

## Written evidence submitted by Professor Alan Felstead, Professor Francis Green and Dr Katy Huxley

This evidence is submitted by Professor Francis Green from UCL, and by Dr Katy Huxley and Professor Alan Felstead from Cardiff University.

The evidence addresses two of the questions in the call for evidence:

- What are the main factors leading to difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified teachers?
- How do challenges in teacher recruitment, training and retention compare to those being faced in other professions/ sectors of the economy?

1. While government has recognised workload as an issue for some time, some previous research had found that high teacher workload was not just a matter of long hours, but also meant high work intensity (the rate of physical and mental input to work tasks performed during the working day).<sup>1</sup> The research found that teachers' work intensity was significantly higher than for other professional workers, and increasing. The same evidence showed that teachers' task discretion had been falling in the years before the pandemic. Together, high work intensity and low discretion are a known recipe for job strain.

2. There is separate evidence that working conditions, and not just pay, affect teacher retention.<sup>2</sup>

3. New evidence (from a report to be published in June) will show that, since before the pandemic, teachers' non-wage working conditions have changed little. However, working conditions in other professional occupations have risen somewhat; that is because the possibility for hybrid working (some home, some at the workplace) allows employees greater flexibilities to fit their work into their daily lives and to reduce the amount of time they spend commuting.

4. It can be concluded that, apart from relative pay, a potential contributory explanation for declining recruitment and retention of teachers is this widening gap between the working conditions of teachers and other professional occupations.

5. The figure below shows this point. It is based on a large survey of working people who undertook a job quality quiz<sup>3</sup> both before and after the pandemic lockdowns, including over 5,000 teachers. It shows that the proportion of teachers who frequently work at a high speed and to tight deadlines remains at the same high level as before the pandemic. However, these proportions have declined in other professions, to a statistically significant extent. The proportions have declined most in the occupations that have most switched towards hybrid working (termed 'Most Hybridised' occupations in the figure below).

6. In a further, more detailed look at working conditions, using a new survey of teachers undertaken this year, it was found that work intensity was higher, and job autonomy somewhat lower, in those

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<sup>1</sup> Green, F. (2021). "British Teachers' Declining Job Quality: Evidence from the Skills and Employment Survey." *Oxford Review of Education*, 47(3): 386 - 403.

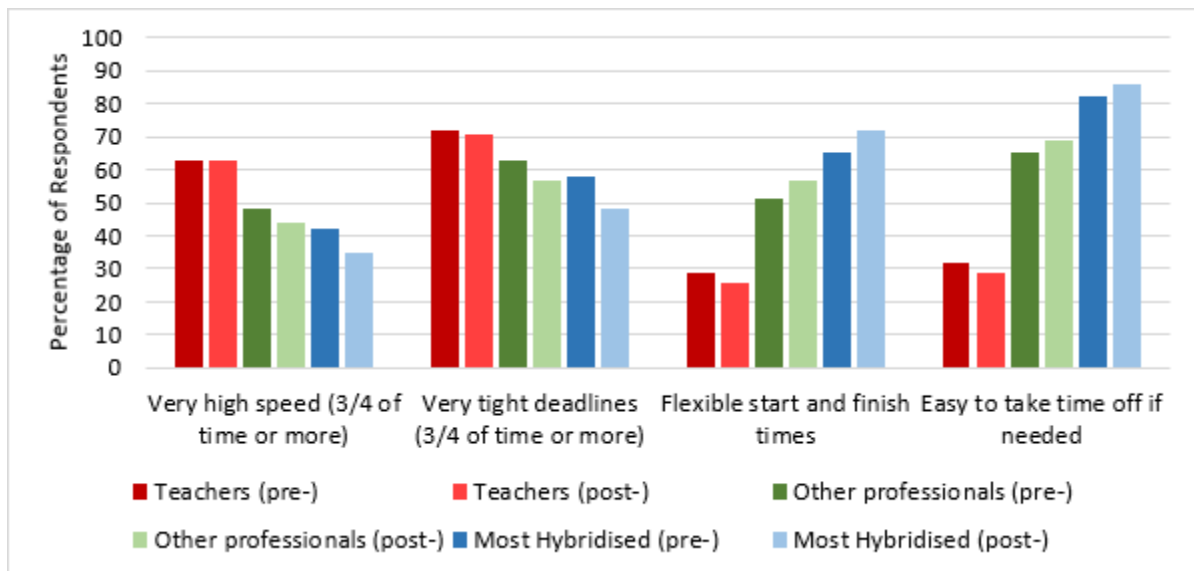
<sup>2</sup> Perryman, J. and G. Calvert (2020). "What motivates people to teach, and why do they leave? Accountability, performativity and teacher retention." *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 68 (1): 3-23. 2 5.

<sup>3</sup> Davies, R. and Felstead, A. (2023) "Is job quality better or worse? Insights from quiz data collected before and after the pandemic", *Industrial Relations Journal*, <https://doi.org/10.1111/irj.12401>

schools where teachers were expecting an inspection within the coming year, and in those schools where there was a high proportion of pupils taking free school meals.

7. We conclude that, to address the problem of declining teacher recruitment and retention, further attention should be given to workload. In doing so, workload should not be defined in terms of set hours of work; rather, there needs to be a tangible reduction in the average amount of work required from each teacher.

**Figure 1: Job Quality in Teaching, Other Professions, and 'Most Hybridised' Professions, Before and After the Pandemic**



Source: Felstead, A, Green, F and Huxley, K (2023) Working in Schools: Job Quality of Educational Professionals Before and After the Pandemic, London: National Education Union, forthcoming.