



Hard lessons

A survey of Scotland's school support staff

January 2017



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Introduction

Hard Lessons is part of UNISON Scotland's Damage series: a programme of surveys looking at the impact of the age of austerity on services and those who deliver them. This survey takes a closer look at the issues affecting support staff in Scotland's schools.

The support staff who responded to our survey have a wide range of jobs in schools including classroom assistants, additional support needs workers, librarians, clerical and administration staff, technicians janitors, catering staff and cleaners. All roles vital to the effective delivery of high quality education.

Responses from staff and official figures on staffing levels in schools show that severe cuts are impacting on schools' ability to deliver the Scottish Government's commitment to *Getting it Right for Every Child*.

The report allows you to hear directly from the workforce. The dedicated workforce is committed to supporting children to reach their potential but are under enormous pressure. They feel exhausted, undervalued and - for many dealing with children with complex physical and emotional support needs - stressed by lack of training and support.

Key issues

- There are 1,841 less support staff in Scottish schools than in 2010
- Staff are under enormous pressure and are skipping breaks and working late because of the increased workloads caused by the cuts
- Staff morale is very low and few expect it to improve



Summary

UNISON conducted a survey of members working in schools in September 2016. Over 900 members responded. Respondents to our survey work in a range of jobs within schools, just over half work as classroom assistants and pupil support workers, the next biggest group were school administrative and clerical staff. Key groups were cleaning staff, janitors, technicians, catering staff, librarians and library assistants. Other workers included business managers and home-link workers. Just over 90% of those who responded to our survey identified as female. Respondents worked in 25 different local authorities. The vast majority had been in post for 11 years or more. This means that the staff have a great deal of experience to reflect on and are able to compare schools now to pre-austerity.

Scottish government figures show that in 2010 there were 673,133 pupils in Scottish schools, by 2015 there were 679,840²: an increase of 6,707 pupils. In 2010, there were 49,784 teachers in Scottish schools and in 2015 this had reduced to 48,395 so 1,389 less teachers. Teacher numbers are relatively protected in comparison to other workers in schools. The total for "other staff" in 2010 was 19,330 and in 2015 was 17,489 - 1,841 fewer support staff working in our schools. This is a bigger cut from a substantially smaller workforce. Within that: library staff numbers in secondary schools have been reduced from 334 down to 249; there are 251 fewer technicians (941 in 2015 when there were 1,192 in 2010) and admin and clerical staff numbers have dropped by 273 (1,569 down from 1,842).

The Scottish government has set targets to reduce inequality particularly around educational outcomes for young people. Sadly, it is young people from the most deprived backgrounds that need school libraries and librarians the most. They are least likely to have access to computers, printers and quiet warm places to do homework, research and general studying. If school libraries have limited opening hours and do not have qualified staff then young people will have less access to information when it is closed and less support to find the information even when it is open.

The Scottish government has also set improving science, technology, engineering and maths education (STEM) as a priority and yet we have less technicians in our schools to support this type of learning. Without admin and clerical support schools cannot function effectively, bills don't get paid, communication with parents and other services breaks down and teachers and senior management teams spend time on paperwork not pupils. Janitors and cleaners make sure that schools are clean and safe places for our children. It takes a whole team to deliver education.

The salami-slicing of school staff numbers means that the job losses do not make headlines but responses to our survey show that they are having a substantial impact on schools and on the staff remaining who are trying to maintain a high quality service and ensure that children in our schools get the best possible start in life.

Only 2% of respondents felt that their school budgets had increased at any point in the last five years. This year 16% stated that budgets had stayed the same, 54% stated that budgets had been cut and 27% stated that budgets cuts had been "severe". Only 20% of those who responded to our survey said there had been no job losses in their school. Members' responses show us that it is not just about actual job losses - many may still be in a job but they have had their hours cut. Pressure to get work done means they are having to stay late and skip breaks meaning they are being paid for less hours but not necessarily actually working less.

Schools are also short of supplies, they are not being thoroughly cleaned regularly and remaining staff are struggling under the weight of trying to maintain standards for their pupils. Members tell us that across their schools, library hours, sports and other lunch/after-school clubs, music tuition and cleaning have all been cut. These are all vital to pupils' attainment, broadening their knowledge and experience and building confidence. Again better-off families will still be able to provide these things for children outwith schools. Those whose only access is through schools will miss out and so widening the attainment gap the Scottish government has pledged to close.



Almost 80% of respondents indicated that their workload is getting heavier. For some members this means doing much more of the same work as before because staff numbers and hours have been cut but expectations remain the same. Members are also telling us that there are increasing levels of challenging behaviour - and in some cases, violence - in schools, and that it's our members who are having to deal with pupils who are disruptive and violent towards staff and other pupils. Alongside pupils displaying challenging behaviour many members are now expected to deal with a range of medical and personal care needs for children that they do not feel adequately trained, supported or indeed paid to undertake.

Concerns for members about the impact of austerity on their working lives:

- **Increased general workload and physical demands**
- **Increasing amounts of challenging behaviour**
- **Dealing with medications and personal care**

Pupils exhibit challenging behaviour for a range of reasons. Some have with complex disabilities and mental health problems, others are just reacting to challenging things in their personal lives. *Getting it Right for Every Child* requires that they get the right support. This requires resources, staff and appropriate training and support for staff to ensure they are able to deal with behaviours in a suitable manner. Not finding the lowest-paid member of staff in the building and telling them to keep an eye on them. Being the victim of violence at your work is not acceptable. Just because the person who hits you has a disability or is facing a difficult time in their lives does not make it acceptable. It is not fair on the pupil themselves, nor their fellow pupils and certainly not for the victim.

Support staff, particularly classroom assistants, are also expected to undertake a range of personal care and medical tasks. We are not talking about cleaning a cut and putting on a plaster or giving a child some Calpol. Pupils require a range of interventions: checking blood sugar and responding with correct insulin injections; catheterisation; tube feeding; and dealing with tracheotomy tubes. These are tasks which carry high degrees of risk if not done properly. Many staff are uncomfortable with taking on the level of responsibility and risk that medical procedures require and feel that the training and risk assessment that they have been given are not adequate to the tasks involved.

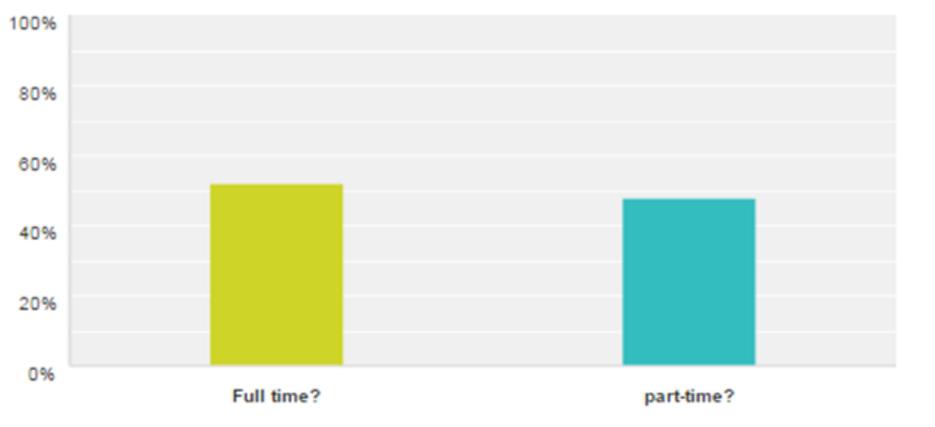
Alongside medical intervention are the personal care tasks which members are increasingly expected to undertake: nappy changing; cleaning intimate areas; and heavy-lifting and operating hoists. Enabling children with disabilities to participate in mainstream education is something that we fully support. It is their fundamental human right. Enabling this requires more than warm words and Act of Parliament, what it needs is adequate resources to provide the appropriately trained and qualified staff they need to support their individual needs - whether that is for personal care medical procedures or behaviour. Unsurprisingly, given the responses to our earlier questions, over 60% of respondents stated that morale was low or very low in their schools.

This report reveals a dedicated workforce committed to supporting children to reach their potential but who are under enormous pressure. They feel exhausted, undervalued and - for many dealing with children with complex physical and emotional support needs - stressed by lack of training and support.



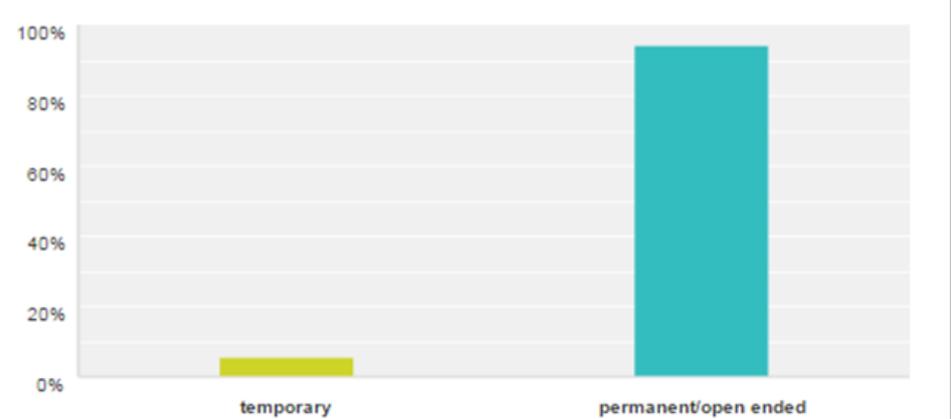
Full-time / Part-time

Unsurprisingly for such a female dominated workforce, there are almost equal numbers of full and part-time workers. When we looked in more depth at responses it is clear that not all those working part-time have this as their first choice. While we did not ask the question about preferred hours of work, many used comments sections to state that their hours had been cut back. It is often the case that women in low-paid cleaning and caring jobs have more than one job with different employers, each of a few hours a day, in order to earn enough money to have a decent livelihood. Cutbacks in work hours in schools will therefore have led to many taking on extra jobs. While campaigns with single employers to ensure that travel time between workplaces have been effective, where people are reliant on multiple employers they have no one to pay for their travel time and are forced to eat meals on the hoof between employers. When workers have another employer to answer to it is more difficult to be flexible with their employers. It is difficult to book time off if you need to agree with two or three different employers and makes sick pay and pension planning complex, and pensions entitlement lower, than if all their working hours counted towards public sector final salary schemes.



Permanent / temporary contracts

The vast majority are employed on open-ended contracts which may reflect the fact that temporary contracts have not been renewed in recent years. It also appears that 'permanent' staff are often redeployed to cover temporary vacancies or vacancies that would once have resulted in temporary cover are now just left unfilled.



Staffing levels

According to Audit Scotland’s latest report there has been an 8.4% real terms reduction in funding from the Scottish government to local government since 2010/11². Cuts of this level have had a significant impact on education services.

Unlike many of the groups of workers we have surveyed for our Damage series, we do at least have access to high quality government statistics to get an understanding of job cuts in schools³. There are 2,043 local authority primary schools, 361 local authority secondary schools and 138 local authority special schools in Scotland. Scottish government figures show that in 2010 there were 673,133 pupils in Scottish schools, by 2015 there were 679,840⁴. An increase of 6,707 pupils.

<u>Teacher numbers</u>	<u>‘Other’ staff</u>
2010: 49,784	2010: 19,330
2015: 48,395	2015: 17,489
1,389 less teachers	1,841 less support staff

Teacher numbers are relatively protected in comparison to other workers in schools. The total for “other staff” in 2010 was 19,330 and in 2015 was only 17,489 - so 1,841 fewer support staff working in our schools (985 fewer support staff in primary schools). This is a bigger cut in job numbers from a substantially smaller workforce. There are substantially fewer staff despite a growing pupil roll (these are Full Time Equivalent figures (FTE) not headcount).

Library staff numbers in secondary schools have been reduced from 334 down to 249, there are 251 fewer technicians (941 in 2015 when there were 1,192 in 2010) and admin and clerical staff numbers have dropped by 273 (1,569 down from 1,842).

The Scottish government has set targets to reduce inequality particularly round educational outcomes for young people. Sadly, it is young people from the most deprived backgrounds that need school libraries and librarians the most. They are least likely to have access to computers, printers and quiet warm places to do homework, research and general studying. If school libraries have limited opening hours and do not have qualified staff then young people will have less access to information when it is closed and less support to find the information even when it is open.

The Scottish government has set improving science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) education as a priority and yet we have less technicians in our schools to support this type of learning.

Without admin and clerical support, schools cannot function effectively, bills don’t get paid, communication with parents and other services breaks down and teachers and senior management teams spend time on paperwork not pupils. Janitors and cleaners make sure that schools are clean and safe places for our children. It takes a whole team to deliver education.

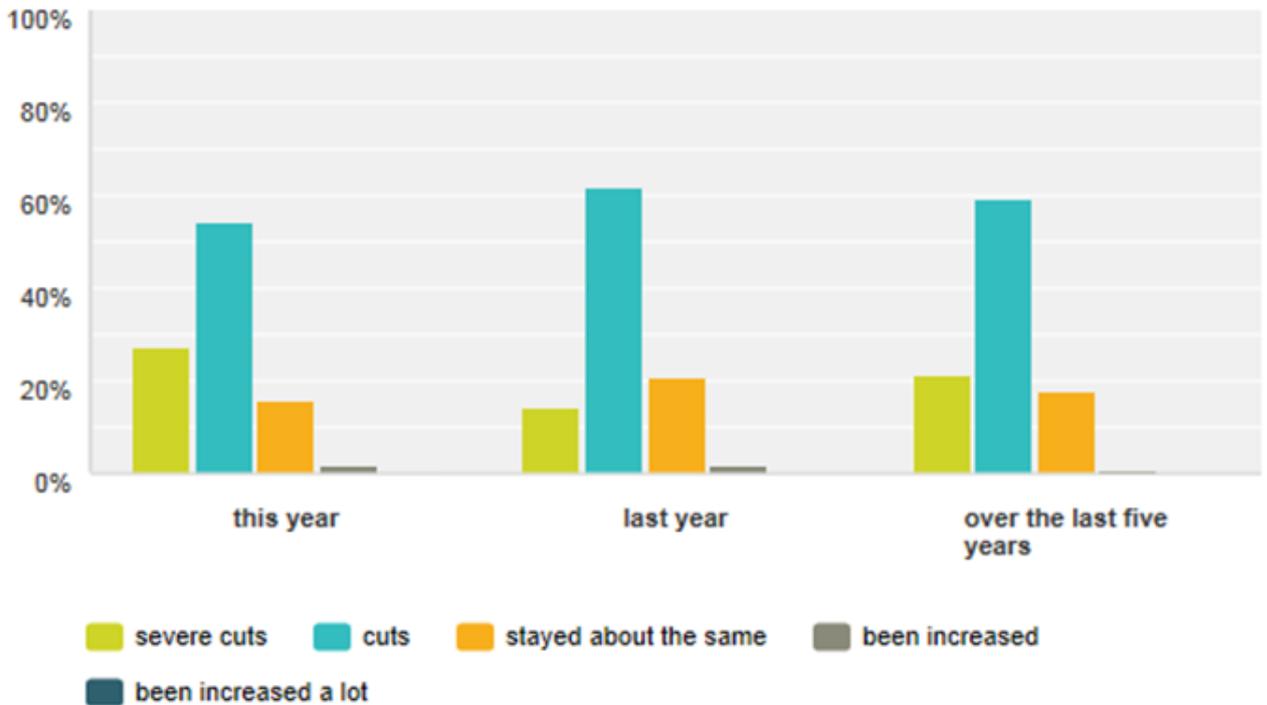
The salami-slicing of school staff numbers means that the job losses do not make headlines. But responses to our survey show that they are having a substantial impact on schools and on the staff remaining who are trying to maintain high quality services and ensure that children in our schools get the best possible start in life.

2 Audit Scotland Local Government in Scotland financial overview 2015/16
 3 Scottish Government education statistics
 4 Scottish Government education statistics

Budget cuts

The survey asked members a range of questions on what their working lives are like. We asked direct questions but also encouraged them to leave comments to explain their answers.

Has your school budget been cut?



We asked members if their school budget had been cut this year, last year or over the last few years. The answers indicate that budgets are under severe pressure.

Only 2% of respondents felt that their school budgets had increased at any point in the last five years. This year 16% stated that budgets had stayed the same, 54% that budgets had been cut and 27% stated that budgets cuts had been “severe”. The chart shows that over the last five years cuts have grown and that, while it may appear the percentage of budget cuts is lower than last year, that is because the numbers indicating that cuts have been severe has almost doubled.

Members indicate that schools are short of staff and resources. As the official figures show, there has been an 1,841 drop in the number of support staff in our schools. Schools are also short of supplies, they are not being thoroughly cleaned regularly and remaining staff are struggling under the weight of trying to maintain standards for their pupils.

These cuts are impacting on pupils and school staff in a number of ways which we will cover in more depth in this report but initial unprompted comments in response to this question indicate that cuts are making it very difficult for schools to deliver the kind of tailored support reflecting pupils’ individual needs that the Curriculum for Excellence was supposed to provide. Scotland is not *Getting it Right for Every Child*.

What the staff say

- *Cuts to cleaners hours, same for classroom assistants and auxiliaries. Funding for training and trips has ceased. Impacts on staff and pupils: the school is dirty; extra classroom support is missing, impacting on the whole class, including the teacher; staff are not learning new skills and are unaware of changes to legislation; pupils are missing out on fun activities and educational trips, which previously provided them with a deeper insight and understanding in many subject areas.*
- *We have lost a lot of additional needs assistants over the last few years*

- *Technician numbers have been cut*
- *Reduced support hours*
- *Our librarian has been removed this year including all library provision in the school. Chemicals and equipment budgets cut*
- *Reduction of hours for PSAs and cleaning staff. Hard to cover break time and lunch time re supervision of children. Not meeting needs of all children.*
- *A lot of cuts made to staffing so we are understaffed and are getting run down resulting in staff illness increase*

Cuts mean shortages of supplies and equipment and means that pupils are missing out on educational experiences. Standards for cleaning and equipment are also dropping. Scotland is a wealthy country we must be able to afford clean schools.

Even the food budget is under pressure despite the importance of school dinners to those entitled to free school meals. How are pupils supposed to set themselves high standards when that is not what they experience in schools? Staff and parents are sometimes making up the shortfall out of their own pockets. Not only should staff not be expected to buy materials but, if we are to close the attainment gap, then clearly we need to ensure that it is not just the children of those that can afford to pay that have access to materials/activities.

- *stationary, books for children, learning tools, all to be shared and has a impact on learning*
- *shortage of resources and cuts in staff hours*
- *Resources and IT are often in poor condition and rather dated. Any hours worked outwith normal contractual hours are often not paid*
- *Maths resources are woefull, every book has either no front cover, no back cover and pages missing, not because of damage to the resource but because the school has not been able to purchase new books. Also, classes are having to share this resource. It's the same with everything else.*
- *Personally I know that my dept. photocopying costs cut severely and also orders for stationery/ classroom resources dramatically cut. Basically all department admin cost cut right back*
- *we have less money every year to provide the basic material for teaching - chemicals, apparatus, glassware and text books*
- *No longer a weekly roast dinner only a formed chicken roll once every 4 weeks. Prices have gone up significantly Frozen bread and rolls instead of fresh*
- *It is more about not replacing people who have gone. 2009 we had 4 technicians 110 hrs a week all year, we now have 3 technicians 95 hours a week, but during holidays 60hrs a week, not taking into account holidays. Central IT support has all been withdrawn*
- *Don't know all I can say is we have not had a school summer outing for the last 2 years and supplies run low. Staff provide lots of stationery for children and also bread juice etc for nurture children.*
- *Can't order as much cleaning stuff, and some of it you don't get*
- *Well we used to have 5 cleaners now we have 2 cleaners and a supervisor*



- *Cleaning materials have been cut down, we had five cleaners and five hoovers on the go every day and when we asked for Hoover bags we got a box of five every few weeks and we changed them every week due to the size of schools. Now after the holidays we came back to just three workers out of five and we were made to do the full school including the nursery between the three of us, in the same hours with the same pay. We are all sore and stressed with this. Blackbags are far and few to come by and other cleaning materials. There has been times I have had to use washing up liquid to clean. The school isn't getting a proper clean with any anti bacterial cleaning equipment . And there are parts of XXX primary school not getting cleaned due to staff shortage.*

Job cuts

We asked members if there had been job cuts in their school.

Official figures show that there 1,841 less support staff working in our schools. Only 20% of those who responded to our survey said there had been no job losses in their school. Our members are telling us is that while many of them may still be in a job they have had their hours cut. Pressure means they are having to stay late and skip breaks to get work done meaning they are being paid for less hours but not necessarily actually working less hours.

Rather than redundancy many of the job losses come from not replacing leavers. While it is of course important to avoid redundancies it does mean there is very little strategic workforce planning. While closed factories garner headlines the salami-slicing of a few jobs here and there gain no media interest. None the less the impact on education is substantial and growing. Support staff have important roles to play in children's' education and the functioning of schools.

Cuts in admin and clerical staff merely place more work onto teachers and head teachers. Records need to be kept; parents need to be informed of what is going on in school in general and with their children in particular.

Cuts to classroom assistants and additional support for learning workers posts again leave more work for teachers and therefore less time for teachers to teach. Technicians and librarians are essential parts of a broader approach to learning within in schools, experiments, practical activities and developing research and information skills. Libraries aren't just about novels and developing a love of reading they are places where you find out things, where you find out what is a reliable source of information and what is not. An increasingly vital skill.

Again, for those who have: support at home; who can visit a public library (which are also experiencing budget cuts); have their own computer and internet connection; parents with degrees who have research skills to share; then lack of access to a school library is not a crisis. But if the over-arching aim of the government is to close the gap, then cutting back on the resources that support children in schools is a step in the wrong direction.

What the staff say

- *No, however vacancies are not always immediately dealt with and so service runs under capacity*
- *So far just one PSA has been asked to go, but ones that have left, prior to this, have not been replaced. Special Needs Teachers have been told by our Head to cover some of our work, also year 6 students are being used to cover the shortfall also!*
- *This year 46 classroom assistant hours have been lost so three staff have gone. More of the office staff are now term time, leaving only one staff member to work during holidays along with the finance officer.*
- *Number of pupil support assistants has been reduced - 1 full time job of 27.5 hours and 1 part time job of 15 hours. A further temporary 25 hour job which seemed to be funded from a separate budget has not been re-instated this school year.*
- *We have gone from 5 technicians (one of whom was supernumary) to 3, and this will possibly be going down to 2.6 (see below). One of the staff cut had to be compulsorily transferred. Office staff went down (but only in accordance with the hours cuts and voluntary redundancies they volunteered for). Librarian had hours cut. Technician dept was only one that lost someone not by our choice. We were lucky, though, that none of us were made term-time or forced to move to somewhere with a term-time contract*
- *Catering hours cut. Kitchen closed. Clerical hours cut. School Assistant hours cut and one job lost. Cleaners hours cut.*

- *Support for learning assistants. Contracts not filled for 6 months and contracts now term time.*
- *Technical support only half of vacant posts replaced and then they are only being made sessional, reduction of 2. Office staff reused to 1 now from previous level of 5.*

When asked specifically about hours being cut rather than whole jobs going members indicated that this is becoming increasingly common. People faced with no pay or less pay unsurprisingly opt for some pay. Staff are having their weekly hours reduced or in some cases moved to term-time working. This means that members are experiencing cuts in their income. Bills don't reduce when you've had your wages cut. Moving staff to term-time means that lots of work that used take place over the holidays is now left till term-time or just not done: planning, deep cleaning of schools or equipment maintenance for example.

- *Classroom assistants had hours cut last year, Auxiliaries had hours cut this year. I went from 20 hours classroom assistant to split of 12 classroom assistant and 8 auxiliary. This year I have been cut to 7 hours auxiliary Colleague now doing mornings only. 0.2 post not replaced*
- *librarian now only 2 days one week and 3days another. no full time cover as before.*
- *Yes! Hrs were cut and people went from five days to four or even three*
- *PSA/clerical hours cut by half leaving majority of tasks to 1 person instead of 2. Some support staff have had their hours reduced by 2/3 hours. Sometimes these hours are reinstated. More support is needed in the school, but there is not the budget to offer this. We rely on parents coming in to help.*
- *I used to work 25 hours per week and I am now cut to 17.5 hours a week. There used to be 5 classroom assistants, now there are 3.*
- *Yes, full time(39 hour) 52 week clerical assistant post reduced to 19 hours term time.*

School cleaners no longer have time to clean each room every day so teachers and classroom assistants are left to maintain basic hygiene. This leaves them pushed for time to complete their own jobs.

- *All the cleaning staff at XXX primary where u work. Cut by 15 minutes a week.*
- *Everyone has lost four weeks as the council stopped the big clean during summer holidays and Easter hols plus we don't work in service days now yet still expect same work to be done*
- *Cleaners kitchen mostly*
- *The janitorial hours have been cut, with cleaning staff taking on some of his roles*

Service cuts

We asked members if there have been any services cut in their school in the last few years. We then moved on to ask members about the impact of budget cuts on the service they provide. Members responded to this question by telling us that across their schools, library hours, sports and other lunch/ afterschool clubs, music tuition and cleaning have all been cut. These are all vital to pupils' attainment, broadening their knowledge and experience and building confidence. Again better-off families will still be able to provide these things for children out with schools those whose only access is through schools will miss out and so widening the attainment gap the Scottish government has pledged to close.

School libraries in particular seem to be targeted for cuts but they are more important than ever now that public libraries are experiencing serious budget cuts.

What the staff say

- *School librarian only in 2 days a week instead of 5 as before.*
- *Librarian comes 2 days a week instead of 5. Lifelink were 6 periods now 3.*
- *Library is closed at lunchtimes.*
- *I have managed to maintain library opening hours but some services have had to be cut due to the cuts to teaching staff who supported many of the projects.*
- *No librarian. Library closed.*
- *Library has had its hours cut it is closed on a Friday and at lunch times.*
- *The library opening hours in the school have not been reduced but the school librarian is now on a term time only contract*
- *Library hours cut as our Librarian has to travel to other schools due to them losing their Librarian through cuts*
- *Our mobile library service has been halved. Now we only get a visit every 2 months.*
- *No funding for CPD; trips; resources and/or consumables. I pay for stationery myself and frequently supplement the book budget with my own money. Much of the professionalism of my post has been stripped away: I used to teach; deliver Information Literacy courses; support class visits to the library for pupils using resources to do research; deliver extra-curricular clubs, stage author visits, etc. NONE of this happens now*

But it is not just libraries that pupils are missing out on:

- *We can give less support to pupils; two children now need day long support which means that others suffer. We do not have enough staff. Children of less 'pushy' parents left out.*
- *Specialist behaviour units etc been closed*
- *Courses like advanced higher cut. My science and CDT technician service reduced. IT support to teachers reduced. Library hours slightly reduced. Less minibuses available for trips. Fewer computers available for pupils. Breakfast club for pupils may be axed. Bus services that outlying pupils were using, out of catchment pupils, were axed as they were being subsidised heavily by the council.*
- *Hand towel/toilet tissue allowance cut by a third, I'm not sure about other cuts outwith my role*
- *Educational psychologists, EAL and speech and language therapists.*
- *Starved of text books and jotters + basic equipment due to cut budget - last year.*

Jobs replaced

We asked our members if there are any jobs that were cut that are now covered by volunteers. In response to this question, approximately 7% said that volunteers were now doing work in schools and a similar proportion said that parents were taking on unpaid work in schools.

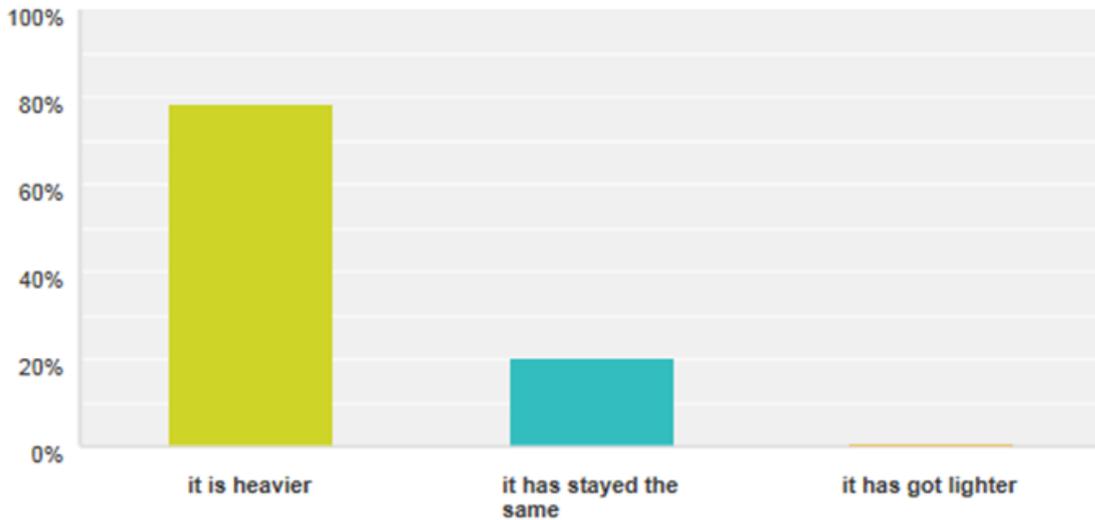
Schools should be imbedded in communities and it is great that people are able to support schools but there are clear issues if basic school functions only take place if there are volunteers available. There is also an issue about inequality. What about schools that do not have access to parents with time or indeed the skills required to work in schools every week? Schools need to have the right staffing levels and staffing mix in order to deliver high quality education for our children. In particular, relying on retired staff to come back to cover clerical duties and parents for libraries and reading groups seems to indicate a real problem with school funding.

What the staff say

- *Library helpers, assistants in classes, helpers to take the children on trips*
- *Any outings which where covered by classroom assistants now asking parents to help.*
- *Reading groups and class trips done by parents*
- *Janitorial and maintenance work just doesn't get done.*
- *we use parents to cover school outing and dining room cover*
- *Senior pupils are offered jobs which are disguised as prefect duties.*
- *Parents help by taking reading groups and helping out on trips which would otherwise be cancelled because there would be a shortage of adults.*
- *Not cut but altered - library hours - parent helpers.*
- *yes. HTs are having to bring in more parent helpers to help in class and go trips as there is not enough staff to do these jobs.*
- *children are accompanied on certain school trip by parents as there is no longer classroom assistant hours available to support this need.*
- *We have two retires member of staff come in and carry out clerical duties free of charge*
- *Library used to be done by PSA as was Bikeability - now done with a teacher and parent helpers. Escorting to swimming - done by parent helpers and teacher*
- *Yes, a reduction in psa's result in parents covering in classes when no psa is available to be allocated to that class. Parents have also helped in dining hall in the past as not enough psa's available to cover.*
- *We have parent readers come in due to lack of Psa hrs.*

Workload changes

How has your workload changed in the last few years?



We asked our members how their workload has changed in the last few years. The key issues they raised were:

- Increased general workload and physical demands
- Increasing amounts of challenging behaviour
- Dealing with medications and personal care

Almost 80% of respondents indicated that their workload is getting heavier. For some members this means doing much more of the same work as before because staff numbers and hours have been cut but expectations remain the same. Our members say there are increasing levels of challenging behaviour - and in some cases, violence - in schools, and that it is our members who are having to deal with pupils who are disruptive and violent towards staff and other pupils.

Alongside pupils displaying challenging behaviour, many members are now expected to deal with a range of medical and personal care needs for children that they do not feel adequately trained, supported or indeed paid to undertake. We asked how their work had changed in recent years and this led to very similar comments to those on workload so the comments are brought together in this section.

Pupils exhibit challenging behaviour for a range of reasons. Some have complex disabilities and mental health problems; others are just reacting to challenging things in their personal lives, for example: bereavement, divorce or domestic violence. *Getting it Right for Every Child* requires that they need the right support. This requires resources, appropriate staff, and training and support for staff to ensure that they are able to deal with behaviours in an appropriate manner. Not finding the lowest paid member of staff in the building and telling them to keep an eye on them. Being the victim of violence at your work is not acceptable. Just because the person who hits you has a disability or is facing a difficult time in their lives does not make it acceptable. It is not fair on the pupil themselves, nor their fellow pupils and certainly not for the victim.

Support staff are also being expected to undertake a range of personal care and medical tasks which they did not expect to be part of their job. We are not talking about cleaning a cut and putting on a plaster or giving a child some Calpol, although this does happen even for staff who's job evaluation says that they have no pupil contact time. Pupils require a range of interventions, checking blood sugar and responding with correct insulin injections, catheterisation, tube feeding, dealing with tracheotomy tubes. These are tasks which carry high degrees of risk if not done properly. Many staff are uncomfortable with taking on the level of responsibility and risk that medical procedures require and feel that the training and risk assessment that they have been given are not adequate to the tasks involved.

Alongside medical intervention are the personal care tasks which members are increasingly expected to undertake: nappy changing, cleaning intimate areas, heavy lifting and operating hoists. Some of these tasks are because children come into school not yet 'toilet-trained' but are eventually able to achieve independence, however, with some pupils with disabilities these are permanent requirements.

Enabling children with disabilities to participate in mainstream education is something that we fully support. It is their fundamental human right. Enabling this requires more than warm words and Act of Parliament what it needs is adequate resources to provide the appropriately trained and qualified staff they need to support their individual needs whether that is for personal care, medical procedures or behaviour.

What the staff say (workload and physical demands)

- *Its got heavier because I don't have proper equipment ie no floor cleaning machine. Having to mop everywhere. My back is aching*
- *My role at XXX is now classed as a school technician rather than my previous science technician role which means I can cover whole school areas rather than one dep*
- *When hours were cut I was told some duties would be taken away. This has not happened. Same job in alot less hours*
- *Am a clerical assistant and gradually over the past few years the workload has increased substantially. No longer carrying out only clerical duties. Have been campaigning for a long time to have our remit upgraded from a Band 3 to at least a Band 5. A lot of responsibility has passed from further up the admin chain to school clerical staff due to cuts but no recognition of this is reflected in the grade we are presently on. Service review in progress but no information forthcoming as to the implication this will have for us. Moral is low amongst primary 'school secretaries' and after the recent review of support for learning assistants, the loss of classroom assistants within schools and the subsequent regrading of some from band 3 to band 5, frustration and feeling unfairly treated is a frequent gripe.*
- *Spread over more classes, more concentrated to individual children. Lunchtime/playtime duties. now clean an area that was cleaned by two cleaners. Someone comes in and buffs once a week*
- *Have to feed two schools from one old kitchen*
- *Working in one class in the morning up until my lunch with a child with additional needs then with another class after my lunch with one child with medical needs and another two children with additional*
- *My remit bears no comparison to what it was initially. I have greater responsibility, working directly with children in either groups situations or individually . There is an increased number of children with ASN and there are not enough PSAs to give adequate support.*
- *More personal care, more manual handling. Less classroom time with pupils who have learning difficulties not of a physical nature*
- *More complex additional needs pupils so more time spent on personal care, physio, hoisting and so on*
- *The level of responsibility. Fewer finance officers means that we have to monitor our own finances more closely. We now have to do more HR checks ourselves when recruiting due to cuts in HR. The introduction of Facilities Management has been a total nightmare and added an additional layer to getting maintenance carried out in school. Our Facilities management do not have the appropriate skills and experience to do this role which was once done by us in terms of dealing with property issues. This is a constant source of frustration*
- *More children are having complex difficulties, not enough support staff to help*

Workload changes

- *Common sense would indicate that once a roll goes over a certain number and especially with shared headship, the admin person should be office based. I am wearing that many hats I would have to be bionic. Receptionist, secretary, classroom assistant, playground supervisor. One person cannot possibly do all that and do it properly and efficiently*
- *free school meals for p1-3 so its heavier*

What the staff say (behaviour)

- *Certainly different. Still classroom based as much as possible but more involved with behavioural issues and working one to one with pupils unable to cope. Often spend long periods of time out of the room, wandering corridors, entertaining children who refuse to join the class.*
- *The job seemed to start of as a general supportive role to pupils in the classroom especially for pupils who found the curriculum extremely challenging. Now ASNs in our school seem to be sent into classes, back to back, to provide support in extremely challenging classes both in behavioural terms as well as learning support needs. I am baffled by the role of Learning Support teachers who join us in some classes as they seem to do the exact same duties as we do instead of acting as a co-teacher to the class teacher. This is frustrating especially considering that we are all on Grade C and yet seem to be expected to be performing academic miracles in every class we work in. I feel that pupils with mental health issues are also passed off to us instead of the 'professionals' who should be better-equipped to take on the complicated supportive role and the accompanying continued documentation of the situation. When one considers that the job evaluation stated that our communication skills interaction were rated lower than those of refuse collectors, something does not add up! An ASN's job in our school is way more demanding than one in a primary school and yet we are all paid the same. It's a further blow when the Learning Assistant at our school does the exact same job as we do and gets paid more*
- *Dealing with more behaviour issues than learning*
- *Instead of working with children with learning difficulties we are being used to manage abusive and physical children. I have been kicked, spat at punched and bit quite a few times in the last 6 months. We are used to help clean rooms, tidy and give medication.*
- *The job has become more physical because of the children's needs, they are more profound both mentally and physically. PSAs have more physical abuse than ever.*

What the staff say (medical procedures)

- *Being a first aiders it can be abit over powering on what we are expected to do. We have 4 kids who have type 1 diabetes, at least 5 kids with allergies who require epi pens on them at all times. More than 10 who are asthmatic, 3 kids who are in wheel chairs who need special equipment for handling and moving and medication in case they fit or any other problems and over and above this medication that gets handed by parents for children to have throughout the day. One child has just had surgery and requires physio 3 times a day. All PSA's are totally stressed with what we have to do. And on edge if we get a dession wrong. We are not nurses, dentist doctors etc like people think!*
- *My workload now includes children with special medical and health needs eg toileting more frequently which includes stoma bag emptying three times a day. Also changing oxygen canisters when necessary. One day a week administering peg feeding*
- *More pupils in mainstream with complex medical needs as well as learning needs*
- *Yes job is now more about medical rather than education*
- *Yes very much. Psa's are now in playground, dinner hall, administer multiple medication daily, first aid*

- *and therefore very little time is in classroom. As a Classroom Assistant previously my main duty was to be in the classroom assisting the teacher with childrens learning. Unfortunately the experience we have is not being used*
- *Yes, now expected to be involved in medication which was not the case when I first began my job*

What the staff say (personal care)

- *Due to the staff cuts in our department the workload has definitely increased and we are being asked to do more and more i.e. personal care, (splint checks, hoisting, standing frame, liaise with physiotherapy and OT, epileptic pupils, wheelchair pupils: toileting, getting ready for PE and swimming, moving a bambach chair from room to room, fire drill: evac chair*
- *We have more children to support in classes and our jobs involve toileting children and other personal care needs*
- *Expected to supervise medication. Expected to change nappies, support more children who can not speak English as well as kids who have learning difficulties. Prepare resources for teachers, mount wall frieze, do any duties required for the head teacher as well as work for the three classes. Laminate, cut out, photocopy at times take bin bags downstairs from classes to facility officer. Tidy up resource room, move class furniture around. Supervise playground with over 150 kids with just myself and another support worker. Behaviour is a huge problem and have been assaulted by a child. Expected just to put up with it.*
- *am asked to work in the office. Give medication. Expected to provide personal care for pupils. This makes me feel uncomfortable as I am a Classroom Assistant and these jobs are not in my job description*
- *School management keep trying to tell school support workers (classroom assistants) that they have to cover absent pupil support workers (support for learning assistant) in changing nappies on incontinent Down's syndrome child. We think this is more an enhanced pupil support assistant job. Management say it is at of what is required*

Extra duties

We asked our members if they feel under pressure to undertake tasks they feel are not part of their job.

The responses to this question paint a similar picture to the two previous questions with members raising issues about: medical procedures; medicine; challenging behaviour; and of work that was previously the responsibility of higher-paid staff or done centrally being pushed out to schools. As is often the way with new IT systems, the claimed savings from ending duplication etc, don't take account of the needs of the end users but focus on centralising and making tasks similar. Schools end up running duplicate systems to suit their own needs which doubles rather than reduces workloads.

The Scottish government is proposing to move some more responsibilities to head teachers and it is important to recognise that this will place an additional burden on head teachers and the wider school team who, as we can see here, are already struggling with current workloads.

General workload, in particular the increasing physical demands, are also raised by lots of members as well as the increased range of tasks that fall on staff regardless of their actual job. Their commitment to pupils means that most are taking on tasks but as we will see in the next question it is having an impact on staff morale.

What the staff say (workload changes)

- We now do all the work Human Resources used to do as an example*
- Janitorial jobs, crossing patrol, driving children to swimming etc in own car*
- technicians feel pressure to carry out janitorial jobs and tasks previously done by general assistants.*
- Very under pressure. My body aches constantly with the heavy work load as does many other workers. I have been told by doctors my back is due to work and my hair falling out is due to stress. I feel under pressure as there isn't enough time to do a proper clean and get everything done within the hours I have. Also I was moved from morning to afternoon cleaning which doesn't suit me at all. I struggle to get to work as it isn't on a bus route, where mornings my partner dropped me off*
- Yes frequently. Toast is being served at break times twice a week to raise funds for school. Whilst I am pushed to the limit I have to devote time to arranging purchase of bread, toppings, assist the one parent who is on a rota to make toast for 70+ Children. Count all the cash, change into notes etc. feel this should ALL be administered by Parent Council. Most canteens in schools this size deal with canteen cash, yet this remains my remit and can be very time consuming. Mail shots get sent from all angles to be put in pupils bags. Some I actually have to print. School uniforms, sorting of sports kits, being called upon to give plasters (when not a First aider - not that I wish to be), having to change pupils who have wet themselves*

What the staff say (medical / personal care)

Members are reporting that they are pressured to take on tasks that they do not feel confident to undertake to a safe standard. Members are concerned about the risks of getting something wrong and quality of the training available for the procedures they are under pressure to provide. School staff aren't just being asked to give children a spoonful of medicine (though even that has its risks and needs to be properly managed,) often there are invasive procedures like catheterisation where there are very serious consequences for the pupil if not done properly. Members also raise the issue of the sheer number of tasks they are now asked to undertake which may seem minor tasks like helping a child who has skint a knee or fallen in a puddle but which take up time preventing them from getting their main job done.

- epilepsy training was rushed through in less than an hour after school. As a result I felt unprepared and untrained to deal with the pupil's medical issues. Playground supervision is understaffed (ratio pupils to staff out of balance) and borderline dangerous.*

- *Catherisation of a pupil on a daily basis! Left to deal with lots of problems which are infact guidance issues!*
- *Very much so. Peg feeding, insulin injections, dealing with children with complex needs not properly trained for.*
- *Yes. First aid (including injections, ripped, catheterisation, self harm), counselling,*
- *Yes, as stated before, the medical side of our job, speaking to NHS staff we would not be allowed to carry out some of these tasks were we employed by the NHS.*
- *We deal with children on a daily basis and Clerical are not paid for contact with children, however you can't ignore an upset child who has forgotten their lunch/PE kit. water bottle ior who has fallen over and has a skint knee or worse.*

What the staff say (additional support for learning)

Here again staff feel they are left to deal with issues they are not adequately trained for. As stated earlier children with additional support needs should have specialist support. Needs must be properly assessed and the staff allocated to provide that support need to be properly trained and supported.

- last August I've been put in the position of working (unofficially) as a one-one with an autistic child with little support & no training giving or offered
- I feel my job has changed to take into account the behavioural issues of some children and I'm no longer able to enjoy working with groups of children, in class, as before. The pressure is more having to deal with the verbal and physical abuse that now comes from these aggressive children.
- Yes - I feel sometimes I need to support probationer staff and carry out more teaching duties largely because of bad behaviour in class. At times I need to physically remove pupils from class and am regularly bitten, punched and kicked - this should not be accepted as part of my job.
- Yes most definitely. We have to deal with a lot of verbal and physical violence from the children rather than help children with their education. Also, we are expected to give children their insulin injections if they are diabetic, which is a massive responsibility and quite frankly, we are not nurses
- Cuts in cleaning provision mean that others now have to undertake tasks to maintain the most basic hygiene standards in our schools. This impacts on members' ability to complete their actual jobs.
- If child is sick in the dining hall, we clean them and find spare clothing but also clean up so doing 2 jobs at the same time but also due to lack of staff still expected to help all the other children . .im not very good at splitting into 3 to do all jobs!

Unpaid work

We asked our members if they regularly do unpaid work to get their job done (e.g. stay late, come in early and skip breaks). Almost 40% of members indicated that they work extra unpaid hours most weeks to get jobs done and a further 32% do so now and again. Where members gave additional comments the most common activity was skipping breaks, which they indicate that they feel pressured and stressed to get their work done and not to let down pupils.

Even those whose jobs are not supposed to have contact time with children feel under pressure to help a child who needs help when they encounter them this of course means they not only skip breaks but cannot complete their allocated work. It's also important to remember that unlike most work places when with children you can't have a "cup of tea" or eat at your desk, you can't nip to the toilet and leave them unsupervised. So if you miss your allocated break there is no other opportunity to go the toilet or eat and drink. Members indicated that they are feeling stressed and exhausted.

What the staff say (stress)

- *Yes need more pupil support in schools more children are coming into main stream with personal needs . Staff stressed feel can't say no on certain situation can't say they are stressed because no one listens or asks how you feel only a number. Getting called out for first aid when on lunch or tea break.*
- *I am feeling really stressed which I have never done before. I have always enjoyed my work which, at this moment I am not due to being overworked and stressed.*
- *Very stressful and gets you down being unable to feel like you can complete your tasks to a high standard.*
- *Despite knowing that I do a good job, because of the workload and the need to work extra hours to try and keep up, I feel inadequate and inept and very stressed*
- *The extra equipment and increased use of ICT equipment places a heavy burden on me, I am afraid to take time off as my workload is not under taken in me absence and it is stressful coming back to a heavy back log of jobs*
- *Its too much and can be very stressful when everyone wants your help.*
- *Work longer hours than most teachers, but it is only ever publicised how much stress teachers are under. Work is extremely intensive, possibly on a par with a factory worker.*
- *Too much at present and more admin cuts next month , feel totally stressed and undervalued*
- *Sometimes I feel I can't cope. It is such a stressful job.*
- *Was off with stress at one point with workload. Now take it in my stride a d work to the best of my ability in the working day.*

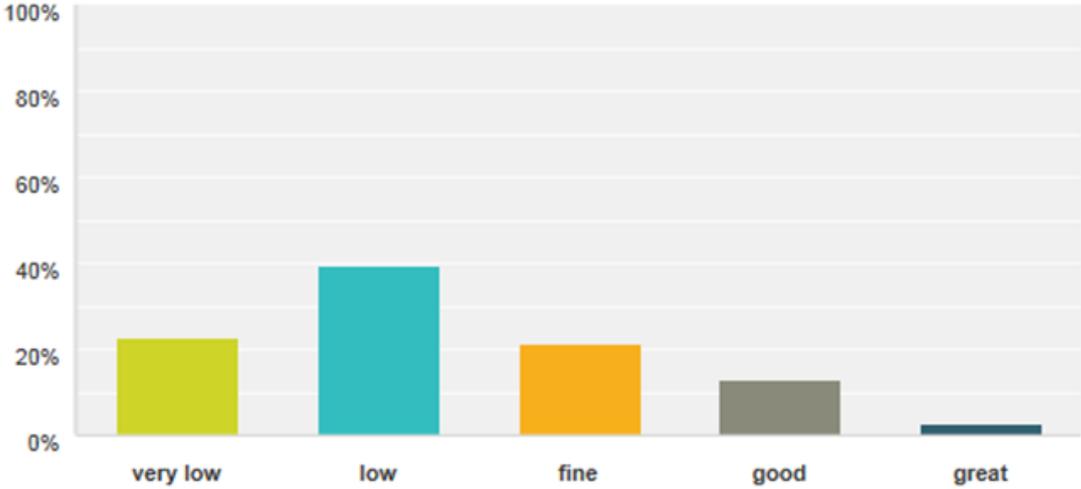
What the staff say (skipping breaks)

- *If we didn't hang back for maintenance who always seem to appear at our break times you could wait weeks to get repairs done and you feel you should get things sorted for the kids.*
- *Sometimes situations arise that need immediate attention therefore we miss breaks & lunch breaks. We are expected to work through the morning with no break*
- *We cover breaks, lunchtimes and run children in our cars all unpaid and unremunerated and are given some informal time off in return. We do this because we are dedicated to the children but, considering we are poorly paid and only paid for 39 weeks of the year, it is obvious the school is really taking advantage of us.*

- *Now and again if I am working with children who are having difficulties I will remain with them instead of going for my lunch as they require the support. Occasionally after work I remain at work to finish a job as I don't get the time throughout the day.*
- *pressure stress skip breaks Yes need more pupil support in schools more children are coming into main stream with personal needs . Staff stressed feel can't say no on certain situation can't say they are stressed because no one listens or asks how you feel only a number. Getting called out for first aid when on lunch or tea break.*
- *Often we are late going for breaks due to dealing with children or dealing with telephone calls but rarely able to add those minutes on as we need to be back on duty by a certain time*
- *Miss lunches tea breaks etc if you are out supporting children on various occasions*
- *I & other staff come into sch early to help get the class ready before the kids come in, because once the kids are in such you don't have the time to go get water for drinks or get their work ready, even to take their swimming things around to the swimming pool as we don't have the staff to get the things done. I & other staff also miss breaks or cut your lunchtime cause we're short of staff.*
- *I frequently don't get breaks and/or lunch due to new 'pupil supervision' commitments. It's that or see my library wrecked.*
- *I come in early or during my break to check E-Mails as important information will be sent and we don't have time to check at other times as we are in Class.*
- *I am always clock watching, rushing to finish duties, meeting going without proper breaks, most days having no breaks.. having to lift very heavy objects on my own.*
- *As a solo worker I have to balance dealing with classes and individuals with carrying out the general housekeeping tasks in the Library. I open to the pupils for 4 lunch breaks a week which means I usually get a 20 minute lunch break and help with a music club on the 5th day. I arrive early each morning to get set up and deal with emails etc as the Library is used for registration classes so time without pupils in there is limited. I do find myself staying later after my finish time most weeks, just to catch up on tasks I can't complete when the Library is open. Moving from a full time to term time contract has also meant that jobs I used to take time to do during holidays have to be squeezed into term time and some tasks have been abandoned altogether.*
- *Lunch breaks are getting later with some members of support staff not getting lunch till 3 earliest lunch for support staff is 1.20.No longer get official tea break staff meeting instead this is not good in winter when it is cold*
- *My working hours are 08:00 - 17:15 with a 30 minute lunch. I start work every day from 07:15 and finish most nights at 18:00 with no official lunch break,*
- *skip breaks I regularly work additional hours in order to complete my job. I don't take a mid morning break and since the start of the school session I've eaten my lunch at my desk apart from one day when I did make it to the Staffroom for 20 minutes. I'm frontline staff and deal with constant interruptions to my day from visitors to school, parents, staff and pupils for any number of reasons. A recent member of staff has been seconded and I'm absorbing the time/workload that she would normally spend in the office. Our school roll has increased over the past three years with an additional allocation of hours until Easter 2017 but this was based on a formula using the roll of fewer pupils, which has increased by a further 15 pupils since the allocation was made. On the whole with changes to policies etc there has been an overall increase in the amount of paperwork required for each child within the school environment. Pupil roll of 179, staff complement of over 30 and only myself and another school secretary who does 6hrs/week to provide admin support for all plus parents. Struggle sometimes to meet everyone's demands/requests.*

Morale

How would you describe morale in your team?



We asked our members how they would describe morale in their team. Unsurprisingly, given the responses to our earlier questions, over 60% of respondents stated that morale was low or very low in their schools.

Poor management was by far the most common reason given: 15% of those who gave a reason for their answer. Other issues raised are the impact of cuts, overwork, stress and being generally worried about the future. While we did not ask about pay in our survey members have also raised the pay squeeze as a factor in their low morale.

It is also important to note that where people said morale was actually good they mainly stated that it was down to the team they were in and the leadership of that team. This shows the value of teamwork and good leadership in tough times

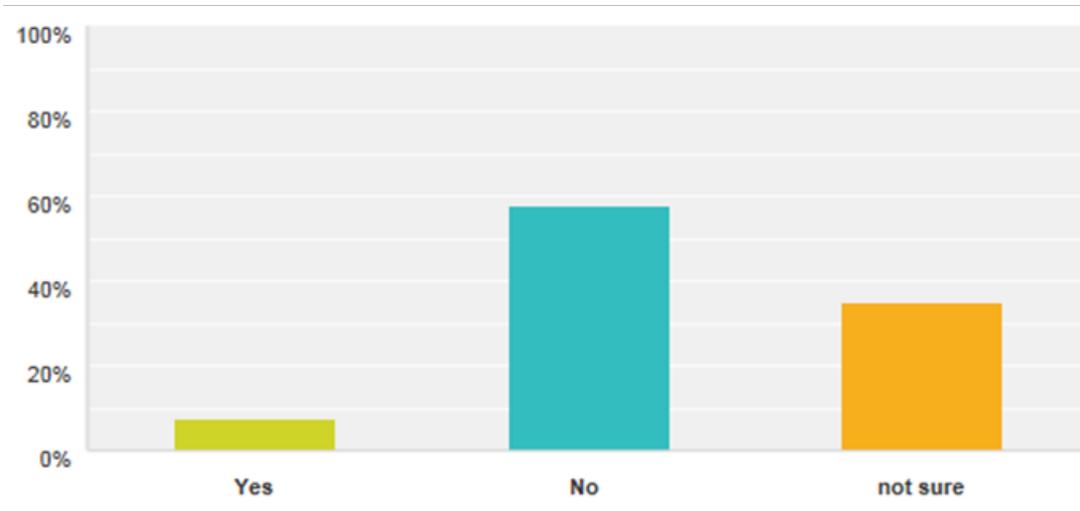
What the staff say

- *Very much under pressure with numbers, expected to deal with needy children, sometimes abusive, no control over the numbers coming to you, and at what time of day. Had zero training in the role have very poor pay, group numbers almost reduced by 50% to do the same work load. No PDR in 4 years - no prospect of improvement. Feeling undervalued.*
- *Everyone is exhausted because we are run down because staff have left and aren't getting replaced so we are having to do twice the amount of things*
- *We have a well structured team where myself and other janitor opinions are listen to and good working relationship with management team*
- *We are all permanently exhausted*
- *We feel under-valued and under-paid for what is expected of us. There is also evidence of preferential treatment for some members of our team while the rest of us are 'micro-managed' (i.e. hounded!) so, inevitably, this is frustrating and adds to the stress of the job. Unsurprisingly, colleagues have had to stay off work due to ill-health caused by stress.*
- *We are a good team who all pull together to help each other. We have a good management team who are very supportive*
- *Low at the moment for all the reasons above. My team is a marvellous team who all work for the benefit of the pupils but we feel very unappreciated by senior staff.*

- *My workload now includes children with special medical and health needs eg toileting more frequently which includes stoma bag emptying three times a day. Also changing oxygen canisters when necessary. One day a week administering peg feeding. We carry out these tasks because we feel we have no choice and are constantly being told that learning assistants do this in other schools. There are not enough hours in the day to fit in classroom support and resource time.*
- *The equipment we use is getting old Hoover parts break regularly and they will not give you replacement parts I have had my mop heads for nearly four years I have to take them home at the end of term and give them a boil wash in my washing machine and yes you did read it right four years I have had to do this.*
- *staff do not feel that we are doing the best we can for the pupils. A few of us have worked when staff levels were far better and resources plentiful and feel that pupils benefited from this and this helped them reach their own potential in their time in the department. Staff are also demoralised by poor management and by the need to go above and beyond the call of duty with no thanks. Extra work is no longer paid for and time of in loo is a joke as their is little opportunity to take this*
- *Social inclusion. Might sound great in theory but in practise its a nightmare. These kids can have complex learning behaviours and there is no training, your just told to get on with it. I can, according to my contract take pupils outside the school gates on trips. This was never allowed as a teacher had to be with you but now I'm expected to be responsible for these kids and also supervise them. I can't refuse not to take them out especially if a child has a diagnosis, as they are not allowed to be excluded. You see the risk assessment and it may say, tendency to kick off, run away etc. If this happens use this method or that method and if they run contact the school immediately, school will contact the parent who knows their child is a runner and has signed the risk assessment to say they will deal with their child should they run off. I and another support for learning worker have experienced this first hand. We had 16 children to take on a trip out of school. It took us 15 minutes to reach our destination. Several refused to follow the marked route, which may have been ever so slightly longer but it meant we would cross main roads using pedestrian crossings. This didn't suit some, they cursed and told us no way, they ran off screeching we are going our way ya f****ing c**nt and ya cannot stop us. They ran off, we followed procedure. Sure enough when reaching said destination there they were and I had to phone the school to tell them they were safe. They were allowed to stay and take part in the activity. Once back at school they were hauled before the headteacher and were told that their behaviour was unacceptable. The following week I had the same kids same walk, same problem and I was told I couldn't refuse to take them because this is part of their curriculum and they have a diagnosis. I can't believe that on my wage I and my colleague can be responsible for all these kids. After all the council keep telling us there is no supervision role on our pay grade.*
- *We feel there is a lot to be done and not enough hours but we are a good working team which keeps moral going.*
- *Fantastic staff team*
- *The kitchen staff are a close knit team who work well together*
- *We are a good team and have worked together now for some years. We have a good rapport with Teachers and the Senior Management Team.*
- *We are the lowest paid most overworked and overlooked section in schools. Office staff are just expected to 'get on with it' put up and shut up!*

Worse to come

Do you expect morale to improve in the next few years?



We asked our members if they expect morale to improve in the next few years. Unsurprisingly, given that there is no sign of any extra funding for local government, few respondents expect morale to improve in the next few years while almost 60% stated it would not.

Members indicates that they know that more cuts are on the way and expect that there will be more job cuts, reorganisations and heavier workload for those who remain.

What the staff say

- *Unsure what the local authorities have planned to make savings therefore more cuts could be applied.*
- *Work load increases yearly for most staff*
- *Major reorganisation and cuts due in the next two years*
- *The cuts look to be with us into the 2020's. Young and newly qualified staff are not getting secure long term jobs to get the experience and to build for the future.*
- *I expect it to get worse as the councils get less and less money.*
- *There will probably be more cuts so we will have even bigger workload*
- *Not If there are more staff hours cut in the lower sector. We need the hours paid. Staff never complained doing a bit of extra time to get the work done, now everyone feels bad about the cuts.*
- *I feel that the workload will continue to increase and communication will continue to be poor.*
- *The cloud of further budget cuts always seems to loom ahead and fears of what will come next*
- *Council has already announced in the local press that it is looking to save money in the next few years through the education budget.*
- *More cuts to come.*
- *council just seem to announce more cuts, and the almost certainty that our hours will be cut*

- *Because we will still be short staffed*
- *Everyone is past the point of no return ... Just had enough*
- *Children are living in difficult situations at home, has got progressively worse over last couple of years., noticeably so*
- *Nothing will change in the current climate*
- *Underpaid and unappreciated although teaching staff are starting to realise that if the council make further cuts to our numbers that this will affect them too.*
- *I don't see circumstances improving. I fully expect more cuts in the Education budget but the expectation of what the staff will have to achieve will not decrease - they will just have to manage. Schools are always expected to cope with caring for young people going far beyond their academic needs/expectations. Currently in society there are too many social and behavioural problems that impact on schools and their pupils.*
- *I feel things will only get worse. If they make the support staff go term time. I am already working unpaid hours and I have 52 week contract. What will it be like if that gets cut to a 39 week contract*
- *With budget cuts and no clear answer as to how this will affect us, we are feeling undervalued and put upon and very much at the bottom of the pile. Many clerical staff are not earning much above the living wage with greater responsibility being placed upon us.*
- *More financial cuts expected. Flogging a dead horse already.*
- *It will only get worse, no money!!*
- *does not look like there is going to be any financial improvement which is key to a lot of the problems*
- *Things are getting worse not better*
- *More cut backs.*
- *Lack of funding means less support staff which affects teaching staff and it's the pupils who suffer at the end of the day*
- *Workloads & better pay would definitely help*
- *Low pay and probably continue to have an increased workload.*
- *More cuts more pressure more insecurity*
- *Jobs getting worse and your expected to do more*
- *We see that budget cuts in the future are likely. There doesn't seem to be a focus on expanding ASN provision which is badly needed, so many children are educated in mainstream settings which are unsuitable to meet their needs, and cause disruption and take staffing from other pupils who also have needs to be met. I don't see this direction changing in the foreseeable future because there is a failure to address what is actually meant by 'inclusion'.*

And finally

The final comments left by members cover the same themes as the rest of the report. They give a picture of stressed and overworked staff trying hard to deliver a high quality service to the pupils in their schools despite the cuts. Most love their jobs they have been doing it for a long time and want very much to continue to support children to reach their full potential.

They are though increasingly unhappy about their work and are struggling to maintain standards. Many feel that their contribution isn't recognised or valued.

What the staff say

- *staff in my school are working tremendously hard to support young people, despite continually diminishing resources.*
- *I enjoy my job mostly but it is proving to be increasingly challenging. I personally feel there has been a drop in standards/ expectations of behaviour from pupils.*
- *Making staff feel under valued and not treating us all the same makes for an unhappy school and this may filter down to the children which isn't fair.*
- *There is always great difficulty in contacting a supervisor. Most of the time the cleaners decided amongst themselves who does the work. It is really badly organised, if parents knew what went on in school regarding cleaning that would not send their kids to school. I enjoy my job sometimes but because I have worked in a number of schools, the same problems happen in all of them i.e. favoritism, work load not shared out fairly, bullying and an inability to get problems sorted out quickly. It is always a hassle. After 15 years as a cleaner the one certainty is things never change just different faces.*
- *also see that the teachers are stretched to capacity. I do not blame them for seeking assistance in their classrooms with some ridiculous demands imposed on them too. My issue is with Department structure and management. We are merely human beings not robots!*
- *I love working in my school, but find it gets more and more mentally and physically challenging every day.*
- *Violence and aggression is becoming more commonplace amongst pupils and staff are having to bear the brunt of this, this is unequivocally wrong. Places must be made to help these children and also for children who have learning difficulties and are being placed in mainstream schools where there is no help for them and in turn the other pupils in the class are having their education constantly interrupted and teachers are constantly interrupting lessons to deal with these children*
- *Hours I have are irregular. I am entitled to 21 permanent hours but instead I have 15 hours and have up to full time on extra hours! I struggle with the uncertainty. This seems to be a problem for other staff members*
- *My contract is half permanent and half temporary. I love my job but my biggest frustration is lack of career progression. As a PSA there is little or nothing to move on to. Dedicated, intelligent, hard working staff leave because of this and it should be addressed.*
- *The school I work in has incredible teachers who work tirelessly for their pupils and always have their best interests at heart. They have a wealth of experience working with pupils who often have little encouragement and support from home and they do everything possible to give them the best education available in often very difficult conditions. They are under constant pressure to produce good results which never takes into account the difficulties they face. They are bogged down by bureaucracy and paperwork. I love my job and that is because of the staff and pupils here.*
- *I struggle to understand the cuts to PSA hours when schools are made to take in more and more behaviour /medical conditions with children who need extra help. I love the school that I work in has a good management team and PSA team which do support each other.*

- I currently work in two schools - one three days a week on a job share and one temporarily part time. In my substantive post I feel well supported and happy, but in my part time post I am hugely frustrated because they refuse to hire a full time librarian. I and another librarian are covering 2 days each because a full time colleague left, and yet instead of hiring someone to do the job properly they expect two of us to cover in 0.8 FTE the same work as one person did in a full time role. It is not possible and frankly a bit stupid. They say they put the job advert up but if so it was up for one week in the middle of summer and they don't seem to think this had a bearing on the number of applicants... I don't understand their reluctance and it strikes me as disrespectful to the person who left (who did a fantastic job and always went above and beyond) and all the work she put in, to the profession in general, and to us who they have dumped a load of work on and then left to get on with it. So I am frustrated by the school very much.*
- The cutbacks mean that everybody is having a heavier workload which in some cases affects the children because people are feeling stressed . There is a greater number of children needing support and instead of reducing support staff they should be increasing them. At the moment not every child is getting the support they deserve.*
- I feel that my pay does not reflect the contributions I make to my school. I feel that although I am expected to contribute to the environment beyond the classroom, it is expected I will do this without pay. For example, taking part in clubs etc. Furthermore I am expected to assist with general discipline within the school, however I am not given the training and support to do this. I love my job, however I cannot afford to do it for much longer, especially without career progression and fair pay. Myself and most of my colleagues are severely under employed. Some of my colleagues have PHDs! I appreciate that this isn't something the council can 'fix'. But greater efforts could be made to recognise this, and to remunerate us properly, for the work we do, not just the poorly written, badly graded job description.*
- you can only cut so far before the Pupils education is harmed*
- I work in a great school unfortunately my job is being undermined by budget cuts and decisions that are being made by senior managers.*
- I'm really concerned about the impact the cuts are going to have on both pupils and staff.*
- The school is not getting cleaned the way it should. Needs mire cleaning not the three times a week that they have put in place*
- I used to love and enjoy my job - but council sorted that out!!!! Raising attainment - haha!!!!!!!!!*
- If parents knew that their child was not getting the help they need they would be up in arms but no-one knows except us it makes us all angry! Cuts need to be done from the TOP down! PSA wages are poor*

Conclusion

UNISON surveyed members working in schools in September 2016. We asked them a range of questions about the impact of public sector budget cuts on themselves and the schools where they work. This report analyses their responses and allows you to hear directly from the workforce about what it's like in our schools. The report reveals a dedicated workforce committed to supporting children to reach their potential but who are under enormous pressure. They feel exhausted, undervalued and for many dealing with children with complex physical and emotional support needs stressed by lack of training and support.

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