

UNISON/TRUE VISION SURVEY OF THE EXPERIENCE OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS IN THE FACE OF SCHOOL CUTS SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS – July 2019

The population

- We surveyed 4549 teaching assistants currently working in publically funded schools in the UK
- 120 UK postcodes represented
- 97% female
- They had been working in education for an average of 15 years (range 1-48 years)
- Most (80%) had been in their current role for 5 or more years

The changing role of TAs over the past 5 years

- Most (>85%) saw their hours and pay stay the same or change only a little.
- However, over two-thirds of respondents said that the number of children they were responsible for had increased (69%) and the support staff available had decreased (70%).
- Almost 9 out of 10 TAs (89%) reported their workload had increased over the last 5 years.

Extra help given to children by TAs from personal resources

- Almost half (45%) bought books or stationery
- Almost 4 in 10 (38%) helped children with washing or hygiene
- Nearly a quarter had bought uniforms (22%) and PE kits(23%)
- A fifth had helped children with lunch money
- Nearly 1 in 5 (17%) had helped children afford school trips

Issues facing children in schools over past year (as reported by TAs)

- The majority (54%) thought more parents needed increasing help from their schools
- The majority (54%) said pupils were attending sleep-deprived more often
- Almost half (49%) said pupils were coming to school hungry more frequently
- Over 4 in 10 said they'd seen increasing poverty (41%) and pupils attending unwashed (42%)

Resources provided by schools for struggling families

- More than 1 in 10 schools operate a food bank (12%)
- More than 1 in 10 provides financial support to families (12%), and over half (54%) provide other support for parents
- 70% have a breakfast club and 59% have an after-school club
- 57% provide pastoral support

School cuts

- Over three-quarters (77%) of schools are making cutbacks; 89% in the past couple of years
- A fifth of schools are cutting teacher numbers, and over half (52%) are cutting TAs
- Almost a quarter (23%) are cutting non-teaching roles
- Almost a half of schools (47%) are not replacing staff who leave
- Almost a third of schools are reducing SEN support (29%)
- 6% are cutting teaching hours, and nearly 1 in 5 (16%) are reducing extracurricular activities

Impact on staff

- 95% are worried there will be cuts in the next year
- 96% of TAs reported adverse effects on their lives from pressures at school
- Over two-thirds (70%) reported high stress levels and reduced morale (68%)
- Over 4 in 10 TAs had experienced poor sleep (44%), anxiety/depression (43%) and burn-out (41%)
- Over half (56%) have considered leaving their jobs due to cutbacks
- Of those who've considered leaving, 3 in 5 (58%) said this was because they feared more cuts, and almost half (46%) said they felt their jobs were at risk
- Over half said they felt overworked (57%) and not supported (58%) enough to do their job properly