

research report

FE colleges: the frontline under pressure?

a staff satisfaction survey
of further education colleges
in England



Frank Villeneuve-Smith,
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Information and Customer Centre
Learning and Skills Network
Fifth Floor
Holborn Centre
120 Holborn
London EC1N 2AD

Tel 0845 071 0800
Fax 020 7492 5001

enquiries@LSNeducation.org.uk

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Further information

For further information about the issues discussed in this publication please contact:

Frank Villeneuve-Smith
Learning and Skills Network
Tel 0845 071 0800
enquiries@LSNeducation.org.uk

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Most of all, we would like to thank the 3084 further education staff who took time out of their busy schedules to complete the survey.

LSN foreword

As we settle into the 21st century, further education colleges are being handed ever bigger challenges. They are being asked to do more, deliver more and take on more responsibility. And these new challenges often remain unmatched by new resources.

This research comes at a crucial time in the history of further education. As the Leitch agenda asks the sector to focus on the skills of the country and its employers, and as colleges move towards self-regulation, our workforce will be increasingly more crucial to further education's continuing success.

The delivery of the Leitch agenda will require people with a deep understanding of the worlds of both education and work. It will require FE professionals to have an ever tighter focus on the needs of employers and the skills to engage with this sometime reluctant audience. It will redouble the requirement for frontline staff to have a combination of up-to-date technical skills to pass on to learners and teaching skills to inspire people from a variety of different backgrounds.

Self-regulation will bring a different set of challenges. The sector will need to provide all its stakeholders, including government and local communities, with assurance that it is able to set and maintain its own set of professional standards. With self-regulation will come both greater degrees of freedom and greater degrees of responsibility. To deliver on self-regulation the FE sector will need to ensure that its entire workforce is fit to meet these challenges.

One thing this research reveals is that FE has an extremely dedicated and driven workforce. People enjoy their jobs and feel proud to work in further education. Significantly, the results suggest that they are driven by the social purpose of the sector. They believe that through their work they are making a valuable contribution to society. Furthermore, they have an unmovable commitment to helping learners achieve their goals.

At a time when the sector is making moves to attract new talent into its workforce, this research reveals that the debate about pay is ongoing. It's no surprise to find that although people are happy with the amount of holiday they get and their pension arrangements, many feel that they could be better paid. This is an issue that goes beyond the boundaries of individual institutions and is closely linked to the level of funding for the sector. Furthermore, it clearly has the capacity to act as a barrier to the sector's efforts to attract the workforce it needs for tomorrow.

The most worrying findings of the research reveal a workforce under considerable strain. In common with other professionals in the UK, many people in further education feel that they are under stress and struggling to achieve the right balance between their work and home lives. However, it also reveals that a small but significant number of people face bullying and threats of violence in the workplace, often from the very people they are trying to help. This is an issue that urgently needs to be addressed.

Overall, the research reveals specific areas that need attention if the FE sector is to develop and retain the sort of workforce it needs to ensure it is well positioned to meet the challenges of the 21st century. But, despite some worrying results, we're starting from a good baseline. People who work in further education are uniquely committed to their jobs and the social purpose of the sector. It's now time to capitalise on this.

John Stone

Chief Executive
Learning and Skills Network

UCU foreword

I congratulate the Learning and Skills Network for producing an excellent piece of research which reveals a wide range of interesting and, in some cases, disturbing facts about staff satisfaction in the further education sector. With over 3000 respondents, this piece of research deserves to be taken very seriously.

The report will inform University and College Union (UCU) internal relations with members and external work including lobbying and campaigning for better pay and conditions, and real recognition and respect for the professionalism of FE teaching staff. It will no doubt be much appreciated by the many UCU members who participated in the survey.

Further education is key to personal fulfilment, civic participation, social cohesion and skills regeneration. Dynamic, thriving colleges with staff who feel valued, involved and supported should be our aim. I hope those decision-makers able to address some of the problems raised will act swiftly.

I am immensely proud to represent and campaign on behalf of people so evidently dedicated to their profession, to their students and to delivering high-quality education. It is clear that staff in further education are very personally committed to the social objectives and values inextricably linked to providing education.

It is no surprise to me to find this level of dedication. And it will surely not surprise students, who in the Learning and Skills Council's National Learner Satisfaction Survey have registered increasingly high levels of satisfaction with the teaching standards and quality of education delivered in FE.

It is clear, however, that while staff are proud to work in the FE sector, many feel negative about the particular institutions in which they work. Only around a third of lecturers would recommend their organisation as a good place to work. Large numbers of experienced staff are planning or hoping to leave their college. Many confirm the unhappiness and frustration that UCU knows is widespread in colleges. Only 35% of FE staff feel valued by their employer: half the UK benchmark figure for all employees. Half of teaching staff feel undervalued. This is damning stuff.

Long hours and poor work–life balance are major sources of the discontent, especially among women, who find many employers inflexible and insensitive to their needs. Growing numbers of staff are experiencing overwork and stress. Bullying is no doubt contributing to this, with many staff feeling it is tolerated by their organisation, and even 20% of managers agreeing. Many staff experience verbal abuse and disturbing numbers have felt physically threatened by learners.

There are many other concerns. More than half of teaching staff say their workspace and equipment are inadequate, even higher proportions of part-time staff report this. And 50% of teaching staff feel their job is insecure.

Despite the altruism of college lecturers, they understandably seek appropriate pay and other rewards but 60% of teaching staff feel they are inadequately rewarded. Given the failure of 43% of employers to implement the new pay structure that was agreed to be in place from 2005 – and the pressures evident in this report – who can blame them?

The report is timely as UCU brings attention to many of the factors revealed here, as part of its demand for better pay and greater respect for teaching professionals.

A key question arising from this evidence must be about the sector's prospects for recruitment and retention. While we can speculate on the extent to which the intentions of huge numbers of experienced staff will be realised by their actual departure from their current employer, the bigger question is: 'What will attract new young talented people into teaching in FE?' Are employers expecting a generation of altruistic professionals uninterested in rewards and conditions?

This report must be a clarion call to the sector not only to think about these issues but to do something about them. Employers must examine the culture and management of colleges, which are so frustrating and dispiriting to their staff. And they must provide the fair rewards that are clearly justified and needed.

Politicians should be examining why their priorities – and the demands they are making of the sector – are creating such intolerable strains in colleges that many dedicated staff want to leave. If they want a new generation of FE teachers to drive the skills agenda, they had better act quickly.

Barry Lovejoy

Head of Further Education
University and College Union

1 Executive summary

This research report investigates staff satisfaction in further education (FE) colleges in England. The University and College Union (UCU) commissioned the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) to undertake the research.

FE staff were invited to take part in the survey, which was launched on 23 October 2007. Over 3000 people returned completed questionnaires, enabling LSN to analyse the results by job role with a significant degree of confidence. LSN's statisticians undertook the data analysis.

Key findings from the survey

1 People enjoy their jobs but are less positive about their institutions.

The survey began by investigating people's overall satisfaction with their jobs, the sector and their organisations. The results revealed that people generally enjoy their jobs and are driven by the sense that they are making a valuable contribution to society. Furthermore, they feel proud to work in further education and would recommend that other people seek employment in the sector.

However, their positive views do not extend to the organisations they work for. People are less likely to feel proud of the organisation they work for or recommend it as a good place to work.

The survey reveals that the overwhelming majority of staff (82.6%) enjoy their job. Furthermore, managers are the group most likely to say they enjoy their job, with 85.9% reporting this.

People believe that their job enables them to make a contribution to society, with 85.7% agreeing with this notion. This view is particularly strong among teaching staff (86.2%) and managers (88.2%). People also feel proud to work for the sector, with 74.4% reporting that this is the case.

People's views on their institutions are more worrying. Only 39.1% of staff say that they would recommend their organisation as a good place to work and this drops to 31.1% among lecturers and teachers. Furthermore, many respondents (42.2%) said that they don't feel valued by their employer.

2 People are dissatisfied with their remuneration but positive about benefits.

Pay and benefits was the first area examined that may have an impact on people's overall levels of job satisfaction. The survey revealed that although many people are unhappy with the pay, they are generally satisfied with the benefits, such as holiday and pensions.

A significant number of people (56%) reported that they don't think they are adequately rewarded for their work. This rises to 60.9% among lecturers and teachers but drops to 34.6% among senior managers. By comparison, the majority of people (68.4%) say they are happy with their pension scheme.

There were also positive messages about holiday entitlement. Approximately two-thirds (65%) of staff said they were satisfied with the amount of holiday they get annually. Clearly, holiday entitlement is only an effective if people are able to take it and the survey shows that the majority of staff (69.4%) are able to do so. However, 21.9% of teachers and lecturers, and 35.8% of senior managers, say they are not able to take their full holiday entitlement.

3 People work long hours, find it difficult to achieve a work-life balance and many feel stressed.

A good work-life balance and work-related stress have become major issues for organisations in recent years. The survey investigated the situation in colleges and examined issues that may be putting staff under additional pressure, such as workplace bullying and inadequate workspace and equipment.

First, it revealed that many staff in FE colleges find it difficult to maintain a good work-life balance, are feeling under stress and do not have access to flexible working arrangements to help them manage these pressures. Moreover, this may be being compounded by a sense among some people that they lack job security.

- Only 7.4% of respondents do not work beyond their contracted hours.
- Out of the staff who said they often work beyond their contracted hours, 28.9% of teaching staff, 38.2% of managers and 63% of senior managers said they often worked more than 11 additional hours per week.
- 48.3% of people said they are not able to achieve a good work-life balance.
- Just over half of all respondents (53%) say they do not have access to flexible working arrangements.
- Most people (69.8%) of people say they feel too much stress in their job. Teaching staff are more likely than other groups to say they are stressed, with 73.9% reporting this.
- 45.7% of staff said they do not feel they have job security.

Second, it revealed that a small but significant number of people are concerned about bullying. Indeed, it also revealed that a number of people don't feel physically safe at work.

- 40% of people say that their organisation will tolerate managers or colleagues who bully others but 39.1% of people said that this was not the case.
- 66.6% of people said they feel physically safe at work, but 16.3% disagreed.
- Teaching staff were most likely to say that they don't feel physically safe at work, with 19.4% indicating that this is the case.
- Overall, 53.9% of people said they had been verbally abused by learners, with 58.8% of teaching staff indicating that this is the case.
- In total, 37.4% of staff said they had felt physically threatened by a learner, and teachers were more likely to say this than anyone else (39.4%).
- The overwhelming majority of staff (88.8%) reported that they have never been physically abused at work but a significant minority of managers (7.8%) and teachers (7.7%) said they had been physically abused by a learner.

4 The sector is likely to face a future staff retention challenge.

The questions explored so far all have an influence on the sector's ability to retain its staff. The next section of the survey specifically investigated employee retention and the results suggest further education could face a considerable challenge in the future.

First, LSN considered whether employees are likely to leave their organisation in the foreseeable future. Almost one in four staff indicated that they would like to leave their organisation in the next 12 months, and around 70% indicated that they hope to have left within five years.

The survey moved on to look at where people are likely to go. 24.3% indicated that they will look for employment outside the sector and a further 22.9% say that they are likely to retire. However, it's worth noting that 59% of people who took part in the survey are aged 45–59, which may explain the high numbers considering retirement.

The survey also explored whether people are likely to leave the sector altogether, and 48.8% said they are likely to do so in the next five years. Furthermore, 50.7% of teachers and lecturers indicated that they are likely to leave the sector in the next five years.

The final set of questions explored why people chose to work in the further education and what inspires people to stay. Once again, answers revealed a workforce that is highly committed to the social purpose of the sector.

The results show that the two key reasons people joined the sector were to help learners achieve their goals (60.8%) and a desire to use their skills to make a contribution to society (60.9%), mirroring early findings that revealed the reasons people stay in the further education.

2 Introduction and research aims

This report sets out the findings from a staff satisfaction survey of those working in further education colleges in England. The survey, its distribution and subsequent analysis, have been carried out by the project team at the Learning and Skills Network (LSN). The survey project was commissioned by the University and College Union (UCU).

The overarching objective of the project was to explore the views of the FE sector workforce across four dimensions of staff satisfaction:

- job satisfaction – overall, to what extent do staff enjoy their jobs? What do they think of the sector they work in and their employer?
- pay and benefits – how satisfied are FE staff with their remuneration and other rewards?
- working life and conditions – how do staff feel about the wide-ranging issues that affect working life, from working hours to flexible working arrangements and job security
- employee retention – how likely are staff to leave their current job? What is keeping them in their present position in the further education sector at present?

A secondary objective was to compare the levels of job satisfaction of people in different roles within further education. We received a high volume of responses, which makes possible a comparative analysis of the views from administrative/support staff, teachers/lecturers, managers and senior managers.

A further objective was to identify, where possible, the impact of other factors, such as age, gender and contract status (full-time/part-time employment) on staff satisfaction.

This report sets out the methodology for designing, distributing and analysing the survey, and then presents the results under each of the four dimensions outlined above.

3 Methodology

The Learning and Skills Network, on behalf of the University and College Union, carried out an online survey regarding staff satisfaction in the further education sector. The survey was developed with the aim of gathering information on a range of aspects around staff satisfaction.

3.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed by the project team and consisted of a combination of multiple-choice, rank-item and text questions that required individuals to either select the appropriate response box or insert an answer in a text box. Most of the questions asked respondents to read statements and indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed.

The survey was designed in an electronic format using the online survey software SNAP. The software was used to upload the questionnaire and generate a URL link which individuals could then click on to access the survey.

See Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire.

3.2 Questionnaire distribution

The survey was launched on 23 October 2007 and emailed to over 28,000 staff at all levels across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.¹ The survey was targeted across the three sectors: further education (FE), work-based learning (WBL) and adult and community Learning (ACL).

The dataset of contacts used for the distribution was collated using an equal number of records from the UCU membership database and LSN's Customer Information Management System² dataset. The records collected from both sources were merged and uploaded into the emailing software, Subscribe Software, so that the target population could be promptly emailed.

1 This is in line with the scope of the UCU and LSN data sources used for distribution, which exclude Scotland.

2 LSN's extensive dataset of sector contacts is generated through the course of its programmes, support services and research activity. The dataset is representative of teacher/lecturer, manager and senior manager job roles in further education across England.

Overall, the survey generated a high level of response with over 3000 completed questionnaires submitted by the closing date of 23 November 2007. Responses were received from across the three countries. However, the numbers obtained from Northern Ireland and Wales were significantly low and therefore have not been included in the final sample size for analysis. Also, a very low number of responses from staff in WBL and ACL were received compared to FE colleges. To avoid bias and to ensure the results reported were not skewed by larger segments of the sample, WBL and ACL sector responses have been excluded from the analysis reported. Consequently the final report presented here is an analysis of the views of staff working in FE colleges in England.

The total sample size for respondents from FE colleges in England was 3084. This provides a 99% confidence level of accurately representing the views of college staff with a $\pm 2.31\%$ confidence interval.

3.3 Sample characteristics

Various characteristics of the sample were gathered with the survey, including the general demographics of gender, ethnicity and age. This was to identify how representative the sample was of the sector, using available benchmark data.³

Gender: The majority of respondents in the sample were female, the breakdown being 60% female, 40% male. The gender ratio in the sample is similar to the general composition of the sector with only small deviations noted from the sector average levels.

Ethnicity: The ethnic group of most of the sample was White (93%), followed by an even proportion of Black or Black British (2%), Asian or Asian British (2%) and Other (2%). The proportion of staff from Black and Minority Ethnic groups was somewhat below the sector average of 3%.

Age: Respondents on average tended to be aged 45 years or older, with 59% of staff indicating they were 45–59 years old. This is a notably higher proportion than the sector benchmark rate of 40% for the same age band. Thus, the composition of the sample was older than the average age of staff in the sector and a smaller proportion of responses was obtained from the younger age groups. As a result, where age may be a strong factor in the answer (for example on intention to retire), caution is advised when interpreting the statistics. This has been noted in the analysis.

Job role: Staff of all levels responded to the survey, with teachers/lecturers submitting the most responses (63%), followed by managers (18%), administrators/support staff (9%) and senior managers (5%). One focus of the research was to determine whether there was a clear link between the seniority of people's roles and their levels of job satisfaction and therefore all results are presented on this basis of the job role level data.

3 Source: LSC's SIR further education colleges in England, 2005–06 (includes Specialist Designated Institutions)

The volume of responses for both teachers/lecturers and managers was high, and can be used to predict overall satisfaction for these job role groupings with a high degree of accuracy.⁴ Fewer administrators/support staff and senior managers responded, providing a lower level of confidence (confidence intervals of + or – 5.9% and 7.5% within each group at the 95% confidence level) and therefore the sample’s ability to predict overall satisfaction for these job role groups is reduced.

Contract type: Over three-quarters of the sample indicated that they were on permanent full-time contracts and 18% were employed on a permanent part-time basis. A minority (6%) were on a temporary contract. Equivalent measures of job-role status for the sector were not available for comparison but the latest public figures on staff terms of employment⁵ show that approximately 68% of staff in FE are permanent. This suggests that there is an over-representation of permanent staff in the sample and the results presented will largely reflect the views of those on permanent contracts, rather than those on temporary contracts or working through agencies.

The full breakdown of the sample in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, job role and contract type is presented at Appendix 2.

4 Random samples of these sizes have a better than 95% probability of accurately representing the views of the target population within + or – 2.2% and 4.0% respectively.

5 Source: LSC’s SIR further education colleges in England, 2005–06 (includes Specialist Designated Institutions)

4 Survey results and analysis

This section sets out the results of the survey, exploring the opinions of FE college staff on issues that affect their working lives. The results for each question are presented both as an overall total and broken down by staff role – this shows the frequent difference between the responses of staff with different job roles. They are grouped into:

- administrators (administrative/support staff)
- teaching staff (teachers/lecturers)
- managers
- senior managers.

Other factors, such as the age, gender or type of contract (full-time/part-time) of the respondents, are presented where there are significant differences in responses. Where national survey data across all sectors of the economy exists for particular questions, this is also presented for comparison.

The results are presented in four themes:

- general job satisfaction
- pay and benefits
- working life and conditions
- employee retention.

The complete set of responses to the survey is presented in Appendix 3.

4.1 Job satisfaction

This section of the survey sought people's views on overall satisfaction with their jobs, the sector and their employer.

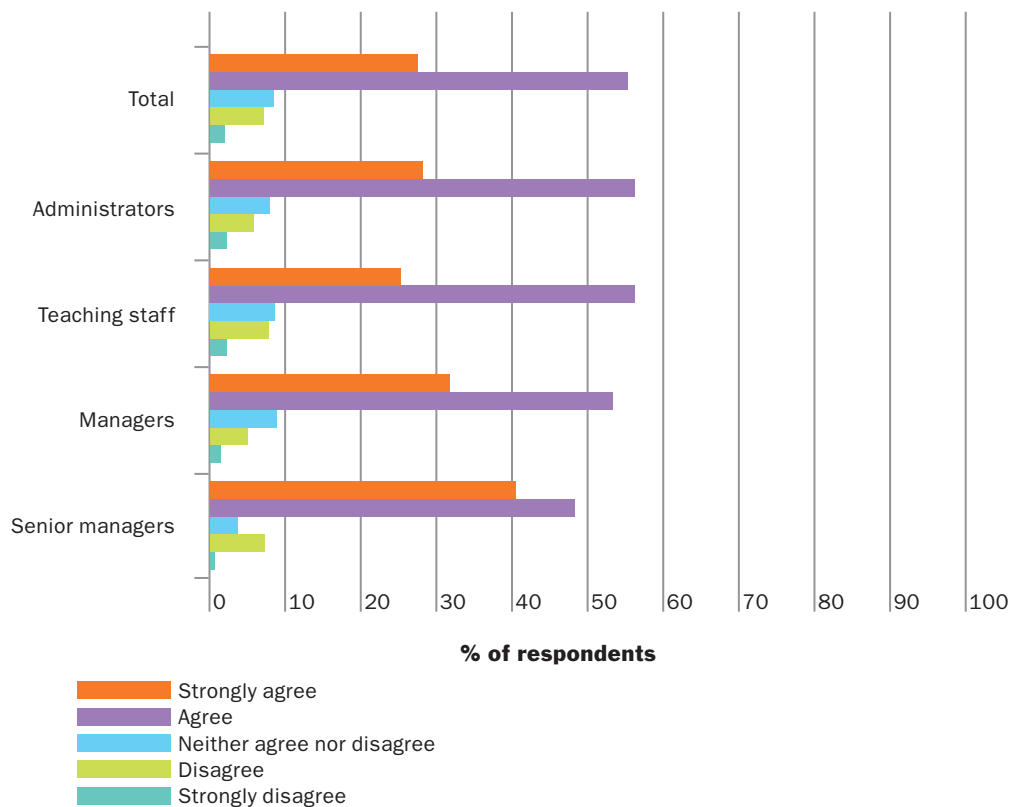
4.1.1 I enjoy my job

The survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I enjoy my job'. The results are set out in Figure 1.

The overwhelming majority of staff of all types agreed with the statement, with 82.6% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. This figure is marginally higher than an equivalent benchmark figure for employees in the UK as a whole of 78%.⁶

Job enjoyment generally increases with seniority, with strong agreement to the statement rising from 28.1% among administrators/support staff to 40.4% among senior managers. This increase with seniority is also found in figures for employees in the UK as a whole.⁷ Teachers and lecturers were the group least likely to agree with the statement. One in ten teachers and lecturers indicated that they did not enjoy their job. However, their overall job enjoyment of 81.4% still represents a broad level of satisfaction.

Figure 1 I enjoy my job



⁶ *The good worker: a survey of attitudes towards work in the UK*. The Work Foundation (2006)

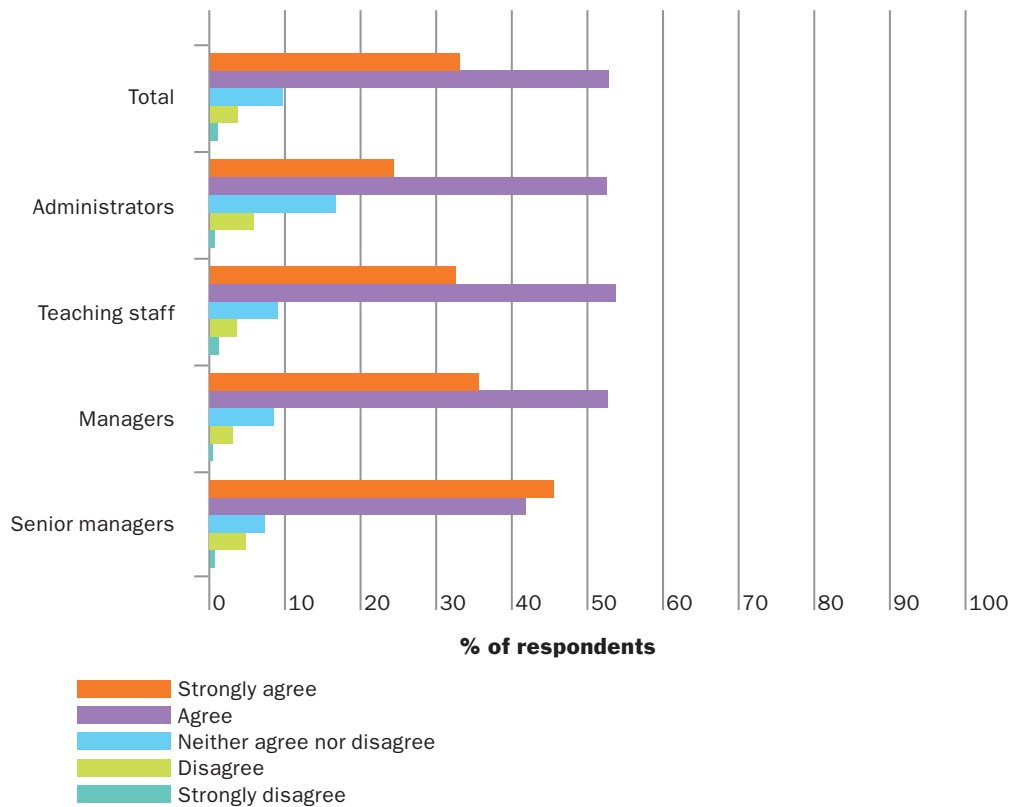
⁷ As note 6

4.1.2 My job enables me to make a valuable contribution to society

To explore whether staff have ‘bought in’ to the sector, the survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘My job enables me to make a valuable contribution to society’. The results are set out in Figure 2. Staff clearly believe that they are making a positive difference, with 85.7% either agreeing or strongly agreeing, of whom a third strongly agree.

The only group whose responses fell outside the margin for error of the total group were administrative/support staff, who could not see the impact of their jobs as clearly. However, 76.8% still either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Taken together, the results suggest staff have a very idealistic view of the FE sector and its role in society.

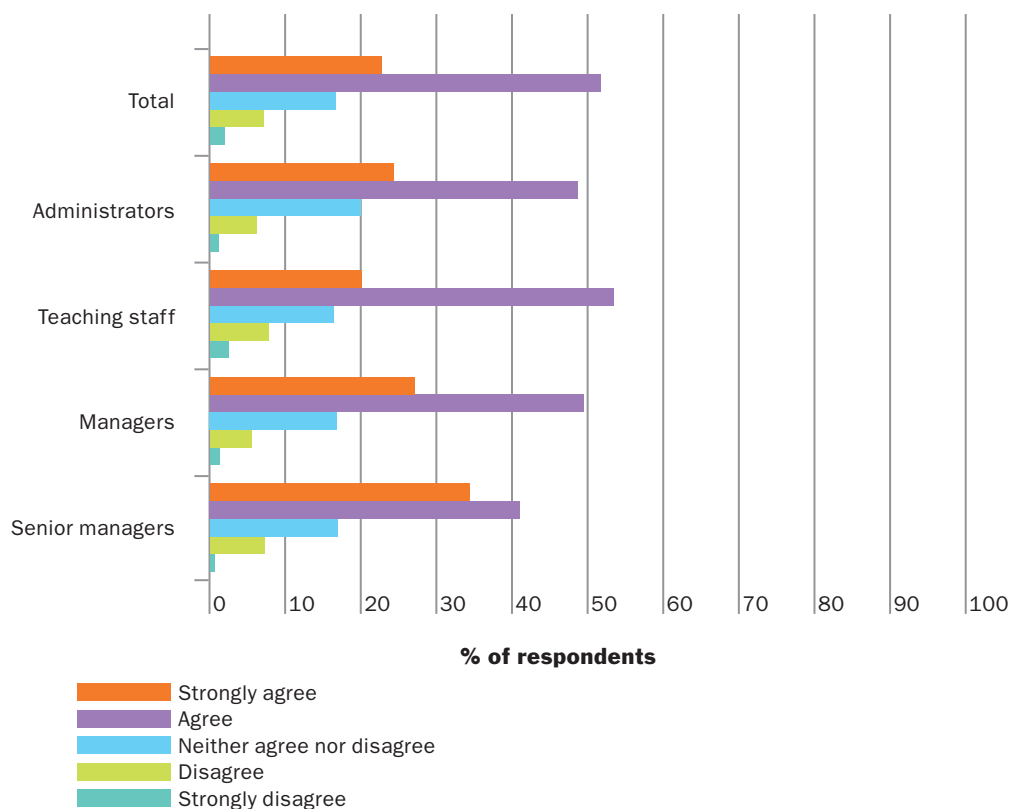
Figure 2 My job enables me to make a valuable contribution to society



4.1.3 I feel proud to work in the learning and skills sector

To provide an indication of pride in the sector, the survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘I feel proud to work in the learning and skills sector’. The results are set out in Figure 3. Respondents were again overwhelmingly positive, with 74.4% either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Most groups responded in a similar way (within the margin of error) with the exception of senior managers, who were more likely than others to strongly agree (34.3%).

Figure 3 I feel proud to work in the learning and skills sector

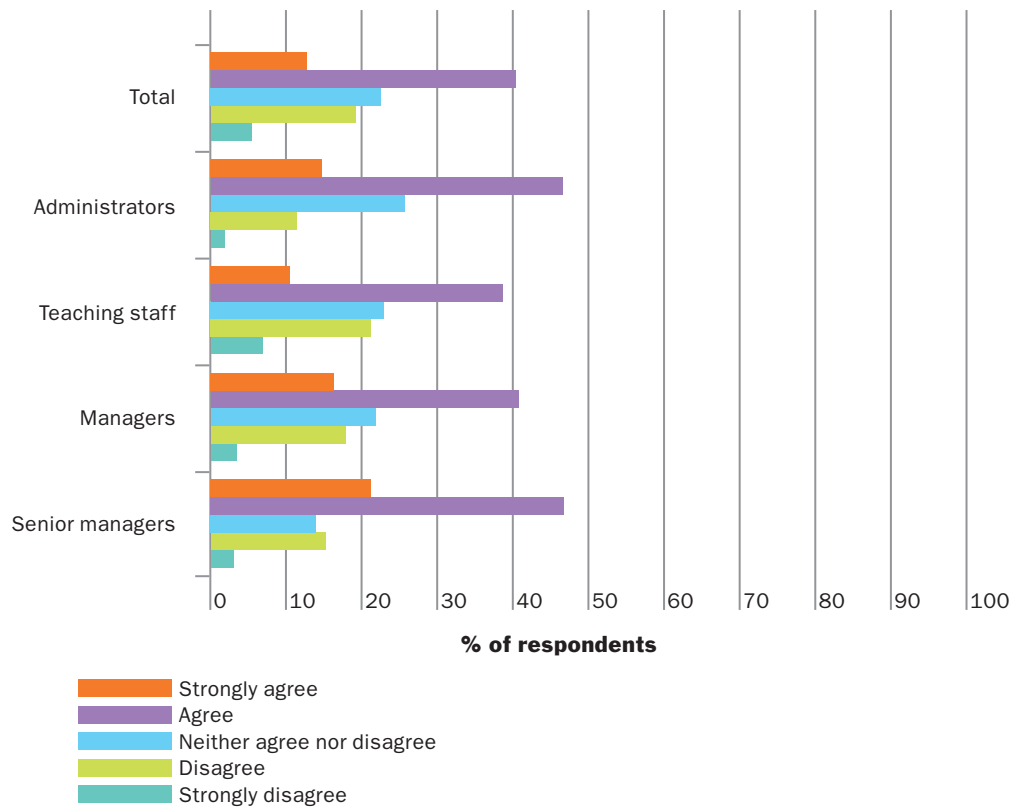


4.1.4 I would recommend working in the sector to others

The next question aimed to identify the extent to which any feelings expressed by respondents about the sector were mirrored by a recommendation to work in it (or not). The survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I would recommend working in the sector to others'. The results are set out in Figure 4. The results indicate that although staff feel positive about their job and its impact on society, and are proud to work in the sector, they would be more hesitant to recommend it to others as a place of work, with only 53% either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Teachers/lecturers appeared to be particularly hesitant to recommend working in the sector. Less than half of the surveyed teachers/lecturers would recommend it. Nearly three out of ten disagreed or strongly disagreed. Senior managers, on the other hand, were much more positive, with 67.9% either agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Figure 4 I would recommend working in the sector to others

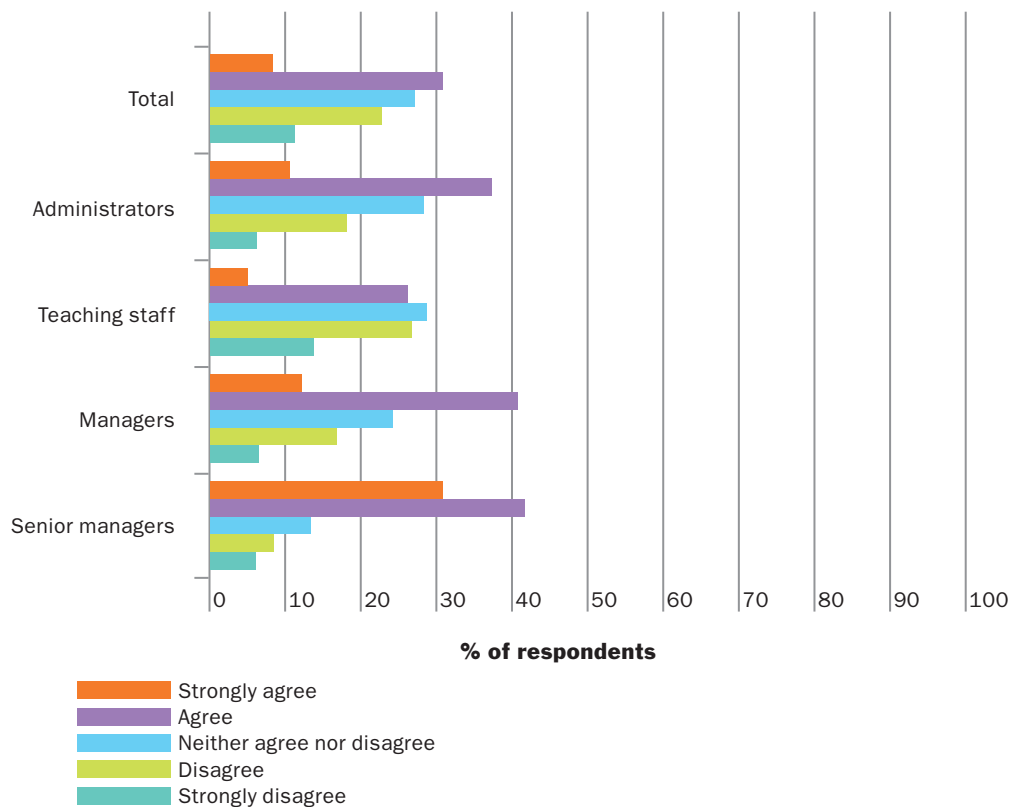


4.1.5 I would recommend my organisation as a good place to work

Survey respondents were less likely to recommend their organisation as a good place to work, than they were the sector. When asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘I would recommend my organisation as a good place to work’, 39% of staff either agreed or strongly agreed – 14 percentage points fewer than for the sector in general. This is also in marked contrast with benchmark data for employees in the UK as a whole.⁸ The UK average level of agreement/strong agreement with this question is 67%. The full results are set out in Figure 5.

The result is largely driven by the responses of teachers/lecturers. Only three in ten agree/strongly agree that they would recommend their organisation as a good place to work. Four in ten actively disagree. Senior managers, however, are more upbeat, with 72% saying that they would recommend their organisation.

Figure 5 I would recommend my organisation as a good place to work



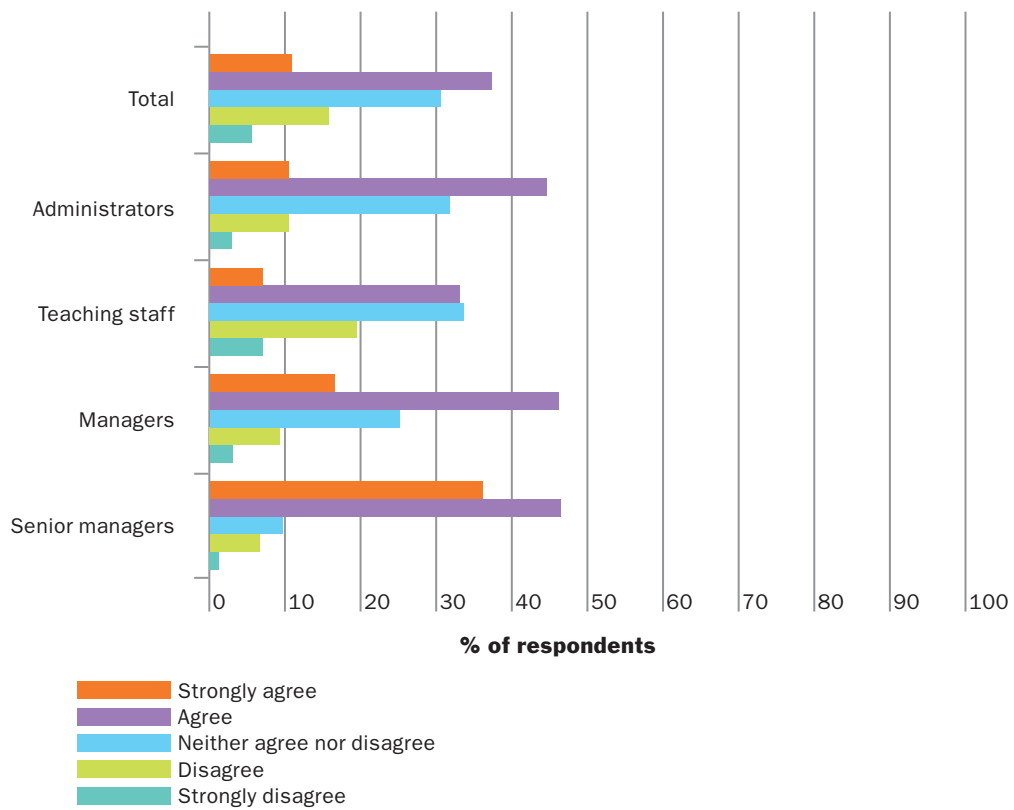
8 Source: People Insight Ltd staff survey national benchmark dataset

4.1.6 I feel proud to work for my organisation

The pride in the sector as a whole noted in 4.1.3 does not translate directly into pride in the organisation. When asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘I feel proud to work for my organisation’, 48.1% of staff either agreed or strongly agreed. This figure represents a 26 percentage point drop when compared to pride in the sector.

As above, the drop is mainly driven by the views of teachers/lecturers, of whom 40% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (as opposed to the average 73.5% for the sector). Pride in the organisation holds up among managers (62.6% agree/strongly agree) and increases among senior managers. The results are set out in Figure 6.

Figure 6 I feel proud to work for my organisation



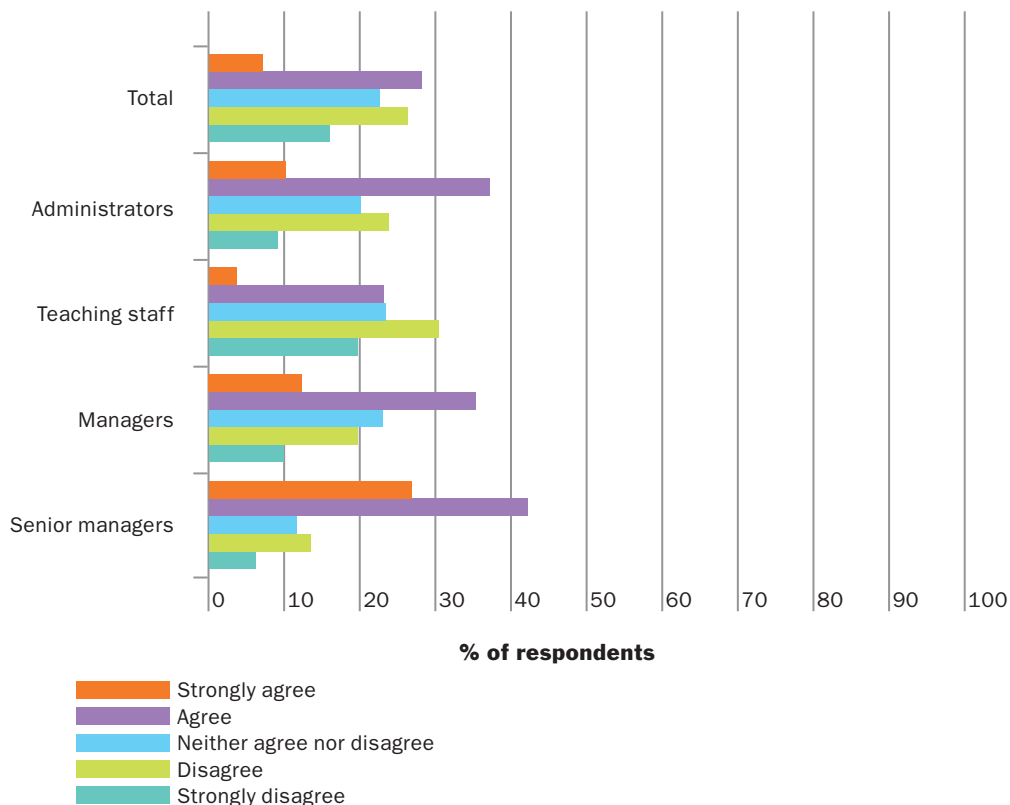
4.1.7 I feel valued by my employer

The survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘I feel valued by my employer’. The results are set out in Figure 7: 42.2% of respondents either disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement, compared with 35.2% who agreed/strongly agreed. This is in marked contrast with benchmark data for employees in the UK as a whole,⁹ where the average level of agreement/strong agreement with this question is 56%.

9 Source: People Insight Ltd staff survey national benchmark data set

Teachers/lecturers felt valued the least, with approximately a quarter of respondents in this group indicating agreement with the statement. Half of the surveyed teachers/lecturers did not feel valued by their employer. With the clear exception of teaching staff, the feeling of being valued by the employer increased with seniority. Agreement with the statement rises from 47.2% among administrators/support staff to 68.9% among senior managers. Three out of 10 administrators and managers do not feel valued by their employer.

Figure 7 I feel valued by my employer



4.1.8 Summary

Overall, staff surveyed indicated that they enjoy their jobs. They reported high levels of pride in their sector and overall felt they were making a positive contribution to society. However, this level of engagement in their jobs and their sector did not translate as effectively into a sense of pride in their organisation or people reporting that they would recommend their organisations. Arguably, a driver of this apparent disconnect could be a reflection of how valued staff feel by their employer. The potential causes of this feeling in terms of pay and benefits, working life and conditions, and what that may mean for employee retention will be explored in the areas that follow.

4.2 Pay and benefits

The next area of the survey aimed to explore how satisfied staff were with their rewards. In addition to pay, issues of holiday entitlement and pensions were also explored.

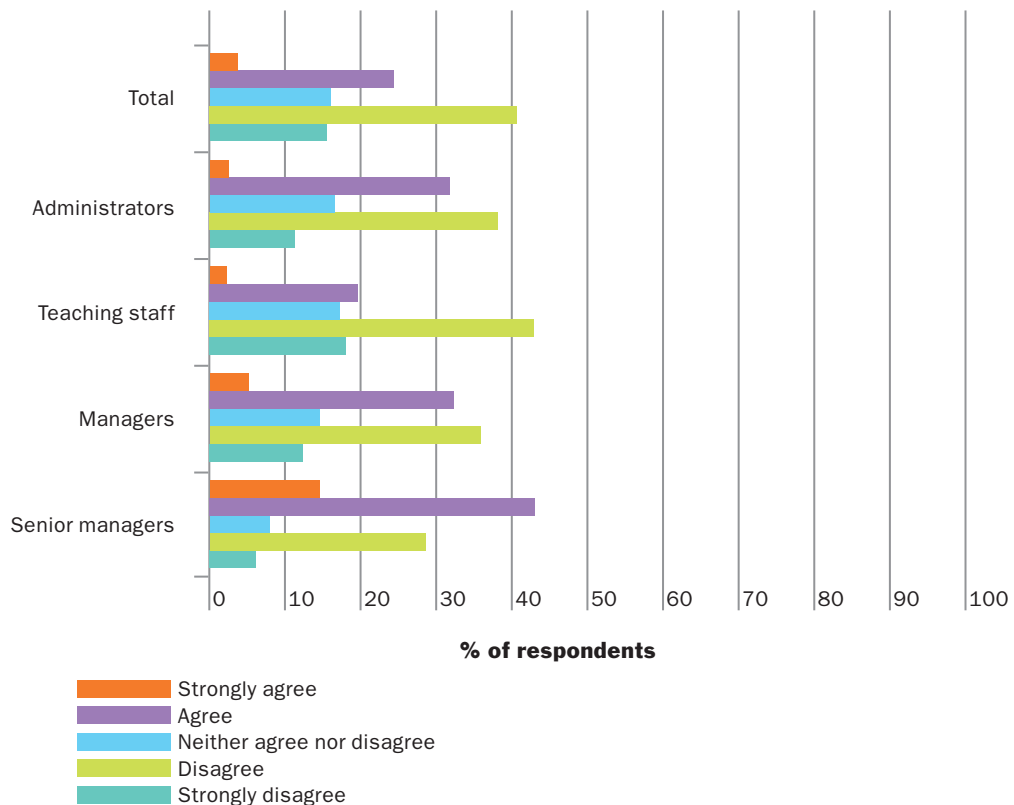
4.2.1 I am adequately rewarded for my work

The survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘I am adequately rewarded for my work’. The results are set out in Figure 8. 56% of respondents either disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement, compared with 28% who agreed/strongly agreed. Teachers/lecturers were the group most likely not to feel adequately rewarded, with six out of ten expressing their disagreement. Only 21.8% believed that their remuneration was adequate.

With the exception of teachers/lecturers, satisfaction with remuneration increased with seniority: both managers and senior managers being slightly more positive. 37.4% of managers agreed that they were appropriately rewarded, but just under half of this group disagreed/strongly disagreed.

As a follow-up question, respondents were asked their perception of whether they would earn more, less or the same if they worked outside the learning and skills sector. All employee groups responded in an almost identical fashion (ie within the margin for error of the survey). 68.7% of people believed that they could earn more money outside the sector. Of these, 27.5% believe that they could earn substantially more. Less than one in ten staff believed that leaving the sector would mean a pay cut.

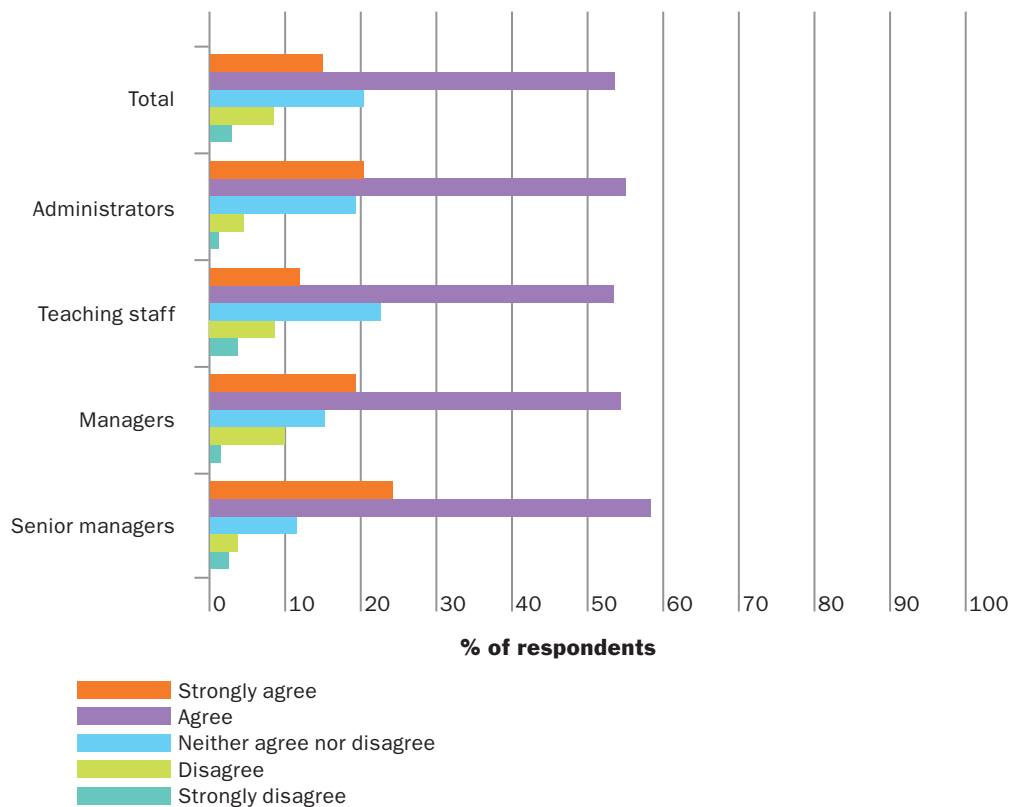
Figure 8 I am adequately rewarded for my work



4.2.2 I am happy with the pension scheme that is provided by my organisation

Although staff attitudes towards remuneration may have been broadly negative, the picture is more positive on the issue of pensions. The survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I am happy with the pension scheme that is provided by my organisation'. The results are set out in Figure 9. Overall, 68.4% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Teachers and lecturers were the least likely to agree, however in total 65.2% continued to agree or strongly agree. Of staff who did not actively agree, all groups were more likely to equivocate than to actively disagree.

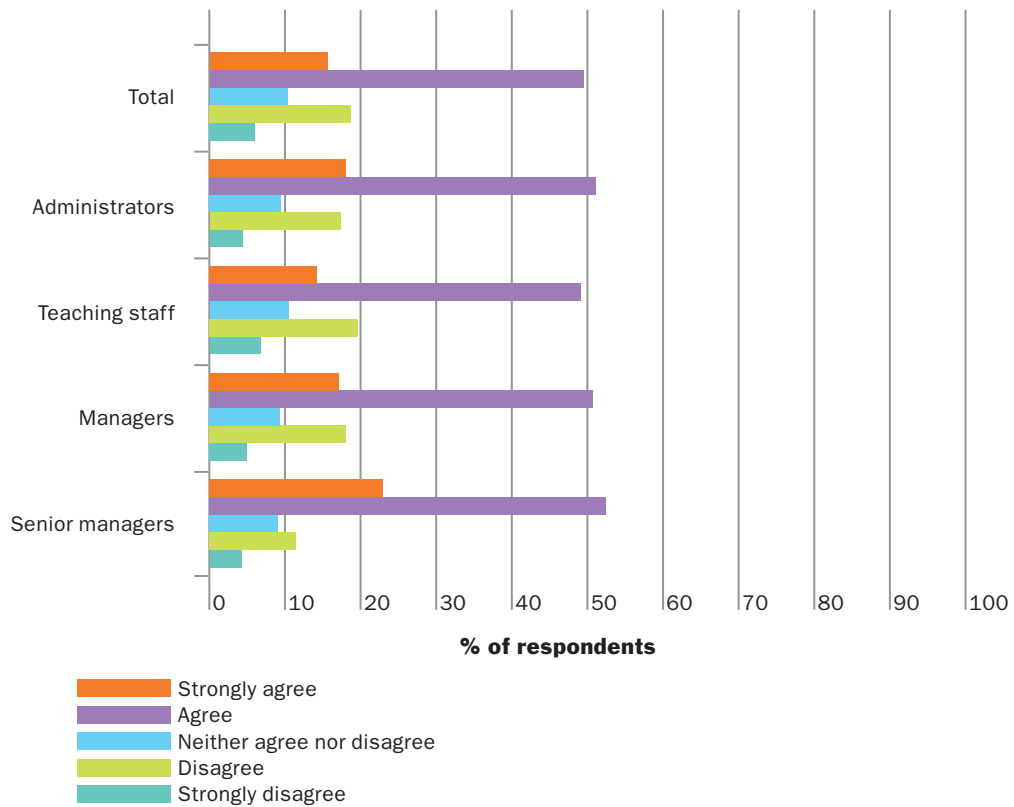
Figure 9 I am happy with the pension scheme that is provided by my organisation



4.2.3 I am satisfied with the amount of holiday that I get annually

The majority of staff were also satisfied with the amount of annual leave they received. When asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘I am satisfied with the amount of holiday that I get annually’ two-thirds of staff either agreed or strongly agreed. The full results are set out in Figure 10. Larger proportions of managers and senior managers agreed with this statement compared to those in other job roles, with managers (67.7%) and senior managers (75.3%) agreeing/strongly agreeing. Teachers/lecturers as a group were the least likely to be satisfied, with 26.3% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Figure 10 I am satisfied with the amount of holiday that I get annually

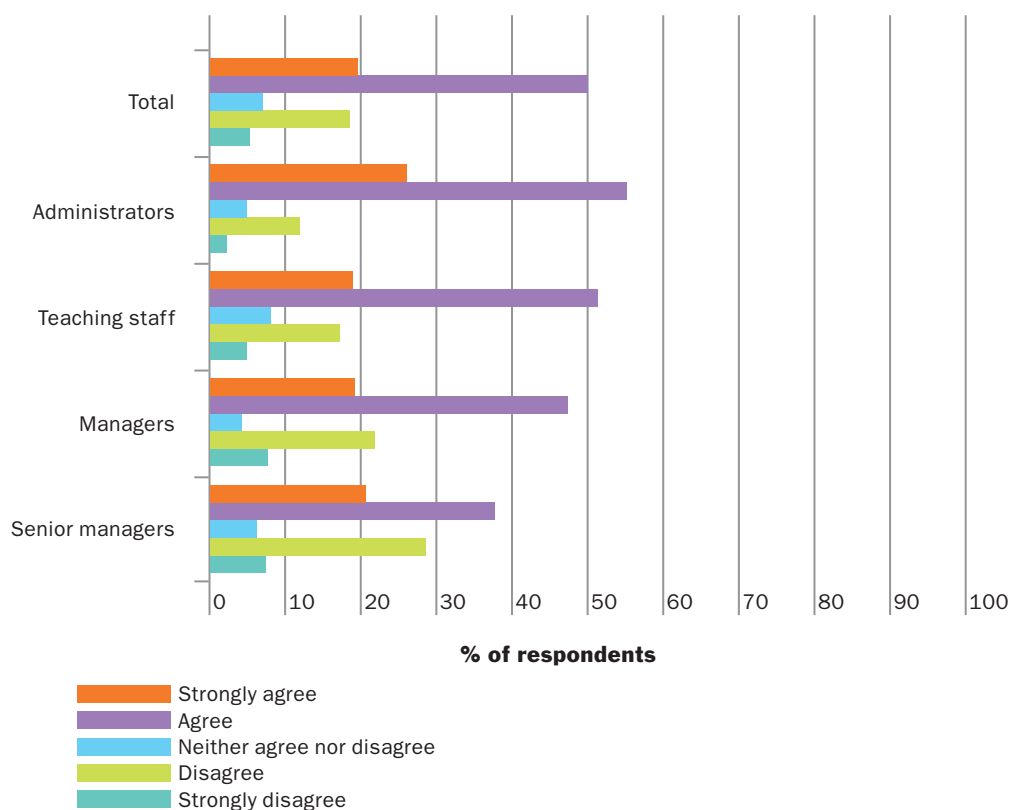


4.2.4 I am able to take my full holiday allocation each year

Holiday entitlement is only an effective reward if staff have the opportunity to take it. The survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I am able to take my full holiday allocation each year'. The results are set out in Figure 11. Overall, 69.4% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

When broken down by staff group, it becomes clear that the ability to fully take leave entitlement diminishes markedly in direct line with seniority. While 81% of administrative/support staff agreed with the statement, the figure falls to 70.2% for teachers/lecturers, 66.4% for managers and 58.2% for senior managers.

Figure 11 I am able to take my full holiday allocation each year



4.2.5 Summary

This section examined staff views on remuneration, pensions and holiday entitlements. Of these factors, remuneration emerged as the single most pressing issue. This is particularly true among teachers and lecturers, with only one in five reporting that they are adequately rewarded. Many people, at all levels, believe that they could do better financially elsewhere. However, most agree that pensions and the level of holiday entitlement are appropriate.

4.3 Working life and conditions

The next area of the survey asked respondents questions about their working life and conditions – their working hours, issues around work–life balance, flexible working and stress at work. The survey then went on to explore the challenging issues of bullying at work and whether staff had encountered any difficult behaviours by colleagues, managers and learners. It concluded with questions on workspace and equipment.

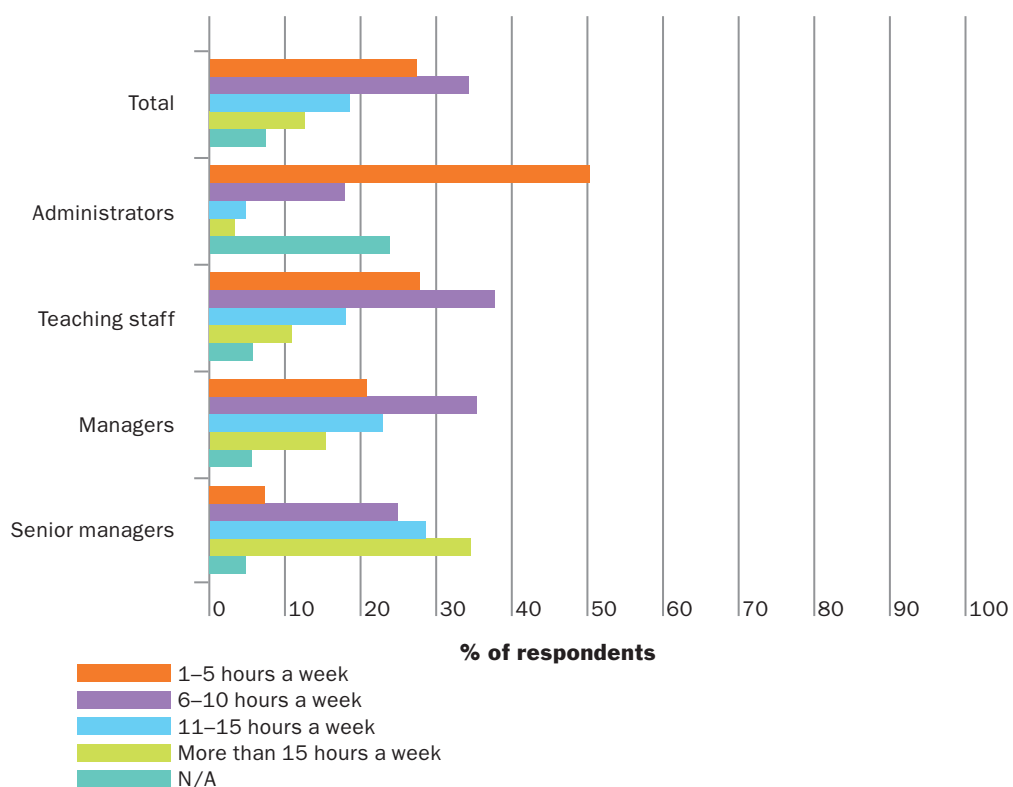
As with previous areas of the survey, there were frequent differences in responses depending on job role. This area of the survey also found several important differences in response depending on the gender of the respondent and/or the contract status of the individual. These will be highlighted for questions where results are outside the margin of error for the survey.

4.3.1 Additional working hours

The survey asked respondents about the extent to which they worked more than their contracted hours. In response to the question ‘If you often work more than the number of hours required in your contract, on average how many additional hours do you work?’ only 7.4% of respondents indicated that they did not regularly work more than their contracted hours. The full results are set out in Figure 12.

When broken down by staff group, hours worked over those contracted increase markedly in direct line with seniority. The percentage of administrators/ support staff working more than 11 hours per week above contracted hours stands at 8.1%; this rises to 28.9% for teachers/lecturers, 38.2% for managers and 63% of senior managers.

Figure 12 On average how many additional hours do you work?



Note: N/A ‘Not applicable’ represents individuals who do not regularly work more than their contracted hours

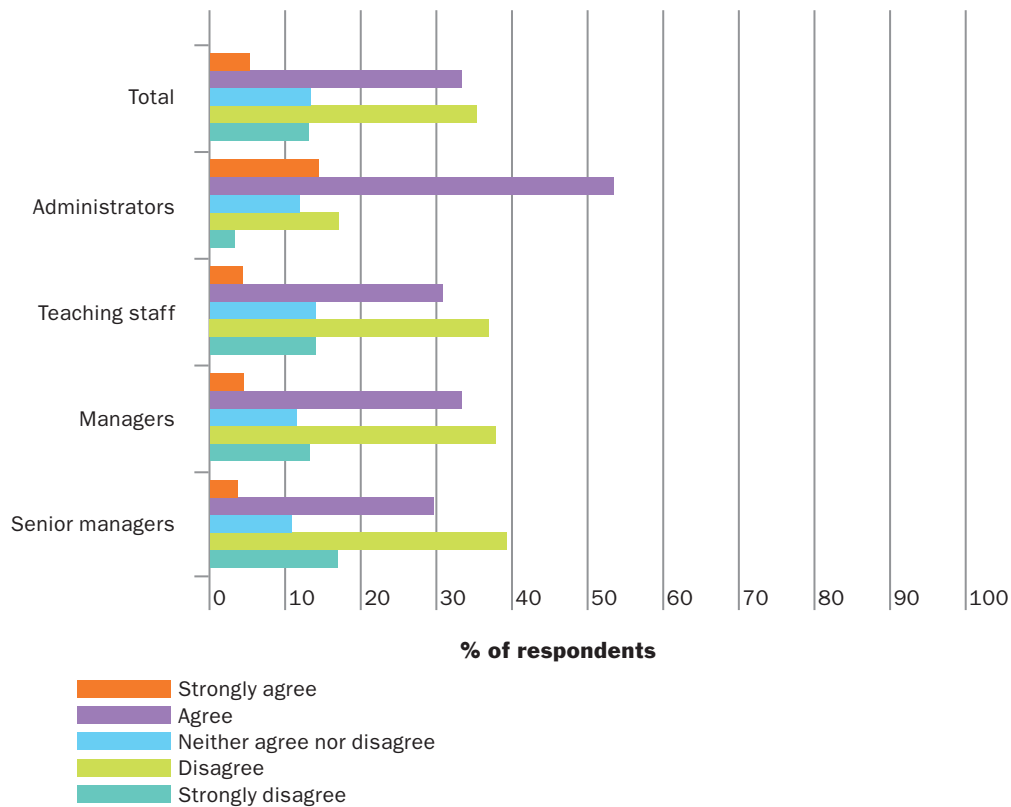
4.3.2 I feel that I am able to achieve a good balance between my work and private life

With the survey showing a large proportion of staff working over their contracted hours, what impact might that have on work–life balance? When asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘I feel that I am able to achieve a good balance between my work and private life’, 48.3% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. By comparison, 38.5% either agreed or strongly agreed. This represents a marked contrast with benchmark data for employees in the UK as a whole, where the average level of agreement/strong agreement with this question is 66%.¹⁰ The full results are set out in Figure 13.

The over-arching figure conceals a substantial difference in the responses between men and women. Female respondents were more likely to disagree/strongly disagree than their male colleagues by a margin of 50.7% to 38%.

There were clear differences in responses across the different job roles. Administrator/support staff respondents were the most likely to feel they had achieved a work–life balance, with 67.8% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Other roles were less supportive of the statement, with half of all lecturers and managers indicating that they did not have a good work–life balance.

Figure 13 I feel that I am able to achieve a good balance between my work and private life



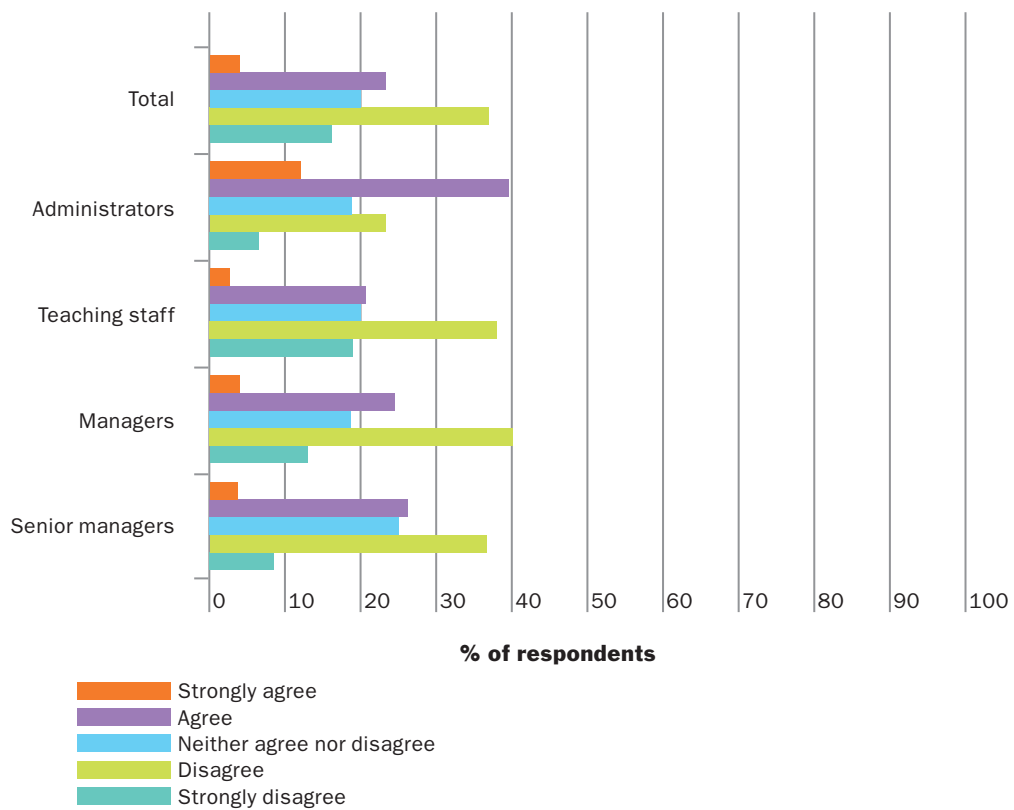
¹⁰ Source: People Insight Ltd staff survey national benchmark dataset

4.3.3 Flexible working

Exploring the work–life balance issue further, the survey asked the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘My organisation offers the sort of flexible working arrangements that enable me to balance my work and private life’. Just over half of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Women were more likely to disagree/strongly disagree than men – 52.8% as opposed to 40.7%. Teachers/lecturers were the group least likely to feel that they benefited from flexible working, with less than a quarter of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. The full results are set out in Figure 14.

People working part-time were more likely to see the benefits of flexible working than full-time staff. 40.5% of part-time staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement as opposed to 24.7% of full-time staff.

Figure 14 Flexible working

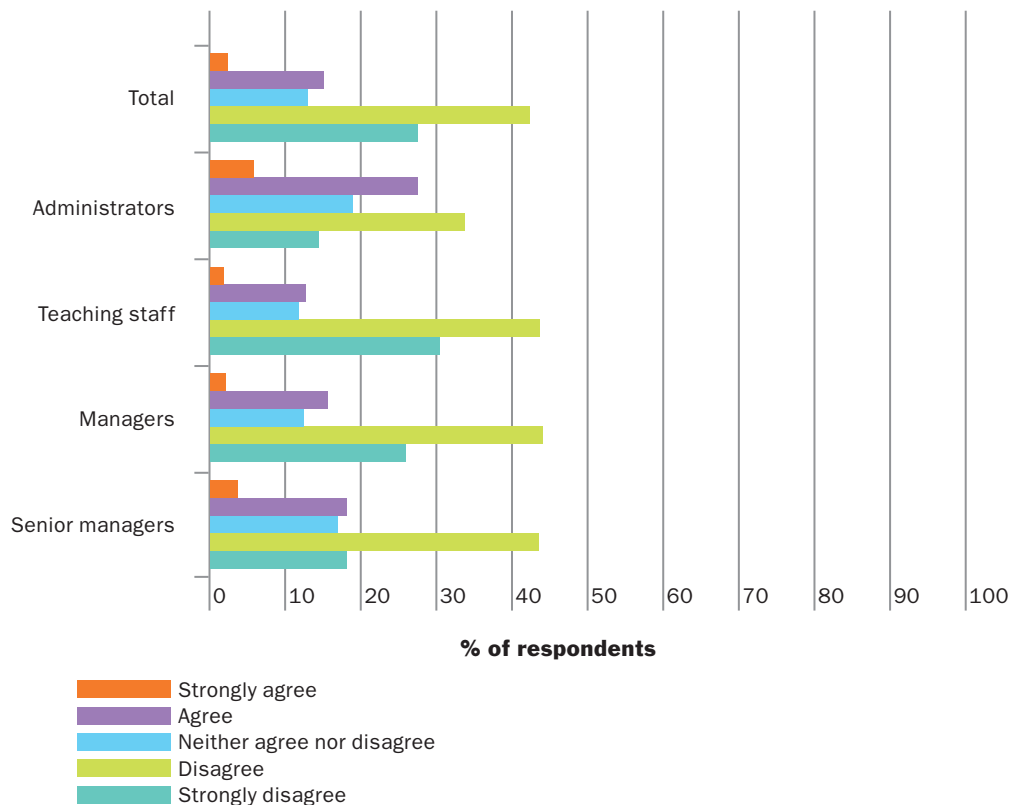


4.3.3 I rarely feel too much stress in my job

The survey explored levels of job stress by asking the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I rarely feel too much stress in my job'. Many staff indicated that they do feel stress, with seven out of ten respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement. The full results are set out in Figure 15.

Administrators/support staff were the least likely to report stress, with one-third agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. Significant proportions of the other groups indicated that they felt too much stress – nearly three-quarters of teachers/lecturers, seven out of ten managers and six out of ten senior managers either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 15 I rarely feel too much stress in my job



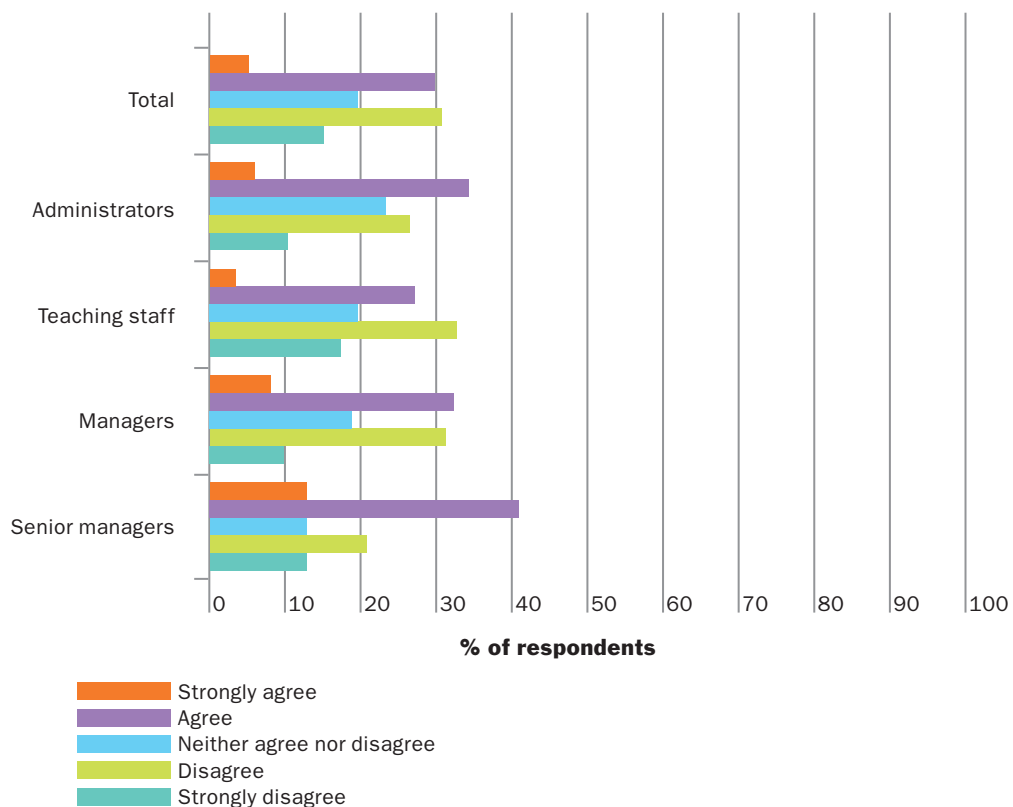
4.3.4 I feel that I have job security

To identify perceptions of how secure sector staff felt their jobs to be, the survey asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement ‘I feel that I have job security’. 45.7% of respondents did not feel that they had job security, either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement. 34.8% of staff agreed/strongly agreed that they had job security. This represents a marked contrast with benchmark data for employees in the UK as a whole, who are much more upbeat about job security – the average level of agreement/strong agreement with this question is 57%.¹¹ The full results are set out in Figure 16.

There was a marked divide between men and women in their views on job security. A clear majority of men (55.3%) agreed/strongly agreed that they had job security – this contrasts with the 36% of women who agreed/strongly agreed – a 19.3 percentage point difference. Part-time staff were also less likely to feel that they had job security, with 53% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing, compared with 42% of full-time staff. The group with the least sense of job security were temporary/contract staff, where only one in ten agreed/strongly agreed with the statement.

There were clear differences in opinion depending on job role. Teachers/lecturers felt the least secure, with half of those surveyed disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. Managers were evenly divided on the issue, with four out of ten managers on each side. Senior managers were the only group where an overall majority agreed or strongly agreed with the statement at 53.7%.

Figure 16 I feel that I have job security



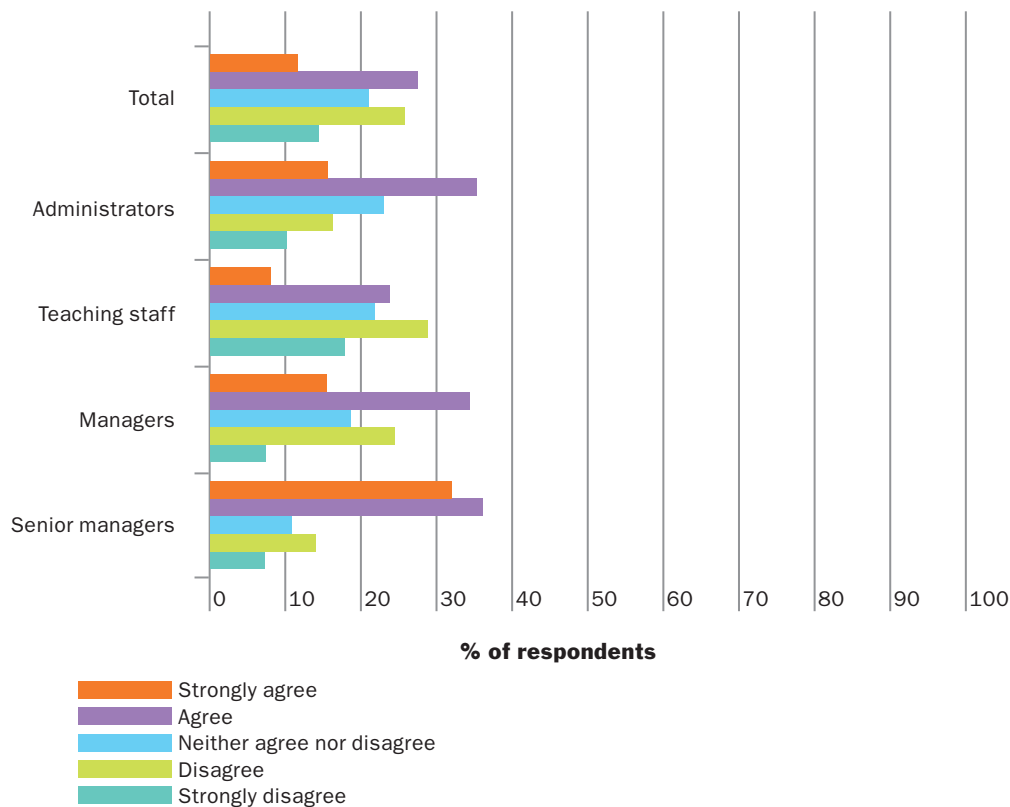
11 Source: People Insight Ltd staff survey national benchmark dataset

4.3.5 My organisation will not tolerate managers or colleagues who bully other members of staff

The survey sought to explore the issue of bullying by exploring how people think their employers would respond to the issue. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'My organisation will not tolerate managers or colleagues who bully other members of staff'. The respondents were evenly split with 40% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing and 39.1% agreeing/strongly agreeing. The full results are set out in Figure 17.

When responses are broken down by job role, differences of opinion become clear. A substantial minority of teachers/lecturers believe that their organisation will tolerate managers or colleagues who bully other members of staff, with 46.6% of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement. This compares with just under one-third who do agree/strongly agree. Managers and administrators are more likely to agree on this issue, with half of respondents in each job category agreeing/strongly agreeing. Just under 70% of senior managers, on whom such responsibility would arguably fall, agree/strongly agree.

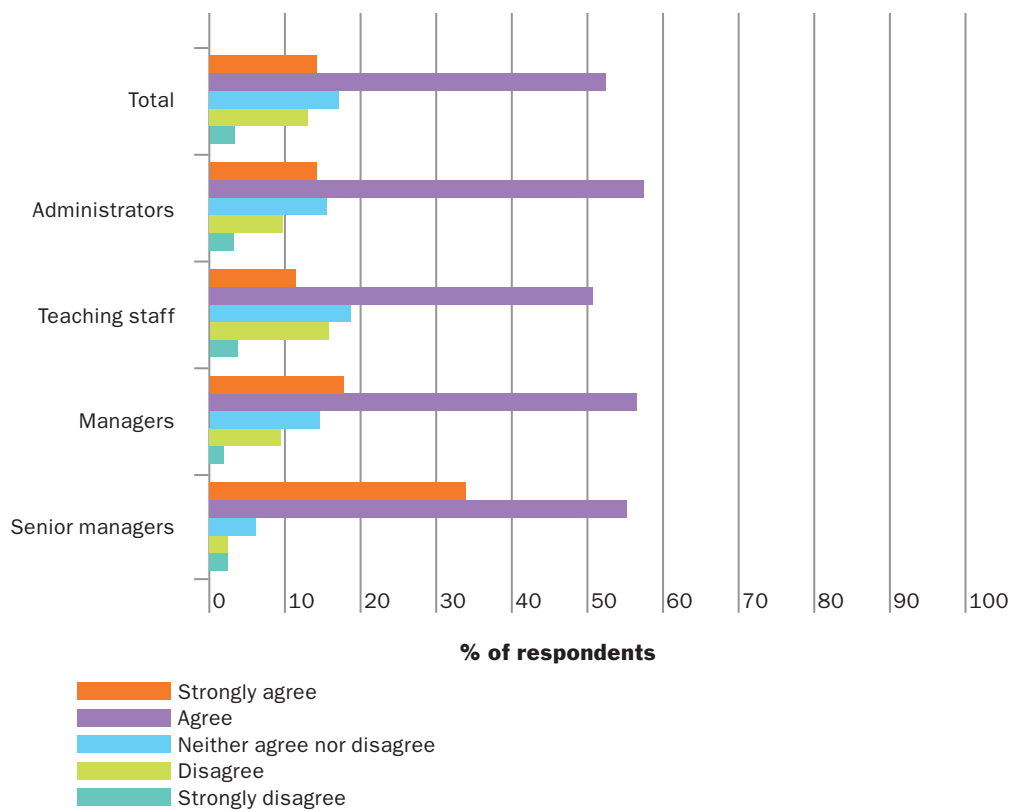
Figure 17 My organisation will not tolerate managers or colleagues who bully other members of staff



4.3.6 I feel physically safe at work

The next series of questions aimed to explore the difficult topics of personal safety and whether staff think they are likely to face forms of abuse in the workplace. The survey first asked respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I feel physically safe at work'. The full results are set out in Figure 18. Over two-thirds of staff either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement but 16.3% of staff indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed. When broken down by job role, the results show that one in five teachers/lecturers does not feel physically safe at work. Approximately one in ten administrators and managers also disagree/strongly disagree with the statement

Figure 18 I feel physically safe at work

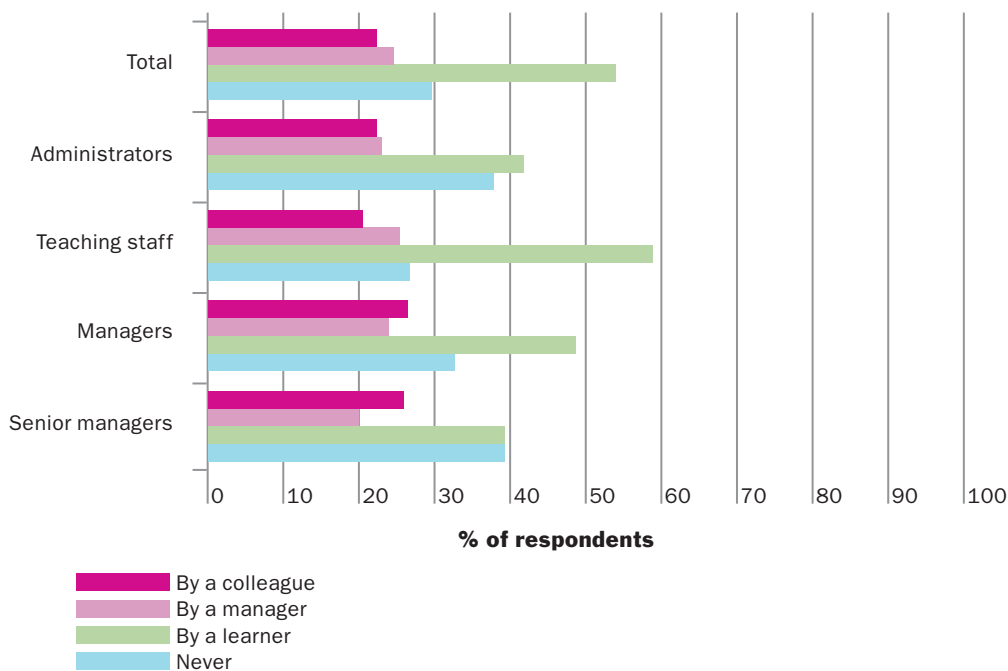


4.3.7 Have you ever been verbally abused?

The survey continued by asking staff ‘Have you ever been verbally abused?’ and if so, by whom? 53.9% of respondents reported that they had been verbally abused by learners, and a quarter by a manager. Only three out of ten had never received verbal abuse. The full results are set out in Figure 19.

When broken down by job role, nearly six out of ten teachers/lecturers said that they had been verbally abused by a learner. Nearly half of the managers surveyed also reported verbal abuse from a learner. All groups report a broadly similar experience of verbal abuse from managers and colleagues.

Figure 19 Have you ever been verbally abused?



4.3.8 Have you ever felt physically threatened?

In response to the question ‘Have you ever felt physically threatened?’ 37.4% of staff responded that they have felt physically threatened by a learner. Nearly four in ten teachers/lecturers reported that they had felt physically threatened by a learner, with managers reporting similar levels at 37%. The full results are set out in Figure 20.

Very few staff suggested that they had felt physically threatened by colleagues or managers. However, nearly one in 20 managers reported that they had felt physically threatened by a colleague.

Figure 20 Have you ever felt physically threatened?

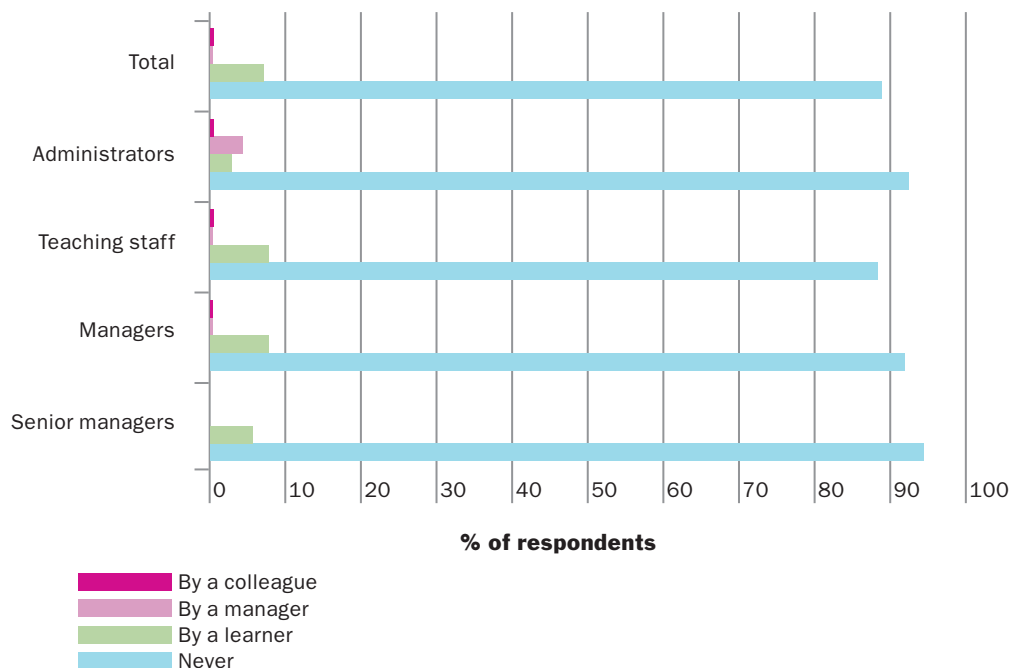


4.3.9 Have you ever been physically abused?

In response to the question ‘Have you ever been physically abused?’ the overwhelming majority of staff responded ‘never’ (88.8%). However, it is worth noting that 7.1% of staff (and slightly more for both lecturers and managers) reported that they had been the victims of physical abuse from learners.

Fortunately, the volume of those who had been the victim of physical abuse from a colleague or a manager was vanishingly small, with responses in most categories at a fraction of one per cent. The only exception is administrator/support staff, with 4.3% reporting having experienced physical abuse from managers. The full results are set out in Figure 21.

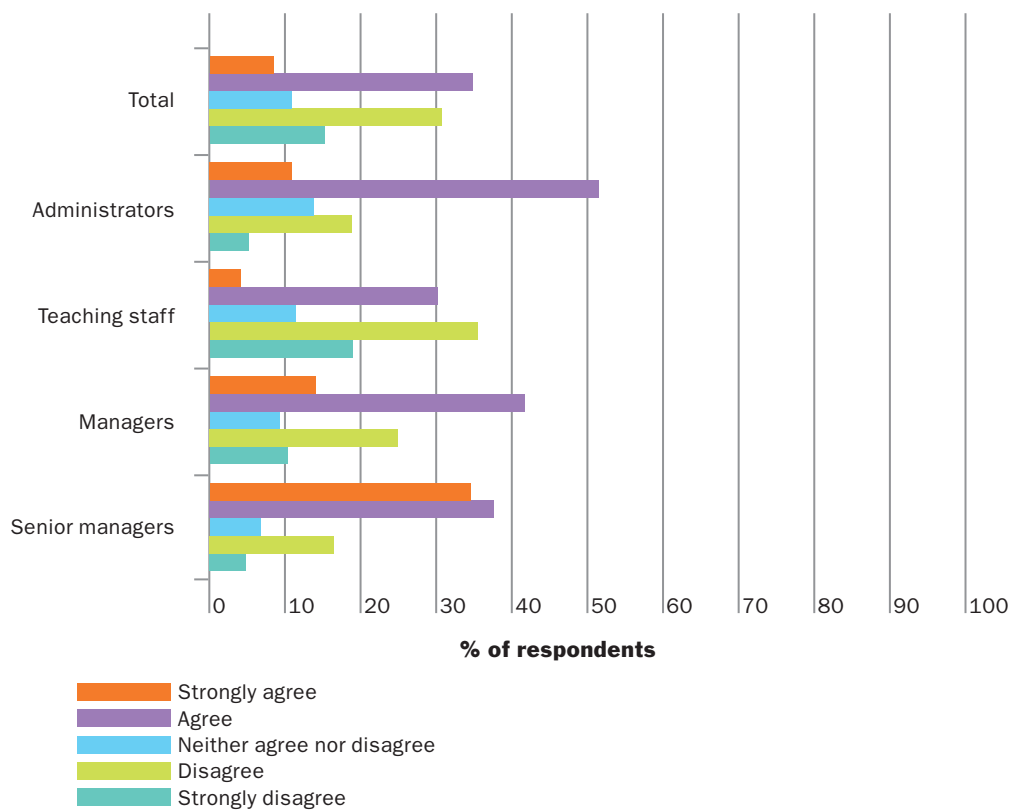
Figure 21 Have you ever been physically abused?



4.3.10 My workspace is adequate to meet the demands of my job

The survey then sought to explore staff's views of their physical working conditions, such as their workspaces and the availability of equipment. First, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'My workspace is adequate to meet the demands of my job'. Overall, staff views were split more or less evenly on the issue, with 43.2% of staff agreeing/strongly agreeing and 45.9% disagreeing/strongly disagreeing with the statement. The full results are set out in Figure 22.

Slight differences are noted across the different contract types. Part-time staff were less likely to agree than full-time staff: 38% of part-time staff agreed/strongly agreed as opposed to 46% of full-time staff. When the issue was explored by job role, a clearer division of opinion becomes apparent. The majority of administrators/support staff, managers and senior managers agree/strongly agree with the statement (62.3%, 55.6% and 72.1% respectively). The majority (54.3%) of teachers/lecturers disagree or strongly disagree, with a little over a third indicating satisfaction with their working space.

Figure 22 My workspace is adequate to meet the demands of my job

4.3.11 I have the equipment I need to do my job

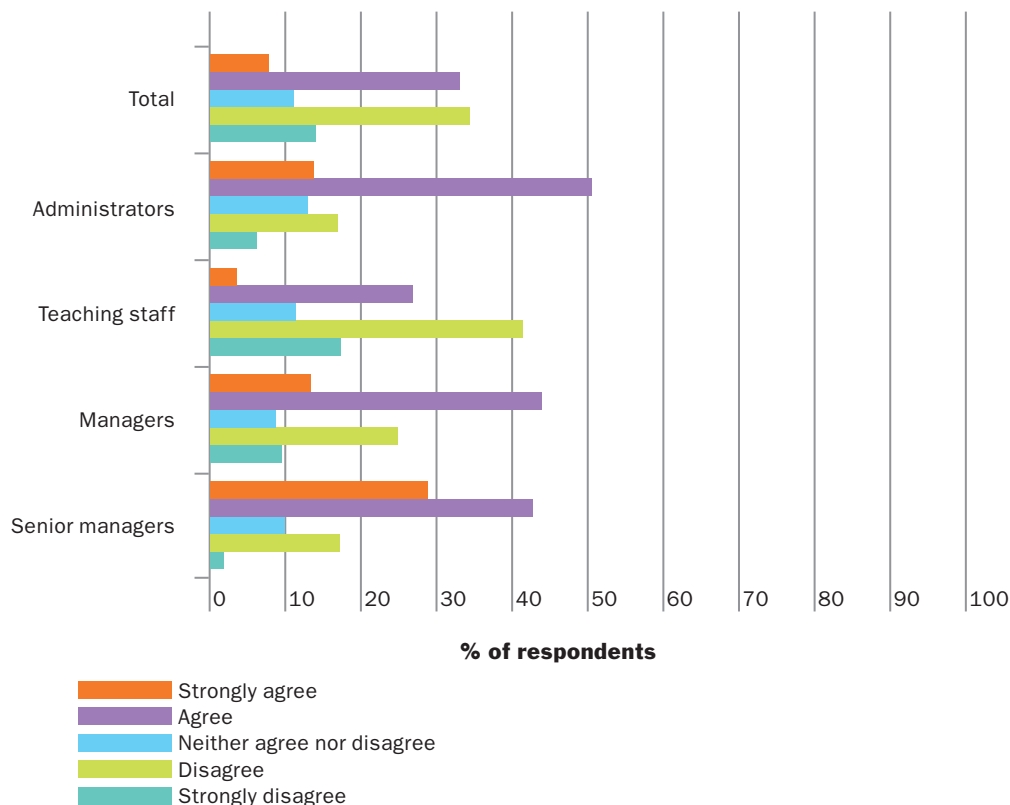
The survey followed by asking the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I have the equipment I need to do my job'. The levels of agreement/ disagreement mirror the pattern for workspace shown above, demonstrating a similar pattern of responses. The majority of administrators/support staff, managers and senior managers agree/strongly agree with the statement (64.1%, 57.1% and 71.4% respectively). The majority (58.5%) of teachers/lecturers on the other hand disagree or strongly disagree, with a little over a third indicating satisfaction with level of equipment provided. The full results are set out in Figure 23.

Part-time staff were less likely to agree than full-time staff, with 34% agreeing/strongly agreeing as opposed to 44% of full-time staff. The responses to both this and the previous question match findings in previous research into part-time staff in the sector which identified uneven access to workspaces and materials.¹²

¹² Hillier Y, Jameson J (2004). *A rich contract? Or, the ragged-trousered philanthropy of part-time staff*. Regional research report of the Learning and Skills Research Network, London and South East. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

To explore the issue of equipment needs further, a follow-up question was asked of those who had disagreed or strongly disagreed with the previous statement: 'Do you ever have to buy extra equipment out of your own money?' Of those who had indicated they felt equipment was inadequate, three-quarters had spent their own money on equipment. Approximately one in 10 indicated that they 'always' have to buy extra equipment out of their own money.

Figure 23 I have the equipment I need to do my job



4.3.12 Area summary

Based on the results for this section, working life and conditions represent the most challenging aspects of staff satisfaction among survey respondents. From levels of stress to lack of equipment; from fear of physical or verbal abuse to lack of job security; many staff, particularly but not exclusively teachers/lecturers, responded negatively to the statements presented in the survey. There are clearly a number of areas of concern highlighted in this area of the survey. In addition, these negative responses may in part explain the difference in respondents' views about the sector in general and their views about their organisations in practice identified in section 4.1 above.

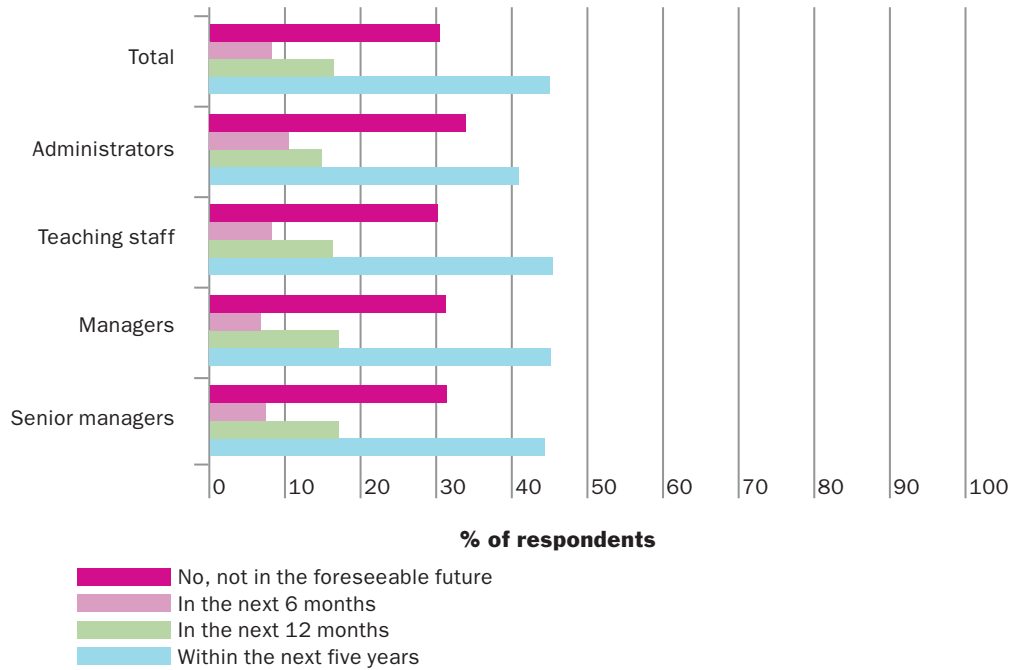
4.4 Employee retention

The final area of the survey explored issues of staff retention – the future plans of staff, what had motivated them to join the sector and the main reasons they currently stay.

4.4.1 I am very likely to leave my organisation

In response to the question ‘I am very likely to leave my organisation’, one in three staff responded ‘No, not in the foreseeable future’. Almost one in four staff indicated a desire to leave their organisation within the next 12 months, with close to 70% indicating that they hope to have left within five years. Should the desire to leave measured in this survey translate into actual staff turnover, this would represent a material staff continuity challenge for colleges. Different groups of staff responded in a broadly similar pattern. The full results are set out in Figure 24.

Figure 24 I am very likely to leave my organisation

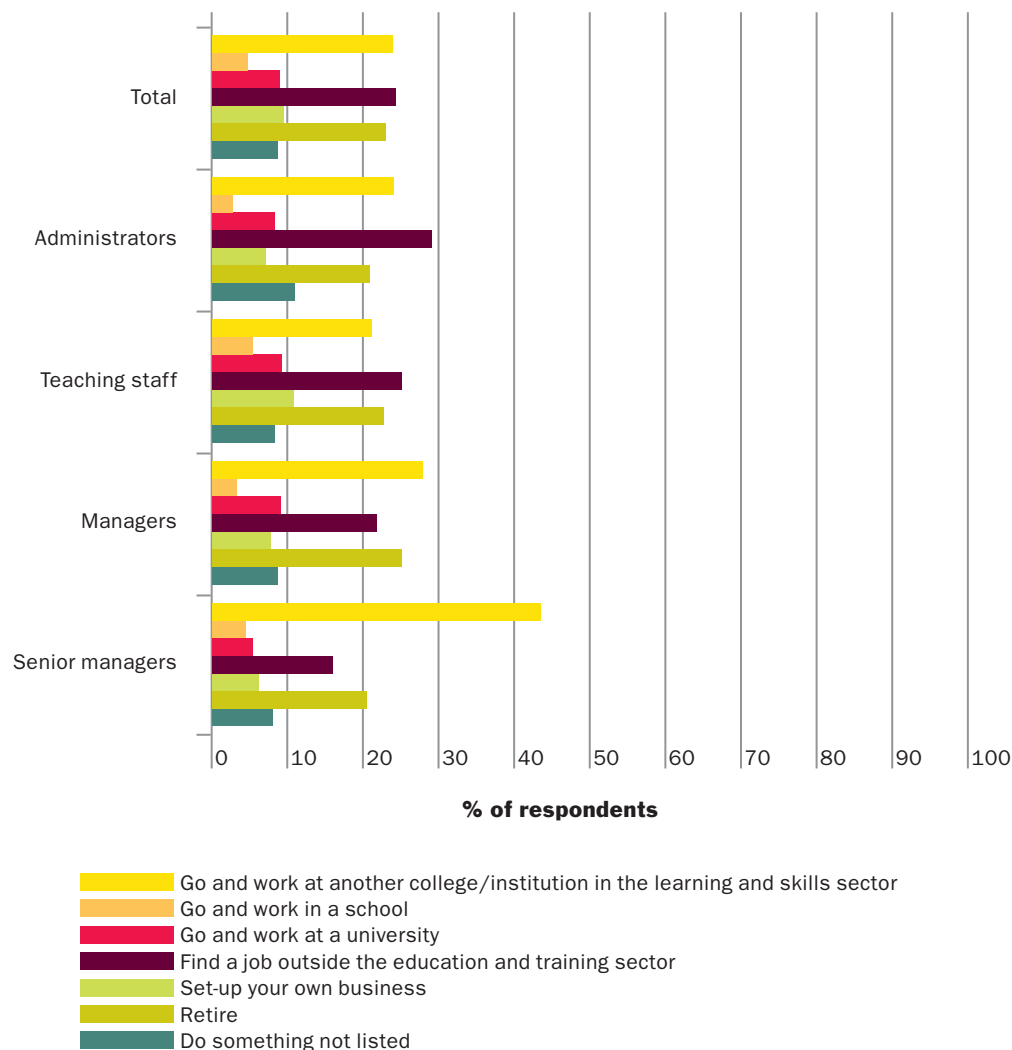


4.4.2 The destinations of those likely to leave

Those who indicated that they were likely to leave, were asked a follow-up question to explore their likely destination. 23.9% of staff indicated that they would go and work at another college/institution in the learning and skills sector. Slightly more, 24.3%, indicated that they would seek to find a job outside the sector, while 22.9% indicated that they would retire. Although the survey suggests that a high proportion of people are considering retirement, it is worth noting that a relatively high proportion of respondents were aged over 45. Indeed, 59% of people who responded to this survey were aged 45–59, compared to an average of 40% in the sector overall.¹³ The full results are presented in Figure 25.

Teachers/lecturers were the group least likely to seek employment in another college/ institution in the learning and skills sector, with 21.1% indicating this as a destination, but it was the most cited destination for both managers (27.9%) and senior managers (43.4%).

Figure 25 The destinations of those likely to leave

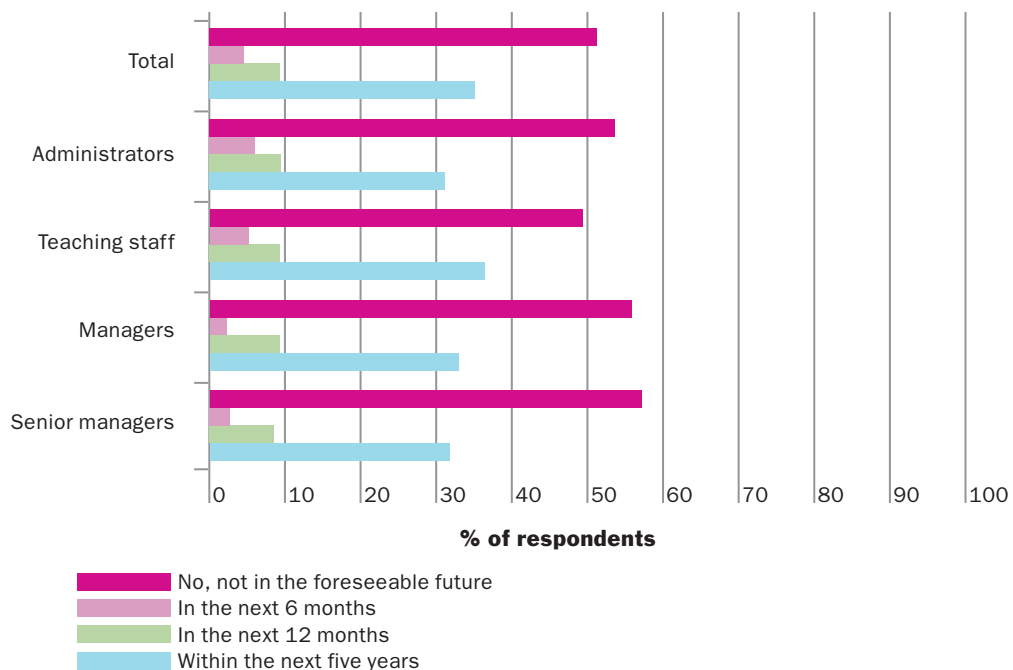


¹³ Source: LSC's SIR Further Education colleges in England, 2005-2006 (includes Specialist Designated Institutions)

4.4.3 I am very likely to leave the learning and skills sector

To explore whether staff intended to leave the sector altogether, as opposed to their organisation in particular, the survey asked for responses to the statement: 'I am very likely to leave the learning and skills sector'. The full results are presented in Figure 26. A slim majority (51.6%) of staff responded that they had no plans to leave the sector in the foreseeable future. However, 13.7% of staff suggested that they would leave the sector this year, a figure rising to 48.8% over five years. Teachers/lecturers were the most likely to indicate a desire to leave the sector, with a small majority (50.7%) indicating that they were likely to leave within five years. Senior managers were the least likely to indicate that they wished to leave the sector.

Figure 26 I am very likely to leave the learning and skills sector



4.4.4 What attracted you to a career in the learning and skills sector?

The survey aimed to explore staff motivations for entering the sector, asking 'What attracted you to a career in the learning and skills sector?' Respondents could select as many answers as they wished from a variety of options, or use free text responses to add their own. The most common answers selected by respondents indicated that their reasons for joining the sector were those that could be described as altruistic:

- to help learners achieve their goals (60.8%)
- to use my skills to make a contribution to society (60.9%)
- to pass on the skills I had developed in my own trade or profession (44.9%).

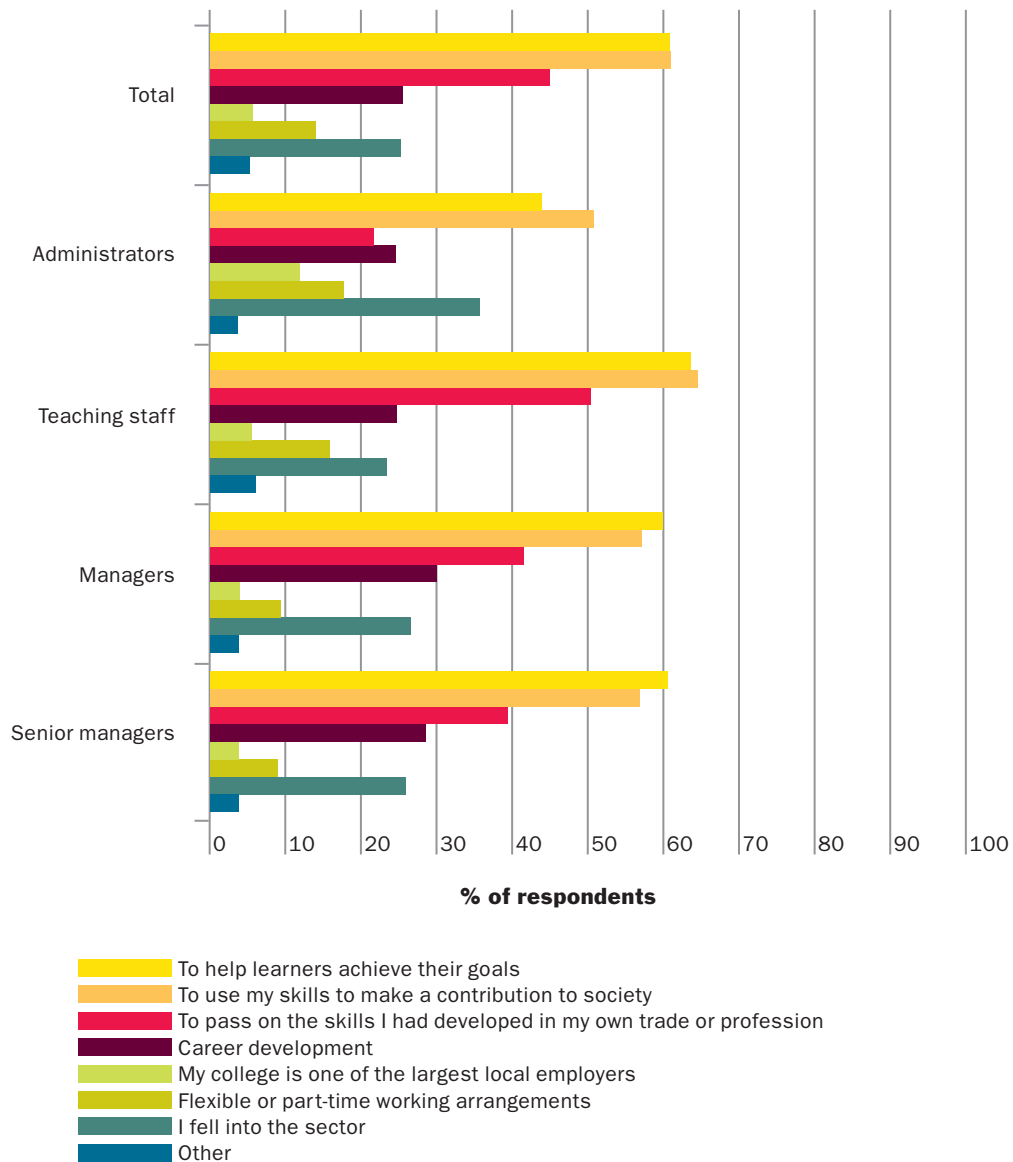
More transactional motivations were less common but included:

- career development (25.4%)
- my college is one of the largest local employers (5.6%)
- flexible or part-time working arrangements (13.9%).

The full results are set out in Figure 27.

Responses around flexible working did differ in relation to gender. Only 6.5% of male respondents indicated that this was a factor that attracted them to the learning and skills sector compared with 18.9% of women. All groups indicated a level of chance in joining the sector, with a quarter of all staff including the response that they ‘fell into the sector’.

Figure 27 What attracted you to a career in the learning and skills sector?



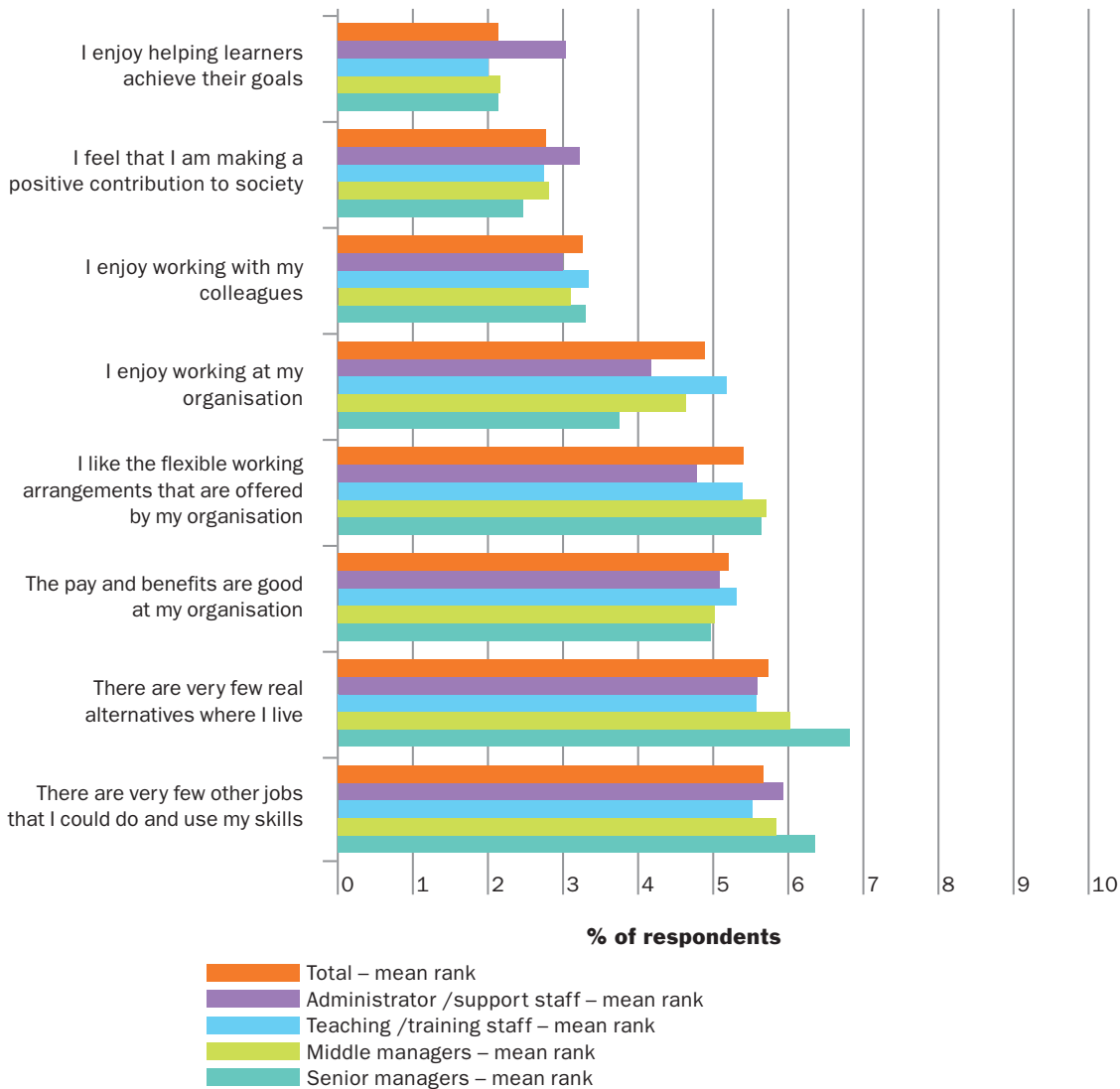
4.4.5 What has motivated you to remain in the learning and skills sector?

The final survey question asked staff: 'What has motivated you to remain in the learning and skills sector?' providing eight possible options for respondents to prioritise. A ranking of 1 would represent the strongest motivation while a ranking of 8 would represent the least important motivation to remain. Mean scores for each question were then calculated to indicate the views of staff. Hence, the lower the value of the mean score (ie 2 or 3, etc), the higher the option was rated in terms of being a strong motivator for remaining in the sector. The full results are set out in Figure 28.

Again, what might be characterised as altruistic motivators were, by a clear margin, the highest ranked motivators to remain for most groups. Based on the mean rank scores for each option, the single most motivating factor was, 'I enjoy helping learners achieve their goals' with a mean ranking of 2.13. This is similar to the key factor of attraction to the sector identified in Section 4.4.4. The second most motivating factor was 'I feel that I am making a positive contribution to society' with a mean rank of 2.77. The third factor, with a mean rank of 3.26, was 'I enjoy working with my colleagues'. Working with colleagues was the most motivating reason for administrator/support staff.

There was then a substantial drop in mean ranking scores to the next most motivating factor 'I enjoy working at my organisation' with a mean score of 4.88. This drop was most substantial for teachers/lecturers, who gave this a lower mean score of 5.17. The remaining options all also scored low mean scores. The least motivating factors across all job role groups were for those options where motivations to remain in the sector were negative, ie 'There are very few other jobs that I could do and use my skills' and 'There are very few real alternatives where I live'. Evidently not all groups of staff remain in the sector because they feel they have no alternative.

Figure 28 What has motivated you to remain in the learning and skills sector?



4.4.6 Area summary

Results from this section indicate that a relatively high proportion of staff may leave their organisation over the next five years. A substantial proportion, although lower, are also considering leaving the sector as a whole. Staff are motivated to remain, not for pay, benefits or the desire to continue to work for their organisation, but for the reasons that attracted them in the first place – to help learners achieve their goals and to use their skills to make a contribution to society.

5 Conclusions

The previous section has presented the results of the survey, showing a picture of staff satisfaction that can best be described as mixed. This section aims to present the conclusions suggested by the responses.

An altruistic workforce that is deeply proud of what it does:

Respondents of all groups demonstrated a high degree of enthusiasm for their sector, responding positively on overall job satisfaction, a pride in their sector and a belief that they made a valuable contribution to society. Motivations for joining and staying in the sector are highly altruistic, with a strong focus on helping learners achieve their goals.

A workforce whose enthusiasm does not extend to its institutions:

Warm feelings towards the sector and its ideals do not readily translate into feelings towards respondents' individual employers. Many respondents of all groups, but in particular teachers/lecturers, do not feel valued by their employers and would not recommend working there to others.

Who work hard under immensely challenging conditions: In almost every dimension of working conditions, but in particular issues of pay, bullying, personal safety, levels of abuse, job stress and working hours, the survey has highlighted major areas of concern for all groups.

Where teachers/lecturers are the most dissatisfied: Throughout the survey, the teacher/lecturer group is the most likely to disagree with a positive statement about their working life. It is a source of concern that the professionals who spend the most time delivering the core business of further education – teaching and learning – are the most dissatisfied.

But where all staff are also under strain: It is not just teachers/lecturers who report high levels of dissatisfaction. All groups in the survey, including manager groups, frequently indicated high levels of dissatisfaction, arguably pointing to systemic strain.

It can be argued that, beyond a simple survey, a deeper understanding of the issues highlighted is needed. These findings need careful consideration in the interests of both staff who work in the learning and skills sector and the learners whom they serve.

Appendix 1 The survey questionnaire

Introduction

The University and College Union (UCU) has commissioned the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) to conduct a major staff satisfaction survey across the FE workforce. We are looking to explore key issues about your working life:

- how satisfied you are in your job
- what you feel about your pay and benefits
- how comfortable you are with your working life and conditions
- your motivation to work in the sector and your future plans.

The results of the survey will help UCU better understand the concerns and aspirations of the FE workforce, supporting the development of policy. It will also be written up by LSN as a research report and distributed widely across the sector.

We hope that you can find the time to complete the survey, which should only take you about 10 minutes. In addition, please feel free to forward the survey to colleagues and co-workers to ensure that they also have their say.

Thank you

Job satisfaction

- Q1. I enjoy my job
- Q2. I feel valued by my employer
- Q3. I feel proud to work for my organisation
- Q4. I would recommend the organisation as a good place to work
- Q5. I feel proud to work in the learning and skills sector
- Q6. I would recommend working in the sector to others
- Q7. My job enables me to make a valuable contribution to society

Options:

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Pay and benefits

Q8. I am adequately rewarded for my work

Q9. I am satisfied with the amount of holiday that I get annually

Q10. I am able to take my full holiday allocation each year

Q11. I am happy with the pension scheme that is provided by my organisation

Options:

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Q12. If I worked outside the learning and skills sector I believe I would earn
(select the one that applies)

Options:

Substantially more

More

About the same

Less

Substantially less

Working life and conditions

Q13. If you often work more than the number of hours required in your contract,
on average how many additional hours do you work? (select the one
that applies)

Options:

1–5 hours a week

6–10 hours a week

11–15 hours a week

More than 15 hours a week

N/A

Q14. I feel that I am able to achieve a good balance between my work and
private life

Q15. My organisation offers the sort of flexible working arrangements that enable me to balance my work and private life

Q16. I rarely feel too much stress in my job

Q17. I feel physically safe at work

Q18. I feel that I have job security

Q19. My organisation will not tolerate managers or colleagues who bully other members of staff

Options:

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Q20. Have you ever... (select all that apply)

- Been verbally abused
- Been physically abused
- Felt physically threatened
- Experienced any other violent threats/abuse

Options:

By a colleague

By a manager

By a learner

Never

Q21. My workspace is adequate to meet the demands of my job

Q22. I have the equipment I need to do my job

Options:

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Q22a. If you Disagree or Strongly disagree with the previous statement, do you ever have to buy extra equipment out of your own money?

Options:

Always

Sometimes

Never

Employee retention

Q23. I am very likely to leave my organisation (select one only)

Options:

No, not in the foreseeable future

In the next 6 months

In the next 12 months

Within the next 5 years

Q23a. If you have indicated in the previous question that you are likely to leave your organisation, are you likely to (select one only)

Options:

Go and work at another college/institution in the learning and skills sector

Go and work in a school

Go and work at a university

Find a job outside the education and training sector

Set up your own business

Retire

Do something not listed (please use the space to specify)

Q24. I am very likely to leave the learning and skills sector (select one only)

Options:

No, not in the foreseeable future

In the next 6 months

In the next 12 months

Within the next 5 years

Q25. What attracted you to a career in the learning and skills sector (select all that apply)

Options:

A desire to help learners achieve their goals

A desire to use my skills to make a contribution to society

A desire to pass on the skills I had developed in my own trade or profession

Career development

My college/institution is one of the largest local employers, so working for it was an obvious choice

Flexible or part-time working arrangements

I fell into the sector

Other (please use the space to specify)

Q26. What has motivated you to remain in the learning and skills sector? Please rank the following options from 1 to 8 (with 1 representing the most motivating factor and 8 representing the least motivating factor)

Options:

I enjoy helping learners achieve their goals

I feel that I am making a positive contribution to society

I enjoy working with my colleagues

I enjoy working at my organisation

I like the flexible working arrangements that are offered by my organisation

The pay and benefits are good at my organisation

There are very few real alternatives where I live

There are very few other jobs that I could do and use my skills

Please specify any other factors which are not listed in the previous question that have motivated you to remain in the learning and skills sector

Personal details

Sex

- Male
- Female

Age

- Under 30
- 31–44 years
- 45–59 years
- 60+ years

Ethnicity

- White
- Black or Black British
- Asian or Asian British
- Chinese
- Other

Role (ie lecturer, lecturer's assistant, etc)

Position type

- Permanent – full-time
- Permanent – part-time
- Temporary/contract (full-time or part-time)

What is the main sector you are currently working in? (select one only)

- further education (FE)
- work-based learning (WBL)
- adult and community learning (ACL)
- Other

In what country are you mainly working in? (select one only)

- England
- Wales
- Scotland
- Northern Ireland

Thank you

Many thanks for taking the time to complete the questionnaire

Appendix 2 Sample breakdown

	Sample		Sector average
	Count	%	%
Gender			
Female	1853	60%	63%
Male	1220	40%	37%
Ethnicity			
White	2847	93%	83%
Black or Black British	72	2%	3%
Asian or Asian British	71	2%	3%
Chinese	*	*	0%
Other	62	2%	2%
Age			
Under 30	183	6%	17%
31–44 years	897	29%	37%
45–59 years	1798	59%	40%
60+ years	174	6%	6%

*Note:

1. Categories with fewer than five respondents are represented with an asterisk.
2. Sector averages are sourced from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Staff Individualised Record (Further Education colleges in England, 2005-2006 (includes Specialist Designated Institutions)(www.lsc.gov.uk/providers/Data/statistics/staff)

	Count	%
Job role		
Administrator/support staff	278	9%
Lecturer, teacher or trainer	1933	63%
Managers/senior managers/principals	734	24%
Unknown	139	4%
Job status		
Permanent – full-time	2313	76%
Permanent – part-time	554	18%
Temporary/contract (full-time or part-time)	193	6%

Appendix 3 Survey responses – summary

Job satisfaction

	Strongly agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I enjoy my job	843	27.4	1698	55.2	260	8.4	217	7.1	60	1.9
I feel valued by my employer	219	7.1	862	28.1	691	22.5	808	26.3	488	15.9
I feel proud to work for my organisation	330	10.8	1145	37.3	939	30.6	483	15.7	171	5.6
I would recommend the organisation as a good place to work	255	8.3	946	30.8	831	27.1	697	22.7	343	11.2
I feel proud to work in the learning and skills sector	694	22.7	1579	51.7	507	16.6	217	7.1	59	1.9
I would recommend working in the sector to others	388	12.7	1227	40.3	684	22.5	582	19.1	164	5.4
My job enables me to make a valuable contribution to society	1013	33.0	1618	52.7	296	9.6	114	3.7	30	1.0

Pay and benefits

	Strongly agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I am adequately rewarded for my work	112	3.7	746	24.3	490	16.0	1244	40.6	473	15.4
	1–5 hours a week		6–10 hours a week		11–15 hours a week		More than 15 hours a week		N/A	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
If you often work more than the number of hours required in your contract, on average how many additional hours do you work? (select the one that applies)	835	27.3	1047	34.2	567	18.5	385	12.6	227	7.4

	Strongly agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I am satisfied with the amount of holiday that I get annually	478	15.6	1519	49.4	317	10.3	574	18.7	185	6.0
I am able to take my full holiday allocation each year	596	19.5	1523	49.9	210	6.9	565	18.5	160	5.2
I am happy with the pension scheme that is provided by my organisation	453	14.9	1625	53.5	615	20.3	256	8.4	86	2.8

	Substantially more		More		About the same		Less		Substantially less	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
If I worked outside the learning and skills sector I believe I would earn (select the one that applies)	843	27.5	1263	41.2	682	22.3	250	8.2	25	0.8

Working life and conditions

	Strongly agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I feel that I am able to achieve a good balance between my work and private life	160	5.2	1025	33.3	408	13.3	1086	35.3	399	13.0
My organisation offers the sort of flexible working arrangements that enable me to balance my work and private life	120	3.9	712	23.2	611	19.9	1133	36.9	495	16.1
I rarely feel too much stress in my job	70	2.3	459	15.0	395	12.9	1295	42.3	840	27.5
I feel physically safe at work	435	14.2	1603	52.4	522	17.1	399	13.0	100	3.3
I feel that I have job security	153	5.1	896	29.7	588	19.5	927	30.7	452	15.0
My organisation will not tolerate managers or colleagues who bully other members of staff	357	11.6	844	27.5	640	20.9	789	25.7	438	14.3

Have you ever... <i>(select all that apply)</i>	By a colleague		By a manager		By a learner		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Been verbally abused	689	22.3	757	24.5	1662	53.9	913	29.6
Been physically abused	13	0.4	9	0.3	220	7.1	2738	88.8
Felt physically threatened	118	3.8	65	2.1	1152	37.4	1775	57.6
Experienced any other violent threats/abuse	114	3.7	144	4.7	617	20.0	2150	69.7

*Note:

This is a multiple response questions; therefore, respondents can select more than one option per row. Percentages reflect all survey respondents, eg 22.3% (n=689) of survey respondents had been verbally abused by a colleague.

	Strongly agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
My workspace is adequate to meet the demands of my job	255	8.4	1061	34.8	333	10.9	936	30.7	465	15.2
I have the equipment I need to do my job	236	7.8	1004	33.0	338	11.1	1043	34.3	423	13.9

If you *Disagree or Strongly disagree* with the previous statement, do you ever have to buy extra equipment out of your own money?

n	%	
205	9.2	Always
1,442	64.7	Sometimes
582	26.1	Never

Employee retention

I am very likely to leave my organisation (select one only)

n	%	
936	30.4%	No, not in the foreseeable future
254	8.3%	In the next 6 months
506	16.5%	In the next 12 months
1378	44.8%	Within the next 5 years

If you have indicated in the previous question that you are likely to leave your organisation, are you likely to (select one only)

n	%	
512	23.9%	Go and work at another college/institution in the learning and skills sector
101	4.7%	Go and work in a school
190	8.9%	Go and work at a university
520	24.3%	Find a job outside the education and training sector
201	9.4%	Set-up your own business
489	22.9%	Retire
184	8.6%	Do something not listed (please use the space to specify)

*Note: This question takes into account 2138 respondents who considered themselves likely to leave their organisations. Therefore percentages do not reflect the total number of respondents that participated in the survey.

I am very likely to leave the learning and skills sector (select one only)

n	%	
1537	51.2%	No, not in the foreseeable future
134	4.5%	In the next 6 months
277	9.2%	In the next 12 months
1052	35.1%	Within the next 5 years

What attracted you to a career in the learning and skills sector
(select all that apply)

n	%	
1,876	60.8	A desire to help learners achieve their goals
1,879	60.9	A desire to use my skills to make a contribution to society
1,386	44.9	A desire to pass on the skills I had developed in my own trade or profession
782	25.4	Career development
172	5.6	My college/institution is one of the largest local employers, so working for it was an obvious choice
430	13.9	Flexible or part-time working arrangements
777	25.2	I fell into the sector
159	5.2	Other (please use the space to specify)

* NOTE: This is a multiple response question so it is possible for respondents to select more than one option. Percentages reflect the proportion of survey respondents that selected each particular option. Eg '60.8% of survey respondents indicated that they were attracted to a career in the learning and skills sector because they had a *desire to help learners achieve their goals*'.

**What has motivated you to remain in the learning and skills sector?
Please rank the following options from 1 to 8**

(with 1 representing the most motivating factor and 8 representing the least motivating factor)

	1		2		3	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I enjoy helping learners achieve their goals	1719	57.1	551	18.3	260	8.6
I feel that I am making a positive contribution to society	729	24.2	1034	34.3	485	16.1
I enjoy working with my colleagues	439	14.6	566	18.9	948	31.6
I enjoy working at my organisation	160	5.4	192	6.5	293	10.0
I like the flexible working arrangements that are offered by my organisation	141	4.8	151	5.2	231	7.9
The pay and benefits are good at my organisation	108	3.7	176	6.0	305	10.4
There are very few real alternatives where I live	200	6.9	175	6.1	182	6.3
There are very few other jobs that I could do and use my skills	211	7.3	159	5.5	212	7.3

Mean ranking

I enjoy helping learners achieve their goals	2.13
I feel that I am making a positive contribution to society	2.77
I enjoy working with my colleagues	3.26
I enjoy working at my organisation	4.88
I like the flexible working arrangements that are offered by my organisation	5.40
The pay and benefits are good at my organisation	5.20
There are very few real alternatives where I live	5.73
There are very few other jobs that I could do and use my skills	5.66

4		5		6		7		8	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
151	5.0	89	3.0	62	2.1	52	1.7	129	4.3
291	9.6	175	5.8	136	4.5	90	3.0	78	2.6
451	15.0	261	8.7	178	5.9	82	2.7	76	2.5
653	22.2	529	18.0	465	15.8	298	10.1	349	11.9
358	12.3	489	16.7	607	20.8	412	14.1	531	18.2
398	13.6	550	18.8	616	21.1	367	12.5	405	13.8
250	8.7	323	11.2	279	9.7	625	21.7	851	29.5
312	10.8	278	9.6	313	10.8	542	18.8	860	29.8

FE colleges: the frontline under pressure?

a staff satisfaction survey of further education colleges in England

In October 2007, the University and College Union (UCU) commissioned the Learning and Skills Network (LSN) to conduct a major staff satisfaction survey across the FE workforce. The survey focused on key issues surrounding working life including:

- how satisfied they were in their jobs
- how they felt about pay and benefits
- how comfortable they were about their working life and conditions
- their motivation to work in the sector and future plans

This report outlines the key findings of the research – representing a collective voice of the FE workforce, voicing their thoughts, and the concerns and issues they face in the sector today.

