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The Educational
Institute of Scotland

Report on Member Survey of Home Economics Teachers



Report on Member Survey of Home Economics Teachers

The Education Committee was assigned the following resolution from the 2022 AGM:

'That this AGM calls on Council to survey Home Economics Teachers to investigate and report on:-

- (a) auxiliary provision at local authority and school level*
- (b) the extent that teachers undertake administrative and non-teaching duties which are generally undertaken by auxiliary staff*
- (c) how this impacts on workload, teaching and learning if there is no auxiliary provision.'*

In addition to desk research, a survey of Home Economics ('H.E.') teachers was constructed and sent out to the 476 members listed as teaching in this area. The survey was open for a 5 week period, with 309 responses received. This represents a 65% response rate, which has high statistical significance.

None of the questions in the survey were mandatory. This allowed respondents to skip questions as they progressed through the survey. This was done to ensure that there was no false recording to improve confidence in the results. Some questions also had 'logic' applied, meaning that respondents would be redirected to different follow-on questions depending on the answers they gave. Details of how many respondents answered each question are included throughout this report.

All figures within this report have been rounded to the nearest one decimal place, meaning that some questions may not have a total exacting 100%, with other questions within the survey allowing for multiple responses.

There was considerable opportunity for members to record more detailed answers to the questions posed, either by using comment boxes, or by ticking an "other" option where appropriate. Throughout this report member comments have been included under the corresponding questions. As some questions within the survey elicited a large number of additional comments or responses, the quotes selected are only a snapshot of this wider data but have been chosen to reflect the majority of views captured.

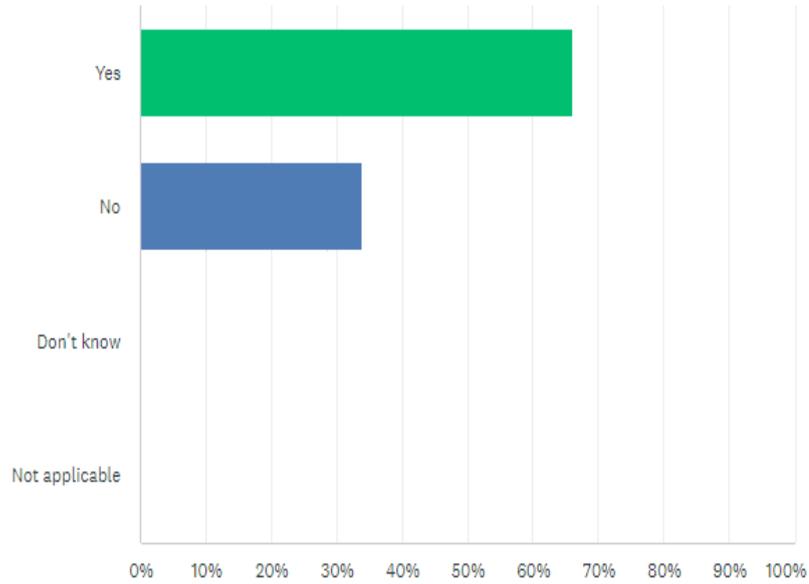
1. Which local authority area do you work in (tick more than one if applicable)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I work in the independent sector/ not based in a local authority	1.29%	4
Aberdeen City	1.62%	6
Aberdeenshire	3.56%	11
Angus	2.59%	8
Argyll and Bute	1.29%	4
Clackmannanshire	1.62%	6
Dumfries and Galloway	3.24%	10
Dundee City	5.18%	16
East Ayrshire	1.94%	6
East Dunbartonshire	3.56%	11
East Lothian	0.65%	2
East Renfrewshire	1.29%	4
Edinburgh City	3.56%	11
Falkirk	3.56%	11
Fife	5.83%	18
Glasgow City	8.09%	25
Highland	3.56%	11
Inverclyde	2.27%	7
Midlothian	2.91%	9
Moray	1.94%	6
North Ayrshire	4.85%	15
North Lanarkshire	7.44%	23
Orkney	0.65%	2
Perth and Kinross	2.91%	9
Renfrewshire	2.91%	9
Scottish Borders	1.94%	6
Shetland Islands	1.62%	6
South Ayrshire	3.24%	10
South Lanarkshire	8.74%	27
Stirling	1.62%	6
West Dunbartonshire	1.29%	4
Western Isles (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar)	0.32%	1
West Lothian	2.91%	9
Total Respondents: 309		

It can be seen from the table that the highest number of responses received were from H.E. teachers working in the City of Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire.

2. As a Home Economics teacher, do you receive any support from Home Economics auxiliary staff?

Answered: 309 Skipped: 0

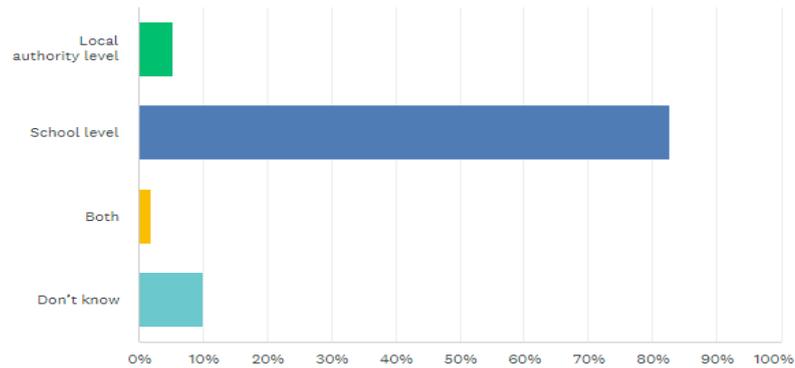


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Yes	66.02% 204
▼ No	33.98% 105
▼ Don't know	0.00% 0
▼ Not applicable	0.00% 0
TOTAL	309

Over a third of respondents (34%) indicated that they received no support from H.E. auxiliary staff, with 66% receiving support of some kind.

3. If you answered 'yes' to question 2, is this support at local authority level or school level?

Answered: 208 Skipped: 101



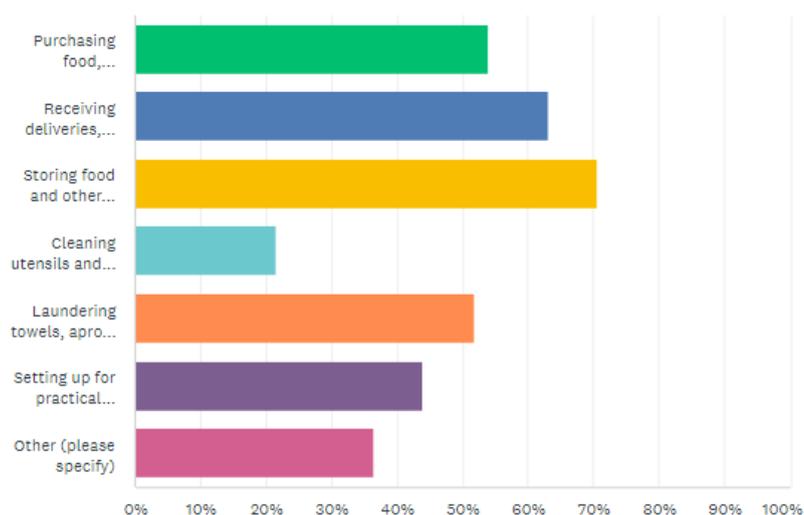
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Local authority level	5.29% 11
School level	82.69% 172
Both	1.92% 4
Don't know	10.10% 21
TOTAL	208

The overwhelming majority of responses (83%) indicated that where auxiliary support is provided, this is at school level, with only 5% indicating that it was centrally based and 2% citing a hybrid approach.

10% of respondents didn't know where those providing auxiliary support were based.

4. What is the nature of the support provided? (tick more than one if applicable)

Answered: 228 Skipped: 82



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Purchasing food, ingredients and other resources for use in practical lessons	53.95% 123
▼ Receiving deliveries, checking deliveries and processing the administration of receipts, late deliveries and non-deliveries	63.16% 144
▼ Storing food and other resources for use in practical lessons and completing stock checks	70.61% 161
▼ Cleaning utensils and other resources which have been used in practical lessons	21.49% 49
▼ Laundering towels, aprons and oven gloves after practical lessons	51.75% 118
▼ Setting up for practical lessons and cleaning up after them	43.86% 100
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 36.40% 83
Total Respondents: 228	

70% of respondents to this question indicated that of the listed tasks, the support was used for storing food and other resources for use in practical lessons and completing stock checks.

63% referenced support in receiving deliveries, checking deliveries and processing associated administrative tasks.

54% and 52% of respondents indicated that they received support in purchasing food, ingredients and other resources and in laundering towels, aprons and oven gloves after practical lessons, respectively.

Under half (44%) received help in setting up, and cleaning up after, practical lessons, with only 21% specifically receiving help in cleaning utensils and resources.

Although there was an option for members to provide information about alternative tasks undertaken and a small number referenced laminating and food portioning in the range of supports given, this part of the survey was predominantly used by members to provide additional comments on, and qualify, the extent and range of support provided.

A prevalent theme permeating the additional comments was the variability and ad hoc nature of the support. Many members referenced the fact that whilst they received support, this was not from H.E. auxiliary staff but was mostly from Pupil Support or administrative staff, who had a defined remit elsewhere in the school.

A number of consequences were cited as flowing from this:

- H.E. teachers cannot depend on this support. It is given on a discretionary basis and only if the staff involved can be released from duties which are specified in their remit and/or regarded as being of higher priority.
- The staff providing the support may not be trained or familiar with the statutory provisions which underpin and influence practice in this area, resulting in a further demand on teacher time in explaining, supervising or assisting in the completion of the task.
- The health and safety risks arising from this lack of training were referenced. If these staff members have not been trained in food hygiene or infection prevention and control systems in accordance with statutory provisions and guidance, then this places children, young people, school staff and ultimately the school at risk.

Members were clear in their responses that even where support is given, it is often minimal and that the duties listed in the question are routinely completed by H.E. teachers. More information on the level of support provided is contained in the responses to question 5 below.

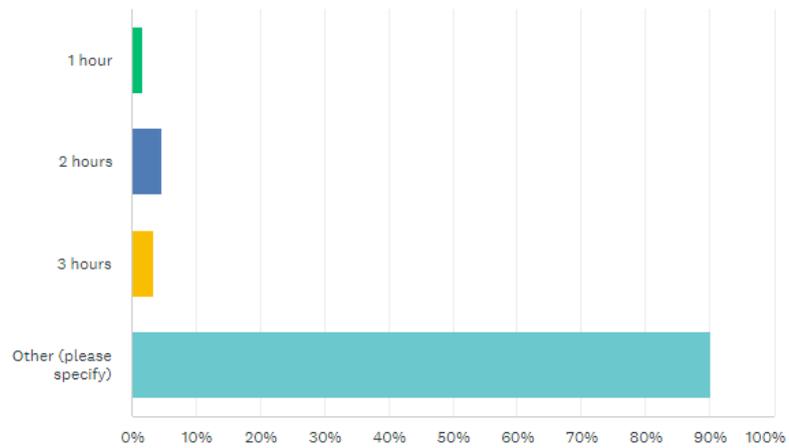
- *We do not have an auxiliary. We have been given a classroom assistant to help. But she can be taken away at any time for more pressing work such as reader and scribe, leaving prep etc to us.*
- *Sporadic support is provided by ASN staff on a very limited basis so cannot be relied upon.*
- *Sometimes I have help from a support assistant if the staffing levels are not short, however if the staffing levels are short, I*

receive no support and carry out all duties myself. When I am fortunate enough to have some level of support, it is general help with preparing and cleaning up. No purchasing of food or completion of stock checks etc. I carry out these duties myself.

- Staff member not trained and we have to show all task before hand - impacting on our time also.*
- Occasional office staff helping with a few basic essential duties like filing, re-typing work and laundering towels. This equates to a max of 10-15 mins a day but not necessarily everyday this is offered. They have to be based in the office and not in our dep.*
- Routine cleaning used to be done by General Assistants. Now not done. Serious implications for Food Safety. Food Safety is really important and needs to be seen as Safeguarding (prevention of infection) and prioritised.*
- Without our technician, we'd be on our knees. We simply couldn't do without the help, if she wasn't there, I'd leave the profession as protected non-contact would be become non-existent and we'd spend all our time doing what she does.*
- I come in an hour early every morning, regularly work through my breaks and stay an hour late, all to set up and clean up from my classes.*

5. How many hours of Home Economic auxiliary staff time is allocated to support you in the course of a week?

Answered: 236 Skipped: 73



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ 1 hour	1.69% 4
▼ 2 hours	4.66% 11
▼ 3 hours	3.39% 8
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 90.25% 213
TOTAL	236

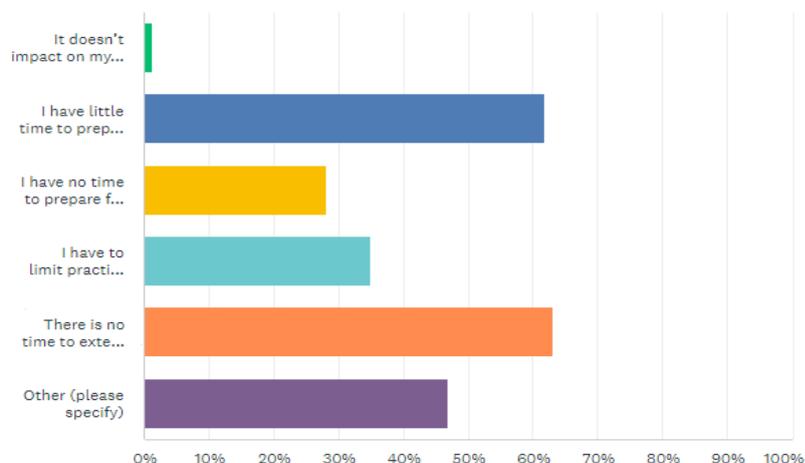
It is evident from an analysis of the qualitative feedback given in response to the 'other' option to this question, that the level of support, where available, is variable.

43% of respondents indicated that they received either less than 10 hours of support per week (31%) or that it was variable (13%). A further 13% received support of between 10 and 15 hours per week, with 32% receiving over 15 hours. Only 12% of respondents indicated that they received full time support.

- *They tend to support other departments that have male members of staff. I see staff within our Technical department and Science departments get support. But our department does not get help for these staff members.*
- *So sporadic that it is hard to tell. The staff that do support are office staff so if they are short staffed or are too busy printing reports we get no support but if they do come to the department it is around 1.5 hours per day.*

6. If you answered 'no' to question 2, how does this impact on teaching and learning? (tick more than one if applicable)

Answered: 160 Skipped: 149



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
It doesn't impact on my teaching and learning	1.25% 2
I have little time to prepare for my classes	61.88% 99
I have no time to prepare for my classes	28.13% 45
I have to limit practical lessons in the classroom	35.00% 56
There is no time to extend practical lessons, to provide depth, breadth of enjoyment of learning for children and young people	63.13% 101
Other (please specify)	Responses 46.88% 75
Total Respondents: 160	

Only 1% of respondents to this question indicated that the lack of support had no impact on teaching and learning in their class.

90% indicated that they either had little (62%) or no time (28%) to prepare for classes.

35% referenced having to limit practical lessons in the classroom, whilst 63% had no time to extend practical lessons, to provide depth, breadth and enjoyment of learning for pupils.

Although this question was asked of those members who had indicated that they received no support, qualitative comments in the 'other' section have also been received from members who considered the support they received was insufficient. The qualitative comments should be read in this light.

The impact of the lack of support was clearly articulated in the qualitative comments made, with members highlighting the significant impact which this lack of support has both on teaching and learning but also on their health and wellbeing, work/life balance and their enjoyment of the job.

Members reported the following concerns and frustrations, arising from the lack or paucity of support:

- the pressure to work well in excess of contracted hours to minimise any negative impact on teaching and learning
- the fact that non-contact time is spent on duties which are outwith the role and remit of a teacher
- the lack of time to tailor the curriculum to the local context, to provide opportunities for depth, breadth and enjoyment of learning and to develop new learning materials
- the lack of time within working hours to prepare for theory lessons, to mark coursework, to undertake reporting and to reflect
- the lack of time for professional reading and learning.

In terms of the impact on health and wellbeing, members highlighted the following issues:

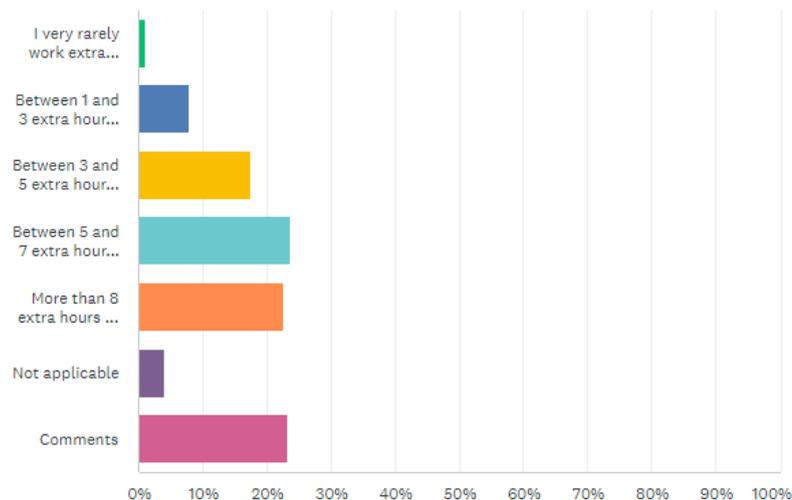
- working excessively long days, without adequate time for breaks and lunch
- high levels of stress and exhaustion
- the negative impact on their physical health related to the demands of the additional tasks being undertaken (e.g. lifting heavy loads, re-organising stock, moving equipment, cleaning etc.)
- poor work/life balance, impacting on family life.

- *No time for marking or developing work, prelims or writing reports. All work done at breaks, lunch and at home.*
- *All marking and paperwork has to be taken home as I spend all non-contact cleaning, preparing setting up food and equipment, doing washing, folding washing away etc, ordering food. This year I have 40 National 5 practical cookery learners where the course is 48% written meaning marking workload is still high. An Assignment takes around 20 minutes to mark therefore to mark practice versions of these takes around 14 hours!*
- *I am burnt out.*
- *As a dept of two, we are extremely stressed and constantly exhausted by the numbers coming through the dept and resourcing our lessons adequately whilst maximising enjoyment, however, this often comes last.*
- *Although we get help, it's not nearly enough - I can do no preparation for theory lessons /marking /reporting or professional reading in my normal working hours - all of that is done in my time. Only thing I have time for in school is practical lesson preparation - the introduction of 50 mins periods also made this much worse as S1/S2 just don't have time in a lesson to weigh ingredients and then cook the dish - its barely manageable if everything is weighed /portioned for them. We only see S1/S2 for 1 period per week - just not enough time.*

- *I have to work a minimum of 11 hours (often more) over and above my contracted hours every single week just to keep my head above water and allow the pupils to have a half decent experience of the subject.*
- *I feel I am constantly firefighting just to survive. I would love to do more and better for my learners, but I am stretched to my absolute limits and it is affecting my family and life outside of school.*

7. If you answered 'no' to question 2, how many hours a week outside of your contracted hours, do you usually spend carrying out work which beyond the remit of a class teacher (such a purchasing food, ingredients and other resources for use in practical lessons, receiving deliveries and related administration, storing food, cleaning utensils and other resources, setting up for practical lessons)?

Answered: 177 Skipped: 132



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ I very rarely work extra hours (less than one hour per week)	1.13%	2
▼ Between 1 and 3 extra hours per week	7.91%	14
▼ Between 3 and 5 extra hours per week	17.51%	31
▼ Between 5 and 7 extra hours per week	23.73%	42
▼ More than 8 extra hours per week	22.60%	40
▼ Not applicable	3.95%	7
▼ Comments	Responses 23.16%	41
TOTAL		177

Only 1% of respondents indicated that they very rarely work extra hours. In stark contrast, almost a half of respondents (47%) indicated that they

worked more than 5 hours extra every week, with 23% working more than 8 extra hours per week.

In the qualitative comments made in response to this question, members, including those who received support, cited the range of non-teaching duties which they are undertaking every day, to ensure that they can deliver practical lessons for pupils. They referenced long working days in school, with additional preparation and marking being taken home for completion in the evening and at weekends.

- *I have totalled this to 14 hours per week.*
- *I have an auxiliary but I still do between 3-5 extra hours a week as well myself.*
- *Very rarely leave school before 5.30 or later. Often only cars in car park are HE teachers. As have to ensure food put away safely, cloths washed, room clean, fridge clean and prepared for next day. We often have 6/7 practical classes back-to-back where the amount of preparation required is considerable. Very rarely am I able to take a morning break or lunch break and often have no time to go to the bathroom until after school. At one point ended up in hospital due to an infection caused by this.*
- *Between 5 and 7 extra hours per week. Our auxiliary support works in the morning for a couple hours 3 times per week. She puts the food order away and checks over the food orders that we write up. She does not set up for practical lessons therefore, we spend an hour or 2 each day (mainly 2) for the practical lessons commencing throughout the day.*
- *I get auxiliary help but still need to depend 8+ hrs carrying out duties that are beyond a classroom teacher.*
- *Even though have 2 periods of CA help, I'm still averaging 8 hours non contractual time to do domestic chores. On a day I'm not in school (0.6), I have to check stock levels, order food for the week, clean cookers, fridges and ovens (the cleaners are not contracted to do this).*
- *I would say 12 hours a week.*
- *I work 4 days a week and am completely snowed under.*
- *I regularly work until 6pm each night after school, so my extra time to prepare lessons averages at 2 hours per day, but sometimes it's more when we have practical exams. Often I'll work these hours and then take marking home at weekends.*

8. I work part-time

18% of respondents indicated that they work part-time.

Members responding to this question also provided qualitative feedback which highlights the impact which the lack of auxiliary support is having on retention of H.E. teachers and the work patterns which they are electing to adopt.

A number of respondents referenced the fact that their decision to move to a part-time contract was largely predicated on the impact of excessive workload and the physical demands which they experienced when working full-time without this vital support.

Those working part-time also indicated that they work on their non-teaching days to complete tasks which they do not have time to undertake in working hours, because they are too busy dealing with the administrative and non-teaching duties which ought to be completed by auxiliary staff.

It is clear from the comments made that morale amongst this group of teachers is low, with some indicating that they feel under-valued and powerless to effect change.

- *Just recently started to wind down to early retirement as pace and expectations at work were becoming overwhelming, particularly physically. Without support I would have had to retire years ago due to workload. Support staff are vital to the survival of Home Ec. In the curriculum. Home Ec teachers are few and far between and this is largely due to the pressures put on them with no domestic support and set very difficult time constraints.*
- *I reduced my hours last session as felt I couldn't keep on top of things and I feel this is partly due to having little support in terms of running of the department.*
- *I have taught for 15 years and have had to go part-time for some of this time as the job is not sustainable working 27 periods a week, moving classrooms and teaching practical lessons. When part-time I would spend my days off making resources, marking and writing resources. Also, we now have a secondary job where we have to have all weekly lessons/videos up on Google Classroom for pupils to access if they are absent.*
- *I am having a career break this year for personal reasons and also due to the nature of the job. When returning, if returning to teaching, I will consider going part-time as I cannot cope with the workload.*

- *I could most definitely not work full time in HE.*
- *I work 4 days a week. Therefore have 4 non-contact periods but spend most of them doing food orders and prepping food which takes me away from my teaching remit. Myself and my colleagues are fed up.*
- *But spend my day off completing tasks I cannot achieve at school because I am busy washing, prepping and clearing up.*
- *I became a part time teacher two years ago due to the pace and physical nature of teaching Home Economics, even with support in the department. This was necessary for my physical and mental health.*

9. Is there anything else in relation to your role that you would like to share?

41% of respondents elected to leave additional comments.

A selection of the additional comments which members made are included under thematic headings here either because they offer new insights or give emphasis to some of the themes highlighted elsewhere.

Excessive workload

- *'Carrying out additional practical duties means other tasks such as marking, making resources, writing reports, writing marking schemes for practical exams, practising making dishes for practical exams all has to be done in my own time outwith school hours.'*
- *'I would not encourage anyone to join this profession (HE). I am in at 7am every day and do not leave until well past 5pm most nights. That is a 50+ hour week and will almost always have to do work at home, marking, reporting, SQA assignment marking. I think the councils are taking huge liberties with HE staff and something needs to change - why would we promote this subject to aspiring teaching staff / pupils?'*
- *'It is a constant struggle to ensure food safety and storage in terms of stock rotation, meeting local authority food safety policy, providing appropriate challenge for young people and driving results when we are inadequately unsupported unlike other practical subjects like Tech and Science that have entire trolleys, trays and lessons set up for them. Its unsustainable!'*

- *'Workload is unrealistic and having an impact on staff morale and the dwindling number of subject specialists who are leaving teaching to pursue higher paid jobs with better working hours and conditions.'*
- *'The workload of a home economics teacher is underestimated by so many and I truly believe the workload is impossible to complete within a working time agreement (or even remotely close) without support from an auxiliary.'*
- *'The workload is HORRENDOUS and I am exhausted at the end of every day.'*
- *'Home Economics as a subject is so diverse, we deliver cookery lessons as well as fashion & textiles and cakecraft. These courses are all completely different with a very heavy resource/need with different ingredients and equipment. The change-over every day is exhausting with several different class set up every day. The subjects are not transferable and it's probably like a science teacher being asked to teach Chemistry, Biology and Physics, so very diverse and therefore more challenging. We need help.'*
- *Even when pregnant I have been offered no help. 25kg bags of flour. Ordering food that doesn't come, at least 4 washes per day- 5pm and only cleaned room, 7:30-8am starts to prep food daily. I'm exhausted. No real solutions given but to get kids to help which often can take time out of day as well and can't always rely on this support. It's becoming that I have thought about going back to industry as after all this tidying/ordering/food prep I still have development and marking to do often working till 10pm to get on top of workload. It just seems unmanageable.'*

Class Size

- *'I used to be able to do 'hand over hand' cutting and stand between 2 at a cooker, but class size so big now it's not possible which is severely limiting skills, now using a multi chopper or having to chop in advance / prep in advance e.g. cream or rub in or pre weigh. Further, having to cook some things in advance too because too many in class e.g. pre-cook pasta for macaroni cheese because too many to supervise that we can only make the cheese sauce. This advance prep is now very, very time demanding and totally de-skilling pupils.'*

Impact on Health and Wellbeing

- *'I personally am at breaking point with this job, the level of prep required is taking its toll. On top of food prep, we have marking and*

all the other commitments that other teachers have. I now feel like I am struggling to do my job properly'.

- *'Completely exhausted, on my knees and finding working like this unsustainable.'*
- *'I am in school just after 7.30 am to help get organised and set up for lessons. It means during my non-contact time is taken up with auxiliary tasks instead of teaching and learning. I also spend more than 8 hours having to still do auxiliary tasks. It has had an impact on my health and I am off work with stress. I have been suffering with high blood pressure and had to be put onto beta blockers.'*
- *'It is a very physical and totally exhausting job being a Home Economics teacher.'*
- *'I have experienced burn out in my career and this is something I am still working through.'*

Impact on Teaching and Learning

- *'Our subject is suffering and staff are exhausted. Pupils are not experiencing the same depth of learning experiences and outcomes as they did when we had Auxiliary help.'*
- *'Teaching and learning, work-life balance and job satisfaction increasingly affected by this issue. Inequality across subjects and councils is demoralising and now forces us to look at timetables to see when we can fit in practicals around availability of clean laundry and time to prepare ingredients and equipment.'*
- *'We have had to reduce the number of practical lessons we do per week as we struggle to set up and order food for practical lessons.'*
- *'It is completely unfair the workload that is placed on Home Economics teachers. The common response is do less cooking and sewing and that will save time but this is at the core of our subject. Pupils like practical lessons which is highly engaging as excellent for preparing them for life. All our practicals are related to the theory content we deliver which supports learners as another tool to learn and revise which not all subjects can offer. I have had great success with pupils achieving N5 and Higher Health and Food Technology by building in active practical lessons that are engaging and are teaching pupils without them realising: an example of this is Jam making to learn about the functional property of crystallisation. Our attainment benefits from the practical work we put in but then has a consequence on our working life which is not right.'*

Equity and Variability of Support

- *'There needs to a consistent approach to auxiliary support for Home Economics across Scotland. Some local authorities employ full time support that does everything and some schools get little to no support meaning workload is crazy/stressful.'*
- *'The lottery of support across the country, and even within our local authority, is appalling.'*
- *'Other practical subjects have 'technician' support. A science technician regularly visits school, bringing resources, chemicals and setting up equipment. Craft and Design have access to a technician who will sharpen tools, prepare wood, etc. In home economics, I have to sharpen the knives myself!'*

Health and Safety and the impact of COVID

- *'Due to the time required to set up for a class/clean up after a class, HE teachers are often carrying out our physically and mentally demanding job without having proper breaks.'*
- *'Food prep is potentially very dangerous if not done properly. Why do science and technical have assistance but Home Ec do not? I'm told it is for health and safety reasons!'*
- *'Learning and teaching is certainly being affected, especially since Covid guidelines required so much extra preparation for practical work (weighing ingredients for every pupil), washing and drying textile items and cleaning hand touch surfaces. Although there was a day cleaner employed until June 2022, they were not deployed to clean in the Home Economics room. We've had no official guidance on relaxing these guidelines, as far as I know.'*

Recruitment and Retention

- *'We are at breaking point which has not been helped by the lack of HE staff to replace colleagues who have gone elsewhere. I love my job but feel undervalued as a teacher and am at the point where I don't want to do this anymore.'*
- *'The main issue we face is lack of HE teachers (if one of us was to leave there would almost certainly be no applicants to replace) plus faculty issue - our PT is PE leaving us to do much of the work (unpaid) that a PT would normally do, due to a lack of understanding of HE.'*

- *'It is so disheartening when you see other teachers starting school later than you and being able to enjoy tea breaks and lunch breaks. It has now broken me and I have decided to take my pension early and leave next year.'*
- *'It is exhausting being a H Ec teacher and I am already looking at what else I can do outside of teaching to let me have a better quality of life. I am exhausted all the time as we want our pupils to undertake as much practical experience as possible however that is only possible if we are carrying out all of the prep.'*
- *'As a profession we need more support, we need to be listened to and we need to feel valued. Our subject should be a National Priority to support the agenda of the Government to improve the health of the nation.'*
- *'I am also concerned that out of 7 high schools...not one of the H.E. Depts is managed by an H.E. specialist. The majority of these faculties are managed by P.E. staff. Over the past year, 2 H.E. staff have been interviewed and appointed ... and both were interviewed without an H.E. teacher at the interview. I have been shocked that this is allowed and feel it devalues our subject.'*

A Dedicated Auxiliary Support Role

- *'The auxiliary is an integral part of our department team, valued, and appreciated. Senior Management need to understand how important they are to us and appreciate their expertise.'*
- *'My CA would like to help more but because she is contracted as a classroom assistant for the pupils she keeps getting pulled off to other classes. If her contract stated she was a technician for home economics then she wouldn't be taken away so readily.'*
- *'We really need a Home Economics Technician who has a remit for the department. The person should hold a food hygiene certificate for food safety.'*
- *'I feel it is very much a 'postcode lottery' in relation to auxiliary support for Home Economics and I feel it should be available as a full-time role across the board in all Scottish schools. Auxiliary staff should be paid a salary which recognises the vital work they do and should not just be seen as a luxury.'*

Lack of investment

- *'At the moment I have no auxiliary support as she left at the end of November. There has been no auxiliary provision in the department'*

since she left. The job was advertised last week but only as a temporary post until June 2023. Originally this post was 15 hours a week, permanent.'

Conclusions

There is a distinct lack of auxiliary provision in Home Economics, both at school and local authority level. Even where support is available, it is insufficient to meet needs; is ad hoc in nature; cannot be relied upon for planning purposes; and is largely delivered by staff who are employed to undertake another role and are, therefore, not qualified or trained to provide H.E. auxiliary support.

The result is that H.E. teachers feel pressure to plug this gap, with many¹ working an extra day or more over their contracted hours every week, having assumed these additional duties, without pay.

This lack of support is having a significant impact on learning and teaching, on the student experience, on workload and on the health and wellbeing of H.E. teachers.

It is well recognised that H.E. plays a key role within Curriculum for Excellence. Through *practical* experiences, young people demonstrate growth in the skills and capabilities across the four capacities, developing key life skills, team building and communication skills, time keeping and employability skills. Education Scotland in their document, '[Home Economics: A Portrait of Current Practice in Scottish Secondary Schools](#)' highlight the importance of pedagogy, rooted in meaningful contexts for learning and through the use of practical activity and investigative approaches.

And yet, the lack of auxiliary support frustrates these policy ambitions and thwarts the delivery of high-quality educational experiences. Instead H.E. teachers are faced with the dilemma of reducing the number of practical lessons taught, thereby curtailing and diluting depth and enjoyment of learning or having to strive to undertake these additional duties themselves, using their non-contact time to do so and foregoing breaks and lunchtimes in the process.

Furthermore, if non-contact time is used to set up practical lessons and complete auxiliary duties, marking, preparation, assessment and reporting – all essential elements of a teacher's role – are, consequently, being undertaken outwith contracted hours. There is no time for curriculum development or to consider opportunities to extend experiences to provide depth, breadth and enjoyment of learning, key principles underpinning Curriculum for Excellence.

It is unsurprising, therefore, that H.E. teachers feel that they are having to choose, on a daily basis, between meeting learners' needs, on the one hand and their own health and wellbeing and family life, on the other.

The physical nature of the tasks, long hours and the mental pressures in dealing with relentless, excessive workload are taking their toll on the health and wellbeing of H.E. teachers. Members report burn-out, feeling exhausted and describe the

¹ Almost a quarter of respondents to this survey

role as 'unsustainable'. Even where these issues have been highlighted to management, there is a perception in some cases that the allocation of support is a 'privilege', rather than an integral aspect of the provision of H.E. Education.

This is at odds with the support available from technicians in other areas of the Curriculum, most notably in science and technology, which is regarded as essential to the functioning of these departments and raises questions about the lack of provision in a subject area taught by, and the disproportionate burden placed on, a cohort of professionals who are predominantly female.

Concerns about the impact on recruitment of H.E. teachers have been well publicised², with a bursary scheme introduced in 2019 to attract graduates to the profession³. However, unless dedicated H.E. auxiliary support is provided consistently across schools and measures adopted to address the excessive workload, such incentives are likely to have little long-lasting effect. The qualitative data from the survey clearly demonstrates that members would not recommend H.E. teaching as a profession.

Retention is also an issue, with members requesting part-time work as they cannot continue in a full-time capacity; considering retirement at an earlier stage than they would otherwise; or contemplating alternative careers. Given the gender balance of this cohort of teachers and the burden of unpaid and caring work which we know women carry⁴, these issues must be considered from an equality perspective and provision made to address the causes of disparity of workload. Some respondents also referenced the impact which the change to a faculty model has had on the provision of support. As many H.E. departments have been subsumed within wider Health and Wellbeing faculties, there is a perceived lack of subject specialist leadership, leaving H.E. teachers feeling that they have no voice, with no one to advocate on their behalf and little prominence or integration. These issues around recruitment and retention must be addressed as a matter of urgency, not only for the wellbeing of staff but also if H.E. is to continue as a central pillar of Health and Wellbeing within Curriculum for Excellence. We cannot forget that for those learners who prefer a 'vocational' pathway or who find the practical elements of the course attractive, H.E. provides the opportunity for valuable engagement and for positive outcomes and destinations. The necessary auxiliary support must be in place to avert a *de facto* narrowing of the curriculum, thereby, restricting the options for those learners for whom traditional 'academic' study is a barrier.

Members are calling for the role of auxiliary staff in H.E. to be recognised and valued, citing its importance in terms of ensuring compliance with key legislative requirements under food safety, infection control, hygiene and health and safety. It should be regarded no differently from the role of technicians in Science and Technology and should be given parity of esteem in terms of the allocation of resources.

² [Home economics 'disappearing' from some Scottish schools | Tes](#)

³ [£20k for new home economics teachers | Tes Magazine](#)

⁴ <https://www.eis.org.uk/gender-equality/iwd2021>

The current variability across and within local authorities and schools and across subjects has resulted in a postcode lottery of provision. Given the impact on teaching and learning, this must be addressed to ensure equity of opportunity and provision for all children and young people; to address the concerns repeatedly highlighted by H.E. teachers; to ensure that reliance can be placed on Appendix 2.6 of the SNCT Handbook, which provides that 'teachers will not be asked to undertake administrative and non-teaching duties which are generally undertaken by support staff'; and to remedy the persistent breaches of Working Time Agreements and SNCT Conditions of Service for Teachers.

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