

BUSINESS LEADER PAY AND CONDITIONS SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

ASCL Cymru is concerned that the pay, conditions and status of our members in business leadership roles are often less favourable than those of teaching staff with similar levels of responsibility. The pay awards between 2022 – 2024 have worsened this situation. Our view is that business leader roles are integral to the leadership team and this should be reflected in their status and remuneration with parity with other members of the senior leadership team.

We surveyed our members working in business leadership roles to gain a detailed insight into their pay and conditions, membership of their school leadership team, responsibilities and priorities.

The results of the survey will help to inform our work in this area and how we can best push for improved pay and conditions for our members. It also provides a firm evidence base to support our calls for business leader pay to be aligned with leadership pay in the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Documents in Wales (STPC(W)D).

We will use the findings of this survey as part of our evidence to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (IWPRB) where we are arguing that business leader pay should be included in the STPC(W)D.

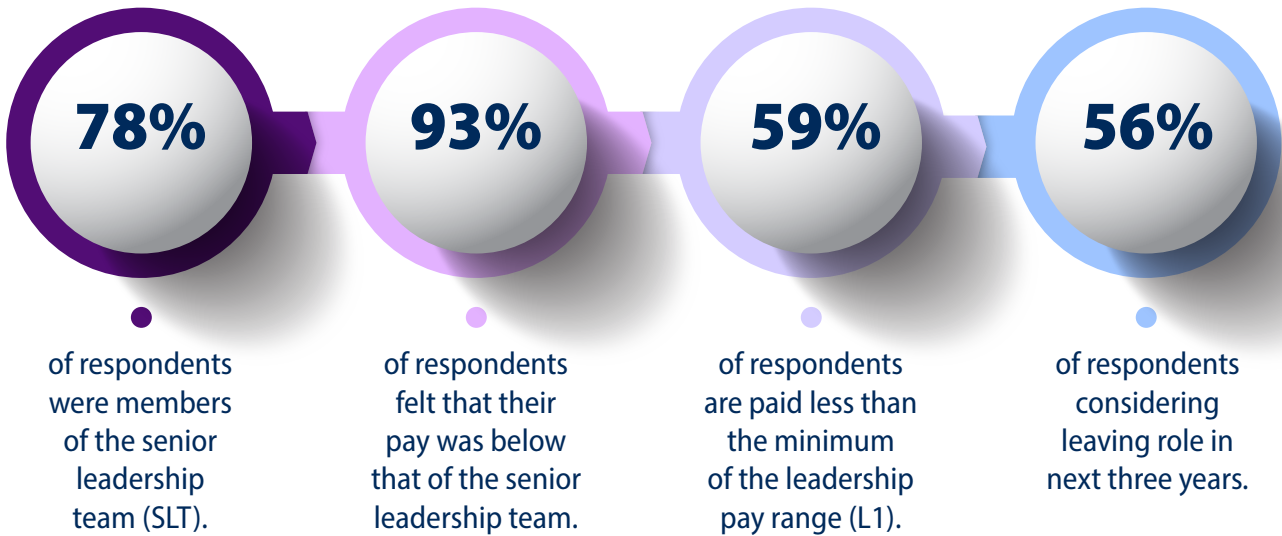
SURVEY DETAILS

Survey period	11 May – 22 May 2026
Category of members surveyed	All business leadership roles
Number of members surveyed	85
Number of respondents	41
Response rate	48.23%

Business leadership encompasses a diverse range of roles. This was reflected by the fact there were over 14 different job titles submitted in the survey.

Respondents hold a wide range of whole-school responsibilities, with the majority including finance (97.6%), procurement (95.1%), HR/People (95.1%), estate/site (85.4%), and health and safety (82.9%).

OVERVIEW



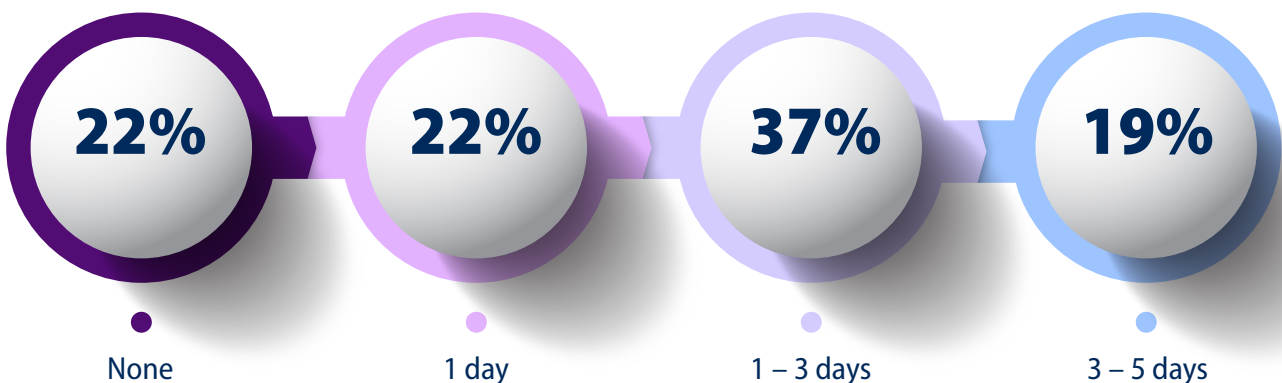
PAY

There is a huge disparity in the remuneration of those who are members of the senior leadership team and their senior leadership colleagues. It is pleasing to see that 78% are members of the SLT, but disappointing that this is not reflected in their pay, with 93% of respondents reporting that their pay was below that of their leadership colleagues.

Over 34% of respondents feel inadequately rewarded for the role they undertake; 49% feel significantly underpaid. It is therefore perhaps unsurprising that 56% of respondents intend to leave their role within the next three years. Pay is cited as a contributory factor in the majority of cases. This high level of dissatisfaction represents a potentially significant loss to the profession.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We asked members what professional development they had received in the last 12 months. The figures are disappointing; almost a quarter of respondents have had none in the last 12 months.



ADDITIONAL THEMES

Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments. Several recurring themes emerged from these responses, including concerns about pay inequity compared to leadership colleagues, as well as issues relating to workload and overall wellbeing.

“
The levels of workload and responsibility asked of us do not fit with ‘support staff’ pay scales.
”

KEY PRIORITIES

We asked members what the key priority was for them in the next 12 months. Worryingly, 66% of respondents reported that the focus was ensuring financial sustainability and managing deficit budgets. This was followed by managing estate/site projects and raising the profile of the business leader role.

CONCLUSION

These results clearly indicate the strength of feeling around business leader pay, conditions and recognition that members have been raising with us in recent years.

Years of inadequate NJC pay awards, in most cases the lowest pay increase in the school, have further exacerbated the situation and widened the gap between senior leadership colleagues and business leaders. In addition, workload and wellbeing pressures were a concerning trend reported by business leaders in the comments.

We believe that business leaders, who undertake whole-school responsibilities should be paid to ensure parity with other leadership colleagues holding the same level of responsibility.

Business leaders are leaders and are not support staff. They should be remunerated, respected and recognised as that.

ASCL Cymru’s formal position on business leader pay as determined by our Council is:

- Fully funded, highly trained business leaders should be appointed in each cluster of schools across all local authorities.
- Business leaders should be members of the senior leadership team.
- ASCL Cymru believes that the status of this should be reflected in their remuneration and be in line with the leadership pay scale.
- ASCL Cymru believes business leaders must be brought into the scope of the STPCWD alongside their leadership colleagues.
- A Wales-specific suite of qualifications for school business leaders, as per the [Institute of School Business Leadership Professional Standards](#), should be created.
- A national benchmarking tool, using integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP) techniques should be created which will help schools to use resources as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Urgent action is required, to ensure that business leaders currently in-role feel supported, valued and recognised for the important work they do so that we can retain them in the profession. Alignment with appropriate national pay frameworks and sufficiency of funding is an essential step in creating these conditions. Where business leader pay is not on a par with other senior leadership pay, ASCL Cymru advises employers to review pay to ensure it is reflective of the roles and responsibilities undertaken. Our business leaders must be given the recognition, remuneration and status they deserve and take their place at the senior leadership table.

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June 2026



The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) is the leading professional association and trade union for all school, college and trust leaders. We are proud to support and represent more than 25,000 leaders of primary, secondary and post-16 education from across the UK.

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