Education Mutual

The Mental Health and Wellbeing of School Business Leaders

Working in schools in England and Wales

March 2023

in partnership with

Education Support

Acknowledgements

Education Mutual and **Education Support** would like to thank the **Wellbeing Steering Group** at **Education Mutual** who helped to give direction and shape to this research study, and the following organisations who helped us promote the research to their membership and contacts: the **Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)**, **the Confederation of School Trusts (CST)** and the **Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL)**. Finally, and very importantly, we would like to thank all the SBLs who took time to complete the online survey and take part in the interviews, without whom this report would not have been possible.

Foreword

We are proud to have commissioned this research into the vital and important topic of School Business Leaders' mental health and wellbeing. Our School Business Leaders are an incredibly important part of our education system, often the unsung heroes who keep our schools running; raising funds and paying invoices, managing HR functions, ensuring teams are paid, managing catering services and being the steadfast ‘go to’ person for support within their school.

The significant changes to the education landscape over the previous 10 years have brought with them changes for our School Business Leaders, who have increased responsibility to ensure the financial viability of our education system. Whilst the demands of our SBLs have changed at a great pace, the sector’s understanding of their role has struggled to keep up. The lack of understanding, along with the changes, has resulted in a workforce with excessive workloads and feelings of isolation.

There is good news to note – the overwhelming majority of SBLs feel their schools support their people well should they experience problems with mental health and wellbeing. Many schools provide confidential helplines, counselling services and wellbeing sessions. The importance the sector has placed on the wellbeing of its school teams is having a positive impact, although the SBL community do share reservations in the stigma attached to mental health problems.

I hope this research encourages our SBLs to know they are not alone, and the challenges they face are shared across their community. I invite you to join us in singing the praises of our unsung heroes, to raise their profile and understanding of the challenges they face, and encourage everyone to support their mental health and wellbeing.

Louise Levy

Director
Education Mutual

Supporting foreword

School communities are under more pressure than ever, as need increases and underfunded public services make greater demands on schools staff every day.

If you work in a school right now, you're likely experiencing an incremental expansion of your job role. This may appear as an increase in ad hoc admin support requests that don't quite fit into your job role, but there's no one else to do it. Or it could be pressure to complete more tasks, more quickly.

School Business Managers, Schools Business Leaders, HR and Admin staff – none of you are immune to this steady creep as budgets tighten. We know it's taking its toll on your mental health and wellbeing.

That's why we were glad to work with Education Mutual to learn more about the issues you face and the impact they have on you. We know a lot about what's going on in schools but we rarely get the chance to really get under the skin of what's affecting SBLs and SBMs.

This lack of understanding of SBLs, SBMs and their roles ended up being a really important theme of this research. It turns out that your colleagues often don't have a clear understanding of what your jobs involve, or when it's appropriate to ask for your support.

The combination of stretched school resources, gradual scope creep for everyone, and a lack of understanding of your role creates an unpleasant effect that can lead to stress, burnout, and eventually losing really talented staff from our schools.

I hope this report proves a useful resource for starting important conversations with your colleagues and leaders. I hope those conversations improve understanding of what you do – and shouldn't be doing! – and help you to set some necessary boundaries.

I also hope that this specific focus on SBMs makes you feel a bit more seen and heard.

You play a vital role in keeping schools running smoothly and allowing school leaders to focus on pupils' needs. Your mental health and wellbeing is an important part of maintaining a happy, effective and safe school community.

Thank you for everything you do, and please do stay in touch with us at Education Support.

Sinéad Mc Brearty

Chief Executive Officer
Education Support

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Section 1
Introduction

Introduction

The Mental Health and Wellbeing of School Business Leaders working in schools in England and Wales

Education Mutual and Education Support have come together to improve our understanding of the wellbeing needs of School Business Leaders (SBLs) working in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England and Wales.
School Business Leaders play an essential – but often unnoticed – role in the smooth running of schools. They interact with everyone in the school community and are often relied upon to find solutions to the tricky issues no-one else can tackle. It benefits everyone to ensure they are mentally and emotionally healthy enough to take on this demanding, but important, role.

Yet, despite their central role in school life, and the increased interest in staff wellbeing following the Covid-19 pandemic, research relating to this group of staff is limited. Education Mutual and Education Support have worked together to change this. We want to improve our collective understanding of the role of SBLs. Through this research report we have sought to understand what aspects of their jobs affects their mental health and wellbeing.

We have explored:

- **The types of mental health and wellbeing support available in schools**
- **Which services are used by SBLs**
- **Which services are perceived to have the most benefit in tackling work-related issues**
- **How the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the mental health and wellbeing of SBLs**

Who is this report for?

We all benefit from happy, healthy colleagues. We want this report to benefit everyone working in schools.

School Business Leaders

If you are a SBL, we hope this research validates your experience, helps you to feel more connected to the wider community of SBLs, and is a useful tool for highlighting your experiences to your line manager.

Senior School Leaders

If you are a senior school leader, we hope this report provides insights, and inspires you to take actions that prioritise the wellbeing of your all-important SBL, and other staff such as your School Business Manager, Operations Manager or HR lead.

Colleagues

If you are a colleague of a SBL, we hope this report helps you to better understand their role and provides some opportunities for reflection regarding how you work together.

Beyond the research insights you also will find a list of organisations that you can go to for support. There is also a reflective exercise you can undertake alone, or with peers, to help you consider your own wellbeing needs at work.

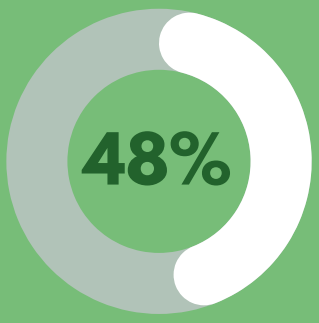
We use the generic term SBLs throughout this report as we recognise that there are many different job titles for staff working in schools who fulfil senior school management. The research was undertaken through a combination of surveys and interviews with SBLs. To find out more about the participants and methodology please see Appendices A and B.

Section 2
Key Findings

A) What affects SBLs' mental health and wellbeing at work?

We asked SBLs what affected their mental health and wellbeing at work.

The top five challenges were:



Excessive workload

A lack of understanding (by colleagues) of their role

Funding issues

Working long unpaid hours

Problems with staffing

These issues were explored further in interviews with SBLs. More details can be found in Section 3a.

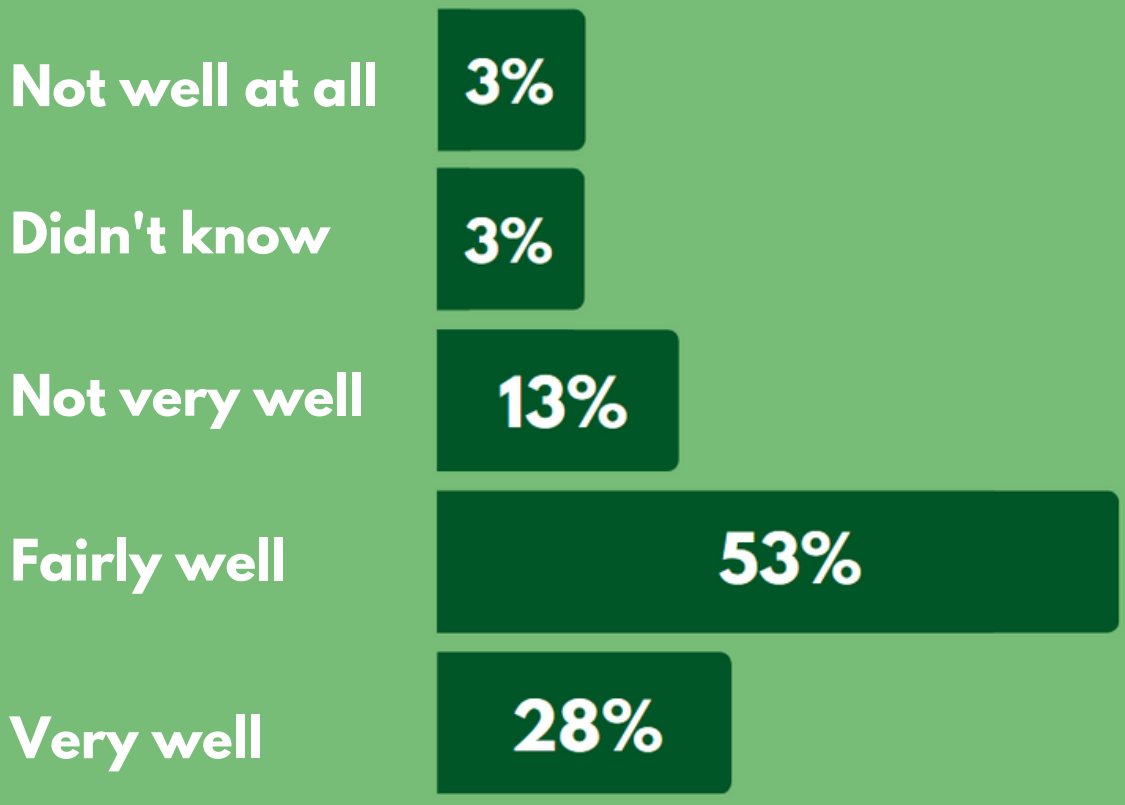
You can read the full breakdown in Appendix 1

B) Schools support employees well if they experience problems with their mental health and wellbeing

We asked SBLs how well they thought their schools support all their staff who experience problems with their mental health and wellbeing.

81% **of SBLs told us their schools supported their employees well (very well or fairly well)**

How well schools support their employees who experience problems with their mental health and wellbeing



Base: All respondents (n=571)

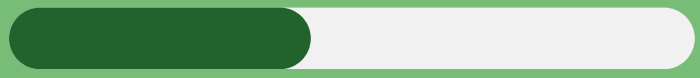
C) The wellbeing services being provided by schools and used by SBLs

We asked SBLs which mental health and wellbeing services their school currently provides for their staff.

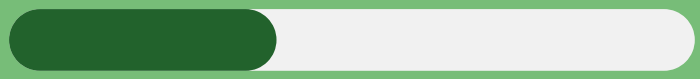
94% **of schools provided services (with an average of 3.7 services provided by each school)**

The top five most commonly reported sources of support were:

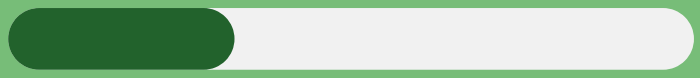
44% Access to a confidential helpline



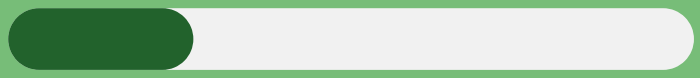
39% Counselling or psychotherapy



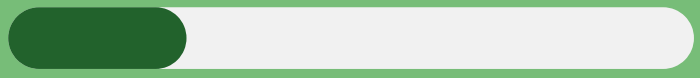
33% Mental health first aid training



27% HR staff to talk to



26% Wellbeing sessions



Base: All respondents (n=571)

It is worth noting that 22% of SBLs reported access to flexible working and union staff they can talk to.

We asked SBLs which services they had used and found that wellbeing sessions and counselling or psychotherapy were the most popular, although usage was generally low.

The chart below details the top five services provided by schools and used by SBLs.

Mental health services provided by schools and used by SBLs

Base: All respondents (n=571)

You can read the full breakdown in Appendix 2.

D) The services which SBLs find the most helpful

We asked SBLs which wellbeing services were most helpful in dealing with their own mental health at work. We asked them to provide their 'top three' options.

SBLs reported their top three options for dealing with their own mental health at work were:

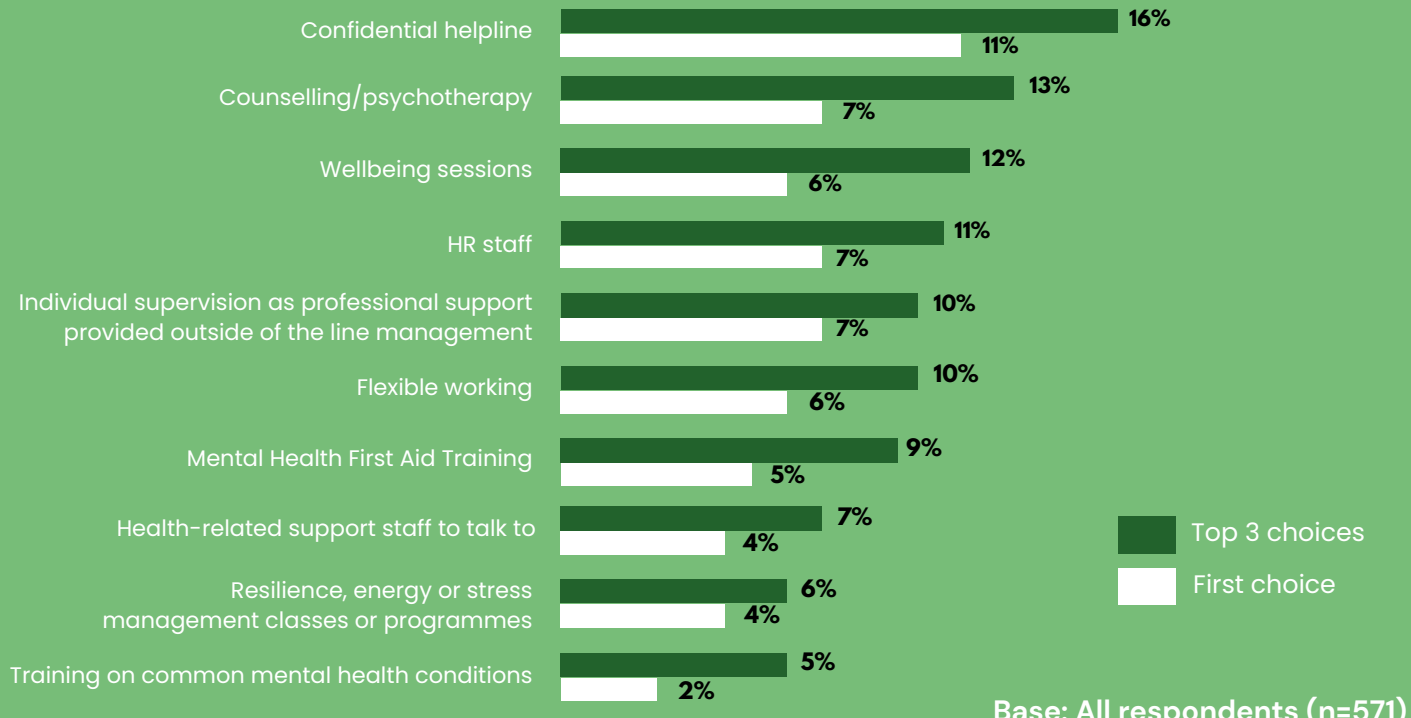
A confidential helpline

Counselling or psychotherapy

Attending wellbeing sessions

Mental health services of most benefit to SBLs when dealing with work-related factors impacting on their wellbeing

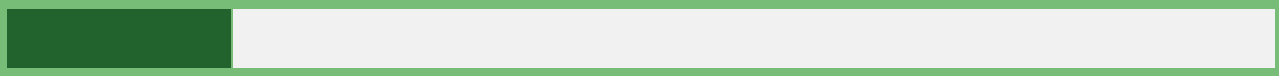
Their first choice overall was to use a confidential helpline. The chart below shows their top three options and first choice options.



Base: All respondents (n=571)

E) What are the barriers to receiving support?

20% **of SBLs had not used the services their schools offered (one fifth)**



The reasons for not using services provided by their school were:

56%

said they preferred to seek support from people outside of work

16%

said they were worried that it would negatively affect others' perceptions of them

12%

said there was a culture of no-one talking about their problems at work

9%

said it would be seen as a sign of weakness

9%

said they believed there was a stigma (feeling of shame) which stopped them from talking to anyone at work

8%

said they were worried about losing their job

7%

said they were worried their school would not be supportive

From the interviews conducted after the survey, other issues were also uncovered. These included confidentiality concerns, some staff not recognising they might need access to such services, some services being limited to particular staff (e.g. just to teachers), some services were not seen as relevant, having a high workload meant there was not enough time to access the services, and SBLs giving priority to supporting other people rather than themselves.

Section 3
Current issues faced by SBLs working in schools

Current issues

We wanted to better understand the range of issues currently faced by SBLs working in schools

Ten interviews were held which explored the following factors identified in the survey as affecting SBLs' mental health and wellbeing:

- Excessive workload
- Lack of understanding from colleagues about the SBL role
- Funding
- Long working hours

We also explored how the Covid-19 pandemic might have affected their wellbeing (positively and negatively).

Each interview followed its own path, but several common themes emerged which are shown in this section.

A) Excessive workload and working hours

The survey found that:

48% **(nearly half) of SBLs considered excessive workload as the main work-related factor which impacted on their mental health and wellbeing (see Appendix 1)**

The interviews confirmed that workload was consistently, or sometimes, excessive. This caused SBLs to feel stressed, overburdened, frustrated and struggling to cope, worrying about their job outside of working hours and feeling isolated.

Three main causes of excessive workload were identified:

- **Holding a wide range of responsibilities central to school functions – the large range of responsibilities held by SBLs made the role highly demanding. This was particularly so at certain times of the year when there are pressure points, e.g. when budget setting. The importance of the role for the effective functioning of the school can also be an added pressure.**

> "To have to shoulder that responsibility, and hearing everyone's woes and worries is hard going and to feel you are responsible for keeping those schools running smoothly, so if your health and safety audit says you need to do something…., you feel you have let the school, [and] people down. Working at high level in schools; people don't take it lightly"
>
> **(Mixed Multi-Academy Trust, East of England)**

- **Reacting to regular staff queries and the need to react to frequent requests from senior leaders. There were frequent interruptions during the day.**

> "Something will happen during the day and I have to drop everything and I have to go and do something else and re-prioritise my work. It is just constant"
>
> **(Special School, local authority, Wales)**

Covering for colleagues – this could be fulfilling administrative duties when colleagues were busy, or providing short-term or long-term staff absence cover. The lack of staff absence cover for administrative roles, compared to teachers' roles was highlighted with the assumption that SBLs would undertake such cover which created a backlog to the SBLs' own workload.

> "I had a whole week where one of my administrators had Covid and I was covering the office. I felt like my job just stopped for that week"
>
> **(Primary school, local authority, East of England)**

Most of the interviewees worked more than their contracted hours. The reasons for this included attending school meetings, catching up on work (which might have been disrupted by staff requests during the day) and responding to critical issues quickly, e.g. involving Human Resources. Another reason was to work on projects which required a lot of concentration, such as budget-setting, together with a sustained and focused effort, although sometimes this could be carried out at home. Working from home was seen as a positive outcome of the schools' response to the pandemic, with online systems now enabling this to happen. This was also considered to be time-efficient as no travelling was involved.

B) Lack of understanding from colleagues about SBL role

The lack of understanding about the SBL role varied across different schools

Some SBLs experienced a better understanding of their role by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) compared to other staff, and for others it was the reverse.

Issues around the lack of awareness of the role included:

- **Not understanding the difference between the SBL role and other administrative roles**

- **Lack of awareness about the many different functions associated with the SBL's role and the time it takes to undertake such tasks (e.g. compliance)**

> "The workload here links to a lack of understanding about the role. No-one has any idea how long things take. Everyone passes work to me and thinks, 'it's okay the business manager can do that; she will deal with it'"
>
> **(Special School, local authority, London)**

- **SBLs sometimes not being included in all SLT meetings, despite attendance being relevant to their role. Some SLT members did not see it as directly relevant to the SBL. Although it is worth noting that the survey found that two-thirds (69%) of SBLs were a member of their school's SLT**

69% of SBLs were a member of their school's SLT

- **SBLs often undertake duties outside of their role, which can then set a future precedent**

C) Isolation

Many SBLs felt that their role was complex and solitary and not well understood by colleagues

As such, they often felt isolated working in schools. Having someone to talk to, and share ideas with, was one of the main areas SBLs thought it would be useful to have.

> "You are isolated particularly with the leadership role, and the complexity of what you have to do. When you are leading at such a level you don't have other business managers that you can talk to and share with within the school"
>
> **(Secondary school, local authority, North West England)**

Some Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) held regular meetings with all their SBLs, as well as planning smaller sub-group meetings for professional development purposes centred on their SBLs' needs

However, for those SBLs not working in MATs, membership of national or local groups which could act as a sounding board were recommended as their membership already understood the role and its pressures.

> "You just know that you are not alone which is massive...I know sometimes, I feel alone at 6:30 in the morning when I'm here doing whatever I need to do, you are alone. But I know that I can ask other school business leaders in different areas for that support and help"
>
> **(Secondary school, local authority, North West England)**

D) Funding and financial accountability

Where funding was discussed as a cause of stress, this included reference to the high proportion of hours spent on budgeting

For some SBLs this directly disturbed their sleep patterns at home.

Reasons include:

- **Rising energy and staffing costs creating the need to find cost savings elsewhere to help mitigate against setting deficit budgets or mitigate the deficit set**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding requirements that needed to be met from school budgets and the costs of meeting one-to-one support**
- **Having to explain to staff that support for individual pupil's needs were unaffordable or items they were expecting to be purchased had been delayed**
- **Responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of costings as they may result in staff redundancy**

> "I think I am a conscientious person, most people in this job role are. We are caring and try and do whatever we can to help people but the budget does keep me awake. I am constantly worrying: Did I factor this in? Did I count that? I can't get back to sleep unless I have a notepad to write it down"
>
> **(Primary school, local authority, South West England)**

E) Staffing and pay

The survey found that:

34% **of SBLs experienced a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing due to staffing problems (one third)**

During the pandemic, maintaining staffing capacity had a negative impact on the wellbeing of SBLs

Now, rising staffing costs, along with rising energy costs, often created the need to find cost savings elsewhere.

> "At the moment, especially with the pay award, we are trying to work out how we can cut resources by 50%, trying to think of new ways of doing things with the increase in energy prices. On one hand you have just given them a pay award, but all that has really done is put more [at] risk of redundancy"
>
> **(Mixed MAT, West Midlands)**

Around one-third of SBLs in the survey (32%) considered that their inequitable pay had impacted their mental health and wellbeing. When explored in the interviews, it was felt that recognition of the role by senior leaders, including headteachers, was a key means through which wider recognition of the role might be achieved. Pay was reported to be limited by school size in local authority maintained schools and the pay structure not equitable with the structure for senior leaders. However, higher levels of pay were available if fulfilling a Chief Finance or Chief Operating Officer role in a MAT due to responsibility levels.

The calculation of staff pay was also found to be a source of stress relating to compliance set by DfE and then changed at short notice, e.g. staff pay not being agreed until after budget submissions.

Conclusions and recommendations

Our Conclusions

1. School support

Overall, SBLs felt that their schools did well at supporting its employees who experienced problems with their mental health and wellbeing.

2. Responsibilities

The range of responsibilities held by SBLs means that the role is demanding, stressful and complex. It is also not well understood by other staff and feelings of isolation were found to be common.

3. Mental health and wellbeing services

The services most offered by schools were access to a confidential helpline, counselling or psychotherapy (online or in person) and Mental Health First Aid training. The most used service by SBLs was attendance at wellbeing sessions. The service considered to be of the most benefit to SBLs was the confidential helpline. Usage of all support services by SBLs was low.

4. The factors which impact SBLs wellbeing at work

There was a wide range of work-related factors which had an impact on SBLs' mental health and wellbeing – these were excessive workload and working hours, lack of understanding about their role, funding issues, problems with staffing, inequitable pay and feeling isolated in their role.

Our Recommendations

For SBLs

The SBLs role is rewarding but challenging. Below we have included ideas that we hope will help to address some of the issues highlighted by the research.

Can you approach a colleague or senior leader within your school or academy trust to informally share ideas or opinions with?

They may not be SBLs but they understand the school's culture and challenges. It might help combat any isolation in your role.

Can you join local or national groups and support networks of SBLs, where experiences can be shared and issues discussed?

Perhaps your Local Authority or MAT chain runs one? If they do not exist, maybe you can start one? Even a WhatsApp group of a few local SBLs could be an incredibly helpful resource.

Consider how you can foster better understanding of your role among your colleagues

One example of this from the interviews was:

> "I did do some work for a trust CPD day to try [to] help everyone understand what the central team does. So we pulled together a lot of statistics around: how many variations of contracts we do, how many invoices we paid in a year, how many admissions meetings we had in a year, tribunals we had in a year, how many meals we served in a year, so that people see what it is that this core team of people are doing. That was really powerful, a lot of people came back and said, 'Oh, I had no idea you were that busy'"
>
> **(Mixed MAT, West Midlands)**

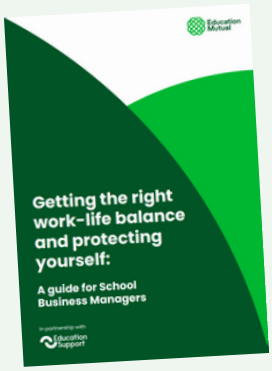
Think about your own mental and physical health and the ways in which this could be improved

It is all too easy to forget about your own needs when in a busy role helping others – it must be an equal priority.

We have published **three** resources with **Education Support** which you may find helpful:

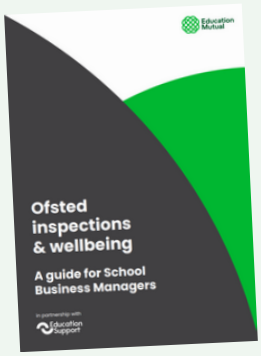
1. Supporting each other with mental health and wellbeing: A guide for School Business Managers

https://www.educationmutual.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resource-1-Mental-health-and-wellbeing.pdf



2. Getting the right work-life balance and protecting yourself: A guide for School Business Managers

https://www.educationmutual.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Resource-2-Work-life-balance.pdf)



3. Ofsted inspections and wellbeing: A guide for School Business Managers

https://www.educationmutual.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Resource-3-Ofsted_3.pdf

For senior leaders

Some senior leaders were found to have a good understanding of the role of the SBL, but others did not. Some recommendations for supporting your SBLs include:

Use this report to start a conversation with your SBLs

Do our findings chime with their experience? How can they best be supported?

Improve awareness of the SBL role to staff working at all levels

This will lead to better understanding and appreciation of what the role involves.

Consider how you can offer all staff access to wellbeing services

This could be services such as helplines, counselling or training in cases where this is restricted to certain job roles.

Encourage external networking with others in similar roles

Signpost to relevant sources, in order to combat the isolation felt by many SBLs.

Reassure all staff that wellbeing services are confidential

They are safe to use and there shouldn't be any fear of potential consequences.

Resources

Reflective exercise

Here are some questions you can use to reflect on your own thoughts after reading the issues raised in this report.

Reflections for SBLs	Reflections for all educators	Reflections for school leaders
Do I clearly explain the nature of my role to colleagues, or allow incorrect assumptions to continue?	Do I have a good understanding of what a SBL's role includes?	Do I have a good understanding of what a SBL's role includes? Do my staff?
Do I have a sense of my own professional boundaries? Are there any work requests that I'm not prepared to accept? Have I communicated my boundaries?	How can I ensure that I only take relevant requests to our SBL?	Is my SBL involved in relevant decision making at a senior level?
How do I feel in my role at the moment? What do I enjoy most? What is most challenging?	Do I know what our SBL's communication preferences are?	What is our school culture like? How might it affect our SBL or other non-teaching staff?
Who is my closest confidante at work? Do I need to expand my network of trusted peers?	What is my working relationship like with our SBL? How might I strengthen it?	Do I routinely expect my SBL to take on work outside of their role? Do staff?
How can I prioritise rest and recuperation to ensure I stay mentally well and effective in my role?	Do I include SBLs and other support staff in all school staff activities?	If working in an academy, does the trust have opportunities for SBLs to meet up within the trust which I could organise?
Do I need to receive work emails on my mobile phone? Do I need to respond to emails outside of working hours?	Do I always physically approach the SBL for information/tasks, when an email might suffice?	Do I expect my SBL to respond to work emails and tasks outside of normal working hours? This could affect their work/life balance.

Signposting to useful organisations and available support

Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

A professional association and trade union for all school, college and trust leaders

https://www.ascl.org.uk/

Confederation of School Trusts (CST)

A national organisation and sector body for school trusts in England advocating for, connecting and supporting executive and governance leadership

https://cstuk.org.uk/

Department for Education (DfE)

'Find a school business professional network'. Newsletter and network directory

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/join-or-create-a-network-for-school-business-professionals/school-business-professional-networks-directory

Education Collective

Provides support in areas such as online software solutions, on-site consultancy, recruitment support and training

https://www.theeducationcollective.com

Education Mutual

The only member-owned, DfE approved staff absence protection provider

https://www.educationmutual.co.uk/

Education Support

The UK's only charity dedicated to the mental health and wellbeing of the education workforce

https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/

Institute of School Business Leadership (ISBL)

A membership organisation offering sector-endorsed professional standards and development opportunities for its professional community and their institutions through a portfolio of quality-assured qualifications, training, resources, research and events

https://isbl.org.uk/

National Association for Head Teachers (NAHT)

A membership organisation which represents school leaders working in the education sector

https://www.naht.org.uk/

SBL Connect

A grassroots movement to connect and represent School Business Leaders

https://www.sblconnect.com/

If you're experiencing difficult feelings, please call Education Support's emotional support helpline.

It's free, open 24/7 and completely confidential.

You'll speak to a qualified counsellor.

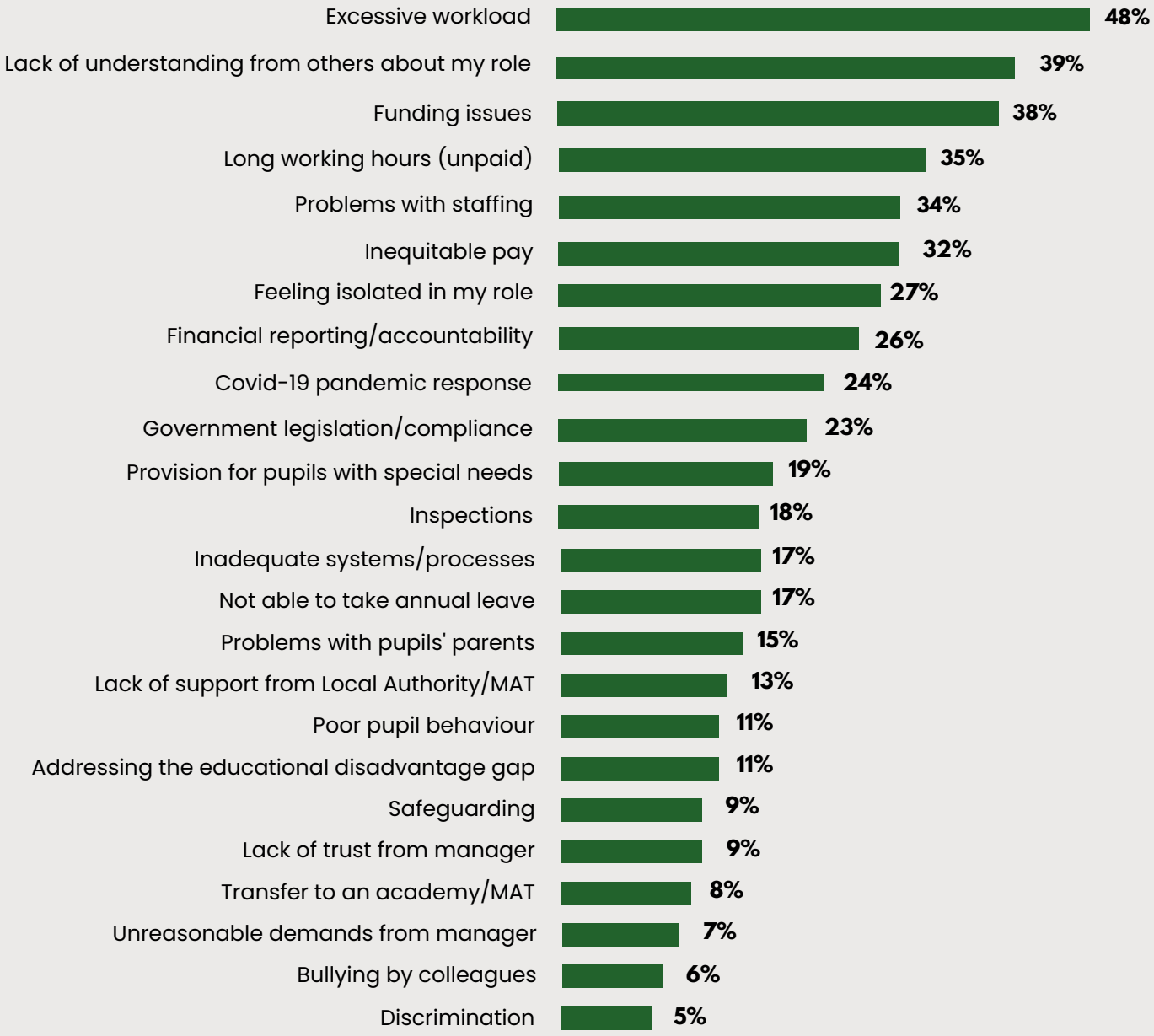
08000 562 561

Appendicies

Appendices

Appendix 1:

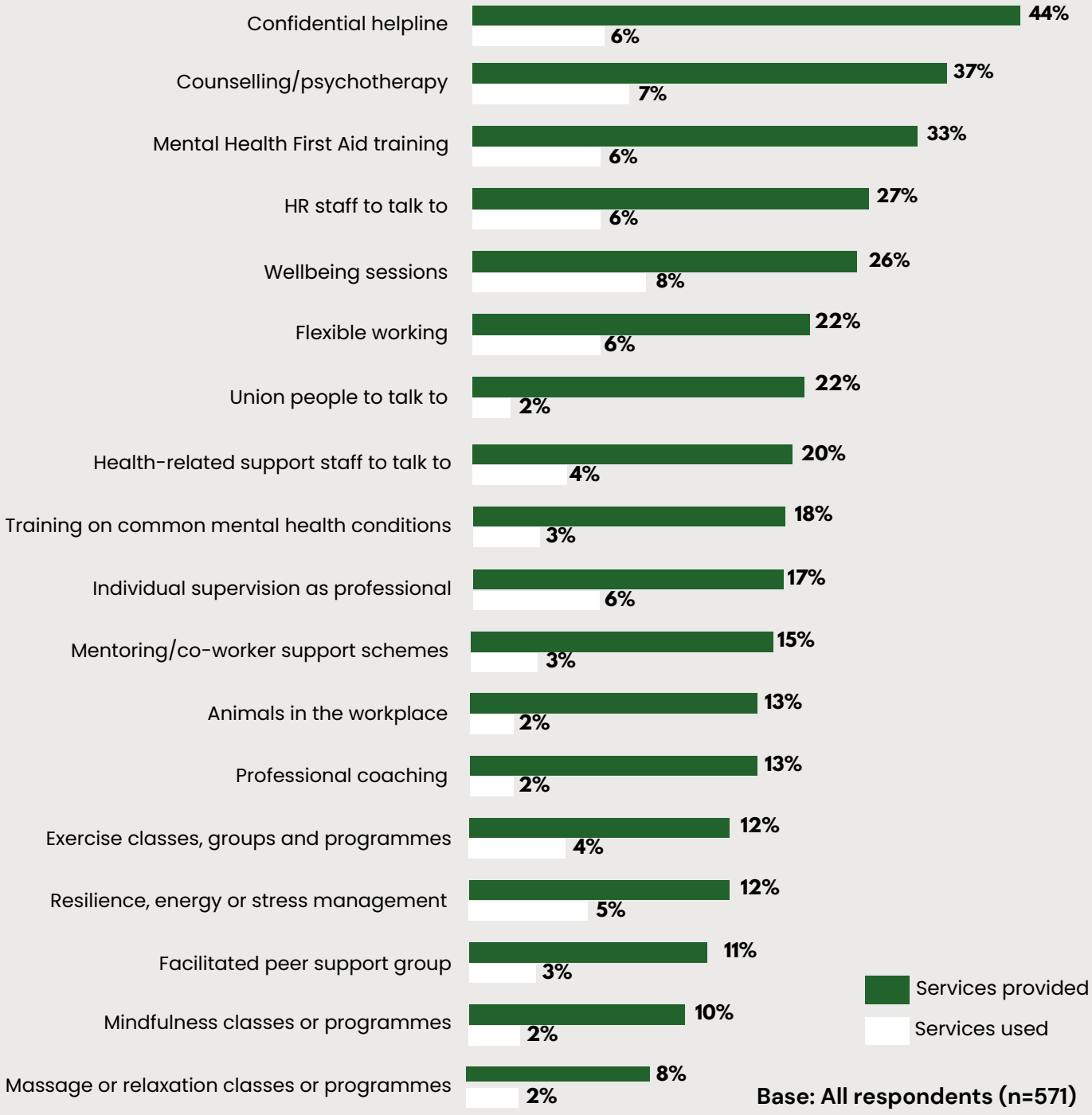
Work related factors which impact on SBLs' mental health and wellbeing



Base: All respondents (n=571)

Appendix 2:

Mental health services provided by schools and used by SBLs



Additional services to help staff wellbeing offered by schools, not noted in the above list, included offering paid time off school for wellbeing (e.g. finishing work early), the provision of health or medical services such as optional flu vaccinations, general health checks, membership of a gym, gestures which show appreciation (e.g. breakfast mornings), special events organised for staff (e.g. outings) and access to discounted shopping (e.g. 'Wider Wallet').

In the interviews, most SBLs reported that there had been increased provision overall in their schools to support staff mental health and wellbeing because of the pandemic.

Appendix 3:
Methodology

This research study investigated the wellbeing needs of School Business Leaders working in state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England and Wales

It aimed to understand:

- **What are the work-related factors which have an impact on the mental health and wellbeing of School Business Leaders?**
- **Which types of mental health and wellbeing support do School Business Leaders currently use? Which are of most benefit, in tackling these work-related factors?**
- **Which wellbeing solutions work well for staff in schools and why?**
- **How might the Covid-19 pandemic have affected the mental health and wellbeing of School Business Leaders?**

A mixed-methods design was used to answer the research questions.

This involved:

- **571 online survey responses from SBLs working in schools in England and Wales. The survey was open for completion during the period 12 October to 6 November 2022. Incentives were offered to take part.**
- **10 telephone, or online, depth interviews with SBLs or School Business Managers, to further explore some of the issues raised in the survey. The interviews were conducted during 11-25 November 2022.**

Details of the respondents who took part in the online survey and the interviews are shown below.

Online survey sample (all tables below based on 571 respondents)

Job titles and tenure of the respondents

Job title	Number of respondents	Proportion
School Business Manager	284	50%
Office Manager/Director	63	11%
Business Manager/Director	41	7%
Finance Manager/Director	40	7%
School Business Leader	37	7%
Operations Manager/Director	35	6%
HR Manager/Director	24	4%
Bursar	19	3%

Headteacher/Principal, Deputy or Assistant Headteacher/Principal	9	2%
Other	19	3%

Tenure	Number of respondents	Proportion
0-2 years	102	18%
3-5 years	161	28%
6-10 years	167	29%
11-20 years	104	18%
21-30 years	32	6%
31+ years	5	1%

Type of school worked for (phase, category and location)

Phase of school	Number of respondents	Proportion
Primary school	289	51%
Secondary school	68	12%
Middle school	56	10%
All-through school	47	8%
Infant school	41	7%
Central trust team	26	5%
Special school	23	4%
Cross-phase primary and secondary	12	2%
Pupil Referral Unit	1	<1%
Other	8	1%

Category of school	Number of respondents	Proportion
Local authority/maintained school	286	50%
Multi-academy trust	166	29%
Single academy trust	101	18%
Other	15	3%
Don't know/unsure	3	1%

Location (region)	Number of respondents	Proportion
North East	63	11%
North West	76	13%
Yorkshire and the Humber	23	4%

West Midlands	34	6%
East Midlands	37	7%
East of England	104	18%
London	63	11%
South East	91	16%
South West	39	7%
Wales	16	3%
Nationally across regions/countries	25	4%

Demographic details of respondents (gender, age and ethnicity)

Gender	Number of respondents	Proportion
Male	145	25%
Female	420	74%
Transgender	5	1%
Non-binary	1	<1%

Age	Number of respondents	Proportion
Less than 20	-	-
20-24	8	1%
25-29	58	10%
30-34	96	17%
35-39	65	11%
40-44	68	12%
45-49	77	14%
50-54	95	17%
55-59	68	12%
60-64	26	5%
65+	7	1%
Prefer not to say	3	1%

Ethnicity	Number of respondents	Proportion
Asian or Asian British - Indian	6	1%
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	4	1%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	5	1%
Asian or Asian British - Chinese	8	1%
Asian or Asian British - Any other Asian background	14	3%

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African - Caribbean	5	1%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African - African	3	1%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African - Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background	3	1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean	5	1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African	2	<1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian	3	1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background	2	<1%
White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	420	74%
White - Irish	40	7%
White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller	8	1%
White - Roma	9	2%
White - Any other background	23	4%
Other ethnic group - Arab	-	-
Any other ethnic group	1	<1%
Prefer not to say	10	2%

Interview sample

All online survey respondents were given the opportunity to take part in a telephone/online interview to further explore some of the issues raised in the survey. 113 SBLs put themselves forward to be interviewed and 33 were selected to contact in three priority groups in order to achieve a mixture of SBLs working in different phases of education, category/type of schools, locations and role types.

The interview sample comprised 10 SBLs working in the following schools and roles:

- **Phase – 4 primary schools, 1 infant school, 2 secondary schools and 1 special school, plus 2 working in central trust teams (mixed MATs)**
- **Category – 7 LA maintained schools, 2 MATs and 1 SAT**
- **Location – 2 South East, 1 London, 1 Yorkshire and the Humber, 2 East of England, 1 North West, 1 South West, 1 West Midlands, and 1 school in Wales**
- **Role – 2 SBLs, 5 SBMs, 1 Operations Manager/Director, 1 Finance Manager/Director, 1 Business Manager/Director**

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