

Key data

The mental wellbeing of children in school settings

DISORDER PREVALENCE

In 2022, **18%** of children aged seven to 16 years old had a probable mental health disorder, a rise from **12.1%** in 2017 and **16.7%** in 2020. These figures equate to **nearly one in five** school-aged children having a probable mental health disorder. The findings come from the third wave of the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey of 2,866 respondents in 2022.



SAFETY AT SCHOOL

Children aged 11 to 16 years old who reported having a probable mental health disorder were less likely to feel safe at school (**61%**) than those unlikely to have a mental health disorder (**89%**). Responses to the Mental Health of Children and Young People survey 2022 also showed they were less likely to report enjoying learning or having a friend they could turn to for support.



CAMHS SHORTAGE

Just **8%** of teachers and **10%** of school support staff surveyed by the National Education Union (NEU) reported having sufficient access to support from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). **A quarter** of teachers and **a third** of school support staff reported having no CAMHS support whatsoever, according to the NEU survey.



NEW AFRICA/ADOBE STOCK

NO LEADERS

Half of teachers in England and Wales surveyed by the NEU said they had no access to a senior mental health lead in their school, college or nursery, as did **48%** of support staff. A further **third** of respondents to the survey from both groups of professionals said they had access to a mental health lead but that this was insufficient.



TEACHER WORKLOAD

Four out of five teachers surveyed by the NEU identified workload as presenting the largest barrier to supporting pupils' mental health, with a further **17%** saying it is an occasional barrier. Meanwhile, **68%** of support staff identified their workload as presenting a barrier to supporting pupils' mental health in their setting.



EXAM STRESS

The impact of exam stress and of high-stakes academic assessment was identified by teachers and support staff as another key barrier to supporting schoolchildren in their setting. Exam stress was highlighted by **60%** of teachers and **57%** of support staff, and high stakes assessments by **63%** of teachers and **60%** of support staff in the NEU survey findings.



Source: Mental Health of Children and Young People survey, NHS Digital, November 2022; State of Education survey, National Education Union, April 2023