



## **Now Teach – The experience of Career Changers in the Profession**

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# Our vision

We are working towards a world where children benefit because talented people, who've already had successful careers, become teachers and bring their skills and experiences to the schools that need them most.

# A note on our data approach for today

- Census - 508 responses, a 55% network response rate
- Follow up focussed survey to 70 Now Teachers who opted in to provide insights to The Teaching Commission

# **1. Who are our career changers?**

# Careers and subjects

Previous Industry	All Recruits
Financial Services	16.35%
Business, Consulting & Management	10.14%
Education and HE	8.65%
Information Technology	7.16%
Media	6.89%
Marketing	6.08%
Science & Pharmaceuticals	5.41%
Engineering	5.00%
Creative Arts & Design	4.86%
Law	4.05%

# Careers and subjects

Subjects	
STEM	63.31%
Maths	25.02%
Physics	7.93%
Chemistry	7.39%
Biology	6.95%
Geography	6.32%
Computer Science	5.79%
Design & Technology	3.65%
Economics	0.27%
MFL	14.60%
English	11.75%
All Other Subjects	10.33%

# Motivations to teach



## **2. Recruitment and retention of career changers**



# Career change growth in ITT

People aged 35+	Proportion of annual total	
	2022	2024
Candidates	24%	33%
Accepted Candidates	16%	21%
Trainees	13%	16%

# National career changer retention (2017-20)

	Teaching QTS+1	Teaching QTS+2	Teaching QTS+3	Teaching QTS+4
<30	71%	71%	69%	65%
>40	61%	59%	54%	50%
<b>Now Teachers</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>63%</b>

Percentage of qualified teachers remaining in teaching

# Meeting career change needs



Specialist support to translate skills and experience to a new context



Support navigating the transition from one professional identity to another.



Support influencing schools to recognise the distinct value they can add



Connection to a community of other professionals navigating the same transition



A 'third-space', outside of schools and training providers, to bring all this together

# Recruitment and retention recommendations

Career changers (or trainees 35+) are showing increased interest in teaching at a time when more teachers are a priority but they are converting and being retained at significantly lower rates.

- 35+ teachers to be considered as a specific group for policy and tracking
- Candidates and trainees and ECTs aged 35+ (career changers) to be given distinct recruitment support/ tailored ITT/ECF experiences to ensure they are recruited, trained and retained at equal rates to other teachers.

## **2. Career changer attitudes to ITT and ECF**

# Career changer attitudes to ITT

- ITT should be more practical
  - More on behaviour management
  - More on broader teacher responsibilities and school systems
- Financial costs are a barrier

# Attitudes to ECF

- ECF feels generic
  - More subject specific training requested
- Workload too intense
  - Timetable initially felt too much
  - Lack of resource sharing
- Feelings of isolation when adapting to new school culture

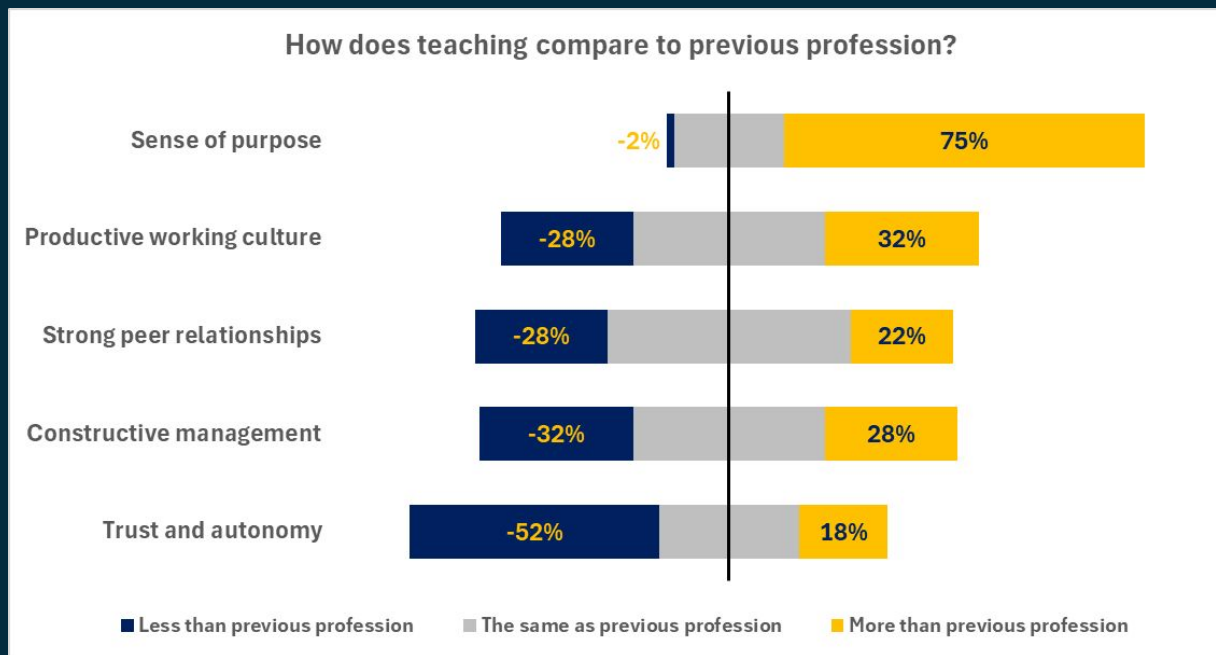
# What would Now Teachers change?

- More practical training; less theory and repetition
- More subject-specific focus
- More behaviour management training
- Gov to reconsider tuition fees for target groups
- ECF should be more tailored to reduce repetition. Proposed changes have been praised
- Explore post-training job security
- Less micromanagement, more autonomy



### **3. Comparing teaching to other careers**

# Career changer comparisons



# Teaching- the positives compared to previous professions:

- Work-life balance and recovery enabled by school holidays
- Part-time teaching more manageable than p/t exp. in other careers
- Intellectual engagement of teaching
- Sense of purpose and connection with students

# Teaching- the negatives compared to previous profession

- Intensity of workload beyond contracted hours
- Lack of flexibility and autonomy
- Poor CPD
- Excessive bureaucracy
- Siloed school cultures
- Pay scales do not account for previous experience on entry

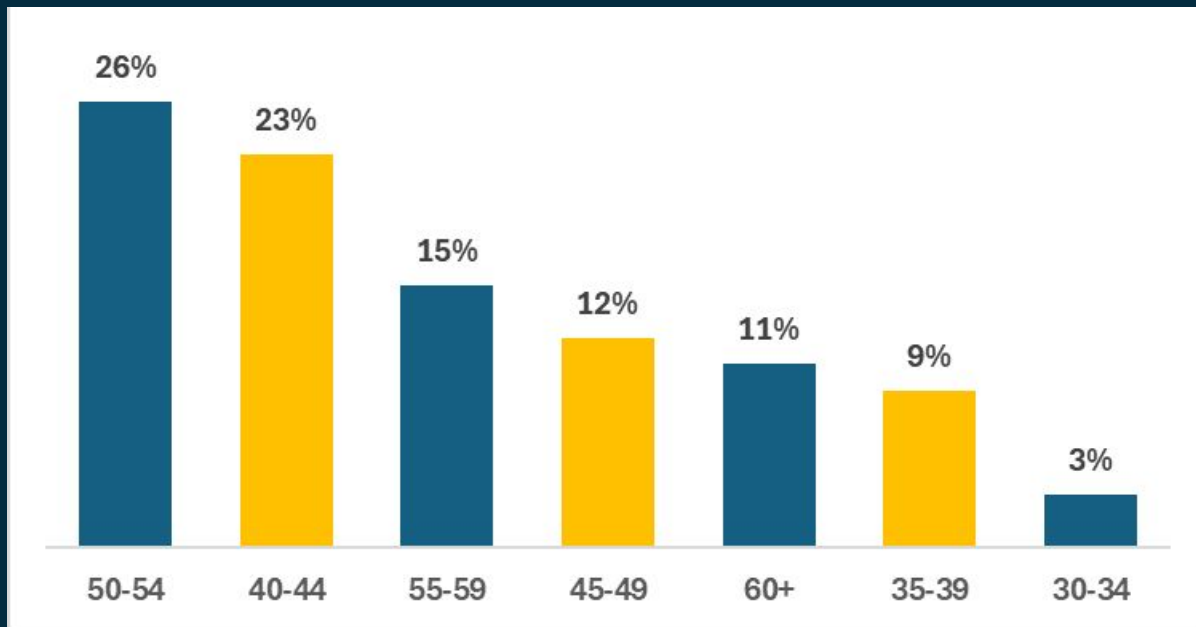
# Priority improvements

Issue	Priority
Classroom Behaviour	1
Workload	2
Teacher Pay	3
Hours worked per week	4
Leadership/Management	5

# Views on workload

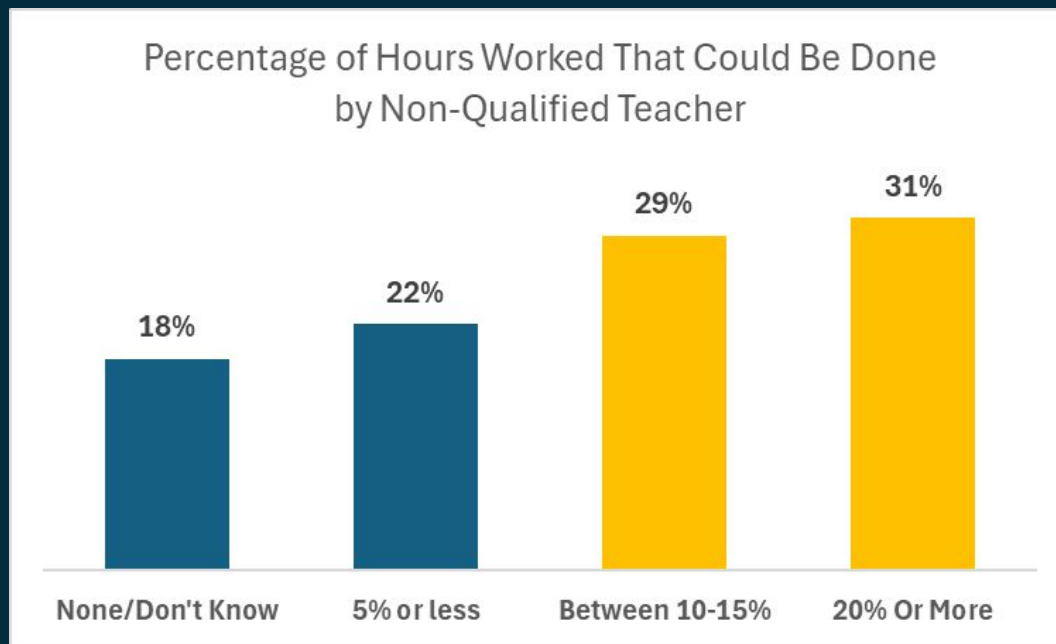


# Hours worked per week



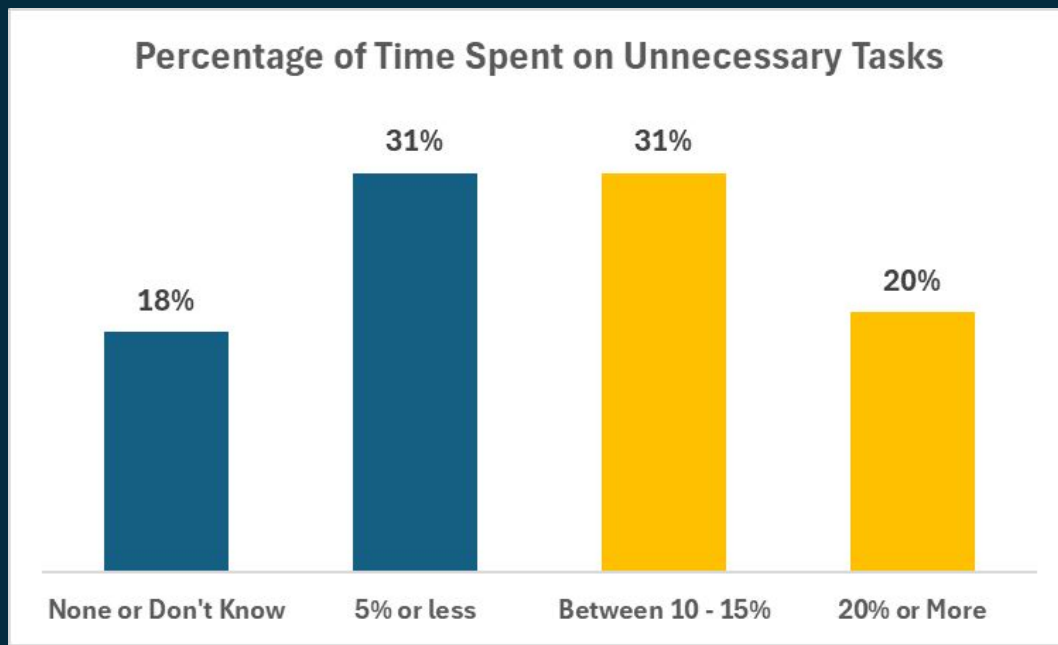
Now Teach Teaching Commission survey

# Workload to be delegated

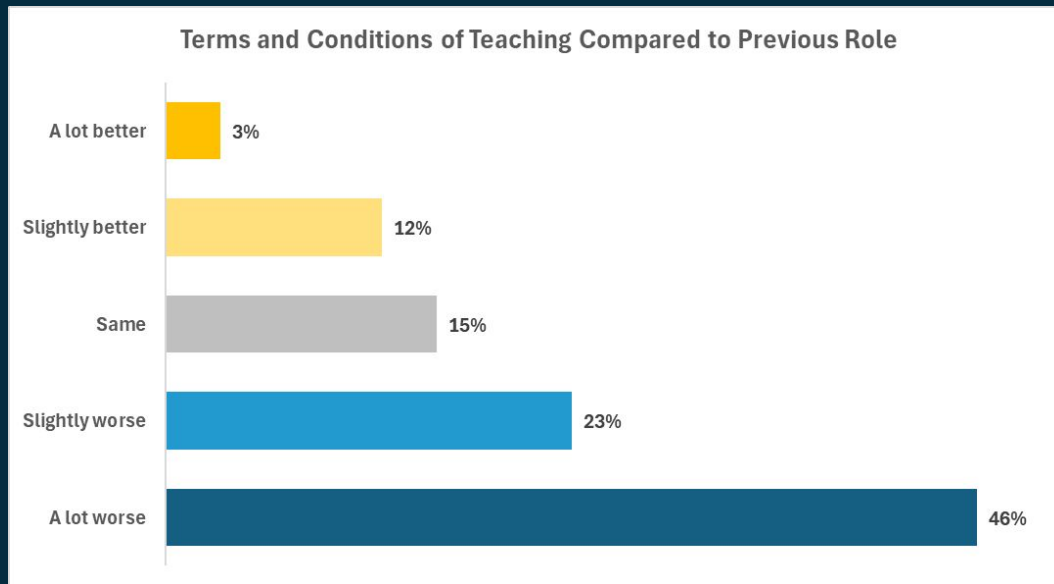




# Workload to be stopped



# Views on Ts&Cs



**Overall, how do you see the terms and conditions of teaching compared to your previous role? e.g. -**  
Salary and benefits, workload and schedule, work culture, professional development, etc.

# Views on Leadership and school culture

- Lack of training for adult leadership leads to poor practice
- Hierarchical and inflexible
- Unaware of career changer skills value

## Recommendations:

- More admin support
- Standardised resource sharing
- Flexible working

# Sources of stress

Issue	%age who mentioned it
Behaviour Management	40%
Workload & Time Pressure	35%
Poor Leadership & Systems	15%
Parental & External Pressures	10%

# Retention issues

- Behaviour
- Workload
- Ineffective leadership
- Limited resources
- IT systems
- Escalating expectations on SEND without training
- 'Not feeling as proficient as in my previous career'

All of the above exacerbate pressure and cause additional stress to classroom teachers

Now Teachers feel addressing these could significantly improve retention.

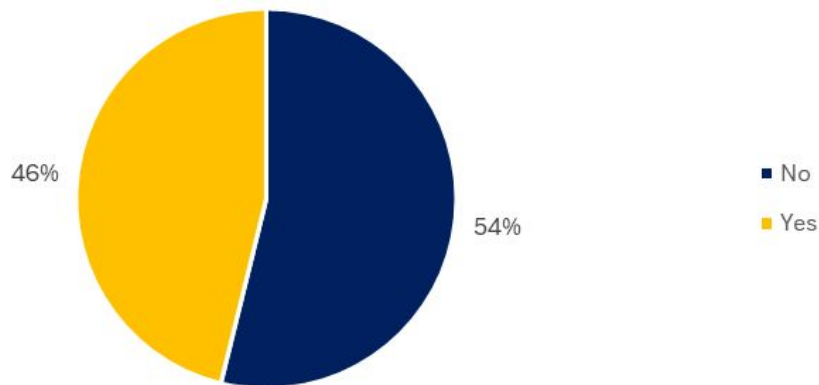
## **4. Career changer career goals**

# Career changer aspirations

Issue	%age who mentioned it
Classroom-Focused	40%
Department and middle leadership	35%
Senior leadership	15%
Uncertain or exploring	10%

# Career changers in leadership

Have Now Teachers progressed in seniority or taken on extra responsibilities?



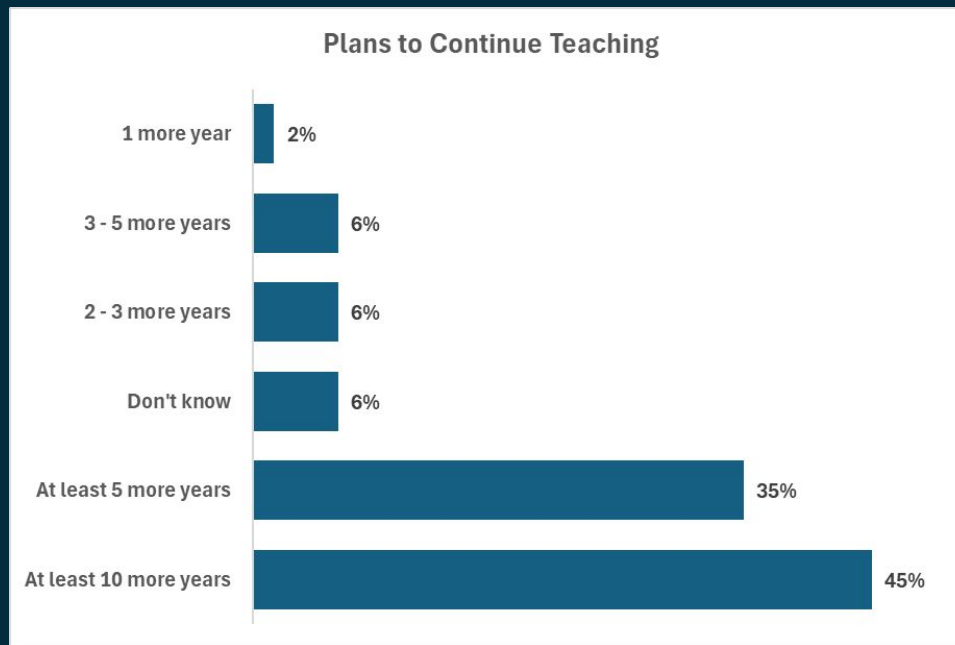
~60% leadership roles

~30% extracurricular programs

~10% combined both,  
leveraging prior career skills



# Expectations of career length



# Reasons for confidence in their decision to change career:

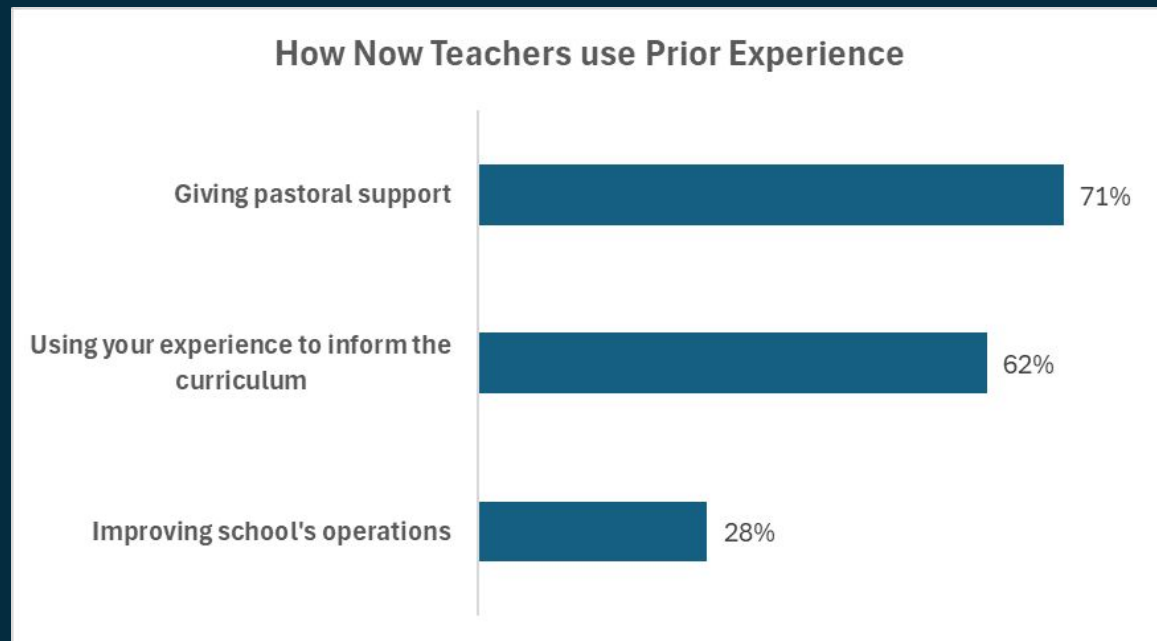
- Student Impact (50%): The tangible evidence of making a difference.
- Classroom Connection (30%): Moments of earning trust or delivering engaging lessons
- Personal Fulfillment (20%): Newfound happiness, work-life balance or autonomy
- Notable Exceptions: A small minority (~5%) remained uncertain in their switch decision

# Sources of joy

- Student Success & Progress (40%)
  - Seeing students grow, achieve, and gain confidence.
- Positive Student Relationships (30%)
  - Rewarding connections with pupils, from mentorship to shared laughter.
- Teaching Itself (20%)
  - The act of teaching—crafting lessons, sharing knowledge, and seeing engagement.
- Colleague & School Support (10%)
  - A smaller but notable group valued collaborative environments

## **6. Career changer impact**

# Using prior experience



# Careers advice

**74% of Now Teachers said they find themselves giving careers guidance/advice.**

- 62% say they do it regularly
- 12% saying at least occasionally

## 5. Recommendations

# A reminder: What would Now Teachers change?

- More practical training; less theory and repetition
- More subject-specific focus
- More behaviour management training
- Gov to reconsider tuition fees for target groups
- ECF should be more tailored to reduce repetition. Proposed changes have been praised
- Explore post-training job security
- Less micromanagement, more autonomy
- Recognition of and interest in the potential value-add of career change teachers



# Recruitment and retention recommendations

Career changers (or trainees 35+) are showing increased interest in teaching at a time when more expert teachers are urgently needed, but currently they are converting and being retained at significantly lower rates.

- 35+ teachers should be considered as a specific group for policy and tracking
- Candidates and trainees and ECTs aged 35+ (career changers) should be given distinct and differentiated recruitment, initial teacher training and early career support to ensure they are recruited, trained and retained at equal rates to other teachers and can thrive and add value to the profession.

# Thank you.

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