

**Education and Skills Committee
Teacher Workforce Planning
10th May 2017**

Introduction

The Committee has agreed to hold a short inquiry into teacher workforce planning. On 10th May the Committee will hear from:

- a panel of trainee teachers (including one who left the training course and has become an additional support needs assistant);
- a panel of teachers including a headteacher, a gaelic teacher, a supply teacher, primary school teachers and secondary school teachers from different specialisms.

They were all selected on the basis of their questionnaire responses, and the Committee's desire to hear a range of experiences and from a range of posts and specialisms. Their questionnaire responses are included in annex A of the submissions pack.

The purpose of the evidence session is to explore:

- recruitment – including what draws people to teaching versus other professions, experiences of teacher training (including work placements) and how this influences motivation to teach and equips for entering the teaching profession;
- retention / promotion - including exploring any factors that influence decisions to leave the teaching profession before retirement, or factors that influence applying for senior management positions; and
- impact of current teacher numbers in schools – including the effectiveness of any measures taken to accommodate any staffing shortages in schools, such as the use of supply teachers / joint headteachers / composite classes etc.

The suggested themes for the session essentially mirror the themes of questions in the questionnaires and are as follows:

Trainee teachers – 4 themes

1. Motivations to become a teacher (on applying and now)
2. Perspective on the university course and its work placements
3. Perspective/suggestions on how to improve recruitment
4. Perspective/suggestions on how to improve retention

Teachers - 4 themes

1. Factors influencing whether teachers teach until retirement or leave earlier (and any succession planning);
2. Factors influencing whether teachers apply for promotion;
3. Perspective on teacher recruitment
4. Details of the impact of any teacher shortages and the effectiveness of measures to adapt to these (e.g composite classes)

To inform the discussion, there is an analysis of all of the trainee teacher and teacher questionnaires in **Annexe A** (page 12 onwards).

Background

Since this is the first evidence session for the Committee's inquiry, below is a brief background to teacher workforce planning, recruitment and retention.

Over the last few years councils have found it difficult to recruit teachers. This follows a number of years when new teachers found it difficult to find work. Moray council comment on this in their submission:

“Considering that only six years ago, there were schools receiving between 20 and 200 applications for teaching posts and there seemed to be a limitless availability of supply cover in Moray, something has clearly gone drastically wrong.”

The main policy levers used by the Scottish Government specifically to affect supply and demand for teachers are advising on numbers of teachers to be trained and having agreements with local authorities on the pupil:teacher ratio. There is also a number of general education policies/legislative requirements which will affect supply and demand by impacting on the attractiveness of teaching as a profession and the ability/requirement of local authorities to employ teachers.

Attractiveness of teaching profession

Submissions from individual teachers give a consistent picture of issues which reduce the attractiveness of teaching as a profession. These are also reflected in the submissions from organisations and are summed up by the GTCS as:

- Poor public perception of the teaching profession
- Financial rewards (including recent pension changes) perceived as less than other professions with similar, or less, responsibility
- Fixed term contracts offered to new teachers rather than permanent contracts
- Geography is a significant challenge in recruiting teachers, particularly to rural areas where teachers mostly from central Scotland will not consider posts
- Failure to appropriately promote the profession and 'talk up teaching'
- A lack of supply teaching opportunities and properly managed and developed supply teachers
- The allure of highly paid, sometimes tax-free, jobs abroad
- Inadequate arrangements to support those returning to teaching after a career-break
- Insufficient consideration and provision for bringing career-changers into the profession

- Lack of promotion opportunities

Vacancies

The Scottish Government does not collect formal statistics on teacher vacancies, but did conduct a survey in September 2016 as part of its workforce planning exercise for 2017/18. This found vacancies at 0.8% in primary and 1.2% in secondary schools ([S5W-5573](#)). At Education and Skills questions on [3rd May](#), John Swinney stated that:

“I recognise that there are shortages in available teachers in certain parts of the country and in certain subjects.

[...]

(T)here is a systemic challenge in recruiting individuals to the teaching profession, which is not just a Scottish issue.

We have to think inventively and creatively about how we motivate more people to come into the teaching profession. It is part of my general work to raise the value, credibility and esteem of the teaching profession, because our young people need to have a good flow of individuals entering the teaching profession to deliver the education on which they depend.”

The UK Migration Advisory Committee advises the UK government of occupations which are considered to have shortages and thus qualify for particular types of visa. For the purposes of this inquiry, the background information to their latest review includes useful information on supply and demand for teachers. The Scottish Government and COSLA submitted a [joint submission to the Migration Advisory Committee's](#) review in October 2016. This sums up the situation in Scotland as “extremely challenging”:

“We are in a situation in which local authorities are finding teacher recruitment extremely challenging in terms of both permanent contracts and supply (covering absences etc.) - more so in some parts of the country than others and more so in some secondary subjects than in others.

Local authorities are adopting a range of approaches to address this including golden hellos, enhanced relocation packages, permanent contracts, and subsidised accommodation. In addition, a number of authorities are actively trying to recruit from overseas.”

The submission requested that the UK Government maintain: “maths, physics and chemistry teachers and including computer science, and design technology teachers on the Shortage Occupation List.”

Supply Teachers

A survey by the Scottish Negotiating Council for Teachers in November 2015 found that:

“the majority of Scottish Councils are reporting a declining situation in providing sufficient supply cover.” (see [SNCT 2016](#))

Many of the individual submissions to the Committee raised problems with finding supply teachers.

A pay deal in 2011 has been blamed by many for exacerbating problems in obtaining supply teachers. Under this arrangement supply teachers were paid on the bottom of the pay scale for the first five days (later reduced to two).

A new website has been developed to help with recruitment. Supply teachers can put their profile and register interest on the site in order that councils can search for suitable supply teachers. The site is in “active testing stage” with eight councils (TESS 21st April 2017).

Initial teacher training

Each year Ministers advise the Scottish Funding Council on the number of places to be provided in universities for initial teacher training. This advice is based on a teacher workforce planning exercise involving COSLA, ADES, GTCS, teacher unions and representatives of universities.

Membership of the group is listed in PQ S5W-07146 ([answered 24th February 2017](#)). The PQ stated that:

“There are no plans to publish TWP Advisory Group minutes. The group provides free and frank advice to Scottish Ministers on the requirements for newly qualified teachers. The advice of the group contributes to Scottish Ministers' annual guidance to SFC on initial teacher education. Scottish Ministers' guidance to SFC for 2016 is available at:

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Announcements/2016/SFCAN012016.aspx>”

The workforce planning exercise takes into account various factors including: pupil projections, age profile of the teaching profession and projected number of leavers from the profession. Recently the Scottish Government has phased in setting targets for individual subjects at secondary school rather than setting targets only for groups of subjects.

COSLA’s submission to the Committee notes that:

“In the last ten years or so, workforce planning for teachers has become more rigorous in monitoring the age profile across promoted and unpromoted staff, early years, primary and secondary and across subjects.”

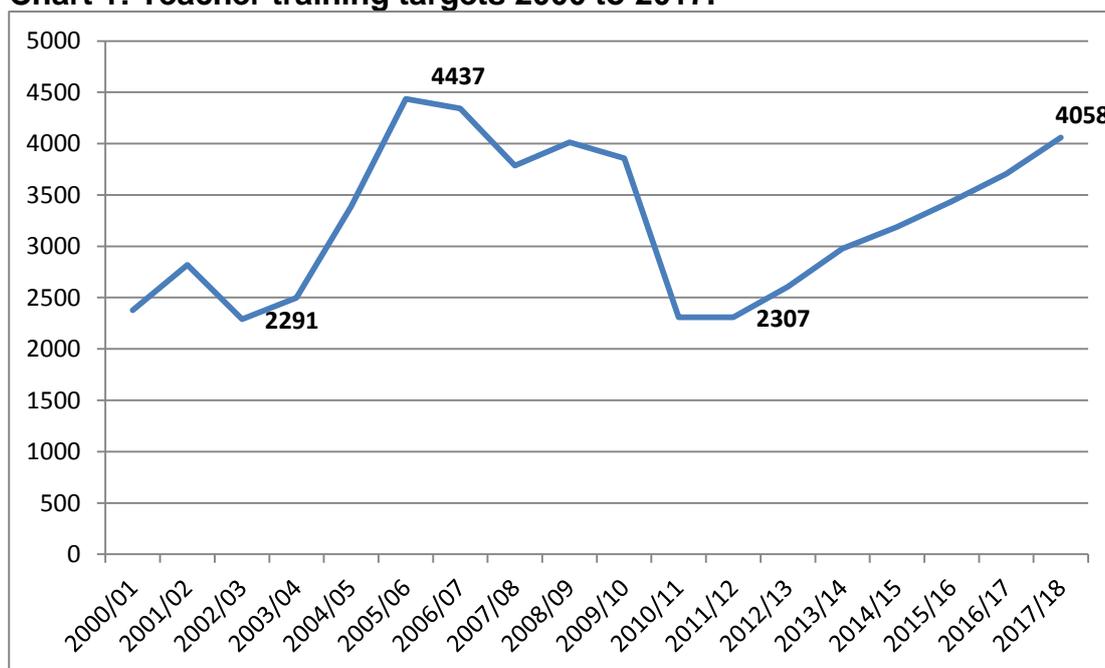
The GTCS suggests that the group could work more closely with local authorities:

“The nature of this group requires to be reviewed in order to work more closely with local authorities who have a greater insight into local trends such as the number of retirements, the age profile of staff both in the short term and the long term, patterns of maternity leave etc.”

They also suggest consideration of local staffing formulae and closer alignment of university placements to local vacancy trends.

The chart below shows how teacher training targets have fluctuated over the last 17 years. Following increases to target numbers in the early 2000’s, numbers dropped back to previous levels by 2010, but have since risen steadily and are now approaching the earlier high point seen in 2004.

Chart 1: Teacher training targets 2000 to 2017.



source. SFC circulars for relevant years.

The Scottish Government/COSLA submission to the Migration Advisory Committee stated that:

“The universities are finding it challenging to meet student teacher target intakes for some individual secondary subjects.”

The Scottish Funding Council provided recruitment figures to SPICe which show the trend in student recruitment. In 2012/13, the total target of 2,617 was under-recruited by 45 students (1.7%). In 2016/17, under recruitment was 2.7% (108 out of 4,058 places). In 2016/17, there was under-recruitment in:

- BEd Technology – 21% (33 places, 26 students recruited)
- BEd Music/combined degree with music – 18% (54 places, 44 students recruited)
- PGDE Secondary – 12% (1,355 places, 1,195 students recruited)
- BEd PE – 3% (100 places, 97 students recruited)

In comparison, primary teaching courses in 2016/17 over recruited slightly.

- BEd Primary – 710 places, 758 students
- PGDE Primary – 1,235 places, 1,247 students.

(SFC figures)

The TES recently reported on the difference between target and achieved student numbers in different subjects for secondary school PGDE. These are set out in the table below, and show that the subjects with the largest absolute shortfalls are maths (51 students below target), technological education (39 students below target) and English (31 students below target). However maths and English are also those with the highest targets. Technological education has one of the largest shortfalls both in absolute numbers and in proportion of the target.

Not all subjects have shortfalls. There was over-recruitment in history, geography, chemistry, PE, modern studies and physics.

Table 1: Targets and recruitment for secondary PGDE, 2016/17

Subject	target	recruitment	difference	% difference
History	48	66	18	38%
Geography	45	57	12	27%
Chemistry	75	81	6	8%
PE	33	38	5	15%
Modern studies	44	47	3	7%
Physics	60	61	1	2%
Gaelic	5	4	-1	-20%
Business education	64	62	-2	-3%
Art	89	86	-3	-3%
Drama	30	26	-4	-13%
Biology	91	86	-5	-5%
Modern languages	105	95	-10	-10%
Computing	52	41	-11	-21%
RE	39	24	-15	-38%
Music	41	22	-19	-46%
Home economics	70	47	-23	-33%
English	194	163	-31	-16%
Technological education	86	47	-39	-45%
Maths	179	128	-51	-28%

source: TES, 7th April p.11

Targets for 2018/19

The TES reported (21st April) that the Scottish Government’s workforce planning model suggests a large reduction to the intake targets in 2018/19, to:

- 400 for primary PGDE (from 1,235 in 2017)
- 700 for primary undergraduate course (from 710 in 2017)

The Scottish Government commented that:

“These are statistics from the workforce planning model which are used as a starting point for discussions with the Teacher Workforce Planning Advisory Group when agreeing required teacher training numbers. This group will also consider other factors such as the teacher census, local demand, the number of teachers leaving or returning to the profession and the number of students not completing their course before final decisions are taken on intake numbers.”

Asked at Education questions on 3rd May, “for what reason there has been a 62 per cent reduction in the target number of primary postgraduate diploma in education places between 2017-18 and 2018-19”, John Swinney stated that: “No such reduction has taken place.” He clarified that targets for 2018-19 have not yet been finalised, saying:

“The Government has to go through an exercise with the teacher workforce planning advisory group, which looks at a range of factors such as the teacher census, local demand, the number of teachers leaving or returning to the profession and the number of students not completing their course, before making any decisions on teacher training intake targets for 2018-19. That is why the premise of Mr Fraser’s question is wrong.

As I acknowledged in my answer to Rhoda Grant’s question, I recognise the shortages that exist in the number of available teachers. That is why I increased the intake into teacher training this year by 370 places and we will continue to look at those issues as we plan for the years ahead. I am acutely aware that, as we deploy pupil equity funding around the country, there will be the possibility of more opportunities for teacher recruitment and the Government will bear that in mind as we set the target intake for postgraduate diploma in education places.”

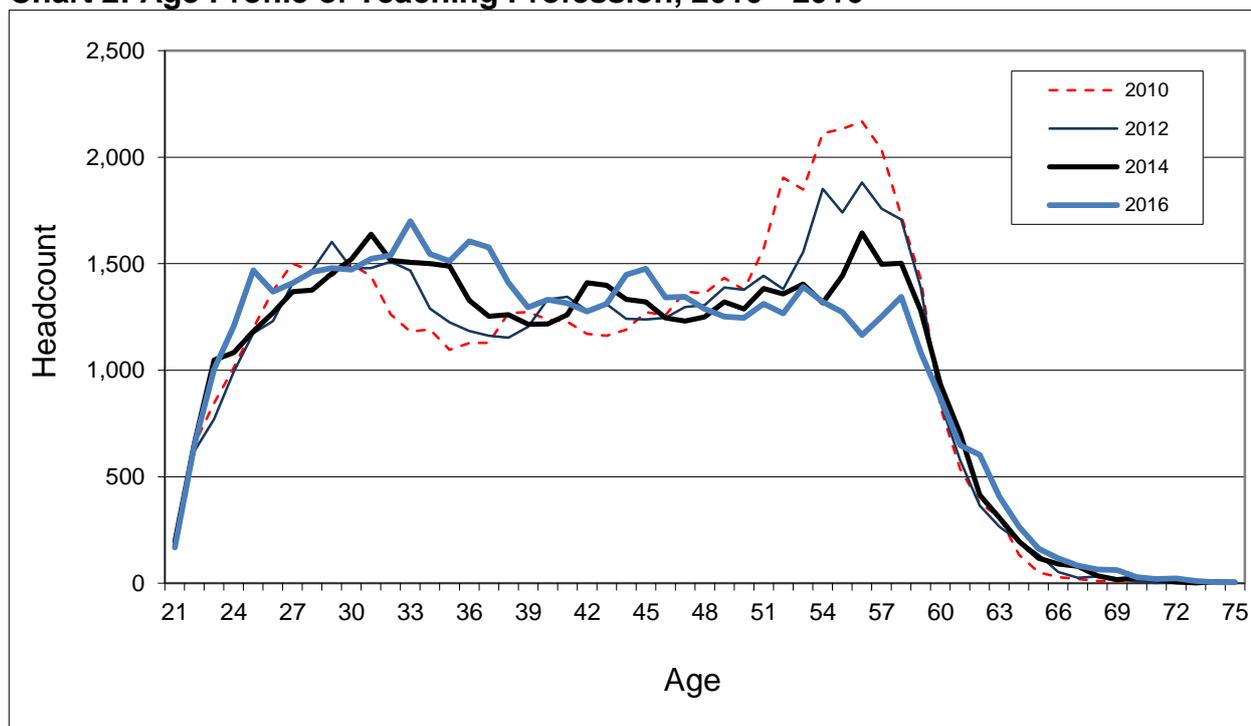
COSLA’s submission to the Committee referred to university intake targets not always matching areas of demand, although they acknowledge that this is changing:

“not all teaching universities have, in the past, made the best use of data in workforce planning to ensure that there is an increased focus on pressured subjects and instead have allowed student intake in courses where there is a known surplus of existing teaching staff. [...] we recognise that this is changing and there already appears to be slight increase in student numbers in the pressured subjects.”

Age Profile of Teachers

One of the key factors in assessing demand for new teachers is the age profile of the profession. The annual Scottish Government teacher census shows how the age profile of the profession has changed. Over the last five years, many teachers in their 50’s have left the profession, resulting a much more even age distribution.

Chart 2: Age Profile of Teaching Profession, 2010 - 2016



source: [Scottish Government teacher census 2016](#)

Age profile of student teachers

One issue that came up in submissions from trainee teachers was that students with families had less flexibility to move to take up placements. Other submissions refer to the difficulty in attracting teachers to move outwith the central belt to take up probationary years or fully qualified teaching posts. This raises the issue of the number of mature students doing ITE, as someone with a more established family life may well be less able to move to take up training or employment. The figures below from the SFC show that the majority of PGDE students are aged 25 or over.

Table 2: PGDE students by age (AY 2013-14 – 2015-16)

Age group ⁽¹⁾	2013-14		2014-15		2015-16	
under 25	449	44.9%	457	43.0%	497	40.9%
25 & over	550	55.1%	607	57.0%	718	59.1%
<i>Total</i>	999		1,064		1,215	

source: SFC personal communication

Graduate Labour Market

Another important factor in the supply of teachers is its attractiveness compared to other graduate occupations. Aberdeen Council's submission to the Committee comments that:

“Young people leaving school are choosing different pathways. At this stage not many are considering a career in teaching when they have just left school. There is also a reduction in the number of graduates selecting teaching as a career path/profession. Graduates are entering other professions which perhaps have better terms and conditions in respect to salaries and opportunities. Salaries have reduced in real terms due to limited pay increases. There is a perception that teaching is a challenging profession and perhaps makes it less attractive to graduates in comparison to other professions.”

The submission from [Teach First](#) quotes the 'HighFliers UK' survey of graduate career aspirations, noting a decline in the proportion of graduates intending to become teachers:

“Fewer than one in ten finalists were applying to the teaching profession - the 2017 survey shows that a total of 9.9 per cent of final year students from the 'Class of 2017' had applied or intended to apply for teaching positions. This continues a steep downward trend that started in 2012, when just over 15 per cent of those interviewed had the intention of becoming a teacher.”

NASUWT's submission to the Committee comments that:

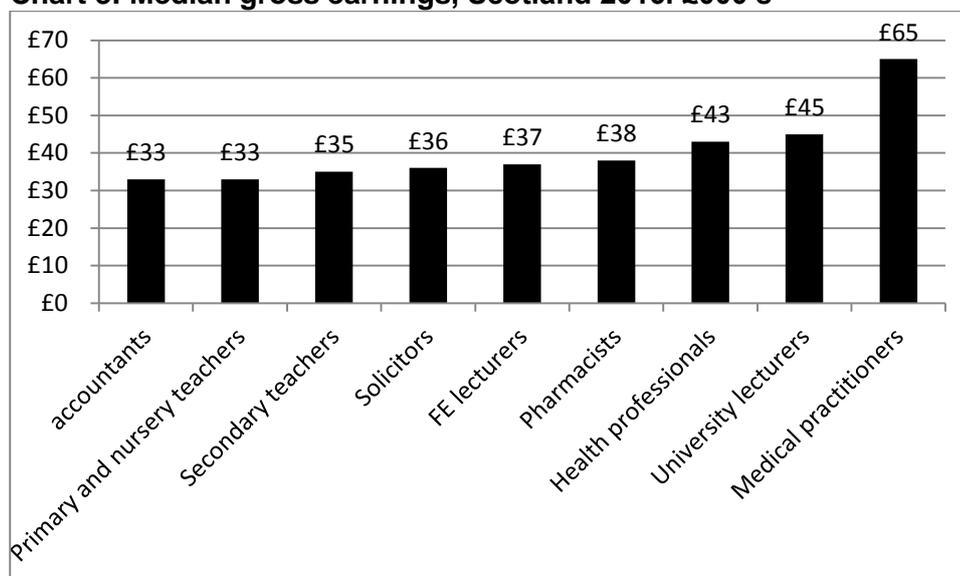
“Teachers' pay in Scotland is not commensurate to those of other graduate professions and this has been exacerbated by average pay increases, such as in 2014, where the average increase for graduates in other professions was 3.3% whilst in teaching it was 1%. There has been a 15.1% real terms drop in salary for teachers in Scotland since 2010.

[...]

The NASUWT Big Question 2016 found that 75% of teachers believe that people are put off a career in teaching because of pay and that 88% of teachers do not think that teaching is competitive with other professions.”

Chart 3 below compares earnings for teachers with other graduate professions. Teacher salaries are similar to the median earnings of solicitors and FE lecturers and accountants, but lower than university teaching professionals, health professionals and medical practitioners.

Chart 3: Median gross earnings, Scotland 2016. £000's



source: Region by Occupation (4 digit SOC) - ASHE: Table 15

Research into the graduate market in 2017 by [HighFliers UK](#) found that the median graduate starting salary at the UK's leading graduate employers is expected to be £30,000 (range £13,500 to £55,000). For the public sector, the median graduate starting salary is expected to be £23,000 (range £16,800 to £42,000).

The payscale for classroom teachers starts at £22,416 for probationers, rising to £26,895 on full registration (See table 3 below). The top of the scale is £35,763. The scale for Depute and Head Teachers ranges from £44,223 to £86,319.

Table 3: Maingrade teacher payscale

Point	1% Increase 1.4.16
0 (Probationer)	£22,416
1	£26,895
2	£28,491
3	£30,111
4	£31,860
5	£33,876
6	£35,763

source: [Annex 2.1, SNCT Handbook.](#)

Initiatives to increase the supply of teachers

Submissions to the Committee from individual councils give an indication of the initiatives taken at a local level to improve recruitment to teaching posts. Examples from the submission from the Northern Alliance are:

- use of centrally based staff
- encouraging retired staff to sign up to the supply register
- promoting programmes for ex Oil and Gas Industry employees
- supporting the Distance Learning Initial Teacher Education (DLITE) course for local authority employees to train as teachers
- schools “swapping” teachers to ensure the curriculum is covered where subject specialists are unavailable

The Northern Alliance considers that:

“Whilst these have all helped to varying degrees, they are largely short term and are not addressing the systemic issue which is a lack of teachers, particularly in rural and remote areas. These are all short term fixes and a more strategic and systemic approach is needed.”

The submission from [Aberdeenshire](#) council states that: “The current system does not provide sufficient flexibility to develop local solutions.”

The Scottish Government/COSLA submission to the Migration Advisory Committee includes examples of approaches which particular local authorities are taking to attract teachers. This includes the use of financial incentives. The submission notes that:

“The SNCT Handbook on teachers’ pay enables local authorities to increase the salary of a particular post where they are finding it hard to fill as well as offering relocation and other financial incentives. Local authorities report that they have had some success with offering this flexibility. Many rural local authorities are offering the Probationer Wavier Payments, £8k is offered to secondary teachers (£5K on appointment and £3K after 3 years satisfactory service) and £6k offered to primary teachers (£4k on appointment and £2k after 3 years satisfactory service). This can be applied to posts which have been identified as hard to fill following 2 unsuccessful recruitment exercises. However, this has had limited success, as Highland and Eilean Siar have stated.”

At a national level, a recruitment campaign, “[Teaching Makes People](#)” launched in February 2017, focuses on science, technology, engineering and maths.

In November 2016 the Scottish Government announced [new routes into teaching](#), funded with £1m from the Attainment Scotland Fund. The proposals include:

For particular subject specialisms

- combining PGDE and probationary year, focusing on STEM graduates at Dundee and Strathclyde
- support for ‘non-traditional entrants’ to Home Economics at UHI
- joint degrees with a secondary specialism at Stirling and West of Scotland

- train more primary teachers with additional subject specialisms at Stirling (including literacy, numeracy, ASN and STEM subjects).
- at Glasgow University qualify teachers to work between P6 and S3 in mathematics

For returners or those qualified outwith Scotland

- at Edinburgh Universities expand a course for those returning to teaching or qualified outwith Scotland
- at Glasgow University, recognising high levels of teacher unemployment in Ireland, recruit recently qualified teachers to undertake further study while they work in a partner local authority

For current local authority employees

- at Aberdeen University expand their distance learning programme to all local authorities for local authority staff to become primary teachers
- at University of Dundee, expand their 'Learn to Teach' programme to all local authorities and to secondary school teaching

Camilla Kidner
SPICe
4th May 2017

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

INTRODUCTION

This paper highlights key issues raised in submissions in response to the questionnaires issued by the Committee. Questionnaires were sent to class room teachers, head teachers and senior management, trainee teachers and non-teaching school staff. Almost 700 responses were received in total. Approximately 350 were received before the deadline (the questionnaire was posted online for just over 2 weeks) and these are analysed below. The remaining questionnaires will be processed for the Committee meeting on 17th May.

TRAINEE TEACHERS

The Committee received 51 responses in this category, of which:

- 30 were currently at university doing initial teacher training. Of these:
 - 10 were studying to be primary school teachers
 - 10 were studying to be secondary school teachers (subjects were: technology, drama, geography, modern studies, chemistry, biology)
 - 10 didn't specify which sector
- 2 were probationers
- 5 had applied for ITE and either been turned down or were yet to start
- 3 had dropped out of an ITE course
- 5 were qualified teachers
- the remaining responses offered views on teacher training

A lifelong career?

Of the 36 replying, 9 said they do not consider teaching as a lifelong career, 20 said they do and 7 were unsure. Of the 9 people saying it was not for them, some of the reasons included:

- pressure of planning, tracking and assessment along with professional autonomy being curtailed by top down management
- long working hours, as want to prioritise family life
- poor pay and lack of support
- lack of pay and promotion opportunities
- workload and stress levels
- lack of respect from pupils, parents and government

Placements.

36 people responded to the question on placements. Of these, 27 gave an overall indication of how the placement system worked. Of these, 16 were positive or neutral, 5 had mixed views and 6 were negative. The main issues raised were:

- travel time

- importance of staff attitude, and in particular, the importance of the mentor role
- last minute allocations
- workload

Within this, the impact of the combination of travel time and workload, particularly for mature students who have family commitments is a noticeable theme in some of the submissions.

It is also apparent that there is considerable variation in experience in different placements.

Travel time

15 responses raised the issue of travel time to placements.

One student in a rural area states that: “simply placing students in schools within a 90 minute commute does not work for students in rural Scotland.” He suggested that “provisions are made to cover student accommodation and commuting costs” outwith the 90 minutes.

Another noted a 70 mile round trip, and a lack of reimbursement for travel expenses from the university

Another stated that: “I think that 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.”

Others raised the impact of travel distance, workload and having childcare commitments, saying: “In my situation with a young family, if I get placed beyond what I consider to be commutable, (less than an hour), then I will walk away”

Similarly a respondent contrasted her different experience of placements, the first being local and the second being over a 50 mile commute. She says:

“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 ½ to 3 hour driving every day (no public transport available) and manage my own commitments with primary aged children.”

Variation in and importance of school placement experience

A clear emerging theme was the importance to the student of staff attitudes in a school while they are on placement. 16 responses referred to this. It was particularly noticeable that some (six) respondents reported very different experiences across their different placements. One respondent said:

“Some school staff have been fantastic, others not and at times I have felt like an inconvenience [...] I was very close to quitting the course during one placement but out of three placements, two have been fantastic and restored by faith in the teaching profession.”

Another commented:

“you expect (somehow) that schools will operate at a departmental level in a similar way – big mistake”

While the above quote doesn't necessarily imply a negative impact of variation, that does appear to be some students' experience. One said:

“my first placement was brilliant with an enthusiastic and lovely deputy head teacher. My second placement I was basically used as a cover teacher.”

For one, the role of the mentor was crucial and needs to be supported better:

“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 are an willing 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 entering a probation year.”

One referred to the change in allocation system:

“the current system 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 1 hr 30 minutes away from their home. There are marked inconsistencies in the experiences of student teachers during their placement with not all schools fulfilling their obligations.”

Late allocations

Delays in making allocations of placements were mentioned in 11 submissions, of these 4 were fairly negative. Those who commented referred to there being very little time between being told where a placement was and a placement starting. For example one commented that:

“finding out at 10.30 pm on 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.”

Workload

Nine submissions referred to the volume of workload expected during a placement. One recalled that:

“the workload on placement is way too much at the beginning. One teacher said to my uni calss after placement “So, have you all cried yet?” and there was a resounding “yes.” The teacher replied that this was OK because we all do that during PGDE”

Challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers

The quality of initial teacher education was raised in 16 submissions as a barrier to recruitment and retention. (This was also raised in some submissions from head teachers). Issues raised included:

- lack of coverage of ASN and behavioural issues
- course structures and approach not being family friendly. For example, that the expectation to attend a placement within 90 minute commute was difficult for

students with families. There was an implication that mature students were not well catered for and that this would prevent people changing career to become a teacher in later life

- the need for a more practical and less theoretical focus

A few submissions were received from those who had not gained a place on ITE courses. These raised issues about the level of entry qualification requirements.

A similar number of submissions (16) referred to **pay or contractual issues** as affecting recruitment and retention. Some referred to pay compared to other professions, in reflection of long hours worked and asking that the expectation of undertaking unpaid duties be investigated. Individual submissions also referred to: the need for classroom based recognition (rather than increased pay only being available by taking on managerial duties), the need to reduce class contact time and difficulties in getting a permanent contract in the local area.

12 submissions made specific mention of **workload**, referring to the difficulty of maintaining work/life balance, the amount of paperwork and importance of family life. One submission considered that there were better opportunities abroad.

Perhaps related to workload and training, 13 submissions referred to the need for more **support staff**, mainly in relation to **additional support needs**.

A similar number of submissions referred to the **image of teaching** and teachers, referring in particular to a 'lack of respect' (from parents, society, government). Some submissions referred to negativity amongst teaching staff on placement, for example one said she was told "crazy, stupid and mad to even be thinking about going into the profession."

Again, around a dozen submissions referred to **government policy**. Comments referred to: too much government interference, constant change, lack of trust and autonomy. In addition there was one submission from a Canadian who trained in Scotland but was unable to teach here because of visa requirements.

One submission said that this was the first occasion they'd been asked for views by 'government':

"There is never any engagement with teachers at the chalk face (this is the first) to ask about their job or how government can improve things"

Other themes raised included:

- the need for **strong leadership and management** (6 submissions), but the stress of the job preventing people applying
- **behaviour** of pupils and, sometimes, of parents (6 submissions)

Suggestions for change

The suggestions for change largely mirror the issues raised above. Other, more specific suggestions included:

- be clear in advertising PGDE that placements will likely involve travel time
- use a more 'apprentice', 'training on the job' approach

- require more ASN coverage in initial teacher education
- ring fence funds for support staff
- offer relocation packages
- make it easier for teachers to leave and re-enter the workforce
- NQTs should be required to stay in teaching for a certain length of time after probation

HEAD TEACHERS AND SCHOOL SENIOR MANAGEMENT

74 submissions were received in this category.

The themes of frustrations in the job were relatively consistent, which were summed up in submission in the following list:

- pay, conditions and pension
- workload and bureaucracy
- promotional prospects
- health and wellbeing
- accountability and responsibility
- pupil behaviour
- support from others
- morale

One head teacher said:

“I love my job but feel that my profession was taken from me.”[...] “Many of us go out of our way to make sure that our children, our nieces and nephews do not enter the teaching profession.”

Will you stay until retirement?

Most of those responding said they intend to stay until retirement (50 of 71 responding). However, 15 of these noted that they were already close to retirement age anyway or planned to take retirement below the state pension age. 8 said they would not stay until retirement, and 14 said they were ‘considering leaving.’

Of those considering leaving, the stresses of the job and long working hours were common reasons. For example one said:

“I can’t possibly sustain this level of work. I work in the school building approx. 50- to 60 hours per week. School takes over my whole life. I will probably need to give up my DHT post in 4 – 5 years and go on the supply list. I am sure that I will be burnt out and I would certainly like to have more time with my family” (Deputy Head Teacher, secondary school).

Another said that:

“I have loved teaching all my working life, and gladly and easily progressed my career. I did not however enjoy the role of head teacher due to extensive political interference, increasingly unreasonable societal expectations which diminish the

role of parents and families and swingeing cuts to education and local authority budgets which mean very dedicated and hard-pressed individuals are continually asked to do more with less.” (Deputy Head Teacher, previously a Head Teacher, secondary school)

There were a few positive comments. For example,

“I cannot imagine ever wanting to leave the profession. I am proud to be part of the teaching profession.” (Headteacher, primary school).

Staff turnover

Just under half of respondents (30 out of 69) said staff turnover was ‘medium’ (10% to 20%). 25 said it was low and 12 said it was high. Two noted different turnover rates for different types of staff: One referred to high turnover for middle management and classroom assistants, but medium for classroom teachers. The other referred to low turnover for teachers but high turnover for support staff.

Positives

As well as being asked about challenges, staff were also asked what kept them in the job. The most common replies were

- making a difference
- colleagues
- the children
- variety – no two days are the same

Other positives mentioned, but by fewer respondents, were:

- relationships with families
- the challenge
- school at the centre of the community
- supportive local authority
- holidays, pay, job security, pension

Challenges in recruitment and retention

A common comment was difficulties in recruitment. For example one primary head teacher said:

“Five years ago there were over 100 applicants for one vacancy – now there are times when there are no applicants.”

On the other hand, another said she had 100 applicants for a class room teacher post, but found it difficult to recruit senior staff.

Many submissions referred to the general challenges of the job (as outlined above) as discouraging people from becoming teachers. For example, in relation to pay one said:

“A teacher at the top of their profession is no longer earning enough to buy a modest flat let alone raise a family.”

Others referred to difficulties in retention, for example a secondary school deputy head teacher said:

“Last year alone I witnessed the resignation of three promoted colleagues, all extremely respected and experienced,[...] all were so completely sickened by the local authority cuts and management restructuring programme that they decided they had had enough and left the profession, giving up rather than wait a few years for their retirement. At present many of my colleagues are looking into lucrative teaching opportunities in the Middle East [...] Many staff with financially secure partners are leaving and I know of a few who have opted to work in supermarkets instead.” (secondary school Deputy Headteacher)

Other issues raised included:

- difficulties of attracting candidates to a rural location
- scepticism that STEM graduates would opt for teaching, given their other option
- non-contact time, which increases the number of staff required.

Subjects difficult to recruit

Responses from primary schools were most likely to say that ASN/support for learning was the most difficult area for recruitment (10 of 30 submissions). Five submissions said that recruiting head teachers was particularly difficult.

In secondary schools, the specific subjects mentioned most often as difficult to recruit were: maths, physics, design and technology, home economics and ASN (each mentioned in between 5 and 7 submissions). Five submissions referred to difficulties across all areas of the curriculum.

Suggestions for improving recruitment and retention

Many of the suggestions for improving recruitment and retention were related to making teaching more rewarding and more attractive as a job generally. For example, reduced workload, improved pay etc. The main issues raised are set out below:

Improved pay was mentioned by 34 respondents. Of these 10 referred to the need for incentives of some kind such as:

- recognition of local cost of living (generally in reference to Aberdeen). One suggestion was help towards housing costs.
- incentives to encourage applications to rural or deprived areas, or to move outwith the central belt.
- alternatively, there were also suggestions for incentives for people to remain in the local authority where they were a probationer.

Other financial and contract issues raised were:

- improving pensions and lowering the pension age
- restoring pay scale for short term supply teachers

- incentives to train as teachers

16 submissions suggested that a reduced **workload** would improve recruitment and retention, often with references to levels of bureaucracy and that teachers work more than their contracted 35 hours. One suggested replacing the 35 hours with a “more realistic 45 to 50 hour” week. One secondary school deputy head teacher said:

“the workload on teachers is unbearable at times. I am at my desk from 7.15am every day usually till at least 6.30pm and then I work at home for a couple of hours most nights and at least one day at the weekend – I still cannot get everything done.”

13 submissions suggested that changes to **career structures** would improve recruitment and retention. Around half of these were comments that better career progression was needed – with reference, for example, to the removal of promoted posts. Other suggestions were

- allow teachers to move around different schools to get different experience
- promote the teaching profession with graduates
- provide mentors for new staff

15 submissions referred to the **role of government and politics**. Respondents considered that education was a ‘political football’ and that there was too much change in education and curriculum policy. There was a desire for more teacher autonomy (“give control of the curriculum back to schools”) and a need to recognise that schools can’t solve all society’s problems.

12 submissions referred to the need for government, society and the media to **value the profession** more. One said: “raise the profile of teaching as a profession in the media” another that the media should: “show good things happening in everyday classrooms.”

There were also concerns about the impact of **non class contact time**¹, (4 submissions) including suggestions to “buy out” non class contact time, to enable existing staff resources to go further. One said:

“if CCR time was brought to an end it would make a huge difference as this would free up lots of teachers, this is also a job that not many people enjoy. If pay was given to class teachers to compensate for this and workload reduced I am sure it would solve a lot of problems.”

Other suggestions for improving recruitment and retention were:

- increased resources, including in terms of support staff and management staff so that teachers are properly supported
- making it easier to recruit teachers from abroad (3 submissions)
- enable schools to recruit their own staff (2 submissions)

¹ Staffing required to cover the difference between contractual class contact time for teachers and the standard weekly hours spent in time by pupils.

- have a part time MA to allow people to train while working, and also part time training for classroom assistants to enable them to train while working.
- a trained counsellor in every school. Improved pupil mental health would impact on pupil behaviour and thus on teacher retention

Supply teachers

Difficulties with obtaining supply teachers are well known and are reflected in these submissions.

In primary schools there is a clear issue of not being able to find supply teachers. In secondary schools the concerns were more about the impact of frequent use of supply teachers and quality of supply teachers rather than basic availability.

In 33 submissions from primary school heads and depute heads, 27 referred to the unavailability of supply teachers. The few submissions that did say they had supply teachers referred to having their own contacts with ex-staff.

Reference was made to the change in pay in 2011, where short term supply teachers were paid on the bottom of the scale. For example, one deputy head in a primary school reflected that:

“Changing the rate of pay for supply teachers and devaluing the contribution that they make to education caused many people to seek alternative employment.”

Classes are covered by Deputy Heads and Head teachers. In consequence, this reduces capacity to undertake other aspects of their role. However, one primary school head teacher said:

“We have had to use the “raising attainment” teacher to cover classes, where required which has impacted on progress made in this area.” (Primary school head teacher).

Another referred to holding longer assemblies:

“absence covered by SMT or by collapsing the non-contact timetable and holding longer and more frequent assemblies” (primary school head teacher)

A special school head teacher said that:

“in some cases, classroom assistants have been left with classes for full days when no-one else has been able to cover”

A principal teacher said that:

“last time I was out of school, my class was taken by a lady in her 80’s no-one else available.”

In secondary schools the more common complaint is the impact of frequent use of non-specialist supply teachers rather than, except in certain subject areas, the ability to find any. One secondary school head teacher explained the impact:

“Supply teachers are used all the time to ensure that classes have registered teacher in front of them. They are not specialist in the areas required and this does impact on the pupil experience. Where vacancies and absences are long term we have been largely unable to recruit supply staff in the appropriate curricular area. This impacts on long term attainment and means we have had to adapt timetables to ensure pupils studying for qualifications have a specialist in front of them. This increases the workload of staff we have in the school and severely reduces the experience of pupils in S1-3. The more we increase workload, the greater absences are likely to be.”

One secondary school head teacher referred to the use of private companies for supply teachers in England. While not suggesting this, he did suggest “a social enterprise company run at arms-length from the Scottish Government would perhaps do a better job if it had appropriate incentives to offer flexible people.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

- 86 responses were received from primary school teachers
- 138 responses were received from secondary school teachers
- 16 responses were received from ASN teachers
- 2 responses were received from gaelic teachers

Positives

The vast majority of the responses mentioned the children and young people as the main reason they teach. As above for the headteachers and other senior staff, a large number of these linked this with making a difference to the lives of the children. Other themes were colleagues and the variety of the work.

“I work with some amazing people. This includes support staff, management and colleagues. I really care about the impact teachers can have on children and want to help shape the future of our country.”

Morale

Options offered in the questionnaire were very good / quite good / quite low / very low.

Of the 86 primary school responses 29 said morale was quite low/low. 27 deemed morale to be very low or used turns of phrase suggesting it was worse than very low. 13 suggested morale was good / quite good and 2 suggested it was very good / very high. 8 offered an unclear answer and 4 said it varies based on the time of year. The remainder did not offer an answer.

Of the 138 secondary school teachers offering responses 55 suggested it was very low or worse, 40 suggested low or quite low, 15 said good/quite good and 5 said very good/high.

One secondary teacher set out influencing factors for saying quite low as:

- Too much to do and not enough time to do it
- Unclear, inconsistent communication from SQA re CfE requirements

- Behaviour of pupils not being addressed
- Parental expectations of their children and their teachers
- Accountability for exam results in an unclear, high-pressure, bureaucratic curriculum

Another did not offer a specific marking but mentioned influencing factors:

Very tricky question. I think there's a loyalty amongst staff to the school and to its pupils. Teachers are tired however and feel ignored. There's a feeling that no one is listening to the teachers who are actually doing the job day in day out. There's an anger that pay, in real terms feels as if it is being cut. There's a tremendous willingness to try to make things work for the sake of the children, but there's also a feeling that we aren't making progress.

A number of teachers from both primary and secondary suggested morale was improved by good camaraderie of spirit within their school and this was often cited as due to a good senior management team.

Will you stay until retirement?

Of the 86 primary school responses 40 said they would stay until retirement be it full time or part time, although 6 said this was workload levels dependant and 4 said they wished to move to other areas of education such as further education. 34 said they were currently looking at other careers or would leave early due to the demands of the role. 6 more suggested they would leave were it not for financial or other personal circumstances. 4 were unsure at present.

Of the 138 secondary school responses 81 said they would stay until retirement be it full time or part time, although 23 said this was workload levels dependant and 8 said they wished to move to other areas of education such as further education. 44 said they were currently looking at other careers or would leave early due to the demands of the role. 5 more suggested they would leave were it not for financial or other personal circumstances.

Of the 16 ASN teachers 12 suggested they would work to retirement age although 8 of those said that was workload dependant. 3 planned to leave and one planned to stay if they could secure a permanent contract.

The questionnaire did not ask teachers to specify what their planned retirement age was, but a common comment was that teaching requires high levels of energy. On that basis, many felt retiring in their late 60s was too late. This 'burn out' was cited in a number of responses as being due to aging but many also suggested the current workload levels meant that they felt continuing to that age was unsustainable/unlikely.

Retention

A number of teachers suggested retention should be the top priority to address workforce planning issues. The themes of frustrations that impact on retention were relatively consistent, with pay and workload/bureaucracy mentioned in almost all of the responses. A selection of quotes from responses on each theme are below:

- pay, conditions and pension

“not actually had an increase – in my hand salary in the last 5 years has gone down by £20 a month.”

- workload

Combined with pay, a common comment was that pay is reducing in real terms at a time when the hours and demands of the role are increasing.

“People feel that they have to work 60 hour weeks trying to do it all or they’re not a good teacher.”

The range of the role was also commented on:

“duties have been extended in many cases. Often now they are required to monitor the insulin levels of diabetic children, as well as supervise playgrounds, help with wall displays and help gather resources.”

- changes to the curriculum / increased bureaucracy

“To make it a more attractive career path there needs to be some stability. The rate of change has been exhausting.”

“A curriculum that is so full that we struggle to fit in everything that we are expected to teach.”

“Teaching requires many things including vast quantities of energy. That energy is sapped not by teaching the pupils and the extra curricular and the supported study but by the paperwork. GIRFEC has added more layers to this”

- pupil behaviour

A number of responses criticised what they perceived to be a lack of impact of ‘restorative justice’. Others suggested, in the more extreme cases where pupils were violent, that there should be a zero tolerance approach as in other professions, but that in teaching some schools treat it as the norm:

“Violence is not tolerated by any other public or private service...I know of several teachers including myself who have been bitten, kicked, verbally abused, physically threatened and abused and nothing is done in 90% of the cases.”

- accountability and responsibility

“One major thing that staff complain about is the **GTC** professional development portal. We have to spend hours proving that we are doing our hours of professional

learning, which is extra hours of workload that does not benefit the children in any way”

“All of this number crunching and box ticking leaves teachers feeling exhausted, demoralised and as if their professional judgement counts for nothing. It is little wonder that recruitment and retention of teachers is a big problem”.

Promotion

Very few responses suggested that a senior management post, in particular a headteacher role, held any appeal. The majority suggested that they preferred to spend time in the classroom. A large number also cited the pressures and hours of the headteacher role and a desire to protect their work life balance.

“I am discouraged by the incredible workload and stress I have seen from many head teachers.”

One suggestion for improvement was to place “Less demands on head teachers and give them more autonomy to run their schools – they should know what is best if you have the right person in the job.” Another said “I would be discouraged due to the high levels of pressure put upon headteachers from local authority and government”

A common suggestion was to reinstate the chartered teacher qualification, or similar, to provide teachers with the opportunity to be recognised within their specialism. Another common observation was that in the absence of promoted posts, including the removal of the department head role, there were no promotion opportunities that appealed to teachers and therefore no means of earning more or taking a more active role in decision making without applying for a deputy or headteacher role. For some of those that did have a desire to move into these roles, the move from classroom teacher to senior management was deemed to be too great a ‘leap’.

“I think the removal of Subject Specialist Principal Teachers as well as Assistant Principal Teacher has greatly reduced the opportunities for young staff to move up the promotional ladder. It is not a ladder now rather a huge leap to Faculty Head or Depute with little preparation of opportunity to gain experience.”

Measures in place as a result of staffing levels

Composite classes was a common approach, with a number of responses saying these had a negative impact on the attainment of pupils. Cluster school courses were also criticised:

“We have seen our advanced higher courses reduced and now ‘share’ delivery of these with our cluster schools. This has been to the detriment of the mental wellbeing of our pupils as in some cases they do more subjects outside of their own school than in it.”

Multi-school headship was described as a success in some responses, aiding collaboration between schools. Others suggested it pushed pressures down to more junior staff:

“There are times when the headteacher will only be in school for a day and a half a week. As a result there are times when we need to rely heavily on our administrative staff member to deal with pupil issues or be in class for short periods so we can do this”.

The majority of responses mentioned a lack of supply teachers, with a large number of associated comments on the pay conditions for supply teachers:

There is little incentive to do Supply Teaching, when the terms and conditions have been downgraded to such an extent. It really is a last resort.”

The majority of responses also mentioned the reduction in the number of additional support needs assistants or teachers, with a large number of teachers suggesting this has had an impact on the education of the children with ASN or more widely on whole classes with teachers providing support to specific children in the absence of an ASN assistant.

“Council cutbacks to pupil support staff hours have had a significant impact on attainment and behaviour, and in staff stress levels, as higher tariff children are expected to cope in mainstream school settings without adequate support.”

Shortages in particular specialisms / impact on subject choices

A previous SPICe analysis of a secondary school survey on subject choices found that:

“around three quarters (of 87 schools responding) considered that difficulty in recruiting teachers was constraining subject choice a great deal (31%) or to some extent (41%)”

Responses from the North-East of Scotland, in particular Aberdeenshire reflected shortages of teachers in lots of subject areas.

A common theme in other secondary school responses was a lack of specialist teachers and/or subjects that are no longer offered such as home economics and, to a lesser extent, music and drama.

A common theme in primary school responses was the inability to offer class trips or outdoor education.

There were also examples of teachers being required to teach outwith their specialism:

“Subject choices within subjects where there are staff shortages are limited. If pupils are not academic, they are dumped in PE and do not want to be there. Additional subjects being dumped on departments without staff consultation. Eg I have to teach Skills for Work with four structure and some lessons being loaded on the system the day you teach the class. One teacher in my department was a qualified PE teacher but also taught Business Studies , Skills for Work, Youth Award, Hospitality, Home Economics and Behaviour support as well as taking cover classes due to staff absences in any excess free periods she had left. She is 24, was appointed in Aug, stayed for 9 months and has now left to teach in Dubai with a take home pay of £2600/month, accommodation provided free of charge, gym membership, smaller class sizes, medical cover, a shorter teaching day, less bureaucracy. There is no comparison.”

Recruitment

A number of responses commented that issues impacting on recruitment are the same issues that impacted on retention (see above).

“I think that many people are put off due to the fact that the salary is not reflective of the workload. A lot of jobs with a similar level of workload pay much more.”

A number of responses expressed regret that the status in society, and therefore attractiveness, of teaching was poor, and lower than it used to be.

Of the responses that commented on trainee teachers, a number echoed comments made by some of the trainee teachers themselves. Specifically a suggestion that there is an underestimation of the workload involved in teaching and that trainees could be better prepared / acclimatised to this before coming on placements or starting a probationary year.

NON-TEACHING STAFF

21 responses were received in this category, mostly from clerical staff.

Morale

8 of the 16 people giving views about morale gave a positive answer (eg morale is good, quite good, very high) and 8 gave a negative answer (low, very low).

Would you recommend the role to a friend

10 of the 17 people answering this question said they would recommend the job to a friend, 5 would not and 2 had mixed feelings.

Recruitment and retention

Suggestions for improving recruitment and retention included

- better pay
- better support when facing stress
- improved terms and conditions for support staff
- increased budgets for support staff

One noticeable point was the difference between pay and conditions of teachers and support staff. For example one ASN support worker said:

“Permanent contracts are needed for all support staff. Currently in my school two thirds of our support staff are either on temporary or hourly paid contracts. [...] My colleagues and I in support or early years are not paid for holidays, we only receive payment for 39 weeks of the year the rest is unpaid. although the salary is displayed for support at £16,369 for a 52 week we are actually only paid £12,276 for a 39 weeks and paid prop rate of 35 hours. Most people work less than 35 hours as the children are only in school for 30 hours. We are not paid for any breaks and have to attend staff meetings during our unpaid breaks.” [...] I have never been rewarded for achieving any of the qualifications I have achieved [...] Perhaps you could look at qualifications [...] perhaps a minimum qualification for support workers to work towards funded by the government to then be recognised and reimbursed at a fair wage.”