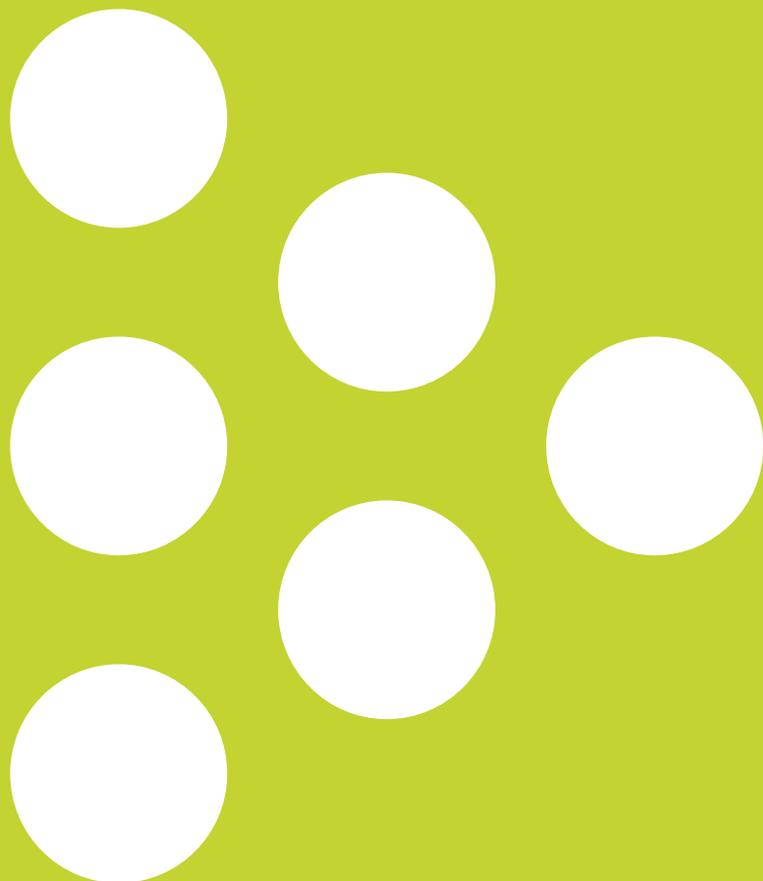


# Teacher Workforce Dynamics in England

Nurturing, supporting  
and valuing teachers




 Rising pupil numbers, shortfalls in the number of trainee teachers and increasing numbers of working-age teachers leaving the profession mean that teacher supply in the state sector is a major policy issue in England. This NFER research identifies the key factors associated with teacher retention, and suggests actions that school leaders can take to improve retention of teachers in the profession and policies that Government can develop to support them to do so.

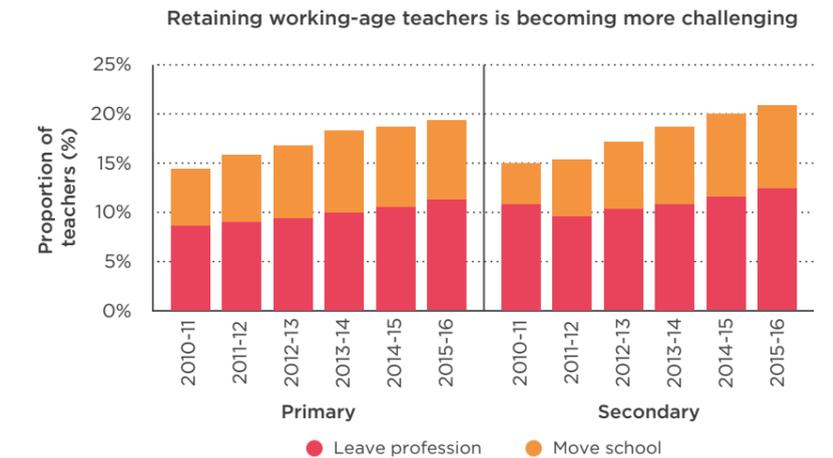
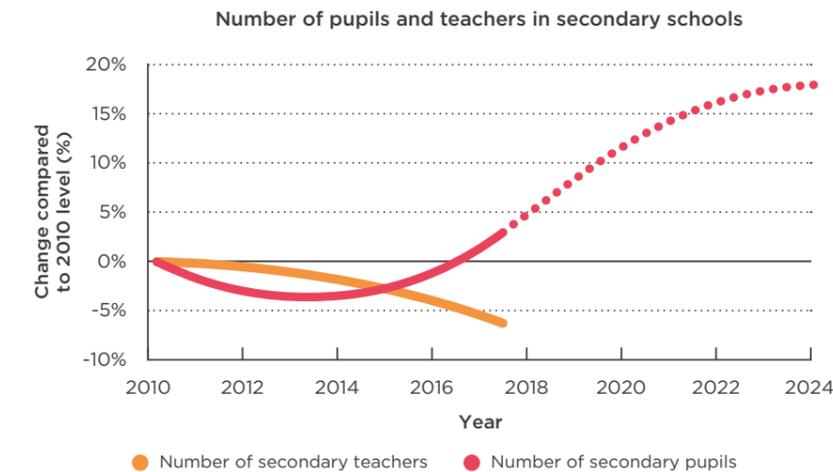
“Teacher recruitment and retention are issues of critical importance to the school system, with evidence of a direct impact on the quality of education children receive, particularly in shortage subjects and in certain areas of the country.”

**Josh Hillman, Director of Education, Nuffield Foundation**

## Rates of teachers leaving the profession and moving school have risen since 2010

Rising pupil numbers mean that England’s schools need more teachers each year, especially in secondary schools where pupil numbers are forecast to rise by 19 per cent over the next decade. Not enough new teachers have been recruited to meet this growing demand: the number of secondary recruits has been below the Government’s target for the last five years.

Retaining teachers who are already in the profession is therefore crucial for managing the supply of teachers. However, the number of working-age teachers leaving the profession has increased since 2010, which has made it more difficult to maintain supply at the desired level. The number of teachers moving school each year has also increased rapidly since 2010, meaning school leaders have more vacancies to fill each year, more staffing uncertainty to deal with and higher costs of recruiting replacements.



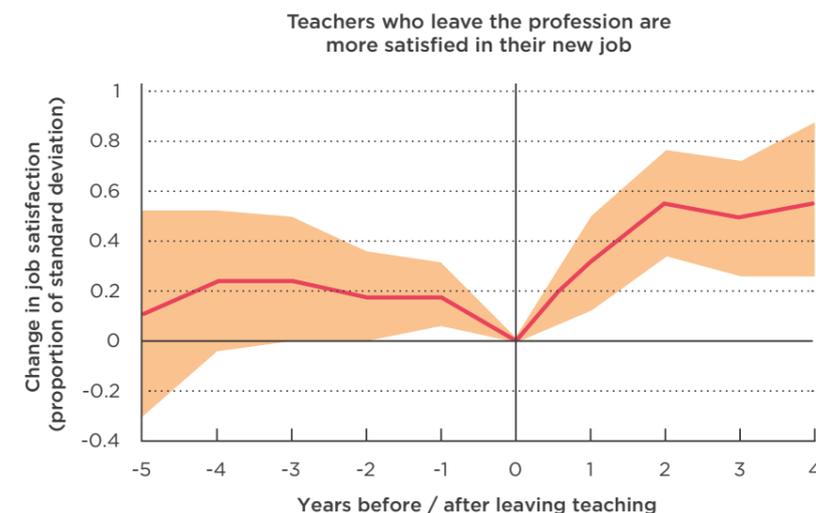
To improve teacher retention, nurturing, supporting, and valuing teachers is vital to keep their engagement high. Making teaching a sustainable career is one of the keys to the future of England’s education system, and one that both school leaders and the Government have an important role to play in delivering.



## Lack of job satisfaction is a key reason why teachers leave the profession

Falling job satisfaction in teaching is an important reason why teachers leave the profession. The job satisfaction of teachers who leave the profession for a new job also improves considerably, suggesting that the prospect of higher job satisfaction was also an important factor.

The quality of school leadership, teachers' sense of autonomy, feeling supported and valued, and whether teachers feel their workload is manageable are all important factors associated with teachers' job satisfaction. Creating supportive school cultures and ensuring teachers' workload is manageable are therefore crucial for improving teacher retention.



## Teachers work long hours during term time and are dissatisfied with their amount of leisure time

Teachers work just over 50 hours per week on average during term-time, considerably more hours than nurses and police officers work in a normal working week. Teachers also have the lowest satisfaction with their amount of leisure time compared to these other professions. Teachers work more intensively across fewer weeks in the year, which can create pressure and stress, with potential negative effects on their health and well-being.

High workload, driven by policy changes and the demands of inspection, is the key reason teachers give for working long term-time hours. Unmanageable workload is consistently the most cited reason teachers give for why they left the profession.

The Government has recently made concerted efforts to reduce teachers' unnecessary workload. These are welcome steps in the right direction, although these words need to be followed up by the right actions from all stakeholders to reduce teachers' long working hours in term-time.



### Recommendations for school leaders:

Regularly monitor the job satisfaction and engagement of teaching staff, for example, through staff surveys, and take appropriate action to keep staff motivated.

Identify workload issues and intervene to increase support and reduce workload pressures where issues are identified, including effective use of line management to support teachers to reduce their unnecessary workload.

### Recommendation for Government and Ofsted:

Continue to actively work together to review the impact their actions are having on the workload of all teachers, identify practical actions that reduce teachers' unnecessary workload, and support school leaders' efforts to do so.

## More and better part-time and flexible working opportunities for secondary teachers is likely to improve retention

While the prospect of large numbers of full-time teachers moving to part-time work on its own presents a short-term risk to teacher supply, there are three main reasons why more and better part-time and flexible working is important for improving teacher retention in the longer term:

1. There is unmet demand for part-time working in the secondary sector, which drives some teachers to leave. Making flexible opportunities available for these teachers may have encouraged many to stay in the profession, and return to full-time work later in their careers.
2. Part-time secondary teachers also have higher rates of leaving the profession than part-time primary teachers. Part-time working needs to be a more sustainable option for teachers.
3. A lack of part-time and flexible working opportunities is one of the key barriers facing teachers on career breaks who want to return.

The secondary school teacher stock has a large cohort of teachers in their mid-thirties, which is when demand for part-time working peaks. The next few years are therefore a critical time for taking action.

Improved availability of flexible working patterns may reduce the number of teachers choosing to be employed flexibly through a supply agency. The NHS has identified this as an important way of potentially retaining more nurses directly in the state-sector, which could also be the case for teachers.



### Recommendation:

The Government and stakeholders in the secondary sector need to look urgently at identifying ways to accommodate more and better part-time working in secondary schools.



## Teachers are not primarily motivated to leave the profession by the prospect of increased pay

The pay of teachers who leave the profession and take up a new job is, on average, ten per cent less than it was when they were a teacher. This suggests that many teachers take a salary cut in their new job to gain other benefits, such as improved job satisfaction or the opportunity to work part-time. Four out of five full-time teachers say they are satisfied with their income, which is similar to both nurses and police officers.

This is not to say that pay is not an important factor. Following years of freezes and below-inflation rises, increasing teacher pay is likely to improve retention to some degree. Higher pay may compensate for other factors that drive decisions to leave, such as high workload and low job satisfaction. Action to reduce teacher workload may be a more cost effective way to improve retention than a pay increase for all teachers.



### Recommendation:

Teacher pay increases should be targeted at groups that are likely to be most responsive to pay changes, such as early-career teachers.

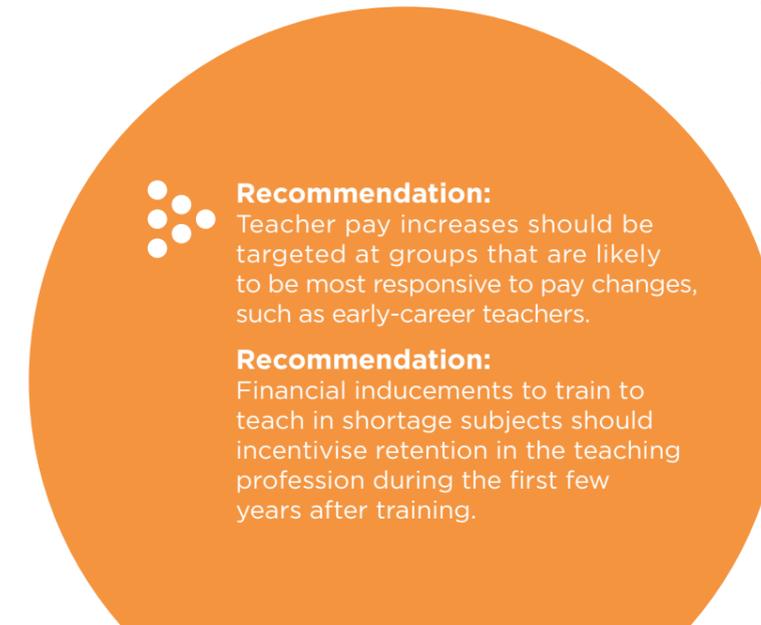
### Recommendation:

Financial inducements to train to teach in shortage subjects should incentivise retention in the teaching profession during the first few years after training.

## Well-targeted financial incentives are likely to help retain teachers who are most responsive to pay

The wider research evidence suggests that pay increases to improve teacher retention are likely to be best value for money when they are targeted at teachers who are most responsive to pay differentials, such as early-career teachers and teachers of subjects with well-paid alternatives outside of teaching, e.g. science and maths. The Government's 2018/19 teacher pay increase of 3.5% for early-career teachers and smaller increases for more experienced teachers and school leaders would therefore seem to be a relatively effective use of constrained resources.

However, the pay increases are not differentiated by subject. Generous up front bursary payments for trainees in shortage subjects do not appear to be incentivising recruitment or retention to the levels required. One way to target resources at this group is to make bursary payments tied to teachers staying in teaching after training. In line with our recommendation, the Government's pilots of phased bursaries for maths teachers and student loan reimbursement for science and modern foreign language teachers are both promising developments.



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