

Written evidence submitted by Professor Tanya Ovenden-Hope

This is an individual expert response by **Professor Tanya Ovenden-Hope, Plymouth Marjon University**. Professor Ovenden-Hope is Provost and Professor of Education at Plymouth Marjon University and Visiting Professor of Education at Canterbury Christ Church University. She is Chair and Convenor of the Special Interest Group on Teacher Supply for the APPG for the Teaching Profession, and long term UCET and ICET Board Member. She is co-editor and author of Ovenden-Hope, T. and Passy, R. (Eds) (2020) *Exploring Teacher Recruitment and Retention: Contextual Challenges and International Perspectives*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis, London. ISBN 9780367076450.

1. The current situation regarding teacher recruitment and retention

a. What are the main factors leading to difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified teachers?

The key underlying issue restricting the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers is the poor status of teachers and teaching in the UK. Perceptions of status about teaching, and of teachers, both within and without of the profession, is that of a de-professionalised role (Ovenden-Hope, 2022¹, 2021²). De-professionalising of teaching has impacted on it being seen as a career of choice for graduates. Applications to train to teach are lower than they have been for many years, impacting on recruitment for schools that are already experience significant levels of attrition (DfE, 2022³). The reduction in those wanting to train to be teachers is believed to be underpinned by perceived low status of the profession, which includes low pay (compared to the graduate professions in the private sector), long hours, high accountability, low autonomy, large workloads, little flexibility and associated issues for work/life balance.

It should be remembered that teaching can appear more attractive to postgraduates during economic downturns when other postgraduate careers are not available and graduate unemployment increases (Dolton et al. 2003⁴; Worth and McClean 2020⁵). Teaching may well be considered 'recession proof', because there is always a need for teachers, regardless of wider economic challenges (Hutchings 2010⁶). The challenge of this for teacher supply is that those entering teaching as a 'fallback' profession (Dolton et al. 2003) may leave teaching as and when the economy recovers. Not being able to anticipate the impact of economic uncertainty on teacher supply offers more instability for recruitment and retention.

¹ Ovenden-Hope, Tanya (2022) *A status-based crisis of teacher shortages? Exploring the role of 'status' in teacher recruitment and retention*. Research in Teacher Education (RITE), 12 (1). pp. 36-42. ISSN 2046-1240 (paper) 2047-3818 (online)

² Ovenden-Hope, Tanya (2021) *Teacher as commodity versus teacher as professional: An international status-based crisis in teacher supply*. Impact - Journal of the Chartered College of Teaching, 11. ISSN 2514-6955

³ Department for Education (DfE) (2022) School workforce in England: November 2021. London, DfE. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>

⁴ Dolton, P., McIntosh, S. and Chevalier, A. (2003) 'Teacher Pay and Performance: A Review of the Literature', Bedford Way Papers, Institute of Education, London.

⁵ Worth, J and McLean, D. (2020). The Impact of Covid-19 on Initial Teacher Training. Implications for Teacher Supply in England. Slough: NFER.

⁶ Hutchings, M. (2010) What impact does the wider economic situation have on teachers' career decisions? A literature review. Research Report DFE-RR136. Department for Education.

In 2025 there is a known demographic ‘bulge’ of students entering Secondary education (age 11) in England, which was identified as a crisis for teacher supply by the government pre-pandemic (DfE 2019⁷). The student bulge means that schools will have fifteen per cent more children than in 2018 (DfE 2019). Attrition levels in teaching are compounding the issue (12.5% of teachers are leaving after year one, DfE 2022⁸).

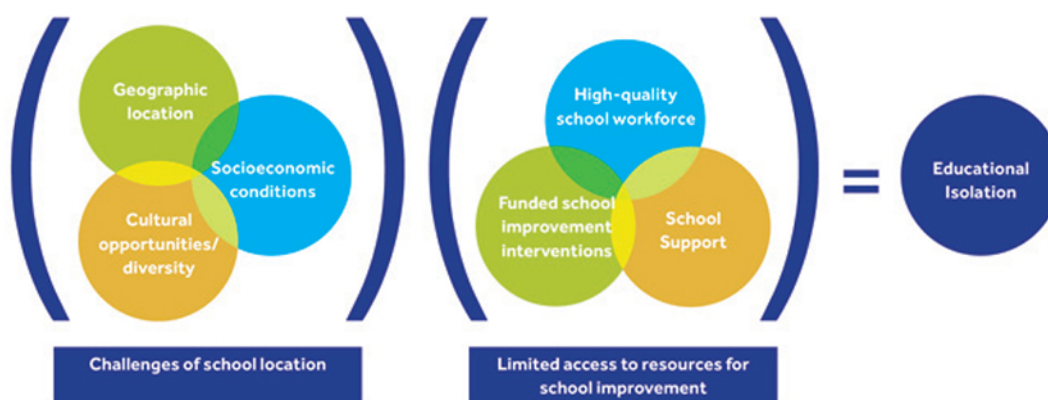
b. Which subjects are most affected?

EYITT, Physics, Chemistry, Maths, MFL, RE.

c. How does the situation differ across the country and across different types of schools and colleges?

Place matters when understanding the challenges of teacher recruitment and retention (Ovenden-Hope, Passy and Iglehart, 2022⁹). In 2019, Ovenden-Hope and Passy reported on ten years’ of research leading to the conceptualisation of ‘Educational Isolation’¹⁰. Educational isolation exists when a school experiences three place-based challenges - geographical remoteness, socioeconomic deprivation and cultural isolation (from opportunities and diversity). Educational isolation limits the schools access to key resources for school improvement, most importantly a high-quality workforce.

Educational Isolation (Source: Ovenden-Hope and Passy 2019: 4¹¹)



Educationally isolated schools in England are typically located in deprived coastal, rural and ex-industrial areas. In 2020, 19 per cent of state maintained schools in England were rural primary schools (DfE, 2020¹²), and 16 per cent of secondary schools in England were in rural and coastal

⁷ Department for Education [DfE] (2019). Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy. London: DfE. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/786856/DfE_Teacher_Retention_Strategy_Report.pdf.

⁸ Department for Education (DfE) (2022) School workforce in England: November 2021. London, DfE. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england>

⁹ Ovenden-Hope, Tanya, Passy, Rowena and Iglehart, Philly (2022) *Educational Isolation and the challenge of ‘place’ for securing and sustaining a quality teacher supply*. In: The Palgrave Handbook of Teacher Education Research. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-22. ISBN 978-3-030-59533-3

¹⁰ Ovenden-Hope, T. and Passy, R. (2019). Educational Isolation: A Challenge for Schools in England. Plymouth: Plymouth Marjon University and University of Plymouth.

https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/13/13574/Education_Isolation_Report.pdf

¹¹ Ibid

areas (Gov.uk, 2021¹³). This means that nearly a fifth of schools in England have additional challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers because of their place.

Schools in low density population areas experience teacher retention and recruitment challenges differently to high density population areas e.g. cities and large towns. Educationally Isolated schools have:

- **Poor retention of Early Career Teachers**
 - High levels of staff 'churn', particularly ECTs, resulting in ongoing staff development needs and additional resource needs.
- **Fewer opportunities to recruit to middle and senior leader roles**
 - A static staff (lack of churn) that do not seek new professional opportunities - can result in inward-looking school improvement and/or a high percentage of staff leaving at the same time due to retirement.
- **Poor recruitment of Early Career Teachers and Senior leaders**
 - Greater reliance on unqualified teachers on temporary contracts to cover unfilled posts. (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2019¹⁴)

Spatial inequity in teacher supply is an issue that needs addressing. The concept of Educational Isolation demonstrates a relationship between place and limited school access to a high quality workforce (which can help to explain why schools in these areas have lower pupil performance, particularly when these pupils are persistently disadvantaged (Ovenden-Hope, Passy and Iglehart, 2022)). The reason for Educationally Isolated schools experiencing more challenges than other schools in recruiting (particularly) early career teachers and school leaders, is that the infrastructure in their community is poor.

Typically Educationally Isolated schools are in places that have limited public transport that exacerbates geographical remoteness, necessitating teachers to own and drive a car to get to work or access expected cultural activities, such as dining out or visiting the cinema. Housing is also challenging for teachers in these areas, with housing being expensive (due to second home owners), or sparse, and with a seasonally affected rental market. Employment in these areas tends to be part-time, low-paid, seasonal, offering very few opportunities for the employment of teachers' family members (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2019¹⁵). When considering applying for a teaching role, early career teachers can find the prospect of living in a remote area with few facilities unattractive. While potential school leaders considering their next school position may find the prospect of having to move home, with little chance of employment for their partner and higher house prices, impacts their choices.

Educational Isolation saw schools in areas of low-wages, under- or unemployment with pupils that had little incentive to work hard at school as their community offered few employment opportunities (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2019¹⁶). Pupils in Educationally Isolated schools typically

¹² Department for Education [DfE] (2020) School workforce in England. Reporting year 2019. . <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-workforce-in-england#releaseHeadlines-tables>

¹³ Gov.UK (2021) Get information about schools. Online. Retrieved from: <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/?SelectedTab=Establishments&SearchType=Location>

¹⁴ Ovenden-Hope, T. and Passy, R. (2019). Educational Isolation: A Challenge for Schools in England. Plymouth: Plymouth Marjon University and University of Plymouth. https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/13/13574/Education_Isolation_Report.pdf

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

displayed little expectation of leaving the area for work and did not relate school to future employment prospects. Contributory factors to poor teacher recruitment include awareness of low pupil aspirations, challenging student behaviour, poor attainment and overall lower school performance in Educationally Isolated schools to greater extent than in urban schools with similar levels of socioeconomic deprivation (DfE, 2019a¹⁷). Equally, these school issues impact on teacher attrition in Educationally Isolated schools, lowering the morale of teachers through sustained challenges to engaging pupils in learning and achieving expected outcomes (Ovenden-Hope, Passy and Iglehart, 2022¹⁸).

Place-based teacher recruitment and retention challenges for Educationally Isolated schools: school leader comments (Ovenden-Hope and Passy, 2019¹⁹):

- ‘As an isolated school, **our staff face challenges in travelling in and this has a knock-on effect on recruitment and retention** ... Teachers in [town] probably travel for about half an hour whereas our staff that travel in from [city] are travelling an hour. When you say that in London you think it’s not too bad, but actually that’s a journey in a car on a single-track road. If you get delayed, then it becomes problematic very quickly.’
- ‘I think **we also struggle in terms of getting quality staff** because we’re ... remote ... An awful lot of teachers that live and work in [local city] would be going, Oh I don’t want to ... commit to that finance [for travelling] every day.’
- ‘**Trying to recruit young staff to coastal/rural areas is very difficult** ... The high cost of housing does make a long-term commitment difficult for young staff, and rental properties are expensive due to the amount of holiday opportunities in the area.’
- ‘**Talented teachers and middle leaders often leave.** We have a lot of staff who have been here a long time so internal promotion opportunities are low.’

In order to address the impact that a schools’ place has on teacher recruitment and retention, there has to be recognition of how infrastructural challenges impact on a schools attractiveness as a place to teach. Once the infrastructural challenges of Educationally Isolated schools are understood at a granular level, this is not a regional or county issue, it is a place-based issue that exists across and within regions and counties, then targeted resources may be released to support our rural, coastal and ex-industrial area schools in recruiting and retraining high-quality teachers.

It should be noted that small schools are predominantly Educationally Isolated and as such they experience additional challenges with teacher recruitment and retention.

d. What impact does this have on pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND?

Persistently disadvantaged pupils in Educationally Isolated schools have lower academic attainment than similarly disadvantaged pupils in urban schools (The Centre for Education and Youth, 2019²⁰).

¹⁷ Department for Education [DfE] (2019a) Outcomes for pupils at the end of KS4 by geography. London, DfE. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908315/Outcomes_for_pupils_at_the_end_of_KS4_by_geography_-_ad_hoc_statistics.pdf.

¹⁸ Ovenden-Hope, Tanya, Passy, Rowena and Iglehart, Philly (2022) *Educational Isolation and the challenge of ‘place’ for securing and sustaining a quality teacher supply*. In: The Palgrave Handbook of Teacher Education Research. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-22. ISBN 978-3-030-59533-3

¹⁹ Ovenden-Hope, T. and Passy, R. (2019). Educational Isolation: A Challenge for Schools in England. Plymouth: Plymouth Marjon University and University of Plymouth. https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/13/13574/Education_Isolation_Report.pdf

The reason for this is because of the greater challenge in these schools of recruiting high-quality teachers and leaders and the impact this has on pupil learning and progress (Ovenden-Hope, Passy and Iglehart, 2022²¹).

2. What action should the Department take to address the challenges in teacher recruitment and retention?

a. What has been the impact of the new bursaries and scholarships announced in October?

The bursaries have had a limited impact on trainee applications. The issue of teacher status needs to be addressed to make the profession more attractive (see above). There is evidence to show that bursaries may support recruitment, but impact negatively on retention. If the financial incentive to train is the motivation to teach, the reason to stay in teaching is gone and attrition follows (See, B.H., Gorard, S., Morris, R., Ventista, O., 2022²²).

For actions to address teacher supply, please see the report of the Teacher Supply Special Interest Group for the APPG of the Teaching Profession, 2022: [TEACHING AS A HIGH-STATUS PROFESSION: IMPROVING TEACHER SUPPLY \(office.com\)](https://www.office.com/teaching-as-a-high-status-profession)

3. How well does the current teacher training framework work to prepare new teachers and how could it be improved?

a. What has been the impact of the Early Career Framework implemented in September 2021?

Professor Ovenden-Hope edited and authored *The Early Career Framework: origins, outcomes and opportunities* (2022²³) and is writing a sequel to this book called *The Early Career Framework: Expectations and Experiences* for publication in early 2024. This second book uses qualitative primary research conducted by Professor Ovenden-Hope that explores the experiences of Early Career Teachers and Mentors in Year 2 of the ECF. It is a robust piece of qualitative research that provides insights into successes and challenges of the ECF and offers suggestions for improvement that would allow more opportunities for the ECF to impact on teacher retention. The key issues found that have hindered the ECF impacting on ECT retention are:

1. Elements of delivery of the ECF e.g., verbatim reading of online and face to face slides in training sessions; no clear value assigned to reflection on practice through written work (tick box approach to completion of tasks), which impact negatively on ECT satisfaction with the ECF and teaching.

²⁰ The Centre for Education and Youth (2019) *Breaking the Link? Attainment, poverty and rural schools*. 5th April 2019 (online) Retrieved from: <https://cfey.org/2019/04/breaking-the-link-attainment-poverty-and-rural-schools/>

²¹ Ovenden-Hope, Tanya, Passy, Rowena and Iglehart, Philly (2022) *Educational Isolation and the challenge of 'place' for securing and sustaining a quality teacher supply*. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Teacher Education Research*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-22. ISBN 978-3-030-59533-3

²² See, B.H., Gorard, S., Morris, R., Ventista, O. (2022). *Rethinking the Complex Determinants of Teacher Shortages*. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Teacher Education Research*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-59533-3_2-1

²³ Ovenden-Hope, Tanya. (2022) *Afterword*, in Ovenden-Hope, Tanya (Editor) (2022). *The Early Career Framework: Origins, Outcomes and Opportunities*. Woodridge, John Catt Educational. <https://www.waterstones.com/book/the-early-career-framework-origins-outcomes-and-opportunities/professor-tanya-ovenden-hope/9781913622954>

2. Elements of content of the ECF e.g., contextual limitations of the statements phase specificity to enable improved phase relevant language and focus, which impact negatively on ECT progress and confidence.

The key benefit found of the ECF for ECTs is the funded dedicated mentoring time, which when supported by an experienced mentor impacts on ECT confidence, knowledge, skills and understand and thereby increases their desire to stay in the profession.

For pre-publication key findings from the research, which has been shared with the DfE call to review the ECF (March 2022) please use this link: <https://sway.office.com/FMEVhFFEL2DuVyOe>

b. Are there ways in which teacher training could be improved to address the challenges in recruitment and retention?

Teacher training could support the challenges of recruitment and retention by re-establishing providers who lost re-accreditation in the market review. This would create a larger offer of ITT with established providers to provide high quality training opportunities. The market review has de-stabilised the supply chain and new providers will bring more uncertainty to teacher training.

c. How does teacher training in England compare internationally, and what are the benefits and disadvantages of the English system?

England has an internationally recognised system of high quality initial teacher training through the established PGCE QTS route. The other routes are less well known or recognised. The increase of routes into teaching with variable outcomes e.g., QTS only, assessed only, PGCE with QTS, BEd with QTS; and the de-regulation of teaching in academies, free schools and studios schools in England, now creates a confusing landscape for the profession.

Real risks to the reputation of the English teaching qualification are:

- Separation of the PGCE from QTS – removal of praxis results in a qualification that is competency based and not underpinned by understanding of evidence-informed teaching.
- De-regulation – having unqualified teachers working as ‘teachers’ devalues all teaching qualifications. It is claimed in DfE workforce data that unqualified teacher numbers in England have remained relatively static since 2009, but if data for all unqualified teachers on temporary and supply contracts were examined, it would reveal an iceberg of unqualified teachers (with more in those schools with greater recruitment and retention challenges).
- De-coupling from countries with high PISA scores that place mastery at the centre of teacher training and ensure that all teachers are qualified to master’s level.
- Two different systems of teacher training for schools and colleges – this adds to confusion about routes into teaching and qualifications. The DET/CET is the qualification in FE and QTLS professional formation, but FE is completely de-regulated (so no qualification needed to teach). QTS is the qualification for schools, PGCE is an add on, and schools are partially de-regulated (qualification needed in Local Authority schools). Why not have one qualification across all sectors? One Universal Teaching Qualification (UTQ) underpinned by praxis (PGCE with QTS) would allow teachers to teach with confidence across sectors from EYFS to FE. The ‘parity’ of QTLS with QTS is not well executed or aligned.

4. How do challenges in teacher recruitment, training and retention compare to those being faced in other professions/ sectors of the economy, and is there anything that can be learned from other professions/ sectors of the economy?

No comment.

5. What particular challenges exist in teacher recruitment, training and retention for teachers from different demographic backgrounds?

a. How well does the demographic makeup of the teaching workforce reflect that of the pupils they teach?

No comment.

April 2023