REPORT

UCU
University and College Union

Workload Survey 2021/22
Further Education

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Contents

Foreword

This important research helps further shine a light on the workload conditions and challenges faced by UCU members in FE and will continue to inform the unions strategic responses at both college and national levels.

Staff across post-16 education are experiencing increasing and excessive workloads, long working hours and intensification of work that is causing significant stress and ill-health. The changing nature of work, often unagreed and compounded by recruitment and retention issues, results in increasing administration, the widening of job roles, the introduction of new IT and online working and increased student care. Theres an increasing sense of a lack of control over events.

Workloads are one area of the union's work which has resonances across all staff groups and this latest survey report highlights members' lived experiences in a changing FE workplace. The vast majority of members have a sense of workloads increasing while resources either fail to keep pace or are in fact diminishing.

Many of the issues that currently face members in the workplace, pay, casualisation, managerialism and stress all connect with issues around workloads.

UCU alongside the other FE unions in England have demand action as part of our joint national claim to the Association of Colleges. We are seeking meaningful negotiations on effective national agreements which would include an agreed national policy on the delivery of guided learning hours, the resourcing of more administration and support staff, nationally agreed class size recommendations and wellbeing and workload protocols.

The union has also developed a range of resource and guidance materials for branches as part of the workload campaign. This research will add to the further development of the union's negotiating and campaigning objectives.

Paul Bridge
Head of Further Education

Background

This report draws on the findings of a larger survey of members conducted by the UCU in 2021/2022 to investigate issues surrounding workloads in further education, higher education, prison education and adult and community education. Overall, there were more than 13,000 respondents to the survey, but this report provides an overview of data provided by the 2,360 respondents who work in further education.

The report focuses on the following questions:

➡ To what extent have the size or intensity of workloads and working hours changed over the previous three years?

➡ How manageable are workloads?

➡ What are the main factors contributing to any changes in workloads and their intensity over the previous three years?

➡ What changes are likely to help reduce workloads?

The report initially provides descriptive statistics for the three questions that used a rating scale: the manageability of workload, the pace and intensity of work and working hours. It subsequently presents themes derived from analysis of the open-ended questions included in the survey: the reasons for any increase or decrease in workload and suggestions for reducing workloads. Representative quotes from respondents are included to illustrate key points.

Profile of sample

➡ 64% of respondents who answered this question identified as women, 35% as men and 1% as non-binary.

➡ 60% of respondents who provided their age range were at least 45 years old, 46% were 51 or over and 9% 61 or over.

➡ Nine respondents out of ten (90%) who disclosed their ethnicity identified as White, 4% as Asian, 3% as Black, 2% as Mixed and 1% as 'Other'.

➡ 13% of respondents who answered this question identified themselves as disabled.

➡ Respondents could select multiple contract types. 94% of respondents who provided information on their contract type were employed on a permanent basis, with 2% on an open-ended contract and 2% on a fixed term contract. Two percent were employed on a zero hours basis, 2% on an annual hours basis, 1% were hourly paid and 4% worked term-time only.

Perceptions of workload, working pace and working hours

MANAGEABILITY OF WORKLOAD

Very few respondents (2%) from further education reported finding their workload manageable all of the time, whereas 20% found it so most of the time and 37% about half of the time. More than three respondents out of ten, however, (32%) perceived that their workload was unmanageable most of the time, with 9% finding it entirely unmanageable.

How manageable is your workload?
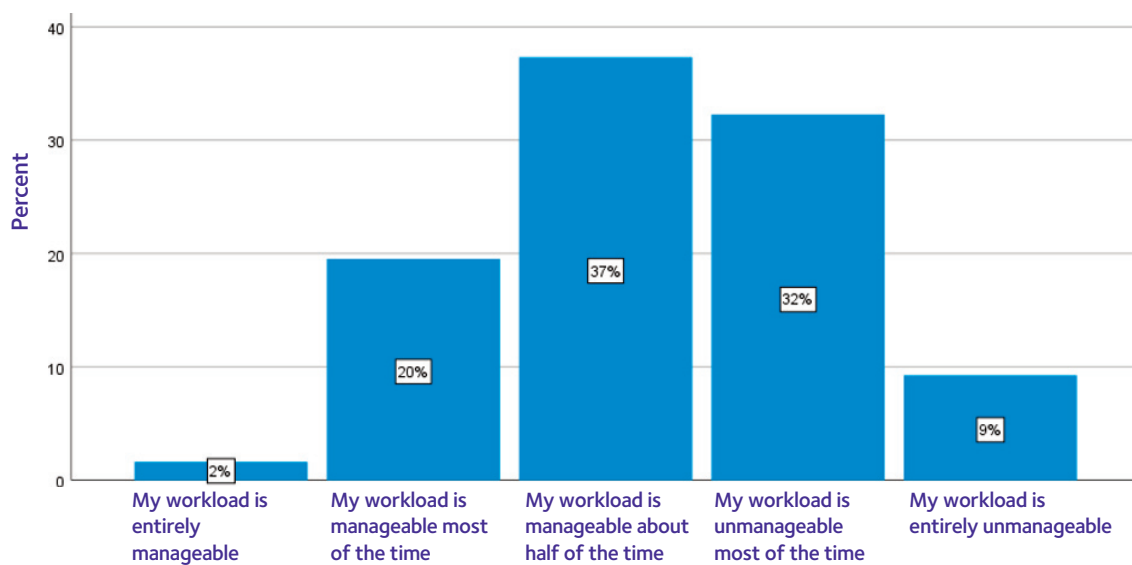
PACE AND INTENSITY OF WORK

More than three-quarters of the sample (77%) from further education indicated that the pace and intensity of their work had increased significantly over the previous three years, with 17% perceiving a slight increase. For 5% of the sample, their working pace had remained stable during this time, whereas for 1% it had decreased slightly.

Thinking about the pace or intensity you currently work at, do you think this has changed over the last three years?
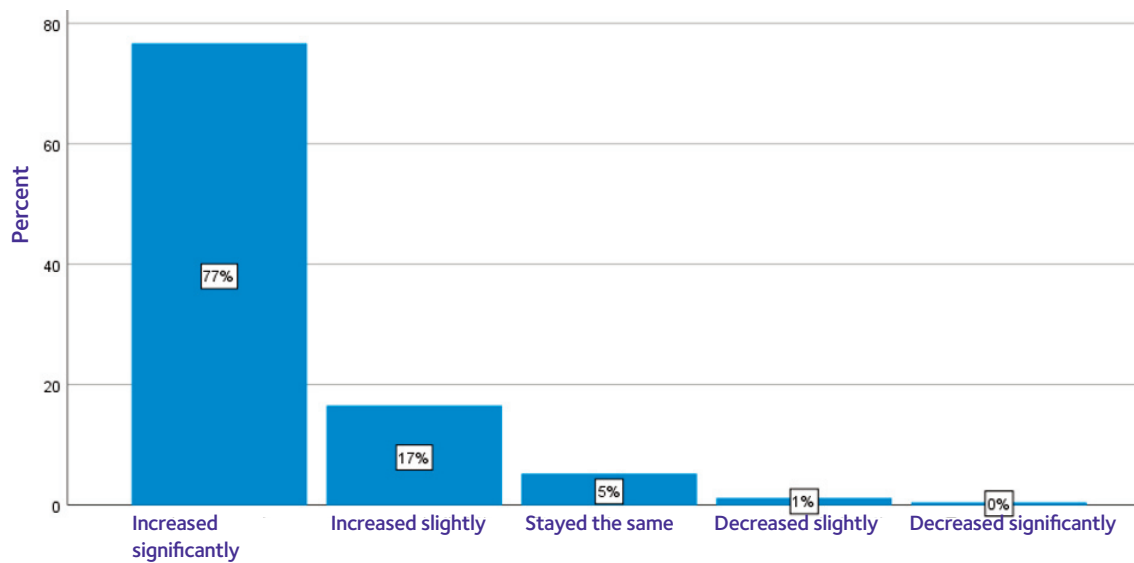
WORKING HOURS

Almost half of the sample (47%) from further education reported that the number of hours they worked had increased significantly over the previous three years, with a further 28% perceiving a slight increase. Nineteen percent of respondents from this sector indicated that their working hours had remained the same, whereas 4% reported a slight decrease and 1% a significant increase.

Overall, over the last three years, how have your working hours changed?
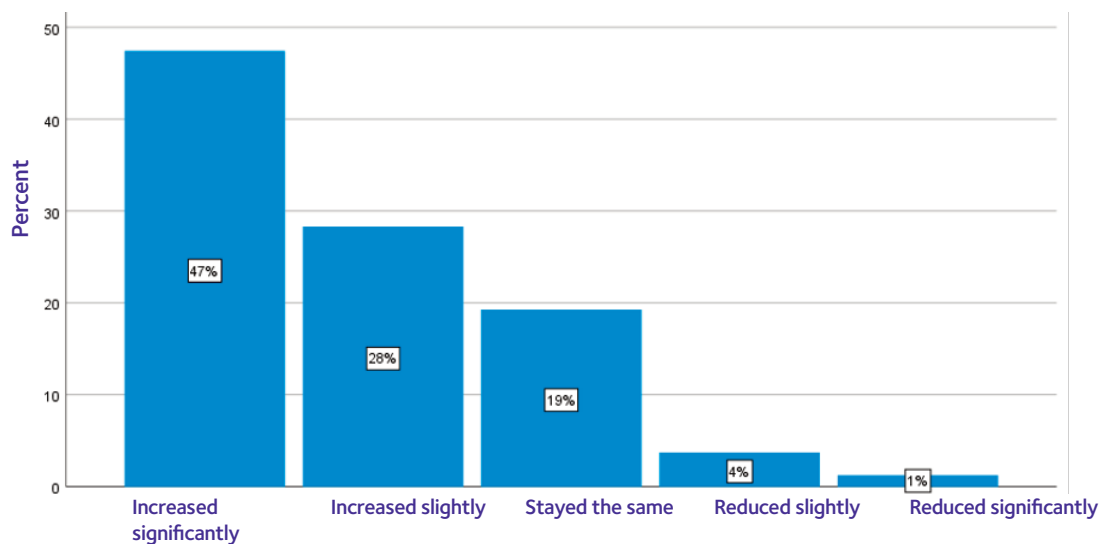
DEMOGRAPHIC AND JOB-RELATED DIFFERENCES

No significant gender differences were found in the level to which respondents from further education reported any changes to the manageability and pace of their work over the previous three years, or to their working hours. Moreover, no notable differences were found in disability status, age, or ethnicity. It should be noted, however, that a considerable majority of the sample was White.

Why has workload changed?

Thematic analyses were conducted on the responses to the open-ended question that asked about reasons for any changes in the amount and intensity of workload (either increasing or decreasing). The themes identified are outlined below with representative quotes provided where relevant.

INCREASED WORKLOAD

Reduced staffing

Many comments from respondents working in further education related to how reduced staffing levels had impacted on their workloads. Unsurprisingly, this was a particular challenge in areas where student numbers had risen and/or the number of subjects taught had increased, while the number of lecturing and support staff had either remained constant or reduced. Many respondents indicated that there had been redundancies in their place of work, while others commented on the *"alarmingly"* high turnover among staff. As one lecturer wrote, *"A lot of teachers have left due to the way they are treated, the enormous workload and the stress."* Another commented, *"I cannot see myself staying at this college – it seems this department is a revolving door over the last 5 years!"*

Respondents frequently identified expectations on the part of management that they would *"absorb"* the teaching, administration and support work of colleagues who had retired, resigned, or reduced their hours and provide cover for those who were off sick. This often required them to not only do their own work and provide cover for co-workers, but to also manage the increasing administrative burden discussed later in this section. As one lecturer remarked, *"There are fewer people left to do the growing amount of work – more systems, more paperwork and more bureaucracy."* As well as a lack of teachers, comments were frequently made about a shortage of administrative and support staff, for example, *"When I first started working here there were 5 full-time technicians for the department, over time this has been reduced to 0.5. The computer services team previously had 15 members of staff, there are currently 4."*

When writing about staff shortages, respondents commonly highlighted increasing expectations that they will be *"flexible and pick up additional work in other areas."* A lecturer expressed concern about their situation, *"Staff shortages have meant that I am now required to teach two subjects I have never taught before, with minimal support and resources. I am having to plan everything from scratch with no prior knowledge, while also teaching my other classes. Many of my colleagues are in similar situations."*

A number of lecturers wrote about how covering for staff sickness impacted on their workload, for example, *"We are all stretched to full hours so have no room for manoeuvre. If cover is required, staff often have to 'double up' and manage two lessons at once and pop back and forth between two classrooms."* Others described having to respond promptly to staffing shortages involving *"timetable changes"*, *"requirements to cover areas outside my expertise"*, *"thinking up new material to teach a new group"* and *"expectations that we can work evenings at short notice."* A lecturer wrote expressed some concern about a lack of long-term planning, *"There appears to be no 'permanent' solution to cover in place, and every morning (the morning the cover is expected), staff receive an email with cover details on."*

Frequently highlighted was the need to improve employee retention in further education by increasing staffing levels to reduce workloads and improving terms and conditions to ensure that new employees will stay. Nonetheless, some respondents identified that recruiting new staff members could be challenging, for example, *"The college is not recruiting quickly enough. We wait at least 3 months for replacements when someone leaves."* When new staff had been appointed, difficulties in finding the time to "train, support and mentor" them were identified when the workload was so intense. A manager shared their concerns for future staffing levels, *"As pay has dropped in real terms over the last 10 years and more experienced, older staff have retired, the 'pool' of experience has been severely and adversely affected. The chronic shortage of skilled staff and the poor pay and conditions make it difficult to recruit suitable staff – this is a problem that is likely to get worse".*

Doing more with less – increased roles and responsibilities

Many respondents from further education commented on expectations from their employer that they *"do more with less", whereby their existing roles and responsibilities had not only* increased but also diversified, requiring the investment of considerable time and effort. Staffing shortages (discussed above) and increased administration demands (covered in the next section) were widely cited as reasons for an increased workload and for *"role creep"*. Demands related to teaching and supporting students were generally thought to have increased with, for example, *"More meetings and essential training days. Extra open evenings and interview evenings. More taster days and 'stay in touch' days."* Others wrote about increased expectations that they will comply with "increasingly tight deadlines" for planning, assessment, monitoring and providing feedback to students. Some respondents reported that their contact hours had been reduced, giving them *"fewer hours to deliver the same qualification"* and requiring them to *"fit in much more content into less time"*. A lecturer commented on their situation and the implications for their students, *"I currently have 1.5 hours a week for a unit that I used to have 4 hours to deliver. Learners are struggling to keep up so it means I have to spend more time outside of teaching sessions to support them."* Another wrote about the need to provide many additional one-to-one support sessions *"to ensure that everyone succeeds."*

The requirement to take on teaching new subjects in response to staffing shortages was highlighted in the previous section, whereas others wrote that the range of groups they were teaching had been extended, *"I teach 5 different groups on five days a week who are at three different levels."* Others wrote about how expectations outside the curriculum have increased where *"An increased focus on enrichment means more planning and preparation."* Respondents generally recognised the need to be flexible and take on additional roles, but the impact on workload was identified. The need to attend meetings, keep up to date with technology and engage in training were widely recognised as intrinsic to teaching and support roles, but finding the time to do so within *"standard"* working hours was frequently considered challenging or even impossible.

As well as enhanced responsibilities within the teaching role, respondents from further education often wrote about how their role had diversified, for example, *"We are now expected to manage tasks that were previously completed by managers or axed support staff."* One lecturer identified a significant degree of role creep in their institution, *"More evidence is needed, there are higher goals to achieve. Pastoral care has increased. We need to market, recruit and promote our courses. I could write for days."* Other comments highlighted the range of additional tasks and responsibilities that are now part of the workload of

teaching staff, such as *"managing enrolment, admissions and withdrawals, managing behavioural problems, safeguarding referrals, ringing parents, chasing up absent students, helping students make UCAS applications and trying to assist them in finding jobs after college."* One lecturer commented on their experience, *"This year, teaching staff were also asked to take photos of students. These used to be an admin job but now everything falls on us."* A librarian wrote about being required to *"print out ID badges and issue luncheon vouchers to students on demand all through the day at any time."* A number of respondents reported that these additional responsibilities were *"frequently not included in workload allocations and could cause a great deal of stress."*

Respondents from further education frequently described the difficulties they experienced taking breaks during the working day. One reported that breaks had recently been *"halved"* in their institution and, even breaks that were timetabled were, *"non-existent in practice."* Many wrote about being forced to work during their breaks to accommodate their growing workload, for example, *"I now teach 24 hours a week and my breaks are included as my preparation time."* Another commented, *"I don't take breaks or even lunch breaks any more otherwise I wouldn't have the time to do all of the tasks I need to complete. I eat at the desk or in the classroom at times."* Using breaks to keep up to date with writing reports and assessments, conduct support interviews with students, hold student disciplinary meetings, phone parents and keep up with emails and admin appears to be common, as *"there wouldn't be any time to do them otherwise."*

One lecturer remarked that the short breaks scheduled between lessons meant they had very little time to move from one classroom to another, *"I no longer have lunch breaks (or any breaks at all) as timetabling has left me running from lesson to lesson as I have to set up each room beforehand and talk to individual students after each class. They all have a wide range of issues that affect their learning experience which I am expected to deal with as a course tutor."* Another described the difficulties they experienced with "*constant interruptions"* from students when trying to take a break, *"Our staffrooms are glass walled so we are visible and on breaks students are always knocking at the door wanting to speak to us."*

Measures introduced to manage COVID (such as moving all classes online, converting materials to an online format and supporting students remotely) were widely believed to have increased workload. One lecturer described an experience that was highlighted by many, *"We had to manage changes in delivery and a new online platform to learn with little or no training."* Observations were also commonly made that the level and intensity of workloads had not reduced when face to face teaching resumed, with some stating that it had increased further. Comments were made about how the move to a hybrid delivery, in particular, had impacted on workloads, for example, *"We were expected to plan both online and in person learning and deliver bespoke lessons to both home learners and those who were classroom based. We were also expected to assess students more to check home or online learning."* Another lecturer described the longer-term implications of COVID for their workload, *"The impact of lockdowns on learning means more needs to be taught to fill learning gaps in the same amount of time as before, with the same high expectations. The pace has intensified further now as we have to make up for lost time during lockdown and help the students catch up."* Another lecturer remarked on how their institution's **unrealistic expectations of achievements for students that have had significant education lapses (due to Covid) had impacted on their workload pressures."**

The heavy and diverse workload that many respondents from further education described was a major cause for concern. Respondents frequently wrote about the *"unrealistically high"*

expectations placed on them from different sources (e.g. managers, students, quality etc.) and the challenges they experienced in meeting the demands associated with their new *"expanded"* role in the time available. Some observed that *"more and more responsibilities were being added"* with demands on their time being *"unreasonable"* and *"impossible to meet."* As one lecturer commented, *"The workload is hugely difficult to manage at times. Expectations that staff will work evenings and weekends are increasing year-on-year."* Another wrote, *"Managers are losing sight of what it is like to be a teacher and students expecting more of us – our goodwill is being taken for granted."*

Respondents often described working at home as helping them manage a heavy workload by providing a *"relatively quiet and calm working environment where we won't be interrupted every few minutes"*, some concerns were expressed about expectations for their extended availability, for example, *"Our managers think it is easier to work remotely, so they expect responses outside of work hours."* Another lecturer commented on the use of MS Teams following the pandemic, *"This has increased expectations from managers and students for swift responses to emails/chat messages - I feel like I never escape work as messages are sent during evenings and weekends and replies are expected immediately."*

Increased administration burden

As discussed above, a common reason provided by respondents working in further education for any increase in their workload was administration. Comments included *"I just feel as though the admin has gone crazy"* with the requirements described as "insurmountable." The increased administration burden placed on teaching staff was often attributed to a shortage of administrators. As one respondent commented, *"A wide range of new tasks has been taken away from administrative staff and foisted onto tutors." Another remarked that administrative duties and responsibilities were continually "newly added over the year regardless of current workload."* Not all of these administrative requests were considered necessary and respondents frequently indicated that they were allocated no additional time to undertake them.

Many comments were made about the *"duplication"* of administrative tasks and information, for example, *"We are often asked to do effectively the same task in three different ways."* Others described having to present *"the same information in different forms for different systems."* Some respondents attributed the duplication of reporting requirements to a move towards micro-management – a pattern of manager behaviour characterised by excessive supervision and control – for example, *"An increase in the level of micro-management in my college has led to certain things being repeated or unnecessarily asked for."* Others commented on their institutions requiring *"duplication of tasks when referring a student to learning support"* and *"data to be uploaded to a new tracking system for students and duplication of the same work over a number of systems to allow for checking up."* The duplication of information was also thought to be due to IT systems and other data collection methods not always being "fit for purpose."

Respondents frequently expressed concern about how the increased administration requirements took time away from what they considered their 'core' tasks of teaching and supporting students. For example, *"If the college appointed more admin staff to support teachers and students, we would immediately have more time for teaching, and students would have better support and service with their issues such as bus passes, enrolment, change of classes, applications for college bursary and hardship payments etc."*

Student-related demands

When providing reasons for an increase in workload, respondents from further education often commented on the challenges they experienced in managing increasing numbers of students, many with additional needs. Staff shortages in key areas, such as student support, and the poor resourcing for teaching that were highlighted earlier in this report were thought to place additional demands on those that remain. As one lecturer commented, *"Some classes have doubled in size but we still have the same contact hours."* The impact on the student experience was recognised, *"It is not possible to mark, feedback, support, get to know students when there are so many per class."*

One of the most frequent reasons provided for an increase in workload in further education was the need to provide pastoral care, which was generally thought to have *"increased at an alarming rate."* One lecturer observed that their *"pastoral workload had trebled*". Comments were often made about the time and effort needed to assist the growing number of students with additional support needs. A respondent commented, *"We have many more complex learners who need individualised planning and targets for each new session."* One respondent working in student support remarked on the increase in demand, *"More students are coming to college with additional needs but our staff team has not increased in size to meet the demand. I work in the Inclusion and Support team, so it is my job to work with these learners, to arrange support plans and daily support."* Another respondent working in safeguarding and welfare highlighted the difficulties they experienced in managing the number of referrals even with a fairly large team, *"We have a team of 10, including 2 counsellors, and it still isn't enough to stem the tide of mental health, substance misuse and family breakdown or domestic violence we are seeing among young people."*

Lecturers frequently reported that they were expected to *"fill in"* for student support teams who could not manage the increase in demand, or who had been reduced in number or disbanded entirely. One commented on the situation in their institution, *"The demand for pastoral care has rocketed and we have had to replace the welfare team."* Another described the difficulties their institution was experiencing in supporting students with additional needs, *"Ensuring students have the support they need is difficult, as the majority of learners need some sort of support following the pandemic, whether this is for their mental health or missed essential skills sessions."* One respondent also commented on the time-consuming nature of growing safeguarding responsibilities, "*Our learners are often in foster care or are asylum seekers. Everything we do has to be recorded online. There is a lot of emailing and telephone work involved."* Little additional time appears to be available for staff to provide such support and to monitor students' progress, with (as described above) respondents often having to use their admin periods and breaks to do so.

Many respondents identified a *"massive"* increase in mental health problems among further education students. Concerns were expressed that lecturers not only struggled to find the time to provide the support required the face of many competing demands, but they also lacked the specialist knowledge and experience to fulfil this key role. As one lecturer wrote, *"We are counsellors without the training, pay or hours"* and another highlighted the difficulties they experienced in *"personally having to absorb so many students' personal pathologies and issues without any training or support.*" A lecturer described their experiences in greater depth, *"I am a subject specialist lecturer and have no counselling training, but I am faced with incredibly vulnerable, complex and seriously unhappy students. I sometimes have to try and support individuals who are so distressed or anxious they cannot*

participate in lessons. I naturally forward my concerns to student support but they are inundated with requests, so I am often left to deal with the immediate crisis alone. I am not averse to pastoral support and I am obviously invested in my students' wellbeing and development, but I am not a counsellor or a proxy father." Another lecturer described how their teaching area often raised personal issues for students who then required support, *"If you teach trauma and abuse, it is inevitable that students will share experiences which, in turn, makes my pastoral role even greater."*

Other student-related issues were identified by further education staff as increasing their workloads. These included students being allowed to enrol late, or to continue in spite of very poor attendance – both requiring the investment of time and energy to help them catch up. As one lecturer commented, *"Students are now permitted to join courses up to 8 weeks after they start. This is pretty much setting them up to fail, so I either watch them struggle or I spend a great deal of my time helping them catch up."* Another issue identified was the move to online teaching, where *"Students can contact you by email at any time."* As one respondent remarked, *"Learners now have 24/7 access to tutors that is adding to workload stress".*

The impact of workload on work-life balance and wellbeing
Although not directly related to reasons for any increased workload they had experienced, many respondents from further education described the impact that their job was having on their wellbeing and work-life balance. Some reported that stress-related sickness absence had *"rocketed"* in their institution with the need to provide cover for "*sick, overworked and stressed teachers"* on a frequent basis. As one respondent commented, *"A huge number of staff have resigned, been off with stress or have broken down and have had to receive counselling."* A lecturer remarked, *"To be honest we didn't get in to teaching for the easy life, but the workload is now impossible to deal with and our stress levels keep on rising."* People described feeling *"pressured"* and *"overwhelmed"* and *"being unable to keep up with the workload"* seems to be a source of stress and anxiety for many. One respondent described the situation in their institution, *"Staff are constantly worried and feel pressured to complete more planning and assessment out of contracted hours meaning they are working through breaks, at home in the evenings and weekends and through holiday periods. Unsurprisingly, there is a subsequent increase in poor mental health, staff sickness and a higher turnover."* The risk of *"presenteeism"*, where employees continue to work while sick, was also identified. As one respondent wrote, *"During COVID time, even when you were sick, you were expected to work as you were at home and this is continuing even now. Managers are not realising that we are off because we are ill, so they contact you during that time to try to arrange meetings."*

The implications of a heavy and diverse workload for respondents' work-life balance were identified by many, for example, *"Due to the significant increase in admin duties, I have no choice but to do a substantial amount of work at home. Currently, I work at least one day at the weekend which inevitably leads to exhaustion and stress, as it is a continuous loop of not getting a proper rest from work duties which I am entitled to."* A lecturer wrote about the serious implications of their workload for their personal life and wellbeing, *"To manage my planning prep I have to come in early every day and have no family or social life, as I just don't have the energy to even go food shopping on the weekend."*

The expectations that staff will monitor and respond to emails after hours identified earlier in this report can also impair work-life balance and recovery. Some respondents indicated that

they had set boundaries and refused to engage with email outside *"reasonable"* working hours, for example, "Managers send emails outside working hours requesting information. I refuse to read them as a matter of principle and to avoid unnecessary stress."

Note

It should be noted that each of the challenges discussed above do not typically occur in isolation but interact to heighten the workload pressures experienced by people working in further education. For example, reduced staffing levels, increased administrative demands and the introduction of online teaching and associated reporting systems, along with larger groups of students with additional support needs will inevitably increase workloads, intensify the pace of work and extend working hours. As well as expressing concerns about their workload and the pressure they experience from various aspects of their role, it is evident that many respondents gain considerable satisfaction from their work. Nonetheless, current working conditions in further education do not seem sustainable and have serious implications for the health and wellbeing of employees as well as their professional effectiveness.

DECREASED WORKLOAD

As shown above, only a small proportion of respondents from further education indicated that the pace and intensity of their work and their working hours had reduced during the previous three years. The next section summarises the few comments that were provided by those who had experienced a reduction in workload during this period.

Improved efficiency and experience

One of the most common reasons provided by respondents from further education for a reduced workload was gaining more *"on-the-job"* experience. *"Better time management and organisational skills"* along with increasing familiarity with work tasks and the organisation's policies, procedures and systems meant that workloads had become easier to manage. As one lecturer wrote, *"I have developed strategies for smarter working that have reduced the intensity of my workload."* Other less experienced respondents who had managed to reduce their workload reflected on the challenges they initially encountered in their new role. As one commented, *"When I first started teaching it was incredibly intense and I did not know the systems etc. As time has gone on, I understand the support and systems within the college more which saves time."* Several others identified the workload benefits of "*getting used to teaching my subjects"*, *"having lessons planned and prepped from previous years"* and *"developing a good set of resources that now only need tweaking."*

While experience can help people manage their workloads more effectively, several long-standing lecturers reported working far in excess of their contracted hours earlier in their career, giving cause for concern. One wrote, *"I came from industry and there were no resources on the system apart from assignment briefs. My predecessor had been off sick with stress for a long time and subsequently resigned. For the first two years I worked triple my hours to build up and maintain the course and meet the standards required. Things are much easier now, but it was a very difficult time."*

Improved staffing

Several respondents from further education indicated that their workload had reduced due to improved staffing levels. A lecturer commented that more teaching staff had been

recruited in response to an increase in student numbers, which they described as *"very welcome."* Another respondent indicated that their institution had employed additional staff to take on some of their support and admin tasks, *"We have introduced progress coaches who set targets and follow up student attendance."*

Increased support and enhanced systems
Some respondents described how enhanced support from their organisation had reduced their workload. omments included *"better leadership and management"* and a *"change in line management, which is now much more supportive."* A lecturer highlighted how the introduction of a new workload system following negotiation between their employer and the UCU had led to workload improvements, *"The college has worked with the UCU to agree a fairer workload and this is improving things so far."*

Improvements to organisational practices and systems were also thought by some to have reduced workloads. Examples include *"Better communication to students and parents"*, *"Better timetabling of lessons"* and *"More efficient software systems."* One lecturer also highlighted the workload benefits of *"Not being asked to do tasks that are repeated."*

Changes in role or responsibilities
Additional reasons provided by respondents from further education for a *"lighter"* workload related to reduced teaching responsibilities. Respondents in this situation reported "*teaching fewer subjects"* and *"less variety of units"*. As one lecturer commented, *"I previously taught 10 units and none of them ran for the whole year, whereas I only have four this year, with two being year-long."* Others mentioned that fewer students and smaller group sizes had reduced their workload pressure, for example, *"The college has attracted fewer students due to issues such as difficulty recruiting for apprenticeships, meaning my hours and class sizes have reduced."* The move to blended learning was also thought by one respondent to have *"reduced the time required to deliver teaching directly and how long I spend commuting"*.

Reduced hours and stepping back
Some respondents from further education described reducing their workload by working fewer hours or moving to a less demanding role. Such actions are illustrated by one manager's comment, *"I gave up my long-term management role as it was undoable, even when I was working 11-hour days. This was seriously affecting my health."* Others described moving to a fractional contract which *"naturally decreased the workload and the pressure"*. As one respondent commented, *"I have reduced my teaching hours because of the unreasonably high number of hours I was working out of the classroom."*

Making a conscious decision to reduce their workload, either through reconsidering their priorities or due to health problems, was another reason provided by respondents from further education. A lecturer described on having chosen to *"prioritise their family life"* by working their contracted hours only. Others had reduced their involvement in work for personal or health–related reasons, for example, *"I have lower personal capacity to cope with what I was previously able to deliver, so I have limited what I am willing to take on."* One respondent had moved to a less demanding role following a cancer diagnosis, *"I was offered a different role in college which is less stressful and I haven't been asked to work as many late nights."*

Reduced training and development commitments
Some respondents indicated that their overall workload had reduced as they had completed additional training and education that they had been doing alongside their work role. As one

lecturer commented, *"I have finished a part-time PGCE course that I was doing alongside teaching 20 hours a week."* Another wrote, *"In the previous two years, I have been completing my PGCE alongside my teaching and programme managing on a .9 contract. Now the course has finished, I have more time for planning and supporting my learners."*

Note

Some respondents from further education indicated that their workload had reduced, either through growing experience, increased support from their organisation, or due to other factors, such as their own decision to "step back". Nonetheless, some comments suggest that many may continue to struggle to meet their workload demands in their contracted hours, for example, "As a new teacher, I had to prepare a lot of new material and worked over 50 hours a week. Although I now have this work to hand, I can only manage my workload by working in my own time, which is obviously unpaid and reduces family time and work-life balance." Another wrote, "I have improved my time management and also understand more about the processes and resources here. However, it is frequently impossible to complete my work within the allocated time."

One change

Respondents from further education were asked to nominate a single change that would reduce their workload. The suggestions made are summarised below.

➡ **Improve staffing levels.** Provide more (permanent) staff. Avoid using hourly paid lecturers to do the role of full-time staff. Offer more competitive pay and conditions and opportunities for career development to attract new staff and ensure they remain in post. Replace people promptly when they leave, rather than expect their work to be absorbed by those who remain.

➡ **Provide more administrative and support workers** to reduce the burden on teaching staff.

➡ **Increase pay** in line with school teaching and higher education employees.

➡ **Simplify and streamline the monitoring and reporting requirements.** Set timelines and deadlines that are realistic and take all other responsibilities into consideration. Be aware where work is duplicated, such as the need to record the same information on different platforms. Avoid excessive monitoring and trust the professionalism and experience of staff.

➡ **Realistically appraise workloads**. In consultation with employees, identify the time and resources required to perform work tasks. Make sure that adequate time is provided for all tasks related to teaching and supporting students, as well as administration and any other duties.

➡ **Review workloads regularly** to ensure that any additional tasks are captured. Recognise the risk of 'creeping workloads', especially where input from admin and support staff is limited.

➡ **Be aware that "one-size does not fit all"** when estimating workloads, as more resourcing may be needed for different subjects, at higher levels of teaching and for larger class sizes.

➡ **Ensure workloads are equitable** and tasks and support activities are fairly distributed across staff teams.

➡ **Maintain a good student-staff ratio.** Recognise that an increase in student numbers requires a corresponding investment in staff and infrastructure, as well as additional staff time to plan, mark and provide learning and pastoral support. Be aware that short staffing will have a serious impact on students' learning experience, as well as staff wellbeing.

➡ **Provide cover** for staff sickness absence.

➡ **Better planning, organisation and communication.** Management should plan for the future, wherever possible avoiding urgent requests for immediate response or action. Ensure that there is better and more timely communication from managers and between departments.

➡ **Introduce systems to ensure staff are consulted** on key issues such as identifying what works well and implementing and evaluating change. Make sure that staff have an input into teaching planning and timetabling.

➡ **Cut down on meetings,** both face-to-face and online and reduce email traffic. Avoiding contacting staff out of hours or when on holiday.

➡ **Ensure electronic systems are fit for purpose.** Provide training before introducing new systems or implementing changes.

➡ **Recognise the increasing pastoral and learning support need**s of students and the time and effort required to provide this support. Ensure there is adequate specialist support for students for behavioural problems, substance misuse, mental health issues and special educational needs.

➡ **Offer opportunities for hybrid working** that are flexible and fit employees' needs and preferences. Trust staff to work effectively at home and be aware that they can be more productive, especially when performing tasks that require concentration.

➡ **Value employees,** treat them with respect and show appreciation for their skills, efforts and dedication.

➡ **Prioritise staff wellbeing.** Recognise how the pressures of the job mean that a healthy work-life balance is essential for the continued wellbeing and optimum performance of staff. Ensure people are not overloaded, that they are able to take adequate breaks through the working day and their full entitlement of annual leave. Be aware of the overwhelming evidence that long working hours make people less rather than more productive and more vulnerable to health problems.

➡ *Be aware of the risks of presenteeism* and ensure that staff who are unwell are able to take sufficient time off to recover.

"If staff feel looked after and happy, students are happy. It should be managers' priority to look after the staff, then the staff priority to look after the students. Unfortunately, some managers seem to care more about the students and the staff care about the students so there is no one at all to look after the staff."