Should I stay or should I go? Factors affecting early career teacher retention

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What we will cover:

• Provide background and current context

• Discuss factors influencing teacher attrition

• Discuss factors influencing teacher retention

• How this fits into our latest research project

• Whole group discussion and recommendations (from you!)
A profession in crisis?

One in three teachers plan to quit, says National Education Union survey

Workload and diminishing respect for profession are main reasons why 35% of teachers wish to leave within five years

Why do so many teachers quit within five years?

This English teacher has stuck it out for five years – but she understands perfectly why so many NOTs jack the job in

Lauran Hampshire
25th April 2021 at 4:36pm

Almost half of independent school teachers considering quitting profession

April 6, 2021

A small survey of teaching staff in the independent sector suggests many staff may leave the teaching profession following the pandemic

Teachers were already leaving the profession due to stress — then COVID-19 hit
A profession in crisis – the problems

• **Levels of teacher attrition:**
  - 1 in 10 secondary school teachers leave each year (DfE, 2018; Sibieta, 2020)
  - 1/3 leave within 5 years of qualifying (Foster, 2019)
  - High rates among early career teachers in Ebacc subjects – maths, science, computing as well as modern foreign languages (Worth and De Lazzari, 2017; Worth, 2019)
  - 50% in shortage subjects like maths and physics remain in post 5 years after training (Sibieta, 2020)
Patterns of teacher attrition

Figure 3: Proportion of qualified teachers that entered state-sector teaching in 2010, who subsequently left (%)

Source: DfE, 2018b
Covid – 19 and its impact on teacher supply

- **Covid-19 impact on recruitment and retention**
  - Surge in ITT applications and lower levels of turnover
  - All subjects except for DT and Physics
Why do teachers leave?  
Findings from our research

• Stress, overload, exhaustion, ill-being and resultant health issues (policy overload)
• Boredom and lack of challenge and equitable promotion opportunities
• Being undervalued by SLT and lack of support
• Culture of fear, surveillance and perceived bullying (accountability/performativity culture)
• Work life imbalance and impact on family life
• The ‘crossroads moment’- do I stay or go? - very prevalent
Why do you think teachers stay in the profession?

Delegates’ contributions to the wordcloud
Findings from our own research
What do we know about why teachers stay?

- Enjoy working with youngsters and helping them achieve their potential
- Collegiality and collaboration with colleagues - good team working and friendship
- Passion for subject and wanting to enthuse learners
- Autonomy to develop teaching style and resources
- Great CPD and personal learning opportunities.
- Strong sense of teacher identity and subject affiliation
Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 disruption on the quality and retention of trainee and newly qualified secondary school teachers

- ESRC project for 18 months
- Mixed-methods approach: data will be collected via questionnaires and interviews. Surveys and interviews with:

**Questionnaires:**
- participants who complete PGCE at KCL during the COVID period (2019-2020 and 2020-2021) and Senior school leaders from KCL’s network of schools

**Interviews:**
- Trainee teachers/NQTs - i.e. those who undertook a PGCE during the COVID period (2019-2020 and 2020-2021); School-based ITT staff; School Senior Leaders; KCL ITT staff – including PGCE Subject Directors and Professional Services

Some of our early findings
What could you do in your role to make a difference and to support teacher retention?

Go to the group Padlet: https://kings.padlet.org/emmatowers/moza68xt5vlk4ah3 and share your suggestions. If you would like to, you can also state your role
Plenary – coming back together

• Please take a look at the contributions on the Padlet: https://kings.padlet.org/emmatowers/moza68xt5vlk4ah3

• Are there any noticeable trends in your suggestions/responses?
• How could these suggestions be put into practice? What would be the first step?
• Are there any surprising suggestions or something you haven't thought about?


