

Violent and Aggressive Behaviour Full Report February 2024

**The Educational Institute of Scotland
Aberdeen Local Association**



Contents

Background.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Summary.....	2
SURVEY RESULTS AND MAIN FINDINGS	4
Levels of Physical Assaults	5
Reporting of Violent Incidents.....	14
Verbal Abuse in Schools.....	19
Health and Wellbeing	20
Leaving the Teaching Profession.....	23
Risk Assessments	25
Police Reporting.....	25
Final Comments.....	28
Recommendations.....	28

Background

The EIS is the largest teacher trade union in Aberdeen City, representing over 80% of all teachers and associated professionals across nursery, primary and secondary education.

Introduction

This 2023 survey marks the third survey conducted by the Aberdeen City EIS Local Association about members' experiences of violent and abusive behaviour in Aberdeen City Schools. The survey was launched on the 21st of November 2023 and follows on from EIS surveys conducted in 2019 and 2021.

The survey was open for five weeks until the end of December, and this report is based on the data and comments that were offered.

For ease of comparison, the results to the questions have been colour-coded as follows: 2023 black, 2021 blue and 2019 red.

The focus of the survey is to explore and tackle instances of violence and aggression in Aberdeen schools. The Health and Safety Executive defines "violence and aggression" as ***"any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work."*** The EIS has adopted this definition.

Aberdeen LA has around two thousand teacher and associated professional members. Responses were received from 774 members which is a particularly high rate of return and a very effective sample of our membership.

All the information in this report has been considered and will be used to inform the recommendations and next steps on addressing violence and aggression in Aberdeen City Schools to the benefit of staff, pupils, and the wider community.

It should be noted that there is a National Campaign highlighting the issue of violent and abusive behaviour in schools. The EIS launched its Stand Up for Quality Education (SU4QE) campaign at its AGM in June 2023. The campaign has a key theme that aims to make learning and teaching environments safer for teachers, other school staff and pupils themselves.

One of the first actions was to launch a National Survey. It was decided that each branch in Scotland would be surveyed and the findings relating to the National Survey can be found here:

[Violence & Aggression Branch Survey Report and Campaigning Recommendations: Full Report](#)

Summary

1. The survey from Aberdeen City Schools in the first five weeks of the 2023/2024 academic year, reveals that 37.82% of teachers reported being physically assaulted by pupils. This highlights a persistent issue with 67% experiencing assaults over five years. Teachers call for better support and measures, including conflict resolution training, positive pupil-teacher relationships, and clear consequences for violence.
2. The primary forms of physical assault reported by teachers include pushing and shoving (60.98%) and being struck with objects (50.98%). Other reported assaults involve kicking, punching, biting, and spitting. These incidents not only pose a risk of physical injury but also cause emotional distress, contributing to an unsafe work environment for teachers.
3. The survey shows that a majority of teachers (54.40%) believe their schools lack effective strategies to prevent or address violence, with over a third disagreeing that such strategies exist. Only 20.90% felt there are adequate measures in place. Staff feedback points to inconsistent consequences for violence and a perception that bad behaviour is sometimes rewarded.
4. A substantial 64.83% of teachers surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is a clear support strategy for staff after violent incidents in schools. Only 16.38% agreed that such support strategies are adequately in place. Teacher comments suggest incidents are often minimized, with some viewing violence as an unfortunate part of the job, especially in ASN settings.
5. Teachers reported a significant discrepancy between the strategies for preventing and addressing violence outlined on paper and their effective implementation in schools. Despite a range of strategies being listed, such as restorative practices and external agency involvement, 64.83% of educators felt that support is lacking or inconsistent post-incident. Comments reveal frustration with the ineffectiveness of these measures, a lack of follow-through, and a perception that violent behaviour is not being adequately addressed, leading to a call for more concrete and consistent application of violence prevention and support strategies in schools.
6. Teachers' responses suggest that while restorative practices are among the strategies documented to address violence in schools, their effectiveness is questionable due to inconsistent application and lack of follow-through. The prevalent sentiment is that restorative practices, as currently implemented, are insufficient for dealing with the severity and frequency of violent incidents. This indicates a need for a review and enhancement of these practices to ensure they effectively contribute to violence prevention and resolution.
7. Members expressed a strong desire for more definitive and consistently applied strategies to address violence and abusive behaviour in schools. Key suggestions include:
 - **Clear and Consistent Policies:** Implement a universally applied behaviour policy across schools, ensuring that consequences for misconduct are well-understood and uniformly enforced.
 - **Improved Support and Consequences:** Increase the severity and consistency of consequences for violent behaviour, including immediate parental involvement and potentially more stringent disciplinary actions like exclusion.
 - **Enhanced Communication with Parents:** Foster open and honest communication with parents about their children's behaviour and involve them more directly in the resolution process.
 - **Staff Support and Training:** Provide more support and training for staff, especially in managing aggressive behaviour, and ensure staff are not blamed for incidents beyond their control.
 - **Staffing and Resources:** Address staffing shortages and provide more Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) and counsellors to support both pupils and teachers.
 - **Proactive and Preventive Measures:** Focus on proactive measures to prevent violence, including better engagement with at-risk pupils and their families, and alternative educational provisions for pupils with specific needs.

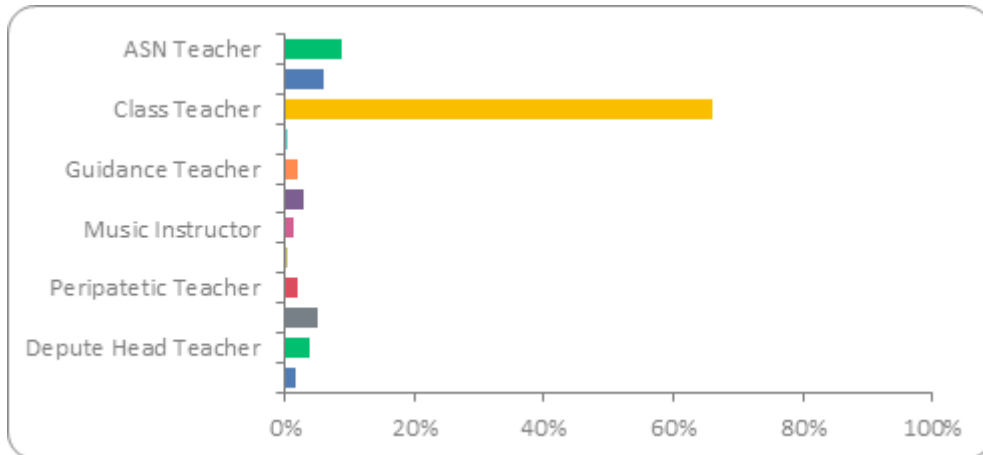
- **Support for Traumatized Staff:** Recognize and address the cumulative trauma experienced by staff, offering necessary medical support and time off when needed.

These suggestions highlight a solution focused collective call for a more robust framework to tackle violence in schools, emphasizing the need for clear guidelines, consistent application of consequences, and comprehensive support for both pupils and staff.

8. The survey data highlights significant concerns among school staff regarding the handling of violent incidents in Aberdeen City schools. A substantial portion of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the resolution process, with over half lacking confidence in the system's effectiveness. A prevalent issue is the culture of blame directed towards staff, who feel unsupported when reporting violence. This is compounded by repeated behaviours despite reporting, with incidents often minimized or blame shifted onto staff. There is also a notable lack of awareness and clarity about the incident reporting process, with a significant percentage of staff either unaware of how to report incidents using the Aberdeen City Incident forms or uncertain about the process. Moreover, there's frustration over the perceived lack of action following reports, with many violent incidents either going unreported or unresolved, which may be leading to a cycle of underreporting and dissatisfaction among teachers.
9. The data on verbal abuse in schools reveals a concerning prevalence of such behaviour, with a majority of respondents (66.43%) reporting having experienced verbal abuse from pupils. The most common form of verbal abuse reported was swearing, with an overwhelming 94.21% of members encountering this issue. Other forms of verbal abuse included racist remarks (6.39%), comments about sexual orientation (9.58%), sex or gender-specific comments (17.17%), comments regarding disability (1.80%), religion and belief (2.00%), and age-related remarks (9.58%). A significant 233 teachers reported being subjected to verbal abuse, directly related to characteristics protected under the 2010 Equalities Act. This highlights a worrying trend in the nature of verbal abuse. Personal testimonies from teachers describe the abuse as often including swearing, threats, personal attacks on appearance and abilities, and discriminatory comments, indicating a pervasive issue with serious implications for the well-being of teachers.
10. The data and comments provided outline a distressing scenario of widespread physical and verbal abuse against staff in educational settings, with significant implications for their health, well-being, and professional environment. According to the data, approximately 76.9% of surveyed members agree or strongly agree that such violence has adversely affected their health and well-being. This consensus underscores the severe impact of these incidents, which not only harm individuals physically and emotionally but also contribute to increased staff absenteeism and a detrimental work atmosphere. Furthermore, the statistics reveal that over a third of staff members have sustained injuries due to physical violence at school, with 11.33% reporting absences from work as a result.
11. Teacher sentiments regarding leaving the profession due to disruptive, challenging, or violent pupils shows a significant concern within the education sector. Averaging the provided percentages, it's clear that a substantial portion of teachers have considered leaving their positions because of negative pupil behaviours. A significant average percentage of teachers agree with the sentiment, while another notable fraction strongly agree, leading to an alarming total of 62.7% who either agree or strongly agree with the notion of leaving due to these challenges.
12. A notable 72.84% of surveyed members either agree or strongly agree that obstacles exist in implementing strategies to prevent violent behaviour. These obstacles are attributed to several factors, including the lack of support from both Aberdeen City Council and school leadership, insufficient resources to address complex pupil needs, and policies that restrict the use of exclusion as a disciplinary measure. Teachers express frustration over being expected to tolerate a degree of violence, a blame culture, reduced support from specialists and pupil support assistants, and ineffective strategies that do not address the root causes of violence. Furthermore, there's a significant concern regarding the construction of Pupil Centred Risk Assessments, with 45% of respondents feeling excluded from this process, highlighting a systemic issue in managing pupil behaviour and ensuring the safety and well-being of staff and pupils alike.

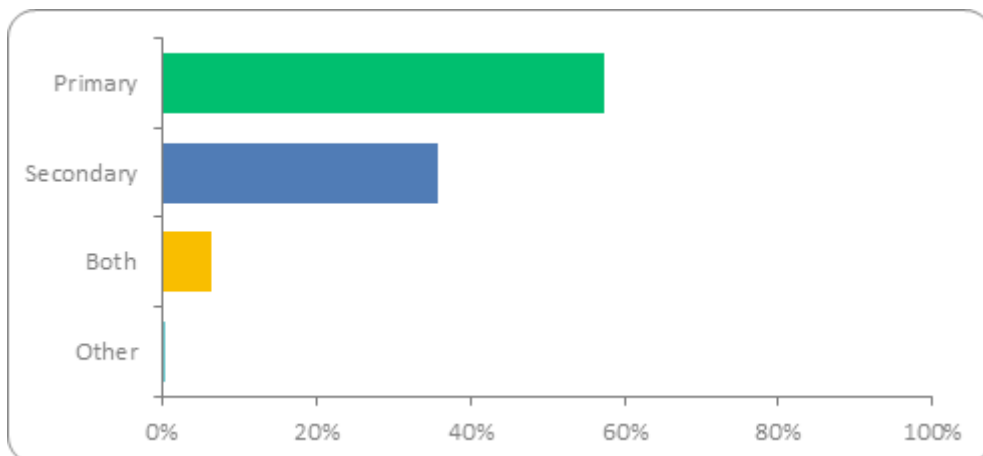
SURVEY RESULTS AND MAIN FINDINGS

Question 1. What is your job role?



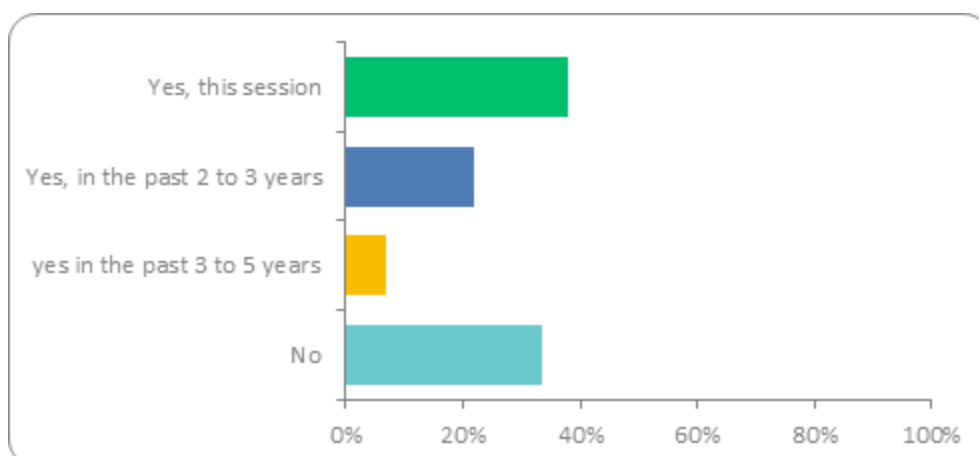
The breakdown in this question shows that there were responses from members at all levels posts in educational establishments.

Question 2. What sector do you work in?



Levels of Physical Assaults

Question 3. Have you been physically assaulted by a pupil?



Over a third of members that responded to the survey reported (37.82%) (28.54%) (28.14%) that they had been physically assaulted by a pupil, within five weeks of the 2023/2024 academic session.

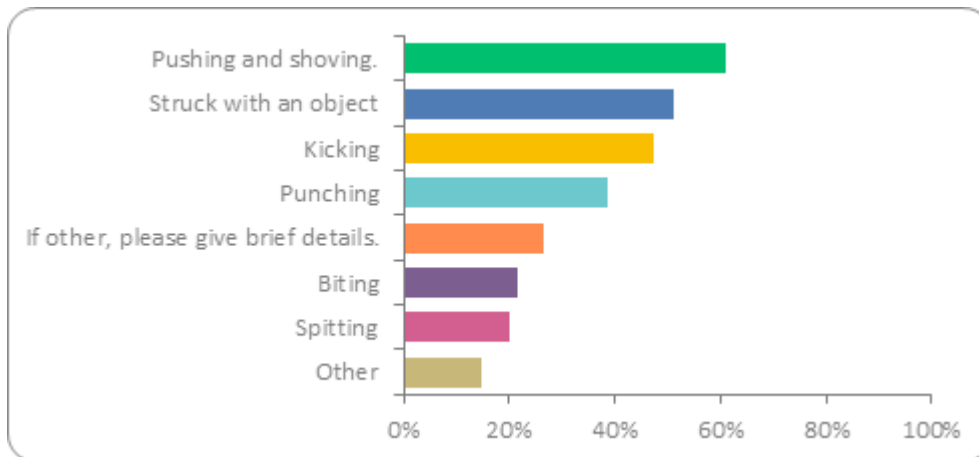
These findings highlight the concerning prevalence of physical assaults by pupils on teachers within Aberdeen City Schools. The relatively high percentage of respondents reporting incidents during the current session suggests an ongoing issue that requires immediate attention and intervention. Moreover, the cumulative percentage of respondents reporting assaults within the past 5 years (67%) highlights the persistence of this problem over time.

There is an urgent need for comprehensive measures to address this issue. Aberdeen City Council must prioritise the safety and well-being of their staff by implementing robust policies and protocols for preventing and responding to such incidents. This may include providing training for staff on conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques, fostering positive relationships between pupils and teachers, and establishing clear consequences for violent behaviour.

Member Comments

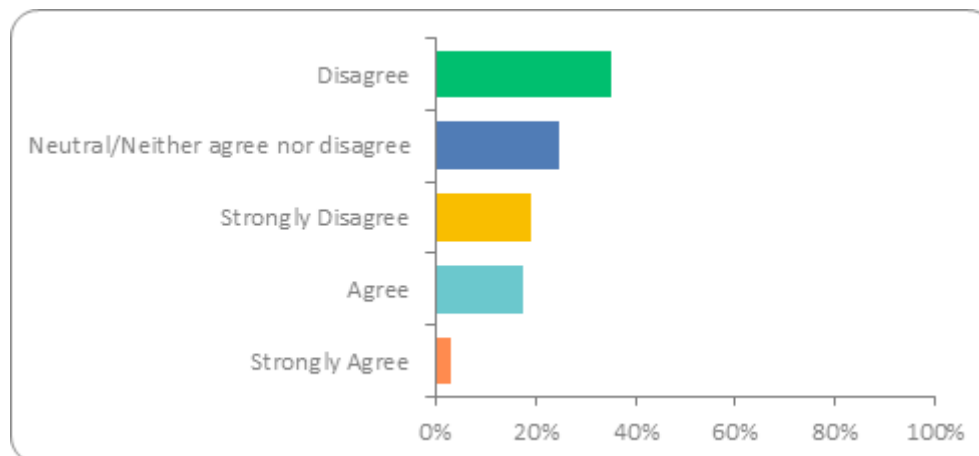
- *I haven't personally experienced violence at my current school, however I did leave my previous school after experiencing violent behaviour from pupils and a lack of support from SLT and the authority. I have witnessed violent behaviour directed at other staff members at my current school and have voiced my concerns to my Head Teacher.*
- *I have taught in an area of deprivation where verbal & physical abuse from pupils and parents was common. I found as SLT at the time that there was little in the way of external supports. This could lead to frustration from staff as the harshest sanction - temporary exclusion - was not the correct tool to correct or prevent further violent behaviours in the future.*
- *I am fortunate to work in a school with a good ethos and high expectations for behaviour and we rarely experience these things.*

Question 4. What form did this take?



The two main forms of assault are pushing and shoving (60.98%) as well as being struck by objects (50.98%) This indicates the physical nature of many assaults experienced by teachers from pupils. Other forms of assault included, kicking, punching, biting, and spitting. These forms of assault can result in physical harm, emotional distress, and undoubtedly create an unsafe working environment for teachers.

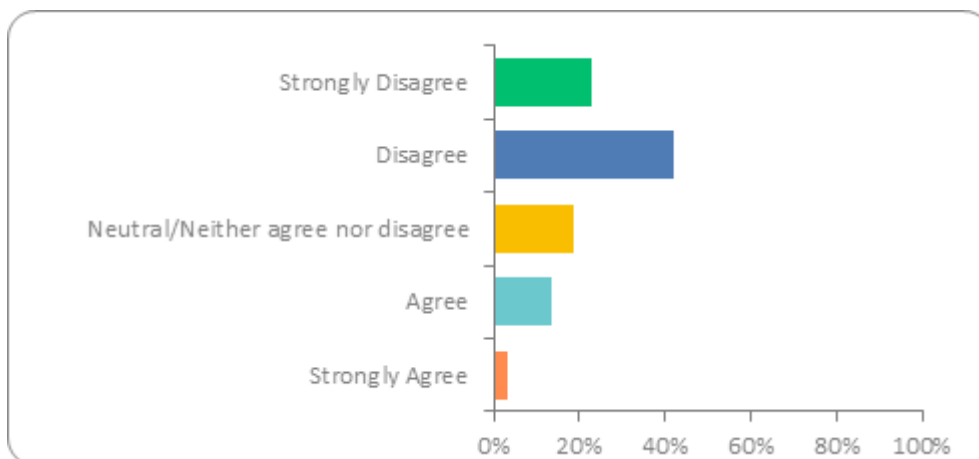
Question 5. There are strategies in place to prevent or address violence in my school.



Over a third of members surveyed (35.06%) (26.86%) (32.66%) disagree that there were strategies in place with (19.34%) strongly disagreeing. Taken together, this means that over half those surveyed stated that their school does not have clear strategies in place to prevent violence. This is a worrying statistic. Fewer than a quarter (20.90%) agreed or strongly agreed that there were strategies in place to prevent violence or address violence in their school.

When considering the combined percentage of those who disagreed or strongly disagreed (54.40%), it becomes apparent that many respondents deny the presence of effective strategies to address violence against staff. Conversely, the percentage of those who agreed or strongly agreed (20.90%) is notably lower. Taken together, this suggests a lack of confidence in the current measures in place. This evidences the need for further evaluation and enhancement of strategies to address violence targeting staff members within Aberdeen City Schools.

Question 6. When a violent incident towards staff takes place, there is a clear strategy for support for the member of staff.

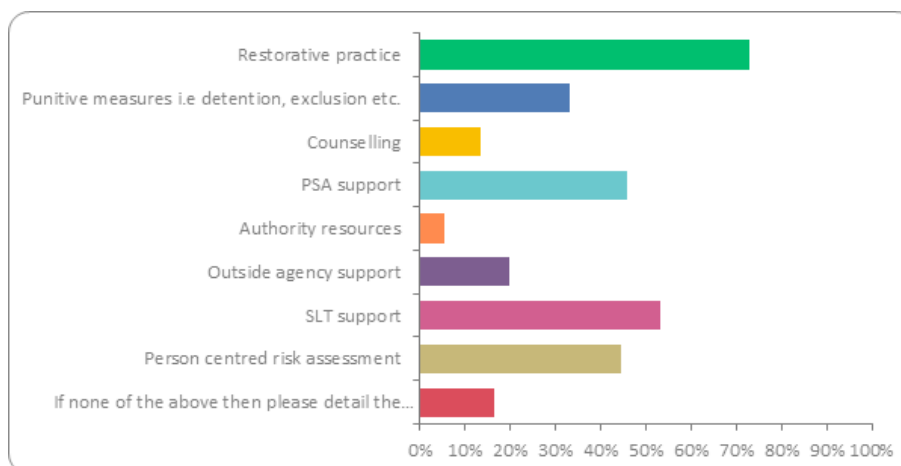


Members surveyed indicated that (41.90%) disagreed that there was a clear strategy for support with (22.93%) (16.55%) (16.53%) strongly disagreeing.

Overall, many respondents (64.83%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that there is a clear strategy for supporting staff members following a violent incident. There were relatively few teachers who agreed and strongly agreed (16.38%) that there were strategies in place to support a member. This suggests a huge gap in support systems for teachers in the aftermath of violent incidents, indicating an urgent need for improvement in this area. This is a matter of concern as every teacher should be supported after a violent incident.

- *An incident form is filled out. I'm a supply teacher so work in several schools. One teacher I know phoned the police after being kicked & punched by an ASN pupil. They came but no action taken. Considered part of the job.*
- *An assumption in asn is that if you can't stand the heat get out of the kitchen.*
- *SLT are consistently trying to brush these incidents under the carpet!*
- *Working in ASN education my colleagues have come to expect to be subjected to violent behaviours - we wholly appreciate that it is communication of an unmet need, this is not about pupil fault, but none of my colleagues felt that they had the same protection from violent behaviours as their mainstream colleagues.*
- *Violence in schools has increased in the last few years and it doesn't look like matters are taken as seriously as they should. We have been offered training on filling incident forms, but that step alone isn't enough to improve things For PSAs this is even worse, when you hear them say 'I'm used to it'. No one should be USED TO being hurt in their place of work. I think the authority knows there is a problem, but either they are turning a blind eye, or the steps taken are too small and having little impact in schools.*
- *I feel like it's ignored and expected to be part of the job that we should expect.*
- *Daily incidents of aggressive violent language are addressed by a rushed "conversation" outside class where learner is asked (sometimes pleaded with) not to do it again.*

Question 7. Please tick all the strategies that are used in your school to prevent/ address violence.



These results suggest that a variety of strategies, including restorative practices, punitive measures, counselling, support from PSA and SLT, and involvement of outside agencies, are listed as being used in schools to prevent and address violence, but do not seem to be applied consistently.

Many members express frustration with the gap between stated policies and their implementation. They note that strategies exist on paper but are not consistently applied or followed through. Many commented on the absence of consequences for pupils who exhibit violent behaviour. Others cite ineffective restorative practices or unclear guidance. Consequently, there is a sense of resignation among staff, who feel that they are left to deal with incidents on their own without adequate support or recourse to meaningful action

Additionally, the person-centred risk assessment is highlighted as a strategy to tailor interventions to individual pupils' needs. However, there is evidence to suggest that not all those responsible for the pupils' education are consulted fully. There are concerns about inconsistent support from school leadership teams and a lack of resources, such as staffing and agency support, to effectively manage and prevent violent incidents.

Overall, there is a clear call for more concrete and consistent strategies to address violence in schools. Clearly, not all these strategies are effective, nor consistently applied within and between schools, as evidenced by member comments and the rise in violent behaviour overall.

- *The strategies exist on paper but in practice are not used effectively. Nobody ever checks in on us after an incident and we're made to feel like if we were more competent it wouldn't have happened. We're also never given time for paperwork, and it's understood that incident report forms are dimly viewed*
- *There is no consistency with the measures chosen. One day a pupil will get excluded/reset day, but a different pupil does the same thing and there's no measures brought in. 1-day exclusions for physical/verbal assault of a teacher and sending a pupil back into class with no real restorative conversation is the norm*
- *Very unclear guidance seems to change every time - we can't give rewards, we can't send them to management, RA only been done recently to only a few pupils and do not reflect the reality. There's no behaviour policy in place.*
- *Caveat - barely any support from SLT. We're expected to contain the disruption and violence in our schools. PSAs support us as colleagues more than it being their remit. There is NO clear strategy for preventing violence at all. There is SOME support after the violence - at times.*
- *There is hardly any strategies in place to prevent violence. Pupils seems to be running the school, they get away with pretty much everything. SLT does not do anything about verbal abuse towards staff and sometimes they exclude pupils for physical abuse.*
- *All are in the policy but none are used if the pupil says they don't want to engage.*

- *I don't know of any strategies in my school. We have a relationship policy that's not fit for purpose. It ticks a box. Nothing helps as there is no consequence at all.*
- *It's meant to be restorative practice but it doesn't happen. I can't tick SLT support because they often aren't available to 'support' us, and their support is speaking to a child and returning them right back to class with nothing else in place.*
- *And still this is not enough as it's not consistent. All support is based on whether staff are available. Restorative practice in name only and a tick box exercise. Doesn't happen.*
- *Ineffective restorative practice. Ignoring of low key incidents.*
- *I had to fill out an incident form and to my knowledge this was never filed as I never received confirmation despite attempts to follow it up. I was told as the boy had ASN needs that he cannot be punished for his behaviour.*
- *Strategies are put in place but physical assaults continue. Although I've only been physically assaulted once in my 11 years of teaching, I have witnessed more assaults on my colleagues in the last 2 years than I have in the other 9 years combined.*

Members also commented on where good practice occurs while noting difficulties in consistency.

- *Guidance team support in removal of pupils from classes and communicating information with pupils' home.*
- *Personal care plans with identified strategies that work well for the learner CALM physical intervention Sensory profiles.*
- *Follow up through incident reporting and next steps/changes made to RA.*
- *Support involves restorative discussion with child afterwards if SLT are available.*
- *All recorded on Seemis and Incident Reports filed. If it is particularly bad we can go and have a cup of tea and take some time to recover before returning.*
- *If we can get mutual time, sometimes, online firms are completed for the more serious attacks. Children are risk assessed and require one to one or two to one support. This is only possible if there are staff. There are not enough staff!*
- *In my current (non-violent) school all of the above supports are given. In my previous school (violent) there was less support.*

Question 8. What additional strategies/measures would you like to see in place to address violence and abusive behaviour to school staff?

Members expressed concerns about the need to establish clear expectations and boundaries to ensure that all stakeholders understand what acceptable behaviour is. Without clear boundaries, there is ambiguity regarding appropriate conduct, which can contribute to recurring incidents of violence. Member comments highlighted again the lack of consistency between and in schools following violent incidents, even when there may be school policy and guidance in place.

- *We need a clear behaviour policy that is followed across the whole school, an effective reward system, consequences for bad behaviour, be able to send disruptive pupils to management.*
- *There should be clear guidelines on what happens with any incident. In my school it is case by case and depending on what SLT member you speak to. The student who has been violent should have their guardians immediately contacted and they should be brought to school to have a meeting with their child so that everyone involved can see the importance of situation. Children who have witnessed violent behaviour should not just be spoken to by their class teacher but should be spoken to by a counsellor. There should be a counsellor in each school to support children who need support. It should be regularly assessed if some children should have more support and not just when an incident happens."*
- *Guidance is often the one dealing with violent children rather than SLT and we have no authority or influence on what happens next. Need clear flowchart of what happens with violence incidents - not guidance being the default.*

- *Applying the expectations and responses that supposedly already exist??*
- *More staff and funding, Consequences for actions General wellbeing support Blanket training for all staff. Smaller class sizes Recognising that needs have changed and previous staff ratios do not work now. Some classes with multiple 2:1s and ratio does not match*
- *Schools doing similar things. Not a school that has violent behaviour under control because of a strong HT and another that doesn't.*
- *Less staff blame, if you've been scratched it's not because you wore shorter sleeves, it's because the child had an unmet need. Increased staffing that recognises the complexity of ASN - only someone who has never had a long-term post in our setting would think we are "overstaffed".*

Many members highlighted concerns about the lack of consequences or the presence of ineffective consequences for pupils who engage in violent or disruptive behaviour. There are concerns about the normalization of disruptive behaviour and the lack of accountability for violent incidents. This lack of accountability may embolden and perpetuate a cycle of violence.

- *Consequences are needed all the time! Need to be consistent and immediate. Not depends on the child or availability of staff. There is a complete normalisation of "low level violence". Need it all to stop!*
- *SLT support, change in ethos and culture of school, clear and consistent consequences for violent behaviour*
- *Clear behaviour policy that is consistently implemented across the school.*
- *Consequences. More asn support. More specialist support IN class instead of endless observations that just create more work for us.*
- *Alternative provision to remove pupils from class. Serious consequences for offenders. Staff should not have to face pupils returning to class immediately upon their return to school.*
- *I'd like to be able to exclude when necessary but pushback from above makes any type of accountability almost impossible.*
- *Care and support for the assaulted staff members.*
- *There is no recognition of the cumulative trauma. There is no physiotherapy offered. The first thing j will do when I finish work next week is to attend an appointment to deal with work related injuries, at my own expense. It is an expectation of the job. More could be done at the organisational level - reduce the number of children in a room and increase the options for them.*

Many respondents stressed the importance of swift and supportive action from school leadership (SLT) when incidents of violence occur. Delays or lack of action from SLT can exacerbate the situation, affect staff wellbeing, and undermine staff confidence in the school's ability to address violence effectively.

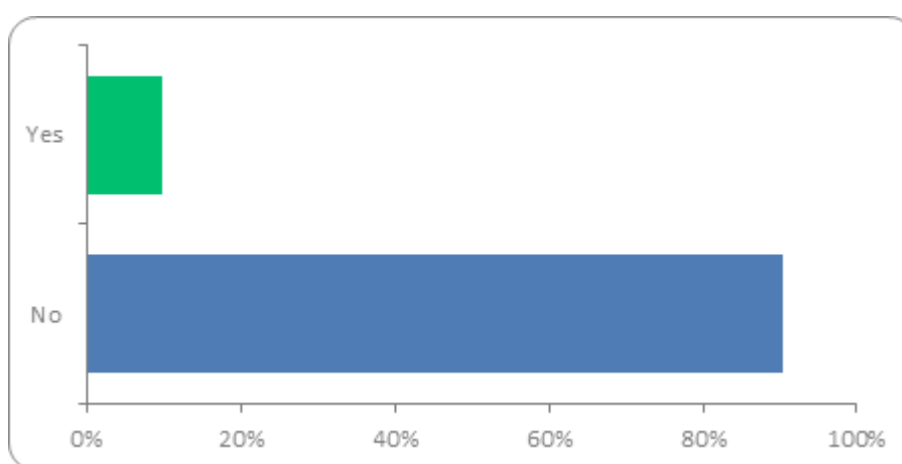
- *Effective practice, staff to be supported. Most of the time, children who have been violent get privileges with SLT and the member of staff is made to feel it was their fault. There is no real wellbeing check-in for the member of staff by DHT. Other learners see this as unfair, so more are showing challenging behaviour.*
- *I would like to see a CONSISTENT approach, which acknowledges that the member of staff has been the victim of what is effectively a crime and actively minimises the risk of that member of staff or any other being abused again.*
- *Care and support for the assaulted staff members. More SLT presence. Clearer consequences for poor behaviour to prevent escalation to violence.*
- *Alternative provision in order to remove pupils from class. Serious consequences for offenders. Staff should not have to face pupils returning to class immediately upon their return to school.*

Members emphasized the importance of implementing proactive measures to prevent violence, such as working with pupils and families to address underlying issues, and providing outreach services for pupils who struggle in mainstream settings. Additionally, smaller class sizes and the presence of Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) are mentioned as strategies to mitigate violence.

- *Clearly boundary setting, consequences and addressing firmly with parents. Training in how to manage aggressive esp for PSA who work daily with violent children. More communication with families and consequences for pupils.*
- *ASN support that reflects the actual need. Inclusion is not working due to lack of resources, training, staff, or any actual input from staff currently in education to policy.*
- *Appropriate staffing to support children, resources, training from local authority on social curriculums, funding for flexible curriculums.*
- *Clearly boundary setting, consequences and addressing firmly with parents. Training in how to manage aggressive behaviour especially for PSA who work daily with violent children.*

Overall, the main concerns expressed in the answers revolve around the need for clear and consistently applied expectations and consequences, swift and supportive action from school leadership, adequate support for staff members, and proactive prevention and intervention strategies to address violence against staff effectively.

Question 9. Has support been made available from the authority to support you?



(90.33%) (85.91%) (88.59%) indicated that they experienced no support from the authority, with (9.67%) (14.09%) (11.41%) indicating that they have after reporting an incident. This is a stark statistic and emphasises a concerning lack of support from Aberdeen City Council.

The survey responses from teachers regarding the violence they have experienced from school pupils paint a concerning picture of members perceiving inadequate support issues within the education system. A pervasive theme that emerges is the perceived lack of support and responsiveness from Aberdeen City Council, leaving members expressing frustration at addressing incidents of violence.

Many respondents expressed concern at a blame culture that exists, where teachers are often held responsible for violent incidents resulting in a reluctance to seek help and support. These responses highlight the urgent need for comprehensive and proactive measures at both the council and school levels to address the root causes of violence and provide adequate support to staff, ensuring the safety and well-being of both teachers and pupils.

- *Authority support is not there. There seems to be deliberate ignoring of our concerns around staffing, wellbeing, provision and sfl including specialist schools. We ask for help and no answer comes.*
- *Absolutely not as they believe it's our fault when children assault us.*
- *HA! Sorry but this authority doesn't care about school staff as long as they have teachers in front of classes.*
- *HT support on violence and filing in forms every time an incident happens depends if they are union based. Most go with the council thinking which is to not fill in forms and sweep huge problems under the carpet.*

- *Only after we have gone to the Union.*
- *Nothing that actually reduces the daily violence.*
- *Yes, but always after an event not to prevent future events.*
- *Very minimal and only in the most extreme cases. A hub of specialist teachers who can attend planning meetings, offer advice to staff and/or work directly with pupils. Outreach agencies are also very helpful including Ed psych, SALT, Autism Outreach.*
- *Some support provided in the most extreme case but no other support offered.*
- *We reached out a number of times and nothing was offered.*
- *While they offer a counselling service this isn't what we need. We need strategies from preventing the violence from continuing.*
- *I chose to opt into counselling from the EP service- which was invaluable and probably saved me from leaving my post. It won't necessarily be ongoing though. I feel like I have to work very hard at maintaining support from SLT (who are probably not sure what to do either!)*
- *I've sent in so many incident reports and heard absolutely nothing back. I feel like we have been abandoned and are not supported by the authority at all.*

Question 10. What assistance would you like to see from the authority that would support the school and assist with the prevention of violent incidents?

Members expressed a need for more and expedient support for SLT, suggesting that school leaders require additional support, resources, training, or assistance to effectively address violence and manage school safety.

Violence within schools is only getting worse - we have seen clear escalation from a minority of pupils creating an unsafe working environment for staff. QIO/QIMs seem to not have a grasp on the gravity of the situation. HT/DHTs seem to be stuck between wanting to solve the problem and not being supported from QIMs. More needs to be done to support teachers and schools with children who are repeatedly violent. A child should not be readmitted to class if there is an anticipation that they will repeat these unsafe, violent behaviours. Over half of the respondents commented in this section, indicating this is an area of real concern where members do not feel they are being heard nor supported.

The responses from teachers regarding the assistance they would like to see from the authority to support schools and prevent violent incidents reflect a profound need for systemic changes and increased support for both staff and pupils. Teachers overwhelmingly express a need for greater staffing ratios and smaller class sizes to effectively manage diverse needs and ensure pupil safety. There is a call for professionals in various fields, such as educational psychology and autism outreach, to be actively involved *in* schools to provide specialized support and interventions. Many members emphasized the importance of clear and enforced consequences for violent behaviour, including the need for consistent exclusion policies and accountability for persistent offenders. Additionally, there is a strong desire for more resources, funding, and training to address the complex needs of pupils, and supporting staff in managing violent incidents.

- *Stop making us beg! When we say we need support it's because we need support. We're not having a jolly and filling out RFAs because we have so much time on our hands. Stop making us jump through so many hoops. Stop being an obstacle and actually help. Fed up. Every year it gets worse.*
- *Exclusion/withdrawal of pupils from a class if they continue to threaten and intimidate staff. Staff should not have to teach a pupil if the staff member feels unsafe.*
- *Proper support for the pupils so less chance of the violence happening in the first place. Support for staff post incident and it not just being brushed under the carpet.*
- *Allow exclusions to take place, and enforce a city wide behaviour policy which can be adapted for each school.*
- *We tend to exclude first and then inform the central team which again goes against policy and procedure but that's because we would be discouraged from doing it despite it being the 'worst' punitive measure we can dole out! It inconveniences the parents so should send a message home that*

we do not tolerate that behaviour! We have posters saying we are a zero tolerance workplace but unfortunately reality we are not.

- *Less blame culture and onus on the teacher to do everything with zero support. More support for SLT whether they ask it or not. Get rid of these ridiculous 'positive relationship policies' that do nothing but blame the adults and place zero responsibility on the children.*
- *Not blaming staff for behaviour but do root cause analysis.*
- *sufficient staffing Less blame culture acknowledgement of the work done if incidents do occur some support rather than just reassess the risk assessment paperwork is important and records must be kept but people are more important.*
- *More power to schools and teachers to lay out clear and defined consequences for violent behaviour and verbal abuse. I believe this should include exclusion.*
- *Been allowed to report incidents Not blaming the teachers Proper support Outside agencies providing resources and plans to support pupils.*
- *More staff More budget for resources that we now need.*
- *Funding, resources, social work interventions, more MH support for young people. Primaries obviously need more as we see many coming to secondary with no diagnoses etc.*

Members emphasized the importance of the Authority caring, acknowledging and understanding the extent of the problem of violence in schools, and providing support, oversight and clear direction, facts, and statistics. They also want to call for an end to using euphemisms like "dysregulated behaviour" in place of violence, suggesting a need for transparency and accountability in addressing the issue.

- *Support not criticism may encourage SMT to follow procedures.*
- *As mentioned. Exclusion rates are only down because HTs are not allowed to exclude any longer - it is emphatically not because behaviour is improving.*
- *Active encouragement to complete incident forms and actually bother to process them and report back Not being frowned upon if choosing to report to police Not to discourage HTs from excluding.*
- *More understanding of the stresses that are being carried and a change in policy where any exclusions have to be agreed to by authority. Until the ethos and relationships between all stake holders in education are respected and respectful good attainment will never be achievable.*
- *When incidents are being reported regularly, the local authority should investigate this further and physically come in to the school to witness the issues.*
- *Understanding and supports in place for children who have experienced extreme trauma and cannot cope being in school. Stop putting pressure on schools to enable these pupils to have full timetable unless significant supports are put in place.*
- *Come in and see what's happening. They dictate policy from their ivory towers without caring about the impact on staff. We only see them for their visits to criticise and tell us everything we're doing wrong.*

There is a desire for specialised coaching or training to de-escalate situations involving violence. This indicates a need for authority intervention to provide staff with the skills and resources necessary to effectively manage violent incidents.

- *More PSA and adult support in schools and while staff training on how to deal with violent behaviour. Not just being told behaviour is communication. We need strategies to apply instead of being used as a punch bag.*
- *To make training part of CPD, in the same way that child protection is. How does one deal with an altercation in the classroom or even outside in the school yard or downtown at a lunch time?*
- *Additional training to deal with violent behaviours A clear reporting process to follow when an incident has occurred with a follow up response*

Members called for the implementation of proper and consistent health and safety measures to protect teachers, suggesting a need for authority intervention to ensure that adequate measures are in place to safeguard staff members. This includes expectations for follow-up actions to ensure staff well-being is

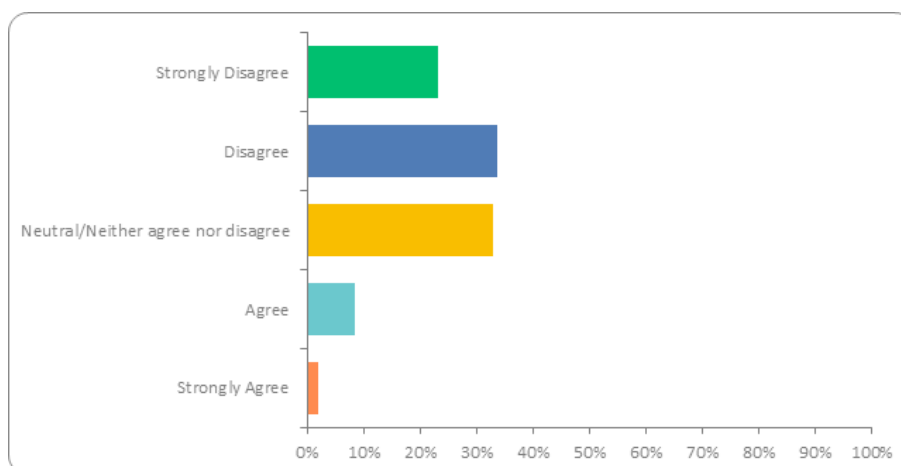
prioritized and clear guidelines for consequences to be implemented. Staff have a right to feel safe in their workplace and ACC is required to address this timeously.

- *Clear expectations of follow up to ensure staff well-being is also being considered and taken care of.*
- *A clear structure of what happens after an incident, clear guidelines of consequence.*
- *Clear guidelines on what the school should do following an incident to prevent more happening*
- *Standard procedure across the city when a student attacks a teacher*
- *Every incident should be discussed with the teachers involved and a commonly acceptable solution must be found to ensure the teachers are feeling safe and protected. Additionally, such decisions/measures should be reported to the rest of the students, that they are aware that as teachers cannot touch the students, they students are barred from touching, hitting or shouting threats, swearing at their teachers and clear consequences should be known to both students and parents as well.*
- *I think the authority should have a violent incident policy where all schools are on the same page on how violence should be dealt with in schools. More support to keep staff and children safe*

Overall, the responses indicate a desire for a range of supports from the authority, including increased resources, training to deal with violence, disciplinary measures, and measures to ensure the safety and well-being of staff members.

Reporting of Violent Incidents

Question 11. When a violent incident at my school is reported, it is resolved satisfactorily.



A third, (33.56%) (29.25%) (31.70%) disagreed with (23.18%) (20.75%) (12.75%) strongly disagreeing. (8.48%) (15.75%) (15.67%) agreed that a violent incident had been resolved satisfactorily with (1.90%) (3.75%) (2.27%) strongly agreeing. (32.87%) (30.50%) (37.53%) neither agreed nor disagree.

With over half of members surveyed (56.74%) expressing a lack of confidence that a violent incident is satisfactorily resolved coupled with the low number of teachers expressing confidence about this (10.38%), there is considerable doubt about the process within schools to satisfactorily investigate and bring a resolution to a violent incident. Whilst a process exists, members have little confidence in the follow up actions required to achieve effective resolution.

Across various schools and scenarios, there is a pervasive sentiment of dissatisfaction and frustration among teachers regarding the handling of such incidents. Many members expressed feeling blamed and unsupported when reporting violent behaviour, with a common theme of being asked to reflect on their own actions rather than receiving adequate support or intervention from school leadership.

Blame Culture

- *It's the opposite. We're often blamed for not having the right environment for the child or lessons not being engaging enough etc. staff are then victimised and bullied for daring to request help and support after violence.*
- *Same behaviours repeated regardless of reporting. Incidents often overlooked/blame put on staff.*
- *We are just asked how we could have handled it differently and made to feel guilty and responsible and then sent back into the classroom with the violent pupil.*
- *some teachers are seen as ineffective if they raise behaviour issues in their classroom or worried about their professional reputation if they can't manage by themselves. Staff not always aware that they can fill in a form after experiencing verbal abuse and what the procedures are. Forms not readily available.*
- *A lot of the time when reporting a violence incident, we as staff are asked to consider if the child has needs or were feeling strong emotions during the violent incident, and what we should have been doing to prevent the violence and support the child. It often feels like victim blaming on us, and making up excuses for the child. This doesn't help anyone! The child only learns that it's OK to be violent if you feel sad/mad, we're setting them up to fail in the real world.*

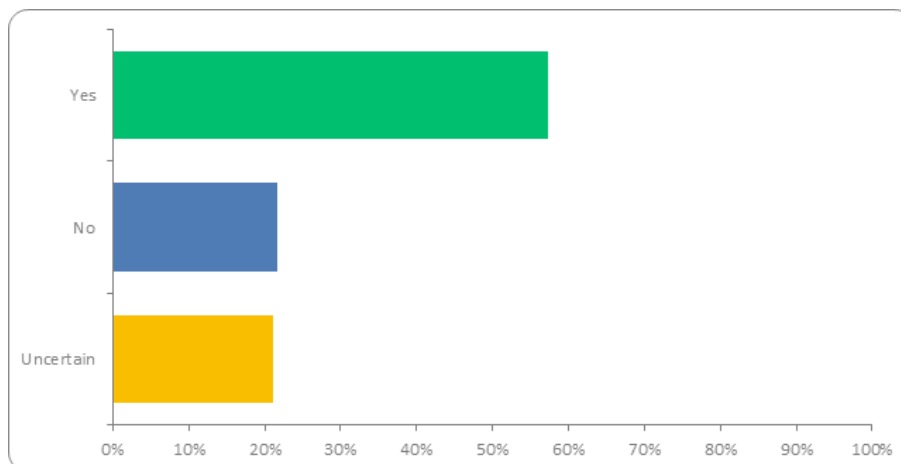
Incidents Not Reported or Dealt With

- *SLT reluctance to report incidents*
- *Violent incidents are not reported to the authority. I sent the online form to my line manager at the end of the last term, but I did not get a reply yet*
- *When a near miss is submitted nothing is done after it no conversations etc to say it has been acknowledged and offer support.*
- *Rarely any acknowledgement or feedback when incidents reported. Not clear if they have actually been submitted or not.*
- *Large volumes of incident reports and near miss forms are being filled out in my school on a weekly basis and from what we can see they barely even get acknowledged! Staff are expected to return to class and continue teaching after these incidents and even if the child is removed to be spoken to they are typically returned to class with very little consequence!*
- *Forms are filled in but nothing happens as a result. It is seen as part of the job by SLT*
- *We send off an incident form and that is about it. I personally like to also inform the parent, but as I've said before a lot of parents brush it off as standard behaviour and nothing else is done about it.*
- *Pressure on SLT. Their workload is so high that often can't deal with these situations as quickly as desired and sometimes the forms never get submitted in the end.*

Violent Children Returned to Class / Situation Not Dealt With

- *I called SLT two weeks ago to say that a child had assaulted me and to ask for support. I was told "I can't come down, I'm dealing with something important". Nobody asked if I was OK. As a result of this attitude, incidents often go unreported.*
- *No opportunity for de-brief within school or communication from council if incident formally reported. Pupils who have displayed violent behaviour regularly returned to classroom.*
- *Children just go straight back into the class after assaulting teachers, barely any repercussions*
- *Extreme violent behaviours are tolerated, and the same pupil is often back in class the following day. Restorative practices are absolutely insufficient.*
- *Some aggressive pupils return to class before restorative meeting has taken place. Teachers are not consulted and feel unsafe.*
- *I was told that boys will be boys when I reported an object being thrown at me. Nothing was done. I have also been left to deal with 2 children violently attacking each other and with no in class phone was just having to shout for adult support or worse having to send a pupil to find any adult so the children wouldn't hurt each other.*

Question 12. I am aware of how to report an incident using the Aberdeen City Incident forms.



(21.61%) (26.94%) (26.14%) said no (57.29%) said yes, with (21.10%) (20.63%) (20.69%) uncertain.

This question highlighted that, (42.71%) (47.57%) (46.83%) of members surveyed were either unaware of how to report an incident using an Aberdeen City Incident form or were uncertain. This represents a fall of 4.86% but still represents an unacceptable proportion of teachers that are unaware of the correct incident reporting process.

This is extremely disappointing as there has been joint agreement between the EIS, ACC Health and Safety and the Education Team that awareness of how to report incidents needed to be raised. There has been training offered by the EIS to all our reps and the authority has offered training through Health and Safety to SLT.

There is evidence from Q11 and Q12 to suggest that there is localised pressure from Head Teachers and SLT to encourage teachers **not** to report an incident when it takes place. There is further evidence of a blame culture that shifts responsibility away from the perpetrator to the teacher. From the responses provided, it is evident that there are concerns and challenges related to the reporting and handling of violent incidents in schools.

Respondents expressed frustration over the availability of support from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in addressing violent behaviour. There is a perception that SLT support is often unavailable or insufficient when dealing with such incidents.

There are concerns about the effectiveness and clarity of these processes. Some respondents indicate uncertainty about what happens after submitting incident forms, while others express frustration over the time-consuming nature of the reporting process.

There is a perceived lack of training and awareness among staff members regarding the reporting procedures for violent incidents. Some respondents mention that new staff training does not include information about incident reporting forms, indicating a gap in staff training and onboarding processes.

Respondents highlight the challenge of finding time to complete incident reports, particularly for verbally abusive incidents that may occur frequently. The time-consuming nature of the reporting process can be a barrier to effectively addressing and mitigating violent behaviour.

Comments Specific to Members Being Discouraged

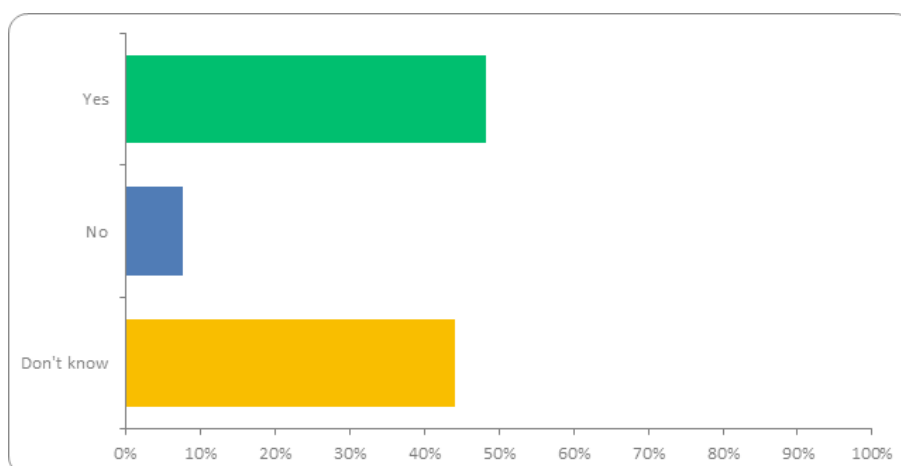
- *Staff are discouraged from filling out a violent incident form. Nothing else happens at all. The child wouldn't know that what they did was wrong, and neither would other children and the violence continues.*
- *Incident reports are discouraged. Responsibility is put solely on teachers to manage all behaviours. We are often told it is up to our creation of a 'classroom culture', which while very important will not resolve all challenging behaviours. There are no real consequences for violent behaviour, learners are taken out for a conversation and returned to class moments later.*
- *Fill in a form but sometimes discouraged to fill in form.*
- *We report the violent incident to the HT and make a time to fill it in with HT. It's often discouraged and HT needs chasing up quite regularly to do this.*
- *Incidents are buried and results depend on persistence of victim and involvement of unions*
- *It is very murky and unclear. Staff are not able to access forms easily. You are made to feel like an inconvenience if you ask. No encouragement to fill in forms or record on SEEMis*
- *I have heard of teachers being discouraged from reporting these incidents as it does not look good for the school when statistics are gathered and published.*

Additional Member Comments

- *A lot of staff are unaware of this process unless you seek it out.*
- *We follow the flowchart procedure that has been given to us via the EIS and ACC. I'm aware that staff DO NOT always fill in Incident Forms though, due to the fact that nothing seems to be taken seriously by ACC about these incidents taking place.*
- *School doesn't bother sending council forms for near miss and violent incidents and tells teachers to send them in themselves without telling staff where form are actually kept.*
- *No. They are not dealt with or ignored. The council do not know the true scale of violent incidents because a lot of them are not reported. Staff are blamed and shamed for these incidents.*

Overall, these responses underscore the importance of streamlining reporting processes, improving staff training and awareness, and ensuring adequate support from school leadership in addressing and preventing violent incidents in schools.

Question 13. Is there a protocol for submitting an Aberdeen City Incident Form at your School?



(44.04%) (47.30%) (50.10%) didn't know and (7.77%) (9.07%) (10.39%) replied no.

The authority advice is the correct document to be used when an incident takes place.

In addition, there was a joint agreement at LNCT that there should be a presentation on the first inset day of the 2023/24 session, and that the authority incident form advice document be made available to all school

staff. This was jointly promoted by the EIS to their reps and the Education Team to Headteachers. When EIS reps were asked if the presentation took place, 39 branches responded, with 10 indicating that it had not happened. This was reported to the Chief Education Officer and remedial measures were set in action. It is a concern that despite a clear instruction being issued, ratified at LNCT, head teachers in some educational establishments chose not to host the presentation on the authority incident protocol. The responses illustrate a concerning lack of clarity and consistency in the protocol for submitting Aberdeen City Incident Forms, exacerbating the challenges teachers face in documenting and addressing violent incidents. Many teachers express frustration over the bureaucratic hurdles they encounter, including difficulties accessing forms, obtaining permission from line managers, and navigating IT issues.

There is a pervasive sense of disillusionment with the efficacy of reporting procedures, with instances where incidents go unreported or unaddressed due to perceived lack of follow-up or support from school leadership. The burden of reporting falls disproportionately on teachers, who often feel overwhelmed by the administrative demands and the absence of tangible outcomes from their efforts. These issues not only hinder effective response to violent incidents but also contribute to a broader culture of underreporting and resignation among educators.

- *We meet with our DHT to fill out a form, this is rarely done as there is never time and therefore mostly goes unreported.*
- *They don't get reported.*
- *Not happy with it as HT won't delegate authority and she is the only one who can fill it out. We have to chase her up because she's always busy and doesn't have time. The onus should not be on teachers to do this.*
- *I would have to request a copy of the form from the office. Most staff are unaware of these forms. They're not publicised!*
- *Must get permission from line manager – permission rarely granted.*
- *Any violent behaviour - SLT to support form however often unavailable.*
- *My headteacher- there are no follow ups regarding the violent behaviour or form submission.*
- *You complete an incident form which is passed to your head teacher. Not sure where it goes after that.*
- *We now have the Near Miss form on our school share point page. But I have no idea what happens once I send it. I also don't have time to do one for every single verbally abusive incident.*
- *Yes but this has to be done online with only one of 2 members of management and their availability to complete these is non existent.*
- *Management will fill it with us but we have to find them first.*
- *I'm aware of near miss, normally done with management, not sure if there is a policy about it.*
- *Near miss form. Which is clunky and unfit for purpose in schools.*
- *Sit with a manager to fill in, however rarely if ever happens.*

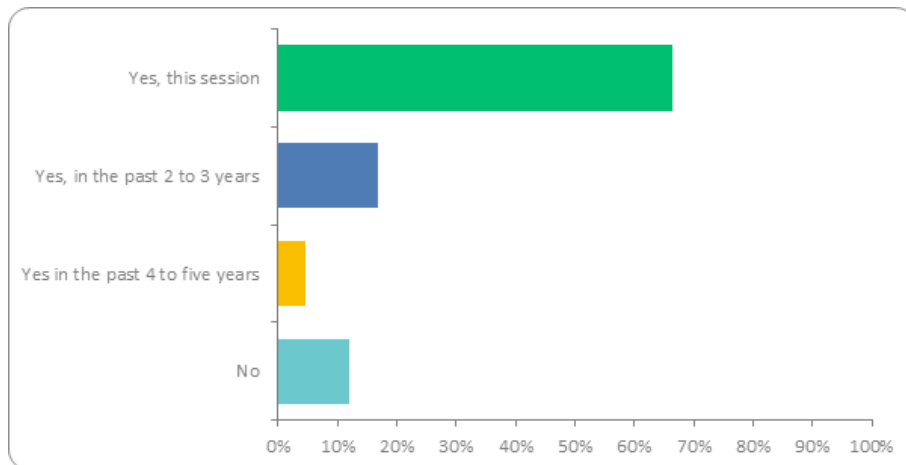
The following comments reflect areas of good practice

- *Liaise with SLT and ensure information is reported on seemis and there is a clear understanding of incident with all parties who witness recorded Complete the incident report with ht and submit*
- *Sit with my boss and fill it out.*
- *Tell our line manager, set up a meeting asap, discuss and complete the form and then we usually set next steps/talk about how to prevent it happening again. We got training at the first Inservice on it.*
- *Staff fill in with their line manager or any member of slt.*
- *Incident is reported by member of staff to SLT who investigate, record incident and findings and form a solution going forward. Staff are directed to support and offered counselling.*
- *Incident form to be completed and sent to Depute who submits online and then checks if you are happy before recording on Core HR.*
- *Report to SLT who completes form. Reference number generated. Follow up conversation.*

- Form is filled in and then shared with a member of the SLT. The member of staff is then invited to a meeting with the member of the SLT where the online part is completed together along with the investigation. A copy of the receipt when sent is sent to the member of staff. Staff complete Near Miss/ Injury form. Discussed with SLT. SLT submit into council Health and Safety. Actions shared with member of staff.
- Work with SLT to complete the form on core HR. Update PCRA if appropriate. Contact parents. Look at supports for the child.

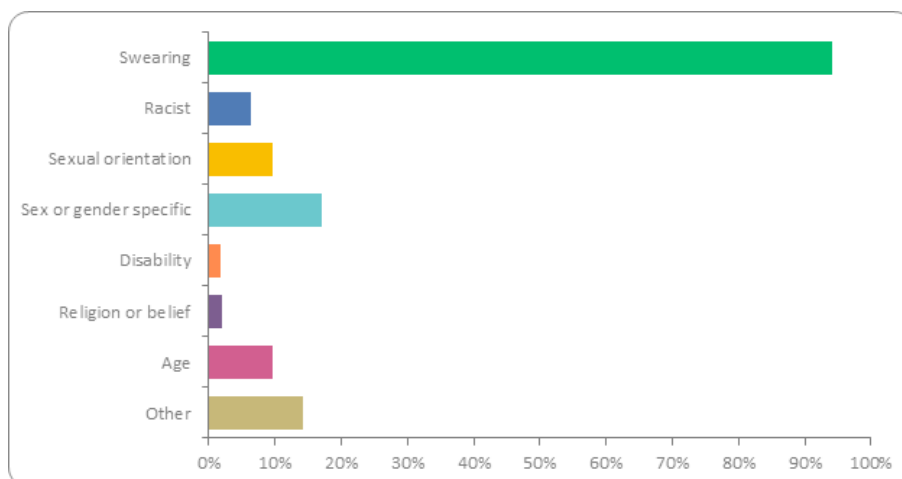
Verbal Abuse in Schools

Q 14. Have you experienced verbal abuse from a pupil?



In the session, 20223/2024 (66.43%) (54.14%) (53.75%) responding to the survey experienced verbal abuse. These responses indicate that a majority of respondents have experienced verbal abuse from a pupil, with a significant portion reporting experiencing such abuse during the current session.

Q 15. What form did this take?



By far the largest category of verbal abuse was swearing with (94.21%) (92.06%) (92.10%) members reporting this. The other categories included racist (6.39%) (8.82%) (7.90%), sexual orientation (9.58%) (7.06%) (5.93%), sex or gender specific (17.17%) (12.06%) (10.62), disability (1.80%) (1.76%) (2.72%), religion and belief 2.00% (1.18%) (2.72%) and age-related remarks (9.58%) (6.47%) (10.62%) being made to teachers.

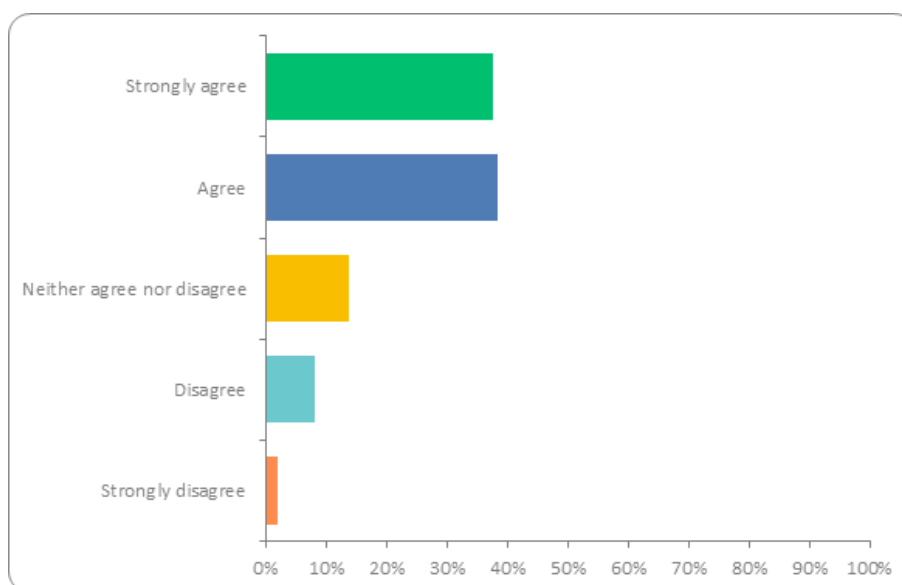
Around protected characteristics included in the 2010 Equalities Act, there were (233) (172) (159) members who indicated that they had been the subject of this type of verbal abuse.

While swearing is the highest category, there is a worrying increase in verbal abuse involving characteristics protected under the 2010 Equalities Act.

- *Bullying. Some pupils targeted me because I am foreigner and should go back to my country and they keep making fun of my accent.*
- *Very sexually explicit in nature*
- *Lots of sexualised language used daily.*
- *It is a daily occurrence with zero consequences for the pupil.*
- *Have had personal comments about my voice and my physical appearance including gender specific comments about being on my period. Aggressive screaming and intimidation when attempting to manage behaviour such as getting shouted at in my face with comments such as 'I f...ing hate you'*
- *Sworn at and had threats made towards me.*
- *Shouting screaming, entry into personal space.*
- *Regularly sworn at, have personal comments made about appearance or teaching abilities.*
- *Threats of physical violence.*
- *In the past year I have also had homophobic comments made about myself which have never been taken seriously.*
- *Being falsely accused of being sexist and racist on multiple occasions because pupils were angry about being called out on behaviour.*
- *I'm going to stab you with a knife, I'm going to kick you in the balls/c..., etc*

Health and Wellbeing

Question 16. Physical violence and verbal abuse has impacted on my health and wellbeing.



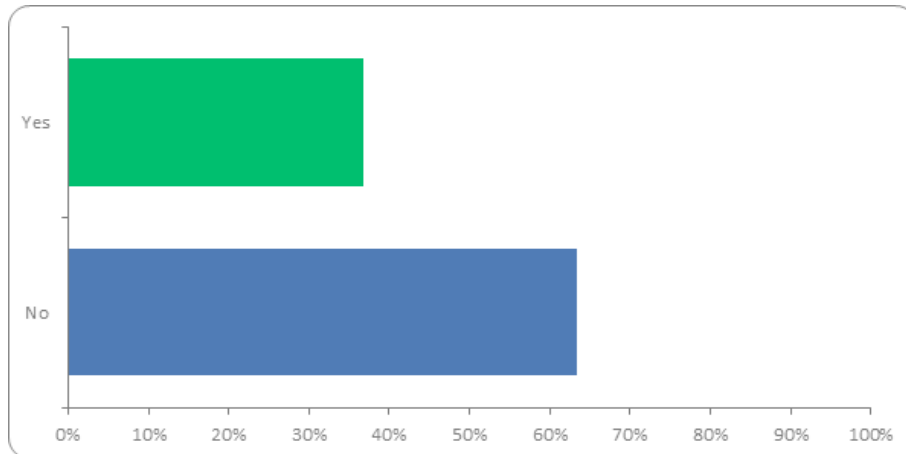
Over a third (38.31%) (33.50%) (37.23%) of members surveyed agreed, with (37.59%) (29.41%) (21.65%) strongly agreeing.

These responses indicate that a significant majority of respondents (approximately 76.9%) either strongly agree or agree that physical violence and verbal abuse have had an impact on their health and well-being. This highlights the serious and detrimental effects that such incidents can have on the overall well-being of staff members in educational settings. Left unaddressed, this will undoubtedly influence staff absence rates.

- *This issue is making me feel unsafe in work. So many of these incidents occur in a day that SLT are overwhelmed in dealing with it. This impacts low level behaviour. SLT are not getting around to dealing with lower level behaviour because they are swamped.*

- *I was so shaken up by the recurring instances of violence, I had to go on anti-depressants.*

Question 17. If you have experienced physical violence at your school, who have been the perpetrators?

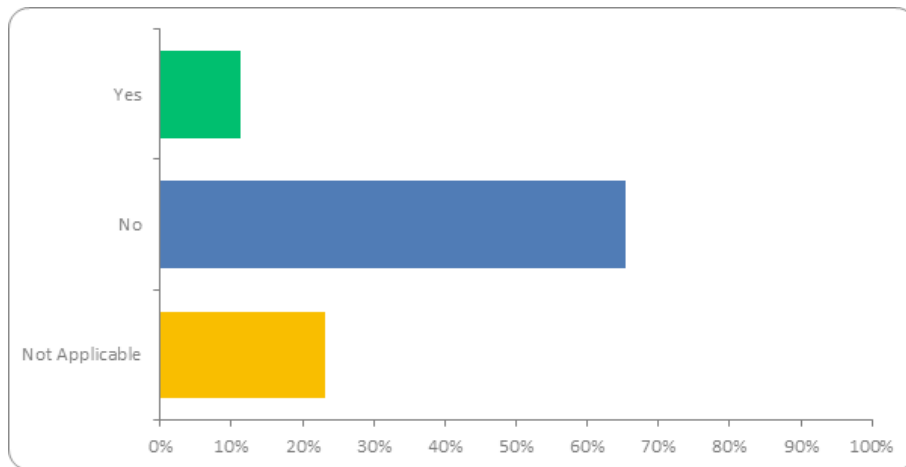


Members responded that 91.37% of the perpetrators were pupils.

Question 18. Have you ever sustained an injury through physical violence at your school?

Over a third of surveyed members indicated that they had sustained an injury through physical violence.

Question 19. Has the impact been so severe that it has resulted in an absence from your work?



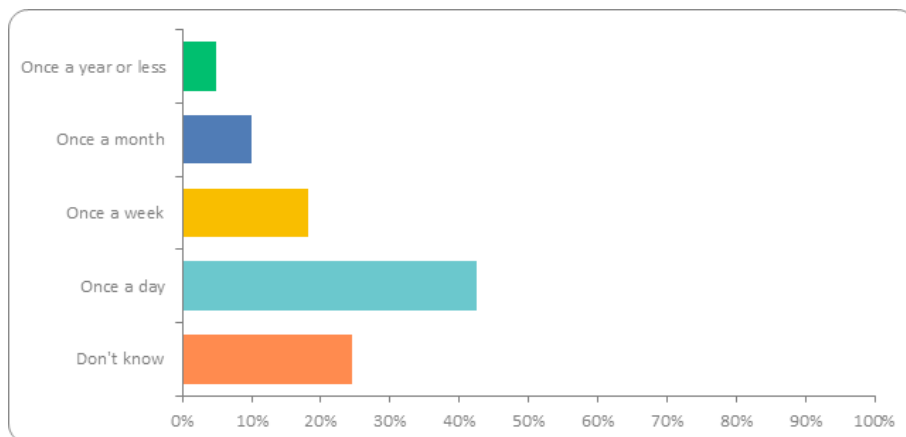
11.33% of members responded that because of a physical injury, they had been absent from work.

Member responses highlight the profound physical and psychological toll that violent incidents are having on teachers. Several teachers reported significant injuries requiring medical attention and time off work. Moreover, the trauma from these incidents has resulted in stress, anxiety, and mental health issues, leading some teachers to seek therapy and medication. Some members also commented on the lack of understanding, leaving them feeling pressure to continue working despite their injuries and emotional struggles.

- *The violence is becoming too overwhelming and has meant more than 50% of staff are off sick. That means the rest of us have to continue to suffer. When are we then going to be off with the same issue?*
- *Back injury. Face injury. Both required trips to a and e and the facial injury has required follow up at a dentist, x2, at my own expense.*
- *Assaulted when 5 months pregnant- resulted in a bleed and hospital visit.*

- *I could/should have taken time off with stress but the guilt of the job and pressure from SLT made this feel inappropriate/unacceptable.*
- *Impact mostly is stress and mental health. I need time to recover mentally from fear/worry.*
- *I had a mild concussion last session, due to being struck with an object. This was one of many incidents, but this caused me to be absent due to the injury as well as stress.*
- *Scared to face class. Humiliation and fear of smt to be seen as weak teacher.*
- *Not directly after but after a number of similar incidents it has impacted on stress levels.*

Question 20. How many times do incidents of violent behaviour towards staff take place in your school?



(42.53%) (29.92%) (18%) of surveyed members indicated that violent behaviour took place in their schools once a day while others reported (18.15%) (18.46%) (19.96%) once a week and (9.96%) (13.85%) (17.38%) stating once a month.

It is deeply concerning to see such a high percentage reporting incidents of violent behaviour towards staff occurring once a day. Since the first EIS survey in 2019 the increase is alarming. This highlights the urgent need for schools to implement effective strategies to address and prevent these incidents.

The frequency of incidents occurring once a week is alarming. It's essential for senior management teams to prioritize staff safety and well-being by implementing proactive measures to mitigate the risk of violence.

The significant number of respondents indicating uncertainty about the frequency of incidents underscores the importance of improving data collection and monitoring systems within schools. Without accurate data, it is difficult challenging to address safety concerns effectively.

The fact that some respondents reported incidents occurring once a year or less does not diminish the severity of the issue. Even occasional incidents of violent behaviour towards staff can have a significant impact on workplace safety and staff morale.

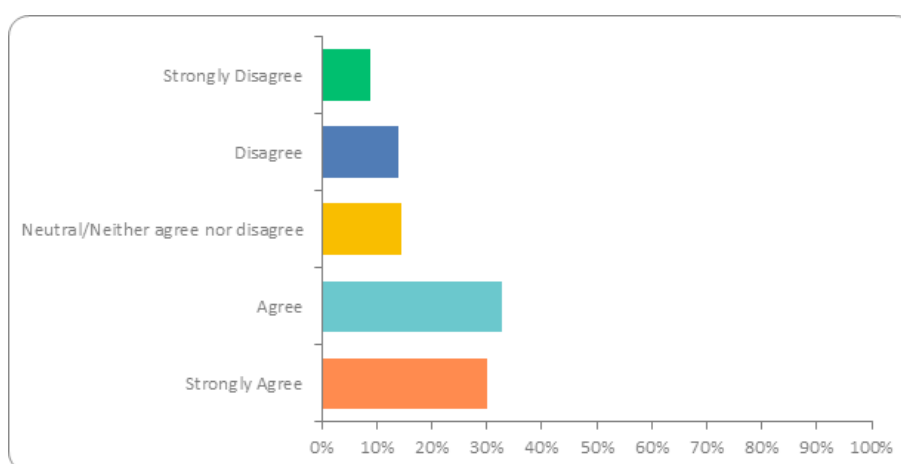
It is clear that there is a pressing need for schools to create a culture of safety and respect where incidents of violent behaviour towards staff are not tolerated. This requires a collaborative effort involving SLT, staff, pupils, and parents to address the root causes of such behaviour."

- *I am physically assaulted weekly and verbally assaulted countless times per day. There are people in my school who are physically assaulted more than once per day Question 20 should reflect that. No one has the time to report all those incidents I myself have only reported it once. It's sad and not many people go to work to be treated in this way. I also think staff from violent schools should be given the opportunity to move to a different school after a number of years in order to support their wellbeing and health.*
- *The volume of physical violence towards teachers in my school are more than once a day.*

- *In my school violent incidents happen multiple times a day and nothing is done. PSAs are being used as punching bags and their and teachers mental health is awful.*
- *Violent incidents are taking place multiple times each day at my school involving both physical and verbal assaults. Staff just expected to have to deal with it as a normal thing.*
- *Schools are at a crisis point. Parents do not realise the extreme violence many of their children witness and experience in school. Some staff are being assaulted on a daily basis, and nothing is done. These situations are left to go on for years.*
- *The frequency of incidents is far higher than once a day. In my school, it is a minimum of 3 incidents per class per day (on a good day). It is usually 3 incidents per session per day (9 total a day)*
- *In my school violent incidents happen multiple times a day and nothing is done. PSAs are being used as punching bags and their and teachers mental health is awful.*

Leaving the Teaching Profession

Question 21. I have considered leaving the teaching profession as a result of being subjected to disruptive, challenging or violent pupils.



A third of members surveyed (32.68%) (26.65%) (29.40%) agreed that they have considered leaving the profession because of disruptive, challenging, or violent pupils with (30.02%) (20.81%) (15.88%) strongly agreeing.

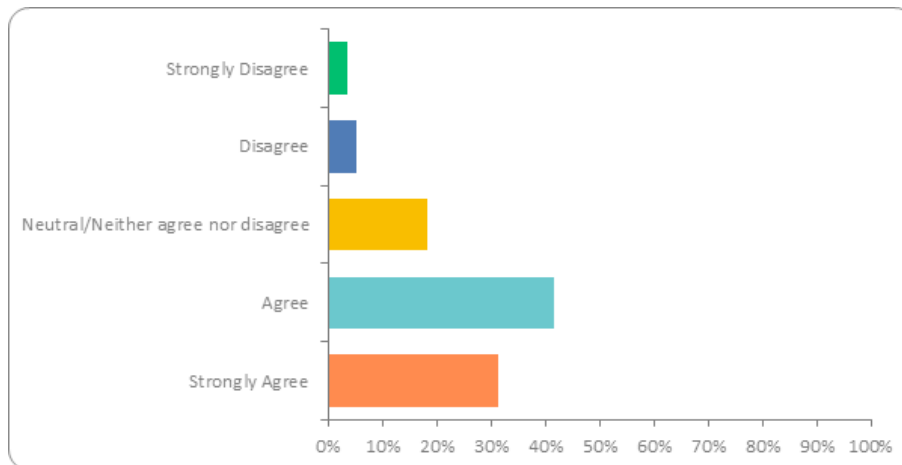
The fact that a sizeable portion (62.7%) of respondents agree or strongly agree with considering leaving the teaching profession due to disruptive, challenging, or violent pupils is alarming. It highlights the urgent need for schools to address the root causes of such behaviour to retain talented educators. It is disheartening to see that many teachers feel compelled to leave their profession because of the challenges posed by disruptive or violent pupils. Schools must prioritise the creation of creating a safe and supportive environment for both staff and pupils to prevent burnout and improve retention. retain experienced teachers.

The responses indicating neutrality suggest a level of ambivalence among educators regarding leaving the profession. This points to underscores the complexity of the issue and the need for targeted support and interventions to address staff concerns effectively. The percentage of respondents who strongly disagree or disagree with considering leaving the teaching profession is relatively low. This indicates a significant proportion of teachers experiencing considerable distress or dissatisfaction in their roles.

It is essential for SLT and senior management to recognise the impact of disruptive and violent behaviour on teacher morale and retention rates. Investing in resources for behaviour management, staff training, and mental health support can help mitigate these challenges and improve the wellbeing of teachers and retain valuable educators.

- *Current government and local authority policy does very little to stop violent and abusive behaviour. Coupled with unreasonable expectations the teaching profession has become a burden to work in. If I didn't have my own family and a mortgage to pay I would leave the profession and retrain or take a job in a sector where I would hopefully feel more valued.*
- *I am passionate about education and its importance within an advanced society. However, I have considered leaving the profession due to the modern demands placed on teachers.*

Question 22. I think that there are obstacles to the implementation of strategies for preventing violence in schools.



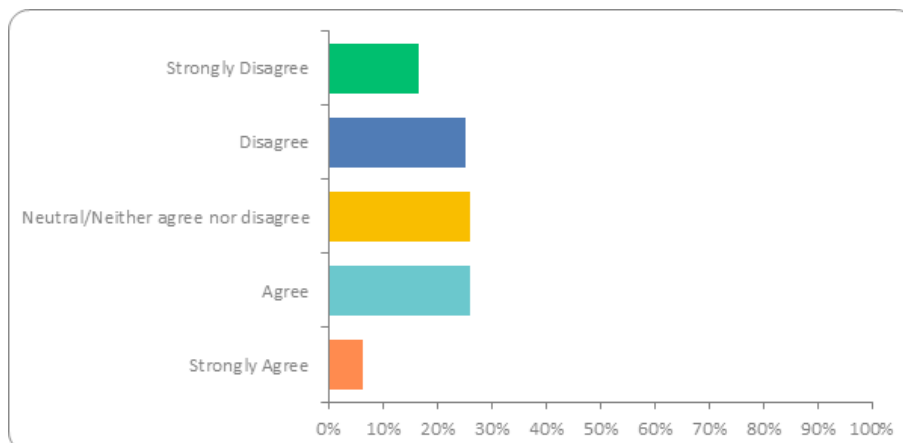
(41.55%) (37.53%) (44.59%) agreed that there were obstacles in implementing strategies for preventing violence in schools with (31.29%) (25.19%) (18.90%) strongly agreeing, for a total of 72.84% agreeing and strongly agreeing

The responses from teachers shed light on several critical obstacles to implementing effective strategies for preventing violence in schools towards them. Many teachers feel overwhelmed by the lack of support from Aberdeen City Council and school leadership, and lack of resources to manage complex pupil needs.

- *Minimising Exclusion, Blame Culture, Teachers expected to put up with a certain amount of violence, lack of SLT support, No Consequences, Decreased PSAs, Decreased Specialists working IN schools and WITH pupils. Fed up of being given "strategies" that I have no time for when specialists have the education for it.*
- *We're expected to put up with a lot.*
- *We aren't left to implement local solutions and initiatives. Our hands are tied at all levels.*
- *Relationships policies and zero consequences and children choosing what they want to do and when has meant zero discipline.*
- *Not fully trained staff who are trained to support pupils with complex needs.*
- *Pressure on HTs not to exclude? Reduced exclusions being a goal in itself?*
- *Keep being told that pupils can't be suspended or excluded due to council policy/ it's just the way it is etc.*
- *There are no consequences to extremely violent behaviour.*
- *The culture of "just getting on with it" coupled with the tacit understanding that, as a teacher, if you try to insist that the measures levied against a pupil are not enough you are seen as either a troublemaker or a weak practitioner.*
- *Lack of staff, staff absences and overstretched staff.*
- *SLT won't exclude children or remove from class even after violent outbursts from children resulting in overwhelmed teachers in flight fright freeze mode being forced to have violent children back in their class 10 minutes later.*

Risk Assessments

Question 23. All staff likely to be impacted by the behaviour of a pupil contribute to the construction of a Pupil Centred Risk Assessment to mitigate risk to staff.



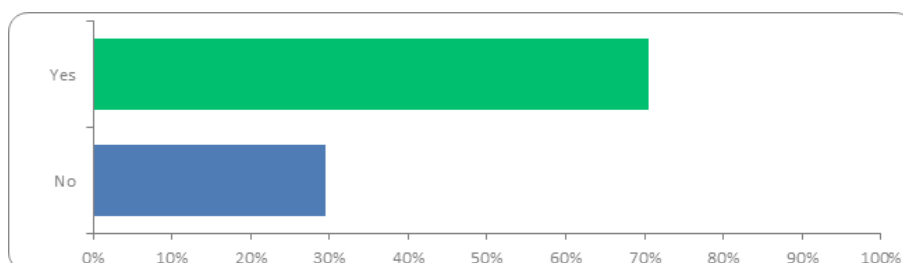
Over a quarter (25.13%) (26.92%) (28.93%) of members surveyed disagreed and (16.52%) (12.56%) (12.31%) strongly disagreed.

It is a source of concern for the EIS that 45% of respondents who may have the greatest experience of pupil behaviour are not being included in the construction of a robust risk assessment.

- *Not often involved in risk assessment as not class teacher eventhough I also work with violent children*
- *Normally it is not dealt with at all other than a conversation, no risk assessments put in place.*
- *Staff aren't involved in coming up with potential solutions. A risk assessment is rarely done when the incident is reported.*
- *Difficult to find time to fill out risk assessments with staff. The form is way too long*
- *Risk assessments are not updated and the child is returned to the class when they are calm. No thought for the effect on staff or other pupils.*
- *Children are put right back into class with zero feedback to teacher or zero ways forward for the child to not repeat their behaviour and no mitigations. We have to always chase up a risk assessment after we have reported an incident.*

Police Reporting

Question 24. I am aware if I am involved in a violent incident, I have the option of reporting this to the police.



Just under a third of members responded no. (29.54%) (27.59%) (33.55%)

It is evident from comments that there is a significant reluctance among staff to report incidents of violence to the police due to several factors, including discouragement from management, fear of repercussions, and concerns about the impact on the child's future. To address this issue, management must create a culture where reporting violent incidents to the police is not only encouraged but also supported. Ultimately,

prioritizing the safety and well-being of both staff and pupils should be the paramount concern, and reporting to the police should be seen as a necessary step in ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

- *Reports to the police would not be appreciated by management.*
- *SLT make staff feel it is part of the job. On the one occasion police were notified after the event, they were shocked by the battered wife syndrome that the staff they spoke to displayed.*
- *Police often come and take the report and say there's nothing for them to do due to the age of the pupil.*
- *I have been told on countless occasions by management that because my pupil has a labelled disability I cannot phone the police.*
- *Going to police is frowned upon, most teachers too scared. ASN or trauma used as excuse for all behaviour.*
- *Many people are aware they can call the police but are concerned that they will be looked upon in a negative light for this.*
- *Reporting to police is frowned upon as teacher will be ruining child's future. ACC do not support SMT by allowing exclusions. Why can cameras not be in rooms or worn by teachers if chosen.*

Finally, members had the opportunity to provide further comments, and over 250 responses were recorded, revealing a critical consensus on the normalization of violence in schools, systemic underfunding, and the failure of inclusion policies without proper support.

Question 25. Are there any further comments that you would like to make on this topic?

- *Violence is unacceptable. We do not help young people by excusing it.*
- *The violence in schools is getting worse because young people know that they will get away with it. There are far too many agency "observations", hoops to jump through, "strategies" to try before anything gets done. By that point, the poor class teacher has been signed off work with mental health issues and the child is terrorising someone else!*
- *I know money's an issue but it's not up to individuals in a school to deal with all society's issues.*
- *What's happening in schools is a reflection of what's happening in society.... disrespect, crime, lack of responsibility and purpose. Society spiralling out of control. Very worrying!*
- *It's just such a shame. Every teacher I know wants nothing more than to build relationships, educate, keep our children safe and do their job to the best of their ability. But globally, we've moved into an ethos where swearing, openly mocking, physically assaulting and deliberately disrupting the class has become normalised and "just part of the job." Why are we tolerating this change? We all have a right to work in a safe environment.*
- *School is becoming a chaotic place where little learning takes place. The teacher's time is taken up in managing behaviour to the detriment of those children who genuinely want to learn.*
- *psychological why are we expected to teach according to council tick box expectations with no recognition that most of us are dedicated to the wellbeing of all the children in our care - including those who are exposed to physical and verbal violence in a place that is believed by their parents to be a safe and nurturing environment.*
- *Children and staff are not being supported by authorities. Angry and traumatised children are just plonked into schools in the name of inclusion and not enough funding is given to support their transitions into busy school day to day life. It is beyond absurd that this is even allowed to carry on. What needs to happen before we see real change? It really scares me. Lip service is all I hear and gaslighting of all of my hard working colleagues who do their very best with what they are given. Summits and taskforces are being set up but none of it actually addresses the chronic underfunding of education and inclusion. Why do they pretend everything is great and we are leaders in education - it is just embarrassing really and I become more resentful every year I have to witness worsening violence in classrooms and schools. I have to watch children flinching and being subject to the same violence as my colleagues. I have to protect and police children daily. Teaching and learning inspections??? Utter nonsense. How about the authority is inspected on their support of our children and their staff. Or the*

governments blind ignorance and cherry picked data points are inspected. I feel totally alone and unable to talk about what is really going on in schools - i think parents would be absolutely horrified by the truth and i feel like i want CCTV so there is some sort of accountability instead of "what happens behind closed doors, stays behind closed doors". How sad and depressing for education.

- *It is disheartening that so many incidents occur. We have so many lovely learners, but they are completely overshadowed by the behaviour of the few. The resources, rewards, and time go to individuals who do not care/change/engage - leaving very little for other learners. I really don't understand why the behaviour is tolerated in one of my schools - because it wouldn't be in another one.*
- *Inclusion is just not working and the mainstream schools are a shambles because of the lack of support and resources. Something needs to change now.*
- *Behaviour in our school is out of control. Other children as well as staff are subject to physical and verbal abuse daily. We have parents fighting in the streets about their children fighting and threatening to take matters into their own hands as they think there is no proper consequences. There needs to be a limit of what is acceptable and violence should never be acceptable. Understand and be trauma aware but give clear boundaries and consequences. They are not learning that it isn't acceptable to be violent and it only gets worse the older they get in scale and in level of strength.*
- *Today I came home saying I had a good day. But when I described my day it included having classroom objects thrown at me and being horrifically sworn at. That is not normal but it has become normalised. I was just relieved that children were not hurt and did not witness it. My own children (in another LA) have normalised classroom evacuations. I am at a loss of what to say to my children, to my pupils, to my pupil's parents. I am horrified that this is now normal. It is not ok. We are traumatising a generation of children due to the trauma experienced by a (growing) minority. We will never raise attainment like this. The LA should be tracking pupil and staff wellbeing. Only when we have that will we be able to raise our attainment tracking. The LA should be tracked and questioned on that - how are you raising the wellbeing of your school staff? How are you ensuring the safety of staff and pupils. The LA should be held accountable and it doesn't feel like they currently are. My employer should be keeping me safe at work.*
- *I feel that some of the children we support are school are not in the correct setting. The policy of presumed mainstreaming should be reviewed. I feel some decisions regarding where pupils should be placed are based purely on financial implications are not whether mainstream school is suitable and set up for pupils with additional support needs. I see all the time at work teachers and particularly PSAs having to deal daily either 1:1 or 2:1 with violent pupils with little to no support, training or review.*
- *Inclusion does not work without the actual funding, resources, staff etc The education system is at breaking point.*

Final Comments

The EIS recognises the collaboration and co-operation with Aberdeen City Council after the results of the 2021 Violent and Abusive Behaviour Survey highlighted member concerns. This positive relationship created a Sub Committee that fed a monthly report to the Safeguarding School Staff Workgroup.

However, it is clear from the data and comments in the 2021 survey that violent and abusive behaviour in schools remains a considerable concern to our members.

Recommendations

Aberdeen City Council Level

- 1) To adopt a definition of 'violence and aggression' (if the Scottish Government/COSLA does not facilitate the agreement of a national definition) and to make a public statement that schools should be places free of and protected from 'violence and aggression' and to develop a local plan with trade unions to deliver that aim.
- 2) To produce, at LNCT level, a comprehensive Violent and Aggressive Behaviour policy specifically for Aberdeen City Schools.
- 3) To revise the remit of the Safeguarding School Staff Workgroup.
- 4) Schools and other council buildings that are workplaces for Aberdeen City School Staff. should have local authority-produced signs and notices communicating to all who use school buildings that 'violence and aggression' will not be tolerated.
- 5) Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen EIS LA carry out a review of the 'violence and aggression' reported and non-reported incidents over the last two years to determine the most common incidents within the LA and produce a short-term plan to address these incidents. The plan should draw on the points set out in this report.
- 6) The LNCT should develop policies and procedures locally, to deal with: Pupil-on-Pupil, Pupil-on-Teacher (& Pupil-on-Staff) and Parent/Carer-on-Teacher 'violence and aggression'.
- 7) These local violence and aggression policies and procedures shall include but not be limited to:
 - a) Definition of 'violence and aggression'.
 - b) Positive pupil behaviour policy with plans for restorative practice embedded and clear boundaries for and expectations of pupil behaviour laid out.
 - c) Agreed response plans to incidents of 'violence and aggression'.
 - d) Aberdeen City implements staffing levels and resources that allow the production of a timetable at each school, of the duty officer available at each school or special unit workplace during school hours. Local authority support should be given to headteacher, depute or appropriate Principal Teachers as "duty officer" to facilitate this recommendation without detriment to the duty officers.
 - e) There should be sufficient staffing levels so that every teacher who is a victim of 'violence and aggression' is given a reasonable amount of 'recovery time' to decompress after an incident and is then encouraged to report the 'violence and aggression' incident with sufficient time to do so.
 - f) Resources and staffing should be implemented that allow for the child who has exhibited violence and aggression to remain out of the class until a revised pupil behaviour plan and/ or updated risk assessment and/or completion of meaningful restorative practices have been undertaken, with the class teacher fully involved in the decision-making around the young person's readmission to the class.
 - g) A trade union rep from the school should be available (and given time) to support the process of writing a 'violence and aggression' incident report if requested. If there is no rep, the LA Secretary should be contacted.
 - h) There is specific, defined support for teachers who have been subject to 'violence and aggression' from parents/carers.
 - i) Every 'violence and aggression' report is acknowledged by Aberdeen City Council.
 - j) Every 'violence and aggression' report is followed up by the Aberdeen City Council or school with an outcome report given to the complainant. The School's SMT should regularly 'check-in' with teachers submitting reports.

- k) Whilst the Aberdeen City Council uses restorative practices, it also makes pupils understand that persistent or serious misbehaviour leads to consequences. Aberdeen City Council develops a clear escalatory set of consequences for pupils who exhibit 'violence and aggression', up to and including exclusion from their school.
 - l) Aberdeen City Council has a clear escalatory set of consequences for parents/carers who exhibit 'violence and aggression'.
- 8) Aberdeen City Council ensures that every teacher is regularly trained in the 'violence and aggression' policies & procedures, de-escalation procedures and restorative practices.
 - 9) Aberdeen City Council provides general strategies to assist teachers in mitigating and responding to 'violence and aggression', including bespoke support for individual teachers requesting such support.
 - 10) There is a joint review at the LNCT of staffing standards and formulae to ensure sufficient staffing levels and resources to prevent violent behaviour from occurring and, where it does, to implement proper support to teachers after 'violence and aggression' incidents and for the proper implementation of restorative practice. These staffing levels should include sufficient support staff within classes and meet the ASN needs of pupils.
 - 11) Support for teacher victims of violence and aggression is reviewed at LNCT and improved.
 - 12) Aberdeen City Council ensures that schools have effective information sharing systems in place for sharing information to teachers regarding background information and risks associated with specific pupils.
 - 13) Aberdeen City Council implements a system of risk assessments for classrooms and other workplace areas to identify risk and control measures for both pupils and staff. These risk assessments are properly implemented, reviewed regularly, and updated after each incidence of violence and aggression.
 - 14) Aberdeen City has sufficient 'competent persons' to carry out risk assessments and to resource their control measures.
 - 15) Aberdeen City Council has the appropriate and sufficient employee support programme for employees who are injured or suffer harm at work.
 - 16) Aberdeen City Council seeks to ensure that 'violence and aggression' policies and procedures will be applied consistently within schools and between schools.
 - 17) Aberdeen City Council ensures that parents/carers are informed of their child's misbehaviour and the school's response/plan.
 - 18) Prejudice based 'violence and aggression' is monitored by Aberdeen City Council and fed into national work in this area.
 - 19) Aberdeen City Council seeks to change and embed a culture within schools that does not blame teachers or pupil victims for pupils' behaviours and encourages all teachers (and young people) to report 'violent and aggressive' incidents.
 - 20) Aberdeen City Council should advise members absent due to 'violence and aggression' to claim special leave as set out in SNCT Section 6.23 and to seek EIS support regarding making a personal injury claim.
 - 21) The Aberdeen EIS Local Association should advise members to report serious instances of 'violence and aggression' to the police, especially if it causes injury or absence from work
 - 22) The Aberdeen City Local Association should campaign and act to make the local authority "accountable" for the level of 'violence and aggression' in its schools and be accountable to the extent to which the Aberdeen City exercises its duty of care to its teacher employees.

Aberdeen City Schools: For Branches

Aberdeen City Local Association will coordinate work at the Local Association/Local Authority level with the school reps to deliver maximum progress with the school-level campaign aims.

- 1) To adopt the Aberdeen City Council or national definition of 'violence and aggression' and to make a public statement that the school should be a place free and protected from 'violence and aggression'. The school should have Aberdeen City produced signs on walls saying that 'violence and aggression' will not be tolerated.
- 2) That each school SMT and EIS branch carry out a joint review of the 'violence and aggression' reported and non-reported incidents over the last two years to determine the most common incidents within the school and a produce short-term plan to address these incidents. The plan should draw on the points set out in this report.
- 3) The school has a good working knowledge of local authority LNCT agreed policies to deal with: Pupil-on-Pupil, Pupil-on-Teacher (& Pupil-on-Staff) and Parent/Carer-on-Teacher incidents.
 - a) These 'violence and aggression' policies be known, explained, and encouraged to be used among and by teachers.
- 4) The local authority (via LNCT) policy and procedures of 'violence and aggression' by pupils shall be adopted and will include the following Is this not the same as LNCT instruction above?
 - a) Positive pupil behaviour policy with plans with restorative practice embedded and clear boundaries for and expectations of pupil behaviour laid out.
 - b) Agreed response plans to incidents of 'violence and aggression'.
 - c) Timetable of 'duty officer' available for teachers and staff at the school during school hours to immediately support with 'violent and aggressive' incidents. Sufficient support is given by the school and local authority to those staff that act as duty officers, including specified management time.
 - d) Every teacher that is a victim of 'violence and aggression' is given a reasonable amount of 'recovery time' to decompress after an incident and is then encouraged to report the 'violence and aggression' incident with sufficient time to do so out with the WTA.
 - e) The child who has exhibited violence and aggression to remain out of the class until a revised pupil behaviour plan and/or updated risk assessment and completion of meaningful restorative practices have been undertaken, with the class teacher fully involved in the decision-making around the young person's readmission to the class.
 - f) Consideration be given as to how the school implements de-escalation in order to avoid any perception that 'violent and aggressive' behaviour is rewarded.
 - g) A trade union rep from the school should be available to support the process of writing a 'violence and aggression' incident report if requested.
 - h) There is specific, defined support for teachers at the school who have been subject to 'violence and aggression' from parents/carers.
 - i) That every 'violence and aggression' report is acknowledged by the school SMT.
 - j) The School's SMT should regularly 'check-in' with teachers submitting reports and use their 'best offices' to ensure the local authority follows up on the incident report.
 - k) Whilst the school uses restorative practices, it also makes pupils understand that persistent or serious misbehaviour leads to consequences. The school has a clear escalatory set of 10 consequences for pupils who exhibit violence and aggression, up to and including exclusion from their school.
 - l) The school has a clear escalatory set of consequences for parents/carers who exhibit 'violence and aggression'
- 5) Every teacher in the school is regularly trained in the 'violence and aggression' policies & procedures, de-escalation procedures and restorative practices. The school's SMT provides general strategies to assist teachers in mitigating and responding to 'violence and aggression', including bespoke support for individual teachers requesting such support. This range of training should include the August (or first) in-service training.

- 6) Support for teacher and pupil victims of violence and aggression is reviewed and discussed by teachers in the EIS branch and views are fed back to the headteacher.
- 7) The school has effective information sharing systems in place for sharing information to teachers regarding background information and risks associated with specific pupils.
- 8) The school has risk assessments for classrooms and other workplace areas to identify risk and control measures for both pupils and staff. These risk assessments are properly implemented, reviewed regularly, and updated after each incidence of violence and aggression.
- 9) The school seeks to have risk assessments completed timeously and to fully resource their control measures.
- 10) The Branch will advise all members to have risk assessments completed for their workplaces and duties. Risk assessments are the employer's responsibility and must be carried out by a "competent person" in health & safety matters. Larger branches (more than 10 members) are advised to nominate a Health & Safety Representative to assist with health, safety, and welfare issues within the school – including members' wellbeing and mental health.
- 11) The school provides access to the local authority's employee support programme for employees who are injured or suffer harm at work.
- 12) The Branch and Local Association should advise members absent due to 'violence and aggression' to claim special leave as set out in SNCT Section 6.23 and to seek EIS support regarding making a personal injury claim.
- 13) The Branch and Local Association should advise members to report serious instances of 'violence and aggression' to the police, especially if it causes injury or absence from work.
- 14) The school will apply policies, procedures, and support to those affected by 'violence and aggression' consistently for all staff and pupils.
- 15) Parents/carers need to be informed of their child's misbehaviour and the school's response/plan. Parental support should be sought by the SMT or pastoral care team.
- 16) The Branch should encourage all members to submit 'violent and aggressive' incident reports after each incident.
- 17) A culture needs to be impressed within the school that does not blame teachers or pupil victims for pupils' behaviours.
- 18) A culture needs to be impressed with the school that has zero tolerance for 'violence and aggression' and in no way normalises 'violence and aggression' within schools. Where a branch is unable to make progress over time in implementing the recommendations above then it should seek support from the Local Association, Organiser or Area Officer to break the deadlock. This may ultimately involve initiating a collective grievance and then a dispute against the local authority (as the employer) for failing to properly exercise their duty of care to staff.

Where a branch in Aberdeen City is unable to make progress over time in implementing the recommendations above then it should seek support from the Aberdeen EIS Local Association, Area Organiser or Area Officer to break the deadlock. This may ultimately involve initiating a collective grievance and then a dispute against Aberdeen City Council (as the employer) for failing to properly exercise their duty of care to staff.

Aberdeen City EIS Local Association