



EVIDENCE TO THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' REVIEW BODY

October 2025

Community

3rd Floor
67/68 Long Acre
Covent Garden
London
WC2E 9JD

01332 372337

www.community-tu.org



Introduction

- i. Community is once again pleased to present our evidence to The Review Body as it is one of the most important annual documents that we can produce to properly outline the situation of our members and all teachers working in mainstream schools across England.
- ii. We were pleased that last year's teacher pay award was determined and implemented in time for the September pay-roll, meaning that, for the first time in many years, the teacher pay award has not been subject to back-pay calculations.
- iii. Similarly, we note that the timetable for evidence this year is intended to result in a similar positive way so that schools can recognise and plan for pay awards in their budget setting.
- iv. It is worth noting that this accelerated timetable has presented some difficulties with evidence, as sources are not yet operating on the same timetable, therefore some of the source materials referred to within our evidence are the same as in previous submissions.
- v. **General Secretary Roy Rickhuss CBE** said:
"Our submission to the pay body mirrors the strength of feeling amongst our members in the education workforce of the need to make the sector an attractive place to work once again. Our members on the frontline in schools feel over-pressured and undervalued, and the recruitment and retention of teachers and support staff has become a mounting challenge. Therefore we are clear that it is not just pay that needs to be addressed, but conditions and action to tackle unsustainable workloads too."

"We have welcomed the Labour Government's commitment to a refresh of the relationship between the Department for Education and education unions, and have already begun to see significant benefits from this cooperative approach. We want to continue building this partnership on behalf of our members, and this submission is an important opportunity for us to set out their pressing priorities."
- vi. And **Helen Osgood, Director of Operations**, said:
"Community is proud to present this robust, evidence-based response to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB)."
- vii. *"Retention remains a critical issue in the education sector as well as recruitment, and it is crucial that we recognise the importance of experience in the classroom. Our members play a vital role in delivering structured, high-quality learning in classrooms across the country, in mentoring and supporting early career teachers (ECTs) and in working with parents, carers and the local school community. This contribution must be fully recognised, restoring the esteem and standing that educators deserve."*

- viii. *“Restoring pay through the STRB is essential to ensuring that educators feel valued and supported. This, in turn, empowers them to do what they do best: teach and inspire the next generation.”*
- ix. *“Community recognises the positive work that has already been undertaken, by removing performance-related pay, and giving an above inflation pay rise - this makes a massive difference, however there is always more that can be achieved, and this document outlines some of the positive changes that Community would like to see.”*
- x. *“Inspiring and educating a generation is no small task, and our members are ready to meet this challenge head-on. However, they need the proper support and investment to succeed. We strongly urge the STRB to adopt the measures proposed in this document to ensure that the education sector retains the dedicated professionals who are so essential to its success.”*

The Graduate Labour Market

1. The UK Government set out its ambition to recruit and retain 6,500 more teachers over the course of this parliament. Attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers is a right and proper aim for a government which is determined to raise standards for all pupils in all areas. However, in order for this ambition to be fulfilled, it is vital that teaching is competitive in the UK graduate labour market and is sustainable as a long-term career option.
2. The UK graduate jobs market continues to undergo the challenges that emerged post-COVID. Heightened competition for jobs, reduced opportunities and slow salary growth all persist, with three-fifths of graduate employers reporting a rise in applications,¹ with some seeing unprecedented numbers of applications, often exceeding 140 applicants per vacancy.²
3. The volatile economy, mostly as a result of COVID-19 impacts and the changing face of UK government, has led to significant pain in the jobs market. Whilst much of the employment pain has been in sectors largely employing non-graduates, such as retail, and services³ companies across all sectors have scaled back their hiring due to economic pressures, leaving fewer openings for a growing number of jobseekers. And whilst sectors such as technology, finance and professional services remain in demand, even here, the competition is fierce.
4. Rising living costs, inflation and constrained employer budgets have created a tougher environment for young professionals. At the same time, employers are increasingly turning to automation and AI-driven tools in recruitment processes, changing how candidates are assessed and selected.
5. According to *What do Graduates do?* the 2021/22 cohort of graduates has a lower full-time employment rate than 2019/20 graduates (59% versus 59.6%) though 80% are employed, with 72% on permanent contracts. Consequently, it has a slightly higher unemployment rate (5.6% against 5%).
6. Those who completed their studies during the pandemic are still feeling the aftershocks, often reporting fewer opportunities, missed experiences, and slower career starts compared to their peers. At the same time, many graduates are struggling to find roles that align with their qualifications, with a significant proportion ending up in non-graduate roles, either temporarily or long term. This mismatch between education and employment has led to dissatisfaction and concerns about limited career progression. And although some employers prioritise skills over credentials, this has meant starting salaries have remained relatively flat.

¹ High Fliers Research Centre, "The Graduate Labour Market in 2024." (2024). Page 25.

<https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>

² Institute of Student Employers, "5 trends you need to know from ISE's Recruitment Survey 2024." (2024)

https://ise.org.uk/knowledge/insights/260/5_trends_you_need_to_know_from_ises_recruitment_survey_2024/

³ Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS, "What Do Graduates Do?" (2024/25). Page 11.

<https://luminare.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

7. Despite these difficulties, there are still pockets of opportunity. Roles in sustainability, digital technologies, and AI-related fields are growing, and graduates who build relevant skills in these areas may find themselves better positioned. While the market remains tight, flexibility, up-to-date skills and persistence can still open doors in this increasingly competitive environment.
8. *What do Graduates do?* Reports that 7.2% of graduates are employed as education professionals 15 months after graduation, with primary and secondary teaching professionals occupying positions four and five in the list of top ten professional jobs held by first degree graduates.⁴ Yet whilst teaching in secondary education comes third in the list of top ten professional jobs held by first-degree graduates, teaching does not feature in the list at all for Computer Science.⁵ Only around 9% to 15% of biology, chemistry, physics, and physical and geographical sciences graduates entered the education/teaching sector⁶ and the speed at which the market changes means that many will have discounted a career in education in favour of better paid employment in another sector.
9. Pay is a significant issue for graduates who are leaving university with some of the highest debt ever seen in the UK. Current estimates indicate that students leave university with £45,000 of debt⁷ to be repaid over an average of 40 years. When coupled with a standard 7.1% interest rate, and the requirement to repay undergraduate and postgraduate loans at the same time on earnings above the threshold, students can find themselves being deducted around 41% of salary, when including pension, tax and National Insurance deductions, and student loan repayments.
10. The median graduate starting salary on offer from the UK's leading employers has risen to more than £34,000 for graduates starting work in 2025. This is an increase of £500 compared to the median salary paid to new graduates in 2023 and means that graduate pay has risen by over 13.3% since 2021.⁸ And whilst the starting salary for teachers has also risen since 2021 to its current rate of £32,916, this remains at least £2,000 shy of comparable graduate roles, especially when considering that more than a quarter of graduate jobs at the country's leading employers now have initial salaries of £40,000 or more.⁹
11. It is interesting to note that if the median graduate starting salary of £29,500 paid by the country's top employers a decade ago had kept pace with inflation over the past ten years, it would now be worth approximately £41,122 – over

⁴ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, "What Do Graduates Do?" (2024/25). Pp 6-7.

<https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

⁵ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, "What Do Graduates Do?" (2024/25). Pp 51-53.

<https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

⁶ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS*, "What Do Graduates Do?" (2024/25). Page 77.

<https://luminate.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

⁷ *Community Trade Union*, "The Hidden Costs of Student Loans" (2024)

<https://community-tu.org/who-we-are/our-sectors/education-and-early-years/early-career-teachers-ect/university-student-loans-campaign/>

⁸ *High Fliers Research Centre*, "The Graduate Labour Market in 2024." (2024). Page 16.

<https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>

⁹ *High Fliers Research Centre*, "The Graduate Labour Market in 2024." (2024). Page 16.

<https://www.highfliers.co.uk/>

£6,000 more than this year's median pay for new graduates¹⁰ and nearly £10,000 more than the starting salary of M1.

12. But, as we noted in our evidence last year, it is not just pay that is important. According to *What do students want? "Money isn't everything"*. While presenting clear salary information is important, graduate jobseekers also want to hear about the wider opportunities that organisations will provide them with, the likely work-life balance, and the ethical and environmental positioning of organisations.¹¹ And flexibilities, such as hybrid working, compressed hours and mentoring support, are all things which new graduates are looking for in their first employment.
13. And it's not just the employees, only 5% of employers expected their graduate hires to be fully office based and nearly a quarter expect them to work from home for at least three days per week.¹² It is clear things need to change in order to make teaching more attractive to graduates, and *"the shift to hybrid work remains pivotal."*¹³ The work of trusts, such as Dixons, in exploring what this might mean in schools will be closely watched by the whole sector to understand the appeal, take-up and possible impact across the sector. Yes, it might make timetabling more complicated, but without sufficient high-quality teachers that would already be impossible.

¹⁰ According to the Bank of England inflation calculator, £29,000 in 2014 would now be worth £41,122 (August 2025).

¹¹ *Institute of Student Employers. & Debut, "What do students want? Listening to the voices of young jobseekers."* (2020). Page 20.

https://ise.org.uk/global_engine/download.aspx?fileid=0784B0F6-9ACF-48AA-8793-08E17AF84870

¹² *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS, "What Do Graduates Do?"* (2023/24). Page 16.

<https://luminare.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

¹³ *Jisc/Prospects/AGCAS, "What Do Graduates Do?"* (2023/24). Page 13.

<https://luminare.prospects.ac.uk/what-do-graduates-do>

The Economic Picture

14. In the five-year period to 2023/24, the real-terms purchasing power of UK earnings fell due to high inflation, with median household incomes decreasing significantly. Whilst average weekly earnings saw growth in some periods, overall purchasing power for average weekly earnings declined over the past year exacerbated by high energy and commodity prices in 2022 and sustained through weaker than expected economic growth and high food costs.¹⁴
15. High inflation, especially in recent years, has been a major factor in reducing the purchasing power of teacher salaries. Between the 2010-11 academic year and 2023-24, teacher earnings in real terms (after accounting for inflation) fell by about 18.2%¹⁵ with experienced teachers seeing the most substantial real-terms cuts to their salaries. And though we have now achieved new teacher starting salaries a little in excess of £32,000, these gains have also been eroded by inflation.
16. UK interest rates in the year to August rose to 4.2% CPIH, according to official figures published in September, meaning that the 4% pay award teachers have recently received has been all but negated by inflation, price rises and the cost-of-living increases.¹⁶
17. In particular, food prices have risen by almost 5%, with the British Retail Consortium noting that *"with food inflation now outpacing wages, many families will be struggling with the rising cost of living."*
18. The continuing higher levels of inflation have almost certainly impacted the decision to increase the state pension by 4.7% under the rules of the triple-lock.¹⁷ It is worth noting that these pension increases are a consequence of inflation and not a cause of it. In the same way, increasing public sector pay does also not drive inflation.
19. The annual growth in average regular earnings, not including bonuses, across the private sector was 4.8%.¹⁸ This is lower than the rise of 5.7% seen across the public sector, but notably higher than the 4% teachers received in 2025.
20. The latest predictions from the Bank of England are that CPI inflation will reach 4% and stay above its 2% target until the spring of 2027. This prediction means that any public sector pay award must be in excess of 4% to be anything other than a pay cut.

¹⁴ Brigid Francis-Devine for *The House of Commons Library*, "High cost of living: Impact on households." (2025)
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10100/>

¹⁵ Lydia Chantler-Hicks in *Schools Week*, "Five things we learned about the teacher workforce from the STRB report." (2025)
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/five-things-we-learned-about-the-teacher-workforce-from-the-strb-report/>

¹⁶ Dearbail Jordan for *The BBC*, "Food prices continue to surge as inflation remains at 3.8%." (2025)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cderznjj4r7o>

¹⁷ Pritti Mistry and Kevin Peachey for *The BBC*, "State pension likely to rise by 4.7% in April." (2025)
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c62lnzdndkeo>

¹⁸ *The Office for National Statistics*, "Average weekly earnings in Great Britain: August 2025." (2025)
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsingreatbritain/august2025>

School Finances

21. Financial pressures in our school system are nothing new, but the mounting pressure within the system caused by increased costs within a tight fiscal environment does have an impact on schools' efficacy. And it is fair to say that *"the sector as a whole has felt financial strain this year."*¹⁹
22. Both local authority-maintained schools and academies, regardless of whether they are standalone or part of a multi-academy trust, are reporting increasing financial difficulties as the financial performance of the sector continues to deteriorate, with the Kreston Academies Benchmark report noting: *"Last year it was only the primary SATs that made an in-year deficit,"*²⁰ going on to say, *"the percentage of Trusts making in-year financial deficits has tripled since 2021, increasing from less than 20% reporting deficits in 2021/22 to nearly 60% in 2023/24. This equates to around three in five Trusts."*²¹
23. This is supported by data obtained by *Schools Week* under the Freedom of Information Act from 71 councils in England, which shows that the average maintained primary school registered an in-year budget deficit of £6,360.49 in the 2024-25 financial year, compared with an average £3,162.17 in 2023-24. The figures give an indication of how stretched budgets were before the 4% teacher pay rise this financial year. This is likely to have increased school costs by 5.14%, far outstripping the rise in funding and leaving schools with further savings to find.²²
24. We must be clear that the situations schools are today experiencing are not recent developments. The squeeze on education funding between 2010 and 2019, led to over a decade of systematic underfunding of school budgets.
25. Secondary school spending per pupil fell by about 0.9% per year between 2010 and 2019, whilst primary school spending per pupil rose by 0.6% per year. This averages out to a small real-terms cut in spending per pupil over the decade.²³ Between 2019–20 and this financial year (2024–25), total school spending in England grew by about £8 billion. And whilst this has led to 11% growth in school spending per pupil and reverses past cuts, it only takes spending per pupil back to 2010 levels.²⁴ Therefore, whilst there has been some recovery in spending per pupil since 2019, the modest rates of

¹⁹ David Butler et al. for *Bishop Fleming* and *Kreston Reeves*, "Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025." (2025). Page 5
<https://www.kreston.com/kreston-uk-academies-report-2025/>

²⁰ David Butler et al. for *Bishop Fleming* and *Kreston Reeves*, "Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025." (2025). Page 18
<https://www.kreston.com/kreston-uk-academies-report-2025/>

²¹ David Butler et al. for *Bishop Fleming* and *Kreston Reeves*, "Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025." (2025). Pp6-7
<https://www.kreston.com/kreston-uk-academies-report-2025/>

²² Chaminda Jayanetti in *Schools Week*, "School budgets slide further into the red." (2025)
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-budgets-slide-further-into-the-red>

²³ Elaine Drayton et al. for *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*, "Annual report on education spending in England: 2024–25." (2025). Page 45
<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

²⁴ Elaine Drayton et al. for *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*, "Annual report on education spending in England: 2024–25." (2025). Page 8
<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

growth seen (about 1% per year or less in real terms) are still below the long-run average growth rate.²⁵

26. The Government's budget for 2025/26 pledged a rise of £2.3 billion to schools funding next year, representing a 1.4% increase in real terms. Research for the Kreston Academies Benchmark report notes that £1 billion of this funding will go towards funding high needs SEND, which covers pupils with the highest levels of SEN and disabilities, and is an increase of 6% in real terms. However, they note *"the number of pupils with EHC plans has risen by more than 7% in recent years."* The remaining £1.3 billion increase in the rest of the schools budget is likely to amount to a 2.8% rise in cash terms in funding per pupil in mainstream schools, which is *"a very small real-terms rise relative to economy-wide inflation of 2.4%."*²⁶ This will be used to fund the 2024 pay awards and help cover the pay awards in 2025/26. This leaves *"very little to cover other school costs and pressures."*²⁷
27. Changing per-pupil funding levels is not the only factor affecting education, there are a number of reasons outside of funding levels that affect the way funding translates into real resources on the ground for schools, leaders, teacher, pupils and students.
28. For example, the *Institute for Fiscal Studies* reports that, in 2023–24, total public spending on education in the UK stood at £116 billion, but that this has fallen by 11% or nearly £15 billion since 2010–11. They go on to note that education spending as a share of national income has also fallen, from about 5.6% of national income in 2010–11 down to about 4.1% in 2023–24.²⁸ Leading them to predict that *"costs will outpace funding for schools in 2025-26."*²⁹
29. While spending on schools has grown in recent years the cost of supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has also increased, meaning much of that increase was absorbed by the rising cost of SEND provision, leaving the actual increase around 5%.³⁰
30. Per-pupil costs rose by an average of around 8% in 2023/24, meaning inflation experienced by the sector has been much higher than in the wider economy.³¹ When filtering in rising energy costs and the unfunded increase in national insurance costs for schools, or the salary uplifts for teachers and school

²⁵ Elaine Drayton et al. for *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*, "Annual report on education spending in England: 2024–25." (2025). Page 46

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

²⁶ Elaine Drayton et al. for *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*, "Annual report on education spending in England: 2024–25." (2025). Page 40

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

²⁷ David Butler et al. for *Bishop Fleming* and *Kreston Reeves*, "Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025." (2025). Page 42

<https://www.kreston.com/kreston-uk-academies-report-2025/>

²⁸ Elaine Drayton et al. for *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*, "Annual report on education spending in England: 2024–25." (2025). Page 6

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

²⁹ Luke Sibbels et al. for *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*, "Schools and colleges in the 2025 Spending Review." (2025)

<https://ifs.org.uk/sites/default/files/2025-05/Schools-and-colleges-in-the-2025-Spending-Review-IFS-Report.pdf>

³⁰ Branwen Jeffreys and Hayley Clarke for *The BBC*, "Rising costs force 'difficult choices' on schools." (2025)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy09e7w6jleo>

³¹ David Butler et al. for *Bishop Fleming* and *Kreston Reeves*, "Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025." (2025). Page 39

<https://www.kreston.com/kreston-uk-academies-report-2025/>

leaders that are much-needed after years of real-terms cuts, schools face the choice between meeting the needs of the children, or balancing the books.³²

31. And school leaders are being increasingly industrious in the ways they manage the budget. According to *The Guardian*, school leaders are taking on caretaking duties and doubling up as lollipop men and women as funding “hits rock bottom.” Others are calling on friends and relatives to help fix crumbling buildings, paint classrooms and do other odd jobs.³³
32. Despite the sector being told that funding is the highest it has ever been - which in absolute terms is correct – in real terms, income has not kept up with costs.³⁴ And although the £4.7 billion extra for schools pledged in the spending review is extremely welcome, once rising costs have been filtered in, this works out as a less than 1% rise by 2028.³⁵
33. Furthermore, the *Institute for Fiscal Studies* (IFS) said the expected rise in spending on SEND could also wipe out the small rise, leaving schools facing a real-terms spending freeze.³⁶

³² Chaminda Jayanetti in *Schools Week*, “School budgets slide further into the red.” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-budgets-slide-further-into-the-red>

³³ Sally Weale in *The Guardian*, “Headteachers in England doubling up as caretakers as funding ‘hits rock bottom’” (2025).

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/sep/14/headteachers-in-england-doubling-up-as-caretakers-as-funding-hits-rock-bottom>

³⁴ David Butler et al. for *Bishop Fleming* and *Kreston Reeves*, “Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025.” (2025). Page 37

<https://www.kreston.com/kreston-uk-academies-report-2025/>

³⁵ Chaminda Jayanetti in *Schools Week*, “School budgets slide further into the red.” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-budgets-slide-further-into-the-red>

³⁶ Chaminda Jayanetti in *Schools Week*, “School budgets slide further into the red.” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-budgets-slide-further-into-the-red>

Matters for Recommendation

Multi Year Awards

34. There are many arguments for and against multi-year pay awards and we have outlined several of them in our previous written and oral evidence to the Review Body. In particular, we note that, whatever approach is taken, there must always be an in-built safety valve that can react to sudden changes in what remains a volatile economic situation. That said, we do also note that the ability to set longer-term budgets and to have greater certainty over medium to long-term funding would benefit many schools. The Kreston Academies Benchmark report states that, *“more certainty would enable longer term planning to be made which will drive more effective decisions and better value for money.”*³⁷
35. As noted above, there can be significant benefit in the greater financial certainty that a multi-year award would bring, as this would allow budgets and staffing to be more accurately modelled and for the scale of pay awards to be a known quantity that can be planned for. One-year pay announcements create short-notice budget pressures, which can lead to reactionary action such as last-minute cuts to staffing or support, whereas multi-year awards can allow school leaders to align funding, staffing plans, and curriculum delivery more efficiently.
36. Also, knowing the salary landscape two or three years ahead of time, allows schools leaders to properly plan and anticipate known costs such as staff-costs, meaning the costs of continuing professional development (CPD), staffing support and unexpected SEND support have a lesser impact.
37. And it is not just about school leaders. Clear and predictable pay progression is a powerful retention incentive for early-career and mid-career teachers. The removal of performance-related pay means that schools are now able to budget for annual pay progression for all of their staff, providing stability in staffing and fairness in pay across all pay points.
38. A multi-year pay award would be of benefit to The Department, as they would be able to secure funding from the treasury based on pre-determined amounts which would make spending reviews more predictable.
39. Predictability and parity with other professions is what schools need to function and, perhaps more importantly, it is what teachers deserve. This could lead to better retention and improve the status of teaching among graduates.
40. However, any multi-year pay award needs to have inbuilt risk assessment. As has been noted, the economy remains volatile, with significant cost-of-living rises experienced over the past five years, which have led to inflation outpacing recent pay awards. Without an inbuilt safety mechanism, we could

³⁷ David Butler et al. for *Bishop Fleming* and *Kreston Reeves*, “Kreston Academies Benchmark Report 2025.” (2025). Page 8
<https://www.kreston.com/kreston-uk-academies-report-2025/>

easily end up with a situation where pay falls even further behind, and this would be disastrous for the sector.

41. Community has expressed support for multi-year pay awards in the past on the premise that they are combined with multi-year funding agreements, and, as mentioned above, are coupled with a safety valve mechanism, because the economic situation can change quickly and what today provides stability can quickly lead to stagnation or worse.
42. A multi-year pay award is more than a funding tool – it is a stability mechanism. It signals a long-term commitment to teachers and learners, and if funded properly, it could be a cost-effective way to begin to address the workforce crisis. However, Community is not convinced that the current economic climate is sufficiently stable for such a mechanism at present.

Demand for Teachers

43. One of the key aims for The Department is attracting and retaining the best and brightest teachers in order to improve life chances and raise standards for all pupils in all areas. As stated by the Labour Party in their Opportunity Mission:
*Labour will transform our education system so that young people get the opportunities they deserve. We will expand our childcare and early-years system, drive up standards, modernise the school curriculum, reform assessment, and create higher-quality training and employment paths by empowering local communities to develop the skills people need.*³⁸
44. But the question is being asked, 'Is teaching still a profession in England?' Professor David Spendlove noted in *The Guardian* that *"Increased prescription, partly driven by ongoing recruitment and workload difficulties. Increased surveillance too, partly driven by accountability measures. The emergence of AI. Changing political priorities. New ways of working emerging since the pandemic."* All these and more work to undermine teacher autonomy and have a direct impact on recruitment and retention.³⁹
45. As we noted last year, our education system sits at breaking point and urgently needs action. We continue to be supportive of the Government's aim for 6,500 new teachers.⁴⁰ However, even if these targets are met, that will only mean one new staff member in just 25% of England's schools and, on its own, that is insufficient when over 40,000 teachers leave the profession each year for reasons other than retirement. We need 6,500 new teachers *and* we need increased recruitment of teachers and support staff too, because a key part of

³⁸ The Labour Party Manifesto (2024)

<https://labour.org.uk/change/break-down-barriers-to-opportunity/>

³⁹ Prof. David Spendlove in *Schools Week*, "Piecemeal reform can't solve teaching's workforce crisis." (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/piecemeal-reform-cant-solve-teachings-workforce-crisis/>

⁴⁰ *Community Trade Union*, "Community welcomes new report on addressing teacher recruitment and retention crisis" (2024)

<https://community-tu.org/community-welcomes-new-report-on-addressing-teacher-recruitment-and-retention-crisis/#7d8a4a2e>

the problem is that ongoing issues go far deeper than simply adding numbers to workforces.⁴¹

46. Current pupil figures point to a demographic bulge. Numbers in primary schools grew by 17% between 2009–10 and 2019–20. That is almost an additional 700,000 pupils – or effectively a full cohort of children. But since then they have fallen, with a 3% or 100,000 expected drop between 2019–20 and 2024–25. And whilst pupil numbers in secondary schools fell from the early 2000s through to about 2014–15, between 2014–15 and 2019–20, they then grew by nearly 10% or 300,000, and are expected to have grown by a further 8% or 250,000 between 2019–20 and 2024–25.⁴²
47. Looking beyond 2024–25, the projections show that the primary pupil population will fall by a further 150,000 between 2024–25 and 2027–28. But it is worth pointing out that this means pupils numbers remain almost 500,000 higher than in 2010. As the pupil bulge moves through the system, the secondary pupil population is expected to start falling from 2026–27 onwards, initially at quite a slow rate. Overall, this implies a fall in the total pupil population of only about 2% or just over 150,000 between 2024–25 and 2027–28.⁴³
48. These projections are useful to allow us to understand the short to medium-term impact of the changing pupil population, but we are already at the end of 2025, and parents are already applying for secondary school places for 2026. To properly understand the demand for teachers we need to have an even longer-term view to make sure that provision is protected and enhanced during times when pupil numbers dip, and to ensure that there is ample sufficiency for when additional capacity is needed.
49. And whilst official figures show the number of teacher vacancies have fallen by over 20%, the number of full-time teachers joining the sector had dropped 1,400 since last year. And although the number of unfilled teaching jobs has reduced to 2,200, from its peak of 2,800, this still remains double its pre-pandemic level of 1,100 in 2020.⁴⁴ And this is despite the rate of those returning to the profession being at its highest since 2014–15, with over 17,000 rejoining the workforce.⁴⁵
50. And increased reliance on unqualified and non-specialist teachers suggests teacher shortages are growing.⁴⁶ Data also indicates that the impacts of

⁴¹ Baljinder Kuller in *Schools Week*, “Government must square up to unscrupulous teaching agencies” (2024)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/government-must-square-up-to-unscrupulous-teaching-agencies>

⁴² Elaine Drayton et al. for *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*, “Annual report on education spending in England: 2024–25.” (2025). Page 14

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

⁴³ Elaine Drayton et al. for *The Institute for Fiscal Studies*, “Annual report on education spending in England: 2024–25.” (2025). Page 14

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/annual-report-education-spending-england-2024-25>

⁴⁴ Jack Dyson in *Schools Week*, “Fewer teachers quit and more return: 10 key workforce findings.” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/fewer-teachers-quit-and-more-return-10-key-workforce-findings/>

⁴⁵ Jack Dyson in *Schools Week*, “Fewer teachers quit and more return: 10 key workforce findings.” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/fewer-teachers-quit-and-more-return-10-key-workforce-findings/>

⁴⁶ Dawson McLean and Jack Worth for *NFER*, “The Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report.” (2025)

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2025/>

teacher shortages tend to be more acute in schools with a higher proportion of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

51. As outlined in our previous submissions, we believe that over the past decade, teacher capacity has not been approached with a sufficiently long-term perspective. This has resulted in a consistent decline in teacher numbers that, when coupled with insufficient recruitment, is pushing the sector toward a critical tipping point.

Recruitment and Retention

52. Analysis by the National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER) says unfilled vacancies are at a record high, with more than six teaching posts in every 1,000 left unfilled last year, double the vacancy rate recorded before the pandemic and six times higher than the NFER's first measure of vacancies in 2010.⁴⁷
53. Sadly, recruitment into teacher training remains "persistently low"⁴⁸ and although the government's plans to recruit 6,500 new teachers highlights a renewed focus on the sector, even if these targets are met, that would only mean that one in four of our 24,059 schools would benefit from a single new staff member.⁴⁹
54. And when 34% of teachers and leaders indicated that they were considering leaving the sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement,⁵⁰ it is clear that the time for half measures is over. Jack Worth, the NFER's school workforce expert, said: *"Teacher recruitment and retention in England remain in a perilous state, posing a substantial risk to the quality of education. Fully funded pay increases that make teacher pay more competitive are essential to keeping teachers in the classroom and attracting new recruits."*⁵¹
55. According to the government's own *Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders* report, high workload and stress and/or poor wellbeing were the two most commonly cited reasons (both reported by 90%). And although there is a slight decrease in the proportion citing high workload (from 94% in 2023 and 92% in 2022), this remains a significant issue when nine in every ten teachers is citing it as a major concern.⁵²
56. And it is having a significant impact on an increasing number of teachers who are suffering with stress and/or poor wellbeing (up from 84% in 2023) which is

⁴⁷ Richard Adams in *The Guardian*, "Teacher vacancy rates at record high in England, report finds." (2025)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/13/teacher-vacancy-rates-record-high-england-report>

⁴⁸ Vanessa Clarke for *The BBC*, "Act 'now or never' to hit 6,500 teachers target, report warns." (2025)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgm1nwm144o>

⁴⁹ Baljinder Kuller in *Schools Week*, "Government must square up to unscrupulous teaching agencies" (2024)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/government-must-square-up-to-unscrupulous-teaching-agencies/>

⁵⁰ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 20

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁵¹ Richard Adams in *The Guardian*, "Teacher vacancy rates at record high in England, report finds." (2025)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/13/teacher-vacancy-rates-record-high-england-report>

⁵² *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 20

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

leading not just to more considering leaving the profession but actually doing so. Of those who indicated, in 2023, that they were considering leaving the sector, 15% did so, an increase from 12% in the previous two reports.⁵³

57. This is confirmed by recent TUC polling, which states two-fifths of education workers have already taken steps to leave their profession to get a job in another field, or are actively considering it.⁵⁴ Government data shows that this is particularly acute among early-career teachers where one-third leave during the first five years of their career.
58. In addition, we know we need sufficient leaders, and yet almost one in three (31%) school leaders appointed aged under 50 leave their post within five years of appointment, more than half (53%) of whom quit teaching in state-funded schools entirely.⁵⁵
59. NFER data shows that there was a 44% increase in those intending to leave the teaching profession in England between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023⁵⁶ and 90% of those teachers considering leaving teaching in 2023/24 cited high workload as a factor, with pupil behaviour becoming one of the fastest-growing contributors to workload since the pandemic.⁵⁷
60. 9% of teachers say they are “*very likely*” to quit in the next two years, with over a third (37%) saying their workload is overwhelming or unsustainable.⁵⁸ With 468,258 teachers in England, this would amount to around 42,000 leaving the profession – a figure that dwarfs the 6,500 the government has pledged to hire.⁵⁹
61. Recent figures show that the number of teachers in England’s schools has shrunk for the first time in years, with the number of full-time equivalent teachers falling by 400 since last year to 468,300 – the first fall since 2017-18.⁶⁰
62. The number of full-time teachers joining the sector has also fallen, standing at 41,700. This is down 1,400 since last year. There is a glimmer of hope, as the rate of those returning to the profession is the highest since 2014-15 – with over 17,000 rejoining the workforce⁶¹ - but this clearly isn’t enough, and a key

⁵³ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, “Wave 3 Summary report November 2024.” (2024) Page 22

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁵⁴ “*Tories have missed their own teacher recruitment targets for NINE out of TEN years*” (2024)

<https://www.thecanary.co.uk/analysis/2024/04/20/teacher-recruitment-crisis/>

⁵⁵ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, “Wave 3 Summary report November 2024.” (2024) Page 20

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁵⁶ Dawson McLean, Jack Worth and Andrew Smith for NFER, “Teacher Labour Market in England: Annual Report 2024.” (2024)

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2024/>

⁵⁷ Dawson McLean and Jack Worth for NFER, “The Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report.” (2025)

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2025/>

⁵⁸ Millie Cooke in *The Independent*, “Schools ‘facing disaster’ as one in 10 teachers set to quit in two years.” (2025)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/school-teachers-strikes-union-matt-wrack-b2803738.html>

⁵⁹ Millie Cooke in *The Independent*, “Schools ‘facing disaster’ as one in 10 teachers set to quit in two years.” (2025)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/school-teachers-strikes-union-matt-wrack-b2803738.html>

⁶⁰ Jack Dyson in *Schools Week*, “Fewer teachers quit and more return: 10 key workforce findings.” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/fewer-teachers-quit-and-more-return-10-key-workforce-findings/>

⁶¹ Jack Dyson in *Schools Week*, “Fewer teachers quit and more return: 10 key workforce findings.” (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/fewer-teachers-quit-and-more-return-10-key-workforce-findings/>

part of the problem is that ongoing issues go far deeper than simply adding numbers to workforces.⁶²

63. According to *The Teaching Commission*, “85% of teachers say they are exhausted at the end of every working day.” And yet most teachers do not blame classroom teaching for this. “The exhaustion is caused by the work teachers do in addition to their teaching, for which we top the international league tables.”⁶³ The report goes on to explain that England’s teachers more than double their working hours working on classroom-adjacent activities. Much of which is “depressingly bureaucratic and seemingly pointless”⁶⁴ and this confirms what has been reported in all three reports of the *Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders*.
64. Further backing these findings, last year’s report on the teacher labour market in England by the NFER highlights the challenges faced by the Government in recruiting and retaining teachers, specifically concluding that more needs to be done to reduce working hours and workload if retention levels are to improve.⁶⁵
65. According to the NFER’s school workforce lead, Jack Worth, recent bursary changes in some shortage subjects has increased the supply of teachers in some areas, but recruitment targets are still being missed and more students are now being taught by unqualified or non-specialist teachers, with the impact felt more acutely by students living in disadvantaged areas.⁶⁶
66. Trainee recruitment for all except five secondary subjects was below the respective target in 2024/25, and NFER’s latest forecast for 2025/26 shows only five subjects have a reasonable chance of recruiting at or above target.⁶⁷ Slight improvements to recruitment last year were limited to a few shortage subjects – such as biology and chemistry – driven mostly by higher bursaries.
67. Many schools and trusts have found it challenging to source skills for some time. This has led to a growing number resorting to agencies to recruit permanent and supply specialists. Reports are that, sadly, some are arguably unscrupulous, charging enormous and unnecessary margins because they recognise the desperate situation these employers are in.⁶⁸
68. Community would support greater regulation of the supply industry to ensure schools are receiving quality teachers and that teachers are not being

⁶² Baljinder Kuller in *Schools Week*. “Government must square up to unscrupulous teaching agencies” (2024) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/government-must-square-up-to-unscrupulous-teaching-agencies/>

⁶³ Mary Bousted in *Schools Week*, “Here’s how we can finally begin to fix the teacher supply crisis.” (2025) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/heres-how-we-can-finally-begin-to-fix-the-teacher-supply-crisis/>

⁶⁴ Mary Bousted in *Schools Week*, “Here’s how we can finally begin to fix the teacher supply crisis.” (2025) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/heres-how-we-can-finally-begin-to-fix-the-teacher-supply-crisis/>

⁶⁵ Dawson McLean et al. for NFER, “Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report 2024” (2024) <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2024/>

⁶⁶ Vanessa Clarke for *The BBC*, “Act ‘now or never’ to hit 6,500 teachers target, report warns.” (2025) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgm1nwm144o>

⁶⁷ Dawson McLean and Jack Worth for NFER, “The Teacher Labour Market in England Annual Report.” (2025) <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2025/>

⁶⁸ Baljinder Kuller in *Schools Week*. “Government must square up to unscrupulous teaching agencies” (2024) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/government-must-square-up-to-unscrupulous-teaching-agencies/>

exploited. This will increase budgets for schools, academies and trusts and give them a fair chance of sustainably resolving their staffing problems.⁶⁹

69. Similarly, staff retention must be prioritised. Not everything can rest on the shoulders of recruitment. We must do more to retain the staff we already have and to support them to stay in the classroom where their expertise can truly be utilised. It now takes ten early career teachers to replace every seven more experienced teachers who leave our schools – and they are leaving in ever-increasing numbers, earlier in their careers.⁷⁰
70. And this is not a situation unique to England. Education systems across the globe need to be more attractive to skilled graduates, as highlighted by the UN High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession.⁷¹ To offer genuine opportunity for this generation of children and young people, we must transform the experience of working in education and retain talent in our schools and colleges.
71. Communities believe that taking action in four areas would have a significant positive impact on both retention and future recruitment.
- a. We need to address teacher and leader workload
 - b. We need to increase Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time.
 - c. We need flexible working that is practical and meaningful
 - d. We need better professional development that meets the needs of all staff.

Continuing Professional Development

72. We have mentioned in previous responses the need for a personal entitlement to continuing professional development. Comparing the situation in England with other high-performing nations demonstrates the continuing paucity of The Department's commitment to its teacher development beyond the 'Golden Thread', which does not meet the needs of teachers beyond the Early Career Framework unless they wish to progress into leadership.
73. According to *TES*, schools spend around £3,000 per teacher per year on CPD, but too much CPD is poor quality, poorly delivered and not suitable for all staff.⁷² Feedback from the *Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders* report agrees, with 16% stating that the CPD they had undertaken had little or no impact.⁷³

⁶⁹ Baljinder Kuller in *Schools Week*. "Government must square up to unscrupulous teaching agencies" (2024) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/government-must-square-up-to-unscrupulous-teaching-agencies/>

⁷⁰ Mary Bousted in *Schools Week*, "Here's how we can finally begin to fix the teacher supply crisis." (2025) <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/heres-how-we-can-finally-begin-to-fix-the-teacher-supply-crisis/>

⁷¹ ILO/UN/UNESCO "United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession. Recommendations and summary of deliberations. Transforming the teaching Profession." (2024). <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2024/02/teaching-professionrecommendationsteaching-profession-recommendations/>

⁷² Matilda Martin in *TES*, "Just 4 in 10 teachers found their last Inset day useful." (2024) <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/just-4-10-teachers-found-last-inset-day-useful-cpd>

⁷³ *Working Lives of Teachers and Leaders*, "Wave 1 Core Report." (2023) Page 22. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-1>

74. Community believes that high-quality professional development would have a positive impact on retaining teachers in classrooms and that it would also have a similarly positive impact on pupil outcomes. With the independent review of teachers' professional development in schools concurring: *"High-quality professional development that improves teachers' knowledge, practice and confidence can have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Teachers also feel more satisfied in their roles and are more likely to stay in their jobs when they regularly access high-quality training."*⁷⁴
75. According to EPI,⁷⁵ a formal entitlement for teachers in England to 35 hours of high quality CPD a year would boost pupil attainment by an extra two-thirds of a GCSE grade – which in turn translates to extra lifetime earnings of over £6,000 per pupil.
76. Too many schools focus on short-term forms of teacher development such as policy and practice updates rather than looking at a longer-term, more holistic approach. In the same way as individualisation helps to meet diverse pupil needs, it is ridiculous to assume that all teachers need the same training, to the same level at the same time, and consideration must be given to a more individualistic approach which blends the necessary whole-school training with a dedicated personal entitlement to develop the individual.
77. Community feels that it is within the remit of The Review Body to recommend an entitlement to professional development through teachers' pay and conditions, even if the detail is not specified in statute. This could then be achieved through guidance which promotes a system of individualised and meaningful development opportunities, in addition to the necessary institutional training, such as safeguarding.
78. Furthermore, according to EPI, a policy of CPD entitlement could also significantly improve retention, leading to up to an estimated 12,000 extra teachers remaining in the profession a year.

Workload and Wellbeing

79. The excessive workload and the culture that sustains it in our schools must be tackled.
80. Community is part of the Improving Education Together partnership that is working to understand and unpick the drivers of workload with the aim of taking some action to address elements of the workload crisis, but much more needs to be done because workload is consistently cited as the number one issue

⁷⁴ Ofsted research and analysis, "Independent review of teachers' professional development in schools: phase 2 findings." (updated 2024)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-professional-development-in-schools/independent-review-of-teachers-professional-development-in-schools-phase-2-findings>

⁷⁵ Jens Van Den Brande for *The Education Policy Institute*, "The effects of high-quality professional development on teachers and students: A cost-benefit analysis." (2021)

<https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/the-effects-of-high-quality-professional-development-on-teachers-and-students/>

for teachers and is a major reason why hundreds of teachers leave the profession each year.⁷⁶

81. Indeed, 34% of teachers and leaders indicated that they were considering leaving the sector in the next 12 months for reasons other than retirement, with high workload and stress and/or poor wellbeing being the two most commonly cited reasons (both reported by 90%). This is consistent with 2023 and much higher than the 25% seen in 2022.⁷⁷
82. One of the biggest concerns for school leaders is that schools are no longer simply places of education and learning, but have become a one-stop-shop for support, not just for pupils but for parents and families also. The withdrawal of vital social support services and provision has pushed additional duties onto schools, teachers and support staff, increasing their workload and having a damaging impact on their wellbeing.
83. Teachers are playing an important role in supporting pupils' often fragile mental wellbeing because so many who need help from health and social care services are not receiving it, either because of the delay due to long waiting lists, or because the bar for accessing such help is so high.⁷⁸ According to *The Guardian*, mental ill-health among school-age children "*is at epic proportions and should be a national scandal. There's just not enough [NHS] provision. Our children are suffering under a system unfit for purpose,*" one teacher said.⁷⁹
84. Almost 90% of teachers are involved in providing mental health support to pupils, and three in four put a pupil's psychological needs ahead of teaching the curriculum at least once a week.⁸⁰
85. Data from *YoungMinds* confirms this with 78% of teachers saying pupils' mental health has got worse since they joined the profession, going on to note that only half or fewer of the pupils who they believe need help with their mental health receive it, and that this is having a damaging impact on all pupils' ability to learn.⁸¹
86. This additional workload burden means that teachers can no longer complete their teaching, planning and assessment within directed time. Therefore it is clear that the number of working hours that can be expected of teachers, leaders and all those who work in our schools should be carefully examined, and that tasks, as with the recent list of administrative tasks, which do not fall within scope should not be expected to be completed.

⁷⁶ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 20.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁷⁷ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 20.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁷⁸ Denis Campbell in *The Guardian*, "Teachers regularly helping pupils in distress in attempt to fill NHS funding gap." (2024)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/10/teachers-mental-health-support-pupils-uk>

⁷⁹ Denis Campbell in *The Guardian*, "Teachers regularly helping pupils in distress in attempt to fill NHS funding gap." (2024)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/10/teachers-mental-health-support-pupils-uk>

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⁸¹ Denis Campbell in *The Guardian*, "Teachers regularly helping pupils in distress in attempt to fill NHS funding gap." (2024)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2024/oct/10/teachers-mental-health-support-pupils-uk>

87. According to *The Independent*, if action is not taken to address workload, 9% are “very likely” to quit in the next 24 months, due to overwhelming or unsustainable workload. With 468,258 teachers in England, this could amount to more than 42,000 leaving the profession – a figure that dwarfs the 6,500 Labour has promised to hire⁸²
88. Kahoot’s Vice President of Schools, Sean D’Arcy, warned that an exodus of teachers from the profession would, “heap further pressure on an education system that already has some of the highest class sizes in the industrialised world”.⁸³
89. Enlarged class sizes and the burden of additional duties arising from pupils’ health and social needs are amongst the causes of stress and burnout cited by teachers as reasons for leaving the profession, and it remains a growing concern. According to the NFER, there was a 44% increase in those intending to leave the teaching profession in England between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.⁸⁴
90. The Department’s *Working Live of Teachers and Leaders* survey, which included over 10,000 respondents, confirmed there is significant dissatisfaction with workload amongst teachers, with only 46% reporting being satisfied “most of the time,” a decline from 58% the previous year, while 36% expressed intentions to leave the profession within the next year, up from 25% in 2022. The most prevalent reason for departure was high workload, with 94% citing it as a critical factor.
91. According to the *Education Wellbeing Index*, 78% of teachers are stressed with 50% considering that their organisation’s culture is making it worse.⁸⁵ This highlights the importance of having a positive working environment and a supportive management culture.⁸⁶ This is especially the case when 35% of all staff have experienced a mental health issue in the past academic year. And whilst 38% of all staff say their organisations do not support employees who have mental health and wellbeing problems well,⁸⁷ mercifully, the picture across all schools is that 50% of education staff do feel those with mental health and wellbeing issues are well supported by their organisations.⁸⁸

⁸² Millie Cooke in *The Independent*, “Schools ‘facing disaster’ as one in 10 teachers set to quit in two years.” (2025)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/school-teachers-strikes-union-matt-wrack-b2803738.html>

⁸³ Millie Cooke in *The Independent*, “Schools ‘facing disaster’ as one in 10 teachers set to quit in two years.” (2025)

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/school-teachers-strikes-union-matt-wrack-b2803738.html>

⁸⁴ Dawson McLean, Jack Worth and Andrew Smith for NFER, “Teacher Labour Market in England: Annual Report 2024.” (2024)

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/teacher-labour-market-in-england-annual-report-2024/>

⁸⁵ Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 15.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

⁸⁶ Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) pp. 16-17.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

⁸⁷ Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) pp. 8-9.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

⁸⁸ Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 18.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

92. Interestingly, the report notes that *“when the level of support offered by public bodies to staff for their pupils and students is compared with the score for staff wellbeing, a relationship is found.”* It can be interpreted that, *“staff who have been offered considerable support have a better wellbeing score”* and therefore it is not just direct school funding which is critical for the system and health and wellbeing of its staff, but also funding for the wider support services. By dedicating funding to these support services, teacher workload will reduce as they are freer to concentrate on their key duties.⁸⁹
93. Behaviour is rapidly becoming a major concern in schools, with 57% of all staff feeling pupils and students have become more disruptive in lessons, 51% citing an increase in verbal abuse, and 29% noting students have become more physically abusive, which is also having a negative impact on staff wellbeing and mental health.⁹⁰
94. Added to this is a sizeable increase in challenging behaviours from parents and guardians through vexatious complaints, verbal abuse, and in some cases physical abuse too.⁹¹
95. We know that The Department is aware of issues relating to worsening student behaviour and challenging parental attitudes and is considering how to approach the matter. The Teacher Wellbeing Index notes a number of potential reasons for this escalation in abusive behaviour, including: *“A lack of will amongst senior staff to tackle low level disruption and challenge problematic behaviour,” “Increased class size while school resources and staff time to properly deal with pupil issues,” “more children with complex needs without additional funding,” “Covid and the closure of schools has had a lasting impact on pupils’ and parents’ attitudes towards school,” “Impact of child poverty,”* and the broader challenges within society.⁹²
96. The report concludes that the rise in poor student behaviour is driven by unmet needs. 84% of staff who think verbal or physical abuse towards teachers has increased in the last 12 months, believe that poor behaviour arises due to lack of provision for their unmet needs such as basic physical needs, emotional needs or mental health needs.⁹³ Therefore, dedicating funding to ensuring wider support services meet pupil and family needs, teacher workload will reduce as they are freer to concentrate on their key duties.

⁸⁹ Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 53.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

⁹⁰ Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 10.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

⁹¹ Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 11.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

⁹² Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) pp. 39-40

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

⁹³ Education Support, “Teacher Wellbeing Index” (2024) page 63.

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/for-organisations/research/teacher-wellbeing-index/>

97. We have reported previously on the excessive hours culture prevalent in our schools, with leaders' average reported working hours of 56.6 per week in 2024. Teachers continued to report working fewer hours than leaders.⁹⁴
98. Primary teachers worked an excessive 52.5 hours per week in 2024. Of those working hours, just 45% (23.3 hours) were spent on actual teaching, despite primary teachers typically having a higher teaching load to those in secondary schools. Secondary teachers similarly are recorded as working fewer hours than in the previous two years of the study, however at 50.3 hours per week, this too remains dangerously high.⁹⁵
99. According to the 2023 research report from TIMSS, teachers in England are much more bogged down by administrative tasks than their international counterparts. Having "*too many administrative tasks*" appeared to be a particular issue. In year 5, 86% of teachers in England said they were affected by this, compared to just 63% internationally. In year 9, the gap was even bigger: 83% affected in England compared to just 53% internationally.⁹⁶ Therefore, if we truly are to start to address the issue of teacher workload, we must consider limiting the additional non-teaching duties which occupy so much time.
100. Administrative tasks continue to top the list of tasks that teachers complete the most of outside of the classroom, with 74% reporting it. This is broadly similar to last year, showing that, despite the inclusion in the body of the current School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), the requirement for teachers to not undertake unnecessary administrative duties is not yet being felt in the classroom.⁹⁷
101. And the rise in social and health needs will require significant restoration of health and social care roles within the education sector, such as welfare officers and properly-trained school nurses, as well as mental health support services and support for SEND.
102. Working hours are not the only cause of poor wellbeing. Teachers and school leaders continue to cite Ofsted as a cause of considerable stress which contributes to many of them deciding to leave the profession at a time when teacher retention is at an all-time low.⁹⁸
103. As already noted, the behaviour of pupils and parents is worsening, with NFER noting that pupil behaviour was "*one of the fastest-growing contributors to teacher workload*" since the pandemic, and was likely to be linked to pupils'

⁹⁴ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 6.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁹⁵ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 7.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁹⁶ *Schools Week*, "Teachers bogged down by admin, and 7 other TIMSS 2023 findings." (2023)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teachers-bogged-down-by-admin-and-7-other-timss-2023-findings/>

⁹⁷ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 8

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

⁹⁸ Harry Quilter-Pinner et al. for IPPR, "Out of Kilter – How to rebalance our school system to work for people, economy and society." (2023) Page 28.

<https://www.ippr.org/articles/out-of-kilter>

mental health and challenges in supporting children with special educational needs.⁹⁹

104. School leaders and teachers both noted that pupil behaviour is good or very good less often (falling 9%) 76% of the time, according to school leaders, and 45% of the time for classroom teachers.¹⁰⁰ And the managing, reporting on and following up on behaviour incidents occupies 10% more time (60%) than two years ago, confirming that behaviour is worsening across our schools.¹⁰¹

Planning Preparation and Assessment (PPA) Time

105. Community has long been a proponent for the need for sufficient time for teachers to properly plan their own lessons.
106. Research shows that properly planned lessons have one of the most positive impacts on pupil achievement.¹⁰² And despite the amount of time that is dedicated to classroom work, teachers in England are only afforded 10% of directed time for this vital task.
107. Workload reduction has been a priority for the Department since the previous government's 2019 *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*. In spite of this, high workload continues to be the main factor causing teachers to consider leaving the profession in England.
108. As we have said in multiple previous submissions, time is what is needed to support teachers to remain in the profession. Dedicated time for planning, preparing and assessing learning is part of the contracted 'directed time' rather than being a task which is completed during the "*reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties*."¹⁰³
109. Because, despite working some of the longest hours in Europe – England's teachers are recorded as working between 50 and 53 hours each week – England's teachers more than double their working hours working on classroom-adjacent activities.¹⁰⁴ Much of which is "*depressingly bureaucratic and seemingly pointless*."¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Richard Adams in *The Guardian*, "Teacher vacancy rates at record high in England, report finds." (2025)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/13/teacher-vacancy-rates-record-high-england-report>

¹⁰⁰ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 12

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

¹⁰¹ *Working lives of teachers and leaders*, "Wave 3 Summary report November 2024." (2024) Page 8

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-lives-of-teachers-and-leaders-wave-3>

¹⁰² Asst. Prof. Qassem Farhang et al. in the *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, "Lesson Plan and Its Importance in Teaching Process." (2023)

[https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?url=https://www.ghru.edu.af/sites/default/files/2024-](https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?url=https://www.ghru.edu.af/sites/default/files/2024-12/Lesson%2520Plan%2520and%2520its%2520importance-)

[12/Lesson%2520Plan%2520and%2520its%2520importance-%2520IJCSRR.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&ei=q3njaKKQLMasieoP3am_iQM&scisig=AAZF9b-5WxzTiOUCpc-yPBVyc9Q&oi=scholar](https://scholar.google.co.uk/scholar?url=https://www.ghru.edu.af/sites/default/files/2024-12/Lesson%2520Plan%2520and%2520its%2520importance-%2520IJCSRR.pdf&hl=en&sa=X&ei=q3njaKKQLMasieoP3am_iQM&scisig=AAZF9b-5WxzTiOUCpc-yPBVyc9Q&oi=scholar)

¹⁰³ *Department for Education* "School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document" (2025). Page 51. Paragraph 51.7

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>

¹⁰⁴ Prof. John Jerrim and Sam Sims, "The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018" (2019) Page 75.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f6484c2e90e075a01d2f4ce/TALIS_2018_research.pdf

¹⁰⁵ Mary Boustead in *Schools Week*, "Here's how we can finally begin to fix the teacher supply crisis." (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/heres-how-we-can-finally-begin-to-fix-the-teacher-supply-crisis/>

110. And it is not only the number of hours that is the problem, but the intensity of the work. *“Research from Thomas et al. (University of Birmingham, 2003) found that teachers’ working weeks were much more intensive than those of other professions and that despite teachers seemingly having so many holidays, a large proportion of these are used to complete work that they didn’t manage to cram into the previous term or to undertake preparation for the next term.”*¹⁰⁶
111. We have already identified that, as the pupil bulge moves through the system, there is an opportunity to reduce the pupil:teacher ratio and attend to the workload burden of teachers through the volume of contact time. It is clear that the benefits of reducing teacher contact time through the increase of PPA goes far beyond supporting mental wellbeing and reducing stress. Reducing contact time could also reduce the long working hours that The World Health Organization report as being *“a significant contributor to deaths from heart disease and stroke.”*¹⁰⁷ Evidence from the Teacher Workforce Survey notes that teachers in the UK often work in excess of 50 hours each week.
112. We acknowledge that there would be a financial impact to increasing PPA time. Increasing PPA to 20% would mean teachers delivering fewer lessons each week so there would be a requirement for an increase in the teaching workforce of around 10% or approximately 47,000 additional teachers together with the associated increase to the annual wage bill, however, Community believes it is time to seriously consider this as a solution to recruitment and retention and improving workload and wellbeing.
113. Teach First argues that *“the ECF has set the precedent that ringfenced PPA time is important for professional development. We are simply arguing that this rationale should be extended across a teacher’s career, so all teachers can keep improving, as well as avoid getting burned out in the process.”*¹⁰⁸
114. And we have cited positive evidence from Noel Baker School in Derby in our previous submissions, with Headteacher at the time, Ann Dougherty, saying: *“In 2018, we were able to reduce our teachers’ timetables by investing in more full-time teachers rather than supply teachers.”* This investment meant the school attracted applicants into permanent employment, vastly reducing the reliance on supply staff. She further noted: *“Permanent staff [are] much cheaper and better for the children in terms of stability and quality of provision.”* And in turn, this leads to *“improved pupil outcomes, bettering our teaching staff recruitment and retention, and giving us time to invest in really well-thought-out extracurricular provisions”.*¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Haili Hughes, “Preserving Positivity”, John Catt Educational (2020), Page 40.

¹⁰⁷ World Health Organization, “Long working hours increasing deaths from heart disease and stroke” (2021)

<https://www.who.int/news/item/17-05-2021-long-working-hours-increasing-deaths-from-heart-disease-and-stroke-who-ilo>

¹⁰⁸ Grainne Hallahan in TES, “Why doubling PPA could help tackle the attainment gap” (2021)

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/why-doubling-ppa-could-help-tackle-attainment-gap>

¹⁰⁹ Grainne Hallahan in TES, “Why doubling PPA could help tackle the attainment gap” (2021)

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/why-doubling-ppa-could-help-tackle-attainment-gap>

115. Therefore, as we have called for in previous submissions, Community continues the clarion for an increase to the basic amount of PPA time for classroom teachers from 10% to 20%.

Pay

116. Looking back over the previous decade, the picture is stark – declining teacher pay has run counter to rising average earnings across the wider economy. This has led to a less competitive profession and is one of the roots of our current recruitment difficulties. Furthermore, this real-terms fall in teacher pay is an unusual trend when compared to other OECD countries, where real pay often rose significantly in the same decade.¹¹⁰
117. TUC general secretary Paul Nowak said: *"We all know the pressure on public finances from the mess the Tories left things in. But as the government's evidence acknowledges, the recruitment and retention crisis in our public sector has been driven in part by pay."*¹¹¹
118. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) said in its public sector pay report that the pay rise for 2024-25 put real-terms pay for new teachers at about the same level as 2010, and *"roughly matches"* recent growth in private sector wages.¹¹² But this means teachers and other public sector occupations have fallen further down the pay distribution scale, even when their usually more generous employer pension contributions are taken into account.¹¹³
119. Therefore, teacher and school leader pay is around 22% lower in real terms than in 2010 when measured against Retail Prices Index (RPI) inflation. With the IFS calculating that long-serving and senior teachers – accounting for nearly a third of those working in England – would have been earning the equivalent of £50,300 in 2010. But below-inflation wage increases over the past 12 years has meant their pay in 2022 was just £43,700.¹¹⁴
120. It is vital that this damage to teacher and school leader pay and conditions is repaired to fix the recruitment and retention crisis. Community calls on The Review Body to make a fully-funded uplift of 6% to teacher and leader pay rates to begin closing this gap.
121. In the private sector, annual average total earnings growth was 4.7%, with average regular earnings growth for the public sector remaining steady at 5.6% in September 2025. In real terms, this means that wage growth, whilst positive, has slowed over the past 12 months to around 0.7% for the period

¹¹⁰ James Zuccollo for *The Education Policy Institute*, "Teacher's Pay in Context." (2022)

<https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/teachers-pay-in-context/>

¹¹¹ Brian Wheeler for *The BBC*, "Improve productivity for more pay, public sector told." (2024)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c24n10p7e4zo>

¹¹² Jonathan Cribb et al. *"Pressures on public sector pay"*, Institute for Fiscal Studies (September 2024)

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/pressures-public-sector-pay>

¹¹³ Jasmine Norden in *TES*, "Experienced teacher pay 9% below 2010 levels despite rise." (2024)

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/experienced-teacher-pay-below-2010-levels-despite-rise>

¹¹⁴ Richard Adams in *The Guardian*, "Teachers' pay cut by £6,600 since 2010, says Institute for Fiscal Studies." (2023)

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/jan/12/teachers-pay-cut-by-6600-since-2010-says-institute-for-fiscal-studies>

May to July 2025. Therefore, in order to even remain competitive, teacher pay must at least match these annual rises.

122. Community notes the recent news that bursaries of up to £31,000 will be paid to recruit more people with science and engineering backgrounds into teacher training, which is good news that we hope will have positive impact on recruitment into subject shortage areas. But it is vital that we concentrate just as much effort and funding into the steps necessary to retain those teachers already working.
123. Teacher retention is key to ensuring effective teacher supply and quality. In its latest report, the Review Body itself made the connection between pay levels and recruitment and retention, stating that: *"spending too little may also give rise to serious problems with subsequent costs which can represent poor value for money."*¹¹⁵
124. And the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) concur, pay *"must remain competitive throughout a teacher's career and steps must be taken to dial down the accountability system and workload pressures that are driving many teachers away from the profession."*¹¹⁶
125. Any cuts to teacher and school leader pay and conditions would be a false economy, because they damage our education service and in so doing damage the country's economic future. When wastage rates remain high across the sector at 6% for those with at least ten years' experience, rising to 9.5% for those with less than five years of experience it is crucial that the pay system properly reflects the significant contribution of experienced teachers and leaders to education.¹¹⁷
126. This is why we need to consider the immediate challenge, but also have an awareness of the conditions that support teachers too, such as the requirement to safeguard a teacher's salary should their role be deemed redundant.
127. Currently the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) protects a teacher's pay for up to three years following a role change, restructure or school closure that results in a pay decrease, and given the forecast reduction in pupil numbers, this is an important component of teacher pay that will retain experience in schools.
128. Any proposals to reform salary safeguarding risk having a destabilising effect on teaching and further worsen the attraction of teaching as a career option.

¹¹⁵ 34th Report of the School Teachers' Review Body, (2024) paragraph 2.50, Page 16.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-review-body-34th-report-2024>

¹¹⁶ Lydia Chantler-Hicks in *Schools Week*, "Teacher retention payments not as effective as first thought, study suggests." (2025)

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/teacher-retention-payments-not-as-effective-as-first-thought-study-suggests/>

¹¹⁷ Government Evidence to the STRB, paragraph 20, Page 8.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evidence-to-the-strb-2025-pay-award-for-teachers-and-leaders>

129. In a similar way, Community feels that the introduction of non-consolidated payments, such as bonuses, would be a retrograde step and dilute the national pay agreement.
130. Given the recent and very welcome move away from performance-related pay, a process particularly flawed because it tied pupil performance with teacher performance, the introduction of bonus payments of any kind would inevitably be seen as a comment on teacher performance. Bonuses, by their very nature, are rewards for performance which is very difficult to assess objectively. Certainly, Community would vociferously object to any system which used pupil-level data to make any such determination.
131. Community cannot conceive of a reason why schools would need to use bonuses, and would not support their introduction. What we want to see is a robust, nationally agreed, pay award that recognises the achievements of all teachers.
132. This is why Community is pleased with the proposals contained within the Schools' White Paper, that all state-funded schools will be required to offer a mandated minimum level of pay, and to have regard to the STPCD, as we feel that this will have a positive impact on the current workforce and support recruitment into the sector. We recommend that it goes one step further and that all state-funded schools are required to adhere to all of the tenets and principals of the STPCD in order to protect and secure pay and conditions for all teachers.
133. Despite rumourmongering to the contrary, evidence strongly suggests that teacher pay awards have little negative impact on the wider economy. In 2024, the Governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey, dismissed concerns raised by the Conservatives that the Labour Government's plans for public sector pay rises would risk stoking inflation and keep interest rates higher for longer.¹¹⁸
134. Community agrees with the Australian Institute: *"It's time this myth was put to bed."* Their research shows that minimum wage increases over the past 25 years have had little to no impact on inflation at all, and they note that *"The Nobel Prize in economics in 2021 showed empirically that a rise in the minimum wage doesn't cost jobs."*¹¹⁹
135. The Bank of England's Andrew Bailey went on to state that, *"private sector wage developments ... [tend]... to "lead" the public sector, rather than the other way around,"* noting that *"pay awards of 5-6% would have a relatively small impact on headline inflation."*¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Richard Partington in *The Guardian*, "Bank of England dismisses Tory claims" (2024)
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/aug/01/bank-of-england-dismisses-tory-claims-public-sector-pay-rises-will-stoke-inflation>

¹¹⁹ Australian Unions via Facebook, "Every time union members win a pay rise." (2025)
<https://www.facebook.com/AustralianUnions/posts/its-time-this-myth-was-put-to-bed-every-time-union-members-win-a-pay-raise-you-ge/1153241753502103/>

¹²⁰ Richard Partington in *The Guardian*, "Bank of England dismisses Tory claims" (2024)
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/aug/01/bank-of-england-dismisses-tory-claims-public-sector-pay-rises-will-stoke-inflation>

136. We have made the case before that a truly independent Review Body must feel empowered to make the recommendations needed to reverse the real-terms pay cuts since 2010, restore pay competitiveness and tackle the workload problems. And we have been tentatively pleased with the stance taken by The Review Body over the past two years to recommend awards in excess of government suggestions, but the fact remains that teacher pay is below where it should be.
137. And when supermarkets such as Sainsbury's announce that they will increase minimum pay for employees outside London to £12.60 an hour from August 2025, with wages for staff in the capital increasing to £13.85 an hour – an increase in wages of 58% since 2018¹²¹ – it is clear that teacher salaries, and those of teaching assistants, need serious attention in order to be able to attract and retain professional applicants.¹²² By comparison, since 2018, teacher pay has risen just 27%.
138. Therefore, the pay award for 2025, and subsequent years, must be significant and it must be sustained in order that it can make a difference to recruitment and retention, because it is not just about attracting and developing new teachers, but ensuring we maintain the breadth and depth of experience within the sector.

¹²¹ *J Sainsbury plc*. "Sainsbury's continues to invest in colleague pay as part of Next Level strategy." (2025)

<https://corporate.sainsburys.co.uk/news/press-releases/sainsbury-s-continues-to-invest-in-colleague-pay-as-part-of-next-level-strategy/>

¹²² For comparison, an Early Career Teacher working an average of 50 hours each week would be paid just £15.49 per hour based on a £31,650 starting salary – 52.4 hours of work per week – 39 weeks of term.

Summary

139. Over the past decade, the UK education sector has faced sustained financial challenges, exacerbated by inflation, rising costs, and historic underfunding throughout the previous Government. The Labour Government's ambition to recruit and retain 6,500 more teachers is challenged by a tough graduate labour market still reeling from the impacts of COVID-19, economic volatility, and rising living costs. Simultaneously, schools are grappling with rising operational costs within an already strained funding environment.
140. Although school funding has increased in cash terms, much of this has been and will be absorbed by the growing costs of SEND provision, leaving little for other essential needs. This means real-terms spending per pupil has only just returned to 2010 levels, and yet per-pupil costs are rising by an average of 8%, outpacing inflation and leaving many schools running budget deficits.
141. Into this tough economic environment it is vital that we have a bold strategy to recruit new teachers and to value and retain those we already have. This is why Community is recommending a fully-funded pay award of 6% for all teachers and leaders, across all pay points.
142. There must be no expectation that schools are capable of finding efficiency savings beyond those which have already been found. Therefore, it is essential that this pay award is funded in full by central government through the Department.
143. We are also recommending reform of continuing professional development (CPD) to support teachers to develop their skills and deepen their expertise. *"Children need a workforce with staying power, where teachers ... build experience, particularly in the classrooms where we know great teaching can deliver the greatest benefit."*¹²³
144. And to further support that classroom work, we again recommend an increase to planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, from 10% to 20%, and that administrative and other extraneous activities are duties that are no longer required to be undertaken by qualified teachers.
145. We do not support the idea of bonus payments, nor do we think the time is right to consider watering down teachers' rights to a safeguarded sum. This, particularly, risks damaging the already fragile recruitment situation, making it even harder for schools to secure the right staff for the right role.
146. One way that schools could be supported with recruitment costs is for standardisation of agency costs to bring spending back into line. This would be likely to increase budgets for schools, academies and trusts, giving them a fair chance of sustainably resolving staffing problems.¹²⁴

¹²³ Melanie Renowden in *Schools Week*, "Recruitment alone won't solve the workforce crisis." (2025)
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/recruitment-alone-wont-solve-the-workforce-crisis/>

¹²⁴ Baljinder Kuller in *Schools Week*. "Government must square up to unscrupulous teaching agencies" (2024)
<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/government-must-square-up-to-unscrupulous-teaching-agencies/>

147. Finally, we must ensure that steps are taken to address the “always-on” culture. All teachers and leaders are entitled to rest and relaxation, and to a proper lunch break. The excessive workload that is extant in our schools is unsustainable, therefore we would support clarification on what ‘directed time’ means, and guidance to ensure that *“reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher’s professional duties,”* as currently stated in the STPCD, is not abused.