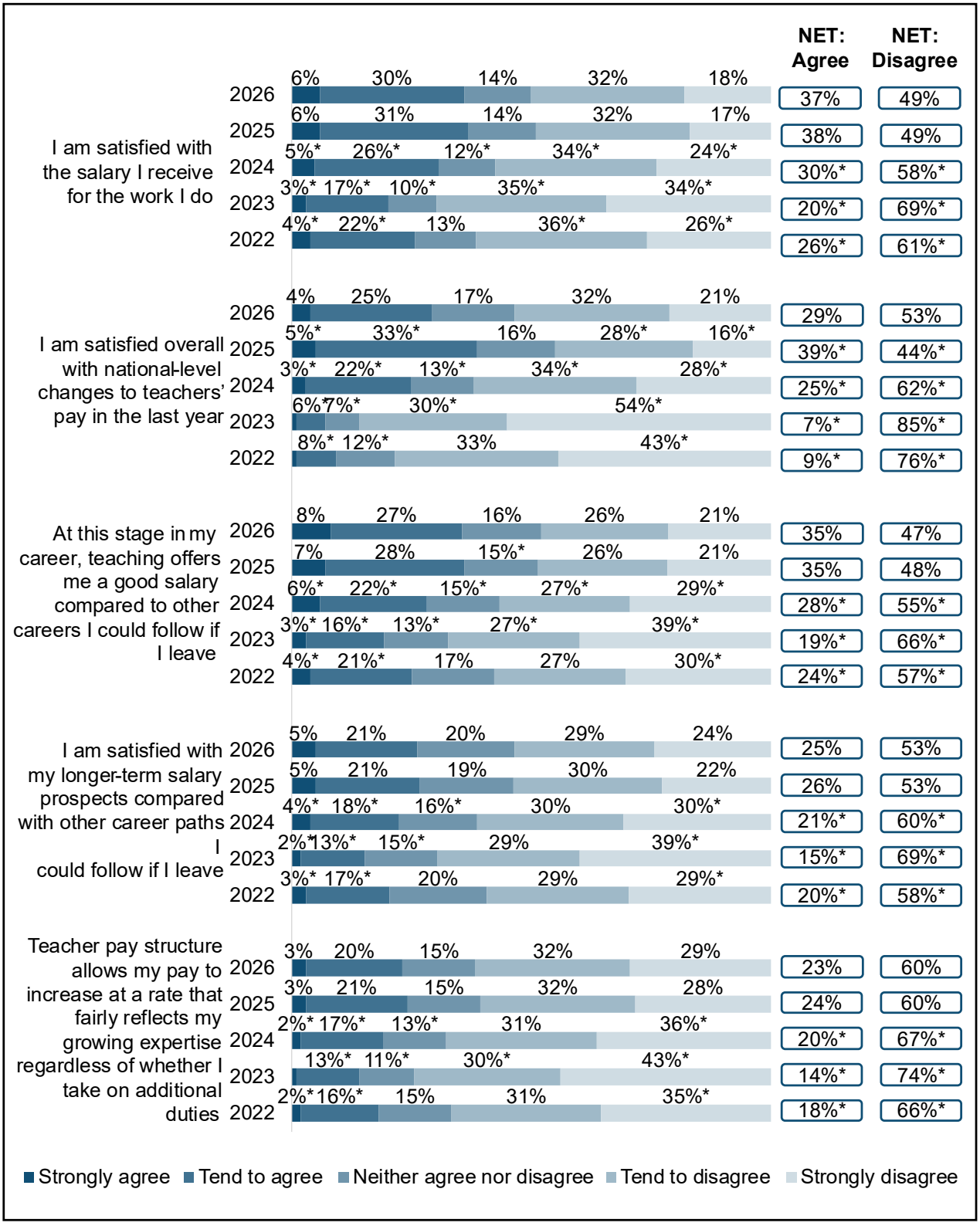
6. Teacher and leader pay

Views on salary and salary prospects

In 2026, over a third (37%) of teachers and leaders agreed that they were satisfied with the salary they receive for the work that they do. This was consistent with 2025 (38%), but an increase compared to previous years (30% in 2024, 20% in 2023, and 26% in 2022) (Figure 6.1). Around half (49%) disagreed that they were satisfied, consistent with 2025 but lower than in previous years (58% in 2024, 69% in 2023, and 61% in 2022).

As in previous years, leaders were more likely than teachers to agree that they were satisfied with the salary they received (59% of leaders vs. 33% of teachers).

Figure 6.1 Teachers and leaders' views on pay, 2022-2026



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. J1_1-5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about pay and your job? Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). Values smaller than 2% are not labelled on the chart. *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Satisfaction with school decisions around pay

Teachers and leaders not classified as headteachers or executive headteachers were less positive about decisions their school made in 2026 compared with 2025, excluding whether they agreed their school followed its own pay policy in making decisions about their pay, where there was an increase:

- Six-in-ten (60%) reported that the decisions their school took about their pay was fair, a decrease compared with 2025 (63%) and 2024 (65%) but an increase from 57% in 2023 and 51% in 2022
- The same proportion (60%) were satisfied with how their school communicated decisions about their pay, a decrease compared with 2025 and 2024 (both 63%), consistent with 2023 (58%), but an increase from 53% in 2022
- Just over four-in-ten (42%) felt that their school followed its own pay policy in making decisions about their pay, an increase compared with 2025 (40%), consistent with 2024 (44%) and 2022 (43%), but a decrease compared with 2023 (46%)

Headteachers and executive headteachers were more positive about their pay than other teachers and leaders. Just over three-quarters (76%) of headteachers and executive headteachers agreed that the decisions taken about their pay were fair. This was consistent with all previous years (79% in 2025, 77% in 2024, 72% in 2023, and 74% in 2022). Similarly, satisfaction with how decisions around pay were communicated remained consistent with all previous years (80% in 2026 compared with 84% in 2025, 81% in 2024, 79% in 2023, and 78% in 2022).

7. Job and career reflections

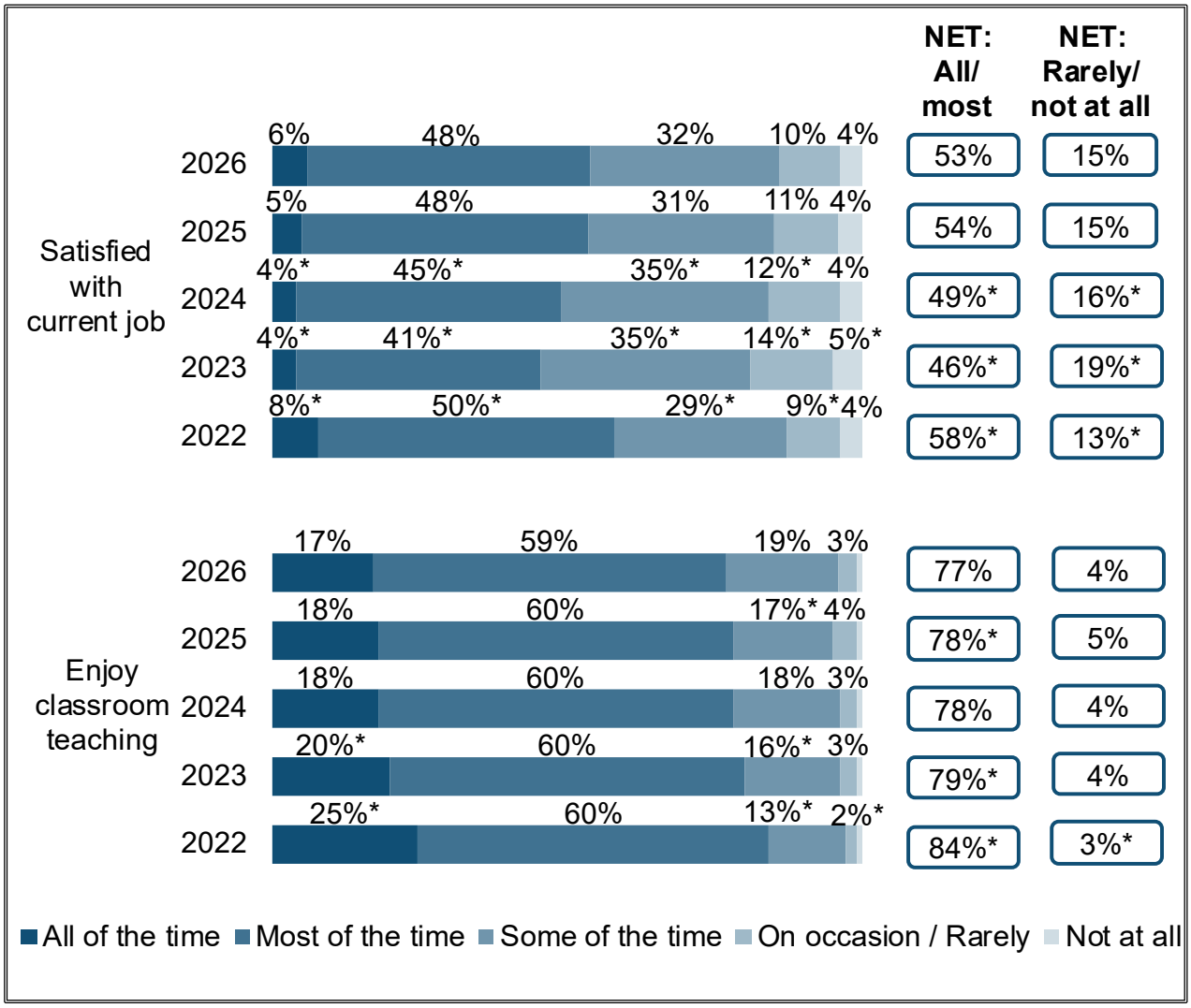
Satisfaction with job

Just over half of teachers and leaders in 2026 (53%) said they were satisfied with their job all or most of the time (Figure 7.1). This is consistent with 2025 (54%), maintaining the increase from 49% in 2024 and 46% in 2023 but below the 58% reporting this in 2022.

Just over three-quarters (77%) of teachers and leaders with teaching responsibilities reported enjoying classroom teaching all or most of the time. This was consistent with 2024 (78%), but still lower than all other years (78% in 2025[4], 79% in 2023, 84% in 2022).

[4] The 78% in 2024 is significantly lower than 2026 but the 78% in 2025 is consistent with 2026 due to difference in base sizes between years.

Figure 7.1 Satisfaction with current job and enjoyment of classroom teaching, 2022-2026



Source: Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey. M1_1. To what extent would you say that you are satisfied with your current job? Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). M1_2. To what extent would you say that you enjoy classroom teaching? Single response. All with teaching responsibilities (wave 1, 2022, n=10,244) (wave 2, 2023, n=9,620) (wave 3, 2024, n=9,118) (wave 4, 2025, n=9,778) (wave 5, 2026, n=9,715). Responses given by 1% or fewer respondents are not labelled in the chart. *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Views on being valued and recognised

In 2026, around two-thirds (67%) of teachers and leaders felt valued by their school, consistent with the 68% in 2025 and 66% in 2024, and higher than the 65% reported in both 2023 and 2022 (Table 7.1). Around a third (34%) of teachers and leaders agreed that school accountability measures provided important information about school performance, continuing the increase seen in 2024 and 2025, and marking the highest point in the time series (32% in 2025, 28% in 2024, 26% in 2023 and 28% in 2022).

Table 7.1 Teacher and leaders' views on school accountability, inspection regimes and whether views are valued

I feel valued by my school	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Agree	65%*	65%*	66%	68%	67%
Disagree	21%*	21%*	20%*	19%	19%
My school recognises and rewards high performance from the teaching / leadership staff	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Agree	39%*	34%	35%	36%	36%
Disagree	31%*	35%	35%	34%	34%
School accountability measures provide important information about school performance	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Agree	28%*	26%*	28%*	32%*	34%
Disagree	49%*	52%*	51%*	46%*	43%
The school inspection regime provides a fair assessment of school performance	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Agree	18%	15%*	14%*	19%*	18%
Disagree	63%	71%*	72%*	64%*	62%
Teachers' views are valued by policymakers, e.g. the government	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Agree	6%	4%*	5%*	7%	7%
Disagree	85%*	90%*	88%*	82%*	81%
The teaching profession is valued by society	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
Agree	17%*	12%	12%	15%	13%
Disagree	69%*	76%	77%*	72%	73%

Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. E1_1. Agreement that 'I feel valued by my school'. Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). Q1_4. Agreement that 'my school recognises and rewards high performance from the teaching / leadership staff'. Q1_7. Agreement that 'the teaching profession is valued by society'. Single response. All module 2 teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=3,494) (wave 2, 2023, n=2,462) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,359) (wave 4, 2025, n=2,588) (wave 5, 2026, n=2,701). E4_1-3. Agreement that 'school accountability measures provide important information about school performance'; 'The school inspection regime provides a fair assessment of school performance'; 'Teachers' views are valued by policymakers. Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Views on diversity and inclusion

The majority (71%) of teachers and leaders reported that their school values an equal, diverse and inclusive workforce, while 9% disagreed. These findings were consistent with all previous years.

8. Continuous Professional Development

Almost all teachers and leaders (98%) reported having taken part in some form of formal continuous professional development (CPD) [5] in the 12 months prior to taking part in the survey (or, if an ECT, since the start of their teaching career if they completed their initial teacher training within this period).

The most common CPD activities teachers and leaders had undertaken in the previous 12 months were[6]:

- training designed and delivered by staff in their own school, MAT or local authority (74%, consistent with 75% in 2025, but lower than 76% in 2023 and higher than 69% in 2022)
- lesson observation and feedback (73%, consistent with 73% in 2025 and 74% in 2023 and higher than 69% in 2022)
- undertaking professional reading (53%, consistent with the 54% in 2025 and 2022 but lower than the 57% who reported this in 2023)
- training designed and delivered by external providers, excluding NPQs and ECF (52%, lower than the 54% in 2025 and 56% in 2023, but higher than the 48% in 2022)

[5] Formal CPD was defined to respondents as including any structured and/or pre-planned learning activities to develop and enhance teachers and leaders' abilities, including activities such as training workshops, studying for a qualification, conferences and events, e-learning programs, coaching, mentoring, lesson observation etc.

[6] Between wave 2 (2023) and wave 3 (2024) H2 (types of CPD undertaken in the past 12 months) was changed to collect additional detail on historic CPD activities undertaken by participants. Analysis of the wave 3 data against previous waves suggested that the change in format of the question led to respondents interpreting it differently. Therefore 2024 findings for H2 are not presented in this section, and comparisons are only made between 2026 and 2022, 2023 and 2025.

9. Teacher and leader wellbeing

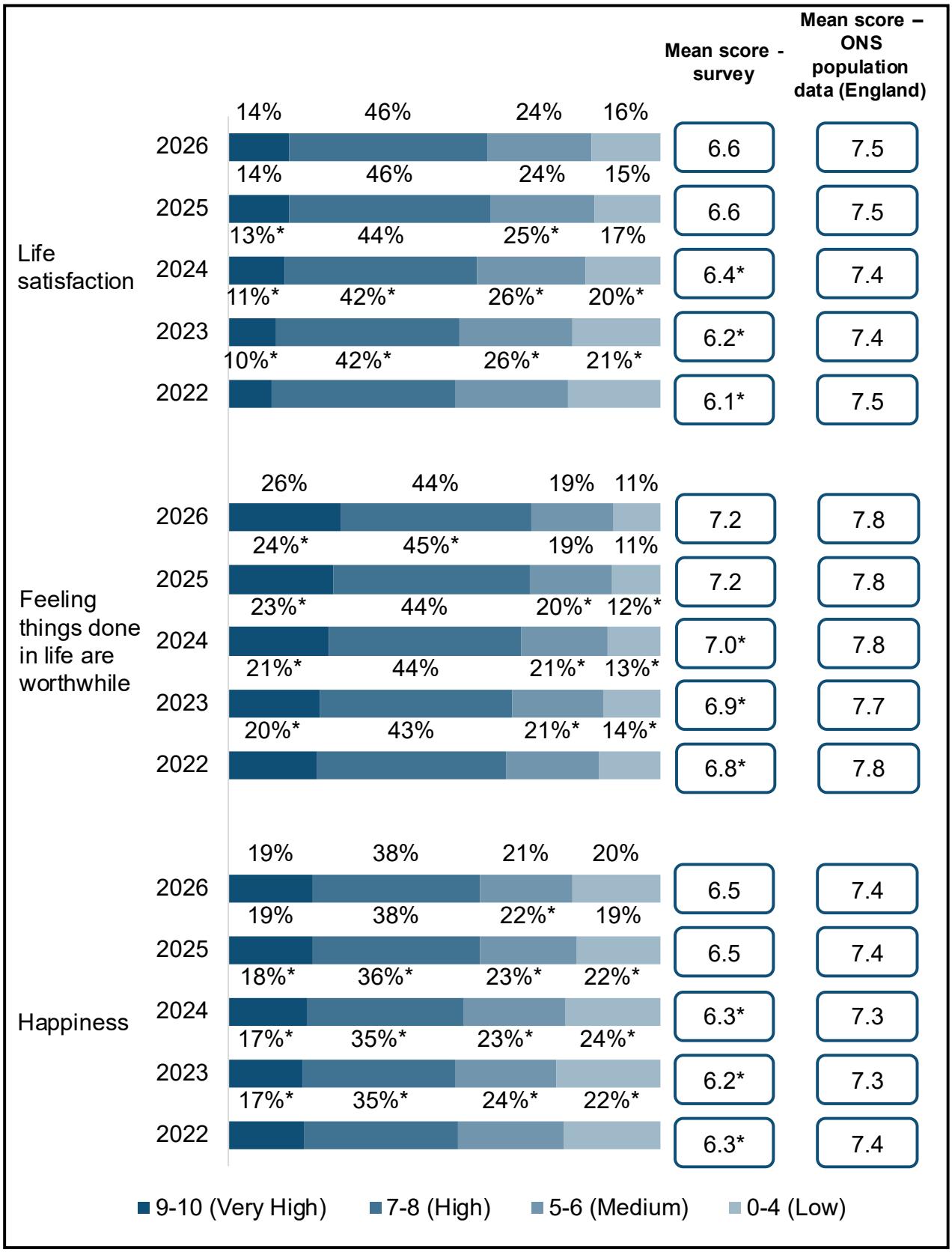
Overall wellbeing

The average scores for life satisfaction, feeling things done in life are worthwhile and happiness rose steadily over time between 2022 and 2025 (to 6.6, 7.2 and 6.5 respectively in 2025) and maintained that level in 2026 (Figure 9.1). The fall in anxiety observed between 2024 and 2025 (from 4.6 to 4.4) was maintained in 2026 (4.4) as shown in Figure 9.2.

As with previous waves average scores for these wellbeing measures are lower for survey respondents than for the wider population in England.[7]

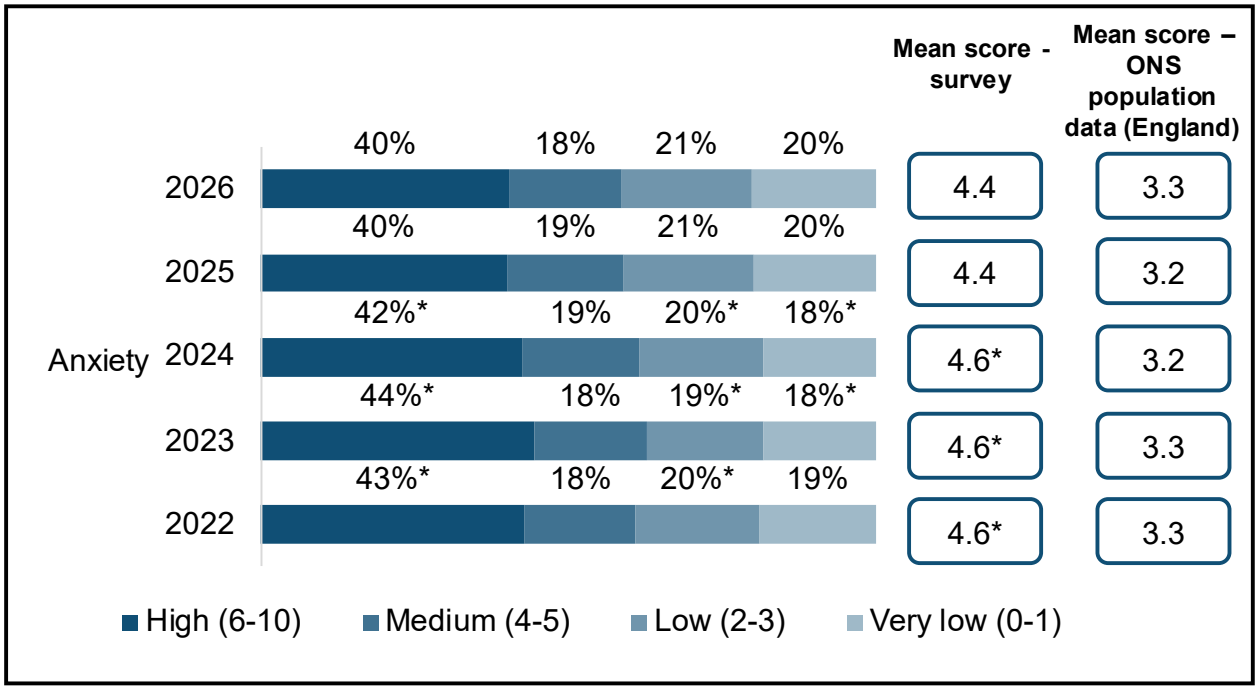
[7] Quarterly personal well-being estimates – non-seasonally adjusted - Office for National Statistics

Figure 9.1 Teachers and leaders' views on life satisfaction, happiness and feelings things done in life are worthwhile, 2022-2026



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. N1. For each of the following questions, please give an answer on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely". Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Figure 9.2 Teachers and leaders' views on anxiety, 2022-2026



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. N2. On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? Single response. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Impact of work life on wellbeing

Teachers and leaders were asked about the extent to which their work life affected their wellbeing. Their views remained consistent with 2025, however, agreement had improved compared to 2024 and 2023 for most of the measures, as shown in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1 Teachers and leaders' views on how work life impacts wellbeing

Net agree/disagree	Agree					Disagree				
Year	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**
I experience stress in my work	86%	88%	89%	86%	88%	6%	5%	4%	6%	6%
My job does not leave me enough time for my personal life	65%	73%*	70%*	64%	64%	16%*	13%*	14%*	19%	18%
My job negatively affects my mental health	56%*	63%*	62%	57%	60%	21%	16%*	18%	21%	20%
My job negatively affects my physical health	45%	52%*	49%*	46%	45%	31%	27%*	30%	31%	32%

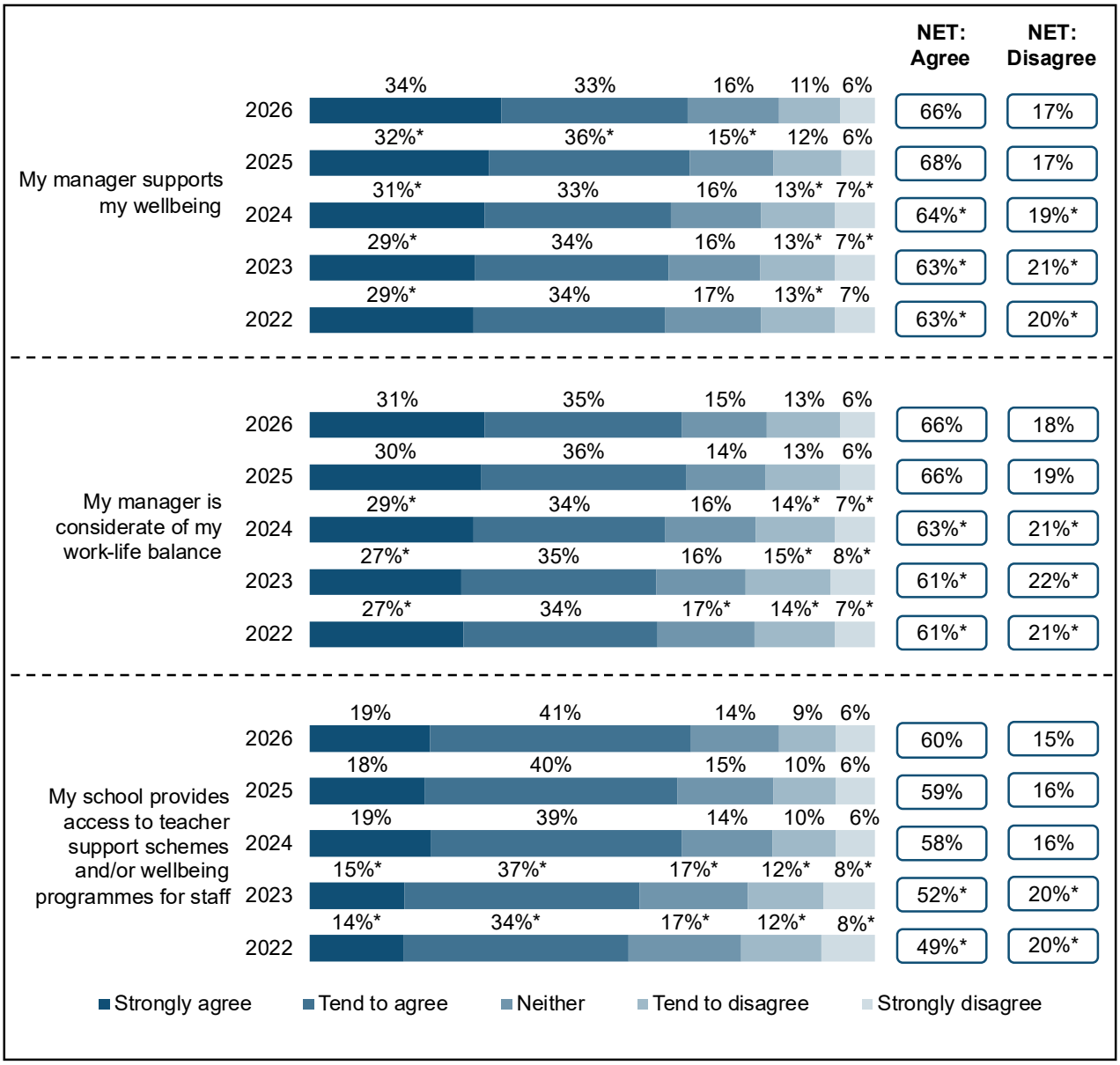
Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. "Agree" is the sum of tend to agree and strongly agree, "disagree" is the sum of tend to disagree and strongly disagree. P3_1-4. Agreement that: 'I experience stress in my work'; 'my job does not leave me enough time for my personal life'; 'my job negatively affects my mental health'; my job negatively affects my physical health'. Single response for each statement. All module 1 teachers and middle leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=3,495) (wave 2, 2023, n=2,461) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,364) (wave 4, 2025, n=2,598) (wave 5, 2026, n=5,371). The proportion of those answering, 'don't know' for all statements across 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025 was 1% or less. *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

Views on support for wellbeing

Teachers and leaders were also asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about the support they had received from their managers and their school more generally.

As shown in Figure 9.3, agreement with these statements remains consistent with 2025. Agreement that their manager supports their wellbeing was 66% in 2026 (consistent with the 68% in 2025 and up from 64% in 2024 and 63% in both 2023 and 2022). A similar proportion (66%) agreed that their manager is considerate of their work-life balance (the same as 2025 and an increase from 63% in 2024 and 61% in both 2023 and 2022). Similar to the pattern seen in previous years, a slightly smaller proportion agreed that their school provides access to teacher schemes and/or wellbeing programmes for staff in 2026 (60%) – this was consistent with 2025 and 2024 and higher than 2023 (52%) and 2022 (49%).

Figure 9.3 Teachers and leaders' views on support for wellbeing, 2022-2026



Source: Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey. E2_2-3: Agreement that 'your manager is considerate of your work life balance'; 'your manager supports your wellbeing'. Single response for each statement. All teachers and leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=11,177) (wave 2, 2023, n=10,411) (wave 3, 2024, n=10,020) (wave 4, 2025, n=10,808) (wave 5, 2026, n=10,715). P3_5. Agreement that: 'My school provides access to teacher support and/or wellbeing programmes for staff'. All module 1 teachers and middle leaders (wave 1, 2022, n=3,495) (wave 2, 2023, n=2,461) (wave 3, 2024, n=2,364) (wave 4, 2025, n=2,598) (wave 5, 2026, n=5,371). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey.

10. Future plans

Career intentions

In 2026, slightly under three-in-ten (28%) teachers and leaders said they were considering leaving the English state school sector in the following 12 months for reasons other than retirement. This was consistent with 2025 (29%), lower than 2024 (34%) and 2023 (36%), but still higher than in 2022 (25%).

Around a quarter (24%) of teachers and leaders were considering applying for promotion within their school. This was slightly lower than in all previous years, with 26% reporting this in 2025, 2024, and 2023, and 28% reporting this in 2022.

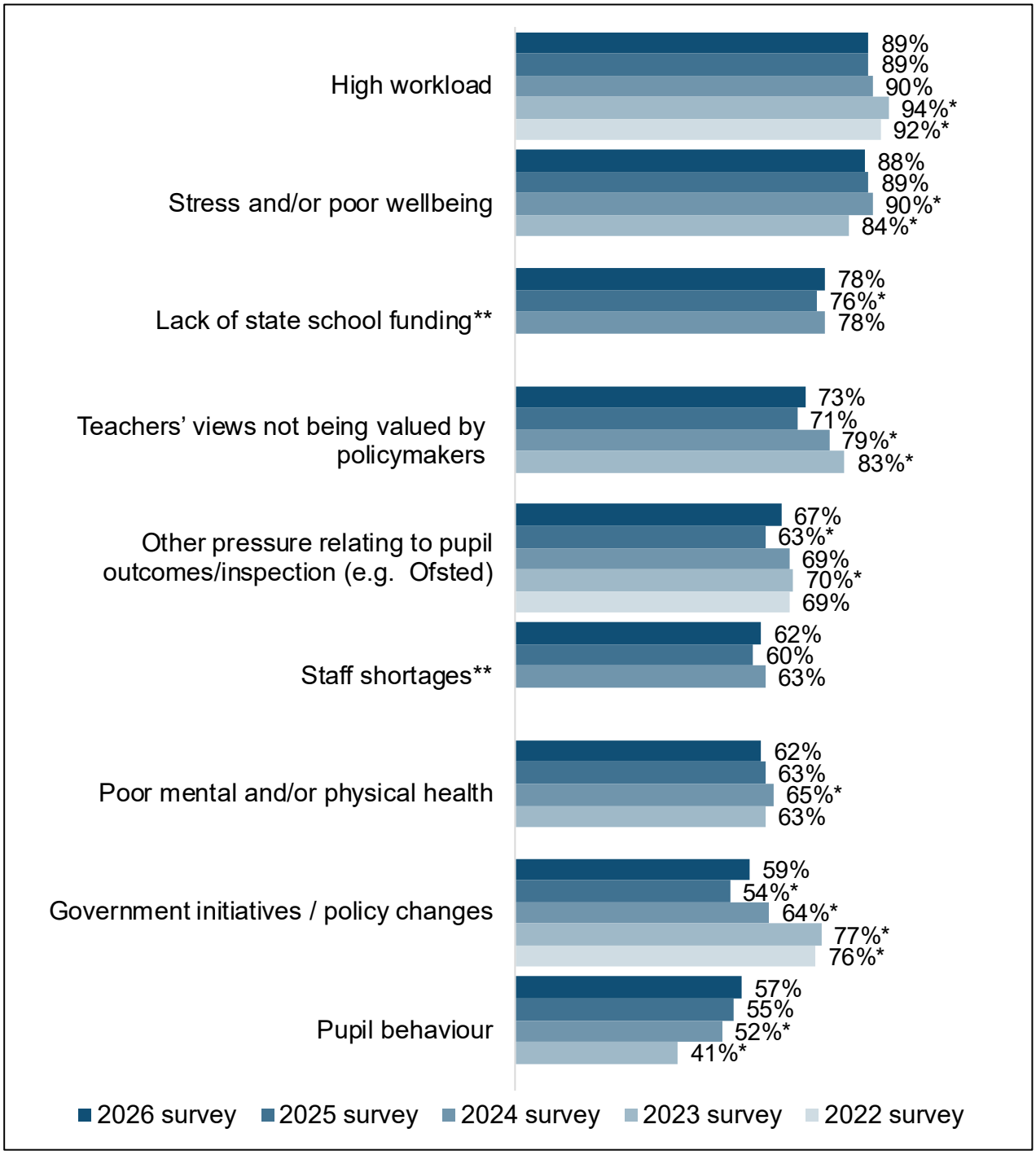
Around a fifth (22%) were considering moving to another state school on promotion, consistent with 2025 (23%) and 2022 (22%) but lower than in 2024 and 2023 (both 24%). Similarly, around a fifth (23%) were considering moving to a new school at the same level, consistent with 2025 (23%) and 2022 (22%), but lower than in 2024 and 2023 (both 25%).

Teachers and leaders not considering promotion (and not considering leaving the English state school sector) in the next 12 months most commonly reported this was due to concerns about the potential impact on work-life balance (28%). This was consistent with 2025 (27%) and 2024 (30%) but lower than in 2023 and 2022 (both 31%). This was followed by feeling happy at their current level (26%, consistent with 25% in 2025 and 24% in 2022, but up from 23% in 2024 and 21% in 2023).

Reasons for considering leaving

For teachers and leaders considering leaving the state education sector, the most commonly cited reasons were high workload (89%) or stress and/or poor wellbeing (88%), consistent with previous years. However, over time, stress and/or poor wellbeing has become slightly more prevalent (up from 84% in 2023), while the proportion citing high workload has fallen slightly (down from 94% in 2023). A further breakdown of reasons for considering leaving can be seen in Figure 10.1.

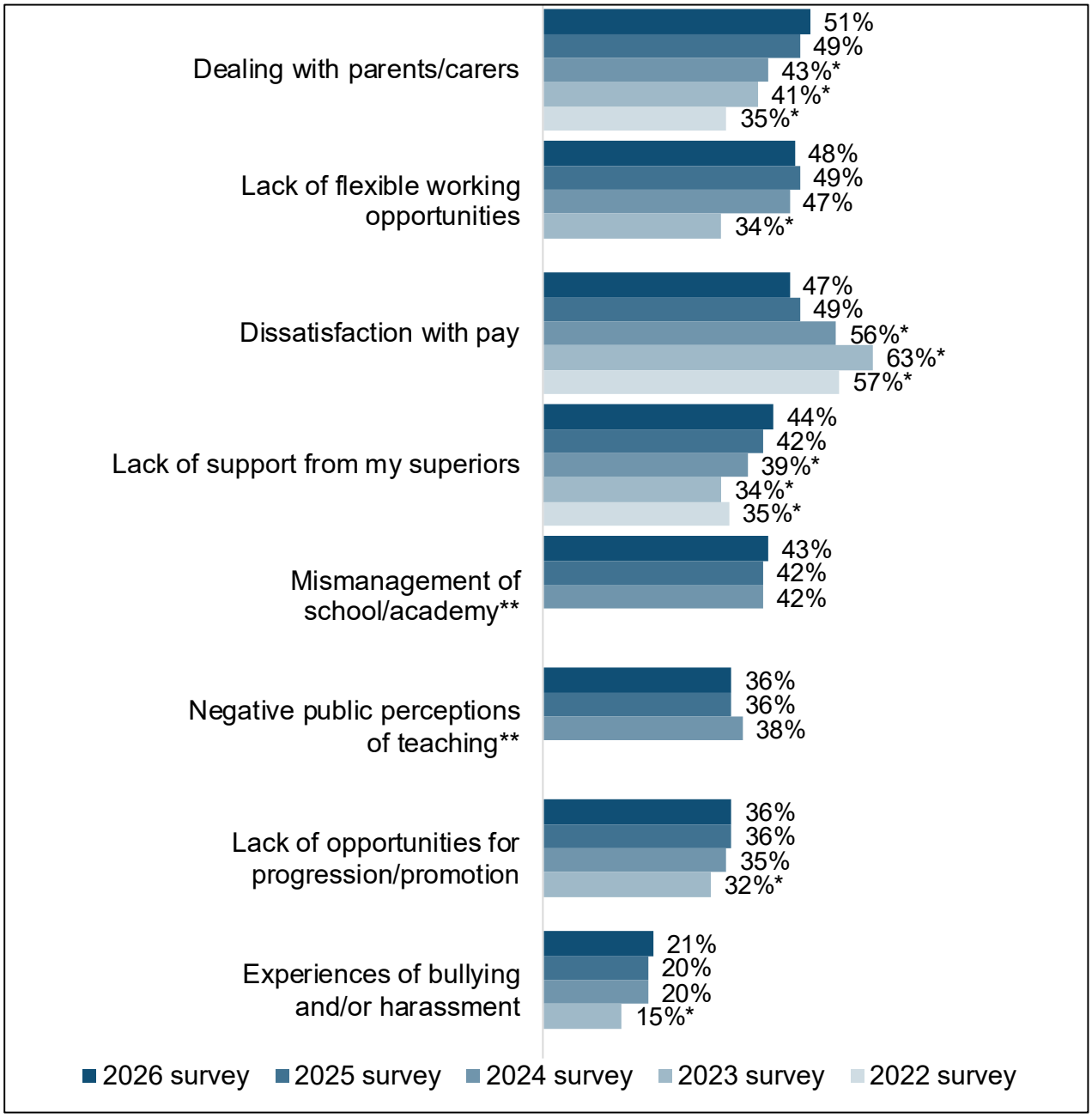
Figure 10.1 Teachers and leaders' reasons for considering leaving the state education sector[8]



Source: Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders survey. M5. How important have the following factors been in making you consider leaving the state education sector (in the next 12 months)? Single response. All teachers and leaders considering leaving the state education sector (wave 1, 2022, n=2,779) (wave 2, 2023, n=3,628) (wave 3, 2024, n=3,316) (wave 4, 2025, n=2,930) (wave 5, 2026, n=2,836). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey. **Indicates new response option for 2023/4 survey. Where wave 1 responses were back coded from 'other' but were added as response options in later waves, the figures have been excluded.

[8] Please note there was a change in wording between wave 2 and wave 3 for the statement "stress and/or poor wellbeing". In 2024 this changed to "stress and/or poor wellbeing including having a poor work life balance". As a result, statements are not directly comparable between years.

Figure 10.1 (Continued) Teachers and leaders' reasons for considering leaving the state education sector



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. M5. How important have the following factors been in making you consider leaving the state education sector (in the next 12 months)? Single response. All teachers and leaders considering leaving the state education sector (wave 1, 2022, n=2,779) (wave 2, 2023, n=3,628) (wave 3, 2024, n=3,316) (wave 4, 2025, n=2,930) (wave 5, 2026, n=2,836). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey. **Indicates new response option for 2023/4 survey. Where wave 1 responses were back coded from 'other' but were added as response options in later waves, the figures have been excluded.

11. Leaving teaching in the English state school sector

Overview of leavers

Among teachers and leaders who responded to both the 2025 and 2026 surveys, 6% had left English state school teaching or leadership by 2026. This was slightly lower than the 7% who left between 2024 and 2025, and the 8% who left between 2023 and 2024, although in line with the 6% who left between the 2022 and 2023 surveys.[9]

Of all who were considering leaving in the 2025 survey, 12% had done so by 2026. Of those who were not considering leaving or were not sure in 2025, 3% had since left, which was slightly lower than those who left between 2022 and 2023 (4%) but otherwise in line with previous years.

Reasons for leaving the English state school sector

As with previous cohorts of leavers, the two most common reasons cited as important in contributing to them leaving were stress and/or poor wellbeing (76%) and high workload (75%) (Figure 11.1).

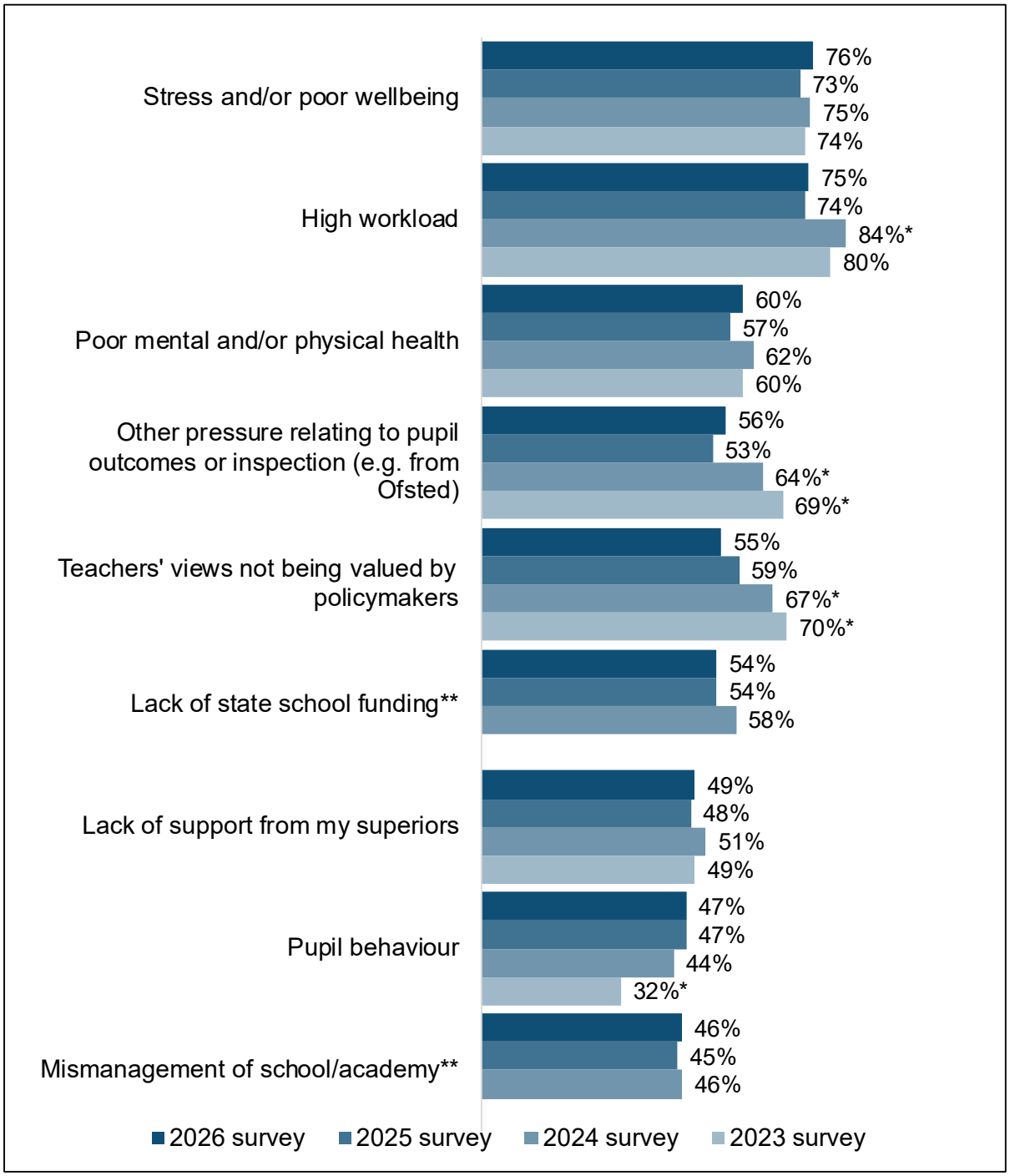
There were no differences in the proportion citing each reason for leaving compared with the 2025 leaver cohort. However, there were a number of reasons which were cited by fewer leavers in 2026 compared with the leaver cohorts in 2024 or 2023:

- High workload (75% vs. 84% in 2024)
- Teachers' views not being valued by policymakers (55% vs. 67% in 2024 and 70% in 2023)
- Staff shortages (44% vs. 52% in 2024)
- Government initiatives/ policy changes (43% vs. 55% in 2023)
- Dissatisfaction with pay (24% vs. 34% in 2024 and 39% in 2023)
- Other pressure relating to pupil outcomes or inspection (56% vs. 64% in 2024 and 69% in 2023)
- Lack of opportunities for progression/ promotion (22% vs. 29% in 2023)

Pupil behaviour was the only reason that was more commonly cited than in a previous year (47% vs. 32% in 2023) but it remained consistent with 2024 and 2025.

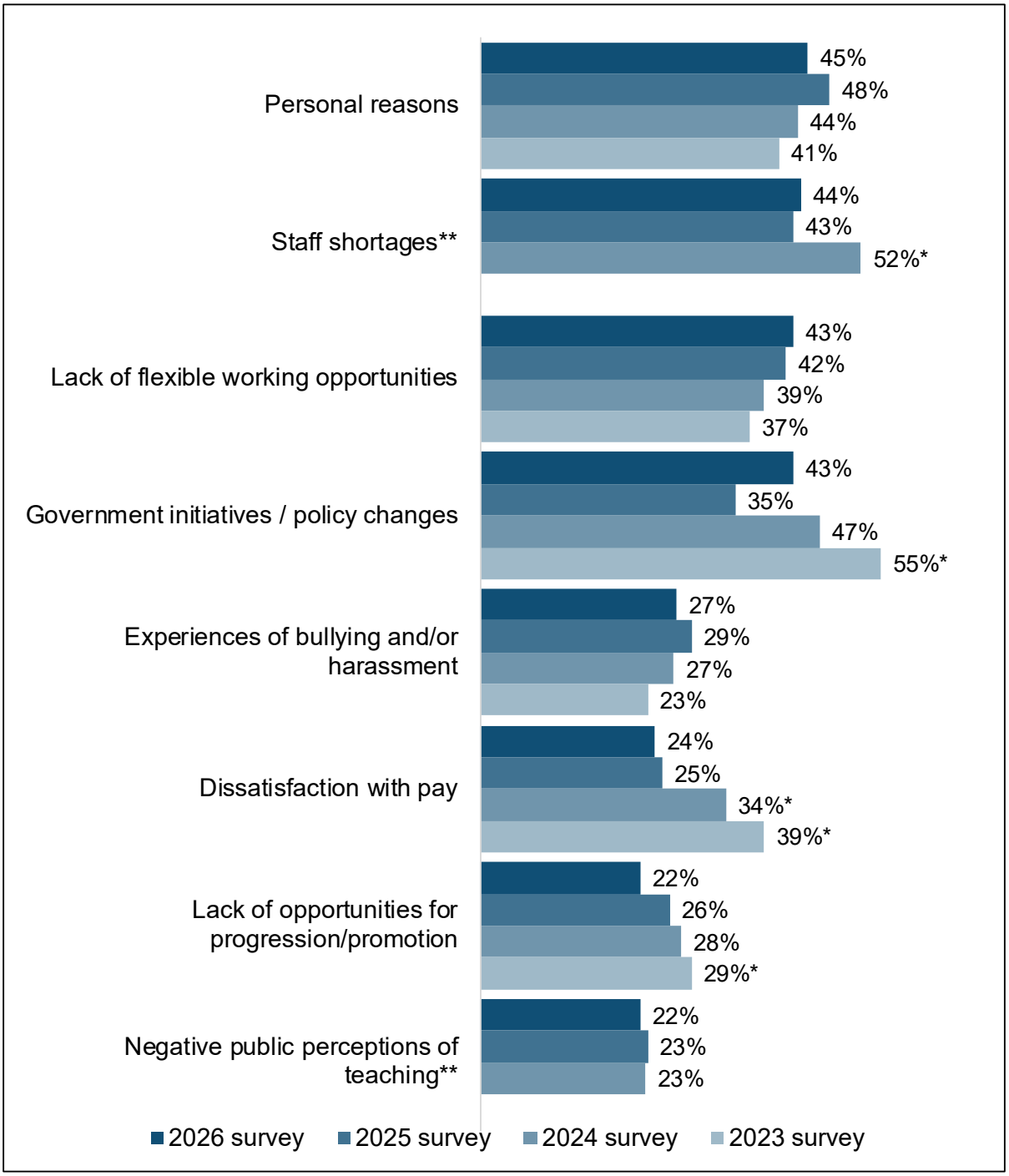
[9] This may be an underestimate as it is derived from responses to the 2026 survey, and it is possible that those who had left teaching were less likely to respond (although all were encouraged to do so).

Figure 11.1 Proportion of leavers citing different reasons for leaving the English state school education sector



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. M6. How important were the following factors in your decision to leave the state education sector? Single response. All who have left the state education sector (wave 2, 2023, n=442) (wave 3, 2024, n=520) (wave 4, 2025, n=461) (wave 5, 2026, n=406). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey. **Indicates response option not asked in 2023 survey.

Figure 11.1 (Continued) Proportion of leavers citing different reasons for leaving the English state school education sector



Source: Working lives of teachers and leaders survey. M6. How important were the following factors in your decision to leave the state education sector? Single response. All who have left the state education sector (wave 2, 2023, n=442) (wave 3, 2024, n=520) (wave 4, 2025, n=461) (wave 5, 2026, n=406). *Indicates significant difference compared to 2026 survey. **Indicates response option not asked in 2023 survey.

Current working arrangements of leavers

Of all leavers between 2025 and 2026, 44% were still working in education in some capacity, while 24% were working outside education and 31% were not working. Leavers in 2026 were less likely to not be working than in 2025 (39%), although the proportion who had retired during this period remained similar to 2025 and higher than previous years (20% and 19% in 2025, vs. 11% in 2024 and 13% in 2023).

Comparison to English state school sector

Nearly six-in-ten (58%) leavers in 2026 who were still in work reported earning less than they had done in their previous role teaching or leading in an English state school, while just over a sixth (17%) were earning around the same amount, and just under a quarter (24%) of leavers in 2026 were earning more.

Among those currently in work, leavers reported working an average of 34.4 hours in the most recent week. This was lower than the average of those still teaching and leading (48.0).

As in previous waves, leavers still in work in 2026 generally reported more positive views of their workload than those still teaching or leading. Around three-quarters (74%) agreed they had sufficient control over their workload, compared with just under four-in-ten (38%) teachers and leaders. Similarly, 78% of leavers in work agreed that they had an acceptable workload, compared with just 26% of those still teaching and leading.

Leavers in work were more likely to be working flexibly than those still teaching or leading in English state schools in 2026 (79% vs. 50%). Although consistent with 2025, leavers in 2026 were more likely than leavers in 2024 and 2023 to be working flexibly (79% vs. 62% in 2024, 70% in 2023). This was mostly driven by a higher proportion of 2026 leavers who were working part-time (41%, vs. 26% in 2024 and 30% in 2023).

Likelihood of returning

Fewer than one-in-ten (9%) leavers thought it likely they would return to teaching or leading in the English state school sector within the next five years while around three-quarters (73%) said they were unlikely to return. The proportion of leavers who said it was likely they would return was lower in 2026 than in all previous years (16% in 2025, 18% in 2024 and 16% in 2023).

Department for Education

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