

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

Trainee Teachers Submissions

Treatment of evidence

The Committee agreed to undertake a short inquiry into teacher workforce planning (and associated issues with school staffing). The Committee issued a call for views running for just over two weeks to inform the evidence sessions on Teacher Workforce Planning.

The information was requested in a questionnaire and we have received a large number of responses. These are the responses from Trainee teachers.

As these submissions are sensitive in nature they have been anonymised wherever requested and the names of teaching staff have been removed, as that may lead to individuals working in schools or local authorities being identified. All those submitting were sent a message to make clear that their submissions would be published unless they stated otherwise.

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PRIMARY SCHOOL – 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

PDGE Primary About to begin final placement.

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?

For) I have worked in schools and have always aspired to become a Primary school teacher.

Against) The stress teachers seem to be under and the worry of not having a work/life balance.

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

Yes as it is something I have always wanted to do and have spent the last 4 years doing other studies to help prepare me for the PDGE course. I feel I have so much to offer learners and will enjoy the role of class teacher.

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

Good experience was informed a few weeks before and tutors prepared me well for what I would be expected to do on each placement. All my mentors at placement schools have been very helpful and approachable.

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 load, time that teachers have to commit to out with contracted hours and a lack of a work/life balance leads to stress and staff not enjoying their job.

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

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

Less paperwork and more time teaching students. More opportunities for people whom have experience in the classroom to enter a career in teaching as it seems to be a career aimed at recent graduates whom possibly don't have the life experience and maturity to work in such a high pressured low paid job. In Scotland we could possibly provide an access to teaching course for those with classroom experience such as early years officers, or Pupil support assistants etc whom wish to train to become a teacher before the B ED or PDGE.

ANONYMOUS 2

I would like to submit feedback from the perspective of a student teacher just about to enter their probation year.

I think a lot of the problems with recruitment and retention arise from teacher education in BEd and PGDE courses. I was studying on the joint honours BA course with French and Spanish before joining the PGDE course. My time at university doing education was severely unpleasant and quite frankly ruined by how I was treated both on placements and by university staff who are supposed to be there to help. They saw me as an annoyance and treated like me like dirt from day one. The teachers frequently told me that they had no time for me and did not actually want a student nor did they like having students. All my lessons were slated and ripped to shreds even if they were of a decent standard. I am aware it is a mentor's job to guide and support a student teacher however no one in that faculty made me feel welcome nor did they show any sign of wanting to support me. I was told on many occasions I was "hopeless" and "lacked in confidence" (how can one be confident when you are constantly belittled by everyone around you and made to feel inferior?) and then I was told I can "never do anything right". I reported them to my tutors at university and was referred to as a "drama queen" and that I was "overreacting". With hand on my heart I certainly was not overreacting at any point.

For my tutor observation (crit), I was told a day in advance that they would be coming – you are supposed to be given at least a week to prepare. During my feedback, I was referred to as "driftwood" and branded a liar for complaining about this school and their disgraceful treatment of me, at one point an art teacher who oversaw the welfare of all student teachers in the school was shouting and screaming in my face as if I were a pupil myself. My tutor used to work in this school so he took it upon himself to side with them to "save professional relationships because schools are becoming harder to place students in" even though they were blatantly lying about me and hiding lesson plans to make it seem as if I was not handing them in – all because they did not want a student.

As predicted I failed the placement – my final report was complete lies and slander. I allowed the university to appeal for a resit placement for myself the following September. I was left in tatters, mentally I was done, after ten weeks of constant mental abuse you would be too. My local high school took me under their wing and rebuilt my confidence and by the following September I was ready to re-enter the classroom. Everything was going well at the resit placement, I passed my crit and was getting good feedback for lessons. However, there was one class (28 pupils, all of which had serious behavioural problems) that I was struggling with. My mentor refused to give me any support saying it was up to me find the answers to my questions on my own. No other teacher in the department could believe she had given me this class, however I soldiered on. It came to my final crit and it was with said class, it was a disaster as I expected – their behaviour was unreal I have never seen anything like it. It was then my mentor had said she was going to fail me since day one and didn't care what any other teacher thought of me. I left the school that day and never went back.

I find it quite worrying that out of the three students in that school at the time (myself included) that only one of us finished the placement and was told the same thing I was told word for word. I was told by the same tutor to give up the ghost, I would never be a teacher in this lifetime and search for something else to do as I clearly was not good at teaching. I cannot describe in any language that I speak how sad, defeated, exhausted and completely drained I felt after this day – I can honestly describe this as the worst day of my life. My parents unbeknownst to me, complained to the university about how I was treated and the only response they could get was “what do you want me to do about it?”.

Fast forward a year, I was given a second chance through the PGDE course at University. However, first I had to get N5 Maths as the grade I had at that point wasn't good enough – despite having a 2:1 Honours degree in French and Spanish, how is it fair that I had to go through all the stress of exams all over again whilst working full time to earn money. However, everything aside I passed the exam and although the course is not without its own flaws, I am now just about to start my probation year in August 2017, almost 3 years later than planned. At the second university I was properly mentored and supported where needed.

I would like to finish by again addressing your questions. I think the issues with recruitment and retention stem from the initial teacher education. Students are seen by many teachers as an annoyance, a hindrance and a general pest. I understand the training years are supposed to be hard and I get that it is supposed to reflect the real job however some expectations and the disgraceful treatment of students by some teachers are stress we do not need. There is no support network for students who are being treated this way and there is little on offer from universities in terms of complaints. Something needs to be done to change this attitude. I was not the first student this has happened to and I can guarantee you I am not the last. My voice and many other's voices have gone unheard for over 3 years now because no one was interested, I hope you choose to hear it and things can change for the better.

ANONYMOUS 3

I hope this is of some help; it is based purely on my own experiences and observations of teaching. I started training to be a primary school teacher, but I left before the course finished, as I decided I wanted to change course in my life before it was too late. For me the rewards of teaching did not compensate enough for the long hours and stress.

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

I think the profession is not looked at with much respect, particularly primary school teaching. This puts a lot of people off of applying for it in the first place. In terms of actually doing the job (of primary school teaching), and why people leave, I would give the following reasons:

- * Most people who apply to courses do not have enough experience in schools to truly appreciate the demands of the profession, and aren't equipped with classroom skills needed to succeed in the course. It is extremely difficult to grasp all of the different bits of knowledge and skills needed in one year to pass and be a successful teacher.

- * It is impossible to have a work/life balance during term-time in the first few years. Most teachers I knew arrived at the school around 7am, left around 5/6pm, and usually did (at least) 8 hours prep work on the weekends. It damages teachers' relationships if they are with a non-teaching partner, and it is extremely difficult to raise a family with those working hours if your partner also works full time.

- * Classroom demands are intense. You have to be on-the-ball every moment, with eyes and ears scanning a whole classroom, with the children in different reading/writing/maths ability groups. Not only do you have to get it right for every child according to their individual ability, you also have to take care of the whole class. To say it is multi-tasking is an understatement. It is utterly exhausting. It requires an incredibly special person to have the strength of character to have a commanding presence everywhere at all times to keep people on task, and give the child/group you are with at that moment your complete attention, working according to their learning style and level.

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

- *Stress of the classroom

- *Long hours

- *Unsupportive colleagues (there is a culture of either you are tough enough to make it or you need to get out). There were two teachers in one school I was in who were off on stress leave. It seemed the head teacher was already planning a way to force them out, and the other teachers seemed fine with this which I felt was wrong.

* There are jobs out there which are simply easier and which pay more if you are intelligent and able to get them.

* Almost all the teachers I know who left the profession encourage other teachers to do so. After enough people telling you the grass really is greener on the other side it makes it easier to quit and go into the unknown.

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

* Not sure

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

* Encouragement to stay includes: A love of children, a love of teaching, a love of helping others, a dogged commitment to stick with it.

* Encouragement to leave: A desire for spare time, wish to earn more money, stress/exhaustion.

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

* Not sure

ANONYMOUS 4

Q1 Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached

and what form of qualification you are working towards

PGDE Primary - 1 year 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.

Edinburgh Council

Q4 When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and

against) that informed your decision making?

I had a year's experience in the independent sector as a classroom assistant across

all years in a primary school and this encouraged me to think of primary teaching as

a profession. This positive experience was the driving force.

Q5 Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if

not, why not?)

I am undecided at this early stage but certainly intend to spend as long in the profession as I can.

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

This process seems to be based on one's home postcode but seems a little random.

However, postcode restriction does tend to lead to a lack of variety.

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 three placements to date and the challenges that present themselves

seem to be similar. These are:

Lack of satisfactory disciplinary structures.

Uneven support for children with behavioural difficulties with attendant class

disruption, such as class evacuation, breaking of furniture, violent, disrespectful, aggressive behaviour.

Uneven help for children who require additional support for learning.

The above two points seem to result in a neglect of both the very able and the capable, who tend to be the majority. The general low standards can be disheartening.

The expectation that teachers will provide the necessary resources out of their own pocket.

With regard to recruitment, teaching does not appear to be a desirable profession for

able people with ambition. Financial rewards in other professions are far more

attractive and the status of the teaching profession in society generally is not particularly high.

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

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

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

My Initial Teacher Education experience has taught me very little in practical terms as to how to effectively turn education theory into classroom practice. Everything I have learnt to date in that regard has been through my own classroom experience, observation of other teachers, trial and error, and peer consultation.

The teaching of curriculum strands within my ITE has not been very adequate. For instance, I am not a P.E. expert and our training for teaching P.E. to all primary children consisted of three hours of skipping technique and very little beyond that.

This would be true of other subjects as well but I use it purely as an example. If subject knowledge and practical skills are not being taught, then teachers will only be able to teach what they already know. For example, in my second placement I observed that no Art, Music, Drama, Science or RME were timetabled at all by the teacher for the five weeks I was present.

I am very pleased to have had this opportunity to share my small experience to d

ANONYMOUS 5

Q1. I am currently working towards my PGDE (Primary) at Moray House, hoping to graduate this June.

Q4. My key motivation for entering teaching was to work with children in a positive, forward looking environment. I wanted to help children from all backgrounds gain as much from education as I did and to work in a field that was about helping and supporting our future society gain the skills they will need. I wanted to keep learning about people.

Q5. I hope to continue teaching but this will demand on how supportive I feel my colleagues and employers will be whilst I am still learning such a demanding profession. Each school has a very different culture and ethos.

Q6. Moray House arranged this and it has worked out well with placements close to where I live.

Q7. The main challenges are probably political due to the ethos and leadership of the schools. Interpreting the philosophy of the curriculum means that the way teachers actually teach vary according to their socio-political beliefs and understanding of the depth behind the content of the CFE. Many tweak the 5-14 model or English lesson plans without fully taking on board the theory behind it; making what is actually delivered to children vary variable. Stress, work load can cause wear and tear if the staff are not supportive.

Q9. Keep supporting and inspiring your head teachers and keep channels open for leadership within schools.

Reduce the amount of unnecessary documents unless it is going to have a genuine impact.

Ensure any government press releases show positive and credible stories of children achieving, particularly if from less affluent backgrounds. Take care that focussing in the media or political rhetoric on the attainment gap does not seep into the mind-set of the public at large because, with the right support, they should be able to, and expected to achieve. Simplify the process for children with additional support to get the diagnosis and help they need - i.e. those in poor areas with EAL will struggle with forms and appointments. Helping these children young will pay dividends in the future and they require people to advocate for them, otherwise its the wealthier areas that access educational psychologists etc. Ensure the needs of children are met and professionally resourced - the most complex needs potentially require the most educated person and not necessarily helped by PSAs (although the ones I have worked with were AMAZING - how about structuring these positions into specialist levels and pay scales like you would in nursing? If you are going to reduce class sizes do so for classes coping with a multiple of additional needs as the effects on the rest of the class with a handful of diverse needs is far more than having 33 kids who are all reasonably able. Resources and attention should not just go to the outliers, remember the middle group form the bulk of the population and it would be wrong to let them fall behind.

The political slant (very socialist) from teacher training is that social justice should be enacted via education. Whilst I don't disagree with this it feels like we may only be tackling the symptoms of poverty. Reducing relative inequality by economic means such as improving access to fulfilling employment in

areas where people are suffering the effects of poverty would equally help improve children's life chances.

SECONDARY SCHOOL – NAMED SUBMISSIONS

RICHARD DAVIDSON

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 the final few months of my 1 year full time PGDE (Primary) 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.

Both of my placement schools have been in Forfar in Angus.

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

I had long considered teaching as a career, originally at school I wanted to be a Maths Teacher (and at the time my maths teacher advised me against this as a career due to the changes being made to the profession – this was in the early 90's). I went on to study Business Studies at university with the intention of becoming an Accountant. In my final year at uni, I took part in the BP Tutoring scheme whereby I volunteered in a primary school 1 morning a week. Whilst I did indeed become an accountant and had a very enjoyable career, the desire to become a teacher never really left me and ultimately, I felt I'd personally be making more of a contribution to society as a teacher.

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

I have embarked on my career in teaching under the assumption that this would be a lifelong career. However, I do wonder about career progression and how well I will be challenged as a teacher to feel that I myself am growing personally and developing and testing my own skills. As part of my previous career as an accountant, I have been used to generally being promoted / moving to higher skilled roles around every two years.

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

Firstly, I have been very fortunate with the 2 schools I have been placed at where I have benefited from, and been inspired by, seeing committed and hard-working teachers 100% focused on improving the learning of the children within their classes. However, the travel requirements of both my placements have been a key challenge which effectively require me to a total travel time of 2 to 2 ½ hours driving a day (driving just over 100 miles a day). On paper the commute should take less than 2 hours, however due to the large sections

of roadworks on the A90 at present, this has greatly added to the journey time. The requirements of the PGDE, and in particular being on placement, mean that there is a significant work load (lesson planning, daily reflections, professional learning and reading) so the travel requirements have a huge impact on my daily workload.

In line with the travel requirements, the cost of this is not fully covered by expenses. As the university deduct a certain amount of mileage a day, in effect I am claiming for 12p a mile (this is compared to most local authorities and private companies offering approx. 40p – 45p per mile travel allowance). I am having to put 100 miles a day onto my cars mileage, over the course of a total of 19 weeks placement that is around 9,500 miles a year – this impacts wear and tea, insurance, and overall value of my car, therefore 12p a mile seems a pretty paltry amount to be able to claim back in expenses.

Additionally, as parts of the placements have been over the winter period, due to concerns about the weather I have chosen to stay down in a B&B in Forfar for a couple of days a week – this is cost I have had to fund myself and is not recoverable from the university. The reasons I have chosen to do this are due to concerns about the weather (it may have been a mild winter, however this is difficult to predict at the time) as well as to reduce the amount of mileage I am putting on to my car each week and also as a means to manage the workload a bit better (as it means I get ½ an hour extra sleep a night, get to school a bit earlier, don't have the stress of the daily commute).

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)

Workload is a key challenge – a specific issue within classrooms is inclusion and mainstreaming, whilst the theory of this is sound in terms of social justice and providing a fair access to education for all, the reality of the situation in the classroom is that teachers are having to cope with a wide range of behaviours which is time-consuming and stressful to deal with and ultimately has an impact on the whole class. Additional classroom support is much needed, if not vital, to give support to teachers and both the pupils with challenging behaviours and the rest of the class.

I am concerned that ASN, SFL and specialist teachers are not being seen and valued as vital requirements within schools. There is a limit to how much work can be pushed on to class teachers which should be the domain of specialist teachers. Cutting jobs here is a false economy as learning is impacted and teacher numbers are affected.

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

All subjects for which compete with better paid private sector jobs, so therefore the obvious examples of engineering and science. However, I'd also, taking my own experience into account, accountants and other business roles which require a wide skill-set which would be valuable to education and schools in a number of roles. The reality of my position is that I am taking a 50% pay cut to be a teacher – whilst I invariably have the usual comments about teacher holidays as compensation for that, as far as I can see so far teachers work just as many hours (if not more) than jobs I have witnessed in the private sector as, based on what I have seen, teachers tend to at least around 50 hours a week.

The financial position is a key consideration for any course of study. As noted elsewhere in this form, there has been a financial impact of studying for the PGDE – not just giving up employment and being a student for a year, but also covering the travel costs which are not covered by the university. Irrespective of the fact that we are still learning, trainee teachers do make a big contribution to the schools they are placed in – this contribution can extend from starting out as an extra pair of hands in a classroom to effectively acting/working in the same way as any other teacher. Therefore, I feel that there should be a financial consideration given to trainee teachers, for example the equivalent of £5k per year (which is 50% the salary of a classroom assistant's wages). Personally speaking this would more than cover the expenses I have incurred as part of the PGDE as well as mean that my mortgage and bills is covered without eating into my personal savings. Whilst I suppose you could argue that course fees are being funded by the Scottish Government, like I say, I feel that trainee teachers are making a strong contribution to the schools they are placed within and in effect free labour.

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

Greater flexibility with working practice – is it possible to offer teachers greater opportunities to work part-time, for example 2 or 3 days a week, which may allow them also to continue to work part-time in the private sector. I feel this may be of benefit to secondary teachers and in particular STEM subjects – I wonder if this may require some kind of agreement with private sector companies to support this.

I have gone down the Primary route as I enjoy the challenge of doing a range of subjects. However, I am a qualified accountant so I would be interested to see if there were opportunities within education for me to use these skills or indeed work between Primary and Secondary. Aside from this being away to better use the skill sets I have, I also feel that it would be very beneficial experience to see both the Primary and Secondary sectors. In particular, as part of my PGDE course I had to spend a couple of days in a Secondary school, this was very beneficial experience to gain a perspective of transition issues, learning gaps etc, I'd worry that I would lose this understanding over the next few years unless there was the possibility of closer working ties between Primary and Secondary. Consequently, I'd be interested to find out if there were opportunities for a dual teaching role, spanning Primary and

Secondary, and for example whether it was possible to cover Primary part time and support Maths or something like Higher Accounts at Secondary part time – I feel this would give an extra dimension to career progression.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I am currently in the position of waiting to find out where my Probation school will be and, more importantly, which Local Authority this will be in. Whilst I fully understand the issues of allocating teachers across Scotland, and the challenges of certain regions to attract teachers, however the position I am in, as a mature student, is that I am a homeowner with an established life in Aberdeen and am therefore concerned where the location of my probation school will be. Whilst there is a high probability of being placed in my top 2 LA choices, there is still very much a real risk that I may not be and will have a large travel requirement to my probation school (e.g. similar to my experience of my placement schools). My very strong views here are that if you want to attract folks with experience outside of teaching into the profession, then you need to be significantly more accommodating of this fact in allocation placement schools and probationer jobs – alternatively, you should consider better funding to cover the costs of travel.

STEFFI ANDERSON

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

I completed a PGDE in secondary teaching – physics with science at Strathclyde University. I am now working as a part-time (3.5 days a week) supply teacher and am on the flexible route to full registration.

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 had placements at 2 education authority schools and one placement at a private school. I am now working as a part-time supply teacher at a school in the Fife Council area.

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

I am an older person (52) who trained and worked as an electrical engineer for many years. When my youngest child finished school, I had an opportunity to go back to engineering full time or to do something else. I am financially secure, heard there is a chronic shortage of physics and maths teachers, and have enjoyed tutoring in music for many years. I enrolled on a PGDE course knowing that I would have no income for the year, but also that my tuition fees would be paid for me. After being warned by my youngest child that 'children are horrible to their teachers', I appreciated classroom teaching would be challenging, especially in terms of behaviour management, but felt it was something I could attempt to do.

I am aware that there is a shortage of engineers in the country. I believe that is partly due to lack of take-up of physics by children at school which may in turn be due to lack of physics teachers.

I and my siblings all benefited from state education and I am keen to stay in state education if possible.

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

I'm a mature probationer teacher

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

The process of being allocated teaching work placements in schools varied out via Strathclyde University was good. I was concerned that it may involve a commute of up to 1.5 hours which I felt I would not manage. If it had required such a long commute I would probably have pulled out at that stage for my own health and well-being. However, commutes to my placement schools were all much shorter than this (up to half-an-hour) which was fine. Things at my first placement school went well. The staffs were very informative, supportive and encouraging. They included me in the department and I was led gradually into the teaching process.

There was a shortage of staff in the science department at my second placement school and I was not made to feel welcome.

I was granted another placement in August 2016 at a private school. The physics staff there couldn't have been more welcoming and supportive. It was a wonderful experience which lifted my confidence again. I completed the placement and the PGDE in November 2016.

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)

Main challenges in recruiting teachers:

I think that the challenge of teaching large classes of poorly-behaved children puts people off embarking on a career as a school teacher.

I also think that at the end of a first-degree, or if coming to teaching later in life, many people need to earn an income. They may not be able to afford another year of training with no finance.

I feel the system of mentoring trainee teachers leaves much to be desired. Whether you have a good mentor or not seems to be the luck of the draw. The teacher-training and induction scheme is a bit of an assault course with very high expectations placed on the trainee teacher. While I fully appreciate that substandard teachers should not pass the course, I feel that some students fail to become fully registered, not because they are incapable of becoming a good teacher, but because of poor mentoring on placement and during their probation year. To stand up in front of a class and teach well

requires a level of self-confidence that needs to be bolstered and supported by a mentor – not to be destroyed. Account should be taken of where trainees are in the learning process and help and encouragement given accordingly.

I have direct experience of this, and I have a friend on probation this year who has pulled out for very similar reasons. Negativity from the person who is meant to be your mentor and is a professional teacher, is not acceptable. Yet those people remain within the system 'mentoring' trainee teachers.

From my own experience, I feel that the multitasking and wide range of activities required of teachers, especially in the state sector, does not lie well with the general characteristics of many people who study physics or engineering.

Main challenges in retaining teachers:

Many teachers find the assessment requirements of SQA courses stressful and time-consuming. They feel too much time is spent on the details of assessment e.g. getting children to produce an assignment in just the right format, and not enough on teaching and learning. After coming into teaching so many years after my own school education I am dismayed by how much time is spent on formal, summative assessment and how little time is spent on fun learning at secondary school.

I think that teachers are continually made to feel that they are not getting it right. There is so much conflicting information on how best to teach and so many new initiatives coming out. I feel that teachers need to multitask far more now than in the past and that there is a place for simplifying things. Running dual qualification classes is especially stressful (e.g. Nat4/5/higher physics) and teachers feel that they are failing the pupils. I noticed that at the private school where I was on placement, the departmental staff had more autonomy, and did not run any dual qualification classes. During my placements, I have not observed a composite physics class work successfully to the benefit of all pupils in a school.

I can also fully appreciate the enormity of the task of rewriting school courses when the curriculum changes and I know of many teachers who left the profession when CFE was implemented.

I also believe that teachers leave simply because they are exhausted by behaviour management issues and by the constant stress of having too much to do and not enough time to do it.

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

I believe this is maths, physics, chemistry and home economics.

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

Recruitment

Ensure that each trainee has a mentor outside their own department both on placement and during the probation year.

Ensure that teachers can only be mentors if they fully understand the role and responsibilities of a mentor (to encourage and support the student) and genuinely sign on to that.

Have someone independent from the school (e.g. at the gtc's?) where trainee teachers can discuss their issues during placement/probation.

Have some sort of mentor feedback system in place so that poor mentoring does not continue at a particular school.

Retention

Smaller class sizes at secondary schools, especially those where behaviour management is an issue. 30 is too large a number to have in one a class at some secondary schools.

Don't run dual qualification classes (e.g. Nat4/5/higher physics classes). Your top 10% of teachers may manage it well, but not the rest.

Simplify the SQA assessment system for National Qualifications, especially the requirement for assignments in science.

Additional comments: If you have any other comments please include them below:

At this moment, I am very close to leaving the profession before I have even become qualified. Despite excellent support from staff at my current school, I am finding work as a supply teacher too challenging in terms of behaviour management of junior classes and the level of multi-tasking required. I am also finding I am not teaching my preferred subject physics, but general science instead.

I wonder whether, in the desire to push for top standards of teaching, the system of recruitment and training teachers has become too inflexible so putting off prospective teachers, especially in shortage subjects.

My ideal job would be to teach senior physics part-time in the state sector where I believe there is a shortage. However, there does not seem to be a way of doing that in the Scottish state education teacher training system without first becoming a full-time, all-round science teacher.

RONAN DOCHERTY

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 MA degree and am currently studying towards a 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 & Dundee City

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

I completed a degree in Sustainable Development and I was encouraged that Learning for Sustainability was incorporated throughout the professional standards and Curriculum for Excellence.

I am a firm believer in social justice and am confident that teachers have the ability to positively change young people's lives. I enjoy working with young people and teaching is a rewarding career. Colleagues have spoken positively about the profession in the past and this was encouraging.

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

I certainly believe that education is a life long career for me. Currently, I love teaching and working in the classroom but I do envisage opportunities to develop curriculum and education policy – including relating to sustainability – presenting themselves to me. Realistically, I think that I would be likely to take some time out of teaching to do this to return in after a period of sabbatical.

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

The experience has been mainly negative. Both of my placements have been very geographically challenging. I relocated to Aberdeen to study my PGDE. My first placement was in Fife and I needed to stay in a B&B during the week and travel back at the weekends. My second placement is in Dundee and I drive from Aberdeen to Dundee on a daily basis. Both placements have for this reason been very tiring.

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)

Teacher workload is a huge contributing factor. Teachers work extraordinarily hard and long hours (many more than 35 hours per week! Closer to 50 hours). Class sizes in my first school were colossal: certificate classes were 30+ pupils and junior classes were around 30 too.

Assessment and tracking is also a massive driver of bureaucracy and the general consensus is that the new benchmarks do little to help teachers understand how to assess in the BGE phase. Most of the benchmarks I have seen have been reworded Es & Os and include vague terms like 'simple explanation' which could be interpreted in many ways.

National 4 is also a sticky topic that has presented issues. Many teachers are supporting pupils to achieve National 4 and then have nothing to do during revision time when N5/H pupils have revision work to do.

Student teachers also face the prospect of an entire year of no salary but having to pay for living and accommodation expenses. Many of my friends

from uni are now on graduate schemes on £25k+. I simply cannot support myself on £475 a month (accommodation is £450pm) and it is impossible to get a part time job when you are teaching and preparing for 50-60 hours a week and travelling for 15 hours.

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

With regard to travel, it is my belief that it is simply not acceptable to expect a student teacher to travel 15+ hours a week and teach lessons. It is too tiring and the rule seems to be without much reasoning. This should be reduced or accommodation provided.

Providing some kind of salary or bursary that can support student teachers to live during the ITE year.

SECONDARY SCHOOL – ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS 6

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 RME/RMPS NQT working for the full GTC registration.

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

Service to Scottish Education; love teaching my subject at all levels following the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence.

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

YES.

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

Not good. I was selected to teach in a school that does not currently and in the future have a need for RME/RMPS teacher. They did teach RME/RMPS here till I arrived but with teachers from other specialisations and with assemblies organised by Ministers from the local Churches here. I presume they will continue teaching the subject in the way they did till now after I leave the 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)

In some schools the RME/RMPS subject is supported well. In some other schools it is poorly supported and overall the recommendations from the Scottish Curriculum of Excellence are not followed across the sector. In some schools the interpretation they give to the Scottish Curriculum of Excellence goes against the spirit and the letter of the relevant documents. Local Councils overall do poor control on how the Scottish Curriculum of Excellence is followed in the local schools. What I was taught in the University is not followed in the Schools, causing major frustration and difficulties adjusting to the way things are taught at the School level.

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

In my experience, RME/RMPS faces the greatest challenges with retention; and this has to do because there is no control over how the Scottish Curriculum of Excellence gets implemented at the School level. Schools do what they can and what they think is best, without taking into full consideration the letter and the spirit of the relevant documents. Teaching subjects at High Schools is carried out by non-specialists, which is very strange.

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

NQTS should have teachers with subject specialist experience and University education specialisation as their line managers. Overall there should be care at the Secondary Education to have specialised and experienced teachers in a particular specialisation be line managers to NQTS and trainees in their specialisation. I.e. There should not be a case where Geographers are line managers on RME/RMPS NQTS and trainee teachers.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

More control centrally of how the Scottish Curriculum of Excellence is applied in the Schools. The thinking and the attitude over job selection and training of teachers to teach subjects at schools should be changed: specialists should teach the specific subjects they are specialists in. There should be a check of who teaches what and with what qualification. GTC rules also have to change: that a teacher gets full registration in a subject without prior University education and specialisation in the subject is very strange and makes the Scottish Education system rather poor in the educational experiences it provides to High School

ANONYMOUS 7

I wanted to provide feedback on the Teacher workforce planning for Scotland's schools. I am a trainee art and design teacher, so will begin my provisional teaching year in August 2017.

There is a huge increase in quotas of teacher training places. For art & design specifically, this is a priority subject and there are 40 plus pupils expected to be taken on as student teachers in 17/18 at University based on Scotgov and GTCS quotas.

The place where I see the biggest discrepancy in workforce planning is councils taking advantage of provisional funding and provisional places and not renewing fixed term contracts for good quality teachers who have finished an initial employment contract. This flies in the face of the demand for teachers and also means that skilled staff are not retained. This is especially worrying is the potential and probable real likelihood of teachers being unable to find permanent contracts after their provisional registration year is up. This is due to councils rotating workforce based on provisional quotas and filling vacancies with teachers in the provisional year. So let's say I finish my provisional year. I am looking for a permanent contract and it is difficult to get one because there are so many other provisional teachers entering the system and workforce planning is failing further down the line

A lot of the employment listings seem to go up internally first within a council's intranet and educational newsletter. For this reason it seems that once you are in a council provisionally, you are more likely to be taken on there than anywhere else.

It's this level of insecurity over progression and the insecurity of future employment that become real issues for teachers entering the workforce and the potential that having studied a full year and become registered, there isn't the level of demand that workforce quotas seem to be indicating. This seems to be down to the way provision places are handled via GTCS and the councils, but also due to the way councils manage their workforces.

The school I am currently in will be losing a very well qualified teacher who has a number of years' experience, but is on a fixed term contract and is now applying for jobs elsewhere. There has to be far better workforce planning to both give teachers better security and to retain their talent. It should be that this teacher's contract is up for renewal and any school or authority ought to be jumping at the chance to employ her. That applies at any stage where teacher retention is being affected down to inept procedures and policies.

For provisional placements according to the GTCS, students have a 66% chance of getting their first choice for local authority and a 12% chance of their second. To be absolutely blunt, if you land in the 22% elsewhere, that really is not of much use if you have primary age children as you can't drop them at breakfast any earlier than 7.30am to commute to get in by 8.45am. There are multiple points in the system that potentially slant against teacher retainment.

From the perspective of student teachers leaving their training, there has been a huge amount of discrepancy seen between student teachers over the quality of their placement and the teaching staff they are working with. I have heard horror stories, including long commutes out with the allowable journey time and of bullying by members of staff. I've been very lucky in that regard, particularly with my second placement school to have good support and feedback. There should be consistency over what is expected of placement and mentoring in the same way that there are standard of registration that

student teachers must adhere to. Experiences of student teachers vary massively from school to school and department to department.

ANONYMOUS 8

I was told that the GTCS had just had their AGM, but on the agenda for the next year was a suggestion to allow experience to negate small academic shortfalls. This was deemed extremely likely, although it could not be promised. On the back of this, we agreed as a family to move to Scotland.

I investigated overcoming this academic shortfall, I discovered that all the ways of overcoming it were based in Edinburgh, four hours' drive from our new home and too expensive as I would not be working. I was given information about an OU course and I immediately signed up for it. I applied for supply posts and was appointed to one within hours, literally.

Once my contract finally arrived after I had been working for some weeks, I learned I was placed on M0, an unqualified teacher rate. My rate of pay had gone from £36k to roughly £18K. I could not work full time due to the time commitments of the OU course, in itself not actually adding anything to what I could teach but only to tick a box. The post I was covering for some months was advertised, but when I spoke to the school management about it, they informed me that another condition of my provisional membership was that I could not be appointed. When they did appoint, I was then forced to look for more work, leaving a school I was feeling a part of.

In the next school I met a teacher who had recently moved up from England, coincidentally very close from where I had been. His circumstances were slightly different from mine, in that he had not had enough teaching time within his own subject to qualify for the GTCS, but an exception was made for him. I was informed that an exception could be made for him with a lack of experience, but not for me with my small academic shortfall.

During all of this, I was hearing of the chronic teacher shortfall, I was being asked to work in several schools and always answering the first to respond to my offer of supply teaching. I was complimented on my teaching repeatedly. My current department consists of me and a probationer who is running the department, organising supply staff and what they teach as well as delivering the higher classes of a colleague off with long term stress.

I am now actively looking for posts outside of teaching, my children complain of constant cover by supply teachers, in some subjects only half the lessons being taught and the other half are work sheet driven. My son has lost a years progress in 12 months measured by SATs and INCAs. My search is no longer in Scotland and as a result, my wife is searching for posts south of the border. We will compound the problem by removing two more teachers from the area. Somehow I will have to find a way of making up the £50,000 I have lost in earnings in two years and the pension payments linked to this.

Issues have been dealing with the GTCS and Councils, layers of bureaucracy which only seem to cause problems and slow things down, create obstacles to delivering good teaching and do nothing to overcome problems in recruitment and retention. It only seems to serve administrative posts within these councils at the expense of all of those at the coal face of education. The restriction of pay for supply teachers seems to have been a monumental failure with at least half a dozen of our friends in our area now refusing to take work and working outside the profession.

The disbandment of the GTC in England does not seem to have had any effect on standards of teaching and the reduction of council control in schools has opened up the market place. Schools are best placed to know what they require for the pupils and can appoint accordingly. Until pupils have the right teachers in front of them, they will not be inspired to enter the profession themselves and this problem will perpetuate long into the future. The world is changing, except in education in Scotland. A PT up here told me that he believes more effort goes into maintaining the status quo than developing the system, to the detriment of the pupils.

ANONYMOUS 9

I was studying a PGDE for Secondary Education. I completed three placements and was on my fourth make-up placement after failing my third placement when I withdrew from the course and stop pursuing a career in teaching.

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

I believe teacher recruitment is possibly the easiest part – there are a lot of enthusiastic people out there who want to inspire and teach the future generations. The positions available at universities to do this are becoming less and less however and demands a rigorous recruitment process which I do believe is necessary. However, retention is the most difficult part. There are a lot of ‘politics’ which go on in teaching which I frankly found exhausting. Colleagues disagreeing, rules being bent for some and not others, other departments getting more funding, senior management not willing to listen etc. The general morale in teaching is low and staff rooms can be so poisonous because there can be so much negativity. When you are surrounded by negativity, it can be hard to keep your positivity afloat. I believe that is the issue for retaining teachers as the love has gone from the job, the support has gone and negativity has replaced it.

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

From my own experience, I believe it is from the expectations placed upon us. I was very willing and enthusiastic about teaching and wanted to do be the best. However, I sometimes felt I could never achieve the expectations. There was always something to criticize and sometimes that was demoralising because I had tried so hard to improve, to learn and was applying the advice given yet there’s was always something else I did wrong.

Furthermore, the difficulty with the training of teachers is placement. Depending on where you are placed, I believe, has a strong impact on whether you continue in the career or not. I had one experience of a school where I was really encouraged, positives were always brought forward with constructive criticism provided too. Teachers were willing to listen to my queries and go to for advice. I felt quite confident in my abilities. However, in the following placements, that confidence was slowly diminished. I sometimes felt demoralised and diminished as I felt I was being constantly criticized with little positivity. For teachers who are currently under CfE should be encouraging and provide constructive criticism, I did not receive that as a colleague. I also found it difficult to go to my fellow colleagues and ask for help/advice because I either felt I was in their way because they were busy, I was stupid for not knowing these things or they simply couldn't be bothered to deal with me. I partly believe that is due to, once again, the expectations placed upon those teachers as well. I could see we were all experiencing the same struggles: being constantly criticized, having a large work load, trying to meet all children's' needs in a complex class of 30 and trying to balance your work/life balance. Yet trying to band together to help each other was difficult because we were all different people dealing with different struggles.

Nevertheless, during my third placement, I suffered what I can only describe as a mental breakdown. I cried every day of the week, I was being sick every day in the morning with nerves, I was barely eating and I was emotionally and mentally exhausted. Placement was consuming my life – I spent every night in my room working on lessons until the early mornings, getting up early in the morning to finish off more work, working on my breaks, my lunch, and then immediately after school. I would have a break for my dinner then back to being in my room. On my second last day of placement, I had a complete breakdown. I was in the heads' office crying my eyes out, I had to be sent home and I did not return to placement to complete it. I was at the lowest point in my life. I had lost my positivity – something I had always treasured about myself that even in my darkest days I could still see the positive. That was gone. I had to go on anti-depressants for a while and I went and still go to counselling. I wasn't even in the job yet and yet that was what I experienced. I take on board my weaknesses: I could have been more resilient, I could have been stronger, I could have stood up for myself more, I could have tried to seek help quicker etc. However, there were so many simple things that would have allowed me to continue in the profession: support.

Yet other students had different experiences which I think allowed them to stay in the profession. However, I still believe to this day that had I had the same experience in the other placements as I had had in the first and furthermore the same as my fellow trainee teachers, I would have continued in the profession. Thus, I think the variety of experiences placement provides can determine your future in teaching.

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

I can only speak of this from limited experience. But the issue appeared in every school I worked in – teachers having to cover other classes, lack of supply available. I think this is an issue that still has room for improvements.

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

I simply believe that it is a case of asking for most teacher 'Is it worth it?'. Is it worth the stress, the low pay, the constant changes, being told you're not good enough and it consuming your life? Difficult one to answer. Teaching is a fantastic job – I always really enjoyed being in the classroom. Seeing a student have an amazing learning moment where they open up to you, or they finally understand something that they have been having difficulty with, or they say that you helped me – it truly is the most amazing feeling. I love seeing students being nurtured and their learning nourished and the progression in them. I would still even consider going back to teaching as I did enjoy it that much. However, I want to teach in an environment where the support is there, the funding is there and the respect is there. I believe that is what ultimately influences whether to stay in the profession or not – whether with all the cons of the job included it is still worth it for you.

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

I couldn't really speak on this issue due to not being in the profession long enough to experience this issue.

ANONYMOUS 10

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

I have 6 weeks of the teaching programme left. I am working towards a pgde in high school teaching.

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

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

For: Holidays, Pension, Job Security, Money.

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

I think so, I am not one hundred percent certain yet. I have realised depending on what school you get can have a major influence on how you enjoy teaching. So far I have had a positive experience on all my placements. I know many teachers and I hear the same story from many of them. They are under enormous pressure teachers to get results. Also education is always

changing and it is unnerving for a lot of teachers. Teachers are not valued enough by management and they are quick to tell you are at the bottom of the pile. Teachers feel they can't switch off from the job and put in a lot of work out of hours that does not equate with the salary they are paid. However this is comments from other teachers, I will have to see for myself what lies ahead and I will approach the profession with enthusiasm and motivation to help young people achieve a good education. I really enjoy teaching and I look forward to it. However I am under no illusion that it may bring many challenges.

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

The process was a shambles. We were sometimes left to less than a week before we were able to contact our placement schools. It was so unprofessional. One school called the University to ask why the student had not contacted the school. It makes the students look bad. It is incredibly inefficient. It is left to one organiser to arrange all placements and the system need to change!

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)

As I've mentioned previously in Q5, also the expectations schools put on teachers to do not only teaching but all the red tape to do with the CFE (interdisciplinary/developing young workforce) A lot of teachers complain they have enough work to do and it take away from their teaching as they have to use their time to fill out forms etc.

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

I think allowing teachers to purely focus on the teaching aspect. Most teachers are passionate about their subject and don't want to have to be seen to be continually doing tick box exercises!! Increasing the salary as the pressure is very high for teachers to achieve results. Most teachers don't work 9-3.30 they are in school from 8-7pm even later. I think bringing in a rule for better working conditions that teachers can't be expected to work more than the allocated hours. If they do they are paid extra and not just expected to work overtime without getting paid. This would not be expected in any other profession so why in education?

I think acknowledging the value of teaching and instilling sense of worth back into the profession. Most teachers don't feel valued. Teachers these days are expected to be many things not only good role models, a social worker, behavioural management specialist!

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 currently studying for my PGDE; I have 6 weeks left of this 1 year, full time course.

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

For: - be a productive member of my community

- be a positive influence to children.
- to open the joy of my subject to ALL children
- a respected profession
- self-development as a continuous practice
- a regular wage
- can see myself still being able teach when over 60 years old.

Against - being unemployed for a year when I have commitments.

- working well over contract hours
- reported high stress levels in teachers
- lack of staff in schools
- lack of funding for the schools

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

Possibly. I want it to be a life long career but my health is important and if I feel that pressures are effecting my mental health I will re consider.

I think that it could be a fulfilling and rewarding career. I hope it will be and I will work for it to be.

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

The school allocation is difficult. My first school was about 15/20 drive from my accommodation. The second school school was 1hr 10min drive. I didn't find out about my second school until 10 days prior to starting. I didn't get any support for accommodation close to the school which was difficult to manage.

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)

Financial support.

1) Along with student loan, consideration for accommodation cost support, if the school is a certain distance from your fixed accommodation.

2) child care support. Personally I don't have children but friends found it to be very difficult to manage the placements and family.

Tutor

1) university tutors that are approachable and willing to help with questions and direction. My subject tutor and professional studies tutor were both

unapproachable and unprofessional I felt. When you feel like an inconvenience, burden and subordinate to their intellect it stops you from using their knowledge and experience to help your growth.

2) in school tutor/mentor, need to be given time out of their normal commitments to be able to observe, have meetings and develop their students ability and confidence. They also need some sort of input (training) on what to do and how to nurture a student teacher for it to be effective and positive for the mentor and the student teacher.

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

STEM subjects. The better wages in private sector attract people and the set hours.

The vicious circle, lack of staff, pressure in department, stress builds up, off with sickness/ leave the job, lack of staff.

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

Regards the accommodation issue, if you are placed with schools a distance from home. Can the placement school be asked to see if any of the teachers have a spare room for the student to use for the placement period? Or a local person/ landlord be willing to offer discounted accommodation to assist? It would be helpful for the school to have that organised for the student arriving as an option.

The childcare issue, I'm not sure how to tackle that one as I don't have children so it's not something that I have had to consider before.

The school allocation. If we can tick boxes for preference of regions for our probationary year, can't something similar be done for the term time placements, perhaps not by council area but smaller pockets to try and accommodate people? Also give students the option to tick a box to go anywhere.

Secondary schools have to opt out of taking students, with an acceptable reason, rather than opt in. I understand there is a struggle every year to find enough placements for students.

Additional comments

If you have any other comments please include them below:

I feel there is a huge issue with some of the tutors at University . My experience was not positive with either my professional studies tutor or subject specific tutor.

I certainly heard similar from other students of other subjects. I feel this is a factor that influences retention. If the student teachers don't feel supported and the tutors are unapproachable it's a lonely and difficult place to be. Even with fellow student support, you miss out on the knowledge and experience of the tutor.

I have been honest with my responses. I have considered several times, over the past year, dropping out of the course. I feel the practice or environment within the education department for PGDE has gone wrong and it's quite toxic. It does not promote or build up students to become teachers, it feels more like "let's keep pushing you down to see if you'll stand back up again".

I would be honest with anyone who asks me about this course and I'm sure that honesty would be an "against" in their decision to go into the profession.

I am not suggesting hand holding or dragging people through who are clearly not suitable. There needs to be some quality control of the people and standards of the university tutors teaching the potential teachers.

ANONYMOUS 12

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 the process of completing my PGDE in Psychology.

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 was placed in Glasgow for my first placement and in South Ayrshire for my second.

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

I taught in the FE sector for over a decade and was very happy to do so. Like many others I chose to take redundancy when the college amalgamation process began. My primary reason for choosing to leave at this point was that my employer was moving away from offering HNC/HND courses in favour of lower level qualifications and my department (Education, Humanities, Social Sciences and Care) was at risk. On exiting FE I gained work with a third sector organisation where I delivered workshops to Secondary school pupils. My experience there was instrumental in my decision to return to education, but this time within the Secondary sector.

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

I would imagine this to be the case. However, having experienced years of turmoil, industrial action and almost continual changes to our role within FE I would have no hesitation in leaving teaching should the same happen within the Secondary sector.

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

It was interesting and useful in that it reinforced my existing beliefs regarding the maintenance and reinforcement of barriers to education. I was both

impressed and dismayed at the manner in which some members of staff chose to (1) teach (2) support individuals with additional needs.

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)

In my experience the main challenges in recruiting and/or retaining staff are (1) the workload (2) the high levels of stress associated with the role (3) the lack of support from SMT (4) the rigid nature of the curriculum which inhibits lateral and creative thought in both teacher and student and the implementation of CfE (5) the expectations - the vast majority of teachers have negligible training in mental health yet are expected to deliver positive outcomes with young people who require significant levels of specialised intensive support – this is damaging for pupil and teacher (6) the lack of specialised staff in schools, for example counsellors, educational psychologists, teaching assistants. (7) the continual changes to the assessment framework.

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

I cannot comment on subject specialisms but based on my previous experience I would imagine that there are significant challenges in the recruitment and retention of teaching and learning assistants, scribes and counsellors.

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

Yes, far too many to include here! However, one thing that should be considered is for the GTCS to recognise the TQFE as a valid teaching qualification. I had to complete the PGDE despite having a wealth of experience teaching disenfranchised and disadvantaged young people and meeting the requirements for a dual qualification. Colleges have a great deal of success working with individuals who exhibit a range of challenging behaviours and this could prove invaluable for the Secondary sector.

ANONYMOUS 13

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.

SCHOOL UNKNOWN – ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS 14

- Q1** Please specify below what stage in the training process you have reached and what form of qualification you are working towards
End of first year Education degree- 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.
- Q4** When considering becoming a teacher what were the key factor(s) (for and against) that informed your decision making?
- I believe that I could provide good, positive learning experiences for children
 - My own learning experiences in primary school were not always as good as they could have been, therefore it inspired me to make a change for future generations
- Q5** Do you think teaching could be a lifelong career for you? (If so, why? And if not, why not?)
Yes, I really enjoy interacting with children of all ages and I think it will be an extremely fulfilling career
- Q6** What was your experience of the process of being allocated a teaching work placement in a 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)
- Q8** Which particular subject specialisms/support roles face the greatest challenges with recruitment or retention?
- Q9** Do you have any suggestions for how challenges with recruitment and retention might be addressed?

ANONYMOUS 15

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

I can only comment on the recruitment and retention of student teachers.

What are the factors that influence whether teaching is considered an attractive profession compared to other professions by those that might consider a career in teaching?

- Coverage of negative aspects in the media
- Advice from current teachers to avoid the profession
- Lack of discipline and respect from pupils
- Good number of holidays
- Hours that fit with childcare
- Number of hours spent working in the evening and at weekends

- Amount of study required

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

- Very little incentive
- Lack of funding
- Placement schools too far away from home resulting in relocation fees which are not fully reimbursed
- Amount of work involved in training when compared to the level of income in the probationary and early years of teaching. Considering the probationary year is £22,800 pa the full year of study before that seems an entirely unattractive prospect
- Unnecessary pressure applied over the training year
- Too much emphasis on theory and curriculum and not enough on practical advice or guidance on behaviour management etc
- Training year is emotionally draining.