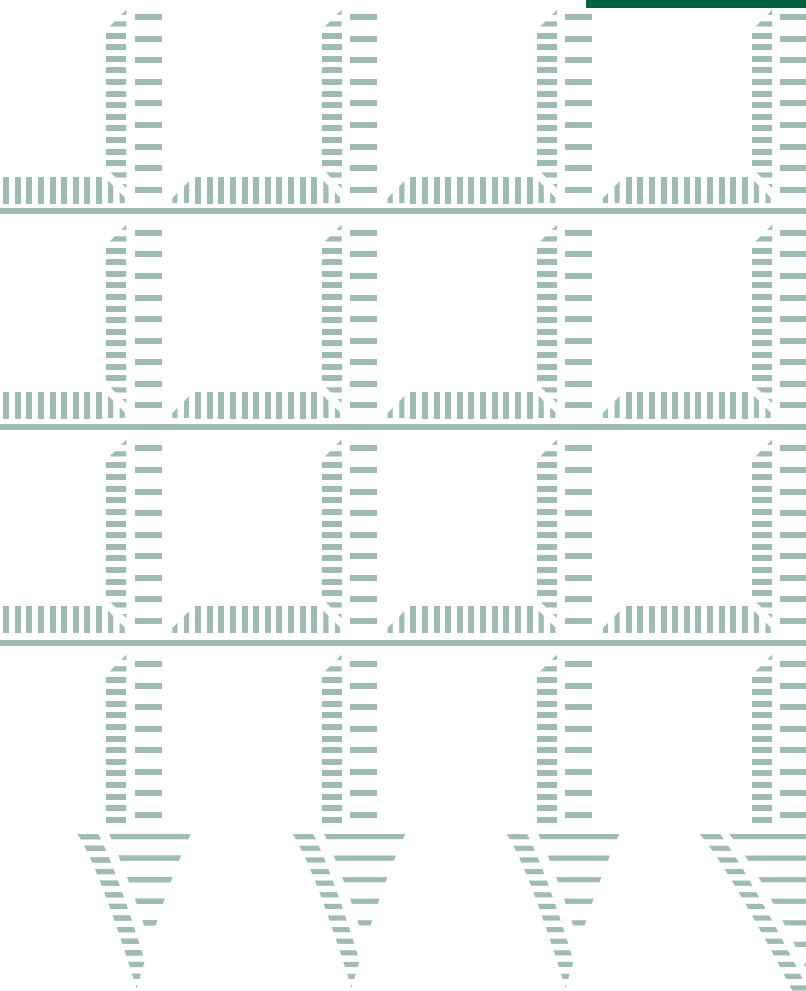


Education Committee

Teacher recruitment, training and retention: Government Response

First Special Report of Session 2024–25

HC 627



Education Committee

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First Special Report

The Education Committee published its Second Report of Session 2023-24, [Teacher recruitment, training and retention](#) (HC 119), on 17 May 2024. The Government Response was received on 9 January 2025 and is appended below.

Appendix: Government Response

Introduction

This government is committed to breaking down barriers to opportunity by reforming our education and care systems, to deliver high and rising standards for every child and young person, setting them up to achieve and thrive. We welcome the former Education Select Committee's report into teacher recruitment, training and retention. We welcome the new members of the Committee, and we are grateful for the vital work they will do to consider and scrutinise the work of the Department for Education. Although this inquiry was conducted under the previous administration, we will consider the report's findings and recommendations carefully as we go forward with the delivery of our reform programmes.

At the centre of this government's plans to break down barriers to opportunity is the goal to see every child achieve and thrive, and this starts in the classroom. As the report raised, we recognise that children cannot receive a great education without great teachers. Teachers are the most important factor in a child's education and great teachers can help break the link between young people's background and future success. The school workforce is one of the biggest enablers of our Opportunity Mission and Growth Mission. Our core objective is to have a sufficient number of high-quality teachers across all subjects and in all parts of the country. This is why the government has pledged to work with the sector to recruit

6,500 new expert teachers across schools, both mainstream and specialist, and colleges over the course of this parliament to raise standards for young people.

Whilst there has been some progress since the previous government published the 2019 recruitment and retention strategy¹, there are shortages of qualified teachers across the country and there is much more to do to meet our goal to ensure every child is taught by a great specialist teacher. For subjects like Maths and Physics or Design & Technology, recruitment targets have been missed each year for 10 years.

To achieve our ambition, further work is needed to improve the experience of being a teacher and re-establish teaching as an attractive profession, one that existing teachers want to remain in, former teachers want to return to, and new graduates wish to join. This includes addressing broader factors such as workload, wellbeing, and career development opportunities because we believe the best recruitment strategy is a strong retention strategy. Teacher retention is key to ensure children and young people receive the excellent education they all deserve from experienced and high-quality teachers.

We have inherited a system with deep-rooted and persistent challenges; and the new government is committed to tackling these systematic issues as a priority. It has been particularly challenging to recruit and retain enough teachers in the context of significantly rising pupil numbers. This issue has been concentrated in secondary schools, which have seen pupil teacher ratios rise and acute challenges within particular subjects. In STEM subjects for example, retention rates five years after entering teaching have been 4 – 7 percentage points lower than non-STEM teachers, for each cohort since the School Workforce Census started in 2010.

This is why this government is taking action to ensure we have sufficient numbers of teachers across subjects and in the right places, and nurture high quality teaching supported by strong leadership.

- We will recruit an additional **6,500 new expert teachers across mainstream, special schools, and colleges**; we will get more teachers into shortage subjects, support areas that face recruitment challenges, and tackle retention issues.
- We have introduced our ambitious Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill to put children and their wellbeing at the centre of the education and children’s social care systems, and make sure every child has a fulfilling childhood enabling them to achieve and thrive. As part of our

1 [Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy; Supporting teachers to make a difference](#)

measures to raise school standards, we will ensure that **new teachers entering the classroom have, or are working towards, Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), and receive statutory induction.**

- We want to ensure all teachers have access to and stay up to date with best practice in continuing professional development at every stage of their career, giving them the expertise and support needed to deliver high-quality teaching, which is why **we will introduce a Teacher Training Entitlement, update the Early Career Framework, and introduce an Excellence in Leadership Training Programme.**
- The government recognises the vital role that school support staff play in children’s education and the smooth running of schools. That is why we are resetting the relationship with the sector and **reinstating the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB).** Establishing the SSSNB will help ensure that schools can recruit and retain the staff needed to deliver high-quality, inclusive education.

This government has already taken steps to reset the relationship with the sector and has the ambition to re-establish teaching as an attractive, expert and go-to profession for graduates and industry experts. We have made early progress towards our aims outlined above:

- We restarted and expanded the teacher recruitment campaign “Every Lesson Shapes a Life”.
- We accepted in full the School Teachers’ Review Body’s recommendation of a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools from this September.
- We announced a financial incentives package for the 2025/26 recruitment cycle worth £233 million, a £37 million increase on the last cycle. This includes a range of measures, including bursaries worth £29,000 tax-free and scholarships worth £31,000 tax-free, to encourage talented trainees to key subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing.
- For 2024/25, DfE is also offering Targeted Retention Incentives worth up to £6,000 after tax for mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers who choose to work in disadvantaged schools.
- Together, these financial incentives aim to attract people to teach in those subjects where recruitment and retention proves more challenging.

- We are committed to supporting schools to implement the full range of flexible working practices, which can include taking Planning, Preparation and Assessment time remotely, so that teaching offers a career which flexes as teachers lives change and develop, whilst protecting face-to-face teaching time for pupils.
- We have accepted expert recommendations to remove the requirement for Performance Related Pay, and published new guidance documents on appraisals, capability and pay.
- We are introducing new school report cards to ensure Ofsted inspection is high information for parents while being proportionate for staff, having already abolished low information, high stakes single headline grades.
- Our work on education starts with our work on poverty. We have established a new Child Poverty Taskforce, co-chaired with the Department for Work and Pensions.
- We are continuing to develop the Improve Workload and Wellbeing for School Staff service, providing access to more resources that support schools in reducing workload and improving wellbeing.
- We have funded Oak National Academy to develop and launch their AI lesson planning assistant named 'Aila'. The tool enables teachers to save significant time with lesson planning, whilst ensuring they remain in the driving seat.
- At the October Budget, we announced £1 billion for high needs funding in 2025-26 to ensure support to meet children's needs is in place.

As we deliver on our key aims, we will prioritise working with the sector to ensure reform leads to long-lasting positive changes for pupils, teachers and support staff. We also recognise that successful delivery will require alignment of reforms across multiple areas, including the Curriculum and Assessment Review, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Early Years, and Accountability.

Recommendations and the Government's Response

Teacher Workforce Model and workforce data

Recommendation 1: The Department should ensure that pupil demographic trends are included in analysis to ensure future demand is taken into full account when setting recruitment targets. We also recommend that the Teacher Workforce Model should be extended to cover the post-16 and further education phases, meaning the model estimates the number of qualified teachers required by state-funded primary and secondary schools (including nursery and post-16 provision within such schools), academies, free schools, post-16 providers and further education colleges in England.

The Department already accounts for pupil demographic trends when estimating future teacher demand. As stated in the annual postgraduate ITT targets publication², the Teacher Workforce Model (TWM) estimates future school teacher demand from a starting teacher stock, as measured by the School Workforce Census, by considering projections of pupil numbers and by estimating the national pupil: teacher ratios needed to meet demand as pupil numbers change.

Additionally, the TWM already estimates demand for all state-funded primary and secondary schools, including nursery and post-16 provision within such schools, academies, and free schools.

The Department estimates demand for the further education (FE) workforce but does so separately to the TWM. We will continue to keep the schools and further education estimates separate due to the differing factors determining both the demand and supply of teachers.

The TWM is focused upon schools and is largely underpinned by data from the annual School Workforce Census. The majority of the workforce covered by the TWM are qualified teachers, trained via initial teacher training, that deliver a curriculum which is focused upon GCSE and A-level subjects. By contrast, the Department's Further Education estimate for FE demand considers a workforce suited to different learner requirements who study a broader range of qualifications, taught in different settings (FE colleges rather than schools), teaching a larger percentage of adult learners, and is underpinned by a separate data collection reflecting factors that impact FE teacher supply, such as the part-time nature of many of the roles.

² [Postgraduate initial teacher training targets: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK.](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/postgraduate_initial_teacher_training_targets_2024_to_2025_-_gov.uk)

Recommendation 19: Targets for maths and other shortage subjects should not be reduced unless the shortage is reversed, and recruitment targets are met, over a sustained period of time. Considering government plans for compulsory until the age of 18 the maths target must be increased substantially unless the government can set out other plans for delivering functional or practical mathematics through an alternative cohort of teachers.

The Teacher Workforce Model estimates supply of teachers through all entrant routes, and retention. Targets published by DfE specifically relate to recruitment through Postgraduate ITT (PGITT), which is only one entrant route into teaching (around 40-50% of entrants to teaching are trained via PGITT each year, the remaining 50-60% come from alternative recruitment streams³) and where we have direct levers to influence outcomes.

When setting PGITT targets, the TWM factors in all teaching inflows and outflows, with residual teacher demand met through the PGITT target. As such, year on year changes in targets should be assessed in the context of broader teacher recruitment and retention trends.

For example, if there was a greater flow of teachers via the returner route, this would partially offset the need to bring in teachers via PGITT, leading to a reduced PGITT target. Similarly, forecasted falls in teacher leaver rates, could further reduce the need for newly trained teachers.

To help mitigate supply challenges, the model uses an adjustment to targets to attempt to counter under-supply in specific subjects by considering the net impact of both recent recruitment (including returners and those that are new to the sector), and retention. If the model estimates a future undersupply for a subject, targets would be increased to attempt to address this. If such an under-supply was to be successfully eliminated through stronger recruitment in future, the adjustment would be removed from future targets.

This target setting methodology helps to account for recent under-supply of teachers using a holistic assessment of all in and outflows for the workforce. Finally, as recruitment to all subjects is unlimited, and ITT places are not allocated, lower targets would not in themselves necessarily result in lower levels of recruitment or a worsening supply picture.

If any new policies require a change in teacher numbers, for example, the government's pledge to recruit an additional 6,500 new expert teachers, recruitment targets would be calculated to reflect any additional

3 Other entrant routes include undergraduate ITT trainees, newly qualified teachers via assessment only routes, those teachers returning to the profession (returners), and those teachers that are new to the state-funded sector.

requirements. This may not necessarily lead to higher targets given targets are driven by a range of factors beyond new policies, such as pupil projections and teacher retention.

We know there is further work to do to increase the supply of maths and other shortage subject teachers, but we have already taken action. We are offering increased bursaries worth £29,000 tax-free and increased scholarships worth £31,000 tax-free for maths trainee teachers. We are also offering a Targeted Retention Incentive worth up to £6,000 after-tax for maths teachers in the first five years of their careers who work in disadvantaged schools, which is a doubling of the previous retention payments available.

Recommendation 20: The Department should collect and publish data on the attrition of teachers by subject, particularly those in their first 5 years of teaching. Data should also be collected on the reason teachers are leaving, to improve understanding of why particular subjects are experiencing higher attrition than others and to help target retention strategies as effectively as possible.

We currently publish subject leaver rates within the annual postgraduate ITT targets publication⁴. These are calculated to aid the Teacher Workforce Model supply calculations and the residual PGITT targets. We will explore publishing subject level leaver rates as part of future School Workforce Census publications.

The Department already collects survey data from the Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders⁵ longitudinal study on the reasons teachers give for considering leaving, and for leaving for those that leave teaching between survey waves. This is published annually at national level. We do not publish reasons for leaving at subject level due to small sample sizes.

We also collect data on the FE workforce via the FE workforce data collection, which goes out to providers annually. This provides the department with important information on the sector, such as demographics, pay data, vacancies, and subject taught. Teacher vacancy rates are published online with subject and regional breakdowns.

Recommendation 21: The Department should collect and publish data on regional subject shortages in teacher supply. This data should be used to inform the expansion of financial incentives such as the Early Career Payment and Levelling Up Premium according to where there are overlaps in regional and subject shortages.

4 [Postgraduate initial teacher training targets: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK.](#)

5 [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

The Department recognises that collecting and publishing more information on sub-national supply challenges would be beneficial. However, it is challenging to quantify teacher supply using a single figure or metric as different metrics may give different, conflicting messages around teacher supply.

For example, pupil teacher ratios (PTRs) could be used to assess teacher supply, by assuming lower PTRs mean supply levels are more favourable. However, PTRs can be a consequence of how well funded a school is, and whether a school receives additional payments relating to specific pupil cohorts, e.g. pupil premium. This is what we typically see in London where PTRs are lower, but if you look at other teacher supply metrics such as teacher leaver and/or vacancy rates then we see that London schools typically have higher leaver rates than elsewhere in England because there is more 'churn' and turnover within the system. Therefore, PTRs and leaver/vacancy rates would likely give conflicting messages about teacher supply in London.

Whilst the Department has attempted to produce experimental supply index scores for each school, expressing supply levels in the form of a single figure, this did not identify a clear geographical pattern. Rather, it identified that differences are more evident at school level and that levels of deprivation and economic disadvantage were important. This is why the Targeted Retention Incentive (formerly Levelling Up Premium) is targeted at the school level using pupil premium deciles, rather than regionally.

Also, as part of this year's published government evidence⁶ to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB), we have included analysis which shows workforce challenges across a range of metrics broken down by pupil premium.

The Department is committed to continuing to invest in the evidence base in this area and to continue to keep our evidence and data collection under review.

Support Staff

Recommendation 2: We recommend the Department complete a review into the cumulative impact of excluding funding for support staff pay increases from school funding allocations. Further, going forward, the wage growth of support staff must be factored into school budgets and the Department must allocate sufficient funding to schools to cover the growth of support staff salaries.

6 [Government evidence to the STRB](#)

The Department's approach to schools funding and costs already takes account of wage growth for support staff and its impact on school budgets. This is factored into the department's decisions on funding. The department's analysis provided in the Schools' Costs Technical Note⁷ (SCTN) shows the impact of support staff pay increases on school budgets and this is factored into the Department's overall decision-making about how schools' overall costs are to be managed.

The SCTN considers the impact of support staff pay rises on school budgets in the preceding year and forecasts the impact of pay increases for support staff and teachers in the next financial year, alongside an estimate for the 'headroom' available for pay awards for both workforces. The Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG) made in 2024, which is providing schools with almost £1.1 billion in 2024-25, took account of the impact of the employer offer that was made at the time of the announcement of the CSBG, as part of the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services process that most support staff are currently employed on. This offer was then accepted which meant that the support staff pay increase for 2024 was fully funded at a national level.

Schools mainly fund wages for support staff and teachers from their core funding. The core funding allocated by the department to schools is not conditional on it being linked to any specific form of expenditure. Most of this funding is allocated through the National Funding Formula, which calculates an allocation for each school based on schools' and pupils' needs and characteristics; schools' final allocations are determined by their local authority.

Looking ahead, the government is reinstating the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) so that in future years the pay rates and pay awards for school support staff will be negotiated by school support staff employer and employee representatives and ratified by the Secretary of State. This will both help ensure there are fair pay rates for school support staff and allow central government to have a strategic view of pay across the school workforce. Our current estimate is that the earliest the SSSNB will start making pay related recommendations is in 2027-28, to ensure a smooth transition from the current NJC process, and to allow for better alignment with the teacher pay process.

There are no plans to change the way funding allocations work for schools in relation to support staff as a result of the SSSNB; staffing costs for schools will continue to be taken into account when the Department considers the level of funding it provides for schools. However, better alignment with the teacher pay process should support schools in their overall budget planning.

7 [Schools' costs 2023 to 2025](#)

Financial incentives, bursaries and retention payments

Recommendation 3: Bursaries should continue to be targeted according to under-recruitment so the subjects struggling the most with recruitment receive the highest bursaries. However, additionally, the Department should introduce lower bursary offerings for shortage subjects where there is no existing offer alongside continuing to promote non-bursary subjects through broad, above-the-line advertising that focuses on teaching as a vocation more generally.

Recommendation 22: Bursaries should continue to be targeted towards subjects where there are shortages and shortage subjects should continually be reviewed to ensure bursaries remain where recruitment is most needed. The Department should increase the value of lower valued bursaries, particularly in subjects experiencing persistent shortages such as RE, DT and modern foreign languages.

The Department currently offers bursaries worth up to £29,000 tax-free and scholarships worth up to £31,000 tax-free for school ITT courses. We review bursaries each year before announcing the offer for those starting ITT the following academic year. In doing so, we take account of a number of factors including historic recruitment, forecast economic conditions, and teacher supply need in each subject as determined by the Teacher Workforce Model. We offer the highest bursaries in STEM subjects where there are persistent shortages and graduates have the highest earning potential outside teaching. In recent years, we have also increased the languages bursary, and reintroduced lower bursaries in subjects such as art & design, music and RE. As we have a limited budget, we need to prioritise when deciding the bursaries on offer.

The School Teacher Recruitment marketing campaign aims to attract and inspire people to consider a career in teaching, through showcasing the wide range of benefits that it offers. The campaign balances the need to present the wider profession through broadcast channels whilst using highly targeted channels to promote bursaries for shortage subjects.

Furthermore, we have continued to offer financial incentives for those undertaking teacher training for the FE sector in priority subject areas. For the 2024/25 academic year, training bursaries are worth up to £30,000 each, tax free (further information about schemes for future years will be available in due course). Applications for the 24/25 academic year are now closed.

For FE, 2024/25 academic year bursaries are in defined subject areas (English, SEND, mathematics, science, engineering and/or manufacturing, computing), for trainees who meet eligibility criteria based on their relevant

qualifications or professional experience, and their intention to teach a designated priority subject in the FE sector. The bursary amount varies according to the subject in which they train to teach.

Recommendation 4: We welcome the initial success of existing retention payments such as the Levelling Up Premium and Early Career Payments. The Department should expand the Levelling Up Premium and Early Career Payments according to subject and regional demand. We have heard concerns about the restriction of these payments to Education Investment areas and that they may be needed elsewhere. The eligibility criteria for these payments should be reviewed periodically in order to adapt and respond to shortages; a national roll out of these payments should be considered if they continue to be a success.

Recommendation 5: The Department should also monitor the attrition of those who receive these payments. This would improve understanding of whether there is a “postponement effect” amongst recipients, where they leave the profession once these payments stop.

Recommendation 23: In line with earlier recommendations in this report the Department should expand the Levelling Up Premium and Early Career Payments according to subject and regional demand. The eligibility criteria for these payments should be reviewed in order to adapt and respond to shortages.

Recommendation 24: The Department should also analyse the impact of the Levelling Up Premium and Early Career Payments. There should be a particular focus on their regional impact, for example, to find out whether recruitment in places nearby education investment areas has been negatively impacted or resulted in ‘brain drain.’

For 2024/25 and 2025/26, the Department is offering a Targeted Retention Incentive worth up to £6,000 after-tax for mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers who work in disadvantaged schools. This is a doubling of the previous Levelling Up Premium payments of up to £3,000 after-tax offered to the same teachers in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Early Career Payments were offered to those completing ITT up to 2020/21 and will cease after 2024/25.

For 2024/25 and 2025/26, the Department is also offering Targeted Retention Incentives to eligible FE teachers for the first time. The Targeted Retention Incentive is worth up to £6,000 after-tax for teachers in the first five years of their career teaching mathematics, physics, chemistry, computing including digital and ICT, building and construction, early year and engineering and manufacturing.

The Targeted Retention Incentive is currently targeted at subjects with persistent teacher shortages and where graduates of these subjects have the highest earning potential outside teaching and are often the most difficult to recruit and retain. It will help to ensure our young people receive high quality specialist teaching to equip them with the STEM and technical skills the UK needs.

The Targeted Retention Incentive also targets the most disadvantaged half of schools across England so is not restricted to Education Investment Areas (EIAs). Teachers working at an eligible FE provider that has higher levels of disadvantage will receive a higher payment. We will keep the eligibility criteria under review and consider the case for expanding the offer. We are completing full evaluations of the Targeted Retention Incentive and previous Levelling Up Premium offers. As part of this, we will attempt to evaluate any postponement effect after teachers become ineligible for the payments. We will also evaluate the geographical impact of targeting certain schools and areas where possible.

Recommendation 10: Further, the Undergraduate veteran bursary scheme and its subject eligibility criteria should also be reviewed and expanded in order to improve uptake. We also recommend the introduction of a non-graduate route specific to ex-military personnel similar to the Undergraduate veteran bursary scheme.

The £40,000 tax-free undergraduate veteran teaching bursary is available to veterans who enrol on undergraduate ITT courses in secondary biology, chemistry, computing, languages, mathematics or physics. We review the bursaries on offer annually so will consider eligibility for this alongside other bursaries. Graduate veterans can already access the bursaries and scholarships of up to £31,000 tax-free available for postgraduate ITT courses.

We do not believe that introducing a specific route for non-graduate veterans would improve uptake, as this was previously trialled through the Troops to Teachers programme. The Teacher Degree Apprenticeship (TDA) is a new route into teaching, which will expand opportunities for people, including veterans, to become excellent teachers. The Department remains committed to promoting opportunities for veterans and supporting their journey into teaching in primary, secondary, and further education through its broad support services.

Routes into Teaching and Initial Teacher Training

Recommendation 6: The Department should improve communication around the different routes into teaching with a particular focus on clarifying what these routes entail and what applicants they are best suited for.

The School Teacher Recruitment marketing campaign inspires and attracts potential candidates to consider a career in Teaching. It directs them to the Get Into Teaching website, which provides clear information and signposting for those who are interested in exploring routes into teaching, including eligibility information to help prospective candidates understand the options available to them. We are currently developing an interactive tool that will help candidates to identify the route(s) to which they are best suited.

Potential candidates also access support and advice through expert one-to-one Teacher Training Advisers, a contact centre and a national programme of events, through which they can get personalised, impartial guidance on the route into teaching that may suit them best.

We also have an established campaign to promote awareness of teaching in FE. Our national recruitment campaign aims to raise awareness, improve perceptions and understanding, and increase consideration of a career in FE amongst industry professionals. The campaign directs potential teachers to a dedicated Teach in FE website, which gives further information about the next steps into a role teaching in FE, including signposting to FE-specific job boards, college websites and the Teach in FE support service. This support service is provided by Teleperformance UK and offers candidates support through phone and email, answering their queries and providing them with next steps.

Recommendation 7: The Department should continue to promote and expand the existing Graduate Teacher Apprenticeship, setting intake targets for each academic year. The Department should also move forward with plans to introduce a non-graduate teaching apprenticeship, specifically for experienced non-teaching staff with further detail on this published by Autumn 2024.

Salaried teacher training is an important part of the initial teacher training (ITT) offer. Both School Direct (salaried) (SDS) and the Postgraduate teaching apprenticeship (PGTA) will continue to be available from academic year 2025/26. We are working closely with providers and schools to ensure candidates have the right information about salaried routes into teaching, and candidates from all backgrounds are supported to access courses.

To help grow provision, providers offering the Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship are now able to access increased grant funding equivalent to the bursary in chemistry, computing, mathematics, physics, French, German and Spanish. This is in addition to the £9,000 apprenticeships levy funding.

While we set targets for postgraduate initial teacher training entrants by subject, we do not currently break this down by route. In February 2024, the Teacher Degree Apprenticeship (TDA) was announced. This is a new route into the teaching profession which will enable successful candidates to ‘earn while they learn’, attain an undergraduate degree and qualified teacher status (QTS) while employed in a school. The TDA standard was published in spring 2024 and we expect applications for candidates to be published from autumn 2024, with training commencing in autumn 2025. The TDA will be open to school leavers, career changers and existing education support workers. The TDA will enable talented and capable non-teaching staff to become excellent teachers.

We have published information about the TDA on the Get Into Teaching website and we will shortly publish a TDA page on GOV.UK to support prospective providers and employing schools to design, develop and deliver TDA courses.

Recommendation 8: The Department should urgently rethink the decision to cut funding for Now Teach as career changers are an important group that have the potential to positively contribute towards improving secondary teacher numbers. Further, the Department should introduce more paid routes into teaching and a bursary specifically for those making a career change. The value of this bursary should be determined on a multiyear basis to help improve the stability of these routes, benefiting both applicants and Initial Teacher Education providers.

The previous government took the decision not to re-procure the national career changers programme beyond the current contract with Now Teach. Career changers make a valuable contribution to the teaching profession and the Department remains committed to continuing to recruit and support them into initial teacher training in the future. The current contract for the Career Changers Programme, delivered by Now Teach will come to an end in Autumn 2026.

All eligible career changers have access to the wider financial support and advice available to candidates, trainees and teachers. This includes bursaries, retention payments and support through our recruitment and marketing campaign.

The School Teacher Recruitment marketing campaign has significant scale and reach, and signposts candidates, including career changers, to support and advice through the Get Into Teaching Service. Get Into Teaching Events, which enable candidates to meet teachers and ITT providers in their area, and receive support from Teacher Training Advisers, run across all regions of England, three times a year, and heavily over index against a career changer audience. We have a wide range of support already available to support all candidates into ITT, including career changers.

Teacher Training Advisers provide one-to-one support to eligible candidates, including career changers, throughout the application process. This includes guidance for personal statements and interviews as well as helping to overcome barriers, for example, advice on funding. The Get School Experience service helps candidates find out what teaching in a classroom is like to help them make informed decisions about whether the profession is right for them.

Trainees who have changed career are eligible for the bursaries and scholarships of up to £31,000 tax-free we offer to all trainees and can also access student finance.

Salaried teacher training is an important part of the initial teacher training (ITT) offer. Both School Direct (salaried) (SDS) and the Postgraduate teaching apprenticeship (PGTA) will continue to be available from academic year 2025/26, including for career changers.

The Teacher Degree Apprenticeship (TDA) is a new route into the teaching profession which will enable successful candidates to ‘earn while they learn’, attain an undergraduate degree and qualified teacher status (QTS) while employed in a school. The TDA will be an attractive route for both those who are starting their careers and those currently in employment who are interested in pursuing a career in teaching, including career changers.

We do not believe there is a need to introduce a bursary specifically for career changers. We announce the above financial incentives for ITT at the start of each recruitment cycle, meaning that career changers are made aware of the support on offer a year before courses commence. We avoid making substantial changes to the incentives year-on-year where possible, but occasionally this is necessary to respond to the impact of the economy and the changing need for new teachers.

Recommendation 14: The Department should continue to monitor the impact of the Initial teacher training (ITT) reviews to ensure that regional capacity and the provision of Initial Teacher Education is sufficient.

The Department recognises the considerable investment that both accredited ITT providers and their lead partners have made in developing partnerships to deliver the new Quality Requirements from September 2024. These partnerships are ensuring there is good coverage of high-quality training places across regions, subjects and phases.

The Department will continue to monitor the supply of places and candidate demand closely, to assess when and where future rounds of accreditation for new entrants to the market or returning ITT providers might be needed.

Returners into the profession

Recommendation 9: The Department should encourage the return of former teachers into the profession by introducing and promoting specific training and bursary routes for returners. We also recommend that the Department reviews how returning teachers can be used to address current issues in the teacher workforce such as the shortage of secondary school teachers and teachers for specific subjects.

The Department recognises the significant contribution former teachers make to the overall supply of teacher in England: returners have represented between 35% and 40% of entrants to the profession in recent years. In 2023 there were approximately 17,500 full-time equivalent (FTE) qualified returners, which is more than a third (38%) of all qualified entrants.

The Department provides one-to-one tailored advice to those who wish to return through the Return to Teaching Advisory service as well as additional content for potential returners on our webpage. We are exploring what further resources we could provide to facilitate more prospective returners to secure a job in teaching.

Previous initiatives to provide bespoke training for returners have proved poor value for money so we do not plan to introduce new training programmes at this time. Equally, we do not intend to introduce bursaries due to the large volume of returners each year who return without a bursary. However, early career returners can receive our Targeted Retention Incentive for STEM teachers in their first five years of teaching, if they return within five years of having done ITT. The Government is also committed to introducing a new Teacher Training Entitlement for all teachers, including returners, to ensure they are able to access high-quality professional development to stay up to date on best practice.

We have also accepted in full the School Teachers' Review Body's recommendation of a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools from this September. This award is above economy-wide average earnings growth forecasts for 2024/25 (the Office for Budget Responsibility expect average earnings growth to be 4.5% in FY 2024/25), improving the competitiveness of teacher pay. to make teacher pay more competitive. This award will apply to maintained schools across all pay points and allowances. In practice, this award will also be implemented in many academies, at their discretion.

Alongside the pay award announcement, we announced that we are providing schools with almost £1.1 billion in 2024-25 through the new Core Schools Budget Grant (CSBG), to support them with overall costs. This matches what

we have calculated is needed to fully fund, at a national level, the teacher pay award and the support staff pay offer in financial year 2024-25, after accounting for the available headroom in schools' existing budgets.

Digital services

Recommendation 11: We were encouraged by the 'Apply for Qualified Teacher Status in England' digital service launched in February 2023. We would like an update and review of the success of this service in response to this report.

Qualified Teacher Status is mandatory in many schools and preferred by most. We launched the 'Apply for Qualified Teacher Status in England' service in February 2023 to allow more highly qualified and experienced overseas trained teachers to gain qualified teacher status.

Alongside accepting applications from teachers who qualified in an increased number of countries to apply for Qualified Teacher Status, we also introduced more robust criteria to better ensure that awarded teachers have the skills and experience to thrive in classrooms in England.

As of 4 June 2024, we awarded qualified teacher status to over 5,000 teachers from applications received between 1 February 2023 and 31 March 2024. Of those awarded teachers, over 90% had over two years' teaching experience.

We are continuing to work with digital and operational colleagues to improve the service and ensure we continue to support high-quality overseas trained teachers to gain qualified teacher status.

International teachers

Recommendation 12: We are disappointed about recent changes to the international relocation payment which will exclude trainee teachers from the 2024 and 2025 academic years. We viewed this payment as a positive intervention to encourage the recruitment and training of international teachers in key subjects and do not view this decision as a step in the right direction. We urge the Department to review this decision and reevaluate the scheme's potential to help in providing high quality teachers in our schools. In particular, we are concerned about the late notice given for this change and urge the Department to work closely with Universities to ensure that no students on their way to qualify as teachers in shortage subjects are lost as a result of this. At a minimum, this change should not apply retrospectively and international candidates accepted prior to April 3rd 2024 should be able to continue on to their studies in September 2024 with these payments.

The previous government took the decision to exclude international trainees from the international relocation payment in the second year of its pilot.

We want to ensure that there are excellent teachers where we need them most, and international teachers and trainees make an important contribution to this in some of our priority subjects. Alongside this we also need to ensure that we are getting the best value from our interventions and that support is targeted where it is most needed. International trainees in physics and languages are still eligible for generous bursaries or scholarships of up to £31,000 for physics, and £28,000 for languages. The international relocation payment is still available to eligible physics and languages teachers. They are not eligible for any other financial support.

The government has inherited a challenging set of fiscal circumstance and needs to make difficult decisions to restore economic stability, including focusing funding where it is needed most to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people.

Recommendation 13: The Department must also collaborate with other relevant government Departments to ensure routes and pathways into teaching for international teachers remain open, attractive, and easy to navigate.

The Department works closely with colleagues across government to make sure that teaching in England remains an attractive option and that support is available where it is most impactful, including regular engagement with the Home Office on ensuring the processes for getting a visa are straightforward for schools and teachers.

Early Career Framework

Recommendation 15: The Department should continue to consult and engage with teachers for feedback on the Early Career Framework. We recommend that the content of the Early Career Framework is reviewed annually by the Department, and that duplicate material continues to be removed. The Department should also work with providers to develop and expand the subject specific elements of the Early Career Framework.

In its manifesto, the government committed to reviewing the Early Career Framework (ECF), ensuring it retained a strong evidence base and was most effectively equipping new teachers for a career in teaching.

We are committed to providing Early Career Teachers (ECTs) with a high-quality evidence-informed training programme as they embark on their teaching career.

As a first step, from September 2025 we are implementing an updated framework and training programme which will address many of the points identified in this report including duplication from ITT, by introducing a combined framework and guidance for providers on progression. We are also increasing the requirement on our training providers to develop subject specific training materials to support ECTs to relate their training directly to their own context.

As the evidence base evolves, so too do the experiences and needs of trainees and ECTs, which is why we are committed to continuous improvement and to review the experiences and needs of ECTs as well as trainees. We regularly engage with training providers and Teaching School Hubs to share best practice and respond to feedback and evaluation findings to iterate delivery of the programme on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation 16: For the mentoring aspect of the ECF we recommend that more time and resources are given to mentors, in order for them to provide early career teachers with the necessary time and support. Mentoring provides a key strength of the framework, but retention of experienced mentors will be key to its long-term success.

Mentoring is a vital part of the current ECF programme, and we are committed to continuing to support and retain ECT mentors. Schools are already supported with additional funding for ECF-based training which is paid directly to schools. This covers a dedicated mentor for each ECT to ensure that mentors have sufficient time to spend with their ECTs. If a school uses a training provider, they also receive funded training delivered to mentors as well as time off timetable so that mentors can attend training. Evidence suggests that mentors generally enjoy the role of supporting ECTs and this enjoyment is strongest when they are supported by their school, and this includes receiving the necessary time off timetable.

However, mentor workload is often too high so from September 2025, training for new mentors will be streamlined from two years to one year. Provider-led programmes will also provide mentor session materials so mentors can spend their valuable time with their ECTs, rather than planning sessions and creating resources. We will continue to look for further ways to support ECT mentors with their important role.

We also offer mentoring support for FE teachers through the Teacher Mentoring Programme (TMP). TMP seeks to embed a mentoring culture within Further Education (FE), where experienced peers act as vital support for new staff, often coming from industry backgrounds without teaching experience. The programme aims to provide at least 600 mentoring places to support 1,800 FE early career teachers by 31st March 2025.

National Professional Qualifications

Recommendation 17: We urge the Department to rethink this decision to restrict funding for NPQs which can benefit teachers in every school, and we recommend that this decision is reversed so that funding is reinstated for all teachers to be able to benefit from NPQs. Further, we recommend that the Department creates standalone funding for NPQs so this is not reliant on temporary programmes such as the Department's catch-up programme.

Recommendation 18: The Department should build on improvements in its Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offering and there should be more scope in the system for teachers to gain and maintain seniority through subject specialism. The Department should expand its subject specific NPQ offering beyond numeracy and literacy and establish clearer career progression pathways for teachers who want to focus on and develop within their subject, for example as head of subject within a year group or subject lead across their school. We would recommend that the Department consider further NPQs for subject leaders with cross disciplinary application such as heads of science or languages.

NPQs are based on the best available evidence of what works, providing access to high-quality in-role training and support in the areas that matter most to teaching and learning, ensuring they continue to provide the knowledge and skills needed for teachers and leaders to develop their schools and improve pupil outcomes.

While not subject-specific, the NPQ in Leading Teaching (NPQLT) is designed for subject leaders and provides them with the appropriate foundations to lead curriculum development or a department. The use of subject-specific exemplification materials is embedded into the course content where appropriate to enable education professionals to develop expert teaching practice within their relevant context.

NPQs are not designed to provide all of the professional development (PD) a teacher can access throughout their career. They can, and should, be supplemented by a variety of subject-specific professional development, including that which is provided by schools, trusts, subject associations, charities, and other private training organisations.

However, we know that evidence is not static and insights evolve. Therefore, we will establish a process for reviewing the existing NPQ suite, to ensure the qualifications continue to be based on the latest evidence and best-practice of what works for teaching and learning.

The government has inherited a challenging set of fiscal circumstance and needs to make difficult decisions to restore economic stability, including focusing funding where it is needed most to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people.

The government is committed to continue delivering funded NPQs in 2025 with a cohort commencing in the spring. Future funding will be confirmed in due course following the multiyear Spending Review.

We will also support teachers to access more high-quality CPD through the introduction of a new teacher training entitlement.

Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE)

Recommendation 25: Subject knowledge enhancement programmes should be used where there are minor gaps in subject knowledge, for example, where individuals have a relevant A-Level or degree qualification. The Department should review current subject knowledge enhancement provision with the aim of balancing quality and flexibility of provision. This review should also look specifically at options for upskilling teachers in the areas of RSHE and financial education, as we have heard in evidence from our other inquiries that teachers would benefit from enhanced training in these areas.

The current Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) programme supports recruitment to ITT subjects with the greatest sufficiency challenges.

SKE is available for ITT applicants who have a conditional place on an ITT programme leading to achieving Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) or, have a SKE course recommended as part of their High Potential Initial Teacher Training (HPITT) Programme.

SKE training is flexible, and can be delivered online, face-to-face, or a mixture to suit candidate needs. SKE courses are in 4-week blocks ranging from 8 to 28 weeks dependent on the identified knowledge. The short courses (8 and 12 weeks) are typically a subject knowledge refresher. The longer courses are usually for participants with more limited subject knowledge, for example where they have an A-level in their ITT subject but not a degree.

The existing SKE framework runs until September 2025. The Department is keeping options in relation to SKE delivery from October 2025 onwards under review and continues to seek feedback from providers on the delivery model and scope of the programme.

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) has a statutory duty to coordinate the UK Strategy for Financial Wellbeing 2020. In October 2022, MaPS launched the Improving Financial Wellbeing through Teacher and Practitioner Training and Targeted Provision programme. Through this £1.1 million grant programme, the Money and Pensions Service funded seven organisations to develop and test approaches to supporting teachers, and practitioners working with children and young people in vulnerable circumstances, to deliver financial education. The Department will work with the Money and Pensions Service to explore how the findings⁸ from their teacher training programme can be disseminated effectively within the sector, to promote consistent and evidence-informed practice.

The Department published teacher training resources in 2020, to support high quality teaching of RSHE which includes content about the risks related to online gambling, including the accumulation of debt; how data is generated and used; and how to keep personal details safe online, which are essential skills in a financial context. The Department is currently reviewing the RSHE statutory guidance.

Financial education also forms part of the National Curriculum for citizenship and mathematics. Schools are free to teach additional financial education as part of Personal, Social, Economic and Health education.

The independent Curriculum and Assessment Review is looking at the whole of the curriculum and how it fits together to ensure that there is space for schools to provide a broad experience. The Review will consider RSHE in that context.

Schools are able to make local decisions that some subjects are compulsory for all pupils. In general, decisions relating to teachers' professional development rightly rest with schools, headteachers, and teachers themselves, as they are in the best position to judge their own requirements. The government has committed to introducing a Teacher Training Entitlement which would support teachers to access more, high-quality CPD across a range of topics.

Recommendation 26: We strongly disagree with the Department's decision to axe five subject options from the Department's subject knowledge enhancement programme offering. Five subjects from this offering to undermine teacher recruitment efforts. We urge the Department to rethink this decision and reinstate funding for subject knowledge enhancement programmes in primary school maths, DT, English, biology and RE.

8 <https://maps.org.uk/en/publications/research/2024/evaluating-grants-improving-financial-education-for-vulnerable-young-people>

The Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) package is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure we are focusing our available funding on the subjects with the greatest sufficiency challenges. We also continue to engage with providers on the scope of the programme.

We will undertake a further review of the SKE package for future years.

Recommendation 27: Upskilling should be used as a mitigation across subjects experiencing teacher shortages. For subjects such as Maths, a compulsory subject that has experienced persistent shortages in teacher supply it is even more pertinent that mitigations such as upskilling are used to manage teacher shortages.

The current Subject Knowledge Enhancement (SKE) programme is available to support applicants who have a conditional offer of a place on an ITT programme leading to the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

SKE is a course designed to enhance the subject knowledge of prospective teacher trainees in their chosen ITT subject. They might not have a relevant degree in the subject they want to teach or have a degree obtained more than five academic years before. SKE is currently available in mathematics, physics, chemistry, computing, and languages.

High and rising school standards are at the heart of the government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and give every child the best start in life. The government's ambition is for a curriculum that delivers excellent foundations in reading, writing and maths, and ensures every young person gets the opportunity to develop creative, digital, and speaking and listening skills particularly prized by employers. The government has made a manifesto commitment to improve the quality of maths teaching across nurseries and primary schools, learning from the success of phonics. The Department funds the Maths Hubs programme, which is supported by the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics. Local Maths Hubs provide school-to-school support focussed on maths subject knowledge and pedagogy training for teachers.

Recommendation 28: The Department should work with subject associations where there are current teacher shortages to coordinate support and funding efforts with the aim of developing upskilling opportunities across these shortage subjects.

Where there are teacher shortages in particular subjects, the Department will encourage subject associations to continue to support schools to access training to help teachers to upskill. New Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams will facilitate networking, share best practice and bring together oversight of improvement programmes to empower schools and teachers to access supports and training.

Flexible Working

Recommendation 29: The Department should redouble efforts to promote the Flexible Working Toolkit with school leaders, with flexible working ambassador schools playing a central role in this. In addition, this should be backed up with a strategy to monitor the extent to which schools are offering flexible working. We ask that the government provides a full update on this in response to this report.

Expanding and enabling flexible working is a priority for ensuring we can attract and retain the expert teachers our children need. Ministers have expressed support for flexible working, including through clarifying the position on Planning, Preparation, and Assessment time in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document ([STPCD](#)), so schools are clear that teachers can use this time at home whilst not compromising on pupils' face-to-face time.

We continue to explore opportunities to promote the flexible working toolkit and our funded flexible working programme wherever possible. We have promoted the toolkit through a range of sector bulletins and newsletters and we ran a small-scale paid search and social campaign last year. We recently ran a comms campaign in collaboration with the [Teaching Vacancies](#) service, which aimed to build broader awareness of the benefits of flexible working in the sector, as well as to promote our wider flexible working programme.

Our flexible working ambassador schools already play a central role in promoting our work, speaking at local and national sector events. We also signpost towards the toolkit in all our webinars. The toolkit was co-created with the sector, and we continue to work with a broad range of partners including flexible working experts to promote flexible working for teachers and leaders.

We already monitor levels of flexible working in the sector through the Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders (WLTL) Survey and part-time rates through the [School Workforce Census](#). [The most recent WLTL survey](#) shows that 46% of teachers and leaders have a flexible working arrangement in place, an increase from 40% seen in 2022. Whilst this is encouraging, we know there is further to go.

We continue to look for opportunities to update and broaden our evidence base, without adding to teacher and leader workload. For example, over the next year we intend to include flexible working questions in the Department's omnibus surveys.

Recommendation 30: The Department should commission research into the impact flexibility has on teaching and learning for pupils as well as teacher retention. Further research is also needed into the resource and financial implications of flexible working arrangements on the school budgets.

Whilst it is difficult to isolate the impact which flexibility has on either teaching and learning for pupils or teacher retention, we are continuously working to build our flexible working evidence base through our ongoing data collections.

In 2023, the Department published research exploring the perceived financial and non-financial costs and benefits of teachers and leaders working flexibly. An overriding theme was that the benefits of flexible working were generally seen to outweigh the costs, as leaders felt that flexible working helped retain good staff and improved teacher wellbeing, which was perceived to ultimately lead to better pupil outcomes.

We continue to monitor our funded flexible working programme and build our evidence on its effectiveness. We plan to interview stakeholders to explore what has worked well and identify areas for improvement as well as look at the profile of schools that have been supported.

We remain close to wider research, including projects run by the Education Endowment Foundation to understand the impact of PPA time offsite and a 9-day fortnight for teachers. Findings will help inform our future policy work.

The Secretary of State has also asked for the STRB's views on how the current pay framework can best support flexible working, which will help to build our wider understanding of potential barriers to implementation.

We will continue to consider future opportunities for research.

Workload and Accountability

Recommendation 31: The Department must continue to promote and build on existing efforts to reduce teacher workload. This should include condensing the Workload Reduction Toolkit, so it is more easily accessible for school staff. We endorse the Workload Reduction Taskforce recommendation that the DfE should “commit to enhancing knowledge and accessibility of the School Workload Reduction Toolkit, including improving the design for users and ensuring that case studies and resources remain relevant and include new, impactful, solutions that schools and trusts have implemented.”

We have recently completed a user research project to update and improve the digital experience of users when engaging with the resources (previously accessed through the School Workload Reduction Toolkit).

Based on feedback from users we have developed and launched a new service [Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff](#) with improved navigability, speed of access to resources and links to other helpful information.

The service contains a range of supportive resources for schools to review and reduce workload, and improve staff wellbeing. Working closely with schools and trusts, we will continue to add new resources to the service and to promote it to ensure it remains a helpful, relevant and impactful resource to support schools and trusts with their workload reduction.

Recommendation 32: The Department should also put measures in place to monitor the implementation of strategies and solutions across schools and trusts. The listed recommendations from the Workload Reduction Taskforce should be introduced as a matter of urgency with the Department reviewing progress on this by Spring 2025.

The government recognises that workload is one of the biggest drivers for teachers and leaders leaving the profession and is driven by a range of complex and systemic drivers at national and local level with no single solution.

We appreciate the significant time and contributions by members of the Workload Reduction Taskforce in reviewing this important matter and building a collective understanding of the current drivers of high workload across the school system and what this means in practice for individual teachers, leaders and schools.

We have made good progress in implementing the Workload Reduction Taskforce's initial recommendations which were published in January 2024, including following an observation from the School Teacher Review Body, from 1 September this year, we have removed the requirement for schools to use Performance Related Pay. We have also launched our new Improving Workload and Wellbeing online service in spring this year and continued to promote the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter with nearly 4000 schools now signed up.

The findings from the Taskforce provide a strong foundation for addressing some of the longstanding and often systemic workload issues and much activity is already underway across the Department and wider government to tackle these issues, for example:

The number of pupils experiencing complex barriers to learning has increased and this has workload implications, such as in adapting teaching, administrative tasks and wider social support to children and their families.

In July, we announced a new Child Poverty Taskforce co-chaired by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education. The Taskforce will publish its strategy later this year. Our reforms to special educational needs and disability will improve inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, ensuring special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.

- The government has also committed to providing access to specialist mental health professionals in every school, increasing access to early support for pupils to address problems before they escalate.
- The [Curriculum and Assessment Review](#) launched in July and chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE, will among other things, seek to ensure that the curriculum and assessment system does not place undue burdens on education staff and, wherever possible, supports manageable and sustainable workloads for teachers, lecturers, support staff and leaders.
- We are supporting schools to use technology effectively to help reduce workload including investment in reliable and safe technology infrastructure, harnessing the safe use of artificial intelligence and releasing a single sign-on standalone service ([‘DfE Connect’](#)) which aims to streamline the guidance and mandatory tasks school leaders and school business professionals can access on Gov.uk.

Workload and retention are early priorities for this government, and we will build on the findings from the Taskforce by working together with the sector to identify where further action is needed and how best to monitor progress.

The Secretary of State is committed to resetting the relationship with the sector and alongside unions and employer organisations is implementing a new way of working on priority areas for reform, learning from the experience of the Workload Reduction Taskforce.

This is part of the government’s reset with the profession, where we work together in the push for better, building on decades of the sector’s experience and excellence. Developing these new ways of working will inform policy design and approaches to implementation, to ensure a high-quality expert education workforce that delivers excellence for all our children and young people.

Recommendation 33: The Department should increase myth busting efforts around Ofsted to reduce accountability related workload. The joint update from DfE and Ofsted that the Workload Reduction Taskforce recommendation should be published without delay and efforts to reduce the accountability related workload should be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Ofsted will be consulting on a new education inspection framework, to come into force next academic year. Following the removal of the single headline grade for school inspections with immediate effect on 2 September 2024, new report cards will also be consulted upon ahead of introduction next academic year. They will consider all recommendations as part of that development.

Recommendation 34: We recommend the Department clearly defines the parameters of schools' and teachers' responsibilities. To support with issues that are not within the scope of schools' responsibilities. Wraparound support should be easily available and accessible. Schools and teachers should be able to easily signpost pupils or parents to other organisations better suited to address barriers to attendance, wider concerns or care, and improvements are needed in both awareness of and access to this type of support.

We do not believe that producing a list of responsibilities for schools and teachers would be helpful, as looking after the development and wellbeing of large numbers of children is inevitably complex. Recognising that workload pressures extend beyond teaching, the Prime Minister announced a new Child Poverty Taskforce in July, co-chaired by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education. The Taskforce will publish its strategy later this year. Our reforms to special educational needs and disability will improve inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools, ensuring special schools cater to those with the most complex needs.

We know reducing teacher workload will play a key role in recruiting and retaining excellent school staff and will support the government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity so all young people can achieve and thrive. We continue to work proactively with the sector to understand the drivers behind workload and wellbeing issues and improve our policies and interventions.

Mental health and wellbeing

Recommendation 35: Once again, we recommend that the Department leads a cross-government assessment of the scale of mental health difficulties amongst pupils and review the current provision of support available in schools and outside of them. The government should conclude this review and report its findings by Autumn 2024. There then needs to be significant and well co-ordinated joint working across the government and additional funding to ensure Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services provision is adequate to meet the needs of school age children, in line with the Department's previous commitment to a 4-week waiting time for NHS mental health support for children.

The government already collates a range of existing data from multiple sources to monitor mental health and wellbeing for children and young people in England and compares this to other countries. However, we agree with the need for cross-government work on this issue, which is why the DfE will continue to work closely with DHSC and others to coordinate our approach to promote and support the mental health and wellbeing of children.

As an example of the data available, in 2017, NHSE (formerly NHS Digital) published the [Mental Health of Children and Young People in England survey](#), which assessed the prevalence of mental health need amongst children aged 2-19. Four follow ups were also published, in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, to assess the impact of the pandemic on mental health need amongst children and young people.

The government has set a bold new ambition to raise the healthiest generation of children in our history that it will deliver through its Missions 'An NHS fit for the future' and 'Break down barriers to opportunity'. In particular, the government recognises that improving the mental health and wellbeing of children will be vital if we want them to achieve and thrive in schools, in families, and in communities.

A key element of our approach will be improving mental health support for all children and young people. The government will work to ensure the right support is available to every young person that needs it, including providing access to specialist mental health professionals in every school, and putting in place new Young Futures hubs, including access to mental health support workers.

The prevalence of mental health needs has grown significantly over the last decade; faster than growth in mental health workforce. The government will also recruit 8,500 additional mental health workers across children and adult mental health services to reduce delays and provide faster treatment.

Behaviour and attendance

Recommendation 36: The Department needs to reinforce the importance of positive and effective partnerships between schools, pupils and parents in addressing and improving pupil behaviour and attendance. This is particularly important for special educational needs and disabilities pupils who represent an increasing proportion of pupils.

Tackling absence and providing safe, calm and supportive classrooms is at the heart of the Department's mission to break down the barriers to opportunity. This government firmly believes that every child and young person should know that success can belong to them.

We agree that the relationships between schools, pupils and families are critical to improving behaviour and attendance. Our newly statutory [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance sets out clear expectations for all parties, starting with a "support-first approach". Parents have a responsibility to send their children to school. Schools and trusts have a responsibility to create welcoming, engaging and inclusive spaces for pupils. This includes working with families to rebuild the child's sense of belonging.

We understand that children with additional needs face greater challenges with their attendance at school. Across the sector, work is being carried out to provide support for children with SEND and we know that parents have struggled with getting the right support for their children, particularly through a long and difficult EHCP process. We aim to rebuild confidence in the SEND system through partnership.

Data suggests there is considerable variation in school level practice. Working in collaboration with the national Attendance Ambassador Rob Tarn and the sector, the Department has released an attendance toolkit to help schools identify the drivers of absence and adopt effective practices in improving attendance. To complement this, our Attendance Hubs work to share best practice across the sector so that the schools who have made strong improvements in attendance can share that learning with their colleagues - be it resources, systems, leadership or approach.

Alongside this, the Department's £10 million [Behaviour Hubs programme](#) pairs schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) with exemplary behaviour practices with partner schools or MATs who want and need to improve behaviour in their setting. The programme is flexible and non-prescriptive, with tailored support and a team of six Behaviour Advisers responsible for overseeing programme development and design and supporting delivery. The Behaviour Advisers bring experience from across the school sectors, including alternative provision and special schools, providing broad representation of all schools and their specific needs.

It is for schools to develop their own approaches to engaging parents that are best suited to the local context of the school and individual families. Although there is no longer a statutory obligation to have home-school agreements, some schools use them successfully as a way to engage parents. A home-school agreement could cover, for example, the practical ways that each pupil's parents could support their child's learning.

A guide for [Parents on School Behaviour and Exclusion](#) is also available which outlines the role of parents and the school in ensuring pupils understand how to behave well, which includes any detail on reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Recommendation 37: We recommend expanding the behaviour hubs programme to increase capacity and allow more schools to benefit from this programme, which could also help teacher retention.

Since 2021, the Behaviour Hubs programme has offered support to schools that want to improve pupil behaviour and create calm, safe and supportive environments. The programme will run until March 2025.

We are considering how we can build school support for behaviour and attendance into the new regional improvement for standards and excellence (RISE) teams.

Conclusion

This government is working to ensure that schools are able to recruit and retain the teachers they need to break down barriers to opportunity as a priority. We understand the scale of the challenge and are committed to working with the sector to tackle it and restore teaching's status as a valued and trusted profession.

We are encouraged by the early progress that has been made to move forward the aims of many of the recommendations made in the report including:

- We restarted and expanded the teacher recruitment campaign “Every Lesson Shapes a Life”.
- We accepted in full the School Teachers’ Review Body’s recommendation of a 5.5% pay award for teachers and leaders in maintained schools from this September.
- We announced a financial incentives package for the 2025/26 recruitment cycle is worth up to £233 million, a £37 million increase on the last cycle. This includes a range of measures, including bursaries worth £29,000 tax-free and scholarships worth £31,000 tax-free, to encourage talented trainees to key subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing.
- We are committed to supporting schools to implement the full range of flexible working practices, which can include taking Planning, Preparation and Assessment time remotely, so that teaching offers a career which flexes as teachers lives change and develop.

- We are moving to a new system of school report cards Ofsted inspection reports having already abolished single headline judgements and are removing the requirement for Performance Related Pay, and publishing new guidance documents on appraisals, capability and pay.

Nevertheless, we recognise how much work is left to do and thank the Committee for reiterating its predecessor's report.

The Department will continue to work to improve the experience of teaching through increased access to flexible working, and other measures to support teachers of all backgrounds. We will build on our early efforts, and work at pace to recruit an additional 6,500 new expert teachers, put children and their wellbeing at the centre of the education and care systems, maximise teachers' development opportunities, and ensure that support staff are once again represented by the SSSNB.