

Privacy notice for FE workforce survey and longitudinal feasibility study: survey and focus groups with FE teachers, managers and leaders

1 Why are we collecting this data?

The [National Foundation for Educational Research](#) (NFER) is collecting personal data as part of a research project, funded by the Department for Education (DfE), to understand the current working conditions, views and professional experiences of the further education (FE) workforce. The project aims to inform targeted and effective FE workforce policy and increase the understanding of the FE workforce experiences and working conditions, for which little up-to-date information exists.

The project will be undertaken between September 2025 and May 2026. One strand of the research involves data collection with FE staff. This includes a survey of FE teachers, managers and leaders and focus group discussions with FE teachers and leaders. This privacy notice relates to these activities. Information on how personal data is processed for other strands of the study is available on the project web page [here](#).

For the purposes of data protection legislation, DfE is the data controller and decides what data will be collected and how it will be used. NFER is the data processor and will follow DfE's instructions about how data should be handled.

Further information about the research can be found in the project information sheet [here](#).

2 What is the legal basis for processing activities?

The legal basis for processing general category personal data is covered by GDPR Article 6(1)e which states that: processing is necessary for the performance of a task of the controller carried out in the public interest or a task carried out in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.

As part of the project, survey respondents are asked to share special category data (about their ethnicity and disability status) with us. The legal basis for the processing of special category personal data is covered by Article 9 (2) (g) of UK GDPR - substantial public interest on basis of national law.

The tasks in the public interest are set out in the Education Act 1993 which gives the Secretary of State for Education the power to conduct research with teachers. Specifically, under Part I, Chapter I, the Act outlines the general responsibilities of the Secretary of State, including: Section 21 – *Duty to compile information and conduct research about provision of education*

- (1) Each funding authority shall—
(a) compile such information, and

(b) make such provision for conducting, or assisting the conduct of, research, as may be required for the purpose of providing the Secretary of State and local education authorities, in such form and at such times as may be prescribed, with such information relating to the provision of education in any area to which an order under section 12 of this Act applies as may be prescribed.

(2) Each local education authority shall—

(a) compile such information, and

(b) make such provision for conducting, or assisting the conduct of, research, as may be required for the purpose of providing the Secretary of State and the funding authority, in such form and at such times as may be prescribed, with such information relating to the provision of primary or secondary education in the area of the local education authority as may be prescribed.

(3) The Secretary of State shall exercise his powers under this section so as to secure, in particular, the provision of information relating to the provision of education for children with special educational needs.

3 How will personal data be obtained?

NFER will collect personal data from college staff using two approaches, as detailed below:

- an online survey of FE teachers, managers and leaders
- focus group discussions with FE leaders and teachers.

We will use publicly available college email addresses together with web searches to contact FE colleges, sixth form colleges and independent training providers and invite them to participate in the research. We will ask senior leaders in organisations to distribute the online survey link to staff. For the focus group discussions, we will ask FE staff taking part in the survey if they are willing to take part in a subsequent focus group. We may also ask senior leaders if they are willing to identify the relevant staff to participate and gain their agreement to participate.

Participation in the survey and focus groups is entirely voluntary. Participants will be fully briefed on the purposes of the research and how the information they provide will be used before consenting to take part. Contact details will only be used for the purposes of the research.

4 What personal data is being collected by this project?

The personal data collected in this project will include:

- Name
- Contact details
- Role
- Organisation.

In the survey, we will collect perceptions and views on the working conditions within the FE sector (including pay, workload, flexible working), teaching experience, continuing professional development, organisation support and culture, wellbeing, career intentions, motivations, and challenges around recruitment and retention. We also collect demographic data, including ethnicity and disability status. We will seek respondents' consent to link their survey responses to information held in the Further Education Workforce Data Collection (FEWDC). This linkage will only be used to produce aggregated statistics, and no individual, college, or provider will be identified in any analysis or reporting. We will also ask for respondents' consent to contact them again to invite them to take part in future FE workforce surveys. We will collect information about the device respondents use to complete the survey, such as device type, operating system, and browser version, to help us improve survey accessibility and performance.

The focus groups will explore views on the feasibility of administering a longitudinal survey with the sector including content, mode of administration, frequency, incentives, and challenges and barriers and how they might be overcome.

5 Who will personal data be shared with?

Microsoft Teams (a video conferencing and online meeting application) will be used to conduct the focus groups. Microsoft Team's privacy information can be found [here](#). The focus groups will be recorded so the research team can ensure the notes they produce are accurate. The recording will not be listened to/watched by anyone outside of the research team and research participants' permission to record will be asked at the start of the focus groups.

The online survey data will be collected via Tivian which stores survey responses in Azure and AWS data centre infrastructure in the European Union. Tivian's privacy notice is available [here](#).

NFER will produce a publishable report for DfE. Data collected during the study will be anonymised and no individual will be identifiable in this report, unless permission has explicitly been given by the data subject.

Within three months of the project's conclusion, NFER will transfer the survey dataset to DfE via a secure, password-protected portal. This dataset will be pseudonymised, with direct identifiers (such as any names) replaced by numeric codes. No information from the focus groups will be archived.

At this point, DfE will retain a copy of the data, and will assume the role of Data Controller. This process aligns with NFER's commitment to open science and the advancement of research methods.

NFER will produce a publishable report for DfE. Data collected during the study will be anonymised and no individual will be identifiable in this report, unless permission has explicitly been given by the data subject.

6 Is personal data being transferred outside of the United Kingdom (UK)?

NFER only stores personal data in the UK.

The online survey data collected via Tivian stores survey responses in the European Union.

7 How long will personal data be retained?

NFER will retain personal data for up to six months after the publication of the project's final report, which is scheduled for the end of May 2026. At the latest, all personal data will be deleted by the end of November 2026.

8 What rights do I have over my personal data?

DfE and NFER handle personal data in accordance with the rights given to individual under data protection legislation.

Participants can withdraw their data from being processed at any time during the project. Should you withdraw from the research, any personal data you have provided up to that point will still be used unless you indicate otherwise.

Under certain circumstances data subjects have the right:

- to request access to information that is held about them (a data subject access request).
- to have personal data rectified if it is inaccurate or incomplete.
- to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing.
- to restrict processing of personal data (for example, permitting its storage but no further processing).
- to object to processing
- to data portability
- not to be subject to decisions based purely on automated processing where it produces a legal or similarly significant effect.

If you contact NFER to exercise one of these rights, we will share your request with the DfE. Or you can contact the DfE Data Protection Officer at: dataprotection.office@education.gov.uk

You may be asked to provide specific information to confirm your identity and ensure your right to access the information (or to exercise any of your other rights). This helps us ensure that personal information is not disclosed to any person who has no right to receive it.

9 Who can I contact about this project?

NFER is responsible for the day-to-day management of this research. Contact the Project Leader Matt Walker (m.walker@nfer.ac.uk) with any queries.

If you have concerns about the way this project processes personal data, in the first instance please raise your concern by contacting the DfE Data Protection Officer at:

dataprotection.office@education.gov.uk

If you remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office, the body responsible for enforcing data protection legislation in the UK, at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>.

10 Last updated

This document was updated in November 2025 to state that we will collect special category data as part of the survey, as well as information about the device respondents use to complete the survey, such as device type, operating system, and browser version, to help us improve survey accessibility and performance.