

Mental Health and Wellbeing in Trainee Teachers Project

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Mental Health and Wellbeing in Trainee Teachers Project – context

- Major concerns over retention levels of teachers in schools and wellbeing concerns
 - The Teacher Retention and Turnover Research Interim Report (2017)
 - Teacher Analysis Compendium (DfE, 2017)
 - Teacher Wellbeing Index (2020)*
- Mental health and wellbeing issues in training and NQTs and other teachers
 - Ofsted Wellbeing Research (2019): Workload; Behaviour management; Support; Work-life balance; Resources
- Birchinnall et al. (2019) – little research explicitly focusing on trainee teachers, but evidence suggest similar levels of stress as in service teachers
- Future considerations of the ITE market review – what might be the impact of this on ITE providers and trainees?

Working in the education sector

Teacher Wellbeing Report
2020 data – June/July 2020

Section 1c, page 29

Education Support/YouGov
online survey – October 2020

Appendix A, page 68

62% → 84%

Education professionals described themselves as stressed.

77% → 89%

Senior leaders described themselves as stressed.

31%

of school teachers
(70% of senior leaders)
worked more than 51
hours a week on average.
Working long hours
and stress appear
to be closely linked.

Section 1a, page 28

45%

of education professionals
felt compelled to come to
work all of the time when
they were unwell
(known as presenteeism).

Section 1b, page 29

64%

of school teachers
(72% of senior leaders)
described themselves
as resilient.

Section 1d, page 31





The mental health and wellbeing support and guidance available to staff working in the education sector

57%

of education professionals would not feel confident in disclosing unmanageable stress/mental health issues to their employer.

Section 3b, page 53

53%

of education professionals considered they did not have enough guidance about their mental health and wellbeing at work.

Section 3c, page 54

46%

of education professionals did not speak to anyone at work about mental health issues because they felt it would negatively affect people's perceptions of them.

Section 3a, page 52

30%

of education professionals (35% of school teachers) considered there was a stigma (feeling of shame) which prevented them from talking about mental health problems at work.

Section 3a, page 51

26%

of education professionals had access to Employee Assistance Counselling Services they could talk to for mental health support at work.

Section 3e, page 55

58%


of education institutions did not regularly survey their staff to establish levels of employee wellbeing.

Section 3h, page 57

8%

of education professionals had access to supervision as a safe space to discuss issues.

Section 3e, page 55



The mental health and wellbeing of education professionals

31%

of all education professionals have experienced a mental health issue in the past academic year.

Section 2b, page 39

38%

of all education professionals considered their organisational culture had a negative effect on their mental health and wellbeing.

Section 2g, page 46

74%

of all education professionals have experienced behavioural, psychological or physical symptoms due to their work.

Section 2c, page 39

44%

thought they could be signs of anxiety – higher than this year's national figure provided by the ONS. 47% of those showing such signs were formally diagnosed by their General Practitioner (GP).

Section 2a, page 37 and 38

32%

thought they could be signs of depression – considerably higher than this year's national figure provided by the ONS. 53% of those showing such signs were formally diagnosed by their General Practitioner (GP).

Section 2a, page 37 and 38

52%

of all education professionals have considered leaving the sector over the past two years due to pressures on their mental health and wellbeing.

Section 2h, page 46

76%

of senior leaders (65% of school teachers) cited workload as the main reason for considering leaving their jobs.

Section 2c, page 40

Mental Health and Wellbeing in Trainee Teachers Project – context

- The Education Inspection Framework (Ofsted, 2019)
- Early Career Framework – Standard 8 Manage workload and wellbeing by:
 - Using and personalising systems and routines to support efficient time and task management.
 - Understanding the right to support (e.g. to deal with misbehaviour).
 - Collaborating with colleagues to share the load of planning and preparation and making use of shared resources (e.g. textbooks).
 - Protecting time for rest and recovery

Addressing teacher workload in ITE (2018)

- **Supporting mental health and wellbeing by:**
 - supporting trainees to develop the resilience needed to manage the unavoidable pressures, demands and pinch points that occur within any profession.
 - routinely seeking the views and experiences of trainees regarding any causes of stress, anxiety and tension on an ITE course and working with them and the partnership to find solutions and strategies.
 - reviewing the support mechanisms for trainees and ensuring that staff and colleagues who are supporting trainees (e.g. personal tutors, school-based mentors) have the skills and time necessary to undertake this pastoral role.
 - ensuring that any analysis of trainee withdrawal or deferment is able to capture whether workload issues were a reason. This would include the origin of any workload issues and how deferred trainees are then best supported to successfully complete their training

Core Content Framework

(2019) - 'how trainees should be supported to manage their own workload and wellbeing whilst they train and as they embark on their career in school'

- **Manage workload and wellbeing, by:**
- Observing how expert colleagues use and personalise systems and routines to support efficient time and task management and deconstructing this approach.
- Discussing and analysing with expert colleagues the importance of the right to support (e.g. to deal with misbehaviour).
- Protecting time for rest and recovery and being aware of the sources of support available to support good mental wellbeing.
- **And - following expert input - by taking opportunities to practise, receive feedback and improve at:**
- Collaborating with colleagues to share the load of planning and preparation and making use of shared resources (e.g. textbooks).

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What trainees and NQTs consider to be the most important things for them to be aware of in relation to their own MHWB as they are training

What ITE providers know about what MHWB is provided at present to trainee teachers

What ITE providers perceive to be needed around MHWB for trainee teachers

What school mentors consider to be most important for trainee teachers to have support in MHWB

If providers are asked to deliver 'something' for trainees – what might that be?

Methods: July 2019-June 2020

- Online anonymous survey for trainees/NQTs, ITE providers, school mentors
- Individual interviews with stakeholders who volunteer at end of survey
- Phase 1 – invite sent out via UCET Bulletin
- Phase 2 – individual emails to each UK ITE provider
- Social media, organizational blogs e.g. BERA, presentations and invites to speak

Participants

- Online survey n=167
 - Trainees/NQTs - 115
 - ITE providers - 22
 - School mentors – 30
- Interviews n=50
 - Trainees/NQTs – 26
 - ITE providers – 19
 - School mentors - 5

Snapshot survey findings – trainees

- 93% indicated that it was 'very' or 'extremely important' to have specific information regarding their own MHWB
 - Most important reasons for this was to 'look after ourselves' and 'to support ongoing teaching practice'
 - For those who didn't find it particularly important (within training programme) indicated that this was due to it being 'down to us as individuals to address concerns' or that they would 'learn about managing this on the job'
- Top 3 types of material to receive to support own MHWB were:
 - Practical tips on managing own MHWB
 - Practical tips on improving own MHWB
 - Mental First Aid training
- Top 3 content areas that should be addressed within MHWB support:
 - Knowledge of stress
 - Stress reduction techniques
 - Knowledge of burnout

Snapshot survey findings – trainees

- Top 3 of WHEN to receive materials regarding their own MHWB
 - During teaching practice
 - During the courses in specific lectures and seminars
 - During induction
- Top 3 of WHO should be delivering materials regarding their own MHWB
 - MHWB support services within the university setting
 - University lecturers during course delivered sessions
 - Mentor teachers
 - *self discovery by the trainee 8th out of 10 options

Snapshot survey findings – ITE providers

- 95% of providers thought it was 'very' or 'extremely important' for trainees to have specific information regarding their own MHWB
 - Most important reason was to 'look after themselves' followed by 'supporting their own pupils'
- Top 3 types of material to receive to support own MHWB were:
 - Practical tips on managing own MHWB
 - Practical tips on improving own MHWB
 - Discussion about MHWB with mentor
- Top 3 content areas that should be addressed within MHWB support:
 - Resilience
 - Stress reduction techniques
 - Time management

Snapshot survey findings – ITE Providers

- Top 3 of WHEN to receive materials regarding their own MHWB
 - During induction
 - Before teaching practice
 - During teaching practice
- Top 3 of WHO should be delivering materials regarding their own MHWB
 - MHWB support services within the university setting
 - University lecturers during course delivered sessions
 - MHWB support services accessed at schools during teaching practice
 - *self discovery by the trainee joint 7th out of 10 options

Snapshot of interview data – ITE providers.

MHWB needs of trainees

- I think it's really important that it's not just a bolt on 'here's a leaflet, right we have covered it as a tick box exercise' but it's a holistic cultural thing about mental health and wellbeing whether it's about ours, our trainees, their students, the mentors, I think the whole thing is about, it's not just a setting up days you know and I think, I feel quite strongly about that, that it's about, the whole thing is actually a journey and it will challenge you and how do we support that together
- it's probably more implicit rather than explicit...around stress and workload which obviously then the impact of that is on mental health and particularly wellbeing, so it's more an implicit focus I think rather, I am not banging on about it all the time but certainly conscious of
- I think previously...the strategy was we'll send them to student services whereas we're much more aware now of thinking, okay, how can we help them to cope with the demands of teaching...to build those skills rather than sending them off to talk to somebody or sending them to the GP which was another sort of default position I think with some colleagues.

Snapshot of interview data - ITE providers - increase in MHWB needs of trainees

- I think that's shifted because trainees...have mental health that's increasing so actually I guess our shift is from being aware of it and kind of caring about it and trying to do something about it to actually we now need to do something about it because you know the percent of trainees are coming to us with a particular need, so I think it's always been there but maybe not as explicitly or maybe not even labelled as mental health and wellbeing, we have just kind of gone down the road of being very supportive, which I think we always have done to be fair, a team of very supportive, caring individuals umm very aware of the challenges trainees face to probably going into a team that are very aware of mental health needs umm so I suppose that's the shift really, so I think it has always been there but maybe not labelled or as explicit I suppose to be sure.
- in the past ten years, the frequency in incidence and severity of the mental health issues that I've been presented with, have all increased, all of them
- I think one of the issues is this ability to say 'it's ok to not feel ok' and I think that there's something, a fear that we have to breakdown; it doesn't mean you're failing, it doesn't mean you're never going to be a good teacher it doesn't mean you're letting the children down, your family down whatever you've given up to be here ... um and explaining that the training, the journey to be a teacher can be different for different people and, I think it's those messages that are going to be important so those people then access...those support systems more, so that the feeling of I'm failing doesn't become an issue whether they reach out.

Snapshot of interview data – trainees – to disclose MHWB concerns or not

- Personally I have been umm extremely careful in not disclosing anything, I'm not diagnosed with anything, I've not been to the doctors for it because I find they just give you a tablet and it's not real support anyway because it's so little you know I was hoping I'd get it out and things and I am worried that even at the moment where there's an encouragement for people to be open about it that somebody will turn against you when it suits them...And especially in a teaching profession it can be such a minefield and if you are, and depending where you are, I mean I don't know but I have seen it happening...to teachers, really really good teachers that have been handled on such grounds instead of supported...so I'm, I'm extremely careful where I reveal it even though I am very supportive of other people...and I don't trust it, let's put it this way, I don't trust it
- I chose not to because I thought it would be seen as a reason not to put me on the course...So I chose not to put my depression on that because I felt that that was going to be used against me at some point umm but another one of my friends did put her depression or anxiety on that and she has got some support but again it's been sort of an ongoing fight with the University to make sure that she is getting that support, umm she did get to go and see a Therapist which was really really good, provided by the University, so there was something there but she put it down and she never really felt like the University wanted her there and I didn't put it down because I did not want them to see me as weak in some way, I know it's not a weakness but I didn't want them to use it against me in the long run.

Recommendations

- Greater communication and transparency about disclosure and support of MHWB support for trainees at application stage
- Possibility of different approaches to mental health and wellbeing within ITE
 - Mindfulness
 - Resilience building (e.g. BRiTE programmes)
 - Wellbeing embedded within schools that ITE providers seek partnerships with
- When we see much rhetoric around teachers taking on the role of supporting MHWB of their own pupils we do need to have a wider discussion and transparency, therefore, in regard to what we are doing for these becoming teachers