Violence & Aggression Branch Survey Report and Campaigning Recommendations:
Full Report

Contents

Background

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

The EIS launched its Stand Up for Quality Education (SU4QE) campaign at its AGM in June 2023. The SU4QE campaign has 3 key priority areas the campaign will call for:

- Build the skills, resources and school culture to address distressed, violent and aggressive pupil behaviour

- An increase in funding and support for pupils with additional support needs

- A significant reduction in teacher workload

The focus in the initial months of the campaign is to explore and tackle instances of violence and aggression in schools. The EIS defines 'violence and aggression' as; "any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work." This definition includes:

- verbal abuse or threats, including face-to-face, online and via telephone
- physical attacks

It should be understood that the term 'violence and aggression' goes beyond violence and includes aggression which may be exhibited verbally, in writing, by gesture as well as by physical means.

Part of the SU4QE campaign on 'violence and aggression' is a survey of branches to:

- Determine the nature and extent of the 'violence and aggression' faced by teachers
- Determine the nature and extent of the 'violence and aggression' faced by pupils
- Identify challenges around 'violence & aggression and good practice to address or mitigate violence & aggression in schools
- Recommend SU4QE campaigning objectives to address or mitigate 'violence and aggression' in schools

The branch survey was open for six weeks from mid-August and this is the output report.

A separate survey on 'abuse directed at teachers' has been issued to EIS members by April Steffeck of the University of Edinburgh. The survey is independent of the EIS, although the EIS did assist by disseminating it to members.

The methodology of this report may be found at the end of this report.

There are 2,461 schools in Scotland according to the 2022 Scottish Government Pupil Census dataset; 1,994 primary, 358 secondary and 109 special schools. Responses were received from 875 EIS branches – i.e. schools. This is a high rate of return.

All the information in this report has been considered and used to inform the EIS 'Stand Up for Quality Education' Campaign's next steps on addressing 'violence and aggression' in Scotland's schools to the benefit of staff, pupils and wider society.

Executive Summary of Branch Survey Findings

The findings for each survey question are identified and discussed in the 'Survey Data, Responses and Findings' section of the report and then summarised in the 'Summary of Survey Findings' section. This 'Executive Summary of the Branch Survey Findings' is an abridged version of the 'Summary of Survey Findings' section. For more information regarding the findings, including data, context and issues please read the 'Survey Data, Responses and Findings' and 'Summary of Survey Findings' sections.

    i.   There is a significant amount of violence and aggression within Scotland's schools with 82.7% of branches responding that there are incidents of 'violence and aggression' every week. Over 72% of branches stated that the amount of 'violence and aggression' had grown in the last four years – from levels before the Covid pandemic. Almost 40% of branches stated that prejudice-based violence had increased over the same period. In Primary and Special Education, "physical violence towards a teacher" was the most common type of 'violence and aggression', whilst, in secondary schools, "Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher" was the most common form of 'violence and aggression'.

    ii.   A majority of school branches responded that boys were more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviours towards teachers, as 51% of branches responded that boys were more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers.

    iii.   Many schools/local authorities do not effectively disseminate policies and procedures to address 'violence and aggression' as fewer than half (47.9%) of branch responses collected stated that everyone in their branch was aware of the policies and procedures in place for dealing with pupil-on-teacher 'violence and aggression'. Many individual responses stated that no such policy existed in their school.

    iv.   Fewer than 11% of branches felt that teachers were "always" supported after a pupil-on-teacher 'violent and aggressive' incident had been reported. A further 63% of branches stated that teachers were "sometimes" supported after a 'violence and aggression' incident. Over a quarter of branches (26.1%) stated that teachers were never supported after a 'violent and aggressive' incident. A majority of branches therefore reported that the support given to teachers was inconsistent after a 'violent and aggression' incident was reported.

    v.   A minority of branches (42.9%) thought that pupil victims were "well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported. A majority of branches (51.7%) thought that pupils exhibiting 'violence and aggression' were "well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported.

    vi.   Around 2/3 of branches (59.1%) felt that teachers were not well supported or received inconsistent support following pupil-on-pupil 'violence and aggression'. A further 13.2% reported that even where some actions were taken, or there was a will to do so, there was a lack of follow-up or support available due to resource constraints. The nature and extent of teacher support very much depended on the availability of colleagues to cover classes, work with and support the pupils involved, or overall resource capacity within the school.

vii.   A number of responses alluded to staffing pressures that led to insufficient time to deal with incidents, decompress, report the incident and properly engage with restorative practices. A lack of resources, training, local authority support and access to associated professionals were also cited as factors that did not help to address 'violence and aggression' in schools. Senior management responses were mixed, and local authority support was much criticised.

viii.   Over half of branches (53.3%) reported parent/carer incidents of violence and aggression on teachers happened termly, monthly or weekly. Just over half of branches (50.5%) responded that parent/carer-on-teacher 'violence and aggression' was becoming more frequent. The most common violent and aggressive behaviour that teachers are exposed to from parents is 'derogatory comments or gossiping about a teacher'.

ix.   Almost all branches, 99% agreed that "violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour, including persistent low-level disruption, in your school" has an effect on pupils' learning. Almost every branch (99.8%) indicated that 'teaching and learning' was disrupted, followed by 'difficult to maintain or regain pupils' attention' (96.9%) and then followed closely by 'other pupils' behaviour is adversely affected' (96.8%) then 'it disrupts certain types of pedagogies' (94.9%).

x.   Almost all of the branches surveyed said that pupils are less focussed (98.2%), more agitated or nervous (96.5%), withdrawn (94.0%), less happy (94.8%), more likely to be disruptive themselves (95.9%) or become angry or upset (92.9%) as impacts of violence, disruption or aggressive behaviour on pupils. Additional comments by branches outline the scale and nature of the problems caused by violence and aggression to pupils, and the adverse impact on pupils' wellbeing, school attendance and learning.

xi.   Almost all branches reported an increase in stress anxiety and depression for some teachers in their school. More than three-quarters of branches (78.5%) said that some of their teachers are afraid of certain pupils. Three-quarters of branches (75.4%) said some of their teachers have sustained physical injuries and 61% said some of the teachers in their school had been on sick leave following a 'violent and aggressive' incident.

xii.   Almost 80% of branches reported (79%) that "members of the branch" considered leaving teaching as a result of the violence and aggression.

xiii.   Well over half of branches responded that they felt that reporting a 'violent and aggressive' incident did not generate a better outcome for pupils (59.9%). Most branches responded that they felt that reporting a 'violent and aggressive' incident did not generate a better outcome for teachers (66.9%).

xiv.   Qualitative responses from branches outlined a need for more ASN, de-escalation and CLPL training.

xv.   The survey included (state) nurseries and early years centres and the outcomes of this report therefore apply to those bodies too.

xvi.   Several challenges and examples of good practice were identified by branches. These are captured in the recommendations section of this report.

Stand Up for Quality Education Campaign Aims Arising from the Branch Survey Responses

The recommendations in this report are drawn from the responses and findings of the branch survey, and they constitute the SU4QE campaign aims to deliver improved outcomes concerning 'violence and aggression' in schools. This aspect of the SU4QE campaign has short-term and long-term campaign aims, and some aims will requires campaigning to create the necessary political will at national and local levels.

The aims have been split into national, local authority and school branch levels. The EIS will provide support and guidance for LAs, branches, reps and members to help deliver these aims at all levels.

1. **National: For the EIS Nationally**

   1) For the Scottish Government, COSLA (and EIS) to make a public statement that schools should be places free of and protected from 'violence and aggression', and to develop a national plan with stakeholders to deliver that aim.

   2) For the Scottish Government, COSLA and EIS to have a nationally agreed definition of 'violence and aggression'. Furthermore, for Scottish Government and COSLA to ensure that local 'violence and aggression' incident reporting procedures are aligned with each other in order to allow for national data collection and scrutiny.

   3) For the Scottish Government, COSLA, and Education Scotland to accept that 'violence and aggression' has an adverse impact on pupil wellbeing, school attendance rates, learning and attainment.

   4) For the Scottish Government, COSLA, and Education Scotland to accept that 'violence and aggression' has an adverse impact on teacher wellbeing, sickness rates, recruitment and retention.

   5) For the Scottish Government, COSLA, and Education Scotland to accept the scale of 'violence and aggression' as evidenced by this Branch Survey and to reach out to parents' organisations Connect and the NPFS.

   6) To work at the SNCT Support Group to review and amend SNCT Sections 6.23 and 6.25 to include a definition of 'violence and aggression' and improved support for teachers who are subjected to 'violence and aggression' incidents at work.

   7) For the Scottish Government to publish a clear national policy as to the escalation of consequences for pupils exhibiting 'violence and aggression', up to and including exclusion (permanent or temporary) from a school. For these to be established as national good practice. Furthermore, to publish clear national policy as to the consequences to parents/carers exhibiting 'violence and aggression' to school staff.

   8) For the Scottish Government to provide resources sufficient to enable teacher staffing levels to adequately deal with 'violence and aggression' including the proper and meaningful implementation of restorative practice in schools and to properly meet ASN needs.

9) To improve the recruitment and training pipeline of specialist teachers, educational psychologists and other specialist roles to help reduce 'violence and aggression 'and to assist appropriate responses.

10) For Education Scotland to include reviewing 'violence and aggression' procedures, incident reports and follow-up actions as a normal part of inspections.

11) That prejudice-based 'violence and aggression' is monitored with a national approach that is integrated with Local Authorities' work.

12) To continue to campaign for smaller class sizes, fewer weekly contact hours, improved ASN support and other SU4QE aims.

2. Local Authority: For Local Associations

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 stakeholders to deliver that aim.

2) Schools should have local authority-produced signs and notices communicating to all who use school buildings that 'violence and aggression' will not be tolerated as in other council buildings that are workplaces for Council staff.

3) The Local Authority and 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.

4) The LNCT should develop policies and procedures locally, until a national template is available, to deal with: Pupil-on-Pupil, Pupil-on-Teacher (& Pupil-on-Staff) and Parent/Carer– on-Teacher 'violence and aggression'.

5) The 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. The local authority 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" in order to facilitate this recommendation without detriment to the duty officers.

e. There should be sufficient staffing levels that 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.

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 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 the local authority.

j. Every 'violence and aggression' report is followed up by the local authority 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 authority uses restorative practices, it also makes pupils understand that persistent or serious misbehaviour leads to consequences. The local authority has a clear escalatory set of consequences for pupils who exhibit 'violence and aggression', up to and including exclusion from their school.

l. The local authority has a clear escalatory set of consequences for parents/carers who exhibit 'violence and aggression'.

6) The local authority ensures that every teacher is regularly trained in the 'violence and aggression' policies & procedures, de-escalation procedures and restorative practices.

7) The local authority provides general strategies to assist teachers in mitigating and responding to 'violence and aggression', including bespoke support for individual teachers requesting such support.

8) 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.

9) Support for teacher and pupil victims of violence and aggression is reviewed at LNCT with stakeholders and improved.

10) The local authority ensures that schools have effective information sharing systems in place for sharing information to teachers regarding background information and risks associated with specific pupils.

11) The local authority 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.

12) The local authority has sufficient 'competent persons' to carry out risk assessments and to resource their control measures.

13) The local authority has the appropriate and sufficient employee support programme for employees who are injured or suffer harm at work.

14) The local authority seeks to ensure that 'violence and aggression' policies and procedures will be applied consistently within schools and between schools.

15) The local authority ensures that parents/carers are informed of their child's misbehaviour and the school's response/plan.

16) Prejudice based 'violence and aggression' is monitored by the local authority and fed into national work in this area.

17) The local authority 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.

18) The 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.

19) The 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.

20) The 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 local authority exercises its duty of care to its teacher employees.

School: For Branches

There needs to be coordinated 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 local authority 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 local authority 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 local authority LNCT agreed policies to deal with: Pupil-on-Pupil, Pupil-on-Teacher (& Pupil-on-Staff) and Parent/Carer– on-Teacher incidents.

4) These 'violence and aggression 'policies be known, explained and encouraged to be used among and by teachers.

5) The local authority (via LNCT) policy and procedures of 'violence and aggression' by pupils shall be adopted and will include the following points::

   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.

   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

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'

6) 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.

7) 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.

8) The school has effective information sharing systems in place for sharing information to teachers regarding background information and risks associated with specific pupils.

9) 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.

10) The school seeks to have risk assessments completed timeously and to fully resource their control measures.

11) 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.

12) The school provides access to the local authority's employee support programme for employees who are injured or suffer harm at work.

13) 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.

14) 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.

15) The school will apply policies, procedures and support to those affected by 'violence and aggression' consistently for all staff and pupils.

16) 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.

17) The Branch should encourage all members to submit 'violent and aggressive' incident reports after each incident.

18) A culture needs to be impressed within the school that does not blame teachers or pupil victims for pupils' behaviours.

19) 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.

SURVEY RESULTS AND MAIN FINDINGS

Section 1 – Pupil-on-Teacher 'Violent and Aggressive' Incidents

Question 1: "How often are there pupil-on-teacher 'violent and aggressive' incidents at the school"

Figure 1
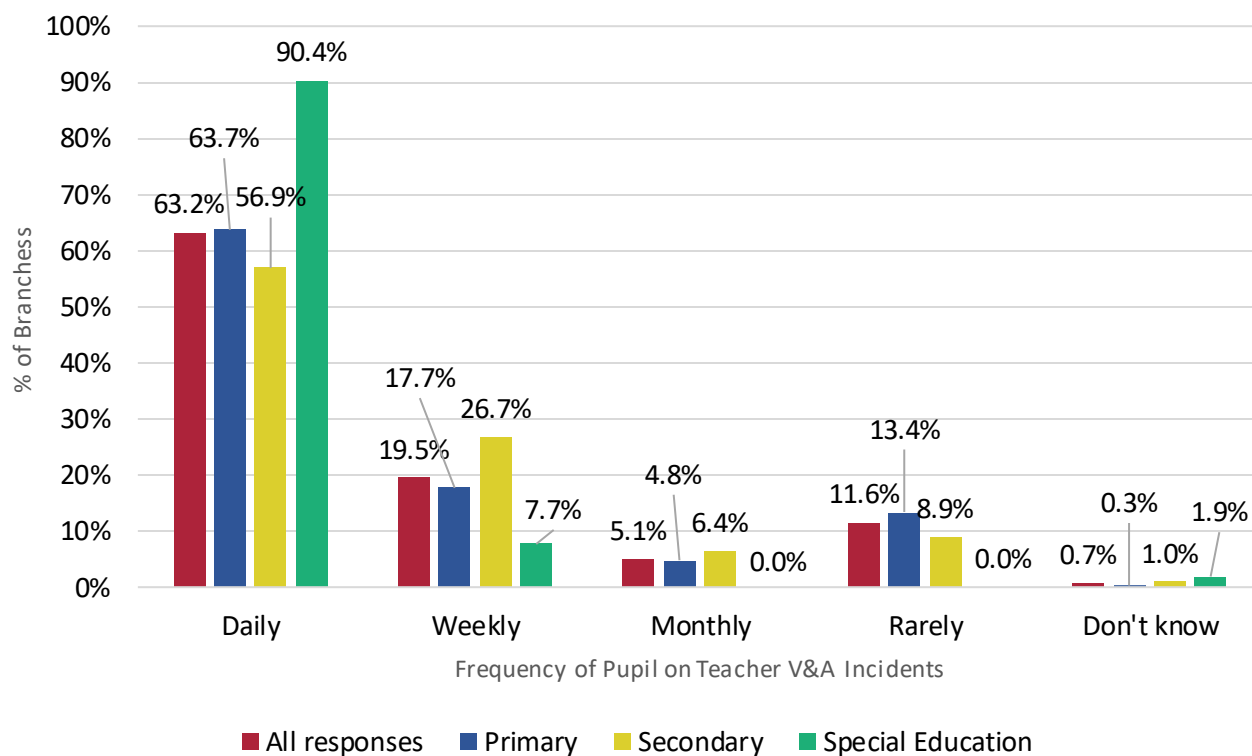
Almost 2/3 (63.2%) of school branches that responded to the survey reported experiencing 'violent and aggressive' incidents towards teachers on a daily basis. This is highest for colleagues working in the Special Education sector with over 90% of branches saying they experience violence and aggression daily.

Most primary school branches reported (63.7%) violence and aggression daily, with secondary school branches having a slightly lower figure of 56.9%.

When figures for daily and weekly incidents are added, 82.7% of schools have incidents of violence and aggression every week. This is an alarmingly high number.

Only a small number of branches reported that their school rarely had incidents of violence and aggression – 11.6% on average, with 0% of Special Schools.

Question 2: "In general, have pupil-on-teacher 'violent and aggressive' incidents increased or decreased over the last four years?"

Figure 2
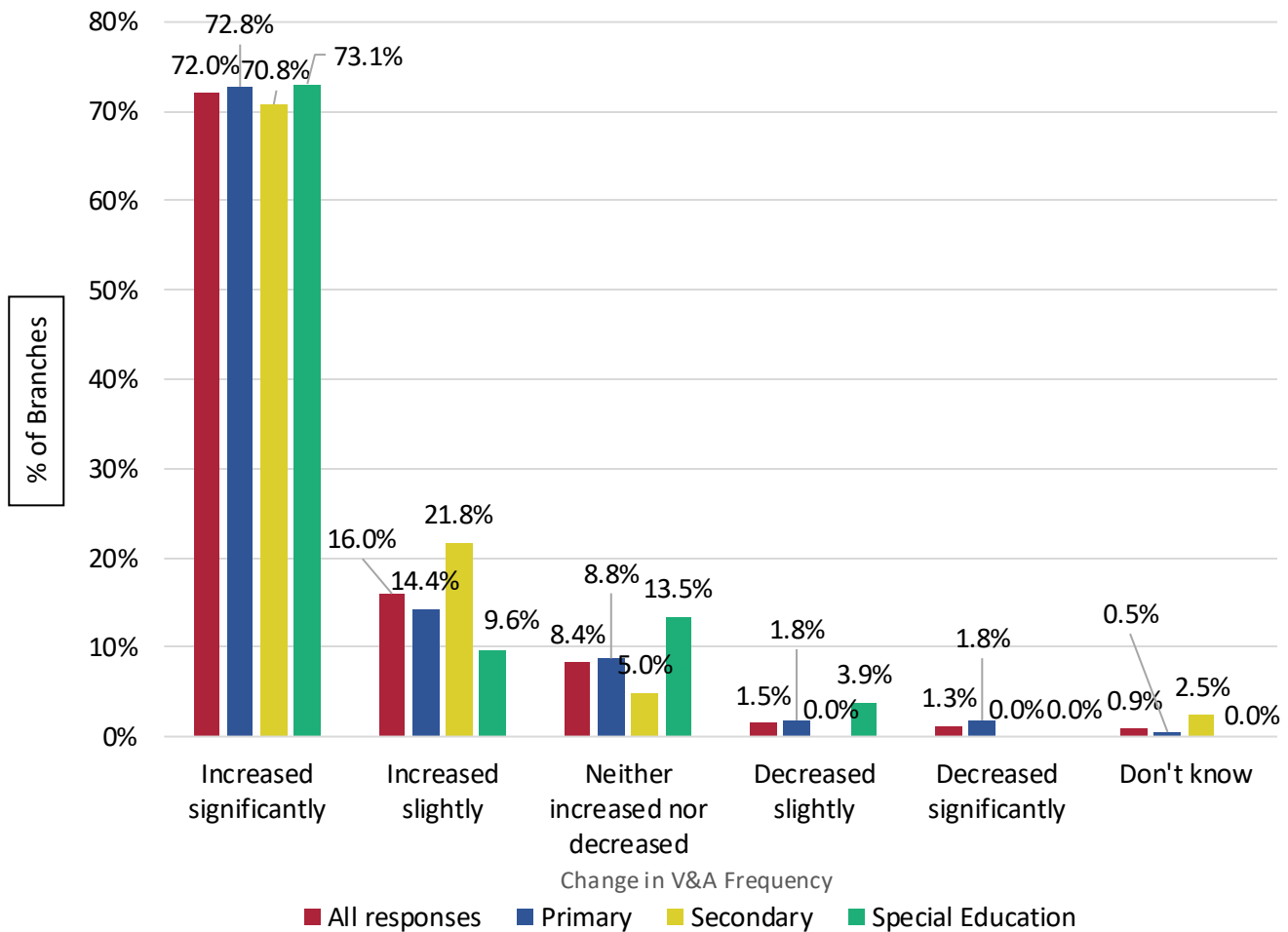
Total branch responses: 874

Almost 3/4 (72.0%) of branches reported that 'violence and aggression' against teachers had "increased significantly" increased over the last fours years – i.e. since the period before the Covid pandemic. Furthermore, 88% of school branches said that violent and aggressive incidents towards teachers had either "increased significantly "or "increased slightly" in the last four years. These figures were broadly the same for all sectors although the Special Sector branches reported a slightly smaller "increase" and the secondary sector reported a slightly larger (93%) overall increase in 'violence and aggression' incidents. Around 12.5% of branches reported no change or a decrease in violence and aggression to teachers over the period.

In terms of sector differences, the primary, secondary and special sectors "increased significantly" responses were all very close to the overall average of 72.0%

This is strong evidence that pupils' incidents of 'violence and aggression' towards teachers have increased since the start of the Covid pandemic, across all education sectors.

Question 3: "What are the most common types of pupil-on-teacher 'violent and aggressive' incidents?"

Figure 3

Incident	All Responses	Primary	Secondary	Special Education
Verbal threats (e.g., physical, psychological or professional harm) towards a teacher	64.1%	62.4%	66.3%	69.2%
Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher	61.5%	52.8%	93.1%	38.5%
Derogatory comments or "gossiping" about a teacher	21.5%	11.8%	52.5%	9.6%
Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory emails, phone calls, SMS or letters to a teacher or about a teacher	2.7%	2.2%	5%	0%
Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory content on social media about a teacher	8%	4.6%	20.8%	0%
Physically intimidatory or aggressive behaviour, including obscene gestures, towards a teacher	58%	58.7%	55.9%	57.7%
Physical violence, (e.g., hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing, pulling, tripping, object thrown at teacher etc)	65.9%	85.1%	5%	86.5%
Theft or damage to teachers' personal property	11.3%	12.4%	8.4%	11.5%
Total branch responses	859			

In Primary and Special Education, "physical violence towards a teacher" was the most common type of 'violence and aggression', whilst, in secondary schools, "Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher" was the most common form of violence and aggression.

 Across all sectors around two-thirds of branches also reported verbal threats of physical, psychological and professional harm within their schools.

Whilst there are commonalities between the violence and aggression experiences of primary and secondary sectors, there are also differences. The Primary sector ranked; 'physical violence', 'verbal threats', 'physically intimidatory behaviour' and 'Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher' as the top 4 ranked issues. This 'progression' may reflect that children develop language skills with age; they become better at expressing their emotions and needs through words rather than resorting to physical aggression. Two of the top four types of violence and aggression are physical, and two are verbal.

The secondary sector ranked the following forms of 'violence and aggression' (in descending order) 'Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher', 'Verbal threats (e.g., physical, psychological or professional harm) towards a teacher, 'Physically intimidatory or aggressive behaviour, including obscene gestures, towards a teacher' and 'Derogatory comments or "gossiping" about a teacher'. This means that 3 of the top 4 ranked types of 'violence and aggression' were verbal, physical violence being raised by 5% of secondary branches.

The Special Education sector profile of violence and aggression incidents is similar to the primary sector pattern.

Additional Comments: Question 3

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 109 branches doing so.

Within these comments, several branches clarified that whilst incidents were taking place it was rare within their school.

> *"At the moment pupil on teacher V&A is rare in this school we have couple of pupils who have autism and other needs who can have verbal outbursts towards teachers."*

The vast majority of comments raised outlined examples of violent and aggressive behaviour, including the culture within schools.

> *"We have seen an increase in all of these at times. Although the nature of pupils we have suggests that outbursts may be more regular we have noticed an increase in these over and above the expected dysregulation behaviours we would expect"*

> *"This is also being seen in very young children, who are just starting to attend school. Because it cannot be dealt with effectively, due to lack of staff, it is now becoming 'normal' behaviour."*

Other responses, however, set out the graphic nature of the 'violent and aggressive' incidents that they experience.

> *"Choking and holding teachers up against walls."*

> *"Taking down displays. Groping Teacher's breasts and sexually explicit behaviour and sexual language. Verbal abuse constantly from Primary 1 up. Teachers' property has been destroyed numerous times."*

> *"Spitting"*

> *"Spitting, Swearing & Disruptive behaviour - toppling chairs"*

Many branches reported that they had seen an increase in physical violence due to the complex needs of the pupils they taught, especially ASN pupils.

> *"Many of the above are closely linked with pupils who have ASN or emotional needs"*

> *Physical violence is most common; due to needs of complex needs children in addition to ASN, this can often result from distressed behaviours and be reactionary rather than intention. This could be avoided by smaller class sizes and increased staffing levels in line with SNCT guidance."*

> *"Physical violence due to the complex nature and additional support needs of the children we support."*

There were also reports of abuse directed at certain staff members for their actual or perceived protected characteristics (sex, sexual orientation, race, religion etc.).

> *"Increase is in the verbal/intimidation/gesture/way staff are made to feel type incidents rather than actual physical violence. An increase in gender related comments towards both male and female members of staff e.g. paedo, bitch."*

"Female teachers are on the receiving end of misogyny from male pupils. We seem to have to deal with things that other workplaces wouldn't tolerate."

A few of the comments highlighted that the abuse teachers were exposed to was also happening outside of school, for example on WhatsApp groups or through social media.

"DEROGATORY COMMENTS IN whats app groups"

There were also a few comments that mentioned the theft of, or damage to, teachers' property. This included resources that they had bought specifically for the class as well as personal items such as phone chargers.

"Teacher's property they buy (due to lack of resources in the school) is getting damaged e.g. resources for the classroom Pupil's trying to vandalise cars in the car park."

"Lack of respect for resources - especially things bought for classroom by teachers."

Question 4

 "Some types of Pupil-on-Teacher 'violent and aggressive' incidents are driven by prejudice such as racism, sexism, misogyny, religious-based hostility, disablism, homophobia, transphobia, class/wealth prejudice, etc. Are such incidents more or less frequent over the last four years?"

Figure 4

Change in Frequency of Prejudice based Incidents
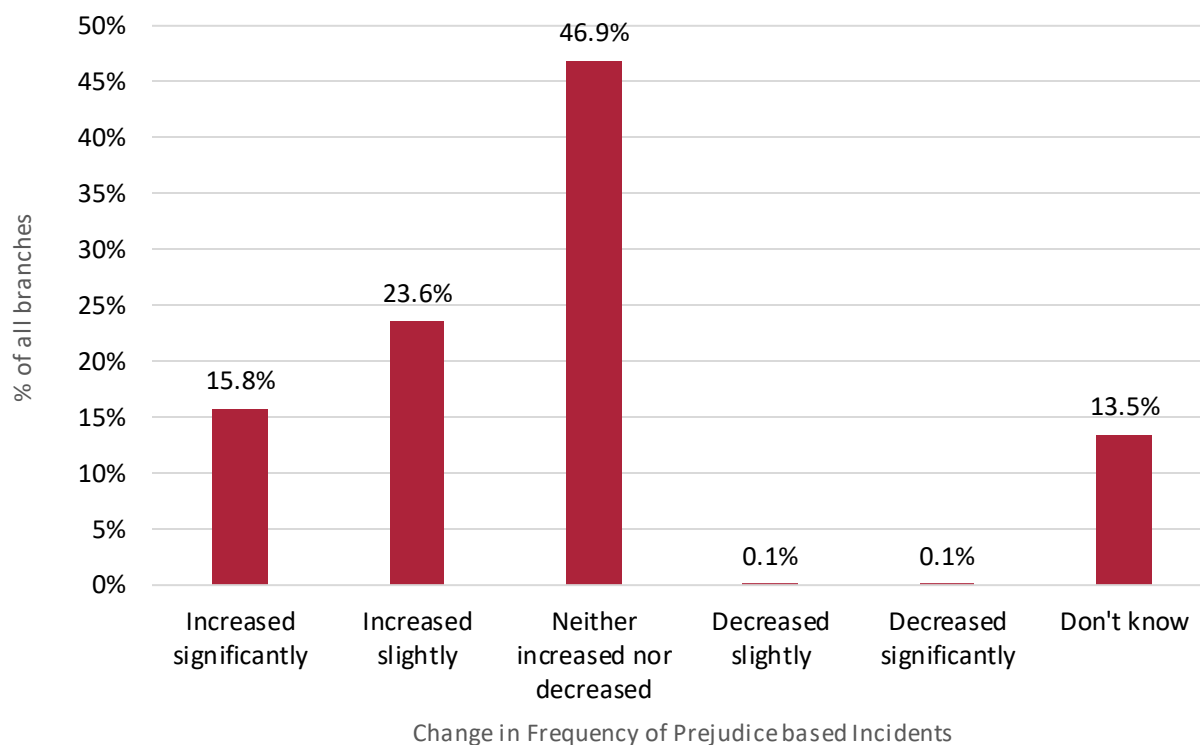
Total branch responses: 874

The branch responses show that 39.4% of branches thought that prejudice-based violence and aggression had increased in the last four years, whilst 0.2% of branches thought it had decreased. Around 47% reported that it had not increased or decreased.

This finding is evidence supporting anecdotal reports that prejudice-based violence and aggression in schools has increased in the last four years, i.e. since the period before the Covid pandemic.

Prejudice based incidents in Schools may reflect society's attitudes and be linked to wider "hate crime". It is interesting to note that the Scottish Government figures have shown a slight increase in hate crime in the 2019/20 to 2021/22 period, whilst England & Wales have had a significant increase.[1]

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[1] https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8537/CBP-8537.pdf

Question 5

"Where do most pupil-on- teacher 'violent and aggressive' incidents take place?"

Figure 5: Branch responses to "Where do most pupil-on- teacher 'violent and aggressive' incidents take place?"
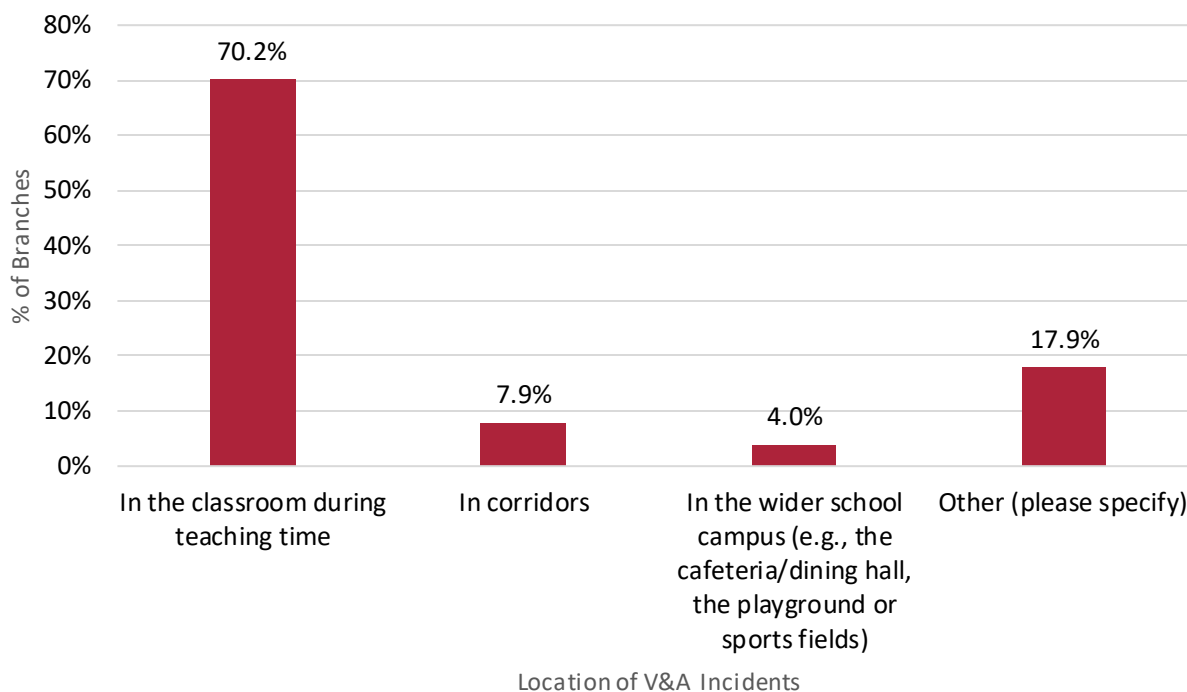
Total branch responses: 871

Over 70% of branches responded that most 'violence and aggression' incidents against teachers take place in the classroom during teaching time. This location is unsurprising given that this is where most teachers and pupils spend over 75% of their time.

A further 8% said in the corridors, 4% reported the wider school campus and 17.9% as "other" as the setting for most incidents outwith the classroom. This is almost 30%, of all incidents and is slightly higher than the proportion of time the pupils spend outwith the classroom – although the 17.9% of "Other" has further information in the section below.

Additional Comments: Question 5

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 155 branches doing so. The majority of the 155 additional comments said that the branch wanted to select "all of the above".

Below are some of the specific examples shared by branches:

All of the above. Playground, corridors but especially classrooms "Mostly classroom but many incidents also in corridors and social areas"

"Often begins in class but then progresses to corridors as child is removed from class. Also during transition times."

"All of the above. It is widespread throughout, all day."

"Primarily classroom, followed by SLT offices."

"All of the above. Starts in the classroom, spills into the corridors and daily in the playground."

Question 6: "Are 'violent and aggressive' behaviours towards teachers most commonly shown by young people of one gender or another?"

Figure 6

Are V&A behaviours more likely to be shown by one gender?
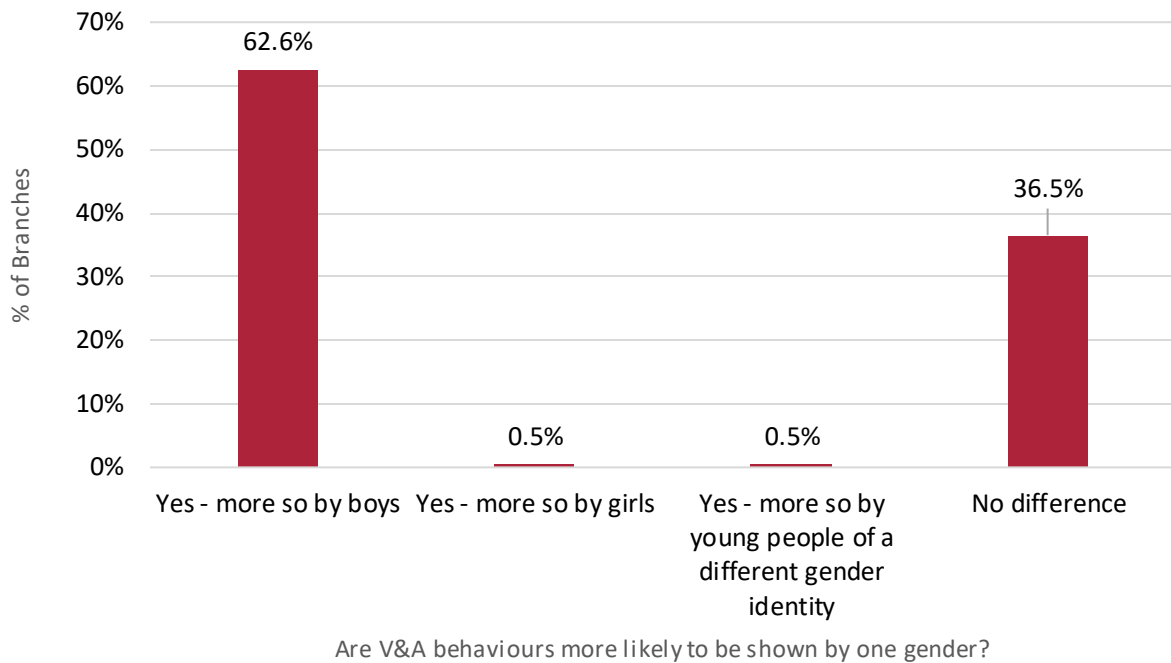
Total branch responses: 871

A majority (62.6%) of school branches responded that boys were more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviours towards teachers.

A tiny % percentage of branches suggested girls were more likely to exhibit these behaviours, with 36.5% of branches expressing no difference in gender.

Research suggests that, on average, boys tend to exhibit more physically aggressive behaviour than girls[2].

Question 7 is related to this issue, and the findings and recommendations are dealt with there.

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[2] Sex Differences in Aggression in Real-World Settings: A Meta-Analytic Review. Review of General Psychology, 8(4), 291-322

Question 7: "Does the branch believe that boys are more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers?"

Figure 7

Are boys most likely to exhibity V&A behaviour to women teachers?
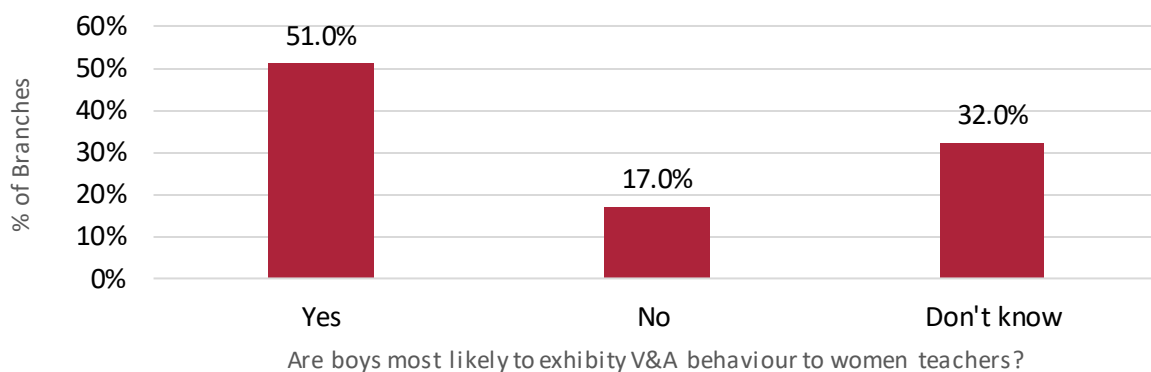
Total branch responses: 865

Over half of Branches (51%) responded that boys were more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers. A small number of Branches stated that boys were not more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour towards women teachers than men with just under a third (32%) responding "don't know".

The finding that boys are more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers is a matter of concern. This finding also confirms anecdotal evidence that boys are more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers.

Research suggests that, on average, boys tend to exhibit more physically aggressive behaviour than girls. There is also research to suggest that "mothers are five times more likely to be victims of parent abuse than fathers"[3]. It is beyond the scope of this paper to seek to explain these findings other than to state the obvious, women are generally physically smaller than men, and smaller than some of the young people that they teach.

The fact that women teachers are at greater risk of "violence and aggression' and that boys are the most likely cause of that 'violence and aggression' need to be acknowledged by employers. A fully resourced risk management approach needs to be adopted – including training, de-escalation techniques and immediate response plans to incidents of violence.

Additional Comments to Question 7

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 277 branches doing so.

A number of comments sought to give examples of how boys carried out acts of violence and aggression towards women teachers. Some accounts in these responses and responses to other questions suggest misogyny – and that it is increasing.

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[3] https://cris.brighton.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/230613/download.pdf

"Lack of respect for females. Intimidate using their size over female staff Boys are exposed to Social media, gaming and some home environments which are derogatory towards women, they bring this into school as acceptable treatment."

"Members strongly felt this to be the case. Lack of basic respect or acknowledgement of the authority of female teachers."

"I have noticed certain attitudes promoted by Andrew Tate coming through in some of the teenage boys."

"3 female teachers have had comments made that wouldn't/couldn't be made to male teachers (sexist/misogynistic), and were left to wonder if male teachers ever get similar experiences. In general the students respond a lot better to male authority figures than females, a hierarchy/ranking order seems to be in place. Violence happens is far more often targeted at female teachers with some ASN pupils turning 180 degrees as soon as a male steps in, abandoning any violent behaviour instantly. Offhand mild sexist remarks occur daily, such as calling all female members of staff Karens, or telling females they're ugly/fat, or telling them to 'go back to the kitchen'."

"In our school at present, there are no male teachers, however, we have many coaches and visitors who work with the children who are male and the boys tend to view and react to them in a different manner; in recent years boys have been more aggressive to female teachers than male colleagues."

"Many of our children have experienced domestic violence in a home setting, so violence against women could be seen as modelled behaviour. However, there is also a misogynistic element to our boys' behaviour and attitude."

"Verbal abuse from children can be more sexist towards women. Derogatory language towards female teachers".

"There have always been pervasive sexist attitudes in our area, but this becomes more apparent when, as over the last few years, the general atmosphere and mood of the school is more aggressive and combative. It is an easy outlet for feelings of anger and powerlessness.

"This is a behaviour that has been discussed. Female teachers from out with the area say that they are treated like 2nd class citizens by boys. Females from Ayrshire say that it is an "ayrshire thing"

"Problem is getting worse. Levels of misogyny increasing."

"There has definitely been an increase in misogyny in teaching."

In a few comments, branches clarified that their responses had nuances to them, with their judgements based on having a predominantly female staff team, meaning women were most likely to be the ones working directly with pupils or disagreeing with the notion that boys behave worse to women teachers.

"The branch feels that incidents from our children are mostly reactionary and do not consider gender, race etc. bias."

"Ratio of male/female teachers is not an accurate sample to use.

"Much of it is personal rather than gender-based. Also not many male staff members compared to female so difficult to gauge."

"We have no male teaching staff."

Question 8: "Is everyone in your branch aware of the school's 'Policies and Procedures' for dealing with pupil-on-teacher 'violent and aggressive' incidents?"

Figure 8

All teachers in Branch Aware of V&A Policy for Pupil-on-Teachers V&A Incidents?
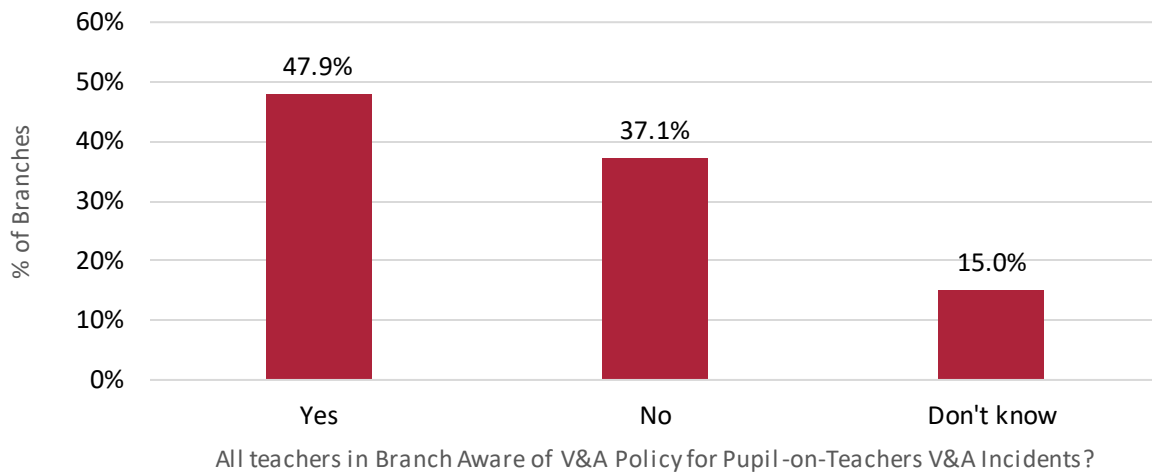
Total branch responses: 873

Almost 40% of branches (37.1%) stated that everyone in their branch was not aware of the policies and procedures in place for dealing with pupil-on-teacher 'violence and aggression', with a further 15.0% that did not know if everyone was aware of them. Taken together this is marginally over half of the branches and is a worrying statistic.

Fewer than half (47.9%) of branch responses collected stated that everyone in their branch was aware of the policies and procedures in place for dealing with pupil-on-teacher 'violence and aggression'.

Employers (and EIS reps) need to do more to ensure that there are clear policies, that all teachers are aware of the policies and that the policies work.

Question 9: "Does the branch feel, in general, that teachers are supported after a pupil-on-teacher 'violent and aggressive' incident has been reported?"

Figure 9
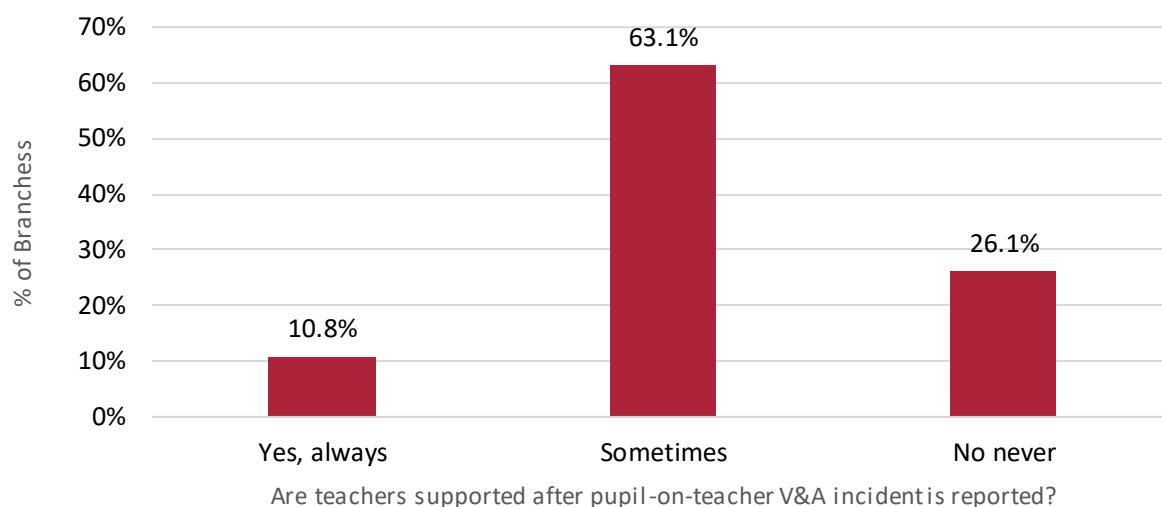
Total branch responses: 859

Fewer than 11% of Branches felt that teachers were "always" supported after a pupil-on-teacher 'violent and aggressive' incident has been reported. A further 63% stated that teachers were supported "sometimes" thus being the most common type of support experienced by teachers in branches. Over a quarter of branches (26.1%) stated that teachers were never supported.

Th low number of teachers who always feel supported is a matter of concern, as every teacher should be given support after a violent and aggressive incident.

Over 60% of branches seem to report that teacher support within schools is inconsistent or variable – sometimes support is given, sometimes not. The fact that almost twice the number of branches responded that "no, never" support was given compared to "Yes, always" is a matter of concern.

Question 9: Additional Comments

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 485 branches doing so. The vast majority of these reports were negative in some way, frequently towards the senior management teams (SLT) and invariably towards the Local Authority.

The majority of the comments left by branches a lack of support for teachers after reporting an incident of 'violence and aggression'

> *"There is rarely, if ever, any follow-up or support for teachers after these incidents (including AIRS forms)."*

> *"At the end of a session the victim then has to fill in copious paperwork reliving the incident and rarely is there a response."*

> *"I have reported aggressive and abusive behaviour to senior management and no-one comes to check I am OK. It is rare you even get a reply to the email. I once reported an incident where a student had been aggressive and used sexist language towards me. No reply from SLT and no action taken. I have sought refuge in the staff toilets to calm down."*

> *"Violent incident forms are repeatedly submitted with no further actions taken place."*

Some Branches cited an inconsistent approach depending on the child concerned, the teacher concerned, SMT availability, and staffing etc.

> *"Varies a lot, similar incidents lead to exclusion on one occasion and not on another. Staff don't always get feedback or checked up on. The recording procedure for incidents is often not followed."*

> *"It can depend on the child. For some frequent fliers, where there are a high number of incidents, there is an accepted level of behaviour and a normalized level of violence in some classrooms."*

> *"It can depend on things like the school circumstance, how busy SLT are and the pupil circumstances and their background. So often young people from care are given and more lenient approach it would appear. If SLT have a lot of DM calls, sometimes your one isn't followed up because there is a more extreme situation sitting behind it. The circumstances can affect the follow up."*

Many said that they felt major incidents were taken seriously and followed up by the appropriate people. However, many responses said that aggression such as swearing, and making offensive comments or threats was not taken seriously. Sometimes this was because the person they were reporting to did not view the incidents with the same severity as the reporting teachers.

> *"This depends on who is dealing with the issue and what the issue is as some managers see some issues as minor and that leaves the member of staff being blamed."*

> *"Teachers do not feel supported - there is often confusion and miscommunication between teachers, PSA's and SLT. Teachers feel left to deal with violent and aggressive incidents themselves and SLT often fail to support. Incident reports/paperwork is handed in but what is done with it? what is the action? never a conversation with management. Pupils will often return to class straight away. Teachers are left dealing with violent situations because SLT are busy. Often made to feel like we are causing an issue and taking the SLT away from something important."*

Other responses to this question said that the more serious incidents were becoming so common that they no longer followed up on the less serious incidents.

> *"Extreme incidents are becoming so common that verbal incidents are not dealt with as they should be"*

> *"For major incidents yes. For low level swearing 'violent and aggressive' incidents the branch feels support could be better but these happen a lot as we are a specialist SEBN (ASN) school offsite provision."*

> *"While members of the branch feel supported by each other and their departmental colleagues, we do not feel supported by the Council."*

It is clear that some of the behaviour that the HSE Executive and EIS believe to be "violence and aggression" is deemed as low-level/less serious or disruptive behaviour. This is a matter of concern.

In some cases, branches reported that teachers were being blamed for 'violent and aggressive incidents when they were reported:

> *"Teachers are being blamed - asked what did we do to exacerbate the situation/why we caused the pupil to become 'disregulated'"*

> *"Can depend upon the Senior Manager involved. Increasing lack of support over last few years as SLT attempt to 'explain' away / mitigate violent, aggressive and / or abusive behaviour through systems that effectively blame the teacher and create convoluted monitoring that leads all to often no sanctions or effective resolutions."*

"Staff feel discouraged from reporting incidents, don't always receive feedback or support after an incident has occurred and worry about being seen as weak by SMT."

The fact that staff feel discouraged from reporting or simply hope for effective support when incidents are reported is a finding of concern.

Many of the comments talked of inconsistent support they received. Many branches felt their colleagues were supportive, but that Local Authority support expressed a lack of support for teachers from Local Authorities. Many highlighted that they filled in numerous forms, but received no feedback from their local authority.

"Supported by the staff within the school. Expectation is that any reporting is done within own time and is an add on to all other paperwork and expectations. Staff feel unsupported by the Local Authority in this area."

"We are well supported at school level but the procedures and support from local authority are convoluted and limited."

"However the support staff feel that they are brushed aside and the council do not respond to HANDS form (which also takes time to complete)"

"Nothing seems to happen after information about a violent or aggressive incident happens. It is reported to the authority and no further steps are taken. Exclusion policy is unclear and difficult to navigate. We feel that in school we take the steps that we are able to take within our capabilities - team pull together to support one another however this is not enough. Clearer guidelines and more support is needed. It has a hugely negative impact on staff morale and other pupils that have to witness these incidents."

"The way in which these incidents are dealt with are appalling. It is becoming acceptable for students to aggressively verbally abuse staff with little to no consequence at all. We are just expected to put up with bad/foul language/swearing - sometimes in front of other pupils too. In the past, any pupil swearing at a member of staff would have been excluded. I doubt that people working in other establishments would be expected to put up with this. No effective sanctions for such pupils. They do and say what they like."

There was also a very small number of comments that said these incidents were very rare within their school.

Question 10 "Are there ways in which teachers could be better supported after reporting a Pupil-on-Teacher 'violent and aggressive' incident?

For example, are staff affected given dedicated time to recover from the incident? Is there effective sharing of information of risks to staff after an incident? Are pupil centred risk assessments used?"

Figure 10: Table of responses outlining challenges faced identified from Q10

Theme (tagged)	% of Branches Identified Theme
Recovery Time	31.4%
No Follow Up or Support for Teacher	23.7%
No Information Shared with the teachers	15.7%
Risk Assessment Poor or not updated	15.0%
Better procedures/Response Plans	12.0%
Staffing Issue	10.2%
No Consequences	8.4%
Returned to Class too soon	7.2%
Better SMT Support	7.0%
Time for reporting	5.9%
Teacher Blaming	3.2%
Culture	3.1%
No LA Support	2.1%
More PSAs	1.7%
ASN	1.4%
Timeous Support	1.3%
Inconsistent approach	1.3%
Counselling	0.9%
Other	9.2%

Total branch responses: 796

The vast majority of responses focussed on the challenges and issues faced by teachers and support staff in schools. Ways of better supporting teachers could be discerned from responses, as well as direct suggestions of how teachers may be better supported.

Most responses included two or more themes within their responses. Eg insufficient recovery time and poor sharing of information. Therefore, all responses were tagged twice, i.e. the two most prominent themes recorded for the analysis.

The Issues and Challenges Identified in the Responses

The most common single theme within all the responses was that teachers reported having either no or insufficient 'recovery time' after a 'violent and aggressive' incident. There seems to be a range of practices identified after a 'V&A' incident; carry on teaching as if nothing has happened, carry on teaching the class but with the pupil being removed from class, a SMT person taking the class or a colleague taking a class. The lack of time to recover from the incident, "decompress" or gather their emotions/thoughts is the most commented theme – around ¼ of all branches made this comment.

> *"More support mentally and emotionally. Additional time to recover. Identified person if incident occurs. What the consequences/next steps are for the pupil. Clear protocols to protect teachers."*

> *"TIme out of class, reassurance that something will be put in place to reduce recurrence, more support from council."*

The second most common issue was the lack of time that teachers had to complete the administrative processes of reporting an incident of 'violence and aggression'. It seems from the survey that no time is carved out for teachers after an incident to do so.

> *"I am not aware of a teacher getting time to recover after an incident. It is usually expected to just carry on and that can be really difficult especially if the pupil is back in class the next time you teach them. It is also very challenging to just teach the next class coming in with all that still mulling in your mind. Even when you leave at the end of the day, you carry incidents like this with you. It is not a quick fix for teachers, it takes time to find your dignity again sometimes."*

> *"When you fill in a violent incident form, there is never any follow up. It feels like a box ticking exercise and I am unsure what happens to the information and if any patterns are followed up."*

Low staffing levels were frequently cited as a barrier to allowing teachers to have recovery time or 'time out' after a 'violent and aggressive' incident, or to allow time to properly engage with the affected pupil or give time to the teacher to report the incident.

> *"The sheer number of children who engage in violent and unsafe behaviours means that children are often returned to class right after or only shortly following an incident as SLT are required to support elsewhere. There is no time for impactful restorative conversation which means that staff who have been hurt are required to interact with and teach their aggressors nearly immediately following an incident. This also impacts the school culture as it becomes accepted as witnessed by other children. Risks are used but time is a massive factor in completing and updating them. Staffing levels are often not adequate enough to meet the targets of risk assessments."*

> *"In the special education provision staff are feeling traumatised and have no capacity for support. Across the wider school restorative meetings are supposed to happen after incidents but this is becoming more likely to be missed out due to lack of resourcing."*

Many branches made the point that pupils were not removed from the class for long enough after an incident and were sometimes returned without prior notice to the teacher in the class. In some cases, this meant that the teacher was not ready to have them back.

> *"Staff who felt unsupported by those above them stated that they would ideally like 'time to recover' enshrined as policy in the aftermath of such events as well as clear, relevant consequences for the perpetrator of the violent act and a risk assessment to be carried out before the perpetrator returns to the classroom."*

> *"- restorative practice and not a five minute time out and then back to class*

- follow-up with staff involved to ensure they are ok after incidents occur

- update risk assessments with class teacher and shared with the adults working with that child"

Several references were made to 'restorative practice' and how this was not being properly implemented, in some cases pupils only needed to apologise to the teacher to be re-admitted to the class. The issue of the restorative model of justice/pupil management was raised in a significant number of responses and is covered elsewhere in this report.

The reporting procedures were not clear in many branches. Once an issue is "reported" the responses identify a range of issues:

- Only some schools allow teachers to submit reports, others need the headteacher or SMT to submit the report.
- There was often no acknowledgement that a report had been made by the system in some schools.
- There was often no follow-up from the local authority or the school after a report.
- Reporting an incident often did not lead to any impact in the classroom.

Information sharing within schools was also identified by many branches as an issue, with staff not being shown risk assessments or not being told of pupil violence and aggression or triggers. This left other staff vulnerable.

> *"Pupil centred risks are often not shared. This has led to staff who are entitled to ask for one, not requesting them. The formal process of bringing teacher and pupil together for restorative chat occurs far too quickly, often minutes after the incident. Members feel there should be a longer cooling off period for those involved. Too often action points are not shared with the member(s) affected [..] or [with] wider staff if there is deemed a risk of further incidents. Staff are informed of formal exclusions but not always informal/internal exclusions even of alternative timetables or withdrawals from certain classes. Members are not aware of any formal risk assessments being made following critical incidents."*

A number of branches state that the lack of "consequences" for pupils who carry out 'violence and aggression' was a factor. A number of branches question the inability of schools or headteachers to exclude pupils.

It is clear that risk assessments are in place in a large number of schools. However, many were not shared with teachers or were written from the child safety perspective as opposed to the worker safety perspective. It was reported that some risk assessments were not properly implemented, and others were not updated after violent and aggressive incidents.

Risk assessments are important from an EIS perspective for two reasons; they help make the workplace safer and they provide evidence of 'foreseeability' in any subsequent accident that is referenced on the risk assessment. This could lead to successful personal injury claims.

Branches, larger ones of 10 or more members in particular, should consider nominating Health and Safety representatives to support making the school a safer workplace – especially in matters of welfare and mental health. The EIS provides training for H&S reps.

A number of branches expressed the view that teachers were simply expected to deal with violence and aggression. Furthermore, when incidents occurred, senior management teams (SMT aka SLT) had a range of responses; questioning the teachers' actions as if they precipitated the pupil violence and aggression (i.e. teacher blaming), giving equal weights to the accounts of the pupil and teacher involved, while some provided the teacher with appropriate support. It was frequently commented that SMT support for teachers was variable.

"Dedicated time to recover. Almost a culture of teachers are expected to put up with it to a certain degree."

"Time off to recover. Too many staff just expected to teach their next lesson. We need far more support from health, CAMHS, social work, education psychologists and other partners. Much more support for parents and families outside of school. Training for staff is important but enough resources also really matters. As respect wanes for the profession on what feels like a national level, it is important to feel supported. Teaching staff must feel that they can carry out their work without fear of violent and aggressive incidents and the added stress that comes with it. A set of national guidelines for all schools to follow should be provided."

Victim blaming (both teacher blaming and pupil blaming) may be used to deflect the lack of time and resources to address violence and aggression in schools.

Many branches reported a lack of active engagement from SMT (SLT) to teachers who had been in 'violent and aggressive' incidents, and whilst some branches reported that SMTs 'checked-in' with affected teachers – many branches reported that this did not happen.

"Not given time to recover, support often doesn't arrive when requested. Staff openly discouraged from completing Violent Incident Reports. Told no risk assessments required for violent and aggressive pupils."

"Yes, more support required. Time given to teachers to complete appropriate forms is a must, in addition to time to recover after any incident or near-miss incident. Often incidents conversations include what could the teacher have done differently, thus a feeling of blame for teachers"

More parental involvement was sought in some responses.

The speed and urgency with which some 'violent and aggressive' incidents were dealt with was a matter of concern within a number of responses.

Better Supporting Teachers

A number of responses also included good practice.

The following points are identified for better supporting teachers after a violent and aggressive incident:

1. Schools should have a pupil conduct policy that sets out a clear escalatory set of sanctions for violent and aggressive behaviour in such a manner that pupils understand that there are consequences to misbehaviour. These consequences should include pupil suspensions and exclusions.
2. There is an entitlement for teachers to have time away from the classroom to decompress and recover from the incident.
3. Staffing levels need to be sufficient to allow recovery time for the teacher, and, importantly, sufficient time for the restorative model of pupil management to be implemented correctly.
4. SMT or PT support should be provided to every teacher who has been affected by a violent and aggressive incident, and that should include regular "check-ins" afterwards.
5. Time should be set aside to complete the reporting procedures with support given by the school or EIS rep.
6. The LA should acknowledge the report and follow up on the report.
7. The pupil should not be re-admitted to the class until the teacher is ready and there is an updated risk assessment with appropriate/agreed control measures.

8. Pupil and teacher support, reporting and following up should be done timeously.

9. Pupil and teacher support, reporting and following up should be done consistently – irrespective of the SMT person handling the issue, the teacher involved, staff availability or the pupil(s) involved.

10. All staff should be aware of the procedures used to report violent and aggressive incidents, and these procedures should be straightforward and not bureaucratic. This includes the immediate response to any 'violent and aggressive' incident.

11. Employers need to provide risk assessments that cover risks to pupils, teachers and other school staff. They should be followed and regularly updated. These should be shared with teachers that are likely to come into any direct contact with the pupils.

12. Schools should share information regarding violent and aggressive incidents among all staff that could come into contact with the affected pupil.

13. Parents/carers need to be informed of their child's misbehaviour and the school's response/plan. Parental support should be sought.

14. A culture needs to be impressed within schools that does not blame teachers or pupil victims for pupils' behaviours and encourages all teachers to report 'violent and aggressive' incidents.

One response seemed to sum up many responses by stating:

"- make it easier and less time consuming to report

- deal with incidents promptly, this isn't currently happening

- often little/no follow up when events are reported

- the absolute reliance on restorative conversations aren't working, there needs to be consequences when these incidents take place, currently, it doesn't feel like this happens."

Section 2 – Violent & Aggressive Incidents Between Pupils

The second section of the branch survey asked about violent and aggressive incidents between pupils within schools, pupil-on-pupil.

Question 11 "How often are there 'violent and aggressive incidents between pupils at the school"

Figure 11
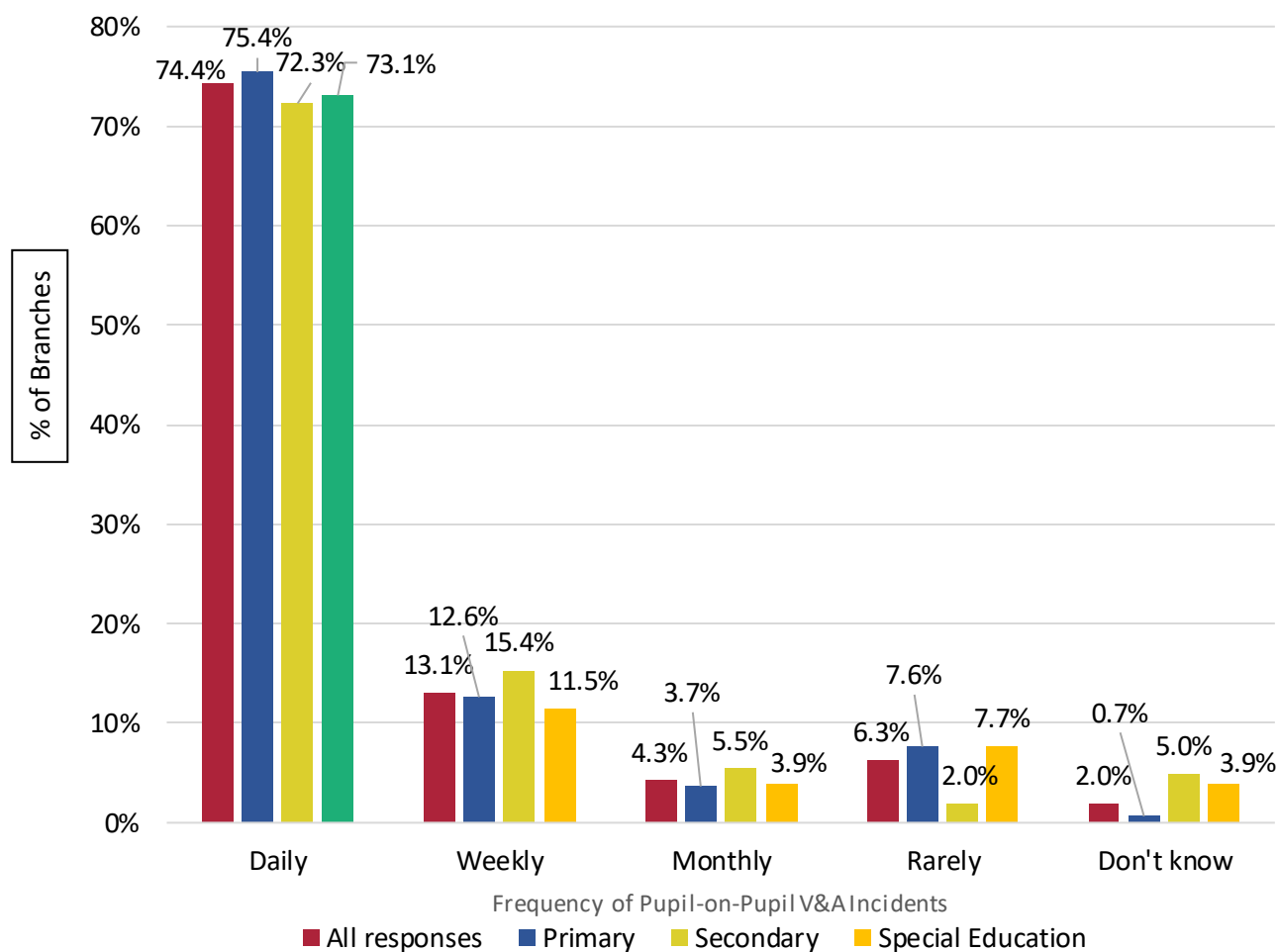
Total branch responses: 870

Almost three-quarters of all branches (74.4%) responded that incidents of violence and aggression between pupils happen daily in their school. When broken down by sector, there isn't a notable difference between primary, secondary and special schools.

When daily and weekly incidents are added, 87.7% of Branches reported pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression on a weekly basis. A small number of branches reported violence and aggression between pupils on a monthly basis (4.3%) with only 6.3% of schools stating that violence and aggression between schools is a rare occurrence.

This is a concerning finding. It means that pupils' experience of school includes being somewhere where there is at least one act of 'violence and aggression' on average daily. This is likely to have an impact on the victims, witnesses and perpetrators of such acts. It also explains a number of branch comments that 'violence and aggression' has become normalised in schools.

Question 12: In general, have pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents become more or less frequent over the last four years?"

Figure 12
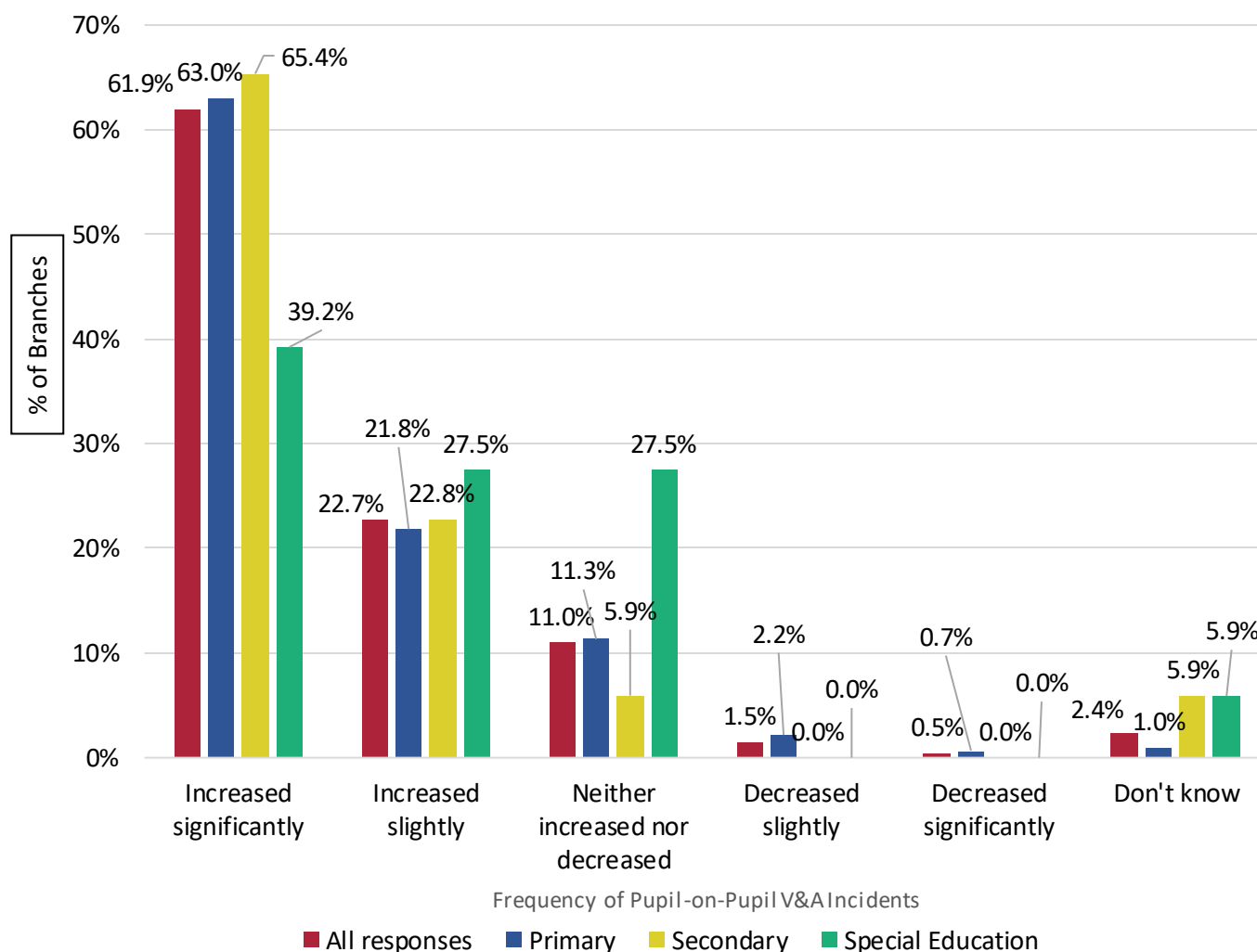
Total branch responses: 867

A vast majority (61.9%) of Branches responded that 'violent and aggressive' incidents between pupils had increased significantly in the primary and secondary sectors over the last four years. Almost 40% of Special Schools' branches also responded similarly.

This finding is concerning, in its own right, and it identifies a significant change in pupils' behaviour in schools over the last four years. It would suggest that something in the last four years has worsened or accelerated the worsening of pupils' behaviour. The obvious event over the last four years was the Covid pandemic and associated lockdowns. However, other effects such as social media cannot be discounted.

There needs to be a systematic response to this finding to address and halt this significant worsening of pupils' behaviour.

When simply considering whether pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents have become more frequent or less frequent over the last four years, almost three-quarters of Branches (84.6%) responded that it had increased over the last 4 years (i.e. if we combined the 'Increased Significantly' and 'Increased Slightly' responses.)

Around 15% of branches responded no change, a decrease or did not know whether incidents have changed in frequency over the last four years.

The Special School branches were different in scale to the primary and secondary branches. In relative terms to primary and secondary, there was a slight shift in the frequency of pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression to "Increased Slightly". This may reflect a higher base level of pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' interactions in the Special Sector. However, when both types of "increased" frequencies are combined, 66.7% of Special Schools branches reported increased violence and aggression between pupils in the last four years – this is two-thirds of branches.

Those in special school branches were most likely to say the number of incidents had stayed the same, with just over a quarter reporting this.

Question 13: "What are the most comment types of pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents"

Figure 13

Incident Type	All responses	Primary	Secondary	Special Education
Verbal threats (e.g., physical or psychological or harm) towards another pupil	72.2%	72.8%	72.8%	59.6%
Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards another pupil	50.2%	46.0%	67.3%	38.5%
Derogatory comments or "gossiping" about a pupil	32.0%	28.3%	47.5%	15.4%
Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory emails, phone calls, SMS or direct messaging to a pupil	13.1%	13.0%	16.3%	5.8%
Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory content on social media about another pupil	33.1%	25.7%	57.9%	19.2%
Physically intimidatory or aggressive behaviour, including obscene gestures, towards another pupil	40.7%	45.2%	28.2%	36.5%
Physical violence, (e.g., hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing, pulling, tripping, object thrown at another pupil etc)	76.4%	87.8%	40.1%	86.5%
Theft or damage to another pupil's personal property	7.6%	7.8%	6.4%	9.6%

Total branch responses 868

Across primary and special school branches, the most common type of pupil-on-pupil 'violence and aggression' in schools was "Physical violence, (e.g., hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing, pulling, tripping, an object thrown at another pupil etc)" with 87.8% of Primary and 86.5% of Special School branches defining it as the most common. For the primary sector, 'verbal threats' were the second most common issue reported (72.8%), then 'intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards another pupil' (46.0%) and then 'Physically intimidatory or aggressive behaviour, including obscene gestures, towards another pupil.' (45.2%).

The most common form of 'violence and aggression' between pupils in secondary schools was "Verbal threats (e.g., physical or psychological or harm) towards another pupil" (72.8%), followed by "Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards another pupil" (67.3%) then "Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory content on social media about another pupil" (57.9%) with "physical violence" being ranked fifth.

In essence, whilst verbal threats between pupils are a common issue in both primary and secondary schools, it is eclipsed by physical violence in the primary sector.

Whilst secondary schools' violence and aggression between pupils has more verbal and social media aggression 40% of secondary branches have listed physical violence as a common type of violence and aggression.

As cited elsewhere in this report, child development research expects pupils to resort less to violence as they grow older, and these findings are of no surprise. Whilst physical violence may cause more severe injuries when pupils are older (as they are stronger and can fight more effectively), there is less physical violence in secondary schools.

Question 14: "Some types of pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents are driven by prejudice such as racism, sexism, misogyny, religious-based hostility, disablism, transphobia, class/wealth prejudice, etc. Are such incidents more or less frequent over the last four years?"

Figure 14
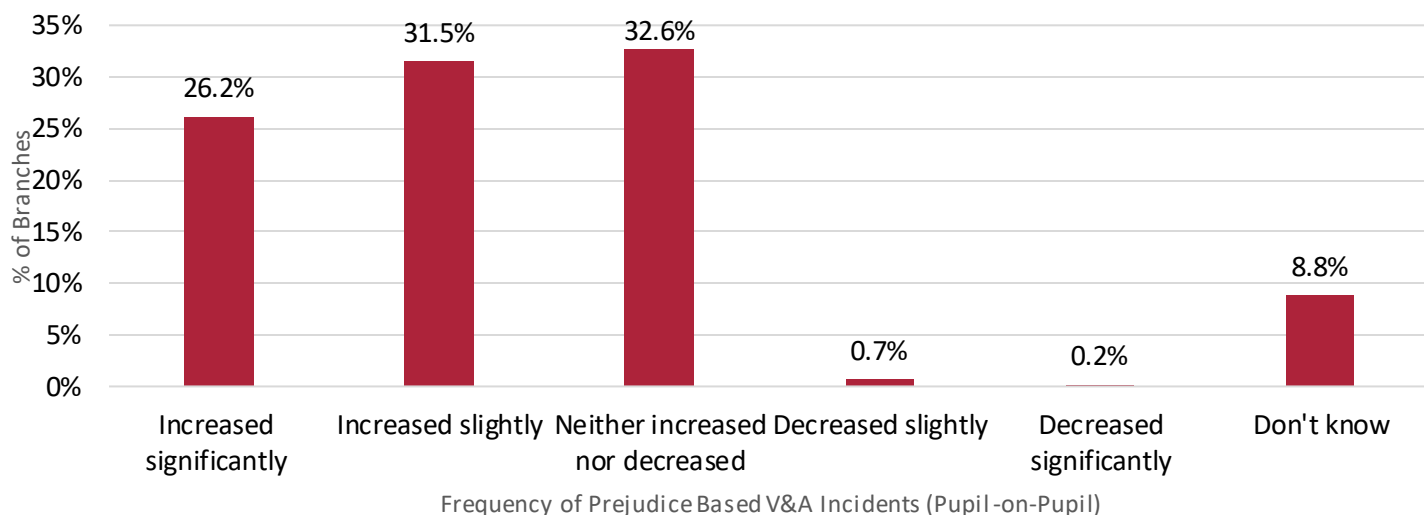
Total branch responses: 871

Over half of branches (57.7%) stated that prejudice based violence and aggression between pupils had increased in the last four years, with over a quarter (26.2%) stating that it had risen significantly. Less than 1% of branches report that it has decreased.

This is a significant finding and suggests that many pupils must find school less welcoming and more hostile as there is an increased amount of pupil-on-pupil 'violence and aggression' driven by prejudice.

Question 15: "Where do most pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents take place?"

Figure 15

Location of V&A Incidents (Pupil-on-Pupil)
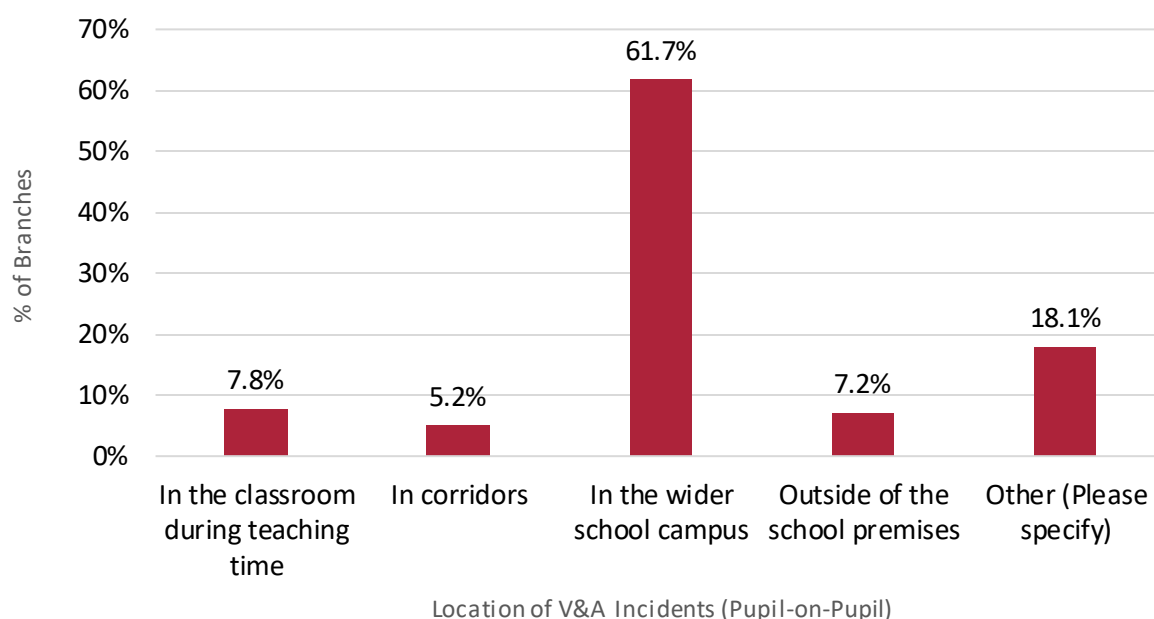
Total branch responses: 870

The vast majority (61.7%) of branches stated that most pupil-on-pupil violent and aggressive incidents were taking place in the wider school campus, which may include playing fields, libraries or other pupil spaces – as opposed to in class (7.8%).

Additional Comments to Question 15

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 157 branches doing so. Almost all the comments

Most of these comments reiterated that incidents were taking place in all of the places listed in question 1.

"All of the above"

"Everywhere"

"All areas of the school."

Some comments added gave additional information to the options in the question.

"Predominantly playground but with large increase in violent incidents in classrooms too."

"Depends on the age. Upper school has a lot more online incidents and in the playground. Younger children are more involved in incidents in the class or playground. "

There were also a few responses that said that social media was involved in the fuelling of these incidents.

"Online incidents seem to be increasing and these are fuelling school based incidents. In the class/corridors between the younger children and the wider campus for the older children. All of the above; A mixture of in the classroom, corridors and the wider school campus."

"All of the above - physical violence tends to be on playground usually linked to football, verbal in school buildings including classroom, also social media type issues outside of school hours."

Question 16: "Are' violent and aggressive' behaviours towards pupils most commonly shown by young people of one gender or another?"

Figure 16

Gender of Pupils most likely to exhibit V&A towards other Pupils
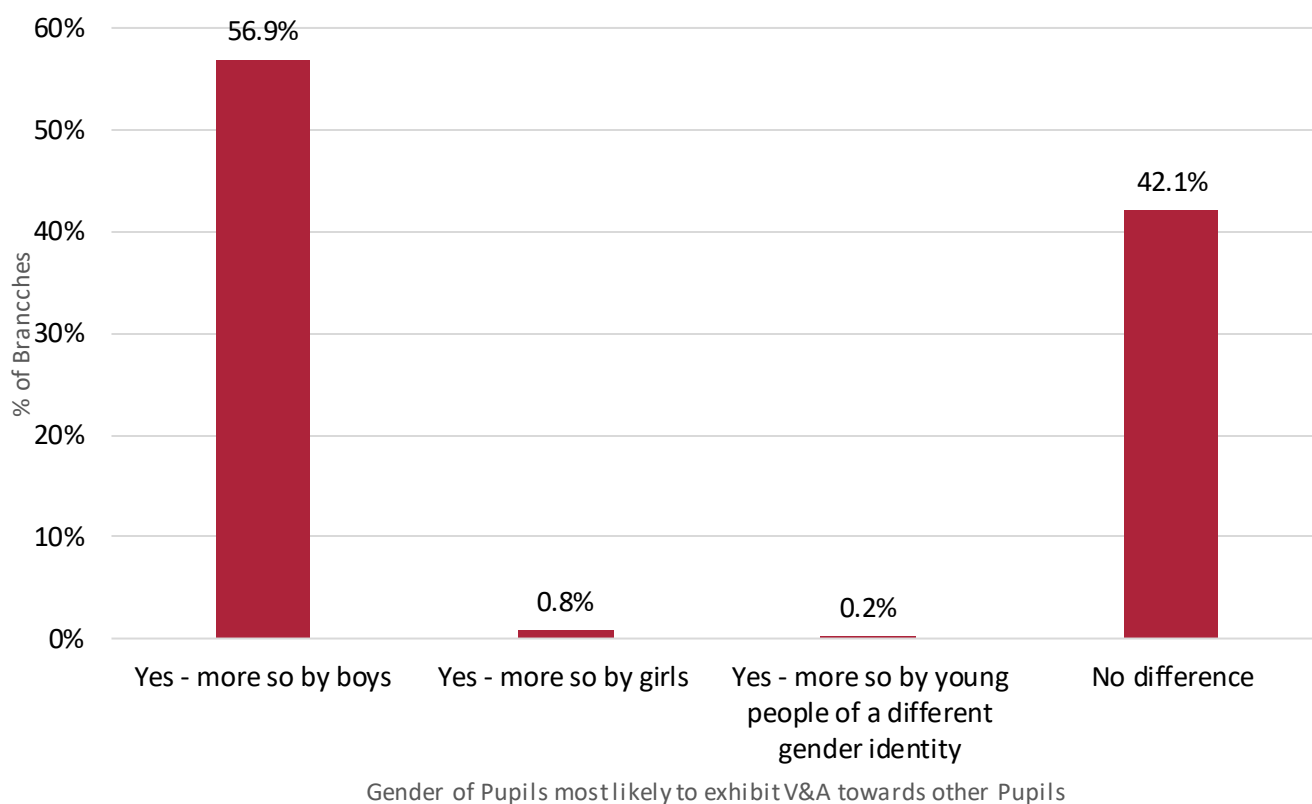
Total branch responses: 863

More than half of all branches (56.9%) reported that boys were more likely to display violent and aggressive behaviour towards other pupils than girls, with fewer than 1% of branches reporting that girls were more likely than boys. A large number of branches (42.1%) responded there was no difference.

This finding that most schools responded that boys were more likely to exhibit violent and aggressive behaviour against other pupils is similar to the result which was reported of pupil-on-teachers violence in question 7.

More research needs may need to be done in this area. Research literature suggests that boys are more violent than girls, but this survey has not explored whether girls are more likely to exhibit aggressive behaviour such as; 'Verbal threats (e.g., physical or psychological or harm) towards another pupil', 'Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards another pupil', 'Derogatory comments or "gossiping" about a pupil', 'Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory emails, phone calls, SMS or direct messaging to a pupil' or 'Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory content on social media about another pupil' – i.e. non-physical elements of violence and aggression.

Question 17: "Is everyone in your branch aware of the 'Policies and Procedures' for dealing with pupil-on pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents?"

Figure 17

Are all Teachers Aware of V&A Policies (Pupil-on-Pupil)
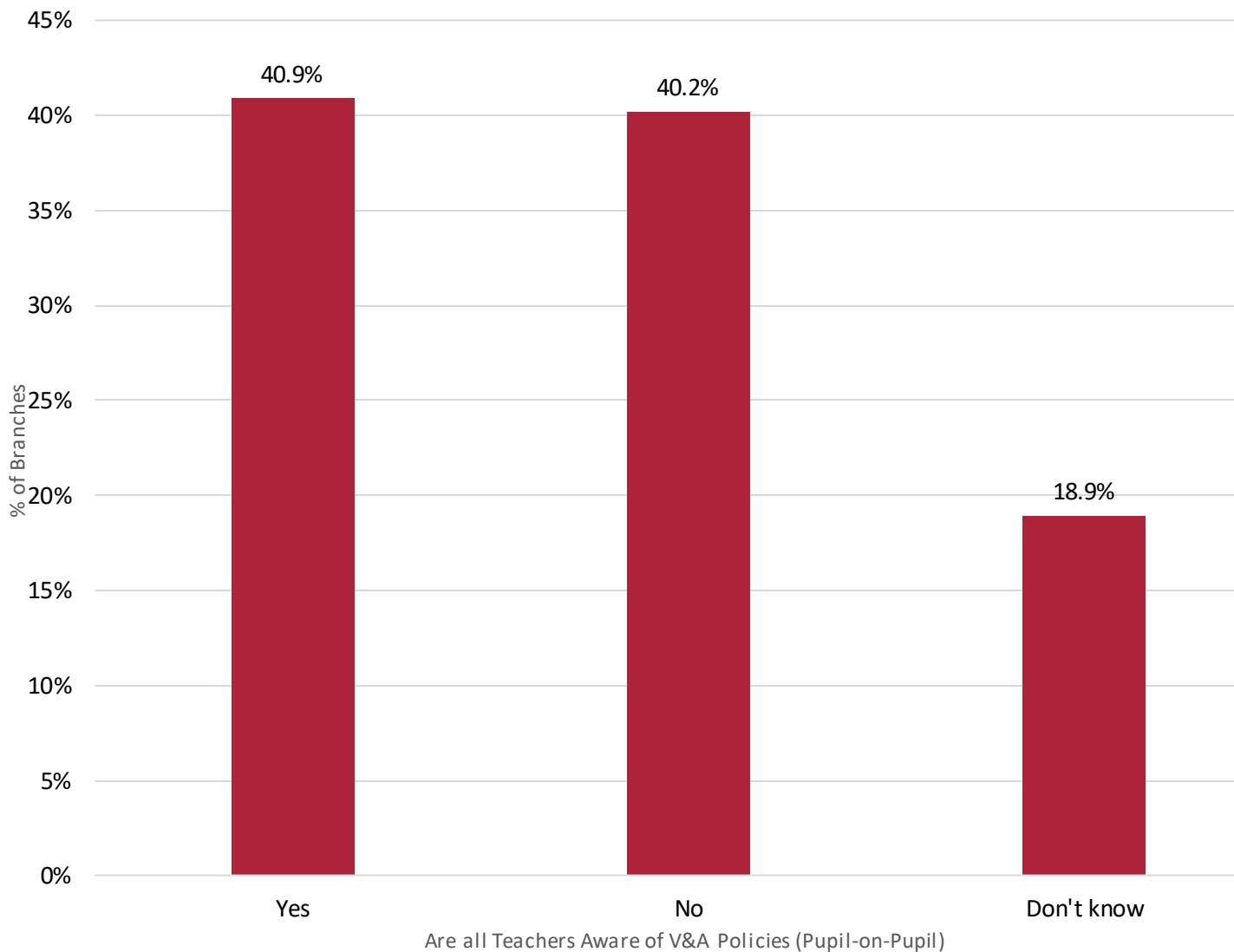
Total branch responses: 871

Only 40.9% of branches responded that everyone was aware of the school's 'Policies and Procedures' for dealing with pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents.

Around 40% of Branches (40.2%) responded that everyone was aware of the school's 'Policies and Procedures' for dealing with pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents, with a further 18.9% of branches that did not know – which also suggests a lack of certainty around policies and procedures.

It is clear from these responses that many, if not most, schools have teaching staff that are not aware of the school's 'Policies and Procedures' for dealing with pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents. This is a matter of concern, especially with the reported rates of pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression – and the reported increase in its prevalence.

Question 18: "How well supported are pupil 'victims' after a reported 'violent and aggressive' incident?"

Figure 18 All responses were tagged in the themes as set out in the table below:

Are pupil 'victims' supported after a reported 'violent and aggressive' incident?	No of responses	%
Yes, they are well-supported	269	32.2%
Yes, they are well supported but with a caveat	89	10.7%
Neutral – No clear opinion given	49	5.9%
Variable – Some good and some bad practices raised	136	16.3%
Not, pupil victims are not well-supported	229	27.4%
Unsure as to whether pupils are well supported or not	70	8.4%
Other	2	0.2%

Total branch responses 835

A minority of branches indicated that pupil victims were "well supported" after an incident of violence and aggression (32.2%) with a number of additional branches stating that pupil victims were well supported with a caveat (Yes, but...). Taken together, 42.9% though that pupil victims were "well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported. Several good practices were identified in many of those answers; use of the restorative model, positive work by class teachers and SMT, time taken and first aid given.

Over a quarter of branches stated that pupils were not well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported, with the balance of branches being unsure, neutral or citing variable practice. Staff availability, lack of consequences for pupils, inconsistent responses and poor local authority support were given as challenges.

Several good practices were identified in many of those answers stating that pupil victims were well supported;

> *"Teachers do daily check ins with children to help support them. Teachers also put support in place to help children manage this. Restorative conversations take place both at class level and managerial level if required, if there is a concern then managers are involved in talking with the children, if management have concerns about a child they do check in sessions with them too. Parents are also informed and invited in to work in collaboration with the school."*

> *"Well supported by school - violent incidents are investigated, documented and dealt with using school policy on violent incidents. Contact with home to explain what happened."*

> *"Victims are reasonably well supported. Where needed they have access to a supportive teacher (normally their PSL or HoH) who they can discuss what happened and how they are feeling. Depending on the incident their timetable can also be adapted as well as their school day so that they feel safe. As a school we have become better at dealing with homophobic/racist/transphobic incidents, supporting the victims, and working to prevent future occurrences."*

Some of these responses highlighted that whilst support was good within the school, there was poor support from the local authority:

"Very well within school but not council. Difficult to get specialist long term support required for the needs of pupils."

"Well supported by staff and HT although council policies tie the hands of SLT from dealing with incidences effectively so that they don't happen again. The perpetrator is often catered to more than the victim."

Around 89 (10.7%) responses indicated that pupil victims were well supported with caveats. The most common caveat was "well supported to the school's ability/resources". Other caveats included whether the SMT was available, staffing levels, the pupils concerned, the teachers concerned etc.

"Restorative conversations take place after the incidents. Children will be asked to apologise and move on. It is difficult to know if the children feel truly supported and the longer term psychological impact of such incidents."

"Quite well supported but we recognise that we can improve on this."

"Very well within school but not council. Difficult to get specialist long term support required for the needs of pupils."

If the "Yes, well supported" and the "Yes, well supported with caveat" response groups are taken together as a single group then 42.9% of school branches (which responded) expressed the view that pupils are well supported.

Around 136 (16.3%) responses outlined that the support for pupil victims of violence & aggression was variable, and did not state whether the overall support was good or poor.

"Very much depends on the situation."

"Depends on how many people/what people have seen it and how they followed it up. Also sadly depends on what pupil was targeted, with some being taken less seriously as they often target other pupils themselves."

"Some inconsistency in approaches depending on the incident, who deals with it and what else is going on."

"Depends if SLT are available to deal and support incident"

Around 40 (5.9%) response stated that it was not possible to discern an opinion as to whether their school supported pupils well – these were deemed as "neutral" as they outlined what the school did but did not comment on its efficacy.

"Many children have grown to accept certain behaviours from a. Few children who are not coping. They are also intimidated every day but want to keep on side with certain children."

"Could maybe do more to support children after an incident and have more structured procedures"

A number of branches (70) responded that they were "unsure" of how well pupils were supported after incidents of violence and aggression. The main reason given was that SMT or the procedures did not allow information to be shared with teachers – and, therefore, they did not know what happened to pupil victims after an incident.

"We are not told what happens".

"Don't know, staff not informed"

"Class teachers are not made aware, so not sure."

Around 229 of the branches' responses stated that pupil victims of violence and aggression were "not well supported". This corresponds to just over a quarter (27.4%) of the branches that responded.

> "It is the opinion of this branch that pupil 'victims' are not often well supported after violent and aggressive incidents. Initial verbal checks do take place but the deep restorative conversation and follow up rarely takes place."

> "Pupils are not well supported, instead they're expected to walk away from the aggressor."

> "We feel that victims are being punished rather than the aggressor eg victim being keep in at break time for own safety. "

> "Not particularly, there are not enough consequences for the aggressor. There is generally an expectation for the victim to accept a simply apology whether or not they feel ready or whether or not it seems genuine."

> "No support - even when physically assaulted by sharp objects"

> "We're concerned that innocent children who are involved in these behaviours are often encouraged to accept outbursts due to individual needs."

> "In a recent RRS survey, children expressed they felt unsafe in school."

> "Children often have to tidy up mess from "trashings" of the classroom and have their wall displays ruined."

> "Pupil-pupil violence is very common in our setting and class teachers will take the lead with separating and calming pupils. No clear guidance on whether parents are to be informed, where to record these incidents (beyond SEEMIS) and how to deal with incidents"

A number of issues could be gleamed from the responses; parental pressure was cited by many branch responses as the determining factor as to how much support was given to a pupil victim.

> "Support is not consistent. Often dependent on the level of pressure from parents/guardians."

A number of responses identified the issue of "victim blaming" where the pupil was accused of provoking or triggering an incident of violence and aggression.

> "Pupils often experience being blamed and asked what they did to cause the behaviour and "incident"

> " Victim blaming "oh they must have bothered him""

The impact on pupils who witness 'violence and aggression' was raised by one school. It is becoming increasingly clear that the impact of violence and aggression on witnesses can be significant, and in some cases on a par with the victims themselves.

> "Children are not well supported. The children directly involved are not the only victims. Those who witness the incident can also be affected. These children may internalise their emotions."

A small number of responses stated that pupil victims of violence and aggression were better supported than teachers who were victims of violence and aggression.

> "Aggressor is supported more than the victim in many cases."

"Victims are given first aid, chat with a teacher, and time out of class to recover. However, indirect victims, those who observe the instant or need to be decanted only see the perpetrators being rewarded with activities."

A large number of responses focussed on the issue of the restorative justice model of dealing with pupil incidents. In some cases, the model was being lauded, especially if teachers had sufficient time to implement it fully after a violent and aggressive incident.

"Pupils are given time and space to self-regulate and process an incident with a trusted, calm adult in many different calm areas. They have the opportunity to talk the situation through and make things right."

Other responses, however, suggested that the restorative model seems to focus attention on the perpetrator or aggressor rather than the victim and that classes had to fit around the circumstances/behaviour of the perpetrator e.g.

"Restorative conversations take place after the incidents. Children will be asked to apologise and move on."

"We have had several incidents where victims have chosen to change schools rather than have to interact with an aggressor. Sometimes classes are changed to separate pupils, but this is as likely to negatively affect the victim as the aggressor. There is some concern among members that victims are not put first when there are competing priorities."

"Not particularly, there are not enough consequences for the aggressor. There is generally an expectation for the victim to accept a simple apology whether or not they feel ready or whether or not it seems genuine."

Furthermore, the restorative model often simply sought an apology from the perpetrator which resolved the issues within the school handling of the incident – irrespective of the victims' view. The perpetrator was then often returned to the victim's class.

"Not at all. To have a restorative conversation with someone who has hit or lied about the pupil is unfair. A conversation is not a punishment and it puts victim and offender on equal status"

"Not well at all. Straight back into the classroom and very rarely any follow up paperwork completed."

The lack of consequences for perpetrators of violence and aggression was identified by a number of responses.

"There is no break for the victim. Victim and other members of the class do not see the consequences."

"We feel strongly as a branch that these pupils are not supported. There are never any visible 'consequences' for those attacking the children. There are also so many incidents that it is impossible to spend enough time with children on the receiving end of abusive behaviour."

"Children are often scared and recognise that consequences do not happen. They often see children being "rewarded"."

Restorative practice is a set of principles and practices that encourages children to take responsibility for their behaviour by thinking through the causes and consequences in 'restorative conversations' with their classroom teacher, or in some cases peer-to-peer conversations. Restorative conversations are a fundamental part of the process and are driven by the classroom teacher who has a relationship with the pupils affected. The Branch Survey, in a number of responses to different questions, raised issues with how restorative practices are implemented in schools, mostly highlighting the fact that resources are not available to allow restorative practices to be implemented properly. The single largest problem is lack of staff, because if a

classroom teacher cannot take a child out of class for a restorative conversation immediately then the opportunity is lost. Furthermore, a further risk is that staffing pressures mean that the restorative conversation is rushed and that pupils 'game' the system by making a quick apology.

> *"Pupils exhibiting violent and aggressive behaviour are better supported than the victims. They often receive time out of class with one-to-one support from an adult. Time to do things that they "enjoy" is provided in order for them to regulate their behaviour. Apologies (when they happen) to staff and pupils are often forced, do not come at appropriate times and are rarely genuine."*

The survey responses from branches also touch on ways in which pupils who carry out violent and aggressive incidents are "de-escalated" and the perception amongst some teachers and pupils is that the de-escalation process (or one that rewards improved behaviour) rewards poor behaviour is worth noting.

A number of responses make it clear that exclusions should be included in the range of escalatory responses.

> *"After one significant episode where a child might have lost their life the perpetrator returned to school. In previous years this would have been an automatic permanent exclusion and the victim would have been better protected/secured"*

> *"no - because in no other setting would a victim be forced to continue to sit with their abuser. There is no respite for the majority of the children - specifically now that exclusion is frowned upon."*

Question 19: "How well supported and managed are pupils exhibiting 'violent and aggressive' behaviour after a reported incident?"

Figure 19 All responses were tagged in themes as set out in the table below:

How well supported and managed are pupils exhibiting 'violent and aggressive' behaviour after a reported incident?	No of responses	%
Yes, they are well-supported	294	35.2%
Yes, they are well supported but with a caveat	134	16.1%
Neutral – No clear opinion given	76	9.1%
Variable – Some good and some bad practices raised	87	10.4%
Not, pupil victims are not well-supported	176	21.1%
Unsure as to whether pupils are well supported or not	72	8.6%
Other	1	0.1%

Branch responses 835

A majority of branches indicated that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were "well supported" after an incident of violence and aggression (35.2%) with a number of additional branches (16.5%) stating that pupils exhibiting the behaviour were well supported with a caveat (Yes, but…). Taken together, 51.7% though that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were "well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported. Several good practices were identified in many of those answers; use of the restorative model, positive work by class teachers and SMT, time taken and de-escalation techniques.

It is noted that more branches responded that pupils who exhibited violence and aggression were better supported than their victims.

Fewer than a quarter of branches (21.1%) stated that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were not well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported, with the balance of branches being unsure, neutral or citing variable practice. Staff availability, lack of consequences for pupils, inconsistent responses and poor local authority support were given as challenges.

Around 294 (35.2%) responses indicated that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were well supported after an incident of violence and aggression – with no caveat. This was the single largest group of responses, yet it is only around a third of all responses.

> *"Pretty well supported, as school is taking a very nurturing approach to challenging behaviour. Almost always followed up with a. consequences and b. nurture/chats/report card, etc."*

> *"restorative conversations and communication with parents"*

> *"Well supported. Assistant behaviour support officer running nurture groups. Restorative conversations had. Outside agencies utilised"*

"They appear to be given more time and attention spent on them. Outside agencies: parents are helpful."

"Extremely well supported . one to on time. individual charts, individual rewards, ball room, health and wellbeing space, SMT have established positive relationships with parents."

"Restorative approaches are used and pupils are listened to, and their opinions heard. Parents are contacted where appropriate. Fair and sensible consequences are agreed."

"Very well supported. Different strategies can be put into place to help aid the young person and help improve their distressed behaviour"

Around 134 (16.0%) additional responses indicated that pupils exhibiting violent and aggressive behaviour were well supported with caveats. The most common caveat was "well supported to the school's ability/resources". Other caveats included whether the SMT was available, staffing levels, the pupils concerned, the teachers concerned etc.

"Restorative conversation generally takes place, child returns to class, situation assumed to be dealt with and matter is closed"

"Very well. In some cases almost rewarded, ipad, baking, football."

"Pupils exhibiting V&A behaviour are supported/managed very well with check - ins and 1:1 support where needed."

"Consistency in the management has been improving over time but the number of pupils coming into the schools who exhibit these behaviours has been increasing and more so since COVID lockdown."

If the "Yes, well supported" and the "Yes, well supported with caveat" response groups are taken together as a single group then 51.21% of school branches (which responded) expressed the view that pupils are well supported – this is just over half.

The responses to Q19 and Q18 show that branches feel that pupils who exhibit violent and aggressive behaviour are better supported than their pupil victims.

"We feel the perpetrator is often treated better than the victim."

"Probably supported better than the "victims" as they need de-escalated and restorative conversations."

"well supported - maybe too well, so it is seen as a reward"

"Removed from situation and allowed time to recover / stabilise. Disgusting that the victim is not offered the same,"

"More supported than the victim. Often rewarded eg tea and a biscuit"

"Pupils exhibiting violent and aggressive behaviour are better supported than the victims. They often receive time out of class with one-to-one support from an adult. Time to do things that they "enjoy" is provided in order for them to regulate their behaviour. Apologies (when they happen) to staff and pupils are often forced, do not come at appropriate times and are rarely genuine."

"They (the aggressor) get all the support and understanding. All the support and attention is focused on the perpetrators not the victims. They are often taken to the nurture room, given hot chocolate and soothed. The victim returns to class and gets on with their work. The LA opinion is that children with distressed behaviours need to be given full understanding."

This theme of aggressors being better supported than victims is identified in a small proportion of responses in this Question and Question 18 and this supports anecdotal evidence shared with the EIS. Some further reflection is required as to whether this restorative approach needs to be re-considered.

It is also worth noting that a small number of branches also stated that pupil aggressors were better supported than teacher victims.

"Feeling is that pupils are better supported after an event than Teaching staff."

"They are supported better than the staff."

Around 87 (10.4%) responses outlined that the support for pupils exhibiting violence & aggression was **variable**, and did not state whether the overall support was good or poor.

"Similar to above, it very much depends on the situation and even more so pupil exhibiting the violent behaviour. If it is a common occurrence less seems to be done, albeit from the outside looking in."

"Members felt violent and aggressive incidents were always strongly dealt with, but not using supportive strategies. Pupils are given some time to reflect on behaviour, however inconsistencies can be evident depending on the child in question. The general feeling was pupils are not always fully supported to understand their behaviours."

"There is no consistency in the support and management of this."

"Depends on staff time and availability and how many incidents are being dealt with at the time."

"Inconsistent - often options are extremely limited with mixed messages from Scottish Government / no clear pathway for children who struggle to regulate themselves."

Around 76 (9.1%) responses gave a response that it was not possible to discern an opinion as to whether their school supported pupils that exhibit violent and aggressive behaviour well – these were deemed as "neutral" as they outlined what the school did, but did not comment on its efficacy.

"They will be sent home for the day and then work in isolation for a couple of days after the incident.

"Could maybe do more to support children after an incident and have more structured procedures"

"Temporary school exclusion is arranged for V&A but it is unclear what is done after readmission to help change the behaviour of pupils displaying V&A towards their peers."

A number of branches (72, 8.6%) responded that they were "unsure" of how well pupils who exhibited violence and aggression were supported after incidents of violence and aggression. The main reason given was that SMT or the procedures did not allow information to be shared with teachers – and, therefore, they did not know what happened to pupil victims after an incident.

"Many staff feel unable to answer this - partly because of a lack of direct input or a lack of communication. We do have pupil and family support workers who work well with pupils who exhibit these kinds of behaviours, however, this is generally only reactive (and by some is seen almost as a reward). We used to have more input from partners such as pupils undergoing anger management programmes."

"Cannot make comment as this is dealt with by management."

"Don't know - no information is shared"

"Those present are unsure as we are not members of school management or pupil support."

"Unaware. There are certainly no consequences for poor behaviour and an unawareness of support for pupils."

These responses identify a lack of information coming from school management regarding the support given to specific pupils. This identifies two issues – severe incidents are often dealt with by senior management teams (aka SLT) without including classroom teachers. Secondly, class teachers are not informed of the actions.

"don't know. Discussion happen with SLT, however we are not involved. Short term solutions are often put in place however ongoing incidents seem to have no impactful consequences."

Around 176 of the branches responses stated that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were "not well supported". This corresponds to just over a fifth (21.1%) of the branches that responded.

"pupils who exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour will often get to engage in a fun activity outwith the class. There is no consistency or consequences that are appropriate. There have been multiple occasions where pupils get to do what they want. Some will take themselves out the building and refuse to come in. Pupils like this do not have access to supports and there is no clear strategy."

"Restorative approach is not always effective"

"There often isn't time to support and manage children exhibiting violent and aggressive behaviour appropriately as there is no designated time to do this and it can eat into learning and teaching time."

"The children exhibiting violent and aggressive behaviours are removed from the classroom but returned extremely quickly after the incident. Sometimes, parents are not informed and very, very rarely does violent or aggressive behaviour result in an exclusion."

"Not well supported at all. Pupils are often returned to class before they are ready or have had sufficient time to de-escalate. There is very little communication with staff on follow ups/consequences."

"The focus is on the pupil however it is not effective and nowhere near enough."

An issue within this group of responses is the underlying problem of dealing with pupils who repeatedly exhibit violent and aggressive behaviour. There seems to be a specific lack of strategy or effective counter to this type of persistent misbehaviour.

"Not at all. They are mostly out of control. An adult tries to support them and guide them to make the correct choice but most of the time it does not have an impact as the behaviour is repeated later."

"Reasonably well supported although this is additional workload for staff and for repeat problems additional resources are not available."

"There is not much support for children who repeatedly display aggressive behaviour."

The lack of effective strategies in some schools for persistent or repeated violence and aggression may be evidenced by a number of branches responding by stating that there are little or no consequences for pupils who exhibit violent and aggressive behaviour. Some consequences suggested that there is even a perception that those exhibiting violent and aggressive behaviour are effectively rewarded.

"Perpetrators are supported more than the victims. Lack of reasonable and just consequences. It sometimes feels like they are rewarded more than anything."

"It's all restorative and very nurturing with no consequences so the behaviour is repeated continually."

"Rewarded instead of consequences being put in place."

"aggressors are receiving additional attention/rewards that seems to be leading to increased negative behaviours."

"pupils returned too soon to class"

"communication of consequences not being shared with teacher"

The impacts of not dealing with' violent and aggressive' behaviour by pupils may be best summed up with this response:

"We feel like we are not very safe and close to breaking when fully staffed but we are never fully staffed and so we never feel completely safe. Many members come to school every day wondering if they will be hurt and if the children are safe."

Question 20: "How well supported are teachers after reporting a pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incident?"

Figure 20: Table showing themes identified in responses to Q20.

Theme	No of Branches	%
Not Supported	325	39.5%
Inconsistent	161	19.6%
Well supported	91	11.1%
Lack of follow up	71	8.7%
Supported by colleagues/union only	35	4.4%
Lack of resources to support	37	4.5%
Supported by manager/SLT	31	3.8%
Neutral	26	3.2%
Teacher blamed	14	1.7%
School good, not LA	10	1.2%
Children supported more than teacher	7	1.0%
Report only	6	0.7%
N/A or Unsure	6	0.7%
Total	**823**	**100%**

Branch responses 823

Overall, around 2/3 of branches (59.1%) felt that teachers were not well supported or received inconsistent support following pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression. A further 13.2% reported that even where some actions were taken, or there was a will to do so, there was a lack of follow-up or support available due to resource constraints. The nature and extent of teacher support very much depended on the availability of colleagues to cover classes, work with and support the pupils involved, or overall resource capacity within the school.

> *"Teachers open feel left to deal with these pupils independently. it is overwhelming and exhausting. Teachers don't feel equipped to support these pupils and often feel at risk of being verbally or physically abused."*

> *"If SLT have the time they do have restorative conversations with staff. However, generally staff just get on with their day."*

> *"HT is trying his best but he does not have enough time as we are so severely understaffed."*

A large number of respondents felt that dealing with pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression was now so prevalent that it was now just seen as part of the job that teachers had to deal with themselves on a day-to-day basis.

> *"This would be seen as "just doing your job"."*

> *"Not very, would be my personal experience. Yet another part of the job we are expected to tolerate.....guess classroom teachers and their welfare is not a priority"*

Around 11% of respondents felt that they were well supported within the school, with others reporting being supported directly by SLT/management (3.8%) or colleagues (4.4%). The overall picture seems to be that teachers are far less of a focus following pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression with staff feeling that children are the focus in these instances.

> *"Not at all, the focus in on the perpetrator"*

> *"Teachers are not supported but often are made to feel inferior for having spoken up and not dealing with incidents independently. No follow-up wellbeing procedures have been established to support teachers."*

> *"Teachers are somewhat supported, However, there is an unspoken 'Just get on with it' attitude."*

Perhaps most concerningly were reports of teachers being questioned or offered feedback following pupil on pupil violence and aggression. The questions or feedback have led to teachers feeling blamed for poor classroom management, not spotting triggers or de-escalating sufficiently, to avoid the incident.

> *"I don't think we are supported well at all. Most times you will report a pupil for shouting abuse at you. They (management or guidance) will interview the pupil...they say they didn't do it...they believe the pupil over you...and then you, as the teacher, are made to feel like you were the cause of the problem. Management also come out with a belter as well here...they actually imply that you are the root cause of the poor behaviour because the teaching and learning in your class is not exciting enough!!! As I said...it is a belter!!"*

Section 3 – Violent and Aggressive Incidents Towards Teachers from Parents/Carers on Teacher

Question 21 "Which of the following behaviours from parents towards teachers has one or more teachers of the branch experienced?"

Figure 21

% of Branches

Behaviour	%
Verbal threats to a teacher	49.9%
Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments to a teacher	63.6%
Derogatory comments or "gossiping" about a teacher	72.5%
Physically intimidatory or aggressive behaviour, including obscene gestures towards a teacher	34.4%
Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory emails, phone calls, SMS or letters to a teacher	62.4%
Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory content on social media about a teacher	49.8%
Damage to personal property	5.7%
Physical violence	4.7%
Other (please specify)	15.1%

Total branch responses: 829

The most common violent and aggressive behaviour that teachers are exposed to from parents is 'derogatory comments or gossiping about a teacher' – with over 72% of branches reporting this had happened to at least one teacher within the branch.

The following types of violence and aggression were then listed in descending rank order; 'intimidatory, obscene, or derogatory comments', then 'intimidatory threatening or derogatory emails, phone calls, SMS or letters' then 'verbal threats' then 'intimidatory threatening or derogatory comments on social media'. Even this type of violence and aggression – which was ranked 5th – had 49.8% of branches raising it.

Physical violence and damage to personal property were uncommon but still reported by 5% and 6% of our branch respondents, with physical intimidatory behaviour ranked 6th.

Parents and carers tend to use verbal comments and written words (by email or social media) to express their feelings with regard to teachers, many of which comment on the teachers' professionalism or character – i.e. derogatory language (aggression). There is a low reported risk of physical violence from parents/carers.

Employers should consider ways in which they can better protect their staff from violence and aggression at the workplace from parents. This may involve filtering emails, following up derogatory social media posts or better managing the interaction between parents/carers and teachers when pupils are dropped off or picked up.

Question 22: "Have teachers felt nervous or fearful of parents following an aggressive incident at any of the following places: (please tick all that apply)"

Figure 22

% of Branches

School property, including leaving or entering and school playing fields/sports fixtures — 72.4%

Online — 35.8%

Local shops or school area — 25.7%

At home — 6.7%

Other (please specify) — 22.3%
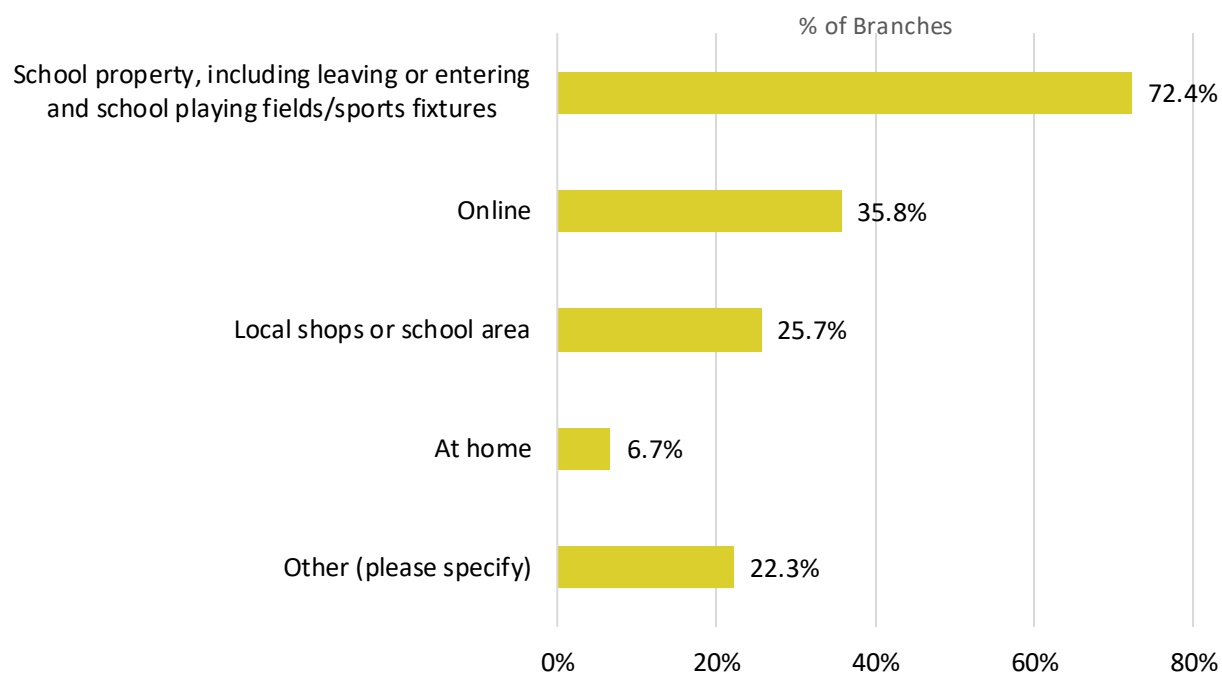
Total branch responses: 727

A majority (72.4%) of branches identified school property as where teachers felt nervous or fearful of parents following an aggressive incident.

However, it is surprising that a large number of branches identified other places where teachers felt nervous or fearful of parents; online and local shops/school areas. This finding suggests that many teachers have work-related fears outwith their workplace. This is a finding of concern and is likely to exacerbate affected teachers' stress levels.

Additional comments to Question 22

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 162 branches doing so. The majority stated that no one in their branch had felt nervous or fearful in any of the places listed following a violent or aggressive incident, and many others within this category said they had not experienced any incidents with parents or carers.

> *"None"*

> *"None of the above"*

> *"N/A"*

> *"Not aware of any incidents outside of school"*

> *"No. Teachers have not felt nervous in any of the above places."*

> *"Not as directly, but teachers we work with are fearful to reprimand pupils to harshly in case of repercussions"*

Some branches offered more specific places where they had felt nervous or fearful including at parents' evenings, in sports facilities, or feeling uneasy at the end of the school day when parents or carers would be picking up their children. Parent's evenings were identified as a specific issue by many responses.

Uneasy at pick-up time (after school)

Meetings with parents

This tends to arise around parents' evenings

"Inappropriate comments on school-home messaging app (Dojo)"

"Parents nights -anxiety surrounding parents nights"

"Not aware of any incidents outside of school"

"At school events or parental meetings where staff are not comfortable being left alone"

"Teaching in a rural community poses its own problems regarding encounters with parents outside of school."

We sometimes ask for another member of staff to attend a meeting

"Parents' nights - isolated in rooms that are far from S.L.T."

"Parents nights -anxiety surrounding parents nights"

Other than parent's evenings, emails and phone calls were identified by many branches as an issue causing nervousness or fearfulness:

"Fear of phone calls emails parents night

"Emails and calls

"Phone calls"

"Emails from parents during lockdown and since."

Question 23 "How often (in general) have incidents of parental aggression towards teachers occurred?"

Figure 23
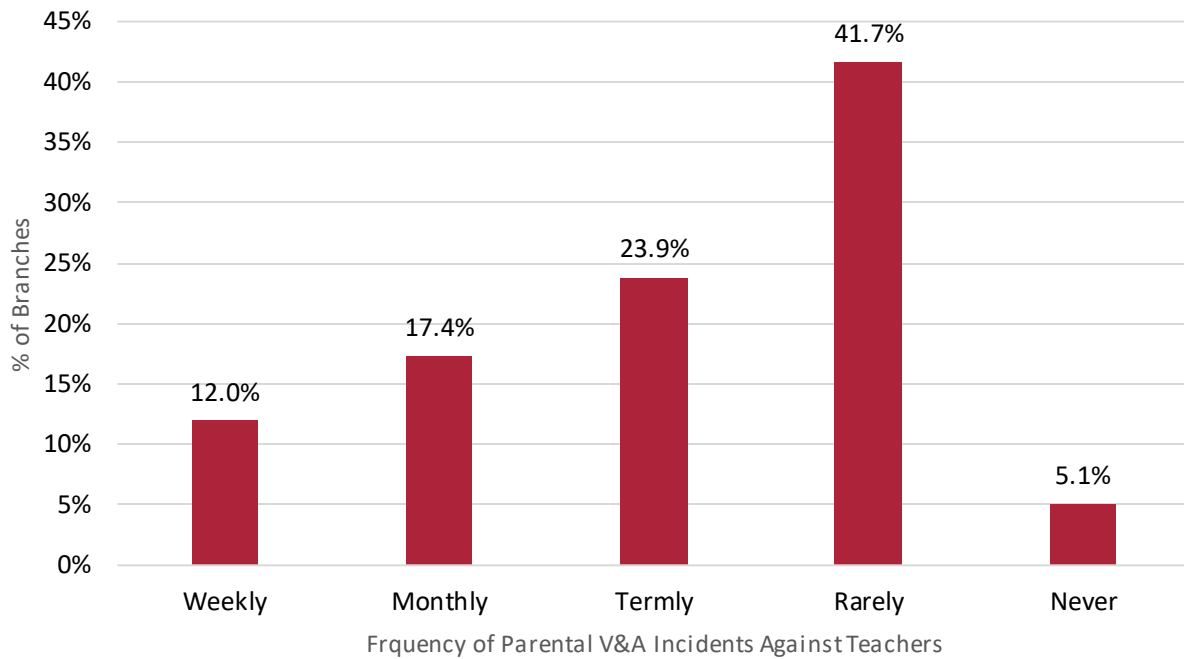
Total branch responses: 859

Over half of branches (53.3%) reported parent/carer incidents of violence and aggression on teachers happened termly, monthly or weekly. This shows that the majority of schools surveyed are experiencing multiple incidents of violent and aggressive behaviour from parents throughout the school year.

This finding must be a cause of stress for a significant number of teachers.

Almost 42% of branches reported that parent/carer-on-teacher incidents were rare, with a further 5% saying they had never happened.

Question 24: "Are incidents of parental aggression towards teachers becoming more or less frequent?"

Figure 24
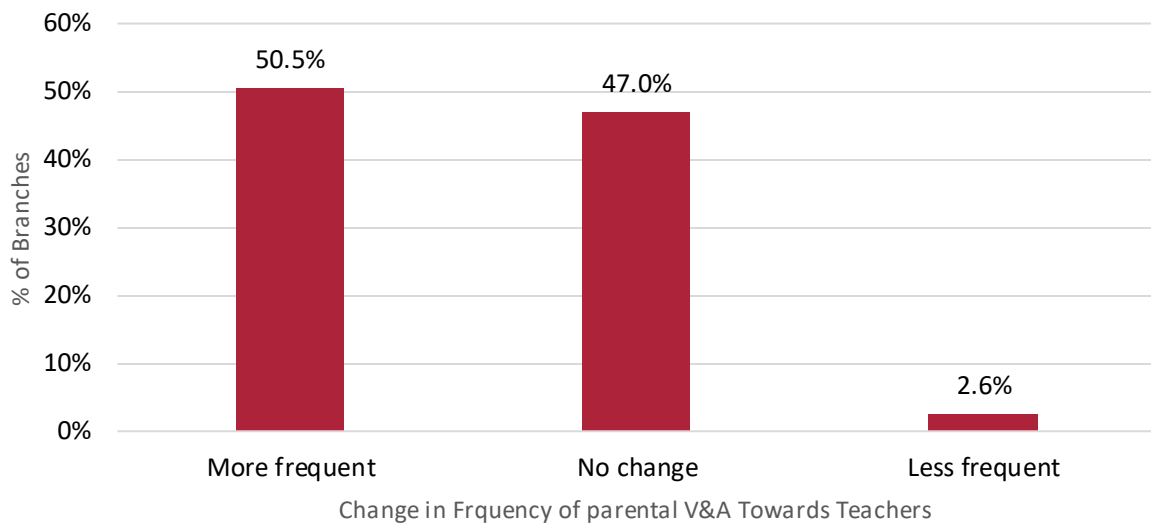
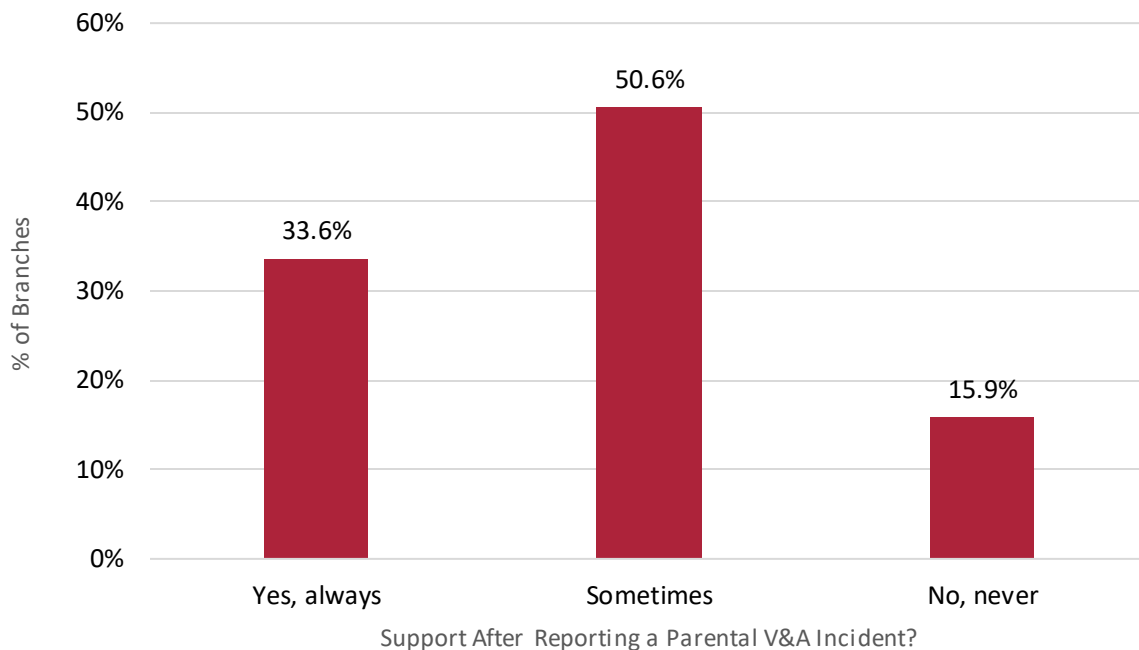*Total branch responses: 854*

Just over half of branches (50.5%) responded that parent/teacher-on-teacher 'violence and aggression' was becoming more frequent.

A further 47% of branches responded there was no change in such incidents, just under 3% said they were becoming less frequent.

Not only is parent/carer-on-teacher violence and aggression a significant issue, it seems to be getting worse.

Question 25: "Does the branch feel, in general, that teachers are supported after they report an 'incidence of aggression' or even violence from parents/carers towards teachers?"

Figure 25

Total branch responses: 825

Branches responded that when teachers report an incidence of 'violence or aggression' from a parent or carer only a third (33.6%) of branches replied that they always felt supported by the school with a further half (50.6%) of branches responding that they sometimes felt supported.

At best the large number of branches that said that members felt "sometimes" supported by their school after violent and aggressive incidents by parents/carers on teachers is a cause for concern. There is a great deal of inconsistency here, and teachers are not sure that they will be supported if they make a complaint. This is a finding of concern.

A number of branches (16%) responded that their local authority never supported teachers after such incidents.

Responses to other questions in the survey also give an adverse view of the amount and quality of local authority support to teachers after reporting a 'violent and aggressive' incident.

Question 26: "Are there ways that teachers could be better supported after reporting a parent/guardian who was violent or aggressive?"

Figure 26 Table themes Identified from responses to Q27

Theme	Count	%
Clear process needed	182	27.7%
N/A; Not sure	131	20.0%
SLT should lead	122	18.6%
Wider back up needed	105	16.0%
No back up	28	4.3%
Time to recover	27	4.1%
Parents views prioritised	23	3.5%
Clear process in place	18	2.7%
Restorative conversations	11	1.7%
Counselling	9	1.4%
Total	**656**	**100.0%**

Total Branch responses 656

Very few branches who responded to this question (2.7%) felt that they had a clear policy or process regarding parental aggression in place. A further 28 branches (4.3%) felt that further support was required concerning parental aggression against teachers, often because parental aggression was not seen to be an issue for that branch. This is quite a small proportion of responses to this question.

A number of recurring themes could be identified concerning possible options for further action in this area. The most prevalent response was that a clear policy and process for dealing with parental aggression needed to be put in place. This needs to set out behaviour expectations, processes to be followed, and possible consequences for parents of not meeting expectations in terms of behaviour. A reference to 'zero tolerance' approaches was made by 44 branches. A high number of branch responses suggested that senior leadership teams within a school should lead on communication with parents who have been aggressive towards teachers and that communications should go through school leaders following any incident. There was also a view that school leaders should be more visible during instances where teachers come in contact with parents i.e. playground at drop off and pick up times, and parents evenings.

> *"Introducing a zero tolerance policy, with robust consequences."*

> *"Having clear procedures in place to ensure staff know what the policies are if they are victims of parental abuse."*

> *"Members would like to see a policy/process/guidelines drawn up for managers to assist them in delivering consistent support to affected colleagues. Members also feel that they should not be required to engage further with those parents."*

Another recurring theme was the request for wider backup from authorities beyond the school in instances of parental aggression. This could come from social work or other support bodies, but significantly branches

report a lack of current back up from their local authorities, even where relevant policies are currently in place. Police involvement was also mentioned by a number of branches (54).

> *"It's a wider criminal justice issue beyond the school's control. Perhaps automatic relocation of the pupil to another school following an incident?"*

> *"The branch believes violence towards teachers in the workplace should be an immediate police referral. In no other workplace would this be acceptable."*

> *"I think the Council should think about ways to support teachers. It shouldn't always be the school management."*

There were a number of themes pertinent to teacher wellbeing directly. Concerningly, a number of branches (23) reported that teachers did not feel supported in aggressive incidents with parents, with a feeling that parents' views are prioritised over the concerns of teachers.

> *"There is frequently the attitude that we should give the parents what they want even if we don't really have the staffing or resources to do this and the other pupils suffer. It would be good if teachers were listened to and be able to give their side of the story and a compromise decided on. Teachers are often left feeling that they are in the wrong and they get no respect."*

A number of suggestions were made that could help support teachers more directly in terms of responding to these incidents and supporting teacher wellbeing afterwards. Ideas included supporting restorative conversations with parents and teachers, providing time after incidents for teachers to recover and reset, and formal counselling being offered to teachers. These are all practical solutions, but the views were clear that clear and robust policies and procedures, consistently applied, with back up from wider organisations (including the employing local authority and police) are required in response to parental aggression.

> *"Given time to pull myself together before going back into class."*

> *"Better layout at parents evening - teachers are in their rooms alone"*

Question 27: "Does the branch believe, in general, that pupils' unmet ASN needs exacerbate violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour from pupils?"

Figure 27
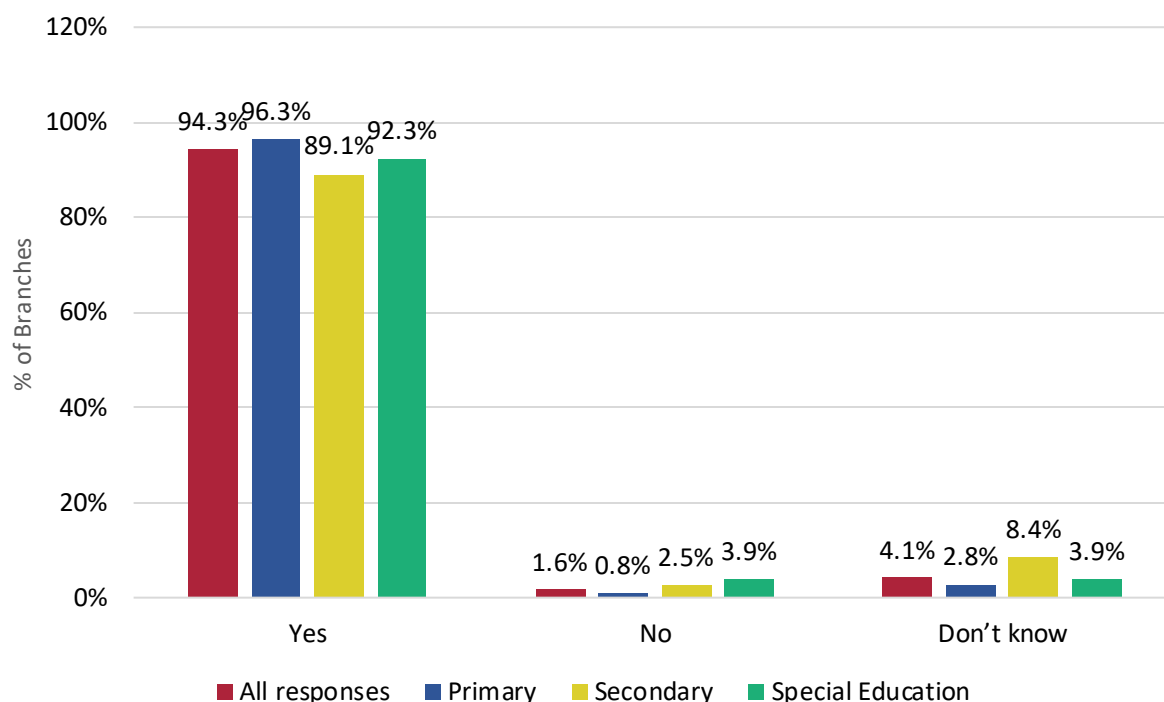
Total branch responses: 869

Over 9 out of 10 branches responded to agree with the statement that, in general, pupils' unmet ASN needs exacerbate violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour from pupils.

The average across all sectors was 94.3%, with a slight dip at 89.1% for secondary and slightly higher for primary schools (96.3%).

A vast majority of branches recognise that the unmet needs of ASN pupils exacerbate violence and aggression within schools. It is also clear from written comments that the behaviour of many ASN pupils (and 34% of pupils in Scotland have recognised ASN needs[4]) has a wider impact on the school community.

It is interesting to note that 92.3% of special school branches believed that ASN needs to exacerbate violence and aggression. This would indicate that Special Schools are having similar problems to mainstream schools in meeting ASN needs.

Witnessing 'violence and aggression' has an impact on all pupils, and the embedding of a school culture of violence and aggression affects all pupils.

The educational impact of violence and aggression is explored elsewhere in this paper.

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[4] https://www.gov.scot/publications/research-provision-pupils-complex-additional-support-needs-scotland/pages/3/

Additional Comments to Question 27

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 393 branches doing so. Most of these comments highlighted members' frustration at the under-resourcing of ASN provision.

> *"So many young people receiving minimal support for conditions that can lead to emotional dysregulation (for example) and being expected to manage this in a class of 30 without any additional support in the class. Not enough PSAs to go round. Teachers not having the time or space in their timetable to offer individualised support themselves. Lots of young people with undiagnosed conditions due to NHS waiting lists for CAMHS."*

> *"More children with more complex needs and less support and less resources in an environment not equipped to meet their needs."*

> *"A lot of our incidents are made worse because our continually increasing amount of children with ASN have unmet needs."*

Some branches highlighted their challenges at mainstreaming pupils who were previously in specialist schools, or placed within a support-based unit in a mainstream class and were now having to spend significant periods of time within a mainstream setting without the support they were previously getting.

> *"The drive to the 'presumption of mainstreaming' without reduced class sizes creates difficulties in managing such incidents of violence & aggression"*

> *"Absolutely, as teacher we are not told a lot about the background of certain pupils and best strategies. There are so many pupils with ASN that are existing in large mainstream classes that do not suit them."*

> *"Mainly due to the fact that children who would previously been placed in a base school are now in a mainstream school where ASN needs cannot be met due to larger numbers of children with ASN needs across the school. This is having a significant impact on the learning of all others in the classroom."*

> *"More and more ASD pupils who cannot cope in busy classes are being expected to integrate in mainstream without support."*

Some comments regarding the 'presumption of mainstreaming' by a small number of branches in Question 37.

Some members also highlighted the added difficulties in trying to de-escalate behaviours with children and young people with more complex ASN whilst also trying to teach the full class.

> *practice, nurture, RRS and understanding distressed behaviours guidance. On one hand we are encouraged to support and understand all behaviour as communication, however when the behaviour is threatening or violent can it be considered acceptable. Members broadly feel issues with unmet needs exacerbate extreme behaviours, and often those needs make de-escalation difficult when also dealing with a full class."*

Smaller class sizes were raised by many branches as a way to better support all pupils and reduce violent and aggressive incidents. This belief is particularly true of the primary sector.

> *"We are a specialist ASN school where we aim to meet the needs of our ASN pupils. Sometimes in a low sensory space will assist with de-escalation"*

> *"There is some dubiety amongst members in where the line is with the attachment informed*

Some comments suggested that the unmet needs of ASN pupils were affecting our pupils:

"Mainly due to the fact that children who would previously been placed in a base school are now in a mainstream school where ASN needs cannot be met due to larger numbers of children with ASN needs across the school. This is having a significant impact on the learning of all others in the classroom."

"Inclusion is becoming exclusion at the expense of the rest of the class. Some classes have high levels of ASN making it impossible to effectively teach."

Staffing and resource cuts impact on ASN was also raised by several branches:

"Staffing has been continually cut. Budgets have been continually cut. The building (and ours is fairly new) does not lend itself to meet all the pupil's needs. We do not have the staffing, resources and suitable environment to meet a wide range of pupil's needs."

"100%. Inadequate staffing levels, lack of specialist support, lack of resources/funding and lack of training of support staff all combine to exacerbate violence."

"The reason for this is due to the fact the staffing and resources are not available to meet the needs of these children. CAMHS waiting list (156 weeks) for an appointment has a big impact on being able to support."

The lack of support from external agencies was also cited by branches:

"Not enough support staff/SLAs to support number of pupils needing individual attention particularly at break. Undiagnosed children can lead to stressed parents and teachers trying to support pupils - long waiting lists for eg CAMHS."

"Huge gaps in support from associated agencies - social work, Ed Psych, CSW, mental health workers leaves schools to pick up the slack. This also puts families under pressure which impacts on learners with ASN"

A few comments were generally positive regarding ASN provision.

Support after these types of incidents has generally been good. Staff have appreciated being joined at follow-up meetings and parents' meetings by members of the management team.

"Too broad a question. Whilst some ASN students have their needs met VERY effectively, others less so due to ongoing staffing shortages, and lack of consultation with staff about when and how much they should be engaged with mainstreams. In addition, behavioural issues often not as well diagnosed, recorded and supported as issues such as dyslexia, mobility etc."

Question 28; "Does the branch believe, in general, that pupils' unmet ASN needs exacerbate aggressive or violent behaviour from parents/carers?"

Figure 28

Do unmet ASN needs exacerbate V&A Incidents on Teachers by Parent/Carers?
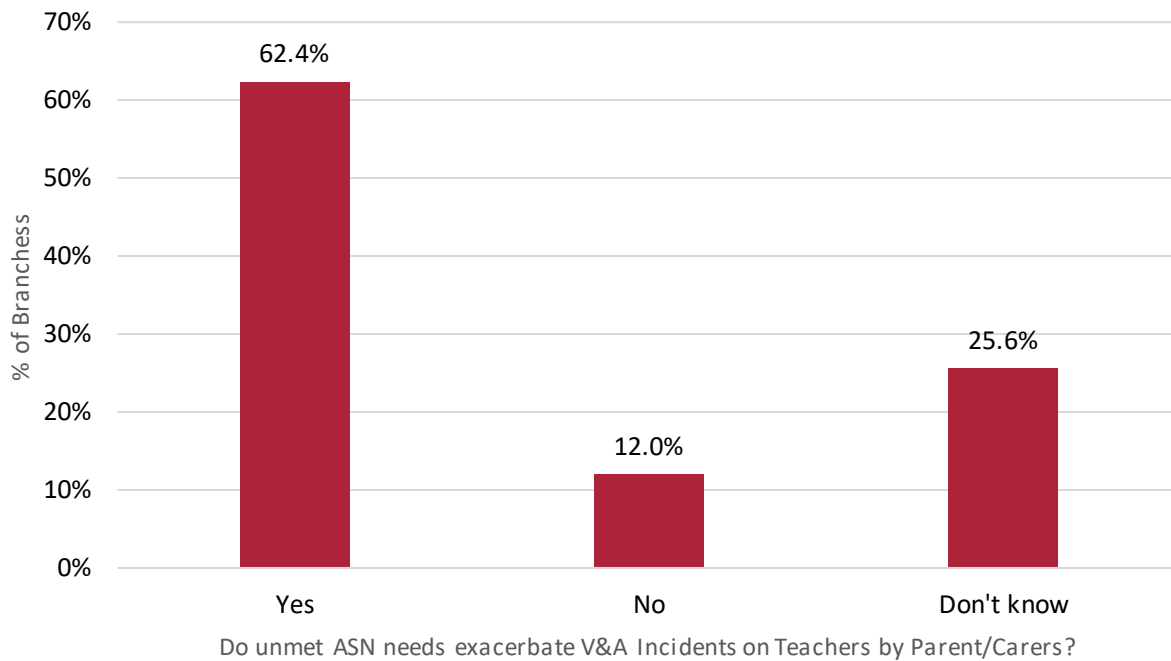
Total branch responses: 867

Almost two-thirds of branches (62.4%) responded that unmet ASN needs of pupils also exacerbated aggressive or violent behaviour from parents/carers to teachers. Only a small number of branches (12.0%) disagreed with this statement.

This data would seem to suggest that parents are frustrated that the ASN needs of their offspring are not being met and are taking it out on teachers – i.e. the parents/carers' point of contact with the school system.

This finding reinforces other findings in this report and suggests that local authorities/Scottish Government under- resourcing of ASN is having several impacts – on the ASN pupils, their parents, other pupils and on teachers.

Section 4: The Impact of 'Violence and Aggression' in Schools

Question 29 "Does violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour, including persistent low-level disruption, in your school have an effect on pupils' learning?"

Figure 29
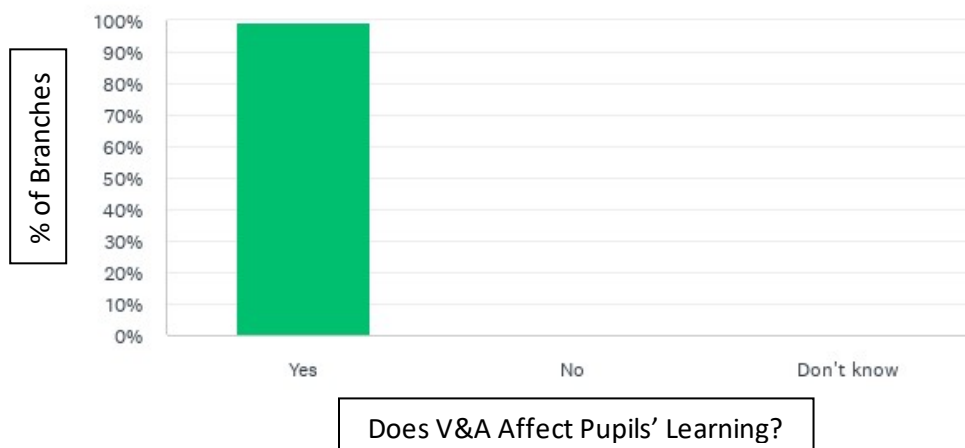
Total branch responses: 866

Almost all branches, 99% agreed that "violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour, including persistent low-level disruption, in your school" has an effect on pupils' learning.

The remaining 1% of Branches were recorded as "no" or "don't know".

This finding underlines the far-reaching impact of violence and aggression; the impact on learning as well as the impact on pupil safety and wellbeing.

Question 29 Part 2

"If "Yes" [in answer to question 3029 please indicate how you believe your pupils' learning is affected:(Tick all that apply)"

Figure 29: Table showing "If "Yes" [in answer to question 29] please indicate how you believe your pupils' learning is affected:(Tick all that apply)"

% of Branches

It disrupts the teaching and learning — 99.8%

It disrupts certain types of work or pedagogies (e.g., independent learning or group work) — 94.9%

Other pupils' behaviour is adversely affected — 96.8%

It's difficult to maintain or regain pupils' attention or focus — 96.9%

I have to keep certain pupils separated to try to avoid violent and aggressive incidents taking… — 92.7%

Other (please specify) — 21.5%
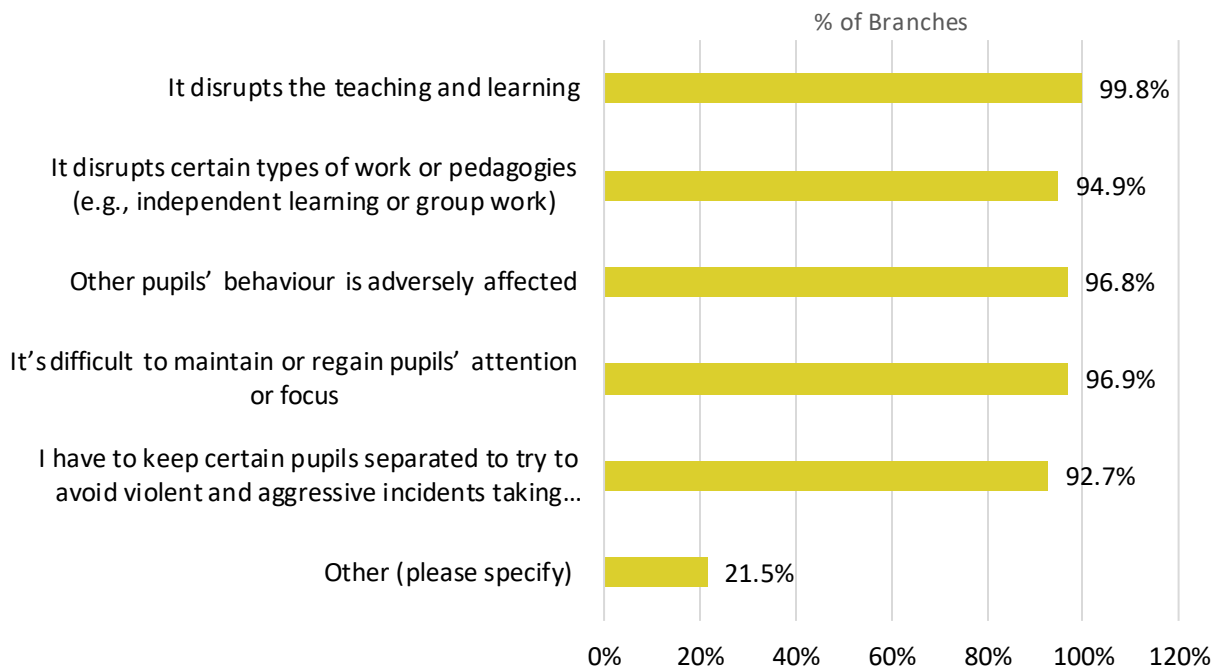
Total branch responses: 864

Of the 99% of branches who indicated "yes" in the first section outlined the nature of the impact on pupils' learning in the second part of the question; almost every branch (99.8%) indicated that 'teaching and learning' was disrupted, followed by 'difficult to maintain or regain pupils' attention' (96.9%) and then followed closely by 'other pupils' behaviour is adversely affected' (96.8%) then 'it disrupts certain types of pedagogies' (94.9%).

These answers reflect the wide-ranging impact that violent and aggression incidents have in the classroom and their undoubted effect on 'teaching and learning'.

Answers breakdown the impact of the teachers' pedagogy on teaching – and keeping some pupils apart will have an impact on group work or carousel work. [Other aspects of the survey have referenced the amount of time spent on dealing with violent and aggressive incidents – again this will have an impact on teaching]. The impact on pupils' learning is also identified – other pupils' behaviour and the fact that pupils are less able to focus on their work.

According to Maslow[5], human needs were arranged in a hierarchy, with physiological needs at the bottom, then safety needs, belonging, esteem and the more creative and intellectually oriented 'self-actualization' needs at the top. Maslow considered them as a hierarchy - with physiological and safety needs needing to be met before a person can begin to satisfy higher needs that lead to learning.

'Violence and aggression' disrupt the 'safety needs' of order, stability, predictability, safety and pupils' feeling of control in their environment. Within Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which has been generally accepted for around 75 years in the education community, the impact of not satisfying 'safety needs' in the classroom will hinder the higher skills of learning (i.e. self-actualisation).

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[5] https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-4136760

Additional responses to Question 29

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 186 branches doing so, and these gave further details and examples on the effects of violence and aggression on teaching and learning.

The effect on teaching is referenced frequently.

> *"Teachers are firefighting and are unable to 'teach' the way they intend to."*

> *"Needing to use PSA support for behaviour rather than learning."*

> *"Affects pace of learning and enthusiasm of other pupils. Affects ability to build relationships with all pupils - less time available for rest of class and may have to be more strict than otherwise. Incidents often spill into corridors and affect other classes."*

The fact that classrooms were not safe was frequently referenced:

> *"environment no longer safe and secure therefore trust in teacher is lost"*

> *"Pupils and staff simply don't feel safe at times. Even incidents in other rooms impact across the school as staff are shifted to fire fight incidents."*

A significant number of responses indicated the impact on pupils' wellbeing and mental health; that pupils become anxious and fearful of other pupils. In some cases, this has resulted in them missing out on days at school because of their anxiety, and in a small number of examples given some pupils have even changed school as they are so afraid of some pupils.

> *"Negative impact on mental health. Children are scared and do not want to come to school."*

> *"All of the above are happening to a large extent, not just a little and the effect it has is significant and constant all day, every day. Lessons are repeatedly interrupted and the pace of learning is affected. It affects staff and pupils' mental health and confidence."*

> *"We have had pupils that have been so anxious that they have not come to school, in some cases we have had pupils removed by parents and moved to other schools. This is due to children feeling so unsafe in their classrooms."*

> *"Children are traumatised by regular instances of violence in the class, and no longer view school as a safe place. Children who come from backgrounds of domestic violence can be triggered and re-traumatised when witnessing violence at school. Learning time is lost to resolving incidents, providing first aid, and helping children to feel safe again."*

Branches raised the issue of 'open plan' schools where the disruption in one class can affect another class. Furthermore, some comments referenced damage to their teaching resources making it difficult to continue teaching the lesson, or future lessons.

> *"Destruction of resources and damage to the classroom environment, additional planning required, sacrifice of space in classrooms"*

> *"Open plan layout of school, another class could be disruptive and it has an impact in all classes in the area."*

"Pupils not feeling safe because of the 'few'. Gaps in the day if have to evacuate classroom. Trauma of room being trashed. Trauma of experiencing violent behaviour. Resources being broken."

Some comments also talked about the knock-on affect on other pupils as staff members are pulled to help manage behaviour issues. There were also examples cited of violence, aggression or disruptive behaviour spilling out into the corridors and even into other classes.

"Affects pace of learning and enthusiasm of other pupils. Affects ability to build relationships with all pupils - less time available for rest of class and may have to be more strict than otherwise. Incidents often spill into corridors and affect other classes."

Question 30: "What impact does violent, disruptive or aggressive behaviour in your school have on pupils' behaviour? (tick all that apply)"

Figure 30

% of Branches

Category	%
Some pupils are less focussed on their work	98.2%
Some pupils are more agitated or more nervous in class	96.5%
Some pupils are withdrawn in class	94.0%
Some pupils seem less happy in class	94.8%
Some puils are more likely to be disruptive in class	95.9%
Some pupils are more likely to become angry or upset in class	92.9%
Other (please specify)	13.7%
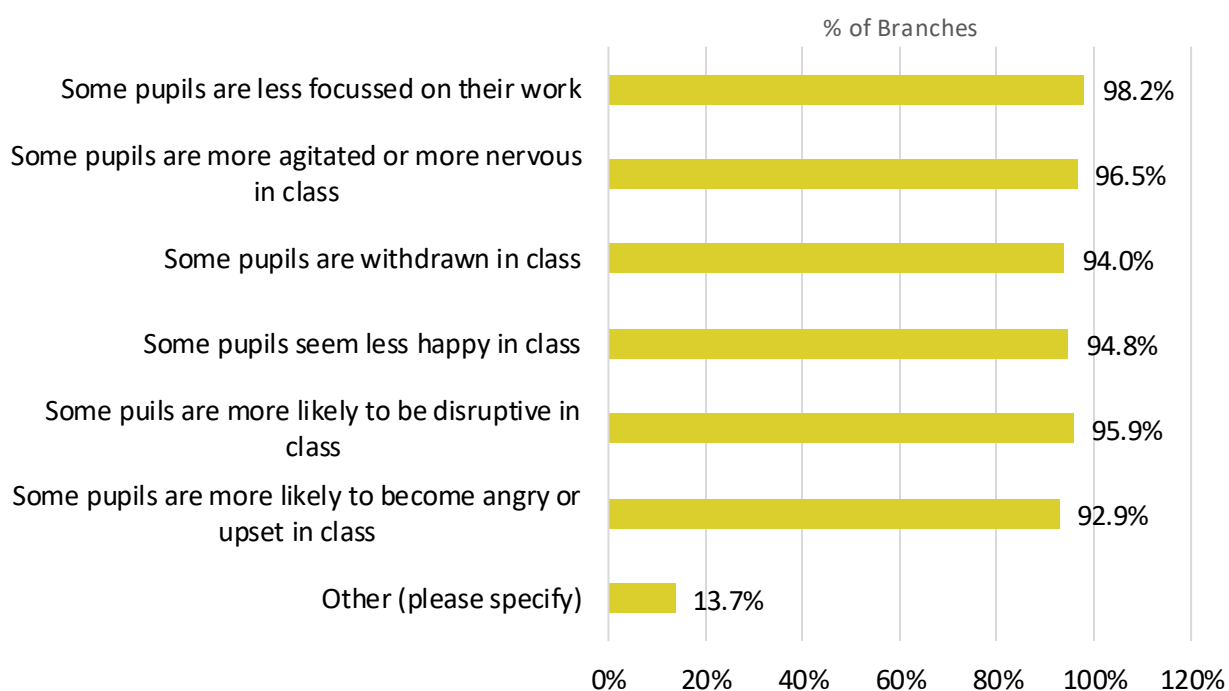
Total branch responses: 867

Almost all of the branches surveyed said that pupils are less focussed (98.2%), more agitated or nervous (96.5%), withdrawn (94.0%), less happy (94.8%), more likely to be disruptive themselves (95.9%) or become angry or upset (92.9%) as impacts of violence, disruption or aggressive behaviour have on pupils.

The impact of 'violence and aggression' on pupils' mindset, focus on work, sociability and happiness are set out in the branches' responses. These factors will hinder individuals' ability to fully participate in learning.

These impacts are also going to have an impact on pupils' wellbeing as well as their behaviour.

Additional Comments to Question 30

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 119 branches doing so.

Most answers amplified and added branches' own experiences of the types of impact outlined above.

> *"Some children are displaying anxious, distressed behaviours at home having witnessed incidents in class or school or have been subject to aggressive behaviour themselves."*

A large number of comments said that some pupils don't want to come to school as a result of the behaviours they have seen in class.

> *"School refusal and attendance, want sent home. Also less likely to find these behaviours unacceptable - normalising this behaviour in society"*

"Can affect attendance. There are also pupils who have to leave classes early because of fears about being in corridors - this means they lose learning or staff have to plan differently to compensate for this."

"Some children become too anxious and don't want to come to school - there is a real impact on their attendance."

"Anxiety leading to truancy from class/school."

"School Avoidance, Pupils feel unsafe."

Many also shared their experiences of pupils developing anxiety or poor emotional regulation following continued disruption in class.

"scared, anxious and not wanting to come into school"

"Children show signs of fear of other pupils and symptoms of anxiety."

"Having a negative impact on pupils' mental health because they are worried something will happen and are constantly on high alert."

There were also a considerable number of comments that suggested that some pupils may copy the disruptive and aggressive behaviour of other pupils, leading to more class time being affected by behaviour.

"Less emotionally regulated, copy behaviours of others, time issues/frustration"

"Children can copy behaviours that they witness."

"Pupils are displaying the behaviours they see."
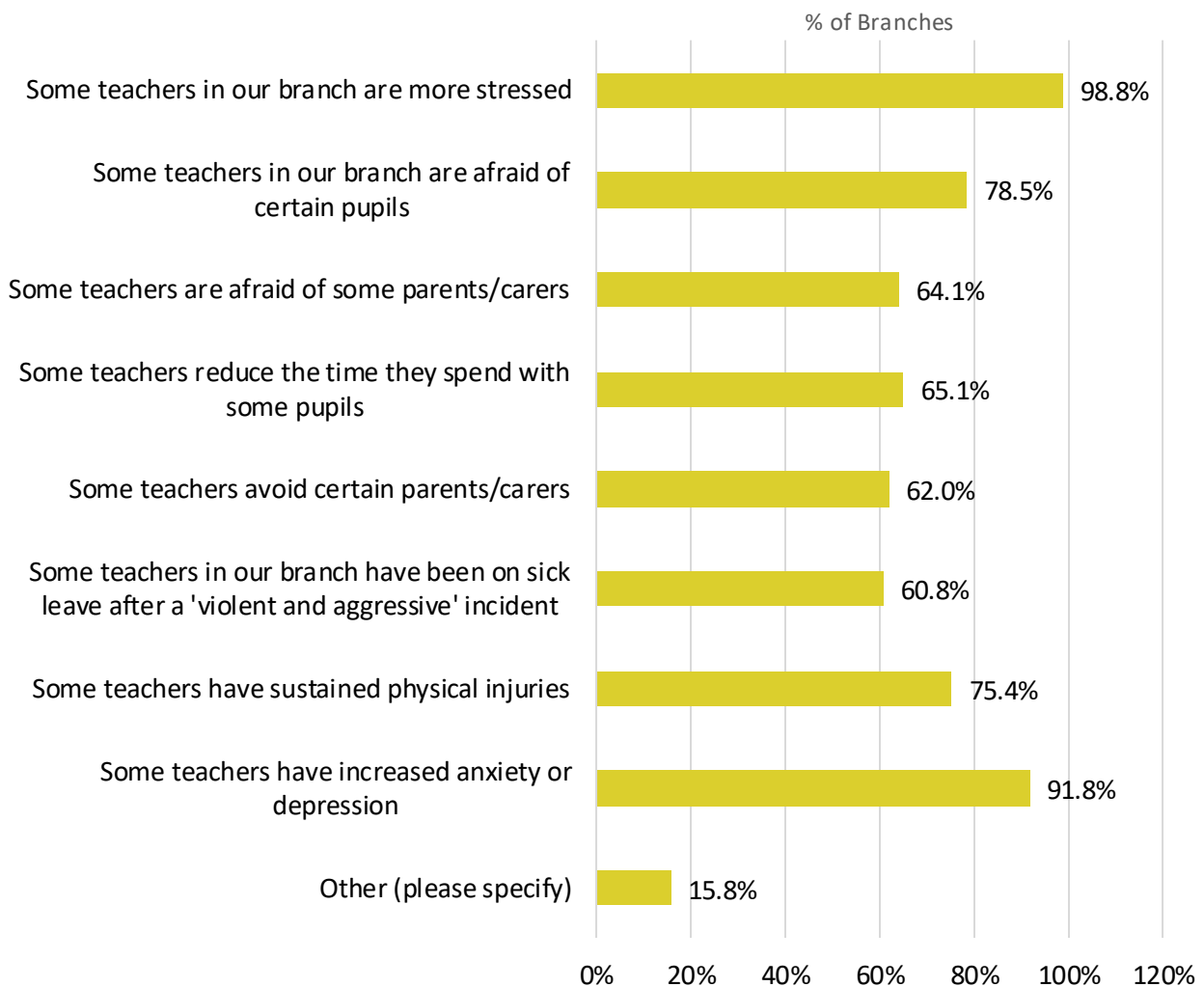
"Mirroring of behaviour!"

Some responses referenced the adverse impact on attainment.

"Attainment is affected. Overall class and school dynamic is affected. Less time to give other pupils 1:1 focus."

"The attainment is dropping as teaching time is taken up with the other incidences"

Question 31: "What impact does violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour have on your [i.e. Teachers] wellbeing? (tick all that apply)"

Figure 31

% of Branches

Category	Value
Some teachers in our branch are more stressed	98.8%
Some teachers in our branch are afraid of certain pupils	78.5%
Some teachers are afraid of some parents/carers	64.1%
Some teachers reduce the time they spend with some pupils	65.1%
Some teachers avoid certain parents/carers	62.0%
Some teachers in our branch have been on sick leave after a 'violent and aggressive' incident	60.8%
Some teachers have sustained physical injuries	75.4%
Some teachers have increased anxiety or depression	91.8%
Other (please specify)	15.8%

Total branch responses: 865

Almost all branches reported an increase in stress, anxiety and depression for some teachers in their school. At 91.8% this is a remarkably high figure, requiring a lot of honesty from teachers taking part in an open collective survey.

The impact on teachers was starkly illustrated by the following branch responses; More than three-quarters of branches (78.5%) said that some of their teachers are afraid of certain pupils, and 65.1% responded that some teachers spend less time with some students and 62.0 % responded that some teachers avoid certain parents/carers.

Three-quarters of branches (75.4%) said some of their teachers have sustained physical injuries and 61% said some of the teachers in their school had been on sick leave following a 'violent and aggressive' incident.

It would seem that to protect their own 'health, safety and wellbeing' and without sufficient protections from the employer, teachers are having to manage their engagements with certain pupils and parents.

Addition Comments to Question 31

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 137 branches doing so.

The vast majority of the comments left under this question highlighted just how badly some teachers have been affected by violence and aggression in their school – both from a personal wellbeing perspective and from a professionally demoralising perspective.

> *"Staff have a feeling of failure towards some pupils. Adds to workload as plans constantly have to change. Tired and exhausted, daily wondering what you are going to have to face each day. Impacting on homelife, can't leave it behind at teh end of the day, causes friction with loved ones who are worried."*

> *"Increased stress •Unable to complete job well and as successfully as we would like. •Less job satisfaction than there ever was."*

> *"It can make us doubt our abilities as a teacher. It makes you wonder why we are in this profession sometimes."*

A significant number of the comments referenced staff members who were contemplating leaving the profession or colleagues who had already left as a result of pupil behaviour and workload.

> *"Staff wellbeing very low, multiple members of staff looking for new jobs. Previous staff members have left the profession completely."*

> *"One teacher has reduced her hours from full-time to part-time due to violent incidents. We suspect this is also the reason why our Probationer Teacher left recently."*

Many talked about the compounding personal health effects of dealing with violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour, with staff members not always off work following one particular incident, but from consistently working in a hostile environment.

> *"General health: stress levels are higher, blood pressure could go up, less sleep over worries which impacts blood sugar levels and digestive system etc."*

> *"Multiple teachers are medicated."*

> *"It has not been after one individual incident that teachers have been on sick leave but after repeated violent and aggressive incidents."*

> *"Can be triggering/upsetting later on - e.g. sleeplessness, worry. There is a big impact on workload with the number of referrals and Health and Safety forms which have to be completed and in supplying separate work when a pupil is removed. Staff are often unaware of previous incidents and there is not time for restorative meetings or communication following meetings which can leave staff in limbo and anxious about pupils returning."*

Accounts refer to significant impact on staff.

> *"In the last six months, two staff have had to attend hospital following violent incidents from pupils, both resulting in broken bones."*

"Several members of staff have attended their GP's due to their mental health. Frustration and general wellbeing.

"Teachers attending therapy sessions"

A number of responses referenced the impact on teachers' personal lives:

"Teachers' are looking for a way out. No work life balance.

"Staff have a feeling of failure towards some pupils. Adds to workload as plans constantly have to change. Tired and exhausted, daily wondering what you are going to have to face each day. Impacting on homelife, can't leave it behind at teh end of the day, causes friction with loved ones who are worried."

"home life/wellbeing/relationships, exhaustion, bingeing/unhealthy lifestyle mechanism"

Question 32: "Have some members of the branch considered leaving teaching as a result of violence and aggression that they have been subjected to, or needed to deal with?"

Figure 32
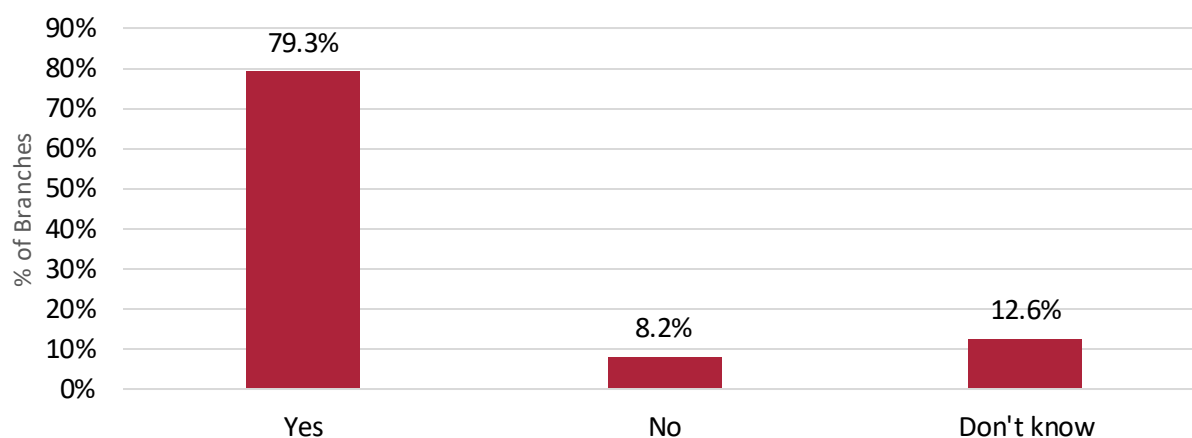
Total branch responses: 868

Almost 80% of branches reported (79%) that "members of the branch" considered leaving teaching as a result of the violence and aggression, with only 8% saying no.

Additional Comments to Question 32

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 224 branches doing so.

Almost all of the comments left gave further detail on the toll that working in such conditions has on teachers physical and mental health. Many of the branches commented that staff are reducing their hours as a coping mechanism, with many others citing examples where their colleagues have felt they had to leave their job because of violent and aggressive incidents. Below is a small, but representative sample of their responses:

> *"Many members have resorted to working reduced days and looking for alternative employment. Long term sickness is increasing."*

> *"Not for violence or aggression, but I am considering leaving teaching as I feel it has generally become harder to do because of disruptive behaviour and dwindling school budgets. I have been fortunate enough to not be subjected to extreme violence or aggression from pupils. But I think the vast majority of teachers feel worn down by constant low level disruptive behaviour. It does feel like low level behaviours are worsening and increasing with time and this undoubtedly has a negative impact on the energy of the teaching workforce and how effective we are at our jobs, especially when we only have 6 free 50 minute periods per week (if at maximum contact time). I find the negative behaviour and verbal abuse becomes wearing on a daily basis, and begins to break your spirit when you feel there is no end in sight."*

> *"It's a very different job than it used to be - if starting career now, I would not be a career teacher. Love of teaching but challenges in behaviour increasing year on year and support not in place to meet the needs of all pupils."*

*"Three teachers who have been very experienced and skilled have recently left the profession. Teaching comes second to behaviour management."*

"One particular teacher put in 5 violence forms to the council and the pupil continued to walk the school as a result the member of staff left."

"Yes 90% of our members are left feeling inadequate, have no confidence in teaching ability, questioning self constantly."

Question 33: "Does reporting 'violent and aggressive' incidents generate better outcomes? (tick all that apply)

Figure 33
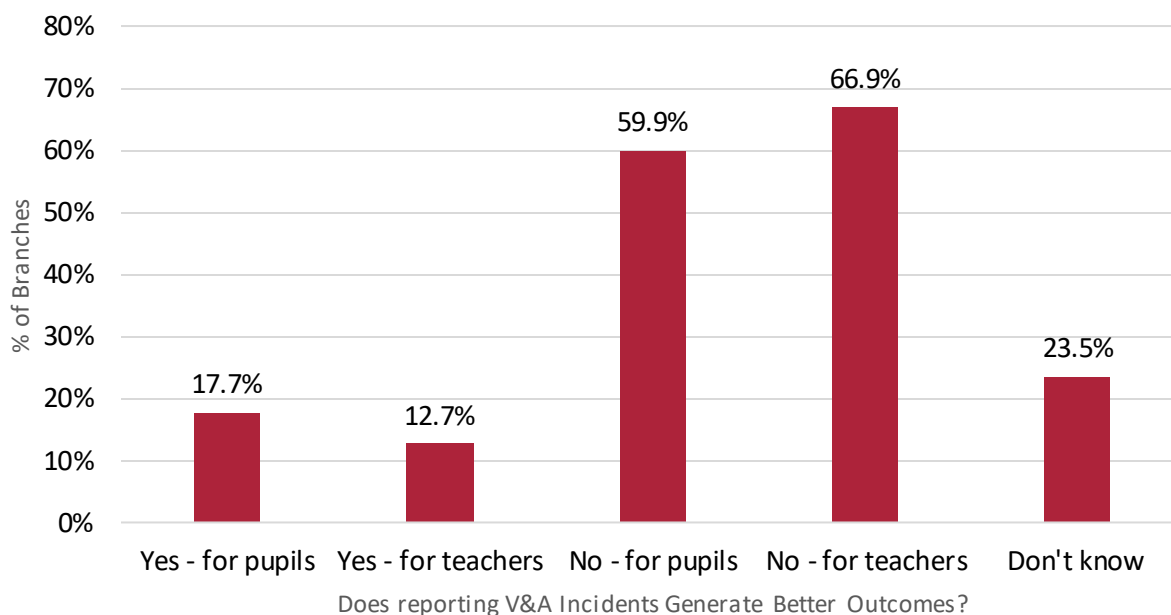
Total branch responses: 868

Most branches responded that they felt that reporting a 'violent and aggressive' incident did not generate a better outcome for pupils (59.9%) against 17.7% of branches that felt that it did produce a better outcome for pupils.

Most branches responded that they felt that reporting a 'violent and aggressive' incident did not generate a better outcome for teachers (66.9%) against 12.7% of branches that felt that it did produce a better outcome for teachers.

Additional Comments to Question 33

There was the opportunity to leave additional comments under this question, with 390 branches doing so.

Many of the comments referenced how teachers can be discouraged from filling in the relevant forms either because the forms and the process of reporting are very burdensome, or because there is no follow-up once the forms have been submitted.

> *"Reporting incidents can be discouraged and sometimes comes back on you."*

> *"Members don't see any tangible effects of the reporting system. It is inconsistent."*

> *"Many haven't completed incident forms due to the length of the form and this puts you off completing as we would regularly be completing for some pupils."*

> *"Doesn't resolve issue of not enough staff/support. Not encouraged to report incidents."*

Some branches reported worse outcomes for teachers following reporting.

"Actions are taken if there is a concentrated effort to systematically report, however this often means that the teacher is subjected to consistent questions or assumptions about their practice. For example Forced observations to look at the child which leads to increased stress."

Other branches reported that they did feel they were supported by the Senior Management Team, but there was no support from the local authority after filling reports.

"While reporting them does mean support from management team where appropriate, there is definitely not from the authority."

"Reporting is just a paper work exercise. Nothing seems to happen after forms are filled in. Our school does all we can, but it is the council that need to take action."

Some responses highlighted inconsistent and variable outcomes to reporting incidents:

Sometimes it generates better outcomes but not always.

A few of the comments highlighted the support they received from their colleagues following reporting, but again highlighted the lack of resources needed to properly support the pupils affected. Below are a small sample of the comments received:

"When behaviours are reported, the impact is only short term as we do not have enough staff to make a long term change."

Some responses outlined good practice and support they received:

"At this school SMT are very supportive of staff and creative in how we work together to support children - so it does change things on an immediate level. Stress points and triggers are responded to and strategies are put in place to support children and care for all involved."

"Now that our school is more aware of the proper procedures involved when we report violent incidents we are hoping it will improve. However, we are also aware it is not a magic wand and might take a long time for anything to happen."

Question 34: "What has worked well to support pupils in dealing with "violent and aggressive" behaviour at your school?"

Figure 34

Theme	Count	%
Nurture/Nature approaches	137	17.2%
1:1 or specialist support	122	15.3%
Nothing/not sure	122	15.3%
More staff & resources overall	99	12.4%
Supportive SLT & management approaches (whole school etc)	82	10.3%
Consequences - exclusion, no rewards	77	9.7%
Flexible, bespoke or reduced timetables	51	6.4%
Partnerships with parents or other external agencies	50	6.3%
Restorative practice	40	5.0%
Risk assessments	9	1.1%
counselling	7	0.9%
Total	**796**	**100.0%**

Total branch responses 796

This question prompted a broad range of responses from branches but with little overall agreement on the best approaches to support pupils in dealing with 'violent and aggressive' behaviour at school. Some responses focused on supporting victims of this behaviour, others focused on those struggling with behavioural control, whilst others focused on wider environments and school approaches to behaviour more generally. Overall, it was clear that many schools are struggling with violence and aggression and that for many, this is getting worse.

> *"We feel as though the school is in crisis."*

> *"System needs an overhaul. Mostly ineffective and getting worse."*

> *"Very little appears to have worked in our school and I feel that violent and aggressive behaviour have become worse as a whole."*

A strong recurring theme was that of insufficient resources within schools to deal with violence and aggression, from simply having enough adults in the school to make children feel safe and respond to incidents, to specifically focused resources including nurture/support areas, specialist staffing, PSAs and sufficient numbers of management staff to deal with issues away for the classroom.

> *"1:1 support but then this takes away support for a large proportion of other children. It therefore has a negative impact on raising attainment."*

> *"Having enough staff to manage / support these pupils. Consistent staff that can build good relationships. Often however neither of these are often possible."*

> *"One to one support, additional down time for decompression outwith the classroom but not enough staff to provide these things for the pupils who require it."*

> *"Enhanced supports (for some but not all). However this is staffing intensive and cannot be supported due to staffing & budget cuts across the board."*

Many of the comments received from branches supported approaches that take a supportive, nurturing approach within schools. That included specific Nurture provision, nature and outdoor education approaches, multiple emotional literacy and wellbeing approaches, and specific whole-school approaches to mental wellbeing.

> "Nurture groups, focus on ASN and correct support, but funding is not there for all."

A number of branches were supportive of using restorative practice as a way of dealing with violence and aggression as a broad approach, but the benefits of these types of approaches were not seen across the board, often due to inconsistent application, or insufficient resources to delivery robustly within schools.

Whilst these nurturing, restorative and wellbeing type approaches were mentioned frequently by branches as a possible positive way to address and prevent violence and aggression in school, there was a clear message that many of these approaches are undermined by lack of staffing, funding cuts, and insufficient physical resources within schools.

> "Extra rooms in school for de-escalation (sensory room, quiet room, nurture room, supervised desks)."

> "1to1 teaching, small group teaching, nurture groups, being out of mainstream classes, soft starts, risk assessments, PEF funded PSAs to build relationships with pupils, de-escalation strategies, lunch away from the dinner hall, different areas of the playground, social stories."

> "Our (soon to be removed) nurture teacher has offered support to groups of vulnerable pupils who display violent and aggressive behaviour. The time she has been able to spend supporting them has been invaluable."

> "We aren't sure that anything is working well at the moment. Even though our school has a nurture room, it isn't staffed."

Similarly, having a well resources, sufficiently staffed and supporting senior leadership team was seen as important in tackling violence and aggression. This had multiple components, including: having sufficient management staff to provide leadership and hands-on support; clear and consistent whole-school approaches to tackling behaviour and supporting mental wellbeing; providing training from teachers; sufficient pastoral support to help prevent and de-escalate behaviours when issues arise; involvement of a wider community of support, including CAMHS, educational psychology and support from campus police where necessary.

An important part of that whole school approach again was linking to staffing and resourcing, so that class sizes and class pupil mixes are manageable to allow the establishment of positive relationships with all pupils. In addition, the involvement of parents in discussing behaviours and setting shared approaches to managing the behaviours was viewed as important, but not possible, for all pupils due to home circumstances.

> "Consistency, positive restorative conversations/behaviour management approaches, shared school values for whole school community, having support for learning workers, developing pupil relationships through HWB outcomes, having a DHT with the responsibility for HWB."

A range of practical solutions were offered to adjust the school day and school environment to help pupils who are struggling to better cope with the school day. This included developing reduced or flexible timetables for pupils, with soft starts or ends to the day, and shorter school days. For some pupils, this may require bespoke timetables or alternative curriculum provision, either within the school or elsewhere. There was an acknowledgement from some branches that alternative provision may be the only solution for some pupils

exhibiting violent or aggressive behaviour. This may be alternative schooling provision due to additional needs which are not able to be addressed within mainstream education due to ASN, or specialist provision for pupils at risk of exclusion due to their behaviour. Underpinning these approaches would require behavioural risk assessments, which are backed by robust and consistent action plans, supported by schools and parents alike.

> *"Have an alternative to exclusion hub to do work with pupils at risk of being excluded."*

> *"Alternative placements for pupils displaying above behaviour."*

> *"Inclusion, when it is prioritised over all else, is letting our young people down. A truly nurturing approach, and genuine implementation of what GIRFEC, involves, from my experience, some mechanism for removal"*

Finally, another strong theme in response to this question was that of clear and consistent boundaries, expectations, and crucially, consequences. The types of consequences mentioned ranged from simply having some time out from the classroom (not in a way that could be construed as a reward), to internal exclusion, removal of rewards such as class trips, to both suspension and exclusion of pupils.

> *"Consistency- sanctions and rewards implemented by class teacher/ support staff. Children see this and know this will happen/ is fair."*

> *"We are finding that the current situation is not working well as there are no consequences for such behaviour."*

> *"Not afraid to exclude / suspend / sideline pupils. Removal of rewards (e.g not attending trips).""*

> *"Management standing firm in their decisions regarding consequences for violent behaviour, regardless of pressure from parents to capitulate."*

> *"In the past, clear boundaries and consequences have worked as victimised pupils were aware of the next steps too. These have been replaced with restorative conversations which support neither party."*

The need for consequences, and in some cases exclusion, reflects the despair that was evident in many of the branch responses and the feeling of ineffectiveness of many of the current approaches being adopted, further undermined by lack of staff and resources. Approximately 15% of branch responses stated that they felt that there was nothing that could be done, or that they were unsure what could be done, to tackle violence and aggression as the perception is that nothing is currently making a difference.

Question 35: "What has worked well to support teachers in dealing with "violent and aggressive" behaviour at your school?"

Figure 35 Table using Tags to identify themes to responses of Q35.

Theme (Tag)	Count	Percentage[6]
Support from colleagues	392	50%
Time	278	36%
Support from SMT (Senior Management Team)	213	27%
Nothing, unsure	160	20%
Support in classroom	144	18%
Support from other agencies	125	16%
Training	113	14%
Guidelines and policies	90	12%
Exclusion/consequences	59	8%
Parental Support	34	4%
EIS support	31	4%
Reporting	25	3%
Total branch responses	782	

Total branch responses 782

Support from other teachers was cited as the most common response (50%) to "What has worked well to support teachers in dealing with "violent and aggressive" behaviour at your school?" Many branches talked about their colleagues as the only support mechanism they had available to them. When members did feel there was support available to them, they highlighted the significance of "time" (36%), in dealing with violent and aggressive incidents. First to ensure the incident is handled promptly, and secondly having the time available to de-escalate the situation and support the pupil as well as the teacher. SMT was ranked third (27%) as what has worked well, and "support in the classroom" was ranked fourth (18%).

Many branches highlighted the importance of having time built in to "debrief" after an incident. They found it helpful to share their experiences with their colleagues and to discuss how best to support pupils who were disruptive across classes. Where members felt there was support available to them, more than a third (36%) talked of the importance of time.

Some comments regarding the support from colleagues are set out below:

> "Discussing incidents as a staff group has been helpful."

> "Good colleague relationships."

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[6] All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number

"Colleagues supporting one another. Adequate staffing would help."

More than a quarter talked about the support they received from their Senior Management (or Leadership) Team but most wanted more from the senior management.

Hard line taken by senior management, when it happens. Groups of staff discussing behaviour and coming up with solutions together, allowing a student to work in a different room, for example (although a short term solution).

"The HT is always available to talk, strong staff relationships and mutual support."

"Management team stepping in to support class and pupil"

"Practical support / advice offered by SLT."

"When SMT are sympathetic and listen it helps but this does not always happen. When SMT are available to call for support when needed."

A fifth of the responses collected said that nothing has worked to support teachers in dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour, or that they were unsure what worked.

"Nothing as children aren't removed or have consequences or corrective action."

"There are almost no supports in place in school to help staff deal with these behaviours."

A few responses were critical of the implementation of restorative practice. This is a common message in the responses from many questions. A few commented that they did not feel they had the training needed to fully embed restorative practices in light of the increase in more serious incidents of violence and aggression.

"When restorative practice is done properly staff do feel supported."

"Restorative behaviour policy (when properly enforced at all levels), duty officer system"

"Restorative conversations between pupil and teacher when teacher and child are ready to talk"

A few years ago there was some workshops on restorative practices which you can argue can work in some instances, though is not a panacea for the issue. For teachers who have experiences of violent and aggressive behaviours there is little support.

Restorative interventions often help with particular pupils.

Check-ins from SLT, offering to remove pupil from class and time allocated to proper restorative meetings, offering to allow staff member time away from class to recover.

There were also a few mentions of the support that the senior management team provided in giving more background on a particular pupil so the teacher was better able to support them in their class.

"More sharing of children's needs and backgrounds"

"Communication with pupil support , communication about their background"

There were also a considerable number of comments that highlighted support in the classroom and from other agencies. These comments talked about the preventative effects of having additional support for learning staff in the classroom or getting bespoke support from other agencies such as speech and language

therapy, social work and even on occasion the police. Many talked about the delays they experienced once successful in getting referrals, but that once in place the support from other agencies helped to better regulate the pupils affected.

"Involvement of support agencies and an efficient and speedier system of diagnosis of ASN"

"External agencies working with pupils"

"Use of various partner agencies that can allow for targeted support for pupils."

Training was cited as an important element to support teachers in dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour. The training that branches listed included de-escalation training, MAPA (now known as CPI Verbal Intervention & CPI Safety Intervention), BSS (Behaviour Support Strategies), ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Awareness, Beacon Schools Support and CALM training. Many highlighted the importance of good quality training for all staff members with the growing number of incidents within their school.

"no changes - huge amount of training on restorative practice"

"CAHMS online training resource"

"Thanks to HR we are now getting some team teach training."

"De-escalation training is mandatory in our council, including MAPA."

"CALMS training but that is only available for some"

"Staff training, ACES, sensory room, circle approach, allocating one to one time with an adult, better relationship policy."

Guidelines and policies were mentioned a few times by members. Many talked about the importance of having clear guidelines and policies which were clear for all to understand and build strong relationships with the school, its staff and pupils. Many who talked about the importance of guidelines and policies also believed that these guidelines should communicate red lines of behaviour that would not be tolerated.

"Exclusion and other sanctions"

"Established, and followed, routines and procedures. The impact of when this is not done is quite severe. Learners have been sent home on informal exclusions so council policies are not being followed. This leads to staff being in more vulnerable positions and also increases parental aggression."

"Focused new Positive Behaviour policy"

Some branches said that when exclusions were used, this offered some support for the teachers and for the pupils who had been affected by violent and aggressive behaviour in their classrooms. Many of the responses gathered under this theme said that when pupils perceived that there were no consequences to their behaviour disruption, and violence and aggression escalated.

"Clear consequences followed through with showing support."

"Support from SMT, Exclusions/consequences"

"A consistent approach to consequences."

A small number (4%) of the comments received talked about the importance of parental support in dealing with violence and aggression from pupils.

"Acknowledgement from parents.

"Parents being involved and called into the school to be made aware of behaviours and impact on education."

"Parent supporting strategies"

"Parental involvement"

A further 4% mentioned the support they had received from the EIS, either through their branch or through their Local Association. This included risk assessments and individual support for staff members who were assaulted at work.

"EIS Support and advice"

"Active union representation and guidance."

"Being part of a Union is helpful. Having a strong branch to discuss with and take action where necessary as a group. E.g. emails to SLT outlining our concerns, involving Local Area Officer when necessary."

EIS support at branch and LA level should include advising members to report serious incidents or injuries arising from 'violent and aggressive' incidents to the police.

Furthermore, any EIS member absent from work due to injuries (physical and mental) arising from 'violence and aggression' should apply for Special Leave as set out in SNCT Section 6.23.

Two branch separate responses summarise many responses.

First response

- *Consistency*
- *Clear boundaries*
- *Part-time timetable when they are not coping with class.*
- *Additional support in class.*
- *Teachers being heard and feel like they are listened to and supported (but this doesn't always feel like the case)*
- *Nothing in place with teachers in mind.*
- *Cake in the staffroom*
- *Support from fellow teachers who have had a similar experience as you.*
- *Acknowledging it...the last two in-service days we have had were very welcome. I felt heard. We need to be helping staff before they escalate and go off ill.*
- *Providing strategies to use*
- *De-escalation*
- *Forming good relationships with the child and parents/regular contact*
- *Some good training, like NVR but it hasn't had much impact so far.*
- *Teachers are just expected to deal with it.*
- *Reduced timetables.*
- *Asna support to play games with pupils when they need time out.*

Second response:

- Positive behaviour plans
- Positive behaviour policy
- Restorative conversations with management
- CPI/MAPA training
- Radio System

- ➢ Supportive colleagues
- ➢ Support/Teaching Assistants
- ➢ Management support

Question 36 : "Which of the following suggested actions would best support pupils and teachers in dealing with 'violent and aggressive' behaviour? (tick top 3)"

Figure 36

Action	All responses	Primary	Secondary	Special Education
Increased support staff to support pupils with ASN	71.7%	75.5%	67.3%	65.4%
Increased support staff in lessons for all pupils	54.9%	61.3%	42.6%	32.7%
Increased teacher numbers	33.5%	33.7%	33.7%	26.9%
Smaller class sizes	66.7%	65.5%	72.8%	59.6%
Fewer weekly teaching hours	16%	12.1%	29.2%	7.7%
More teaching resources	11.8%	10.6%	13.4%	19.2%
More learning resources for ASN pupils	20.8%	19.8%	18.8%	34.6%
Better access to Education Psychologists or CAHMS	38.4%	39.2%	34.7%	38.5%
Better 'violence and aggression' procedures at school/local authority level	42.8%	39.9%	49.5%	51.9%
Better sharing of information related to previous 'violent and aggressive' incidents	22.3%	16.8%	35.6%	30.8%
More actions or support arising from reporting 'violent and aggressive' incidents	42%	41.2%	42.6%	46.2%
More long-term support for teachers who have been hurt or affected by 'violent and aggressive' incidents	21.5%	20.1%	21.3%	32.7%
More support for pupils who have been involved in a 'violent or aggressive' incidents	20.5%	18.6%	22.3%	32.7%
Greater support from outside agencies in schools (e.g., social work, educational psychologists, the police etc	37.5%	38.7%	31.2%	40.38%
De-escalation training	16%	16.1%	13.4%	23.1%
Pupil centred risk assessments	12.7%	12.6%	14.4%	5.8%
Total branch responses	865			

Total branch responses 865

When asked which actions would best support (all) pupils and teachers in dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour, increased support staff to support pupils with ASN was the most commonly recorded answer for both primary (75.5%) and special education branches (65.4%). Smaller class sizes were ranked second by primary branches, (65.5%) Secondary school branches (72.8%) recorded smaller class sizes as their favoured action, followed by 'Increased support staff to support pupils with ASN' (67.3%).

From the data above it is clear that branches recognise the need for multiple actions from increased support staff in lessons for all pupils, to better violence and aggression procedures at a school or local authority level.

Question 37: "Are there any other comments that the branch would like to add?"

Figure 37 Table showing major themes from "Are there any other comments that the branch would like to add?"

Tag	Branch Responses	Percentage of Branches that made response
Health and wellbeing	135	27.4%
Additional Support for Learning (ASL)	128	26.0%
Better policies and guidelines	87	17.7%
Mainstreaming	61	12.4%
More staff and resources	55	11.2%
Multi-agency support	54	11.0%
Training	41	8.3%
Better reporting	32	6.5%
Blame culture	30	6.1%
Smaller class sizes	27	5.5%
Zero Tolerance for Violence in Schools/Workplaces	19	3.9%
Space	14	2.8%
Other	84	

Total no of branches that responded 492

Finally, all branches were asked if they had any other comments they would like in consideration of violence and aggressive incidents in their school. In total 492 branches completed this open-ended question, and their responses were categorised into themes, with the 12 most common themes, listed in Figure 37 above.

Over a quarter of all comments received under this question mentioned the health, safety and wellbeing of teachers, or in some cases pupils, arising from so much violence and aggression within their school.

> *"Staff are finding these incidents are so frequent now it is massively impacting teaching, learning, mental health and wellbeing of staff and behaviours of other pupils."*

> *"Violence and abusive behaviour in schools is endemic. It is now so embedded in daily life that most members of the branch feel they spend less time teaching than ever before and more time dealing with abusive behaviour from individual pupils. We have created a culture in schools where we should expect abusive behaviour daily and we need to just put up with it.*

> *"There has been a real escalation in poor pupil behaviour generally. This survey address the worst cases, however it is the continuous (often termed) low level behaviour which leads to teacher frustration and burn out. Also, notably parents are less supportive and more critical of staff and the school."*

A small number of responses make the point that 'violence and aggression' had become "normalised" within schools.

"Stop accepting and normalising aggressive behaviour as part of the way young people are."

"We fill out PERS100 forms but there are never any follow-ups and we're left feeling like aggressive and violent behaviours are being normalised."

"Staff are at breaking point with violence and aggression. These things are now a daily occurrence and people are beginning to accept this as part of the job. Parents are not generally shocked or bothered by their children displaying these types of behaviours towards staff or other pupils. This cannot continue."

Furthermore, some responses (3.9%) stated that teachers should not have to put up with any 'violence and aggression' in the workplace:

"We should be given the same protections as any other worker. We have the right to come to work without the threat of being physically or verbally assaulted. It is not acceptable for us to be treated differently from the rest of the working population."

"We would also really like to see a 'zero tolerance' policy put in place for teachers and school staff to feel more supported and safe. Such an approach is there for any other public-facing council service, thus should be the same for teachers and school staff. This is regarding feeling safe and supported from both pupils and parents' violent/aggressive behaviour, in situations that are face-to-face, online, on the telephone, by email or otherwise."

Some responses mentioned colleagues who have been pushed out of the profession, who may leave the profession as well as those who are off long-term sick as a result of their working environment.

"We strongly feel something needs to be done soon, many teachers are considering leaving the profession due to these violent & aggressive incidents between pupils, teachers and parents/carers. We are not being supported, we are not listened to and it is becoming socially acceptable for people to treat teachers violently and aggressively within society in general."

"I have never heard before of so many teachers leaving the profession. I have 24 years teaching and have never found it harder."

Additional support for learning (ASL) was a key theme in the additional comments section (26.0%) with many branches saying they did not feel able to support their ASL pupils in the way they needed; either due to large classes, open plan design or lack of specialist staffing – including ASL teachers and PSAs.

"This branch feels very strongly that cuts to ASN provision are not only contributing to incidents of violence and aggression, but also to staff workload and are detrimental to health & wellbeing of staff and pupils."

"The amount of incidents at our school has increased massively. Teachers feel unsupported in dealing with these. Consequences are variable between pupils. We have a huge amount of ASN needs in our school and these are not being met."

"Branch feels that ASN funding has been significantly cut over the last few years while the level of need amongst the children has increased."

Many ASL responses and other responses (12.4%) referenced the 'presumption of mainstreaming' with mostly critical views as to whether the current level of staffing, resources and professional support services can sustain this inclusive type of education. Furthermore, the disruption caused by unmet ASN needs has an adverse impact on other pupils.

"The Inclusion agenda is in no way supported and as such the rights of the disruptive child has become more important than the rights of the majority of children whose learning is frequently disrupted by these children - If support was sufficient, then Inclusion would have a chance…"

"The biggest problem is in the system - not enough provision for children with difficult or violent behaviour - presumption to mainstream is not working for violent pupils as this affects the health and wellbeing and education of all other children whose potential is becoming impossible to realise."

"We feel that there needs to be consideration made about not forcing square pegs into round holes, which we are currently doing and this undermines the whole principle of CFE. We need better provision to support those young people who for whatever reason have issues accessing mainstream."

A number (11.2%) of responses highlighted again, the need for more staff and resources to support them – often highlighting recent funding cuts.

"We have been cut to the bone in every way and at the moment, it is only a matter of time before someone is seriously injured in a high school. The discipline is non-existent, and everyone is extremely stressed as we feel we are teaching with our hands tied…"

"We feel schools are in crisis - something needs to change - this is not a new problem - this has been a result of years of budget and support cuts for schools. This is not simply 'post covid' this has only exacerbated existing issues. Often incidents in primary school are not taken seriously because the children are 'young' however this is the stage that support can be put in to make a positive change before they move on to secondary school and adulthood. Violent or aggressive incidents are violent or aggressive incidents regardless of age - they have the same negative impacts on all."

Many branches raised the need for smaller class sizes, as a way of better supporting all pupils.

"Unanimous on increase ASN support and smaller classes"

Whilst smaller class sizes were referenced frequently, fewer weekly teaching contact hours were not raised in responses.

As outlined in other areas of this report, a number of branches highlighted the need for better policies and guidelines to address violence and aggression. They again reiterated the inconsistency that is applied to the handling of 'violent and aggressive' incidents and called for greater clarity on how incidents should be handled. Within this 'question' there were also calls for local authorities to outline how they plan to better support their school staff, with the importance of multi-agency support, especially outside support to families and parents/carers.

A number of branches made responses that were a cry for further support to address 'violence and aggression' in schools.

Members indicated that often they had felt the desire to go off on stress as a result of incidents relating to violence but hadn't as they had been worried about the impact of a colleague stepping in to provide cover.

After the meeting numerous members approached me to indicate how jarring it was to set it all out and discuss the impact and how it had helped to emphasise the severity of the situation. A number indicated that they were questioning why anybody would want to become a teacher and expose themselves to violence.

The branch response below seems to capture the views of many:

"Staff feel that a nationwide, union led if necessary, policy should be widely publicised regarding 'zero tolerance' with posters in schools, adverts on tv. The public need to be fully informed of what is being experienced in schools and what their children may witness and know the education authority's policy and what the consequences may be as a result."

Summary of Findings

This summary of the main findings is drawn from the findings in the main body of this report on the EIS school branch survey on 'violence and aggression' issued in August 2023. The findings in the main body of the report are set out in greater detail, with more issues raised and drawing on many comments made by branches.

There are around 2500 schools and special ASN units in Scotland, and 875 school branches responded to this detailed survey.

1. Almost 2/3 (63.2%) of school branches that responded to the survey reported experiencing 'violent and aggressive' incidents towards teachers on a daily basis. This is highest for colleagues working in the Special Education sector with over 90% of branches saying they experience violence and aggression daily. When figures for daily and weekly incidents are added, 82.7% of schools in Scotland have incidents of violence and aggression every week.

2. Almost 3/4 (72.0%) of branches reported that 'violence and aggression' against teachers had "increased significantly" over the last four years – i.e. since the period before the Covid pandemic. Furthermore, 88% of school branches said that violent and aggressive incidents towards teachers had either "increased significantly" or "increased slightly" in the last four years. These figures were broadly the same for all sectors although the Special Sector branches reported a slightly smaller "increase" and the secondary sector reported a slightly larger (93%) overall increase in 'violence and aggression' incidents.

3. In Primary and Special Education, "physical violence towards a teacher" was the most common type of 'violence and aggression', whilst, in secondary schools, "Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher" was the most common form of violence and aggression.
   The Primary sector ranked; 'physical violence', 'verbal threats', 'physically intimidatory behaviour' and 'Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher' as the top 4 ranked issues.
   The secondary sector ranked the following forms of 'violence and aggression' (in descending order) 'Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards a teacher', 'Verbal threats (e.g., physical, psychological or professional harm) towards a teacher', 'Physically intimidatory or aggressive behaviour, including obscene gestures, towards a teacher' and 'Derogatory comments or "gossiping" about a teacher'. Physical violence is being raised by only 5% of secondary branches.
   Additional comments outlined the concerns over the level and frequency of 'violence and aggression' taking place within schools.

4. The branch responses show that 39.4% of branches thought that prejudice-based violence and aggression had increased in the last four years, whilst 0.2% of branches thought it had decreased. Around 47% reported that it had not increased or decreased. This finding is evidence supporting anecdotal reports that prejudice-based violence and aggression in schools has increased in the last four years, i.e. since the period before the Covid pandemic.

5. Over 70% of branches responded that most 'violence and aggression' incidents against teachers take place in the classroom during teaching time. A further 8% said in the corridors, 4% reported the wider school campus and 17.9% as "other" as the setting for most incidents outwith the classroom.

6. A majority (62.6%) of school branches responded that boys were more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviours towards teachers than girls.

7. Over half of Branches (51%) responded that boys were more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers.

8. Almost 40% of branches (37.1%) stated that everyone in their branch was not aware of the policies and procedures in place for dealing with pupil-on-teacher 'violence and aggression', with a further 15.0% that did not know if everyone was aware of them. Taken together this is marginally over half of branches. Fewer than half (47.9%) of branch responses collected stated that everyone in their branch was aware of the policies and procedures in place for dealing with pupil-on-teacher 'violence and aggression'.

9. Fewer than 11% of Branches felt that teachers were "always" supported after a pupil-on-teacher 'violent and aggressive' incident has been reported. A further 63% stated that teachers were supported "sometimes" thus being the most common type of support experienced by teachers in branches. Over a quarter of branches (26.1%) stated that teachers were never supported.

10. The most common responses (ranked) Branches gave to ways in which teachers could be better supported were; (sufficient) recovery time for a teacher who is a victim of a 'violent and aggressive' incident immediately after the incident, improved follow-up by the employer to support the teacher after an 'violent and aggressive' incident, sharing information with teachers regarding the pupils they teach, use or improve the use of risk assessments. Two major themes were identified; insufficient staffing in schools was cited as causing no/insufficient recovery time, problems with implementing restorative practice and allowing follow-up and support. Secondly, the inconsistency of how 'violent and aggressive' incidents were handled after reporting – depending on the SMT (SLT) manager, SMT (SLT) availability, which individual teachers & pupils were involved and how teachers were sometimes made to feel that they were being blamed for the incident.

11. The use of risk assessments must be encouraged in schools. Risk assessments are important from an EIS perspective for two reasons; they help make the workplace safer and they provide evidence of 'foreseeability' in any subsequent accident that is referenced on the risk assessment. This could lead to successful personal injury claims.

12. Branches, larger ones of 10 or more members in particular, should consider nominating a Health and Safety representative to support making the school a safer workplace – especially in matters of welfare, 'violence and aggression' and mental health. The EIS provides training for H&S reps.

13. Almost three-quarters of all branches (74.4%) responded that incidents of violence and aggression between pupils happen daily in their school. When daily and weekly incidents are added, 87.7% of Branches reported pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression on at least a weekly basis.

14. A vast majority (61.9%) of Branches responded that 'violent and aggressive' incidents between pupils had increased significantly in the primary and secondary sectors over the last four years. Almost 40% of Special Schools' branches also responded similarly.

15. Across primary and special school branches, the most common type of pupil-on-pupil 'violence and aggression' in schools was "Physical violence, (e.g., hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing, pulling, tripping, an object thrown at another pupil etc)" with 87.8% of Primary and 86.5% of Special School branches defining it as the most common. For the primary sector, 'verbal threats' were the second most common issue reported (72.8%), then 'intimidatory, obscene or

derogatory verbal comments towards another pupil' (46.0%) and then 'Physically intimidatory or aggressive behaviour, including obscene gestures, towards another pupil.' (45.2%).

The most common form of 'violence and aggression' between pupils in secondary schools was "Verbal threats (e.g., physical or psychological or harm) towards another pupil" (72.8%), followed by "Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory verbal comments towards another pupil" (67.3%) then "Intimidatory, threatening or derogatory content on social media about another pupil" (57.9%) with "physical violence" being ranked fifth.

16. Over half of branches (57.7%) stated that prejudice-based violence and aggression between pupils had increased in the last four years, with over a quarter (26.2%) stating that it had risen significantly. Less than 1% of branches reported that it had decreased.

17. The vast majority (61.7%) of branches stated that most pupil-on-pupil violent and aggressive incidents were taking place in the wider school campus, which may include playing fields, libraries or other pupil spaces – as opposed to in class (7.8%).

18. More than half of all branches (56.9%) reported that boys were more likely to display violent and aggressive behaviour towards other pupils than girls, with fewer than 1% of branches reporting that girls were more likely than boys. A large number of branches (42.1%) responded there was no difference.

19. Only 40.9% of branches responded that all teachers are aware of the school's 'Policies and Procedures' for dealing with pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents. Around 40% of Branches (40.2%) responded that everyone was aware of the school's 'Policies and Procedures' for dealing with pupil-on-pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents, with a further 18.9% of branches that did not know – which also suggests a lack of certainty around policies and procedures.

20. A minority of branches indicated that pupil victims were "well supported" after an incident of violence and aggression (32.2%) with a number of additional branches stating that pupil victims were well supported with a caveat (Yes, but…). Taken together, 42.9% thought that pupil victims were "well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported. Several good practices were identified in many of those answers; use of the restorative model, positive work by class teachers and SMT, time taken and first aid given.
Over a quarter of branches stated that pupils were "not well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported, with the balance of branches being unsure, neutral or citing variable practice. Staff availability, lack of consequences for pupils, inconsistent responses and poor local authority support were given as challenges.

21. A majority of branches indicated that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were "well supported" after an incident of violence and aggression (35.2%) with a number of additional branches (16.5% stating that pupils exhibiting the behaviour were well supported with a caveat (Yes, but…). Taken together, 51.7% thought that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were "well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported. Several good practices were identified in many of those answers; use of the restorative model, positive work by class teachers and SMT, time taken and de-escalation techniques.

It is noted that more branches responded that pupils who exhibited violence and aggression were better supported than their victims.

Fewer than a quarter of branches (21.1%) stated that pupils exhibiting violence and aggression were "not well supported" after a 'violent and aggressive' incident was reported, with the balance of branches being unsure, neutral or citing variable practice. Staff availability, lack of consequences for pupils, inconsistent responses and poor local authority support were given as challenges.

22. Overall, around 2/3 of branches (59.1%) felt that teachers were not well supported or received inconsistent support following pupil-on-pupil violence and aggression. A further 13.2% reported that even where some actions were taken, or there was a will to do so, there was a lack of follow-up or support available due to resource constraints. The nature and extent of teacher support very much depended on the availability of colleagues to cover classes, work with and support the pupils involved, or overall resource capacity within the school.

23. Over half of branches (53.3%) reported parent/carer incidents of violence and aggression on teachers happened termly, monthly or weekly. This shows that the majority of schools surveyed are experiencing multiple incidents of violent and aggressive behaviour from parents throughout the school year.

24. Just over half of branches (50.5%) responded that parent/teacher-on-teacher violence and aggression were becoming more frequent. A further 47% of branches responded there was no change in such incidents, just under 3% said they were becoming less frequent.

25. The most common violent and aggressive behaviour that teachers are exposed to from parents is 'derogatory comments or gossiping about a teacher' – with over 72% of branches reporting this had happened to at least one teacher within the branch. The following types of violence and aggression were then listed in descending rank order; 'intimidatory, obscene, or derogatory comments', then 'intimidatory threatening or derogatory emails, phone calls, SMS or letters' then 'verbal threats' then 'intimidatory threatening or derogatory comments on social media'. Even this type of violence and aggression – which was ranked 5th – had 49.8% of branches raising it.

26. A majority (72.4%) of branches identified being on school property as the place where teachers felt most nervous or fearful of parents following an aggressive incident, with the online space being second (35.8%) and the local school area third (25.7%).

27. Branches responded that when teachers reported an incidence of 'violence or aggression' from a parent or carer only a third (33.6%) of branches replied that they always felt supported by the school with a further half (50.6%) of branches responding that they sometimes felt supported.

28. Branches suggested ways in which schools could better support teachers after reporting a violent and aggressive incident; these included a clear process for dealing with such incidents (27.7%) better Senior Management Team (SMT aka SLT) support (18.6%) and wider back up (16.0%) (from the local authority).

29. Over 9 out of 10 branches responded to agree with the statement that, in general, pupils' unmet ASN needs exacerbate violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour from pupils. The average across all sectors was 94.3%, with a slight dip at 89.1% for secondary and slightly higher for primary schools (96.3%).

30. Almost two-thirds of branches (62.4%) responded that unmet ASN needs of pupils also exacerbated aggressive or violent behaviour from parents/carers to teachers. Only a small number of branches (12.0%) disagreed with this statement.

31. Almost all branches, 99% agreed that "violent, aggressive or disruptive behaviour, including persistent low-level disruption, in your school" has an effect on pupils' learning.
Of the 99% of branches who indicated "yes" in the first section most outlined the nature of the impact on pupils' learning in the second part of the question; Almost every branch (99.8%) indicated that 'teaching and learning' was disrupted, followed by 'difficult to maintain or regain pupils' attention' (96.9%) and then followed closely by 'other pupils' behaviour is adversely affected' (96.8%) then 'it disrupts certain types of pedagogies' (94.9%).

32. Almost all of the branches surveyed said that pupils are less focussed (98.2%), more agitated or nervous (96.5%), withdrawn (94.0%), less happy (94.8%), more likely to be disruptive themselves (95.9%) or become angry or upset (92.9%) as impacts of violence, disruption or aggressive behaviour have on pupils.

    Additional comments by branches outline the scale and nature of the problems caused by violence and aggression to pupils, and the adverse impact on pupils' wellbeing, school attendance and learning.

33. Almost all branches reported an increase in stress, anxiety and depression for some teachers in their school. More than three-quarters of branches (78.5%) said that some of their teachers are afraid of certain pupils, 65.1% responded that some teachers spend less time with some students and 62.0% responded that some teachers avoid certain parents/carers.
Three-quarters of branches (75.4%) said some of their teachers have sustained physical injuries and 61% said some of the teachers in their school had been on sick leave following a 'violent and aggressive' incident.

34. Almost 80% of branches reported (79%) that "members of the branch" considered leaving teaching as a result of the 'violence and aggression'.

35. Most branches responded that they felt that reporting a 'violent and aggressive' incident did not generate a better outcome for pupils (59.9%) against 17.7% of branches that felt that it did produce a better outcome for pupils.

    Most branches responded that they felt that reporting a 'violent and aggressive' incident did not generate a better outcome for teachers (66.9%) against 12.7% of branches that felt that it did produce a better outcome for teachers.

36. Branches gave a range of responses to "what has worked well to support pupils in dealing with 'violent and aggressive' behaviour". Many of the comments received from branches; supported approaches that take a supportive, nurturing approach within schools; and were supportive of using restorative practice as a way of dealing with violence and aggression but the benefits of these types of approaches were not seen across the board, often due to inconsistent application, or insufficient resources to delivery robustly within schools. A strong recurring theme was that of insufficient resources within schools to deal with violence and aggression, such as staffing, PSAs and sufficient numbers of management staff to deal with issues away from the classroom. Another strong theme

in response to this question was that of clear and consistent boundaries, expectations, and crucially, consequences.

37. Support from other teachers was cited as the most common response (50%) to "What has worked well to support teachers in dealing with "violent and aggressive" behaviour at your school?" Many branches talked about their colleagues as the only support mechanism they had available to them. When members did feel there was support available to them, they highlighted the significance of "time" (36%), in dealing with violent and aggressive incidents. First to ensure the incident is handled promptly, and secondly having the time available to de-escalate the situation and support the pupil as well as the teacher. SMT was ranked third (27%) as what has worked well, and "support in the classroom" was ranked fourth (18%). Having a 'duty officer' present who teachers know how to contact at all times was referenced as being good practice by a number of branches, although some responses noted that such a system comes under strain when there are two or more incidents taking place at the same time. A small number of responses referred to the positive support offered by the police, and campus police officers in particular.

38. EIS support at branch and LA level should include advising members to report serious incidents or injuries arising from 'violent and aggressive' incidents to the police.

39. Furthermore, any EIS member absent from work due to injuries (physical and mental) arising from 'violence and aggression' should apply for Special Leave as set out in SNCT Section 6.23.

40. When asked which actions would best support (all) pupils and teachers in dealing with violent and aggressive behaviour, increased support staff to support pupils with ASN was the most commonly recorded answer for both primary (75.5%) and special education branches (65.4%). Smaller class sizes were ranked second by primary branches, (65.5%). Secondary school branches (72.8%) recorded smaller class sizes as their favoured action, followed by 'Increased support staff to support pupils with ASN' (67.3%).

41. A number of responses referred to victim blaming in the survey, especially that some SMT or Local Authority officers would ask teachers who had reported a 'violent and aggressive' incident would be asked questions that implied that they had triggered the incident, caused it or failed to address it properly. There were also cases of pupils being blamed for triggering 'violent and aggressive' behaviours by other pupils. Victim blaming may be used to deflect the lack of time and resources to address 'violence and aggression' in schools.

42. A large number of branches (496) made responses to the survey's final open-ended question. Four issues were highlighted by a large number of branches;

- The damaging and adverse impacts of 'violence and aggression' on teachers and pupils.
- The impact on ASN pupils and other pupils of unmet ASN needs.
- A common view that the effective implementation of 'presumption of mainstreaming' and a meaningful implementation of 'restorative practice' requires more staffing, training and resources to be properly realised.
- A call for greater support to address 'violence and aggression' in order to prevent its 'normalisation' within schools and to establish a culture of zero tolerance to 'violence and aggression' within schools.

Comparing Secondary with Primary Responses

Question	Primary	Secondary	Comment
Sample size	605	204	Primary branch sample is 605/1994 whilst the secondary branch sample is 204/358.
Incidence of pupil on teacher V&A incidents	63.5 % daily 17.6% weekly 13.29% rarely	57.35% daily 26.5% weekly 8.82% rarely	Some differences in reported frequency (daily incidents higher in Primary) but overall, a similar picture of concern
Pupil on Teacher V&A incidents change in frequency over time			No real differences – very high percentages of both samples saying they have increased over the last 4 years
Most common types of pupil-on-teacher V&A incidents	52.7% Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory comments 11.7% Derogatory comments or gossiping 85.1% Physical violence	93.1% Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory comments 51.96% Derogatory comments or gossiping 4.9% Physical violence	Verbal V&A is more common in secondary, whilst physical assault more common in primary
Frequency over time of prejudice-based V&A incidents (pupil on teacher)	30.5% said increased significantly or slightly over time	68.13% said increased significantly or slightly over time	The perception that prejudice-based V&A has increased over the last four years much higher in secondary branches
Where do most Pupil-on-Teacher 'violent and aggressive' incidents take place?	75.9% In the classroom during teaching time 2.2% In corridors	56.9% In the classroom during teaching time 25.5% In corridors	Far more incidents take place in corridors in secondary, but classrooms are still highest for both
Are 'violent and aggressive' behaviours towards teachers most commonly shown by young people of one gender or another?	72.9% boys 26.6% no difference	37.9% boys 59.6% no difference	Boys showed more V&A incidents in primary, with this being lower in secondary where more responses suggest no difference
What are the most common types of Pupil-on-Pupil 'violent and aggressive' incidents?	46.9% Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory comments	67.49% Intimidatory, obscene or derogatory comments	Verbal threats are still highest for both (just over 72% for both) but the profile of verbal v physical is different for other incidents (verbal higher in secondary, physical higher in primary.

	28.29% Derogatory comments or gossiping 87.85% Physical violence	47.29% Derogatory comments or gossiping 40.4% Physical violence	
Frequency over time of prejudice-based V&A incidents (pupil on pupil)	52.9% said increased significantly or slightly over time	80.9% said increased significantly or slightly over time	Both have increased markedly, but higher reported in secondary
Does the Branch believe that boys are more likely to exhibit 'violent and aggressive' behaviour towards women teachers than men teachers	45.7% yes	70.3% yes	Twice as high in secondary school branches
Are 'violent and aggressive' behaviours towards pupils most commonly shown by young people of one gender or another?	68.4% more so boys 30.8% no difference	28.9% more so boys 69.6% no difference	Gender difference more pronounced in primary school
Parent on teacher V&A			Little difference was found in any of the questions
ASN support questions			Little difference was found in any of the questions

Methodology of Branch Survey

The Branch Survey on Violence, Aggression & Disruptive Behaviour in Schools was opened on August 11th and closed on 29th September. The survey consisted of 38 questions that members were to discuss and report back on as a full branch. One question was removed from the analysis.

In total 875 branches completed this survey, around 47% of a total of 1850 EIS branches (defined as having a nominated EIS rep) and 2461 schools. The survey link was shared with branch reps directly, and members within schools without reps were invited to organise and obtain a survey link – and a number did so. (The survey was therefore used and served as an initial organising activity in this campaign, as well as gathering branch views on violence and aggression).

The branch return rate is around 47% and the overall school return rate is 35.5%. In terms of members, around 45% of members were covered by the branches that submitted returns in this survey. These are high survey return figures and provide a fair representative sample of the Scottish school system.

The survey asks members about their experiences of violence, aggression and disruptive behaviour in the classroom, how it impacts day-to-day learning, and what members say they need to better support their pupils and colleagues. Within this survey, there are also questions asking members if they believe that the protected characteristics of teachers (for example their sex or race) are a factor in the violent and aggressive incidents they report.

None of the questions were mandatory. This allowed respondents to skip questions as they progressed throughout the survey. This was done to ensure that there was no false recording within the survey, and to improve confidence in the results. Details of how many respondents answered each question are included throughout this report.

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

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

This survey was conducted on the Survey Monkey platform, with the number of responses tracked in EIS Engage. 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).

Using the fully eligible membership as our baseline Figure, the margin of error (according to Survey Monkey[7]) with our sample of 875 branches, representing 2461 schools is 3% on a 95% Confidence level.

We therefore believe that our survey results and findings are robust.

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[7] https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/mp/margin-of-error-calculator/

Branch Data

Alongside the postcode and name of the school they represented, branches were also asked to provide information on which sector they taught in Primary, Secondary, Special, Nursery or Primary and Secondary. The percentage of responses received from each sector is:

- Primary 69.4%
- Secondary 23.01%
- Special Education 5.9%
- Nursery 0.1%
- Primary and Secondary 1.5%

Owing to the small sample size for Nursery and Primary and Secondary branches, data has only been disaggregated by Primary, Secondary and Special Education.

Branches also identified which local authority area they resided in. This information will be made available to Local Association Secretaries for their local campaigning.

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