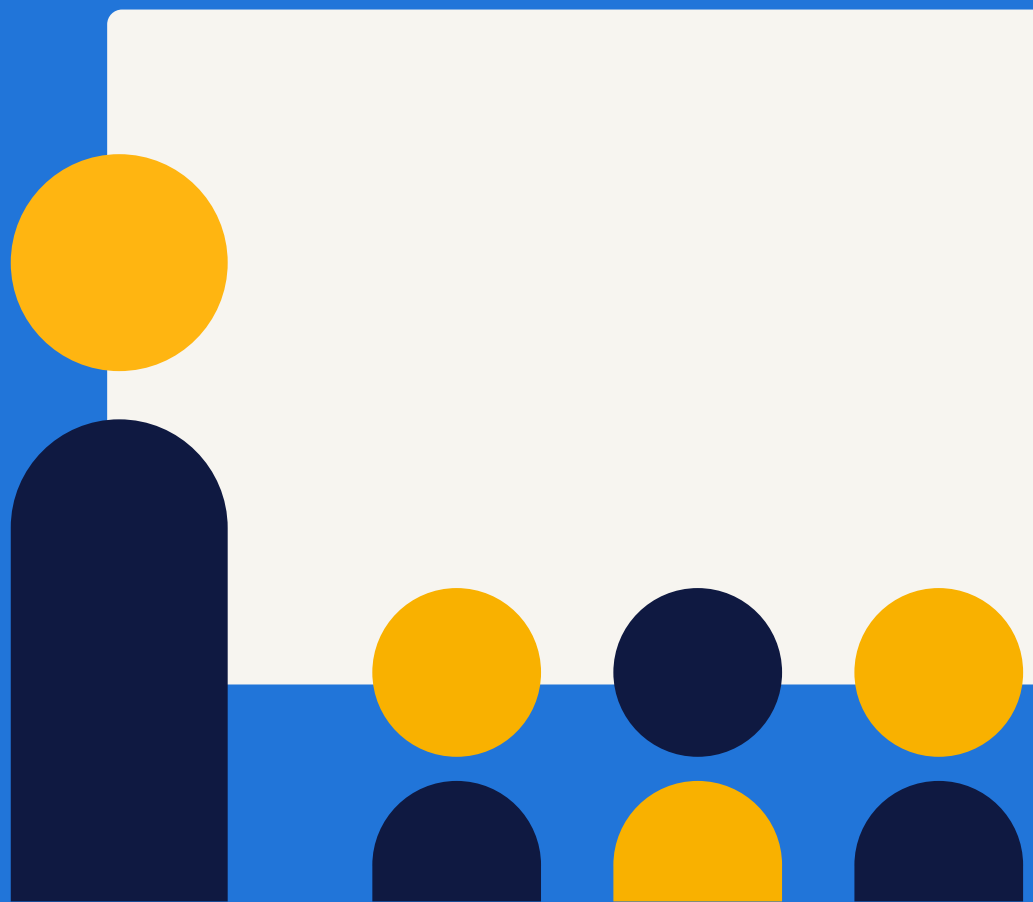


supporting
staff

in education.



An insight into
mental health.

foreword.

According to mental health charity Mind, approximately one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year, and in England, one in six people report experiencing a common mental health problem (such as anxiety and depression) in any given week.

The mental health charity, Mind also discovered that public sector workers were over a third more likely to say their mental health was 'poor' than their peers in the private sector.

In an effort to better understand the current state of mental health within the public sector, in education specifically, in 2019 Randstad surveyed nearly 2,000 teaching staff about their current state of mental wellbeing.

Unfortunately, findings revealed that their state of mental wellbeing has taken a sharp decline compared to 2017 data, with less than a quarter (22%) describing their mental health as 'very good'. This has resulted in 15% admitting to taking more days off due to mental illness compared to the same time period the previous year.

We know that over half of employees don't feel comfortable speaking to their line manager about mental health issues. Encouraging an open dialogue about the subject of mental health is slowly becoming more common, however there is still a long way to go - employers need to work harder to drive this forward. With the correct resources and knowledge, employers can help the nation's valuable teachers feel reassured knowing that they will get the support required to enjoy their career.

**Victoria Short, managing director,
Randstad Public Services.**

"The workload is intense. I don't stop thinking about my job and my workload ever. I seriously don't feel I can continue in this role permanently."

introduction.



checking the wellbeing of education staff.

With significant historic cuts in many school budgets and a lack of funding resulting in increased pressures upon schools, the teaching profession can be a tough sector. As Damian Hinds, former Secretary of State of Education of the United Kingdom, said last year “Like any really important job, teaching comes with its own challenges and, whilst rewarding, I don’t need to tell you how stressful it can be.”

‘Mental health’ and ‘wellbeing’ have been increasingly prevalent topics across broadcast and social media in the past year. However looking deeper, how much is actually being done to support the wellbeing of teachers across the UK? We asked 1,992 education professionals about their mental health and the factors that influence the state of their wellbeing. As part of this study, we also take a look at what has changed in the two year period from our last survey carried out in 2017 in order to provide some insight and narrative as to what has changed, and why.

what we found.

Findings from our 2020 report state that mental wellbeing has taken a sharp decline compared to the same period two years prior. Approximately 5% of respondents described their state of mental wellbeing as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ in our 2017 survey. Our most recent survey has seen nearly a **360% increase** to 23% in the number of respondents who described their mental wellbeing as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Although the last two years have seen the topic of mental health and wellbeing gain much deserved awareness and prominence in media and society, it seems that very little has been done to combat the issue within the education space, as highlighted within our findings.

How would you describe your state of mental wellbeing?

2017

very good

2019

very good

Now only less than a quarter (22%) describe their state of mental wellbeing as very good where previously 42% described it as very good/perfect. 27% of respondents say their state of mental wellbeing has changed for the worse in the past year. This finding is supported by a survey undertaken by Education Support, a UK charity dedicated to supporting mental health and wellbeing of education staff where 72% of all educational professionals described themselves as stressed.

the problem.

increasing pressures.

The top three reasons given behind the deteriorating mental health are:

1. work-related stress
2. personal life
3. poverty or debt.

Increasing pressures of the role and stress of Ofsted inspections are the main contributors of poor mental wellbeing. 55% say role pressures impact mental wellbeing negatively and 41% believe Ofsted inspections have a negative impact too. With work-related stress ranking as the top factor impacting mental wellbeing negatively, school leaders must take accountability.

But when asked if their current or most recent employer did enough to support with any mental health conditions, a significant 48% responded with no. 46% say they are not being provided with sufficient PPA time which may be part of the reason for the current mental wellbeing decline in this sector.

20% of teachers spend their own money on resources.

Despite poverty or debt being a factor for negative mental health for many education professionals, it has not stopped them from reaching inside their own pockets to purchase school supplies and ensure their class has everything they need. According to the NASUWT, the teachers' union, one in five teachers said they buy lesson resources with their own money once a week with over half blaming funding pressures for this. In a bid to raise awareness of this issue impacting thousands of cash-strapped teachers across the UK, Randstad recently held a competition to offer schools and teachers with a passion for learning environments, funding to design new spaces that promote creative learning.



“Teaching is a mentally/emotionally exhausting profession. Students often require teachers to give so much of themselves, and often those teachers have little time to recuperate.”

caring for your teachers.

The mental wellbeing of staff is a priority that can impact other areas of your organisation too. It could impact on the standards of education delivered to pupils. If teachers have better mental health, they will be in a stronger position to recognise and support students who are struggling with mental wellbeing. If not handled correctly, it could also impact your reputation within the local area, both as a school and an employer.

One in ten teachers took 16 or more days off work in the last 12 months due to mental health conditions, compared to just 2% in 2017. There also seems to be an upwards trend for the number of days being taken off due to mental health. 15% of respondents said that they took more days off due to mental illness in 2019 than the previous year and 21% took more days off than this point 5 years ago.

responsibility adds up.

Only 56% would recommend working in this profession to someone else with men (around 50%) less likely than women (57%) to recommend this. When we analysed the results by role, we found that teaching/learning assistants are most likely to recommend working in this profession (77%). In comparison, only 47% of teachers in other roles would recommend working as a teacher. This may be related to the workload and amount of responsibility held at teaching assistant level versus a teacher. With work-related stress being a key factor of poor wellbeing, this is further evidence to campaign for a lighter workload and less admin in this sector.

To reinforce this further, 26% of permanent/long-term workers believe that their mental wellbeing is 'poor' or 'very poor' compared to a much lower figure of 17% of day-to-day supply workers. Again, this could be due to the lower admin and workload often associated with supply work in education as opposed to a permanent teacher.



“Having taken the option in doing supply work, there isn't the intensity that would be felt with a permanent post. There is more leniency with work patterns and responsibilities.”

the solutions.

what next?

With 21% of staff planning to leave the education profession in the next 12 months due to work-related mental wellbeing concerns, steps need to be taken now in order to retain our valued staff and maintain high education standards.

Are you planning to leave the education profession in the next 12 months due to work-related mental wellbeing concerns?

I plan to leave but not because of work-related concerns

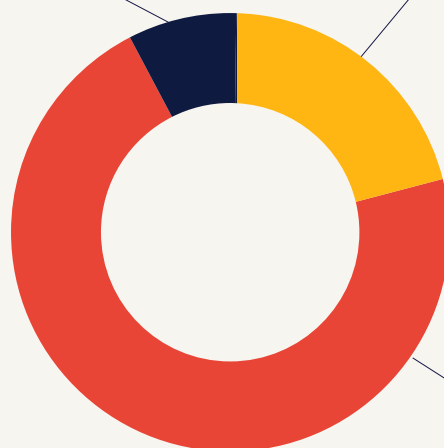
7%

yes

21%

no

72%



“work life balance is being stretched to its limit. I am close to leaving teaching as cannot cope with the stress on my home life”

More must be done across the board from government to school senior leadership teams to look after our teachers and other school staff. Last year, the government committed to helping school leaders to reduce teachers' workload by “helping school leaders strip away unnecessary tasks such as data entry; simplifying the accountability system to clarify when a school may be subject to intervention or offered support; and working with Ofsted to ensure staff workload is considered as part of a school's inspection judgement.”

A support network that can easily be accessed by workers is also paramount. Education Support is an example of an organisation that could support you and your school staff. Their report finds that 60% of educators would not feel confident in disclosing stress or mental health issues to their employer. This fear is something that needs to be tackled by management to create a working environment where employees feel comfortable to talk about mental health.

implementing additional support.

More positive news landed with the government's pledge to implement additional support. Earlier this year, the implementation of a new expert advisory group to look at how teachers and school leaders can be better supported to deal with the pressures of the job was announced. The advisory group aims to bring teachers, unions, professional bodies and mental health charity, Mind, together to work with the government to look at how to promote better wellbeing for teachers.

The use of technology within education could play a pivotal supporting role too. According to a publication by Betts Show, education technology may be just what is needed. Platforms such as Twinkl present multiple lesson planning and activity options for teachers.

While becoming a teacher has many benefits and remains a hugely rewarding career with the ability to really make a difference and inspire the future generation, there is still a shortage of applicants for teaching roles. Among the long list of positives, it is no secret that teachers work hard, often do long hours and take work home with them. Working overtime has become normalised across education and therefore healthier practices need to be looked at to overcome this. Research shows that productivity drops after a certain period of time working so what are we achieving by overworking?



"I had a breakdown at school and had to take six months off. Even with medication and receiving CBT therapy, I wake up most days with a pain in my chest and struggle with the thought of having to go to work."

conclusion.

Every country relies on its education system to produce a capable and skilled workforce. Every education system relies on teachers and other school staff to be able to fulfil this. Therefore the wellbeing of our education staff should be of utmost importance. Failure to acknowledge this and take action is a risky and expensive move not only for schools (as recruitment tends to cost more than retention) but also for the individual whose mental health is at risk and for the country in looking after our education system.

Along with the positives of working within education, our survey has highlighted some alarming trends in the deterioration of teachers' mental wellbeing in the last two years. With much wider access to resources to support teachers and a pledge from the government to invest in supporting teacher wellbeing, school leadership teams need to shape a culture that encourages an open discussion and support system for teacher wellbeing. Not only will this help retain their best teaching and support staff, but will recognise them as an employer of choice for prospective teachers too.

resources.

- 1) <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/statistics-and-facts-about-mental-health/how-common-are-mental-health-problems/#.XfeOfGSTKUK>
- 2) <https://www.randstad.co.uk/about-us/press-releases/randstad-news/over-half-of-brits-wont-speak-about-mental-health-at-work/>
- 3) <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/dec/08/revealed-one-in-five-school-buildings-in-england-require-urgent-repairs>
- 4) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/hinds-to-announce-wellbeing-focus-at-ascl-conference/>
- 5) <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/research-reports/teacher-wellbeing-index-2019>
- 6) <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/article-listing/teachers-paying-to-provide-basics-for-pupils.html>
- 7) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-on-wellbeing-for-teachers-in-schools-and-colleges>
- 8) <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/research-reports/teacher-wellbeing-index-2019>
- 9) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-on-wellbeing-for-teachers-in-schools-and-colleges>
- 10) <https://www.bettshow.com/>
- 11) <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/03/20/stanford-study-longer-hours-doesnt-make-you-more-productive-heres-how-to-get-more-done-by-doing-less.html>

about us.

At Randstad Education, we work hard to provide high quality teaching, leadership, support, and non-teaching staff to primary, secondary and SEN schools, multi-academy trusts and federations. We like to help unlock a world of exciting career opportunities for our candidates whilst ensuring our clients have top class support both inside and outside of the classroom.

0845 600 1234
education@randstad.co.uk
www.randstad.co.uk