



# **Recruitment and retention 2018**

## Introduction

Teaching can be one of the most rewarding careers imaginable, yet workload, high-stakes accountability, insufficient funding and continuing real term cuts to teachers' and school leaders' pay drives many committed professionals out of teaching.

Five years on from our first survey, the teacher supply pipeline remains broken. Despite spending over £1 billion since 2010 on incentives to tempt graduates to teach, the DfE has failed to meet its recruitment targets to initial teacher training for six consecutive years. Worse still, we fail to retain existing teachers and school leaders. It's clear that moral purpose alone is insufficient to offset the combination of crushing workload, falling real pay and the inspectorate's constantly moving goalposts.

Over the last five years, our annual member survey on has shone a light on the extent and depth of the of the teacher supply crisis facing schools.

This year's survey once again paints a depressingly familiar picture, with members continuing to report difficulties in recruiting.

In 2018, over three quarters (76 per cent) indicated that it was difficult to recruit across all posts; of these 14 per cent failed to recruit at all.

Our survey records big increases in those telling us they're struggling to recruit to senior leadership (particularly for heads of school), while difficulties with recruitment to middle leadership roles continue to be pronounced.

Recruitment difficulties continued to be exacerbated by the exodus of existing teachers and school leaders from the profession. We asked our members about retention; 67 per cent of respondents said they were aware of some of their staff having left the teaching profession in the last year for reasons other than retirement.

These findings come as no surprise. They echo official statistics and many academic studies; underlining data that demonstrates that the proportion of working-age teachers leaving the profession has increased each year since 2010, in both the primary and secondary phases.

With overall pupil numbers expected to continue to rise, pressure on teacher supply is likely to increase further in the coming years.

The facts are no longer in dispute. The Secretary of State's has made finding solutions to the crisis one of his Department's key priorities.

NAHT has welcomed the broad intent of the Department for Education's recently published recruitment and retention strategy, the centrepiece of which is the Early Career Framework, a funded programme of support and mentoring designed to induct newly qualified teachers through the first two years of their career. NAHT has

engaged fully with Officials developing strategy and the framework; we're clear that this is a positive first-step towards resolving the supply crisis.

More is needed. NAHT believes that new career progression pathways are essential to retain mid and late career teachers, including the development of non-leadership routes and professional qualifications. Support for new leaders in their first few years of leadership is critical, as is the protection of leadership time for heads, deputies and assistants. Steps are required to support teachers 'working longer', to facilitate the retention of teachers and leaders to the later retirement age. Flexible forms of working, including but also beyond, part-time working are also essential.

At the heart of the issue lie the big picture items. To resolve the crisis, it is essential to:

- develop a fair and reliable system through which to **hold schools to account**
- make teaching an attractive career option – immediate action is required to reverse a decade's cuts to real value of **pay**
- deliver sustainable and equitable **funding** to schools, and secure access and sufficient funding to deliver the supporting **health, care and social services** that pupils need
- take further, more fundamental action on **workload**.

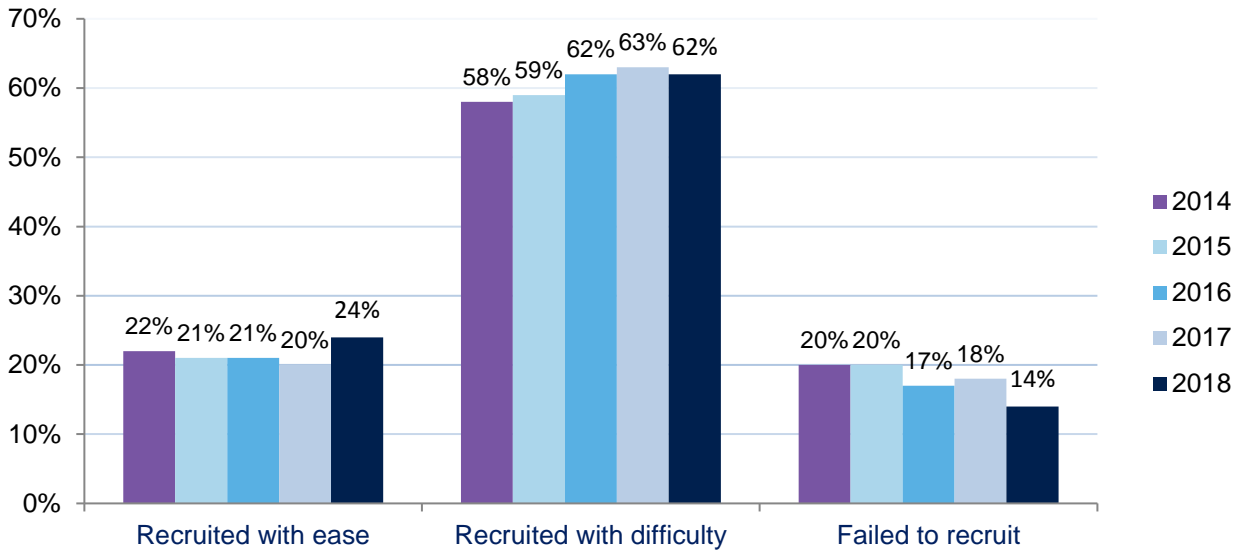
To create a **positive proposition** for a career in teaching the essential components include competitive pay; attractive and flexible working conditions, a healthy work-life balance, opportunities for career-long continuing professional development, and lower risk ways of holding schools to account.

Alongside this there is a pressing need to return **agency** to the profession. The report of **NAHT's independent Accountability Commission** [ADD LINK] sets out the immediate steps that are required, including work to develop and embed peer review across the profession.

The challenge to recruit and retain teachers is to akin to a complex jigsaw, where the individual pieces must be correctly placed.

Decisive action is needed across each of the policy areas indicated above to encourage those already in the profession to stay; those who have left to return; and new entrants to have confidence that teaching can offer a rewarding, well remunerated and flexible professional career.

Chart 1 - Respondent recruitment experience across all roles in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018



## Key findings

### Recruitment

- For the fifth consecutive year, school leaders reported that they struggled to recruit across all roles, from teachers to senior leaders.
- Overall, a very high proportion (76 per cent) of responses indicated that it was difficult to recruit for any post. Of the total responses to this question, where respondents were asked to report their experiences of recruiting to a range of posts<sup>1</sup> 62 per cent struggled to recruit and 14 per cent failed to recruit at all.
- The data also highlights an issue at the senior leadership level: this year's respondents reported a considerable rise in the failure to recruit for head of school roles since 2017 (up 15 percentage points from 2017 to 27 per cent in 2018). Of those respondents who had a head teacher or principal role to fill, two thirds (66 per cent) struggled to recruit for the role, while 12 per cent failed to recruit for the role at all.
- Recruitment difficulties for the main middle leadership roles in schools continue to be pronounced. Only 21 per cent of responses indicated that posts carrying a teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) or special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) responsibility could be recruited for with ease. 59 per cent of responses indicated that they struggled to recruit for these posts and in 20 per cent of cases the respondent failed to recruit altogether.

<sup>1</sup> 727 of the 734 respondents answered this question.

- This year's respondents also reported a small rise in the failure to recruit newly qualified teachers (NQTs), a rise of one percentage point from 2017.
  - The most commonly reported reason for struggling or failing to recruit NQTs was a shortage of quality applicants in the area (cited by 59 per cent of individuals).
  - The second most commonly reported reason was a general shortage of NQTs in the area (cited by 40 per cent of individuals), closely followed by the school being located in an area of high housing and living costs (31 per cent).
- All too often, recruitment campaigns fail to produce a field of high-quality candidates from which to recruit. The main reasons given to explain why schools struggled to recruit for teaching roles (excluding NQTs) included the quality of applicants in respondents' areas (61 per cent), a shortage of teachers (46 per cent) and the number of teachers leaving the profession in respondents' areas (37 per cent).
- The proportion of respondents who indicated that budget pressures were affecting their ability to attract the right candidates has risen from nine per cent in 2014 to 35 per cent in 2018, as the funding crisis bites. This was also reflected in our 2017/18 breaking point survey, which found that 79 per cent of school leaders were expecting a deficit budget for 2019/20.
- The cost of housing continues to be a major barrier to recruitment. Almost a third (30 per cent) of respondents cited high housing and living costs as a factor, representing only a minor improvement to the situation in 2017 (31 per cent) and 2016 (31 per cent).
- For those who failed to recruit, supply agencies were the most common solution, pursued in 72 per cent of cases of unfilled roles. However, 44 per cent of respondents reported that their solution was for the teaching hours to be covered by a member of the senior leadership team – the same percentage as 2017, and a three percentage point increase since 2016.
- Despite the high overall levels of recruitment difficulty, the picture does show some signs of improvement since 2017. The proportion of responses indicating difficulty in recruiting for any post has fallen overall by five percentage points since last year.

## Retention

- For the fifth year, concerningly high proportions of respondents reported that recruitment difficulties were due to the number of teachers leaving the profession in their area. This has risen from 15 per cent in 2014 to 37 per cent this year. Although there has been a seven percentage point drop since last year, this continues to be the third highest reason cited for recruitment problems.

- 67 per cent of respondents said they were aware of some of their staff having left the teaching profession in the last year for reasons other than retirement. This result is supported by recent research finding that 42,830 FTE qualified teachers left the state-funded sector in the 12 months to November 2017, a 'wastage rate' of 9.9 per cent. This rate was the same as the previous two years and has increased from 9.2 per cent in 2011. For the first time, according to the data series (which goes back to 2011), in 2017 more FTE teachers (400) left the profession than joined.<sup>2</sup>
- Of those respondents who reported that they were aware of staff having left the teaching profession in the last year (for reasons other than retirement), the two most commonly selected reasons were wanting a better work-life balance (75 per cent), and workload pressures (75 per cent).
- When asked what they thought would make the biggest contribution to easing the recruitment and retention crisis, the most popular suggestion was for a 'real terms increase in school funding' (cited by 82 per cent of individuals).<sup>3</sup>
- For the first time this year, we asked respondents whether they were considering leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement. 50 per cent were not currently considering leaving, 16 per cent were not sure and 34 per cent stated that they were considering leaving at some point.
- Respondents who were considering leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement were asked why, and were able to select as many reasons as applied to them. The two most commonly selected answers were a need for a better work-life balance (78 per cent) and concerns around workload pressures (77 per cent). High proportions of respondents also highlighted stress (62 per cent) and funding pressures (59 per cent) as factors impacting on their consideration to leave the profession.

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<sup>2</sup> From House of Commons Library Briefing Paper CBP-7222: Teacher recruitment and retention in England (2018).

<sup>3</sup> 667 of the 734 respondents answered this question.

## Respondent profile

The survey was completed by a total of 734<sup>4</sup> school leaders in October and November 2018, representing the most up to date and comprehensive view of school recruitment and workload. It was sent to NAHT members in England.<sup>5</sup> Of those who responded, the majority were head teachers or principals (66 per cent).<sup>6,7</sup>

The majority of responses (85 per cent), were received from leaders working in the primary phase of education (including nursery, infant and junior schools). Six per cent were from secondary phase schools.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Due to the nature of the survey, the number of responses varies by question. As such, the calculation of the percentages within the report is based only on those individuals who responded to that question. Therefore, wherever this report refers to 'X per cent of', this should be interpreted as 'X per cent of individuals who responded to that question.'

<sup>5</sup> For the first year, this survey was sent to members in England only. Data from previous years may include responses from Northern Irish and/or Welsh members.

<sup>6</sup> 666 of the 734 respondents answered this question.

<sup>7</sup> Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

<sup>8</sup> 663 of the 734 respondents answered this question.



## Experiences in recruitment

For the fifth consecutive year, we asked members how easy it had been over the last year to recruit for various roles. The table below shows responses from those who had advertised vacancies for these roles.

**Table 1 - Respondents' recruitment experience across all roles in 2018<sup>9</sup>**

| Answer options                                 | Recruited with ease |     | Struggled to recruit |     | Failed to recruit |    |
|--|---------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|-------------------|----|
|  | %                   | #   | %                    | #   | %                 | #  |
| Head teacher/principal                         | 21%                 | 28  | 66%                  | 87  | 12%               | 16 |
| Head of school                                 | 10%                 | 5   | 63%                  | 31  | 27%               | 13 |
| Deputy head/vice principal                     | 34%                 | 47  | 57%                  | 79  | 9%                | 12 |
| Assistant head/principal                       | 33%                 | 43  | 55%                  | 71  | 12%               | 16 |
| Teaching role with TLR                         | 22%                 | 51  | 60%                  | 136 | 18%               | 41 |
| Teaching role with SEN allowance               | 18%                 | 21  | 62%                  | 72  | 21%               | 24 |
| SENCo  | 20%                 | 24  | 57%                  | 70  | 24%               | 29 |
| Teacher on the upper pay scale                 | 18%                 | 34  | 63%                  | 117 | 19%               | 35 |
| Newly qualified teacher (NQT)                  | 33%                 | 162 | 57%                  | 280 | 10%               | 48 |
| Teacher on the main pay scale (excluding NQTs) | 16%                 | 77  | 71%                  | 349 | 14%               | 68 |
| School business manager/leader                 | 31%                 | 44  | 60%                  | 87  | 9%                | 13 |

A very high proportion (76 per cent) of responses indicated that it was difficult to recruit for any post. Of the total responses to the question, 24 per cent of responses indicated that they were able to recruit for any role with ease, 62 per cent struggled to recruit and 14 per cent failed to recruit at all.

Despite high overall levels of difficulty, the recruitment picture does show some signs of improvement since 2017, with the proportion of responses indicating difficulty in recruiting for any post falling overall by five percentage points since 2017.

Recruitment difficulties for the main middle leadership roles in schools continues to be pronounced. Of posts carrying a teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) or special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) responsibility, only 21 per cent of responses indicated that these could be recruited for with ease. 59 per cent of responses indicated that they struggled to recruit for these posts and in 20 per cent of cases the school failed to recruit altogether.

The top three roles most commonly reported as having *failed* to recruit for were:

- head of school (27 per cent),
- SENCo (24 per cent) and
- teaching role with SEN allowance (21 per cent).

<sup>9</sup> 727 of the 734 respondents answered this question.



Since 2017, there has been a 15 percentage point increase in the proportion of responses reporting a failure to recruit for the head of school role. There has been a two percentage point increase in responses reporting a failure to recruit SENCos (to 24 per cent), while the percentage of responses failing to recruit a teaching role with SEN allowance has dropped by six points since 2017, to 21 per cent.

The comparison for each role can be found in chart 2 below, although note that data for three of the roles was only collected from 2015 onwards.<sup>10</sup>

Encouragingly, since 2017, a number of roles have seen a decrease in the percentage of responses reporting a failure to recruit to them. The top three roles with the largest reported decrease in 'failure to recruit' since last year are:

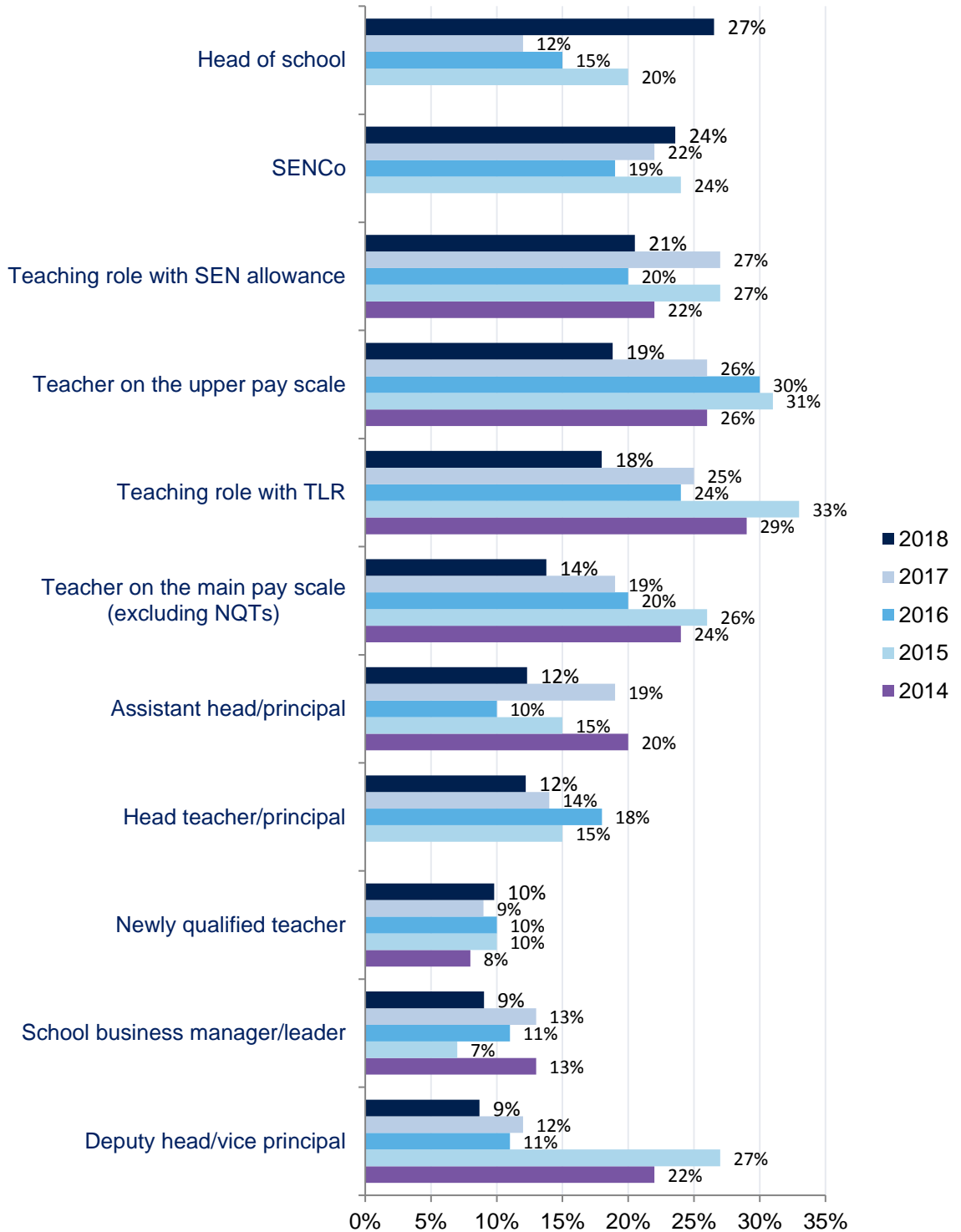
- assistant head/assistant principal,
- teacher on the upper pay scale and
- teaching role with TLR.

All of the above saw a seven percentage point drop in the number of responses reporting a 'failure to recruit' for those roles.

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<sup>10</sup> Data on head teacher/principal, head of school and SENCo/ALNCo roles was only collected from 2015 onwards.

Chart 2 - Percentage of respondents reporting failing to recruit for a role in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018<sup>11</sup>

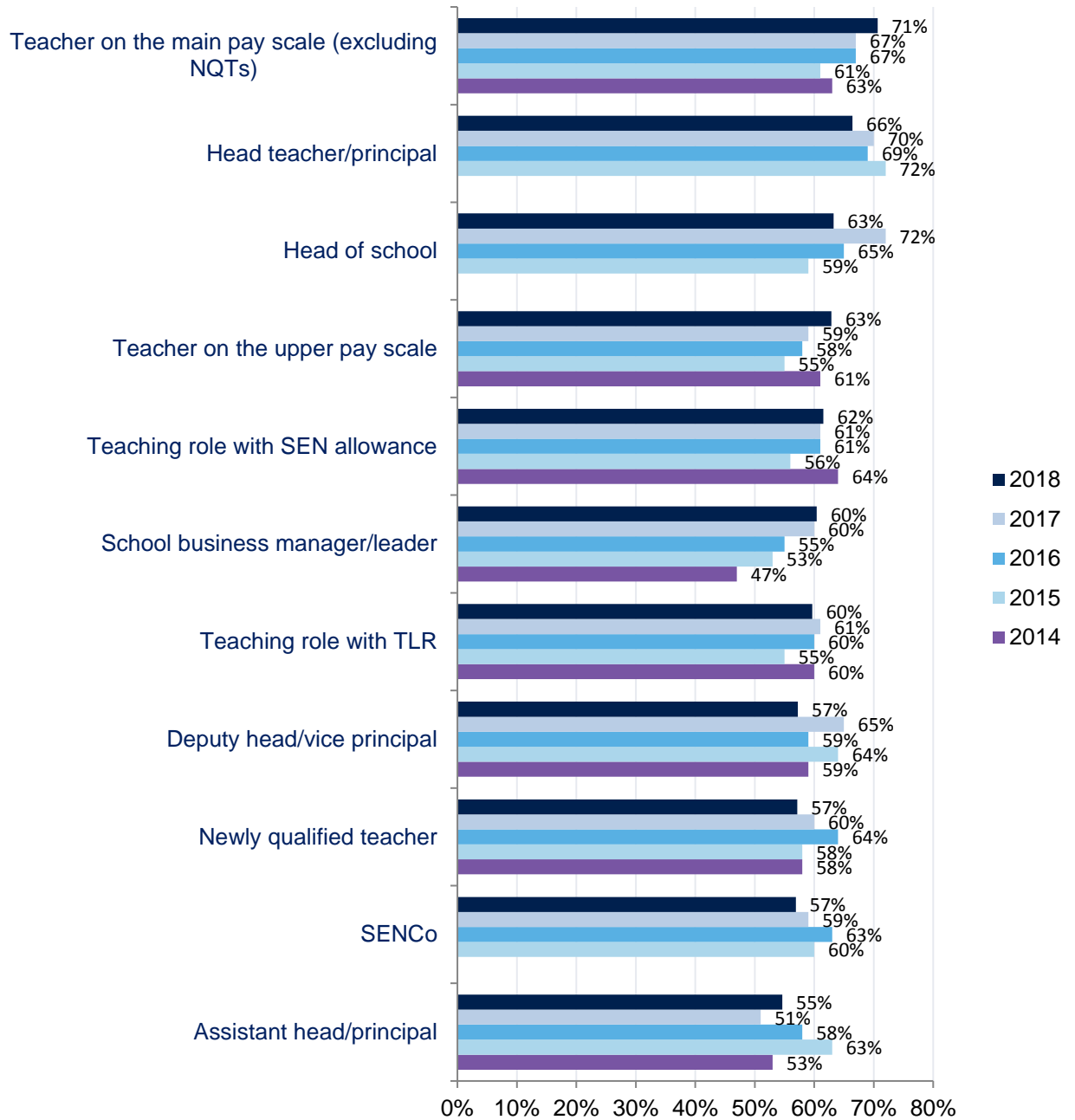


<sup>11</sup> Two of the categories were slightly different in previous surveys. These were 'teaching role with SEN/ALN allowance' and 'SENCo/ALNCo'.

For those who reported struggling to recruit for a post, the areas of most concern are the recruitment of teachers on the main pay scale, excluding NQTs, (a four percentage point increase since last year, to 71 per cent) and the recruitment of head teachers/principals (a four percentage point decrease from last year, but still a concerning high percentage at 66 per cent).

Although the percentage of responses struggling to recruit a head of school appears to have dropped by nine percentage points since 2017, this must be noted in the context of a concerning 15 percentage point rise in responses indicating a complete failure to recruit for this role.

Chart 3 - Percentage of respondents reporting struggling to recruit for a role in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018<sup>12</sup>



### School inspection

Responses were analysed by Ofsted inspection grade for the third year in a row, and no particular correlation was evident between different Ofsted judgements and higher or lower levels of recruitment difficulty. However, due to low respondent numbers, these findings may not be fully representative of the situation.

<sup>12</sup> Two of the categories were slightly different in previous surveys. These were 'teaching role with SEN/ALN allowance' and 'SENCo/ALNCo'.

## Reasons that schools were struggling to recruit

### Newly qualified teachers (NQTs)

We asked members who reported struggling or failing to recruit NQTs to provide reasons why they thought this was, and allowed them to tick any of the responses that applied to their experience(s).<sup>13</sup>

In 2018, the most commonly reported reason for struggling or failing to recruit NQTs was a shortage of quality applicants in the area (cited by 59 per cent of individuals).

The second most commonly reported reason was a general shortage of NQTs in the area – this was cited by 40 per cent of respondents, a five percentage point increase since 2017. The third most commonly reported reason was the school being located in an area of high housing and living costs (31 per cent).

The two most common reasons given for difficulty in recruiting NQTs (shortage and quality) have remained the same since 2015.<sup>14</sup> There have been increases in some of the other choices that respondents selected since 2017:

- The percentage of respondents reporting a shortage of NQTs with the right subject expertise in their area has increased by four percentage points since 2017, to 11 per cent.
- The percentage of respondents reporting difficulty in recruiting for SEND/special schools has increased by three percentage points since 2017, to eight per cent.

There has been a two percentage point decrease in the percentage of respondents citing NQT recruitment difficulties due to their school being located within a deprived area. However, the percentage of respondents selecting this option (28 per cent) remains concerningly high.

Encouragingly, the percentage of respondents who stated that high numbers of NQTs were being recruited by supply agencies in their areas has fallen year on year for the last three years, from 20 per cent in 2016<sup>15</sup> to 17 per cent in 2018.

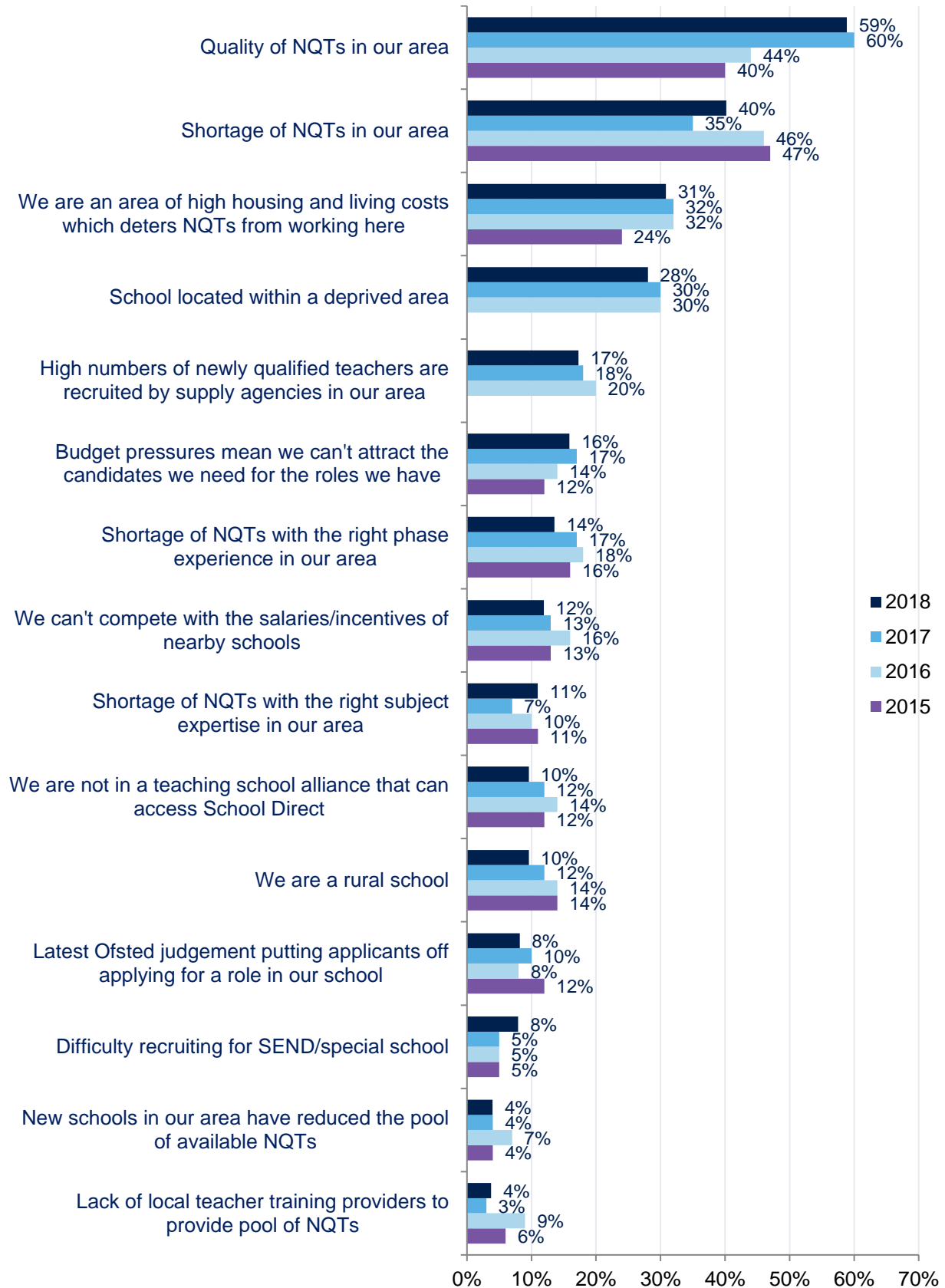
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<sup>13</sup> 428 of the 734 respondents answered this question.

<sup>14</sup> This was a new addition in 2015, so there is no data for 2014.

<sup>15</sup> 2016 was the first year that this option was included in the survey; no earlier data is available for comparison.

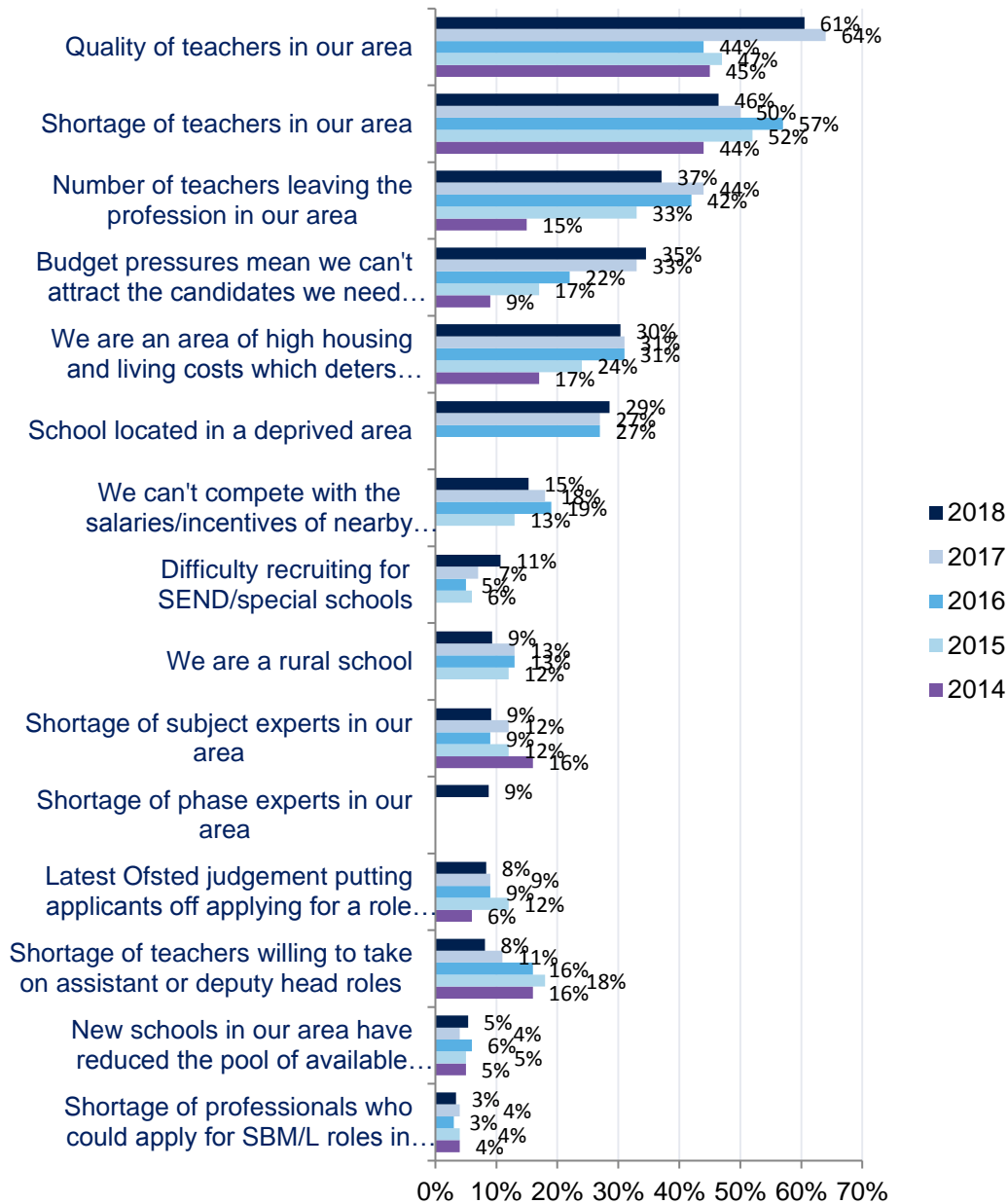
**Chart 4 - Respondents' perceptions of why they had struggled or failed to recruit NQTs in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018**



### Other teaching roles and school business leaders

We also asked members who reported struggling or failing to recruit teaching roles other than NQTs to provide reasons why they thought this was, again allowing them to tick any of the responses that applied to their experience(s).<sup>16</sup> The responses from 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 are shown in chart 5 to compare experiences over the last five years.

**Chart 5 - Reasons for struggling or failing to recruit for teaching roles (not NQTs) in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018<sup>17</sup>**



<sup>16</sup> 504 of the 734 respondents answered this question.

<sup>17</sup> Note that the 'shortage of phase experts' option is new to the 2018 survey, so there is no previous data available for comparison.



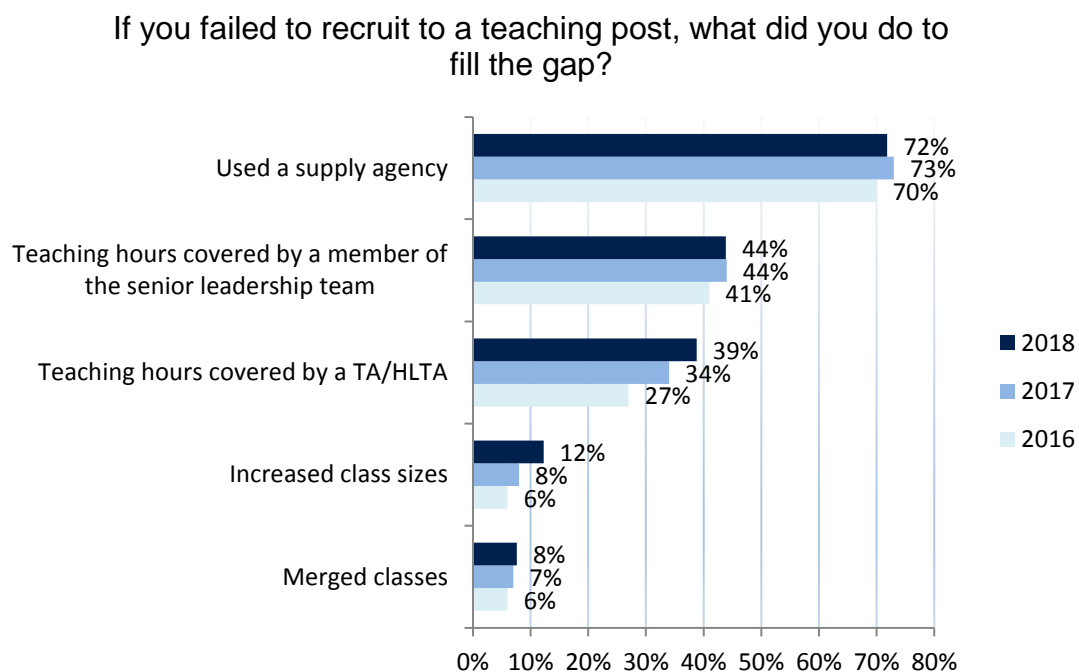
In 2018, the most commonly reported reason for struggling or failing to recruit for teaching roles was related to the quality of teachers in respondents' areas (cited by 61 per cent of respondents). This percentage has fallen by three percentage points from 2017, when it was also the most commonly reported reason.

The second most commonly reported reason was a shortage of teachers in respondents' areas – this was cited by 46 per cent of respondents. Encouragingly, the percentage of respondents selecting this answer has dropped year on year since 2016, when 57 per cent chose this option. However, the results remain worryingly high and this clearly continues to be a significant factor impacting on recruitment.

The third most commonly reported reason was the number of teachers leaving the profession in respondents' areas – cited by 37 per cent of respondents.

The top three reasons cited for difficulty or failure to recruit for other teaching roles remain the same as in 2017. Following large increases between 2014 and 2015, the percentage of respondents citing high housing and living costs as an explanation has remained at high levels over the last three years. In 2018, 30 per cent of respondents identified this option, suggesting that it continues to be an issue impacting on recruitment.

**Chart 6 - Responses to the question: “If you failed to recruit to a teaching post, what did you do?”<sup>18</sup>**



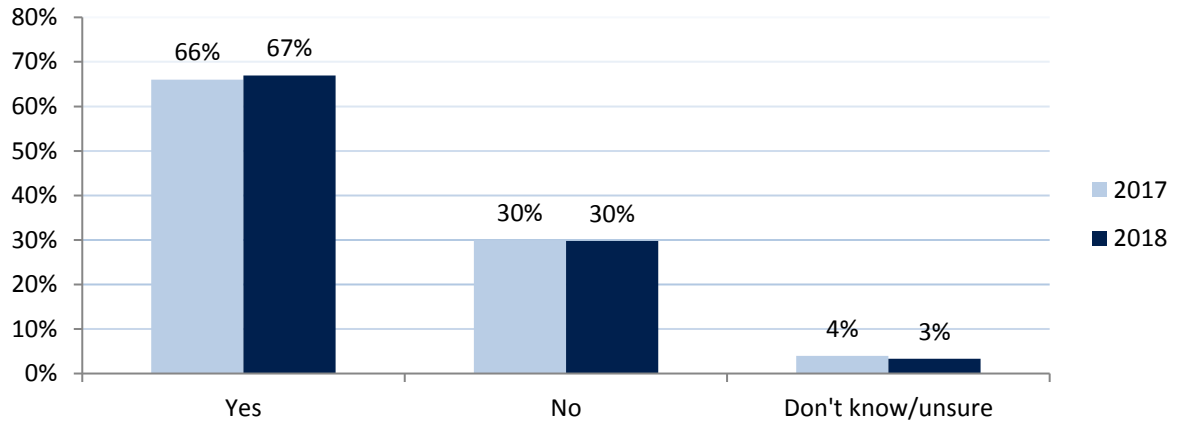
For those who reported failing to recruit, supply agencies were again the most common solution pursued in 72 per cent of cases (down one percentage point from last year). This was followed by hours being covered by a member of the senior leadership team (SLT), with 44 per cent of respondents selecting this answer.

<sup>18</sup> 433 of the 734 respondents answered this question.

Concerningly, this is the same percentage as last year, indicating that the situation has not improved. 39 per cent of respondents stated that teaching hours were covered by a TA/HLTA – a five percentage point increase from last year. The data also points to a rise in the percentage of respondents who are increasing class sizes in order to fill the gap – this option has seen a six percentage point rise since 2016.

**Chart 7 - Percentage of respondents reporting an awareness of staff having left the teaching profession, for reasons other than retirement, in the last year<sup>20</sup>**

**In the last year, are you aware of any of your staff having left the teaching profession, for reasons other than retirement?**



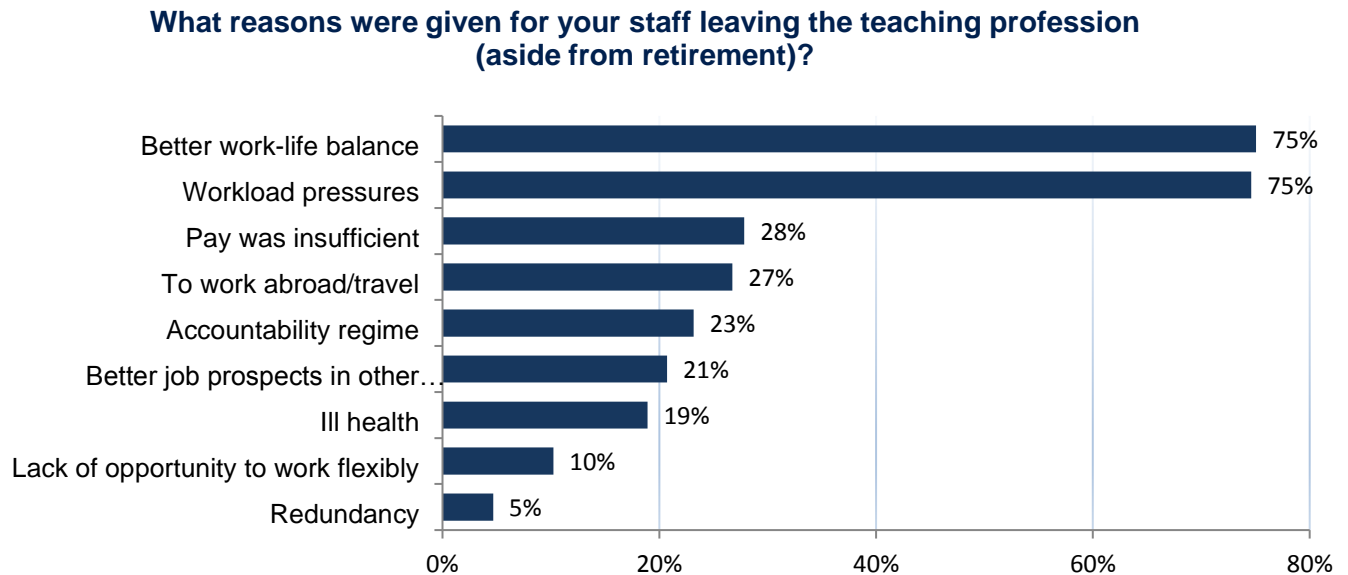
Results remain similar to those captured in the 2017 survey. However, there has been a one percentage point increase in the percentage of respondents stating that they are aware of staff having left the profession in the last year, for reasons other than retirement.

This resonates with the finding from above; the number of respondents citing 'teachers leaving the profession' as an explanation for why they struggled to recruit has increased year on year from 15 per cent in 2014 to 44 per cent in 2017. In 2018, this percentage dropped to 37 per cent but remains concerningly high.

<sup>19</sup> This section was newly added to the survey in 2017, therefore comparisons can only be drawn across one year.

<sup>20</sup> 665 of the 734 respondents replied to this question.

Chart 8 - Responses to the question: "What reasons were given for your staff leaving the teaching profession (aside from retirement)?"<sup>21</sup>



Of those who reported that they were aware of staff having left the teaching profession in the last year (for reasons other than retirement),<sup>22</sup> the two most commonly selected reasons<sup>23</sup> were wanting a better work-life balance (75 per cent) and workload pressures (75 per cent). The percentage of respondents selecting these options has decreased by eight percentage points and nine percentage points respectively since 2017.

Concerningly, since 2017, there has been a seven percentage point increase in the percentage of respondents stating that staff left the teaching profession due to insufficient pay.

For the first time this year, we asked respondents whether they were considering leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement. 50 per cent were not currently considering leaving, 16 per cent were not sure and 34 per cent stated that they were considering leaving at some point.<sup>24</sup>

Respondents who were considering leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement were asked why and were able to select as many reasons as applied to them.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Respondents were able to select as many answers as were applicable to their situation.

<sup>22</sup> 449 of the 734 respondents replied to this question.

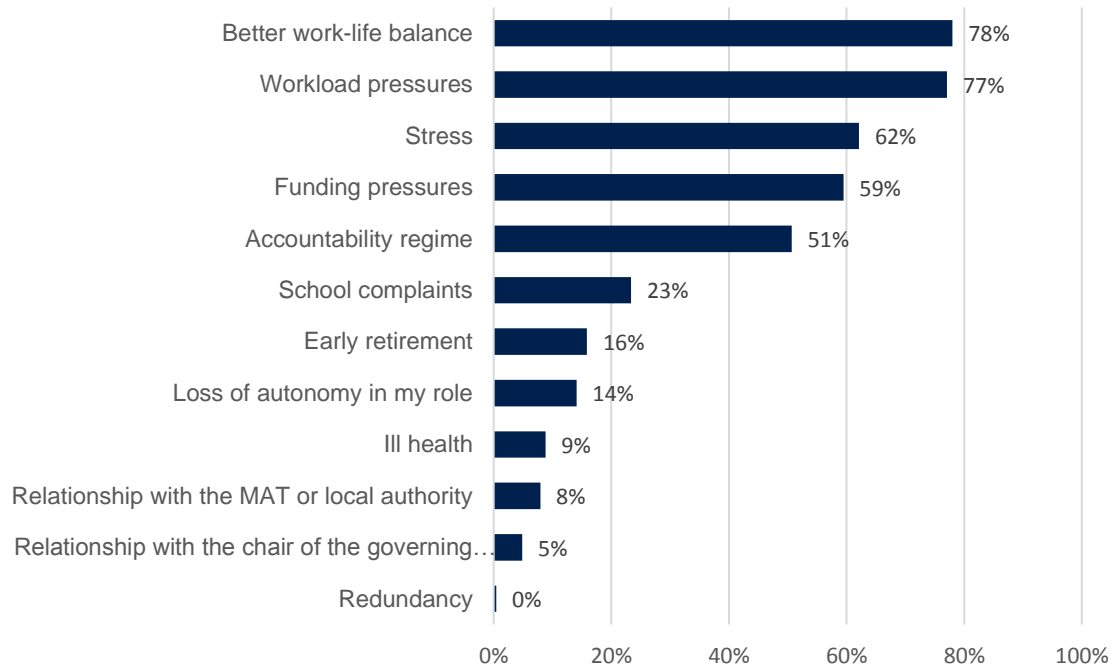
<sup>23</sup> Respondents were able to select multiple responses that applied to their experience.

<sup>24</sup> 659 of the 734 respondents answered this question.

<sup>25</sup> 227 of the 734 respondents replied to this question.

**Chart 9 - Responses to the question: "Why are you considering leaving the profession (aside from reaching retirement age)?"**

**Why are you considering leaving the profession (aside from reaching retirement age)? Please select all that apply**



The two most commonly selected answers were a need for a better work-life balance (78 per cent) and concerns around workload pressures (77 per cent). High proportions of respondents also highlighted stress (62 per cent) and funding pressures (59 per cent) as factors impacting on their consideration to leave the profession.

When asked what they thought would make the biggest contribution to easing the recruitment and retention crisis, the most popular suggestion was for a 'real terms increase in school funding' (cited by 82 per cent of individuals).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> 667 of the 734 respondents answered this question.