

Education Committee

Oral evidence: [Teacher recruitment, training and retention](#), HC 119

Tuesday 14 November 2023

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Members present: Mr Robin Walker (Chair); Caroline Ansell; Miriam Cates; Mrs Flick Drummond; Nick Fletcher; Ian Mearns.

Questions 149 to 234

Witnesses

[I](#): Philip Nye, Data Scientist, Institute for Government; Katie Waldegrave MBE, Co-founder and CEO, Now Teach; and Dr Luke Sibieta, Research Fellow, Institute for Fiscal Studies.

[II](#): Sinéad Mc Brearty, Chief Executive Officer, Education Support; Jack Worth, School Workforce Lead, NFER; Professor Becky Francis CBE, CEO, Education Endowment Foundation; and Professor Becky Allen, Chief Analyst and a Co-founder, Teacher Tapp.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Add names of witnesses and hyperlink to submissions]

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Philip Nye, Katie Waldegrave and Dr Luke Sibieta.

Q149 **Chair:** This is the fourth session of the Committee's inquiry on teacher recruitment, training and retention. Today, we will be hearing evidence from two panels. First, at 10 o'clock, Philip Nye, data scientist for the Institute for Government, Katie Waldegrave, MBE, co-founder and chief executive of Now Teach, and Dr Luke Sibieta, research fellow at the Institute for Fiscal Studies. You are all very welcome, and thank you for joining us this morning.

I would like to start by asking the panel what you can tell us about the main trends around recruitment and retention in the teacher workforce in England. Who would like to go first?

Dr Sibieta: I will happily go first; it is at the top of my list. To be blunt, teacher recruitment and retention is in quite a poor place in England at the moment. We see about one in 10 teachers leave the teaching workforce every year; that is relatively high, and it also includes a large number of people who are moving out of service. About two thirds of teachers who leave every year are just leaving their jobs, which is up from around 6% in 2010. Almost all teachers who are leaving now are mostly moving out of service; teachers who left previously used to be moving into retirement.

A lot of the problems with retention happen early in teachers' careers. After one year, about 87% of teachers are still in post; after five years, that is down to about two thirds, and that picture has not changed much over the last 10 or 15 years. We have always seen this problem of teachers leaving early in their careers.

Retention is also relatively poor compared with other countries. If you track back to when the OECD last measured this in 2016, England had probably the joint highest level of teacher exit across the countries that were measured, with a level of 10% of teachers leaving, compared with a norm of more like 4% to 8%. If we look within the UK, for instance, we see in Wales around 4% to 5% of teachers leave their jobs every year. That is partly because the teaching workforce in Wales is a bit older than in England, and that really matters, because young and less experienced teachers are more likely to leave their jobs, but England probably does have a relatively high level of teacher exit.

It is also relatively high compared with other occupations. We see a similar level of exit rates in the NHS, with around 10% to 11% of NHS workers leaving their job every year. It is a little higher than in the civil service, where it is about 7% to 8%. But within education, one area where teachers are not as bad is colleges: about 16% of college teachers leave their jobs every year, which is even higher than it is in the school workforce. Those are a few statistics just to exemplify the point that teacher retention is quite poor.



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Q150 **Chair:** That is quite an acute figure for the colleges; is that divide also visible in other systems, or is it unique to the English system?

Dr Sibieta: I do not know. The OECD only measures it for teachers every now and then, so we do not know the figures for other parts of the education sector.

Q151 **Chair:** You mentioned that England was the joint highest in 2016. Who was the other?

Dr Sibieta: Norway.

Q152 **Chair:** Who were the best? Which are the countries we should be looking to for a better example?

Dr Sibieta: I will happily get back to you on that; I cannot remember, but I think it was maybe Belgium and Estonia, but I would prefer to confirm that afterwards, if that is all right.

Chair: Of course, but it would be interesting to try and look for examples that perhaps we ought to be following or learning from.

Dr Sibieta: Potentially, yes, but you can look at churn in two ways. One is that people are leaving and that is a really bad thing, but you can also see churn in early parts of a teacher's career as just a natural process that is trying to get at whether people are right for the teaching profession or not. Some people start teaching, and within a year or two they realise it is not for them, and they leave and do something else. That is fine; it is about finding the right balance.

Q153 **Chair:** Katie, you are bringing people in as career changers. Do you see the retention figures as different for that group?

Katie Waldegrave: Yes, I have been looking at this. Compared to the private sector, retention figures would seem good, although it probably is more relevant to compare to the public sector. But it is tricky even there, because, as you were just saying, it is pretty similar in medicine, but if you look at qualified doctors leaving the profession, which obviously takes a long time, that is much lower, at about 3% or 4%.

What is so significant and striking is people leaving early. Maybe the only comparison is with itself, and it has got worse; we see more teachers leaving every year since 2010, as far as I know, so, if we compare it with itself, it does not seem to be working.

Q154 **Chair:** From the Institute for Government's perspective, have you looked at the comparison of different parts of the UK?

Philip Nye: We have looked at comparisons with other public sector organisations, including the police, and NHS staff in hospitals and community settings.

In terms of police, leaver rates are broadly similar to those in teaching. With NHS staff, looking at the early career leavers is particularly



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interesting. It is on a slightly different basis in that the figures we have for schools are based on the number of years since qualifying, whereas figures for NHS are based on age bands, so we are having to make some assumptions that younger members have not been in the service that long.

It is interesting that for teaching, in terms of early career leavers, as Luke said, things got a little better at the start of the pandemic, and then have got a bit worse since. The picture in the NHS is much starker: we have seen rates of midwives under 25 leaving hospitals and community settings more than doubling between 2020 and 2023; for nurses under 25, the leaving rate has gone up by 60%, which is far greater than in teaching. The narrative there is around NHS staff going to work abroad, so things do not seem quite that bad in teaching.

You asked about recruitment, and the area that we particularly have data on is recruitment into initial teacher training courses as opposed to recruitment into schools themselves. Recruitment to ITT is at crisis levels. Overall, the target the Department for Education set for post-grad trainees who were needed was missed by 30% in the last year for which we have data. Things are even worse at secondary level in certain subjects. In physics, the worst performer, the target was missed by 83%, in computing around 70%, and foreign languages by around two thirds.

Q155 **Chair:** That is despite a significant increase in the bursary for foreign languages.

Philip Nye: Yes. Part of the picture with foreign languages is it does not just come down to bursaries and training, but we have relatively few people doing degrees in foreign languages, so there is not the pipeline of people coming through.

Q156 **Chair:** And not so easy to bring people in from overseas as perhaps it once was in that space. On that recruitment front, are we observing a similar trend in other jurisdictions in other parts of the world, or is England an outlier in that challenge?

Philip Nye: In our work, we have not done international comparisons. I am not sure if anyone else on the panel has.

Dr Sibieta: I would not be able to speak to detailed international comparisons, but it is well known amongst other countries that there are greater difficulties recruiting maths and science teachers, in particular.

Q157 **Chair:** When we visited Finland to look at the early years piece, we heard they had the same challenges in terms of teacher recruitment, and also concerns about a brain drain from early years into schools, which some of our early years people would also tell us happens here. It was interesting in that respect; clearly, that is a wider challenge, but, given the Government's ambitions with regard to maths in particular, addressing that challenge seems pretty vital.



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Katie Waldegrave: As you were saying, in retention, it seems maybe the figure itself is not critical, but where it is happening. It is happening early in careers, in shortage subjects, in the most disadvantaged schools, where it is harder to retain and recruit teachers, so one needs to maybe look at those things, rather than just the base.

Q158 **Miriam Cates:** Looking at the figures, although there obviously is a problem in education in terms of recruitment and retention, it is not wildly different in comparison to other professions or to other countries. Do you think in some ways it just reflects the wider post-pandemic labour force changes we have been seeing across the west? If not, what is unique about teaching that is making this slightly worse than other similar public sector jobs, than other countries? What is it specifically about teaching in England that just tips it over the balance of what is average for now?

Philip Nye: One of the big factors is pay; teachers' pay has fallen more since 2009-10 than in the public sector as a whole. In terms of secondary school teachers, it has fallen by around 12.5%; for primary school, around 15% in real terms. That is worse than the falls in pay in real terms for nursing professionals and police officers. It is broadly similar to what we see for secondary school teachers, but police officers are better paid than primary school teachers, so that has to be part of what is driving it. Also, taking the broader lens, pay has fallen by more than it has in the private sector, so there is that question about how attractive it is.

Q159 **Chair:** You were also saying the deterioration in recruitment for the NHS is worse than for teaching, despite the fact the pay is better.

Philip Nye: On the pay figures, the data that I have is only for nursing professionals, but, from reading around the subject, I am aware that junior doctors are also very dissatisfied with their pay, but, yes, pay is not the only factor.

Q160 **Miriam Cates:** What do you think then are the specific factors? Katie, you mentioned drop-off in deprived schools being particularly bad. Do you think there is something about the culture of teaching, or the conditions of teaching, particularly in some schools, that, in recent years, have made it too difficult for people to carry on?

Katie Waldegrave: Hearing what Now Teachers say about teaching compared to where they have worked before is really interesting. We have worked with and supported nearly 1,000 people, and the average age is about 50, so they have had quite a lot of experience in other sectors. They are full of admiration for their colleagues and the schools, and, interestingly, they say the baseline things that are hard to get right in other sectors—sense of purpose, community, all sorts of things that have been lost post-covid for a lot of people—are stellar for them.

They are all proud, and mostly satisfied, with the decision they have made to change career; none the less, 70% of them suggest their



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workload is higher than it was in other sectors. This includes people who have worked in the private sector, in highly client-based sectors, the whole range of industries. They are saying they are working more, and, because of the retention so often in early years, inevitably, people are promoted to management early. I was a head of department before I was qualified.

Inevitably, you are then getting into a culture of management not comparable to what they have seen before; about 17% of them thought management culture was better than they had seen in their previous sectors. They all wanted to say this is not to be critical of the individuals who they have enormous respect for, but it is not an environment which is set up.

Q161 **Miriam Cates:** They had not reached the point where they had a lot of expertise in the basic job and could therefore take on a new challenge.

Katie Waldegrave: Exactly. Some Now Teachers come in and are very clear they want to go into management, and that is wonderful; we love to help support them, but, for the majority, they do not want that; they want to progress in their career.

Q162 **Miriam Cates:** Become very good classroom teachers.

Katie Waldegrave: It is not obvious how you do that whilst increasing your status, and indeed your pay.

Look at somewhere like Singapore, which has very clear, different tracks, management, specialism, research. We are not as good as we could be. Institutions such as the Charter College exist, but perhaps there is something we can learn.

Q163 **Miriam Cates:** If you excel in the classroom, you get taken out of the classroom.

Katie Waldegrave: Yes, and you are incentivised to do that.

Q164 **Miriam Cates:** Are independent schools seeing similar retention issues, as far as you are aware?

Dr Sibietta: I do not think that is measured. I am very happy to get back to you on that, but I do not think we have good statistics.

Q165 **Miriam Cates:** One of you was saying that the best comparator is elsewhere in the education sector, because it is so different to NHS. The most interesting comparison would be whether there is a similar drop-off.

Katie Waldegrave: Anecdotally, I believe they have the opposite problem sometimes.

Q166 **Miriam Cates:** In terms of improving retention, people in the NHS have suggested things like, "If you have been trained in this country as a doctor, you must stay in the NHS for X number of years, otherwise you have to contribute to the cost of your training." Do you think that is



appropriate in teaching, or do you think it is a very different scenario?

Dr Sibieta: I am not sure it makes a huge amount of difference. If you are forcing someone to stay in teaching through a financial penalty and they want to leave, that is probably not going to be a great situation for the teacher or the school. Trying to deal with some of the underlying issues would be better.

You asked what is specifically different about teaching, and specifically in England. I am sure we will cover it in the next session, but working hours and workload are big issues. That has got a little better, but it is still quite high compared with other occupations.

Katie also mentioned management, and there is a lot of good research showing the quality of management makes a big difference in terms of whether teachers stay in the profession and whether they stay in that specific school, and so improving the quality of management can make a big, big difference.

Another factor is context and behaviour. Moving from a school with high levels of disruption to one with low disruption is equivalent to something like a 26% pay difference, so it makes a big difference to teachers where they teach, and the context matters to them.

We have already spoken about STEM subjects and deprived areas, but you see these things multiply. I often come back to a report we did for EPI, which was looking at variation by subject and by area. If you looked at the share of physics teachers with a degree in physics in deprived areas outside London, that was about 16%. The chance of getting a physics teacher with a physics degree in a deprived area outside London is almost zero, because it is the highest-earning subject outside teaching and is the hardest place to get teachers into. So you see these things multiply together; part of it is the differentiation and the distribution.

Philip Nye: Perhaps as a bright spot to mention, on CPD and career progression, teaching comes out as an area that teachers are fairly satisfied with compared with other public sector organisations. These things are generally based on survey results, but, as best as we can tell, that seems to be the case.

In terms of actions to consider, we think more can be done within Government to compare public services and learn the lessons on retention from one service to another, for example from the health service to schools. The NHS has done lots of work on making the working environment menopause-friendly, and so let us learn the lessons from that in teaching.

We think there could probably be a role for the people function of the Cabinet Office to build this retention evidence base and share good practice from one area to another. In general, there tends to be more



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focus on recruitment than retention, and a lot of that comes down to the fact that we have a stronger evidence base.

Miriam Cates: More targets.

Philip Nye: Yes, but that is not necessarily to say that is where we should be directing our efforts.

Chair: Your point about more focus on recruitment than retention is interesting. I cannot remember which year it was, maybe 2021, when the Department formally changed it from a recruitment strategy to a recruitment and retention strategy, so there was clearly an intent to shift in that direction.

I remember giving evidence to a Lords Committee that was looking into recruitment and retention across the public sector, and, at the time, they seemed to be quite pleased with the fact that education had identified retention as as big a challenge as recruitment. The challenge is then in the delivery, how that translates, rather than necessarily the intent, but it is interesting from that perspective.

Q167 **Ian Mearns:** Katie, this has already been alluded to, but I was wondering if you could flesh out a little more your understanding of how workload and wellbeing in teaching compares with other professions and employment sectors.

Katie Waldegrave: As I said, pay, workload, and management, all linked together, create a cycle where, with the best will in the world and huge amounts of effort, they do not compare favourably. There are big positives around sense of purpose and pride, which we need to build on.

The other area is around flexibility, and this has been alluded to in other Committee meetings. The world has changed, teaching has not kept up, compared with what the private sector is doing and getting better at, but, again, there are lessons to learn from the private sector.

I was speaking to a Now Teacher who used to run an NHS trust, and she said she feels that teaching is where the NHS was perhaps 20 years ago, when she started in the NHS. A number of headteachers I have spoken to say they are anxious about flexible working for the impact it will have on their children, and that is most acute in the more disadvantaged areas.

And yet, we know a patient benefits from continuity of care; it is essential, and so we have moved to more of a shift pattern, and you can then make it part-time and flexible, which is, of course, different work. So there is a lot to be done, because that massively impacts both recruitment and retention and the need for part-time and flexible options for both starting in and staying in teaching; that links to both of those very strongly.

It comes back again so often to money. I was talking to a former senior BBC executive Now Teacher, who said, when they were staffing for the



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BBC, they staffed the necessary plus 18% to allow there to be flex in the system so that you could then create the additional flexibility you need. It might be interesting to compare how different sectors think about that.

Q168 Ian Mearns: I have been a member of this Committee for far too long, but from experience, amongst so many teachers that we come across, there seems to be an absolute selflessness in terms of how much effort and time they put in. It seems this sector has not got the work-life balance thing correct at all. Would I be right in thinking that, by comparison to other sectors?

Katie Waldegrave: In comparison to other sectors, that is 100% true. When Now Teachers were asked what might eventually push them out of teaching, the first thing they said was workload, then they said pay, and then they said hours worked, so they are distinguishing between those two things in their head.

Francis Green of UCL did a report talking about teacher intensity. Apparently, compared to any other major occupation, the workload intensity is higher than any other profession, and has increased dramatically in the last 25 years or so. This high accountability stakes and the slight culture of fear that comes from Ofsted drives this sense of intensity and it comes back to funding too.

Q169 Ian Mearns: It is intrinsically tied with anxiety and fatigue.

Katie Waldegrave: Exactly. There was a Now Teacher who had been a lawyer or a media executive, and what she was saying felt very accurate, "I was used to working hard, 12-hour days plus weekends and holidays, in my previous career, but the expectations on teachers are unachievable." That comes to CAMHS and everything else struggling too.

Q170 Ian Mearns: Philip and Luke, could you give us any thoughts on differentiated pay regions for teachers in England? How does that impact salary competitiveness in comparison to other sectors?

Philip Nye: I possibly do not have too much to say on this. Even if differentiated pay was pursued, there is a level about pay overall; it is not just the question of differentiated pay. Beyond that, I do not think we have a particular house view on whether changes to pay, introduction to differentiated pay, and so on, are more or less successful than bursaries.

Q171 Ian Mearns: This is very instinctive, but would I be right in thinking that, if you had differentiated pay, you would then start to get cross-border drift in terms of people moving from one region to another? Every region has a border, and if this region is paying a bit more than that region, you will get cross-border drift; it happens already, we see that.

Philip Nye: Yes, it seems reasonable to assume that would be the case.

Q172 Ian Mearns: Luke, anything to add from your perspective?



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Dr Sibieta: You will no doubt be familiar with the picture around the country in terms of public sector pay compared to the private sector, and the public sector tends to have a bigger premium in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, north-east, other parts of the north, as well. That does not necessarily mean you should have differentiated pay across the country. We know it has implications, but, as you say, managing it is very hard. You have borders where people can cross, but you would have to interact it with the funding system, so you would have to have a funding system that provided less for people in the north-east than in the south-east.

Ian Mearns: That would be a little unfair.

Dr Sibieta: I am just saying it is relatively hard to manage. It has advantages, but it is hard to manage.

Q173 **Ian Mearns:** When you look at recruitment and retention problems, they are often quite localised as well, so you might have to have those competitive issues being done on a localised basis within regions, never mind across regions.

Katie, from your perspective, what is your understanding of the competitiveness of teacher salaries in comparison to the former professions of those making a career change to teaching? I have a funny feeling it is a mixed bag.

Katie Waldegrave: It is definitely a mixed bag, because people have come from the full range of professions. We should not ignore that teaching has a competitive salary, and it is seen as a relatively safe industry to be in compared to others, even in the private sector. So there is a lot that can be above and, whatever people's former salaries, they are making the choice to come into teaching based on the fact of the salary they know.

I am not for a second denying the pay issue is critical, but it is too broad. They all agree it is probably not enough, but it is not enough for what they are asked to do.

Q174 **Nick Fletcher:** Some of this has already been answered, but I have some further questions of my own, too. Can you identify some key barriers to recruitment and retention? In particular, what do other sectors offer that teaching cannot?

Katie Waldegrave: The human population has doubled its lifespan in living memory, and this is a huge opportunity. It is fundamentally a good thing, and, for many of us, we will be able to therefore live and work longer. We still very much think in terms of immediate or very recent graduates when we think about recruitment in.

Last year, the expressions of interest among the over-55s shot up by about 65%, and the over-50s by 52%. The absolute numbers remain not huge, but we have seen a huge appetite from older people, and the



private sector is beginning to really lean into the sense that no one is going to stay in one job forever. We will need to be able to recruit people from one sector to another, to retrain and reskill them, and also to hold on to older people and figure out the right career path and pace for them within one sector and be able to manage flexibility towards the end of a career.

There is something about teaching that could look to the private sector a little. For example, Phoenix Insights are doing some really interesting work around midlife MOTs, building on some of what the Government are doing, looking at how they can support people into career paths or career transitions in quite a sophisticated way. We need to think about the ageing population.

Dr Sibiet: Particularly with teaching, but also the NHS, what stands out is the working from home premium, which is connected to flexibility, as well. Since the pandemic, more people are working from home, and they place a high value on it. Private sector organisations are very much hot on that, trying to work out appropriate compromises for their employees, the means by which they can still interact in an office environment but have the flexibility to work from home when they need to for particular events, or just for autonomy.

Work by Nick Bloom has suggested the value of being able to work from home is probably about 8% of salary, so it makes teaching a little less competitive because it cannot really offer work from home or flexible options.

Philip Nye: That is true also of public services; a lot of those roles cannot be done working from home, for example, police and NHS. Perhaps the difference is that, historically, teaching has been seen as quite family-friendly; you get the long summer break, which, if you have family responsibilities, could be very useful. But now, perhaps, compared to other non-public sector roles, it is not as flexible and family-friendly as it once was.

Chair: In both schools and early years, anecdotally, I keep coming across this issue of supermarkets offering jobs for term-time and school-hours only, which seems to be relatively new and is creating a lot of tension, particularly for the teaching assistants—for the people below the teacher level in schools. But that seems to be a big competitive pressure which people are really feeling.

Q175 **Nick Fletcher:** I come from the private sector, and there was always lots of overtime for the people that worked in my sector. Please correct me if this is wrong as I have only asked one teacher; I asked if we could give teachers some overtime for out of school activities for Saturday mornings, stopping back for a couple of hours, but using the school as a community asset. But, like you said, some of the issues are that, for a teacher to increase their wages, they have to move into management or a specialist, whereas some just want to stay in the classroom. Those that



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are staying in the classroom do not feel valued because they are not getting paid for their experience; we are paying young teachers that come into it the same to try and recruit them, so that is what is happening there.

Is it right that, because of the Burgundy Book, we cannot differentiate between somebody who has more experience than others, and offer overtime for the younger teachers coming through so they can increase their wages if they need to? There is lots to unpack in there, but surely, we have to look at ways we can make this a little fairer, and we can do something with this.

Philip Nye: On the actual mechanisms of whether you can or cannot do it, I am afraid I do not know.

Katie Waldegrave: On the whole, if people ran a Saturday group or something, they would be paid and relieved for doing it.

Q176 **Nick Fletcher:** Would it be a good idea, though? Do you think that could work? And do you understand what people are saying: that the only way they get to increase their wages is by moving into management? In the private sector, I pay people for their experience; not massively more, but they do get something more for their experience.

Katie Waldegrave: Lawyers charge per minute, do they not, and teachers are so elastic in the way they see their workload that, for discrete things, probably they are.

Dr Sibieta: Schools can use things like teaching, learning and responsibility payments and other allowances to pay teachers more for taking on certain responsibilities, and those can be subject level or extracurricular. In the end, it will come down to whether or not the school can afford to; some schools will, and some schools will not be able to, but that is the mechanism by which they could do those sorts of things.

You also touched on an important point about teaching, which is the level of progression, pay progression and management progression. One thing that is quite interesting about England, in particular, but also about teaching, as well: England compares relatively well on early career salaries. If you compare early graduate salaries with teaching salaries, teaching salaries look pretty good. Not for maths and physics, but for most subjects, teaching salaries look pretty good early on in the career.

In comparison to private sector workers in their 30s and their 40s, teaching does not look as good anymore; teaching gets to a ceiling where you cannot really go much further without becoming a deputy headteacher or a headteacher. And headteachers are paid very well in England compared with in other countries, so it is pretty normal compared with other graduates, but headteachers are paid about twice the amount of average graduate wages. So headteachers do very well, but you can only have one headteacher per school, so progression in their 40s and 50s is relatively low.



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Q177 **Nick Fletcher:** If you are losing people at five years because they do not want to go into a specialist or management, if you increased their salary because they had five years' experience teaching, would that do something to hold them there?

Dr Sibieta: We do, to some extent. We have a relatively steep profile early on in a teacher's career, and they get stuck at the top of what is known as the upper pay scale, which they get at around their early 30s. The only way you move beyond that is by becoming a head of department, a deputy headteacher, or a headteacher, so you do get stuck. Whilst in the private sector, you would see continued pay progression through your 40s and your 50s, which makes the private sector much more competitive for those sorts of workers.

Q178 **Nick Fletcher:** So you would see an advantage in doing that.

Dr Sibieta: I would see an advantage; the issue is the cost.

Q179 **Nick Fletcher:** I have been campaigning for a Minister for men; I am dealing with lots of issues with men and boys. One issue we have found is there are not enough male teachers—I think it is one in three in primary and one in seven in secondary—and 30% of primary schools have no male teachers at all. We have also found an issue with fatherlessness at home, and so we believe having male teachers within the school is a good thing. Is there anything you can offer that might be able to help with recruitment of males in schools?

Katie Waldegrave: Now Teach is roughly 50/50 men and women, which is unusual in the profession. Once people have done a first career where maybe they are supporting the family, then they maybe look at another career; a lot of our men say they had always wanted to be a teacher but got pushed into something else. So widening the pool is one small thing of who we think about later on.

Philip Nye: Leaver rates are broadly similar for male and female teachers, so if we are getting men into the classroom, it does not seem to be the case that they are leaving then at a much higher rate.

Q180 **Nick Fletcher:** But we are not getting the amount in in the first place. Luke, do you want to add anything to that?

Dr Sibieta: Not much to add beyond the fact that we know men are more likely to go into maths and physics subjects, and those subjects are very high earning. So it is not a huge surprise that we then have fewer men, particularly in secondary school, but it is just recognising that it is a bigger draw in some cases.

Q181 **Mrs Drummond:** I would like to unpick the workload issue a little more, because it is something they all say. What can we do to change it? Because if that is why they are leaving, then something has to change, so I just wanted to get your views on that.



Philip Nye: In 2018, the DfE produced their workload reduction toolkit. Of course, the pandemic has introduced new challenges, and teachers will also tell you they are having to do a lot more on mental health and social care responsibilities, for example, as a result of local authorities not having the resources they used to have. That probably plays a part of it, so it is not just the workload, but it is the type of extra work they are being asked to do.

There is some research from John Jerrim which looks at the impact of a range of different types of activity on teacher wellbeing, and there are some things that teachers seem much happier to spend an extra hour doing than other things. So it may be a question of what extra things they are being asked to do, as well.

Q182 **Mrs Drummond:** Particularly in secondary schools, is it that they are having to cover for subjects which they do not perhaps know very well, and having to do more work to prepare for those lessons, particularly in things like physics?

Chair: That is certainly something we heard from the subject experts when we had that session.

Mrs Drummond: Is that causing an issue?

Katie Waldegrave: Even within their own subjects; they are teaching a huge number of different classes, different years, typically, but they have a lot. It is very important that we do not see part-time as the solution to workload. Of our Now Teachers that are working part-time, 66% say they are still working 40-plus hours a week, so one is not the solution to the other.

Having said that, greater flexibility can help wellbeing, and the ability to be part-time is what some people want. If they would just like to be working less and could afford to be on four days, for example, then we need ways of making that work more effectively.

One thing that would be interesting would be not looking so much at what the Government are doing with the FWAMs and the flexible work—this is all great, and I know there is going to be lots of focus on it in the new iteration of the recruitment retention paper—but whether there could be more research on the impact on students. Anecdotally, it is quite often good for students; you can have a split class where you get different expertise from different teachers, but headteachers worry about the impact. So that might be a lever, because I appreciate that headteachers do have discretion; it is quite hard to know what levers the Government have.

Q183 **Mrs Drummond:** On the recruitment, do you think the negative PR coming out, with strikes, and teachers saying it is such hard work, etc, is having an impact on recruitment?



Philip Nye: It is hard to say; I do not think that is really something we have looked at.

Q184 **Mrs Drummond:** It could be quite interesting to find out. When I did a report on social workers, we were looking at the PR and whether they did a good television programme about what a great job it is, etc. I just wondered if that was one of the reasons why people were not going into teaching.

Ian Mearns: I am just wondering if a comparison could be done as to what recruitment and retention were like prior to the current round of industrial action, and what they are like in the aftermath.

Mrs Drummond: Yes, some research on that.

Ian Mearns: It is still going on.

Katie Waldegrave: What was quite heartening was I told Now Teachers I was coming here and I have been sent half a dozen cited papers, hundreds of emails; people have this wealth of experience from other sectors that they want to bring. One thing they talk about is the perception of teaching, that for all they want to highlight the issues around workload and pay, etc, compared to almost every industry they have worked in, there is a sense of joy of working with young people. Without wanting to say these things are not all issues, those things are also real, and they all do think, "Is there a way we can do a rebrand without whitewashing the real issues?"

And almost the opposite, flexible working, working from home; all these things people like, but it is quite a lonely way of working for many people. And one thing schools are not is lonely; you are surrounded by people, you are part of a community, you have a great sense of purpose, all those things are a given. So they do wonder if there is a way of rebranding.

Q185 **Mrs Drummond:** It transforms lives, does it not? We all know the good and bad teachers; we can all remember them. As far as I am concerned, it is the most important job, apart from parenting, so it is really depressing to find that people are not going into it.

I will go back to the question that I am supposed to ask. We have heard about teacher training bursaries for maths and physics and various subjects. If they were smaller and more available for more subjects, do you think that would help with teacher recruitment? So if everybody in all subjects got a bursary today, would that help?

Philip Nye: Again, that is one I would leave others to answer; we have not really looked at bursaries in detail.

Dr Sibietta: I would probably say no. We have problems recruiting trainees in maths, science and languages in particular, so targeting more bursary spend on those areas seems fairly sensible, particularly as it is



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the one part of teachers' remuneration over their lifetime where we can vary it by subject. It is very hard to pay maths and English teachers different amounts of money in a salary because it leads to some tricky staffroom dynamics. You can do it in bursaries; it seems rational to be doing it as much as is realistic there, so the present distribution is probably about right.

Katie Waldegrave: I would love to say yes, because, in terms of the professionalism of the whole sector, it feels almost petty to say, "Oh, this is worth more than that;" I agree fundamentally with it being a powerful lever.

Particularly for career changers with care and responsibilities, mortgages, etc, they are critically important, but also it would be wonderful if they could be announced earlier. So, for somebody thinking about becoming a teacher who is already doing something else, it tends to be at least a two-year process of thinking about that. If you are looking at the bursary in January and it seems to be £20,000 so you make some plans around that, but by the time you have applied and got your place it has dropped because it only gets announced in October and now it is £12,000. Whilst I see how they are useful to play with the levers and numbers change, giving a slightly longer-term threshold would be helpful.

Q186 **Chair:** I understand the point you are making—that they are effectively market-driven about filling the gaps and so on—but, once these things have become priced in and we still have a critical shortage of physics specialists, for instance, is there a diminishing return on that investment? Could it be used more effectively in, say, a retention payment or something? Has anyone looked at that or done any research around the balance between upfront bursaries and retention?

Dr Sibietta: It would be quite hard to do that really well, because it would require a research setting that would be really hard to get right. But the intuitive point is right, that there are benefits to doing bursaries, and there is research showing the benefits in improving it. It is currently around £25,000 to £30,000 for physics and maths, and I am not sure there is research evidence that suggests going up to £40,000 to £50,000 would be particularly beneficial or sensible.

The approach of then providing retention payments in the first five years of teaching in maths, physics, languages, and higher levels in deprived areas, is a good approach and is very research-driven. There is a lot of good research showing that would be a good approach, so I do not think it is either/or; it is about using both approaches, but not trying to throw all your eggs in one basket.

Chair: To Ian's point, it would be interesting to see in the long run whether those retention payments in those targeted areas have a drain on their neighbours. Presumably, that evidence is not really available yet, but that would be an interesting thing to monitor.



That has been very helpful, and we are running more or less to time. I am very grateful to the first panel, if we can hand over to the second panel. Thank you very much for your contribution.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Sinéad Mc Brearty, Jack Worth, Professor Becky Francis and Professor Becky Allen.

Q187 **Chair:** Thank you very much for coming to give evidence today. We are continuing with this fourth session of the Committee's inquiry on teacher recruitment, training and retention. On the second panel we will be hearing evidence from Sinéad Mc Brearty, chief executive officer of Education Support, Jack Worth, the school workforce lead at the NFER, Professor Becky Francis CBE, chief executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, and Professor Becky Allen, chief analyst and co-founder of Teacher Tapp. You are all very welcome and thank you for coming today.

We have heard a lot about teacher retention workload from the last panel. To what extent have previous Government interventions, including the school workload reduction toolkit, been effective, and what could the Government do to improve their efforts to reduce teacher workload?

Professor Allen: I am happy to say a few words on the school workload reduction toolkit. We run a daily survey of over 10,000 teachers in England every day, and, at the weekend I took the liberty of asking the senior leaders on the panel about the workload reduction toolkit. A third of those senior leaders had never heard of it, and a third of them had heard of it but not read it. A third had looked at it, and just over a third of those who had looked at it said they found it helpful.

The school workload reduction toolkit is a big document; you need to invest about 100 hours of senior leadership time in really working through it, and it is unrealistic for school leaders to find the time to focus on school workload reduction.

Q188 **Chair:** Given the nature of the retention challenge, that ought to be a priority for people running a school.

Professor Allen: It ought to be a priority, and, in some respects, it is a priority for school leaders, but it is intrinsically in tension with other priorities. We ask school leaders to do school improvement, and we place a lot of external accountability on school leaders, who, when they are being asked to improve their schools and ensure they are good, necessarily impose a lot of internal accountability on the staff themselves.

It is very easy for us as outsiders to say, "Well, school leaders need to just stop asking teachers to do things, stop asking them to come to meetings, have marking policies, etc." But that is really akin to taking away the ability of school leaders to work on this thing called school improvement, which is something the accountability system requires them to do in their job. This is the tension that senior leaders feel; on the



one hand, it is in their gift to materially change the workload of their teachers, but, on the other hand, they would be metaphorically shooting themselves in the foot if they were to do it, because they would be undermining their own efforts to lead and run and improve their school.

Sinéad Mc Brearty: We found two things in the Teacher Retention Commission earlier this year. One is that data and marking for all the work that was done are still issues in many schools. Schools are still doing data drops, they are collecting too much data, more data than they can ever use, and that is still fairly standard across far too many schools. And marking policies have not taken account of best evidence across the whole sector, so, again, we have too many schools that are doing more than necessary in those spaces.

There are two big areas outside the Workload Toolkit, and Becky has alluded to these. One is around the accountability-driven workload, which is not part of that; we talked about it a little earlier. A lot of anxiety arises from the accountability regime, and we cannot deal with it in a very rational task basis, because it is not people doing this thing that Ofsted said they should do, for example.

It is more that the stakes are very high, and it is very reasonable for a leader to think, "If the stakes are this high and I could lose my job and my community, the funding for this school may be fundamentally affected, and the community will suffer." They pay a lot of attention to every possible scenario that could go wrong in an inspection. Inspections are subjective, there is low trust in the inspection system, and that makes enough space for a lot of anxiety to bubble up.

The pressure is then on school leaders and trickling down to teachers to almost over-create a very visible audit trail for everybody to see the rationale for every decision that was ever taken in the school, and that is when we talk about accountability-driven workload. This was brought home to me by a comment a headteacher made directly after an inspection that, from their perspective, had gone reasonably well. With some relief, the headteacher said, "That's great, we can go back to the school development plan now, strip out all the Ofsted-y stuff and just focus on the enrichment for children." That is the bit of workload that we do not pick up in the toolkit.

The second bit is the spillover from wider public services not being able to manage in terms of CAMHS and social services, which I am sure you will have heard of through multiple evidence sessions. We do not have a system that is working well for additional educational needs, and poverty has become a massive issue; we hear this from teachers and school leaders all the time.

If we have 1 million children who have experienced destitution in the past 12 months, those kids are turning up in schools not ready to learn. The workload required to support them is great, whether you pick that up because you take their clothes home to wash them—which 13% of



teachers do according to our research—or you have to work so much harder to support a child to learn who has not had a decent breakfast, and biologically is not in the place to learn well.

A lot of workload is coming out of those two areas, and they are quite difficult to grapple with, so, whilst the Workload Toolkit may be responsible for reducing some hours, there are big gaps in what it is able to cover, or what it has covered historically.

Q189 **Chair:** Some of that is about resourcing other parts of the system to support schools better, rather than just what happens in schools.

Sinéad Mc Brearty: Absolutely. In one way or another, the amount of resource we put into supporting children and families is not equitable in terms of what they need and what the demand is; it is a long way short.

Q190 **Chair:** Jack and Becky, do come in on this. The EEF does a lot of work to look at what works and what makes a difference. To that point of the unnecessary workload and the pressures on that, what can you say in terms of what could be done?

Professor Francis: At the EEF, we are deeply committed to this issue of recruitment and retention, and, because of that, we conducted a rapid evidence review across the whole area. Building on the findings of that holistic review, we commissioned three sub-reviews focused on different aspects, including leadership culture and flexible working—and I am sure we will come back to those issues—but also workload reduction, commissioned by the NFER, so this is going to segue on perfectly.

I can perhaps present a few green shoots in the messages here, though I do not disagree with anything that either Becky or Sinéad have said already. We see some positives; most schools are taking measures to address workload reduction, sometimes drawing from the toolkit, of course. This is primarily focused around PPA time and lesson planning support, but there is a strong correlation between teachers feeling their workload is being supported and schools that have these strategies, and that is an important lesson in its own right.

Again, teachers report that drivers of workload are often external: pressure from Government changes, Ofsted, parental expectations and liaison, and, of course, all the issues around CAMHS, as we were hearing, both from Sinéad and in the earlier session. Again, as we have been hearing, a barrier to addressing some of that is funding.

We have also heard about behaviour management being a top priority for teachers in regard to not only their classroom experience, but also to addressing workloads. There is a strong correlation between positive efforts to address these issues within schools and teachers' feelings, both about their likelihood of retention, and about their work satisfaction and their positive views of their own manageability of their workload. That leads on to this issue about the importance of leadership and support.



I just want to throw in the extra issue that has not been mentioned yet around artificial intelligence. We are at a crossroads where there is very little evidence on this to date. The EEF are stepping into this space to run hopefully the first trial of some positive support for teachers around using large language models to support workload reduction. But the promise is pretty strong, and it is very interesting to see where those areas of promise are, which is often slightly counterintuitive but I am glad to talk more on that if helpful.

I will turn to Jack; there is no one better placed in terms of the data.

Jack Worth: There are a number of different surveys that measure workload, and workload is complex to measure; it is not just working hours, but it is how teachers feel about the workload, what they are asked to do, and the impact they feel that has in the classroom. The data fairly consistently shows there has been a slight improvement since the Government started to think about focusing on workload. It is impossible to say whether it was the toolkit—which senior leaders may or may not have seen—or the independent review groups that looked at different aspects of working; for example, Becky's group looked at data.

There have been lots of different actions; Ofsted explicitly look at workloads. There has been a slight reduction in workload since around 2016, but we are talking really minor changes. Working hours have come down a bit but are still much higher than in other graduate jobs. In a typical working week teachers feel they work too many hours.

In a DfE survey, those who disagreed they had an acceptable workload fell from 87%, and it is now at 72%. So small amounts of progress, but the big picture is that 72% of teachers still say they do not have an acceptable workload, and that is the focus for all the issues we have been talking about.

Q191 **Chair:** Yes, 72% is still high. Are those up-to-date figures, or are they pre-pandemic? Because some of what we have heard consistently is that things were improving a bit before the pandemic, but then it has got worse again, partly because of the external factors that Sinéad referenced. Is the data you just mentioned 2023 data, or is it older?

Jack Worth: That is 2022 data, so it has slightly increased since just before the pandemic. The big change was between 2016 and the start of the pandemic. The pandemic has also contributed to changes—working hours have slightly come down—but they are really marginal changes, and a lot of the same issues, as well as new issues coming along.

Q192 **Chair:** Teacher representatives and unions always argue that teacher agency is really important, and teachers feeling they have ownership of what they do is just as important as how much they have to do. In that respect, AI poses both a challenge and a threat in that it needs to be used in a way that supports teachers and gives them agency, not takes it away from them. Is there anything you want to add to that, Becky?



Professor Francis: I am sure that is right. There is almost zero evidence in this space to date so it is hard to be categorical. The promise around being able to, not necessarily to create lesson plans which has been an obvious suggestion we have seen to start with, but to support the materials within that and be able to provide differentiation, to structure lessons and provide worked examples and so forth; those are really promising, and I am sure that there are other areas as well. It is going to be an interesting 18 months.

Professor Allen: We asked people in our panel who are actively thinking of leaving the profession, "What would make you stay?" After they have mentioned workload, pay, student behaviour, and Ofsted, the fifth thing that comes up regularly is autonomy: less micromanagement. For people thinking of leaving the profession, this is important for some of them.

To say a word on what we know about how they are now using ChatGPT and other large language models, we know that at the moment four in 10 teachers say they are already using them for their school work. The reason they say they like them is that they are consistent with a model of autonomy over teacher planning.

What teachers do not like is being given curriculum resources and told you have to teach this way, and it is not just because they want to do their own thing, it is because the way they make sense of the topic they are about to teach—and remember we ask teachers to teach an incredibly wide range of topics and across five, six, seven year groups—is that they have to go through that process of reimagining the lesson. What the large language models allow them to do is work together with an assistant, if you like, to have a conversation about how they are going to plan the lesson. That is why they like them so much.

The real question about the future and what that brings is: do we get to the point where we are able to do computer-assisted marking in subjects beyond maths, where we have pretty much already cracked it? That is the real promise, because the one thing we know about teachers is, overwhelmingly, when you ask them, "What have you been doing too much of this week?" or, "What have you been doing that you feel is unproductive and not a good use of time?", they will mention marking. So, the question is, first, can we get there: can we get these models to the point where they are reliable enough that we can give reasonable feedback in low stakes environments to students? Do individual teachers get there or is this really about commercialisation of products around homework platforms and so on because the technology demands scale to allow it to happen? If that does happen, it will materially change the nature of teaching.

The very controversial thing is what happens when this works really well in some subjects and not in others? We are already in a situation where maths teachers do not have to mark homework because they can purchase commercial platforms. Nobody really minds that because we do



not have enough maths teachers so nobody is aggrieved at them, but what happens when we have these real inequalities across the teaching profession where we have platforms that can do the job so well of marking in some subjects and not others? It will be interesting to watch.

Q193 Chair: That is a really interesting point. On the work that the EEF and the NFER have done, are there specific areas that you have identified where you can say this has been a successful piece of workload reduction? Are there specific good examples that you can highlight in that respect? Is there anything we can learn from those to apply in other areas?

Jack Worth: There is certainly some mixed evidence, which also came through the Department's survey, where they asked teachers—and we asked the same question—"Has your school done something recently that was aimed at reducing workload?" There were a lot of mixed responses in terms of whether it actually had, partly because changing a system can lead to workload in the short term, but it can be hard to do.

The areas teachers identified as being important for workload reduction were around behavioural management, pastoral care, marking, which always comes up a lot, and a big enabler is the support services around schools. Schools know how to reduce workload but they have a lot of other things to think about, like balancing trading off against school improvement and what Ofsted wants to see. The support from outside agencies to help with some of those things would help teachers to then focus on the job of teaching.

Professor Francis: I do not think I have much to add there. I agree with everything Jack said about how to reduce administration but I think administration is the only one he did not mention. We know how to reduce administration but whether, for the reasons that Becky and Sinéad were talking about at the beginning, it is feasible or leaders want to do so, is a different set of issues.

Q194 Chair: You have talked about behaviour and I know behaviour is something that comes up a lot in retention surveys—one of the reasons why people leave—but when it comes to balancing behaviour and workload, there is a tension there in terms of if a school has a very detailed behaviour policy that is potentially going to generate workload as well as potentially relieving some pressure on teachers. Do you have any evidence as to what works in that space and is there any difference between the schools that are working with behaviour hubs and those that are not?

Jack Worth: It is a stress inducer, having to deal with those issues, and what teachers value is the whole school system and support from senior leaders. You can have a policy that says you will do this, you will do that, but if as a teacher you do not have the consistency of support from the senior leadership and the whole school to do that, it makes it a lot harder.



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Q195 **Ian Mearns:** Jack, you have mentioned the marginal changes and improvements which have occurred since 2016. Of course 2016 was when the Department launched the Teacher Workload Survey. Has there been any impact from the data which has come out of the survey that has had a tangible benefit that you can see?

Jack Worth: It is hard to assess the value of data. Obviously, data is very important—I would say that as a data analyst—but I think it is important to measure these things and measuring things makes it salient that it is important. NFER conducted the 2019 Teacher Workload Survey, which showed some significant changes from that 2016 survey and between 2010 and 2016, there was not a survey at all. Workload had been rising throughout that period but nobody knew; it was hard to find out that that was the case, because you need consistent surveys time after time.

So now the Department has moved to the Working Lives Survey, which will produce annual snapshots of a lot of those same measures which are in the Teacher Workload Survey. It is important to have a consistent time series so that we are measuring these things over time. Whether the data itself has any impact, I do not know, but it helped to identify the areas that needed attention. There were then some working groups that looked at them, and those areas reduced.

Q196 **Ian Mearns:** I suppose the crucial question therefore is, in your analysing of the data, has the data thrown up anything which you think well really that needs to be addressed but is it being addressed or is it not? How are the Department using the data and how effectively are they using the data?

Jack Worth: They are using it to identify the issues and a lot of the same issues come up, which often happens with—

Q197 **Ian Mearns:** If the same issues are coming up, that would tell you that the data is not being used to great effect in that case.

Jack Worth: I think there has been action in the areas that came up in that 2016 survey which led to some improvements in the 2019 survey.

Q198 **Ian Mearns:** For instance, inventing a toolkit which takes 100 hours of professional input to access and then only a third of a third are actually getting any tangible benefit from that, that is what we have been told this morning. Right, Becky?

Professor Allen: Nearly all surveys of working hours of teachers, including workers, ask, "How many hours did you work in the last week?" And I wonder how many of you could answer that question. At Teacher Tapp we ask, "How many hours did you work in the last week?" And every so often we ask them every single day, "How many hours have you worked?" And from that we know that they suffer from terrible recall bias so a significant proportion of our teachers actually overestimate how



many weekly hours they are working relative to the daily reports that they give us.

You have to think about why that is happening in relation to the nature of the job as a teacher, because the job of a teacher is not one that we complete on-site in fixed hours. Even when we are at work, the question of, "Are we working at lunchtime and break time if we are half-eating our lunch but students are coming in to see us and we are sorting out some photocopying?"

Each day, what we are doing in terms of our duties and our meetings is going to vary. We go home, if we have a family we look after our children, and then we log on in the evening. We know that four in 10 teachers on any day that we ask say that they marked some work in front of the TV. If you were sitting there marking work for three hours in front of the TV, should we count that as three hours' work? Well it depends, does it not, on how intensely we are working relative to watching TV. Then we work at the weekends and we dip in and out at holidays.

So one of the reasons these surveys probably do not tell us a great deal about the nature of teachers' working lives is that we ask the question in a way that it cannot be answered, because none of us knows how many hours we worked last week. We can answer a question about what we were doing at 7 pm yesterday: were we looking at emails? Were we working? That is the way we ask questions at Teacher Tapp to try and work out the intensity and patterns of work that are taking place and it reveals stories about disconnected understanding of the intensity of work within the profession.

For example, headteachers will tell you that meetings are not an issue in their school because as far as they are concerned, they only organise one meeting a week that takes place. Yet, when you ask the teachers within their schools, "How many meetings did you have after school last week?" They will typically say they had three meetings, because of course the headteacher does not realise there is all this other stuff going on: where parents are coming in, where departments out of their own volition are organising meetings. So when we think about fixing the workload problem, we have to recognise the complexity of what the job is like and the inadequacies of how we measure workload.

Q199 Ian Mearns: It strikes me, Becky, that there will be some teachers who are sitting at home with the television on in the room, who will be taking absolutely no notice whatsoever of the television—it is just background noise—and there will be others who are distracted by it occasionally. It is difficult to measure that.

Professor Allen: Also, in relation to marking, what do we want? What kind of intellectual intensity do we want? Given that we know when we ask teachers this hypothetical question: "Suppose you stopped adding any written comments in students' work, how much would learning



deteriorate?" Half of teachers say, "Not at all." So they are completing a task with ambiguous status in terms of its contribution to learning. This comes back to work intensity, and what do we want teachers to do?

Q200 Ian Mearns: I am wondering, Jack, is there any other data that would be helpful for the Department to consider in order to better address the issue of high teacher workload? Is there anything that they are not looking at that they really should be looking at in terms of data collection? I know that the NFER have been involved in collecting the data.

Jack Worth: To Becky's point, it is a really complex thing to measure. You can start with working hours, but it is not really about working hours, it is sometimes about how those working hours feel or how manageable workload is. The Department are collecting data on some of those measures, but there is a huge amount you could possibly ask about how much influence teachers feel they have over their work, over different aspects of their work. That would add up to an enormous survey which would probably be infeasible to deliver. So it is always going to be a balance between what you can fit in a survey and what is useful to ask about to actually get under the bonnet of what workload is.

Ian Mearns: Based on experience, you can do all the planning that you like in terms of how you want to map your day out, but stuff gets in the way all the time.

Q201 Mrs Drummond: Moving on from that, it is about the wellbeing of teachers. Hearing about the workload, it feels as if they do not have control over their day, which is causing a lot of angst and may be contributing to their wellbeing. To what extent has the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter been effective, and what are the main contributions to poor wellbeing for teachers? Sinéad, do you want to start?

Sinéad Mc Brearty: In terms of the wellbeing of teachers, we know that when we stand back and look at wellbeing across all workplace settings, there are some factors that really matter. Purpose—we heard about it in the previous session—is hugely important. On the one hand we know it, but we do not attend to it well enough in the education sector. We have a workforce that is deeply connected to its purpose, that arrives with really high ambition and aspiration to do good work, and somehow we manage to wring that out of people along the way and there is a huge lost opportunity in it. Other industries would give their left arm for the level of purpose that we see in the workforce in education. So that is a huge part.

Ensuring that we can allow people to feel connected to that sense of purpose comes back to self-efficacy; if I am a teacher in front of a classroom and I feel like I can make a difference in the lives of the children in front of me, that sense of purpose is being met.

If I do not—and I do not because I have this number of behavioural issues, this number of special educational needs that are not being met, I



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have some social, emotional and mental health issues over here, I have some children who have never caught up in whatever the subject is after covid—that is a much less satisfying experience as a teacher. At that point, if you think, “I cannot make a difference, the sense of purpose I brought here is not being met”, it is a pretty rational decision to decide to go and do something else. So purpose is hugely important and really difficult to measure and navigate.

Culture matters enormously. We are publishing the 2023 Teacher Wellbeing Index tomorrow, and in that, the statistic that breaks my heart is that 55% of teachers experience their workplace as having a negative impact on their personal wellbeing. Fifty-five per cent! There are some big systemic issues in that, that we start to get to through some qualitative research, but culture in the sector is not in a good place.

There are lots of aspects: we are talking about the norms of how people interact, we are also talking about bureaucracy, the accountability stuff, teachers report that target-driven culture is a problem. I would put line management in that mix, and we know from workplace wellbeing surveys globally and internationally, that line management is a huge issue: poor line management can really be corrosive to anybody’s sense of wellbeing and commitment to the job. That is a second point.

Colleague relationships: teachers are more social than lots of other professionals, and the relationships that they have with colleagues at work are hugely important to their sense of wellbeing. When stuff gets in the way of that, or when those relationships are not facilitated, their wellbeing is negatively impacted. Again, it is one of those things that is quite difficult to measure but when we get it right, people feel more satisfied in their work.

The three things that come out when we ask staff why they would consider leaving or why they want to leave the profession—and it is interesting getting some different perspectives on this because there are different lenses on similar issues—60% to 70% cite the same three things: the first is workload which obviously we have talked about quite a lot.

Secondly, work-life balance. It is adjacent to workload, but it is not the same thing. Again, we know from really high-quality global studies that there is a strong argument that work-life balance is the most important element of workplace wellbeing. If people cannot switch off from the job, if they cannot take time to attend to their family relationships, if they do not feel they can look after their kids, if they cannot go for a jog or go to the cinema, however it is they relax, that has a disproportionately negative impact on their wellbeing. In the teacher cohort, and actually even more so amongst senior leaders, we see really poor levels of work-life balance, and that is driving a lot of our issues.

Thirdly—and another really difficult one to measure—is not feeling valued. When we unpack this again in some qualitative sessions, this



matters at two levels for people. There is the in-school level where if you work in a culture—we are talking 55% of people saying that cultures are negative for their own wellbeing—where you do not feel valued in a particular school with a particular line manager, that is an issue. More broadly, people talk about the profession and education not being valued in our national conversation, and culturally within England: teachers do not feel that the job has status. That is not driving people out of the door as a first position, but it is definitely corrosive and demoralising over time.

Q202 Chair: It is interesting: when we speak to the FE sector or the early years sector, they point to the value that is placed on teachers as what they want to have and feel that they lack. A very strong message that we received from our childcare and early years' inquiry was that, "We saw Ministers thanking teachers and making a big fuss about the teachers during covid and we did not hear it about us." Which actually, having been in the Department at the time, I am aware the same messages were being sent, but they were not being received in those other sectors perhaps in the same way. It is a really interesting point around how we get that sense of value across, and of course part of it is around pay and that sort of thing but there is more. Becky, you wanted to come in.

Professor Francis: I can probably provide a little evidence to support some things that Sinéad said from a slightly different perspective. I mentioned the rapid evidence assessment on leadership, culture and practice that we commissioned from the universities of Durham and Warwick; the findings there were very strong around that sort of supportive culture in regard to supporting teaching, recruitment and retention. First, prioritising teacher development, of course, but then again, we know that some autonomy in relation to that is strongly appreciated by teachers. Secondly, building trust, and thirdly, improving working conditions, as we have already been discussing.

There were also four characteristics of facilitative culture that were pulled out by the academic team. First, promoting collegiality, and secondly, again, positive school discipline—so this is a recurring theme throughout our discussion—and thirdly, intellectual stimulation, that again comes back to that professionalism and feelings of professional autonomy, and then interestingly, fourthly, perceptions of equity around workload distribution. All of that speaks to that collegiality, that feeling of collaborative profession and facilitative culture.

Q203 Mrs Drummond: It seems to me that leadership is very important. In the schools that I go into, you can tell whether the headteacher has got that atmosphere right. Do we need more training in leadership then, or are we picking the right headteachers to lead the schools?

Secondly, you know how we work here in Parliament—ridiculous hours et cetera—do you think we actually understand how other people really should work? Do you think Government actually understand that not everybody needs to work like we do? I think we perhaps are on such a



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different planet sometimes when it comes to looking at work-life balance—we do not have any balance.

Caroline Ansell: Some MPs were teachers.

Mrs Drummond: And you will know, exactly, Caroline. I know I have put two completely separate things in, but I just wanted to get those in.

Professor Allen: Just to say something on the latter, the thing that you both have in common is that you do not have employment contracts that have fixed hours and it makes teaching almost unique—that they do not have employment contracts that specify how many hours they should work. It is my very strongly held view that until we move towards fixed working hours for teachers, we will not uncover, and therefore resolve, the nature of the workload difficulties because it is all hidden: it is masked, it is being done at home.

As far as I am concerned, I would like to see a profession that has hours of say 8 am until 4.30 pm every day and an expectation that they should go home and that there is then no work that a headteacher should be asking them to do. They will then find the job is not manageable and we will have a public debate about what we do about it, but until then we pretend that we are trying to fix a problem, but ultimately it is masked inside teachers' homes.

Caroline Ansell: The cost of overtime in that scenario might be—

Professor Allen: Well we would not have overtime because we cannot afford it. We would have to find solutions to workload and we might not like them. They might mean for example it has to become more difficult for parents to get in touch with schools and for schools to provide all these kinds of ancillary social support networks around families. We might have to do that because we cannot pay for overtime. At least that would uncover the nature of the difficulty and we decide then what we value as a society and whether we pay for it or not.

Q204 **Mrs Drummond:** Do other countries have fixed hour contracts?

Professor Allen: I do not know.

Mrs Drummond: It would be interesting to find out.

Chair: There was a law in France about not being allowed to contact people outside working hours, and I wonder if that had an impact on teaching from that perspective.

Caroline Ansell: You could schedule emails in that scenario.

Chair: Yes, that is true.

Sinéad Mc Brearty: I strongly endorse what Becky said about the contracts. I lead an organisation and if I want to get work done, I cannot just keep giving it to the same person and assume that they will do it



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round the clock. It just does not work, it is not allowed, it is not legal. There is some part of workload which is—

Q205 **Ian Mearns:** Because it is not legal does not mean it does not happen.

Sinéad Mc Brearty: Well, indeed, Ian, indeed. I am very naive. There is some part of workload that is stuff that does not need to get done. We all recognise this in organisational life, that is always true, but there is no requirement to squeeze that out because there is this open book of hours available to us. In terms of the question on leadership, do we need more training? Definitely.

Really specifically, and this is a dirty word—soft skills has become a dirty word somewhere along the way—but we need to train leaders in emotional, social and behaviour skills so that they can do the best job that is possible to do as a leader of an organisation of humans. We miss such an easy trick; it is not expensive, it is not even especially difficult, but when you take the previous panel, we had somebody who was leading a department who had not yet qualified.

I was appointed a manager at 21 in a big firm. I was way too young for the job, and I was awful at it. I would not work for old me for love nor money. That is not because I was bad or did not try; I just did not have the training or the experience to do it well. We really do need to invest in this bit.

As for the hours in this place, Flick, you do not want to hear my workplace wellbeing expert view on how healthy or otherwise that is, but you are right: there is a distortion that comes from looking at the world through the end of a telescope, which is very long hours and very intense.

Q206 **Ian Mearns:** Supplementary to that, you have just mentioned that school leaders are dealing with a workforce of humans, but those humans are also interacting with a pupil body of human beings as well.

Becky Francis, you were mentioning before about discipline within schools and I keep wondering myself how important is the appropriateness of the curriculum which is being delivered to disciplinary issues within the school? I am convinced that that is a problem which is not being properly addressed or even being looked at.

Sinéad Mc Brearty: We do not have any evidence on that Ian, but I think there are some interesting conversations to be had. One of the things we can say, and I think it is cultural, is in our culture in education we prioritise performance over wellbeing. We have historically seen those two things as mutually exclusive: that you can drive performance and if wellbeing suffers, then so be it.

But what we increasingly understand, because the evidence more broadly is better, is that performance and wellbeing are intrinsically linked, and if you want sustainable performance, then you have to address both. If you



prioritise performance, often you are going to sacrifice wellbeing in a way that ultimately curtails overall performance in the long run.

Q207 Caroline Ansell: In light of Becky's earlier comments about how much traction the workload reduction toolkit had achieved, the Department's flexible working toolkit was published earlier this year. What, if any, initial impact has it had?

I note that the conversation earlier—and we talked about no fixed hours—but thinking back to my own school experience, as recently as in the omicron wave when I went back on supply, there is nowhere more fixed than school, with the bell ringing on the hour every hour. So flexibility is clearly quite a challenge and something that workers across the economy are looking for, particularly in the wake of the pandemic. Flexibility is obviously deemed to be one of those qualities that might help with recruitment and retention, particularly if people have caring responsibilities or want to study alongside professional work experience. So, your thoughts on the toolkit?

Just so everyone can marshal their thoughts, I will go on to ask about the balance between what schools can do on flexibility and what Government should be doing, and whether there are immediate flexibilities that can be offered and whether there are longer term changes that could be woven into our thinking at this point.

Professor Allen: I will give the stats on who has heard of the flexible working toolkit; the majority of senior leaders have never heard of it. Fifteen per cent. of senior leaders say that they have looked at it, and only 4% of senior leaders have looked at it and found it useful.

Q208 Caroline Ansell: Do we have a problem with comms?

Professor Allen: Do you know how many emails you get if you are a senior leader? The only way you deal with your job is through mass deletion of emails every day and one of them, unfortunately, would have been the email about the flexible working toolkit. But perhaps somebody else can talk about how it is working or their views on it.

Professor Francis: To be fair, it has not existed for very long so I do not think even you, Jack, can answer the question about the effect of the toolkit.

Jack Worth: I think it is too early to tell.

Professor Francis: I can say some things about our review of flexible working approaches, again commissioned from the NFER. It is such an important area, but so complicated. It is about work-life balance. It is also now, particularly post-pandemic, genuinely about flexibility and what graduates expect from their working conditions, or what they would like from their working conditions. So we had this rapid evidence review, again looking at both data and also job advertisements and some interviews and so on. There is very strong perceptual evidence about the



desirability of flexible working amongst the teacher workforce. Again, no causal evidence yet, but very strong perceptual evidence that teachers want greater flexibility, and we can all imagine why and we know the comparisons now as well.

The perceptual evidence suggests that teachers feel that this is complementary to their wellbeing and job satisfaction, their productivity and their motivation, and to diversity and particularly for working women. But school leaders are very concerned about the impact on increased costs, of course, and potentially a lack of consistency for children in the classroom as well. As I say, as yet we have no evidence about the impacts.

Although it is quite small proportions, I was quite surprised at the extent of existing part-time working in the system; nearly 20% of secondary teachers are working part-time, and over a quarter of primary school teachers are working part-time. There are other practices that are becoming a little more common as well, such as phased retirement, the use of personal days and personal preparation time, and so forth.

Clearly the evidence about this sort of perceptual desire suggests that schools will benefit from pursuing flexibility in terms of recruitment and retention, but we do need to tread carefully because we need to know what the effects are on teaching practice and ultimately the impact on kids.

Q209 Caroline Ansell: For children, as the other half of this scenario, they have no flexibility, so how is this feasible? I can see how it is desirable, but as a former timetable maker, how is genuine flexibility something that schools can aspire to?

Professor Allen: How this plays out in primary and secondary schools is very different. We know in secondary schools the major issue is the timetable and in fact when flexible working requests have been rejected, that is the overwhelming reason given. In primary schools you are simply looking at job share, class share arrangements. We do not have good direct evidence about the extent to which that can be a problem for children, but we do have indirect evidence that it might be an issue for children.

The reason why we have indirect evidence on this is there are good experimental studies that show that the extent to which you get to know your children has an impact on how effectively you can teach them. We see, for example, in studies in the US where you give the same children to a teacher for a second year running—it is known as looping—that that is associated with better learning outcomes.

One of the wonderful things about primary teachers is the extent to which they get to know their children. We just have to be realistic; if you are working two and a half days a week, you are going to get to know them more slowly than if you are seeing them for five days a week.



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I do not think in these contexts we should pretend that it is costless to have teachers who are seeing students far less often and who necessarily know them less well. The question is: is it worth it given that we could retain our experienced teachers that we know are more effective teachers?

Q210 **Caroline Ansell:** When you spoke at the beginning around interviews you did—exit interviews, I think you did—with those considering leaving the profession, you mentioned a number of different things.

Professor Allen: I did not mention flexible working.

Caroline Ansell: It was not there.

Professor Allen: I was about to say, it is interesting that when they talk about workload and work-life balance, mostly they are not asking for flexible working; they want to be able to do the job of a teacher in a way that is manageable and is compatible with having children of their own at home who they get to see occasionally. That is not to say that nobody wants it.

I want to balance what I have just said about the people who are actively thinking of leaving with the profession as a whole, because when you ask the profession as a whole, "Are you interested in flexible working? Unfortunately, about four in 10 say, "Yes, I am actively interested." I say "unfortunately" because if we allowed them to flexibly work they would reduce their hours and we would have to find some more teachers from somewhere. When we ask specifically teachers in their twenties, "Has the rise of work from home made it more likely that you feel you are going to leave the profession?", 40% of them say, "Yes, I am looking at work from home."

Q211 **Caroline Ansell:** Is there potential for teachers to work from home?

Professor Allen: Not in my opinion, and we just have to face up to that and focus on the bits of workload that we can solve, which is keeping the school day as short as possible for teachers and getting them out at the end of the day and home and on with their lives, as our primary strategy. I say that because any alternative strategy involves existing teachers working fewer hours, and at the moment we do not have any other teachers to plug the gap.

Q212 **Caroline Ansell:** Does a shorter day make for a more intense day, though?

Professor Allen: Not necessarily. It really depends on whether we are going to ask teachers to stop doing some things.

Q213 **Caroline Ansell:** And fewer opportunities for that collegiate time to develop relationships with colleagues.

Sinéad Mc Brearty: It depends how we do it. The question about the hours and contract hours sits alongside flexibility to some extent because



they are both aspects of modernising education. Could we do it in the current system as it operates with the current degrees of workload? Absolutely not. But I think the question for Government specifically is the long-term attractiveness of the profession. It is under significant stress, and that is not going to go away: there will be some point in time when we look at how we modernise, how we continue to keep the profession attractive, and questions of how we reshape the school day will become really important.

I agree; it is about making sure that we have teachers working in the hours that we sort of imagine school operates at. If teachers actually worked the hours most of the public imagines they work, they would be grand, they would be really happy, but that is a far cry from the reality. These things go together and in that brave new world, you might take advantage of things like looping and rethink how we structure schools or how we restructure an education day or week or year, but that is clearly a very big piece of blue sky thinking.

Q214 Caroline Ansell: Even just pushing back summer holidays by a week or two is a tsunami of comms.

Sinéad Mc Brearty: We have a very fragile system right now. There is zero tolerance. We cannot afford to lose an hour here or an hour there of the existing teaching capability because we are so scant on resource: what is coming into the system is too little and what is leaving the system is too much.

The dynamics of what is happening in the profession are going to require change, combined with people like me who get toward the later end of our career and think, "I might like to give back, but there is no way I am going to work 60 hours a week in that mode when I am feeling like I am giving back." If we are going to deal with a greying workforce, more than we have accommodated the requirement for flex for parents, specifically—and almost always mothers in that conversation—we will be forced to accommodate it for older workers who are making it quite clear in their employment decisions that they do not want to work long hours. If we want to attract a workforce at all, we are going to have to grapple with this. We are probably not fixing it this morning, I am going to put myself out there and say, but it is something that we will have to work through.

Professor Francis: I have a micro point and a macro point. The micro point is that there are things around the edges that schools can do to support flexibility. The review that we commissioned refers to being able to potentially undertake planning time from home and on particular afternoons, etc. There are things that schools can productively look at, and these workload reduction plans are a part of that.

The other thing to credit the DfE with is its flexible working ambassador programme. I am sure nobody has heard of it but, nevertheless, they have one and I am sure it will grow on the radar. It will be really



interesting to see whether they can exemplify productive flexible models. I am sure we all agree that this is pivotal stuff in terms of recruitment and retention, particularly in comparison to other professions.

That comes to my macro point: if it turns out that we cannot facilitate greater flexibility without impacting student outcomes negatively, we will need to recognise that in pay and conditions in comparison to other graduate professions which can facilitate greater flexibility. We are going to have to recognise that in the long term.

Q215 Caroline Ansell: Are you aware of any particular schools or MATs or systems doing this well or moving into this space?

Jack Worth: There are quite a few. We undertook research as we wanted to understand what makes part-time working work, especially where we saw a lot of teachers leaving secondary schools and working part-time, presumably because they could not access it within secondary teaching.

We spoke to schools who had approximately 10% to 15% part-time, but there were schools making it work with 50% of their teaching staff working part-time. They all recognised the same kinds of trade-offs, the same difficulties, and the same benefits but what was it that was making them work? Basically, they just prioritised it. The part-timers go into the timetable first, because it is complex for timetabling. There is an entire year-long process that goes into the timetabling: you are actually proactively asking who wants to work in a flexible way next year so you can have those conversations and negotiations.

Q216 Caroline Ansell: Is that just a part-time fix?

Jack Worth: This is specifically part-time, but the same goes for wider flexibilities. If everyone knows what everybody wants to start with, then you can start to negotiate and you can start to fit it in. Not everyone is going to get what they want, but at least you can have that conversation rather than a reactive approach where senior leaders will go, "Oh, another part-time request. What am I going to do with this one?" If you are trying to jam it into the timetable, it is not going to work. It is that proactive approach and the leadership that goes around it. Those leaders had prioritised it as a thing that they wanted to make work in that school, and it was working in that school.

The challenge that will come with the flexible working ambassador programme is engaging with those schools that are on the other side and have decided that it is not for them. What is the in? They are busy doing what they are doing, so how do you convince them to take on or consider a different change?

Sinéad Mc Brearty: One small point is that, in this space, it is not that we need to re-engineer everything. We did some case studies on flexible schools for the Teacher Retention Commission which noted that Northampton Academy allows staff to come in late, or go home early, one



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day a week. They worked that into the timetable. Now this does not seem to me an extraordinarily difficult or onerous thing to do, but for them it has been transformative for how staff feel they are being treated. It has upsides in terms of reducing attrition but also reducing the need for supply staff because of improvements in sickness, etc. We do not need to have a picture of it being really complicated and terribly difficult; sometimes small improvements mean a lot to the staff in place.

Q217 Chair: I was going to ask about the supply issue because obviously, in the NHS, other areas of public service and, in particular, social care, we see a huge pull out of full-time working into the supply space, partly as a result of higher staff absences where there has been pressure on supply teaching. Are we seeing some people who want greater flexibility moving into supply because they have more control over their own hours, or is that something which is equally challenging once you are there?

Sinéad Mc Brearty: I do not have data on this.

Jack Worth: I do not have data on this in terms of why people go into supply. People go into supply for lots of different reasons; it can be flexible, but of course it is more uncertain as well.

Professor Allen: Yes, and it is very expensive for schools to use external supply agencies. At the moment the supply market is struggling. As far as possible schools like to use internal supply cover and, within multi-academy trusts, for example, it is always more economic for them to take on internal staff and deploy them.

Q218 Caroline Ansell: And it is what is best for the children.

Professor Allen: Yes, absolutely.

Sinéad Mc Brearty: Anecdotally, we know that a lot of people who struggle with stress, and the stress of a permanent teaching post, will choose to work in supply because they can control the amount of hours they are working in a week more easily. I do not have data on it, but we hear it routinely in the work that we do and through the helpline that we run.

Q219 Chair: From what you are saying, overall, the direction of travel is not to the extent it is in the health sector in terms of that casualisation taking place, probably constrained by resources.

Professor Allen: No, and the nature of the supply teaching job is so fundamentally different because the value of teaching, and the enjoyment, is about the relationship with the students. That is what you lose when you do supply cover.

Q220 Chair: Understood. You heard the comments of the previous panel on golden handcuffs. In general, that does seem to have been dismissed in many spaces. What is your opinion of them? Would they provide any kind of solution in terms of teacher retention?



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Jack Worth: Golden handcuffs are early career payments. There have been various schemes over the years looking at this in shortage subjects, and they seem to have been effective at retaining more teachers in those subjects. Yes, they would be beneficial for improving the retention because you get lots of teachers coming in, and then lots leaving, especially in these shortage subjects which tend to have higher leaving rates, particularly in the first few years. So being able to retain more is hugely beneficial for the entire supply.

Q221 **Chair:** Is there any evidence that the payments simply postpone the point at which people leave, or does the fact that you keep them in for longer mean that they are more likely to stay for significantly longer?

Jack Worth: It is too early to tell whether it is a postponement effect, but one of the things we have been looking at recently is the impact of bursaries. There is a similar concern or fear when you have a bursary that tempts more people in, and the effect of it has been fairly clear for years and years. The subjects that see a boost in their bursary tend to see their applications go up a lot more, so it is definitely attracting more people in. The key question is what happens to those additional trainees? Do they actually enter schools, or do they come for the bursary and then disappear?

We were quite surprised to find that, actually, they tend to be retained at the same rate as anyone else, so it does lead to a sustained permanent increase in supply. That would lead me to think that probably, for an early career payment, something similar would happen in that it drops off at the end once you get to five years in. However, you know that is coming so you can prepare for it, so it is not a big surprise.

Also, by the time of a teacher's fourth or fifth year in their teaching career, we see a drop-off in the retention rate. This is because it is increasingly difficult to change careers at this stage and, very similar to bursaries, once you have come in and committed to that decision, yes as a result of a financial incentive, you then stick at it.

Q222 **Chair:** That is very interesting because we did have one suggestion, in our previous evidence, that you could spread out the bursaries over a longer period of time. From what you are saying, that would not necessarily be a sensible use of resources, it is better to attract people in, try and keep them in the early years and then expect a reasonable proportion of them to stay as more experienced teachers.

Jack Worth: Yes. We tried to look at that directly through looking at the bursaries and, actually, they are very cost-effective when the bursary is low. So if the bursary is zero, and you are struggling to recruit to your target, increasing the bursary is a really sensible thing to do over and above early career payments, for example.

The Government have recently done this with art, RE, and music, which were all well below target and had no bursary. Therefore, actually putting



their bursary up to £10,000 feels like an entirely reasonable thing to do. When you get to the much higher bursaries for maths, computing, physics, and chemistry, they are already at almost the starting salary, so they are reaching a natural ceiling anyway, but then the cost-effectiveness changes slightly. At that point, you are probably going to get more benefit from putting extra resource into early career payments for those teachers and, more broadly, perspectives on pay as well more generally across different subjects.

Q223 Chair: I saw you nodding a lot during that, but is there anything you want to add?

Professor Allen: That is absolutely right. The goal of all the financial payments has to be to get teachers to year five, because by year five we know that the retention rates are pretty good, and they are pretty good for a couple of reasons. One is actually because they are paid reasonably well to the point where it is hard for them to leave the profession and find a comparable salary straight away. The second reason is the job has become manageable. It is such a difficult job in years one, two, and three. However, you get to the point where the job is manageable around year five. So as much as experienced teachers wish that we had a stronger seniority element to our pay scale, if we care about teacher retention we should be focusing our efforts on the first five years.

Professor Francis: I absolutely agree with that. I think that, potentially, there may be more that we can be doing to get the most out of the bursaries and different offers that exist at the moment. There is some evidence from the NFER that the diversity of different systems, the fact that they are often removed and then put into place in different ways means that some benefits of that systematic approach are missed.

I think Luke mentioned Norway earlier, and I believe that Norway has wage premiums for teachers in high vacancy schools that are removed if the teacher moves to a low vacancy school, whereas in the UK bursaries do not include those kinds of stipulations so we may be able to get more out of what we are doing.

Q224 Caroline Ansell: In a conference speech last month the Prime Minister made an announcement around a £30,000 incentive, if you will, over the first five years of a teaching career, which seems to speak to your point. What do you think of that as a potential solution to attracting and retaining teachers in those early, all-important, first five years in key subjects?

Professor Francis: I missed that. Was it an announcement for a systematic rise across the piece for the first five years?

Jack Worth: As far as I can tell, it is an extension of the current levelling up premium but to a higher rate for those first five years. Currently, it is very highly targeted towards high FSM schools and schools in education investment areas. In the schools that are on both of those scales, a



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physics or a maths teacher could get £3,000 a year. If that policy was in place for five years, then that would be £15,000, and this is about raising that up to £30,000.

There is not enough detail on what that actually looks like to pick it apart, but to look at the existing scheme, the levelling up premium, there is evidence that it is working in retaining more teachers because the earlier version of the scheme showed an effect on the retention of those shortage subject teachers that were eligible for it.

As it has shown such good promise in terms of its effectiveness, it should arguably be much greater in scale. It is currently targeted at early education investment areas but looking at the data, as far as we can tell, there is not much difference between early education investment areas and non-education investment areas in terms of their recruitment and retention challenges. There certainly is in terms of FSM levels.

There is a definite case for targeting at FSM levels. However, for a huge number of schools across the country, they are not eligible for this levelling up premium. Given that it has shown such promise and it has such high cost-effectiveness in terms of targeting the resource at those early career teachers in those shortage subjects, arguably we should be putting much bigger rocket boosters underneath it, certainly in terms of national coverage, arguably also in terms of generosity of each benefit as well.

Professor Allen: We asked teachers on the day it was announced what they thought of the policy and perhaps you will not be surprised to learn that they were largely not in favour. Over half were against this type of policy, and around 25% thought it was a good idea. Which is not to say we should not do it; it is just a reminder that perceptions of equity are very important within the profession and those do have to be managed.

I wish to say something about the impact of disadvantage in relation to the particular recruitment difficulties that we are facing at the moment. We should strongly look at a targeted approach to getting teachers into more disadvantaged schools.

We know from lots of different studies, and from the school workforce census, that schools that serve disadvantaged communities have higher teacher turnover. Teachers are less likely to be teaching a subject that is their specialist subject. We see that they are more likely to be recruiting what we call, "Reluctantly appointing candidates" that the interview team felt were not appropriate for their role. They are more likely to see incidents where they make an appointment, but they fail to sign the contract or commence employment.

So when we talk about this very short period of time we are facing at the moment, and we are facing it specifically in secondary schools, it is associated with the demographic boom of the 11-year-olds arriving at secondary school being relatively large compared to the cohort who are



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currently leaving, combined with the fact that our graduate population who are trying to train to become teachers is very small. So we have this short window of crisis of three years. If we ask how we survive, we have to first ask how schools serving disadvantaged communities survive. They will feel the brunt of the effect of the teacher shortages, and they already are now.

Ian Mearns: On that one as well, the devil will be in the detail. Would it be only for NQTs, or could it be for returning teachers? Could it lead to a drift from one school to another because you leave one school and go to another because you would get the £6,000 a year bonus? The devil is in the detail really from that perspective.

Chair: I think it is for early career teachers rather than switchers.

Ian Mearns: If you have people who left the profession, it might attract them back, but the devil is in the detail.

Q225 **Caroline Ansell:** In terms of the detail, the response that you had on the day, presumably, you would understand those responding by their own position in terms of their career, whether they are early career or more experienced, and what subject area they were coming from. How did those results shake down?

Professor Allen: Yes, we do have all that. Largely speaking, people who think they are in key subjects are more in favour of payments to key subjects, even if they themselves do not get them. Surprisingly, headteachers are massively against these types of divisive policies. However, we are talking about differences between subjects, and we are talking about differences between teachers in different schools. It is easier for teachers to tolerate the idea that there are differences across schools because they are not their direct colleagues who they see every day.

Q226 **Caroline Ansell:** There are subjects where it probably is more widely understood, such as maths, physics, or engineering, where there are other professions they could pivot to that would be very much better remunerated, so there is an opportunity cost there.

Professor Allen: We have to distinguish between explicit and implicit pay differentials. Ultimately, people who join the profession in shortage subjects like maths and physics have always been able to start above the bottom of the pay scale. It is not known, and it is not understood, but it is seen.

There is a lot of masked pay differentiation that can go on within the system. You can give responsibility points to a particular teacher to do a job that is not particularly onerous because, really, you are using it to give them a bit of extra pay to persuade them to join the profession. That is just what headteachers do because they have to, if they have the money, and we should recognise that that is something that happens outside DfE initiatives, dealing with differential pay.



Chair: We are going to need to make some progress as we are about to run over time. I hope the panel can stay for a few more minutes just to answer the remaining questions. Ian, I am going to bring you in.

Q227 Ian Mearns: There has been some talk about teachers feeling valued. I wonder how much the role of Continuing Professional Development—CPD—programmes have in making the workforce and teachers individually feel valued? Can we do any quantification of its impact?

Professor Francis: The answer is that it depends. There is strong evidence that, done well, professional development—including for leaders as we were talking about earlier but clearly from the leaders' perception—and supporting professionals is really beneficial. However, actually being able to designate what quality looks like is notoriously difficult and challenging.

This has been highlighted as a really promising approach in our literature review and our evidence. There has been a range of work on this subject, which other panellists will be familiar with but, again, there is a lack of causal studies to evaluate the impact on recruitment and retention. So a lot of the work is either quantitative, qualitative, or perception.

This issue of finding a shared definition of high quality will be one of the big challenges for the research evidence going forward. I can say more on ECF and MPQs, etc, but I do not think that is what you were getting at, Ian.

Jack Worth: Done well seems to be the key word there. There was a survey Luke referred to earlier in terms of offering teachers different things, and how much they valued them; one more day of CPD was worth less than half a percent of pay. Teachers are not that interested in it, probably driven by the low quality of the professional development that broadly, on the whole, they are experiencing at the moment. Inset days, doing general activities, which are not very relevant or related to teachers' activities is not making them better or making them feel valued. High-quality CPD is a different issue but, in terms of what they are currently experiencing, more is not exactly desired.

Q228 Ian Mearns: It seems to me that it is not about how much, it is about quality and what the teacher themselves get out of it and how much it adds to their experience within teaching and learning.

Jack Worth: Absolutely, and relevance as well. We looked at teacher autonomy and the one factor that came out as being most related to job satisfaction was influence over the professional development because it is currently really low in the survey. Teachers are doing professional development, but it is not their professional development; it is not developing them professionally. If it was, and where it does, it can really have a benefit, but that is not the general experience of a lot of teachers.

Q229 Ian Mearns: It is not good enough to tick a box to say we have provided some training and that is it.



Sinéad Mc Brearty: We had a great quote from Lucy Kellaway as part of the Teacher Retention Commission. She said, "The potential for training to become yet another reason why teachers hate their jobs is a grave danger," and that was her experience from being in school. This point about quality is really important.

Also, what is difficult is that quality is often bespoke. You are talking about meeting people where they are and is how they perceive quality often, which is quite difficult to do in a replicable, measurable way. We know there is good evidence that CPD that allows people to look up and look out, is hugely beneficial for their wellbeing and their job satisfaction. There is a lot in there, but I agree with all of it.

Q230 **Mrs Drummond:** In many other countries you are encouraged to do further degrees and things while you are teaching as well, so those are the really worthwhile CPDs.

I have a quick question on the early career framework. Professor Allen, you said that the job becomes manageable from year three, yet the early careers framework is only for the first two years. Should it be extended, and would that help with the retention?

Professor Allen: The question is whether we believe the early career framework is supportive and helpful as opposed to burdensome. The evidence on it at the moment is rather mixed. Ultimately, the first two years of your career are incredibly difficult. We have tried to impose what, at the moment, looks like a bit of a one-size-fits-all system in terms of your requirement for extra supplementary training and courses that take place outside your school.

Part of the reason why that happens is that, on day one when you launch an early career framework, there are no resources in place, there are no organisations delivering it. So we are only now starting to get to the point where if, for example, you are a maths teacher the things you are experiencing are specific to maths teaching.

The other part of the early career framework is about mentorship within schools. Again, the experience is very mixed and perhaps we are back to management questions here but, ultimately, the person who becomes a mentor within a school is not necessarily doing it because they feel a vocational desire to become a mentor to an early career teacher; they just happen to be the body that is there and able to do it. So, for both the mentors and the mentees, it has been a rocky ride which does not mean that the framework cannot be made to work and be successful because it will evolve, and schools will learn how to deal with it.

My sense, at the moment, is that we should do as little as possible to change it. We certainly do not need to extend it. What teachers need in years three, four and five, I would argue, is not imposing some sort of professional development framework on them. In part, that is because it is very hard for us to say what quality is, and what they need. Do they



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know what they need? Does their school know what they need in terms of professional development? Does the Government? Can we regulate it? So this question of quality within a professional development framework is a challenging one.

Also, when we think about what professional development is, I would argue for those teachers in years three, four, and five, imposing a framework on them is unnecessary if they are somebody who wants to develop and get better at teaching because there is so much that they can go out and do for themselves to get better at teaching. It is undesirable for those who do not want to get better at teaching, and by do not I mean that they are utterly overwhelmed by their workload, and they are in survival mode. Actually, survival mode is a legitimate approach to getting through the school year at particular points in your career and your life. So if you try to impose a framework on those people, it could actively push them out of the profession. I am relatively cautious about this idea that we need further professional development frameworks in place.

Q231 Mrs Drummond: What are your views on the reformed national professional qualifications? What other opportunities should there be?

Professor Francis: There are increasingly NPQs, subject specialisms and so forth, that can answer that need as well and the feedback on the NPQs has been broadly positive. In terms of the ECF, Becky is right that, so far, the evidence in terms of feedback and effects on retention is somewhat mixed but that would necessarily be the case with the pandemic. We basically need longer to be able to monitor the impact.

There has been some positive information, including from UCL, in terms of the impact of the ECF on both, interestingly, mentors and mentees. I would add though that much more can be done to celebrate the role of the mentor, which has been slightly under-attended in the initial roll-out of ECF. We always knew it was going to as it takes up capacity, but it needs to be planned for, respected and recognised and much more can be done around that.

Q232 Mrs Drummond: Going back to professional development, is it financial or is it just the fact that they cannot spare any teachers because there are not enough of them in the school? What is the biggest issue? Is it finance or lack of people?

Professor Allen: Are you asking why teachers rarely take time out from the school day to attend professional development courses? It is really expensive, not least the supply cover, more than anything, and it is disruptive for students. We do not have a model that has space for provision.

Mrs Drummond: We actually need a model which could take people all the way through their career, and at certain times. There are some private schools that take sabbaticals so they can go and do things. That



would be amazing and perhaps we should look at it. In Australia, if you have worked for 10 years in the public sector, you then get six months or a year off. Maybe that is something that we need to look at to really help people continue and be happier in their careers.

Q233 **Chair:** In terms of CPD, we obsess about the detail of the model in this country, are there other jurisdictions we ought to be looking at in terms of what they do on CPD, either within the UK or further afield? Does anyone have a view on that? No?

Professor Francis: I think the one thing that we are probably all aware of is the very frequently referenced statistics about how much more CPD hours people get in other countries compared to here. However, until you crack the quality issue there is no guarantee that that necessarily helps.

Q234 **Ian Mearns:** Is it not a self-fulfilling prophecy? You have a recruitment and retention crisis, so you do not have enough staff to facilitate releasing them to undertake deep levels of CPD. Is that a fair observation?

Professor Francis: Absolutely. I think that is right, as has been said.

Chair: It has been a rich discussion, so thank you very much to the panel. We will wrap up at that point, 10 minutes over the planned end of the session. Thank you to members for staying.