

# Covid-19 and the classroom: Working in education during the coronavirus pandemic

The impact on education professionals'  
mental health and wellbeing



The charity for everyone  
working in education

# Foreword

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has had a huge effect on the provision of education in the UK in the last six months. We need to learn from what has happened, plan for the future, and grasp how the crisis has affected the mental health and wellbeing of education professionals working across the sector.

These last six months have seen a tremendous amount of change. On 20 March 2020 most schools and colleges in the UK closed whilst the country went into 'lockdown'. Some education institutions did, however, remain open during this time in order to continue educational provision for vulnerable children and those of key workers. National examinations were cancelled. Many staff were required to work from home, getting to grips with remote teaching and distance learning, often whilst supporting their own families. Some staff were furloughed and supply teaching contracts with agencies were terminated. Pupils' and students' learning was interrupted with the potential for a learning/knowledge loss in what is often a tightly-packed curriculum. During this time, some staff and their students have tragically experienced the loss of friends, neighbours and family.

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) has thrown up many new challenges for education, and this report helps us to understand the impact these have had on education professionals, and the support required to surmount them. The pandemic has also crystallised issues which for a long time have impacted the working lives of teachers and education professionals. A key finding of the report is the lack of appreciation education professionals have felt, above all from the government, while they have been working extremely hard to support the learning of pupils.

Another consistent theme of the report is the concern expressed by education professionals about the lack of clear guidance and direction from government, particularly over reopening schools safely and the priorities of teaching, learning and assessment next year. The report demonstrates the difficulties this lack of appreciation and communication, neither of which are new phenomena, present for teachers and school leaders.

As we move into the new academic year, uncertainty remains high. A resurgence of the virus may lead to renewed school closures, affecting teaching, learning and assessment and potentially the mental health and wellbeing of both staff and pupils. Even if schools do not close again, school life will be deeply affected by the need to arrange teaching and learning safely. Yet the challenges of the pandemic also provide an opportunity for change. In this environment of uncertainty, it is paramount that government actions demonstrate that it respects, values and places trust in the education profession. The government must collaboratively work with teachers and senior leaders to ensure that the educational needs of pupils are met and that the mental health and wellbeing of both pupils and staff is supported.

Sinéad Mc Brearty  
CEO  
Education Support

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# About the Report

This report explores the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of education professionals working across the education sector. It considers the principal challenges education professionals have faced and the relationship between the profession, government and other interest groups. It also examines the key areas which education professionals identify for schools reopening, and the support they need moving forward.

The underpinning research had three aims:

- 1 To provide a description of how the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic affected the mental health and wellbeing of education professionals.
- 2 To identify differences in the teacher and education staff populations as appropriate.
- 3 To investigate how education professionals could effectively make the transition back to work in their institutions.

The research was conducted using an online survey of education professionals drawn from YouGov's panel. The total sample size was 3,034 education professionals and the survey was conducted during the period 24 June to 16 July 2020. The sample included all job roles within the education profession. These include a) Senior Leaders (Headteachers,

Deputy Head and Assistant Headteachers, Heads of Year and Departments); b) Teachers (qualified, newly-qualified, trainees, Teaching Assistants and Supply Teachers) and c) staff working in other roles (School Business Managers and Managers). All phases of education are included – Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Sixth Form, Further, Adult, and Vocational Education sectors. Appendix A gives a detailed breakdown of the responses received by sector, region, gender, age, time spent working in education and ethnicity. Ethnicity has been included due to the higher incidence of severe Covid-19 cases reported among people of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) heritage and interesting trends noted. All findings in this report have been shown in percentages<sup>1</sup>.

Education Support will also be publishing the “Teacher Wellbeing Index 2020” in November 2020. This will be its fourth large-scale survey benchmarking the mental health and wellbeing of education professionals in the UK, and will reference and broaden some of the findings of this report.

<sup>1</sup> As a result of GDPR legislation, all YouGov respondents were given the option to opt-out of questions that gathered sensitive personal data, including questions that captured information about their health. In the analysis these were coded as “refused”, in addition to respondents who selected the “prefer not to say” option. Where comparisons have been made, the figures are based on those who responded to the question (ie excluding “refused” and “prefer not to say”).

# Executive Summary: Findings in Numbers

The mental health and wellbeing of education professionals during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



**52%**

Of all teachers (50% of all education professionals) felt their mental health and wellbeing had declined either considerably or a little

*Section 2.2, page 18*



**58%**

Of all education professionals who needed support, turned first to their family and friends

*Section 2.4, page 21*

The relationship between the education profession, government and others during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



**61%**

Of all education professionals felt greatly or somewhat appreciated by the parents/guardians of their pupils/students

*Sections 3.1 and 3.1.1, pages 24 and 28*



**25%**

Of all education professionals felt greatly or somewhat appreciated by the general public

*Section 3.1.8, page 29*



**15%**

Of all education professionals felt greatly or somewhat appreciated by the UK government

*Sections 3.1 and 3.1.6, pages 24 and 29*



**12%**

Of all education professionals felt greatly or somewhat appreciated by the general media

*Sections 3.1 and 3.1.7, pages 24 and 29*



**18%**

Of all education professionals felt greatly or somewhat appreciated by their education departments<sup>2</sup>

*Sections 3.1 and 3.1.5, pages 24 and 29*

<sup>2</sup> Education departments refer to the Department for Education (England), Education Scotland, the Department for Education and Skills (Wales) and the Department of Education (Northern Ireland).

## The challenges of working during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



**58%**

Of all education professionals mainly worked from home during lockdown. Their most challenging aspect was ensuring pupils/students completed their work

Sections 1.1 and 1.2.1, pages 8 and 10



**32%**

Of all education professionals mainly worked in their usual institution during lockdown. Their most challenging aspect was ensuring social distancing

Sections 1.1 and 1.2.2, pages 8 and 12



**3%**

Of all education professionals had been furloughed. Their most challenging aspect related to uncertainty about their future

Section 1.1 and 1.2.4, pages 8 and 15

## Education professionals making the transition back to their normal place of work



**59%**

Of all education professionals, 60% of school teachers, were worried about the Coronavirus (Covid-19) returning

Section 4.1, page 32



**56%**

Of all education professionals considered the ability to adapt to new circumstances/new routines was the main skill needed to support pupils/students back to school/college

Section 4.2, page 35



**50%**

Of all education professionals working from home cited the lack of timely government guidance was one of the most challenging aspects

Section 1.2.3, page 14

## Testing the education workforce for the Coronavirus (Covid-19)



**9%**

Of all education professionals had suffered from Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms

Section 2.1, page 17



**13%  
& 13%**

Of all education professionals working in London and West Midlands reported they had suffered from Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms (ie the two regions which reported the highest number of staff with symptoms)

Section 2.1, page 17



**57%**

Of all education professionals who had experienced Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms and had not taken a test would like to have a test

Section 2.1, page 17

Section 1:

# The Challenges of Working During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

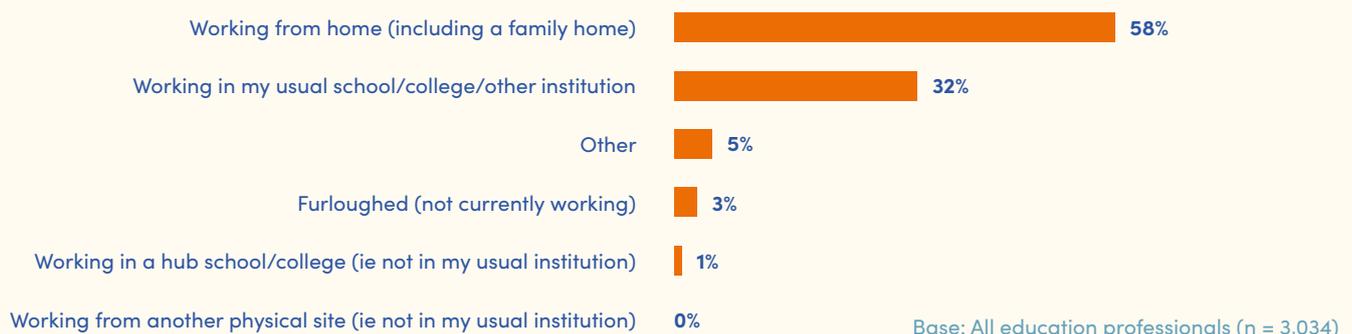
# Section 1: The Challenges of Working During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

This section details education professionals' main places of work during lockdown and the most challenging aspects of working/not working at that time.

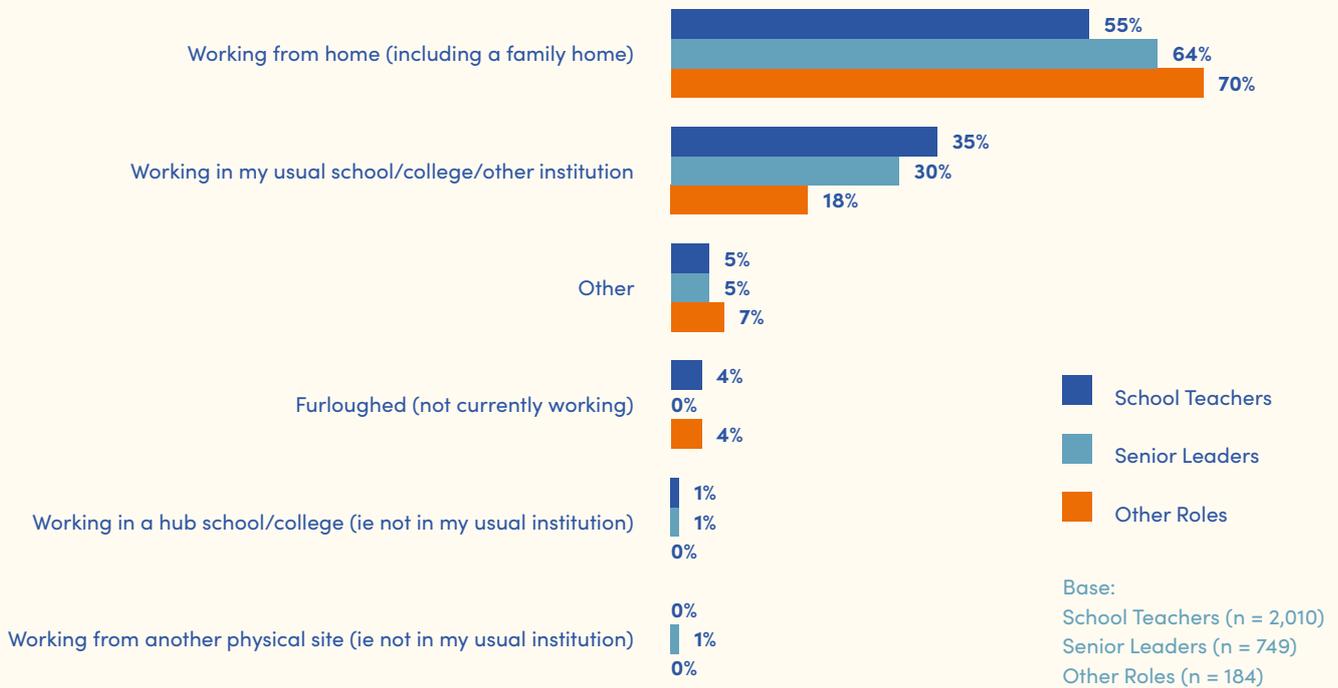
## 1.1 Education professionals' main place of work during lockdown

More than half (**58%**) of all education professionals reported they were mainly working from home (including a family home) during lockdown. Just under a third (**32%**) were mainly continuing to work in their usual school/college/other institution. The remainder worked at other places, which included a mixture of being physically located both at school and home (5%), had been furloughed so were not working (**3%**) or were working in a hub school/college which was not their normal place of work (1%). No staff were working from another physical site (ie not their usual institution).

### Educational professionals' main place of work during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic



Educational professionals' main place of work during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic – by job role



- The largest group to work from home were staff working in other roles (70%). Whereas 64% of senior leaders and 55% of school teachers also worked from home.
- The largest group to remain working in their usual school/college/other institution were school teachers (35%), followed by senior leaders (30%) and staff working in other roles (18%).



Working from home has been wonderful. I've really valued not commuting. It's meant more time to sleep, reduced fuel costs, and gained three hours a day with my family instead of sat in the car in [a] queue of traffic.



Member of staff in other role, FE College, Wales

## 1.2 The challenges faced by education professionals who were working (and not working) during lockdown and afterwards from different locations

This section details the challenges for education professionals of working, and not working, from the different locations identified in Section 1.1.

### 1.2.1 The most challenging aspects of working from home during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

Education professionals who stated they had worked from home during lockdown were asked to indicate the most challenging aspects they faced (noting up to five).

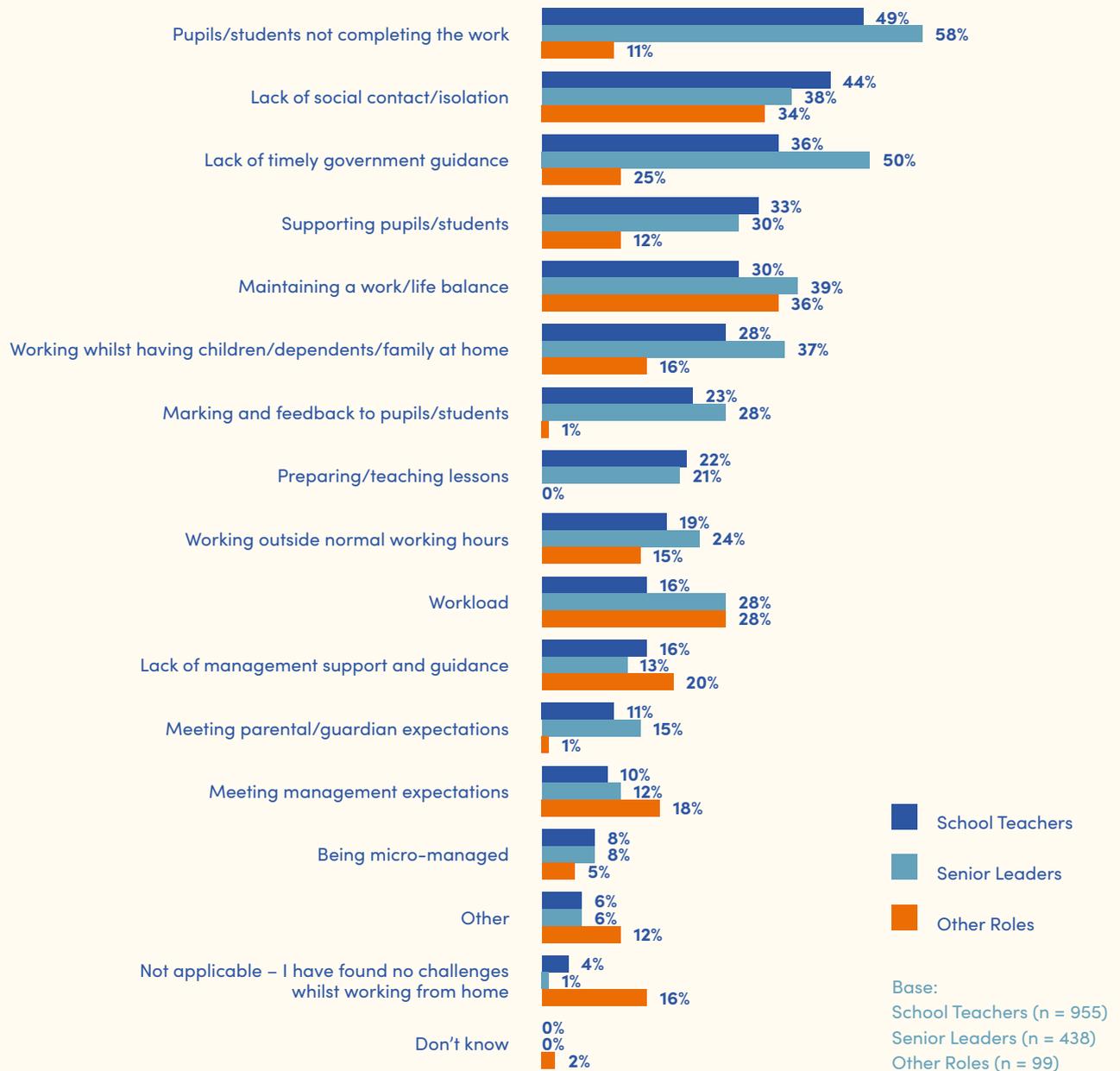
- The three main challenges related to pupils/students not completing their work (48%), experiencing a lack of social contact/isolation (41%) and having a lack of timely government guidance (39%).
- Students not completing their work was a greater challenge for staff working in the secondary sector (64%), compared to staff working in the sixth form sector (50%), in the primary sector (36%) and in further education (31%).
- The lack of government guidance was a greater challenge for staff working in the secondary sector (45%), compared to staff working in the sixth form sector (38%), the primary sector (37%) and further education (35%).
- Maintaining a work/life balance was a challenge for 32% of education professionals. A gender difference was found, namely this was stated more strongly by female staff (36%) compared to male staff (25%).
- Working whilst having children/dependents/family at home (30%) and supporting pupils/students (29%) were other key aspects experienced.

### The most challenging aspects of working from home since the start of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



Base: All education professionals (n = 1,536)

The most challenging aspects of working from home since the start of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic – by job role



When looking at the data relating to working from home by job role, a number of main differences were found.

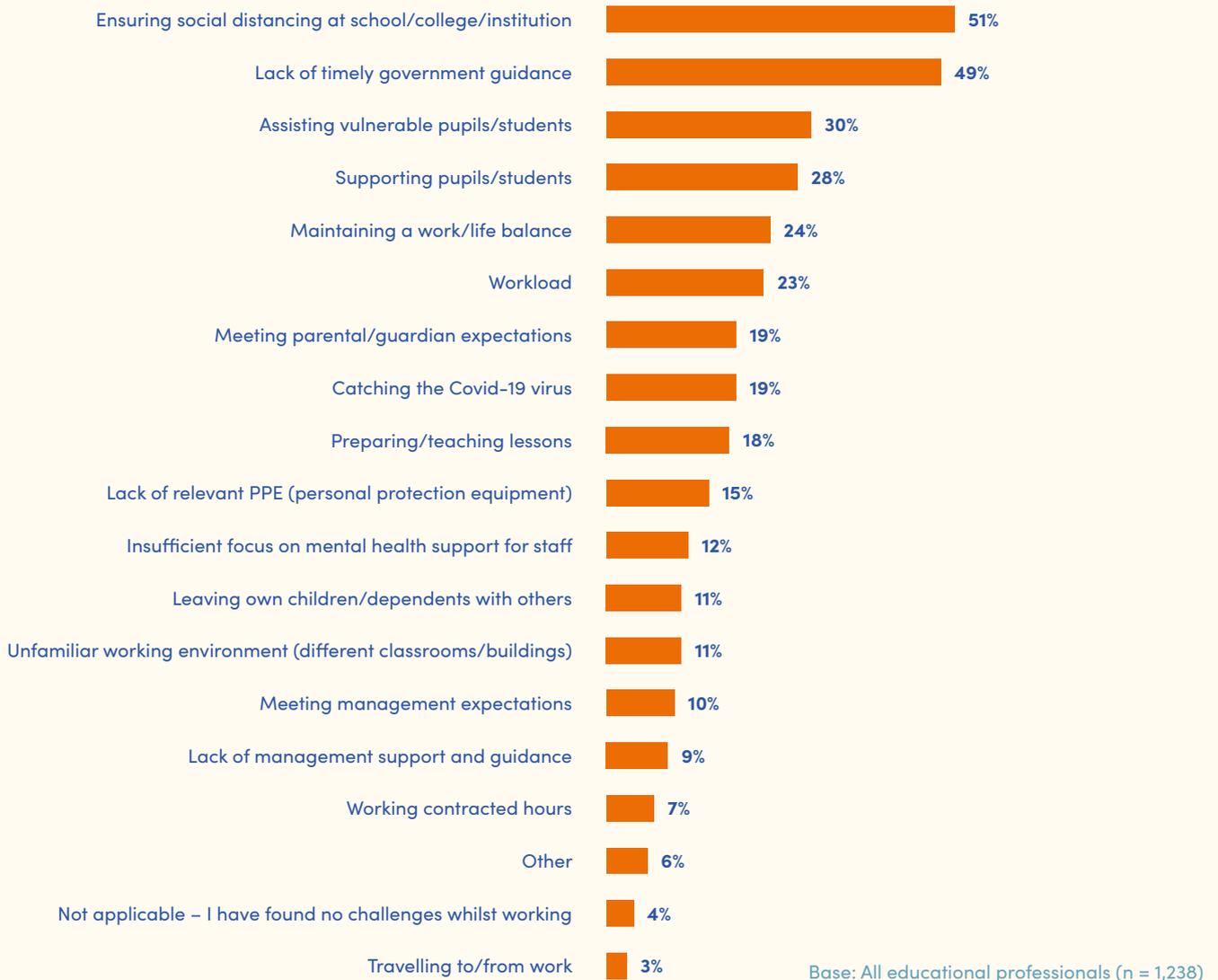
- Senior leaders (58%) considered pupils/students not completing their work as the most challenging aspect, compared to 49% of school teachers and 11% of staff working in other roles.
- Half (50%) of school leaders reported the lack of timely government guidance to be challenging, compared to 36% of school teachers and 25% of staff working in other roles. The provision of timely government guidance was also found to be the main support which would allow education professionals to make the most effective transition back to the “new normal” way of working (detailed in Section 4.3).

- Lack of social contact/isolation was more of a challenging aspect for school teachers (44%), compared to school leaders (38%) and those working in other roles (34%).
- Staff working in other roles faced greater challenges in the areas of experiencing a lack of management support and guidance (20%, compared with school teachers 16% and school leaders 13%), and in meeting management expectations (18%, compared with school leaders 12% and school teachers 10%).

### 1.2.2 The most challenging aspects for education professionals working from their usual school/college/other institution, another physical site or at hub school/college since the start of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

The Department for Education has estimated that in England, during the period that schools and colleges could open only to priority groups, approximately 80% of schools/colleges remained open, except for holiday periods when fewer were open (DfE, 2020)<sup>3</sup>.

The most challenging aspects for education professionals working from their usual school/college/other institution, another physical site or at a hub school/college since the start of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



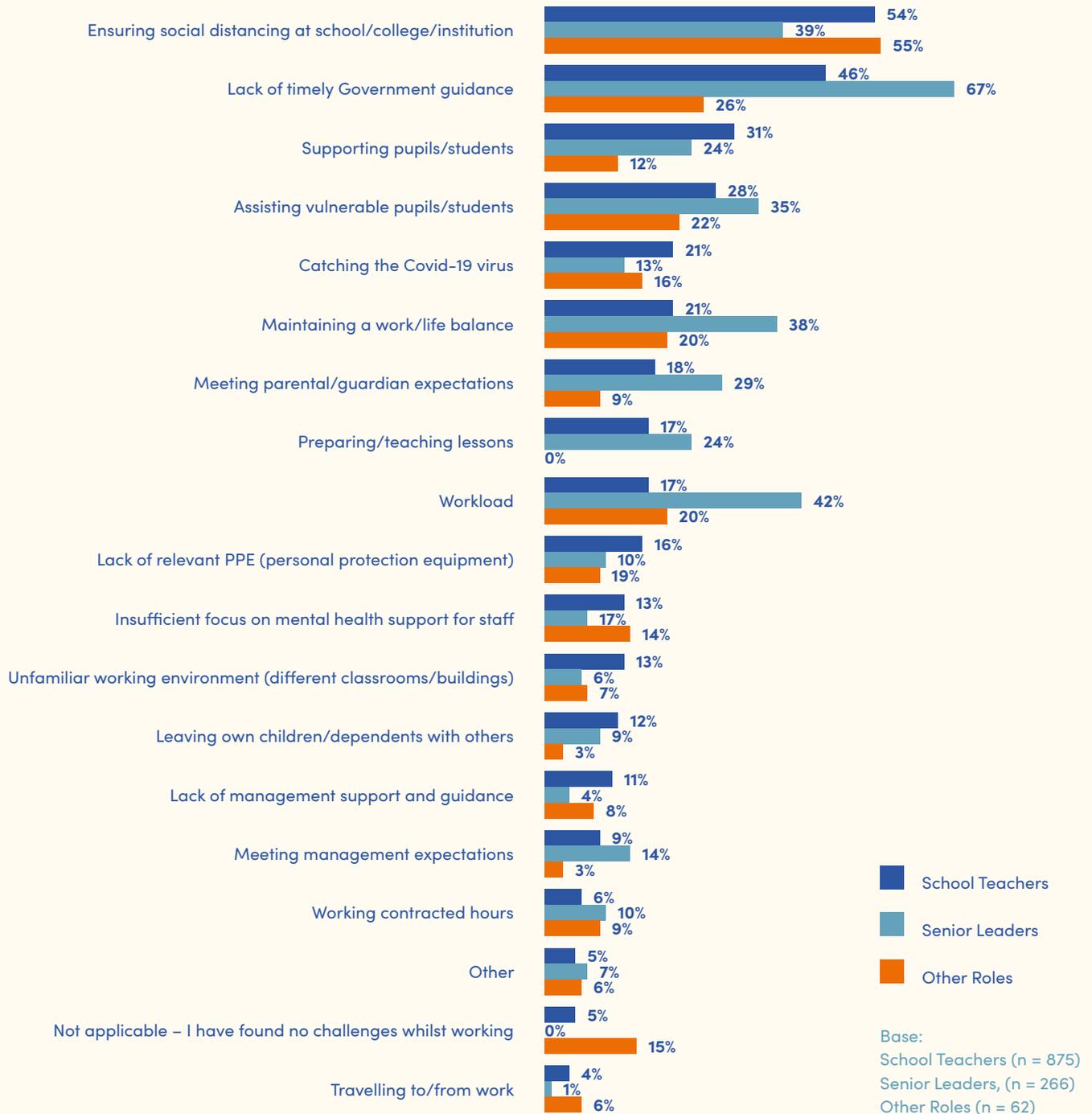
Education professionals who stated they had worked from their usual place of work, another physical site or in a hub school/college were asked to indicate the most challenging aspects they faced (noting up to five).

- The two main challenges related to ensuring social distancing (51%) and having a lack of timely government guidance (49%).

- Two other main challenges were how to assist vulnerable pupils/students (30%) and how to support pupils/students (28%).
- Lack of government guidance was more challenging to staff working in the primary sector (53%), compared to the secondary sector (46%).

<sup>3</sup>(DfE, 2020). "Attendance in education and early years' settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak". 21 July 2020. Available at [explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/2020-week-29](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/2020-week-29)

The most challenging aspects for education professionals working from their usual school/college/other institution, another physical site or at a hub school/college since the start of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic – by job role



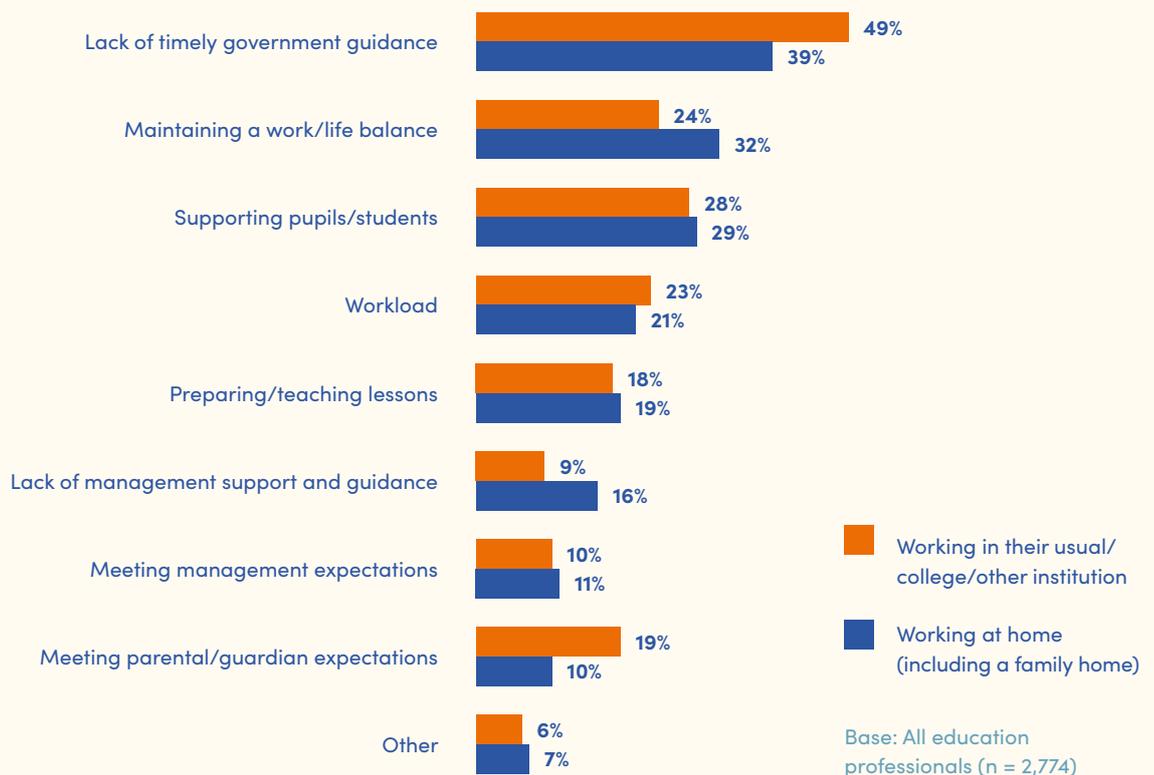
When looking at the data by job role, a number of main differences were found.

- The lack of timely government guidance was a challenge for 67% of school leaders, compared with 46% of school teachers and 26% of staff working in other roles.
- Ensuring social distancing was a challenging aspect for 55% of staff working in other roles, 54% of school teachers and 39% of school leaders.
- Workload was a challenging aspect for 42% of school leaders, compared to 20% of those working in other roles and 17% of school teachers.
- Supporting pupils/students was a challenging aspect for school teachers (31%), compared to school leaders (24%) and staff in other roles (12%).
- Assisting vulnerable pupils/students was a challenging aspect for school leaders (35%), compared to school teachers (28%) and staff in other roles (22%).

### 1.2.3 Comparison of the most challenging aspects for education professionals working from home with working from their usual school/college/other institution, another physical site, or at a hub school/college since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic

A comparison of the most challenging aspects of working from home with working at the other locations (NB only options that were common to both locations have been detailed).

Comparison of the most challenging aspects for education professionals working from home with working from their usual school/college/institution, another physical site or at a hub school/college since the start of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



- The lack of government guidance was an issue. This was felt most strongly by staff working in their usual place of work (49%), but also by staff working from home (39%).
- For staff working from home, a key issue was the ability to maintain a work/life balance (32%), which was also felt by those working from their usual place of work but not so strongly (24%).
- Both locations shared a similar concern for how to support their pupils/students (29% and 28%).



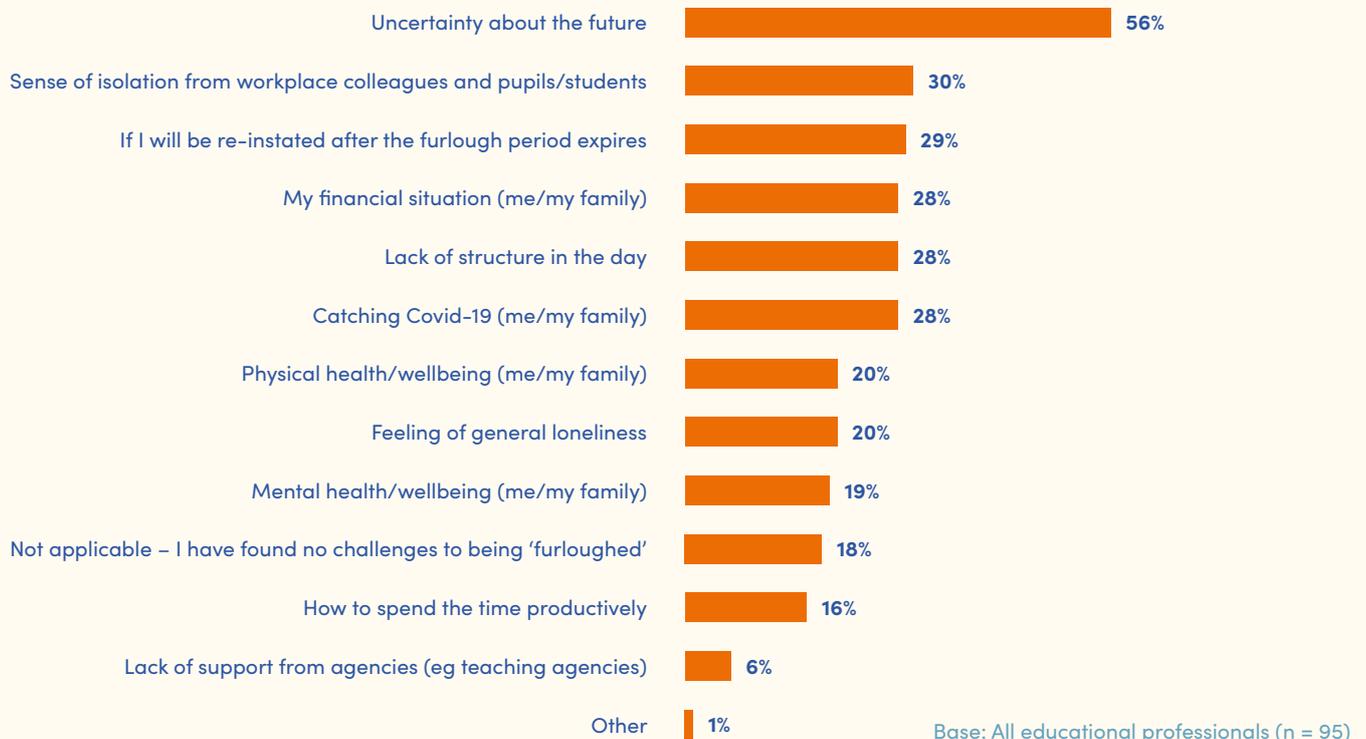
Reduce the workload. Being 'on call' 24/7 is too much. I teach in school all day, I come home and have to deal with children online. I get emails in the late hours, I send emails into late hours. This blurry line between home and work has really impacted me.



Head/Deputy Head of Department,  
Academy, West Midlands

### 1.2.4 The most challenging aspects of being furloughed since the start of (Covid-19) pandemic

The most challenging aspects of being furloughed during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



Education professionals who had been furloughed during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic also faced challenges.

- The greatest challenge, faced by 56% of all educational professionals, was uncertainty about the future.
- Other challenges included a sense of isolation from workplace colleagues and pupils/students (30%), possible re-instatement after the furlough period expires (29%), a lack of structure to the day (28%) and them/their family catching the virus (28%). A comparison by job role has not been undertaken because of the small datasets.



**As a supply teacher I have been furloughed, despite being responsible for a class for two days a week. The school took advantage of the time to not pay me. Therefore I wasn't able to work and make a difference.**



**Supply Teacher, Primary School,  
West Midlands**

Section 2:

# The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Education Professionals During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

## Section 2:

# The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Education Professionals During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

This section notes the number of education professionals who had suffered from Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms, and those who had undergone a virus test. It details the impact felt by education professionals on their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic, and a comparison is made with their resilience levels. The sources of support accessed during this time are noted.

### 2.1 The education workforce who had suffered from Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms and who had undergone a virus test

It was found that at the time the survey was undertaken (24 June to 16 July 2020) **9%** of education professionals stated they had suffered/were suffering from symptoms of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), 88% were not, and 3% did not know. Those who stated they had such symptoms (n=345) were asked if they had taken a test and, of those who had, 2% had tested positive, 19% had tested negative and 2% had not yet received the result. Of the 75% who had not taken a test, **57%** said they had not taken a test but would like one and 18% did not want a test.

The regions where education professionals reported the highest number of symptoms were London and the West Midlands (both **13%**), whereas the lowest number reported were from the North East (3%), Wales and Scotland (both 6%).

More details can be found in Appendix B.

“ Teachers and teaching assistants [should be] among the first to receive a vaccine when it is available as it is impossible to social distance at school and I am extremely worried I will get Covid-19 when back at work in September. ”

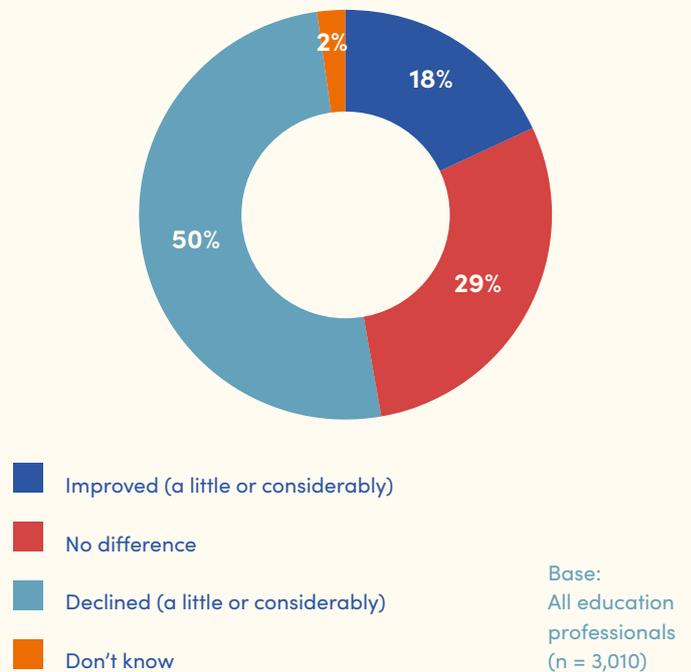
Teaching Assistant, Primary School, South East England

## 2.2 The impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on education professionals' mental health and wellbeing

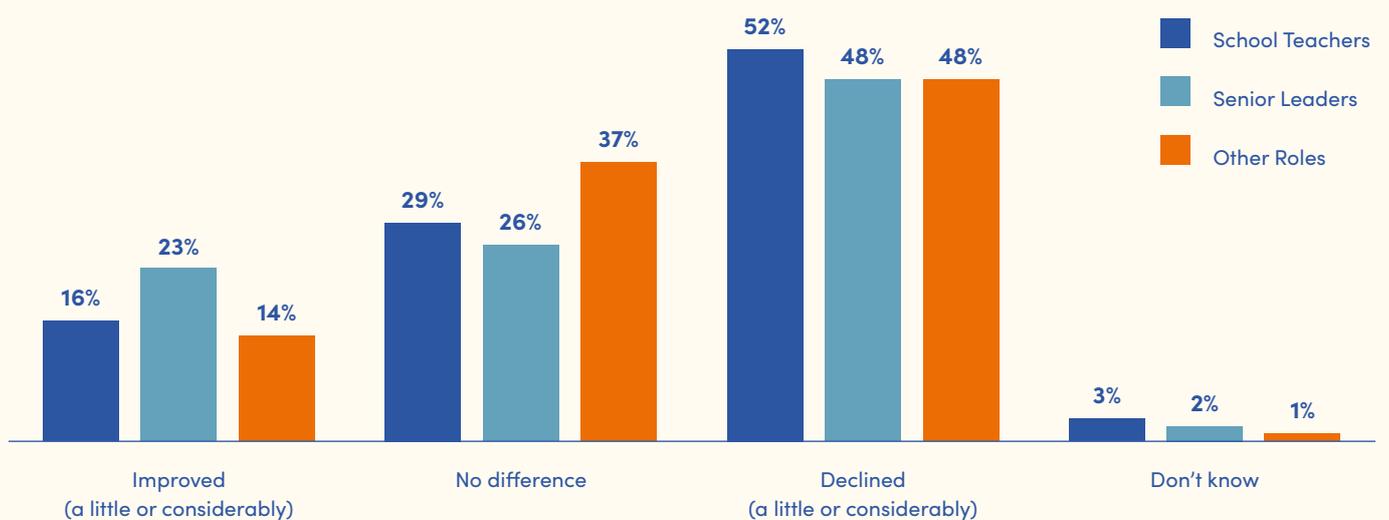
Education professionals were asked if the Coronavirus (Covid-19) had an impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

- It was found that 50% of education professionals considered their mental health had declined (either considerably or a little), 29% found no difference, and 18% experienced an improvement (either considerably or a little).
- School teachers reported the largest decrease in their mental health (**52%**), compared to senior leaders and staff in other roles (both 48%).
- In the senior leaders' category, 60% of headteachers/principals reported their mental health had declined, while 29% experienced no difference, 9% stated it had improved and 3% did not know.
- Some education professionals reported their mental health had improved – of those who did 23% were senior leaders (particularly heads/deputies/heads of department), 16% were school teachers and 14% were staff working in other roles.
- The regions reporting the highest decline in mental health were the East Midlands (57%), West Midlands (55%) and Scotland (55%). The regions reporting highest improvements were Wales (26%) and the North East (24%).

The impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on education professionals' mental health and wellbeing

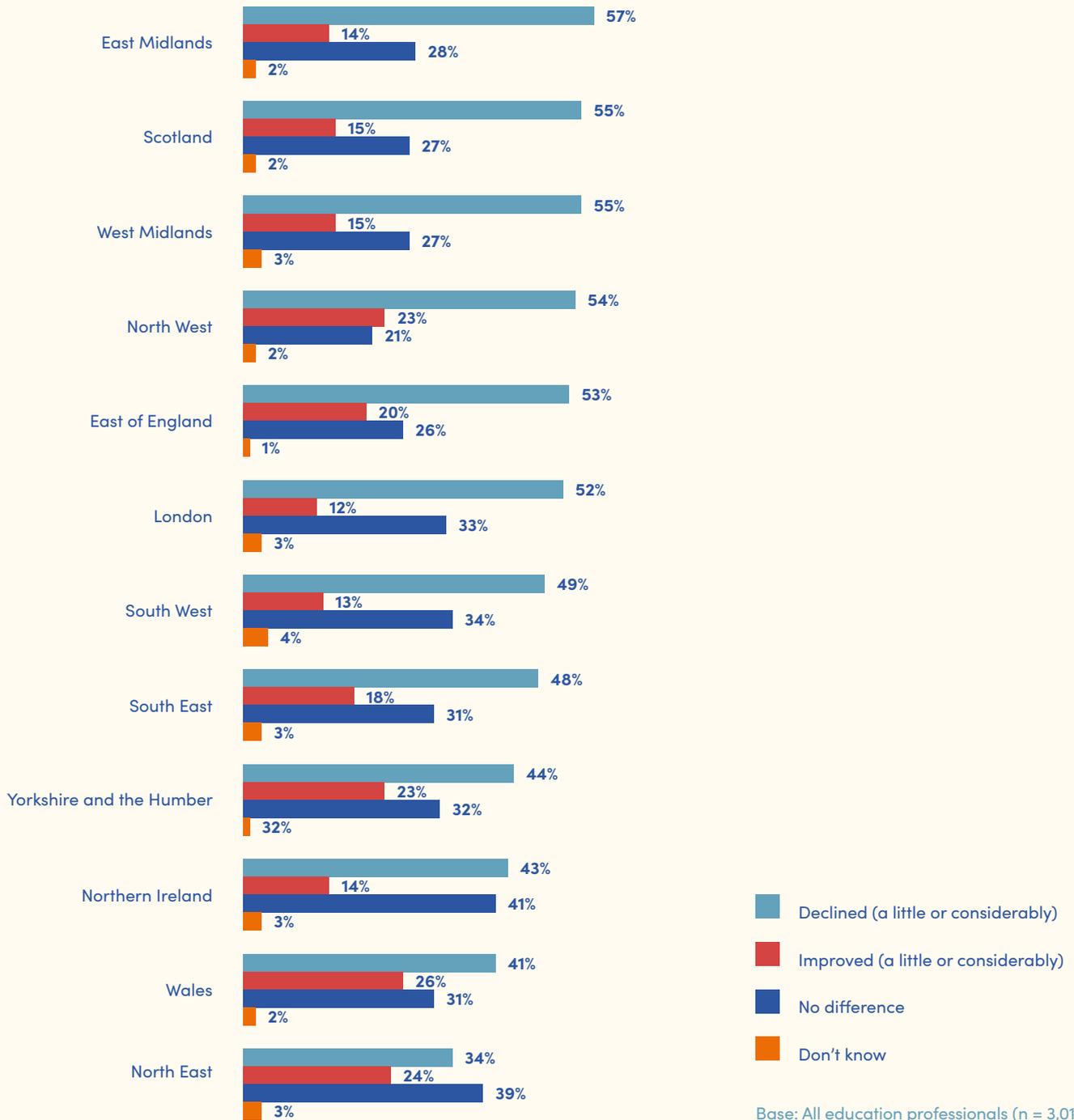


### The impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on education professionals' mental health and wellbeing – by job role



Base: School Teachers (n = 1,992), Senior Leaders (n = 743), Other Roles (n = 184)

The impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on education professionals' mental health and wellbeing – by region

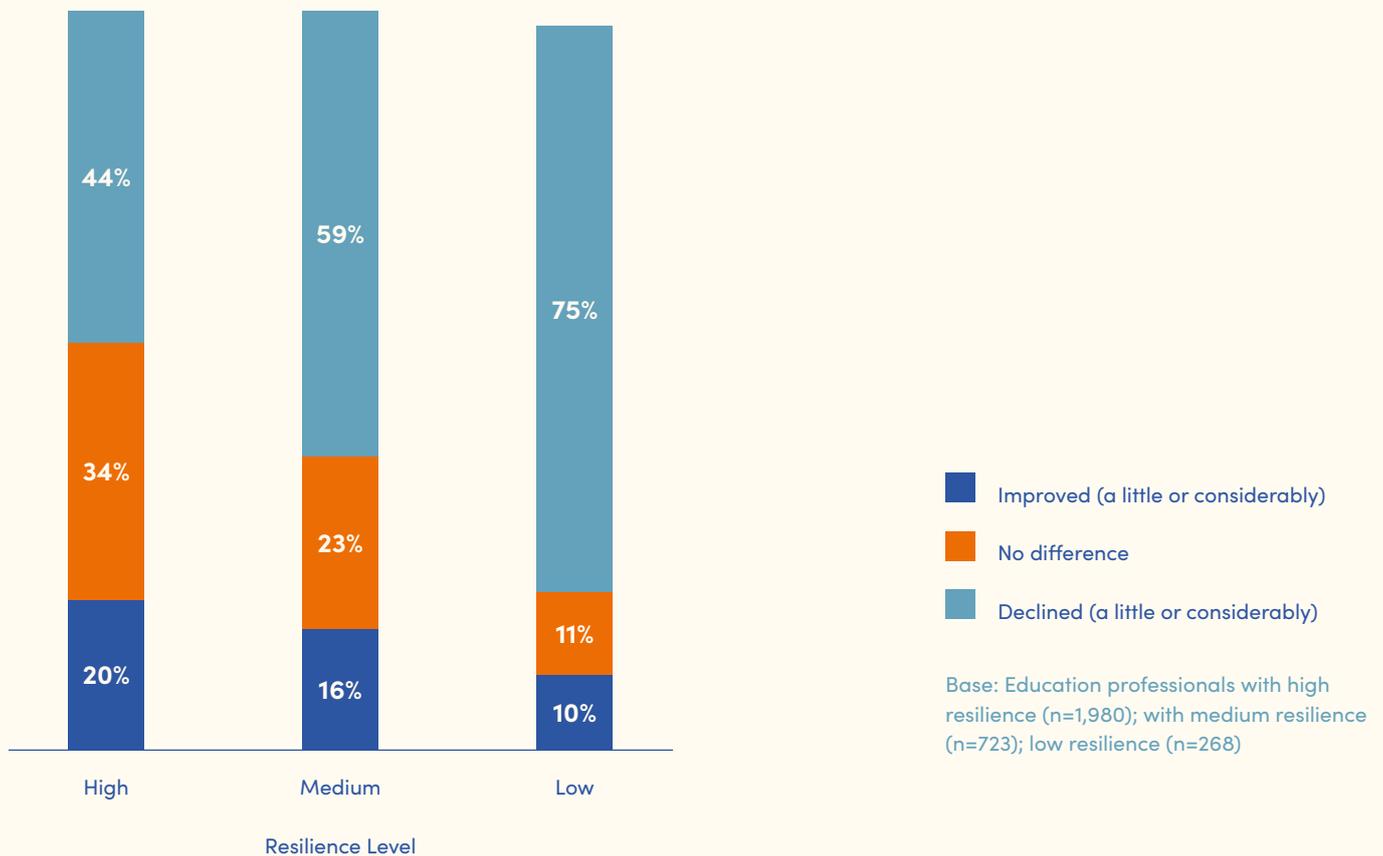


### 2.3 Comparison of education professionals' level of resilience with the impact of Coronavirus (Covid-19) on their mental health and wellbeing

Education professionals were asked to give a rating of their current levels of resilience. Resilience was defined as “the ability to adapt and recover after experiencing difficulties or challenges in life”, which was seen as important in being able to manage challenges in both their work and home lives.

- Overall, 66% of education professionals described themselves as resilient, i.e. with very or fairly high resilience levels. Senior leaders had the highest levels of resilience at 72%, school teachers 64% and staff in other roles 63% (by answering very or fairly high levels).
- When the relationship between levels of resilience and the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) on education professionals' mental health are compared, it can be seen that staff with low levels of resilience were more prone to suffering from poor mental health/wellbeing as they stated their mental health/wellbeing had declined to a greater extent than those with medium or high levels of resilience.

Comparison of the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) on education professionals' mental health and wellbeing with resilience levels



## 2.4 Sources of support accessed by educational professionals to help cope with the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

All education professionals were asked if they sought support to help them cope with the pandemic.

- The main sources of support accessed were support from family and friends (58%) and partner/spouse (52%), followed by support from peers/colleagues (27%). However, there was a large group (24%) which did not access any form of support.

- Differences in support accessed were noted by job role. Senior leaders preferred to seek support from their partner/spouse (59%), compared to school teachers (50%) and those working in other roles (44%). Senior leaders also preferred to seek support from their peers/colleagues (32%), compared to school teachers (27%) and those working in other roles (10%). School teachers, however, showed a preference for turning to family and friends (60%), compared to senior leaders (55%) and those in other roles (45%). Staff working in other roles were the highest group not accessing any form of support (32%), compared to school teachers (24%) and senior leaders (23%).

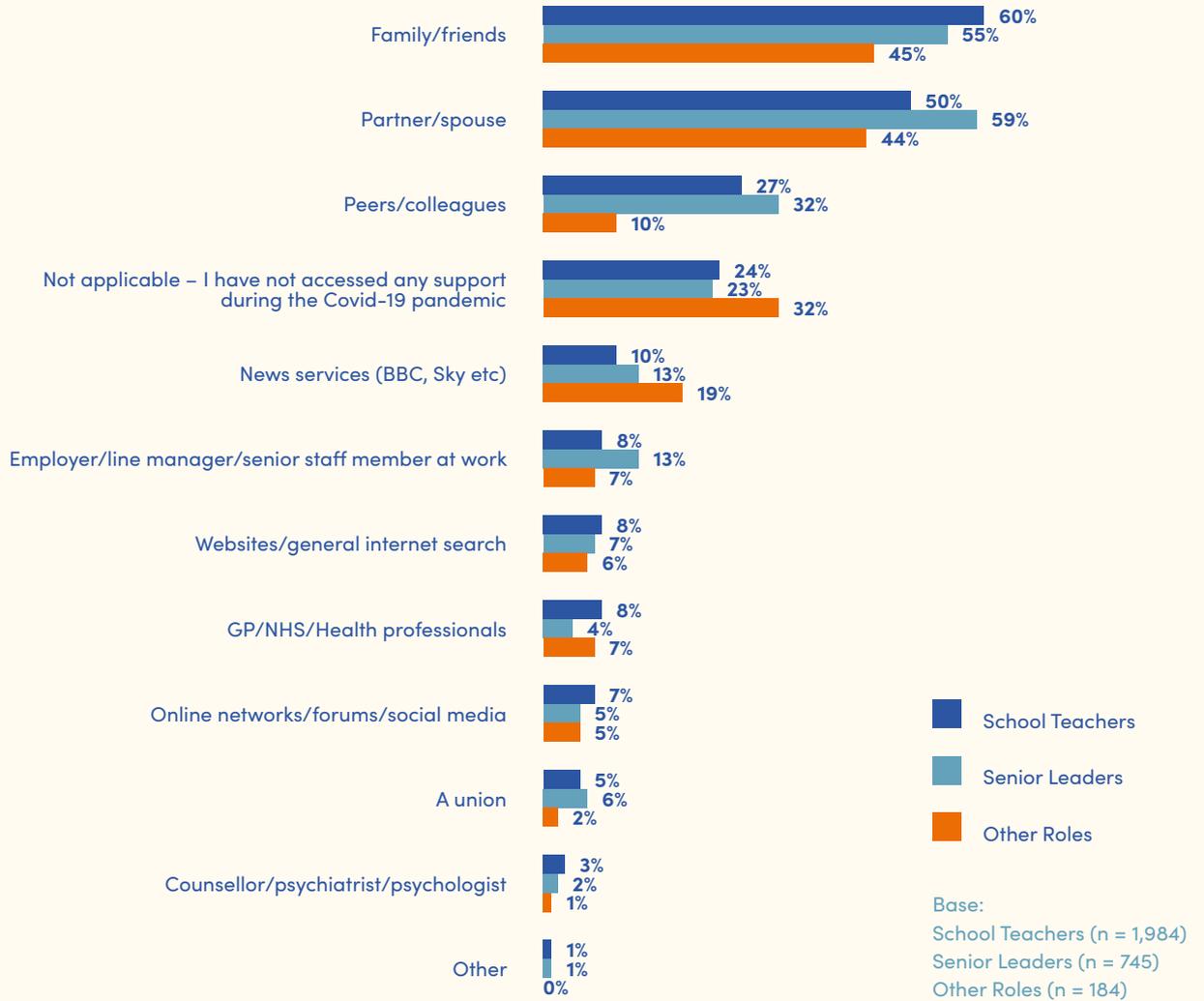
### Sources of support used by educational professionals to help them during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



“ I have valued the support and hard work of my immediate team (my department). Their goodwill and willingness to contribute and work hard in trying circumstances. ”

Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, South East England

Sources of support used by educational professionals to help during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic – by job role



“ I value working with colleagues – having a supportive department and wanting to help each other. ”

Teacher, Secondary School, London

Section 3:

# The Relationship Between the Education Profession, Government and Others During the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

## Section 3:

# The Relationship Between the Education Profession, Government and Others

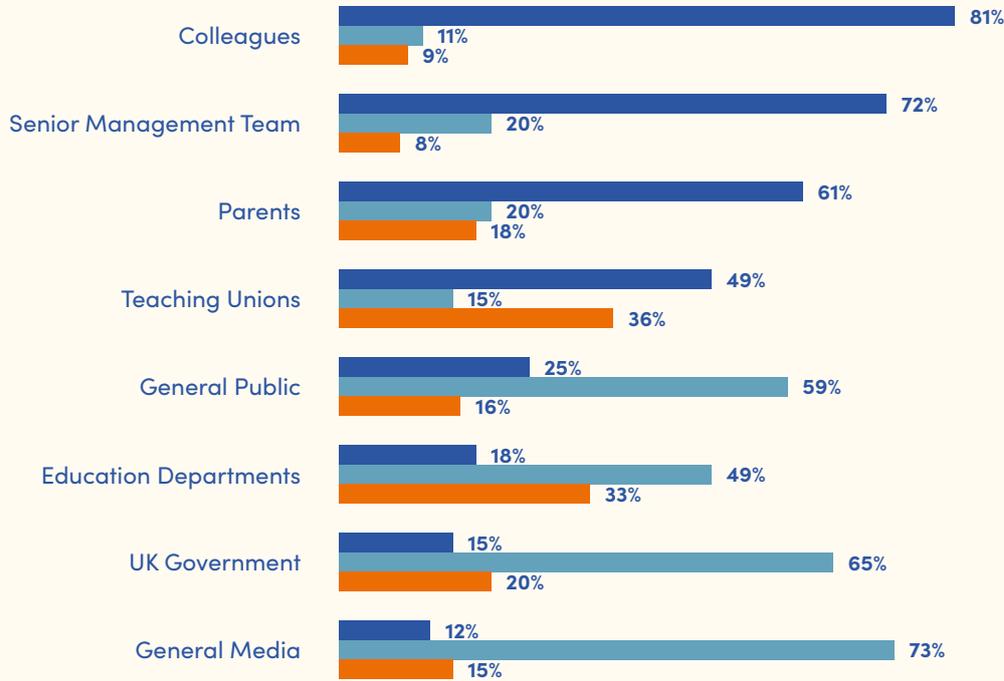
This section details how school teachers and education professionals felt their work during the pandemic was perceived by colleagues, government, parents, unions, the general media and the public. Teachers and education professionals were asked how valued and appreciated they felt by each of these groups.

### 3.1 The extent to which education professionals felt their work was valued by others

Much has been written about school/college closures and the impact this had on learners. Education professionals have worked tirelessly during lockdown in order to provide teaching and learning but also care for vulnerable children and children of key workers. A question was asked to find out how appreciated they felt by different sectors of society.

- Education professionals felt *most* appreciated by their colleagues (81%), their senior management team (72%), parents (61%) and teaching unions (49%).
- Education professionals felt unappreciated by the general media (73%), the UK government (65%), the general public (59%) and their respective education departments (49%).

The extent to which education professionals felt their work has been valued during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic



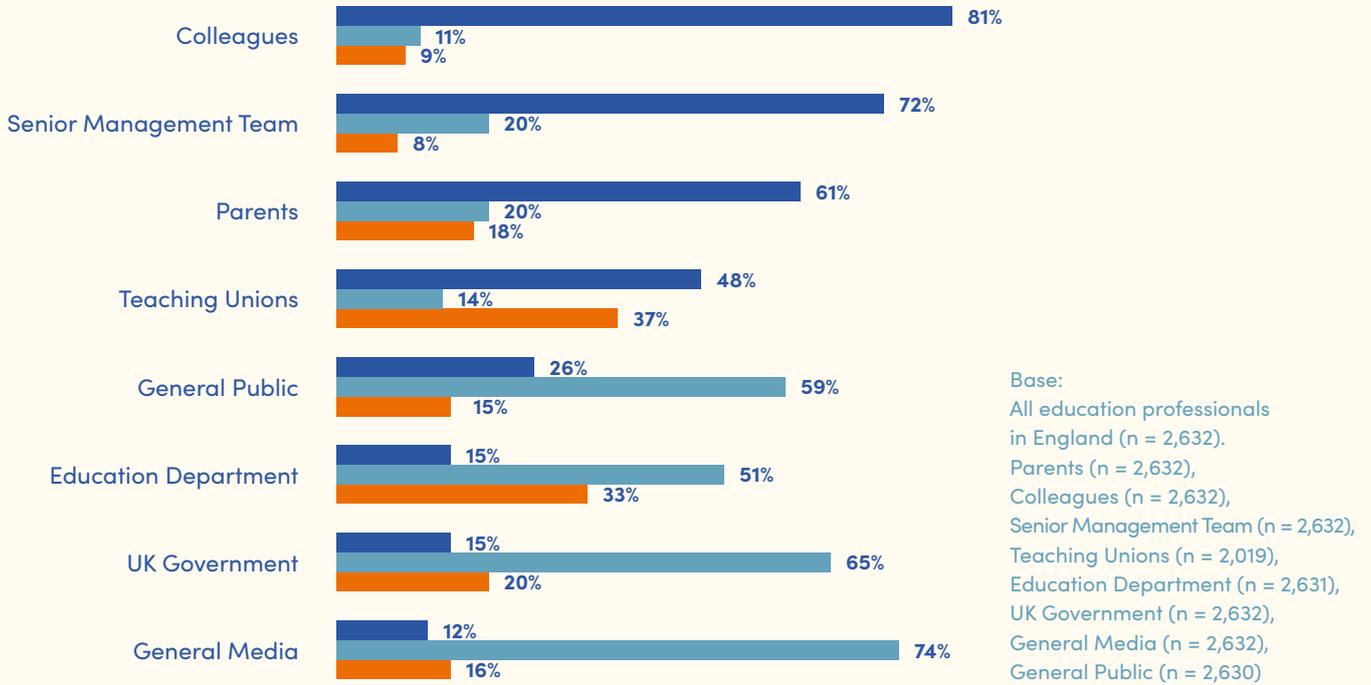
- Appreciated (greatly or somewhat)
- Not appreciated (very or not at all)
- Don't know

Base: All educational professionals – Colleagues (n = 3,034), Senior Management Team (n = 3,034), Parents (n = 3,034), Teaching Unions (n = 2,350), General Public (n = 3,032), Education Departments (n = 3,033), UK Government (n = 3,034), General Media (n = 3,034).

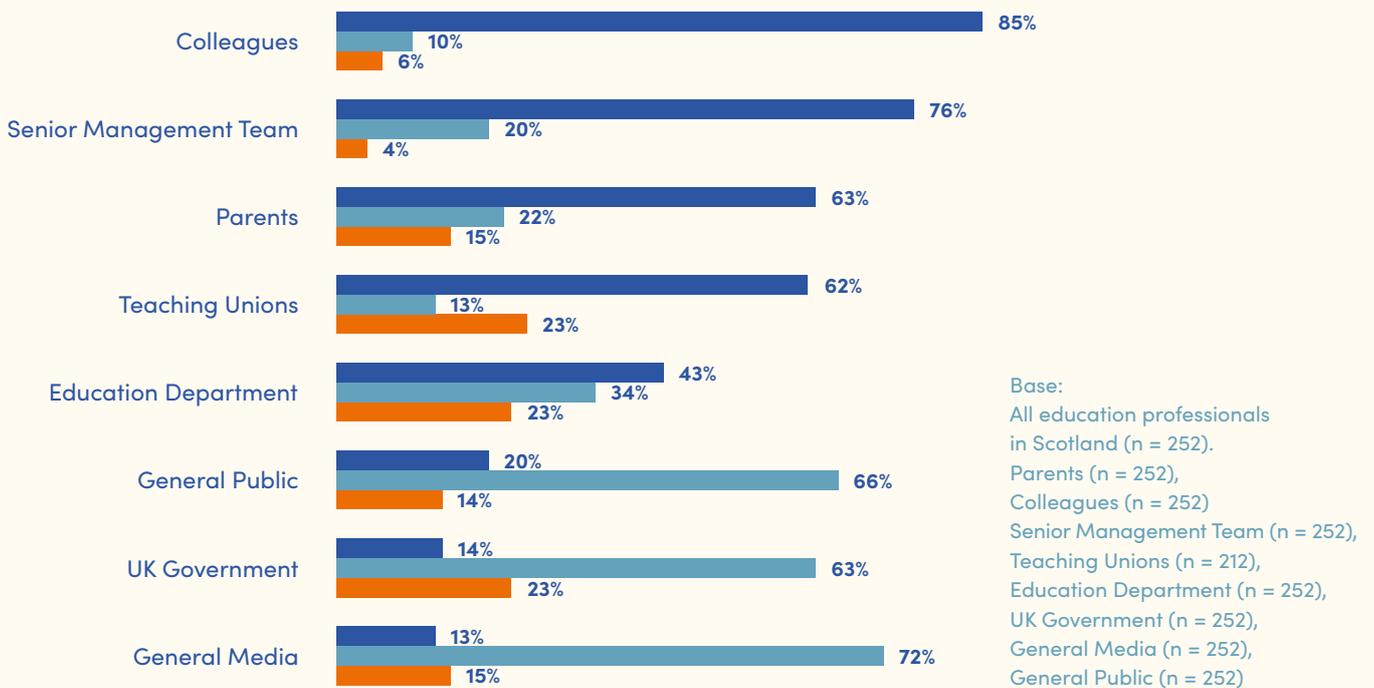
Some interesting differences in the extent to which education professionals felt their work was appreciated by different groups/organisations were found on a devolved nation basis (NB the dataset relating to Northern Ireland is small and has been excluded).

- There was a large difference in the levels of appreciation felt by the different education departments – staff working in Scotland (43%) felt most appreciated, compared to staff working in Wales (21%) and England (15%).
- There was a large difference in the levels of appreciation felt by teaching unions – staff working in Scotland felt the most appreciated (62%), compared to staff working in England (48%) and Wales (36%).
- Levels of appreciation felt by the general public were generally low – staff working in England (26%) felt the most appreciated compared to staff working in Wales (22%) and Scotland (20%).
- Levels of appreciation felt by the UK government were lower – staff working in England (15%) felt slightly more appreciated than staff working in Scotland and Wales (both 14%).
- Levels of appreciation felt by the general media were also low – staff working in Scotland (13%) felt the most appreciated, compared to England (12%) and Wales (10%).

The extent to which education professionals felt their work had been appreciated by different groups during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic – England only

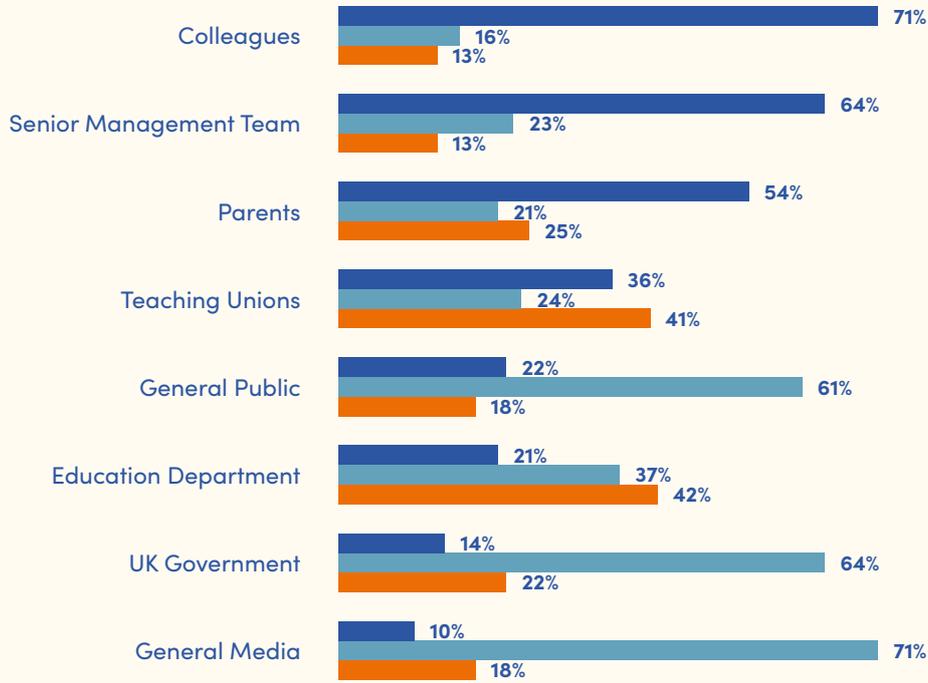


The extent to which education professionals felt their work had been appreciated by different groups during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic – Scotland only



■ Appreciated ■ Not appreciated ■ Don't know

The extent to which education professionals felt their work had been appreciated by different groups during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic – Wales only



Base:  
 All education professionals in Wales (n = 123.)  
 Parents (n = 123),  
 Colleagues (n = 123),  
 Senior Management Team (n = 123),  
 Teaching Unions = (n = 95),  
 Education Department (n = 123),  
 UK Government (n = 123),  
 General Media (n = 123),  
 General Public (n = 123)

■ Appreciated ■ Not appreciated ■ Don't know

The following sections examine the differences between levels of appreciation felt by these groups/organisations. Comparisons have also been made with where education professionals were working (or not) at the time. This included six possibilities:

- i working from home (including a family home);
- ii working in their usual school/college/other institution;
- iii working from another physical site (ie not their usual institution);
- iv working in a hub school/college (ie not their usual institution);
- v furloughed (not currently working); and
- vi working in other places (self-defined).

However, an analysis of the data related to iii and iv has not been included below due to the small datasets.

### 3.1.1 How appreciated education professionals felt by parents

- Nearly two-thirds (**61%**) of the education professionals felt appreciated by parents, of whom 19% felt greatly appreciated.
- Senior leaders and school teachers felt the most appreciated (both 63%), compared to those working in other roles (46%). However, 25% of senior leaders felt they were not appreciated, as did 20% of school teachers and 11% of those in other roles. A large number of staff working in other roles (43%) stated they did not know, compared to 17% of school teachers and 12% of senior leaders.
- Staff reported different levels of appreciation based on where they were working (or not) at the time. Staff working in their usual place of work felt most appreciated (71%), compared to staff working from home (57%), staff working in other places (55%)<sup>4</sup> or those who had been furloughed (36%).
- A trend was noted whereby BAME staff reported higher levels of feeling greatly appreciated by parents (30%) than non-BAME staff (18%) – but caution needs to be exercised here as the dataset is small.

### 3.1.2 How appreciated education professionals felt by colleagues

- Education professionals felt highly appreciated by their colleagues (81%), with a much smaller number (11%) not feeling appreciated.
- 87% of senior leaders felt appreciated by their colleagues, compared to 79% of school teachers and 75% of those in other roles. Those who did not feel appreciated were school teachers (12%), senior leaders (10%) and those working in other roles (8%).
- Although a small group, supply teachers felt less appreciated by their colleagues (52% compared with 81% generally).
- Staff reported similar levels of appreciation based on where they were working (or not) at the time. Education professionals working from their usual place of work and working from home felt appreciated (84% and 82% respectively). Staff working in other places also felt appreciated (69%)<sup>4</sup>. However, only 38% of furloughed staff felt appreciated by their colleagues.

### 3.1.3 How appreciated education professionals felt by their Senior Management Team (SMT)

- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of education professionals felt appreciated by their Senior Management Team, although 20% did not feel appreciated by their SMT and 8% did not know.
- Senior leaders felt the most appreciation (81%), compared to school teachers (69%) and those working in other roles (67%). Of those who did not feel appreciated, school teachers were the largest group (22%), compared to school leaders and those working in other roles (both 16%).
- Staff working from their usual place of work (78%), staff working from home (71%) and staff working from other places (66%)<sup>4</sup> felt appreciated by their SMT. However, only 33% of furloughed staff felt appreciated by their SMT.
- Education professionals who had a length of service of 6 years or more felt more appreciated by their SMT than those with lower levels of service (73% compared to 64%).

<sup>4</sup> Other staff excludes staff working from another physical site or in a hub school/college

### 3.1.4 How appreciated education professionals felt by the teaching unions

- Nearly half (49%) of education professionals felt appreciated by the teaching unions, although there was a high number (36%) who did not know, and some (15%) felt their work was not appreciated.
- School teachers felt the most appreciated (52%), compared with senior leaders (49%) and staff in other roles (21%). Whereas, senior leaders felt the most unappreciated (19%), followed by school teachers (13%) and those working in other roles (10%).
- Those who felt most appreciated by the unions were staff working from their usual place of work (52%), those working from home or other places (both 48%)<sup>4</sup>.

### 3.1.5 How appreciated education professionals felt by the Department for Education (England)/ Education Scotland/Department for Education and Skills (Wales)/Department of Education (Northern Ireland)

- Less than one-fifth of education professionals (18%) felt appreciated by their respective education department, compared to half (49%) who felt unappreciated and one-third (33%) who did not know.
- A large difference was found when comparing job roles, i.e. **66%** of senior leaders felt unappreciated, compared to 47% of school teachers and 26% of those working in other roles. However, 19% of school teachers felt appreciated, 18% of those in other roles and 15% of senior leaders. A large number (56%) of those working in other roles stated they did not know, as did 35% of school teachers and 19% of senior leaders.
- Education professionals who felt most unappreciated by their respective education department were those who worked in their usual place of work (56%), those who worked from home (47%), those who worked from other places (46%)<sup>4</sup> and those who had been furloughed (31%).

### 3.1.6 How appreciated education professionals felt by the UK government

- Only **15%** of education professionals felt appreciated by the UK government, compared to 65% who felt unappreciated and 20% who did not know.
- A difference was found by job role, i.e. senior leaders (78%) felt the most unappreciated, compared to school teachers (63%) and those working in other roles (43%). Of those who felt appreciated, 17% were school teachers, 16% were those in other roles, and 11% were senior leaders. There were a high number of staff working in other roles who said they did not know (42%), compared to school teachers (20%) and senior leaders (11%).

- Those who felt the most unappreciated by the UK government were those who worked in their usual place of work (69%), followed by those who worked from home (64%), those who worked from other places (55%)<sup>4</sup> and those who were furloughed (40%).

### 3.1.7 How appreciated education professionals felt by the general media

- Nearly three-quarters (73%) of education professionals felt that their work was not appreciated by the general media, compared to **12%** who felt appreciated and 15% who did not know.
- Senior leaders felt their work was the least appreciated (87%), compared to school teachers (72%) and those working in other roles (52%). Of those who felt appreciated, the largest group were school teachers (14%), followed by those working in other roles (10%) and senior leaders (7%). There was a large category of people working in other roles who did not know (39%), compared with school teachers (14%) and senior leaders (6%).
- Staff working in their usual place of work felt the least appreciated (79%), followed by staff working from home (73%), staff working in other places (62%)<sup>4</sup> and staff who were furloughed (41%).
- A trend was noticed where non-BAME staff felt the least appreciated (74%) by the general media than BAME staff (64%).

### 3.1.8 How appreciated education professionals felt by the general public

- More than half (59%) of education professionals felt their work was not appreciated by the general public, compared to **25%** who felt it was appreciated and 16% who did not know.
- Senior leaders felt the most unappreciated (71%), compared to school teachers (59%) and those working in other roles (36%). Of those who felt appreciated, the largest group were school teachers (27%), then those working in other roles (22%) and school leaders (21%). Those who did not know were those working in other roles (41%), followed by school teachers (14%) and senior leaders (8%).
- Staff working in their usual place of work felt the most unappreciated (64%), followed by staff working from home (59%), staff working from other places (51%)<sup>4</sup> and furloughed staff (34%).

<sup>4</sup> Other staff excludes staff working from another physical site or in a hub school/college

Section 4:  
**Education  
Professionals  
Making the  
Transition Back  
to Their Normal  
Place of Work**

## Section 4:

# Education Professionals Making the Transition Back to Their Normal Place of Work

This section is focused on education professionals making the transition back to work. It details the main concerns that they have in returning, and the attributes and skills that are needed by the workforce (or needed to develop) to support their pupils/students to adapt positively after lockdown. Finally, the forms of support which would help them make the most effective transition to the “new normal” way of working are described.



**I have missed the joy of working with children face-to-face, it's doing little things to support their development and wellbeing. It's not the same through a computer!**



Head/Deputy Head of Department, Primary School, Scotland

## 4.1 Transitioning back to work

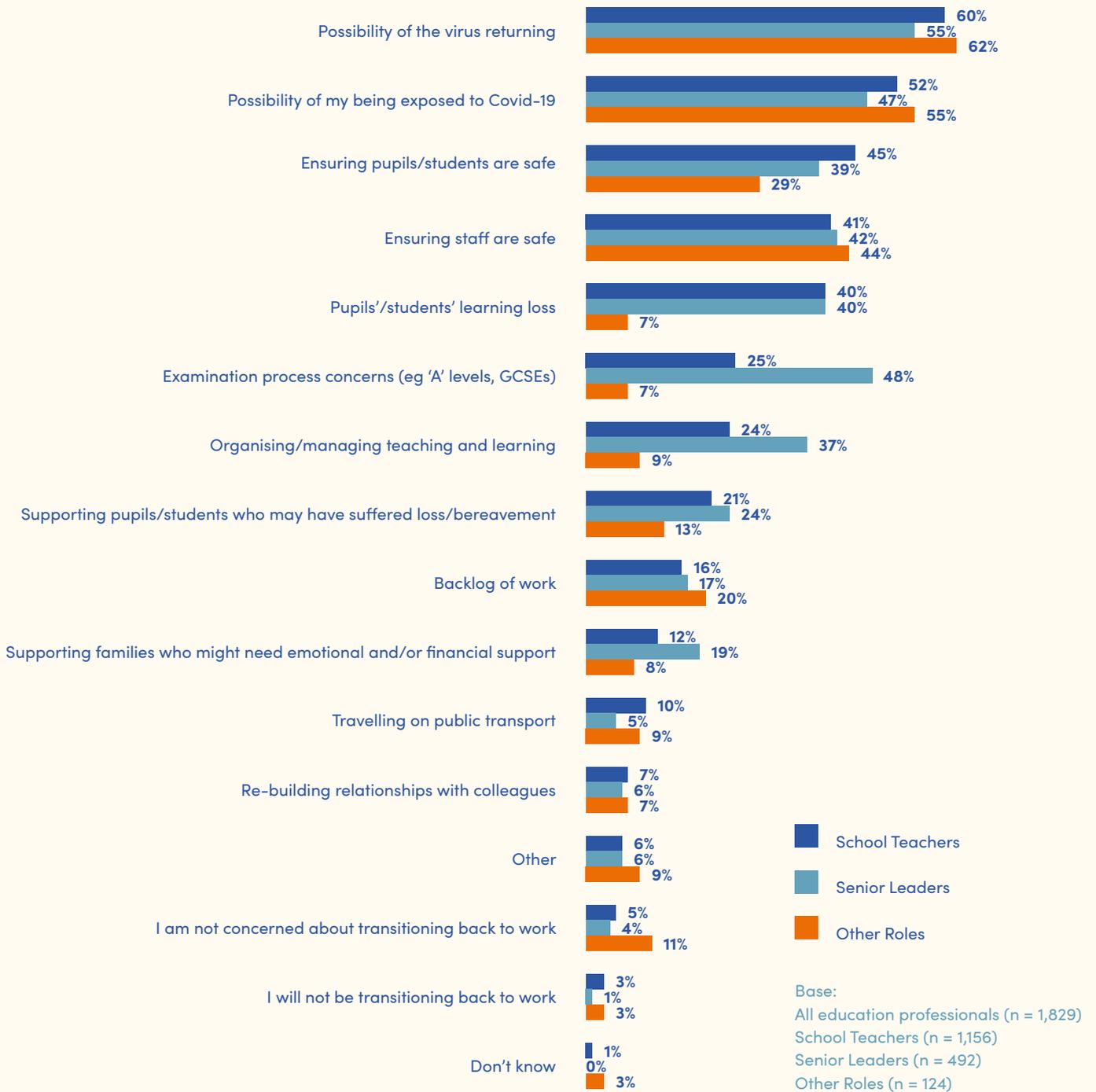
### Concerns education professionals had about making a transition back to work at their usual institution



Education professionals who had not been working in their usual school/college during lockdown were asked what most concerned them about making a transition back to work.

- Concerns related to the virus were uppermost. More than half (59%) were worried about the possibility of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) returning and, again, more than half (51%) were concerned about the possibility of themselves being exposed to the Coronavirus.
- Safety was another key issue, where 41% were concerned that their pupils/students would be able to be kept safe, and also that staff would be kept safe (41%).
- Over one-third (36%) were concerned about the loss to learning which had happened during lockdown.
- Concerns about exams were also important for 29% of education professionals (the exam-taking process for 'A' level, GCSE and SATs having been cancelled), as was the organisation/management of teaching and learning (25%).
- One fifth of education professionals (20%) were worried about how to support pupils/students who may have suffered loss/bereavement.
- Only 6% were not concerned about making the transition back to work.

Concerns education professionals had about making a transition back to work at their usual institution – by job role



Differences were found relating to the concerns that education professionals had about returning to work by job role.

- All education professions had concerns related to the virus. Staff working in other roles were most concerned about the virus returning (62%, compared to **60%** of school teachers and 55% of school leaders), and about the possibility of being exposed to the virus (55%, compared to 52% of school teachers and 47% of senior leaders).
- School teachers had the most concern relating to keeping pupils/students safe (45%, compared to 39% of senior leaders and 29% of staff working in other roles).
- Staff working in other roles had the most concern about keeping staff safe (44%, compared to 42% of senior leaders and 41% of school teachers).
- Concerns relating to the pupils'/students' learning loss was an issue for both senior leaders (40%) and school teachers (40%).
- A large difference was found relating to the examination process, which was a concern for nearly half (48%) of senior leaders, compared to 25% of school teachers and 7% of staff working in other roles).
- Another major concern for senior leaders was managing/organising teaching and learning (37%, compared to 24% of school teachers and 9% of staff working in other roles).
- Senior leaders were also more concerned about how to support families who may need emotional and/or financial support (19%, compared to 12% of school teachers and 8% of staff working in other roles).

Differences relating to the concerns expressed were also found by region. For those concerns which constituted 20% or more of the findings, the top regions have been noted below<sup>5</sup>:

- The possibility of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) returning was of greatest concern to staff working in, East of England (64%) and the South West (62%).
- The possibility of being exposed to the Coronavirus (Covid-19) was of greatest concern to staff working in the North East (67%), London (59%) and the South West (57%).
- Ensuring staff are kept safe was of greatest concern to staff working in the North East (52%), East of England (48%) and the South West (47%).
- Ensuring pupils/students are kept safe was of equal concern to staff working in the East of England, South West and the West Midlands (all 48%).
- Organising/managing teaching and learning was of greatest concern to staff working in Yorkshire and the Humber (32%), Scotland (31%) and the West Midlands (30%).
- Exam process concerns (eg 'A' levels, GCSEs etc.) was of greatest concern to staff working in Yorkshire and the Humber (41%), the South East (36%) and London (32%).
- Concerns related to pupils'/students' learning loss were considerably higher in the West Midlands (51%), followed by East of England, and Scotland (both 38%).
- Concerns related to supporting pupils/students who may have suffered loss/bereavement were most felt by staff working in the East of England and Yorkshire and the Humber (both 25%).



We need proper suppression of the virus, plus proper test, trace, isolate programmes, so that we could have all the children in front of us full-time.



Teacher, Primary School, Scotland

<sup>5</sup>Northern Ireland has been excluded due to the small dataset

## 4.2 Attributes/skills needed by education professionals in order to support pupils/ students to adapt positively back to school/college

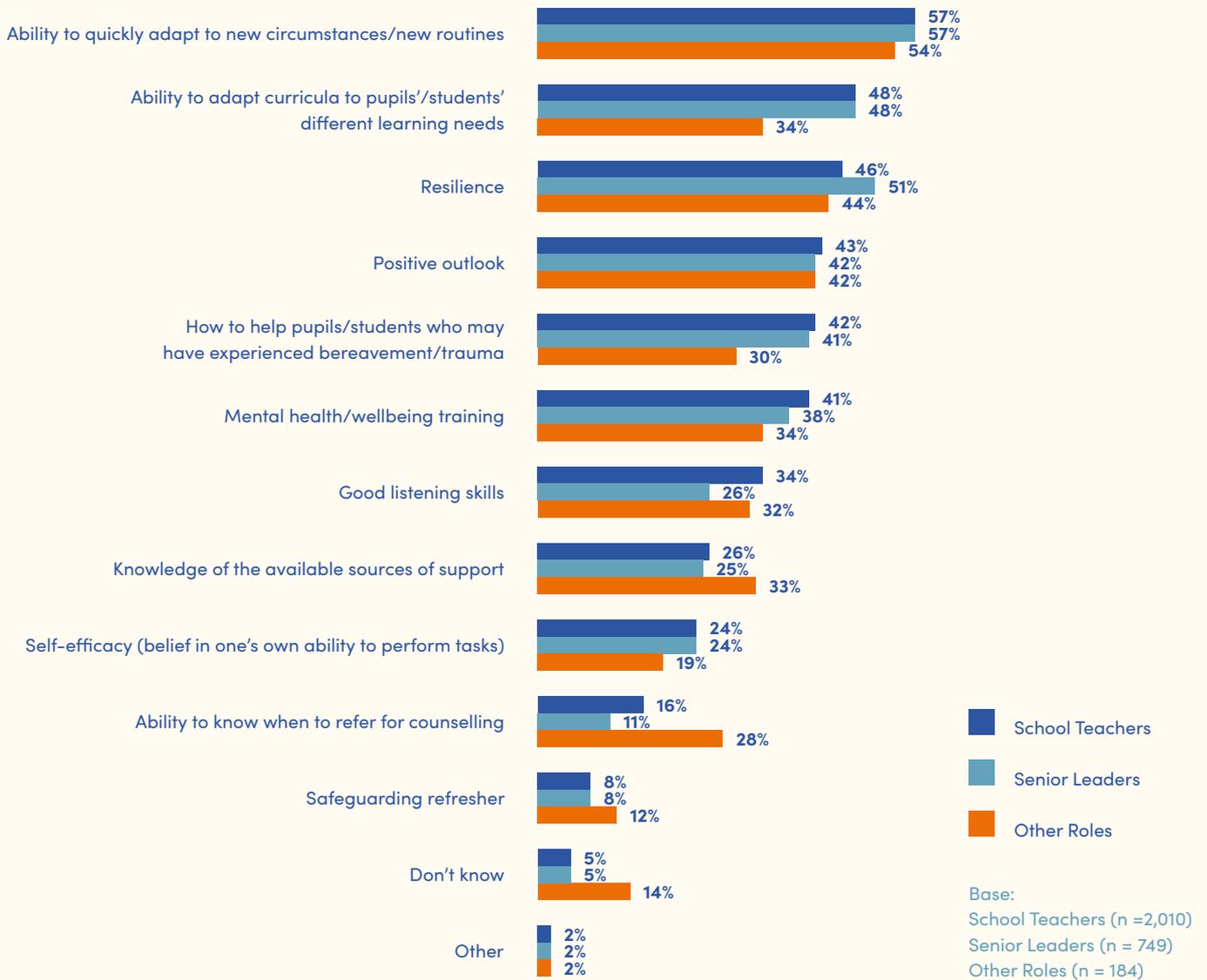
Attributes/skills education professionals feel are needed in order to support their pupils/ students to adapt positively back to school/college life after 'lockdown'



Education professionals were asked what skills and attributes were needed (or needed to develop) in order to support their pupils/students to adapt positively back to school after lockdown.

- More than half (**56%**) of education professionals felt the ability to quickly adapt to new circumstances/new routines was the most important attribute/skill needed.
- Just under half felt the ability to adapt curricula to pupils'/ students' different learning needs (47%) was important, as was resilience (47%) and having a positive outlook (42%).
- Knowing how to help pupils/students who may have experienced bereavement/trauma was also considered important (40%).

Attributes/skills needed to support pupils/students to adapt positively back to school/college



Small differences were found relating to the skills and attributes needed (or needed to develop) to support their pupils/students adapt positively back to school/college after lockdown by job role.

- The ability to adapt the curricula to pupils'/students' different learning needs was of higher concern to senior leaders and school teachers rather than staff working in other roles (48%, 48% and 34% respectively).
- How to help pupils/students who may have experienced bereavement/trauma was of higher concern to school teachers and senior leaders rather than staff working in other roles (42%, 41% and 30% respectively).
- The ability to know when to refer for counselling was of higher concern to staff working in other roles, compared to school teachers and senior leaders (28%, compared to 16% and 11%).

### 4.3 The form of support education professionals need to help them make the most effective transition back to work

Education professionals were asked to state the one form of support which would help them make the most effective transition back to the “new normal” way of working. The question asked for open-responses in order to give respondents the opportunity to share their own thoughts and ideas, while offering valuable insight into their support requirements for the new academic year/their future.

There were 1,775 replies to the question – nine from the early years’ sector, 405 from the primary sector, 518 from the secondary sector, 257 from the sixth form sector, 401 from the further education sector and 185 from the

adult/vocational and other sectors. Many education professionals stated more than one form of support to this question. The word cloud below shows the themes identified from the responses to this question. The text size relates to the frequency of occurrence. Themes that achieved less than ten responses have not been shown.

The overall findings are summarised below, with a few example extracts for illustration. A greater selection of extracts relating to the top six themes identified can be found in Appendix C.



2020 Base: All education professionals (n = 1,775)

What is clear from the above image is that the greatest support needed to be provided to all education professionals was to receive guidance on next steps. This was noted in 358 responses. A large number of staff (150) stated general guidance was needed, but not saying who should provide it. A similar number (143) were looking to their government/education departments to provide this guidance, others (61) were looking to their local management/senior management teams, and a small number (4) were looking to their local authorities to provide this. Such guidance was described as needing to be non-contradictory, timely, appropriate, workable and based on scientific evidence.

**“Clear instructions and guidance well in advance”**  
Teacher, Secondary School, South West England (#622)

**“We have 2,400 students at our school. We would like to know how the government would like us to proceed safely”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, South East England (#1842)

**“Clear guidance from senior management on what our priorities will be for learning”**  
Teacher, Primary School, Wales (#3015)

**“Consistent clear planning from Local Authorities”**  
Teacher, Primary School, Scotland (#17)

This requirement for further, timely and appropriate guidance related to multiple issues. Many teachers and school leaders wanted guidance related to reopening schools safely while the virus is still in circulation. Greater clarity was also required over the shape teaching and learning should take in this dynamic context. In particular, education professionals wanted clearer guidance on the assessment process for next year.

**“Clear, non-contradictory guidance from Department of Education/Education Authority/Exam Boards as to what is expected next year”**

Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary Grammar School, Northern Ireland (#31)

**“Clear guidance on the 2021 exam process”**

Teacher, Secondary School, West Midlands (#435)

**“Clarity on next year’s examination process”**

Teacher, Secondary School, North East England (#511)

The other main area of support identified by education professionals as being needed was health and safety measures (126). This related to the need for schools/colleges to take the appropriate precautions in order to provide a safe environment for both staff and pupils/students, including those who were clinically vulnerable. To do this, risk assessments would need to be undertaken, and rules/procedures would need to be instigated. Classrooms would need extra cleaning, cleaning products provided for hand-washing and social distancing would need to be maintained.

Issues connected with the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils were another key concern (114). Many staff considered the restoration of their pupils’/students’ wellbeing to be a first priority, with other work such as data collecting, testing and exams given lesser importance. There was also a need for staff training to support students, many of whom would not have attended school/college for six months, and the areas identified were stress, anxiety, grief and trauma. Staff also noted they would like support with their own mental health, eg from their headteacher.

Having time was also a key feature of returning to work (88). Time was stated in various ways, eg having time to prepare (preparation time featured highly), time to implement changes, time to adjust, time to re-establish working relationships with colleagues and extra time to further support their pupils/students if needed. Time was also needed for institutions adopting blended learning, ie in order to prepare materials for both online and face-to-face teaching.

The support of local management was also strongly needed (87). Such support would help staff adapt to change, offer advice, acknowledge any difficulties, and assist with any challenging pupil/student behaviour that might be encountered related to social distancing.

CPD/training was another form of support needed (78). The greatest need was for training in mental health and how to deal with specific issues such as bereavement, anxiety etc. There was also the need for training in how to use technology, curriculum training, general training and training associated with implementing safety procedures such as social distancing.

**“Same levels of safety being required in schools as in all other work places (ie social distancing, masks where this is not possible etc)”**

Teacher, Secondary School, East of England (#263)

**“Supporting children’s mental health and wellbeing seeing as most have had almost six months outside of school and some have not accessed any learning at all”**

Teacher, Primary School, Yorkshire and the Humber (#253)

**“Additional planning and reflection time to deal with changes and updated guidance properly”**

Teacher, Secondary School, London (#771)

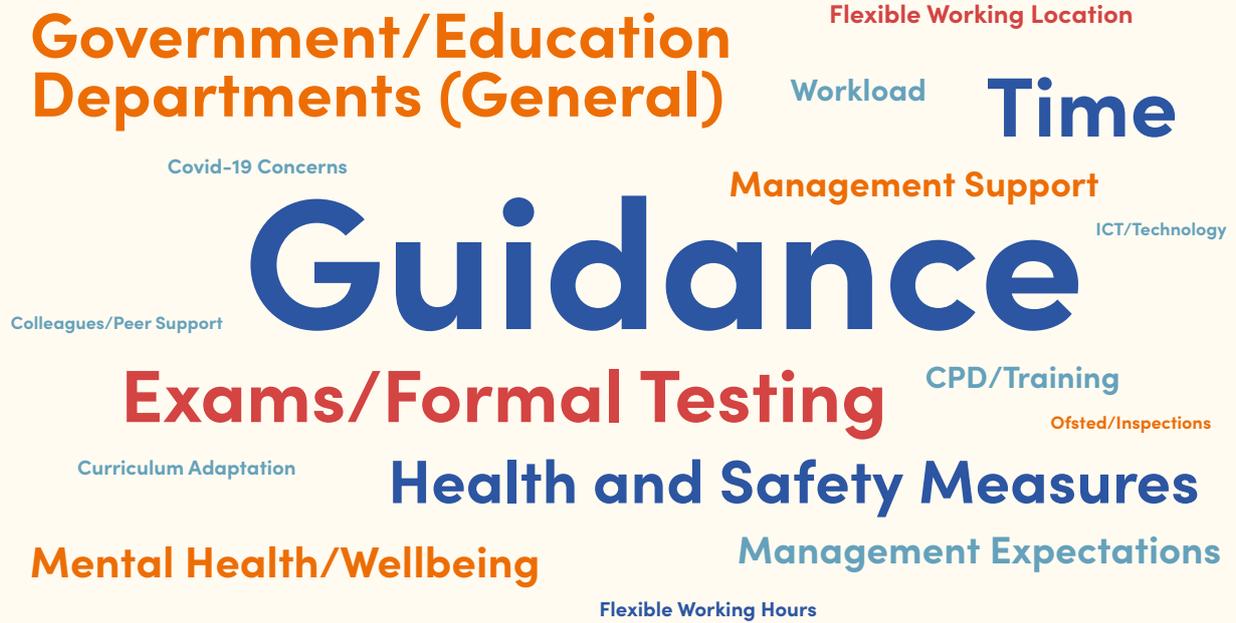
**“Supportive senior leadership team”**

Newly Qualified Teacher, Early Years, London (#1318)

**“Training to aid students with bereavement/loss”**

Teaching Assistant, Secondary School, West Midlands (#1268)

Differences were found in the support needed by education professionals to make an effective transition back to work by job role.



2020 Base: All senior leaders (n = 465)

The word cloud above illustrates the support that senior leaders consider would help them make an effective transition back to work. Regarding the top five themes which senior leaders identified:

- Guidance as the most important aspect (98), either from the government/education departments or general guidance.
- One area, which senior leaders focused on, compared to all professionals, was exams/format testing (31). Support was requested relating to exams from the government/examination boards, particularly relating to the 2021 exam series.
- Other areas included time (35), general comments relating to government/education departments (27), and health and safety measures (26).

“ We need clear, non-contradictory guidance from Department of Education/Education Authority/Exam Boards as to what is expected next year. ”

Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary Grammar School, Northern Ireland



2020 Base: All school teachers (n = 1,018)

The word cloud above illustrates the support school teachers considered would help them make an effective transition back to work. Regarding the top five themes which school teachers identified:

- Like senior leaders above, guidance was the most important aspect of support needed by school teachers (182).
- Support related to mental health and wellbeing (94) and health and safety measures were also concerns (93).
- Having the support of management (65) and CPD/training (60) were also needed.

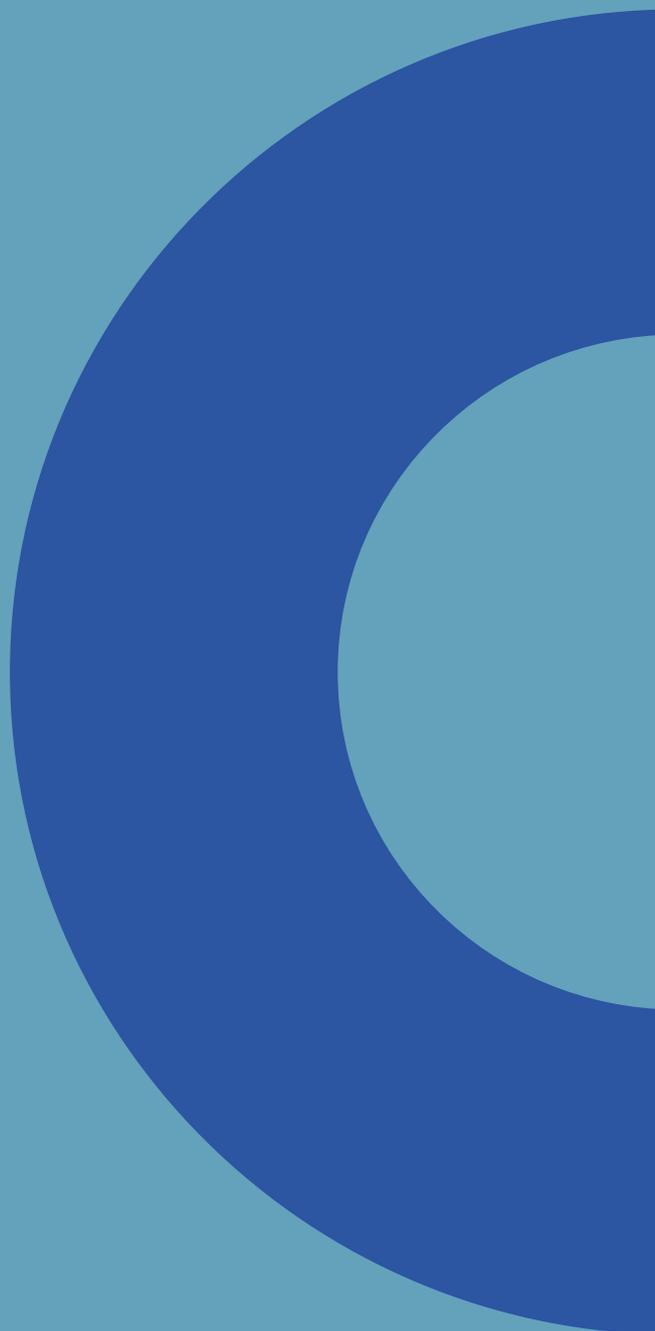


2020 Base: All staff in other roles (n = 88)

The word cloud above illustrates the support that staff working in other roles consider would help them make an effective transition back to work. There was a large spread of answers to this question. The main areas identified were:

- General guidance and guidance from government/education departments (13), health and safety measures (7) and management support (6).
- The wish to have a flexible working location (5) was also a feature.

# Conclusion and Recommendations



# Conclusion and Recommendations

Education Support is committed to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all professionals working in the education sector. The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has highlighted just how important such support can be.

The key findings of this report are:

## a) Education professionals' mental health and wellbeing has declined during the pandemic

More than half (52%) of school teachers (50% of all education professionals) stated that their mental health and wellbeing had declined (although 18% stated it had improved) (page 18).

### Recommendation

The impact of the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of education professionals is likely to continue as schools/colleges return. The government needs to recognise the difficulties of working in education at this time and ensure that its future policy prioritises and supports the mental health and wellbeing of education professionals. Within schools and colleges, new ways of teaching, learning and working are likely to be required to offer flexibility but also support the mental health and wellbeing of both staff and learners.

## b) How valued education professionals felt by different groups/organisations

Education staff have worked extremely hard and professionally through difficult circumstances to support their learners. Yet the report finds that many teachers, especially senior leaders, feel they are unappreciated by the UK government and by their respective education departments. This is especially the case in England. Education professionals also feel that they are negatively portrayed by the general media (page 29).

### Recommendation

The UK government must demonstrate that it respects, values and places trust in the education profession. Teachers and school leaders ought to be at the heart of policy decisions, which should be made through a participative process in which the views of the profession are sought and acted upon by government. Involving the education profession in decisions and valuing their role will in turn produce a more positive appreciation amongst the general media and the public of the vital work of education professionals.

## c) Lack of clear, timely government guidance over reopening schools safely

Education professionals keenly felt the lack of authoritative, clear guidance relating to health and safety, social distancing and how 'bubbles' of learners should operate (page 37).

### Recommendation

The government/education departments should publish clear, concise guidance for schools/colleges which is relevant to different educational contexts. This should be published as far in advance as possible to give staff time to plan for the safe return of their pupils/students at the start of the academic year and for any sudden changes which may need to be made.

## d) The importance of making Coronavirus (Covid-19) tests available

9% of staff had presented with symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19). Of these, 23% had been tested and 2% had tested positive. However, 57% of those who had not had a test would like one (page 17).

### Recommendation

Capacity be increased in order that regular and frequent testing for all education professionals can take place as needed. This is important so that schools/colleges returning for the new academic year can understand quickly if there has been a virus outbreak.

## e) Lack of clear government direction over the priorities for teaching, learning and assessment in 2020-21

Educational professionals also cited the lack of clarity over the priorities attached to teaching, learning and assessment in the coming academic year. Senior leaders in particular are worried about how formal exams will be administered and assessed in 2021 (page 32).

### Recommendation

The UK government and regulators should work with the education profession to provide certainty over teaching, learning and assessment in 2020-21. This means clarity over the requirements to which schools will be held accountable and certainty over the nature of examination and assessment. Clear contingency plans should be in place for the 2021 exam series in the event of a resurgence of the virus leading to school closures.

## f) Transitioning back to work

More than half (59%) of education professionals were concerned that the Coronavirus (Covid-19) will return and about the impact this would then have on staff, pupils/students and their families. Other concerns included the lack of formal guidance, the practicalities of implementing and maintaining safe procedures (particularly social distancing), how to restore school/college life including making up for any knowledge/learning loss, and dealing with mental health and wellbeing issues of both staff and pupils/students. Education professionals also want time and space to be able to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils, and support and training to deal with issues such as anxiety, stress, bereavement or trauma (page 38).

### Recommendation

Regular, clear communication needs to be maintained between the UK government and schools/colleges, and senior leaders and their staff. Institutions should decide on a local basis how best to deal with issues which arise, although they must be supported by clear government guidance, as noted above. Mental health and wellbeing provision needs to be available to support the needs of staff and pupils/students in every institution. Government must also ensure that resources (both within and outside of educational contexts), support and training are provided to assist education professionals in supporting their pupils' mental health and wellbeing. Schools should be given the time and space to focus on mental health and wellbeing alongside educational objectives.



It [lockdown] has shown me the importance school has for children's wellbeing and that the job we do as teachers is so much more than being an educator. It would be amazing to have the government, media and general public realise this.



SENCO, Primary School, South West England

## Acknowledgements

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

We would like to thank colleagues at Education Support, notably Josh Mellor, for all their help and assistance with this report. Particular thanks goes to Simon Richardson of Arcade78 for the design of this report. And finally, we would like to thank Ian Neale, Laura Piggott and Sophie Webb from YouGov.

# Appendix A: Sample Profile



# Appendix A: Sample Profile

A total of 3,034 responses were received to the overall survey. All respondents were drawn from the YouGov panel of people that have signed up to undertake research with YouGov. The data has been weighted to be representative of the wider education population by phase, institution, type and respondent age to ensure generalisations can be made to the wider education population. The table below provides a summary of the achieved sample profile by key demographics.

ROLE	NUMBER	PROPORTION
Senior leaders	749	25%
Teachers/lecturers	1432	47%
Other roles	184	6%

PHASE	NUMBER	PROPORTION
Early years	128	4%
Primary	1197	39%
Secondary	1368	45%
Sixth Form College	71	2%
Further	116	4%
Adult	30	1%
Vocational	10	0%
Other	114	4%

REGION	NUMBER	PROPORTION
North East	116	4%
North West	349	12%
Yorkshire and the Humber	263	9%
East of England	254	8%
West Midlands	278	9%
East Midlands	243	8%
London	330	11%
South East	513	17%
South West	286	9%
Wales	123	4%
Scotland	252	8%
Northern Ireland	27	1%

GENDER	NUMBER	PROPORTION
Male	790	26%
Female	2244	74%

AGE	NUMBER	PROPORTION
18-34	707	23%
35-49	1437	47%
50+	890	29%

LENGTH OF TIME WORKING IN EDUCATION	NUMBER	PROPORTION
0-2 years	121	4%
3-5 years	358	12%
6-10 years	590	19%
11-20 years	1120	37%
21-30 years	627	21%
31+ years	218	7%

ETHNICITY	NUMBER	PROPORTION
White	2845	96%
BAME	127	4%

Appendix B:  
**Testing the  
Education Workforce  
for the Coronavirus  
(Covid-19)**

# Appendix B: Testing the Education Workforce for The Coronavirus (Covid-19)

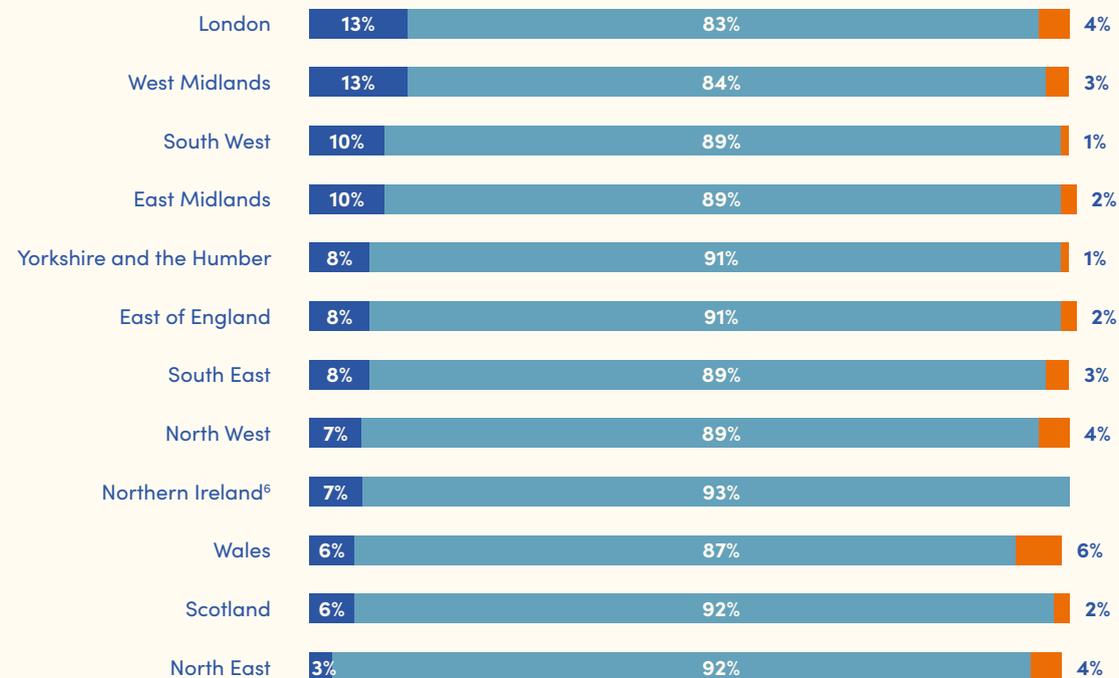
This appendix reports the details relating to the number of education professionals who had suffered from Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms and those who had undergone a virus test.

## 1 The education workforce who had suffered from Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms

This survey was undertaken in the period from 24 June to 16 July 2020. At this time, 9% of education professionals stated they had suffered/were suffering from symptoms of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), 88% were not, and 3% did not know. The symptoms were defined as a high temperature, and/or a new continuous cough and/or loss of smell and taste.

- Senior leaders reported the highest incidence of symptoms (10%), compared to school teachers (8%) and those working in other roles (7%).
- The regions where education professionals reported the highest number of symptoms were London and the West Midlands (both 13%), whereas the lowest number reported were from the North East (3%), Wales and Scotland (both 6%).

### Education professionals who had suffered/were suffering from the symptoms of Coronavirus (Covid-19) – by region



■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know

Base: All education professionals (n = 3,016)

<sup>6</sup> Small dataset

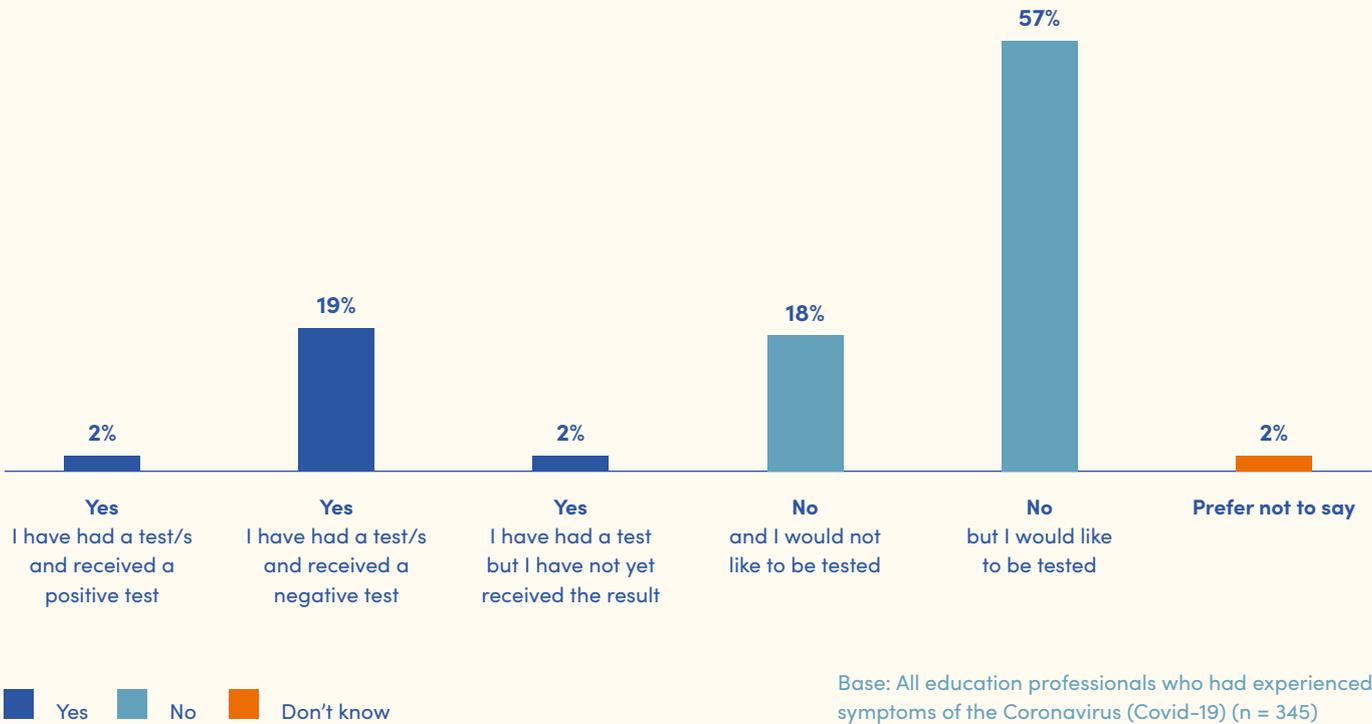
**2 Education professionals who took a Coronavirus (Covid-19) test**

Education professionals who stated they had experienced Coronavirus (Covid-19) symptoms (n=341) were asked if they had taken a test.

- Of those who had taken a test, 2% had tested positive, 19% had tested negative and 2% had not yet received the result. Of the 75% who had not taken a test, 57% said they had not taken a test but would like one and 18% did not want a test and 2% preferred not to say.

- Although the datasets are small and the results should be treated with caution, two groups of staff expressed a higher preference for wanting a test where one had not been taken:
  - BAME staff (67%) compared to non-BAME staff (56%).
  - Staff working in other roles (77%) compared to senior leaders (62%) and school teachers (50%).

**Education professionals who had taken a Coronavirus (Covid-19) test/s**



Appendix C:  
**Sample Comments  
Which Illustrate  
the Main Support  
Needed to Help  
Education  
Professionals  
Transition Back  
to Work**

# Appendix C: Sample Comments Which Illustrate the Main Support Needed to Help Education Professionals Transition Back to Work

Sample comments made by all education professionals which illustrate the five main forms of support which would help them make the most effective transition back to the “new normal” way of working.

## 1a Guidance (without stating who should provide this) (n = 150)

### “Clear, consistent and safe guidance”

Deputy Head/Assistant Head/Vice Principal/Assistant Principal, Secondary School, Independent Sector, Scotland (#155)

### “Clarity of guidance”

Headteacher/Principal, Secondary School, North West England (#904)

### “Clear, reasonable and well communicated guidelines”

Teacher, Secondary School, East of England (#952)

### “Clarity of plans instead of continually changing advice”

Supply Teacher, Primary School, East Midlands (#1287)

### “Guidance produced in good time with adequate time to set up for a new way of working”

Teacher/SENCO, Secondary School, Wales (#1750)

### “Guidelines and advice that actually reflect practicalities of a realistic class and take into account ALL areas of school (eg SEN etc)”

Teacher, Primary School, South East England (#1899)

### “Clear guidance that makes sense and has scientific backing, so I can feel like I’m not being gas-lighted into thinking it is safe to go back when every other profession is working from home and wearing PPE”

Teacher, Early Years, South East England (#2282)

### “Clear information and guidance with notice and transparency”

Teaching Assistant, Primary School, Scotland (#2516)

## 1b Guidance (to be provided by the government/ education departments) (n = 143)

### “Clearer guidance about future plans from the government. We are currently trying to plan for next year without any knowledge of how we are supposed to function as a school”

Teacher, Primary School, North West England (#281)

### “Government guidance that is not sent out at the last minute that doesn’t change”

Deputy Head/Assistant Head/Vice Principal/Assistant Principal, Early Years, Yorkshire and the Humber (#777)

## 1c Guidance (to be provided by Management/SLT) (n = 61)

### “Clear expectations of attainment and progress aims in the next academic year”

Teacher, Primary School, London (#83)

### “Clear guidance, organisation and communication from SLT”

Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, North West England (#417)

### “Clear guidance of the expectations and support from senior management”

Teacher, Primary School, Wales (#1432)

## 2 Health and safety measures (n = 126)

### “Consistent rules and regulations that are applied and followed to create a safe working environment”

Teacher, Primary School, South East England (#740)

### “Robust and clear safety measures which people actually followed all the time”

Teacher, Primary School, North West England (#891)

### “Knowing I would be safe and what risk assessment has been done and shared with staff”

Supply Teacher, Secondary Education, South West England (#908)

### “To know that all necessary safety measures have been put in place and are being adhered to, and this can be shown to be happening”

Teaching Assistant, Secondary School, West Midlands (#1042)

### “Senior Management trying to ensure that staff and children’s safety is paramount come September” (#1230)

### 3 Mental Health and Wellbeing (n = 114)

**“Less pressure to get children ready for exams and more focus on restoring their wellbeing”**  
Teacher, Primary School, West Midlands (#152)

**“I would like proper training on what to look out for and how to deal with pupils experiencing trauma/stress/anxiety due to the Covid-19 pandemic”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, East Midlands (#845)

**“Time to adapt back to the new normal with time to concentrate on mental health pupils and staff”**  
Teaching Assistant, Early Years, East of England (#1183)

**“Focus on everyone’s mental wellbeing rather than data”**  
Teaching Assistant, Early Years, South West England (#1781)

**“Better mental health training to know how to support the needs of my pupils”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, North West England (#1844)

**“Mental health/wellbeing training on how best to help students overcome the damage of the past few months”**  
Teacher, Primary School, East of England (#2023)

**“Training in grief dealing and anxiety”**  
Teacher, Secondary School, South West England (#2431)

**“Support for my own mental health and wellbeing”**  
Teacher, Primary School, North West England (#2748)

### 4 Time (n = 88)

**“Being given adequate time in working day to prepare for both face-to-face learning, online learning and pastoral issues”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, Northern Ireland (#842)

**“Time to prepare before students come back”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, North West England (#1064)

**“Time to transition. Not being expected to jump straight back to a full timetable” (#1206)**

**“Time to adapt back to the new normal with time to concentrate on mental health pupils and staff”**  
Teaching Assistant, Early Years, East of England (#1183)

**“Time relieved from curriculum pressures to deal with children’s social and emotional needs following the pandemic”**  
Teacher, Early Years, East of England (#1343)

**“Time off timetable to create the work for pupils in class whilst also setting online work for pupils who are working from home whilst also marking and giving feedback to all pupils in a timely fashion”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, Wales (#2219)

**“Time. Being able to spend time with a student that needs help/reassurance with the current situation or with regards to family illness/loss”**  
Teaching Assistant, Primary School, South East England (#2848)

### 5 Support of Local Management (n = 87)

**“Support from management with adapting to the changes”**  
Supply Teacher, Primary School, South West England (#23)

**“Knowing senior leadership team were there to help and support”**  
Staff in other role, Secondary School, South East England (#399)

**“Supportive management team”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, South West England (#1623)

**“SLT actively supporting me returning from shielding”**  
Teacher, Primary School, East Midlands (#1681)

**“Good management. Visible, supportive leadership”**  
Teacher, Secondary School, London (#2220)

**“Support with challenging behaviour from SLT – those who spit/cough deliberately etc”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, North West England (#2800)

**“Support from SLT by having training days and regular communication throughout the school holidays to keep us updated, and to check in that we are ok”**  
Teaching Assistant, Primary Education, London (#2948)

### 6 CPD/Training (n = 78)

**“Training on how to support students through bereavement”**  
Head/Deputy Head of Department, Secondary School, London (#871)

**“Training on spotting trauma, mental health issues in kids”**  
Teacher, Primary School, North East England (#1154)

**“Training to support children’s mental health after being at home for so long and readjusting to school”**  
Teacher, Primary, School, London (#1626)

**“Training in grief dealing and anxiety”**  
Teacher, Secondary School, South West England (#2431)



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