

Governance News

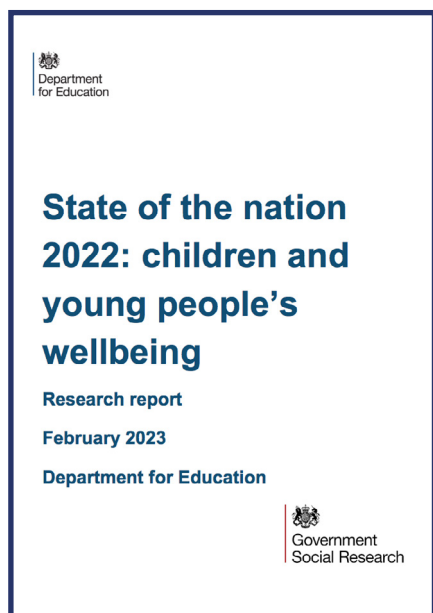
**A Termly Newsletter for Liverpool Governors and
Trustees**



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State of the Nation 2022: Children & Young People's Wellbeing



The Department for Education has published its annual 'state of the nation' report, collating and analysing published evidence about the wellbeing of children and young people over the academic year September 2021 to July 2022.

Executive summary

Over the past year, schools and colleges have returned to full-time face-to-face teaching and formal examinations have resumed. As the focus has shifted beyond the immediate impacts of COVID-19 towards recovery and the future, a range of national and global issues have emerged or come into focus. These include war in Ukraine, the increasing cost of living, concerns over the environment and climate change, and wider social issues.

The report brings together a range of published information from government, academic, voluntary, and private sector organisations to provide a clear narrative for all those interested in the wellbeing of children and young people in England. It provides a shared evidence base for everyone - in government, services, schools & colleges, parents & families, communities, and employers - to reflect upon and deliver better wellbeing outcomes for all children and young people.

Key Findings

Personal wellbeing

The trends presented in the report indicate that children and young people's subjective wellbeing, measured annually, appears to have dipped in 2020 and recovered close to pre-pandemic levels by 2021, remaining at similar levels in 2022. During the 2021/22 academic year, while wellbeing on most measures remained consistent, anxiousness among both primary and secondary-age pupils appears to have increased and is higher than in 2020/21).

Considering differences in wellbeing trends by subgroup, secondary-age boys reported better wellbeing than girls throughout the 2021/22 academic year on all measures; this was consistent with State of the Nation reports in previous years. Within secondary-aged pupils, older pupils consistently reported poorer wellbeing than younger pupils. Secondary-age pupils with SEN were more likely to report low wellbeing on some time points and in some measures than those without SEN in 2021/22, though there was no consistent pattern.

Finally, secondary-age white pupils reported greater anxiousness than those from an ethnic minority background throughout the 2021/22 academic year. This contrasts with the 2020/21 academic year, when no differences in anxiousness were detected by ethnicity.

Together, these findings suggest a mixed picture regarding children and young people's personal wellbeing in 2021/22, though anxiousness among primary and secondary age pupils may have worsened through the year.

Mental and physical health

The percentage of children and young people reporting low happiness with their health appears to have increased in recent years. Rates of probable mental disorders and eating problems remain at elevated levels compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on parent/carers reports in a different data source, children's behavioural and attentional difficulties had, on average, remained relatively stable between July 2021 and March 2022, while children's emotional difficulties had increased since during this period.

While rates of probable mental disorder among younger age groups have remained consistent in recent years, amongst 17-19-year-olds, the percentage had increased to one in four in 2022, up from 1 in 6 in 2021. Rates of eating problems and self-harm were also higher in older age groups. Primary aged boys were more likely to have a probable mental disorder than primary aged girls whereas older young women were more likely to have a probable mental disorder than older young men. There was no difference by sex among secondary-aged children and young people for likelihood of a probable mental disorder. At primary level, children in year 6 have consistently been more likely to be obese than those of reception age. Rates of obesity among year 6s remain higher than before the pandemic.

A related issue concerns the frequency of problems with sleep experienced by children and young people. In 2022, those who regularly struggled with sleep were more likely to have a mental disorder. Sleep problems were more prevalent in older children and young people, specifically young women, groups particularly at risk for poorer mental health and wellbeing in general.

While these results point to a heightened risk for health problems in older ages, those aged 17-23 years old were less likely than those aged 7-16 years old to have sought help for a mental health concern in 2022. It is unclear from these data why help seeking is lower amongst older young people. However, potential reasons may include: being unable to recognise symptoms of mental health disorders in themselves; perceived social stigma of mental health problems; and, losing access to school support once leaving school.

Together, these findings suggest an inconsistent recovery of children and young people's mental and physical health towards pre-pandemic levels.

Education and skills

In June 2022, most secondary-age children and young people reported being motivated to learn, were managing to concentrate in class, felt safe at school, enjoyed being at school, and felt that they belonged at school.

While children and young people's happiness with school has remained at a similar level to previous years on average, the percentage of those reporting low happiness with school appears to have increased.

Boys continue to score higher on measures related to their experience of school, including happiness with school, enjoying coming to school, feeling safe in school, motivation, concentration, and school belonging. Pupils who were eligible for free school meals were less likely to report being motivated to learn, being able to concentrate in class, feeling safe in school, and having a strong sense of belonging at school, compared to those not eligible for free school meals.

Differences in other groups were less consistent across measures. Pupils from an ethnic minority background were more likely to report being motivated to learn, managing to concentrate in class, and enjoying coming to school than white pupils. Pupils with SEN were more likely to report low happiness with school compared to those without. Pupils with SEN were more likely to report having difficulty concentrating in class, compared to those without SEN.

Relationships

The percentage of those reporting low happiness with their family and friends remains at elevated levels compared to before the pandemic. While annual data show that rates of loneliness appear similar in 2020, 2021, and 2022, within-year data suggests increases in rates of loneliness through the 2021/22 academic year. Those who reported often feeling lonely were more likely to have a probable mental disorder.

Considering children and young people's happiness with their relationships at school, around 7 in 10 children and young people agreed or strongly agreed that adults at their school were interested in their wellbeing, that there was at least one adult at their school who they could talk to about how they were feeling, and that young people in their school got on well together. However, around a quarter of primary-aged children and around a fifth of secondary-aged children reported having been bullied in the previous 12 months when responding in June 2022.

Looking at subgroup differences, boys reported greater happiness with peer and teacher relationships, were more likely to report that young people in their school got on well together and were less likely to report often feeling lonely throughout 2021/22. These trends are consistent with gender differences in subjective wellbeing.

Both primary and secondary-age children with SEN/SEND5 were more likely than those without SEN to report having been a victim of bullying in the previous 12 months. Rates of bullying victimisation were also higher for those eligible for free school meals compared to those not eligible for free school meals.

Finally, secondary-age white pupils were more likely to report having been a victim of bullying than pupils from an ethnic minority, though no difference was found for primary pupils.

'What we do'

Overall, children and young people's happiness with their time use dropped between 2019 and 2020 during the height of the pandemic but appears to have since recovered and remains at a similar level in 2022 to 2021.

Rates of participation in extracurricular and physical activity have also increased since 2020/21 with nearly half of children and young people being physically active for at least 60 minutes per day and 8 in 10 reporting having engaged in at least one type of extracurricular activity in summer term of 2022. Most children and young people reported spending time outside most days of the week, and 4 in 10 having a high connection to nature. Regular physical activity and regular experiences in the natural environment were associated with greater wellbeing.

These data also highlight inequalities in participation in activities and access to outdoor spaces. Female respondents were more likely than males to report having not attended any extra-curricular activities in the summer term of 2022. Further, there was some evidence that female respondents were more likely than male respondents to indicate high connection to nature.

Younger children aged 8-11 were more likely than those aged 12-15 to have regularly spent time outside in school in the previous week and to indicate high connection to nature.

Children and young people with families whose annual household income was greater than £50,000 were more likely than those with families whose annual household income was less than £15,000 to have regularly spent time outside in school in the previous week and indicate high connection to nature. Those with high family affluence were also more likely to be physically active than those with low family affluence.

Finally, white children and young people were more likely than those from an ethnic minority background to have regularly spent time outside in school in the previous week; this difference was also observed between those with without a disability compared to those with a disability.

Self, society, and the future

Children and young people's average happiness with the things they own, and their appearance, appear similar to previous years, but their happiness with their choice in life and what may happen to them later in their lives appear to have increased between 2020 and 2022, after having dipped between 2019 and 2020 during the height of the pandemic.

Most children and young people reported that they felt safe in and like living in their neighbourhood. Most also reported that they felt they could trust people and that there were enough places to play in their neighbourhood.

However, concerns about household finances were evident in responses, with around a third of parents and carers reporting that they had struggled with school costs, and a quarter of secondary-age pupils being worried about being able to afford technology for studying.

Furthermore, around one in five 7-16-year-olds and one in ten 17-22-year-olds reported that their household had experienced a reduction in income in the previous 12 months, suggesting worsening of household finances for some families in the previous year.

There was also evidence that a sizeable minority of children and young people have had negative experiences with social media, with around one in eight 11-16-year-olds and one in seven 17-24-year-olds reporting that they have been bullied online.

Girls and young women were less likely than boys and young men to report that they felt safe using social media, and young women were more likely than young men to report that they had been bullied online.

Conclusions

The data indicates a mixed picture as to the current state of children and young people's wellbeing during the 2021/22 academic year. Some measures suggest signs of recovery and positive experiences over this time, such as: some measures of subjective wellbeing; time use and participation in extra-curricular activities; obesity; physical activity levels; average happiness in a number of different areas of life. However, others indicate sustained poorer outcomes compared to before the pandemic, or worsening over the past academic year including: mental health problems, especially for older young people; feelings of anxiousness; the percentage reporting low happiness for a number of the different areas of life.

A lack of data means that the outcomes and experiences for all subgroups of interest cannot be consistently scrutinised. However, across the measures considered, there are indications that outcomes and experiences may be poorer for older children and young people, and girls and young women. Patterns in outcomes and experiences are less consistent for other groups, however it is challenging to draw conclusions where there is less data.

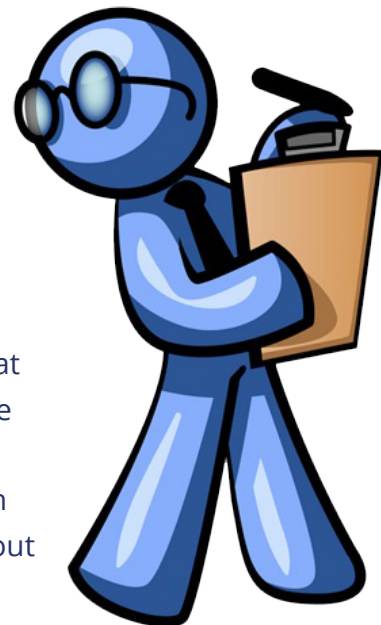
While the data cannot tell us about the causes, there are indications that a range of emerging or continuing national and global issues may be causing worries and challenges for children and young people. These include worries about cost of living, the environment and wider social issues and inequalities, and negative experiences using social media.

The DfE's State of the Nation 2022: Children and Young People's Wellbeing can be accessed [here](#).

Safeguarding and School Inspection



One of the most important duties that governing boards fulfil is to ensure that their school provides a safe environment for pupils. The National Governance Association (NGA) and the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) have jointly published advice to help governing boards demonstrate, through the inspection process, that an effective safeguarding culture exists throughout their school/trust.



Although safeguarding is not graded as a specific area, Ofsted inspectors will always make a written judgement under 'leadership and management' about whether the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. Where safeguarding is found to be ineffective, it is likely to lead to an inadequate judgement for leadership and management.

Multi academy trust (MAT) boards and federation governing bodies will want to ensure that safeguarding culture and policies are consistent throughout all of their schools while taking into account the circumstances of each individual school. For example, through adopting an overarching safeguarding and child protection policy and appointing someone at executive leadership level to coordinate safeguarding activity across the group of schools.

Governing board safeguarding responsibilities

In broad terms, boards are responsible for ensuring that:

- Safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and comply with the law at all times
- All staff understand their roles and responsibilities and are able to discharge them
- The board has sufficient knowledge and capacity to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities

School and trust leaders are primarily responsible for implementing safeguarding policies and procedures and ensuring that day-to-day practices promote the safety and wellbeing of pupils.

The responsibilities are detailed within **Keeping children safe in education (KCSiE)**, statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) that schools must have regard to. All governors and trustees must read and understand KCSiE - part two sets out the responsibilities of governing boards. Governors and trustees should ensure that they are kept informed of any changes to the guidance and to their safeguarding responsibilities. Governing boards must also have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism; known as the **Prevent Duty**.

The evidence that Ofsted look for

Inspectors will gather evidence from a range of sources to evaluate the culture of safeguarding. This includes looking at policies and meeting with members of the governing board to establish whether the board understands its role and carries it out effectively. As many board members as possible should attend the meeting with inspectors.

It is particularly important that the safeguarding link governor/trustee attends to give their insight, although it is the board that retains collective responsibility.

During the discussion with inspectors, the board should be able to demonstrate that they know what the strengths and areas for development are for their school/trust in relation to safeguarding. Where there are areas for development, the board should know what is being done to address them. The following table outlines topics that may be covered with inspectors.

Boards should ensure that:	Inspectors may ask about:
All governors/trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training <i>(That includes online safety)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The specific nature of this training and the impact it has had on the board's role. For maintained school governing boards, it is a requirement for at least one member of a recruitment panel to also complete safer recruitment training (also advisable for academies).
Relevant safeguarding policies are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key aspects of the child protection policy, staff code of conduct, behaviour policy, safer recruitment and selection policy. They may also ask how policies are monitored and reviewed.
The safeguarding link governor/trustee fulfils their role effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the role is carried out and how the link governor/trustee interacts with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), such as through termly meetings and routine reports to the board.
Safeguarding forms part of the board's routine monitoring schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated safeguarding visits undertaken by the safeguarding governor/trustee. Other themed visits should also take into account safeguarding practices in line with adopted policies (such as the behaviour policy).
Effective communication strategies are in place to help safeguard pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For example, the governing board monitors and has evidence that all staff are aware of who they need to contact if they have safeguarding concerns.
The board systematically monitors number and types safeguarding incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The actions taken to minimise future incidents. This should be high-level data which does not identify individuals but enables the board to see how policies work in practice.
The board's oversight ensures that the single central record (SCR) is up to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversight which likely draws upon routine reports from the DSL and evaluation of external reviews (sometimes carried out by the local authority). Boards are not required to routinely audit the SCR.
The board is confident that pupils in their school/trust know how to keep themselves safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for pupils to develop knowledge of how to stay safe and protect themselves online. Inspectors may also ask about the school's approach to dealing with sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and peer-on-peer abuse. Those governing should be able to identify ways in which the school promotes appropriate standards of behaviour such as through the delivery of relationships, health and sex education.

[illegible]

A study by Ofsted, published in November, explores the purpose of AP, the reasons why primary-age pupils are referred to it, and the expectations for their progress and outcomes. Although the study identifies examples of joined-up working that would benefit pupils, it also highlights the challenges in supporting primary-age pupils with additional needs, such as a lack of access to specialist help or a breakdown in the relationships between parents and school staff.

The aim of the government's policy is to educate all children, including those with SEND, in mainstream settings wherever possible. Legislation strengthening children's rights to mainstream education came into force in each country of the UK in the 1990s and 2000s.

‘Education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.’

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Many APs keep pupils safe and provide at least a good standard of education, which is evident from inspections of pupil referral units, AP free schools and AP academies. However, there is concerning variability in the quality of provision across the sector. Not all AP settings are registered with the DfE, and some of those that should be registered are not. As a result, they are not subject to any direct oversight.

This adds a further layer of complexity, as the size of the unregistered sector is not fully known. What is known is that the number of placements in unregistered AP has been rising since 2017. Further, some unregistered AP settings do not carry out the required checks on staff. Inspectors have found low standards of education in some of these settings, along with a range of other safety and safeguarding concerns.

Main findings

Most pupils in the study were referred to AP because of violent behaviour

Pupils were referred to AP when school staff could not safely manage their violent physical and/or verbal behaviour, and this behaviour was having a negative effect on other pupils and staff. Staff in schools, APs and LAs believed that violent behaviour originated from difficult home lives or, in some cases, from previously undiagnosed SEND. Staff stated that a large majority of primary-age pupils referred to AP had SEMH needs as a primary area of need. This aligns with the national statistics on the needs of pupils referred to AP.

Ofsted inspectors have encountered needs being sometimes labelled as SEMH or SEND when in fact they originate from inadequately designed curriculums or poor teaching. While there are children who have severe, profound or multiple needs, others are identified as having SEND during key stages 2 or 3, which can be traced back to a poor curriculum and poor teaching in the early years and key stage 1, rather than a genuine need or difficulty.

Therefore, staff must consider each pupil's needs carefully when deciding what measures to put in place. A high-quality curriculum and high-quality teaching are crucial for preventing needs from developing, worsening or leading to avoidable AP referrals. Staff also need to be aware of pupils' circumstances and develop good relationships with their parents and carers.

Pupils were referred to AP when mainstream school support strategies had not worked

School staff referred pupils to AP when they were not able to meet pupils' additional needs because of a lack of funding, training or facilities.

School support strategies became ineffective when the relationships between parents and school staff had broken down. In such cases, school staff referred pupils to AP. It is important that school staff can build effective and close relationships with parents from the start, through regular, clear and balanced conversations. This reduces the likelihood that pupils will be referred to AP, and allows staff to allocate extra resources to them in good time. Many parents may themselves be in need of support. An awareness of this, along with signposting them to relevant sources of help and expertise, can help staff to build strong relationships with parents.

Staff had high expectations for the progress and outcomes of pupils

Staff expected that most pupils would return to mainstream education having developed the necessary skills and ability to learn and function well in this environment. They also expected that primary-age pupils referred to AP would go on to achieve well in secondary school and after leaving school. School and AP staff were determined to help pupils in AP to achieve positive outcomes. Their long-term expectations were high. This was because they considered that using AP when pupils were young was likely to have long-term benefits, especially when pupils were making good progress in AP, and because they focused on pupils' academic needs as well as their SEMH needs. However, these high expectations are not borne out by previous research, which found that the younger pupils are when they first attend AP, the worse their later attainment.

When AP and school staff did not consider it appropriate for a pupil to return to mainstream school, they worked together to identify the right future setting, such as a special school.

AP staff also expected school staff to improve their knowledge of and skills in working with pupils with additional needs. AP staff worked with mainstream colleagues to ensure that pupils were reintegrated successfully.

Primary-age pupils' stay in AP is usually short, but some stay in AP for years

Most pupils in AP are expected to stay for a short period (several weeks or months), and mostly part time. School and AP staff reported that they worked together to make sure that education is coherent for those pupils. For example, they decided which subjects should be taught in AP and which ones in school, or they taught the same subjects in a similar way. It was apparent that a close alignment between school and AP staff on pupils' progress and outcomes was important to them.

However, some pupils with complex needs stay in AP for years while waiting for a special school place. AP staff do not feel that they can meet those pupils' needs fully. If these vulnerable pupils do not receive appropriate teaching and support for a long time, this is likely to affect them negatively.

Parents were positive about their child's progress, but their expectations for long-term outcomes were not always high

All parents acknowledged that their child's behaviour, SEMH needs and academic work had improved since joining AP.

However, parents focused mainly on social and well-being outcomes. Although their child's behaviour had improved, some were unsure whether AP could substantially 'change' their child or lead to them having a happy and full life after leaving AP.

There was no consensus among staff on what AP is

Some staff considered outreach work to be AP, and others took the broad view that any sufficiently differentiated curriculum was AP. Some staff considered AP to involve an off-site placement, while others thought that some types of AP, such as pupil referral units, were short-stay schools rather than AP.

School staff did not consider internally resourced provision (where school staff work with pupils from the same school) to be AP. One school, however, used its internal AP for a pupil from another school.

The lack of consensus on the definition of 'alternative' may stem from the way AP is currently defined in the statutory guidance. When AP is arranged by LAs, it is 'education' for the excluded pupils. When it is arranged by schools, it is 'off-site provision to improve their behaviour'. The SEND and AP green paper looks at reforming the role of AP, so that it can offer a range of services from 'targeted support in mainstream schools' (where AP staff provide advice, coaching and one-to-one support for school staff) to 'time-limited placements'.

Staff identified outreach work as an important role of AP

Outreach work involves AP staff advising school staff to help them and the pupil(s) in the school setting. School staff found this helpful for:

- Early identification and intervention
- Preventing suspensions or permanent exclusions
- Reintegrating pupils into mainstream education

However, AP staff said that funding arrangements affect the amount of outreach work they can do in schools. They find it difficult to meet the need for outreach when funding is insufficient or uncertain. This can prevent staff from identifying the additional needs of pupils quickly. In addition, pupils may be suspended or excluded, when this could have been avoided.

A lack of available funding also sometimes led to AP being used as a short cut to getting support.

Staff thought that pupils benefited from a different environment

Staff from schools and APs considered staff in off-site APs to be better placed and qualified than school staff to identify certain needs and to tailor provision to individual pupils.

Some APs also had multidisciplinary teams on site (for example, child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) workers and educational psychologists) so that pupils' needs could be assessed and understood quickly.

APs were used as a 'circuit breaker' to repair relationships

When relationships between school staff and parents contributed to AP referral, AP staff were seen as helpful and effective mediators in repairing those relationships and working with parents and school staff to meet the pupil's needs.

When some parents did not have strong relationships with school staff, they objected to referral because they believed that AP was a punishment. Clear communication about its actual purpose helps with this, as does hearing from other parents whose children have been referred to AP, or from AP staff.

School staff's knowledge and skills are important in keeping pupils in mainstream education. It was sometimes possible to meet pupils' additional needs in mainstream schools when the school's staff had sufficient training and skills.

Staff develop their knowledge and skills through high-quality training, with help from external services or through good-quality outreach work by AP staff. All of this contributes to an inclusive school ethos, which was shared and valued by school and AP staff in the study.

Many school and AP staff referred to strained external services and the lack of access to them, both of which have been aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. They said this also limited the ability of school staff to support pupils in their schools.

Core elements of joined-up working across the schools and APs

In the study sample, these included:

- Strong collaboration between school and AP staff
- Schools remaining accountable for referred pupils
- AP staff providing advice and training for school staff to ensure that the school environment (strategies, and staff's knowledge, skills and understanding) is right for the pupil with additional needs
- School and AP staff working with parents and pupils throughout the process

Conclusions

Ofsted set out to explore the use of AP for primary-age pupils and the purpose of AP in the education system in England for those pupils. The study was carried out across 5 LAs.

Most primary-age pupils in the study were referred to AP because of violent behaviour, which staff attributed to SEMH needs. They were referred to AP when support strategies at school were not effective.

The main purposes of the AP in the sample were to:

- Provide outreach work in mainstream schools to help identify pupils' additional needs, and strategies to support them, at an early stage
- Prevent avoidable suspensions and permanent exclusions
- Support reintegration of pupils into mainstream school

When AP was used as an off-site setting, its purpose was to provide a different environment for pupils so that their needs could be better identified and addressed, or to reset and repair relationships with parents and/or the pupil.

AP was also used as a path into special schools for some primary-age pupils. Some pupils with complex needs stay in AP for years while waiting for a special school place.

Although there were many examples of joined-up working, previous research and inspections of some unregistered APs have revealed serious issues in the sector. These include safeguarding arrangements, the quality of education and staff qualifications.

Ofsted's study was qualitative, rather than quantitative (11 primary schools, 8 Aps and 1 SEMH school across 5 LAs) so its findings cannot be applied more widely. In addition, schools themselves selected the pupils' cases that were examined in greater depth, and this self-selection could account for the positive examples heard.

Alternative provision for primary-age pupils in England: a long-term 'destination' or a 'temporary solution'? can be viewed [here](#).

Research and analysis

Alternative provision for primary-age pupils in England: a long-term 'destination' or a 'temporary solution'?

Published 8 November 2022

Early Experiences of Governance



Report introduction and background

One of **Governors for Schools'** key responsibilities is to recruit skilled volunteers for school governance roles across England and Wales. It also supports volunteers to develop their skills as board members over the twelve to eighteen months following appointment.

Governors appointed via Governors for Schools are asked to respond to a survey both one and two years after their appointment confirmation. The collective responses for both of these surveys across the academic year 2021-22 are presented below. The one-year anniversary survey was sent to 1,895 volunteers and received 225 responses while, the two-year anniversary was sent to 1,294 volunteers with 150 individual responses, meaning both surveys attracted a response rate of just under **12%**.

This report shares some of the collective and individual experiences of volunteers appointed by Governors for Schools at an early stage of their governor journey.

Enjoyment within the role

As all school governors know, joining a school board is an honour and a privilege. While the role can be challenging at times, we are confident most readers view the experience as deeply rewarding and enjoyable. We're delighted that **95%** of respondents claimed to be enjoying governance a year into the role, rising to **97%** of respondents two years into the role.

Another positive feature was that **94%** of first-year respondents would recommend the role to friends, family, and colleagues, a sentiment shared by **93%** of those two years into the role. In Governors for Schools' most recent financial year, we received 457 applications from individuals who had heard about the role via word of mouth or had been directly referred by a friend, accounting for almost **16%** of total applications across the year.

These statistics demonstrate that sharing personal experiences represents one of the best recruitment tools available. As such, Governors for Schools supports the **Visible Governance** campaign led by the National Governance Association (NGA). We stand firmly behind the NGA's call for governors to stand up and champion their roles, helping others understand the personal and societal benefits associated with school governance. GovernorHub released a **report** earlier in 2022 highlighting a lack of public understanding of governors' responsibilities. It is up to those involved in governance to address this problem and deepen others' understanding of the role.

Many respondents took the time to express the specific ways in which governance improved their life. Stand-out comments included: "I am really enjoying my experience and the work I do is so rewarding. I wished I had done this earlier," and "I love my school governor role, I'm learning loads about how education in early years works and meeting so many lovely people - children and adults!" Such sentiments appeared in different forms repeatedly across both survey groups.

Qualitative responses provided in both the one- and two-year surveys suggest governance roles are enjoyable when:

- There is an effective on-boarding process and newly appointed volunteers are given access to buddies and/or mentors.
- There is accessible training across a range of formats.
- Meetings are chaired effectively, with a clear command of agenda items and a mutual understanding of expectations.
- People have access to networks where they can discuss their roles.

A further elaboration on the final point came from a volunteer who stated: "I have really enjoyed my governor experience so far. There is a network of school governors at my workplace (a university) who meet often to share experiences and offer peer support." Governors for Schools work with a wide range of organisations to help them develop school governor networks and volunteering initiatives.

We also maintain our own very active governance community, often sharing best practice, tips, joys, and challenges with each other. If this is something you would find beneficial, please get in touch, as we'd be happy to share our expertise from working with a wide range of employers.

Of course, not all of the qualitative feedback relating to individual enjoyment was positive. Common themes included:

- The impact of COVID-19 on governors' ability to get to know the school and build relationships in person.
- The time commitment being higher than anticipated.
- Governors feeling that their contributions were not listened to - with a particular focus on the role played by the Chair.
- A resistance to effective challenge and scrutiny from the school.

Many such factors affecting respondents' enjoyment of the role are well-known and, perhaps, unsurprising to the governance community. However, anyone involved in leading a governance board should ensure their boards are consistently reviewing progress, utilising governor feedback, and following best practice guidelines.

Questions worth considering include:

- 1. Have we conducted self-evaluations within our school over the past twelve months?***
- 2. If yes, have the responses been shared? Have suggestions and concerns been acted upon?***
- 3. If not, do we know why?***

Progression and impact within the role

Succession planning is always central to governing board agendas and is often cited as a priority by the thousands of schools we work with every year. Today's governance volunteers are likely to comprise the majority of Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Chairs of Governors over the next few years, as people currently in those roles move for a variety of reasons.

We asked respondents in both the one-year and two-year anniversary surveys about the roles they had taken on within their boards and their plans (if any) to develop their skills as governors. The results are quite positive.

One year on from appointment

59% of respondents stated that they had taken on a Link role within the first year of their appointment. Our recruitment service works to connect volunteers with schools requiring their unique skills and experiences. As such, we're especially pleased to have received responses such as "I have taken on the role of SEND governor" and "This has enabled me to use my SEND qualification and experience in the area to the fullest extent."

25% of first-year respondents also stated that they would be willing to consider a Chair role in future, with **51%** undecided and a further **24%** saying they would not consider the role. These positive figures indicate that many people who pursue governance roles through Governors for Schools are keen and/or willing to take on leadership roles. As such, board members must consider how to go about developing potential future leaders.

ONE YEAR ON:

95% OF RESPONDENTS HAD ENJOYED THEIR FIRST YEAR OF GOVERNANCE

94% WOULD RECOMMEND THE ROLE TO FAMILY, FRIENDS, OR COLLEAGUES

59% HAD TAKEN ON A LINK ROLE ON THEIR BOARD

25% WOULD CONSIDER BECOMING A CHAIR, WITH A FURTHER 51% NOT RULING THIS OUT

Questions to pose include:

- 1. Are we having regular conversations with our board members about their future plans and aspirations? Do we know who might be interested in stepping up?*
- 2. Are we applying talent development principles and increasing the responsibilities of those looking to get more involved?*
- 3. Are we utilising opportunities for shadowing and introducing other areas of the work of the governing board?*

Two years on from appointment

TWO YEARS ON:

**98% OF VOLUNTEERS
FELT THEY WERE
MAKING EFFECTIVE
CONTRIBUTIONS TO
THEIR BOARDS**

**62% HAD TAKEN ON A
LINK ROLE ON THEIR
BOARD**

**97% OF RESPONDENTS
WERE ENJOYING THEIR
ROLE**

**17% HAD BECOME
CHAIRS, WITH 29%
BECOMING VICE-CHAIRS**

After two years in the role, **62%** of respondents stated they had taken on a Link role on their boards, marking a slight increase from the first-year data. Of course, not all boards utilise Link governors beyond their statutory function, so there is no need for every governor to take on these roles.

Encouragingly, **31%** of respondents had taken on a committee Chair role, **29%** had taken on a Vice- Chair role, and **17%** had gone on to become Chair of their board at the end of the second year of their term of office. Governors for Schools predominantly appoints people entirely new to school or academy governance, so we're encouraged by how many of our placed volunteers took on leadership roles at an early stage of their governance journeys.

We partnered with the National Governance Association on their new guide to succession planning which was released in September 2022 and can be found [here](#).

It is a very helpful report designed to give boards the confidence to develop the future leaders that we can see are coming into the school governance talent pool to ensure they are ready to take on the challenge in their schools and trusts when the time comes.

Ability to effectively contribute to the board

A common question faced in discussing governance roles with prospective volunteers is how individuals can effectively contribute to their boards. Indeed, this concern represents an entry barrier for many. Governing boards benefit from a wide range of skills and aptitudes held by people in many different professions. However, this fact is not always apparent to those on the outside looking in. Emphasising the developmental aspect of the role represents a key part of our messaging strategy for recruiting new volunteers, as shown in the data below.

The surveys asked how respondents felt they had been able to contribute to their boards in their first and second years in post.

After one year in post:

At all times	11%
Most of the time	38%
Sometimes	36%
Rarely	12%
Not at all	3%

After two years in post:

At all times	23%
Most of the time	44%
Sometimes	31%
Rarely	2%
Not at all	0%

Reflecting on the important role training plays in development, one respondent stated that: “I think the webinars help considerably in helping people like me keep abreast of the current situation and ask challenging yet constructive questions.”

Many of the respondents’ negative comments related to doubts surrounding their ability to contribute to board discussions. While it is unlikely any individual volunteer will contribute across all the board’s areas of responsibility, it can be helpful for seasoned governors to check in on their less experienced peers. Regular check-ins can help mitigate imposter syndrome and generate productive conversations about how a governor can get more involved with their board if desired.

Professional support and development in the role

While governance is rewarding in and of itself, it also presents wonderful opportunities for knowledge and skills development, helping volunteers learn more about the intricacies of the education system. The two-year anniversary survey asked respondents to reflect on the skills they had developed during their governance experience to date. Among those most commonly listed were:

- Finance
- Questioning and analysis
- Governance
- Communication/interpersonal skills
- Understanding of the education sector and pedagogy

These findings are in keeping with a wider study the charity undertook with some of our corporate partners in 2018, and you can find a summary of that report [here](#).

Conclusion

Overall, we believe the responses to our one- and two-year surveys paint a positive picture of early experience in school governance in 2021-22, despite some clear challenges. Given the respondents to both surveys had experienced significant disruptions to their governance experiences as a result of COVID-19, we’re delighted to see so many enjoying their roles nevertheless. This gives us cause to be optimistic for the future with many more committed individuals coming into the pool of talent involved in the governing of our schools.

Viewed collectively, these responses demonstrate the value of developing robust induction plans for newly appointed board members. For more detailed advice about building an induction plan, please refer to **this fascinating session** on the topic, recorded at the Governors for Schools Conference 2022. Every board and individual board member is responsible for developing informative induction plans and lending support to newer colleagues as they settle into their roles. If your induction plan needs refreshing, it’s a good idea to prioritise this task and champion robust induction processes in the weeks ahead.

The National Governance Association estimates there are nearly 20,000 governance vacancies within England alone - an all-time high. Ensuring we create welcoming and inclusive environments for newcomers to the role will improve retention rates and mitigate volunteer shortages.

Another way to enhance recruitment and retention rates is to utilise personal governance experiences as a means to promote the vital role of governors among personal and professional networks. Is there scope for exploring a school governor recruitment initiative within our workplaces? Are there people we believe will be excellent governors who we can speak to about the role?

Governor recruitment and retention represent a major challenge. As such, thorough induction processes and high-level support is vital for the volunteers giving their time and expertise to schools, academies, and trusts.

As a charity we look forward to continuing to help appoint many more people into governance roles, support them in their governance development and hear about their experiences across the forthcoming academic year. Please keep an eye on our correspondence and our website and social media for details of future training opportunities and we hope you and your board have a successful year ahead.

Home Education in England



A report by The Centre for Social Justice seeks to paint a picture of home education in England and the challenges currently faced in ensuring all children are learning in a safe environment.

Executive summary

Home education is on the rise, but fundamental questions remain around how best to ensure all children in home education are there through choice, have access to a high-quality education, and are safe from harm.

Analysing the data across a range of local authorities in England, the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) estimates that by the start of the 2021/22 academic year a record high of least 81,000 children were being home educated – the equivalent to the population of 80 average-sized secondary schools.

Prior to the pandemic, the cohort of children who are home educated was growing by around **20%** year on year. The cumulative number of children who were home educated over the course of last year was over 115,000. This is an alarming **34%** higher than before the pandemic. In some areas, the total number of children in home education more than doubled. At present, half of all children taught at home were found to have begun their retreat from the classroom during lockdowns.

Parents should have the right to choose what education their children receive. This principle is written into our English education system and should be recognised in any reforms to home learning.

Parents know their children best and are best informed to make choices about what their children need. Many parents who take their children out of school and provide a thorough and high-quality education, at great personal expense. Their right to do so is enshrined in law and needs to be respected.

However, our current home education system is not enabling all parents to make a fair and free choice. Fears have grown about a growing population of parents opting for home education because they feel that they have no other option or being coerced into taking their child off the school roll.

In the CSJ's research, there were many instances where parents took their children out of school because they believed that school was no longer a safe environment. Many parents cited difficulties with accessing SEND provision, a lack of support for mental health and serious incidences of bullying as reasons for opting for home education. These parents feel that schools are failing to meet their children's needs.



During school shut-downs, there was a big influx of families opting to home educate. Parents cited concerns around Covid-19 and health concerns as a decisive factor when taking their children out of school. Recent news has suggested that children from families with critically vulnerable people were encouraged to de-register children.

While parents often choose to home educate for legitimate reasons, sometimes a child can be removed from the school roll for reasons other than the child's best interest. This is known as off-rolling. Evidence has emerged of families moving into home education following the threat of school exclusion and being left deliberately uninformed about the consequences of being moved off-roll. Studies suggest that the majority of children being taken off-roll come from only a small minority of schools.

We cannot definitively say how many children are being home educated or whether any groups are more likely to move off-roll than others because so little data is collected.

9 in 10 local authorities believe they have not been able to identify every child in home education. However, existing data suggests that children who are moved out of school are disproportionately likely to be eligible for free school meals, have an EHCP or SEN support and have a history of absences and school exclusions.

The Education Select Committee concluded in their recent report, "Strengthening Home Education", that the status quo does not allow the "government to say with confidence that a suitable education is being provided to every child in the country."

Educating children at home is no small task, it requires a lot of time and effort. In some cases, the education received at home is better than that received at school but in others it is worse. We cannot make any firm conclusions about the overall quality of home education or what proportion of children receive a suitable education because there is no data collected on home educated children's academic outcomes and development. In fact, England is an international outlier in this respect: oversight and assessment of educational progress is commonplace across Europe, but England has no such quality assurance.

Studies by Ofsted confirm that some home educated pupils have been left without access to the appropriate quality of education and Anne Longfield, the former Children's Commissioner, suggests that some families have found themselves "struggling to cope" with the demands of home education. The Department for Education has stated that there is "considerable evidence" that many children who are home educated are not receiving a suitable education.

Some children who are home educated have been subject to safeguarding concerns. In 2020, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel uncovered 15 incidents of harm involving children reported to be in home education. These cases included severe harm such as serious neglect, emotional abuse and intra-familial abuse. In three of the cases, the children had died.

The Panel concluded that these children were often invisible; they were not in school and did not receive home visits. Local authority leads relayed to CSJ a range of safeguarding concerns including county line involvement, gangs, and exploitation, as well as child employment.

The CSJ's investigation has shown the diversity of outstanding home education routes, which provide an alternative to mainstream schooling. However, CSJ shines a particular spotlight on the needs of children who have become invisible through home education, for whom the decision to home educate was not made in their best interests.

The investigation focused on this cohort of pupils because recent research has shown that children with additional needs are increasingly being moved into home education. Many children who are currently being home educated have previously been excluded from school or had disengaged entirely from mainstream education before moving off-roll.

While there is no comprehensive data on children in home education, a **study by FFT Education Datalab** found that children with additional vulnerabilities are disproportionately likely to be out of the school system by the end of Key Stage Four. It is estimated that about half of these children are in home education.

Their analysis found that:

- A child who has been persistently absent from school is more than 3 times more likely to end up with no final destination, compared a child who has never been persistently absent;
- A permanently excluded child is 2.5 times more likely to end up with no final destination compared to a child who had never been permanently excluded;
- More than 1 in 20 children classed as 'long term disadvantaged' end up with no final destination; and
- A child who has ever been SEN or ever had an EHCP is also more likely to end up with no final destination than a child who has never been SEN.

These children are on the margins of our education system and, once they move into home education, they become hidden from sight.

Recommendations

CSJ's report finds five areas for reform that, if addressed, would create a more collaborative home education system which enables all children to thrive:

- Improved oversight of home education
- Greater controls on off-rolling
- More robust quality assurance
- Strengthened safeguarding, and
- More extensive support for home educating families.

To improve oversight of home education, local authorities need to be given additional powers:

- These powers should include more frequent visits and powers to see the child in person.

To prevent off-rolling into home education, we need to introduce mechanisms for off-rolled children to return to school, if they choose to do so:

- A two week cool off period should be introduced, where a neutral advocate meets the family to help them decide if they want to proceed with the move.
- A six week 'right to return' should also be implemented nationally, where a child can return to the same school within this period.

To ensure every home educated child is receiving a quality education that helps prepare them for their future, we should introduce light-touch national quality assurance and clear statutory guidance:

- Each home educated child should complete a light-touch assessment in English and Maths to check they are working at the level of their peers.
- The guidance on home education should also be clarified to strengthen the minimum benchmarks of that constitutes a suitable education, ensuring every child receives an education that enables them to function in society as an independent adult.

Safeguarding must be front and centre of both a reformed school system and approach to home education, including training local authority home education staff to spot any signs of safeguarding risks.

- All local authority staff involved in home education should be trained to spot any signs of safeguarding risks.
- The Children Not in School register should also be implemented in a way that encourages multi-agency working, particularly in cases where a child may be at risk.

There needs to be a greater emphasis on support and collaboration.

- Local authorities should be given the duty and resource to provide a consistent package of support for all children in home education.
- This should include a neutral advocate role to support families with the decision to move into home education.
- All pupils in home education should be given funding to sit their Maths and English GCSEs.
- For children in low-income families, pupil premium funding should follow children into home education to form an Educational Dividend.

CSJ's recommendations are intended to provide a blueprint for a new home education system which balances rights with responsibilities, proposing a model of oversight with greater transparency and buy-in from parents.

CSJ's aims are:

- To give all parents the right to choose the best education for their child;
- To support children to achieve better educational outcomes; and
- To protect all children equally, whether educated at school or at home.

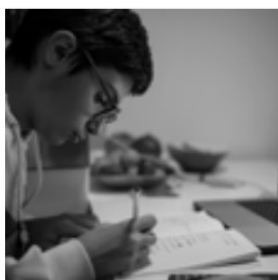
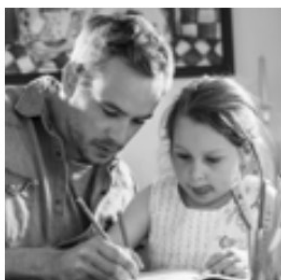
The CSJ hopes to create a new system which cultivates trust and collaboration between parents, schools, and local government, which will enable all children to thrive in education.

OUT OF SIGHT AND OUT OF MIND Shining a spotlight on home education in England by The Centre for Social Justice can be accessed [here](#).

OUT OF SIGHT AND OUT OF MIND

Shining a spotlight on home education in England

November 2022



Children, Violence and Vulnerability



Combining a survey of 2,025 children and young people with a review of national statistics, *Children, violence and vulnerability 2022* (a report produced by the Youth Endowment Fund in collaboration with Crest Advisory), explores the ways in which violence – and fear of violence – is shaping children’s lives.

Defining violence

When asking children about their experiences of violence, the following definition was used:

“By violent crime, we mean the use of force or threat of force against another person or people, for example punching someone, threatening someone with a weapon, or mugging someone. This also includes sexual assault, which is when somebody intentionally touches someone in a sexual way without their consent.”

Included in the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) definition of violence is:

- Sexual assault: **5%** of teenagers reported being the victim of sexual assault in the last 12 months (this rises to **8%** for girls).
- Being threatened by a weapon: **5%** reported being threatened or assaulted with a weapon in the last 12 months (this rises to **6%** for boys).
- Being assaulted, including on school premises: for example, being pushed to the floor and punched by another pupil.
- Being stabbed.

As adults, we sometimes treat as acceptable a level of violence among teenage children that we would see as assault among adults. It is important to include violence that happens on school grounds between pupils as there’s a large body of evidence that shows a link between such behaviours in childhood and involvement in later crime and violence. For example, a meta-analysis of 41 studies shows that ‘externalising problems’ such as fighting and physical aggression in childhood significantly predicts involvement in crime. Similarly, bullying other children at school has been found to predict later offending in many longitudinal studies. With a focus on prevention, it’s important to understand the prevalence of early problems, as well as more serious forms of violence.

Weighting the survey

The survey recruited 2,025 13–17-year-olds, including comparable numbers of girls and boys and around 400 of each age. Results were weighted by age, region and gender to ensure they mirrored the make-up of the population of England and Wales as a whole and were broadly representative based on other characteristics, such as ethnicity, free-school-meals eligibility and parent’s education levels.

Summary of findings

The nationally representative survey found that:

- **14%** of teenage children had been a victim of violence in the last 12 months
- **39%** of teens had been a victim or witness of violence in the last 12 months
- **55%** of teens said they'd seen real life acts of violence on social media in the last 12 months. **24%** said they'd seen children carrying, promoting, or using weapons.
- **65%** of teens said they'd changed their behaviour to keep themselves safe from violence in the last 12 months. **14%** had been absent from school out of fear. A further **14%** said it caused them to lose concentration, because of worry. **16%** avoided going to a social event. And **2%** even said that their fear had led to them carrying a weapon.
- **26%** want to see changes to policing (such as more patrols) to address violence, alongside more youth clubs and activities (**15%**) and drug and alcohol services (**10%**).

YEF's review of national statistics shows that:

- Violence was down in the years before the Covid-19 pandemic. 0-17 knife related hospital admissions fell **7%** between 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- During the pandemic, violence fell; robberies decreased by **34%**, homicides by **20%** and 0-17 hospital knife related hospital admissions by **14%** between 2019/20 and 2020/21.
- As restrictions eased, some forms of violence have returned to pre-pandemic rates while others haven't. Robberies remain **27%** below the rate in 2019/20 but homicides of 13-17-year-olds in London are higher in 2021 than in 2019.
- Black children are increasingly over-represented in the criminal justice system. Black children make up **4%** of 10–17-year-olds, **15%** of arrests, **18%** of children stopped and searched and **29%** of children in custody – up from **17%** in 2011/12.

Comparison to the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW)

The Office for National Statistics(ONS) regularly surveys the population about their experiences of crime. This includes a survey of 10–15-year-olds (the last time was in 2019/20 and surveyed 2,398 children). This includes asking about their experiences of violent crime.

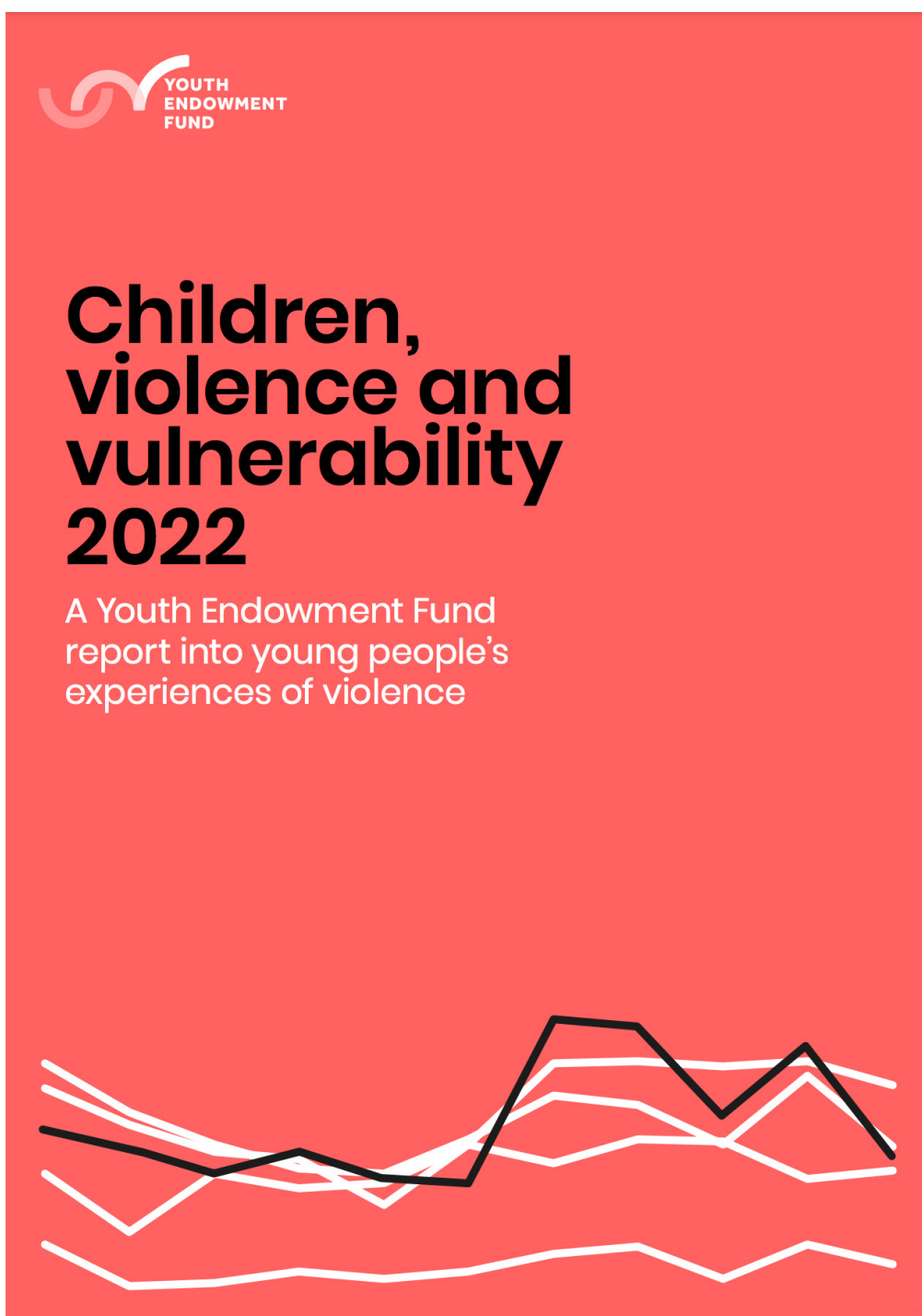
The CSEW differs from the YEF survey in a number of ways:

- Age-range: YEF surveys children aged 13-17, while the ONS includes 10–15-year-olds.
- Definition of violence: YEF's approach to measuring violence differs in a number of ways. Firstly, it includes questions about sexual violence which the ONS doesn't. Secondly, while the specific wording for individual types of violence is similar, there are differences. Thirdly, YEF offers a broad introductory question about any violence experienced. The ONS survey doesn't include this and only asks about specific incidences.
- Delivery of the survey: YEF's survey is delivered online, while the CSEW is conducted face-to-face with a family member present.

Due to these differences, YEF and the CSEW results should not be directly compared. However, it's natural to ask how the findings compare. Children in the YEF survey were significantly more likely to report being victims of violence (**14%** compared to **7%** in the CSEW in 2019). This is likely due to a combination of:

- a. Children being more likely to share experiences of violence in an online poll rather than when their parent or guardian is present,
- b. The broader definition of violence used – YEF's definition includes sexual violence which the CSEW doesn't, and
- c. YEF's survey covering an old age range.

The full report of Children, violence and vulnerability 2022 can be found [here](#).



Prevent Duty Self-assessment Tool



The DfE has published a self-assessment tool to help schools in England review their responsibilities under the Prevent duty.

The self-assessment tool involves evidence gathering against 7 distinct areas, each with specific requirements to identify what is working well and what requires development. Evidence gathering should include:

- Consulting your students
- Discussing safeguarding arrangements with staff
- Reviewing evidence

Schools should regularly review their self-assessment results, so that there is continuous learning, reviewing and improving of internal processes and external partnerships. Schools should plan to go through a self-assessment process at least annually. As well as checking that you have robust safeguarding policies and practices in place, the tool asks you to make professional judgements on how effective and comprehensive they are.

For the tool to be effective in identifying weaknesses and gaps, it is vital that schools examine existing arrangements and collate evidence of policies being put into practice and evaluate their impact. The tool is not a comprehensive checklist and does not replace the need for settings to create their own Prevent risk assessment or action plan. It should be used to assess the impact and effectiveness of your efforts to meet the requirements of the [Prevent duty guidance](#) and the [Education Inspection Framework \(EIF\)](#), to aid in continuous improvement.

The self-assessment process is split into 3 steps:

1. Evaluation
2. Action planning
3. Summary

Although an in-depth understanding of the Prevent duty guidance and the EIF are not essential to this process, they provide much of the detail regarding requirements, and both documents are the benchmarks by which judgements should ultimately be made regarding effectiveness.

Step 1: Evaluation

Using the self-assessment spreadsheet, consider each question within the sections and identify evidence of effectiveness and impact. Based on your evidence decide which level (1 to 4) your organisation meets:

- Where you have identified gaps or shortcomings, summarise this in the red column
- Where you have concerns regarding the completeness or robustness of your evidence, summarise this in the amber column
- Where you have robust and sufficient evidence, summarise this in the 'business as usual' (green) column
- The blue column is intended to identify those areas where organisations have established outstanding practice which is robustly tested and well evidenced.

Step 2: Action planning

Use the evidence and actions in each section to identify future development needs that will:

- Address shortcomings in areas evaluated as red or amber
- Build on good practice identified as green

The template can be refined and extended, if required, to fit your school's action planning and reporting arrangements. Where there are no actions relating to a section, indicate this for completeness.

Step 3: Summary

Complete the levels in the summary tab of the spreadsheet attachment with the single status that applies to each section. This provides an overview evaluation of safeguarding and Prevent in your organisation.

Make a clear judgement on the status of each section and avoid scoring in more than one column. If your evidence is unclear or partial, score downwards and treat this as insufficient evidence to robustly meet the higher level's criteria. Action plan to improve that area.

At this final stage you may wish to discuss your findings with your local authority Prevent Education Officer (PEO), your local authority or your children's safeguarding services nominated Prevent Lead. They can help you with action planning and finding local Prevent networks and partners that can assist you.

Completing this table should be the final stage in the assessment process. It is intended to identify actions to address policy and practice shortcomings. The table can provide a picture of the effectiveness of safeguarding and Prevent in the school. It can be used for strategic reporting to senior management and for prioritising future planning.

Actions that have been identified to address shortcomings can be included in the school's Prevent action plan or workplace development plan with oversight by senior management.

Assessment levels grid		
RAG	Level	Definition
Red	4 - Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no policy or practice in place and/or requirements of the Prevent duty and EIF are not being implemented effectively
Amber	3 - Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is policy or fundamental aspects of practice in place, but they are not detailed in scope or scale, or embedded in routine practice and are insufficient to address complex or challenging environments or incidents
Green	2 - Business as usual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required policy and practice are effectively embedded and staff and students are included in their development Policies are detailed, applied across the organisation in all relevant areas of business and are supported by robust and transparent management and governance processes
Blue	1 - Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is sound and effective implementation and understanding of how policy and practice work together to implement all relevant requirements of the Prevent duty and EIF to safeguard students There is ongoing reflection of best practice, testing of impact and effectiveness and knowledge is shared across the institution and with appropriate networks and partners

The Prevent duty self-assessment tool for schools can be accessed [here](#).

Teacher Wellbeing Index 2022



The **2022 Teacher Wellbeing Index**, conducted annually by Education Support in conjunction with [YouGov](#), has found that, overall, stress levels have increased when compared to 2021. Staff working in education also continue to experience higher levels of depression and anxiety than those reported in the general population.

In a survey of 3082 education professionals, over half of staff - including respondents in the independent sector - have actively sought to change or leave their current jobs, citing workload as the main factor.

The Challenges

- **75%** of education staff described themselves as stressed - a **3%** increase on 2021 (**84%** of Senior Leaders, **72%** of School Teachers, **68%** of Support Staff)
- **47%** of all staff surveyed felt compelled to always come to work when unwell – a **1%** increase on 2021 (**61%** of Senior Leaders, **45%** of School Teachers, **30%** of Support Staff)
- **42%** of all staff consider their organisation's culture has a negative effect on their wellbeing
- **59%** of all staff are not confident in disclosing unmanageable stress or mental health issues to their employer
- **48%** of all staff feel their organisations do not support employees well who have mental health and wellbeing problems (**51%** of Senior Leaders, **48%** of School Teachers, **39%** of Support Staff)

Mental Health of Education Staff

- **36%** of all staff reported experiencing mental health issues in the past academic year - a **2%** decrease on 2021 (**39%** of Senior Leaders, **37%** of School Teachers, **31%** of Support Staff)
- **78%** of all staff experienced symptoms of poor mental health due to their work – a **1%** increase on 2021 (**59%** of Senior Leaders, **51%** of School Teachers, **53%** of Support Staff)
- **44%** of all staff felt, or it was suggested to them, that the symptoms they experienced were signs of anxiety – higher than the national figure provided by the Office for National Statistics (**37%**)
- (**41%** of Senior Leaders, **46%** of School Teachers, **40%** of Support Staff)
- **27%** of all staff thought the symptoms could be signs of depression – higher than the national figure provided by the ONS (**17%**)
- (**26%** of Senior Leaders, **27%** of School Teachers, **29%** of Support Staff)
- **28%** of all staff thought the symptoms could be signs of burnout (**41%** of Senior Leaders, **46%** of School Teachers, **40%** of Support Staff)

Staff Retention

- **59%** of all staff have considered leaving the sector in the past academic year due to pressures on their mental health and wellbeing (**67%** of Senior Leaders, **59%** of School Teachers, **46%** of Support Staff)
- **55%** of all staff who had considered leaving had actively sought to change or leave their current job during this academic year (**58%** of Senior Leaders, **53%** of School Teachers, **52%** of Support Staff)

Teachers and education staff gave three main reasons for thinking of leaving the education sector due to pressures on their health and wellbeing:

- **68%** - volume of workload
- **63%** - seeking a better work-life balance
- **60%** - not feeling valued

Conclusions

1. Stress, depression and anxiety have all remained at an unsustainably high level

Three quarters (**75%**) of the workforce are stressed, rising to **84%** for school leaders. This figure has been well above **60%** for the last six years. Signs of depression and anxiety are also above the levels reported by the general population.

Over the lifetime of the Teacher Wellbeing Index, these figures have not meaningfully improved, painting a bleak picture of the workforce's long-term mental health.

2. Real term funding cuts bite

55% of staff are actively looking to leave the profession. For the first time, 'lack of resources' has become one of the top five reasons that staff, especially in primary settings, consider leaving the profession. This comes at a time when the **3%** real-terms cuts in school budgets (between 2010 and 2024) have resulted in school leaders reportedly cutting teaching assistant roles, classroom teachers, reducing spend on equipment and reducing spend on professional development for staff.

3. There are long-term health implications for the education workforce

Nearly half of all staff (**47%**) report always working when unwell, and more than half of staff (**59%**) have a lack of confidence in talking about mental health challenges to their employer. High volume of workload remains the main reason for staff considering leaving their jobs. This points to a persistent culture of 'powering through' ongoing stress. The health implications of chronic stress are well understood, including greater chances of heart disease and strokes and increased morbidity and mortality risks.

4. Schools support staff wellbeing has deteriorated

Support staff's levels of stress levels and depression have increased. This demonstrates a saturation of stress at all levels of the school workforce. All staff roles are reporting wellbeing scores that are lower than the general population.

5. Workplace culture matters

Positive organisational culture, good quality support for staff and trusting line management relationships are linked with better individual wellbeing.

This is especially important to recognise right now. The current context - of financial and staffing challenges, Government and policy instability, as well as pressure from Ofsted - makes the creation of positive, productive and psychologically safe cultures incredibly challenging.

Recommendations

Education Support concludes its report asserting that, without decisive action, the government risks the acceleration of current worrying trends, including:

- An increasingly burnt-out workforce, that is unable to deliver the quality of education that our children and young people deserve
- Intensification of the existing retention and recruitment crisis
- Decreasing health outcomes for our education workforce, at great cost to the NHS, at a time when it is stretched to breaking point

The Government does not need to choose between prioritising children's futures or the wellbeing of school and college staff. The two are interconnected, as healthy teachers are better able to provide high quality education and support for pupils who have been through an extraordinary few years.

1. The scale of the Government's ambition needs to meet the scale of the challenge. We need ambitious, fully-funded initiatives that address the systemic drivers of stress and poor mental health in the education sector, including funding, intensification of workload and the status and autonomy of the profession. This is vital if we are to create a solid foundation for successful education and skills outcomes. School funding remains materially below 2010 levels. Research findings indicate that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on children and young people's mental health is not waning and we might expect this impact to be seen for years to come. Growth and productivity depend on the quality of education and learning that takes place in our schools and colleges. Whilst schools are cutting posts and operating foodbanks for their children and staff, educational success and pupil wellbeing remain seriously at risk.

2. Resourcing for the Department for Education's retention strategy needs to be reconsidered. While many of the ideas in the strategy are sound, without specific funding targeted at the most significant drivers of stress it has not delivered meaningful impact. Workload and work-life balance remain significant issues across the sector with staff almost twice as likely to experience a negative workplace culture than a positive one.

3. Ensure the Department for Education implements the wellbeing policy test that is outlined in the Wellbeing Charter. The pace of future changes, new policies and additional demands on the workforce must be carefully considered to avoid further damage to workforce effectiveness and morale.

4. Ensure that the wellbeing requirements in all training frameworks are delivered consistently and effectively, across all training providers. Important frameworks including the Early Careers Framework and National Professional Qualifications make references to wellbeing that are easily overlooked, without intentional action.

The Teacher Wellbeing Index 2022 can be viewed or downloaded [here](#).



LGF AGM 08 November 2022

Treasurer's financial report for the academic year 2021/22

David Blythe delivered his seventh report as treasurer and extended his thanks to members for their support during the year. It was noted that LGF income was mainly sourced from individual school subscriptions, via the Liverpool Headteacher Associations, which currently stands at £25 per school. Concern was expressed that as schools converted to academies LGF income will reduce in future years as a number of academies are disinclined to continue their LASH/LPHA/ALSSH and thus LGF subscription. It was unanimously agreed that the financial report be accepted.

Chair's Report and 2022 Annual Review

Michael Morris thanked David Blythe for all his hard work during the preceding year and commented that it made his role as Chair of LGF much easier. Paula Anderson was also thanked for her secretarial support. Michael paid tribute to Frank McFarlane, who had died earlier in the year, stating that his contribution was much missed by LGF and other organisations that Frank had represented Liverpool governors on.

Michael highlighted that the LGF Conference, held in July had been a success, despite a relatively poor attendance compared to previous conferences. Kathy Desmond was acknowledged for organising the guest speaker. It was noted that further discussions are needed as to the time, venue, and topics etc. for forthcoming conferences.

Michael commented that LGF has had increasing requests for support across the city, especially to sit on individual school panels, which means the LGF profile is positively received. Dave Cadwallader was thanked for promoting LGF's profile in Governance Matters. It was noted that to provide this support LGF needs to be strong in numbers and quality. David Blythe thanked those governors who had willingly supporting other schools when requested.

The 2022 Annual Review (as reported in the previous edition and available [here](#)) had been widely circulated prior to the meeting, including to the Headteacher Associations and senior officers across LCC and SIL, provided a comprehensive account of LGF activities and was formally accepted by those present.

Election of Officers for 2021/22

Chair - Michael Morris was unanimously elected as Chair.

Vice Chair – Maureen McDaid was unanimously elected as Vice Chair.

Secretary/Treasurer- David Blythe was unanimously elected as Secretary/Treasurer.

Autumn Term 2022 Meetings

September

Guest speaker: Rohit Naik, Headteacher, Hope School

Hope School is a strategic partner with Chester University and ARC (Attachment Research Community) in developing a framework for schools to become Attachment and Trauma-responsive. Currently, 10 Liverpool schools are engaged in the project and a further 10 are signed up to start soon. The aim of the project is to make schools more inclusive and consequentially reduce the demand for special school places as pupil needs are met in a mainstream setting. Currently a place in a mainstream school costs approximately £4000 whereas a place in a special school costs approximately £24,000.

A place in an independent/out of area school can cost up to £50,000 to £90,000 not including transport costs. Based on academic research, Hope School developed an approach that is sensitive to supporting pupils with attachment and complex trauma histories. This new approach removed reliance on external sanctions and rewards to control behaviour. The emphasis changed to understanding the internal reasons for behaviour. This approach empowers pupils to control their own behaviour without external controls. He explained that all behaviour is communication.

Trauma is an event such as the death of a relative or a car accident and can affect a person to a lesser or greater degree depending on their own resilience. Attachment Trauma is something that can happen to everyone in the early years of their existence. This is very important as this is when the brain is developing. The impact of the behaviour of our care givers during this developmental stage can have a huge impact on the mental health of children even if the events are not remembered. Rohit cited children who are brought up in war zones with understandably stressed parents or the practice of leaving a baby to cry as examples of Attachment Trauma. Attachment Trauma can also be caused by physical or sexual abuse and neglect.

Rohit shared details of his own trauma from his childhood and this encouraged LGF members to do likewise. He highlighted that often when a person completes a 'timeline' of their own trauma it is often likened to events in their parent's lives. Rohit emphasized that it is nobody's fault and blame should not be attributed. A child can be affected by the mother drinking or taking drugs during pregnancy, but this does not mean they are not a loving mother. She may be abusing substances because she is stressed because of something that has happened in her own life.

Rohit stated that the opinions he had expressed were his own based on his extensive research and he was lucky to have the support of the governing board of Hope School.

Paul gave an overview of his role and responsibilities as the first Race Equality Officer appointed by Liverpool City Council and highlighted the following:

- Paul, the sole member of the team, had been in post since August 2022 and, although this is his first time working in the city, he appreciates the unique nature of Liverpool and intends to be guided by those working in the city. He is taking a holistic view to promote racial equality and diversity across the city finding collaborative solutions whilst working directly with schools, community groups and other relevant organisations.
- Paul has met with the majority of Liverpool Headteachers and feels all the meetings so far have been positive and he had identified a passion and energy for positive change within schools and he hopes to work collaboratively across the education sector including headteachers, workforce, governors etc. and to provide a strategic leadership.
- He stated that the key to success is adoption and implementation of robust and transparent Race Equality Policies in every educational establishment. Policies that are not just a 'tick box exercise'. Policies must be up to date and relevant to the current landscape and legislation. Parents, students, and staff must understand where the school stands on the issue of race equality, the process of reporting concerns etc. To achieve this aim Paul wants to work with governors and the senior leadership teams of schools to help inform their policies.
- Paul explained that it is his intention to develop a policy steering group with different leaders from across the city coming together to share best practices and what could work in specific environments. He also shared a long-term plan for a mentoring scheme to be set up alongside the soon to be launched Centre of Educational Leadership at Liverpool John Moore's University to upskill members of the community to enable them to become governors and understand the requirements of the role. Paul said that he hoped existing governors could become potential mentors in future.

Jonathan said he would speak generally on academisation and was not just going to promote REMAT. He said that governors must take many things into account when considering joining a Trust and initially both the school and Trust must work together to understand each other and ensure their culture and ethos are compatible.

There is confusion regarding the role of a governor once the school has entered a MAT. He said that a 'good' trustee should not interfere with the general governance of the school. That is the job of the governors. Trustees will not have the knowledge that governors have at school level. Schools should have a clear plan in place that would be supported by the trustees but implemented by the governors. Ultimate responsibility in a MAT sits with the members. Authority is delegated to the trustees, via Articles of Association.

Jonathan noted that funding is an obvious concern of governors when considering entering a Trust. He reassured the meeting that any reserves the school had when entering a Trust would be retained and highlighted that a Trust would not under-fund a school as it wished the school to thrive and be the best it can be. At REMAT, for example, budgets are set by the CEO and Headteacher, the governors then manage the budget and can apply to the Trust for funding for additional projects. Jonathan advised the meeting to be wary of any Trust that offered the school funds as an incentive to join them.

Governors should be aware of how Trusts generate funds, highlighting that REMAT raises additional funds through successful bids and providing outreach support for other schools. Schools and Trusts must realise that funding mechanisms are changing for LAs and MATs. Alongside the basic funding, the government now wants academies to apply for funding for specific building projects from its Conditional Improvement Fund or teaching and learning reasons from the Trust Capacity Improvement Fund. This is designed to prevent schools from holding unspent reserves as the expenditure will be scrutinised to ensure it has been appropriately spent.

Jonathan noted that the government has had to think of the whole country which includes remote areas that have no existing MATs. Concern was expressed at the influence of larger Trusts where individual schools can lose their identity. Furthermore, large, national Trusts will not have an understanding of local context.

At the moment, schools with an Ofsted judgment of good or outstanding have a choice of which MAT to join. This will not be the case with other schools who may be directed to particular MATs. JN highlighted the importance of legislation and the influence it has on the future of schools/academies. He cautioned against setting up a local 'mates MAT' warning governors that they must consider who would be accountable, who would sit on the Trustee Board, what their skills are, etc. The skills needed to be a trustee were quite different from the skills needed to be a governor. Jonathan advised that the most important thing that governors should consider is whether their school would flourish in a particular Trust.

Looking ahead

LGF 2023 Conference

Our conference this year will take place on the morning of Saturday, 13 May at the Partnership for Learning, South Road, Speke, Liverpool, L24 9PZ.

Rohit Naik, Headteacher of Hope School and Carolyn Lawler, Liverpool Virtual Headteacher will talk about their work in promoting an Attachment and Trauma-friendly approach.

Committee meetings

LGF Committee meetings are scheduled for:

- 10:15am Tuesday 21 March at Mosspsits Primary School. Speaker: Jonathan Dixon, Resonate
- 10:00am Tuesday 16 May at Springwood Heath Primary School. Speaker: tbc
- 10:00am Tuesday 11 July at Archbishop Blanch C of E High School. Speaker: tbc

Our meetings are open to all Liverpool governors. If you would like to attend, please email admin@livgovforum.org.uk or check our website www.livgovforum.org.uk to confirm the venue.

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