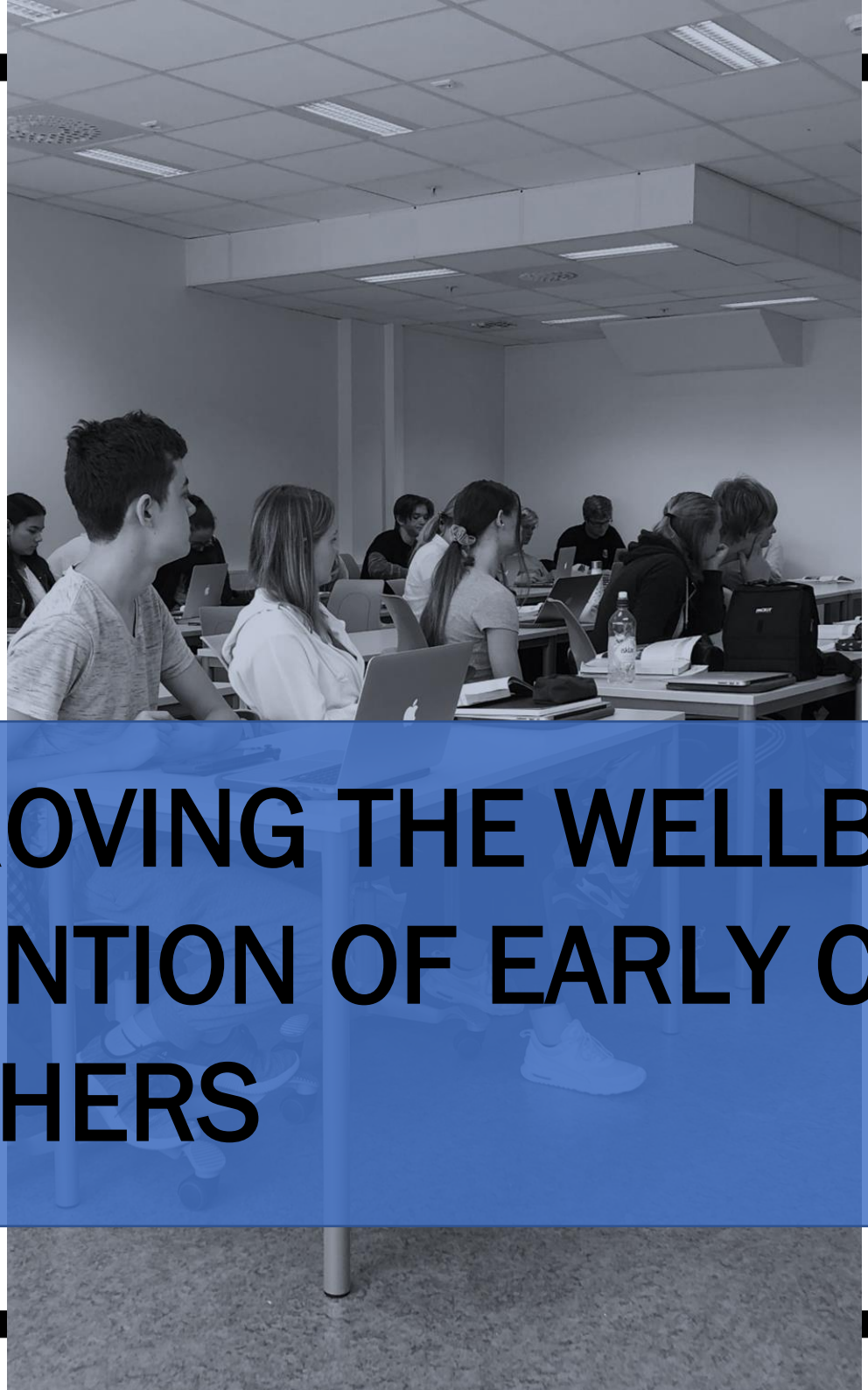


WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

IMPROVING THE WELLBEING AND RETENTION OF EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

PAUL MIDDLETON

Contents

Acknowledgements

This research was carried out with the generous funding and support of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust. I would like to thank the team at the WCMT, as well as all of the teachers, students, university lecturers and government officials who shared their experiences with me. Without their openness and passion for change, this report would not have been possible.

All names in this report have been changed to protect the privacy of the teachers that so kindly shared their opinions and experiences.

About me

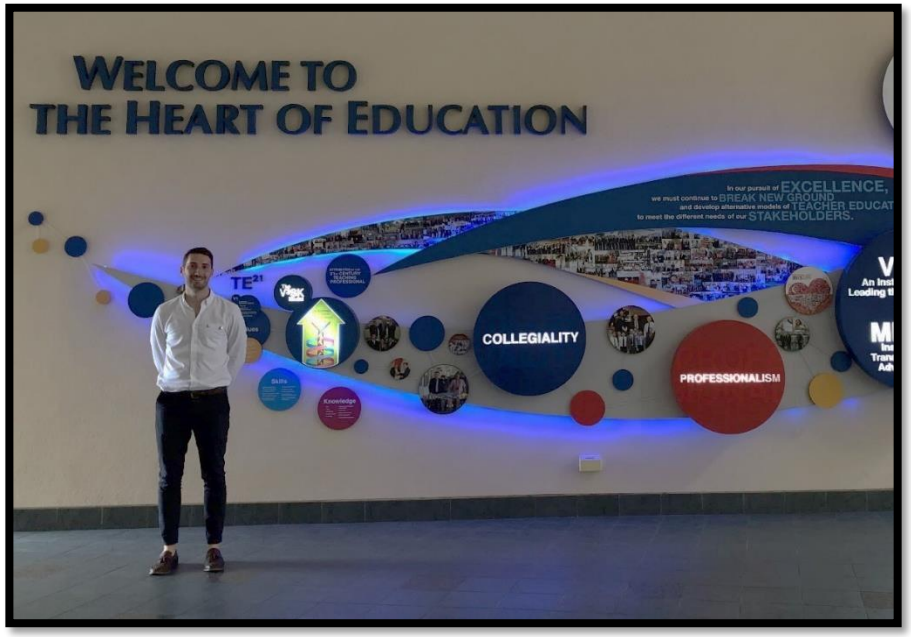
My name is Paul Middleton and I have been a secondary school History teacher since 2014. Since joining the profession, I have been Head of History in two Hertfordshire secondary schools, including in my current school based in St Albans.

In 2019, I became one of the first teachers to gain Chartered Teacher Status in the UK, having completed the programme delivered by the Chartered College of Teaching. I was also awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2019, which has enabled me to carry out this research into early career teacher retention.

Update: June 2020

This report was produced in March 2020 based on research carried out in 2019. Since then, the education system in England has been severely disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on early career teachers has not been explicitly addressed in this report, as the situation is still ongoing; it is not yet clear what education and schooling will look like going forward.

Nevertheless, with many trainee teachers entering an unfamiliar system, after losing out on the final phase of their training year, it is evident that the interventions suggested in this report will be even more necessary going forward. I hope to issue a revised edition of this report in light of Covid-19, once schools return to a new normal and the impact of this pandemic on new teachers becomes clear.



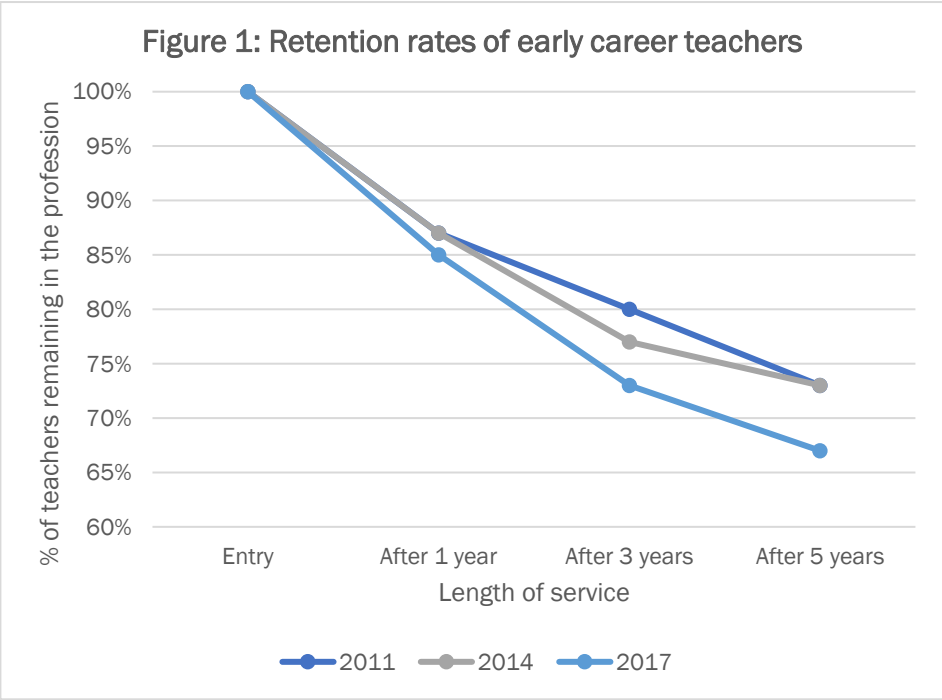
Introduction

Teacher attrition in England today

The Department for Education (DfE) has calculated that 22.5% of teachers in England leave the profession within the first two years of teaching, with the number rising to 32.3% by year five.[1] In fact, this five-year wastage rate is the highest in the current series, which dates back to 1997 (Figure 1). While these figures are disconcerting when viewed in isolation, they become even more troubling considering the number of secondary school pupils is set to increase by 15% by 2027. Clearly, the teaching profession (and perhaps the education system more broadly) is somewhat broken; interventions will need to be implemented quickly to prevent further disruption to student learning.

Excessive workload is one of the most common reasons given by teachers to explain their decision to leave, which will not come as a surprise to many people familiar with the current state of the profession. A survey of 1,200 current and former teachers carried out by the UCL Institute of Education (IOE) showed that 75% of respondents left the profession/consider leaving due to work/life balance, followed by workload (71%) and a target-driven culture (57%).[2]

But who are these teachers that are leaving the profession? Recent DfE data shows that early-career retention rates are lowest for Maths, Science and Modern Foreign Language teachers; incidentally, these are the subjects that receive the greatest amount of bursary funding from the government. Retention rates are also lowest in London, with 37% of 2010 graduates leaving the profession within five years of service, compared to just 21% in the north of England.[3] Perhaps this is due to the transience of London workers, particularly university graduates. The statistics are also split on gender lines, with the five-year retention rate of female NQTs being five percentage points higher than for male NQTs. It was also higher among those under thirty.[4] This bleak picture of attrition rates has not gone unnoticed by recent governments, who have all recognised that workload is 'the most frequently cited reason for teachers wanting to leave the profession' and have stated that it 'is too high and must be reduced'.[5] However, actions to resolve these issues have been slow to materialise. A series of surveys and review groups since 2014 culminated in the Workload Reduction Toolkit – an online resource created in 2018 for school



[1] Foster, D (2019) *Teacher recruitment and retention in England* (House of Commons No. 7222). London: HMSO.
[2] J. Perryman & G. Calvert, 'What motivates people to teach and why do they leave? Accountability, performativity and teacher retention', *British Journal of Educational Studies* (April, 2019).
[3] Department for Education (2018), *Analysis of teacher supply, retention and mobility*. London: HMSO.
[4] Foster, D (2019) *Teacher recruitment and retention in England* (House of Commons No. 7222). London: HMSO.
[5] Department for Education (2019), *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*. London: HMSO.

leaders to help tackle excessive workload in their schools.[6] Yet, the extent to which this guidance is being implemented in schools is difficult to ascertain. There will most certainly be a disconnect between the advice being published by the government and school leaders actively employing this advice within their schools.

One intervention that will hopefully have a greater impact on the retention of early career teachers is the rollout of the Department for Education's Early Career Framework (2019), which forms part of their recruitment and retention strategy (Figure 2).[7] In what is one of the biggest shakeups within the profession in recent years, the framework is expected to have a hugely positive impact on supporting early career teachers. Specifically, the DfE are implementing the following reforms:

- Providing schools with funding to extend support for newly qualified teachers from one year to two years. This funding will allow schools to reduce timetables, provide and train mentors and offer support to staff at a leadership level.
- Circulating an evidence-informed list of competencies that early career teachers should be confident with after a few years within the profession; this will help form the basis of early career mentoring.
- Developing new specialist qualifications for teacher development, which act as an alternative to the traditional progression pathways of leadership and management. Schools can spend their Apprenticeship Levy funds to resource these.

The DfE is planning an early rollout of the Early Career Framework in parts of the north of England in 2020 and many are hopeful that this will begin to tackle the high attrition rates among new teachers. What is clear is that the future is certainly brighter for those entering the teaching profession; however, it remains unclear whether this will mark a permanent break from an otherwise turbulent past decade. More research will need to be carried out, and further initiatives must be introduced, to help reverse the current situation facing early career teachers.

Figure 2: Teacher career pathways

It is hoped that this Fellowship project will contribute to this ongoing research surrounding teacher retention. The aims of the project were as follows:

- To highlight the issues facing early career teachers in England, by making comparisons with foreign systems that currently demonstrate best practice.
- To identify potential solutions to these issues based on the interventions that have already been introduced by our foreign counterparts.
- To understand the role played by various members of the education community in supporting early career teachers and improving retention rates.
- To reveal the current strengths of the English education system and the potential strengths of future interventions such as the Early Career Framework.

[6] Department for Education (2018), *Reducing school workload*. London: HMSO.
[7] Department for Education (2019), *Early Career Framework*. London: HMSO.

The project

Destinations

This Fellowship involved conversations with over one hundred individuals across Singapore, Norway and Switzerland. The motivation for the inclusion of these three countries in this research project is outlined below:

- **Singapore** – The city state has received a lot of coverage over recent years after topping the PISA league table in 2015 and for having one of the lowest teacher attrition rates among any nation, at just 3%.[8] The education system is extremely centralised, with the National Institute of Education and Ministry of Education overseeing all aspects of education. The country's reputation, coupled with this unique approach to the profession, made it an interesting case study for this research. It also gave the project a more international perspective by exploring a nation that has a different culture towards teaching and education compared to Europe.
- **Norway** – The decision to travel to Norway was based on its focus on flexibility, freedom and collaboration, which has become part of the Scandinavian model of education in recent years. This laissez-faire approach to the profession was a good comparison against the uniform Singaporean system; it allowed for greater understanding of the benefits and limitations of each approach.
- **Switzerland** – In many ways, Switzerland provided the closest comparison to the English education system, with the many cantons and the prevalence of independent international schools mirroring the complex patchwork of education in England. A second European case study also ensured that the project remained focused on education models and teacher experiences that most resembled those within England.

Methodology

Across the six-week project, interviews were carried out with the following individuals:

- Classroom teachers, including early career teachers and more experienced members of staff (all countries)
- Senior leaders and mentors within schools (all countries)
- University researchers/trainers, who deliver training to prospective teachers or support the development of existing staff (all countries)
- Trainee teachers (Norway and Switzerland)
- Civil servants creating and revising education policy (Norway and Singapore)

Due to the varied nature of the individuals being interviewed, discussions were not necessarily structured around a set list of questions, but rather, a set list of topic areas. Depending on the position and experience of the interviewee, particular topic areas were chosen for discussion. For example, part time staff were asked about the ease of flexible working and mentors were asked about the induction programmes/support available within the school. This allowed for the evidence collected to naturally emerge, rather than simply fitting pre-set hypotheses. Lesson observations were carried out in all three countries to put the comments of teachers into context.

Interviewees were selected by school leaders based on the list of desired individuals above and each interview lasted between twenty and thirty minutes. Due to the relatively small sample size (94 interviewees), there are obvious limitations with the findings that have been collected through this research and, as such, the conclusions should not be taken as representative of the city or country. No quantitative data was collected during this project due to restrictions on time and the unwillingness of the Ministry of Education in Singapore to allow surveys to be completed.

[8] The National Center on Education and the Economy, E*mpowered Educators: How High-Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World* (Washington D.C., 2016)

Workload

The situation in schools today

The issue of excessive workload within the teaching profession has been widely documented. Unnecessary marking practices, exhaustive lesson plans and regular data collection have been added to the task list of teachers up and down the country. This is largely due to a growing inspection culture, which has increased the pressure on school leaders and classroom teachers to be evidencing every aspect of learning. In a 2019 wellbeing survey of more than 2,000 school and college staff carried out by the Ofsted schools inspectorate, many teachers cited Ofsted themselves as being the main cause of this increase in extraneous workload.[9] However, it is ultimately the responsibility of school leaders to protect and maintain staff wellbeing, particularly for those entering this challenging profession. In order to support these leaders in improving staff wellbeing, the DfE have recently introduced a number of initiatives that are beginning to have an impact, such as the Workload Reduction Toolkit.[10] In an Ofsted survey of 836 school leaders, 94% reported reducing workload related to marking, compared to 88% at this time last year. More than three-quarters (78%) of leaders reported they had reduced workload related to planning, compared to 71% last year.[11] Clearly, these government initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on teacher workload and more school leaders are taking active measures to improve teacher wellbeing.

Findings

Certainly, when interviewing teachers across these three countries, it is clear that educators in England are not unique in this struggle against professional workload. In Singapore, for example, one early career teacher talked of 'overcoming their own tiredness', while in Norway, another wondered, 'is the workload too much, or am I too slow?' In interview after interview, whenever teachers were asked what the greatest challenge was within the profession, the vast majority replied with workload. This ultimately raises the question of whether there is more to teacher attrition than just workload; if this is the main reason, then why are attrition rates in other countries so low? Perhaps it is not that workload is the issue forcing teachers to leave the profession, but the prevalence of extraneous tasks that is the real bone of contention for teachers in England

In many of the interviews within this research, complaints regarding excessive workload primarily focused on tasks that were directly linked to professional development, pupil experience or academic outcomes. Figure 3 shows a timetable of a secondary school Science teacher in Singapore, who has been teaching for three years. While the number of teaching hours was certainly lower than her counterparts in England (14 hours compared to c.20 hours), she was expected to coordinate in co-curricular activities each day, such as sports

Figure 3: A timetable of an early career secondary teacher (Science) in Singapore

	1 7:30 8:00	2 8:00 8:30	3 8:30 9:00	4 9:00 9:30	5 9:30 10:00	6 10:00 10:30	7 10:30 11:00	8 11:00 11:30	9 11:30 12:00	10 12:00 12:30	11 12:30 13:00	12 13:00 13:30	13 13:30 14:00	14 14:00 14:30	15 14:30 15:00	16 15:00 15:30	17 15:30 16:00	18 16:00 16:30
Mo	Assembly			1st Year			2nd Year A		3rd Year A		3rd Year B			Co-curricular activities/ academic support				
Tu		3rd Year C					2nd Year B					3rd Year B		Co-curricular activities/ academic support				
We	Staff CPD/ Meeting			3rd Year D			2nd Year A							Co-curricular activities/ academic support				
Th							3rd Year C							Co-curricular activities/ academic support				
Fr	Assembly						3rd Year A		3rd Year D					Co-curricular activities/ academic support				

[9] Ofsted (2019), *Teacher well-being at work in schools and further education providers*. London: HMSO.
[10] Department for Education (2018), *Reducing school workload*. London: HMSO.
[11] Department for Education (2019), *School leaders crack down on workload* [Press release]. 17 July 2019. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/school-leaders-crack-down-on-workload (Accessed: 7 March 2020).

clubs, military drill or academic clinics. Furthermore, class sizes in Singapore were the highest of the three countries within this project; between 35 and 45 pupils. Therefore, although the scheduled workload may seem less at first glance, the amount of time spent marking and reporting on such large classes would be considerable. Amber, an early career Geography teacher, explained how she works 'seven days a week' and that workload would be the most significant factor in making her leave. In another secondary school within the city state, Lucy, explained that she spends three to four hours each evening planning and marking, with one day of the weekend also dedicated to meeting the demands of the job. She described how, 'for teachers, starting a family may be a struggle … I do see some of the teachers with families struggling a little'.

Another stress that adds to the workload of teachers in Singapore is the inability to switch off. For instance, it is common for a teacher's personal mobile number to be shared with both parents and pupils, to accommodate the intense culture surrounding academic success within the country. Many teachers described how they receive calls and text messages late into the night and during holidays, which considerably impacts their wellbeing.

Figure 4: A timetable of an experienced high school Geography teacher in Oslo

	1 8:15 9:00	2 9:00 9:45	3 9:45 10:30	4 10:30 11:15	5 11:15 12:00	6 12:00 12:45	7 12:45 13:30	8 13:30 14:15	9 14:15 15:00	10 15:00 15:45
Mo						Pastoral meeting			1st Year A	
Tu	2nd Year			1st Year B		1st Year A	Academic support time		Collaborative time	
We	1st Year B			2nd Year					3rd Year	Tutor time
Th	Pastoral meeting					Tutor time		3rd Year		1st Year A
Fr	3rd Year			Collaborative time			1st Year B		2nd Year	

High workload, primarily from marking and planning, was also commonplace among the teachers interviewed in Norway and Switzerland. In one secondary school in Oslo, the number of contact hours was certainly lower than in English schools; however, there were additional roles and responsibilities that made the professional load comparable. Figure 4 shows a timetable of an experienced Geography teacher at the school. Here, the teacher has 16.5 hours of contact time with pupils, made up of four classes and one tutor group, yet there is an additional 6.5 hours of scheduled time to meet as a department and as a year group. While there may be some differences in the amount of marking and reporting required for such a small number of classes taught (just four), there will no doubt be other demands placed on teachers here that are not expected of their English counterparts.

In both Norway and Switzerland, many of the teachers that were interviewed highlighted workload as a significant stress factor:

- "When I got home in the evening, I was crying because there was so much stress. I had such a headache" – Joanna, a Health teacher in her third year (Norway).
- "I didn't expect to work that hard [when I entered teaching] … I'm working every evening and weekend" – Samuel, a French teacher in his third year (Switzerland)
- "I did not open my laptop all weekend and I felt so guilty; I was so overwhelmed" – Sara, a History teacher in her fifth year (Switzerland)

Clearly, from the testimonies gathered from teachers in all three countries, excessive workload is not an issue unique to English schools. The key differences perhaps are the systems in place to support early career teachers with the pressures of teaching; these will be explored later in this report.

Recommendations

- **Schools should continue to reduce extraneous workload** – School leaders should continue to utilise the Workload Reduction Toolkit to reduce the number of extra demands placed on staff, particularly those who are new to the profession. Superfluous marking and planning strategies that are not research-informed should be scrapped. Everyone within the education community has a role to play in this. For example, although Ofsted and school leaders have the greatest role to play in redesigning school policies, middle managers must also ensure that they minimise the pressures placed on new teachers in their departments/year groups.
- **Increase the power of trade unions to protect teachers' wellbeing** – Many teachers in England pay between £15 and £20 each month for trade union affiliation; however, this is largely used as an insurance policy if anything goes wrong, rather than a support system. Greater changes would take place if we shifted to a Norwegian model, where trade unions play a key role in the daily life of the school. Union representatives within the school should meet with school leaders each half term to ensure staff were being heard. A greater dialogue between staff and senior leadership, through the appropriate union channel, could create a much more positive working culture for many new teachers who are wary about speaking up.
- **Shift the discourse away from workload to focus on the pull factors that keep teachers in the profession** – Despite the many issues regarding workload, it is important to remember that teacher attrition is multi-causal; the narrative of teachers and the media must therefore shift to reflect this. Instead of just focusing on teacher burnout, poor wellbeing and workload horror stories, interventions should begin to focus on making teachers more efficient and more valued. For example, school leaders should be trained to be managers, as well as academic leaders. Courses should focus on how to create a positive culture within schools and how to promote teacher talent. This would improve retention rates by increasing the pull factors that keep teachers within a particular school and within the profession more generally. Intrinsic rewards should not just be experienced in the classroom, but as part of the wider teaching team.

Teachers in Singapore and Norway (above) experience similar class workload to their English counterparts.

Training and development

The situation in schools today

Educational training in England is certainly something that should be celebrated. Training providers such as universities, TeachFirst and the Institute of Education (IOE) suitably prepare teachers for the demands of the workplace. There are many benefits to these various routes that individuals can take to enter the profession, particularly for teachers entering the profession 'unconventionally'. This could include career changers, unqualified teachers seeking qualified teacher status (QTS) or teachers who want to start earning money quickly while learning on the job. However, it is important to recognise that the government has failed to meet its recruitment targets for secondary school teachers for the seventh year running. In 2019, for example, the number of teachers recruited in this area was only 85% of the target.[12] What is perhaps more concerning, are the difficulties in recruiting specialist Maths, Physics and Chemistry teachers; recruitment for Physics, for instance, was only 43% of the expected level.[13] Clearly, the methods for recruiting and training teachers need some revisions in order to meet these targets going forward.

Regarding training and development, there is a lot to commend the English education system on. In particular, the Early Career Framework announced last year marks a huge step forward in the way that new teachers will be inducted into the profession. This will hopefully formalise much of the amazing work already carried out at a school level by caring colleagues, mentors and school leaders. Once inducted, a lot of teachers engage with grassroots projects and programmes in order to develop their own teaching. Low-cost conferences such as ResearchEd and BrewEd are helping to support and inspire many teachers across the country, while social media provides informal support and inspiration on a daily basis. Formal qualifications such as the Chartered Teacher and Accelerate programmes (from the Chartered College of Teaching) also offer beneficial opportunities to early career teachers seeking career development.

However, there are many teachers who do not engage with CPD opportunities, whether this is down to their own indifference, lack of time, or a lack of financial support from their school. While just under 50% of teachers in England had participated in curriculum-related CPD in the 12 months before the 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), almost 90% of teachers in Shanghai and 80% of teachers in Singapore had done so.[14] Furthermore, a lot of professional development remains focused on GCSE and A Level examination training, with few teachers participating in courses to develop their subject knowledge or classroom practice. A recent report published by the Wellcome Trust highlighted the benefits of specific CPD but found that the opportunities offered to teachers in schools were broadly generic.[15] With many schools having a quota or a limited budget for the development that can be undertaken by teachers and/or departments, there is a real need for professional development that is low cost, accessible and teacher specific.

Findings

Teacher training

All three countries offered teacher training schemes that reflected those within England. Singapore's PGDE is very similar to England's PGCE, although this takes place over a period of sixteen months rather than twelve. It is the most common route into teaching and is extremely competitive, with one staff member explaining how there are often more than 14,000 applicants for just 1,000 places each year. The National Institute of Education (NIE), based at Nanyang Technological University, is the only teacher training facility in Singapore and this centralisation is one of the keys to its success.

Graduates from the NIE all receive the same level of training, which focuses on four key areas of teacher education:

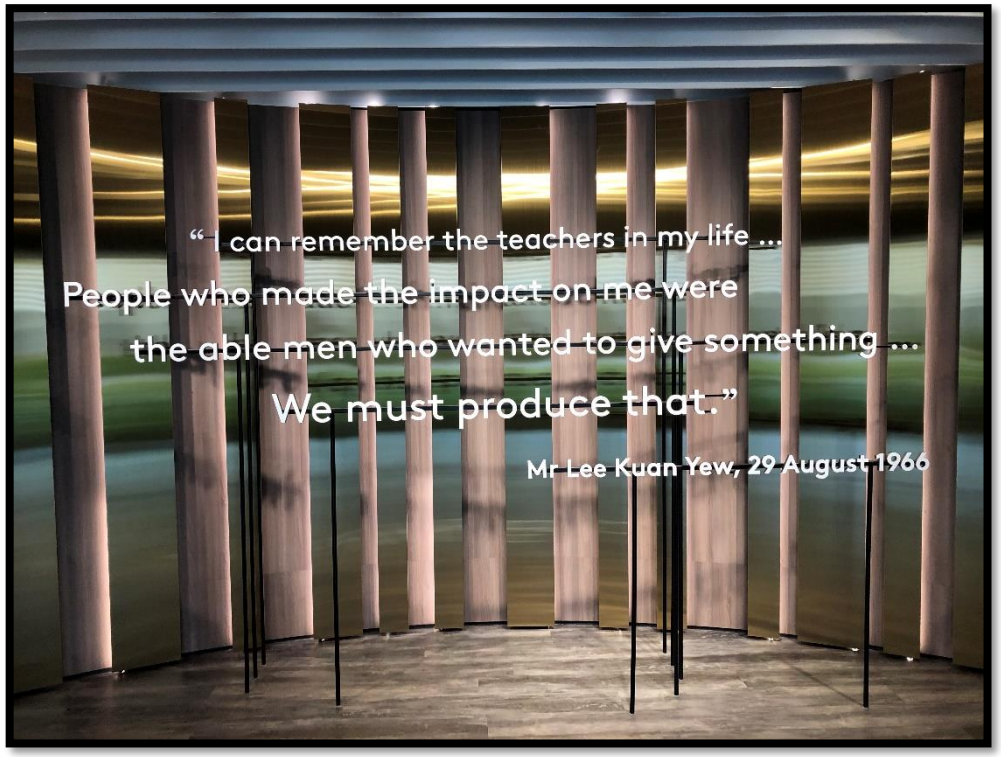
- Lifelong (continuous learning for teachers)

[12] Department for Education (2019). *Initial teacher training: trainee number census 2019 to 2020*. London: HMSO.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Department for Education (2014). *Teachers in England's Secondary Schools: Evidence from TALIS 2013*. London: HMSO.
[15] P. Cordingley, et. al. 'Developing great subject teaching: rapid evidence review of subject-specific continuing professional development', Wellcome Trust (February 2018).

- Life wide (learning beyond your discipline and engaging with the community)
- Life deep (depth of knowledge and pedagogy)
- Life wise (values)

There are certainly many benefits to this centralised model. For example, there is consistency in the knowledge delivered to teachers and as teachers receive the same graduate experience, a strong professional community is created. At around half the size of London, it is easy to see why Singapore developed this centralised model and why it works so effectively; however, there would be difficulties in replicating this in England, due to difference in geographical size.

In Switzerland and Norway, teachers can also enter the profession through a postgraduate qualification; however, it is more common for teacher training to be integrated into a five-year master's qualification. Katrina, a teacher of Geography, Norwegian and Spanish based in Oslo, explained how she had a choice at the age of eighteen to either gain an MA in Geography, or an MA in Geography with teaching. The typical postgraduate year of pedagogical teaching and school placements was instead spread over the five-year course, increasing in length in years four and five. Many of the early career teachers interviewed in both countries explained that the appeal of this degree was the job security and flexibility it offered, in comparison to the single honours route. However, others explained that they knew they wanted to become teachers before they began their degree, so this 'split honours' was the most obvious option. Luke, a Maths and Physics teacher from Trondheim, stated that, 'the reason I started the course was to become a teacher. I was inspired by teachers at my own school.' Meanwhile, in the meritocratic Swiss system, teacher trainers at the Zurich University of Teacher Education (PHZH) explained a third reason why people chose this five-year teaching course - they did not make it on to a competitive subject-specific degree. "A lot of teachers that come to this university chose this as a second choice because they did not get on to a course studying medicine … unlike Finland, we do not have the benefit of selecting the best." What was curious, from speaking to students and trainers on these courses, was that a number of students drop out of the programme around year four and five, although these figures are never more than 5% per year. Whereas teachers in England have already qualified when they decide to leave the profession, trainees in Norway and Switzerland merely switch courses before they even fully enter the classroom. Perhaps if the duration of teacher training in England was longer, then the percentage of teachers leaving the profession after qualification would be less.



The NIE has its own museum of education, which documents the meteoric rise of Singapore's education system.

Mentoring/induction

As is so often the case across schools in England, the frequency and extent of mentoring that takes place internationally varies considerably. In every school that was visited during this Fellowship, new teachers received a mentor and a series of meetings that formed part of a broader induction programme. However, these were predominantly informal, unstructured and impromptu conversations that did not extend beyond a teacher's first year. For example, one leader of a secondary school just outside of Oslo explained that, 'A weak

point in the formal mentor training is the lack of funding available. The school has to pick up the cost, so it is dependent on the wealth of the school and the desire of the principal'.

Nevertheless, there were schools in each country that offered induction and mentoring programmes that were more formalised; although, many of these schemes were in their infancy. In Singapore, for instance, new teachers now spend their first two to three weeks observing their mentor, before tackling a lesson themselves. Discussions will often take place before the lesson to go over the proposed plan and then again afterwards, to evaluate how the lesson went. It is also common for new teachers to team-teach alongside another early career teacher, which makes the transition to a full teaching timetable more manageable. Finally, mentoring sessions in Singaporean schools follow a clear schedule that is outlined by the NIE; an online portal provides discussion topics, resources, videos and links to research. This is a more comprehensive version of what is currently being proposed within the DfE's Early Career Framework. In certain Norwegian schools, mentors also follow a more formal, structured approach to the induction of new teachers. Marian, an advisor that oversees the mentoring of new teachers in a high school in Bergen, explained how new teachers refer to her as 'mentor mummy'. She stated that the mentoring scheme has been redesigned in recent years and now consists of a two-year programme of weekly meetings with a trained mentor. The sessions offered technical and administrative support, pedagogical knowledge and advice for the wider responsibilities of a teacher. Marian explained that the induction process was strengthened to improve teacher wellbeing and reduce attrition rates:

'All teachers, especially the fresh ones, need to reflect. They leave because they are very overwhelmed by all of the roles involved with being a teacher: the caretaker, the empathiser, the psychologist, the parent … and then they have to teach!'

This shift towards a more formal induction period for new teachers was perhaps influenced by advice from the Ministry of Education and Research in Norway. The team there described how survey data recently identified that 40% of newly qualified teachers had not received any structured guidance during their first years in a new school. In response, a National Framework was introduced in 2018 to help increase both teacher recruitment and teacher retention; one piece of advice for schools was to increase the induction process to two years and to take a more structured approach.[16] The document also encouraged Higher Education institutions to offer greater support to its teaching graduates. This is something that already takes place in Switzerland, where trainees at the PHZH explained how they are offered ten hours of free coaching and mentoring

Pre-service teachers in Switzerland reflect on their experiences in the classroom with an experienced mentor from the university

[16] Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2018), *Teacher Education 2025: National Strategy for Quality and Cooperation in Teacher Education*. Oslo.

after they graduate. Similarly, in Singapore, the Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST), a subsidiary of the Ministry of Education (MOE), offers free wellbeing workshops, counselling sessions and family events for all teachers within the profession. Although small, these gestures would undoubtedly be invaluable for teachers who lack the support of their school, either during or at the very beginning of their careers.

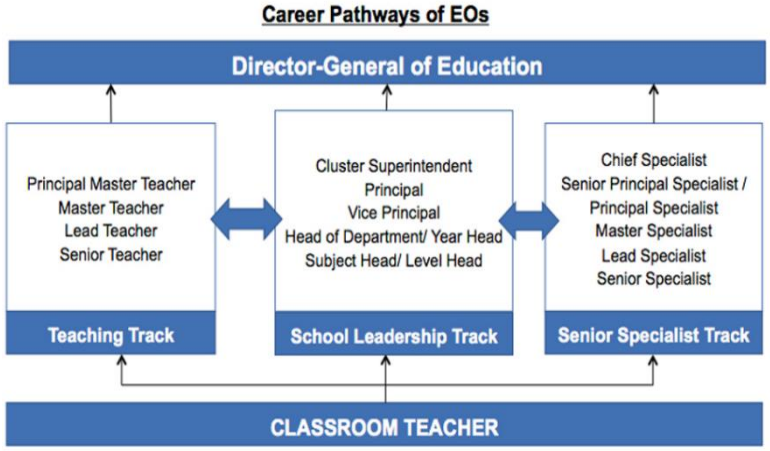
CPD

Professional development was a significant focus for schools in Singapore; however, their European counterparts did not invest much time, money or attention in this area. In both Switzerland and Norway, professional development is ultimately driven by the individual teacher or the school. Although there is often not a shortage of money, it seems in these systems that the majority of the support and guidance comes internally, from departmental colleagues, for example, rather than from outside of the school. The majority of professional development is delivered during an INSET week at the beginning of the school year, where teachers spend their time creating resources, workshopping ideas and listening to visiting speakers. It is also common for the entire staff team to go on a two-day residential trip every few years to learn about education in another country. One teacher in Oslo explained how they travelled to their partner school in Berlin last year, while staff in Trondheim travelled to Edinburgh. Nevertheless, many new teachers seemed slightly frustrated with the lack of progression and development they received. In Norway, a number of them highlighted the lack of formal appraisals and the fact that pay progression is not necessarily linked to performance or competency. Marika, a Spanish and Science teacher in her second year, explained that when she qualified her colleagues joked, 'now you have forty years in the profession!'

A lack of CPD is certainly something that early career teachers in Singapore are not at risk of facing in the near future; around 12,000 teachers benefited from CPD courses delivered by the AST and NIE in 2018, for example. In fact, 98% of Singapore's teachers and principals attended at least one personal development activity in 2018, and the 2018 TALIS report highlighted how CPD is 'ingrained in a school's shared vision of professional learning.'[17] Although the previous guideline of 100 hours of professional development for all teachers has now been scrapped by the MOE, the focus on lifelong learning remains the same and is essential for career progression. Lucy Crehan, in her widely celebrated exploration of international education, *Cleverlands*, described this link:

> *'Your pay increases annually for the first three years of your career, but after that, the only way to get a pay rise is to move up one of the available ladders – the Teaching Track, the Leadership Track or the Specialist Track … [and] you can't achieve a certain position without having completed certain training … Moving up the career ladder also brings you extra responsibility, which is reflected in the higher salaries.'*[18]

Figure 5: A diagram of the three career tracks available to teachers in Singapore.



[17] OECD. *TALIS 2018 Results: Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, vol. 1 (Paris, 2019)
[18] L. Crehan, *Cleverlands* (London, 2016)

Figure 5 demonstrates these three development tracks and the roles associated with them. Incidentally, this approach has just been adapted as part of the DfE's Early Career Framework, which encourages teachers to pursue professional qualifications in one (or more) of these three areas.

To help Singaporean teachers progress, each school employs a school staff developer that oversees whole-school and individual professional development; this is a relatively new role that only emerged in the last ten years after guidance from the MOE. Although many teachers spoke positively about the structured career progression offered by the career-track system, there were some reservations. One early career teacher explained how: 'The issue with the three tracks in Singapore is that you don't get exposed to everything … the leadership track is exclusive.' This level of frustration is understandable – while lateral movement between the tracks was possible, this was difficult to achieve in practice as the prerequisites of each tier of the destination track must be satisfied.

As well as these clear routes of progression, Singaporean teachers in secondary schools are appraised every year; the results of which are linked to performance bonuses of two-three months' salary. Here, teachers are graded and ranked alongside others on the same scale based on set Key Result Areas (KRAs), for example in the teaching track:

- The holistic development of students through:
  - Quality learning of students
  - Pastoral care and well-being of students
  - Co-curricular activities
- Contribution to the school
- Collaboration with parents
- Professional development

Many teachers that were interviewed accepted this rigorous performance management system as simply part of the profession; they understood that it was carried out with the purpose to develop teachers and improve academic quality in the country. However, many early career teachers felt unsettled by the competitive nature that the system created among colleagues. One teacher stated that, 'I have my reservations about ranking teachers … it doesn't sit well with me'. In response to similar feedback from schools, the MOE explained that, 'while there are debates about the pros and cons of ranking, it has been proven that ranking imposes objectivity, fairness, rigour and discipline in the appraisal system.'[19] This suggests that the system is going nowhere fast, particularly as Singapore continues to dominate PISA league tables, adding further justification to its meritocratic approach.

Mary George Cheriyan shared the work of PeRL, the Centre for Pedagogical Research and Learning, at Raffles Girls' School in Singapore. The creation of PeRL in 2010 allowed for a specialist career track to be set up for teachers within the school.

[19] A. Tan, 'Teachers' appraisal system fair, but MOE will continue to finetune it', *The New Paper*, 21 Nov 2018. Available at: https://www.tnp.sg/news/singapore/teachers-appraisal-system-fair-moe-will-continue-finetune-it

Recommendations

- **Universities should trial a four-year master's degree with integrated PGCE** – This type of degree would appeal to a range of students: those who are passionate about teaching, students who are seeking job security and those who are passionate about their subject but do not want to pursue a career in it. The new degrees would also offer greater value for money, as students would achieve three qualifications in the space of four years, rather than five. The scheme could be trialled at a small number of universities to consider its viability. This new type of degree could not only increase the recruitment of teachers but could also strengthen the resolve and expertise of those entering the profession.
- **Continue to support schools to implement the Early Career Framework effectively** – in particular, the DfE must ensure that all secondary schools receive adequate funding to provide newly-qualified teachers with a qualified mentor for their two-year induction. A central, online portal containing videos, teacher testimonies and research materials (like in Singapore) would help support schools in delivering this.
- **Provide further guidance so that schools can deliver more effective review and development** – Formal review and development processes should be a more common feature of the teaching profession, as seen in Singaporean schools and the corporate sector in England. As well as providing early career teachers with professional support, this would also offer an opportunity to discuss career progression and appropriate development opportunities. CPD should also be integrated into review and development as a criterion for progression; this would both encourage and reward proactiveness. As has been highlighted by Dame Alison Peacock, Chief Executive of the Chartered College of Teaching: 'there should be a national expectation for teachers to complete regular, high-quality CPD, with teachers entitled to specific amounts per year.'
- **Make CPD more accessible** – In order to encourage teachers to engage with CPD opportunities, particularly considering their high workload, there should be a greater effort from the DfE to provide cheaper, more accessible courses and workshops for educators. Particularly in the digital age, more could be done to digitise lectures from national conferences or to provide webinars, so that CPD materials can be accessed anywhere at a lower cost. Trade unions could work with school leaders to ensure that CPD is available and accessible to all staff.

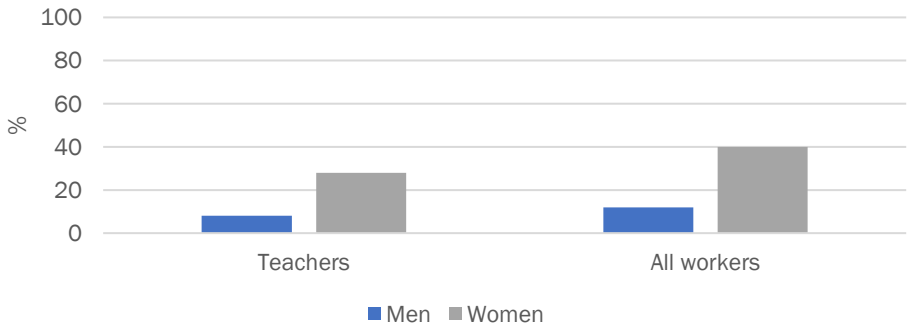
Early career teachers and school mentors shared their experiences of the induction process in all three countries. Many schools have recently moved to a more formal programme of training and support.

Pay & Flexible Working

The situation in schools today

Announced as 'the biggest reform to teacher pay in a generation', starting salaries for educators are set to rise to £30,000 by 2022/23. News of the c.£6,000 increase was announced in 2019 to help recognise teaching as a 'high-value, prestigious profession', and it was welcomed by those working in the education sector.[20] This increase in salary will have a significant impact on the practicality of flexible working within education. According to Timewise, which collects data on flexible working from all sectors, the proportion of jobs advertised as being open to flexibility has risen year on year. 15.3% of jobs offered flexibility in 2019, which reflects a growing trend towards a healthier work-life balance.[21] Within education, the number of flexible workers has seen a similar increase; however, the total number is lower than the occupational average (see Figure 6).[22]

Figure 6: Percentage of part-time workers within the teaching profession



A survey of 600 teachers and leaders by the National Foundation for Education Research found that 'the most common reason for not working part-time was affordability', with many teachers also feeling as though their request for flexible working would not be agreed by their school.[23] However, there are a small number of schools that are leading the way in offering greater flexibility to teachers. Huntington School in York, for example, has c.50% of its teaching staff working part time, compared to just 15% in 2007; they claim to have granted every application for flexible working since 2007, including in senior leadership positions.[24]

Clearly, there is a real desire for flexible working within the teaching profession that is not being met on a wide scale. Although the majority of flexible working requests come from women returning to work after a career break of a year or more, the issue remains significant for all teachers, even those beginning their teaching careers. If teaching is viewed as an unsustainable profession for NQTs wishing to work flexibly (either now or in the future), then this would be a significant factor in decisions to leave the profession. With greater support from school leaders and the removal of significant financial implications, the sector could better retain this particular group of teachers desiring flexible working.

Findings

In Singapore, flexible and part-time working remain uncommon within the teaching profession, with only a small handful of staff in each of the schools I visited working in this way. However, one school principal explained that requests for part-time contracts have increased in the last decade, particularly from working mothers and 'millennials' who believe that 'life is not all about

[20] Department for Education (2019), *£30,000 starting salaries proposed for teachers* [Press release]. 2 September 2019. Available at: *https://www.gov.uk/government/news/30000-starting-salaries-proposed-for-teachers* (Accessed: 7 March 2020).
[21] Timewise, 'The Timewise flexible jobs index 2019', 2019. Available at: https://timewise.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/TW_Flexible_Jobs_Index_2019.pdf
[22] Department for Education (2019), *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*. London: HMSO.
[23] C. Sharp & J. Tomsett, 2019. 'Flexible working for teachers: how schools can make it work'. ResearchEd, London. 7 September 2019. Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/3671/flexible_working_researched.pdf. Accessed 7 March 2020.
[24] Ibid.

work'. Yet, the proportion of teachers requesting these contracts remains small, perhaps due to the intrinsic culture of hard work of the country or the perceived impact on student performance. It is certainly not due to financial implications, as starting pay for early career teachers in Singapore is comparable to other professions such as law and medicine; albeit, only in the short term. When asked about pay, the majority of teachers responded positively, with a NQT stating, 'the pay is just right for me', particularly when considering the additional performance and retention bonuses. For example, as well as the annual reward of two-three months' salary based on your appraisal, teachers also receive money through the Connect Plan. Launched in 2002 under the Education Service Incentive Payment Act, the scheme encourages **CON**ti**N**uity, **E**xperience and **C**ommitment in **T**eaching. For example, a teacher with fifteen years of service can expect a total CONNECT Plan pay-out of $56,600 to $78,400 (c.£30,000 to £43,000), while a teacher who has forty years of service would receive a total pay-out of $120,000 to $160,000 (£66,000 to £88,000). The sheer amount of money that is given to the sector reflects the status of education within Singapore and the desire to retain excellent teachers.

The Norwegian system had greater rates of part-time working based on the secondary schools visited as part of this Fellowship; however, negotiating these contracts can still be difficult. Zoë, a History and Norwegian teacher explained how she 'had to fight to get a 75% timetable', although she originally wanted 75%. Yet, there were a number of teachers that seemed to work flexibly even though their contract did not explicitly state this. For example, a secondary school on a sparsely populated peninsula in the Oslofjord ensured Claire's timetable was more flexible. This alleviated the stress from her ninety-minute commute from the capital each day. In another school in central Oslo, Nicholas, a Maths teacher in his third year of teaching, also revealed his similar schedule:

MON	8:00 – 9:35
TUES	8:00 – 15:00
WED	13:25 – 15:55
THUR	8:00 – 15:00
FRI	9:45 – 15:00

By working with the timetabler and school principal, Nicholas achieved a teaching schedule that worked for him. He works three full days and then only comes in for compulsory meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays; the rest of his marking and planning is completed at home. Daniel, a secondary school principal in Trondheim, explained that he tries to give his staff as much flexibility as possible and the school is supported by the government in making this a reality. 'There has been a big focus on further education for teachers in the last six years', with staff working a 70% timetable but being paid 100%, provided they are completing further study at university. The costs of this are absorbed by the government and the initiative is of course aided by the miniscule costs of university in Norway generally.

'In a group interview with students at the PHZH, none of them were planning on starting teaching full time.'

Teachers in Switzerland had the greatest level of flexibility out of the three countries that comprised this Fellowship, not only in the frequency of part-time working, but in the culture of flexibility that existed within the profession. In a group interview with students at the PHZH, none of them were planning on starting full time. Jodie, who is in her fourth year, stated, 'I don't think I would want to start at 100% in the beginning. I would need more time for planning and marking', while Simon admitted, 'I don't think it's possible to be the teacher they train you to be here if you are working full time … it's impossible.' Clearly, the issue of workload is the major factor for many new teachers seeking part-time work, with the c.£85,000 starting salary facilitating this. This high starting salary is what 'makes the job attractive' to Jodie and her fellow trainees, particularly when teachers are 'elected' to tenured posts within a school. James, an experienced English teacher in a secondary school in Zurich, explained how 'elected' status brings a wage increase of c.£750 per month as well as job security. Once elected, it is incredibly rare for teachers to leave a school and James was one of many who had been at the school for over thirty years. He went on to describe how teachers can dictate their own contracts each year, stating that 'to my knowledge, for those that become elected, none of them work full time.' The appeal of part-time working was one of the main aspects that encourages many female teachers to remain within the profession. Gabrielle, a French teacher in her fourth year, explained that 'in the future, if I am going to be a mother, it will be useful [to work part time]'. However, a vast majority of the staff interviewed found it beneficial. Michael, a German teacher in his third year, believed that the rise of part-time teachers is because 'we are less defined by our job these days' and there is no financial need to work full time. He explained his reasons for working flexibly:

> *'If the school told me I had to work 100%, I would think about leaving … I have private projects going on. I organise a literature festival every year … and I think the school profits from this.'*

Recommendations

- **Schools should proactively encourage flexible contracts** – Although many schools are showing signs of improvement regarding flexible working, the situation is still far from ideal. Many senior leaders struggle to see its benefits, both for the school and the staff body; there is also a lack of confidence with how flexibility would work in practice. The DfE should continue to share examples of best practice with school leaders to increase their confidence and willingness to implement flexible ways of working. These strategies will not only help to meet the demands of all teachers but will also make the education sector a more sustainable and attractive profession for NQTs.
- **Increase teacher salaries to make flexible working a viable option** – As well as the reluctance of senior leaders, another obstacle to part-time working is the potential financial implications. With the DfE increasing starting salaries to £30,000, it is hoped that this will encourage early career teachers to see a part-time teaching role as economically feasible. However, it is important that this increase in starting salary continues to be reflected across the entire pay scale. Greater financial benefits will ultimately offset the high workload that many teachers face within the profession and could also avert the disproportionate number of leavers based in London.
- **Schools should allow teachers to complete planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) at home** – In order to alleviate the pressure of teacher workload and allow for flexibility within a full-time contract, schools should also adopt the Norwegian timetabling model. Where possible, teachers should be given gaps in their timetable at the beginning and end of the school day to allow them to leave late/arrive early, if required. This would not only benefit staff with long commutes and childcare commitments but would also improve teacher wellbeing by making time for exercise, household chores and the opportunity to complete PPA at home. With remote access to emails on mobile devices, there is no reason why schools cannot provide staff with this flexibility, provided pupil ratios are maintained.

Freedom & Collaboration

The situation in schools today

In many schools up and down the country, classroom teachers have the paradoxical experience of being both extremely autonomous but also frustratingly restricted. When delivering curriculum content, teachers are usually free to teach the material using a method of their choice, whether this is through written responses to questions, group work, a debate, a role play or a multimedia resource. This level of autonomy is what transforms teaching into a profession. Teachers are trusted to educate in the way they see fit, using their classroom experience and pedagogical training to underpin decision making. However, although there is a significant degree of autonomy at a classroom level, the curriculum is incredibly restricted at a governmental level. For example, as the majority of maintained schools in England are required to follow the National Curriculum, there is often an absence of innovative and relevant course content being delivered. In fact, the material that is delivered to students in 2020 is largely the same content that has been delivered in schools for decades, aside from the occasional update to reflect British values or global perspectives.

Although there is some scope for flexibility within the recommended government guidance, teachers often find themselves at the mercy of textbook publishers to resource any new areas of study. There may also be the issue of continuity to GCSE/A Level, particularly with two-year Key Stage Three (KS3) curricula becoming more common; there is simply not enough time to deliver non-essential topics. A survey by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL, now the NEU) found that 36% of its trainee and newly qualified members joined the profession because of a love of their subject.[25] However, these recent graduates entering the teaching profession will ultimately find that the cutting-edge research and emerging fields of study that they have been exposed to at university have no place in the standard classroom. Historians, for example, will struggle to teach students about the emerging field of environmental history, which traces the impact of climate and landscape on world events. Chemists may face backlash from school leaders if they chose to deviate from the scheme of work to deliver a lesson on the structure of the Corona virus, despite the incessant questions from students who have read about it on the news. While, an Engineering graduate would struggle to break away from the prescriptive Mathematics curriculum to teach about the maths involved in the construction of a school building project. Put simply, there is very little flexibility at KS3 to deliver subject matter that is tailored to the cultural, economic and geographical makeup of the students within the classroom, or to respond to current events. These curriculum restrictions increase at KS4 and KS5, where exam boards and national qualifications dictate the material that must be

Teachers in England do not always have the freedom and autonomy as their counterparts in Norway

[25] S. Marsh, 'Five top reasons people become teachers – and why they quit', *The Guardian*, 27 January 2015. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/jan/27/five-top-reasons-teachers-join-and-quit

learned, changing every five to ten years to fit the new political establishment. Here, teachers often lose any and all opportunities for innovation that they may have found at KS3, as they move through the textbook, topic by topic. Although the wider understanding of a topic is encouraged and even credited, in some subjects, the core content of the specification is fixed and remains compulsory. Again, talented graduates entering the profession often find they do not really use their degree to its fullest effect; they are no longer working as subject specialists.

The issue of support and collaboration is also a significant restriction on the ability and willingness of early career teachers to deviate from course textbooks. Other than department meetings (which may not be frequent, well attended or even timetabled due to a lack of time), early career teachers are often required to work independently, regardless of whether they have prior knowledge of a topic or not. Although resources may be shared in some schools or departments, this is not always consistent; there may even be a degree of reluctance from experienced members of staff when asked to share their resources. Even the TES website, which provides a bank of resources and lesson plans for teachers in all areas, now features thousands of resources that educators must pay for if they would like to use them in their classrooms. Under the current system, early career teachers are therefore left with the strange experience of being expected to teach innovatively and effectively, but only within a narrow curriculum and often without the support of others.

Findings

One of the qualities that sets the Norwegian and Swiss education systems apart is the level of trust given to teaching staff. In Norway, although there is a fixed curriculum and national qualifications, teachers are largely autonomous within the school. Whereas teachers in many English schools face regular work checks, lesson observations and marking rubrics, educators in Norway seem to receive the full confidence of their senior leadership team. One school principal, dressed down in jeans and a casual jumper, explained how, 'we trust teachers to do their job', while another headteacher aimed to 'let each teacher be themselves in the classroom'. This level of trust means that teachers are given greater freedom to try new things, whether this is a pedagogical approach or a new topic that deviates from the standard course textbook. Yet, even when a textbook is provided to support the delivery of national qualifications, teachers seem to have a lot of freedom with what they teach. This is largely due to the exams themselves being so broad. Magdalena, a French teacher in her second year at a school in Bergen, for example, explained how students are tested on their knowledge of the language, rather than the vocabulary of specific topics such as crime, tourism or employment. There are certainly benefits to this approach for early career teachers, who would feel more comfortable delivering certain topics they were familiar with from their university studies or teacher training.

This level of trust and freedom was an even greater feature of the Swiss education system, where national qualifications do not exist. Even the recently introduced national curriculum, which is adapted for each canton (or state), is more a list of key competencies that students should develop rather than a list of statutory topics. This opportunity to teach content that both students and staff can engage with was one of the most celebrated aspects of the Swiss system from the interviews conducted in this research. For example, many of the teachers interviewed in an international school in Lausanne were British educators who had travelled to Switzerland for a better quality of life. They explained how, 'you spend every day teaching your subject, not on behaviour management' and that 'teaching is teaching [in Switzerland]; you are not putting out fires'. Maria, a Swiss teacher who has been teaching English for four years in a state secondary in Zürich, echoed these statements. She stated that 'I still have enough freedom to be creative [in the classroom] … there are no guidelines limiting me in any way.' This level of freedom means that teachers like Sebastian, also working in Zürich, can link his passion for Biology with current research developments. For example, he explained how he recently delivered a lesson on cancer treatment to his brightest and oldest students after watching a documentary on it the previous week; this is something that is not particularly common in English schools.

However, this level of autonomy can often be tough for early career teachers to cope with, particularly at the very beginning of their careers. Frederica, an experienced Chemistry teacher in Switzerland, explained how, 'this freedom is nice, but it makes it more challenging, especially if you are new.' Fortunately, in Norway, where teachers are granted a similar level of freedom, systems are in place to support new teachers. In a secondary school in Bergen, Carolina a mentor for new starters, described how, 'there is an atmosphere here of always

being able to ask anything … collaboration is an expectation.' This focus on collaboration was common in many schools across Norway and early career teachers benefitted from the resources and expertise of more experienced colleagues. 'There is a really good culture here of sharing what you make … it makes me much more secure', explained Rebecca, an early career History teacher working in Oslo. Yet it is not just through the informal sharing of resources that collaboration takes place, there are at least two meetings between teaching staff that take place each week (as seen in Figure 4 previously). Simone, a new teacher working in Trondheim, discussed how she cooperates with both her department and year group team, which 'creates a bond between teachers.' These year group meetings are certainly not a common feature in English schools and provide an opportunity for teachers of the same class to discuss effective strategies, pupil concerns and cross-curricular projects.

Staff at the Ministry of Education and Research in Norway explained how collaboration was one of the key elements of their recent Early Career Framework

Recommendations

- **Revise the National Curriculum to allow for greater classroom freedom** – The 2013/14 curriculum is far too prescriptive and restricts the ability of teachers to deliver content that is relevant and forward-thinking. Graduates often spend three to four years exploring a wide range of topics within their subject specialism at university, but then end up in classrooms teaching the same content they were taught at school. It is understandable why this would cause frustration among those who are passionate about their subject and enter teaching to pass this enthusiasm on to young people.
- **Free schools, academies and independent schools should be encouraged to promote teacher autonomy** – A growing proportion of schools in England have the option of diverting away from the National Curriculum; however, many departments often stick to this existing content. This is no doubt due to a lack of planning time and available resources, so the DfE should promote initiatives that support these new curriculum opportunities. Museums, universities, businesses and professional bodies could provide greater outreach tools to help teachers move away from standard curriculum content.
- **Greater trust for teachers** – Teachers need to be seen as the well qualified and passionate professionals that they are, not just a body in front of a class. As well as encouraging teachers to teach more of what they want, they should also be trusted to teach how they want. Work checks, formal observations and marking/planning rubrics should be used appropriately. This will encourage early career teachers to develop and become more innovative classroom practitioners.
- **Promote collaboration inside and outside of schools** – Middle leaders and senior leadership teams must create a culture of greater collaboration in schools, not only within departments, but across subjects and year groups. This will not only reduce the workload of existing teachers but would help support new teachers entering the profession. The DfE should create a free database of teaching resources for teachers to access if required, so that they are not at the mercy of expensive publishers or pay-per-download resources on the TES.

Conclusion

From visiting these three locations and interviewing over one hundred individuals, it is clear that there is no simple explanation as to why early career attrition rates in England are so much higher than many of our foreign neighbours. As such, finding a solution to this issue will not happen quickly and there are many issues that will need to be addressed, aside from extraneous workload. After all, the DfE identified in their 2018 study that 'teachers' decisions to leave the profession were generally driven by the accumulation of a number of factors, over a sustained period of time', rather than one single problem.[26] Teaching will always be a profession that carries a high workload along with it and this research suggests that this is the same regardless of the country. Therefore, focusing solely on the 'push' factors that force teachers out of the profession is perhaps not going to achieve the desired result of improving teacher retention. Instead, those working in education at all levels must focus on the 'pull' factors within the profession – what will make teachers want to stay?

First of all, the need for continuous professional support is incredibly important for early career teachers, particularly given the relative speed at which trainees become qualified in England. As has been partially addressed by the Early Career Framework, teachers must be supported at the very beginning of their careers. Extending the induction period to two years will no doubt have a positive impact on reducing the number of teacher retention; however, more time and money must be invested to support early career teachers beyond this point. The majority of teachers in England do not have the benefit of a four/five-year teaching qualification behind them, and while we can celebrate the strengths of having subject specialists in schools, we also need to address the issues that this potentially creates. A culture of lifelong learning must be created and facilitated to offer continued support to teachers at all stage of their careers, but particularly in their first five years. Greater investment is needed in low-cost, frequent and targeted CPD opportunities, to provide pedagogical (and often moral) support to teaching professional. Not only could this help early career teachers to manage their workload more effectively, but it will also contribute to teaching being viewed as a more desirable profession, where new starters can expect continued growth and development. The DfE's plans within the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy to introduce new specialist qualifications as an alternative to traditional leadership career routes will be an important first step towards achieving this; however, efforts must be made to ensure that these qualifications are accessible and worthwhile.

Linked to this need for greater professional development, this research has found that teachers in England also need to be better rewarded for their performance and commitment to the profession. Certainly, this has been partially addressed by recent decisions to raise the starting salary of new teachers outside of London to £30,000 by 2022-23 and the ongoing commitment of the government to reward retention bonuses for teachers of particular subjects. However, while a rise in salary may boost teacher recruitment, it will not independently address the growing attrition rates during the initial five-year period. Therefore, greater financial incentives must be given to encourage early career teachers to remain within the profession. While issues of pay are rarely found to be a main driver of school leavers, retention and development bonuses would no doubt complement the current initiatives being introduced by the DfE's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy. Furthermore, as previously stated, specialist qualifications that recognise and reward ambitious teachers will need to carry financial incentives. Alongside the typical pay progression that comes with experience, early career teachers should be encouraged to spend time on their professional development in order to move up the pay scale more quickly. This will improve retention rates by not only creating a generation of teachers that are more adept at dealing with the greatest challenges within teaching but will also enable many teachers to achieve salaries that come close to their contemporaries in other professions.

As in Switzerland, greater levels of pay throughout a teacher's career could also make flexible and part-time working much more viable, making the profession much more attractive to new and future educators. As found by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), there is a significant demand for greater flexibility within the teaching profession, with pay being one of the most significant barriers for many educators. Ultimately, part-time salaries often do not justify the number of hours that these teachers end up working. Yet, issues

[26] Department for Education (2018). *Factors affecting teacher retention: qualitative investigation*. London: HMSO.

of pay are not the only obstacle to flexibility within the teaching profession. Evidence from the NFER suggests that, in fact, 'around one in six secondary school teachers would like to reduce their hours and could afford to do so'; the issue is therefore with the inflexibility of schools and the teaching profession as a whole.[27] These problems will be partially addressed by the creation of a 'Find Your Jobshare' website under the DfE's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy; however, more work will need to be done to convince school leaders of the feasibility and benefits of flexible working among their workforce. The positive stories contained within the DfE's Flexible Working in Schools report, for example, must be made more widespread and teaching must be seen as a profession that readily facilitates flexible working.[28]

Finally, from the case studies of Norway and Switzerland, it was clear that teachers (especially those new to the profession) valued the level of freedom and trust that their education systems promoted. Teachers in these systems were not constrained by narrow curriculums or national qualifications; they were trusted as professionals to deliver appropriate content in an effective manner. The vast majority of teachers that enter the profession are well-qualified subject specialists, who have a passion for their subject that they want to pass on to their students. Therefore, this should be something that is celebrated within schools, rather than snuffed out through restrictive curriculums. Ultimately, this will require a change to the current national qualifications and DfE guidance at KS3; there needs to be greater openness to enable the examination of students' skills and knowledge of a subject as a whole, rather than on prescribed content. Where this is already possible, for example at KS3, in free schools and academies, and in the independent sector, senior leaders and heads of department must be more flexible in their approach to curriculum design to allow for greater individuality. Teachers, particularly those new to the profession, should be trusted as subject specialists to deliver topics that they feel are engaging, challenging and useful for their students to study. There will still be a need for cohesion and structure in order to satisfy Ofsted's current focus on curriculum and to support non-specialists; however, the current situation is having a negative impact on job satisfaction. Creating a culture of responsibility and trust will strengthen the profession and promote teaching as an attractive career for subject enthusiasts who wish to pass on their expertise.

Overall, by reflecting on aspects of best practice from international education systems, and adapting these to an English context, the DfE could transform teaching into an even more attractive and sustainable profession. Revising current policies surrounding mentoring, pay, professional development and flexibility would ensure that newly qualified teachers entering schools are fully supported throughout their careers. The Early Career Framework has the potential to improve the lives of new teachers considerably; however, it will be the responsibility of the DfE and school leaders to ensure that these ambitious plans become a reality.

[27] C. Sharp et. al., 'Part-time Teaching and Flexible Working in Secondary Schools', NFER (2019). Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/part-time-teaching-and-flexible-working-in-secondary-schools/

[28] Department for Education (2017). *Flexible working in schools*. London: HMSO.

Obstacles

There are obvious challenges to the interventions identified above; it is clear that they cannot be introduced quickly, or without adjustments to suit individual contexts. Arguably the most significant issue is money. This is indeed obvious for recommendations regarding teacher pay and teacher training; however, it is also a key obstacle for the introduction of specific CPD and the presence of experienced mentors in schools. While this research has tried to include several cost-effective solutions, it is undeniable that government funding for schools must increase if the retention crisis is to be resolved.

School leaders and educators themselves are also a potential obstacle to these interventions. Some of the recommendations suggested in this report are particularly progressive, such as the switch to flexible working and curriculum freedom. It is therefore understandable that this may be met with reluctance from other members of the school community. Some may have false preconceptions of part-time workers, there may be anxieties regarding the impact on Ofsted inspections or perhaps there is a fear of change more generally within our school communities. It is therefore important that school leaders educate themselves on the potential benefits of the recommendations detailed above. As well as this report, they should consult the research carried out by the Chartered College of Teaching, Education Endowment Foundation and the National Foundation for Education Research, to make a more informed judgement. It is also the responsibility of educators themselves to share best practice and highlight the success stories surrounding teacher retention. By doing this, the discourse surrounding teacher retention can shift from a narrative of crisis, to one of hope and practicability.

Moving forward

This research will now be shared with educational bodies to try to continue the conversation surrounding teacher retention. It will also be sent to Gavin Williamson MP, the current Secretary of State for Education, in the hopes that further dialogue can exist between the government and the education community.

The recommendation of CPD for early career teachers will be explored over the coming months and a pilot programme of courses will be created during the 2020/21 academic year. It is likely that these will take the form of digital webinars and interviews with current educators, so that early career teachers have a bank of resources available to them throughout their careers. If successful, this pilot project will be expanded to include face-to-face courses and events for early career teachers, available from September 2021.

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A one-page executive summary of this report can be found on the final page of this document.

IMPROVING THE WELLBEING AND RETENTION OF EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

PAUL MIDDLETON

The Department for Education (DfE) has calculated that 22.5% of teachers in England leave the profession within the first two years of teaching, with the number rising to 32.3% by year five.

The aim of this six-week project was to identify strategies that could enable schools and policymakers to reverse the growing rates of early-career attrition in England. The project involved over one hundred conversations with individuals across Singapore, Norway and Switzerland, including:

- Classroom teachers, including early career teachers
- Senior leaders and mentors within schools
- University researchers/trainers, who deliver training to prospective teachers or support the development of existing staff
- Trainee teachers
- Civil servants creating and revising education policy

Teachers in Singapore shared insights into the benefits of a centralised system that nurtures teachers from the very beginning of their pre-service training. Interviews carried out in Norway revealed a profession based on collaboration, where school teams work together to relieve the pressures on teaching staff. In Switzerland, teachers were rewarded with high salaries that facilitated flexible working. The absence of strict curricula in these European nations enabled teachers to be professionals in charge of their own classrooms. The findings from this research have led to several recommendations that are outlined here.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

REDUCE WORKLOAD

- Continue to reduce extraneous workload
- Increase the power of trade unions to protect teachers
- Shift the national discourse away from workload

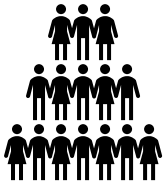
TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- Create a four-year master's degree with integrated PGCE
- Continue to support the implementation of the Early Career Framework
- Provide further guidance so that schools can deliver more effective review & development
- Make CPD more available

PAY & FLEXIBLE WORKING

- Schools should proactively encourage flexible contracts
- Increase teacher salaries to make flexible working a viable option
- Schools should allow teachers to complete planning, preparation & assessment at home

FREEDOM & COLLABORATION



- Revise the National Curriculum to allow for greater classroom freedom
- Encourage schools to allow for greater teacher autonomy
- Promote teacher collaboration inside and outside of schools