

# Teaching Assistant Survey Results

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Thank you for taking part in this key piece of research. The role of a teaching assistant is incredibly important, and we want to work together with everyone involved to ensure you feel valued.

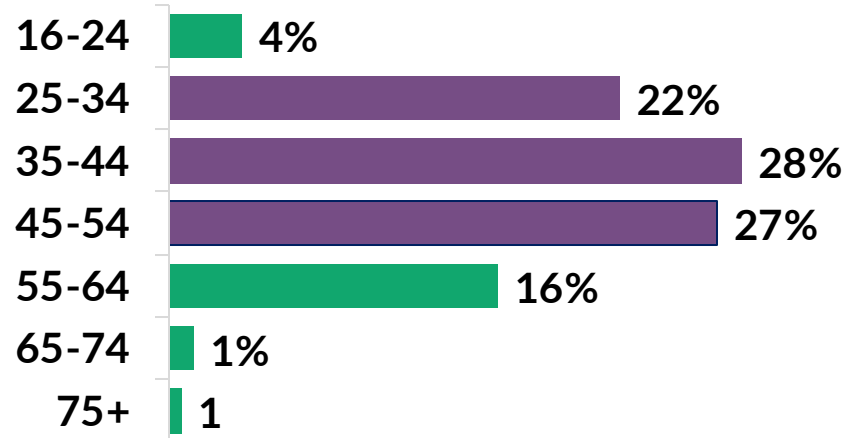
We will use the findings from the teaching assistant retention survey to create a response that supports schools and academies to retain staff.

As a first step, we wanted to share with you the results from the survey as we begin to work together with partners to form an action plan.

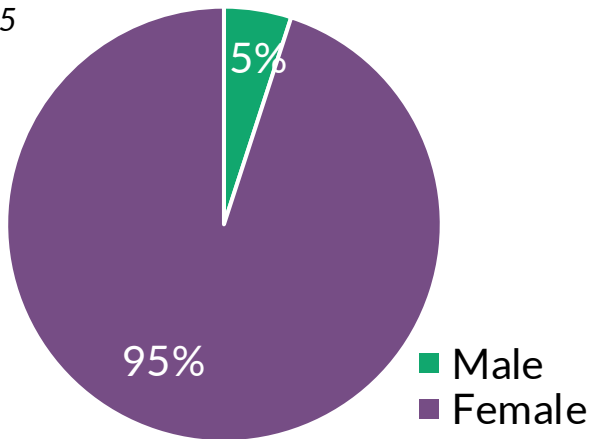
**197** Teaching assistants took part, demonstrating how important it is for us to engage with you as a group

# About you

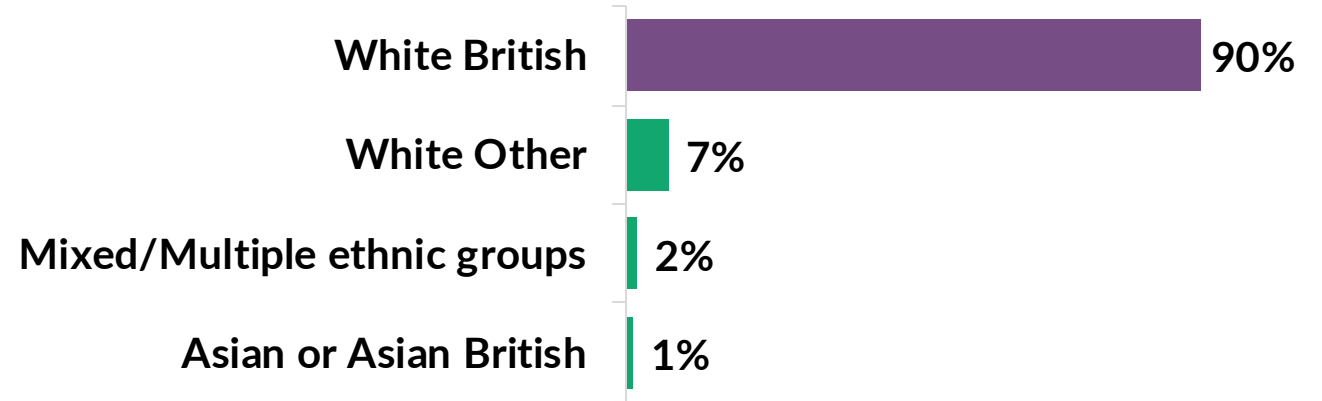
## AGE IN YEARS Base: 165



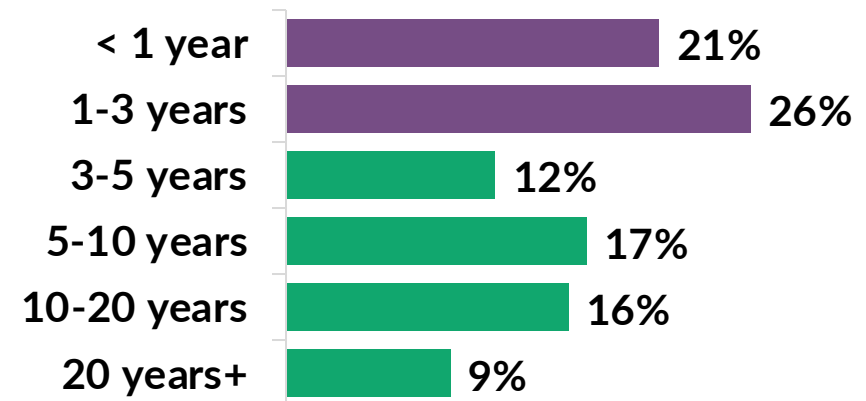
## SEX Base: 165



## ETHNICITY Base: 164



## TIME IN CURRENT ROLE Base: 197

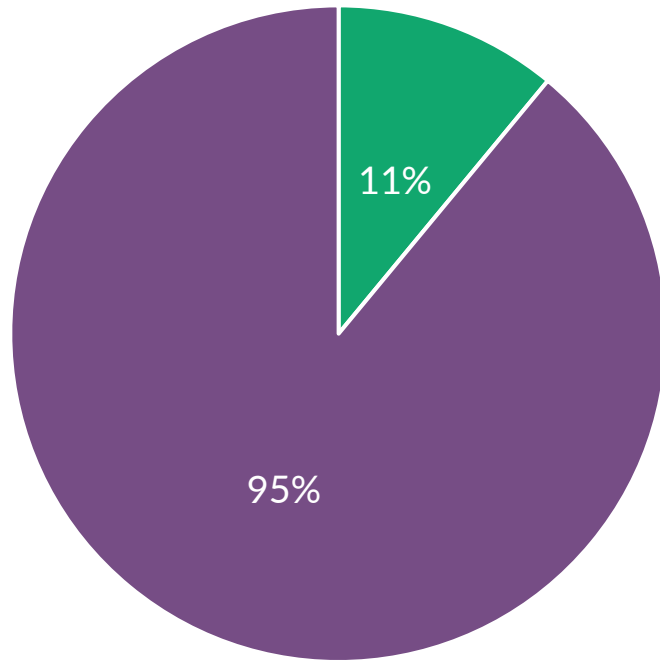


- Most of you are female, aged 25 to 54 years of age, and from a White British ethnic background
- Nearly half of you (47%) have been in role for 3 years or less

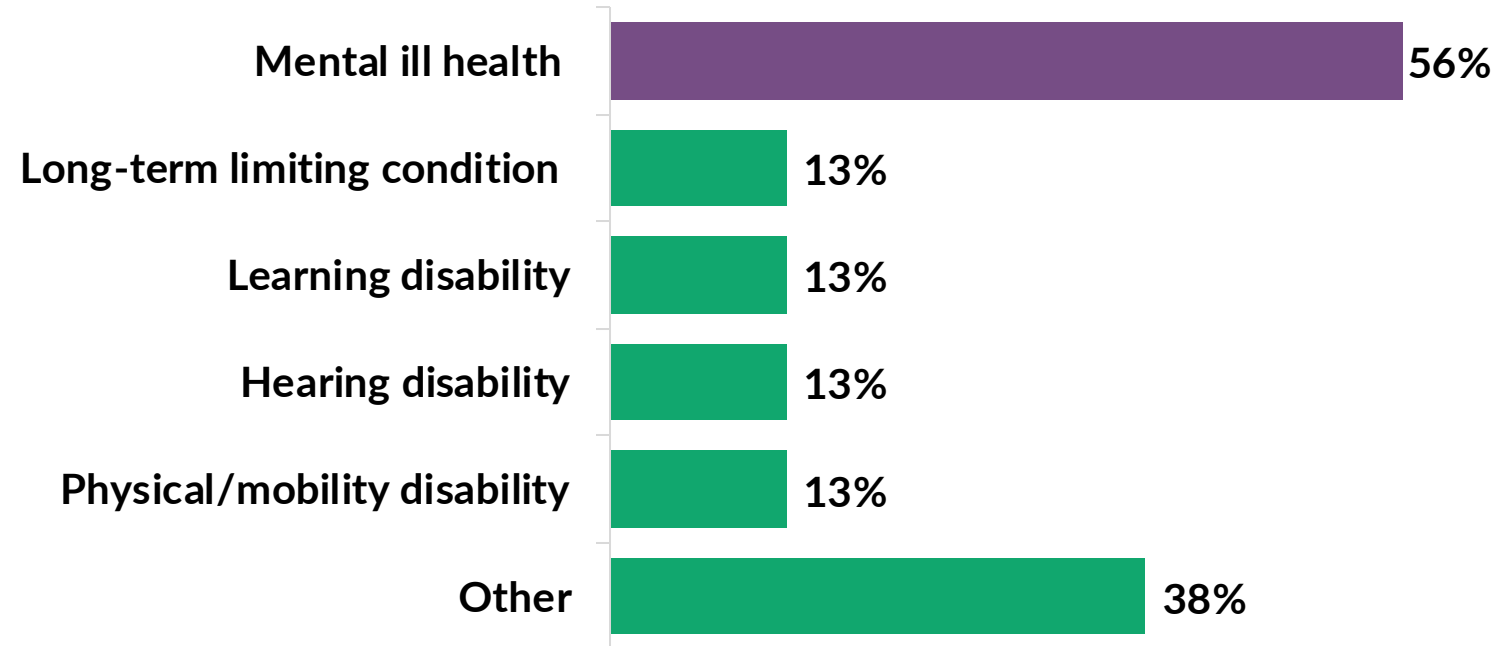
# About you continued...

## DISABILITY\* Base: 153

■ Has a disability ■ Does not have a disability



## TYPE OF DISABILITY Base: 16\* (\*caution small base)



*\*the actual question asked is "Do you consider yourself to have a disability, a long-term illness, or a physical or mental health condition that reduces your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?"*

- 11% of you consider yourself to have a disability, long-term illness, or a physical or mental health condition that affects your everyday life
- The most common type of disability, condition or illness is mental ill health

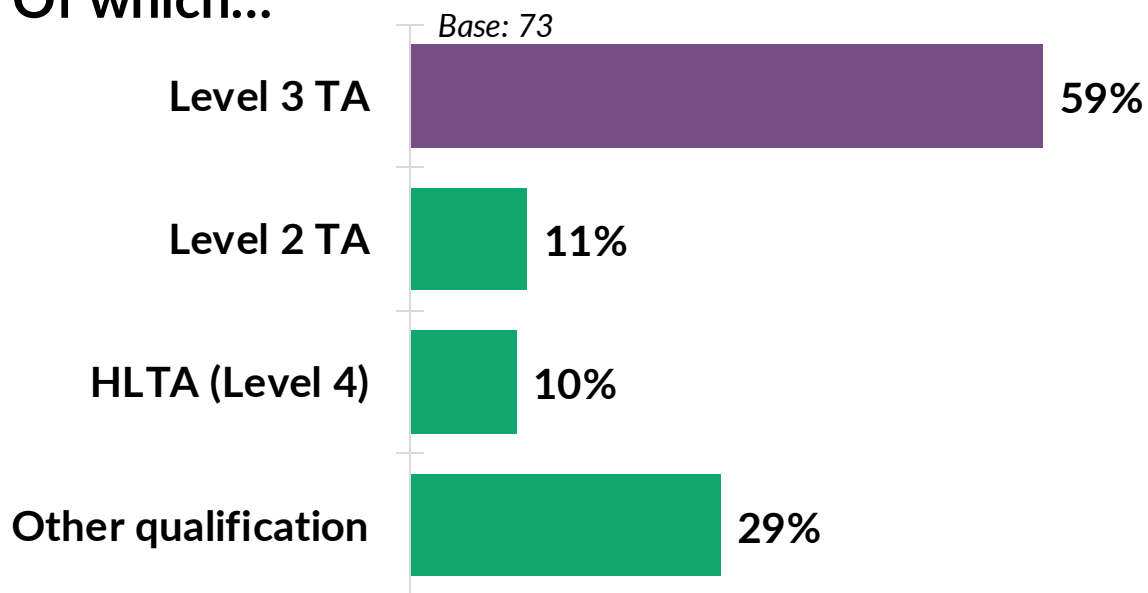
# Your qualifications

## 60%

Have a formal  
teaching assistant  
qualification



Of which...



Other qualifications included SEND and ELSA training, Cache Diplomas, various BTEC diplomas and higher degrees

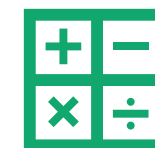
## 90%

Have a GCSE pass  
or equivalent in  
**English**



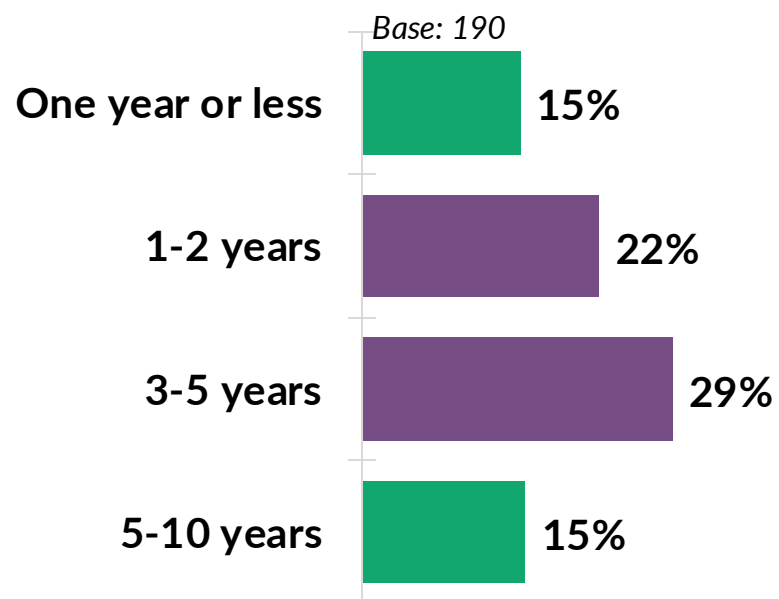
## 80%

Have a GCSE pass  
or equivalent in  
**Maths**



# Current roles and future plans

You have differing views on how much longer you plan to stay as teaching assistants

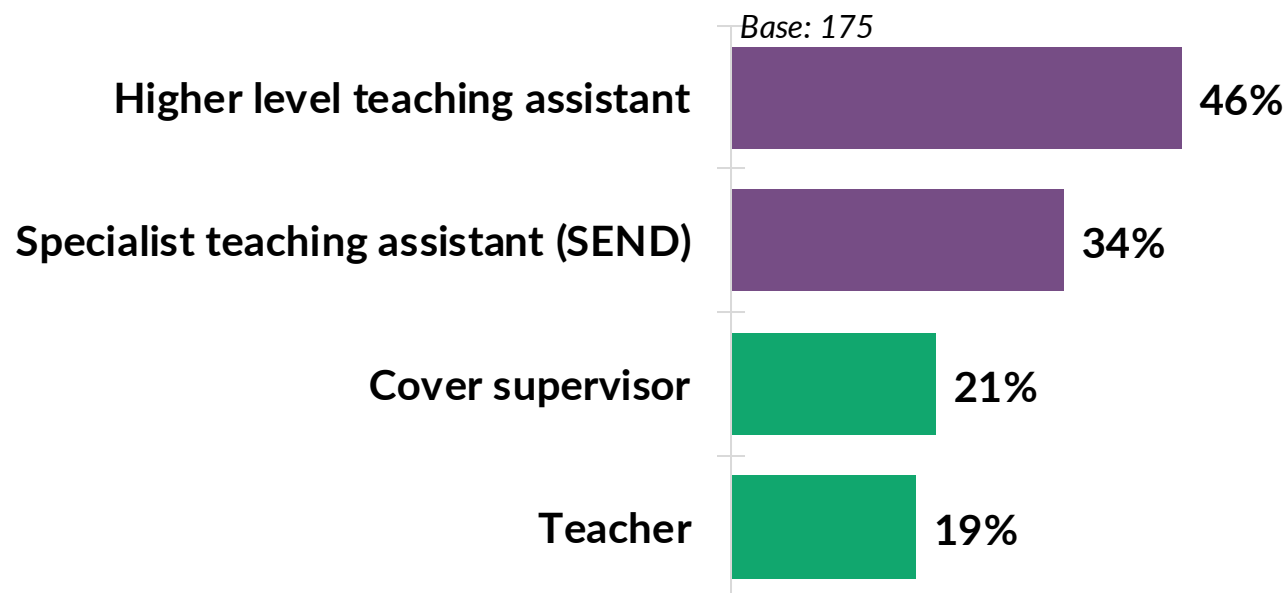


Roughly **a third** Of you want to **progress** in an **educational role**

Roughly **a quarter** Of you are **happy to stay** in your **current role**

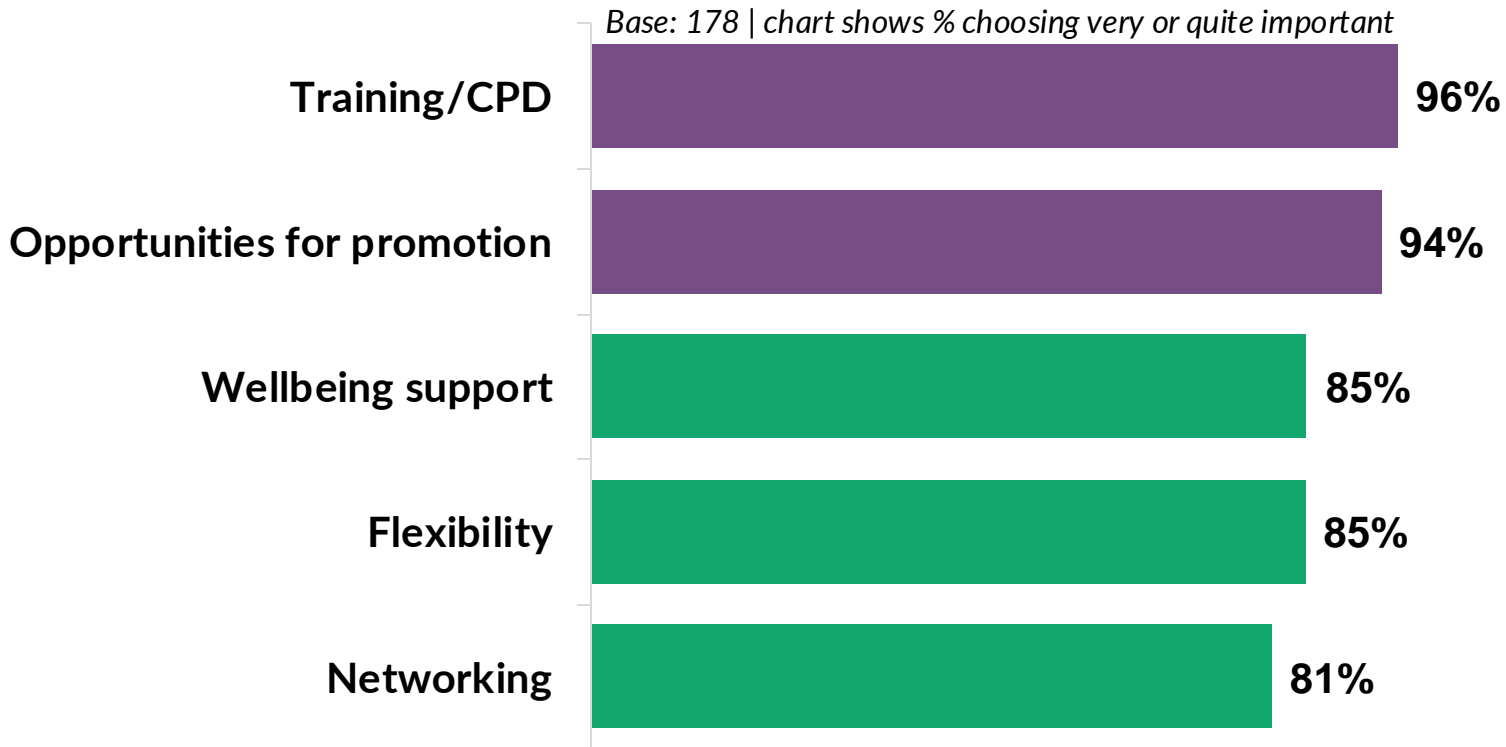
Roughly **a third** Of you are **unsure** what to do next or are **looking at a role** outside of **education**

Many of you aspire to become HLTAs or specialist SEND TAs



# What's important to you?

Training and CPD, opportunities for promotion, flexibility, wellbeing support, and networking opportunities are **ALL** important to you



However, wellbeing support scores higher than opportunities for promotion in your top 3 priorities...

**83%** rank **training and CPD** in the top 3

**76%** rank **wellbeing support** in the top 3

**58%** rank **opportunities for promotion** in the top 3

**1st**

...and more of you rank **wellbeing support** as your number 1 priority than anything else

# Opportunities to progress

**36%** Of you agree that you are given opportunities to progress

And a workplace that...

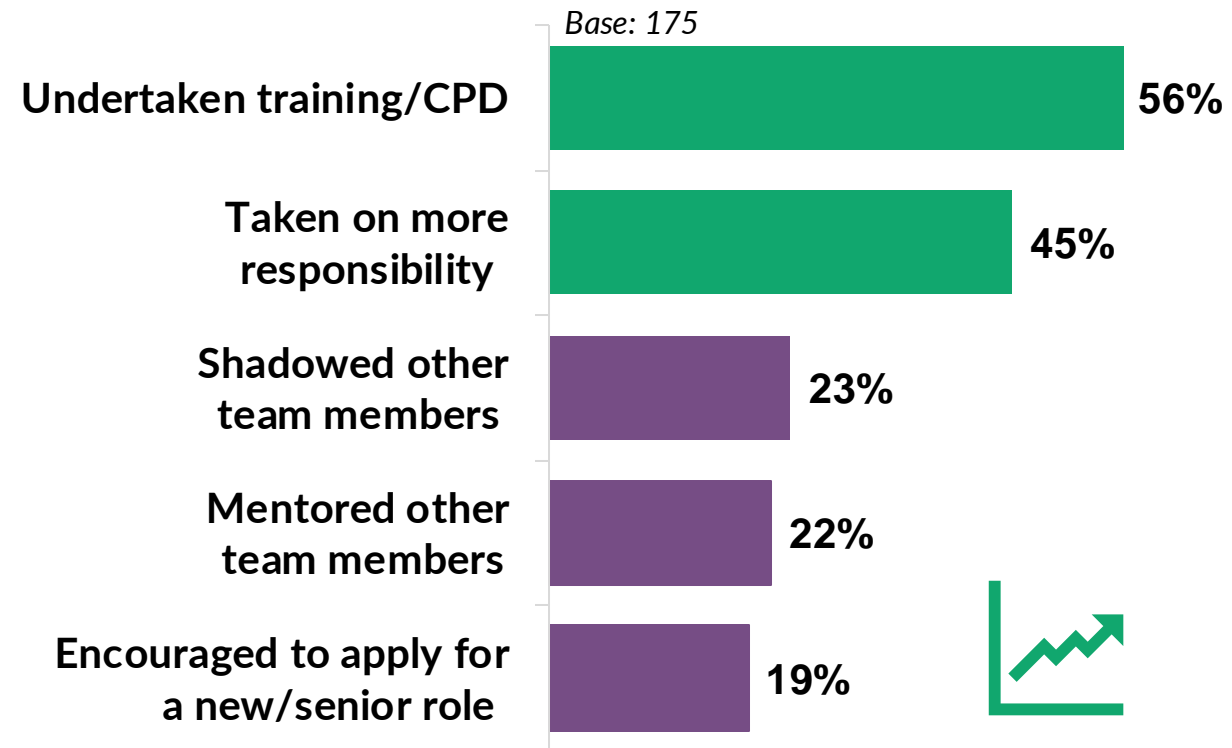
- incentivises career development
- encourages internal job applications
- regularly communicates what opportunities are available

are all important to at least **88%** of you

**95%** Of you told us that regular communications around what opportunities are available in your school is key



Most of you can give examples of opportunities you have been given to progress





# Opportunities for training and CPD

**66%** Of you agree that you are given opportunities for training and CPD

And a workplace that...

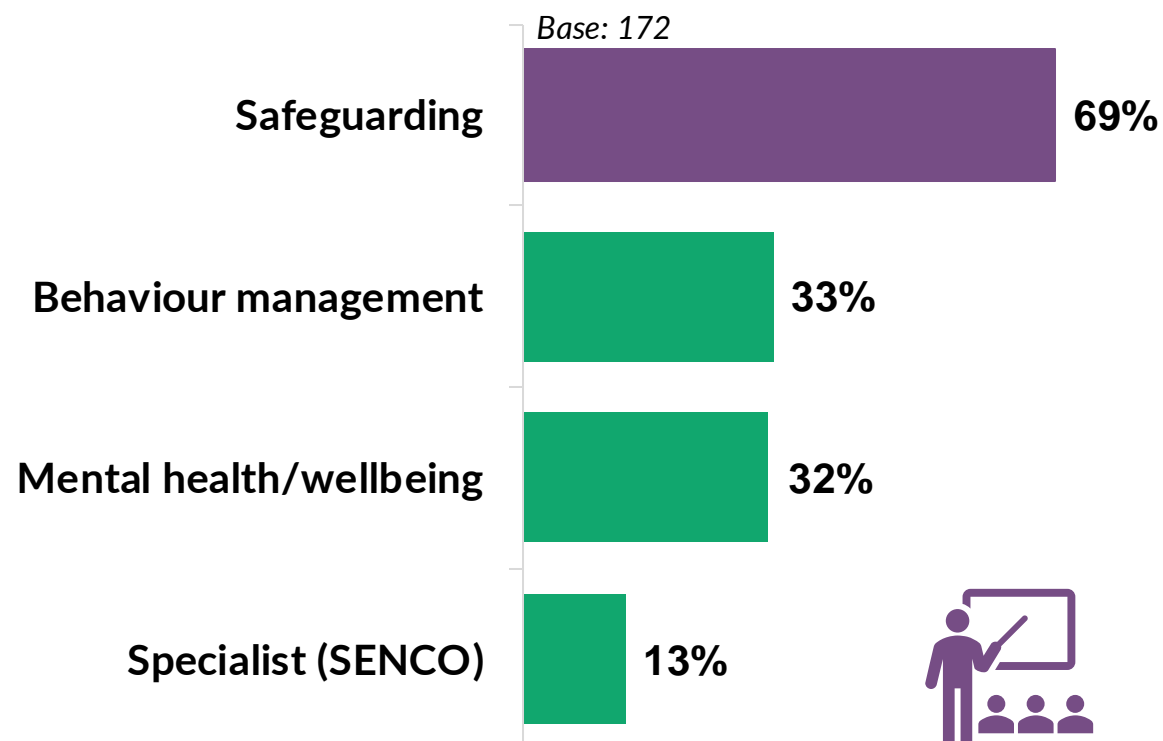
- provides time to learn and train
- understands your outside commitments
- supports your learning and development
- listens to your interests

are all important to at least **96%** of you



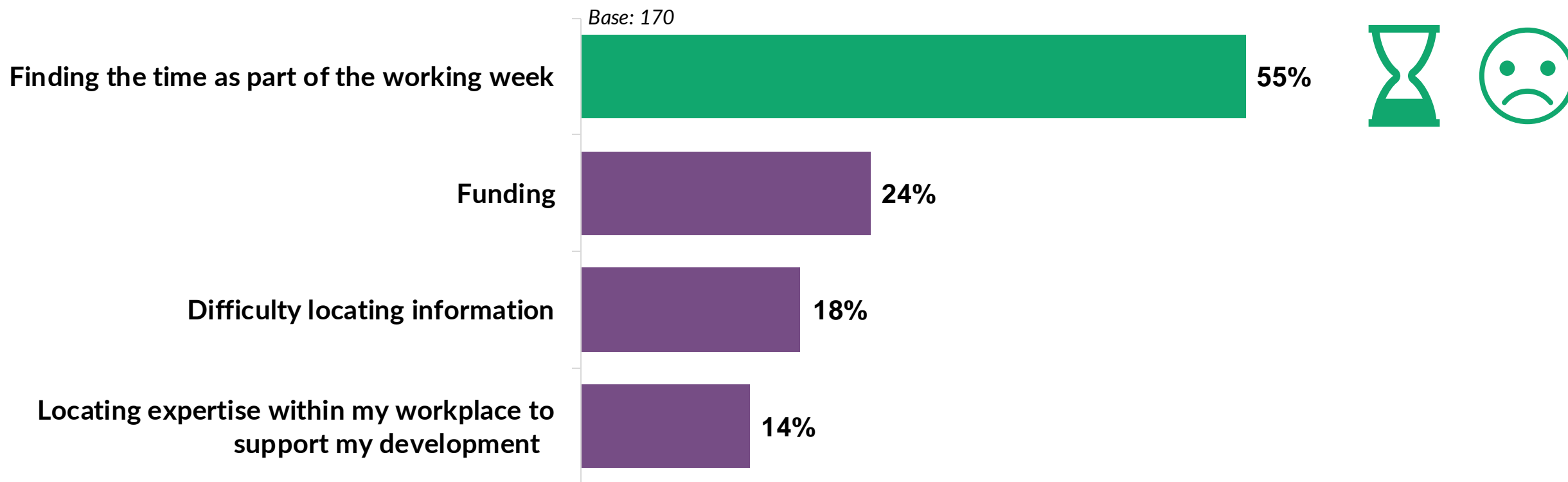
Supporting your learning and development is key, with **100%** rating it 'quite' or 'very' important

Most of you have undertaken training or CPD in the last 12 months, the majority of which has been for safeguarding



# Barriers and challenges to training and CPD

We asked: “Which, if any, of the following challenges have you encountered when deciding to undertake training or CPD?”



- Finding the time to undertake training or CPD is the number one barrier

# The themes from your open comments

This slide shows the main themes from the comments you made in the final question of the survey.  
The bigger the font, the more often the theme was mentioned

Higher pay and more benefits  
To be valued and recognised  
Well-funded quality training  
Progression opportunities  
Communication & trust  
Resources & support  
Wellbeing measures  
Realistic workloads  
More flexible hours

# Key take-outs by theme

## Higher pay and more benefits

- Pay that genuinely reflects the roles you do
- Benefits in line with teaching staff
- Flexible pay scale based on experience and qualifications
- Pay above minimum wage

## Progression opportunities

- Recognise the individual
- Provide more information
- More salaried teacher training positions
- Remove the glass ceiling

## To be valued and recognised

- Change the job title to Assistant Teachers
- Value the role played in children's education and wellbeing
- Treat with respect and recognise you as a key part of the team
- 'Professionalisation' of the role to reflect how it has changed

## Communication and trust

- Listen to your views
- Respect from the SLT
- Involve you in planning
- Share strategies/methods that are working

## Well-funded, quality training

- Mandatory training in SEN and behaviour management
- Training to be a priority and given sufficient allocated time
- More opportunity to take different specialisms
- Externally recognised training that leads to a qualification

## Resources and support

- More teaching staff and SEN specialists
- Dedicated spaces for interventions
- Support dealing with violent/abusive behaviour
- More behaviour units/non-mainstream places

## Wellbeing measures

- Mental health/stress and wellbeing awareness days
- Staff wellbeing check-ins
- Ability to take breaks and lunch hours

## Realistic workloads

- Allow time for planning and paperwork
- Don't move you around without consultation
- Allow you to be TAs, not 1-1 SEN support

# Key take-outs by theme in your own words i

## To be valued and recognised

*"Appreciation shown for dedicated staff. Some roles can be extremely challenging and can feel quite thankless at times. To be included, valued and thanked, to feel like part of a cohesive school team."*

*"Not to be used instead of a classroom teacher or acknowledged if this is the situation."*

## Well-funded, quality training

*"Consistent ongoing training/CPD."*

*"Built in training/induction system for new staff focusing especially on behaviour management and SEN support"*

*"Further training opportunities, Knowing where to find these. Having release time to understand other areas within school."*

*"Access to training days within other working school environments to see things in action, especially SEND. More training for handling aggressive children both mentally and physically, this is a huge part of the difficulty in my own workplace."*

## Progression opportunities

*"Having more career development and having maybe ELSA and SENCO training for LSAs to be used and developed further within education."*

*"Having the chance to experience all of a TA role such as 1:1, interventions, general TA in a class etc. as sometimes this opportunity is not available."*

## Communication and trust

*"Ideas to be submitted to Teach Portsmouth on what works well/ interventions/ sensory circuits/ parental support/ parental engagement to support their child within education. Discussed in detail what that could look like and for it to be rolled out within a 'pilot' school to measure its success."*

*"For teaching assistants to be involved in some of the planning, sometimes being a ta you get to know the needs of the children more than the teacher so have a more in-depth view of their needs, progressing and relationships with others."*

*"Working by team sharing positive methods that are effective with the students with special needs"*

*"I do sometimes feel that SLT do not always listen to our thoughts and ideas; we are given the opportunity to speak but not always actually listened to. TA's spend a lot of time in class with the children and, although might not have higher level qualifications, still have firsthand insight and knowledge."*

*"Debriefing should always be offered, and time given. To be informed and have a plan of work. For leadership to get to know their staff a little, their skills and experiences so these can be utilised. So TAs can work in confidence and with the support needed to best fulfil their role."*



# Key take-outs by theme in your own words iii

## Resources and support

*"An outside support network for all Teaching Assistants within the City...we all have so many skills and experienced that could be used to help others. Access to help /support independent of workplace."*

*"Opportunities to network with other TA's - sharing knowledge and experience"*

*"Better resources in school for interventions - designated spaces for interventions to be undertaken, provided resources, allocated fixed time."*

## More flexible hours

*"Flexibility for time off - for example accrued time which could be used for important appointments which can't be made in school holidays (heating engineers for example). But there needs to be adequate staffing to cover. Not everything can be organised outside of working hours"*

## Wellbeing measures

*"ALL TA'S DESERVE A 1HR LUNCH BREAK schools should employ actual lunch time staff."*

*"More light on TA well-being - regular check ins, restoratives, allow time to breathe after challenging periods of the day for 1:1s."*

*"The availability of wellbeing and mental health awareness days for the staff. 1 personal day a term/annually maybe."*

# Next steps

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the teaching assistant retention survey.

The findings from the survey have raised six key take-aways that are important to teaching assistants and ones we will take forward. *Feeling valued and recognised, having access to quality training, progression opportunities, communication and trust, flexible working and wellbeing.*

It is vital that any response to address these key take-aways are done in a way that involves head teachers and teaching assistants.

Teach Portsmouth will work with senior and support staff to create a charter that sets out a series of values that will underpin this area of work. Schools will have the option to subscribe to this charter.

Work is already underway within the Portsmouth Education Partnership to support school leaders to access high quality training for teaching assistants.

We will now take the findings of the survey to the PEP Strategic Board in October 2024 with a series of recommendations.

Once further feedback has been sought from this group, we will then publish an action plan, communicating and engaging with schools before the new year.

If you would like to participate in the development of the Portsmouth Teaching Assistant Charter, please email [teachportsmouth@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:teachportsmouth@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

We would welcome engagement from head teachers, HR leads and teaching assistants from primary, secondary and specialist settings.