



Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer  
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru  
National Academy for  
Educational Leadership Wales



INSIGHT SERIES

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## Well-being Survey Report Youth Work Sector 2021

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# Key findings

## 1. Context

The National Academy for Educational Leadership's (Leadership Academy) [Corporate Plan](#) sets out the organisation's commitment to helping create a Welsh education system in which "**the well-being of educational leaders is prioritised and systematically supported**". As part of this commitment, the Leadership Academy is working with partners to develop an All-Wales Strategy for the Well-Being of Educational Leaders.

To inform this work, the Leadership Academy undertook a national survey of youth sector leaders in February 2021. This report sets out the key findings of the survey.

Further surveys of leaders in other educational sectors, including further education, will follow later in 2021.

## 2. Survey

The survey<sup>1</sup> was open to youth sector leaders<sup>2</sup> across Wales between 1<sup>st</sup> February and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

The survey received 25 responses.

It should be noted that responses were received during the 2nd Covid-19 lockdown period. The important well-being implications of the pandemic were not part of the survey's focus and no question made direct reference to it. However, the possibility that responses were influenced by these exceptional circumstances should not be discounted.

The survey collected a number of characteristics for each respondent for analytical purposes and these are broken down as follows:

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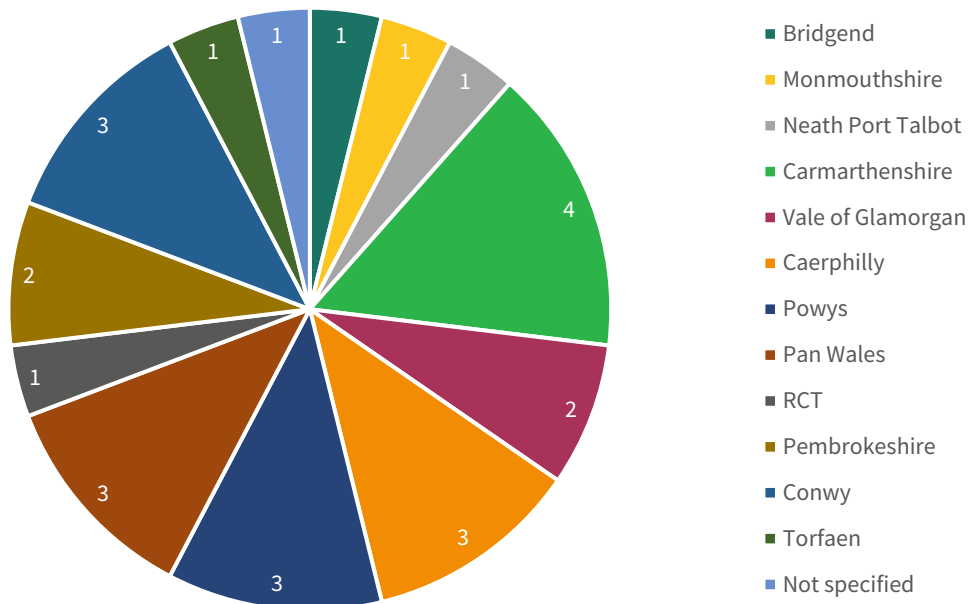
<sup>1</sup> The survey was open to youth sector leaders across Wales between 1st February and 28th February 2021. It consisted of 13 questions focusing on the following areas:

- Background information,
- Leaders' understanding of 'Well-being',
- Factors that impact well-being,
- Improving well-being and
- How the Academy can support

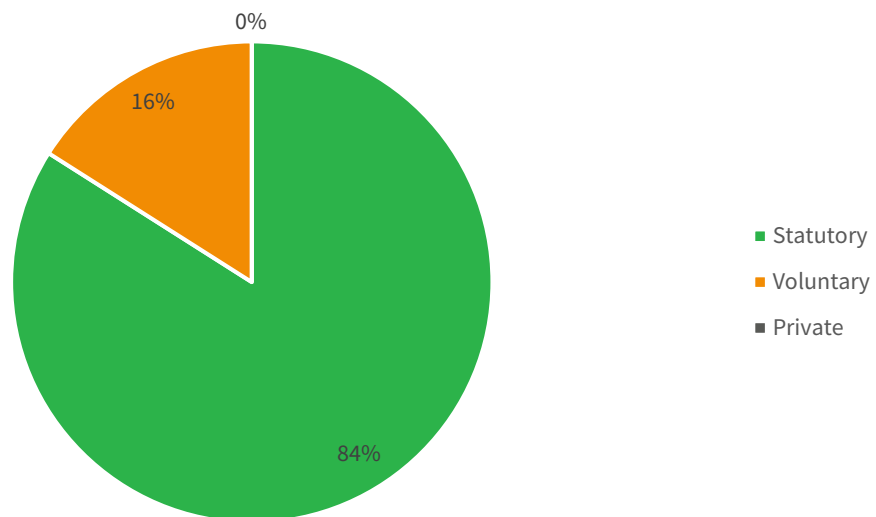
The survey was constructed using survey monkey, and trialled by a group of 5 youth leaders before going live across Wales.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of the survey, the definition of 'youth sector leader' was restricted to the roles listed in Chart 3, below. The Leadership Academy estimates the total population of youth sector leaders in Wales, using this definition, is approximately 150.

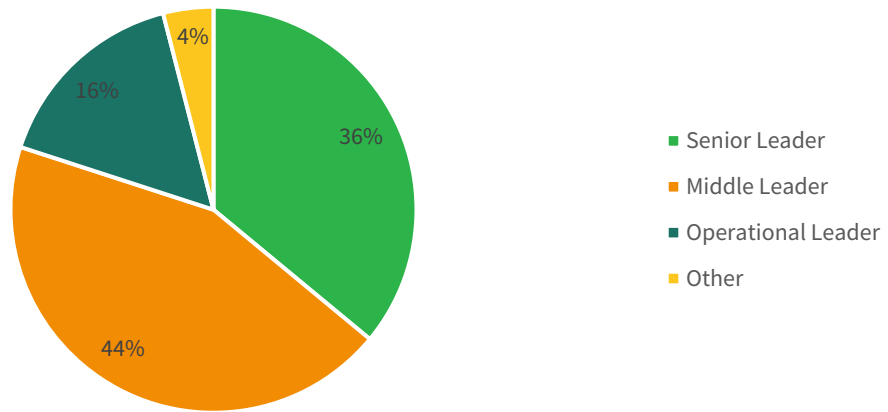
## Charts 1: Response by location



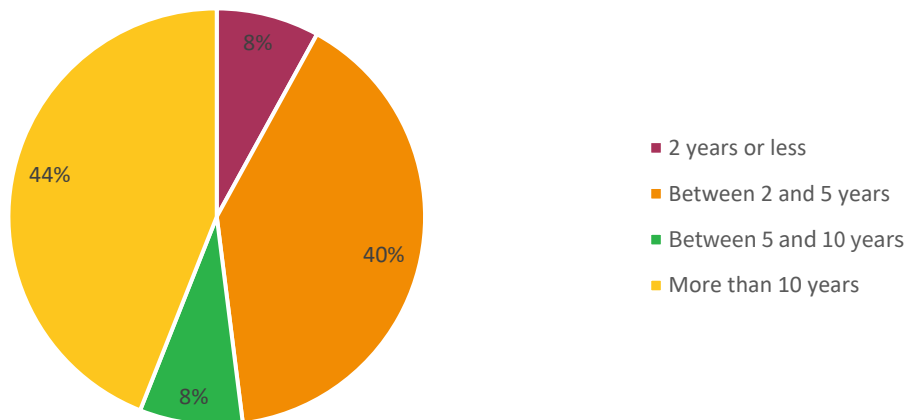
## Chart 2: Response by sector area



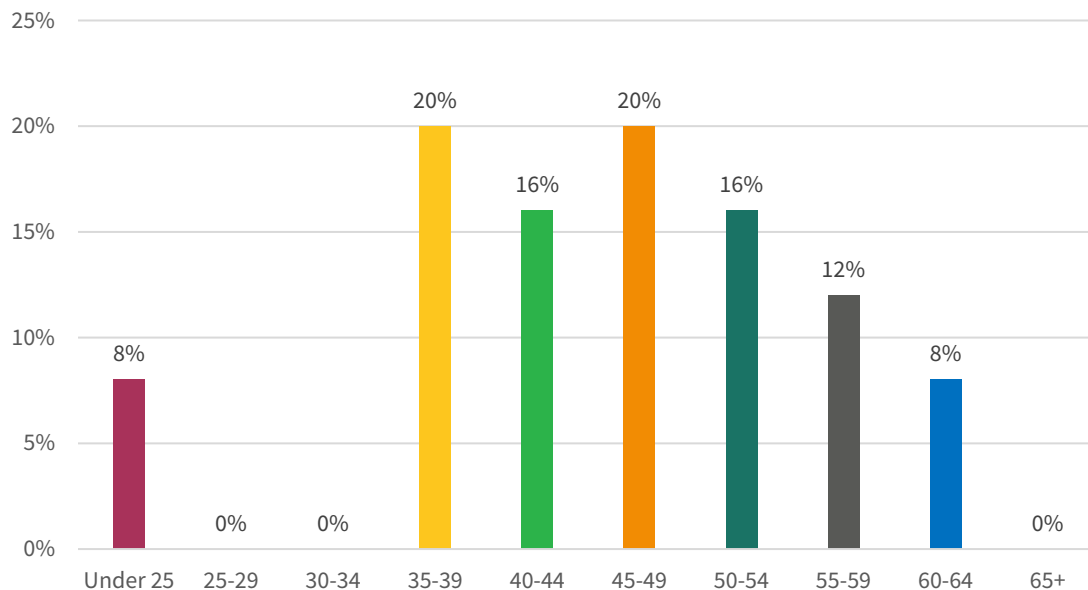
**Chart 3: Response by perceived leadership level**



**Chart 4 Response by leadership experience**



### Chart 5: Age profile of respondents



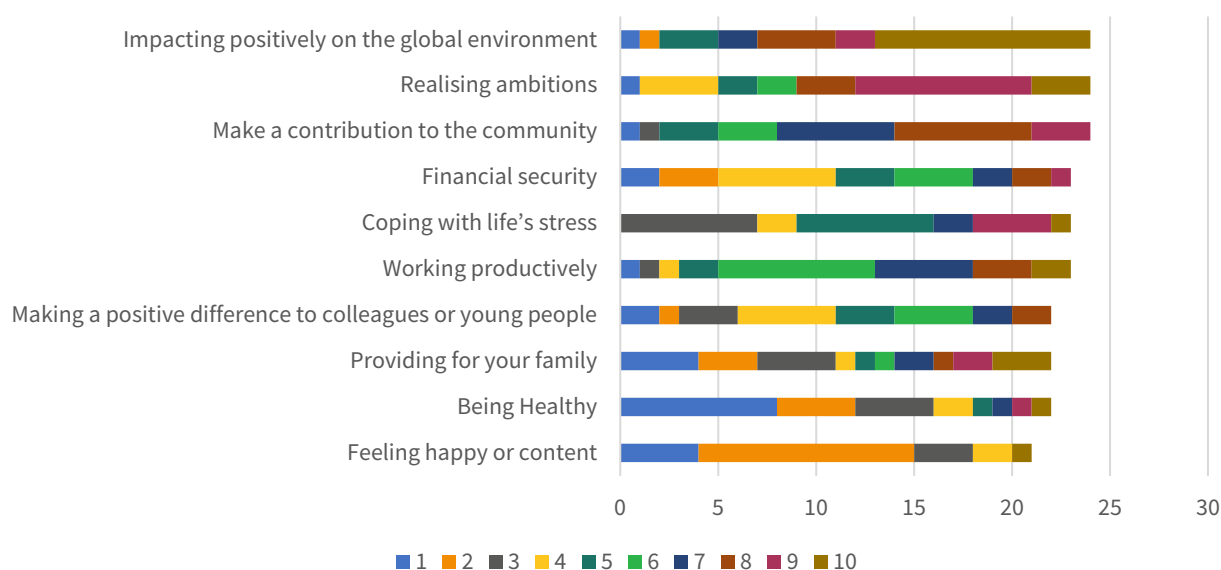
All survey data were analysed to identify variation according to these key characteristics. However, very little variation by geography, age, role or setting was found and certainly none that produced any statistically reliable findings. As a result, analysis by respondent characteristic has been excluded from this summary level report.

### 3. What does well-being mean to youth leaders in Wales?

Respondents were asked to rank ten aspects of their personal and professional well-being, from the most to the least important. The following four aspects were ranked highest:

1. Being healthy
2. Feeling happy or content
3. Coping with life's stress
4. Financial security

## Chart 6: Aspects of well-being ranked most to least important



Respondents were also asked to identify any other aspects of well-being that were important to them. A thematic analysis of these responses identified the following additional aspects of leaders' well-being:

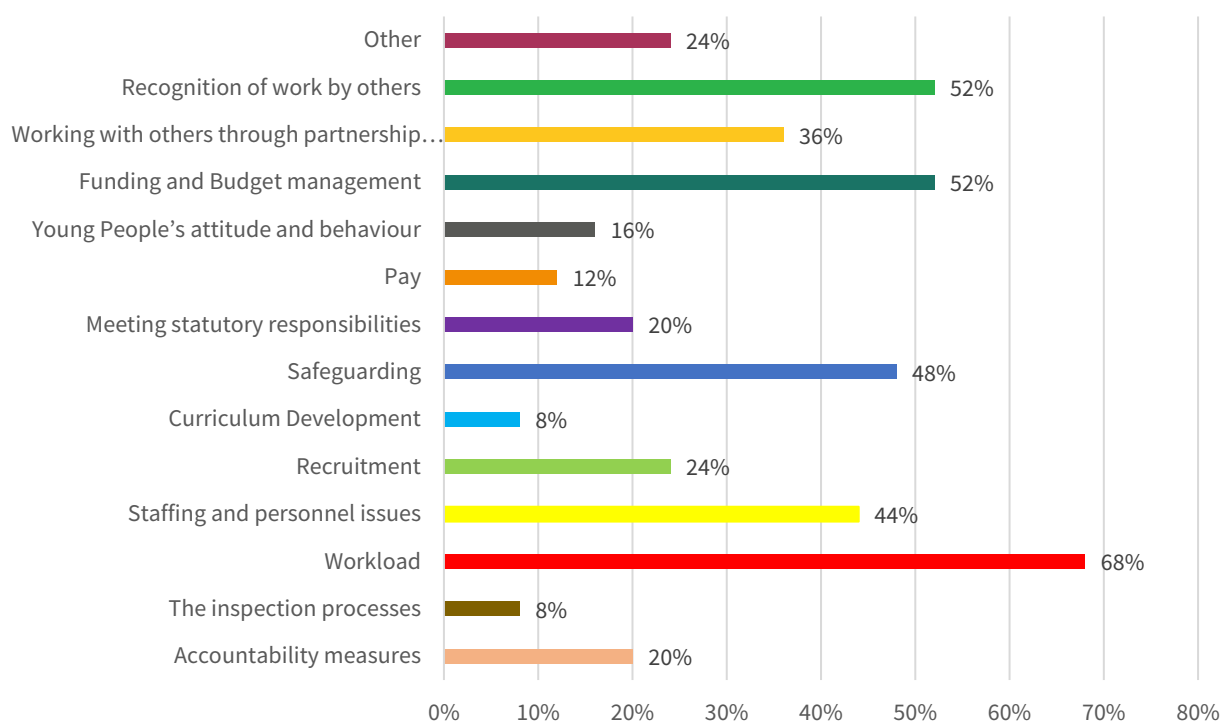
- Well-being and health of family and those around us (31 % of responses)
- A good work/life balance (19%)
- Positive relationships (12%)

## 4. What factors affect youth leaders' well-being?

Respondents were then asked to reflect on factors affecting their well-being. The most frequently chosen factors, from a list of 14 options, were as follows:

1. Workload (chosen by 68% of respondents)
2. Recognition of work by others (52%)
2. Funding and budget management (52%)
3. Safeguarding (48%)
4. Staffing and personnel issues (44%)

## Chart 7: Factors affecting youth leader's well-being



Respondents were then asked to provide reasons for their choices. From a thematic analysis of the free text responses, the principal ways in which these factors affected respondents' well-being can be identified as:

- Retaining staff on yearly contracts, funding, and budgets.
- Workload
- Recognition by peers and young people

Workload was chosen by 68% of respondents, the largest number by some margin.

It is worth noting that 'curriculum development' and 'inspection processes' were not among the most frequently chosen factors affecting leaders' well-being, ranking the lowest out of the 13 factors.

## 5. Current sources of support

Respondents were then asked to consider ways in which their well-being is currently supported. The sources of support chosen most frequently from a list were as follows:

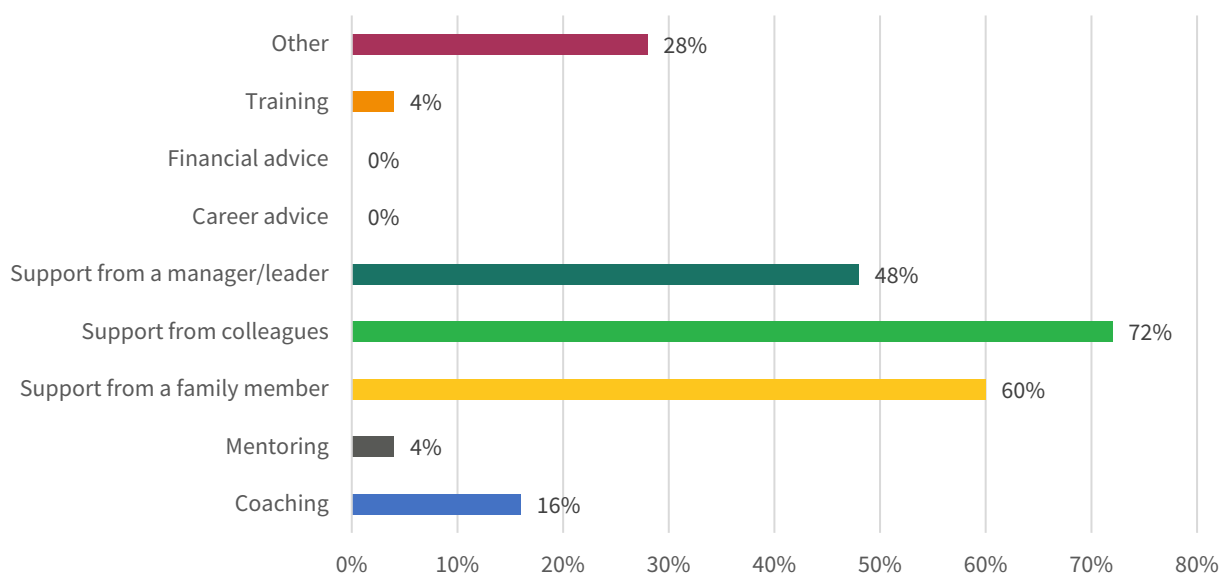
- Support from colleagues (chosen by 72% of respondents)
- Support from a family member (60%)
- Support from a manager/leader in the workplace (48%)

It may be significant that, among the least frequently chosen, were sources of support that could collectively be termed 'external interventions or services', namely:

- Training (4%)
- Support from mentoring (4%)
- Financial or career advice (0%)

This suggests that the great majority of support for well-being currently being accessed by youth leaders in Wales, while hugely valuable and a key component of effective support more broadly, is not from professionals with training in coaching, supervision, facilitation counselling, mental health and so on; that is to say – and with very specific reference to well-being – the support that is currently accessed in Wales remains in large part ‘non-expert’.

**Chart 8: Current sources of well-being support**



Respondents were then asked to describe the main ways in which sources of support for their well-being were beneficial. The most frequent responses were identified in a thematic analysis of the free text responses. The sources of support were:

- Support of family members and friends / importance of a good supportive network (36%)
- Emphasising team members/peer support as they understand youth work (23%)

\*To note: at this question there were some comments about some less positive impacts on well-being. There were a number of additional comments from respondents relating to:

- A need for self-sufficiency
- A need for more line management support
- Difficulties turning to colleagues
- A need to access external supervision



## 6. What more can be done by the Leadership Academy to support leaders' well-being?

The survey concluded by asking respondents how the Leadership Academy could support youth leaders' well-being in Wales. Some suggestions from respondents were:

- How's best to have a voice in situations where direct line management and decision makers aren't from a Youth Work background, and are set in their standard way of managing (in my case income-generating Leisure Services)
- Developmental opportunities for aspiring staff - not yet in management.
- Relevant bite sized courses and opportunities for discussion.
- It would be good to see the Youth Work Leadership & Management Programme come to fruition. Even better, I look forward to a time when all educationalists are able to access the same L&M training - bespoke training is of course, important but joint training would have so many benefits for the sector.
- More information about what the Academy does.
- Supporting the sector to promote the benefits of youth work.
- Connecting leaders from across the education profession on shared learning and networking opportunities.
- Support and opportunities for further development.

Although this question asked respondents to focus specifically on the role of the Leadership Academy, it is instructive that much of what leaders say they would value as a means of further supporting their well-being are the kinds of external interventions and services that are currently only accessed by a minority of leaders (see 5. Current sources of support, above).

This suggests there is currently an undersupply of such opportunities across Wales (once again, there was no significant geographic variation in responses), or at least a dearth of opportunities that are seen as being *accessible* by leaders, either in terms of their quality, cost, perceived value for money or some other factor or combination of factors. This should be a focus of attention and further research for the Leadership Academy, its middle tier partners and Welsh Government.

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For information on the Leadership Academy's work on the well-being of educational leaders, visit our [website](#) or email us [post@agaa.cymru](mailto:post@agaa.cymru).



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