

**Education and Skills Committee
Teacher Workforce Planning Inquiry**

Trainee Teachers Submissions

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PRIMARY SCHOOL NAMED SUBMISSIONS

CARYS BOYLE

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am just about to finish my second year. I am working towards MA(hons) Education

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Angus- St Thomas's RC primary school.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I always had such fantastic teachers at high school who were clearly so passionate about watching their pupils attain good qualifications but also make learning fun and allow them to look forward to attending their class. I had teachers who made lessons enjoyable and memorable, and although I am not in training to be a secondary teacher this point still stands in primary school. I want pupils to look back and think "Miss Boyle taught us that."

Additionally, I wanted to be there for that "light bulb" moment. I wanted to see a pupil who was struggling with a certain piece of work suddenly realise how to do it and see the happiness in them.

I obviously knew that to become a teacher you would attend university. I love learning and developing new skills for myself and I knew by going to university I would be given this opportunity.

Finally, I felt that I had the patience and trustworthiness to become a teacher. Being someone a pupil can come to in any situation is vitally important and I wanted to be that person that they can trust and ensure that if they were to have any problem, no matter how big or small, I would be there for them.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I do feel that teaching could be a lifelong career for me. Every class I teach is going to be different with a huge amount of personalities in the one classroom each year. I would also like to see myself work my way up to a principle or deputy head position. I believe that I would have a sense of pride knowing that my hard work through university and my classroom teaching would be rewarded greatly in one of these roles.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

At university the only choice we were given was if we would prefer our placement school to be near our home time or our term time address. However, in the interview (before I'd even been accepted!) we were all asked to sign a declaration that stated that we would be willing to travel up to 90 minutes to our allocated school.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Personally, I believe that when people apply for a teaching degree they really underestimate the workload (myself included). I have only had my first year placement but my school wanted me to do more lessons than I was meant to. At the time, I was extremely stressed but it did allow me to make good sense of the work load and I am more than ready for this in my MA3 placement next year. As a student teacher lesson plans need to be extremely detailed and some can take a long time to create and giving up your social life for a while to make sure your standard of work is to best it can be. This also means teaching subjects you are not too confident in.

The cost of attending university is also something I feel contributes to the lack of new teachers. Although tuition fees are funded by the government the cost of moving is expensive as many student loans don't cover accommodation

costs. It is a competitive course to get onto at any university so many people may not get the university closest to them and would have to move away from home and have parents who can help cover all costs needed. In addition to this, doing an education degree makes it hard when also having a part time job as you really don't get much time to yourself when on placement as so much time is needed to plan, prepare and reflect.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I think that a negative experience with a subject studied in school would discourage people to go into the profession as they would not feel confident in teaching it to 20+ pupils (Maths is one in which I was very nervous to teach but after asking the pupils on my last day what their favourite lesson was a lot of them did say a variety of maths ones which was definitely a confidence boost for myself as it let me know I had made a positive impact on them with a subject that is commonly disliked).

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I think that there should be more focus on reflection from student teachers and new teachers that encourage people to come to university and become a teacher. This should be put on university websites that applicants can view to ensure that this is the right job for them and just how rewarding teaching is from someone that they can relate to.

Additionally, work experience should be compulsory in high school from a younger age and also encouraged during free time in 5th and 6th year. It was the additional work experience that I undertook in my senior years at High School that fully allowed me to realise this was the job for me. Primary schools in the local areas should accept to have high school students in the classroom to see first-hand what the job is like and have these pupils work hard in school to get the grades and experience needed for the job.

To keep teachers in the job I think that praise should be given to them on a more regular basis. That really is something I feel does not happen enough. Some teachers don't realise just how hard they work to ensure that each and every child is getting the most out of their education and being the best they can be. I believe this would encourage teachers to stay in the profession as it would allow them/us to understand that what we are doing is contributing positively to a child's life, wellbeing and education.

ZOE CAPRANI

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

Almost completed one year PGDE Primary course at Aberdeen University.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Aberdeen university for studying and have been placed in Peterhead, Aberdeenshire for placement.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I was working as a TA in a school and had an encouraging teacher.

I am very passionate about children's rights and doing the best for each individual child.

I enjoy working with children.

I think providing children with a safe and caring classroom environment and an enjoyable experience of education can stimulate a passion for learning and enhance social skills.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I hope so, but I am concerned about the stress levels and effects on mental health and long hours. I plan to have a family in the future and would need a work life balance.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

The experience was OK, I travel an hour each way every day which really takes its toll but luckily I have a very supportive husband. The fact that I didn't have to move away for these placements was good.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Staff motivation. I have been told I am crazy, stupid and mad to be even thinking about going into the profession. In one school the staff were very close knit and very welcoming and made me feel like I was a part of the school. In the other, the staff barely spoke, just saw me as another student and the staff did not seem to talk to each other much and support each other.

If people talk to each other they will be able to share problems and not be so stressed.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

General Primary teachers due to retirement and people moving on after probation year.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

More emphasis on promoting teachers within a school to talk to each other. Retention for probationers by actually trying to 'match' them to a place where they might enjoy so that they stay. We have been told that the allocation for probation year is just a numbers match (when you tick the box). I have a husband and 3 dogs and would love to work in a small rural school possibly on an island, I have travelled a lot and enjoy seclusion and nature, where as

other people who have for example never left home before and would be moving by themselves may find this type of living challenge along with the probation year more difficult.

Additional comments

My experience over my two placements has been so different, even though the schools are only five minutes apart. If I had had my current placement in [name] School first, I might be regretting my decision to move my family and dogs to Aberdeen to do the course. There have been no staff meetings, I have seen practice which I found shocking, additional support needs where a diagnosis had not even been considered and a negative attitude to a child with additional support needs. The university process is enjoyable, its great to share ideas etc, however, after one of my observations (which I passed) I felt awful as there was so many negative parts of my practice that were picked up on, and the observer had not recognised that I was doing what I was being allowed to do by the teacher. We are told at university to basically keep our heads down and keep teachers sweet when we are on placement which is hard to do, some people have had really bad experiences.

I think that teachers should be able to say if they want to be mentors, and get given some sort of compensation to sign up for this, as it can be very challenging, giving students a positive experience on placement and putting them with teachers who want them there and are will to spend extra time with them and allow them to try things, would result in less people dropping out, failing an observation and lead to teachers being more confident in entering their probation year.

SHAUN MOORE

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am currently in the final year of a BEd (Hons) degree in Primary Education at the University of Glasgow.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

I have been fortunate enough to work in four excellent schools over the course of my degree, all within Glasgow: St Marnock's Primary School, St Paul's Primary School (Shettleston), Spittal Primary School (nursery placement) and St Conval's Primary School. My experiences have been both rewarding and challenging, assuring me that I made the correct decision to enter the profession.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

My initial decision to become a teacher was, perhaps inevitably, influenced by the positive experiences of learning from and working with engaging teachers throughout my academic career.

I have always had a passion for working with young people and have developed a genuine interest in educational policy within Scotland. My degree has encouraged me to think critically and draw parallels between Scottish and international perspectives.

The prospect of becoming an excellent practitioner in the future is what continues to drive me, despite having had a negative experience on my most recent placement at [name] Primary School.

Admittedly, I feel that there are genuine issues in the recruitment and retention of young teachers. With opportunities arising around the world and the increased academic rigour of teaching programmes in Scotland, newly qualified teachers are highly sought after and can be incentivised to relocate to, for instance, the Middle East from a very early stage in their careers.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I am certain that I wish to be involved in Scottish education, but cannot claim that I intend to work as a class teacher for an extended period. I hope to achieve a master's degree following my probationary year and would then consider Educational Psychology as a possible career, eventually working towards a doctorate. The rationale behind this decision relates to the excessive pressure being exerted on teachers each term, with regards to planning, tracking and assessment. I sincerely feel that, in spite of the laudable aims of Curriculum for Excellence, the professional autonomy and creativity of individuals is being inhibited by top-down management and time constraints.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

The current placement allocation process is not fit for purpose. Formerly, universities were able to allocate placements, taking into account the circumstances of individuals. Currently, the system is a troubling lottery, in which students can be placed up to 1hr 30 mins away from their home address. There are marked inconsistencies in the experiences of student teachers during placement, with not all schools fulfilling their obligations. The mentoring system, in which student teachers are expected to observe the effective practice of a more experienced colleague, is inadequately regulated. If we look to the Austrian model, teachers who wish to mentor students must participate in regular training and achieve certification. Within Scotland, the reality is that class teachers with as little as two years of experience can be assigned a student, irrespective of whether they have the ability to adequately support them. My most recent experience at [name] Primary School reflects this issue, with my mentor lacking both the capacity or willingness to support me, due to the regular prioritisation of personal and professional commitments. I feel that there should be a more rigorous system in place across Scotland, in which prospective student mentors should demonstrate their commitment by engaging professional development programmes which explore how to effectively support emerging practitioners.

- Q7** If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I feel that the inconsistency of practical experience across Scotland is a major challenge for the recruitment and retention of prospective teachers, with potentially excellent practitioners leaving the profession due to negative experiences on placement. At [name] Primary school, for instance, I was not permitted to enter the staff room within the first two months, which served to undermine my status and authority from the outset. This, accompanied by a lack of personal or professional engagement on the part of my mentor, resulted in feelings of isolation and anxiety. The experience has severely dented my confidence and self-efficacy, leading me to reconsider teaching as a long-term career.

- Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I feel that with the drive towards master's level qualifications for classroom teachers must be reflected in salary offered to teachers. Simply put, Scotland is not currently competing with a number of other countries. I do not feel that it is realistic to expect Scotland to compete in this regard, though we can ensure that the pressures exerted on teachers are lessened by tackling bureaucracy in planning, tracking and assessment.

TRAINEE PRIMARY TEACHERS ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 1

- Q1** Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

PGDE Primary, almost completed. Will begin probation year August 2017.

- Q2** Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Edinburgh

East Lothian

- Q4** When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

The primary impetus was working with early years students in my last term of high school. Following that, I knew I wanted to teach but not how I would get my qualification. I continued with a BA in psych, anthropology and linguistics, always focusing on developmental and educational aspects when possible. I moved to Glasgow to do an MEd, and discovered the PGDE. It was appealing because of its low cost, efficiency as a one year program, and the support provided during the probation year. I chose to study at Edinburgh because of their emphasis on critical thinking, training teachers to be learning teachers, and social justice causes.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Yes. One of the primary things I found so engaging about teaching is that every day presents a new situation to deal with, and each year you are working with new students in a new context. Even if I were to 'adjust', all options I would consider would be related to education – e.g. work in teacher education, teacher professional development, or learning support and EAL situations all appeal to me.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Overall, fine. We basically hear from the uni where we will go and that is it. Most of my placements have been very close to home, which is convenient. My upcoming last placement is significantly further, but still accessible and my travel costs will be reimbursed.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I think teachers as a whole feel underappreciated and under-supported. The government needs to listen to what teachers say, and not just move around money to make it look like they are doing things. More funding needs to go into support for learning assistants (it is just hypocritical to have a presumption to mainstream but low levels of support for students who will definitely need it!). Teachers need to be paid more, and more needs to be done to lessen the workload and aide with teacher health and wellbeing. Additionally, schools are not the 'solution' to the attainment gap, the class gap, etc. They can help, but the key point for intervention is from birth to 3 years old – by the time they get into formal education settings, much 'damage' (not a good choice of word...) has already been done. Children of parents who are working class and have little or no higher education are exposed to much less talk and significantly less vocabulary. This 'gap' is your attainment gap already. Teachers can help with this, but we can only see children for so many hours a day.

In summary, please get more people with actual experience in education to make policy decisions. Make them visit schools and see what things are really like. Make them try and manage a class of 30 students – no teacher cares what the research says, a class of 30 just simply means teachers are more worn out and feel less effective in their teaching. Classrooms often just do not have enough space for 30 children to sit comfortably as well.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention? I wouldn't know.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Please see my response to Q7. Additionally, we need to foster more respect culturally for teachers. On top of that, retention could be addressed by providing a stronger emphasis on dealing with mental health in teachers – teaching is a profession with abnormally high rates of burn out and mental

health problems. There is this pervasive culture of valuing the number of hours put into planning and saying that it is 'normal' to feel so worn out, stressed, tired, to not see your family enough, to work 10+ additional unpaid hours. We need to not pander to this culture of teachers-as-martyrs, but create a culture where we understand that teaching is a very important job, but it should not haunt teachers. Teachers should be able to only work their contracted hours and not feel like they are letting down their students. They should be supported to make their workload manageable, be that through specialist teachers, effective marking systems, additional support staff, smaller class sizes, or dividing subject areas amongst stage partners.

You don't have to be daft to see that teaching as a profession in Scotland (and the whole UK) is not appealing to anyone who is not incredibly committed to working with young children. And it is a profession which seems to be breaking even those who are incredibly committed.

ANONYMOUS 2

Thank you for the opportunity to provide confidential feedback.

I am a primary teacher now living in Sydney, Australia. I graduated in 2002 and left Scotland in 2010. I was promoted to Principal teacher after 6 years of teaching in Scotland and I absolutely loved my job! It almost stopped me from taking the gap year to Aus where I've ended Up settling.

There's huge competition in Sydney for teaching jobs yet I got the first one I went for. I was promoted to a coordinator (first step on the ladder) within 2 years and then Assistant Principal (next step is Principal) within 4 years. This is very quick! This year I've been identified as someone they want to train to be a Maths coach in our system (there's 136 primary schools and only 9 people have been selected).

The reason I am telling you this is because I attribute a lot of it to my probation year in Scotland. I was the first year of the new teacher scheme where we were assigned a school and a mentor. My mentor was the Assistant Principal and she was amazing! A true inspiration. She worked very hard to coach me and spend time with me and I was like a sponge. She was a model of what to aspire to: exceptionally professional, hardworking and she just "had it". The support we had from Glasgow city council was incredible, lots of PD courses, twilights to connect with other beginning teachers and my mentor was supported with PD and twilights too. My mentor and I both shared stories from these networking meetings. I was lucky to have her but she said she was lucky to have me. I deduce that some newly qualified teachers perhaps took the opportunity for granted. It was lip service.

I have 3 beginning teachers in my school at the moment and I am supporting them to complete their accreditation paperwork. It saddens me that I simply cannot give them the time and energy that I was so fortunate to get. At the same time I can see some of the stories that my mentor told in one of my teachers: he doesn't listen, can't take on feedback and is having a tough time as a result. He was a gifted student himself and he is probably facing challenge for the first time in his life. He can't see this of course, he is

desperate for a job at the end of the year. His only goal. It's making him lose sight of what is most important: the children.

My solution: bring back that scheme but perhaps not for all teachers. Bring it back for those who show great potential on their pracs. Check in with them regularly and make sure they are being supported. At the end of my first year I was asked to talk to new beginning teachers about my experience. My head teacher said I couldn't be released from school. This is my only complaint. Schools shouldn't get to decide that. I missed out on an opportunity to talk passionately about what an amazing year I had. About the importance of listening to feedback even when you think you're right. At times the parents would go straight to my mentor instead of me. It hurt me but I realise she was protecting and supporting me. How lucky I was! Good grades at subjects do not equal good teaching necessarily. As a very average student throughout my teaching degree I have gone on to graduate with 2 post grads and I've almost completed a masters - all whilst working full time. Yet my transcript from my undergrad is shocking, it's like the qualifications were from different people. I was young and immature and wanted to party but when I got to my honours year I totally switched. My final prac was excellent and my grades were fairly good. Having scraped by the first 3 years I probably wasn't yet capable of writing an outstanding essay at that point. It didn't affect my capacity to be a very good teacher in that first year. Teaching is so much about personality, being practical and sensible and being tough enough to stand up to parents but diplomatic enough to know the peaceful route is always the way. And never losing sight of the children. Treating every single child with dignity and respect is one thing I take from my mentor every single day. She made that clear in her actions: in every single interaction I witnessed it was always about the child.

Having dedicated role models who you can actually aspire to is a huge thing and having someone hold your hand and guide you in that first year is the key. You then need to identify the brightest and make sure you don't lose them. Support them to be outstanding mentors who inspire others. I had to leave Glasgow city council as they offered me 3 days in one school and 2 days in another. It was crushing after such a positive start. South Lanarkshire were offering permanent area cover. It wasn't much better but at least the word permanent was in the title. I ended up back in Glasgow after a few years of being knocked around. I wanted to repay them for all they had invested in me.

I'm very grateful to this day for the start I had as a beginning teacher. Teaching is social according to vygotsky; it's about people. Find the best mentors and the brightest young talent and support them to develop. The Australian system hasn't got it right either. Beginning teachers get knocked around so much in the first year. They need to be very resilient.

On another note, it's a shame the media constantly reports on education like they're experts. Parents need to respect the job that teachers do and as a society we need 2 way traffic: we should name and shame parents when they send abusive emails/act disrespectfully towards teachers etc. we should hold the media accountable when they report negative, bias stories. Schools will always uphold the dignity of families which means it's never a fair fight.

Journalists should be held accountable for their reporting. In addition, Unions need to stop with their constant negativity and write some positive articles for a change. How can people feel inspired when we constantly read about how tired, stressed and overworked we are (true but constant moaning doesn't fix the problem).

Good luck with your research. I think this is an excellent project.

ANONYMOUS 3

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

PGDE Primary. Finish in May

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Aberdeenshire

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

The attainment challenge. I believe that I have the skills and ability to be part of this process. I am also returning to work after having my children and did not want to go back into hospitality.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Yes, I would like to think of it as a life-long career in which. I could progress to management. I do, however, refuse to work in a school in which I am unhappy.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I think they need to take into account how close the school is to your home. I have children and my first placement was 60 miles away. I would not be able to do this if it were for a whole year. The cost would be too high as well as the time taken to travel.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The teachers in one of my placements are very unfriendly. They have openly said that the PGDE course should not exist. They do not think that you can learn to be a teacher in a year. They also think that teaching is not something that you can turn to later in life. They think that if you did not do it when you were younger that you do not really want to do it at all. They are unwelcoming and I have to put up with personal comments about my life and upbringing on a daily basis.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Additional support needs. There is not enough support in class for inclusion of all. Time seems to be spent mainly with the additional support needs children, whilst the others are left to fend for themselves.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Additional support for teachers with challenging classrooms. So much time seems to be spent with 'behavioural management' of the few rather than actual teaching.

Additional comments

Whilst I understand and agree with the policy of inclusion. I also think that there needs to be more support for teachers in class. So much time seems to be spent with the additional support needs that I believe the education and direct teaching time of the class as a whole suffers. I believe that the attainment overall will suffer as teachers do not have the time to challenge learners. I also think that teachers need to stop being blamed for behavioural issues. As a teacher we would be reprimanded for suggesting that 'parenting' may be to blame for something, so why is it ok to make out that it is all the fault of a teacher. Teachers are generally passionate about their job and their ability to make a difference but they are currently not being given the tools to do that job. I also think that teachers should get up to the highest rate for salary more quickly. Teachers are doing the same job no matter how long they have been there. I think 6 years is too long to work up to a rate. More experienced teachers are often the ones using older teaching practices, so why punish the newer teachers?

ANONYMOUS 4

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

I am educated to MSc level with a 1st class MA from St Andrews Uni in Social Anthropology and an MSc (Distinction) in Environmental Resource Management from Edinburgh Uni.

Prior to commencing the PGDE I volunteered for 6 months in a primary school & a nursery for a half day per week, whilst also working 0.8FTE with the Curriculum for Excellence's Es&Os in my paid work in the 3rd sector with nursery, primary and secondary aged children. i.e I had some experience and understanding of the nature of the job.

The reason I withdrew from the course was that the course, and the academic staff delivering the course content, were appalling. The quantity of work expected was absurd (impossible to get through in any meaningful, reflective way), the quality of lectures really poor (outdated power-points delivered by bored and disengaged lecturers in front of an audience of around 300 students) and the workshops/tutorials banal, patronising, unhelpful and also delivered by bored and disengaged staff (when they bothered to turn up).

Also, despite being a secular course, and despite being a secular country, the balance of content was also weighted strongly towards religious education, which was delivered in an asinine and patronising manner by a staff member who was

evidently a raging Christian trying to assert her world-view onto the style of teaching practice. It was appallingly bad.

To sum up, the delivery of the PGDE Primary Education at [name] was a cynical sausage-factory; churning out teachers vis-à-vis staff who had NEVER delivered the participatory Curriculum for Excellence and had no self-awareness of the disconnect between their teaching style and the Curriculum for Excellence.

I have kept in touch with a few fellow students and they all, unequivocally, despise their teaching jobs and are looking for a way out.

My recommendation would be that the course at [name] needs urgently audited by an independent body, that the staff delivering the course should have, at least, 3 years' experience of delivering the Curriculum for Excellence, and that the practical placement process should be led by the needs of the schools.

I hope this is helpful input.

ANONYMOUS 5

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am coming towards the end of my teacher training programme. I will complete the PGDE (primary) at Strathclyde university in May 2017.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

I have undertaken all of my placement schools in West Dunbartonshire whilst studying for my PGDE this year.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I wanted to become a teacher because I love working with children and I know I can make a difference in education. My undergraduate degree was in Psychology, I studied a lot about children and I loved it! However when considering teaching, many teachers told me to completely avoid the career as there was no work/life balance and they worked ridiculous hours every single week and it was starting to really affect their health. I was also informed that teachers do not receive the support that was once available with regards to additional support needs and classroom displays.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I definitely do not think teaching could be a lifelong career for me and I decided that from the outset. I do not wish to be working ridiculous hours every week and taking work home at night, resulting in little family time. Family is very important to me and when I come to have children I do not want to sacrifice quality family time for a job where I am taking work home every night and at weekends. This will result in stress and friction in my family home which I most definitely do not want, especially when the salary isn't the best!

The volume of work teachers are now expected to do simply does not reflect in the salary! After all, it is only meant to be a 35 hour working week. I have witnessed all teachers working excessively at every opportunity and they do not seem to get any praise or credit for it.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Fortunately I had a very pleasant experience when I was allocated to my placement schools. For all three of my placements I was 'school confirmed' as soon as the list was issued. However, at times the list of placements was not issued until 5 days before placement which was not ideal for organisation and travel arrangements.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The main challenge in school placements is the volume of paper work that postgraduate students need to fill out, whilst attempting to learn about different teaching styles. Another challenge is that staff are very negative about the teaching profession and often advise you "to leave whilst you can", asking if you are silly enough to put yourself through such a horrible career. Furthermore, various older mentors who are teaching tend to advise you not to teacher in relation to CfE as they believe it is not a good system and therefore do not support you in areas such as active and outdoor learning etc.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I think primary teachers struggle to secure permanent posts close to where they live when they complete their probation year.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

The government desperately needs to invest money into education to improve its state. This would enable more teaching and learning assistant posts, which in turn would improve the staffing crisis and provide more support for children with additional support needs. Investments would also improve the lack of resources that schools currently face at the moment. Many teachers are using money from their own wages to improve resources in their classroom and school, which is simply unacceptable!

ANONYMOUS 6

I have been working to gain entry into primary education for over four years and feel I have a valuable perspective for you in improving the recruitment of teachers.

Unfortunately, I have found the application process to be extremely frustrating over the last few years. My perception of universities is that they look for any excuse to reject applicants, and while I understand the competitive nature of the course, I am not satisfied that the process allows for the most sensible selection of interview candidates.

First, regarding my B Ed application from this year. I accept that my qualifications record from school is not competitive, however my efforts since leaving school have shown resilience and an appreciation of the power of education. I possess an HND, a projected first class business degree, and industry qualifications. In addition, I feel it is an advantage that I have experience in life and work that should be taken into account. I was nothing short of astonished therefore to be rejected by Glasgow University without even the offer of an interview, with an explanation that I was not academically qualified for entry to an undergraduate course. Yes, I do not have AABBB highers, but surely their admission staff should be able to take note of an academic record far in excess of conventional entry standards.

Regarding the PGDE course, in addition to the above details, my personal statement demonstrated my four year journey and hence my commitment to the role. It also detailed extensive experience in both primary and secondary schools. Again, Glasgow and Edinburgh did not even consider an interview to be a fair outcome. Strathclyde were similar; despite using last year's feedback from them and improving my personal statement with them in mind, they used the same excuse to reject me. I was bewildered that their rejection letter contained the same reason, and embarrassingly for Strathclyde, the same spelling mistake as last year. This creates a perception of haphazard decision making and a lack of investment or respect in the process.

Many weeks ago, I asked Glasgow and Strathclyde for feedback on their refusal to offer even an interview, and still I await their response. Not impressive from a service level perspective.

The only university I have found to be fair, is UWS. They clearly showed some common sense and offered me an interview. I was subsequently offered a place for next year and I am grateful to them for the opportunity that have given me.

This does not however remove feelings of doubt regarding the application process in Glasgow and Strathclyde, and I feel this information will be useful during your discussions.

ANONYMOUS 7

I was reluctant to reply to your request for comments on this subject, however, my wife asked me to do so to provide some degree of understanding as to issues surrounding teacher training. It is relevant that I give you some background before I provide you the feedback you seek, I worked for 23 years in Dundee City Council and in the last 8 years completed a degree in Childhood and Youth Studies at the Open University. I am disabled and an active wheelchair user, I had always wished to be a primary school teacher and in 2007 at the age of 40 after successfully accomplishing my degree I gained a place on the PGDE (Primary) at University. I left my successful and secure job at the City Council to begin the course and it was the beginning of the worst period of my life.

My main problem I have with replying to you is the sense that I may come over as someone who is bitter and angry, I will happily say that I was indeed bitter and angry for quite a while over the experience and attitudes I

encountered. However, this is long gone and now my only regret is that after not becoming a teacher I was a 40 something disabled male who could amass 30+ interviews in a year and not be given a job. This was simply because of the same attitude to my disability that I encountered during my time from lecturers at the university and teachers at my placements.

The university is not to blame for the experiences I had via attitudes towards perspective male primary school teachers or disabled teachers, I must take some of the onus on myself in not reporting the comments that I received. I know how this will look before I even this in writing, but the two placements I failed in were where I received very negative and discriminatory comments about men being primary school teachers. But what really hit me hard was the attitude I received about my disability, amongst the many comments were “a classroom is no place for someone in a wheelchair” and “I do not believe it is right to have a person who cannot walk teach children”. On reporting these comments back to my tutor I was not expecting anything to be accomplished other than it be noted, but I was flabbergasted by the response of “I do have my own concerns that wheelchairs are inappropriate for classroom situations” and “I told you before that I think it is wrong for someone like you to be in a classroom.”

I know “why did I not report it?”, and the honest answer is I did not believe anyone would believe me and think I was using my disability to cover for my failings as a student teacher. As far as I can see nothing has changed, the “men should not be in a primary classroom” attitude by female teachers and lecturers is still strong. I went home from meetings with my tutor or classroom teacher feeling as though they saw me as some sort of deviant, “why would any man want to be a primary school teacher” was well and truly built into the foundation of many lecturers and teachers.

As I have stated this was a decade ago and this failure on my part (as I take full responsibility of not passing the course) has had a devastating impact on my life, I have never worked since and now in receipt of my superannuation pension 20+ years early due principally to the attitudes I explained above. I worry I sound bitter and twisted, I am no longer annoyed or angry just a feeling of total apathy that nothing has changed. I have just begun a second degree part-time at University in August 2016, whereupon I have spoken to a couple of lecturers individually from my time as a student teacher in 2008, without any prompting or even initial comment by me each lecturer has stated that in their opinion I was always going to fail. They put it squarely down to discrimination against men in primary schools and people with a disability, they explained that it is still the same even a decade on.

I can say one thing the training I received at the university was almost perfect, I passed all the academic requirements, however if you asked me now if I wished things had gone better I would have to say no. If attitudes and discrimination is as endemic now as it was then, then I am glad I am not a teacher and you have as much hope of getting more men or disabled people as primary school teachers as you have getting a square peg in a round hole.

ANONYMOUS 8

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am currently in Year 2 at Moray House School of Education and I am working towards an MA (hons) in Primary Education with Mathematics.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Scottish Borders / Midlothian.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

Thoroughly enjoyed my work experience placement in a primary school, and loved working with children at the After School Club I worked at for 3 years before applying to University.

Wanted to make a difference to the lives of many children I would work with as a teacher – education is so important, it shapes a child's life and their attitudes towards learning.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Yes I think teaching could be a lifelong career for me, as it appears to be a very rewarding job, in terms of working with children.

However I would not rule out the potential to further my career by going back to University to participate in teacher education programmes.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

My experience has been fairly positive, I received my first allocation in time to start when the School had expected me to start and everything went to plan. My second allocation was a bit more problematic, the school allocations were released later, as many students did not have an allocation, so the University held back to see if more students would get placed, but the school did not receive this information, and so thought I was late when I contacted them, and due to an inspector visit I was unable to start the date I had requested, which impacted on assignments and caused unnecessary stress.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Working environment and atmosphere within the school, e.g. relationships with staff/head-teachers.

Staff potentially wanted to further themselves and looking for opportunities for promotion elsewhere.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Potentially Additional Support Needs workers, aware of many assistants hours being cut which meant children did not have the required support at all times and also staff took a cut in pay – could result in them looking for work elsewhere.

- Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

ANONYMOUS 9

- Q1** Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

PGDE in Primary education (Post graduate diploma in education is a one year course. I have only two months left on the course).

- Q2** Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Glasgow City Council

East Dunbartonshire Council

- Q4** When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I had been an education librarian for 20 years (which involved working in nurseries and primary schools). In 2016, my council employer decided to cut my service and rather than take a redeployment post to a totally unrelated area I opted to apply for teacher training. This was largely due to my experience in education (I knew both the positive and negative aspects of working in education and schools) and for job security.

- Q5** Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

No

The disorganisation of schools and education (at a local and national level), the lack of support and the poor pay will mean I will have to look for another more financially rewarding post (I will have to work at weekends during my probation year to make up the shortfall in wages compared to my last post).

The lack of discipline means that you are constantly doing classroom management instead of teaching. Parents who do not believe their child is unwilling to behave or learn in class and the lack of support when dealing with such issues (although this does depend on your school management. It is a lottery to get a good, supportive school staff).

- Q6** What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Chaotic and Disorganised.

Finding out at 10.30pm on the Friday night where you were supposed to be on Monday morning was not professional. The school knew weeks or in

some cases months in advance I was coming but the information was not passed to students.

- Q7** If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Classroom behaviour - it is wearing and frustrating to spend a lot of your day getting classes to listen and/or on task.

Work hours - you work 10 hours days, weekends and holidays to prepare lessons and complete paperwork but the public image is that we get loads of holidays and only have a 6 hour day.

Paperwork - justification for everything you do in class. Reports, Testing etc. Too much unnecessary paperwork. Trust that the people who are trained and registered to be teachers can do their job.

Staff - some school staff have been fantastic, others not and at time I have felt like an inconvenience. If you did not fit in the school or your mentor and university tutor did not like you, you failed that placement. Some students passed when they had done less work than others and there was no consistency. I was very close to quitting the course during one placement but out of three placements, two have been fantastic and restored my faith in the teaching profession.

- Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

All areas of education

- Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Better quality training

Change to the law regarding RME. During my course I have had 2 hours training on the following subjects: PE, science, technology, art, drama, social subjects BUT 12 hours RME. While RME is important it is not so important to the detriment of other subjects.

Less paperwork

Better pay (pay good teachers to stay in classrooms, rather than lose them to promotion).

More protection from violence and verbal abuse from pupils and parents.

ANONYMOUS 10

- Q1** Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

PGDE (primary)

- Q2** Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

East Renfrewshire/South Lanarkshire

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

For: interest in area

Against: pay, work/life balance, job progression, work load, long hours, having to work/plan at weekends, nights

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Maybe. I want my prior professional experience to find an ASN post, with a view to specialising in one area. I am considering the possibility of working part-time so I can still pursue other work related to this field.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Terrible. I use public transport and on my 2nd and 3rd placements I was expected to walk a considerable distance, after taking two busses, one of which only ran every hour. As well as having to transport a considerable amount of equipment back and forth daily - folders, files, resources and p.e. kits etc.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Work/life balance

The "lottery" nature of placements; getting a supportive school/teacher/tutor.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

All areas face these challenges.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Work load and work/life balance needs to be addressed

ANONYMOUS 11

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am a current 2nd Year student at Edinburgh University

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Fife and Edinburgh.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I have always wanted to become a primary teacher. I want to make a difference to children's lives. At the moment we are too focused on academic success and I believe we need to focus more on social learning and step away from the pressure of academic results. In this way children will enjoy school more and will learn better and inevitably results in school will be better. I decided to become a teacher to help achieve this.

Although since coming into teacher training I realise how undervalued teachers are and how much pressure is put onto teachers. This is something I would tell others to consider before choosing to become a teacher.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Yes teaching will be a lifelong career for me. I enjoy teaching a lot however, if I believe that not enough is being done to support teachers and children I may consider seeking a role to help with this in the future.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

The process for first year was good however, in second year I was not allocated a school placement for first semester as there was a 'shortage of placement places'.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The work load at university is intense and the tasks required to be carried out in placement are not useful and add to the extra stress. Also, teachers in school are busy and do not have much time to spend with students which can make some students feel like a hindrance and not enjoy their placement time.

Workloads in school are hard for teachers to manage and teachers have to give up much of their free time to carry out extra work. Pay is not good for the amount of time teachers spend.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Additional support need specialism is needed more.

With emphasis on language learning more qualified teachers are needed to teach languages. The standard I have seen in placement has been shocking with teachers being made to teach languages with not much knowledge. This leads to mispronunciation or false information being passed onto children.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Too much pressure is put on teachers to follow strict guidelines and people feel confined by this. It does not let teachers be individual and teach how they would like to teach. Let teachers be involved in policy making as the government are not the ones putting this policy in place. Teachers know what

children need best and how best to support children's needs. Teachers feel powerless and controlled and that's why many leave.

Additional comments

With Edinburgh University moving away from undergraduate education I feel as though education/teaching is not viewed as a profession anymore. Why should someone do four years of a course when they have no interest in this and what they want to do is teaching? With there being concern over the standard of teaching in Scotland, how can it be justified that a one/two year postgraduate course is enough time for people to learn all of the skills and knowledge needed to teach in schools. It downplays the importance of teaching and makes it seem more like a backup choice. Reinforcing the idea that 'anybody can teach' and it's not an important role in society, when in fact it's one of the most important roles.

I would also like to add that although the Scottish Government says they want to focus on and improve education, I see nothing happening. Also why are benchmarks being added back into the curriculum? Seems as though we are moving back in time and not forward. Whoever makes these decisions should made consult the teachers working daily in schools with the experience to tell you what is needed.

ANONYMOUS 12

I completed my initial teacher training (PGDE Primary) at Moray House School in July 2016. I thoroughly enjoyed my program and felt well prepared to embark on a fulfilling teaching career in the Scottish Education system. However, I am not currently teaching in Scotland, because I was not able to obtain a work visa.

I am Canadian. I was therefore excited to see a page on the Moray House School website dedicated specifically to recruiting Canadian students. Apparently there is quite a history of Canadians coming to train as teachers in Scotland. I was accepted at Glasgow Uni, Strathclyde, and University of Edinburgh, and was offered part-time positions as a residential house parent in independent schools in Edinburgh and Helensburgh. I decided to accept the position at St. George's School for Girls and swallow the international tuition fees at University of Edinburgh (15,500 GBP). I was able to obtain a Tier 4 student visa for the duration of my PGDE program.

As a Canadian, I was not entitled to a probation year, which was very discouraging. I would have been willing to "tick the box" and go anywhere, had I been entitled to a probation year. In fact, I was very excited at the prospect of working in a small community in the Highlands and Islands, or Aberdeenshire. I was encouraged, however, to learn that Scotland was introducing a new 1 + 2 approach to language learning, as I am trilingual (German, French, English).

My program came to an end, and I realized that it would be impossible to stay and teach in Scotland for the following reasons:

1) I was not eligible for a Tier 5 Youth Mobility Visa, as I am over 31 years old.

2) Primary teachers are not considered a "national shortage occupation", and school councils don't sponsor visas, and therefore, I was not eligible to apply for a Tier 2 working visa.

3) My most recent ancestors to be born in Scotland were my great-great grandparents, and therefore I was not eligible to claim ancestry.

4) Even if I had managed to marry a UK citizen, I would have had to abstain from working for at least six months.

It seems extremely unfair that a trilingual Commonwealth citizen with Scottish heritage should be encouraged to come train as a teacher in Scotland, pay full international tuition fees, and then not be allowed to stay and contribute to the Scottish education system - especially when there is apparently a shortage of teachers willing to go into remote areas.

I was forced to come back to Canada, where teaching jobs are scarce. I am not sure I will ever obtain a permanent, full-time teaching job here. What a waste.

I hope Scottish immigration policies can be revisited, in order to retain qualified, enthusiastic teachers like myself

TRAINEE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS NAMED SUBMISSIONS

SCOTT CAMPBELL

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am currently undertaking a programme of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) through a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), specialising in Modern Studies, at the University of Glasgow.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

To date, I have undertaken two of my three placements. The local authorities I have undertaken these placements in are East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

For	Against
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love of my subject• Desire to work in my subject further• Ambition to work with children• A sense of satisfaction• Relatively secure employment• Defined contribution pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Heavy workload• Low pay, comparative to other professions• Continual changes to curriculum and alterations to professional guidance• Potentially high stress levels

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I believe that teaching could (and most likely will) be a lifelong career for me because I love my work. Colleagues regularly refer to the cliché that teaching is a 'calling'; that the job is a lifelong career – a career which only certain people can ably undertake. I prescribe to this belief. I enjoy my work, and I find my subject both intellectually stimulating and forever new, being that Modern Studies can – and does – draw heavily upon current affairs. In the years ahead, I foresee myself working as a Teacher because I love my subject, I enjoy teaching and I like working with children.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Having friends attending Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes at Universities other than mine, I am aware that the process is a matter of luck. In my experience, the details are published online several weeks before we go on placement. The details are published via our virtual learning environment in Excel format, leaving us to find our details and contact the school to arrange a visit. The allocations are random, with people who do not drive being sent further afield than those who have access to a vehicle (according to anecdotal evidence from others on my course). Once we have been allocated our schools and contacted them, we are placed in Local Authority cluster groups – the tutors from which become our School Experience Tutors (SETs), and thus our assessors (the people who undertake our Joint Assessed Visits). Thereafter, placement commences and is undertaken over six weeks, during which time contact with University and SETs is limited (unless you have something you wish to discuss with them). Occasionally, there are seminars organised at one of the schools within the cluster. These seminars are thematic and centre around an issue that we are anticipated to face in day-to-day classroom environments. The process, in my experience, has been simple and well-organised.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Having undertaken two placements, I view the main challenges in the teaching profession (and thus an issue that affects the recruitment and retention of teachers) as being workload-related, lack of training and a reduction in the number of support staff. I address these main three challenges (workload, lack of training and lack of support) in further detail in my additional submission.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

In my experience, the positions and roles which are facing the most prominent issues in terms of recruitment and retention are support roles and supply positions. People who seek to work in positions such as Support for Learning (SfL) assistants often refer to the long hours, low-level of pay and job uncertainty. SfL assistants are essential to the education system, particularly in an era where the consensus is that mainstream should be the first instance. Yet, as I refer to in my additional submission, these positions are often seen as soft targets for when reductions in public expenditure are reviewed and decided upon. An issue is arising too surrounding the number of supply teachers. Based on experiences and on discussions with colleagues, it is clear that some secondary schools and local authorities are struggling to find both subject-specialising and general supply cover on either a temporary or permanent basis. I would suggest that low pay and a lack of job security might be the major issue.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

As per my additional submission, I believe that several options could be considered to address the issues facing teacher recruitment and retention in Scotland. The options I believe would be more beneficial are as follows:-

1. That teacher pay scales are reviewed more regularly by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers;
2. That consideration is given to increasing teacher pay – especially towards the lower end of the pay-scale. This might attract and retain more individuals;
3. That formal recognition is given to the fact that teachers work more hours for less pay than comparable professions;
4. That formal recognition is given to the hard work and contributions made by support staff in Scottish schools;
5. That consideration is given to ringfencing funding specifically for employing school support staff;
6. That more training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities are offered nationally; and,
7. That, as part of Initial Teacher Education programmes, prospective teachers are required to learn about a range of ASN matters.

Additional comments

Teacher workload.

When considering the issue of teacher workload, the report of the Committee of Inquiry into professional conditions of service for teachers, 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century', is an ideal starting point. In evidence to the Committee, Professors David Bell and Peter Elias reported that a secondary school teacher in Scotland worked approximately 41.2 hours per week – despite a recommendation from the Committee that, "35 hours should continue to be the basis for the contractual week." (Scottish Executive, online; Scottish Executive, online(a)). Fourteen years on from the McCrone Report, little has changed. A survey undertaken by Scott Porter Research on

commission from the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) in 2014 reported that 12 per cent of respondents felt 'satisfied' with what was then a 'present' workload. Only 9% of the survey respondents said that they were satisfied with the workload in general. (EIS, 2014). This is further compounded by an EIS survey in 2015 which reported that teachers worked on average 46.5 hours per week. (EIS, 2015). Although teacher workload is comparable with other professions, the rate of pay afforded to teachers makes such comparisons flawed. A report from High Fliers Research emphasises this. Their report, 'The Graduate Market in 2016', compares the starting salaries of graduates with non-graduates and reported that graduates going to work for one of the UK's major graduate employers enjoy a median starting salary of £30,000 (High Fliers Research, 2016). By comparison, the starting salary of a probationary teacher is currently £22,416 (Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers, 2015).

Recommendations:

1. That teacher pay scales are reviewed more regularly by the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers;
2. That consideration is given to increasing teacher pay – especially towards the lower end of the pay-scale. This might attract and retain more individuals.
3. That formal recognition is given to the fact that teachers work more hours for less pay than comparable professions.

Reductions in support.

The past few years have witnessed a prolonged period of funding reductions for Scottish local government. As the Accounts Commission states in a recent report, "Councils' revenue funding from the Scottish Government will reduce by five per cent in 2016/17, bringing the real terms reduction in revenue funding since 2010/11 to 11 per cent." (Accounts Commission, 2016). For example, £9,728.8million was allocated for local government in the 2008-09 Scottish Government budget (Scottish Government, 2008). Then, in 2011-12, the Scottish Government provided a, "total baseline package of resource and capital funding of £11.548 billion in support of local authorities' services." (Scottish Government, 2010). This year sees the funding for local government decrease further. According to the Scottish Government's Draft Budget: "In 2017-18 we will make available to local government a total funding package amounting to £10,131.1 million." (Scottish Government, 2016a). However, 124.5million of this is ringfenced for either Gaelic education provision or for the Attainment Fund. To make such reductions in spending, councils often view support staff in Scottish schools as a soft target.

The results from a recent Unison survey of support staff in Scotland's schools records this vulnerability of support staff to public expenditure reductions. In their report of the survey's results, 'Hard lessons: A survey of Scotland's school support staff', Unison report that: "There are 1,841 less support staff in Scottish schools than in 2010." (Unison Scotland, 2017). Furthermore, according to the Scottish Teacher Census, Scotland had 22,957 secondary school teachers in 2016. This compares to 23,059 in 2015 and 24,776 in 2010. According to the Census, the number of secondary school teachers in

Scotland has been declining continually since 2010. This marked decline in the number of secondary school pupils is in sharp contrast to the other categorisations of educational professionals. Aside from secondary school teachers, only Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) teachers have witnessed a continual decline in their numbers. (Scottish Government, 2016).

Looking at the macro-economic picture, the headcount for the number of people employed by local government in Scotland has fallen too over the past few years. For instance, in the first quarter of 2013, after the passing of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, the number of people employed by local government in Scotland (excluding those working in Police and Fire Services) totalled 249,300. By the fourth quarter of 2016, that headcount stood at 241,900 – a reduction of 3% over three years. (Scottish Government, 2017).

Recommendations:

1. That formal recognition is given to the hard work and contributions made by support staff in Scottish schools;
2. That consideration is given to ringfencing funding specifically for employing school support staff.

Lack of training.

Teachers are expected to meet the needs of all learners through differentiation, Assessment for Learning strategies, positive behaviour management techniques and positive relationships. However, with the presumption being that children undertake mainstream education in the first instance, teachers are struggling. If teachers are to assist all pupils then guidance and training should be given – perhaps even as part of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes – to educate teachers in how to work with learners who present a wide array of Additional Support Needs (ASN). This is not happening at present.

In their 2003 report, 'Moving to mainstream: The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools', Audit Scotland and HMIE examined the implications of children with special educational needs (SEN) being automatically enrolled into mainstream education. Of teacher knowledge and training, the joint report recommended that: "The Scottish Executive, councils, the teacher education institutions and the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) should consider how best to ensure that all teachers are equipped to teach children with SEN." (Audit Scotland, 2003). Then, in 2005, Paul Brna, George Head and Anne Pirrie from the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) published their evaluation and assessment of how Section 15 of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000 were being implemented across Scotland. Amongst the issues affecting implementation that they cited, training was one. Brna et. al reported that:

"Adequate staffing levels, the availability of suitably qualified specialist staff (including, in some cases, mobility and IT advisers), and the provision of appropriate staff development and training opportunities, were considered vital to successful inclusion." (Scottish Executive, 2005).

A recommendation similar to that from Audit Scotland and HMle's 2003 report and the issue raised by Brna et. al are salient today. In December last year, the EIS union warned against ASN education "on the cheap", with members feeling over-worked and under-valued (EIS, 2016). The union's warning was issued as Scottish Government statistics calculated the number of pupils with Additional Support Needs to be 170,329 across Scotland – up from 98,523 in 2011 (Scottish Government, 2016b). As an aside, it is notable that in previous responses to the Education and Skills Committee, the word 'training' appears 260 times in the two Additional Support Needs Submissions Packs. That's 260 references to training across 334 pages (Scottish Parliament, 2016; Scottish Parliament, 2016a).

Recommendations:

1. That more training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities are offered nationally;
2. That, as part of Initial Teacher Education programmes, prospective teachers are required to learn about a range of ASN matters.

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KIMBERLEY MILLER DRUMMOND

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I withdrew from my course in January 2017. I had been working towards a PGDE in Secondary English at Strathclyde. I withdrew previously in 2006 from a concurrent program at Stirling.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

I have undertaken placements in Renfrewshire. Previously I undertook placements in Stirlingshire and Perthshire.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

My primary goal was to become a pupil support/asn/learning support teacher in a mainstream secondary setting. This is because I am fully committed to inclusion and believe every individual child regardless of their challenges has the right to equal access to education.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Being a pupil support teacher may well have been a lifelong career for me, however in order to get there, I would have had to complete the PGDE and probationary year in a subject specialism or a primary teaching post, work as a teacher for a number of years and build up pupil support hours before applying for a pupil support teaching post. This is unrealistic as the reality of undertaking training, probation and work in a role I am not passionate about meant I was demotivated from almost the outset.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I was lucky and had a suitable placement allocation each time.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

My biggest issue on placement was confidence. Even though I have been involved in education work for a number of years, class teaching and behaviour management in particular were a big challenge for me. Poor planning and administration at the university had already had an impact on my

frame of mind and the nature of the campus terrain had impacted my physical health. The same poor planning meant juggling reading and essay writing with planning classes for placement and all of this impeded my ability to read the texts I required to read and teach my classes. This badly affected my confidence and self-esteem and I began to feel I wasn't good enough.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

My subject was English so I can only speak about that subject. The workload for English increases with each class. Full texts have to be read for every class, sometimes several if placement is over a long period, and planning and prep has to be done around these. As there are infinite number of texts, the workload can quickly become unmanageable as a student teacher. Different schools, even different teachers, use different texts and it is difficult to manage the workload required as well as personal responsibilities and family commitments.

(I have a 14 year-old with Asperger's Syndrome and power of attorney for a 95 year-old Uncle who has been hospitalised since early December and is now going into a care home)

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Teaching is a very stressful profession. Not enough is done to prepare students for behaviour and classroom management and not enough is done to ensure and promote students' health and well-being.

Additional comments

Pupil Support teaching is a valuable and necessary role, but is very different to class teaching, either by subject or in primary and perhaps warrants a training qualification of its own.

Some of the difficulties I experienced while at university are detailed below. A large number of my fellow students agreed this was a factor in their decision to withdraw.

Experiences on the PGDE:

The course was isolating from the beginning due to the nature of the induction week and the oversubscription on the course. The terrain of the campus and distance between lectures and tutorials was physically challenging. There was a distinct lack of ability to plan from the outset. Access to the course intranet was not granted until after induction week and course pages were not opened to students by course leaders until later again. Readings for the lectures and seminars were not often available until the day before the class, sometimes not until late evening. This made it very difficult to plan reading and studying. Essay deadlines were poorly thought out. The first was due the Friday before Placement 2 and classes ran right up until this date with late notice of readings. This made it impossible to read for and write the essay and read for classes and read the texts and plan for placement and maintain work-life balance and fulfil family obligations. The next essay deadline was just after the Christmas break, which meant reading for and writing the essay

during holiday time as it was the only time it could be fitted in. It also meant no lecturers were available to answer questions. The resubmission deadline for failed 1st essays was during the Christmas break which clashed with the 2nd essay as well as having no lecturers available to answer questions. Failed essays were only returned the week before the break. A further issue was lack of cohesion. The course structure was disjointed and could have been better organised to cover educational issues holistically, rather than breaking them down.

WILLIAM MACLEOD

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am due to complete my PGDE Secondary Technology course in June 2017

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Na h-Eileanan an Iar and Highland

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

The key factor in becoming a teacher was financial support from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. I was previously in their employment as a school technician and without the offer of financial support during the year the PGDE requires there is no way I could consider entering teacher training. I had worked in a training role during previous employment and was engaged in supporting pupils in different ways as a technician so progression to teaching was always of interest to me, but as the main earner in the household it was never an option to take time out and lose my salary.

Having a young family, the prospects of spending time with them during holidays and having a stable career with options for progression was very attractive. In a rural community, there is a lack of secure jobs which pay well – most well paid jobs require spending significant time working away from home, but teaching is relatively well paid and allows you to live locally.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I believe it will be a lifelong career – I've worked in a school for quite a few years now in a supporting role with pupils and enjoyed the work very much. With extra pay, longer holidays, and a career progression path I would hope I would enjoy working at school even more!

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I have had three teaching placements so far and enjoyed every one. Placements one and two were at The Nicolson Institute (Stornoway). Placement three was at Ullapool High School. My final placement will be back at The Nicolson Institute.

Placements 1,2 and 4 were allocated to me automatically. They were the default option for secondary PGDE students at Lews Castle (UHI). There are only two secondary schools meet the 90-minute commute criteria.

I was aware that I would be asked to go to the other school within the 90minute commute for placement 3 or 4 regardless of the quality of experience that placement would give. There is no single full time technical teacher at the other school and a very small roll with limited classes would severely limit my placement experience.

During discussions with the Technical PT in The Nicolson Institute about placement options we concluded that it would be best to try and work out a better option myself. I got in touch myself with Ullapool High School, the next closest school (commute time around 4 hours!) who were very accommodating in every regard and were willing to support me for a placement there.

I then got in touch with UHI and proposed to go to Ullapool for placement 3. UHI worked with the necessary parties to arrange this.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Issues with recruiting teachers – who can take a year out of paid work to train as a teacher without someone else supporting them? And when taking a year out of paid work, do so unsure if you will get a job you can accept in the locality?

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar have recognised and taken steps to address these issues, hence I am sitting here responding positively to this questionnaire.

I cannot make many comments about retaining technical teachers – however one complaint that I can relay regards the constant change of the courses and the disgraceful quality of paperwork and drawings that are provided by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. A combination of a change in courses – initially with Curriculum for Excellence and then to the new “Nationals” along with a perceived lack of support may be driving older teachers away as soon as they reach an age they can retire – they are “scunnered”.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Again, I can only comment in my own subject specific area. Technical teachers are in short supply, particularly in the North East of Scotland where I believe large numbers are due to retire.

Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Support councils who recruit from within their existing workforce where the workers can demonstrate a commitment to their employer.

Ensure financial support for students. The best employers never expect someone in the prime of their working life to give a year for free with a vague promise of job somewhere locally for a year then a good chance of nothing after that. This is no way to attract the best employees – someone who can afford to take a year out to put themselves through a PGDE can afford to leave if the grass is greener elsewhere.

PGDE courses are not family friendly. They could easily be a lot friendlier by having a placement system that took the needs of those with children or other carer responsibilities into account and placed them above the needs of 20 year olds fresh out of university with no responsibilities. This would be equitable and is no more and no less than an employer would be expected to provide.

Refer to answer 7 for advice on retention regarding older, experienced teachers who I have invariably found to be a great support.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I am very disappointed that the placement system does not work to provide the best experiences for students. Simply placing students in schools within a 90-minute commute does not work for students in rural Scotland. Taking the situation into my own hands ensured I got a suitable placement at Ullapool – I cannot commend Ullapool High School highly enough, it was a fantastic learning experience.

However, that placement cost me a fortune and I spent the equivalent of another week simply commuting. I was able to stay in an old family croft house around an hour's drive away from Ullapool during the week, but the costs of commuting weekly on the ferry and the driving to the croft house was substantial – many hundreds of pounds. There is no official support for students to address these costs although I applied through my course tutor at UHI and got a small contribution which covered a return ferry trip for my car. For a 5-week placement, this was hard going.

Student nurses are expected to undertake placements and a suitable national system is in place to ensure their out-of-pocket expenses are paid. I suggest that where the schools within a 90-minute commute radius are patently unsuitable for placements (small school rolls, lack of subjects etc.) that provisions are made to cover student accommodation and commuting costs. This is particularly a problem for secondary students studying in remote areas.

MARK MELROSE

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am currently working towards a PGDE (Secondary) in Design & Technology at University of Edinburgh (Moray House School of Education)

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

City of Edinburgh Council – Holy Rood RC High School

East Lothian Council – Dunbar Grammar School

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

Teaching is a career that I considered from high school but never went in to. After mentoring apprentices in my previous job, I decided to move into teaching as this was something I thought I would enjoy. Job satisfaction was a key factor for me as I was not enjoying my previous job.

Coming from the defence industry, job stability in the education sector is significantly better.

When working in the private sector, I worked less days and did not have to worry about additional work at night. On top of that the pay is much less.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I do think that teaching could be a lifelong career as every day is different. I found my last job becoming mundane on a day-to-day basis, however, I do not feel this will be the case with teaching.

There is also scope for movement (into guidance, pupil support etc.) and career progression.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

The system for allocation of placements does not seem fit for purpose in the slightest. I was told the Thursday of the week before my second placement which school I would be going to. This was after being told that I would be going to three different schools in the weeks before.

This delay gave me no time to visit the school prior to the placement and resulted in wasted time when one placement getting up to speed with school projects and meeting members of staff.

For my forthcoming third placement, my school had not been confirmed by the Easter holiday, once again meaning I will have limited time to contact my school prior to the placement.

It does not seem that such a system, which has been in place for several years should be so difficult to administrate. The system should be designed to suit the needs of the most important stakeholder – the student teacher – and yet this is not the case.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Some schools, and teachers, do not offer adequate levels of support. Some teachers seem to think it is their duty to give student teachers a tough time.

Although it is not my own personal experience, many of my peers have told me this is the case.

The placement allocation system does not help either; in the end, it causes added stress to going on placement. This is what I have found as I have been told two of my placements at late notice compared to my peers.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Within Design & Technology, there is a shortage of teachers coming through who can teach Engineering Science. In my opinion, this is an under rated subject, however there is an increasing number of school taking up the subject. This will not continue if more teachers cannot be recruited from an industrial background. More needs to be done to bring current engineers into teaching.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Financial incentives would always help. It is a hard year on the PGDE course and many excellent potential teachers will not be able to move into the career. For a qualification which leads to public service there could be a greater acknowledgement of the huge leap many have taken.

Perhaps a greater awareness of the day-to-day aspects of the job would help. A more formal route for people interested in moving into teaching could be offered. I was able to spend time in my old school prior to applying for the course due to maintaining contact with some of my old teachers. However, for those that haven't done so, there may be an unwillingness or uncertainty on how to do this.

Within Design & Technology, it is my experience that we have spent a lot of time on the generic theory of teaching as opposed subject specific skills and pedagogy. I think this sours many peoples experiences and leads to them feeling anxious in the placements.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I am concerned around the rumours that the University of Edinburgh are introducing a 2-year PGDE course in place of the single year course. I cannot see how this could be of any benefit to teacher recruitment. I have mentioned this to many of my peers and not a single person has told me that they could afford to do this. In my opinion this would result in a large reduction of student teacher numbers.

ANGUS MURDOCH

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

PGDE Secondary Chemistry with Science. On current year 2016/17 end of course May 2017.

- Q2** Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.
- Aberdeenshire
- Q4** When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?
- I am a TIES student, I had already experienced a few downturns within the North Sea. On each one the question in my mind would be what would I do? From the first occasion, I realised that teaching was a potential option. Having dealt with people, especially OPITO apprentices, I found that my skills and knowledge could be transferrable and potentially appreciated.
- Q5** Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)
- Lifelong? As a mature entrant, I would expect to work until normal retirement age
- Q6** What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?
- Excellent – no issues at all
- Q7** If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
- The differences that exist between different education establishments. As a student, you expect (somehow) that schools will operate at a departmental level in a similar way (BIG MISTAKE).
- Main challenge – PAY If you think you can recruit at the current level for Probationer / early years (Fine if you walk out of university (or is it?)) for a career changer supporting themselves/family for a year and then....
- I'm lucky I've worked in the North Sea for 20+ years and saved. Now supplementing TIES income with savings – still have x2 grown up children at home.
- Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
- STEM – That's why I'm on the TIES scheme
- Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?
- For a mature entrant, the very highly intensive (time intensive) nature of the PGDE course has been challenging. I know that several TIES students have dropped out, especially within Aberdeen City. I had come across a different way of training teachers: <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21700385-great-teaching-has-long-been-seen-innate-skill-reformers-are-showing-best>
- It may not be the model we want to use but as a mature / starter it held Appeal.

TRAINEE SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 13

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards.

I am 3/4 of the way through PGDE Secondary Science and Biology

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Highland

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

FOR: Holidays, salary, guaranteed job for your first year, free tuition for PGDE students, no day is the same in teaching, it's an extremely social job, it's creative, you're not stuck in an office, you can inspire and help others, you get to talk about your subject (secondary), there are lots of jobs available, it's a respected job and it seemed like an easy and straightforward option for when I finished my undergraduate degree (unlike my friends who have had a lot of rejections from job and internship applications).

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Currently I am not sure because I haven't had enough experience yet. I do feel as though I am not pushing/challenging myself enough. I don't like to admit it but other people's opinions of me matter and when I went into teacher training after getting first class degree from University of St Andrews, I felt as though people were disappointed/surprised. Teaching has a bad reputation—some people see it as a tiring, low-paid, perhaps even embarrassing job that isn't valued as an asset anymore. This needs to change!

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

When I moved to Aberdeen to study for PGDE at University of Aberdeen I rented a flat in the city. I did not find out until well into the course that I would be placed at my Mum's home in Fort William for my first 2 placements. Then I was told about half way through the course that my final 2 placements would be 35 miles from my Mum's address. Over the course of PGDE I will have paid £1600 worth of rent for a flat in Aberdeen when I wasn't in it. Had I known in advance that I would be spending half of the course near my mum I would have reconsidered my housing situation—perhaps stayed with my cousin who lives in Aberdeen instead of getting my own flat. I am also disappointed at the lack of travel reimbursement from the uni. I have likely spent about £1000 in travel expenses (going from my home to the high school and back is a 70 miles per day journey and travelling to and from Aberdeen is a 340 mile round trip) and I am getting very little back. When I know that there are others on the course who literally walk to their school from their house in Aberdeen it feels extremely unfair.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Luckily I am only 22, do not have any children or a mortgage, and do not have to work a part-time job while on the course so I am quite flexible. However, I have friends on the course with families, jobs and/or mortgages that have been placed beyond the 1h30min travel distance, meaning they have to move to the area where their placement is. I cannot imagine how disruptive this must be to families.

When friends have been placed so far away that they have to move I get the impression that it is extremely hard to find temporary accommodation for a month that is £30 a night (this is all that the uni will pay). If this situation was made more explicit from before people chose to apply for the course then I think the drop-out rate would be lower. It is crazy to ask a mother or father of young children to move away from their home and have to pay for the accommodation as well without first making them aware that this could happen.

I was also not made aware of the placement system until I started the course. Advertising the reality of this would stop people who are likely to drop out because of such instances from dropping out half way into placement.

I think that starting student teachers off on a 16 hour timetable is too much. Why not ease us in slower? Yes the uni can say that it gives guidelines to schools on starting off with team teaching or the student helping out with groups first but my schools, and a lot of friends' schools, had students in there teaching 16 hours a week from week one with very little prior experience.

For me the 2 biggest issues have been that: placements can be so disruptive to people's lives and the workload on placement is WAY too much at the beginning. One teacher said to my uni class after placement "So, have you all cried yet?" and there was a resounding "yes". The teacher replied that this was okay because we all do that during PGDE. It is definitely not okay.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Unsure.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

See answer for qu. 7.

I would say to advertise PGDE more honestly and explicitly. Tell applicants that you could get placed so far away that you need to find temporary accommodation. Having this in the subtext of some document is not enough.

Try to allocate placements better. I.e. don't send a carless father of an 8 month old 2 hours away from his home and only offer to cover £30 a night for accommodation (this example is of my friend).

Let students know where they will be placed in advance of the course starting so that they can allocate for this (e.g. I would not have chose to rent my own flat for 10 months if I knew that for half of that I would not even be there).

Lower initial placement workload. Make it so that schools cannot make you teach more than, for example, 8 hours in your first week.

Additional comments

I found out about this questionnaire through Facebook and I think that it is great that you are harnessing social media to get the opinions of teachers/trainee teachers!

ANONYMOUS 14

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

Teacher Training, PGDE Secondary

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Fife

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I enjoyed working with young people and wanted to inspire students to achieve more than they thought they could, like one of my teachers had for me.

I worry about the behaviour of young people these days and the lack of authority and respect teachers have in education. I worry about support for teachers.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I like to hope it would be. However, I have my doubts as already I am feeling the pressure of a high work.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I have been very fortunate in both my placements where I have been in very good schools. The process was efficient enough.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The work load is too great. With changes being continuously made, teachers are struggling to keep up with all the new documentation whilst doing what is expected of them within the classroom.

The pay does not reflect the amount of work teachers do.

It is incredibly difficult for teachers to ensure equality because there simply isn't the support in place to ensure that students are fully understanding the work within the given time.

Trainees/Teachers are not fully equipped with the knowledge, understanding and/or training to sufficiently support students with additional needs. This puts a lot of pressure on the teacher who is required to include all individuals, yet they are unsure how to manage the behaviour that is presented.

Additionally, some support staff fail to have a complete knowledge regarding individuals with whom they are working with. I had a student with Down Syndrome in one of my classes and noticed one lesson that he was rocking. From my own personal experience, I knew that it could indicate that he was either happy or distressed and asked the supporting assistant. She didn't know why he was rocking and I still don't know why he rocks.

There is little to no consideration for the health and wellbeing of the trainee/teacher. With the level of stress, pressure, deadlines to meet, changes to the curriculum to keep up with and challenging situations presented by some students, trainees/teachers are pushed to their breaking points. Some teachers take numerous sick days because they are struggling to manage with the physical, mental and emotional exhaustion. Without a well-rested, motivated, happy teacher, how can you expect students to achieve their best?

With staff numbers dwindling, teachers are stretched as they are expected to cover more classes.

I personally don't think trainees/teachers have the enough support from management to manage behaviour. More could be in place and senior management should be available to support issues.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Teachers. There is too much pressure and responsibility on teachers that they are under too much stress. They go off sick, part time or leave causing issues for the rest of the department and school.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

The workload needs to be lightened.

Parents need to be more actively involved in getting their child into school and managing unwanted behaviour within it.

Trainees, teachers and support staff need better training to support students with additional support needs. Without the knowledge and the training, how can they be supported?

ANONYMOUS 15

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am reaching the end of my PGDE Design and Technology course. I have a Masters degree with distinction in Architecture.

- Q2** Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.
- Fife.
- Q4** When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?
- To teach designerly thinking to pupils and ensure that creativity in learning is a priority.
- I wanted work life balance.
- I wanted to work with young people in an environment where I could still be creative (both with my pedagogy and in what I was teaching).
- Q5** Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)
- Yes, I would like to be able to progress and have more influence over the learning experience for pupils. I can imagine I will be able to do this by taking on more responsibility within departments and eventually moving up within the school.
- Q6** What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?
- I have had fairly positive experiences however we are not told where our placements will be until a couple of weeks before. I have a one year old daughter and share a car with my partner which makes not knowing extremely difficult to prepare for. I have been in very supportive schools and have been lucky but am aware that the schools take a great deal of time out to help students on placement with very little compensation or reward other than what the student can do for them. As such, there seems to be a culture now where students are expected to earn their way by creating resources for the department. I think this is wrong and I am aware of some students that spent most of their time making finishes and joint boards for the school rather than preparing for lessons. There also seems to be some animosity that some students have had and I think again it is coming from the teachers that are taking these students feeling resentful for having them. As I say, I have been lucky but know of many who have not been so lucky.
- Q7** If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)
- There doesn't seem to be enough CDT teachers in Scotland. I think this might partly stem from the fact that those applying for PGDE technology are coming from established career backgrounds like architecture or engineering (unlike those who study English/art/maths etc).
- Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
- I would say my subject in CDT for the exact reason as above. I would also add that the students in my class feel very underprepared in terms of subject

knowledge because of the breadth of the subject and where we are coming from. Those teaching maths did maths at uni, those teaching biology, did it at uni. We have to teach, engineering science, woodwork, metalwork, practical electronics, graphic communication and design and manufacture. I studied none of these at university and took only graphic communication to higher when in school. The combination of working with wood and metal, while being creative for the design elements and technically minded for science is very difficult.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I think if you want to recruit more teachers you need to make the job itself more appealing. There is no point in spending loads of money on recruitment and putting none into the job itself. Make the job more appealing and recruitment will solve itself.

ANONYMOUS 16

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I have an MChem and PhD, and am currently completing a PGDE in secondary teaching (Chemistry) which will be finished in June.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

I have been in Edinburgh and in Midlothian.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I enjoyed teaching at university level, I wanted a stable, permanent job and the opportunity to settle somewhere. It is reasonably well paid (although the starting salary is lower than I would have received in a research job and the pay increases are slower). I felt that it was something I was good at.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I think it could be a lifelong career. I have no desire to climb up the management ladder, but I would be interested in going towards to the course development/SQA side as long as I was able to teach at the same time.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I have had no problems in the allocation process. It is a little slow (only a week before going on placement can cause some stress).

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I think that the main problem is too much interference from government. New schemes are constantly being introduced (and they are not being introduced

well) so that teachers are under pressure to stay on top of all of the changes as well as teaching their normal classes. The government wants an education system that develops skills and rounded people, however, they have also introduced new qualifications which focus on achievement. This has led to teachers being pulled in two different directions. It feels as though the government does not trust the teachers in Scotland to do their jobs, and it is also not listening to their opinions (and they seem to think they know better than the people who are in the classroom doing the job).

Another problem is the lack of integrity in the senior management teams. I did not meet the head teacher in either placement school I was in, and I only met a couple of the depute heads. The teachers did not seem to have much faith in them.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

As far as I am aware, it is Chemistry, Physics and Maths but from what I hear, it is areas of the country (Aberdeenshire/Moray/Highlands) that have the problems rather than subject areas.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

More support for teachers, better senior management.

ANONYMOUS 17

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am currently one placement [six weeks] away from completion of a Post Graduate Diploma of Education with a focus in Secondary Education.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

My first placement was within a North Lanarkshire school and my second placement was within an East Renfrewshire school where I will also be taking my third placement.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

Primarily I wanted to work with children: I was raised in a family of severely low income and was aware that without having experienced great teaching, my own chances would have been hindered. I want to give this opportunity back to children who have come from similar backgrounds to my own.

I also wanted to continue working within my chosen field of study [English Literature] and share this passion with others. Some of my most memorable experiences in school were when I was taught by someone passionate about their subject.

One of the biggest drawbacks in going into teacher training has been the financial element. It is virtually impossible to take on a part-time job during this course and that leaves a financial hole even with a student loan and bursary. During every other year as a student I have worked alongside study but as this is not possible, there has been a genuine strain.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

It is my intention that this will be a lifelong career for me: I'm passionate about giving opportunities to children. I'm a patient, caring person and I feel morally obliged to be a part of the solution instead of the problem. The only real issue I see with this plan is that the level of work required is far beyond what would happen in any other working environment: for example, it takes 30 minutes to mark one critical essay, class sizes are around 30 children, that is an additional 15 hours of work to return one piece of work back to one class. Multiple by that by two higher classes and add in marking for junior classes and that marking load quickly becomes 40 hours of additional work. This then needs to be added to the 22 hours of contact time required and the 11 hours of planning that make up a 33 period week. That's 73 hours of work in one week and on top of that, teachers are expected to partake in extra-curricular activities. For me, I am happy to put in those hours but it is clear to see that the majority of staff in schools are disenchanting and exhausted.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Illogical. It appears to be a complete lottery with very little sense. Nearly no-one on my course was placed in a school within a 20 minute public transport travel time. We were all assured that we wouldn't be expected to travel more than 90 minutes each way but I was placed in a school that was closer to two hours of travel each way [when considering wait times between buses and trains]. No-one was able to state preferences of area for their placements and this probably would have made more sense as people generally know the areas that they will be able to access easily. Thankfully, I've been lucky enough to receive a placement allocation when needed but others on my course have had to wait for placements as they have failed to be allocated one.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

From the perspective of a student teacher, many schools are wholly unwelcome environments for staff. The more stressed or tired staff members are, the less inclined they become to train someone else. On my most recent placement the person that was allocated as my mentor openly stated that they didn't want to mentor me, that they felt it was too much for their remit and that they didn't have the knowledge to help me. It is fundamental to note that teachers are not trained to be coaches or mentors: they are trained to teach children [predominantly] how to learn a specific subject. They are not trained to coach an adult into becoming the best professional they can be – many teachers do not offer constructive criticism and bullying amongst teaching

staff is rife. It is ironic that while teachers preach against abusive behaviour to their students, the staffroom is an intensely poisonous environment. This type of situation does not encourage student teachers to continue in the field.

It's also worth noting that student teachers are frequently told that getting a job will be difficult, that there are no permanent jobs going. While you are guaranteed a probationary year that is paid, this continues to feel like a year of assessment as opposed to job security.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

My subject specialism is English and while there are many English teachers, a significant proportion of our initial training group has dropped out. The marking load seems far more drastic in this specific subject than in others as much of the work is subjective.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I think it would be helpful if students were given trained coaches within schools during their placement; this would take some pressure off of staff and give students a fairer chance at success. It would be worthwhile if the government reduced teacher contact time according to their subject specific marking load: this would mean less exhausted teachers that are more enthusiastic in the classroom, it would open up more teaching jobs so teachers would feel secure and it would reduce teacher strain. It would also help if the teacher training programme was more about learning and having positive failures as opposed to the rather drastic notion that if you make any mistake, you are destroying a child's education. It would aid retention if bullying was reduced in the workplace and teacher, alongside student teachers, felt open to challenge abusive behaviour.

Additional comments

It would be beneficial if student teachers were supported financially. This is exceptionally important when it comes to travel expenses which currently cannot be claimed back until the placement is complete – for most this means consistent periods of debt.

ANONYMOUS 18

I have possessed a huge desire to retrain as a teacher for a few years now as a mature student . However, a few things have prevented me from doing so.

Firstly having to pay fees to do a second degree as I already have a degree in Marketing and Communication. Secondly, the fact that even though I have an existing degree and work experience in business etc , I still have to upgrade my existing maths qualifications as I got below the criteria level at secondary school, even though I don't want to teach maths. Lastly, why are there no conversion courses available for existing graduates like there is for Psychology for instance? Something like this would make the transition much easier/straightforward.

I am still very keen to teach at Secondary level possibly Geography or History but the thought of the above is a huge risk for my family and me at the age of 38. The degree available at Stirling University is very interesting but to take 5 years(Inc Maths course at local college) out of my life at this stage is quite a thought and financial undertaking. If there was a shorter route with less obstacles then I would have no hesitation to go ahead and start the process. I understand there has to be a certain entry standard and criteria. However, I believe with my previous education, work experience and life experience, I have a huge amount to offer the profession and future pupils. Nevertheless in today's financial environment and job market , I am struggling to convince myself it is a viable option, which is really disappointing.

I hope this information is helpful for your study and can help the assessment of the current situation.

ANONYMOUS 19

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I have an undergraduate degree in Geography and am nearing the end of my PGDE year to become a geography teacher.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

East Lothian and Edinburgh

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

For

Working with young people

Passion for Geography

Enjoyed going to school myself and want to try to encourage young people to enjoy it too!

Want to be a part of trying to close the attainment gap

Against

Admin time

Prep time for classes

Uncertainly over number of available jobs

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Yes, I'd like to be a classroom teacher for a while and then perhaps move into a guidance role.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Good, I've had a broad mix of schools.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Temporary contracts mean that a lot of teaching jobs are unstable and this might prevent people from wanting to go into teaching. I think retaining teachers very much depends on the senior management team at the school and the support given to teachers.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I don't know.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

More permanent job contracts.

TRAINEE TEACHERS- SCHOOL UNKNOWN NAMED SUBMISSIONS

DANIEL CALDER

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

Applying for PGDE course, expecting to start in September.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

Rewarding career.

My past experience in classrooms and tutoring.

Job security.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Probably. I hope to reach a senior position in the school system though. I will probably also look outward to council and government positions when I have more experience.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

From my minimal work in schools so far staff complain about the poor relationship between teaching staff and management, which is motivating a significant number to look elsewhere for work.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I don't know.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

As a postgraduate I would have liked to see a better route into teaching for me. Training on the job would have been much more favourable, and perfectly workable considering my experience. Most PhD students will have significant teaching experience and would be a valuable source of future leaders in teaching.

HANNAH CUNNINGHAM

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am coming towards the end of a PGDE.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

I have undertaken placements in Angus council.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I knew that I would be able to study at a university local to where I live but that I would have the opportunity to move further afield in my probationary year. I knew that my degree would be used on a daily basis, and that there would be plenty of jobs available once I had completed my probationary year. I was also aware of the government's L1+2 initiative, which I felt would be hugely beneficial in the uptake of modern foreign languages in the senior stages.

I was, however, aware of the difficulties that many teachers were facing with regards to workload and stress and this has become clearer to me as I have progressed through the course.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I feel that teaching could be a lifelong career, as I feel as though it could be something that I enjoy for years to come and that I would like to progress in. However, with the current changing of many schools to faculties, I feel there is less of an opportunity for myself (a languages teacher) to progress, when (in my experience) modern languages are often merged with English to form faculties.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Although I have been placed relatively close to home, I feel as though I would have preferred the process to have been quicker. For both placements, we had to wait until two weeks before we started at our new school before we knew where we were going. This left fairly little time to contact the school and organise visits. It was also fairly stressful as I was unsure as to whether I would be put too far away to travel and would therefore need to find alternative accommodation, which would be difficult in the short amount of time available.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

For many students, the workload paired with traveling that they must do can be too much. I travel 40 minutes to my current placement school (I know of people who are traveling double that) and feel as though I have no time to relax as I am required to prepare or adapt lessons every evening and every weekend.

I am also highly aware of the amount of pressure that teachers are under to meet deadlines for paperwork, ie reports, completing quality indicator self-evaluations, to name but a few, as well as ensuring that their lessons are well prepared and that learners can be well supported. I feel that, although the paperwork being completed is important, teachers are spending more time on it than they are on teaching which can lead to lessons that are not as engaging as they could be. This is not what I expected teaching to be, I wanted to work with young people for the majority of my working day, not complete paperwork!

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I am aware of a shortage of PSAs to support learners in the classroom. I have taught some classes that I feel would benefit from extra support, however it is not possible as the PSAs are required elsewhere in the school.

I am also aware that there is quite a shortage of languages teachers. I have heard from teachers that I am working and also from fellow students with that they worry about the future of languages in schools.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I think early on, placements play a huge role in retention as I know of some students who have decided to quit because they have been placed too far away from home and are unable to travel/stay away. If there was a guarantee that we would be placed close enough to home then that would make placements run much smoother.

I also believe that there is a need for some stability in education. I understand that changes are occurring in order to improve the curriculum, however it feels as though some changes are being made without much thought of the consequences.

HALLA PRICE

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am in my final year of the BEd studying at Moray House University.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Edinburgh City

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

The key factors for choosing this career path started initially with my love of working with younger children, I taught first and second year classes whilst in my senior years of secondary school alongside coaching netball in the local primary schools and helping out with reading groups in the neighbouring primary. From this I developed a love of helping and inspiring young people. However, the factors I had to debate against were firstly the salary, teachers are not paid enough which is a demotivating factor – particularly for more academic people who have promising career prospects with opportunities for promotions/pay rises etc. Teaching does not have this and I do not believe that until they are paid more you will ever get the best candidates for teaching to even properly consider training as a teacher. Secondly the stigma of teachers being “not very academic” was a demotivating factor which I have spent the past four years trying to argue against (however for many students on the same course as me this is a fairly true stigmatisation).

As a student with three As and Advanced Higher I wondered if the BEd course at Moray House would be stimulating and interesting enough. I cannot lie and say that it has been at all stimulating. With the exception of this fourth and final year in which the options modules challenged my professional and academic thinking, I have spent the first three years making clay pots, puppets, burning candles, creating tessellating patterns and being told repeatedly that “reading is good for children’s creativity”. Without my enjoyment of the teaching placements and determination to reach the end goal of becoming a qualified teacher I would have dropped out in sheer dismay at how uninspiring the course was.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

As much as I love being in the classroom, I do not believe teaching will be a lifelong career for me. I hope to work my way up to be part of the school management team which will prolong my time spent in education but the lack of pay and promotion opportunities will mean I eventually have to leave to find a better paid and more appreciated job.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I have whole heartedly loved every minute of my teaching placements, the opportunity to be in a position where you can positively impact 30 children’s lives every day is an enviable one. Through the placements I have learnt something new every single day and challenged myself to create more inspiring, interesting and motivating learning experiences for pupils each time I stand in front of a class.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Through my discussions with staff and other students there is a general sense of being undervalued. The saying "He who can, does; he who cannot, teaches." gives a sense of how teachers think they are viewed by the government and public. Pressure to meet standards forces teachers to ignore pupils' needs for the sake of meeting a specification set by external bodies and this is disheartening. Also getting rid of valuable classroom assistants means that teachers have less time to spend with pupils and on creating valuable learning experiences for pupils.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I do not have requisite experience or knowledge to answer this specific question, sorry.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Pay teachers more, value teachers more, start trying more of a Teach First approach whereby you seek "the brightest graduates", "the most creative, enthusiastic young people" and promote teaching as a valued, respected profession. This will draw in more intelligent, innovative people who can bring new life to the teaching profession. Once we have more enthusiastic creative teachers we can start looking at trying to close the attainment gap but until you fix the issues with teaching being a lower rate profession you cannot hope to fix any of the issues within education itself.

EVE STOCKLEY

Unst – Shetland

I noticed that you wanted some feedback on teacher recruitment. I do not know if this is relevant but myself and a number of other teachers I know have moved from England to Scotland as fully qualified teachers to have to start again from scratch due to the GTCS wanting completion of a probation period.

I have been teaching for over 12 years, was at the top of the pay scale in England with teaching and learning responsibilities and then have gone back to being a probationary teacher for the past two years, I have been told this was because most of my teaching experience was in a special school (even though we work to same standards as other schools).

Other teachers I know have been teaching mainstream and still have to do this probationary period. Some of my teaching friends have given up completely trying to get full registration and found other work. I think this could be one factor that is not helping the recruitment of teachers in Scotland as some teachers have said to me they feel insulted to have to go back to being a probationer after being fully qualified for so long.

TRAINEE TEACHERS- SCHOOL UNKNOWN ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 20

Many trainee teachers with children find it difficult to attend placements that are a considerable distance for them to travel too, there seems to be no preference/consideration given to parents who wish to become teachers and would be a great asset to the teaching profession as many of them have already worked within schools as assistants.

My children are both in GME multi-composite classes and since the class sizes have been increased from 16 per class to 24 I have seen teachers under considerably more pressure and stress, I feel teaching in a different language to such different age ranges should be considered when deciding class sizes.

I have first-hand experience of teachers who feel they cannot teach successfully under these circumstances.

When my school had a teacher on maternity leave they could not get a GME teacher to cover so the children had an EME teacher for 6 months which was completely unacceptable.

I feel living in the Highlands, teachers should be offered relocation packages to encourage them to move from the central belt to more remote areas where accommodation may be more difficult to find.

I also feel strongly that GME teachers should be on a higher pay scale than EME teachers as they have a more complex teaching practice to follow, with many children attending class who have very little Gaelic when they begin in P1 and many GME classes are multi-composite which has added pressure to the class structure, many GME teachers have to source their own teaching materials or adapt EME teaching materials, which takes extra time out of their teaching day.

SCHOOL UNKNOWN ANONYMOUS SUBMISSIONS

ANONYMOUS 21

What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

They treat student teachers like dirt at universities on placement

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

As a former student teacher I can say my university never supported me, the schools set me up to fail and they were seeking respect constantly but all the while disrespecting students to their faces. I was not treated like an adult but spoken down to, demeaned and stressed to the point I am now on medication for depression and stress.

How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?

Not very.

What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

The treatment, pay and parents.

What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

More money, less dealing with others nonsense.

ANONYMOUS 22

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

PGDE entering final placement period.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

South Ayrshire

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

For –1. Believing I can bring skills that can make a difference to the education of children. 2. Career prospects (this is a second career for me and I wanted work that would be interesting and fulfilling for the next 20 years until I retire)

Against – Financial. Having to pay to train for what is an essential job in the workforce. Future Salary is not very great compared to previous career.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I intend it to be, but this is a second career for me. I left my original career to have family over 10 years ago. I have about 20 years left before retirement. I intend to continue in education, although I am not sure it will always as a teacher. I may be interested in Headship or perhaps HMIE or Education Advisor roles as time goes on.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

University provided placement as expected in timescale advised by them. Placements have been local to me. Schools, however, are not very organised for the placement student pre-placement visit and appear unaware of the date we are advised to arrange visit for.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I have had 3 placement schools. In 2 of the 3 schools I would say that the management teams are not interested in the student or what you are doing in

their school. As someone who used to be a general manager with teams of up to 60 staff, I find it quite strange that the management team have no interest in who is in their school and what skills they can bring. It is also very unwelcoming. I'm not sure I would wish to return to one of my placement schools as a probationer.

In terms of workload, teaching is exhausting in the primary school as you are continually planning new lessons, planning for differentiation, and dealing with children who have special needs for learning. I have worked with lovely classes and teachers; however, it is very stressful dealing with behavioural issues constantly and lessons and learning can be disrupted for the whole class. You must be very flexible and be able to change tactics if you have a disrupted class.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

Primary Teachers have a huge workload that is not really made clear before you start your studies. At the moment, it feels like everything must be delivered by the primary teacher and there are not enough hours in the teaching day to do this. Often we have to take the role of PE specialist or music specialist and to deliver these areas well takes a huge amount of planning. This is on top of numeracy, literacy and all the other areas of the curriculum. I am worried I will have too many hats to wear in my probationer year if I end up in a school that has no PE or Music specialist. Schools tend to make use of the PE or music specialist lesson for Non-Contact time for the class teacher, but if these roles do not exist, how does the teacher get non-contact time?

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Financially the rewards for teaching do not seem to be commensurate with the levels of responsibility that comes with the job. Teachers must prepare the young workforce of the future, yet they are paid quite poorly in comparison to other professions and work incredibly long hours. The number of unpaid extra duties that teachers take on in the school should be investigated and recognised. Primary teachers are responsible for delivering 8 subject areas of the curriculum and this takes a large amount of time to prepare each lesson. Even with stage partners to share the workload there is still a huge amount of time spent on preparation and non-contact time does not allow for teachers to carry out all the requirements of the job in the school working day. Most work on into the evenings and weekends preparing work, assessments and reports. This is not good for a teacher's health and wellbeing.

The financial package and a way to support teacher's extra workload out with the weekly working day must be found.

Additional comments

Class sizes have also increased and the number of children with IEPs is on the increase, all this takes careful managing and puts more time pressure on the teacher. I have worked in two placements with classroom assistants - one

placement had a permanent assistant for one child who had behavioural and learning issues. This was a help in the class, however that assistant was not a teacher and had not been trained as one, so whilst it is an extra pair of hands in the class they do not have the knowledge to teach subject areas and time pressures don't allow for sitting down with that assistant and planning lessons with them in any detail. In another placement, there was a timetabled pupil support teacher for maths lessons, however this teacher was often called to cover supply in other classes during scheduled lessons, this meant that any lesson plans I had made that included her to assistance with teaching, with the children she was supporting were null and void and I had to change the teaching plan as I went along. I also found that children who were being taken out for support in literacy were often taken at critical times in a lesson you were taking. This lack of planning really impacts on the child's learning. It would make much more sense for pupils to go out for literacy support in literacy lessons and maths support in maths lessons!

Student teachers are there to learn how to teach, however often you are asked to cover just as a supply teacher would, but you're not getting paid for it and probably expected to deliver a better job because you have planned the sequence of lessons and will have to assess the learning and next steps after the lesson.

Being welcomed into a team would go a long way in making student teachers feel that they were entering a profession. The management team really do need to have some sort of training in this aspect of the role. There is usually one member of the management team who has the role of coordinating the placement students, but they do not make contact even during the placement period. This may of course be due to time pressures but it is incredibly unprofessional.

ANONYMOUS 23

What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

There is a significant lack of respect for the teaching profession. This comes from the Government, media and society in general. The constant , "we can do better" /" do more and better with less"/ " good is the enemy of great" mantra suggests nothing is ever good enough and has a really negative impact on morale as well.

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

Some people go into teaching post grad especially as a last resort choice. This never turns out well. Those who go in for the right reasons are still at risk of losing heart due to the low morale, workload issues and constant deficit model approach of inspectors, quality assurance procedures and the constant criticism of standards. There is no balance! No consideration is given to the impact of poor staffing, appalling budget cuts, lack of cover, lack of quality CPD, parental apathy (or aggression) student apathy, nor the enormous impact if inclusion on the teacher! There is never any engagement with teachers at the chalk face (this is the first) to ask about their job or how Govt can improve things. Decisions are taken on high and teachers feel overburdened. Every conversation or presentation from Inspectors is about

"raised expectations" - think about what that does to people and their confidence.

How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?

Not effective. There is no cover and senior management are expected to not only cover classes (and still keep on top of the 'journey to excellence!!') But they are also required by local authority and unions in particular to put their own job on hold to cover classes to give class teachers non-contact time away from children. The role of managers and leaders is becoming untenable and is not a role that attracts people. The pay is appalling, conditions are impossible and you are expected to be everything to everyone.

What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

Stress and anxiety, job satisfaction, life work balance, demands that are unrealistic, lack of opportunity, very low morale.

What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

Pay, remit, responsibility, support, opportunity, expectations, work life balance, morale, job satisfaction. The job is very unattractive and the salary difference between DHT and HT is a huge stumbling block. HTs who should be 'leaders of learning' are either covering classes, handling issues linked to behaviour or inclusion (Girfec- paperwork nightmare!) or dealing with school staffing issues....and building issues, grounds issues. Repairs, maintenance...but they are not measured or given any consideration of how time consuming this all is and how it takes time away from core business! It just is expected- then you are hammered for not being all singing all dancing or having everything in place or for not being innovative, creative, sector leading or achieving this badge or that award or that certificate of recognition.

On top of all that there is the consultation agenda. We can't do a thing without consulting every single parent, interested party, stakeholder....oh and gathering evidence of doing so...writing it up as an action plan...and evidencing implementation...outcomes and impact and reporting on it!!!

Initiative burnout is another issue.

Lack of resources is an issue- schools without up to date resources, no budget and no local authority strategy (eg ICT) Upgrading resources and schools via fundraising is disgraceful but it is what we do on top of everything else we do.

I hope this tiny contribution is helpful and I truly hope some good comes from this.

I have recently sent my detailed response on the difficulties of recruiting teachers and want to add another area of concern.

I have had a young girl who has a degree and several years shop management experience volunteer in my school on her holidays and days off

as she has applied for primary teaching. She is a fabulous candidate for the classroom however she has just been told that due to "limited intake numbers" she has not got a place this year. She is gutted. I find it difficult to understand how in a time of crisis in recruitment and severe teacher shortages colleges have limited intakes and applicants are being turned away. Especially concerning is turning away applicants with life experiences who can bring a lot to the role and people who are actually showing commitment by changing their career to take up teaching.

I trust you can include this as a big concern on my behalf.

ANONYMOUS 24

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

PDGE will qualify in June 2017.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Aberdeenshire Council

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

It was the right time in my life, i.e. I have worked and now have a family. Looking to go back to employment and after volunteering in a school for a few years decided to get paid for it.

Looked to be compatible with family life, although now that I am deeply immersed in it I realise that it actually eats into family life because there is so much planning and prep required at home.

Obviously have not chosen it for the financial rewards as compared with what I could be paid it is a poorly paid profession. I have a Science PhD and have worked for large multinational companies such as Mars. Instead I have chosen it as a career whereby I can have a positive impact on the lives of others.

It is a job that I can take with me, so for instance if someone else in the family gets a job relocation, I should be able to find employment without too much stress.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I hope it will be lifelong, but it will depend upon how "professional" the career remains. If it becomes a job wherein one is just turning the handle on a curriculum, following a set process and churning out what the state wants....much like a factory, then I will most likely leave.

I want to be in a profession where I can exercise my professional judgement to encourage individuals to explore the wonderful world around them and

manage themselves so that they can live their life to the full in a way that is productive for them.

Also, I will be taking into account the financial implications of his career choice. If my pay deviates significantly from my life plan, then I will reconsider and choose an alternative direction. Having good qualifications to my name enables me to take stock of my life and redirect. It is this confidence that has facilitated my entry into the profession in the first instance.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Stressful, because I have a family with children at primary school. Obviously I needed to consider the impact of my travelling long distances in addition to being at school for a full working day, and working late into the night. Luckily I was placed within an hour's drive of where I live. However it still had significant childcare costs and inherent stresses.

I think it would be fairer to split large LEAs such as Aberdeenshire into North and South, so that there is an ability to match applicants within appropriate distances.

I also felt that the process was very tight in terms of dates...i.e. we were only told where we were to be placed a few days before the actual placement started, which is insufficient notice when you have to organise childcare.

The GTS experience for allocation of probation places is even more stressful as we have had to select 5 regions in which we could be placed. When you live in Aberdeenshire, your 5 adjacent regions are enormous. This doesn't compare fairly with a student studying and living in Glasgow for example. There is also no ability to cite circumstances that may prevent you relocating far from home. In my situation, with a young family, if I get placed beyond what I consider to be commutable (>1 hr), then I will walk away!

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Staff that I spoke to that were considering or actually leaving the profession talked about the lack of support in the classroom as the main reason for leaving. What they meant by that was the difficulty of coping with inclusion of disruptive pupils that prevent the teaching of the majority of the class. Some pupils are so mismatched with the peers in their class that they don't have access to the learning, yet can't be easily left to get on with a suitable task whilst the rest of the class receive direction because they are incapable of independence. This is so disruptive and exhausting that many teachers I have spoken to say they worry about the rest of the pupils and just feel that the job is becoming unmanageable. When I started in my placement, I just let this wash over me, full of my own naïve enthusiasm. However, after a few placements I am coming to the conclusion that inclusion, whilst aspirational, is not resourced well enough, so is actually having a negative impact in the majority.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I don't have the information to answer this.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I see that the universities are not struggling to recruit students for their courses, the problem is at the schools. Within the LEA there is a willingness to do the best within the schools, however, staff I have spoken to talk of initiative cycles that come and go, bandwagons jumped on etc, yet little evidence that learning theories are embedded deep within the latest fad. Staffroom conversations have centred on criticism of the purchasing of resources for schemes that were reported to have had impact in one region, only to find that the original region are no longer using the scheme.

The teachers often seem to talk about the disconnect between the LEA and Education Scotland, e.g. the benchmarks differ to the LEA guidance. I am becoming aware of a them and us culture.

I haven't investigated the makeup of the LEA committees that select the schemes that we have to use with schools. When I do get the time I will be asking the question...how many have recent classroom experience? Possibly that is the purpose of this questionnaire...to get workforce comment? Perhaps it would be pertinent to ensure that panels that have LEA-wide purchasing power have positions on them that are filled by teachers on-secondment so that a current perspective is achieved.

I have also experienced a disconnected workforce within school. The kitchen staff, cleaners, PSAs and Management are all part of separate aspects of school life and there isn't too much overlap. Because of that I feel that it is more hierarchical than it needs to be. The central focus should be the welfare of the pupils, and we all have a role in that. Thus all jobs that interact in that process should come together and support each other to do the best job they can. If I was managing the system I would get an evaluation of the impact of the various players in the team, and look at strengthening the bonds between them. In a football team analogy, the person that is responsible for ordering the football shirts should talk to the players that will be wearing them to see if they are appropriate.

Additional comments

I also think that recruitment drives with attractive packages such that I have seen in England, just further separate the new recruits from the existing workforce. Recruitment should emphasise the professionalism of teaching in the same way as the medical profession do. Reward for training accrued and demonstrated effectiveness in the classroom is a better way to recruit. If there was an obvious progression through the profession, not to leadership, but actual classroom-based recognition, then people might be more inspired to upskill within the profession, and help recruit externally.

ANONYMOUS 25

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am nearly completed third year of the MA (Hons) Education degree.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Dundee City Council

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

To be honest, I didn't think very much about it, I wanted to be a teacher from a very young age and just sort of went for it when the time came. I did not consider any other career path.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I believe it could, and it will be as far as I am concerned, however I do not plan to be a primary teacher for my whole career. I have my heart set on going into Support for Learning in the secondary sector. I know many others in a similar boat who plan on using their primary teaching undergrad to go into other things.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I have never really thought about this as it is just allocated by the university.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I think that the workload is very high. I think that we are sometimes expected to do more than is almost possible! As I learn more about my future career, I hear that I will be expected to do some kind of research project in my probation year - this seems like an added burden, and I think there are a lot of things like this.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I don't know and would not like to speculate.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I think that it is an issue which will always be faced, as there are opportunities to use one's education degree to do many other things! Perhaps it could be made easier to leave and re-enter teaching so that retention may remain the same, but teachers could return to the sector having gone away and done something else?

ANONYMOUS 26

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am nearing the end of year 3 of the MA Education programme.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Dundee and Angus Council areas.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

For:

- Engagement with pupils
- Ability to make a difference in the lives of young people
- Enjoying being involved in a social profession
- The opportunities and possibilities that becoming a fully qualified teacher can offer in regards to progression within the profession and in regards to specialising within specific areas of interest such as supporting children with ASN needs or within the Expressive Arts area of the curriculum
- The financial security that the job can offer regarding the current need/requirement for teacher

Against:

- Workload
- Stress levels
- Pressure from parents and the governmental policies
- The unsure/ ever changing nature of the profession as a result of so many changing views and policies

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

No. This is due to my perceived inability to continue to juggle the current workload and stress levels that are placed on teachers. Although I can see myself taking on roles in the future which are still related to the teaching profession I do not see myself staying as a classroom based teacher for a prolonged period of time.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

The experience of being allocated a work placement has been mostly positive. However, whilst we were asked to engage with a form outlining where we lived and whether or not we had access to car transport, this seems to have been completely ignored when it came to the allocation process. I live in the same flat block as other student teachers on my course. Many of them have access to a car and have been placed only 15 minutes away. I do not have access to this and have been placed over an hour and a half away using public transport. This is something which I feel must be addressed in relation to feasible time to juggle the completion of the student teaching workload.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

One of the main challenges in recruiting teachers is the work load and pressure placed on even student teachers during the placement process. We are to undertake not only the teacher workload but our UNI workload too leading to unhealthy and completely unmanageable and unrealistic workload expectations being placed on us. This is instilling negative working habits from the beginning of the profession and is unsustainable even over a short placement period of time, never mind for the rest of your career within the teaching profession. This has pushed many of us to make the decision now, prior to having even completed our training that we are not going to stay in the profession for long or stay in the profession within this country for very long, seeking a healthier work life balance from other professions under the child-based work umbrella or from other countries where they have a healthier work balance.

Another huge challenge comes from the pressures placed on teachers from society perceptions and values and governmental biases as a result of this. In a recent paper I have been researching the affects that the need for the government to answer to society and its promised democracy of and mandates has upon the pressures placed upon the teaching profession. Whilst I am in full support of the current governmental system it highlights a profound need for a change in attitude towards education and teachers from society and the government as a whole moving towards placing true trust and autonomy in teachers as opposed to bombarding them with policy after policy which is to me maintained and upheld. It is my belief that true teacher retention would come from feeling valued as a professional and feeling that we are knowledgeable and supported and valued by the government and society and parents as opposed to being constantly criticised in decisions made. Trust is key.

Another issue in recruiting teachers comes from the courses that are offered by universities. Although we are studying for an education degree, we feel that we are being taught how to write essays and read books, not how to actually teach and become better professionals within the classroom. If retention rates are to improve a change in the training of potential teachers needs to improve to teach how to cope with challenges in the classroom and provide more practice of this, not giving as big a scope to the theory base (although there is importance in understanding the basics of this). In short, we need to be taught how to be teachers and how to teach, not shown the theory and expected to become teachers from this.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

In my opinion primary teaching and primary teachers face the greatest challenge.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

As mentioned above, the following may improve this:

- A distinct rise in pay rates for teachers to honestly reflect the long hours and additional time that is put in by teachers to ensure that the learning of children is improved and to the high level that the current curriculum demands. This would also help in improving the value placed on the profession of the profession and other's views of the profession.
- A societal and governmental change of views of teaching as a profession and providing a true and honest teacher autonomy as opposed to the current 'perceived' autonomy provided by the government. This would push society to value teachers, the well-informed choices that they make and their views in relation to education, improving the teacher retention rate.
- A move in the initial teacher education courses to more truly reflect the skills and abilities required by teachers within the classroom as opposed to a high theory low practice rate currently offered within the MA programmes. It is common belief amongst students and teachers whom I have been in contact with throughout my professional placements that true teacher education occurs whilst on practice, the more of this we are able to get the better prepared we will be to support children when we come into the profession.
- A change in the workload required of teachers and student teachers in particular, making the profession appear as a sustainable and enjoyable life-long career as opposed to a means to an end until you find something more manageable with a better work-life balance to ensure your own mental health and wellbeing. We cannot fully support children if we are not meeting our own basic needs first and foremost. We must be in a strong position in order to fully support the children and the current working hours and working life placed on teachers and student teachers does not support this.
- There is also a need for those involved in education within the government to have worked within education as teachers themselves. You do not truly know unless you have been there as a teaching professional yourself!

Additional comments

I am aware that the issues I have mentioned come up over and over again in relation to teacher retention and student teacher retention. I believe that this is because the government is not truly meeting the voice of the teachers, it is meeting the needs of its mandate and financial gains. Please listen to the comments that are being presented by teachers and work with us to make these changes for the better or else I feel we are going to be stuck in a never-ending circle within the education profession. Attitude changes must come from high up to trickle down effectively and truly make a difference and what is required is a monumental change in attitudes and beliefs of society and the government.

ANONYMOUS 27

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

3rd year student undertaking the MA Hons in education at Dundee University.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Fife

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I was working as an early years officer in Fife and the key factor in deciding to undertake teacher training was mainly so that I had more of a voice in decisions being made. I am passionate about the early years and the impact quality education can have on a child's future. I had many experiences where early years officers were treated as not as worthy as teachers and that our opinions did not matter as much as teachers because we did not have a degree. Another key factor is that I know how important the formative years can be and I felt that if I was teaching in early primary I could make an impact on the lives of children. This does not take away from the impact that I made whilst working as an early years officer as I strongly believe that nursery is a crucial stage and I have had the privilege of working with many talented, inspiring and dedicated early years workers. I also struggled with the concept of the heavy workload and paperwork involved in primary teaching and am of the opinion that a substantial amount could easily be removed to the benefit of teachers and learners. Another negative going into teaching for me would be the misinterpretation of CfE and differing implementation across schools, which is also something I believe could be easily resolved if it were not for the hang ups of "coming out on top".

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I believe so, however this will depend on the school I go to and how current developments within education pan out.

Either way I will always be involved in teaching whether that be at primary Level where I know there is a shortage or back in nursery as an EYO.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I have had good and not so good experiences, having come from the background of nursery I was comfortable working holistically within the early levels but was dismayed at the lack of cohesion in teaching in one placement. Lessons were almost stand alone and no interdisciplinary learning was taking place. Planning was barely there and despite my love of responsive planning, the planning that I witnessed (or lack thereof) did not show progression in a cohesive way it jumped from one topic to another without clear links. The lack of ICT, RME and outdoor learning was evident in both placements thus far. Poor use of NCCT and children becoming disengaged were consistent factors throughout.

The process of being allocated a school in terms of distance and suitability was fine. Although turning up to a placement where the class teacher doesn't know you are coming is a bit disappointing. This was not the fault of the

university but rather a lack of communication between head teacher and class teacher.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

The challenges that face student teachers in my opinion is meeting the university criteria for what is required within the teaching folder. For example, policies from the school are required but when the school does not supply the students with the policies there is no other way to obtain them, this has happened to me on one occasion whereby I was in week 4 of placement with a formative visit due from my tutor and I still had not received any school policies. The amount of paper work required by university to “evidence engagement” is unrealistic and could easily be obtained through a conversation with class teacher and student. This would identify if the student has in fact engaged. I also feel the essays that are required to be written during placement and indeed throughout the course are ambiguous at best and are entirely open to interpretation by your marker. The teaching profession should be focussing on the results of teaching practice and not on academic writing. The cut in teaching hours at university have also had an impact on students moral in terms of readiness for placement. At Dundee there are teaching placements in 1st and 3rd year and I strongly feel that there should be a teaching placement in 2nd year. There is too much of a gap between these placements for students to feel confident. I also feel that the problem with retaining teachers lies in the fact that teachers have a huge workload and are under pressures to close the attainment gap but this is impossible when there is a lack of support in the classroom. With more and more children being identified with an additional support need there needs to be the support staff to support these children. Teachers are suffering stress and undue pressures and this could be alleviated with a much more cohesive and holistic approach to teaching and learning. Clear guidelines on CfE, more support staff and smaller class sizes would all help teacher retention.

I also feel that there could be far more emphasis on research and current developments in education at ITE stage. Perhaps developing a degree with a specialism attached would attract more people. I would have preferred to have undertaken a degree with a specialism in ASN as this is an area of deep interest for me personally and would benefit me in my professional development. I also feel that weight should be given to applicants who have relevant background experience. I certainly have felt that in the last three years I have not learnt anything that would support me as a teacher, I do recognise that this is because I have worked in nurseries prior to undertaking this degree. This particular degree attracts a number of school leavers and I remember sitting in a psychology lecture where the lecturer was telling us that the brain isn't fully developed until age 21, most of the students were under that age! Also research shows that actually the brain never stops developing and changing so perhaps a slightly moot point.

Unfortunately I also know that the problems do not lie with just education but in terms of getting support external agencies ie speech and language or

educational psychology etc are also under pressure so this does have a knock on effect.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I believe there is a lack of primary teachers and most certainly a lack of support staff, with or without teaching degrees. I believe both recruitment and retention are both issues.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

I do not believe that the recruitment is necessarily the biggest issue. I do however feel that retention is.

We are fortunate that in Scotland, your teaching degree can be taken worldwide once you qualify and quite frankly there are better opportunities abroad than there are in Scotland.

The teaching profession needs to be recognised and valued by all stakeholders and this is not an easy task.

Offering a shorter and targeted degree options taking account of prior experiences would help.

I suggest that the government looks towards asking the “people on the ground” what needs to be done.

Happy workforce = happy children = willingness and ability to shine for all.

Closing the attainment gap can happen if the right measures are taken. Support the teachers in their classrooms with strong leadership and support staff on a regular basis. This would inevitably lead to a much less stressed workforce which would lead to a much more productive workforce whereby the real beneficiaries are the children.

After all is this not what we are striving towards?

Additional comments

I have to admit that I was sceptical with the implementation of CfE in the beginning but quickly came to realise that in essence it has the potential to be an amazing curriculum. The problem lies with the interpretation of the many experiences and outcomes. Whilst the newest benchmarks seek to clarify these they can and will be open to interpretation. The curriculum should be taught in such a way that is relevant and contextualised for each child (principles for curricular design) and I am certain that a child in inner city Glasgow’s needs will differ significantly from the needs of a child in a small rural school.

This is where I disagree with a standardised test because the whole curriculum is not designed to be “tested”. How can we lump together children and issue a standard test when it goes against the grain of the curriculum?

There is a lot of wasted time at university and I strongly feel that the degree could be restructured to be more of an “apprenticeship” model. That is to say

that perhaps having Monday in university for theoretical lectures then perhaps three days in a school placement, then back to university on a Friday to reflect and plan. This is a very brief and over simplistic idea which I would be happy to discuss in more detail and give reasons as to why I feel this would work, I also think it would help to identify earlier those that choose to drop out of the course.

Finally, the 4 year degree is long winded and could quite easily be cut to half that time in terms of timetabled inputs and valuable learning.

ANONYMOUS 28

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

4th year bED student

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Edinburgh council

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

To change pupils lives, make a difference

To teach children (in schools I feel as though it is now 80% behaviour management, 20% teaching)

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

No, too high a work load, stress put on by parents, lack of respect from pupils, parents and government, not enough pay for the amount of work expected to do

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Can be very last minute but mostly positive

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

Pay

Lack of mental health support – highly stressful job that is not recognised by the government

I went to South Korea to teach there and it was such a respected profession and the pay was great, less workload. I completely understand why teachers are looking elsewhere to work and I haven't even graduated yet

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Reduce workload

University entry grades are too high, leaves a lot of great teachers unable to become a teacher

Reduce class sizes!

More ASN support

Additional comments

It makes me sad that I have not even graduated yet but after placements have seen how the workload of being a teacher can have a terrible effect on teachers. The lack of respect from pupils and parents is astonishing. We are expected to be experts in a huge range of needs when some children simply should not be in a main stream school and there is barely anything we can do especially if parents are not on board. We have 32 other children to attend to, if one child has ASN and there is no additional support how can all the other kids get a decent education? I have seen classes that are impossible to manage due to the vast range and amount of ASN. It is not fair on teachers.

ANONYMOUS 29

I appreciate that this may not be entirely relevant to the question you are asking or information you are seeking, but I feel it's a point worth making.

I am 45 years old, left school at 16 to attend what was University of Paisley, obtained a BSc (Hons) in Technology & Management. I then worked for a large multinational, in various roles within Engineering and Purchasing

For the past 15 years, I have built businesses in various sectors and enjoyed reasonable success.

I would like to give it all up and retrain as a teacher.

But I can't. Why? Despite all my accomplishments, when I was a mere 15 yrs old, I only achieved only a 'D' grade in Higher English.

No ifs, no buts, I'm told. No Higher English, no access to Teacher Training!

This is hardly an example of 'growth mindset' in operation, is it?

I have presented to senior management of large multinationals, presented sales pitches to companies to win contacts, dealt with suppliers at all levels when I worked as a 'Procurement Specialist'.

But this is not enough! I have vast experience of industry and entrepreneurship - exactly the skills and qualities that should be passed on to our young people.

But 30 year ago, I failed my Higher English.

ANONYMOUS 30

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I have just started on a part-time PGDE course (Learn to Teach 2) at Dundee University, funded by my employer Angus Council.

- Q2** Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Due to the course being funded by Angus Council I will be undertaking placements within the Angus Council area and will be obliged to continue in Angus for a minimum of 3 years including probationary year.

- Q4** When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

I originally left university in 2002 intending to go on to do secondary teaching, however I did not get on to the course and got a job instead. A few months later I was then offered a place on the course to start almost immediately but declined due to changes in circumstances. When this current opportunity came up to study for a PGDE in primary teaching whilst still working full-time I jumped at it as up until now circumstances and finances had got in the way of my pursuing a teaching career.

- Q5** Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

Yes, I do – I am a late-comer to teaching and have only just started my teacher training but it's something that I have always wanted to do and really hope that it makes a difference to not only my life but to my prospective pupils. While I have been in a working environment since I was 18 (and was a mature student at 26!) I still think that I had not found my niche – and I expect to be able to be a teacher now until I retire.

- Q6** What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

I haven't been through this process yet, but expect it within the next few months. However, as I mentioned before, I am limited to schools within Angus as they are paying for my tuition!

- Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I understand from the current intake of the distance learning secondary PGDE that it is STEM subjects and Home Economics that are the subject which need to be recruited for. I think the issues here are to do with very outdated gender stereotyping.

Additional comments

I feel that the opportunity I have been given through the cooperation of my employer and the university has given me a chance I do not think that I would have had otherwise. This is a great way of getting people who have other life skills into the teaching, providing a wider pool of skills and knowledge than the teaching profession would have had without it. I am really enjoying the course so far, despite it being very hard work juggling with my full-time job, and can't wait to get into the classroom!

ANONYMOUS 31

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am currently in my probation year and I am working towards reaching the full standards of registration by June 2017.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

The authority is West Dunbartonshire Council.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

FOR:

A more challenging and rewarding career,

Working with young people,

Being part of the school ethos and society,

Appropriate pay and holidays.

AGAINST:

The amount of responsibility both in work load and in child welfare. This can be intimidating,

The amount of focus on results of exams and how the success of schools is based on percentages of exams,

A worry about not being good enough to meet the changing demands of being a teacher,

How quickly policies and pedagogies change.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I do think it will be a lifelong career for me. Because it challenges me every day, there are always more things to learn and change about your teaching. Working with young people is very rewarding and I enjoy the job very much.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

The process of being allocated a school was efficient through Strathclyde and the GTCS. However I do feel that the type of school and personality clashes between colleagues should be taken into account. Every student should try different authorities and schools with differing affluence and attainment levels to fully help teachers to understand what schools can achieve and to give a better understanding of what type of school fits with the teacher.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

One of the main issues I found both in being a student teacher, a supply teacher and in my NQT year is that all teachers are under so much stress and such a high work load that asking for help, time and support can be tricky. Both from my point of view of worrying about annoying busy teachers and from the point of view that teachers sometimes don't have time to help you.

A huge problem is that the behaviour policies, school rules and curriculum are massively different from school to school so planning and re-drafting lessons to fit with school policies and rules takes time. Often to find these things out you have to research yourself, however there is not always useful school handbooks and easily understood rules and policies available (though there are sometimes). You can make mistakes and be reprimanded even though you hadn't been told or trained on how to do something according to the rules. Often instructions are sent over email. Even though it is your first time doing it. Like reports or level changes or referrals or general school admin. Other teachers have no time to check you have done it right, or to help you but the responsibility is ultimately yours and people judge how good a teacher you are not only in what you do in the classroom but also on how well you keep up to date with admin.

Teaching is three full time jobs rolled into one. You could spend 40 hours a week planning, making resources and marking. Another 40 hours organising your marking, reports, statistics and administration. And another 40 hours teaching and improving with personal CPD. If the curriculum was planned for teachers or all school behaviour policies and rules were the same this would make life easier as all teaching would be clearer and more consistent.

There is an unspoken fear in all departments of being viewed as a lazy or bad teacher. I think the constant pressure from departments, schools, councils and the public eye have a lot to do with why most teachers quit within the first five years. I had a friend who was put on performance review within his first six months of teaching and has now left. How can you overcome that emotionally and mentally to go back to the same department? Where was the support?

As a student teacher I had a terrible experience in my second placement. I thought the school measured me against what a fully qualified teacher would do rather than a student teacher. The supportive technique was tough love. I felt extremely stressed and as I left the placement some of the comments on the school report hadn't been raised during the placement. No suggestions of how to fix it apart from doing it yourself. My mentor was a probationer and I felt more picked on and insulted than helped. I can take criticism and work on it but I only learned some things at the end in the report and I was made to read and sign the report in front of the teachers with no time to consider it and ask questions. This felt unprofessional and I don't know why a probationer was my mentor.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

I think English and Maths are under the most pressure due to the focus on the attainment gap and on Literacy and Numeracy. I feel these teaching roles are under the most scrutiny and are tested often with their results always being

shared and other teachers judging if a child's literacy or numeracy are not of a high standard, as all pupils do English and Maths they are also the busiest subjects with the largest classes. I have not yet worked in a department that is fully staffed. In some departments there have been as many as 5 teachers short with no subject specific supply teachers.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

For retention of teachers especially new teachers schools should do school specific training before the teachers enter a classroom. This gives the teachers more confidence. Smaller class sizes make a difference. Clearer instructions on marking, admin and rules and better training.

ANONYMOUS 32

What are the main challenges in relation to teacher recruitment and retention?

Problems with the student placement allocation system left lots of student teachers with a lack of faith in the GTC. Increasing workload and stress of NQTs who are buckling under the pressure and are not getting the support they need from department heads and SMT.

Are there patterns or key reasons why some trainee teachers do not complete courses, or do not choose to go into teaching having qualified?

Workload, stress and pay are the main areas here. Many simply give up within the first five years as they burn themselves out and as a result do not have a healthy work-life balance. Pressure on teachers to spend the majority of their time planning, monitoring and marking ; hence leaving very little time to do anything else. This is also having a knock on effect to their mental health.

How effective are the various approaches taken to cover shortages of teachers in schools?

Lack of consistency and pay rates.

What factors influence teachers deciding whether to stay in the profession or to leave?

Salary, workload and work-life balance.

What factors influence teachers when deciding whether or not to apply for promotion to senior management/headteacher level?

Suitability and experience for the post.

ANONYMOUS 33

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I am towards the end of completing my PGDE training.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

I have completed placements in Aberdeen city and Angus authorities (I live in Aberdeenshire)

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

For: A new challenge and career fulfilment. Flexibility around my family once qualified.

Against: Lack of flexibility within the training and probationary year. No part time options, no consideration for individuals who have family commitments when allocating placements.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

As I have already had one career in science research I plan this to be a long term career change for the future.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

The first placement was local to me so travel was not an issue, I did however feel the workload was huge and difficult to keep on top of some of the time.

The second placement was in Angus, over 50 miles commute each way, when I first found this out I thought I may have to give up the course as I couldn't see a way to manage the workload, 2.5-3 hours driving every day (no public transport available) and manage my own commitments with three primary aged children. The partnership unit and one of the course coordinators had no interest in my concerns (there is very much a you get on with it or leave attitude to issues like this) and it was a workshop tutor who was very helpful in general who persuaded me to give it a go and see how things worked out.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

On a PGDE course everything is packed in very quickly, I understand why this must be and the course has been very well linked together and a high standard of lectures and workshop. The problems seem to be in the lack of support during placements. I was lucky as both times I was in large schools with another student, this was helpful just to know there was someone in the same situation and bounce ideas off. I know of others (one of whom dropped out) who have been placed so far away they have to relocate and have no contact for weeks apart from one tutor visit. It is difficult to know how you are progressing and what is expected, in addition to the huge workload it is a challenging time.

Distance to my second placement was a huge challenge, frequently I was out for 12 hours in a day, working 2-3 hours in the evening and the remaining 1-2 hours I had to feed my children and organise home life, most days I got 5-6 hours' sleep before starting the commute again in the morning. Five weeks of this was only just manageable with huge support from my family with childcare, if they hadn't lived locally and I relied upon commercial childcare I would not have completed this course.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

As I do primary I am not sure of the details on this.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Greater flexibility would have been beneficial, part time options for the course and the probationary year (I would still opt to do this part time if there was an option available).

A better system for allocating placements, the 1.5 hours commute is too long with the additional workload that is required in the evening. There should also be better support if students have concerns about where they are placed.

When a friend dropped out, no effort was made by the University to arrange a meeting to discuss options. I feel unless you know which tutors will be helpful with support then you're very much on your own, I have asked some tutors for advice but they are not the ones I would be directed to via the course handbook.

Additional comments

This is maybe more of a specific point to the University but when assessing students on placement there seemed to be differences in what tutors were looking for. For example, it was known amongst students that one would like a folder to have a particular format, one likes theory, others focus more on classroom management when they visit etc. Surely assessment of students' progress should be moderated between tutors in the same way as there is a marking criteria for essays. There is a standard form but it's almost like students are trying to work out what a particular tutor is looking for.

ANONYMOUS 34

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

I have reached Term 4 of probation year and working towards completing my Fina Profile.

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

East Ayrshire.

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

Factors against:

Very high workload

Little room to progress unless you want to be in management

Factors for:

Job satisfaction

Job stability

Many jobs available in the current climate

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

No – I believe that the workload and stress will become too much at some point (to the point where it outweighs the job satisfaction) and I will want to change careers. Teachers are required to work far longer hours than the 35 stated in their contracts.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

Not good – East Ayrshire was one of the final councils to release the placements to the probationers and on the day of releasing the placements, the probationers had to sit through 2-3 hours of talks and lectures before being handed envelopes to open in front of guests from the schools who would take us to our respective schools. Prior to the meeting we had not been told this schedule and were not made aware that we were going to the schools for the afternoon and that we should bring a lunch. Luckily my mentor was able to drive me home to pick up my car, otherwise I would have had no way of getting home again from New Cumnock. Overall, I felt the lack of information given greatly heightened the stress of the probationers in an already stressful situation.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

I think the main challenge in retaining teachers is the level work and stress that they are put under. Often work has to be duplicated in the form of hard copies and electronic copies. Roles which management used to be in charge of (Eco Committee, Dyslexia Friendly Schools etc.) are given to teachers on top of an already expanding workload. I personally find the Non-Class Contact Time being split up over the week to be unhelpful, as I would get a lot more planning, marking and other paperwork done if, for example, I had one afternoon out instead of 2.5 hours split over the week as it is difficult to get a lot done in 45 minutes. This often means that work is taken home.

Q8 Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?

In my experience in my probation school, supply teachers are very difficult to get a hold of. They are unwilling to travel so far to New Cumnock and so few people accept the job. As a result, the workload and stress of management and class teachers is heightened in an effort to fill in the gaps.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

More people may apply to do teaching if they hear that the government is making efforts to lessen the stress of the job and allow all teachers a better work/life balance.

There should not be incentives for new teachers only as this would cause teachers who are thinking about changing careers/retiring early to leave. Any incentives/help for teachers should be rolled out to everyone.

ANONYMOUS 35

I started a PGCE, but couldn't keep up with the insane workload. I was getting 3 hours sleep a night, and my class control was suffering as a result. They asked me to repeat my placement, but I decided I just couldn't put myself through that again. The toll it was taking was too great. A third of my class didn't make it through the course. Some people didn't enjoy it, but most people dropped out due to the toll it was taking on their mental or physical health. Of the people who did pass the course, the majority are no longer teaching because it is impossible to have a good work/life balance, or because there is better money for less work in other fields.

ANONYMOUS 36

My son is just finishing his honours degree and wants desperately to teach. How can a person be rejected by the reading of a personal statement. He applied for 5 teacher training courses and only was interviewed at one and his feedback to that one was "there were better candidates"!!

People have to want to teach and not just make it a follow on from a degree. I work in a school in administration and can see people who are coming into the profession for the salary and paid holidays that come with the job not really in the teaching of children.

My friend's child went through the same 4 years ago and again couldn't have got a better example for teaching.

ANONYMOUS 37

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards

Third year student at University of Edinburgh, studying MA Primary Education with Religious Studies

Q2 Please specify the education authority area that you have undertaken a placement in, if relevant, and if you wish you can state the name of a particular school but this is entirely optional.

Midlothian

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?

My own teachers, family and friends.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)

I do think it could be a lifelong career yes. However I am concerned that there are limited options for progressing within your teaching career except for taking a managerial role. I am aware there were once options for further study and the ability to progress your career and gain recognition as a chartered teacher for those who wish to continue to learn and develop as a professional teacher rather than as a manager. I would like to option to further enhance my career through further study with recognition.

Q6 What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a school?

My experience has been positive with placements within close distant of my home. The schools have mainly been warm and welcoming. However I felt many teachers within the schools were unaware of the model of placement I was undertaking as it is a new degree programme. This caused some confusion about why I was there for example in 1st and 2nd year so little time with limited teaching.

Q7 If you have undertaken one or more placements, what do you think are the main challenges, if any, in recruiting or retaining teachers (and other staff)? (please feel free to provide details of practical experiences)

It seems from talking to teachers in schools, some discuss feeling overworked and underappreciated. Many feel that the curriculum has 'too much to get through' which stifles freedom to enjoy learning and teaching with children.

Q9 Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

Retention may be solved by allowing teachers career breaks. For example if teachers, especially new teacher who experience high 'burn out' rates within the first few years, may be comforted knowing they could take a year out, to for example, travel, teach abroad, try something new and remember why they wanted to teach in the first place with the knowledge they have a job and career behind them.

There have been numerous studies showing alarming rates of teachers developing mental health illnesses, partly due to the stressful nature of the job. I think further support and guidance provided by the Scottish Government in schools would improve retention.

Regarding recruitment, I think that often people think it is too late to go into teaching if they have been in another job and have been out of education for a long time. Perhaps more encouragement that it is never too late and support will be offered would bring more people into the profession. Also, if the profile of teaching was raised to a more professional platform, more young people may be encouraged to consider.