



Getting the Best Deal?

NAHT Survey of School Business Leaders' Pay and Responsibilities 2018

School Business Leader Survey on Pay and Responsibilities 2018

Introduction

School Business Leaders (SBL) make up a growing proportion of NAHT's membership and the current government focus on improving school efficiencies has placed a spotlight on this role in schools and multi academy trusts.

As the government places more responsibility on these professionals to secure the best deals for their schools, we wanted to understand whether they themselves are securing a fair level of pay. SBLs are often paid under local government pay scale levels that fail to recognise their status and seniority and our members continue to report concern about pay. We decided to survey SBLs to understand how this has evolved since our two previous surveys in 2014 and 2016, and also to understand how their responsibilities are changing as growing numbers are working in group structures where school business leadership roles are often centralised.

Our survey was carried out between April and May 2018, and 439 SBLs responded.

Key Findings

- **Three fifths of respondents** do not think their pay fairly reflects their role and the responsibilities they undertake.
- **The average salary for an SBL is £40,000 a year**, up 9% from our 2016 survey but substantially below that of the rest of the leadership team.
- **Whilst only 46% had had their pay reviewed in the last 3 years, 85% of those reviews had resulted in an increase** in pay but 52% had not had a review in three years¹.
- **71% of our respondents continued to have a generalised SBL role**, although others were specialising.
- Of those working in groups of schools, **11% reported that school business management was totally centralised** in the group, with a third reporting a mix of centralisation and school based business leadership, and 40% still focused on the individual school level.
- **More than three fifths (61%) work more than 45 hours per week** and almost two-thirds (63%) said that their working hours had increased over the past 3 years.
- **The majority (81%)** said that their workload had increased over the last year
- **Only just over half (51%)** said they have received any formal personal development in the last year. 70% were keen to undertake further formal qualifications for both professional development and keeping up with the demands of the role, however they will likely be hindered by the same barriers as those for CPD
- **Barriers to accessing CPD were time (68%) and funding (61%).**

¹ 2% were not sure

Recommendations

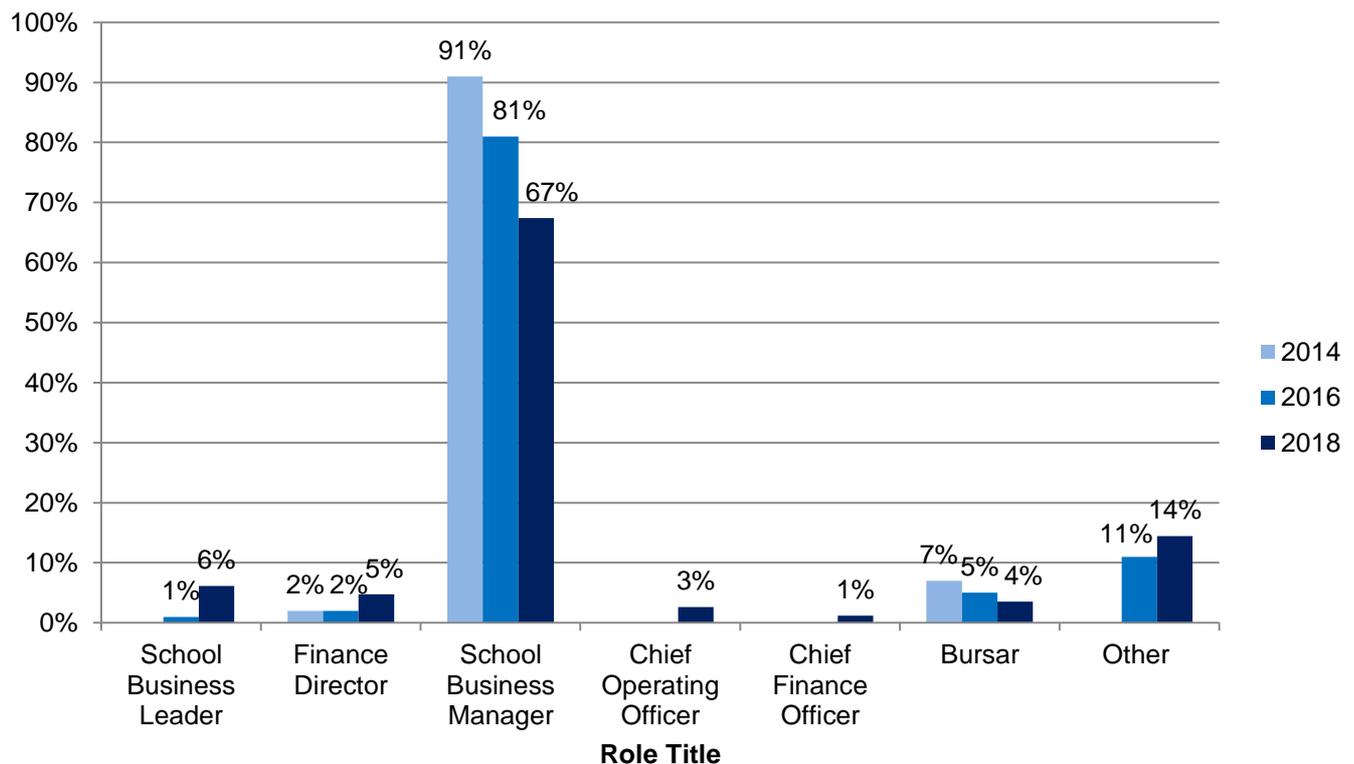
The findings of this report demonstrate that SBLs face increasing demands and expectations from government and schools whilst we continue to fail to invest in them. NAHT therefore has the following recommendations arising from the report:

1. We must secure appropriate levels of pay for SBLs if we are to attract and retain high quality individuals to the profession. SBLs perform a role as important in the running of the school or group of schools as deputy and assistant heads or principals and should be paid at an equivalent level. NAHT believes there should be one national framework for the pay of all staff working in publically funded schools to create appropriate levels of probity and parity.
2. The government is committed to tackling the workload of teachers and teaching leaders but we must extend those efforts to SBLs if we are to retain them in the profession. As the expectations on the role grow, there needs to be a realistic assessment of what SBL resources a school or group of schools need to function effectively, rather than stretching these professionals ever more thinly.
3. The demise of the National College bursaries for SBLs and the funding crisis makes it more difficult for SBLs to access the CPD and professional qualifications that they require to meet the changing needs of their roles. We urge government to make funds available to support the professional development of SBLs, and to support the roll out of the apprenticeship levy funded programmes of study.
4. The DfE's workforce census fails to record information about SBLs as a distinct group of business leaders so that there is no way to understand how this profession is evolving, and who is working in school business leadership. We urge the DfE to collect data about SBLs as a distinct group to inform the support for this profession.

Roles of School Business Leaders

Two thirds (67%) of our respondents still describe themselves as “School Business Manager”. This has declined as this role in schools has developed, down from 81% in our last survey in 2016 and 91% in the 2014 survey. Only 4% said their job title was “Bursar”. Fourteen percent entered other job titles which included “Strategic Business Manager” and “Finance and Operations Director”².

Chart 1: What is the title of your role?



We asked SBLs how long they had been in post, the survey results showed a fairly even spread in terms of length of service. In the responses to this question, just over a third (36%) said that they had been in their role for 1 to 5 years, 29% said they had been in their role for 5 – 10 years and 29% said they had been in post for 10 or more years³.

Characteristics of respondents

Sixty three percent of respondents to the 2018 survey were members of NAHT, a third (34%) were members of both ISBL and NAHT and 20% were members of ISBL only. Non-members were also encouraged to answer the survey and as a result 17% of respondents were not members of either NAHT or ISBL⁴. Three quarters of those that were members of ISBL were a full member and a further 17% were a fellow of ISBL.

² 424 responded to this question

³ 389 responded to this question

⁴ 423 responded to this question

Of those that responded, overall 46% were employed by the local authority (LA), 25% by a multi academy trust (MAT), 9% by a standalone academy and 17% were employed by the governing body⁵.

When asked if they were responsible for more than one school, the majority 82%, said that they were responsible for just one school⁶. Of those that said they were responsible for more than one school, the majority, 86%, said that they were responsible for between 2 and 5 schools⁷.

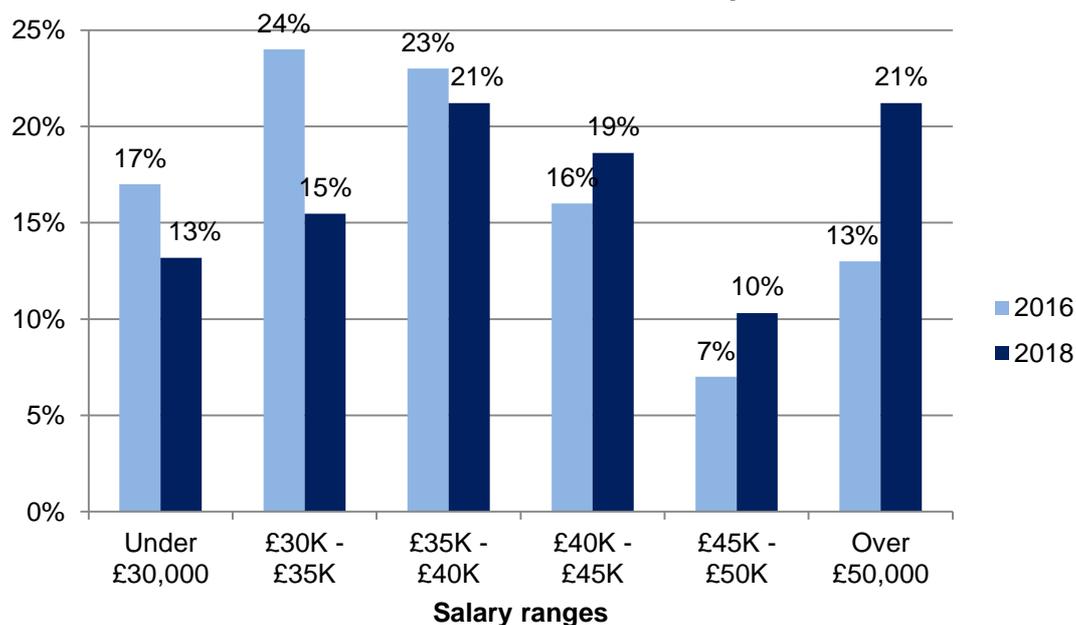
Three quarters of respondents (74%) said that they were a member of a local group or network of SBLs⁸.

SBL Pay

We asked SBLs what their annual salary was (a full time equivalent for those who are part time). The median salary of all respondents was £40,000, with the lowest salary £21,074 and the highest being £85,000⁹. The median salary in this survey is nearly a 10% increase from that reported in the 2016 survey where it was £36,537. As shown in Chart 2, below, since 2016, we have seen a 15 percentage point drop in SBLs paid under £40,000 and a 14 percentage point increase in SBLs paid £40,000 or over.

In addition to this, we also asked SBLs to let us know what their salary range was. The average minimum of a salary range was £36,528 and the maximum salary range was £41,869¹⁰.

Chart 2: Salaries of SBLs in the 2016 and 2018 survey



⁵ 414 responded to this question

⁶ 415 responded to this question

⁷ 73 responded to this question, the lower response rate should be considered when looking at the results to this question

⁸ 345 responded to this question

⁹ 352 responded to this question

¹⁰ 235 responded to this question

SBL pay compares very unfavourably with leadership pay for assistant and deputy heads in schools. The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document for September 2017¹¹ sets out that the absolute minimum annual salary for any member of the leadership team will be £39,374 outside the London and fringe areas and £46,814 in inner London. This would take averages for those roles to far higher than £40,000.

Most SBLs lead the school business leadership functions in a school at a similar level of accountability and responsibility as other senior leaders who lead the teaching and learning. NAHT is clear that they should be remunerated at similar levels as the assistant or deputy heads in the school. The barrier to this, in the majority of cases, is that the majority of respondents (68%) said that their pay was determined by the National Joint Council for Local Government (Green Book), 9% indicated that it was set by the Academy Pay and Conditions Document, while only 4% said it was determined by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document¹².

The local government pay scales do not offer sufficient flexibility to recognise these leadership roles, and pay evaluations do not fully recognise their levels of responsibility and accountability. Whilst academies have more flexibility to set salaries commensurate with the rest of the leadership team, some still fail to break away from local authority levels.

The level of dissatisfaction is clear when asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement "*my salary fairly reflects the roles and responsibilities I undertake*"¹³ only 32% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, which shows a slight but continual increase from the 2014 survey where 29% said the same and 31% in 2016. With those that said they disagreed or strongly disagreed, we have seen a drop since 2014, from 71% to 60%. However, we have seen a slight increase this year from 2016 of 2 percentage points. In any case, two thirds of our respondents do not feel that their salary fairly reflects their role and responsibilities.

When asked what salary they thought would fairly reflected the roles and responsibilities they undertake, the median salary result was £45,000¹⁴: £5,000 more than the average salary of respondents. This gives an indication of how much SBLs feel they are underpaid for the vital work they do in schools.

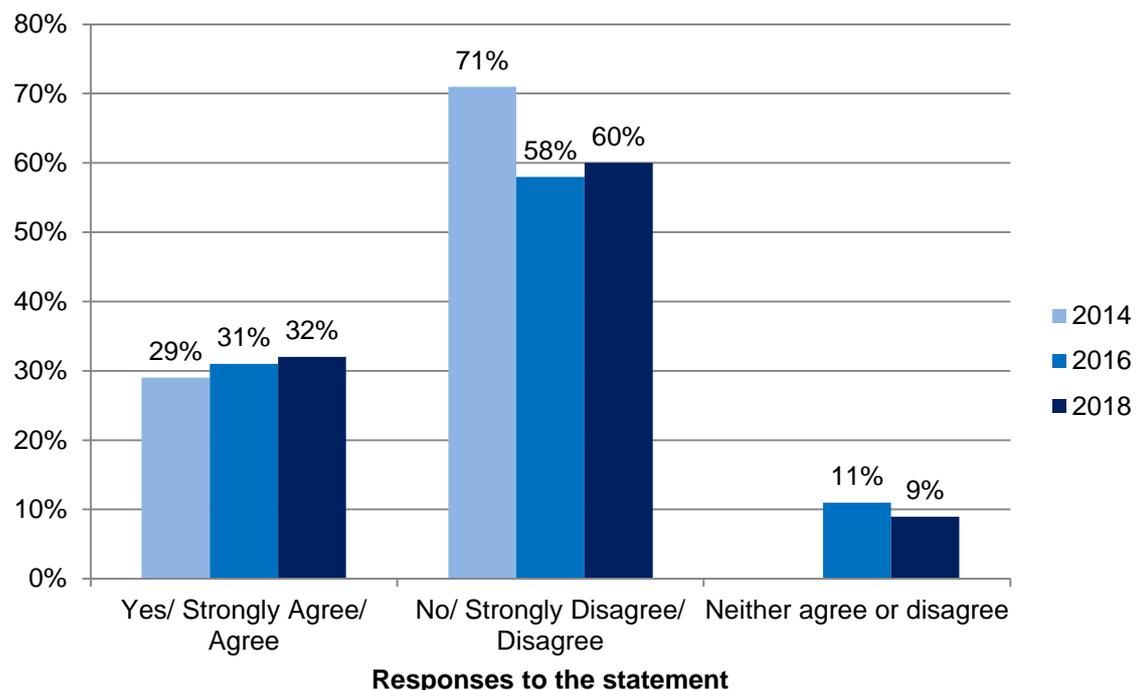
¹¹ Whilst academies are not bound by the STPCD, many choose to adopt its terms and conditions

¹² 369 responded to this question

¹³ 369 responded to this question

¹⁴ 232 responded to this question

Chart 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement “my salary fairly reflects the roles and responsibilities I undertake”?



Pay Review

We asked respondents whether their pay had been reviewed in the past 3 years. Just over half (52%) said that they had not had their pay reviewed, with 46% saying that they had¹⁵. However, there was a positive response from those that had their pay reviewed, as 85% had received a pay increase as a result¹⁶. We also asked those that had received a pay increase if they had referred to the NAHT advice on pay evaluations for SBLs. Just over a fifth, 21% had referred to the guidance to support their case¹⁷.

The Association is keen to understand how else we can support SBL members’ pay and conditions, so we asked an open question to respondents asking them to let us know how else NAHT can support them¹⁸. A number of SBLs indicated that they would like to see more information given to governors so that they can better understand the work they do and therefore be paid appropriately. Other respondents highlighted that they believe SBL pay should be in line and on the same scale as other school leaders, particularly deputy head teachers.

Many schools are joining other schools in groups, either through different types of federations or by joining multi academy trusts (MAT). Although the majority of respondents, 71% said that they had not joined a group of schools over the past 2 years, 16% said that they had done so¹⁹. Of those that said they had joined a group

¹⁵ 359 responded to this question

¹⁶ 168 responded to this question

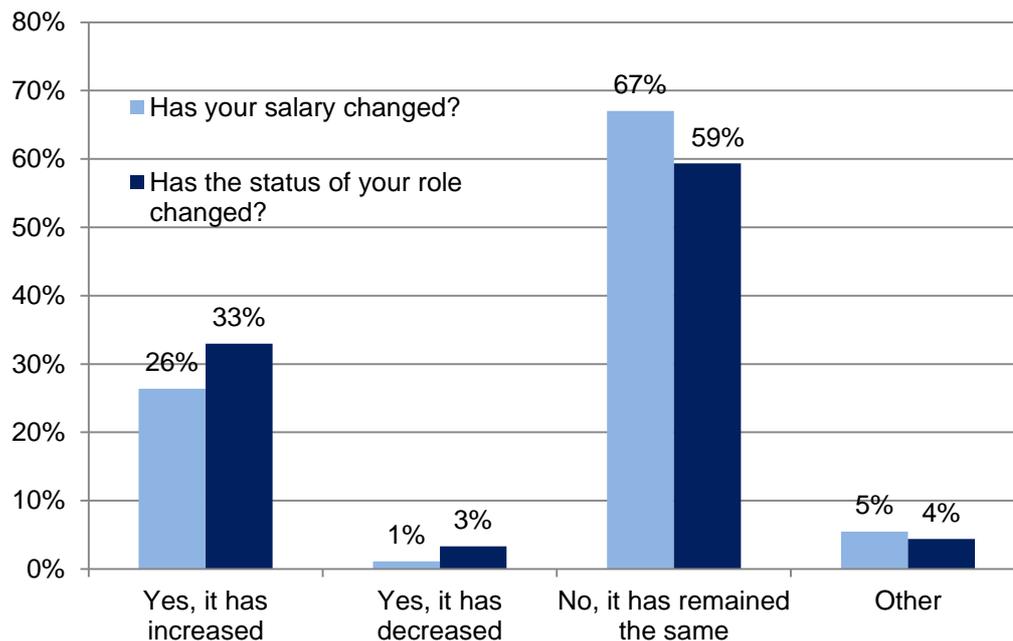
¹⁷ 159 responded to this question

¹⁸ 197 responded to this question

¹⁹ 348 responded to this question

of schools, two-thirds said that their responsibilities had increased²⁰, however, only a quarter (26%) had seen a rise in their salary as a result²¹. We also asked if the status of their role had increased and only a third said that it had while 59% said that it had remained the same²². This is shown in the chart below.

Chart 4: Since you joined a group of schools - has your salary changed? And has your role changed?



Working hours, workload and contracts

SBL members report to us how they often have to work well beyond their contracted hours. In order to try to better understand this, we asked respondents to tell us what their contracted hours are and how many hours they typically work. As shown in the chart below, the majority of respondents, 83% were contracted to work between 35 and 39.9 hours per week. Only 5% of respondents, however, actually worked these contracted hours. Despite most being contracted for less than 39.9 hours, 29% were working between 40 and 44.9 hours per week and three fifths were working more than 45 hours²³.

We also asked if the number of hours that respondents typically worked has increased over the past 3 years. Almost two-thirds, 63% said that their working hours had increased²⁴.

²⁰ 92 responded to this question

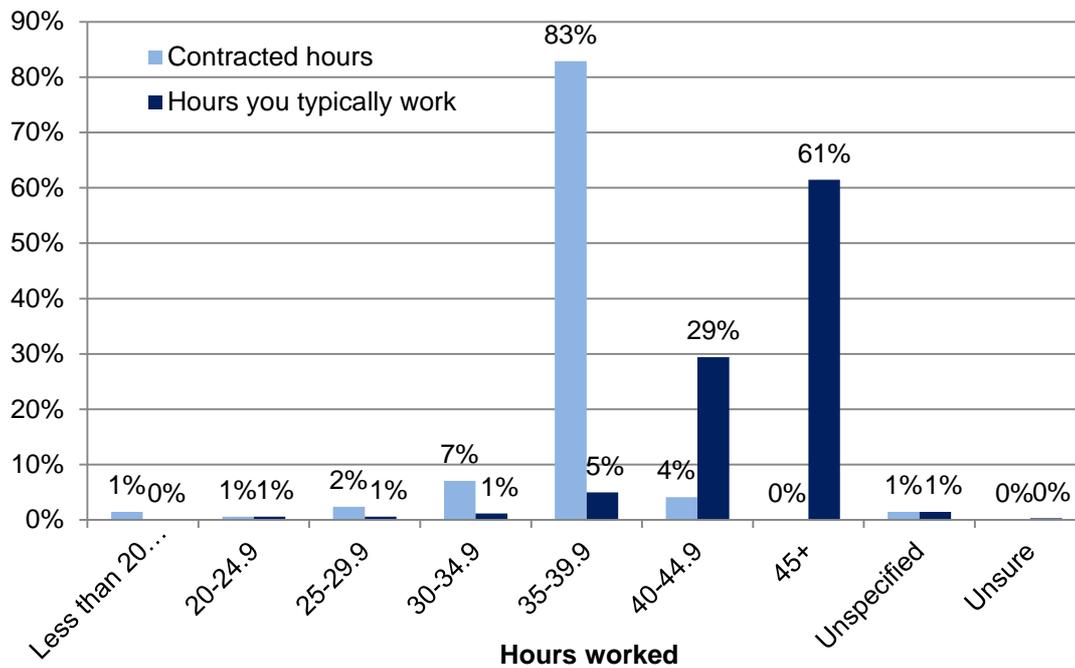
²¹ 91 responded to this question

²² 91 responded to this question

²³ 350 responded to this question

²⁴ 349 responded to this question

Chart 5: What are your weekly contracted hours and what hours do you typically work per week?



As we can see from the responses to the survey, many SBLs are working beyond their contracted hours. Taking this into consideration, we asked if SBLs received any benefits in return for working beyond their contracted hours. Almost two-thirds, 65% said they did not receive anything in return for working over their contracted hours. Only 16% said they received TOIL (time off in lieu), overtime pay or a combination of both²⁵.

We understand that SBLs are on different types of contract which may affect the number of hours they work per week. Our survey asked what type of contract SBLs were employed on. The majority, 69% said they were on an all year-round contract, while almost a fifth (19%) were on a term time only contact²⁶.

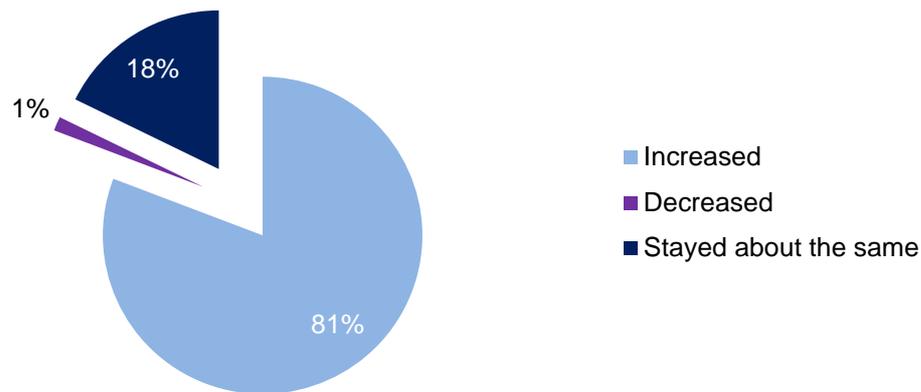
We also asked if, over the past year their workload had increased, decreased or remained the same. More than four-fifths (81%) said that their workload had increased over the last year and only 18% said that it had remained the same²⁷.

²⁵ 348 responded to this question

²⁶ 350 responded to this question

²⁷ 350 responded to this question

Chart 6: Compared to a year ago has your workload increased, decreased or remained the same?

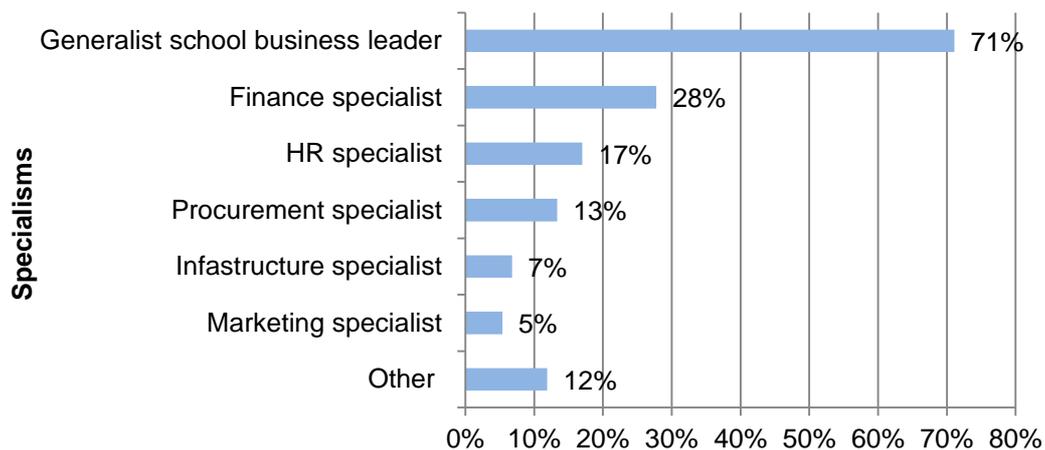


The responses from the survey indicate that many SBLs are working well over their contracted hours and this is increasing over time and continues to be unremunerated.

SBL Specialisms

The crisis in school funding, the drives for efficiencies and the move towards groups of schools mean that the role of the SBL is evolving very quickly. We asked school leaders in our survey if they specialised in specific areas or whether they were a generalist SBL²⁸, we asked them to select all the specialisms that they led on. The majority, 71% said that they were a generalist but 17% said they specialised in HR, 13% in procurement and 28% said they specialised in finance. This shows how the role of the SBL is continuing to expand beyond more than one area and more SBLs are becoming generalists in many areas and reaching into more specialisms.

Chart 7: In your role do you specialise in any of the following areas? (Respondents were asked to tick all that apply)



This change in the way schools are organised is having an effect on the roles of SBLs and we asked how the school business leadership functions were organised in

²⁸ 353 responded to this question

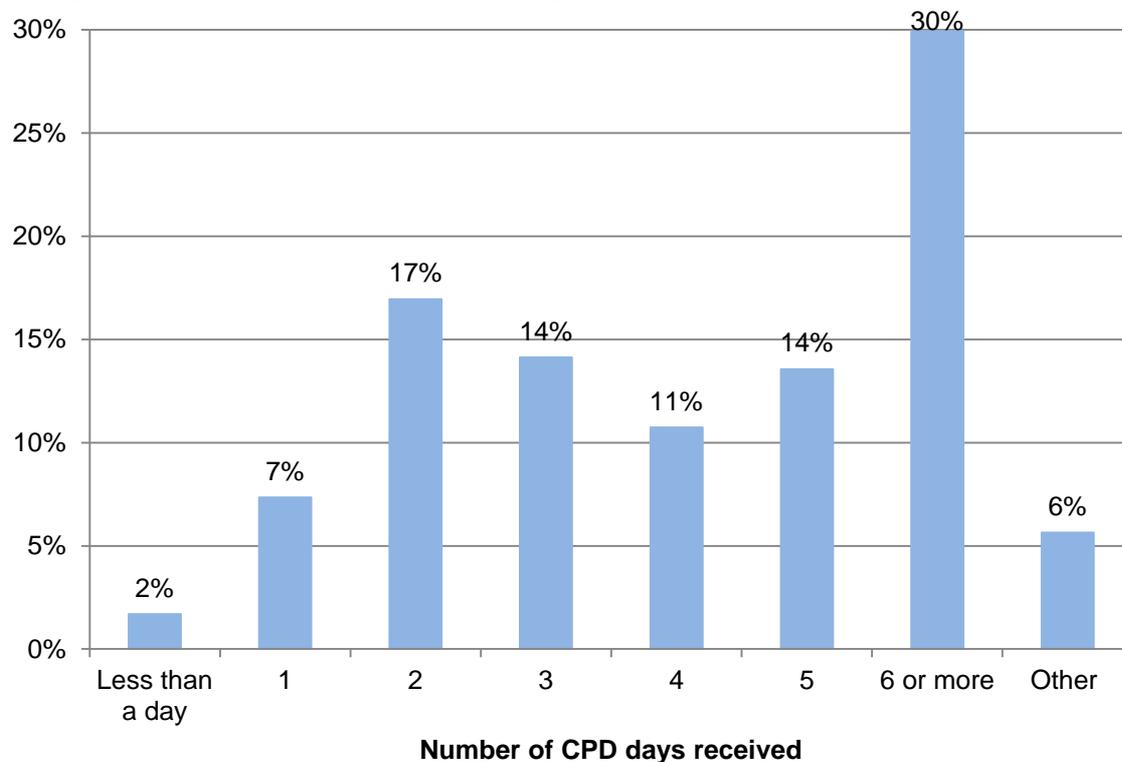
those schools working within a group. Only 11 % reported that they were totally centralised, with 40% reporting in their group of schools they were still delivered at a school level and a third said it was through a combination of both centralised and school level²⁹.

Access to Professional Development and Professional Qualifications

As school budgets come under more and more pressure, previous SBL surveys have shown that access to continuing professional development (CPD) has become more difficult and limited. **We asked in this year’s survey if respondents had undertaken any form of professional development in the last year and only half (51%) said that they had**³⁰. This is a decrease of 13 percentage points from our 2014 survey where 64% said they had accessed CPD within the last 12 months.

We asked those that said they had CPD within the last 12 months how many days they had received, which is shown in the chart below.

Chart 8: Of the 51% that had received CPD we asked how many days professional development had they received over the last 12 months?



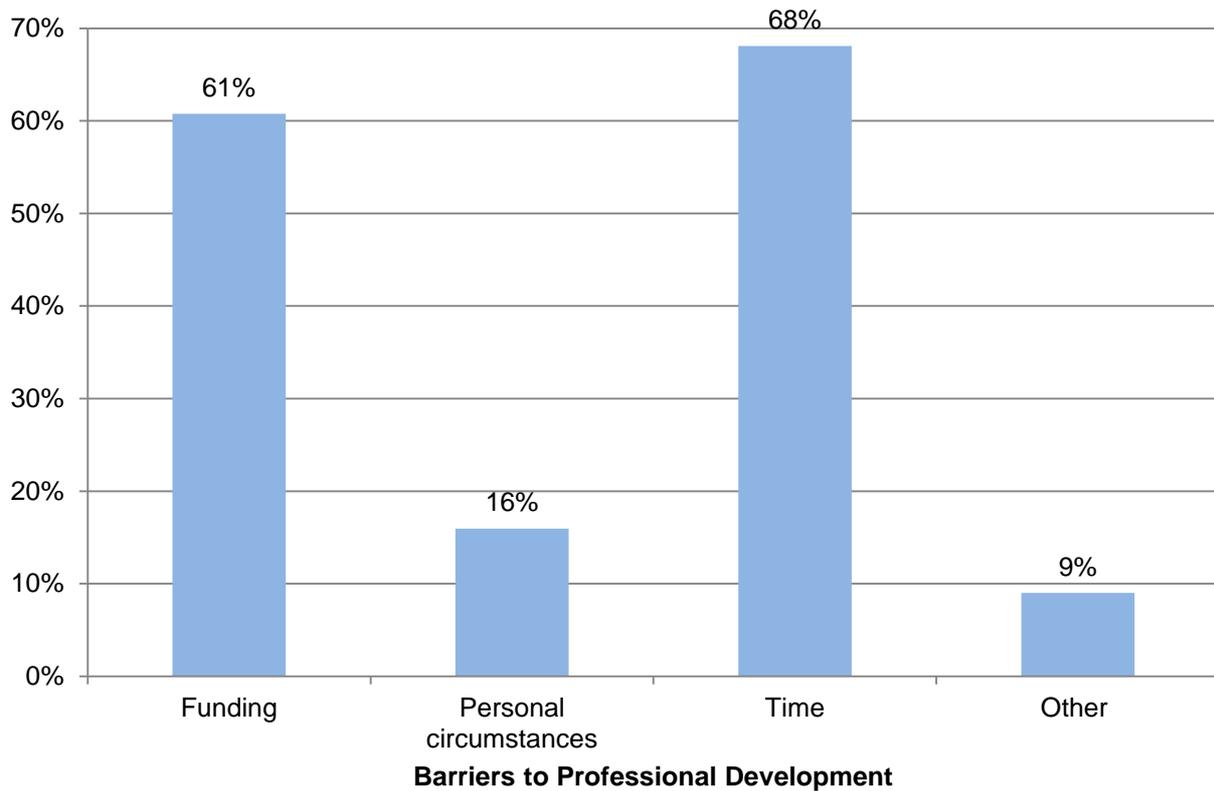
We asked what the barriers were for respondents undertaking further professional development and the two most prominent reasons cited as barriers were funding, (61%) and time (68%)³¹. This shows how the funding crisis and increasing workloads are preventing SBLs, and other school leaders, from having access to funding and adequate professional development. This is a continuing theme, as shown in NAHT’s recent [Breaking Point](#) report that CPD one of the first casualties of cutbacks.

²⁹ 90 responded to this question

³⁰ 346 responded to this question

³¹ 232 responded to this question

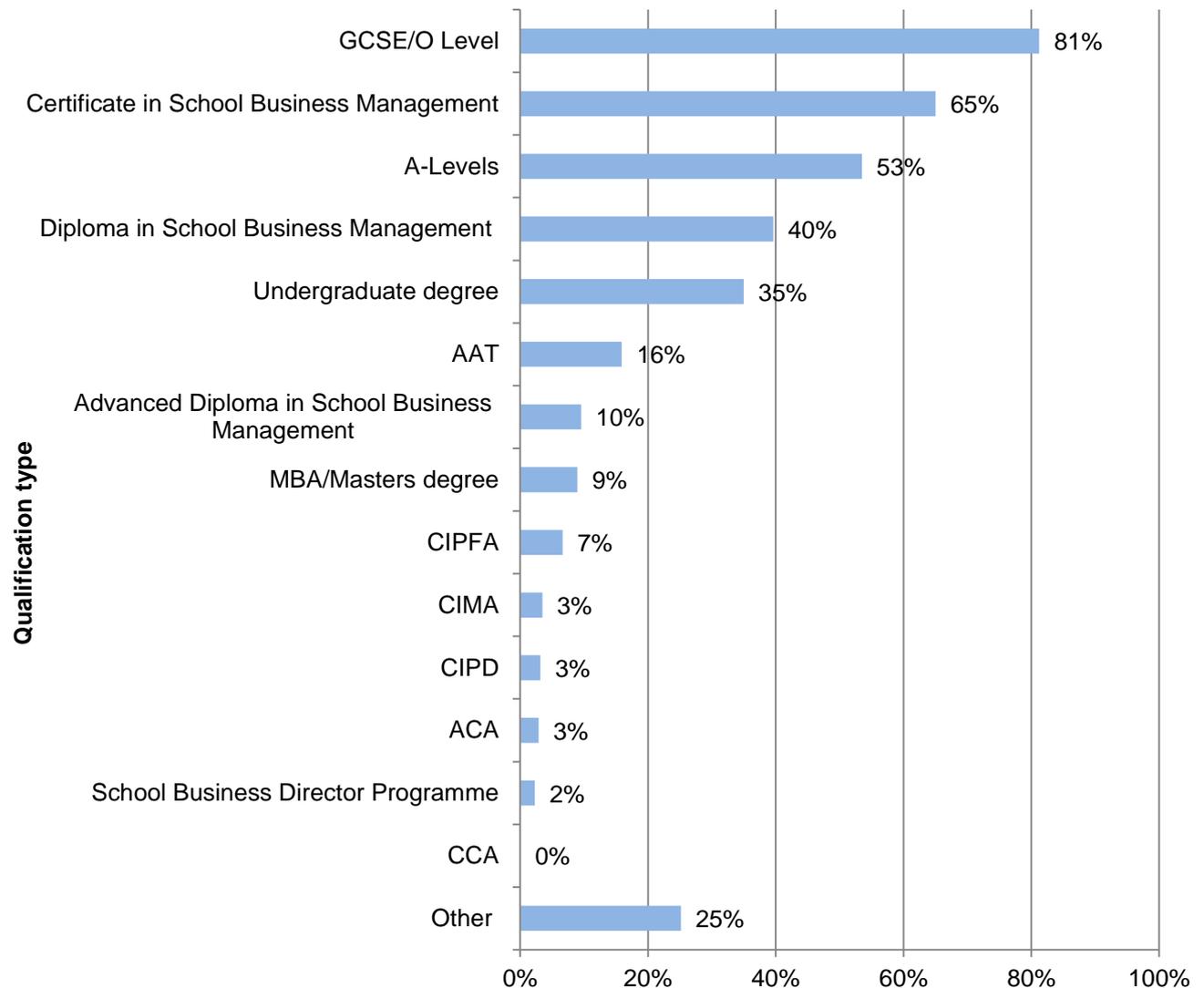
Chart 9: Are you facing any barriers to undertaking further professional development? (Respondents were asked to tick all that applied to them)



We asked respondents about the qualifications that they hold and we can see that two-thirds (65%) said that they hold a certificate in School Business Management and 40% have a Diploma in School Business Management³². A quarter also said that they hold other qualifications, some of these included specific degrees in School Business Management and ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) qualifications.

³² 346 responded to this question

Chart 10: What qualifications do you hold? (Respondents were asked to tick all that applied to them)

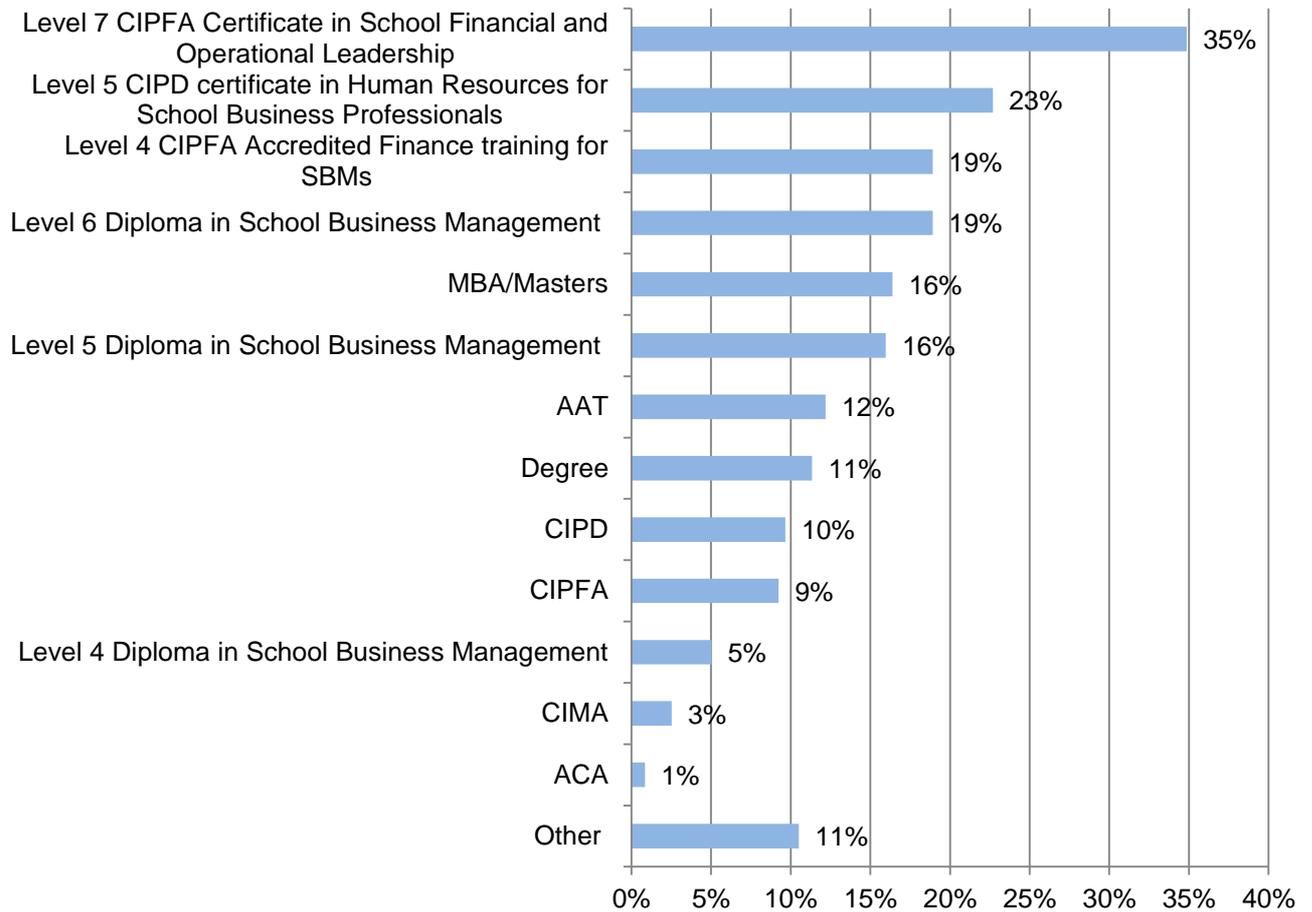


The majority of respondents, 70%, were interested in gaining further professional qualifications³³. Just over a third (35%) were interesting in pursuing a level 7 CIPFA certificate in school financial and operational leadership and 23% were interested in a level 5 CIPD certificate in human resources for school business professionals³⁴. We also asked in the survey what motivated SBLs to pursue further professional qualifications and the two reasons cited the most were “professional development” (82%) and “keeping up with demands of the role” (57%).

³³ 346 responded to this question

³⁴ 238 responded to this question

Chart 11: What professional qualifications are you interested in pursuing?



Professional qualifications interested in

Summary

The results of the third NAHT School Business Leader survey show the continued development of the role, which is adapting and changing to the ever-evolving school system. The role and the expectations are growing for SBLs yet our survey shows that they continue to be underpaid in relation to their role and responsibilities, and in comparison to others on the senior leadership team.

Like all school leaders, SBLs cannot escape the ever increasing demands of their role and are frequently working well over their weekly contracted hours to cope with their workload, typically at least an extra 10 hours a week. As schools come together in groups, this workload is increasing and some are seeing their generalist role becoming more specialised but it is reassuring that the majority of our respondents saw the status of their role either remain the same or grow upon joining with other schools.

Many are keen to develop and pursue further professional qualifications to allow them to adapt to the growing demands of the role. However, as we see that nearly half of SBLs have not undertaken any CPD in the last year, and that the school budget crisis and workload are clear barriers to professional development, we must address this if we are to allow these important school professionals to develop.

The Government has started to recognise the important role that SBLs perform in schools but they need to invest in these professionals if we are to allow them to fulfil their maximum potential.

NAHT Headquarters

1 Heath Square
Boltro Road
Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1BL

Web: www.naht.org.uk
Twitter: @NAHTnews
E-mail: policy@naht.org.uk

© Copyright NAHT 2018

All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be copied or reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publishers. While every care has been taken in the compilation of this publication, neither the publisher nor NAHT can accept responsibility for any inaccuracies or changes since compilation, or for consequential loss arising from such changes or inaccuracies, or for any other loss, direct or consequential, arising in connection with information in this publication.