

EIS Member Survey 2023

Briefing 1 – Cost of Living Crisis

April 2023

The Educational Institute of Scotland

Background

The EIS school sector survey was opened on Wednesday 21st December 2022 and closed on the 31st January 2023. The survey has a total of 37 questions, but owing to survey design, most members were not required to answer all questions.

In total 16,475 responses were gathered, with a return rate of 32%. This turnout shows just under a third of all members eligible have completed the survey. The average response time to complete the survey was 7 minutes; however, some members noted that it took them longer than this due to the extended answers that they gave.

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

The survey was broken down into 4 sections: About You, Workload, Health and Wellbeing and the Cost of Living. There was also an opportunity at the end of each section for members to note any further comments.

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, to improve confidence in the results. Some questions also had 'logic' applied, meaning that respondents would be redirected to different follow-on questions depending on the answers they gave. Details of how many respondents answered each question are included throughout this briefing.

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

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

Margin of Error

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

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

"Margin of error is often used as a way of measuring how effective a survey is. The smaller the margin of error, the more confidence you may have in your results. The bigger the margin of error,

the farther they can stray from the views of the total population. One way in which to reduce the margin of error is to increase the sample size.”¹

Using the full eligible membership as our baseline figure, the margin of error with our total survey sample of 16,475 is less than one percent².

Survey demographics

The first section of the survey asked respondents to fill in key details about themselves. The answers given in these opening sections give an indication of who our members are and what they teach. Whilst these answers provide insight into EIS teacher members when looked at on their own, they can also be analysed alongside other questions within this survey to provide information on how different sections of EIS membership responded to certain issues. Where the sample size was lower than 1,000, these have not been disaggregated to ensure confidence in the results.

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

For the first time, members were asked to state if they identify as a woman, and if they identify as Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority (BAME). They were also asked if they identify themselves as being disabled, as well as asking if they had caring responsibilities.

Key findings from the “about you” section are:

- 55% of respondents work in Primary education, 34% in Secondary and 5% in Special education;
- 66% of respondents are main grade teachers;
- 82% of respondents identify as being a woman;
- 36% have a caring responsibility;
- 2% of respondents identify as Black, Asian or Ethnic Minority (BAME); and
- 4% identify as disabled

Where useful, results have been refined to illustrate nuances in response based on indicators such as sector worked in, post held or any other relevant characteristic.

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

² Ibid.

The Cost of Living Crisis

The final section of the 2023 EIS Member Survey explored the current cost of living crisis that has been created by inflation which has soared well into double figures and remained high, without corresponding wage increases for many workers.

At the time the survey was live, the EIS was campaigning for a pay rise for teachers. The following questions asked members about their ability to pay for household bills as well as whether they were worried about paying for certain things in the future.

To give a greater understanding of the impacts of the cost of living crisis on protected groups, such as those with a caring responsibility or disabled members, disaggregated data has been provided the tables below.

Figure 1: What impact has inflation has on your ability to pay for any of the following monthly costs?

	No impact	Some impact – I’m starting to struggle or am worried about paying for this in the coming months	Significant impact – I’m struggling to afford to pay for this	Not Applicable
<u>Rent/Mortgage</u> (14,788 total responses)				
All Respondents	26.1%	50.4%	12.9%	10.5%
BME Respondents	20.2%	49.8%	20.5%	9.5%
Women Respondents	25.9%	50.6%	12.4%	11.1%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	22.7%	53.7%	16.1%	7.6%
Disabled Respondents	22.6%	45.7%	23.2%	8.5%
<u>Weekly Food shop</u> (14,749 total responses)				
All Respondents	16.7%	65.1%	16.1%	2.1%
BME Respondents	13%	59.8%	24.1%	3.1%
Women Respondents	16.5%	65.6%	15.7%	2.3%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	12.1%	65.4%	21.1%	1.3%
Disabled Respondents	11.8%	58.3%	28.7%	1.3%
<u>Clothes for self and/or children</u> (14,709 total) responses				
All Respondents	25.0%	49.2%	19.0%	6.8%
BME Respondents	19.6%	45.4%	26.2%	8.8%

Women Respondents	24.5%	49.6%	19.1%	6.8%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	17.1%	55.8%	24.3%	2.8%
Disabled Respondents	19.6%	43.6%	30.5%	6.2%
<u>Childcare – including afterschool clubs and wraparound care</u> (14,646 total responses)				
All Respondents	19.6%	14.6%	7.9%	58.0%
BME Respondents	21.1%	16.8%	12.9%	49.2%
Women Respondents	18.6%	13.9%	7.6%	59.8%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	22.4%	25.2%	14.8%	37.7%
Disabled Respondents	19.1%	9.8%	10%	61%
<u>Running a car – including petrol, tax and insurance, and maintenance costs</u> (14,805 total responses)				
All Respondents	13.4%	57.7%	23.4%	5.5%
BME Respondents	9.9%	49.4%	31.9%	8.7%
Women Respondents	13.2%	58.7%	22.5%	5.5%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	10.4%	57.5%	28.4%	3.7%
Disabled Respondents	8.9%	46.3%	34.1%	10.7%
<u>Wellbeing activities – therapy sessions, gym memberships, wellbeing classes and apps etc.</u> (14,778 total responses)				
All Respondents	14.5%	35.7%	34.1%	15.8%
BME Respondents	9.5%	34.5%	42.8%	13.3%
Women Respondents	13.5%	35.7%	34.6%	16.2%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	10.5%	32.4%	41.7%	15.3%
Disabled Respondents	8.7%	27.4%	51.5%	12.3%

The table above shows that a significant number of EIS members are struggling with the cost of living with 50% of respondents saying they are starting to struggle or are worried about paying for their rent or mortgage, and a further 13% saying that they are already struggling to afford it. 65% said they are starting to struggle or are worried about their weekly food shop, and almost a quarter of respondents said they are already struggling to afford running a car. 70% said there has been some

impact, or a significant impact on their ability to pay for wellbeing activities. This is especially concerning when examined alongside the health and wellbeing findings.

Disabled members were more likely than all other groups to notice a significant impact across all areas apart from childcare costs. There wasn't a considerable difference for members who identified as a woman, and this may be attributed to the fact that the vast majority of total responses gathered were from women.

Members were then asked if they were having to cut back on or go without a range of social activities and seasonal spending. As the survey was open from the end of December, and this is usually a time of increased spending demands, the EIS was eager to see if the cost of living crisis affected their Christmas holidays as well as their ability to spend on leisure activities.

As Figure 2 below shows, a fifth of all respondents said that they are having to go without spending on social activities, and 29% said that they are having to go without spending on holidays. Additionally, 76% said they had to cut back on Christmas presents for friends and family this year.

Figure 2: Are you having to cut back on, or go without any of the following:

	No, I can continue to spend on this as expected to	Yes, I'm having to cut my spending on this	Yes, I'm having to go without this as I can't afford it	I don't know	Not applicable
<u>Social activities - e.g. cinema, dining out, other night's out, Christmas celebrations etc.</u> (14,813 total responses)					
All Respondents	9.9%	67.4%	19.5%	1.2%	2.0%
BME Respondents	6.8%	64.6%	25.9%	1.1%	1.5%
Women Respondents	9.4%	67.7%	19.7%	1.2%	2.0%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	6.4%	64.6%	26.3%	1.0%	1.7%
Disabled Respondents	6.5%	54.2%	35.2%	0.5%	3.6%
<u>Christmas presents for friends and family</u> (14,754 total responses)					
All Respondents	14.7%	76.1%	5.9%	1.1%	2.2%
BME Respondents	7.6%	68.3%	12.6%	1.9%	9.5%
Women Respondents	14.0%	76.9%	5.7%	1.1%	2.2%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	10.7%	79.5%	7.2%	0.9%	1.7%
Disabled Respondents	10.5%	72.5%	12.5%	0.7%	3.8%

Holidays (14,769 total responses)					
All Respondents	9.3%	57.4%	29.3%	2.0%	2.0%
BME Respondents	5.3%	54.0%	36.9%	2.7%	1.1%
Women Respondents	9.1%	57.6%	29.3%	2.0%	2.0%
Caring Responsibility Respondents	6.7%	55.6%	34.5%	1.7%	1.5%
Disabled Respondents	6.5%	43.6%	45.7%	1.3%	2.9%

Again, similar to the responses examined in Figure 1, we can see in Figure 2 that disabled members were the most likely of all groups to report going without certain things as they couldn't afford them. This shows the impact of the cost of living crisis on disabled members especially; however Figure 2 also shows that BME members and those with a caring responsibility were more likely to report going without holidays, social activities and Christmas presents than members who did not highlight belonging to a protected group. Again there is little difference in responses gathered from women.

Health and Wellbeing Impacts

As we know, struggling to afford the necessities in life can have a significant impact on overall wellbeing. Under the question explored in figure 2 members were asked if they wanted to share any additional comments. In total 422 comments were left, many of which highlighting the personal toll that money pressures had placed on them. Below is a small, but representative sample of member views.

- "I'm very lucky as I'm a single person, so I don't have any dependents. I can see how hard it currently is for my colleagues who have children."
- "I can't afford to replace my work shoes which are falling apart. I also can't afford to buy a warm appropriate jacket for work."
- "We are having to watch our energy bills closely which is difficult when you are living in Scotland and it is dark by 4pm and minus 10 degrees outside."
- "We regularly have the heating off, or turned down to 10 degrees to try and counteract the energy prices. I'm concerned this will lead to damp in our home and cause health issues for my wife and sons."
- "I feel it is important to note that I am married and my husband has quite a well paid job which is why I able to say I can continue to spend normally. If this was not the case then I would definitely not be able to afford even the basics for my family."
- "As a teacher I had hoped for a higher quality of life, to feel more financially comfortable. This is not the case - have not been able to afford a holiday abroad once during my 15 year career."
- "My children's Christmas was paid for by my dad as I couldn't afford any extra outgoings. Coming out from being a student and earning very little during my time studying, all reserves were used to retrain as a teacher."

Foodbanks

When asked, only 1% of respondents³ said that they have had to use a food bank in the last 6 months. The number is slightly higher for members who identified themselves as disabled, as 4% said they had used a foodbank in the last 6 months.

Of those who said they had used a foodbank in the past 6 months the majority, 79%, said they had done so for the first time⁴. This shows that whilst the number of EIS members who have used the services of a foodbank are small, they are being forced into using this support for the first time as a result of the cost of living crisis.

And while 1% is a small minority, it is indicative of the fact 191 members who responded were using food banks at the time the survey was live.

Government Support

When asked, 5% of members said they have had to rely on Government support with the cost of living.⁵ This includes, but is not limited to, working tax credit, council tax rebate and income support. This number was slightly higher for those with caring responsibilities (8%) and disabled respondents (12%) showing the unequal impacts of the cost of living crisis according to protected characteristics and personal circumstances.

Resources for the classroom

The EIS has been aware of increasing numbers of teachers using their own money for classroom supplies since austerity policies were introduced after the last financial crash. When asked if they spent any of their own money to buy food, clothing, school equipment, or pay for pupils that they teach so they don't go without, the vast majority, 69%, said yes. Only 31% said they did not use their own money to support pupils.

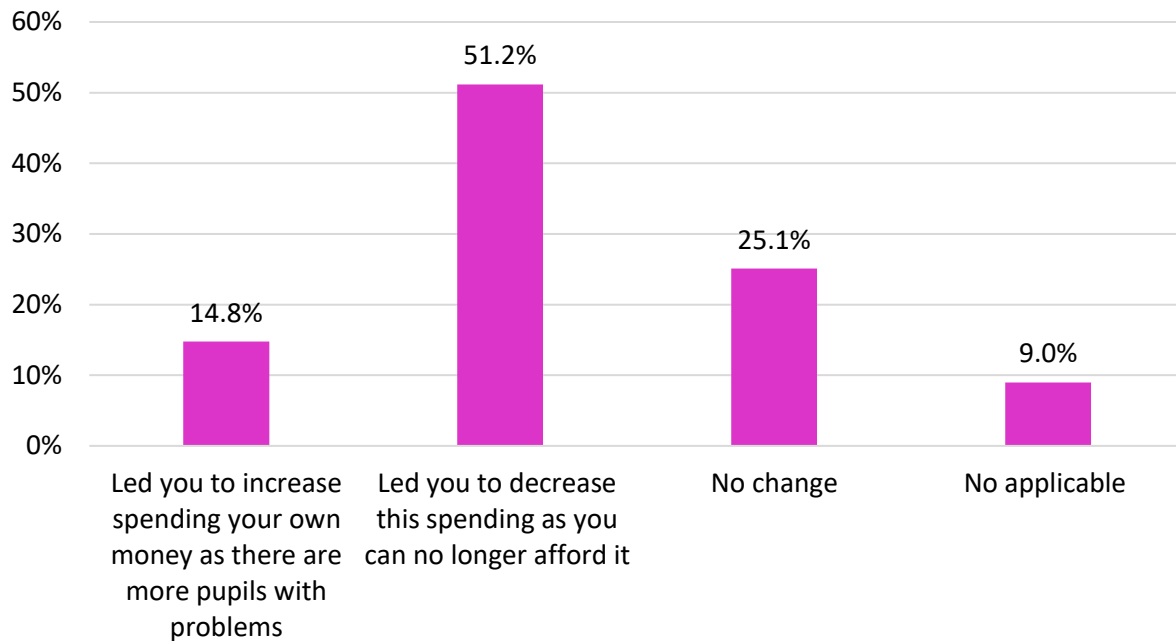
Additionally, when asked if the cost of living crisis has affected their spending on classroom resources, 51% said they spend less because they can no longer afford it, and 15% said they spend more because of greater need as shown in figure 3.

³ 14,849 responses were gathered under this question.

⁴ 199 respondents answered this question asking if this was the first time they had used a food bank.

⁵ 14,780 responses were gathered under this question

Figure 3: When it comes to buying materials or resources for your classroom (from your own money) has the cost of living crisis:



Total responses: 14,774

Finally, members were asked if there was anything further that they would like to add in relation to the cost of living crisis. Within the 2,851 comments left, members shared that they were struggling to pay for everyday costs and were worried about the future. Some members said they were having to borrow money from their family and others were saying that they were now reliant on the wage of another family member such as their partner. Below are some of the comments left by members under this section.

- “I don't think the public or the government realise the actual hours teachers work, and assume working hours are the same as the school day. I also don't think they realise the time, effort, personal sacrifice and money teachers spend on doing the best they can by their pupils.”
- “The pay does not reflect the work that we do and the qualifications that we have.”
- “We wish more people knew the expectations for teachers. My family and friends are so supportive but only because they know. I feel that a lot of the resentment from public is due to a severe misunderstanding of what being a teacher entails. It is not just a job, we can never switch off and our wages are always cut due to supplying essentials such as breakfast for children that do not have. This is only a small part of the expectations of teachers. Thank you.”
- “Very concerned about the erosion of salary, with its impact on standard of living and final pension. Cost of travel and potentially paying for work parking space (previously mentioned in some regions as a pollution limiting option) is a great concern.”
- “The devaluation of our salary has resulted in a devaluation of the profession.”
- “I am having to cut hours due to stress but realistically cannot afford to do so.”

- “I am constantly stressed about money. I have a lot of debt because of the cost of living. My children are going without trips at the weekend because I am always catching up on work load and can’t afford to take them to soft play. It doesn’t pay to be a teacher. No money, no respect completely exhausted!!”
- “I worked really hard for my Pupils in lockdown and now feel like it's back to square one now that schools are back in. The Government takes us for granted and shovels anything that needs fixed in our society and expects us to solve it with less budget.”
- “We are so undervalued and we have been paying for and providing resources for our pupils for far too long.”

Further Information

For more information on any of the themes within this report please contact:

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Member advice and support can be found here:

<https://www.eis.org.uk/Member-Support/Advice>

For more information on the health and wellbeing support available:

<https://www.eis.org.uk/Member-Support/HWRResource>

Professional Learning Opportunities:

<https://www.eis.org.uk/Meetings-And-Events/Courses>

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