



EIS Workload Briefing:

EIS School Sector Survey Results 2025

The Educational Institute of Scotland

June 2025

Foreword From the General Secretary

Firstly, this work is a testament to all the members who have taken the time to share their workload experiences within our national members' survey. A huge amount of time has been collectively invested in sharing members' views; and as with all surveys the EIS has run before, the data collected from this report will be used to shape relevant EIS policy and will be shared with stakeholders to ensure that teacher voices and experiences are heard by all and are at the heart of education debates.

The EIS has been routinely surveying its school-based membership and has gathered tens of thousands of firsthand accounts of members' experiences of working in Scotland's schools. The data collected through these national surveys has been used as a valuable resource to highlight the experiences of Scotland's teachers and associated professionals, to government, employers, and other key education stakeholders. These findings are also shared across our membership to highlight that individual members are not alone in feeling overworked, underappreciated and struggling to meet the ever-increasing needs of children and young people, with ever-dwindling resources. The 2025 school-based member survey results are no different in this regard.

The education that children and young people receive is critical to their development and sets them up with knowledge, skills and experiences they can then draw upon for the rest of their lives. The school environment also vitally supports children and young people emotionally, physically, and socially as they grow up, and as they move towards adulthood. In short, teachers and other associated professionals working within schools have an incredibly important role in shaping the lives of young people.

This briefing on workload is the first in a series exploring the 2025 membership survey data. It showcases the most recent findings on school-based member workload. Alongside the qualitative data gathered from responses to the survey questions, there is also a considerable amount of supplementary evidence provided in the form of member comments and narratives that reflect what it means to work in Scotland's schools today.

Whilst this report does highlight how common and widespread excessive unpaid and unofficial 'overtime' has become, and how difficult it is now for teachers to access ASN supports for their pupils at the point of need, it is not inevitable that this continues.

The EIS Stand Up for Quality Education (SU4QE) campaign is putting workload, enhanced ASN support and tackling violence and aggression at the heart of EIS activity. Whilst we still have work to do, we are making progress.

At Local Authority and school level our members are working together to push for workload control through the use of Working Time Agreements.

At national level, EIS campaigning has led to the Scottish Government considering the need to recruit more teachers, and to reduce class contact time, with commitments on both included in the 2021 SNP manifesto. Since then, the EIS has been very clear: the Scottish Government must deliver on its promises to Scottish teachers to reduce their workload by cutting class contact time to 21 hours per week and giving that released time as additional 'Preparation & Correction' time. To do so, more

teachers need to be trained and recruited permanently. Political will is required to make the difference, and the Scottish Government must honour its commitment to teachers- and to the whole electorate, including the parents and carers of the children who attend our schools and nurseries.

The EIS has campaigned strenuously to persuade the Scottish Government to deliver on its 2021 manifesto promises – we have arranged members’ emails, MSPs briefings, online petitions, meetings with Scottish Government Ministers, SNCT negotiations, etc. – but nothing has yet got us a cast-iron guarantee that the Scottish Government will facilitate delivery of the 1.5 hours weekly class contact reduction, with this 1.5 hours to be used for teachers’ planning and preparation of learning, teaching and assessment, and ‘correction’- marking of pupils’ work and providing meaningful assessment feedback on learners’ progress. A consultative ballot of EIS members on workload will, therefore, open shortly.

In the meantime, I hope that this latest body of compelling evidence, from almost 11,000 of our school-based members, that teacher workload is unfair, unhealthy and unsustainable, will finally persuade the Scottish Government and Local Authority employers that they need to act as they have promised to do, time and time again, to reduce teacher workload- in the interests of fair work, of health, safety and wellbeing, and the long-term sustainability of the teaching profession, all of which are ultimately for the benefit of our children and young people’s learning and for the benefit of education for the common good.

Andrea Bradley

General Secretary, EIS

Survey Methodology

The EIS school sector survey was opened on Wednesday 18th December 2024 and closed on 7th February 2025. The EIS has run a member survey for all school-based members since 2018. Every two years members are asked the same, if not very similar questions on their workload, health and wellbeing and basic demographic information such as the local authority they work in, and their substantive post.

For the first time, in an effort to reduce the burden placed on members, this biennial survey was amalgamated with survey topics aimed to investigate AGM directives. As a result the total survey length was 116 questions, although members were advised throughout the survey that additional sections looking at AGM resolution themes were discretionary.

In total 10,789 responses were gathered, with a return rate of 20%. This turnout shows a fifth of all members eligible across state and private schools have completed the survey. The estimated response time to complete the entire survey was 28 minutes; however, very few members will have completed every section and responded to every question.

Eligible members were emailed a link to the survey, which was also promoted on the EIS social media pages. Prior to the survey going live to members, it was issued to a small test sample for peer review.

The survey was broken down into six sections. The first three sections followed the same format and question design as previous years under the headings of: About You, Workload, Health and Wellbeing. Following this there were a further three discretionary sections exploring AGM themes under the headings of: Education Questions, Experiences of Access to Promotion and Progression, and Employment Questions. At the beginning of each of the discretionary sections members were asked if they wanted to continue to the survey, skip to another section or to end the survey. This report includes the findings in respect of Workload.

There were a few mandatory questions within the survey to ensure that members were directed to the sections that were relevant to their experiences (i.e. ensuring that questions designed for secondary teachers were only completed by this cohort). In all other instances members were free to skip questions as they progressed throughout the survey. This was done to ensure that there was no false recording within the survey, to improve confidence in the results. Some questions also had 'logic' applied, meaning that respondents would be redirected to different follow-on questions depending on the answers they gave. Details of how many respondents answered each question are included throughout this report.

All figures within this report have been rounded to the nearest one decimal place, meaning that some questions may not have a total exacting 100%, with other questions within the survey allowing for multiple responses.

There was considerable opportunity for members to record more detailed answers to the questions posed, either by using comment boxes, or by ticking an "other" option where appropriate. Throughout this report member comments have been included under the corresponding questions. As some questions within the survey elicited thousands of additional comments or responses, the quotes selected are only a snapshot of this wider data but have been chosen to reflect the majority of views captured.

Margin of Error

This survey was conducted on the Survey Monkey platform. Survey Monkey describes the margin of error as:

“Margin of error (also called confidence interval) indicates the level of certainty with which you can expect your survey results to reflect the views from the overall population. Surveying is always a balancing act where you use a smaller group (your survey respondents) to represent a much larger one (the target market or total population).

“Margin of error is often used as a way of measuring how effective a survey is. The smaller the margin of error, the more confidence you may have in your results. The bigger the margin of error, the farther they can stray from the views of the total population. One way in which to reduce the margin of error is to increase the sample size.”¹

Using the full eligible membership as our baseline figure, the margin of error with our sample of 10,789 is less than one percent².

Survey Demographics

The first section of the survey asked respondents to provide key details about themselves. The answers given in these opening sections give an indication of who our members are and what they teach. Whilst these answers provide insight into EIS teacher members when looked at on their own, they can also be analysed alongside other questions within this survey to provide information on how different sections of EIS membership responded to certain issues.

Within the survey, members were asked whether they taught in Primary, Secondary, Nursery, or Special schools (with the ability to select more than one option as appropriate), with Secondary school teachers then also being asked what subject(s) they taught. Members were asked, also, to state what their substantive post is from a range of options, and which local authority they worked in.

Alongside this, members were also asked some questions about their protected characteristics including their gender, and whether they have a disability or caring responsibility.

Key findings from the “about you” section are:

- 52% of respondents work in primary education, 38% in secondary, 5% in special education, and 1% in Nursery education;
- 66% of respondents have a permanent full-time contract;
- Of the members who said they were unhappy with their current teaching contract, 65% of those within their first 5 years of working in education are looking for a permanent contract; and
- 73% of respondents are main grade teachers.

¹ Survey Monkey, Margin of Error Calculator https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/margin-of-error-calculator/?ut_source=mp&ut_source2=sample-size-calculator&ut_source3=inline&ut_ctatext=margin%2520of%2520error%2520calculator

² Ibid.

Key Findings

This report outlines the key workload issues that our school-based members are facing. Alongside the quantitative data produced from our member survey, there are also extensive member comments peppered throughout this report that reflect the nature and scale of the challenges that teachers and associated professionals are facing every day.

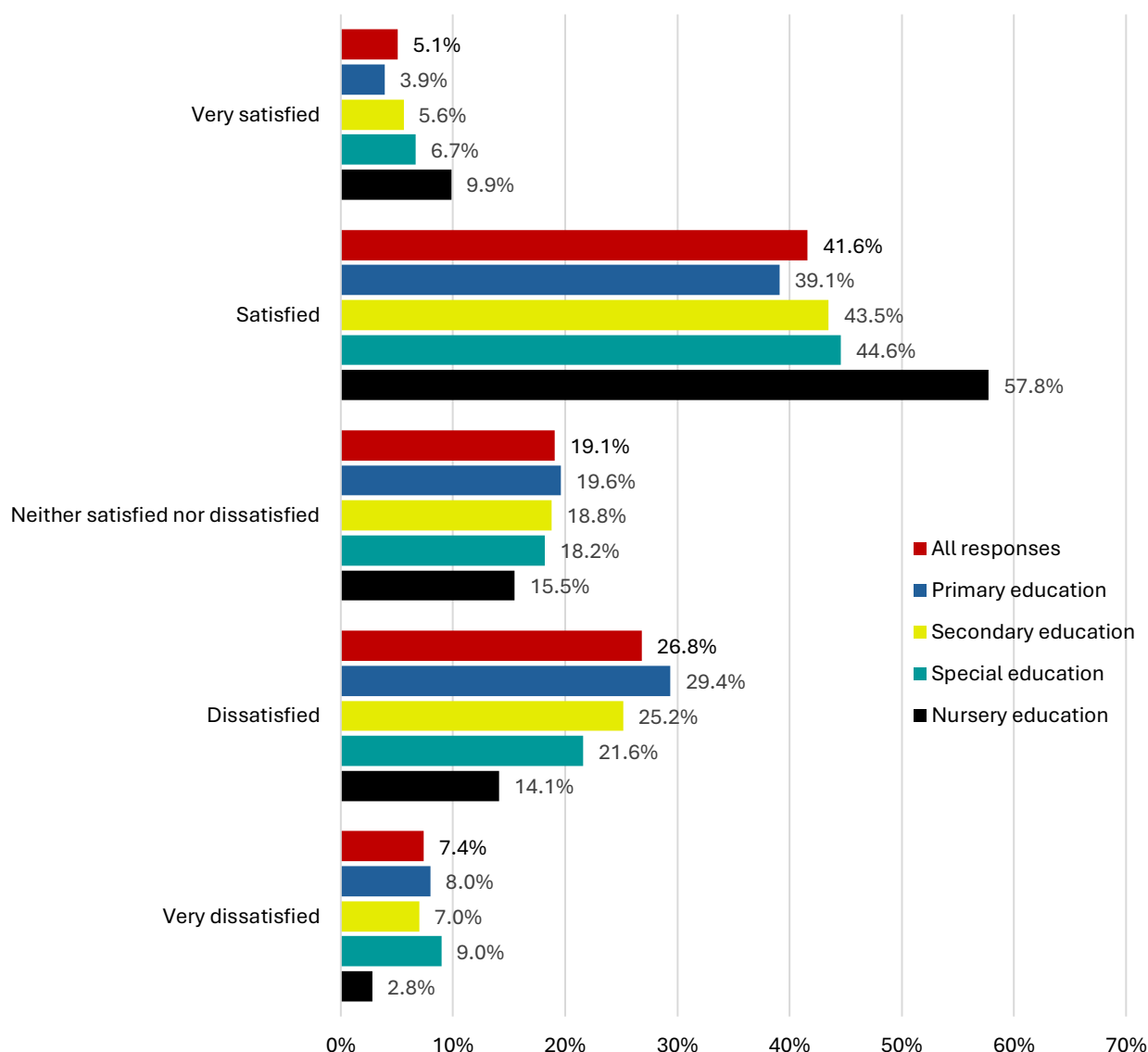
Some of the key findings from this report include:

- Only 17% of respondents said they are very satisfied, or satisfied with their workload levels generally
- 64% of members said they can never complete all of the tasks assigned to them in their working week
- 73% of respondents said they rarely, or are never able to do the necessary preparation and correction within the working week
- 44% of members said they usually work more than 7 hours extra per week, with a quarter of these respondents saying they work more than 15 additional hours – the equivalent of more than 2 full working days extra
- Only 1% of respondents said they have sufficient time in a typical working week to complete paperwork, liaise with colleagues and external agencies, and attend meetings in relation to supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs
- Almost half (48%) of members who said they plan to leave teaching within the next 5 years are considering doing so because workload is too high

EIS Survey Results 2025 - Workload

The following data is focussed on EIS member perceptions of their workload. Workload has been raised as a key concern by EIS members for a number of years. This data helps us to better understand how members feel about their workload, and what measures they believe would help to reduce it.

Figure 1: “How satisfied are you with your job overall?” responses by sector



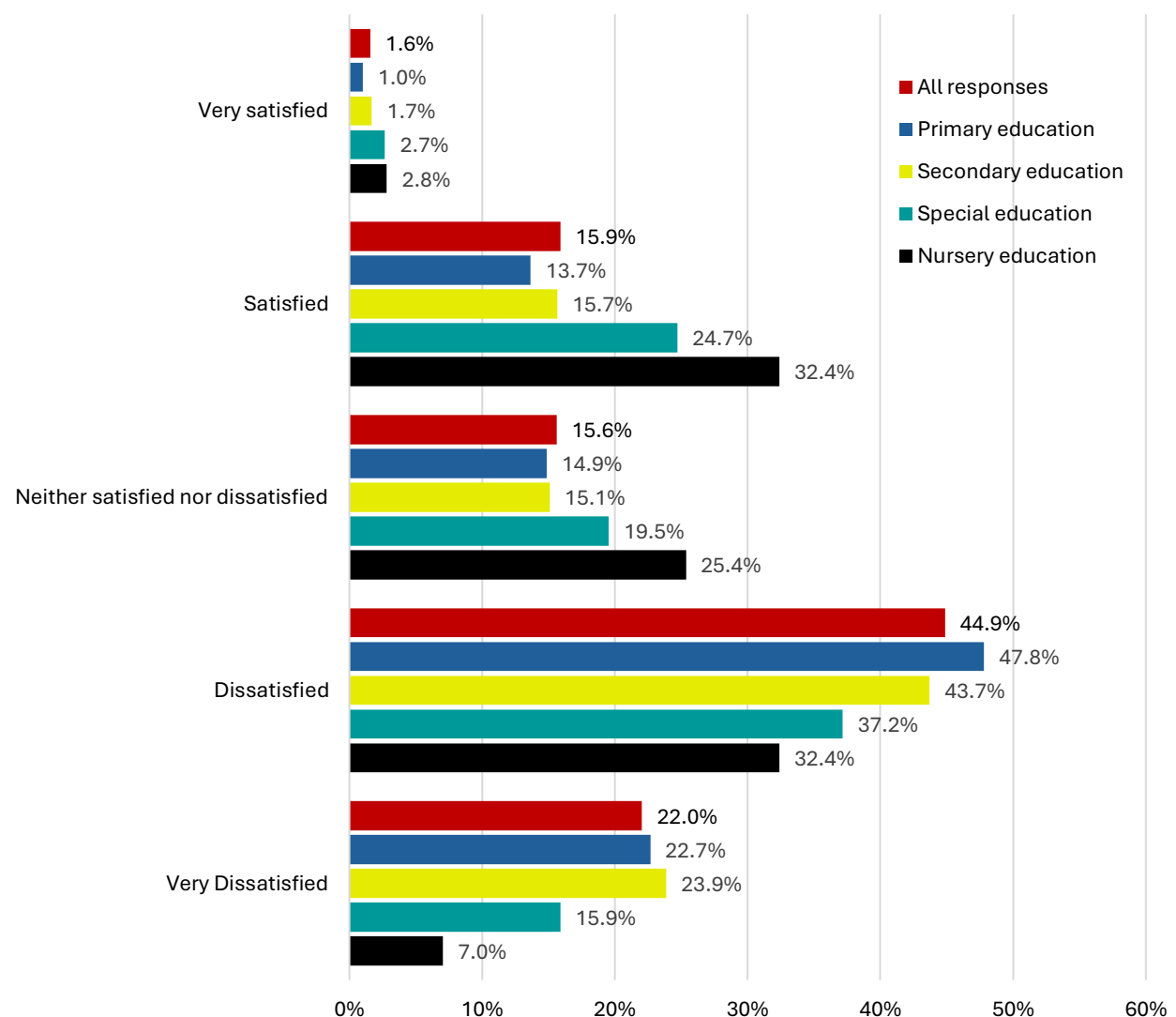
Total responses: 10,269

Figure 1 above shows that less than half of members are satisfied or very satisfied with their job overall. Over a third of all respondents reported they are either “dissatisfied” (26.8%) or “very dissatisfied” (7.4%) with their job overall. The highest level of dissatisfaction is recorded from those

working in primary education with 29.4% being dissatisfied and 8% very dissatisfied with their job overall. The highest levels of satisfaction are noted from those working in the nursery education sector, with over two thirds saying they are either “satisfied” (57.8%) or “very satisfied” (9.9%) with their job overall.

Figure 2 below shows 17.5% of all respondents are either “very satisfied” (1.6%) or “satisfied” (15.9%) with their workload levels generally. Figure 2 also shows there are high levels of dissatisfaction with workload levels across the teaching profession. Two thirds of all respondents (66.9%) said they were either “dissatisfied”, or “very dissatisfied” with their workload levels generally, with those working in the primary education most likely to report being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (70.5%). Again, those working in the nursery sector were most likely to say they were either “very satisfied” (2.8%) or “satisfied” (32.4%).

Figure 2: “How satisfied are you with your workload levels generally?” responses by sector

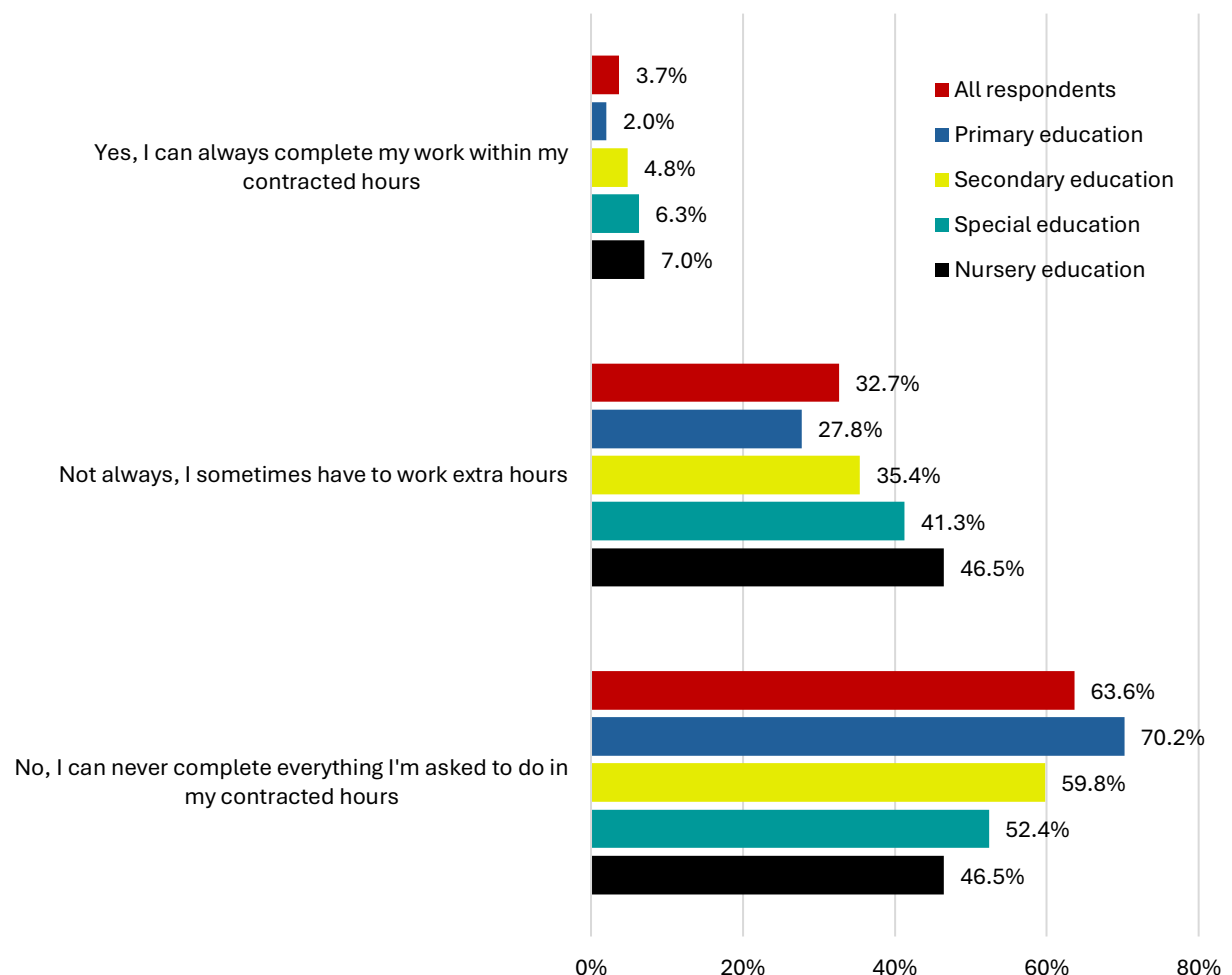


Total responses: 10,262

When asked if they felt they could complete all of the tasks that are assigned to them within their working week, only 3.7% of members said “yes, they can always complete their workload within their contracted hours”. A further third (32.7%) said they sometimes had to work extra hours (in order to complete), but the vast majority (63.6%) said they could never complete all of the tasks given to them in their working week, as shown in figure 3 below.

Again, there are sectoral difference as shown in figure 3. Those working in primary education were the most likely (70.2%) to say “no, I can never complete everything I’m asked to do in my contracted hours”, and those working in the nursery sector were the most likely (albeit a small 7%) to say “yes, I can always complete my work within my contracted hours”.

Figure 3: “Do you feel that you can complete all the tasks that are given to you within your working week?” responses by sector

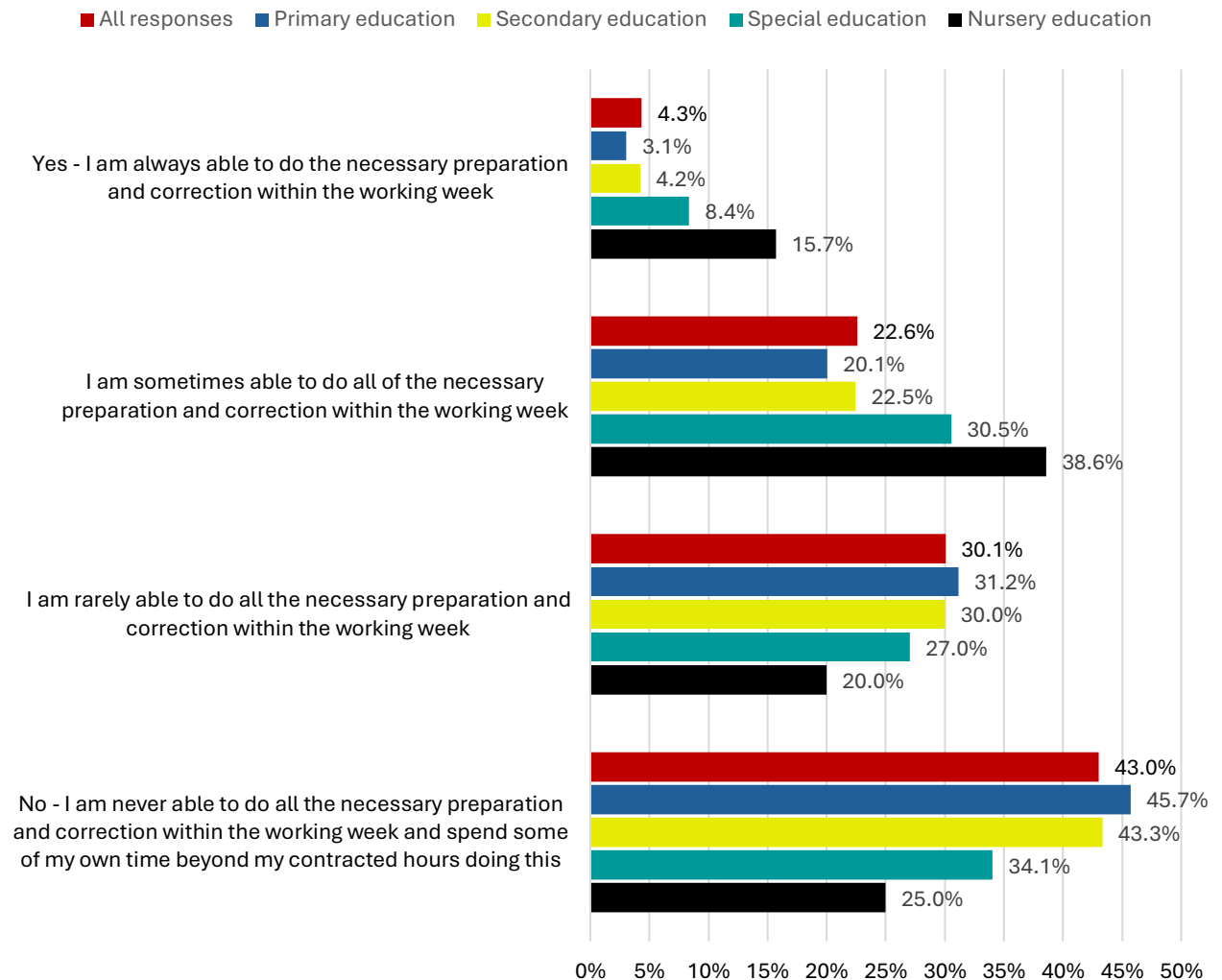


Total responses: 10,266

Additionally, when asked if members thought they had enough time each week for preparation and correction, again only a small number of respondents (4.3%) said they are always able to do this within their working week. Those working in nursery education were the most likely to say they

always had time in their working week for the necessary preparation and correction (15.7%), and those in the primary education (45.7%) sector were the most likely to say they are never able to do all of the necessary preparation and correction, and spend their own time doing this – as shown in figure 4.

Figure 4: “Do you think that you have enough time each week for preparation and correction?” responses by sector



Total responses: 10,177

Workload Drivers

Figure 5 below shows how members responded when asked what the biggest drivers of their workload are, beyond teaching, preparation and correction. More than three quarters (77.6%) of all members reported completing paperwork/admin/bureaucracy as one of their biggest drivers of workload. Managing the behaviour of students was the second most reported driver of workload, followed by tracking and monitoring activities.

Figure 5: “Beyond teaching, preparation and correction what are the biggest drivers of your workload? (please tick the top 5)”

Answer Choices	All responses
Tracking and monitoring activities	67.4%
Reporting to parents	39.8%
Changes to the curriculum	28.9%
Responding to management requests	49.1%
Managing the behaviour of students	70.2%
Additional tasks which require training/ professional learning	30.3%
Activities outwith the pupil day (e.g. clubs, events, etc.)	11.7%
Completing paperwork/ admin/ bureaucracy	74.9%
Carrying out standardised assessments	13.6%
Covering other classes because of staff shortages/ lack of cover/ unfilled vacancies	31.8%
Responding to national consultations	2.4%
Other (please specify)	8.7%

Under the “other” option 882 comments were gathered. Key issues included the challenges of meeting a diverse range of support needs, as well as the increasing number of pupils that have identified needs.

“I have a child in my class who is non-verbal autistic with destructive and violent escalating behaviours. I am basically doing 2 jobs creating a curriculum for him based on the pre-milestones and it's very demoralising as I have double the workload but the learner cannot access them as I have no support for them and management have said no one to one is allowed. It is so demoralising and awful because the child deserves a placement where he can be happy and safe and the other members of his class aren't being hit, pulled, prodded, spat on, work ripped up etc.”

“Planning for the widespread of ability and making resources across the curriculum to try and meet every learner's needs.”

Members also said they did not have enough non-contact time for meetings and other key demands within the school. This included the pressures around supporting learners with coursework, tracking pupils' learning and filing reports.

"General coursework, writing, preparing and checking coursework and keeping it up to date and relevant."

"Having to complete multiple versions of the same task, i.e. tracking on Seemis and also on a school spreadsheet."

Members also raised the workload that is associated with delivering practical lessons, such as preparing food for Home Economics lessons.

"Extra rehearsals as there is not enough time to complete the curriculum during class time."

"As a Home Economics teacher my time is spent setting up for practical lessons; shopping for food; washing aprons/dishcloths; cleaning kitchens; cutting fabric; food ordering and other non-teacher related jobs that used to be completed by our auxiliary staff."

Members' additional comments also highlighted the complexity involved when supporting pupils. There were mentions of the workload associated with handling behaviour issues with pupils, and with the parents/carers. Respondents also highlighted the workload associated with supporting vulnerable children and young people, as well as those with additional support needs.

"Dealing with behaviour issues. Parental contact as a result. Underfunded inclusion. Lack of PSA support in class for learning activities"

"Consultation and reviewing vulnerable children and young people with busy teaching staff"

Additional Correlating Evidence on Teacher Workload

In September 2024 the EIS published independent research on workload.³ This report found the "distribution of activities across the working week is also changing as teachers contend with additional challenges of personalised planning for more diverse learner needs, an increase in behavioural and attendance issues, and expanded pupil wellbeing responsibilities. The contraction of support across children's services extends and intensifies the work of teachers."

This report also outlines the key drivers of teacher workload as:

- Multiple competing pressures on non-teaching time that mean that core activities - planning, preparation and marking - cannot be accomplished in contractual hours
- Increased pupil behaviour and attendance issues
- More diverse learner needs requiring personalised planning
- Increased and more complex Additional Support Needs
- Reduction in support for learning

³ Hulme, M., Beauchamp, G., Wood, J. & Bignell, C. (2024) Teacher Workload Research Report. School of Education and Social Sciences, University of the West of Scotland. ISBN 978-1-903978-76-4 (print) ISBN 978-1-903978-77-1 (report published by the EIS September 2024) <https://www.eis.org.uk/teacher-workload/research>

- Insufficient funding to support increased job demands⁴

The key findings from this independent research further supplement the narratives provided by EIS members within this survey briefing report.

Hours Worked by Teachers Beyond Contracted Hours

Members were then asked how many hours a week outside of their contracted hours they normally work. As can be seen from figure 6, members are routinely working significantly beyond their contracted hours, with only 2.5% saying they very rarely work extra hours. More than a fifth of members (21.8%) are working almost a full extra day (between 8 and 11 extra hours per week) with a further fifth (22.5%) working more than 11 hours extra per week.

It should also be noted that when asked, 23.6%⁵ of members indicated that they work part-time. When the responses are disaggregated by those working part-time we can see that there are high levels of additional working hours, even for those on part-time contracts. Only 3.8% of those working part-time said they very rarely worked extra hours, and over 50% of part-time respondents said they worked between 3 and 7 extra hours per week.

The findings in figure 6 show that 44.3%, almost half, of all respondents work more than 7 additional hours in a typical week – the equivalent of more than another full working day. Additionally more than 10% (11.5%) of members said they work 15 hours or more per week – the equivalent of working more than 2 extra days per week.

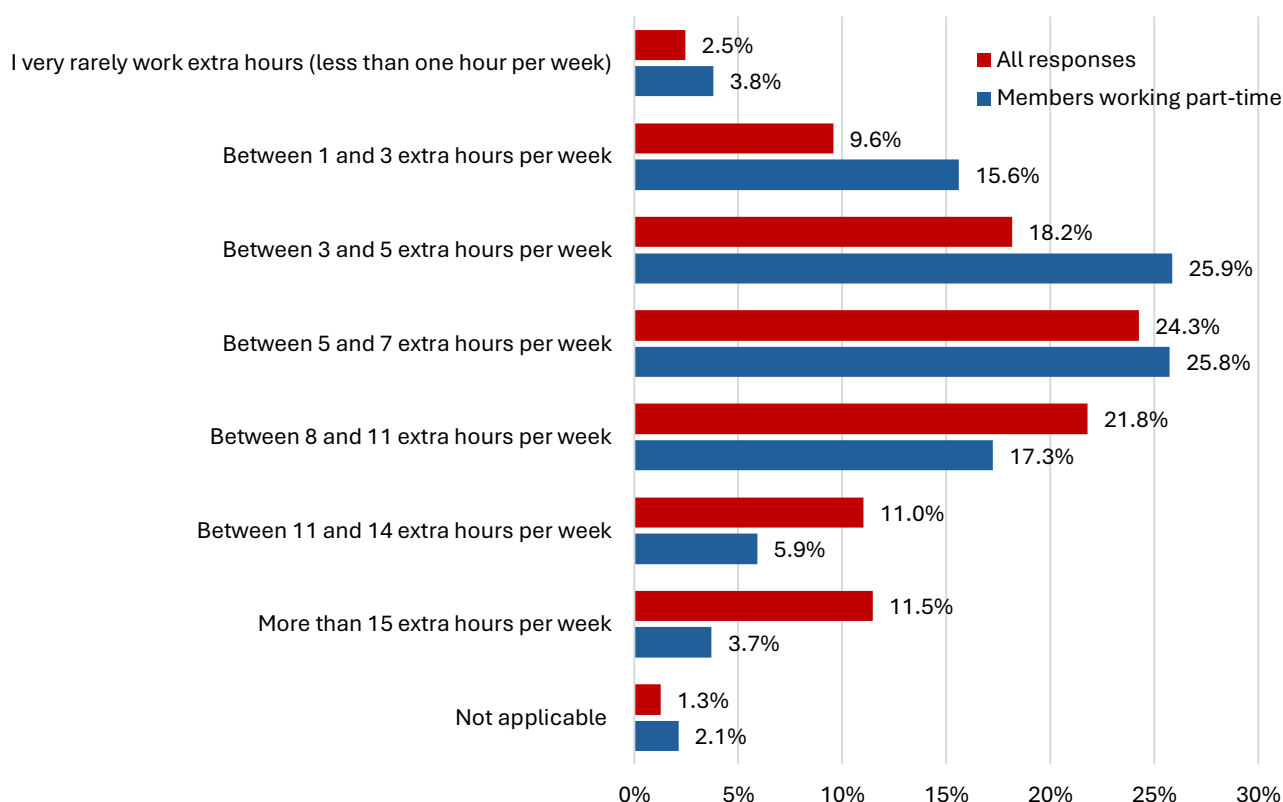
The aforementioned EIS independent research on workload also found that; “on average, the teachers who participated in the research reported working 46 hours in the target week. This is 11.39 hours spent on work-related activity beyond the 35-hour working week stipulated in the 2001 Teachers’ Agreement.”⁶ The standard deviation within this finding is 7.91, showing that there is a considerable spread across the number of additional hours worked above and below the 11.39 hours recorded. Figure 6 below supports the findings of the 2024 research, and gives greater insight into just how many members are routinely working beyond their working hours, as well as how many hours they are working.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ 2,545 responses to the question “If you work part-time” please tick this box” out of 10,789 respondents.

⁶ Hulme, M., Beauchamp, G., Wood, J. & Bignell, C. (2024) Teacher Workload Research Report. School of Education and Social Sciences, University of the West of Scotland. ISBN 978-1-903978-76-4 (print) ISBN 978-1-903978-77-1 (report published by the EIS September 2024) <https://www.eis.org.uk/teacher-workload/research>

Figure 6: “How many hours a week outside of your contracted hours do you usually work?” responses



Total responses: 10,048

653 additional comments were left by members under this question. Many gave explanations as to why they worked so many additional hours. These included preparing students for, and marking prelims, managing pupil behaviour, preparing pupil reports, being assigned to cover classes, parent consultations, and preparing for practical lessons.

“As a practical subject there is simply no time within the working day to carry out any task which is not directly related to the pupils seated in front of me. I am on the minimum allowance of free periods. I leave late, I work at home each evening and often a couple of hours on a Sunday to keep up with the demands of the job. I do everything possible to decrease this time, using A1, different educational tools, different types of assessment and creating materials. Working on CPD activities, inspection materials, collegiate work and SQA changes all take time and attention. As an experienced teacher I do struggle with maintaining a work life balance.”

“There are busier times than others but I often work in the evenings because I can’t get everything done at work. I deal with behaviour or complete tasks that we are asked to do at work and then at home I plan or develop or mark.”

Many of the comments gathered shared insights into how long the working day is for some members, as well as respondents detailing that they often have to work during the weekends too. Some members did highlight that they often work even longer hours during some points within the academic year, and that the answers they gave were an average over the school year.

“A typical working week is 50 hours. More than 50 hours depending on the time of year and tasks to be completed.”

Within the comments many members highlighted that they don't feel that the additional hours they work are sustainable, with some highlighting the toll this is already taking on them.

“Having been off with work related stress I am very conscious of having strong boundaries. So whilst I only do a little extra time most weeks it means that there are some things that just don't get done or roll onto the next week...and the next week. I find I am constantly juggling expectations and what is possible with the time available.”

Others mentioned that for personal reasons such as looking after children, or health reasons, they simply can't work too many additional hours, but they often leave tasks uncompleted or feel stressed when trying to keep to their contracted hours.

“I have tried to cut this down, but the stress associated with the build-up of unfinished tasks is unmanageable for me.”

“After years of extra daily hours, my health dictates that I try to spend less to enable a better work/life and healthy balance where possible.”

“I feel burnt out so haven't been working extra.”

Others simply laid out the complexities of their job, resulting in long additional hours.

“Bureaucracy within our Service has now increased to the point where completing consultation proforma is considered more of a priority than being out in schools supporting children, parents/carers and school staff.”

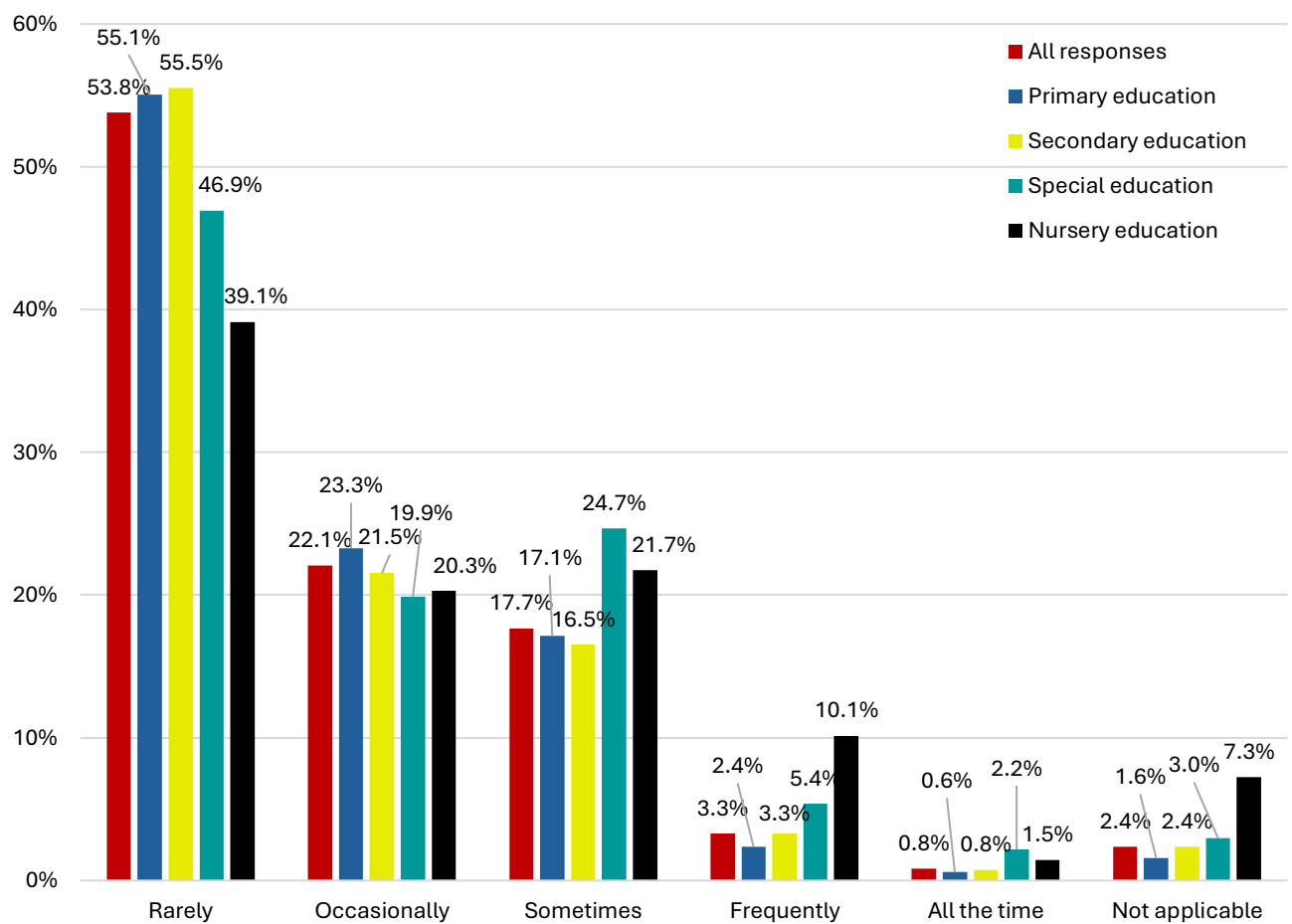
“The child's planning role is huge. The level of need is higher. Still down filling various forms for referrals. Increasingly expected to undertake a social work type role and being asked and expected to be lead professional when not appropriate.”

Additional Support Needs

The following couple of questions looked at the relationship between workload and Additional Support Needs (ASN) resourcing. The first (figure 7) asked members to what extent they felt they had sufficient time in a typical working week to complete paperwork, liaise with colleagues and external agencies, and attend meetings in relation to supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs. Over half of all respondents said they rarely have the time to complete these asks to support pupils with ASN, with a further fifth saying they only occasionally felt they had sufficient time to carry out these duties. Fewer than 1% of respondents said they felt they had sufficient time “all the time” within their working week to complete the asks listed to support pupils with ASN.

There was some difference across sectors in relation to this question, with those working within the nursery education sector being least likely to report “rarely” having sufficient time to support ASN pupils.

Figure 7: “To what extent do you feel that you have sufficient time in a typical working week to complete paperwork, liaise with colleagues and external agencies, and attend meetings in relation to supporting pupils with Additional Support Needs?” responses by sector



Total responses: 9,945

There were 635 additional comments recorded under this question. Members detailed their experiences of trying to balance all of the demands that are placed on them, and the constant challenges in trying to provide children and young people with the support they need whilst resources are scarce.

“The additional meetings, paperwork, parental liaison and planning for children with additional support needs and challenging behaviour is all consuming.”

“I am a supply teacher, but when I have more than a day or 2 in schools I can never complete all the planning and marking in the normal working hours.”

Many others highlighted the personal and professional toll that these increasing demands placed on them including sacrificing their personal time and having to pass up on career development opportunities.

"I feel that I am continually chasing my tail. In addition, I feel that I am not completing lessons to the standard I would like. Everything is rushed and this is impacting the quality of learning."

"Due to lack of time I feel that planning for ASN is always done in my own time and there is never any time to talk through this with PSAs. Meetings seem to be arranged during NCCT which we are then never given back."

"I have an opportunity to do a GTCS Professional Recognition award, but will have to turn it down as my school duties are wearing me out"

The vast majority of the comments left highlighted just how difficult and stressful it can be to try to balance meetings, paperwork, and liaise with colleagues. Some members also suggested that they felt they were simply not able to fully support some of their pupils based on the time constraints and lack of resourcing for ASN.

"Liaising with colleagues is so beneficial yet everyone is so overworked they don't have time to do this which is obviously detrimental to the progress and development of the young learners."

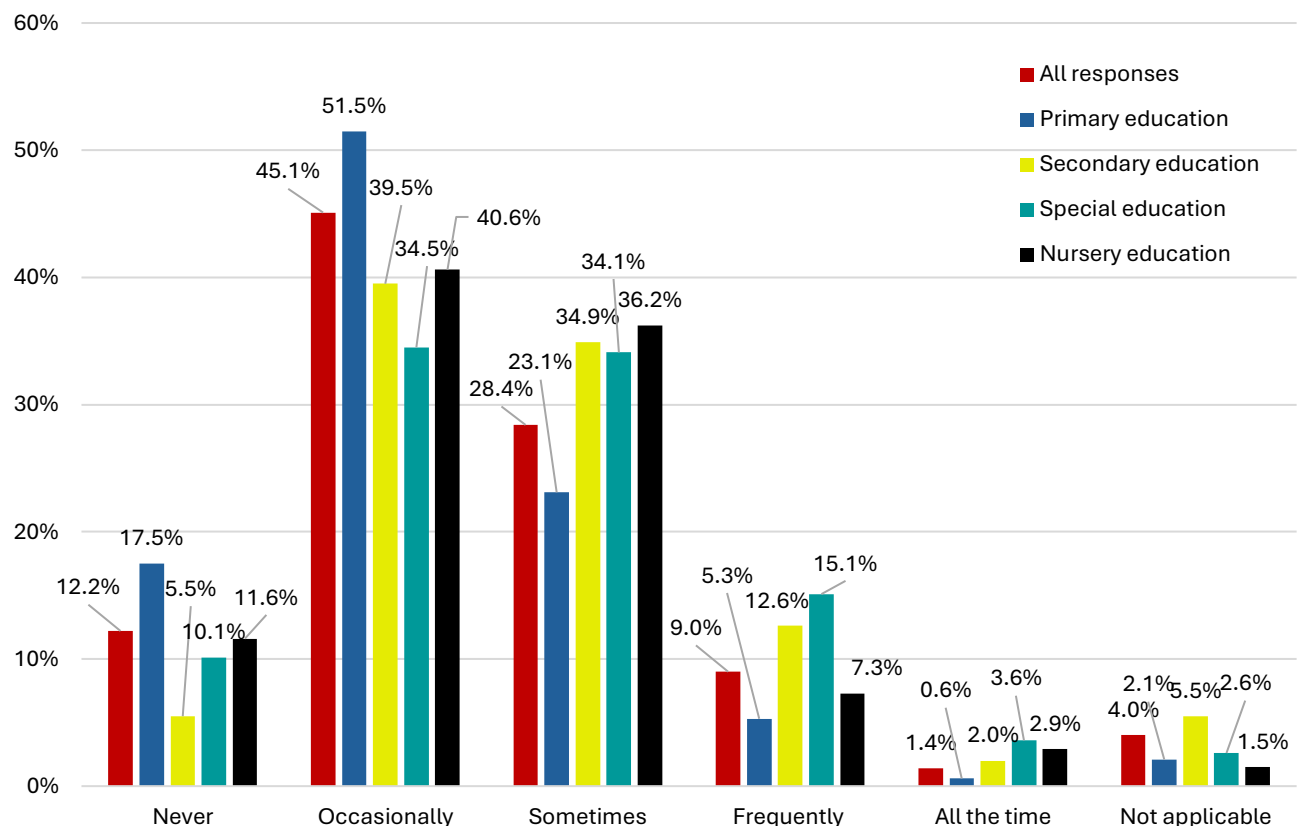
"Over 40% of my class have recognised Additional Support Needs or behavioural difficulties. I am supposed to meet with ASN teachers/staff to plan for them but there is neither the time, the resources, nor the staff to do this."

Accessing Support Services

Next, members were asked if they were able to access front line support services for children and young people at the point when the need is identified. Just over 1% of respondents said they could access this support, at the point when the need was identified "all the time". Around three quarters of respondents said they could access this support "occasionally" or "sometimes", with over 10% saying they could "never" access this support at the point which the need was identified.

Those working in special education were most likely to say they could access this support "frequently" (15.1%) or "all the time" (3.6%). Those working in primary education were most likely to report (17.5%) that they could "never" access frontline support services when the need was identified as shown in figure 8.

Figure 8: “To what extent are children and young people in your setting able to access frontline support services at the point when their support need is identified?” responses by sector



Total responses: 9,868

761 comments were left by members under this question. Most of the comments gathered mentioned that many pupils are languishing on referral waitlists for a very long time – sometimes years. This can mean that by the time pupils are seen by the most appropriate professionals, their needs have considerably increased.

“Waiting lists for CAMHs and other services is 1.5 to 2 years+. Children in crisis are not getting the support they need, therefore this is having a negative impact on functionality of school, workload and time spent supporting children who are unregulated.”

“Support takes so long that by time it arrives situation is always significantly worse. Every day is about managing high tariff pupils to stop them destroying the learning of others. Those who need learning support are abandoned.”

“Always a long wait especially for neurodiversity referrals.”

Some members highlighted what they try to do to support their pupils, whilst also pointing out that they are often not trained or best placed to be offering support such as mental health support.

“I try to support my children as best as I can but with minimal resources and zero PSA assistance, it is extremely difficult and often children’s specific needs are not fully met during the day to day running of the class.”

"In particular in relation to mental health, increasing teacher's skills in this area is important but increasingly we are being expected to be mental health experts. Many pupils require therapeutic interventions which schools are not designed or skilled enough to deliver."

Some respondents simply highlighted their frustration at trying to get their pupils the support they need, highlighting the bureaucracy involved to access support.

"Frontline services are never available to children when they need them. A paper trail must be kept or they end up on ridiculously long waiting lists for services. There isn't the manpower readily available in schools to properly provide support either so more pressure is put onto the class teacher."

Reducing Workload

Members gave informative responses when asked what would make the biggest difference in reducing their workload. Commonly identified interventions included "more classroom assistants/support for pupils with additional support needs"; "improved pupil behaviour within the classroom"; "smaller class sizes"; "less paperwork/ bureaucracy", "more resources/ funding to support pupils' learning", and, unsurprisingly, "fewer contact hours with pupils".

Under the "other" category, members highlighted the many workload pressures that they face during their working week. Many responses highlighted the need for more professional support including more classroom assistants, support for learning staff, auxiliaries to help prepare for lessons, as well as more professional support from outside agencies, including mental health support and referrals for children and young people with complex needs.

"As DHT [Deputy Head Teacher] - more support available from external support such as Ed Psych, CAHMS, Social Work, Third Sector, School Nurse and liaison with health professionals and authority provision for pupils with extra needs - support eroded over the years due to budget cuts and demand in other service areas but still pupils often left with internal/ external support options due to reduction in staffing/ budget cuts."

"People are the most valuable resource we have - we currently have more support needs than ever, quite exceptional in some cases, and less staff - current support staff are often 1 to 1 to support children with SEBN and ASN to allow these children to have safe and positive school experiences whilst ensuring the safety of others - meaning general support for raising and closing the attainment gap is impossible."

It was also raised within the comments section how much of their workload is driven by managing pupil behaviour, even more so when colleagues are pulled out of their classrooms to support in the management of pupils.

"I actually can't cope with the levels of disruptive behaviour that occur in the class. It's very demoralising and makes me feel like I can't do my job."

"Designated staff to deal with behaviour and what is disrupting learning - kids in corridors, stairwells, abusing staff - all of which takes time to deal with, report, follow up etc."

Some primary school members highlighted the need for a more streamlined curriculum, whilst those in secondary schools mentioned the workload pressures around preparing pupils for assessments, collating portfolios and creating coursework materials.

“Reduce the breadth of the curriculum especially in early primary.”

“The[lack of] understanding from the SQA with regards to the workload associated with the Music assignments and a willingness to listen to our concerns and allow us to be part of the solution is very frustrating.”

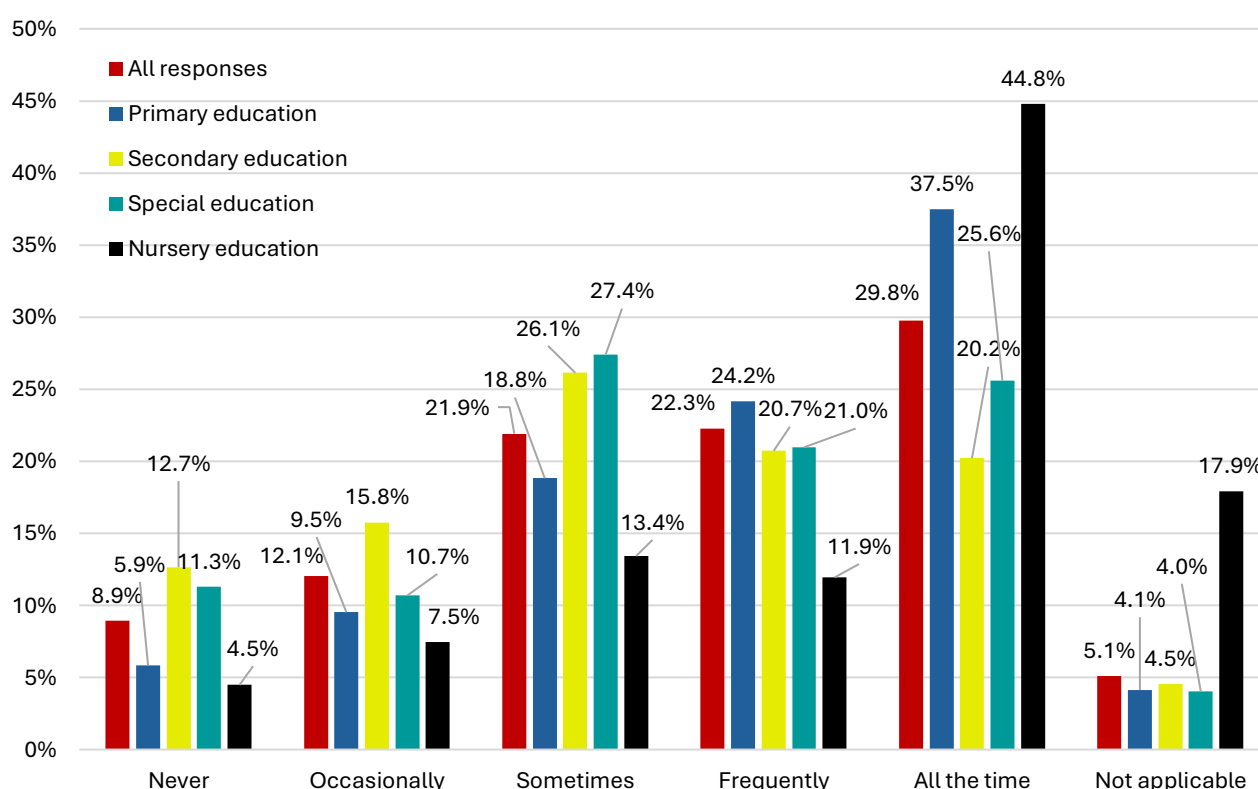
The need to reduce the workload derived from the number of teaching hours in the working week and the workload associated with being responsible for pupils, typically in the context of large class sizes, in respect of all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment tailored to the needs of individual pupils, 40% of whom have recognised additional needs, is clear from this evidence.

Reducing class contact time will give teachers an increased amount of time to carry out more of the necessary ‘preparation & correction’ associated with preparing to meet pupils’ needs and providing appropriate learner-centred feedback, as well as the administration and bureaucracy that is increasingly demanded of teachers.

Working Time Agreements

Next, members were asked if they have the opportunity to input into the Working Time Agreement process within their school/team/service. Around a third (29.8%) of all respondents said they have the opportunity to feed into this process “all the time”. Additionally, a further quarter (22.3%) of respondents said they contribute to the Working Time Agreement process in their school “frequently”.

Figure 9: “Do you have the opportunity to input into the Working Time Agreement process within your school/team/service?” responses by sector



Total responses: 9,821

There were considerable differences across the sectors, with those working in nursery education most likely to report they contribute to Working Time Agreement processes “all the time” (44.8%) and those working in secondary education most likely to report “never” (12.7%) feeding in. Working Time Agreements are a valuable tool to allow schools to prioritise areas of work and to manage staff workloads. It is vital that all staff members are allowed the opportunity to feed into the Agreement process given its purpose as a key mechanism for workload control.

The final question within this section of the survey asked members if they had any final comments they would like to share about their workload. There were 2,575 comments gathered under this question, that mirrored the themes that had been raised throughout this section. Members again mentioned the long hours that their jobs demand.

“Most teachers I know spend a day or part of a day at weekends getting prepared.”

“Workload is unsustainable due to class contact time, emails regarding pupil ASN/behaviour etc.”

“The main reason I work so many extra hours is I do a lot of paperwork, planning or finding resources for so many individual children with ASN within my class and care. This has a knock on impact on what I would have considered as my ‘tasks’ for the week as stated in the school’s working time agreement as well as my planning time. I am forever playing “catch-up” as there are so many individual needs within my class that I am trying to get it right for every child to the detriment of my own time and health.”

Workload, was again mentioned by members who feel they are constantly trying to catch up with new initiatives and all of the responsibilities that are placed on them.

“I reduced my hours to part-time as a direct result of workload in order to improve my work-life balance, to the financial detriment of my family. The role feels like 2 jobs - 1 in the classroom, 1 as an administrator job which has to be completed outside of contractual hours in order to fulfil the classroom job adequately.”

“Workload is overwhelming and instead of improvements, it seems to get worse year on year with more and more expectations on us as teachers to adapt resources, make changes to the curriculum, do more marking, more reporting... It is having a very seriously negative impact on my physical and mental health and has done for some time. I regularly think about whether I should leave the profession as workload has been continually raised as an issue but nothing ever seems to be done about it.”

“As EIS rep I lead discussions on the WTA and include all members in that process. Despite this workload goes beyond the hours allocated for all members at the school.”

Members also used this question to highlight again how difficult it is to support children and young people with additional support needs, at a time of rising demand and cuts to classroom support.

“Additional pressures are added on time for planning etc because I need to focus on strategies to support pupils with emotional/behaviour needs.”

Another important theme that was highlighted repeatedly was managing pupil behaviour within schools. Some of these comments highlighted that they thought pupil behaviour in general was deteriorating, others mentioned a rise in the number of incidents that they were dealing with on a routine basis.

“Too many pupils with no speech and who have major behavioural problems are being put in mainstream schools where the building is not fit for their needs. I work in an open area where children from a base are crying and screaming continuously all day long. No one can use the open area due to the noise and random violent acts from some of the children.”

“Over 30% of my daily routine is dealing with pupil behaviour issues. I lose over 30% of teaching time dealing with multiple instances of low level disruption, having to log instances of poor behaviour, having restorative conversations with pupils, completing referrals for pupil behaviour, managing pupils who are on mobile phones, contacting SLT regarding missing pupils from class.”

Finally, some members highlighted the impact that recent budget cuts were having on their workload and their ability to meet the needs of all pupils. The EIS has been campaigning for more

resourcing across all areas of education, and the comments gathered from members on this issue highlight the impact that the lack of resources is having day to day.

“This academic session is the worst I’ve ever seen in terms of the impact of budget cuts. Due to the increase in identified needs in P1, PSA support is now exclusive to early years and this leaves children who would otherwise benefit greatly from another adult to help with their learning unsupported. Coupled with an increase in disruptive behaviour and minimal Sfl provision makes the school day less about teaching and learning and more about managing behaviour.”

“Can the government/councils please stop cutting funding to vital services including learning assistants. Give us the smaller classes they promised and stop pressuring schools to attain. Teachers are being asked to fudge predictions to appease councils. Absolutely scandalous. For some children just getting to school is a massive deal never mind attaining. Just stop with the pressure.”

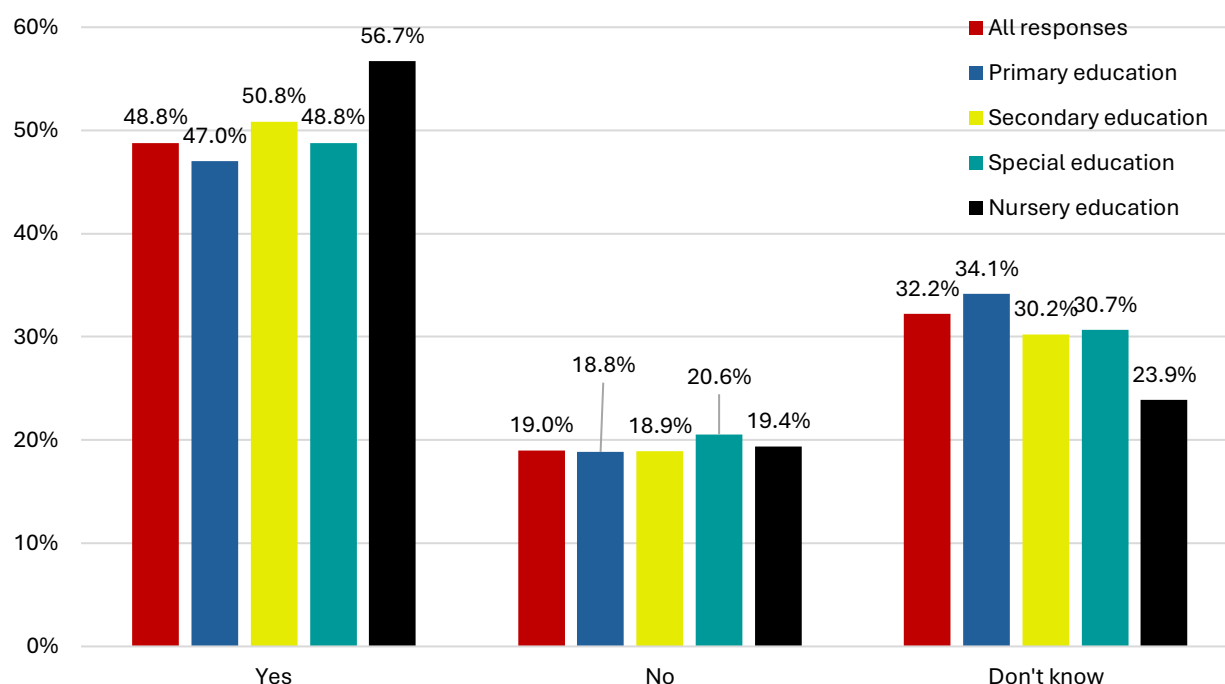
Members’ Future in Teaching

Members were also asked if they planned to stay in teaching for at least the next 5 years. Fewer than half (48.8%) of all respondents said “yes”, almost a fifth (19%) said “no”, with the remainder indicating “don’t know” to this question. Those working in the nursery education sector were most likely (56.7%) to say they planned on staying in teaching for at least the next 5 years, and those working in special education were the most likely (20.6%) to say “no” they did not plan to stay in teaching for at least 5 years, as shown in figure 10.

Figure 11 then shows the reasons members gave as to why they plan to leave teaching in the next 5 years. Almost half (48.4%) said it was because “the workload is too high”. The second most common response (39.4%) was “I don’t feel I have the resources or time to do my job well”, followed by just over a third of respondents saying they are “due to retire”.

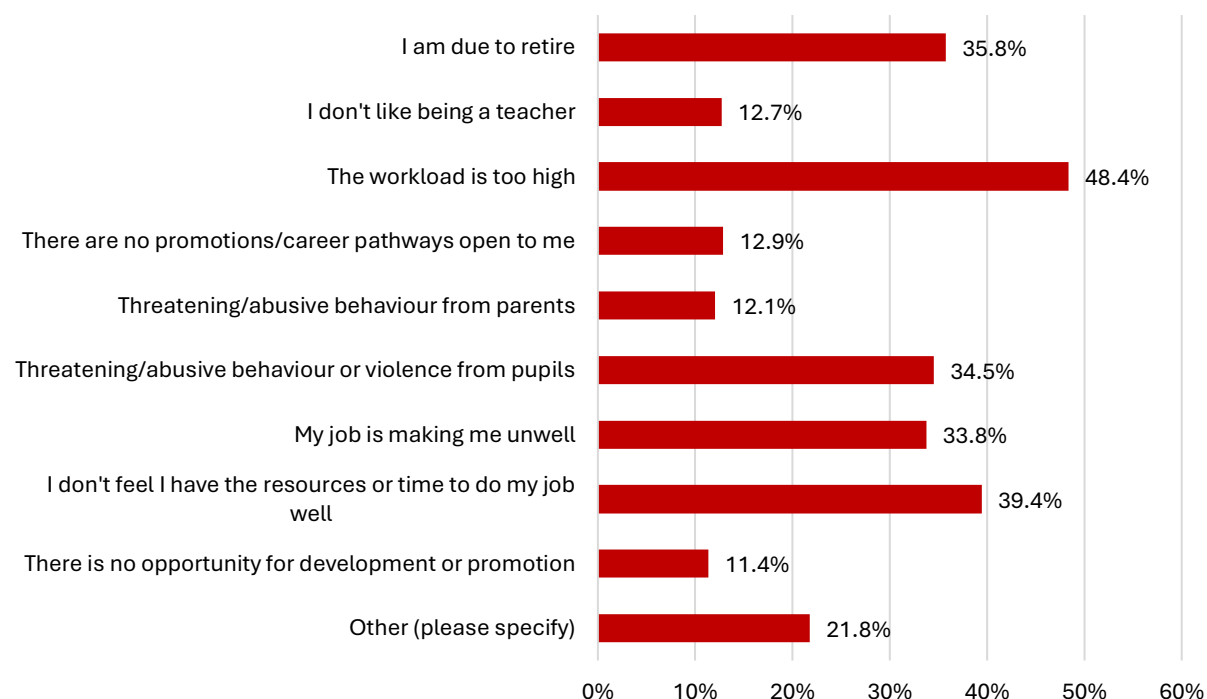
The data gathered from this question lays out clearly that workload is the biggest reason teachers are planning to leave their profession. A further third (33.8%) said “my job is making me unwell”. These statistics highlight the crisis that many are facing within our schools, and urgent help is needed to support them in their work.

Figure 10: “Do you plan to stay in teaching for at least the next 5 years?” responses by sector



Total responses: 9,772

Figure 11: “As you indicated “no” to the previous question please state why you plan to leave teaching in the next 5 years: (tick all that apply)” responses



Total responses: 1,849

Under the “other” option, 403 comments were gathered. Of those respondents who elaborated on their reason for wanting to leave teaching, the most popular reason described was that they were already retired or planning to take early retirement, without giving an explicit reason.

The next most prevalent reason was that teaching did not allow for a good work-life balance, or teaching was infringing on their ability to have a satisfying personal or family life, or was otherwise affecting their health due to workload and stress. One respondent succinctly described this as:

“My work life balance is wrong - I spend my time off ‘recovering’ from work”.

Others described more serious situations with their health, either having already experienced significant ill health or fearing burnout and that they could no longer continue in the role and deliver effectively whilst having a good family and personal life.

Another serious theme expressed was having to deal with poor pupil behaviour, and the stress and distress arising from the lack of adequately funded and supported ASN provision. One teacher poignantly expressed that:

“Horrendous situation with lack of support for children in general. ASN children’s needs not met which impacts all children. It goes against everything I believe in as a teacher”

These views sat alongside a related theme of unrealistic expectations of the teaching profession. There were views expressed that overall, teaching is becoming unmanageable due to constantly increasing demands and lack of resources and support for the ever-increasing needs of pupils.

“Parental expectation and demand has become all-consuming. The “customer is always right” approach we seem to have is destroying education. Also the idea that we can and should fix every issue that a young person walks in the door with. My job feels impossible nowadays.”

Smaller numbers of respondents mentioned issues such as a lack of support from management, micro-management cultures, and unsupportive colleagues. Related to this was a sense of frustration and a lack of clear vision for education from local authorities and the Scottish Government. Issues related to change management, and curriculum reform and review were also raised as reasons why some teachers are considering leaving the education sector.

“Consistent lack of support from SLT and Council; a constant culture of curriculum initiatives and blaming staff for pupil disengagement and negative behaviour”

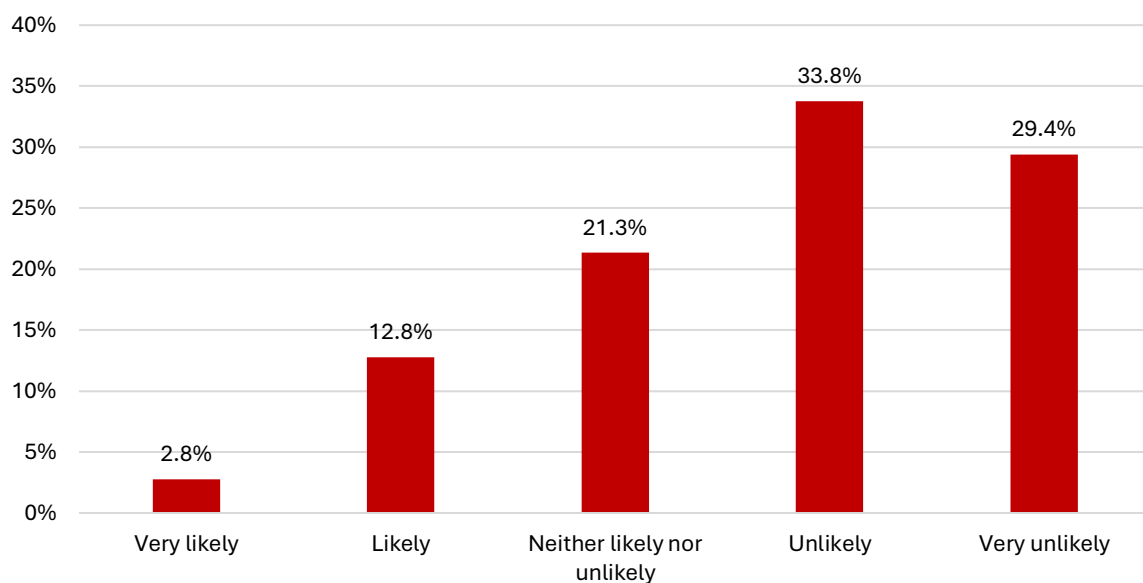
Workforce planning issues were also mentioned, with concern being raised over precarity of contract, and a lack of development opportunities for teachers who were less keen to move into management roles. A number of comments discussed the idea of retraining or seeking employment outside of education. Only a very small number of respondents said that they felt that their skill set was better suited in another work area, with others reporting that they would be more satisfied in another career.

“Found a career in something else that brings me more joy”.

“I hope to take as early retirement as possible so I can start a different career.”

Following this, members were asked how likely they would be to recommend teaching as a good profession to take up. 15.6% of all respondents said they were either “very likely” (2.8%) or “likely” (12.8%) to recommend teaching as a good profession to take up. Almost two thirds (63.2%) of respondents said they would be “unlikely” or “very unlikely” to recommend teaching as a career to someone who is thinking of entering the profession as figure 12 shows.

Figure 12: “How likely would you be to recommend teaching as a good profession to take up, to someone who is thinking of entering the profession?” responses



Total responses: 9,725

This data should make sobering reading for anyone who cares about the future of Scottish education and who wishes to see it thrive.

Workload Reflections

This briefing showcases once again that EIS members across Scotland are struggling to meet the expectations placed on them by Local Authorities, the Scottish Government and parents. Many of the issues within this survey have been raised by thousands of members time and time again. Poor resourcing of Additional Support for Learning, behaviour issues in schools, workload demands that far exceed the working week, and a lack of support in the context of the ever-mounting additional duties that are placed on teachers are not new issues.

Each one of the issues highlighted within this report is shocking in its own right: EIS members contemplating leaving the profession because their workload is too high; members saying that they cannot access support for pupils at their point of need; and an education workforce that is being forced to work in environments so stressful that it is making them unwell. Added to this is the ever-increasing number of incidents of violence and aggression in our schools between pupils and towards school staff. This has led to increasing levels of reported classroom disruption, as the 2023 EIS Violence & Aggression National Branch Survey found.⁷

The combined effects of such significant workload pressures that teachers have described are intolerable for an increasing number of our members. The need to reduce workload, to reduce the class contact time, class sizes and the bureaucracy associated with teaching is evidenced by their responses. The EIS is campaigning to reduce workload in order to make teaching a more sustainable profession and to improve learning. Simultaneously reducing weekly class contact (i.e. teaching hours) in order to increase lesson preparation and deal with work associated for teaching is a key step towards that aim – a view also expressed by the SNP manifesto of 2021.

Workload is a significant driver of workplace stress and must be proactively tackled by the Scottish Government and COSLA on behalf of local authority employers. The EIS has been campaigning for years for reduced bureaucracy to allow teachers to use their talents teaching Scotland's children and young people rather than completing tasks that have little direct impact on learning. The EIS has also been clear that the Scottish Government must deliver its promise to Scottish teachers to reduce their workload by cutting class contact time to 21 hours per week, and use the time released for preparation and correction. The existing time allocation within the contract currently has been proven time and again to be completely inadequate, with the result that teachers are doing very large amounts of this critical work in their own time.

Each one of these findings is stark, but together they paint a bleak picture which is pushing increasing numbers of teachers to breaking point. Without serious policy and investment to immediately reduce workload, starting with the promised reduction in class contact time, the statistics highlighted in this report will only continue to get worse.

⁷ EIS, "Violence and Aggression Branch Survey Report and Campaigning Recommendations: Full Report" (November 2023) <https://www.eis.org.uk/pupil-behaviour/surveyresults>

Further Information

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