



Department
for Education

Government evidence to the STRB

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Summary

1. The Secretary of State wrote to Dr Mike Aldred, the Chair of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB), on 22nd July, to issue the remit for the 2026/27 pay round. This remit asked the STRB for its recommendations on the pay and conditions for teachers and school leaders for 2026/27 and 2027/28 and an indicative recommendation for 2028/29, recommendations on whether to allow non-consolidated payments including bonuses, recommendations on salary safeguarding and views on reforms to working hours.
2. This document sets out the department's evidence for the pay award across the spending review (SR), to support the STRB's development of their recommendations and views.
3. The *Teacher Workforce Context* chapter provides the STRB with an update on patterns and trends in teacher recruitment and retention, as well as pointing to wider sources of information that may be relevant.
4. The *Recruitment and Retention: Government Ambitions and Policies for the Teaching Workforce* chapter then sets out the department's ambitions and policies to improve recruitment and retention, including a delivery update on the commitment to recruit an additional 6,500 new expert teachers, and the steps that the department has already taken to improve the experience of being a teacher.
5. The *School Budget Context* chapter sets out our pay proposal, outlining the key economic and affordability considerations that should be taken into account when determining appropriate and sustainable pay awards across the SR period. It also provides further context on the funding allocated to schools for the next financial year.
6. The *Working Conditions Reform* chapter provides further evidence to the STRB to inform their views on how the pay and conditions framework can best support teachers. This chapter asks the STRB to consider the use of non-consolidated payments including bonuses, the salary safeguarding period, and for views on working hours.

Teacher Workforce Context

7. This chapter will set out the current picture of teacher supply in schools, including recruitment and retention; further data is provided in the annex.

Summary

8. Pupil numbers are a key driver of teacher demand in schools. Over the last decade, the demographic bulge of pupils has moved from primary schools into secondary schools. This has led to more acute teacher supply challenges in secondary schools.
9. Looking forwards, pupil numbers are expected to fall significantly in primary schools. In secondary schools the number of pupils aged 11 to 15 is expected to plateau but the pressure of rising pupil rolls will move to the 16 to 18 sectors, both in secondaries and further education (FE). This is why the government has targeted its commitment to recruit 6,500 new expert teachers towards secondary, special schools, and in our colleges.
10. There are positive signs that the government's strategy is starting to deliver, with the latest data showing improvements in both recruitment and retention.
11. The rates of teachers leaving state funded schools have decreased this year, with the overall leaver rate now the lowest, excluding pandemic years, since the School Workforce Census (SWC) began, at 9.0%. The census data also shows that there are already 2,350 more teachers in secondary and special schools in 2024/25 than there were in 2023/24.
12. The number of teacher vacancies in November 2024 decreased by around 600 to 2,200 in November 2024, having more than doubled in the previous three years; from 1,100 in November 2020 to a peak of 2,800 in November 2023.¹
13. There are promising signs in recruitment, with Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training (PGITT) data from the on-going recruitment cycle for courses starting from September 2025 showing that as of 15 September, there were 6% more applications and 10% more acceptances compared to the same period last year.
14. The improvements seen are, in part, thanks to the progress made in the past two years in improving the teacher pay offer. So far over this parliament, teachers have received above inflation pay awards of almost 10% and, as of September

¹ School Workforce census, reporting year 2024, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england-reporting-year-2024). Vacancies as of the Census data. Include full time and part-time appointment of at least one term. Schools that do not report are counted as having no vacancies. Excludes temporarily filled vacancies unless for shorter than one term.

2025, we expect the median teacher to be earning more than £51,000. As discussed in last year's evidence to the STRB, there is evidence of slower pay growth for graduates and professional occupations than the wider average earnings growth, with teacher pay comparing better to the former.

15. While pay is undoubtedly an important factor in recruitment and retention, it is clear that it is not the main reason teachers leave the profession. The Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders (WLTL) Wave 3 report shows that high workload and stress or poor wellbeing remain the two most commonly cited reasons by teachers who are considering leaving, with dissatisfaction with pay as the ninth most commonly cited reason.² Among teachers and leaders who left the state education sector between Spring 2022 and 2023, only 34% reported that pay was an important factor in their decision to leave. High workload (84%), poor wellbeing (75%), pressure relating to pupil outcomes/inspections (64%), pupil behaviour (44%) and lack of flexible working opportunities (39%), all were cited more frequently than dissatisfaction with pay.²
16. That is why we have a wide package of support, beyond pay, to support recruitment and retention. The *Recruitment and Retention: Government Ambitions and Policies for the Teaching Workforce* and *Working Conditions Reform* chapters provide more detail on this support, as well as detail the government's plans for addressing other important issues that matter for teachers and leaders.

Teacher Workforce Size and Pupil Numbers

17. Supply challenges have been more acute in secondary schools than primaries, and in the evidence the government submitted to the STRB last year, the department discussed that pressures in secondaries were expected to increase further in coming years. Recent data indicates a more positive outlook in secondaries, with an increase in teacher numbers and pupil numbers stabilising. The number of teachers in secondary schools increased in 2024/25 by 1,440 or 0.7% to 219,000.³ Alongside this, the pupil population in secondary schools that was rising by on average 2% year-on-year up to 2023/24 has now stabilised. Pupil teacher ratios have decreased slightly, from 16.8 in 2023/24 to 16.7 in 2024/25.

² Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Wave 3 Report, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

³ Teacher numbers and pupil teacher ratios from the School Workforce Census, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

18. Pupil projections, which only cover pupils aged 11 to 15, now expect the number of secondary school pupils to remain stable around 3.2 million in the next few years before starting to slowly decline.⁴ While these projections do not include pupils aged 16 to 18, Office for National Statistics (ONS) population forecasts suggest growth in this age group,⁵ which is likely to sustain demand for teachers in secondary schools as well as the wider FE sector.
19. The picture in primary schools is similar to last year. Since a peak in 2018/19, pupil numbers in primary schools and nurseries have declined by 3%. The number of pupils in primary schools is projected to continue to decrease and be around 6% lower by 2028/29 compared to 2024/25.⁶ Pupil teacher ratios have remained relatively flat and were 20.8 in 2024/25 (20.8 in 2023/24), as the number of teachers in these settings has decreased by 2,900 (1.3%) since 2023/24.
20. The department remains committed to ensuring a sufficient supply of expert teachers across all phases of education. Given the current supply challenges are predominantly in secondary education, the government is focusing delivery of the 6,500 new teachers pledge across secondary and special schools, and colleges, over the course of this Parliament, to help ensure all children and young people receive the high-quality education they deserve.

Retention

21. Retaining experienced teachers is vital for the supply of expert teachers in schools. This year's SWC data shows improvements in retention with the overall leaver rate being the lowest since the census began, excluding the pandemic years.
22. In 2023/24 the leaver rate was 9.0%, down from 9.3% in 2023/24, with 1,740 fewer teachers leaving than the previous year. Outside of 2019/20 and 2020/21, this is the lowest since the start of the SWC in 2010/11.⁷ The decrease in leaver

⁴ See Annex FC11

⁵ National Population Projections, Office for National Statistics (2025). Available at: [National population projections - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁶ See Annex FC11

⁷ See Annex FD2 in the attached analytical document for details. For all retention figures, the most recent year with available data is 2023/24. A teacher can only be said to have left the state-funded sector when they do not appear in a SWC; therefore, the latest analysis uses the November 2024 SWC to verify whether teachers in service in November 2023 have left.

rates is driven by a decrease in wastage rates,⁸ which decreased from 8.5% in 2022/23 to 8.2% in 2023/24.

23. There have also been improvements in the retention rates of early career teachers (ECTs). The retention rate for teachers after their first year of teaching rose from 87.4% in 2021/22 to 89.0% in 2022/23, the highest level on record at the time, and 3.6 percentage points higher than pre-pandemic. This increase came despite retention rates having fallen across other early career cohorts over the same period, with analysis published as part of the Early Career Framework (ECF) evaluation estimating that year-1 retention in 2022/23 was over 5 percentage points higher than would otherwise be predicted based on the characteristics of the cohorts and wider retention trends.^{9, 10}
24. The data also shows there is still room to improve retention further, especially for some groups of teachers. In the 2023/24 academic year, the leaver rates for teachers in the first five years after qualifying was 11.1%, substantially higher than the rates for teacher with six to ten years of experience at 7.7%.¹¹ However, this is an improvement over the previous year for both groups (from 11.4% and 8.1% respectively).
25. Despite the increase in the science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) retention rate, the gap between STEM and non-STEM teacher retention rates remains, as with previous SWC cohorts, with retention rates 4-7 percentage points lower among STEM teachers five years after qualifying.¹²

Recruitment

Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training Targets:

26. Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training (PGITT) remains the largest source of new teachers into state schools, although it is not the only route to increasing the

⁸ Wastage rate is the proportion of qualified teachers leaving the state funded teaching sector for reasons other than death or retirement. Available at: [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

⁹ Evaluation of the National Roll-Out of the Early Career Framework Induction Programmes: Statistical Annex, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Evaluation of the national roll-out of the early career framework induction programme: statistical annex](#)

¹⁰ See Annex FD1

¹¹ Leaver rates refer to FTE leaver rates for teachers in their first year since achieving QTS. See Annex FD1 in the attached analytical document for details. This will not always match the equivalent headcount-based retention rate in the published retention grids.

¹² See Appendix TD5 and TD6. STEM includes subject specialism of biology, chemistry, physics, science, computing and maths

number of teachers. PGITT targets¹³ are calculated each year using the Teacher Workforce Model, which accounts for retention strength and the scale of other inflows to the workforce as well as performance against targets in recent years. The actual number of teachers schools need to enter the workforce each year is higher than the PGITT target, with much of this met via non-PGITT entrants such as teachers returning to service. Therefore, whilst performance against PGITT targets is an important indicator, it should not be considered the sole measure of recruitment sufficiency.

27. With the improvements in retention and the pupil roll changes discussed earlier, the target for PGITT trainees in 2025/26 was 26,920, 19% lower than in 2024/25, or 6,440 fewer trainees.
28. This includes a decrease in the target for secondary PGITT trainees of 4,690 compared to 2024/25, from 23,960 to 19,270 (a 19.6% decrease). This decrease was due to both more favourable retention and entrant forecasts. In particular, the increase in secondary ITT recruitment between 2023/24 and 2024/25 of 2,000 trainees, had improved supply forecasts.
29. In primary schools, falling pupil numbers are contributing to lower targets. The 2025/26 target for primary PGITT trainees has fallen by 1,750 compared to 2024/25, from 9,400 to 7,650, an 18.6% fall.

Initial Teacher Training Recruitment: Recruitment cycle data

30. Statistics on the number of new entrants to initial teacher training (ITT) and performance against targets are published in December each year, this evidence therefore does not include an update to the data presented last year. The STRB may wish to consider this data once it is available, as it will provide a complete picture of the recruitment cycle.
31. During the ITT recruitment cycle, the department publishes monthly data on the number of applications to training courses and the outcomes. These statistics cover applications made through the Apply for Teacher Training (Apply) service which covers most routes into teaching except applications made directly to training providers and undergraduate teacher training.¹⁴ This data can be used to compare back to the same period of the previous cycle as an indication of whether the performance thus far is better or worse. However, it cannot be

¹³ Postgraduate initial teacher training targets, academic year 2025/26, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Postgraduate initial teacher training targets, Academic year 2025/26 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁴ Initial Teacher Training Statistics, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Initial teacher training application statistics for courses starting in the 2025 to 2026 academic year - Apply for teacher training - GOV.UK](#)

directly extrapolated to the number of trainees that will be starting in September 2025 and the performance against targets.¹⁵

Initial Teacher Training Recruitment: Secondary

32. In secondary, recruitment targets have been particularly challenging in recent years due to rising pupil numbers pushing demand for teachers up. Excluding the pandemic, recruitment targets have not been met for the past ten years, but there has been year-on-year improvement from 48% of target in 2023/24 to 62% in 2024/25.¹⁶
33. Since 2015/16 (excluding 2020/21), secondary PGITT numbers have fluctuated between around 12,000 (2022/23) and 16,700 (2019/20). Following the low in 2022/23, we have seen increases in the last two years, to 14,810 in 2024/25 and, whilst final trainee numbers will not be available until December, there has been an 11% year-on-year increase in acceptances as of September 2025. This offers positive signs of a return to some of the higher levels that have been seen historically.¹⁷
34. The monthly application data so far available for 2025/26 suggests there is likely to be a further increase in the number of trainees in the upcoming academic year. Up to 15 September 2025, applications submitted for secondary school courses were 6% higher than the same period in the last cycle (2,230 submissions).¹⁸ The number of accepted training offers was about 11% more than the same period last cycle with 1,630 more acceptances.¹⁹
35. The combination of lower PGITT targets in 2025/26 and the higher accepted offers so far in cycle suggests better performance against targets compared to 2024/25, but this will be confirmed in the ITT Census published in early December.
36. While there have been difficulties in secondary PGITT recruitment, these have been more acute in some subjects. For example, key subjects including mathematics, physics and computing have not met their recruitment target for the past 10 years.

¹⁵ The ITT applications data should not be directly compared to the ITT census data because some candidates will drop out before starting their course, applications directly to providers are not included and candidates can make multiple applications.

¹⁶ Initial Teacher Training Census, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Initial Teacher Training Census, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁷ Initial Teacher Training Census, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Initial Teacher Training Census, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁸ See Annex FD3

¹⁹ See Annex FD4

37. The majority of subjects have more accepted offers so far in the 2025/26 cycle compared to the same period in the previous cycle.²⁰ There have been larger increases in some key subjects with lower recruitment performance last year. For example, in September, accepted offers for Computing were 42% higher and for Physics 33% higher, both subjects that had some of the lowest recruitment against target last year, at below 40%.
38. Policy is an important factor in changing performance. The effects of Targeted Retention Incentives (TRIs) are supporting retention in STEM subjects, helping to reduce targets for recruitment. Further evaluation will be needed to quantify the contribution of TRIs, particularly as data has only recently become available for the first cohort impacted by the doubling of the TRI offer to a maximum of £6,000. Overall, for these STEM subjects, the data is positive and suggests an improvement, though it is important to note that it may not represent a full reversal of the challenges seen in the past few years.
39. Most of the trainees recruited in the 2025/26 cycle will be qualified and entering the workforce in the academic year 2026/27. Previous, challenging recruitment cycles continue to constrain the number of teachers available to schools in the short run. This is reflected in the number of newly qualified entrants in the 2024/25 SWC still being low by historical standards despite an improvement from last year.

Initial Teacher Training Recruitment: Primary

40. In primary, the number of PGITT trainees recruited has fallen in the last two recruitment cycles, with provisional statistics showing that 88% of the primary PGITT target was met in 2024/25. This decline has followed falling targets, driven primarily by falling pupil numbers and the associated reduced demand for new teachers. Employment rates for primary postgraduate initial teacher trainees awarded qualified teacher status (QTS) have remained stable at 71% to 72% for the past five cohorts.²¹ In the 2024/25 SWC, the number of new entrants to primary schools continued to decline.²² Taken together, this suggests that there is not sufficient demand to accommodate a large increase in the supply of new primary teachers.
41. The latest recruitment data from the current cycle shows that, up to 15 September 2025, 6% (670) more applications had been submitted to primary ITT

²⁰ See Annex FD6

²¹ Initial Teacher Training Performance Profiles, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Initial teacher training performance profiles, Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#) Please note that employment rates are provisional for the 2023/24 cohort.

²² School Workforce Census, Department for Education (2024). Available at: [School workforce in England, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

courses and 9% (780) more acceptances compared to the same period in the previous cycle.²³

42. The evidence indicates challenges have been less acute in primary schools and we expect pressures to continue to decrease. However, it is vital to maintain a sufficient but not excessive supply of expert teachers in primary schools, and performance against the PGITT targets is an important indicator of this.

Further Education (FE) Workforce

43. The STRB has been asked to have regard to evidence on the wider state of the labour market, including the impact of recommendations on the FE teaching workforce in England. This is consistent with a request in the 2024/25 pay award remit. To help inform this consideration, the department is providing updated contextual data on the FE workforce.
44. The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper²⁴ sets out Government's commitment to a prestigious FE sector, underscored by high quality teaching, which drives economic growth, builds national capacity and delivers regional impact. FE teachers are critical to this vision, breaking down barriers to opportunity for learners from all backgrounds, and driving participation and success in the key growth sectors set out in our Modern Industrial Strategy, such as manufacturing, digital, and green energy. High quality FE teachers are vital to ensuring local and national industries have access to the skilled workforce they need to thrive, including in critical skills shortage areas such as construction, which is essential to our national infrastructure. As set out in the White Paper, FE teachers will be supported by a high-quality professional offer, including development of a coherent, career long development pathway, from initial training through to leadership.
45. The FE teaching workforce will need to service increased demand resulting from demographic changes in the 16 to 18 age group. Based on ONS population projections,²⁵ by 2028/29 the department expects to see around a 5% (106,000) increase in the number of 16 to 18 year-olds in England compared to 2024/25 levels - intensifying demand on FE provision and staffing. This projected growth is expected to place additional strain on the FE teaching workforce, including in academic subjects, such as English and maths, which are also taught in schools. An FE workforce of the requisite scale and quality continues to be instrumental in

²³ See Annex FD3 and FD4

²⁴ Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper \(2025\)](#).

²⁵ National Population Projections, Office for National Statistics (2025). Available at: [National population projections - Office for National Statistics](#)

upholding the provision of high-quality education for 16 to 19 year-olds and adults.

46. The further education college workforce analysis publication shows that, historically, in the region of 20% of teachers who leave FE colleges within one year exit to another education sector, highlighting career fluidity across the broader teaching profession.²⁶ Sector engagement by the department suggests this mobility is particularly prevalent with schools in shared subject areas. The movement of the demographic bulge of 16 to 19 year-olds may therefore continue to offer new and varied career development opportunities for teachers.
47. FE competes with both other education sectors and industry in terms of teacher recruitment, and creating a flow of expertise between industry and education is fundamental to the White Paper ambition. It is important context to note that FE is diverse, delivering a range of vocational, technical, academic and functional skills provision in a variety of settings, including those of the statutory FE sector - sixth form colleges, general FE colleges and designated institutions - where the majority of classroom FE learners undertake their education. Understanding the FE workforce requires recognising this diversity and the comparator labour markets that influence FE teacher supply.
48. Recruitment and retention continue to pose challenges across the FE sector. Colleges experience a significant teacher turnover rate, with nearly 50% of new teachers leaving the profession within three years.²⁷ Since the STRB's 35th report, the government has published new data on the FE workforce for the 2023/24 academic year.²⁸ This latest release shows that, by the end of 2023/24, 3.9% of teaching positions across the FE sector were vacant, with a specific rate of 4.0% for General FE colleges. The reported vacancy rate for the previous academic year (2022/23) stood at 4.7% for the sector, and 5.1% for general FE colleges.²⁹ This data is not directly comparable to the 2023/24 data due to a different set of providers returning data each year.
49. In 2023/24 data, subject areas with the highest vacancy rates include critical skills for the economy, such as construction (7.1 per 100) and engineering and manufacturing (6.9 per 100). Vacancies also remain elevated in areas with

²⁶ Further Education College Workforce Analysis, Department for Education (2021). Available at: [Further education college workforce analysis - GOV.UK](#)

²⁷ Further Education College Workforce Analysis (Table 3.2), Department for Education (2021). Available at: [Further education college workforce analysis - GOV.UK](#)

²⁸ Further Education Workforce, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Further education workforce, Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

²⁹ Further Education Workforce, Department for Education (2024). Available at: [Further education workforce, Academic Year 2022/23- Explore education statistics- GOV.UK](#)

academic crossover, including maths and English, which were 4.9 per 100 and 4.0 per 100 across the FE sector respectively.

50. To support the FE sector, we have increased investment in 16-19 education by £400 million in the 2025-26 financial year. From the Spending Review, we will invest nearly £800 million extra in 2026-27, including and fully consolidating the £190 million boost provided in May. This will help colleges and other 16-19 providers to recruit and retain the high quality teachers they need, supporting our pledge to recruit 6,500 new teachers across FE colleges, and mainstream secondary and specialist schools over the course of this parliament.
51. The government is also continuing to strengthen its policies to support the recruitment and retention of teachers. The government has extended the Targeted Retention Incentive (TRI) to eligible college teachers. This payment is worth up to £6,000 per year after tax for early career teachers in key STEM and technical subjects in disadvantaged schools and all FE colleges. As of 5 May 2025, 5,984 TRI FE claims had been approved. The majority of approved claims were from teachers in building and construction (1,725), maths (1,367), and engineering and manufacturing (1,195). The Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper also makes clear our intention to continue to provide support for new FE teachers, including career changers, via initial teacher education bursaries as well as our Taking Teaching Further programme. It further sets out our plan to extend the Teaching Vacancy Service to FE, making it easier for providers to connect with and recruit expert candidates.
52. When considering teacher pay in schools, it is equally important to reflect on the implications for FE. FE institutions play a vital role in delivering post-16 education and skills and pay can significantly impact recruitment and retention in the sector. Sustaining a high-quality FE workforce is essential, particularly given the sector's responsibility for educating a disproportionately high number of disadvantaged and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 16 to 19 learners relative to provision in school settings. This demands staff with the right skills, experience, and support to meet learners' complex and varied needs.
53. For further information on the FE Workforce, the Further Education Workforce Publication provides comprehensive information on the characteristics of the FE workforce including information on the size of the workforce; workforce characteristics; teacher pay and vacancy rates by subject among other statistics. Based on data from the latest publication for academic year 2023/24, the FE workforce included an estimated 148,400 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff on

permanent or fixed term contracts, with an estimated total headcount of 203,000 across all contract types.³⁰

54. In addition, the FE College Workforce Analysis Publication uses teacher pension scheme data to provide a time series on teacher headcount, FTE median pay, teacher retention rates and pay progression for new teachers.
55. Further publications from the department on FE are covered in Annex A.

³⁰ Further Education Workforce, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Further education workforce, Academic year 2023/24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Recruitment and Retention: Government's Ambitions and Policies for the Teaching Workforce

Introduction

56. Access to high-quality teaching is the single largest in-school factor impacting a pupil's attainment, as well as being one of the strongest predictors of college student success. Good teachers are therefore critical to inspire a life-long love of learning and raise the attainment of their pupils, improving their career prospects and breaking the link between background and success. The government's mission to break down the barriers to opportunity therefore depends on our ability to recruit and retain the best teachers possible. This is why, as part of the government's Plan for Change, the department committed to recruiting an additional 6,500 new expert teachers across secondary and special schools, and in our colleges, over the course of this Parliament. The department is targeting mainstream secondary schools and colleges, as well as special schools to support children and young people with SEND. This focus accounts for demographic shifts in the student population over the parliament; with a greater proportion of students set to move into these settings.
57. In addition, as part of attracting high quality talent, the government is committed to working alongside the sector. This is why the government, in partnership with unions and employer organisations, has established the Improving Education Together (IET) partnership to address key reform priorities, and collaborate on policy design and implementation.
58. This chapter aims to provide an update on the progress made to deliver 6,500 new expert teachers. It also aims to layout the department's new ambitions around modernising the teaching profession to make it fit for today's labour market.
59. The forthcoming Schools White Paper (SWP) will provide further details on how the department will empower leaders, transform career-long development opportunities, and modernise pay and conditions for school staff.

6,500 Expert Teachers

60. The government has already taken action to achieve its ambition to recruit 6,500 new teachers. Over the last two years, teachers in maintained schools have seen a nearly 10% increase in their pay as a result of the government accepting the last two pay award recommendations of 4% and 5.5%. These above inflation awards have improved the overall competitiveness of teacher pay.

61. This increase in pay has been further supported by offering trainee teacher incentives worth up to £31,000 tax-free. This is on top of improvements in conditions, such as amending the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) to make it clear that Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time could be taken at home and better supporting part-time teachers into leadership roles by allowing part-time teachers to access the full Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) payment.
62. The department is already seeing positive signs that its investment is starting to deliver: the workforce has grown by 2,346 FTE between 2023/24 and 2024/25, in secondary and special schools; the schools where they are needed most. This includes 1,435 more secondary school teachers and 911 more special and Pupil Referral Unit teachers compared to last year.
63. Despite these early promising signs, further work is needed to ensure teaching is an attractive profession – a profession that graduates want to join, teachers want to stay in, and leavers return to. This means continuing to make progress on reducing workload and improving wellbeing, in addition to opportunities for career progression. Details on how the department intends to do this are discussed in this chapter.

Modernising the Workforce

64. As part of attracting high quality talent, the department has an ambition to modernise the teaching profession, making it fit for today's labour market and reform working conditions to improve teacher and leaders' experience in the job.
65. As part of these efforts, the department has committed to reviewing the STPCD to fulfil the ambitions of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. The department's aim is that the measures, and the changes we make through secondary legislation following this Bill, will mean that all state school teachers can rely on a core pay offer and all schools can innovate to attract and retain the best teachers that they need for our children. A key part of this is looking at working conditions and practices to ensure that they meet the needs of teachers and leaders.
66. As covered above, the department, with advice from the STRB, has already made some reforms in this space, including clarifying that PPA time can be taken from home, through reinforcing the commitment to flexible working by putting this explicitly in the STPCD and through changes to TLR payments, which means that part-time teachers can access the full TLR allowance (a full-time payment) where they are carrying out the full responsibility. The department is going further by looking into working hours within this pay round by seeking the STRB's and statutory consultees' views on this topic. This forms part of the department's

wider work to reform the culture of the profession, for example by continuing to work with our flexible working ambassador schools and multi academy trusts who champion flexible working and provide bespoke peer support.

67. Similarly, the department is looking at how it can give additional flexibility to school leaders to recruit, retain and reward teachers. The department has started to progress this objective by asking for the STRB's recommendations on non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to allow leaders to reward their staff on a one-off basis, and whether to reduce the salary safeguarding period to allow leaders to deploy their workforce in an efficient and flexible manner. These topics are discussed in further detail in the *Working Condition Reforms* chapter.
68. The department is committed to further changes within the STPCD review process to modernise the workforce and share best practice, to support schools in recruiting and rewarding the teachers they need. Future remits to the STRB will be used to facilitate these changes.
69. Beyond this, the department is also committed to leveraging technology to enhance time efficiency, reduce workload, and improve student engagement. As discussed later in this chapter, the department is supporting the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for lesson planning, training for teachers and leaders to boost confidence and capability using technology, as well as connectivity improvements. All of which support the department's aim to modernise the education sector.

Pathways into Teaching

70. The department wants to encourage people from all backgrounds to become teachers to ensure we have a strong pipeline of expert, talented teachers to support children and young people. To do that, prospective teachers need to understand the benefits of a career in teaching and there needs to be a variety of routes to become a teacher. This enables people from as many different backgrounds as possible to enter teaching, via a route that is best suited to them. This section outlines how the department attracts graduates into teaching through a multitude of different routes, from fee-funded and high-potential ITT to apprenticeships. This section also covers our range of financial incentives to encourage people into the profession, which should be viewed alongside our starting salary offer, which is now almost £33,000, increasing to over £40,000 in London.
71. To promote the benefits of a career in teaching from an early stage, the department continues to run the 'Every Lesson Shapes a Life' school teacher recruitment marketing campaign.

72. The 'Every Lesson Shapes a Life' campaign aims to inspire and attract people to consider a career in teaching and strengthen their consideration. The campaign, which runs across the full range of marketing channels including advertising, direct marketing and on university campuses, highlights the impact that teaching has on the life of a teacher, as well as that of the children they teach, focusing on the progression, growth and personal satisfaction that a career in teaching offers. It promotes the starting salary for teachers, as well as bursaries and scholarships for priority subjects and signposts potential candidates to the comprehensive Get Into Teaching website, where prospective trainees can access support and advice through expert one-to-one Teacher Training Advisers, a contact centre and a national programme of events.
73. Alongside advertising the benefits of teaching to prospective applicants, the department is continuing to invest in the Teaching Internships programme, as part of the Get into Teaching service, to enable undergraduate and master's students the opportunity to experience teaching before they commit to it as a career. This programme targets potential teachers of chemistry, computing, languages, maths and physics with the aim of increasing the number of applications for ITT. In the 2025/26 academic year, we are piloting an extension of the programme to include design and technology internships.
74. To support recruitment into subjects where need is greatest, we continue to invest in our bursary and scholarship offer. In October 2025, to attract graduate talent in shortage subjects, the department announced the ITT financial incentives package for those starting ITT in 2026/27. Recruitment incentives are vital to not only boost recruitment in these subjects but also result in a sustained increase in long-term teacher supply.³¹
75. This includes offering bursaries worth up to £29,000 tax-free and scholarships worth up to £31,000 tax-free, to encourage talented trainees to key subjects such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing, and a languages scholarship worth £22,000 tax-free for French, German and Spanish. The department also offers a £20,000 tax-free bursary for languages and design & technology, and a £5,000 tax-free bursary for biology and geography. The department is continuing to offer bursaries and scholarships to all non-UK national trainees in languages and physics, attracting teachers to the UK.
76. Although the 'traditional' route to become a teacher has long been through tuition fee funded ITT, the department appreciates that not every potential teacher wants to take time out of work to receive training. That is why the department

³¹ The Impact of Training Bursaries on Teacher Recruitment and Retention, National Foundation for Educational Research (2023). Available at: [The impact of training bursaries on teacher recruitment and retention - NFER](#)

offers a variety of paths into teaching through our range of apprenticeships and alternative routes.

77. The department currently offers a postgraduate and undergraduate apprenticeship route into teaching; the Postgraduate Teaching Apprenticeship (PGTA) and Teaching Degree Apprenticeship (TDA), respectively, which provide the opportunity for people to earn and learn whilst obtaining QTS. The PGTA is a popular and growing route for trainees from all backgrounds, and has seen significant growth in recent years, from 784 new entrants in 2022/23, 958 in 2023/24 and 1,488 in 2024/25. This growth has been in large part because of more generous financial incentives in shortage subjects. Providers offering the PGTA are now able to access salary grant funding equivalent to the bursary in all subjects. This is in addition to apprenticeships levy funding.
78. Meanwhile, the TDA was introduced in October 2024 and is a new apprenticeship route for potential teachers who do not possess an undergraduate degree. Successful candidates still 'earn while they learn' but also get the opportunity to attain an undergraduate degree and obtain QTS while working in a school. Degree-awarding ITT providers will partner with employing schools to deliver the TDA. The department will continue to offer salary grant funding to schools employing secondary mathematics TDA trainees through selected training providers, with training beginning in autumn 2026. The first recruitment cycle for academic year 2025/26 has seen 193 acceptances as of 15 September and high candidate interest and applications in this new route into teaching.³² The department expects this route to open the profession to those that would not otherwise be able to train to become teachers. This includes those that cannot forego a salary, such as career changers and existing support staff, as well as school leavers for whom university would not be an option.
79. An alternative route for those with a degree is the High Potential Initial Teacher Training and Leadership Development (HPITT) programme. This route seeks to recruit and train high potential graduates and career changers who may have been otherwise unlikely to join the profession. Trainees are placed into schools serving low-income communities with high numbers of disadvantaged pupils. Following an interim single cohort extension (for the 2026 cohort), the current contract for this programme is coming to an end and is currently being retendered.
80. For very experienced graduate teachers without QTS, the Assessment Only route offers the opportunity to gain QTS without further training. Applicants must

³² Initial Teacher Training Application Statistics, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Initial teacher training application statistics for courses starting in the 2025 to 2026 academic year - Apply for teacher training - GOV.UK](#) [Accessed September 2025]

demonstrate that they meet the Teachers' Standards without the need for further training. The same qualification and suitability entry criteria apply to these candidates as they would to any PGITT route. Accredited providers must also determine whether the nature and extent of the prior experience meets the robust experience criteria and prepared the applicant sufficiently to meet the Teachers' Standards, before acceptance onto the route.

81. Whilst the department's teacher recruitment and retention efforts will always be focussed domestically, the department will continue to work to ensure that the very highest skilled teachers from around the world have the opportunities to work in English schools to benefit our pupils. Alongside other routes to QTS, some highly qualified and experienced overseas teachers may be able to apply for recognition without further assessment or training, if they meet the robust criteria. Others may be able to access teacher training where they live and work, through the international QTS programme. The programme is delivered by accredited providers and backed by the department.

Early Career Support

82. The department knows that teachers in the first few years of their careers are more likely to leave, with leaver rates for teachers in the first five years of their career being 3.5 percentage points higher than those with six to ten years of experience.³³ Therefore, once an Early Career Teacher (ECT) has completed their training, it is crucial that they are sufficiently supported as they begin their career, which is why the department has developed a suite of financial incentives and has taken steps to improve their training offer.
83. To improve the financial offer to ECTs, the department is offering Targeted Retention Incentives (TRIs), worth up to £6,000 after tax, for mathematics, physics, chemistry and computing teachers in the first five years of their careers who choose to work in disadvantaged schools. The TRI is also available in all Further Education colleges, including in additional key shortage technical subject areas, such as building & construction, engineering & manufacturing, and early years, reflecting the important role these subjects play in the economy. The department will confirm any future offer for academic year 2026/27 onwards in due course.
84. Whilst financial incentives can improve retention, it is also important that teachers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed in their role. Teaching is a profession, and this government is committed to ensuring we have well trained professionally qualified teachers in our schools. This government is delivering on

³³ See Annex FD1

a manifesto commitment by introducing QTS legislation through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. Clause 47 of the Bill will ensure that new primary and secondary teachers have QTS, unless they meet one of the exemptions set out in regulations. The vast majority of teachers who achieve QTS do so through ITT delivered by high quality accredited providers. All ITT must incorporate the content set out in the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF), which is underpinned by the best independently verified evidence of what defines great teaching.

85. In addition to the training received whilst obtaining QTS, new teachers can benefit from additional support in their first few years, which is why newly qualified teachers in local authority-maintained schools and special schools are already required to undertake a statutory induction. Clause 47 of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill will also extend the requirement for statutory induction to newly qualified teachers in primary and secondary academies in order for them to work as a teacher there. Until September, this early career support was underpinned by the Early Career Framework (ECF). The ECF provided a structured and evidence-based support system for teachers in the first two years of their careers to help ECTs develop strong teaching practices through high-quality training and mentoring. The evaluation of the ECF shows that ECTs and mentors were generally positive about their experience of the programme. ECTs valued the help and support received from their mentors, reporting increased confidence over time as they progressed through their induction. The majority of induction tutors (67%) were satisfied overall with the induction programme and 59% felt that the programme had a positive impact on ECTs likelihood to stay in teaching.
86. The department aims to go further in its support for ECTs, and in September introduced the Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE) to replace the ECF. The ECTE revises and improves the ECF programmes, maintaining the grounding in evidence, to ensure the highest standards of professional development for newly qualified teachers. Changes include moving to a combined framework to create a joined-up programme of development, which covers at least the first three years of a teacher's career. The new Initial Teacher Training Early Career Framework (ITTECF) sets out how knowledge and skills should develop across ITT and through ECT induction to reduce unnecessary repetition. Provider-led ECT training programmes build on prior knowledge, using diagnostic tools and mentoring to focus on individual development needs, supported by high-quality resources. The updated ITTECF also contains new and enhanced framework statements relating to adaptive teaching and supporting pupils with SEND. Additionally, in September 2025, the department improved ECT training to include creating diagnostic tools to focus on aspects ECTs most need to develop and to give greater flexibility in mentoring.

87. To ensure every ECT has access to a high-quality induction as part of their ECTE, in addition to the changes above, the department will also:
- Support schools to deliver their own training, if they want to;
 - Provide targeted support and further real-life examples for ECTs in special schools;
 - Reduce the burden on schools by streamlining the registration process to access the ECTE.
88. The department recognises that it needs to continue to iterate the offer in order to transform the training and support for all new teachers, and to review the experiences and needs of ECTs as well as trainees. The department has committed to a full review of the delivery of the ECTE, including the content of the ITTECF, in 2027 to ensure it continues to provide the best possible support for ECTs based on the most up to date evidence. The review in 2027 will focus on how we can increase support for ECT mentors, as well as how we can provide further support for ECTs teaching pupils with SEND.

Supporting Teachers Throughout their Career

89. It is vital that teachers are not only supported through the first few years of their career, but throughout so that they are equipped to thrive in their roles and inspire the next generation. This includes ensuring they are given opportunities to develop their skills, progress in their careers and that they can effectively manage their workload and wellbeing. This section will lay out the work the department is doing to support teachers from all backgrounds and at all stages of their careers.

Continuous Professional Development That Delivers

90. Professional development can play an important role in supporting teachers to thrive in the classroom, helping them feel supported and valued, as well as giving them the tools they need to help manage their workload.
91. The Department has now developed and made available ten National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). Five of these, for example the NPQ for Headship and NPQ for Senior Leadership, support the development of leadership skills or progression into a leadership role. The other five aim to support teachers to lead specialisms within a school, for example NPQ for Leading Teaching and NPQ for Leading Behaviour and Culture.
92. The Autumn 2025 cohort will provide an opportunity for up to 20,000 participants to undertake high-quality professional development funded by the department (subject to eligibility criteria). As of July 2025, there have been over 131,000 funded NPQs started since the reformed NPQs were introduced in autumn 2021,

reaching 20% of the teacher workforce.³⁴ The department wants to ensure that NPQs continue to offer the best possible support to teachers and leaders wanting to expand their knowledge and skills, which is why on 10 January 2025, the department announced that it will review the NPQ frameworks to consider new evidence and best-practice.

93. To ensure high-quality professional development is accessible to teachers and leaders at every school across England, the department supports a national infrastructure of Teaching School Hubs. Teaching School Hubs are a network of 87 centres of excellence, led by schools and multi-academy trusts, that offer department approved teacher training and professional development for teachers and leaders at all stages of their career. This includes ITT, early career training programmes for ECTs and mentors, and NPQs. They also quality assure ECT induction through their Appropriate Body role.
94. The department additionally supports the National Institute of Teaching to deliver its mission of improving the quality of teacher and leader professional development at a system level. The National Institute of Teaching generates and interprets research, applies the insights to the design and delivery of their teacher development programmes, and shares all findings with the sector. The National Institute of Teaching's research projects are designed to support teacher educators and continuous professional development (CPD) leads across the sector.
95. To further strengthen the professional development offer to teachers and leaders, the government has committed in its manifesto to introducing a Teacher Training Entitlement, and we are currently working with the sector to develop this.
96. It's also important that teachers feel they can grow and develop in their roles. Teaching Vacancies,³⁵ the department's free service for schools to list all their vacancies, simplifies recruitment processes and improves access to the right career opportunities to allow teachers to continue their learning, growth and professional development goals.

Reducing Workload and Improving Wellbeing

97. Alongside ensuring that teachers have opportunities to learn and develop through a strong professional development offer, it is also important that schools are supported to reduce workload and improve wellbeing. The Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders (WLTL) Wave 3 Report indicated that, in 2024, 90% of

³⁴ Teacher and Leader Development: ECF and NPQs, Department for Education (2025), Available at: [Teacher and leader development: ECF and NPQs, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

³⁵ [Teaching, leadership and support jobs - Teaching Vacancies - GOV.UK](#)

teachers and leaders who were considering leaving the profession cited ‘high workload’ as a reason for their decision. This is down from 94% the previous year.³⁶ Whilst this shows progress, it also demonstrates that more needs to be done to reduce teacher workload, and that reducing teacher workload and improving wellbeing will play a key role in recruiting and retaining excellent school staff. This will, in turn, support the government’s mission to transform the education system so that all children and young people get the skills, care and opportunities they deserve.

98. Average term-time working hours for both teachers and leaders are high. In 2024, full-time teachers reported working an average of 51.2 hours per week while full-time leaders reported working an average of 57.6 hours per week.³⁶ During term time, teachers work longer hours than similar graduates, according to the National Foundation for Educational Research.³⁷ A large proportion of teachers and middle leaders reported spending too much time on general administrative tasks (74% in 2024).³⁸ Reducing the administrative burdens placed on teachers will both help teachers to focus on what matters most – teaching - and reduce their overall working hours. To this end, the department remains committed to tackling the systemic challenges that the sector faces which drive high workload and poor wellbeing and is working together with the sector to improve the government’s policies and interventions, and to identify where further action can be taken.
99. To reduce bureaucracy for schools, the department has already taken action to remove the requirement for schools to use performance related pay. The department also reinserted a list of illustrative examples of administrative tasks that teachers and leaders should not routinely be asked to carry out into the STPCD.
100. Additionally, the department is continuing to expand its offer of direct support to school leaders and teachers. The ‘Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff’ service, allows schools and trusts to share what has worked for them in reducing workload and improving staff wellbeing. The department will continue to work closely with school leaders to expand the range of material available, ensuring schools are able to access resources to inform their approaches to tackling excessive workload and improving staff retention. The recent publication

³⁶ Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Wave 3 Report, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

³⁷ Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2024, National Foundation for Educational Research (2024). Available at: [Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2024 - NFER](#)

³⁸ Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Wave 3 Report, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

of the *Conversation guide for workload and wellbeing in schools*³⁹ should help to stimulate discussions and encourage the workforce to consider how they can help introduce more efficient practices.

101. The department is keen for this sharing of best practice to go further, and to facilitate schools sharing workload reduction advice directly. The department's Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) programme aims to break the link between young people's backgrounds and their future success by raising standards in schools through both targeted and universal support. Universal RISE will work with all schools to signpost effective practice, promote peer-to-peer support, and foster collaboration across the system. The aim is to build a self-improving school system where all schools, alongside its responsible body, can confidently navigate a path to improvement. The department is committed to ensuring that, where targeted RISE is used, it is a supportive and proportionate process, with realistic timelines to help minimise workload for school staff. Interventions will be tailored to the context of each school, and the department will continue working closely with the sector to ensure it is a supportive process.
102. The department is also exploring ways to reduce the burdens imposed on schools from government and is working with the IET partnership to see how the government's guidance can be improved and streamlined. The department has already consulted on the accountability framework and has committed to a new system that will see a more tailored and proportionate approach to intervention and better support for school leaders. We will work with the IET partnership to explore further opportunities to support headteachers, particularly in the context of inspection visits and outcomes.
103. The department believes that there is a need for robust accountability and faster school improvement that works for both parents and the sector. The department recognises that the previous inspection regime placed an undue burden on teachers and leaders whilst not delivering for parents and carers. Ofsted's renewed inspection framework, which will take effect in November, will see a new methodology for inspections which emphasises professional engagement and collaboration between inspectors and school leaders.
104. The new inspection toolkits - based around expectations set in current guidance from the department, will be familiar to school leaders and staff, and will embolden rather than distract schools as they strive to improve. Inspections visits

³⁹ Conversation guide for workload and wellbeing in schools and academy trusts, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Conversation guide for workload and wellbeing in schools and academy trusts - GOV.UK](#)

will lead to report cards which will provide clearer and broader information which will be helpful both to parents and professionals.

105. Finally, the arrangements will see an extended monitoring programme, so that where improvements are made, these can be recognised quickly in amended report cards. As Sinéad Mc Brearty's independent wellbeing impact assessment of the revised Ofsted framework notes, if the new methodology is implemented and evaluated as intended, there should, in time, be an evidence base that demonstrates that additional work for Ofsted is not required. In turn, this could have a powerful impact in addressing unnecessary workload associated with inspections.⁴⁰
106. The department recognises the pressure the sector is under and that the lead-in time to the introduction of the new framework may present additional challenges. Ofsted is committed to continuing to engage with the sector in advance of implementing the framework, and to carrying out extensive engagement and training during the first half of the autumn terms so that schools and providers are well prepared for the new inspections. The rollout of the new inspections is being managed carefully, and the first state-funded schools who will be fully inspected under the new arrangements will be selected from a pool of volunteers.
107. Where workload cannot be directly reduced, the department is committed to leveraging technology to enhance time efficiency and minimise the burden placed on teachers. For example, technology can streamline administrative tasks, allowing teachers to focus more on teaching and less on paperwork: the department's robust Technology in Schools Survey found that 70% of school leaders report time savings on tasks such as parental engagement, staff management and CPD delivery. The same study showed that 63% of teachers reported saving time collaborating and sharing resources.⁴¹
108. To support teachers and leaders further and to respond to a clear ask from the sector, the department published online materials in June this year to support staff in schools and colleges use AI safely and effectively.⁴² They have been developed by the sector for the sector in partnership with the Chiltern Learning Trust (CLT) and Chartered College of Teaching (CCT). Supplementing the Generative AI policy paper,⁴³ these materials include a toolkit for all educators

⁴⁰ Independent Wellbeing Impact Assessment of the Revised Ofsted Framework, Education Support (2025). Available at: [Independent wellbeing impact assessment of the revised Ofsted framework](#)

⁴¹ Technology in schools survey report: 2022 to 2023, Department for Education (2023). Available at: [Technology in schools survey report: 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

⁴² Using AI in education settings: support materials, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Using AI in education settings: support materials - GOV.UK](#)

⁴³ Generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK](#)

outlining the basic information that everyone working with young people should know about using AI safely and some potential use cases.

109. In addition to taking steps to reduce workload and support teachers and leaders, the department is also taking action to promote positive wellbeing cultures in schools and colleges. This includes working with the sector to update the education staff wellbeing charter. The charter provides a framework to support schools and colleges to remove workload and wellbeing barriers through developing supportive wellbeing cultures. Over 4,100 schools and colleges are signed up to the charter.
110. The department is aware that it must also look more broadly at other factors contributing to increased workload. The latest WLTl report showed that 60% of teachers and middle leaders reported that they felt they spent too much time following up on behavioural incidents, and that 52% of teachers and leaders who were considering leaving the profession reported that pupil behaviour was a factor in their consideration.⁴⁴ Equipping teachers and leaders with the skills they need to manage behaviour may, therefore, reduce teacher workload and boost retention rates.
111. As part of the previously mentioned RISE programme, the department is launching up to 90 new Attendance and Behaviour hubs supporting up to 5,000 schools across the country. Hubs will be led by schools with excellent attendance and behaviour practice who will support others in their region that are most in need to develop safe, welcoming cultures with high expectations for attendance and behaviour, a strong leadership approach, robust processes and the effective use of data.
112. In addition to supporting schools by equipping them with the tools they need to improve behaviour, the department is continuing to work on rolling out breakfast clubs. Evidence shows that where schools run breakfast clubs, they report improvements to pupils' behaviour, attendance and attainment.⁴⁵ If passed, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill will mean that every state-funded school with children on roll from Year 6 will be required to offer a free breakfast club before the start of each school day, regardless of circumstance, meaning every child has a supportive start to the school day.
113. The department appreciates that schools are already doing a lot to support children and we are investing a further £80m into free breakfast clubs between

⁴⁴ Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Wave 3 Report, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

⁴⁵ Magic Breakfast: Evaluation report and executive summary, Education Endowment Foundation (2029). Available at: [Magic Breakfast report.pdf](#)

April 2026 and March 2027 to bolster this support. This will help us reach a further 500,000 children in year one of national roll out.

114. The delivery of free breakfast clubs in schools should be tailored to ensure clubs run effectively, meet the needs of pupils, and align with the broader context of each school. Schools will be funded for the running of a breakfast club, including food, staffing, and day-to-day delivery.
115. It will be up to schools to decide how best to use the funding to staff breakfast clubs, and there is no expectation that it needs to be staffed by teachers. The department believes that the improvements in behaviour associated with free breakfast clubs will be experienced first-hand by teachers. This will allow them to spend more of their time doing what they love, teaching.
116. Breakfast clubs are just one part of the government's wider objective to reduce child poverty. The Child Poverty Taskforce will publish a Child Poverty Strategy in the autumn that will deliver fully funded measures to tackle the structural and root causes of child poverty. This includes the action already announced to expand free school meals to children from households in receipt of universal credit, lifting 100,000 children out of poverty by the end of this Parliament. Reducing child poverty will reduce the impacts it has on their education, and the burden it places on teachers.

Encouraging Greater Flexible Working

117. Improving teacher's access to flexible working is a key part of the department's ambition to modernise the teaching profession, and to improve teacher wellbeing. Expanding and promoting flexible working opportunities in schools can help to recruit, retain and motivate teachers, and promote equality of opportunity in the workforce. By helping to recruit and retain talented teachers, it can support the high-quality teaching needed to make the biggest difference in a child's education. To help schools realise the benefits of flexible working, the department is taking action to support implementation of flexible working in schools. This includes:
 - Encouraging schools to sign up to the department's Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, which promotes the wellbeing of staff, and includes commitments for organisations to create a supportive culture around flexible working, recognising the key role flexible working can play in supporting staff wellbeing;
 - Delivering a programme focused on embedding flexible working in schools, and multi academy trusts (MATs), including the delivery of supportive webinars and a cohort of flexible working ambassador schools

and MATs championing flexible working and providing bespoke peer support;

- The aforementioned changes relating to TLR payments, allowing them to be paid to teachers based on the proportion of responsibility they carry out, rather than their contracted hours.

118. The introduction of a reference to flexible working in the STPCD, making it clear that all schools should be aiming to support flexible working requests where operationally feasible, and setting an expectation that schools have a flexible working policy in place.
119. These steps are in addition to the changes to flexible working being made through the government's Make Work Pay plan. The Employment Rights Bill will strengthen the existing day-one right to request flexible working, by requiring employers to explain the grounds on which they've denied a request and adding the requirement that a rejection of a request be reasonable.

Building a Representative Teaching Workforce

120. It is essential that we attract and retain excellent teachers from all backgrounds to develop the strong profession that will help our children to thrive. Promoting greater equality in the teaching workforce is not only a matter of fairness - it also strengthens recruitment, improves retention and supports our broader goal of teacher sufficiency; ultimately driving higher standards across our schools and improving outcomes for all pupils. By fostering inclusive environments and equitable career pathways, the department can reduce attrition and build a more stable workforce. The department asks the STRB to consider how any of their views or recommendations for this year's report may impact those with different protected characteristics, so that these inclusive environments can be fostered across the sector.
121. Our diverse range of pathways into teaching kicks off the department's ambition to have a diverse workforce. However, to address disparities in ITT recruitment, the department is trialling anonymised recruitment through the 'Find a candidate' section of its digital service, 'Apply'. Candidates' names and dates of birth are being obscured to support fairer decision-making. Candidates' ethnicity, sex, and disability information is already obscured during the recruitment process.
122. The department is committed to increasing representation across all phases and stages of the teaching career pipeline. It is essential that the teaching workforce reflects the communities it serves, and that children see themselves reflected in the role models around them. However, we recognise that ethnic minority teachers and those with disabilities remain underrepresented—particularly in leadership roles—relative to both the working-age population and the pupil populations. The Employment Rights Bill is introducing the requirement for all

employers - including schools - to report ethnicity and disability pay gap data. In preparation for this, the department is aiming to enhance data collection through the School Workforce Census. This will enable the department to better monitor and address disparities affecting protected groups, including those from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with a disability.

123. The National Foundation for Educational Research found that teachers from Asian and Black ethnic backgrounds have a significantly higher intention to apply for promotion than their White counterparts, even after controlling for differences in characteristics.⁴⁶ This suggests that issues in representation are not due to a lack of interest, but are more likely to reflect a lack of opportunity or inequitable treatment in decision-making processes.
124. In reviewing NPQs, the department is exploring how we can ensure NPQs support leaders to realise the aspirations of all their staff and create a diverse talent pipeline. Some NPQ providers are working with the sector to offer tailored courses that encourage participation from women and ethnic minority teachers.
125. By embedding equity at every stage of the teaching journey, we can create a profession that not only attracts and retains diverse talent but also delivers the highest standards of education for every child, in every classroom. The department would therefore appreciate it if the STRB considered the department's aims to improve access to flexible working, and any potential impact on teachers from differing backgrounds when it makes its views and recommendations.

Supporting School Leaders

126. Having high quality school leadership is critical to ensure schools can provide a high-quality education to their pupils, effectively support their staff and run efficiently. The department aims to support school leaders to make the best decisions for their schools, and to ensure that every teacher that wishes to progress into leadership feels equipped to do so. To encourage progression into leadership, it is vital that leaders continue to be supported, both through opportunities for professional development to maintain their wellbeing and manage their workload. Whilst many of the interventions previously discussed apply for leaders as well as teachers, the department has also created material that is tailored for the needs of school leaders. This includes a collection of leadership NPQs. These leadership NPQs help boost teachers and leaders' existing knowledge and confidence as they progress into more senior roles and

⁴⁶ Ethnic Disparities in Entry to Teacher Training, Teacher Retention and Progression to Leadership, National Foundation for Educational Research (2025). Available at: [Ethnic disparities in entry to teacher training, teacher retention and progression to leadership - NFER](#)

the specialist NPQs have been designed to support teachers and school leaders who want to broaden and deepen their expertise in specialist areas of school practice.

127. There is a growing recognition in the sector that professional supervision, a form of mental health and wellbeing support, can provide valuable support to those with challenging leadership roles such as headteachers and SENCOs. Since April 2024, over 900 school and college leaders have begun to benefit from a programme of professional supervision funded by the department and delivered by the charity Education Support. The government is funding these places whilst provision of supervision grows in the sector, supporting the cultural change towards normalising discussions of mental health and demonstrating the demand for and benefits of supervision. Participants have reported a reduction in stress and anxiety levels and improved management of workload.⁴⁷ It is anticipated that a further 1,500 leaders will benefit from this support up to the end of March 2027. The department continually works with Education Support to improve the delivery of the programme, as well as with the Supervision in Education Network to promote the benefits of supervision for all education staff, most recently by supporting the publication of the network's Quality Standard Framework for Supervision in Education, which the department grant funded.

Conclusion

128. This chapter has laid out the ambitions the government has for the teaching workforce, and the measures it is taking to reach those ambitions.
129. In addition to these policies, the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a key part of the overall reward package for teachers and aids retention. It offers a generous, defined benefit pension which provides a guaranteed income in retirement, alongside other important benefits such as ill-health cover, a death-in-service lump sum and ongoing benefits payable to eligible dependents. The TPS is particularly valued by established teachers with the scheme design rewarding those who are in teaching the longest.
130. Going forward, the department is keen to continue to work with the sector to develop further policies in a collaborative manner. Since January 2025, the department has been working with the IET to develop and implement a range of retention-focused interventions to support staff in schools and colleges. The aforementioned conversation guide for leaders to help support workload

⁴⁷ School leader mental health and wellbeing service evaluation, Department for Education (2023). Available at: [School leader mental health and wellbeing service evaluation - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118118/school-leader-mental-health-and-wellbeing-service-evaluation-2023.pdf)

reduction was developed in collaboration with the IET. The department will continue to work with the IET to address teacher recruitment and retention issues through policy measures and interventions aimed at reducing workload, supporting effective practices, reducing pressures from government, boosting diversity of the workforce and increasing access to flexible working opportunities.

School Budget Context

Introduction

131. The recent SR settlement means that overall schools funding is increasing by £4.2 billion between 2025/26 and 2028/29, taking the total funding to £69.5 billion. This more than protects overall schools funding in real terms per pupil, supporting teachers and leaders to deliver high and rising standards across every school. It is an investment which reflects the trust placed in school leaders to provide the most effective support for their pupils.
132. The funding increase for financial year 2026/27 will support continued reform of the school system, including covering the full-year cost of the 2025 teacher pay award in mainstream schools and delivering an uplift to the national funding formula. While the SR investment reflects a strong commitment to education, it has been carefully prioritised within a constrained fiscal environment.
133. Continuing to deliver the government's ambitions for schools - including investment in a high-quality workforce appropriately rewarded - will require a sustained and ambitious focus on maximising the impact of existing as well as new expenditure. Schools are driving better value and making spending smarter to contribute to the delivery of the 4% teacher pay award in 2025 and there is already excellent practice in the sector. But there are also opportunities to spread that best practice and also to take further action. It is the joint responsibility of the government and the entire school system to secure best value for money, unlocking the full value of the substantial resources in the system – not least, the expert professionals, teaching and support staff – to best deliver for children. To deliver the government's ambitions for schools, the department will tackle the systemic issues that drive costs and prevent schools and groups from realising the best value for money. The department will also urge schools, trusts and local authorities to continue to proactively drive better value from their budgets across the next three years. Though this will help release cash back into schools' budgets to invest in children and staff and contribute towards pay affordability, it is not just about helping schools manage costs; it is about unlocking opportunities that directly benefit children.
134. As part of helping schools drive value for money, the department has brought forward the pay award process to aid schools in planning their budgets. Last year's pay award was announced at the earliest point in a decade.
135. Teacher pay accounts for approximately 50% of school expenditure, making early notice of pay awards critical for effective budget planning. To support this, the department launched this year's pay round two months earlier than last year and five months ahead of the previous government's 2024/25 round.

136. As outlined in the Secretary of State’s remit letter, schools are being asked to innovate across areas including Ofsted, curriculum, assessment, and SEND. In this context, budget certainty is essential. That is why the Secretary of State has requested STRB recommendations for a multi-year pay award covering 2026/27, 2027/28, and an indicative award for 2028/29. This approach will enable schools to plan more accurately, make informed recruitment and provision decisions, and maximise value from every pound spent - ensuring public funds are used as effectively as possible.

An Appropriate Pay Award

137. As set out in the recruitment and retention chapter, there are positive signs that the government’s pay strategy is starting to deliver improvements to the recruitment and retention of teachers. To continue to build on these improvements, the department’s view is that a 6.5% pay award over 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 would be appropriate, with the level of awards weighted towards the latter part of the remit. This would support schools to manage the challenging affordability position in FY 2026/27, which has resulted from the significant pay uplift in AY 2025/26, preceded by a substantial pay uplift in 2024/25. A weighting towards higher awards in 2027/28 and 2028/29 would give schools a longer timeframe to plan for changes to their operations, provisions or staffing.
138. The proposed awards would maintain the competitiveness of teacher pay and provide a real terms improvement over the parliament. A 6.5% award over the next three years, when combined with the increases from the last two pay rounds, would mean teacher pay rising by nearly 17% across the parliament. Using the Office for Budget Responsibility’s (OBR) forecasts for the Consumer Price Index (CPI), this would be a real terms increase of almost 4.5% over the five years.⁴⁸
139. Considering the projected trajectory of average earnings growth across the wider economy, it is appropriate that pay awards over the next three years are lower than those in the past few years. Measures of average wage growth have historically been higher than median pay settlements, as they are affected by compositional changes in the labour force and factors such as changes to working hours. Settlement data are the most comparable data to pay review body decisions, as they are a direct measure of consolidated pay awards, and are not directly affected by other factors such as changes to working hours or changes in

⁴⁸ Economic and fiscal outlook, Office for Budget Responsibility (March 2025). Available at: [Economic and fiscal outlook – March 2025 - Office for Budget Responsibility](#)

the composition of employment. According to Brightmine, median settlements across the economy were 3% in Q1 and Q2 2025.⁴⁹ Relative to this, the 2025/26 award of 4% should support an improvement in recruitment and retention.

140. Average earnings growth is forecast to slow further over the coming months, and into next year. The OBR expects average earnings growth to average around 2% in the three years from 2026/27 to 2028/29, down from 3.7% in 2025/26.⁵⁰
141. As discussed in detail in last year's evidence, there appears to be a divergence of pay growth for professional occupations and in the upper half of the income distribution compared to the whole economy average, with slower pay growth in groups more comparable to the teaching profession.⁵¹ This may continue to be the case, given the contribution to average earnings growth of the 7.1% increase to the National Living Wage in 2025/26 and its forecasted increase of 4.1%⁵² in 2026/27, higher than average earnings growth forecasts for the same year.
142. Graduate starting salaries have also shown slower growth after the pandemic than earning in the wider economy, and the initial data from 2025 shows this trend continuing. The median graduate starting salary in the UK's leading graduate employers increased by £1,000 or around 3% in 2025,⁵³ lower than whole economy average earnings growth in the year to date.⁵⁴ This indicates that an award for teachers that maintains competitiveness may be below the average earnings growth for the whole economy.
143. Different data sources suggest that the labour market has continued to loosen over 2025. The unemployment rate has risen over the last year, reaching 4.8% in the 3 months to August 2025. Vacancy levels in the economy have fallen over the past three years and Pay As You Earn (PAYE) Real Time information data on payrolled employees shows a gradual fall over this year.⁵⁵
144. New graduates are a key source of teacher trainees. There is evidence that in recent years, the graduate employment market has slowed down more than for

⁴⁹ Pay Trends 2025, Brightmine (2025). Available at: [Pay trends 2025 | August report](#)

⁵⁰ Economic and fiscal outlook, Office for Budget Responsibility, (March 2025). Available at: [Economic and fiscal outlook – March 2025 - Office for Budget Responsibility](#)

⁵¹ Government Evidence to the STRB, 2024, Department for Education (2024). Available at: [Government evidence to the STRB](#)

⁵² National Living Wage Estimate Update, Low Pay Commission (2025). Available at: [National Living Wage estimate update - GOV.UK](#)

⁵³ The Graduate Market in 2025, High Fliers Research (2025). Available at: [The Graduate Market in 2025](#).

⁵⁴ AWE: Whole Economy Year on Year Three Month Average Growth, Office for National Statistics (2025). Available at: [AWE: Whole Economy Year on Year Three Month Average Growth \(%\): Seasonally Adjusted Total Pay Excluding Arrears - Office for National Statistics](#)

⁵⁵ Labour Market Overview, Office for National Statistics (2025). Available at: [Labour market overview, UK - Office for National Statistics](#) [Accessed October 2025]

the general economy and is worse than forecasts had expected. The latest High Fliers Survey, from September 2025, finds that the graduate intake, was over 14% lower in 2024 than the previous year and the largest annual drop since 2009. This was a significant downward revision with employers recruiting over 20% fewer graduates than they had originally expected to in last year's report. Recruitment targets in the Times top employers have decreased further in 2025, meaning that graduate vacancies have fallen for the third year running.⁵⁶ Graduate labour market statistics also show employment rates for graduates aged 21 to 30 fell for the second year in a row in 2024.⁵⁷ The worsening of the graduate labour market is likely to have contributed to the improvement in teacher recruitment last year, and early indications from 2025 suggest this trend will continue at least in the short term.

The Fiscal Context and Funding the Pay Award

145. As outlined above, overall schools funding is increasing by £4.2 billion between 2025/26 and 2028/29, taking the total funding to £69.5 billion as the outcome of the SR.
146. This outcome reflects the government's ambitious plans to drive improvement and reform in the school system to advance the outcomes for children and young people and to deliver the Opportunity Mission. In particular, this settlement includes investment to transform the delivery of the SEND system and to establish a new entitlement to free school meals for all children in households in receipt of Universal Credit. Not only has the department invested in schools, but it has also invested in Best Start family hubs, school-based nurseries, and mental health support teams, which aims to address the wider pressures that schools have been facing.
147. The investment in schools comes in a challenging fiscal context as the government has inherited substantial pressures on the public finances. While this investment is both welcome and necessary, it is vital to strike a balance. Going beyond the proposal set out in written evidence over the SR period would place significant pressure on school budgets, especially in 2026/27.
148. The macroeconomic context is driving some of the pressures on the public purse. The UK economy has shown resilience to economic uncertainty of global trade and volatility in domestic demand, emerging as the fastest-growing G7 economy

⁵⁶ The Graduate Market in 2025, High Fliers Research. [The Graduate Market in 2025](#)

⁵⁷ Graduate Labour Market Statistics, Department for Education (2025). Available at: ['Employment rates by graduate type' from 'Graduate labour market statistics', Permanent data table - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

cumulatively across the first half of the year. Looking ahead, expectations for 2026 have softened compared to the spring: the most recent IMF forecast (July 2025)⁵⁸ was 1.4% compared to 1.5% in January, while the latest Bank of England (August 2025) forecast was 1.25%, compared to 1.5% in February.⁵⁹ There has been a persistent slowdown in UK productivity growth since the Global Financial Crisis, which has worsened since the Covid-19 pandemic as productivity growth has largely flatlined. Sustained productivity growth is required to support sustainable growth in real wages.

149. Low and stable inflation is a key component of a stable macroeconomic environment and a prerequisite for sustainable economic growth and improved living standards. Headline Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation has risen over the past year to 3.8% in September – above the 2% target - primarily due to one-off factors such as a rise in global energy market prices and regulated water bills.⁶⁰ Services inflation, an indicator of underlying inflationary pressure, has fallen by 1.0 percentage points since the start of Q1 2024/25. According to the Bank of England's August Monetary Policy Report, inflation is expected to return sustainably to target in 2026/27. Overall, risks to inflation remain two-sided, reflecting domestic cost pressure from wage growth which has been a major factor in services inflation persistence, and prices as well as external pressures from energy markets and trade policy.
150. The UK economy remains exposed to several risks, including potential global spillovers from new US trade tariffs, heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, the ongoing impact of Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Overall, risks to UK growth remain elevated and skewed to the downside.
151. Affordability levels across the three years will be subject to both future decisions regarding the use of the Core Schools Budget and changes in costs. The Schools' Costs Technical Note (SCTN) will provide further detail on the government's forecast for affordability based on a range of economic variables, including policy assumptions on schools funding and costs. This will provide the department's full affordability assessment. While the department is not yet able to provide headroom figures, the overall pattern suggests that affordability will be limited across the SR period, and especially in 2026/27, when affordability will be tightly constrained. This is the result of the government rightly prioritising

⁵⁸ World Economic Outlook Update, International Monetary Fund (July 2025). Available at: [World Economic Outlook Update, July 2025: Global Economy: Tenuous Resilience amid Persistent Uncertainty](#)

⁵⁹ Monetary Policy Report, Bank of England (August 2025). Available at: [Monetary Policy Report - August 2025 | Bank of England](#)

⁶⁰ Consumer Price Inflation, Office for National Statistics, (August 2025). Available at: [Consumer price inflation, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

investment in teacher salaries with significant pay awards in 2025/26, early in the parliament, the cost of which continues into financial year 2026/27.

152. Moreover, beyond headroom figures, the department anticipates that schools' capacity to make and implement plans to maximise their use of resources – supported by departmental offers and otherwise - will increase with time and therefore across the next three years. We can be confident that this will contribute to improved affordability.
153. It is therefore crucial to schools that the overall cost pressure of the teacher pay award is weighted towards the latter two years of this remit– allowing them greater capacity to plan out how they will be funded. This approach would align with the central purpose of the multi-year remit: giving schools long term certainty to support effective budget planning.
154. As is customary, schools will need to take into account the financial implications of support staff pay for each of the next three years in their budgets. Support staff terms and conditions are currently set out in the Green Book produced by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. This period will include the establishment of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body.
155. As set out above, the department expects that most schools will need to implement plans to realise and sustain better value from existing spend in addition to the funding being provided through the Core Schools' Budget to deliver the pay awards. As it is the collective responsibility of government and the entire school system to secure the best value for money, the department is urging every school, trust, and local authority – underpinned by departmental support to tackle the systemic issues that drive costs and prevent schools getting the best value for money – to take proactive steps now to identify and implement opportunities that maximise value from the school budget, ensuring we make best use of every pound to the benefit of children.
156. There are significant opportunities to do this. There is scope for schools to secure better value from their commercial and non-staff spend, supported by the department's core offer. Many already take advantage of the Teaching Vacancies Service to reduce their recruitment costs and the Get Help Buying for Schools service to support their buying decisions, including one trust which recently saved over £500,000 through better contract management.
157. The department continues to expand its offer, such as with energy where the new Energy for Schools Service will enable significant cost savings for schools switching to it - schools which participated in the pilot last year will save 36% on average compared to their previous contracts. There are more areas where schools can secure better value and the department will continue to identify opportunities and provide support for schools to realise them, which is why the

department intends to establish a new programme to help schools and groups seize opportunities to maximise the most value from every pound.

158. There is significant potential in under-utilised assets across the school sector, including sizeable financial reserves and physical assets such as land and buildings. Opportunities include better banking solutions and, in particular, making use of the substantial reserves in our system, which totalled more than £6 billion in 2023/24, nearly 10% of the core schools budget, which could be unlocked and used to benefit children directly. While some schools have reserves earmarked for capital projects, it is important to acknowledge that schools have greater income stability than charities or businesses and these funds are to be used for the benefit of children, for example, through investing such reserves in new technology which also has the benefit of helping to tackle workload and can increase productivity.
159. There are also opportunities to address any red tape which inhibits schools using their other assets to support income generation – for example, use of school buildings outside the school day and during school holidays. Additionally, the department will go further through initiatives such as the Great British Energy Solar Partnership for Schools, which will develop ways for schools to make better use of their buildings – in particular, the estimated 55 million m² of viable roof space across the education system, which could be used for solar capacity.
160. The shape of the schools workforce continues to evolve, with considerable variation in how staff are deployed, but ultimately it is excellent teachers that deliver the best outcomes for all children, and it is vital we continue to maintain this pipeline of teachers.
161. Many schools are already taking action to maximise their resources for high quality teaching. We want to help schools to learn from each other and from best practice to ensure that they are delivering the best possible value, which is why the department has made available toolkits such as Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool (FBIT) for schools and will soon publish the new Workforce Toolkit.
162. The department acknowledges that opportunities vary across individual schools, reflecting differences in context and operational models. Nevertheless, several common themes have emerged, particularly in relation to workforce deployment. Schools have identified and acted upon opportunities in the following areas:
 - Use of Supply and Agency Staff: Schools are reviewing their reliance on supply and agency teachers to manage costs more effectively. National expenditure on agency supply teachers has increased significantly in recent years, reaching £1.4 billion in 2023/24.
 - Leadership Team Structures: Schools are reconsidering the composition of their leadership teams. There has been a 45% increase in assistant

headteacher positions since 2011/12, indicating some room to drive better value from spending.

- Deployment of Support Staff: There is space for schools to optimise the deployment of support staff to enhance their impact on pupil learning and development. As an example, the workforce data shows a 30% increase in teaching assistants, compared to a 7% increase in teachers since 2011.
- Integration of Technology and AI: Schools are increasingly leveraging technology, including AI, to support teachers in delivering high-quality education. This includes improving efficiency in lesson planning, marking, assessment, curriculum development, and streamlining administrative processes beyond the classroom.

163. The department is also aware of trends of increasing executive pay and monitors this through an annual engagement exercise. There are opportunities to drive value for money in this area – the department has started to make progress in this area with the recent introduction of executive pay into the Financial Benchmarking and Insight tool for trusts to encourage boards to make evidence-based decisions when setting executive pay.
164. It is important that schools have sufficient lead in time to plan and implement changes to cover the full costs of pay awards – which would be put at risk with a higher pay award in 2026/27. This will also support schools to plan for the changes required for SEND reform, with a clear picture of the cost pressures forecast from their staff structure. The next SCTN will provide further analysis on the expected balance between schools funding and costs at a national level.
165. Deferring higher pay awards into 2027/28 and 2028/29 would support schools by providing time for plans to maximise value from their resources. The department recognises when and how schools will be able to do this will vary. For example, some schools may be locked into contracts with suppliers which mean changes will take time and where strategic decisions including workforce planning are needed and these decisions may be taken over a number of years. Although *when* such changes would be realised across the SR period is uncertain, it is reasonable to assume that schools will be in a position to implement plans by the final year of the period i.e. 2028/29. Allowing three years provides sufficient time for schools to develop multiyear plans, renegotiate contracts where necessary, and make more complex structural and strategic decisions.
166. If costs are frontloaded, schools would need to identify and implement plans more rapidly. However, this may not always be feasible, particularly given the complexity of school budgets and the need to protect educational outcomes. In such cases, schools could face financial strain or be forced to make unplanned short-term adjustments that adversely impact pupil learning or the workforce, and that can be difficult to reverse even when opportunities are later realised.

Deferring higher pay awards into 2027/28 and 2028/29, would provide schools with the necessary time and flexibility to plan and deliver sustainable approaches to managing their resources, helping to safeguard both financial stability and the quality of provision to best deliver for children.

Supporting Schools to Manage Their Budgets

167. The department recognises that to cover the 6.5% pay award proposed for teachers over 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29, that in addition to the new funding being allocated through the SR, most schools will need to make plans to maximise value from their budgets.
168. How schools plan for this will depend on their circumstances, including changes in pupil rolls and previous spending decisions on staffing and non-staff costs. As covered in the previous section, our central expectation is that 2026/27 is likely to be the year when headroom will be most constrained at a national level and where schools will have had the least planning time to implement any changes and in ways which best deliver for children. The department thinks it would therefore be appropriate for the overall pay increase over the years to be weighted towards 2027/28 and 2028/29.
169. As part of the department's core offer, all schools can already access services such as the Get Help Buying for Schools service to get best value when procuring goods and our Teaching Vacancies Service to save recruitment costs. To aid in managing their budgets all schools have access to the department's Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool to examine their financial data and benchmark their spending against similar schools. It can help users identify areas for improvement and share best practice with others. Alongside this the Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning tool offers guidance and support to help schools plan the best curriculum for their pupils with the funding they have available while schools can also access the School Resource Management Adviser Programme. School Resource Management Advisers are accredited sector experts that provide peer-to-peer advice to schools on using revenue and capital resources.
170. As covered in the previous section, the department is continuing to expand its core offer. For example, we have expanded the department's Energy for Schools scheme to all schools following last year's initial pilot. Schools that use the service are added to the department's energy contract with Crown Commercial Service, which buys energy for this particular contract over a long period of time, reducing the risk to schools of substantial fluctuations in price.
171. The service also helps:
 - Protect schools from market volatility and high prices

- Save time spent on procurement process
- Remove risk associated with unregulated energy brokers
- Comply with procurement regulations

172. To go further, the department aims to establish a new programme shortly to help schools and groups seize opportunities to maximise value from every pound. This is a shared responsibility, so the department will tackle the systemic issues that drive costs and prevent schools and groups from getting the best value for money and provide support to schools and groups in four key areas where we know there are opportunities to drive better value: commercial spend; assets, including reserves; workforce deployment; and tackling barriers to further improvements to driving value from their resources, particularly through AI and technology. The new programme will provide an expanded level of support to schools and groups in the form of benchmark data, toolkits, commercial offers, capability building, case studies and investment in areas such as technology.

Working Conditions Reform

Introduction

173. Working conditions are important to teachers' experience of the profession and play a key role in recruiting and retaining teachers. There have been representations for the department to review the STPCD and the department has dedicated time to engage with partners to understand potential areas for reform. The Secretary of State has set out her ambitions for pay and conditions through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill (which is currently going through the legislative process, and which will require some secondary legislation to implement). High-quality trusts have demonstrated how excellence and innovation can be spread across the system, and the department wants all schools to have access to these flexibilities. For these reasons, the department is looking at where we can build in greater flexibilities within the pay system to allow all state schools to innovate and attract the top teaching talent they need.
174. The current fiscal context is challenging and therefore this is a further reason to allow school leaders greater autonomy to make efficient workforce decisions, as they have the most understanding of the needs of their pupils and workforce. Changes to the STPCD are being pursued in conjunction with the department's efforts to modernise the workforce and to deliver 6.5k additional teachers by the end of the parliament.
175. The department is committed to managing these reforms to working conditions incrementally to avoid overburdening schools. Reforms will take place over the course of this parliament, building on changes already made, such as making clear that teachers can undertake PPA time remotely, and the many other reforms referenced in the *Recruitment and Retention: Government Ambitions and Policies* chapter. Some changes including the establishment of the pay floor can only take place once the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill receives Royal Assent. The department continues to prioritise working in partnership with the sector, particularly on complex issues such as working hours. This is why the department is asking for views on this topic this year to listen to the sector and gather evidence and views on potential future reform.
176. The Secretary of State is keen to look at three key areas of reform within this pay remit. The first is removing restrictions on non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to allow schools the option to offer one-off payments to staff. The second area is looking at the salary safeguarding period to ensure the balance is right between efficient workforce deployment and ensuring staff protections. Lastly, the department is keen to understand the benefits and challenges of

current working hours arrangements for teachers and leaders to inform our future thinking and potential reform in this space.

Recommendations on Non-Consolidated Payments (Including Bonuses)

177. Teachers play a vital role in society, and we are committed to ensuring they are valued for the hard work they do. One commonly used reward tool in the wider labour market are non-consolidated payments (including bonuses). These are often given as a one-off payment to reward contributions on a short-term project or exemplary discrete piece of work.
178. While the STPCD allows for certain forms of non-consolidated payments mostly in the form of allowances, it does not provide for other types of non-consolidated payments, including bonuses or honoraria to teachers. This restriction potentially limits the ability of these schools to provide timely financial reward, without creating an ongoing financial obligation, for high-quality work or specific contributions.
179. The department understands that some academies offer non-consolidated payments or bonuses to their staff, such as a “golden hello” for new staff, rewards for staff who have delivered a long service in their particular school, and one-off payments to reward exceptional performance. Currently, maintained schools are not able to make payments like this to their staff.
180. In the remit letter, Secretary of State asked the STRB to consider and make recommendations on whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to reward teachers, separate to and above any pay progression arrangements and the annual STRB recommended pay uplift. The department’s view is that allowing this could provide maintained schools with an additional option to use remuneration more flexibly, in line with the flexibilities already available to academies.
181. As mentioned above, within the STPCD, there are currently provisions that allow schools to offer certain payments to recruit, retain and reward teachers and leaders, currently about 55% of school leaders use them.⁶¹ These include the Recruitment and Retention Allowance, which is a discretionary additional payment that schools may choose to offer to teachers, for example, to attract and retain staff in posts that are difficult to fill. TLRs are another tool currently available in the STPCD, particularly TLR 3, which is a fixed-term

⁶¹ Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Wave 3 Report, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101444/Working_lives_of_teachers_and_leaders_wave_3_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

allowance awarded to teachers in England for undertaking time-limited projects that are focused on improving teaching and learning within the school.

182. However, as both Recruitment and Retention Allowances and TLRs have strict limitations in their use, the department believes allowing maintained schools to offer bonuses for specific purposes fills the gap left by these initiatives. For example, schools may wish to make a one-off payment as a reward to staff for exceptional work or to recognise contributions beyond contractual obligations, such as leading extracurricular activities or supporting whole-school initiatives. These activities would be different from other forms of remuneration that tend to require on-going additional responsibility rather than rewarding short term retrospective efforts for when teachers have gone above and beyond. This is why the department is keen to explore the removal of the prohibition on non-consolidated payments (including bonuses) to increase flexibility and enable schools to offer these timely, one-off payments to reward their staff for their contributions if they wish.
183. The department believes that enabling maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments would:
- Create parity between maintained schools and academies;
 - Encourage innovation in the use of financial awards to support workforce needs;
 - Help retain excellent teachers by recognising exceptional contributions;
 - Support schools in making efficient use of their budgets.
184. The department recognises that some stakeholders have concerns about the use of non-consolidated payments. These concerns include subjectivity and fairness; the potential for inconsistent application of payments or decisions made at the discretion of individual leaders; and the possibility that bonuses might be used as a substitute for formal pay progression.
185. To address these concerns, the department proposes the following safeguards:
- Schools wishing to use non-consolidated payments must clearly outline their approach in their local pay and conditions policy, including eligibility criteria and allocation processes.
 - Non-consolidated payments must not be used as a substitute for pay increases agreed by government. The department is clear that this would be an inappropriate use of the policy.
 - Decisions must be made in compliance with equalities and employment legislation.
186. In terms of how this is delivered, any payment of non-consolidated awards should be entirely separate to existing annual pay progression and the annual pay uplift agreed by government following STRB recommendations. Instead, it would

provide an additional tool for schools to recognise and reward excellent performance. It is important to note that schools will not be receiving additional funding to cover the costs of any non-consolidated payments including bonuses they wish to make.

187. This proposed change would give all maintained schools the option to offer non-consolidated payments, though it would not be mandatory. The aim is to provide schools with greater flexibility to use these payments where appropriate and affordable at the discretion of the school. The department remains committed to supporting schools in attracting and retaining excellent teachers and leaders. While some schools may decide not to use this approach if it doesn't suit their context, enabling non-consolidated payments is considered a positive step towards improving recruitment and retention, while preserving the integrity of the pay framework.

Recommendations on Salary Safeguarding

188. In the remit letter, the Secretary of State has asked for the STRB to consider the current salary safeguarding arrangements to provide recommendations on whether the salary safeguarding period should be reduced to enable employers to deploy their workforce most effectively, whilst ensuring that teachers are still protected from sudden drops in their salary.
189. Salary safeguarding arrangements protect the salaries and allowances of teachers who lose their post (or part of their post) due to reorganisation or restructuring. The safeguarded sum is equal to any lost salary or allowances for up to three years.
190. This salary safeguarding period of three years applies, unless the teacher is in a post for a fixed period or fixed term contract. There are other instances where the safeguarding period can also end early such as when a teacher moves schools or receives pay progression that exceeds the value of the safeguarded sum. If the safeguarded sum is more than £500, a teacher can be asked to undertake reasonable additional duties, which are appropriate and commensurate with the safeguarded sum. If a teacher unreasonably refuses to carry out such additional duties, the employer can stop payment of the safeguarded sum.
191. The intention of salary safeguarding is to help schools manage their workforces during a period of transition whilst still providing teachers with reassurance around how any change will impact their pay. It ensures that teachers do not face a reduction in their pay through no fault of their own.
192. It is difficult to determine the exact number of teachers covered by salary safeguarding at any given time, but data indicates it is likely to be a small proportion. In the WLTL report, 2% of teachers surveyed reported being in receipt

of a safeguarded TLR payment (as we would expect this has remained stable across the survey waves).⁶² This is a survey sample, so may not be representative of the whole workforce; it also relates to TLRs only, so there may be a higher number of teachers covered by the provision for other payments, including base salary.

193. Salary safeguarding is not unique to the teaching profession but is predominantly used in the public sector. There is some variance in the length of this period across the public sector with most workforces deciding the appropriate safeguarding length at a local level, rather than centralised policy.
194. The department has heard concerns from some stakeholders that the current salary safeguarding provisions hinder school leaders' ability to make changes to staff structures within their schools, with some schools having avoided restructuring their workforce due to the cost implication of safeguarding salaries for three years. In written evidence for the 2024/2025 pay round, a National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) survey showed that 34% of respondents, who are the employers of teachers, would want to review or reduce salary safeguarding.⁶³
195. It could also be argued that the lengthy safeguarding period may prevent some leaders from appropriately rewarding staff for additional duties that benefit pupils, due to the long-term financial implication of doing so. It could be challenging for a school leader and governing body to be confident, with a three year lead in period, whether that role would be required due to the changes that might occur within that period. The salary safeguarding period is therefore likely to lead to a highly risk averse culture to making changes to staffing structures to best meet current pupil needs, disadvantaging pupils, and limiting a school's ability to make efficient deployment decisions and creating opportunities for teachers and leaders.
196. Furthermore, we think there is a case for change given an ongoing decline in overall pupil numbers in schools, and therefore a likely change to the workforce required to teach them. In 2025, the population in state-funded schools was 7,899,000. By 2030, this is projected to decrease by 395,000 (5.0%) to 7,504,000.⁶⁴ With changes to pupil numbers, school leaders should have flexibility in how their workforce is deployed to best meet their local needs.

⁶² Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Wave 3 Report, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

⁶³ NEOST Evidence to the STRB, Local Government Association (2024). Available at: [NEOST evidence to the STRB](#)

⁶⁴ National Pupil Projections, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [National Pupil Projections](#). Note that this only includes pupils up to age 15.

Leaders understand the needs of their pupils and therefore can create a workforce that reflects how to best support them.

197. This agility to make changes without these lengthy additional costs is why we have asked the STRB to consider reducing the salary safeguarding length to ensure this balance works for pupils, teachers and schools overall.
198. There are options in how this could be delivered. It may be that for simplicity, the salary safeguarding period is reduced to a shorter period, for example, two years rather than three years, to build in this flexibility for school leaders. Another option could be to taper the salary safeguarding period to avoid the sudden drop in salary, and therefore retention risk, at the end of the period. The department is keen to ensure that any changes to this provision are easy to deliver and clear for school leaders and teachers to understand. Alongside the STRB's consideration of this issue, the department will also review the wider wording relating to salary safeguarding within the STPCD [p.33-41] to consider whether the provisions should be simplified in due course.
199. The department welcomes the STRB's recommendations on considering the reduction of the salary safeguarding period to ensure the best outcome for school leaders to manage and deploy their workforce efficiently, whilst ensuring protection for teachers against sudden drops in their salaries.

Views on Working Hours

200. For teachers, the current arrangements regarding working hours in the STPCD set out that full-time teachers in maintained schools need to be available to work 195 days per year (190 teaching days plus 5 inset days), and can be directed to do specific tasks at a particular place within those days for 1265 hours; this includes protected time for PPA, which equates to 10% of their timetabled teaching time.
201. 1,265 hours of directed time for full time staff, excluding holidays and weekends, equates to roughly 6.5 hours per working day, which aligns with a typical school day while allowing for some flexibility for limited additional tasks, such as parents evenings or meetings, at the discretion of the school, which require the teacher to be in a particular place at a particular time. However, as this additional directed time is limited, whether or not an activity is deemed to be directed time may be a significant factor in whether a school chooses to ask teachers to undertake it, even if this decision is to the detriment of staff or pupil outcomes. Activities which would be considered directed time might include a collaborative planning session, group professional development session or supervision of a centralised detention, as compared to each teacher undertaking that activity alone and not directed, even if this were less overall time efficient.

202. The administrative discussion of whether or not specific activities and periods are considered within directed time has been raised with the department as a significant and unnecessary burden on schools. Although it is important to consider alongside this, the risk of a change in this area being highly disruptive.
203. In addition to directed time, teachers must also work such reasonable additional hours that are required to fulfil their professional responsibilities but cannot be directed by the school in terms of where or when these additional duties should take place (undirected time). This ability to choose when and where to work, outside of directed time, is an important benefit and flexibility for teachers. However, full-time teachers in England have reported working on average 51.2 hours a week during term time.⁶⁵
204. Directed and undirected working time is not a unique concept to teachers in England. The Welsh Government currently mirrors our guidance of 1265 directed hours and additional undirected time for teachers, with no definitive guidance for leaders; however, in this years' remit letter to the Independent Welsh Pay Review Body,⁶⁶ they have asked the review body to consider if further guidance should be included in the Schools' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document regarding the working hours of leaders, which, at this time, is still awaiting reply. The Scottish Government has limited teachers and leaders working hours to a 35-hour week, with a maximum 22.5 hours of class contact time. Despite this variation in approach, evidence suggests that UK teachers and leaders (including in Wales and Scotland) report among the highest working hours when compared to teachers in other countries.⁶⁷
205. For school leaders, from assistant head teachers upwards, the contractual hours protections are primarily the limits set by Council Directive 93/104/EC of 23 November 1993.⁶⁸ Leaders' self-reported average working hours during term time significantly exceed this existing contractual protection at 57.6 hours.⁶⁵ The STPCD also states that they are entitled to a reasonable amount of time to discharge their management responsibilities.
206. The department recognises that there is an intrinsic link between workload and wellbeing: poor working cultures and a lack of a work/life balance can lead to poor mental health. High workload and stress and/or poor wellbeing remain the

⁶⁵ Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Wave 3 Report, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

⁶⁶ IWPRB Sixth Annual Report, Independent Welsh Pay Review Body (2025). Available at: [Sixth Report](#)

⁶⁷ Boeskens, L., Nusche, D., 2021. "Not Enough Hours in the Day: Policies that chape teachers' use of time" *Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development*. Available at: [Education Working Paper No. 245](#)

⁶⁸ [Council Directive 93/104/EC of 23 November 1993](#)

two most cited reasons for people leaving teaching, and teachers often report working long hours during term time.^{Error! Bookmark not defined.} Practices which lead to poor workload outcomes can sometimes be a result of the culture within schools or the wider education sector. Schools and trusts have their own internal cultures, but government also has a significant role in shaping the culture across the education sector. Therefore, when considering the effectiveness of current STPCD provisions, such as working hours, it is important to consider their influence on working culture. To help create and sustain a positive culture, current government policy, and any amendments to this, should consider the potential impact on teacher and leader workload, with a focus on changes which will reduce workload.

207. Additionally, according to the WLTl report, the most cited reason teachers and leaders are less likely to apply for promotion is due to concerns regarding the potential impact on work/life balance, likely due to leaders reporting higher working hours than teachers.^{Error! Bookmark not defined.} Teachers and leaders should not be dissuaded from remaining or progressing within the teaching profession due to workload and working hours; such an issue could impact teacher and leadership quality and diversity, and therefore pupil outcomes. The department has taken action to improve teacher and leader workload, and therefore working hours, and many of these changes are still in the early stages of implementation. As evidenced in the *Recruitment and Retention: Government's Ambitions and Policies for the Teaching Workforce* chapter, the department's Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff⁶⁹ service developed alongside school leaders, is a helpful resource for schools to review and reduce workload. In order to reduce unnecessary administrative burden, a list of administrative that teachers should not be expected to undertake⁷⁰ was added as an annex to the STPCD, and the requirement for performance related pay was removed. All departmental research, guidance and other published documents are also available on the *Reducing school workload*⁷¹ page on gov.uk.

Seeking the STRB's and Statutory Consultee's Views

208. Alongside our efforts to reduce teacher workload, the department is interested in the STRB's assessment of how these working hours arrangements in the STPCD are currently working for teachers and leaders. Academies do not currently have

⁶⁹ Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff, Department for Education. Available at: [Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff](#)

⁷⁰ Workload Reduction Taskforce – Initial Recommendations, Department for Education (2024). Available at: [Workload Reduction Taskforce – Initial recommendations](#)

⁷¹ Reducing School Workload, Department for Education (2025). Available at: [Reducing school workload - GOV.UK](#)

to adhere to the STPCD, so can be more innovative regarding school timetabling due to flexibility around working hours. We would like the STRB to thoroughly consider the merits and challenges of any reform for maintained schools, and additional factors for consideration include:

- 32.5 hours - A non-statutory expectation of a 32.5-hour minimum core school week for all mainstream, state funded schools was introduced in March 2022.⁷² Although this provision relates to the length of school day for pupils, there are likely implications for the working hours of both teachers and leaders.
- Non-working weeks - Term time for teachers and leaders includes approximately 39-weeks of the year. This means their annual working hours cover shorter, more intense periods.
- Flexible working - The department is committed to supporting schools to implement flexible working, such as part-time working, compressed hours, and remote working including off-site PPA time, so that schools are supporting the working lives of their staff in modern, practical ways.
- Balancing headteacher flexibility and teacher autonomy - We want to ensure that headteachers have the freedom that they need to organise their workforce in the best interests of their pupils, whilst recognising the importance of teachers' autonomy to manage their own workload and maintain a work/life balance. We also want to ensure that teachers and leaders are not dissuaded from staying in teaching, or progressing their teaching career, due to working hours or excessive work culture.

209. The department will take into account the STRB's views and evidence from consultees, before considering whether to pursue any change to the hours provision for teachers or leaders. The department recognises that this is a challenging topic, so welcomes the STRB's views and any innovative potential solutions on how to address some of these challenges.

⁷² [Length of the school week - non-statutory guidance](#)

Annex A: Relevant Departmental Publications

- A1. Please note the majority of annexes relevant to the 2025 Government Evidence to the STRB can be found in the spreadsheet published alongside this document. In the annex, the department is publishing for the first time data on the nationality of teachers based on matching SWC data to HMRC's Migrant Worker Scan (MWS) database, detail on the methodology can be found in Annex B.
- A2. The STRB may further be interested in the following publications and statistical releases from the Department.

Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders Survey

- A3. The WLTL is an annual survey of teachers and leaders in state schools in England. It started in Spring 2022 and is intended to run for at least 5 years. The STRB may wish to consider the evidence presented in the Wave 3 summary report when published.
- A4. Over time, the WLTLs will provide invaluable insight into the experiences and views of teachers over an extended period of time to strengthen the department's evidence base across a number of areas, including teacher diversity, workload, flexible working and CPD, helping the department design policies that support these aims.
- Wave 1 (carried out in spring 2022) - [Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 1 - GOV.UK](#)
 - Wave 2 (carried out in spring 2023) – [Working lives of teachers and leaders – wave 2 - GOV.UK](#)
 - Wave 3 – (carried out in spring 2024) – [Working lives of teachers and leaders: wave 3 - GOV.UK](#)

School Workforce Census

- A5. The census runs each November and collects information from schools and local authorities on the school workforce in state-funded schools in England. From this year it contains estimates of median teacher pay based on TPS data. It is updated annually, and the next update is expected in June 2026.
- [School workforce in England, Methodology - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

Disability Data Collection in Schools

- A6. The department provides guidance for schools, local authorities and trusts to prepare for and complete the SWC for employed staff. The guidance sets out the importance of collecting and reporting complete and accurate data and includes a number of resources which schools, local authorities and trusts may find helpful when considering their roles and responsibilities.
- [School workforce census guide 2024: Guide for schools](#)
- A7. Whilst the department has good data on sex and other characteristics from the SWC, there is limited data on disability in the workforce, preventing reliable reporting. This publication explores the challenges in collecting disability data about the school workforce.
- [Disability data collection in schools - GOV.UK](#)

Initial Teacher Training Publications

- A8. These statistics cover applications for ITT courses in England starting in the 2025 to 2026 academic year.
- [Initial teacher training application statistics for courses starting in the 2025 to 2026 academic year - Apply for teacher training - GOV.UK](#)
- A9. This publication provides information on recruitment to ITT programmes by training route and subject. It is updated annually, the next update is expected December 2025.
- [Initial Teacher Training Census, Academic year 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)
- A10. Guidance on grant funding associated with school ITT courses. This guidance refers to ITT funding for the academic year 2025 to 2026.
- [Funding: initial teacher training \(ITT\), academic year 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

Targeted Retention Incentives Payments for School Teachers

- A11. Eligible chemistry, computing, mathematics and physics teachers can apply for targeted retention incentive payments. The below link provides guidance for eligible teachers.
- [Targeted retention incentive payments for school teachers - GOV.UK](#)

Further Education Workforce Publication

A12. The FE Workforce annual statistical publication provides comprehensive information on the characteristics of the FE workforce including information on the size of the workforce; workforce characteristics; teacher pay and vacancy rates by subject among other things.

- [Further Education Workforce Publication](#)

Further Education College Workforce Analysis (2021)

A13. This publication uses TPS data to provide a time series analysis on teachers' pay, new entrant teachers and teachers leaving FE colleges. The information is provided for teachers at General FE Colleges, Sixth Form Colleges and Specialist Colleges (including Art, Design and Performing Arts Colleges and Land Based Colleges).

- [Further Education College Workforce Analysis \(2021\)](#)

Targeted Retention Incentives for Further Education Teachers

A14. Eligible FE teachers can apply for the second round of targeted retention incentive payments for FE teachers for the academic year 25/26 in due course. The below link provides guidance for teachers including eligible subject areas.

- [Targeted retention incentive payments for further education teachers-GOV.UK](#)

Targeted Retention Incentives for Further Education Teachers Transparency Data

A15. This publication sets out claims data for the FE TRIs as of 5th May 2025.

- [Targeted retention incentives for further education teachers transparency data](#)

Annex B: Methodology of teacher nationality data

Data sources

Migrant Worker Scan

- B1. The MWS is an HMRC owned administrative data source which provides details of all individuals who have registered for a National Insurance number through the adult National Insurance number registration process.
- B2. Most UK residents will be automatically issued a National Insurance number aged 15 years and 9 months via HMRC's juvenile registration scheme.
- B3. Individuals who have not been allocated a National Insurance number through this process will need to apply through the adult National Insurance number registration process. This process records a single nationality at the point of registration. Subsequent naturalisation, other changes in nationality and multiple nationalities are not recorded.

Matching

- B4. The School Workforce Census (SWC) data is linked to the MWS using the National Insurance number.
- B5. Secondary matching variables (names, date of birth, gender) are then used to determine match quality.
- B6. 8% of National Insurance numbers in the 2023 SWC matched to the MWS. The remaining 92% that did not match to the MWS are assumed to be UK nationals. This is consistent with match rates seen in previous years.
- B7. There are no directly comparable published data to sense check this match rate, however [Department for Education statistics](#) using census data show that 85.1% of teachers in state-funded schools in England were white British in 2021 (of those whose ethnicity was known). As our analysis includes all school staff from state-funded schools, 7% seems reasonable. In addition, [HMRC published statistics](#) show that 12% of employments in the wider Education Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code in December 2024 were of non-UK nationals.
- B8. The department provides subject data for a subset of SWC teachers. This data is linked to the SWC-MWS matched data using National Insurance number. Less than 1% of records did not match and were removed from the analysis.

- B9. Records with the same National Insurance number, census year and subject are then grouped together, and hours worked summed.
- B10. If an individual teaches a subject on average for 30 minutes or more per week, they will be included in counts.
- B11. Weighting In a given academic year, an individual may have multiple employments. To provide outputs at the individual level, we take the highest weighted employment.
- B12. Weighting is based on the post and FTE SWC variables. Teacher and full-time employments are given greater weighting than non-teacher and part-time employments. The post variable carries greater weight than FTE. Where multiple employments have the same post and FTE weight, the employment in which the individual has worked the most hours is selected.

Nationality

- B13. Nationality is taken from the MWS and is the nationality at the point of National Insurance number registration. This process records one nationality per individual and is not updated if an individual subsequently changes nationality or citizenship.
- B14. We group by three broad nationality groups:
- **United Kingdom (UK):** The 4 countries of the United Kingdom: England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.
 - **European Economic Area (EEA):** The EEA consists of 27 countries of the EU in addition to Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Swiss nationals are treated as EEA nationals for immigration purposes and so are also included in the EEA grouping.
 - **Rest of world (ROW):** This grouping encompasses all other nationalities not covered by the definitions above.

Subject Breakdowns

- B15. Subject data was then matched on to the matched SWC-MWS data, again using National Insurance number. Cases in the subject level data without a National Insurance number were removed from the analysis as they could not be matched. The match rate to the subject data was 97%. The small proportion of records that did not match were assigned an 'unknown' nationality. These records are not included in analysis.
- B16. Records with the same National Insurance number, census year and subject are then grouped together, and hours worked are summed.

B17. If an individual teaches a subject on average for 30 minutes or more per week, they will be included in counts.



Department
for Education

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