

# **Teachers Working Longer Review: Interim Report**

**Annex D: Stage 2 call for evidence and  
emerging themes**

**Produced by the Teachers Working  
Longer Review Steering Group**

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## Overview of responses

On 7 September 2015, the Teachers Working Longer review launched its stage 2 call for evidence, through the Teachers' Pensions website, with a deadline for responses of 9 October. In addition to asking for details of published research, published articles, grey literature or research studies currently underway, this stage also included a set of questions designed to identify barriers/enablers to working longer and examples of employment practices which could support or hinder working longer.

A total of 122 respondents answered the additional questions and 18 documents were submitted.

## Responses to individual questions

The below sets out the themes raised in responses, using the words used/views put forward by respondents – these do not, therefore, represent conclusions reached by the review group, but this information was analysed and used by the review group to inform its thinking, including on further research requirements.

### **Question - Please describe any key factors which you feel might POSITIVELY affect teachers' and school leaders' capacity to work longer.**

Key themes of responses were:

- Work/life balance – A reduction in workload for all teachers, a maximum of a 7 ½ hr working day, an increase in number of teachers and teaching assistants employed, exemptions from evening events/meetings for older teachers.
- Experience and greater tolerance.
- Feeling valued and supported by: parents; students; school leaders; government; press and colleagues.
- Inspirational leadership with a positive attitude towards older teachers.
- Changes to management and appraisal processes.
- Changes to sickness and absence policies to take into account age related conditions.
- Improved pupil behaviour policies and increased funding for alternative provision.
- Flexible working including part time hours, reduced contact with students, job sharing, move to advisory/administrative role, mentoring, support with certain parts of the role, reduction in responsibilities.
- Pensions – more flexibilities, phased retirement, changes to regulations to lessen the detrimental effect of stepping down or moving to a different role later in career (suggestions include final salary benefits calculated on best 3 years in 15 and continued access to the TPS if changing to a non-teaching role within the same establishment), raising awareness of provisions already available, enhanced pension and lump sum.

- Incentives for good teachers to continue working, suggestions include financial, free bus passes for teachers over 60, free gym/ health club membership, fast track access to medical care & diagnosis.
- Improving healthy lifestyles of teachers and general population, and better medication available.
- More promotion of the benefits of staying in employment - Continued income, social interaction, self-confidence, job satisfaction, keeping the mind active, increased pension on retirement.
- Pleasant/healthy working environment – suggestions include showers, quiet space, break rooms, access to adequate hydration and rest, annual review to tackle workplace stress and identify solutions.
- More autonomy for teachers, less central government decisions, reduction in significant curriculum or other changes, increases in school budgets, stability in accountability and examination systems, external inspection.
- Introduction of a unified examination board at KS4 and KS5 to make it easier for teachers to change schools.
- Consideration given to length of school holidays and whether teachers can take holidays outside of these times.
- Career breaks and periods of employment outside education to gain industrial/professional experience.
- Access to high quality CPD.
- Expert practitioners.

**Question - Please describe any key factors which you feel might **NEGATIVELY** affect teachers' and school leaders' capacity to work longer.**

Many of the responses under this section mirrored those given in the previous question, citing a lack of the practices suggested as a negative impact. Additional themes of responses are:

- Pay – Not in line with private sector and does not reflect the hours worked.
- Workplace conditions not always healthy.
- Health issues related to ageing including the impact of the physical stress and mental rigour of teaching, burnout and tiredness.
- Potential impact on students of teachers remaining in teaching “past their best”.
- Personal circumstances and family commitments.
- Lack of fresh challenges.
- Finite number of alternative roles.
- More teachers choosing to work part time causes timetabling and continuity issues.
- Older teachers may be less able to adapt to new ideas and/or may suffer diminishing tolerance.
- Difficulties with technology.
- Disconnection between older teachers and students.

- Older teachers classed as too expensive.
- Pressure from senior management, government, parents etc.
- Low morale.
- Bullying.
- Fewer vacancies available for younger teachers.

**Question - Please provide information about particular practices within schools you are involved with or other schools you are aware of which might HELP teachers and school leaders to work for longer.**

Many of the responses here were on similar themes to the previous questions. Additional themes from responses are:

- Transparency of decisions and realistic deadlines for tasks.
- Sharing teaching resource across schools.
- Changing roles – still within teaching but possibly a different subject or age group.
- Well-being programmes – e.g. yoga, mindfulness, meditation and social events.
- Additional time off, suggestions include for carers and a year off with full pay for every 10 years worked.
- Clear and firm communication with parents.
- Introduction of full programme of retirement planning.

**Question - Please provide information about particular practices within schools you are involved with or other schools you are aware of which might HINDER teachers and school leaders to work for longer.**

Again many of the responses here were on similar themes to the previous questions. Additional themes from responses are:

- Age discrimination.
- Resistance of unions.
- Lack of commitment and professionalism from less dedicated teachers
- Capability issues/processes including misuse of these.
- Lack of suitable equipment to address the physical needs of older teachers.

**Question - Please provide your views and suggestions (including ideas from within or outside of the teaching profession) of any other adjustments which could be made within schools which could help teachers or school leaders to work for longer.**

Many of the responses here were also on similar themes to the previous questions. Additional themes from responses are:

- Employee healthcare support.
- Workshops on maintaining good health and pension flexibilities.
- Some element of homeworking.
- Better parenting courses for families of disruptive pupils.
- Buddying system for older and younger teachers.

- Job swaps.

## **Additional evidence submitted**

The documentary evidence submitted as part of the stage 2 call for evidence was considered by the review group to assist in informing additional research and the interim report.

Of those documents, some had also been submitted as part of the stage 1 call for evidence and thus were covered within the REAs. The evidence in the remaining documents, drawn from surveys and other studies, is consistent with and adds to that proved in answers to the questions posed (see above). The below sets out the themes raised in those documents, using the words used/views put forward by respondents in surveys conducted by the LGA and ASCL, ATL, NAHT, NUT, UCAC and Voice – these do not, therefore, represent conclusions reached by the review group:

- Stress, workload, long hours and physical demands are cited by teachers and leaders as the main challenges.
- Early years and primary school teachers and leaders are more likely to cite concerns about physical demands than teachers and leaders of older age groups.
- Physical demands are a particular issue for PE teachers.
- Teachers over 50 are more likely to be concerned about keeping up with developments in technology.
- Leaders reported more concerns about ensuring teachers can remain enthused about their role over a long period of time than teachers themselves did.
- Older leaders are more likely to recognise the need to offer more flexible working opportunities than younger leaders.
- Shorter hours, phased retirement and working flexible hours were cited as the top things that would support working longer.
- Lack of clarity about pension arrangements, pension restrictions and leaders' attitude to older teachers were seen as the main barriers to working longer.
- There are differences in the level of occupational health services provided.
- Face to face guidance on pension arrangements is provided by employers and the guidance on the TP website is promoted but it is also reported that teachers' understanding of the flexibilities on offer remains variable.
- Some examples of flexible working opportunities/practices were cited, though evidence also reaffirmed that there is often limited scope to undertake alternative pathways or flexible working opportunities, and that this very much depended on circumstances at individual school level.
- Examples where whole career support for teachers' health and well-being is offered were identified, but the impact of this was not quantified.
- Other ideas of how teachers could be helped to work longer included: reskilling/retraining individuals for alternative teaching roles; more coverage of well-being in training and induction programmes; give older teachers mentoring roles; and making adjustments to roles to assist older teachers.

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