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# Teacher recruitment and retention: Evidence to the Teaching Commission

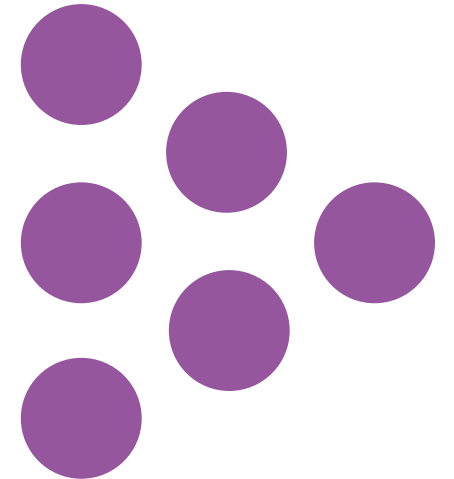
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School Workforce Lead, NFER

**December 2024**

 **@JackWorth**

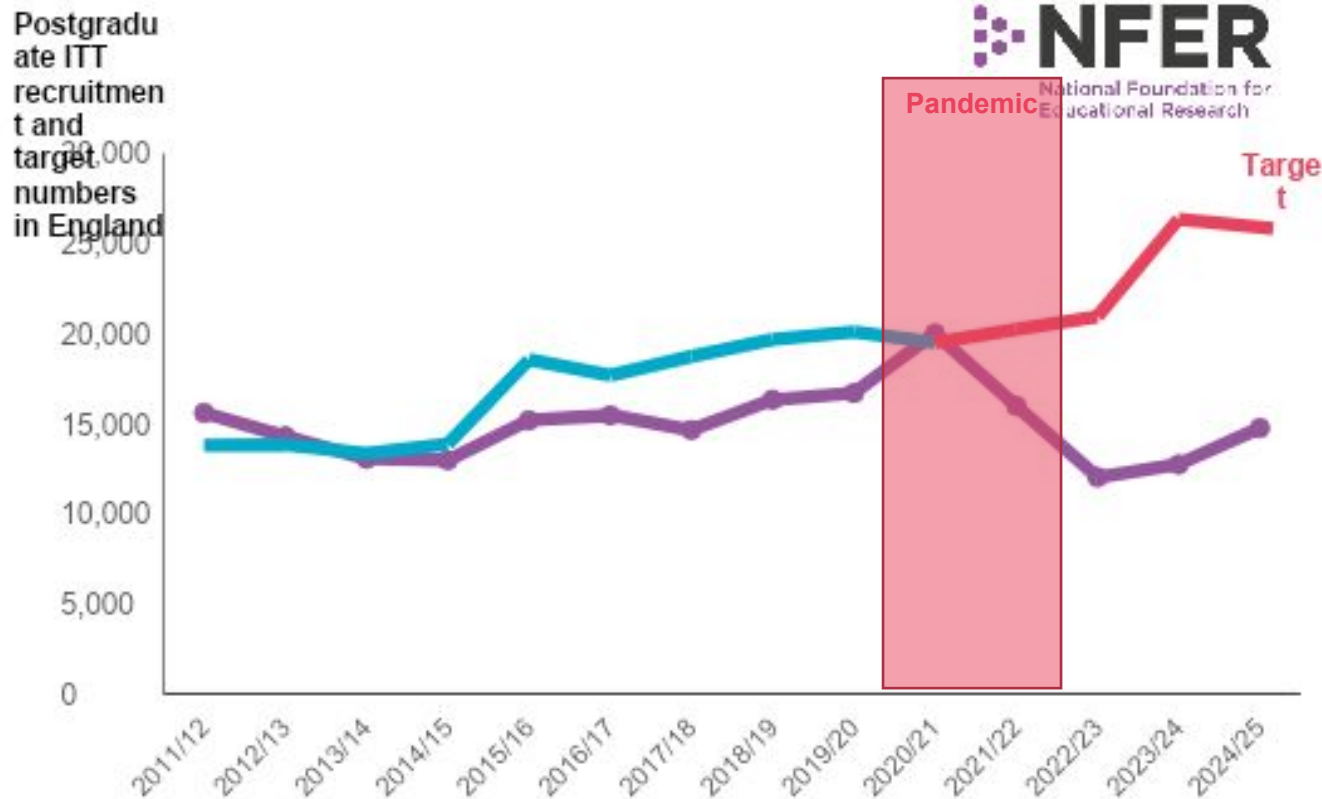
 **@JackWorthNFER**



# Overview

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- Latest teacher recruitment and retention trends
  - What policymaker action can support recruitment and retention?
  - What can school leaders focus on to retain teachers?

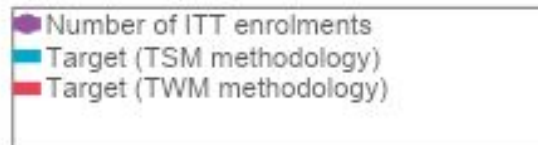
# The teacher supply challenge in England has intensified after the pandemic



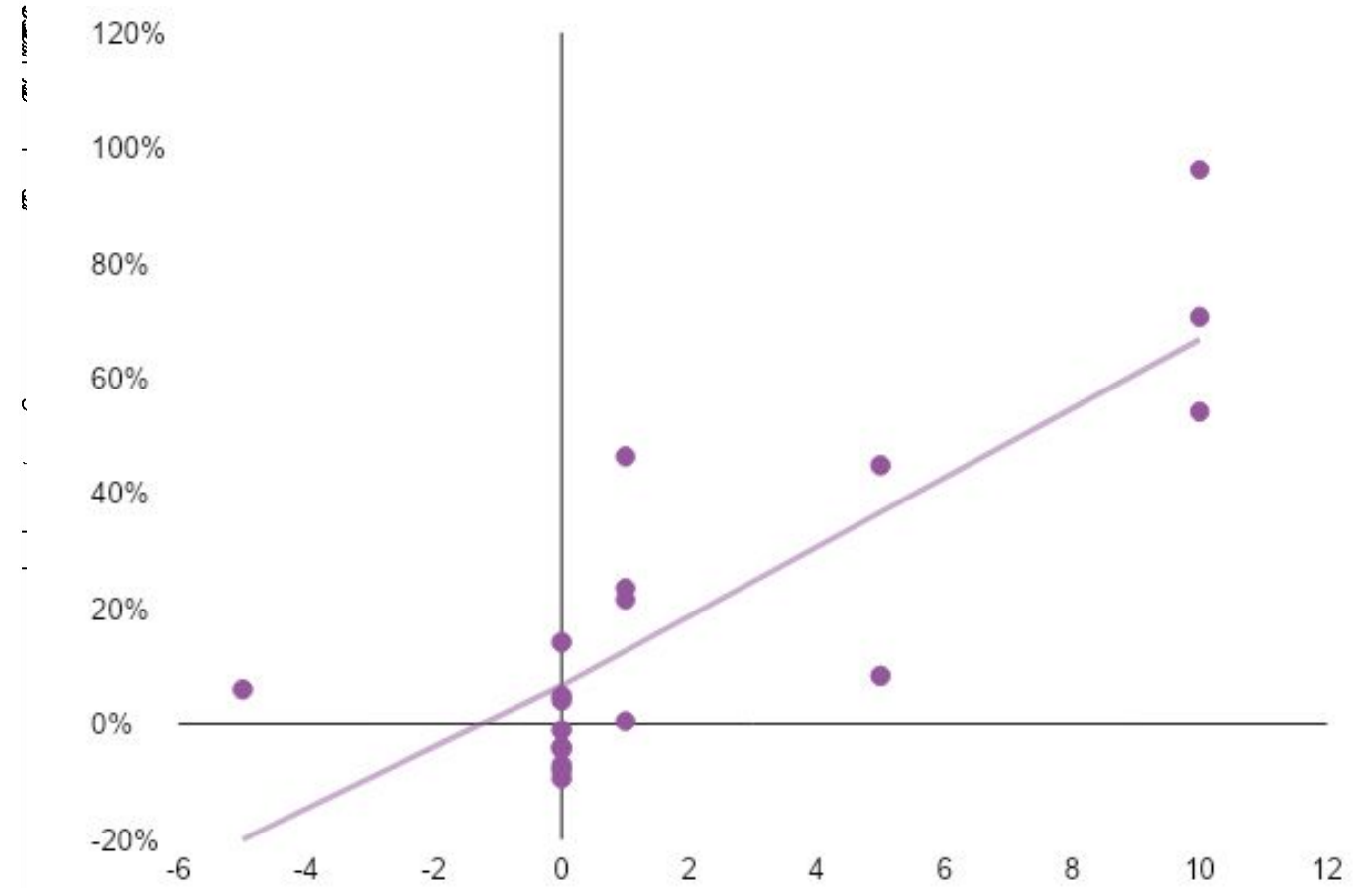
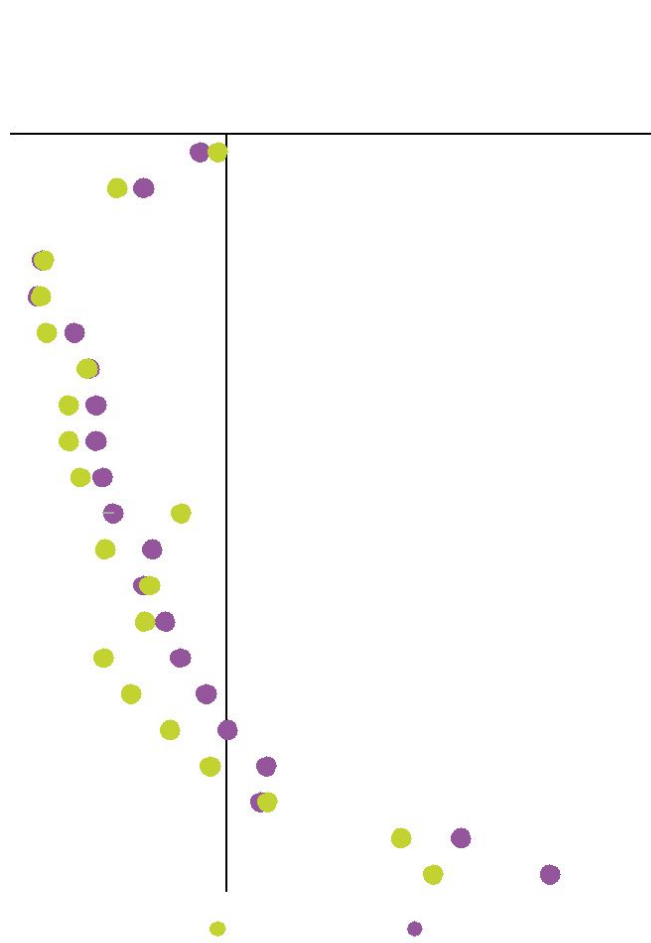
↓ Improve retention  
↑ Improve recruitment

Retain 7 more teachers  
=  
Recruit 10 fewer teachers into ITT

Note: data labels show the percentage of target.



# Under-recruitment across most secondary subjects, bolstered mostly by bursaries



# Gen Z has more graduates and are more likely to seek 'pro-social' careers



Change in total number compared to level in 2009/10

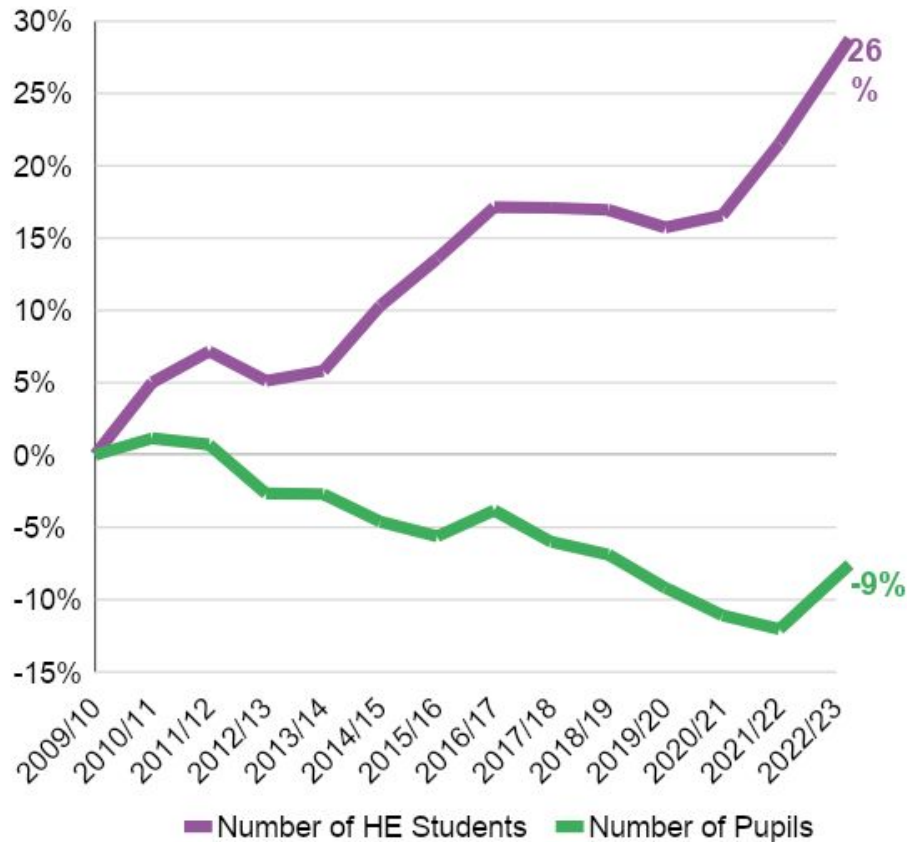
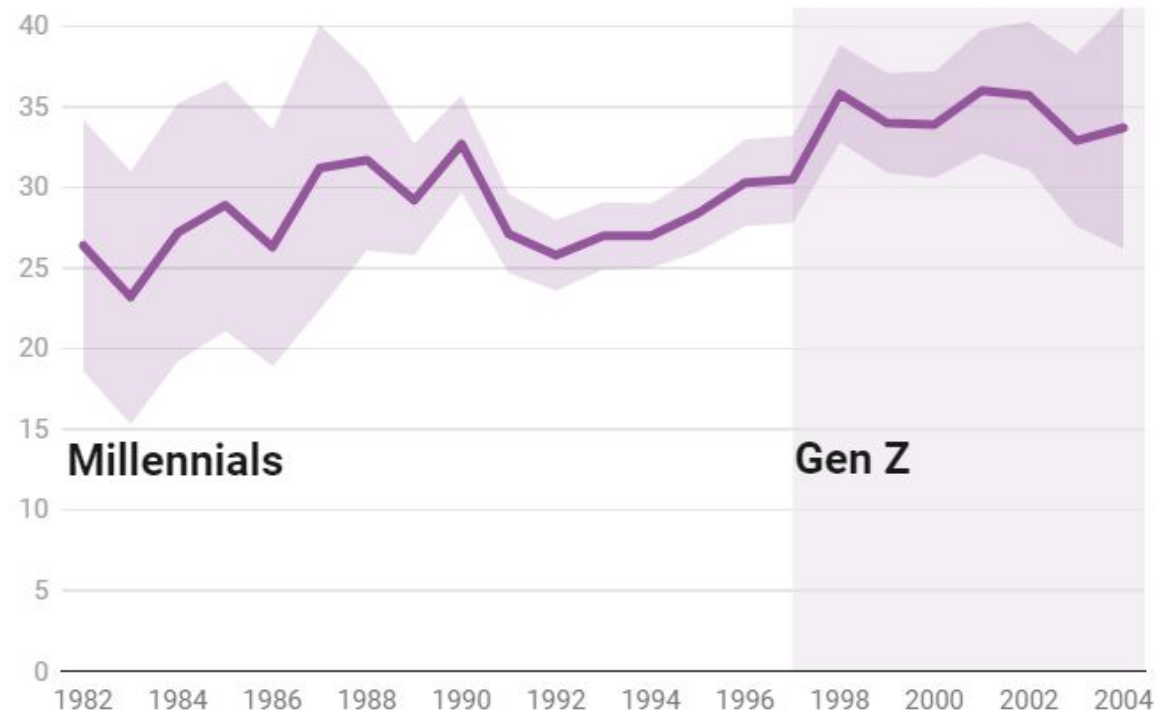


Figure 6: The proportion of young people seeking 'pro-social' careers has increased slightly over time

Years represent year of birth



# School leaders take actions to mitigate impact of recruitment difficulty on pupils

## Recruitment challenges

Budget challenges

Assembling field of quality applicants/ issues with the suitability of staff applying

## Mitigations

Recruit inexperienced, unqualified or low-quality teachers

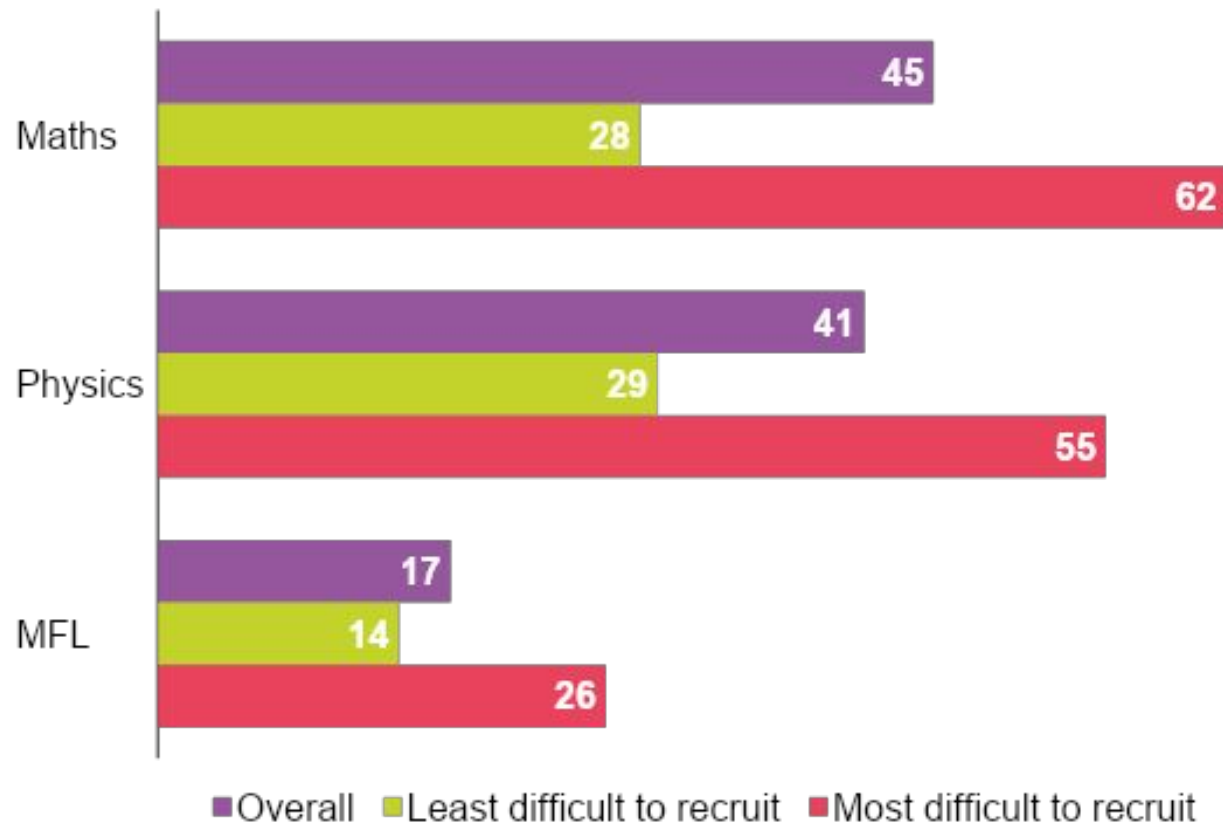
Deploy non-specialist teachers

Reduce non-contact time for existing teachers

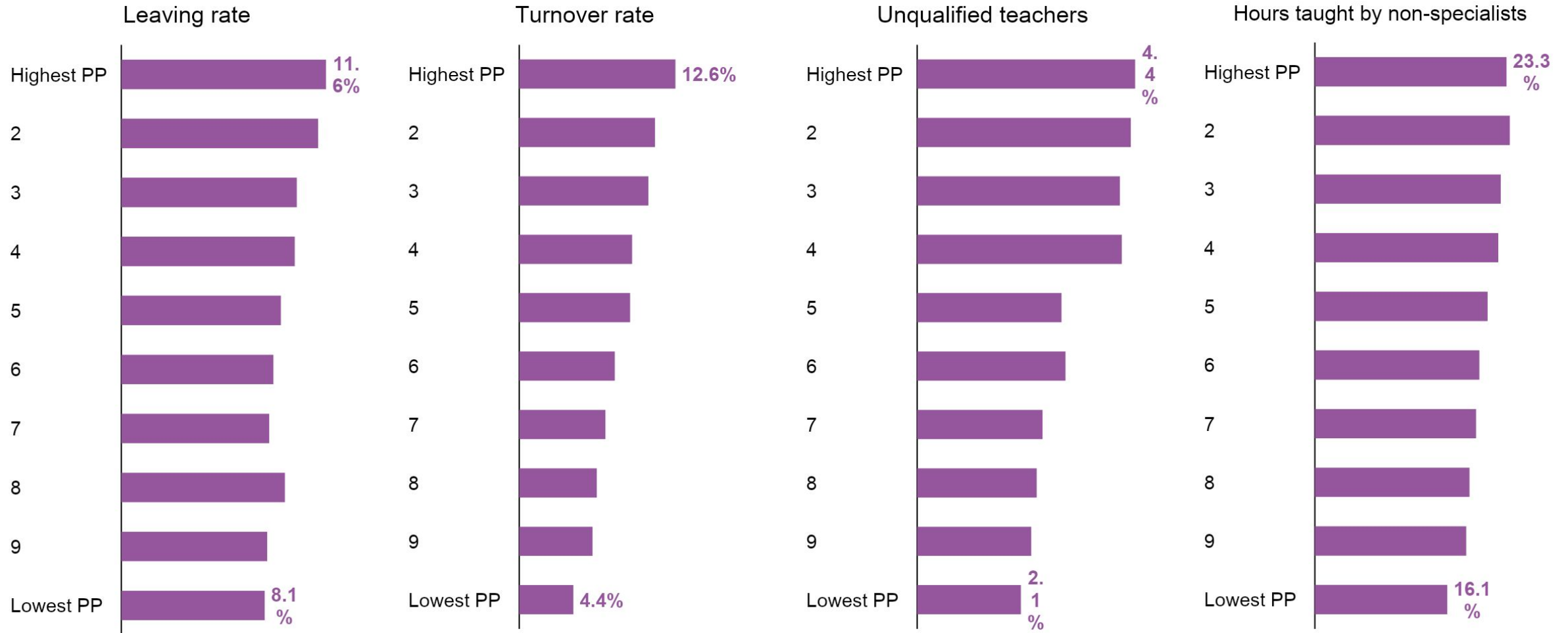
School leaders teach more than usual

# Deploying non-specialist teachers has negative implications for education quality

Proportion of secondary schools in which at least some lessons are taught by non-specialist teachers



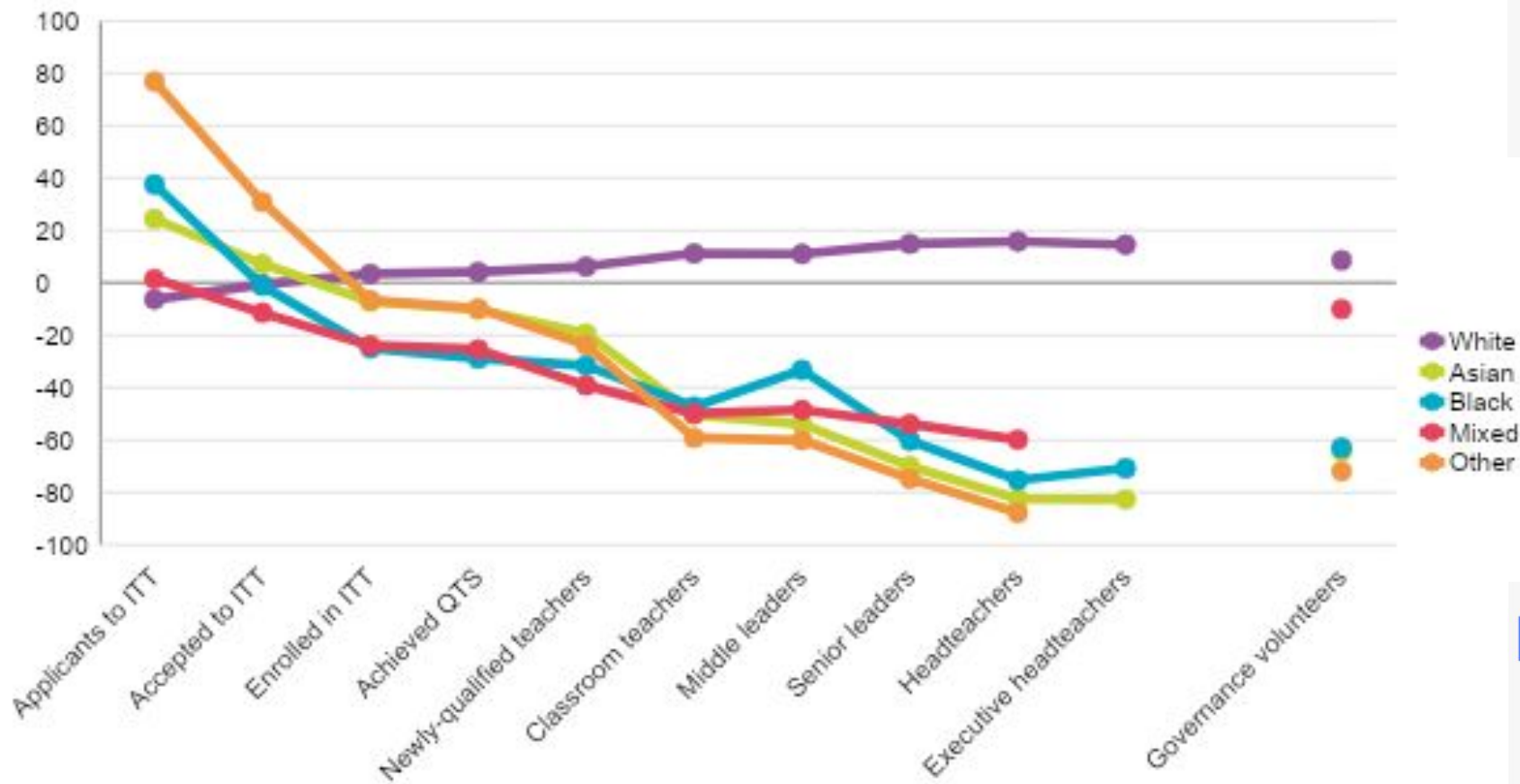
# Disadvantaged schools struggle more with retaining teachers and experiencing shortages





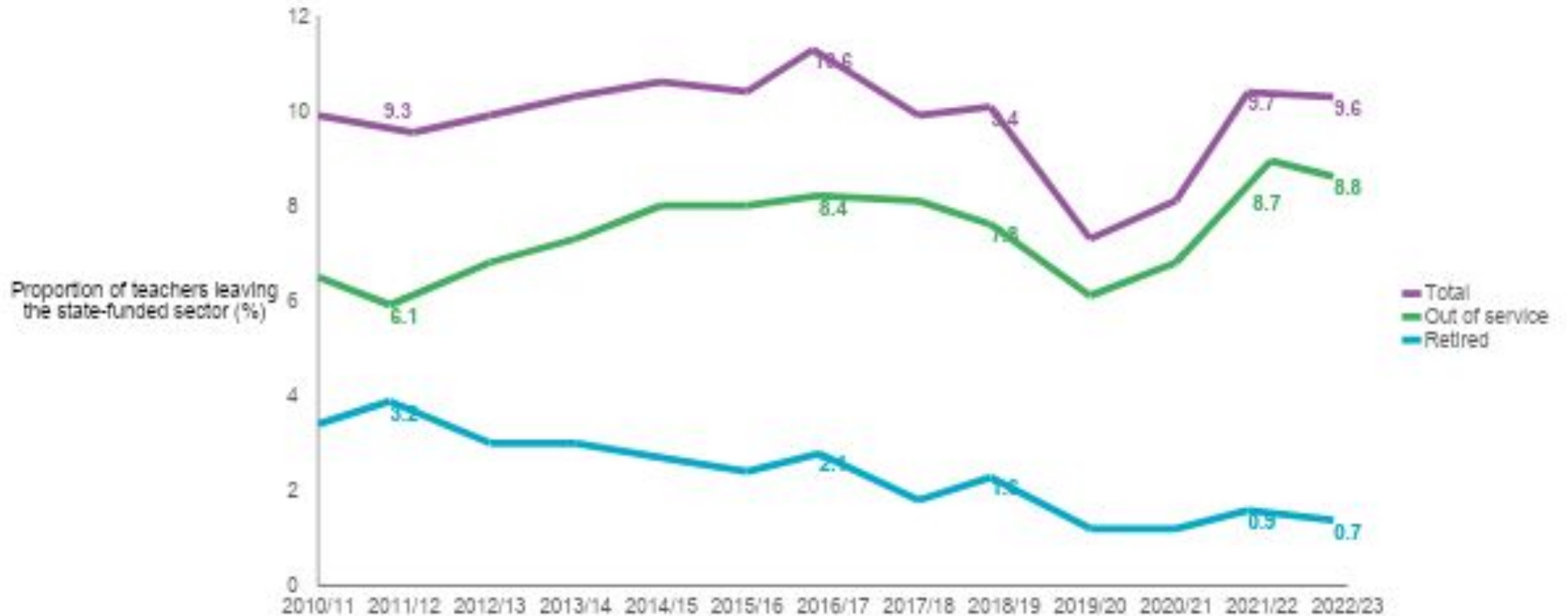
# People from ethnic minority backgrounds are under-represented in teaching

Percentage of under-/over-representation of teachers compared to age-adjusted population (%) in 2020/21

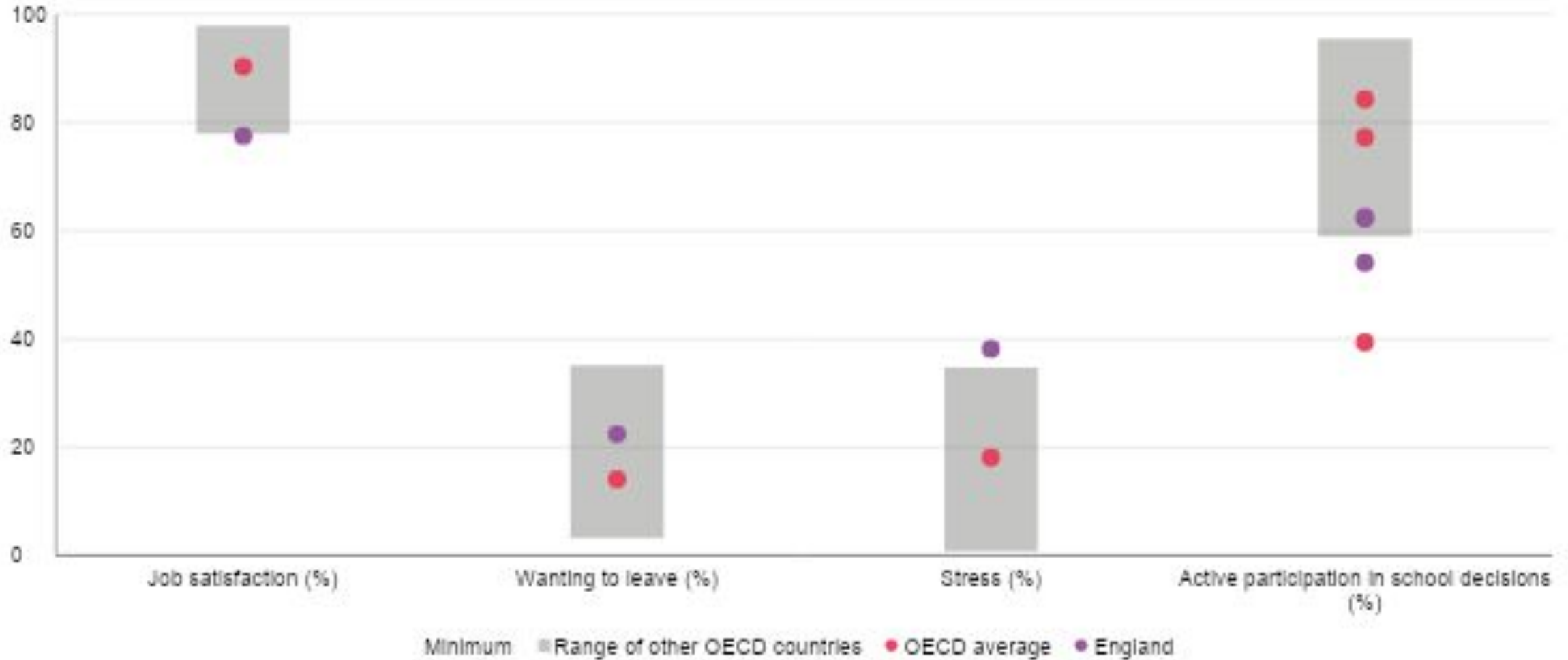


% Over/  
under-  
representation  
(0=equal  
representation)

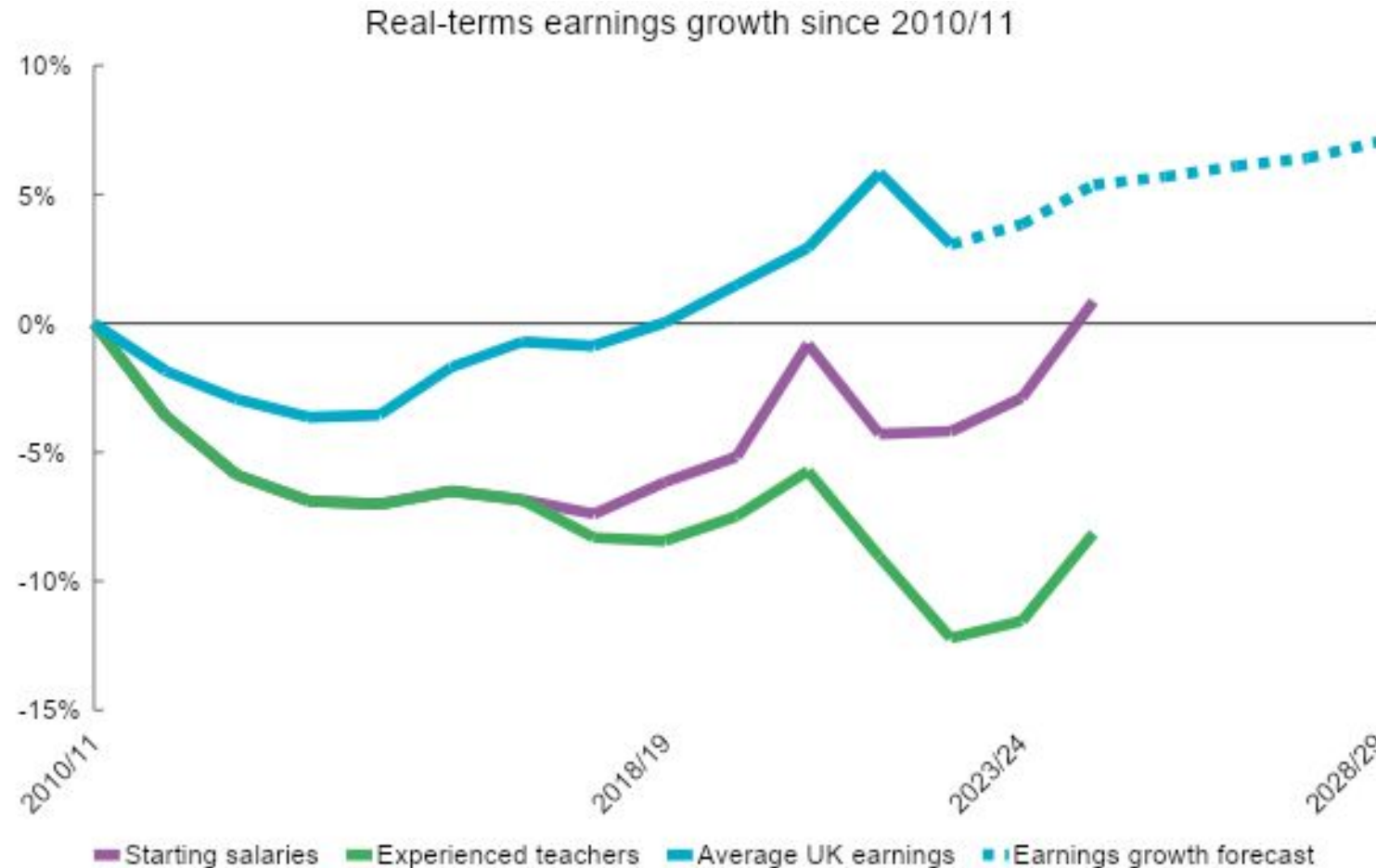
# Overall leaving rate has fallen since 2016, but more working age teachers leaving



# England's conditions for teachers compare poorly against other countries, except on



# Teacher pay has lagged earnings growth in the wider labour market since 2010/11



- 5.5% pay increase was higher than average earnings growth in the last year
- But over longer term, relative competitiveness has fallen since 2010
- Drive for flatter pay scale since 2017 has left experienced teacher pay further behind
- This is based on OBR March 2024. Earnings growth forecast updated in OBR October 2024
- 2025/26: **up from 1.9% to 3.0%**

# Financial factors associated with improving teacher recruitment/ retention

- **Pay:** improves recruitment and retention. High cost, untargeted by specific challenge
- **Bursaries:** impactful and cost effective (vs pay), even in long term. Progressive even though not targeted by area/ type
- **Early-career retention payments:** impactful and cost effective (vs pay)
- **Student loan reimbursements:** similar cost effectiveness to ECRPs, but much less flexible

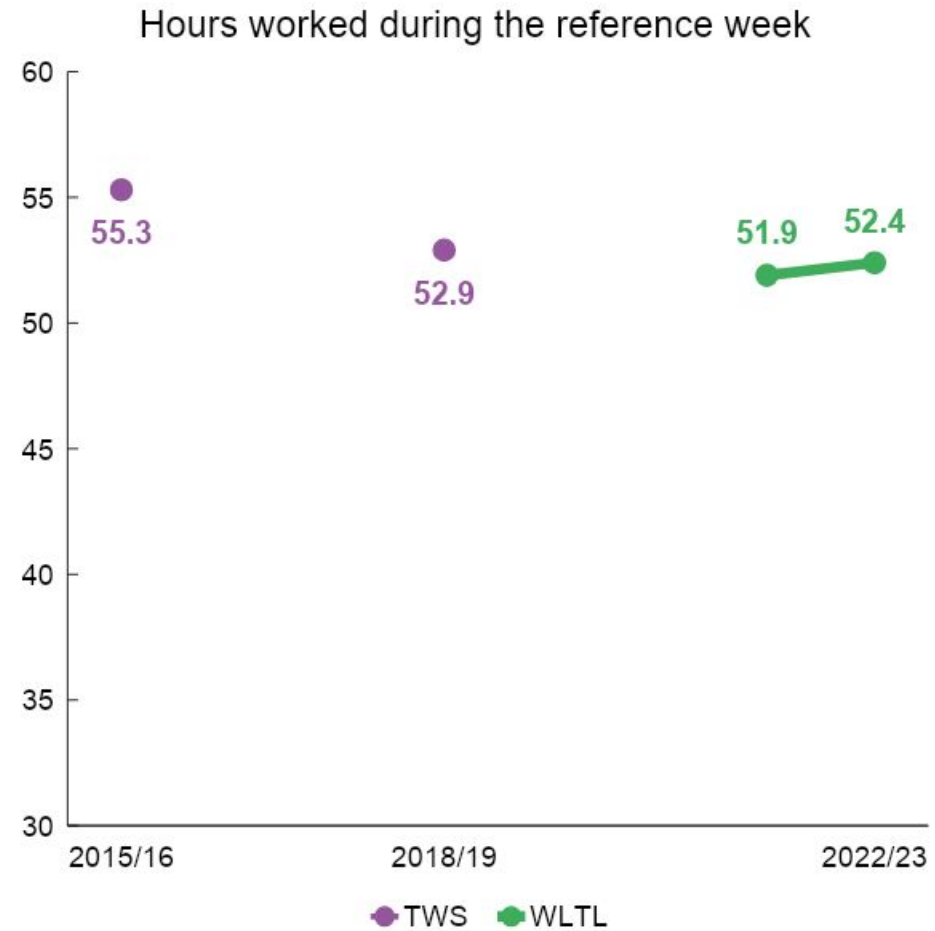
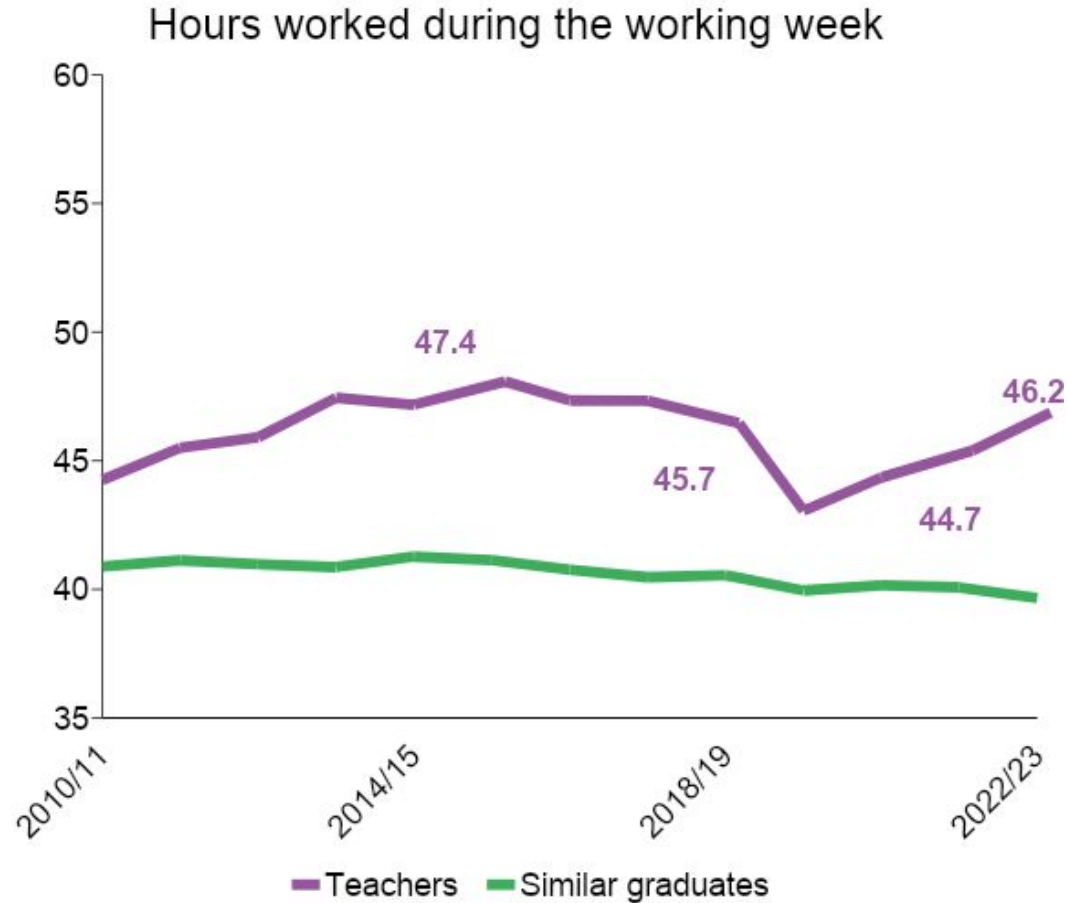
# How to recruit 6,500 teachers?

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- **Report published earlier this month, with Gatsby Foundation**
  - We adopt a **working definition** of the supply target: an increase in the number of secondary teachers, excluding PE and history, of 6,500 by 2027/28, plus meeting the primary recruitment target in 2027/28.
  - **Under our working definition achieving the target is ambitious and not trivial**
  - **It will require new policy measures: more than business-as-usual**
  - Achieving through **pay increases alone** is feasible but would require pay increases of **nearly ten per cent per year**. This scenario comes with the highest cost: **£4.9bn per year** from 2026/27 onwards.

# How to recruit 6,500 teachers?

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- **Many policy measures would not be sufficient to meet the supply target in isolation, unless they were taken to unrealistic extremes**
    - Bursaries for shortage subjects are already high
    - ECRPs could easily be expanded but risk becoming distortionary (e.g. cliff-edge after 5 years) if pushed too far
  - **Scenarios with lower costs are combinations that rely on:**
    - **cost-effective spending on targeted measures aimed at shortage subjects, particularly bursaries and ECRPs**
    - **OR non-financial measures e.g. reducing workload or improving CPD**

# Teachers' working hours increased between 2021/22 and 2022/23

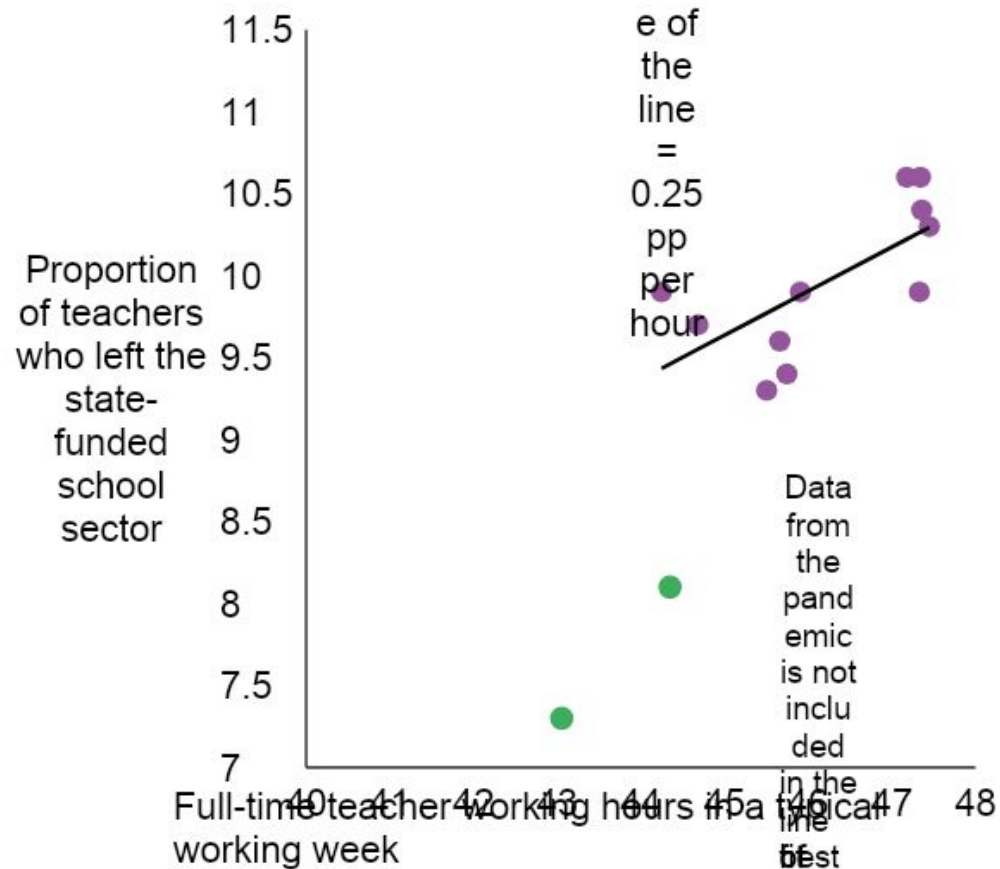


Source: NFER analysis of LFS data (2010 – 2023)

Source: TWS 2016 and 2019; WLTL survey waves 1 and 2.



# Workload reduction would likely improve teacher supply



- **Five hours per week in three years (previous Government's workload reduction target):**
  - Implies retention rate improvement of 1.25pp
  - Which could add ~2,300 teachers by 2027/28
- **Teachers' highest priorities** for workload reduction:
  - Behaviour management and pastoral care (47%)
  - Feedback, marking and assessment (41%)
  - Dealing with pupil safeguarding or pupil/family welfare issues (38%)
  - Lesson planning and preparation (37%)

# Science teachers using ChatGPT to assist lesson planning reduced time by 31%

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- Tended to use for one or two activities rather than across the lesson
  - most common: creating questions/quizzes or finding new ideas for activities
- Quality did not appear to be affected ('blind' quality assessment, although small sample)
- Does using ChatGPT reduce teacher agency/ creativity?
  - 'taking out a lot of that grunt work'
  - 'more creative' and making a teacher 'more engaged with... the content I teach'



## Supportive teaching environment

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### Poor pupil behaviour => higher workloads and stress

- Shifting behaviour from: ‘Significantly disrupts most lessons’ to ‘Rarely a serious problem’
  - Equivalent to a **40 per cent pay rise**
  
- Shifting from ‘lack of support from school leadership’ to ‘sufficient support’
  - Equivalent to a **10 per cent pay rise**

Source: RAND Europe, Understanding Teacher Retention

## Aligned autonomy

- Teachers feeling they have **influence over their work** is strongly associated with **job satisfaction, workload manageability** and **intention to stay**
  - In conflict with establishing consistency?
  - “Conformity kills innovation and drives away the best staff; standardisation fails to respond to changing needs and environment” (Dixons Academy)
- Percentage of secondary teachers who agree that their school provides staff with opportunities to actively participate in school decisions
  - OECD average = 77%; England = 63%
  - Source: TALIS, 2018



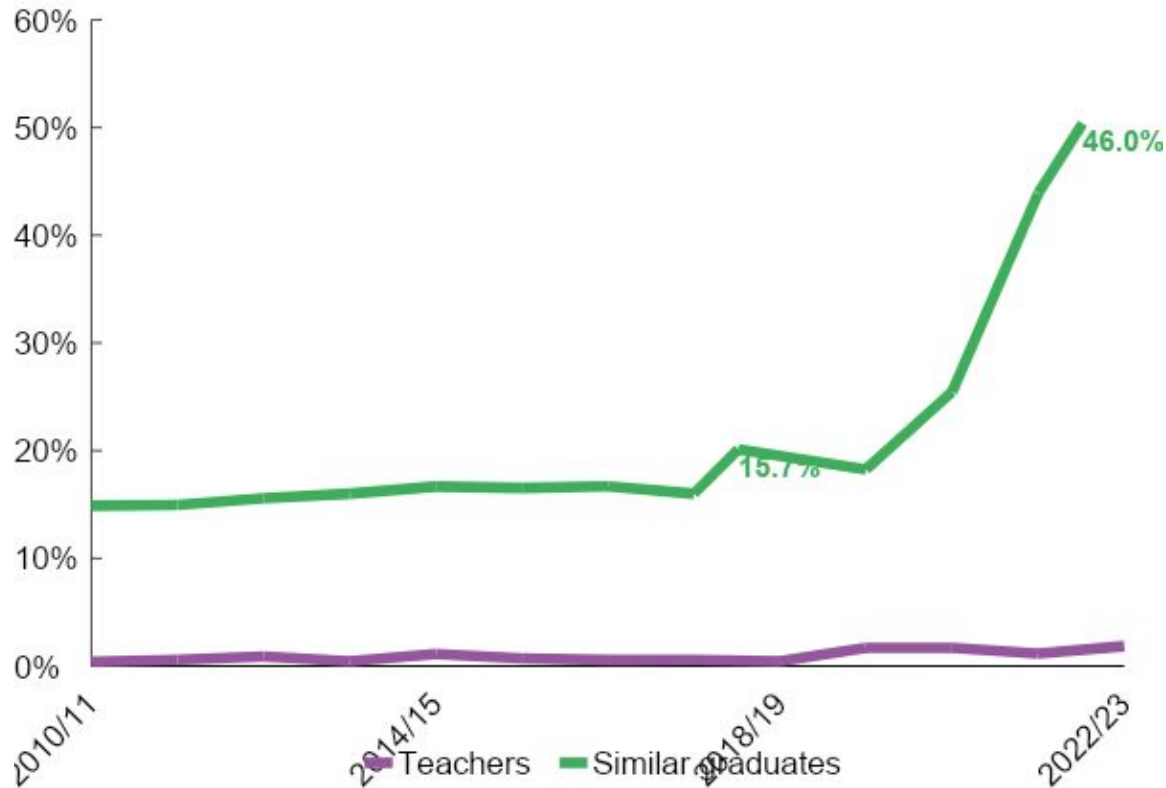
## Professional development goals

- Q: How much salary would teachers be willing to give up for one more day of CPD?
  - A: 0.4% (Source: RAND Europe, Understanding Teacher Retention)
- Teachers' **autonomy over their professional development goals** is strongly associated with higher job satisfaction
- Less than a quarter of teachers say they have 'a lot' of influence over their professional development goals
- Teacher CPD must be relevant to teachers: enhancing **engagement** and **impact**.



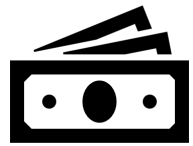
# Part-time and flexible working

Proportion of teachers and similar graduates that primarily work from home



- Hybrid/ remote working remains much more prevalent in the wider graduate labour market
- Estimated teacher pay increase required to compensate: **1.8%**
- Importance of FTE-neutral flexibilities, such as time offsite for PPA
  - 12% in 2022 to 15% in 2023
  - Far more prevalent in primary than secondary
  - “Government will clarify that teachers can carry out their planning time at home, improving flexible working for staff” – Jul 2024

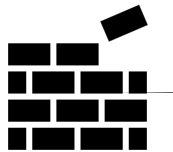
# How to recruit (and retain) 6,500 more teachers?



**Pay teachers more!  
(and fully fund it)**



**Target incentives**



**Support schools to:**



**Reduce workload**



**Supportive teaching environment**



**Aligned autonomy**



**Professional development goals**



**Part-time and flexible working**

# Thank you! Questions?



**<<< Read more of NFER's teacher  
workforce research**