

How YOU can help our mission of learning about teacher wellbeing and anxiety

Rather than write another blog about WHAT you are doing at the moment, today we want to tell you about the research we are conducting on HOW you are coping.

Knowing this information will be crucial going forward as it helps us understand how school-life is affected and, in the long-term, how the pandemic has affected everyone in schools. But it does mean our questions are sometimes worded a little strangely at the moment. This blog explains why.

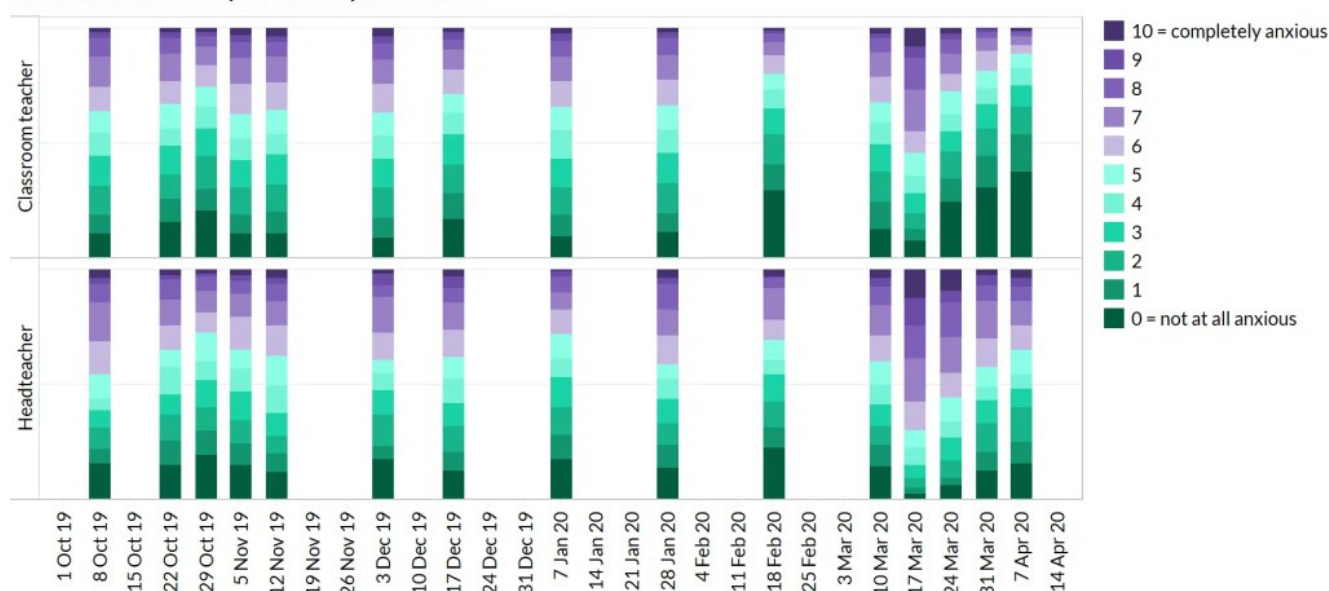
Looking At Anxiety

Those of you who have used the app for a while will know we've asked about your work-related anxiety levels on numerous occasions this academic year. We did this because we wanted to track how anxiety changes over the school year.

The chart below shows what we've learned about how anxiety rises and falls for classroom teachers (i.e. those without significant management responsibilities) and for Headteachers. [NB. For all the charts today, middle leaders and other SLT tend to look much more like classroom teachers than Heads]. Purple is the anxious end of the spectrum, green is the not-anxious end.

You can see the lines become a little bit more green on the October and February half-term dates. When we asked on 17th March, the day before the school closure announcement due to COVID-19, the anxiety levels were much more purple than usual.

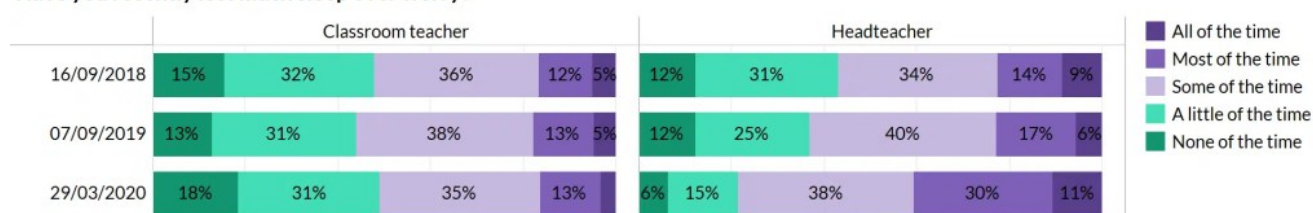
Work-related anxiety on Tuesday of the week



Since the closures, anxiety levels have gradually fallen. In fact, for classroom teachers, work-related anxiety is now lower than at any point in the year. By contrast, even though it is supposed to be the Easter holidays last week, Heads have anxiety levels more typical of term-time.

Questions about sleep and levels of strain have also highlighted differences between classroom teachers and Headteachers. Around two weeks ago, most Heads were losing sleep over worry. Yet, for most classroom teachers, their sleep patterns were little different to normal term-time levels. By the time schools closed, classroom teachers were finding life LESS stressful than if it were running normally, but Heads were finding it far MORE stressful.

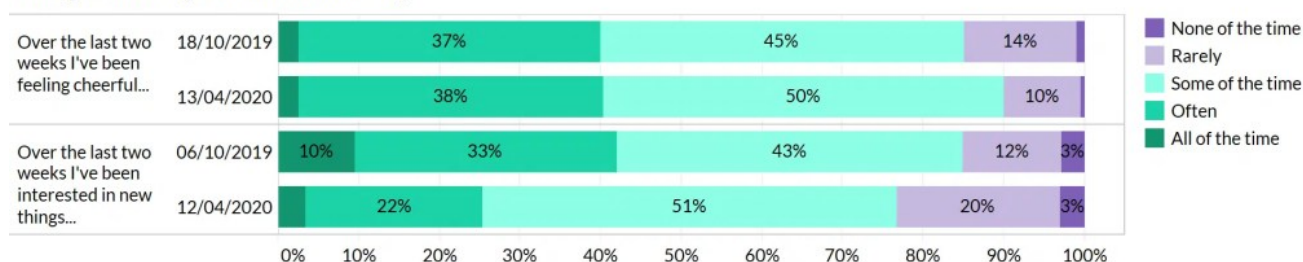
Have you recently lost much sleep over worry?



What About Wellbeing?

The questions you are seeing most days that start 'Over the last two weeks...' are helping us look at overall mental wellbeing. We first asked these questions back in the Autumn, meaning we can now look at how the figures have changed since the school closures and lockdown. For example, we can already see that social distancing hasn't had an impact on your outlook in the sense of how cheerful you feel, but you are far less likely to report that you are currently feeling interested in new things.

Examples of changes in mental wellbeing



These questions are not always the most exciting to answer but they are really important for us to be able to understand how the closures are affecting teachers.

Please do encourage colleagues to help us gather more information by sharing the link teachertapp.com/get-the-app and getting them to sign up.

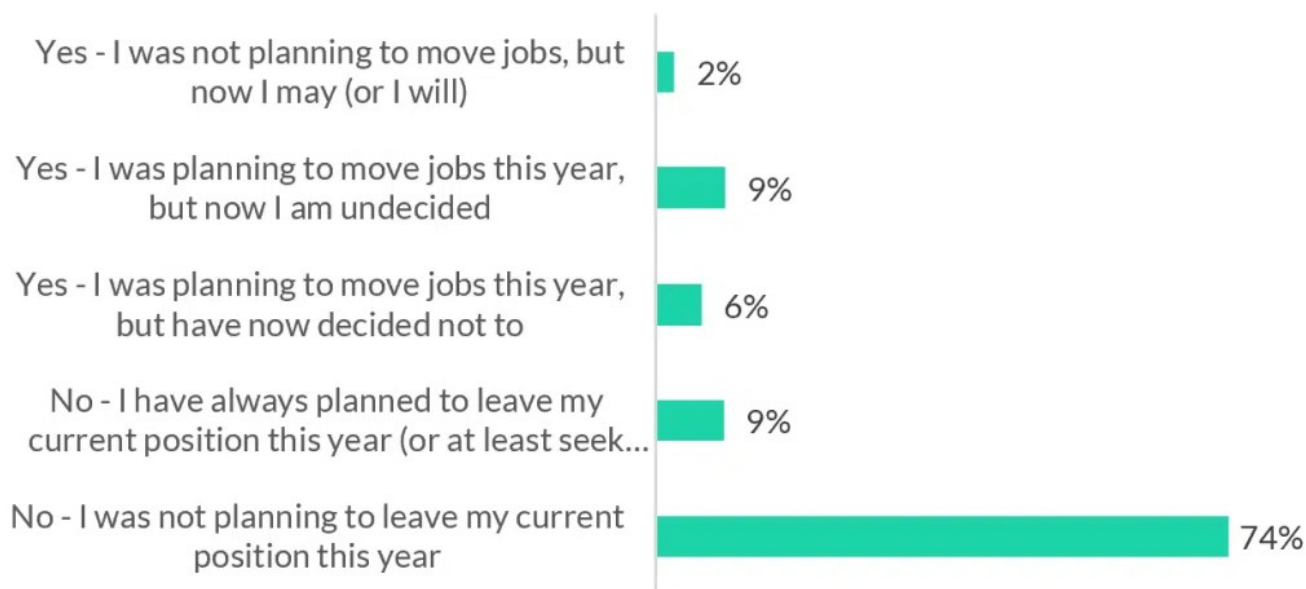
What's going on with recruitment?

One other thing we are currently researching, alongside the Gatsby Foundation and School Dash, is how the recruitment market is responding to the crisis. Recruiting activity at English secondary schools, as measured by posts advertised on their websites, fell suddenly in mid-March and is currently down by about 50-60% compared to the same period last year.

We asked some questions at the end of March to see whether the current economic uncertainty is likely to reduce the flow of teachers between job posts in England. Many of you who had previously been considering changing job this summer have since reconsidered. Unless this sentiment changes in the next few weeks, teacher turnover is likely to be lower than usual this year, which will reduce the number of vacancies that schools must fill.

Middle and senior leaders were the most likely to say they were previously thinking of leaving and are now staying (6 and 7%, respectively). They are also the group who are still most undecided (10 and 11%, respectively). It may be that they are reluctant to seek out a senior promotion in a school that they cannot currently visit.

Has the COVID-19 pandemic changed your short-term career plans?



The initial report we've written for Gatsby Foundation is [available on their website](#).

Look out for more questions about your future career plans over the next few weeks. Again, it's a crucial aspect of the school calendar with enormous influence on teachers' lives. The more information we have, the better we can inform policymakers at all levels.

Hands up to help!

Although some teachers are currently inundated with work, we know that around half of you feel like you are working many fewer hours and, in some cases, are a little bored!

One feature many Tappers have asked for is the ability to have subject/phase-specific tips on the final page. To do this, we need your help.

Later this week we will ask a question seeking volunteers to recommend 10 subject/phase-specific blog articles and to write the tip for them – that is, to write a 240 tweet-style message to go out on the last page describing the article. We will then collate these and start offering more specialised tips on the final page. Keep your eyes peeled for the question!

Finally, we know how much you love the daily tips, so here are all of the ones from last week...

- [Mastering the two types of distance learning](#)
- [Implicit learning ability](#)
- [How to rank GCSE and A-level students](#)
- [Making teaching videos](#)
- [Maximising the effectiveness of multiple choice](#)

- [Mastering the art of influence](#)
- [9 common cognitive biases](#)