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Department for Education

Academic year 2024/25

Further education college

workforce using teacher pension data

Analysis focusing on the further education college workforce in England using teachers' pensions scheme data. Covers the years 2002/03 to 2024/25.

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 **This release is an update of a previous publication of FE college workforce analysis using teacher pension scheme data from 2021.**

Headline facts and figures

Headcount of the statutory further education workforce:

57,000

up 2.0% on academic year 23/24

▶ Scope of the workforce



Median FTE salary at GFECs:

£38,800

up 3.8% on academic year 23/24

▶ What is a GFEC?



Median FTE salary at SFCs:

£48,800

up 3.5% on academic year 23/24

▶ What is an SFC?



Headcount of new teachers:

7,500

up 2.8% on academic year 23/24

▶ Who is a new teacher?



Teachers retained after 5 years of joining:

42.1%

of those who started working in academic year 19/20

▶ What is retention?



Attrition rate:

14.7%

down 1.9 ppts on academic year 22/23

► What is attrition?



This is a separate and complementary publication to the Further Education Workforce publication. Figures may differ due to different data sources. More information is available in the methodology section.

Workforce size

Teachers' Pensions Scheme data suggests a headcount of approximately 57,000 teachers in the statutory FE sector in 2024/25, up from 55,900 in 2023/24 (a 2.0% increase).

New entrants make up 13.1% of the workforce, whilst 82.7% continue from the previous year and 4.2% return after a break of 1 year or more. These proportions are very similar those seen in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

The one-year retention rate for teachers in 2023/24 was 75.5%, up from 72.3% in 2022/23.

Of those working in 2023/24, 14.7% were not in service the following year. This is the lowest attrition rate since 2019/20 (14.5%), and prior to that since 2008/09 (13.3%).

Pay

Median teacher pay is higher in sixth form colleges (SFC) than General Further Education Colleges (GFEC). This gap persists throughout the time series since at least 2002/03. Teachers at GFECs on average earn a full-time equivalent (FTE) salary of £38,800 (a 3.8% increase relative to 2023/24), whilst those at SFCs on average earn an FTE salary of £48,800 (a 3.5% increase relative to 2023/24).

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Summary

This release focuses on teachers in statutory further education (FE) colleges in England - General FE Colleges (including Tertiary, Specialist and Designated institutions) and Sixth Form Colleges - based on Teachers' Pensions Scheme (TPS) management information. It covers up to the 2024/25 academic year (1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025).

All numbers in this publication refer to headcount. Headcount and pay are calculated as at 1st December each year.

Academy-converted SFCs are out of scope of statutory FE once conversion takes effect, with the exception of retention and attrition measures to present a smoother time series. Further information is available in the methodology.

This is a separate and complementary publication to the Further Education Workforce publication. Figures may differ due to different data sources. More information is available in the methodology section.

To improve consistency and comparability across the sectors, changes have been made in this release from the previous 2021 publication:

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~~Retention and attrition measures adjusted to count a teacher who joined statutory FE as remaining in service if they are later employed at an academy converter.~~

- Academy converters are now distinctly classified; SFC converters are excluded from statutory FE post-conversion.
- Coverage and data cleaning improvements.

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Headcount

Teachers' Pensions Scheme (TPS) suggests there were 57,000 teachers working in the statutory further education sector in the 2024/25 academic year, a 2.0% increase from 55,900 in 2023/24.

The majority (91.1%) were employed at a General Further Education College (GFEC). This has been the case throughout the time series since 2002/03.

In 2024/25 there were 52,000 teachers in GFECs, an increase of 3.2% from the previous year. In the same year, there were 5,100 teachers in SFCs, a decrease of 9.4% from the previous year. This decrease in headcount in SFCs can be partially attributed to some providers becoming academy converters and falling out of scope, rather than teachers leaving their education provider.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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A slight increase in teacher numbers in recent years can be seen after a prolonged decrease from 2009/10 to 2021/22

		Number of teachers
Academy converter	2017/18	1,838
	2018/19	2,177
	2019/20	2,632
	2020/21	2,741
	2021/22	3,099
	2022/23	3,154
	2023/24	3,116

	2023/24	3,140
	2024/25	3,655
Sixth Form College	2002/03	8,659
	2003/04	9,044
	2004/05	9,353
	2005/06	9,418
	2006/07	9,758
	2007/08	10,118
	2008/09	10,334
	2009/10	10,595
	2010/11	10,664
	2011/12	10,302
	2012/13	10,007
	2013/14	10,042
	2014/15	9,963
	2015/16	9,737
	2016/17	9,465
	2017/18	7,482
	2018/19	6,821
	2019/20	6,105
	2020/21	5,974
	2021/22	5,673

2022/23	5,699
2023/24	5,629
2024/25	5,100

Total statutory FE

2002/03	61,621
2003/04	64,522
2004/05	66,160
2005/06	66,698
2006/07	70,753
2007/08	76,415
2008/09	78,695
2009/10	81,644
2010/11	78,059
2011/12	75,375
2012/13	73,458
2013/14	73,046
2014/15	71,078
2015/16	66,480
2016/17	63,993
2017/18	59,518
2018/19	58,128
2019/20	56,582

2020/21	56,224
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2021/22	55,426
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2022/23	55,611
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2023/24	55,917
----------------	--------

2024/25	57,029
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General FE College incl Tertiary, Specialist and Designated

2002/03	53,029
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2003/04	55,554
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2004/05	56,877
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2005/06	57,337
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2006/07	61,069
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2007/08	66,366
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2008/09	68,424
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2009/10	71,135
----------------	--------

2010/11	67,483
----------------	--------

2011/12	65,156
----------------	--------

2012/13	63,536
----------------	--------

2013/14	63,100
----------------	--------

2014/15	61,192
----------------	--------

2015/16	56,796
----------------	--------

2016/17	54,584
----------------	--------

2017/18	52,075
----------------	--------

2018/19	51,348
2019/20	50,511
2020/21	50,277
2021/22	49,786
2022/23	49,951
2023/24	50,323
2024/25	51,958

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Footnotes

1. The drop in headcount in Sixth Form Colleges from academic year 2017/2018 onwards can be partially attributed to some providers becoming academy converters and falling out of scope, rather than teachers leaving their education provider.

Source: Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS)

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There were 7,500 new teachers in the statutory FE sector in 2024/25, an increase of 2.8% on the previous year 2023/24, and making up 13.1% of the workforce that year.

Of those 7,500, 7,000 were employed by a GFEC, making up 13.4% of their teachers. SFCs employed 500 new teachers, representing a smaller share of their workforce at 9.8%.

Since 2002/03, new teachers have always made up a greater share of the workforce in GFECs compared to SFCs.

[Chart](#)

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GFECs consistently have a larger percentage of teachers new to the statutory FE sector in their workforce compared to SFCs

			New to statutory FE
Percentage of teachers	Sixth Form College	2002/03	10.2%
		2003/04	9.3%
		2004/05	9.4%
		2005/06	8.8%
		2006/07	10.4%
		2007/08	11.0%
		2008/09	10.3%
		2009/10	9.3%
		2010/11	8.9%
		2011/12	7.0%
		2012/13	7.5%

2013/14	9.4%
2014/15	9.3%
2015/16	8.5%
2016/17	8.1%
2017/18	9.0%
2018/19	7.9%
2019/20	8.6%
2020/21	8.3%
2021/22	8.8%
2022/23	9.6%
2023/24	8.8%
2024/25	9.8%

Total statutory FE

2002/03	13.3%
2003/04	13.2%
2004/05	12.7%
2005/06	11.8%
2006/07	15.2%
2007/08	18.0%
2008/09	14.7%
2009/10	13.2%
2010/11	10.0%

2011/12	9.4%
2012/13	10.3%
2013/14	12.3%
2014/15	12.3%
2015/16	11.0%
2016/17	11.3%
2017/18	12.0%
2018/19	10.8%
2019/20	10.8%
2020/21	9.7%
2021/22	10.6%
2022/23	12.9%
2023/24	13.0%
2024/25	13.1%

**General FE College incl Tertiary,
Specialist and Designated**

2002/03	13.8%
2003/04	13.8%
2004/05	13.3%
2005/06	12.2%
2006/07	16.0%
2007/08	19.1%
2008/09	15.3%

2009/10	13.8%
2010/11	10.2%
2011/12	9.8%
2012/13	10.7%
2013/14	12.8%
2014/15	12.7%
2015/16	11.4%
2016/17	11.9%
2017/18	12.4%
2018/19	11.2%
2019/20	11.1%
2020/21	9.8%
2021/22	10.8%
2022/23	13.2%
2023/24	13.5%
2024/25	13.4%

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Source: Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS)

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There were 2,400 teachers in the statutory FE sector who returned to the sector after a gap of a year or more, making up 4.2% of the workforce. The proportion of returning teachers showed an increasing trend from 2005/06 to 2018/19, followed by a decreasing trend.

Within GFECs, 4.3% of the workforce had taken a gap of a year or more and returned to the sector, compared to 3.2% of SFCs. GFECs have historically had a greater share of teachers taking a gap in service than SFCs since 2008/09.

The remainder of teachers (those continuing service from the previous year) made up 82.7% of the statutory FE workforce.

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Pay

Median salaries

In 2024/25, teachers working at GFECs earned a median FTE salary of £38,800 (a nominal increase of 3.8% on the previous year), whereas those at SFCs earned £48,800 (a nominal increase of 3.5% on the previous year). The gap between the two provider types widened in the latest year by £200.

From at least 2002/03, median teacher salary has been higher at SFCs than at GFECs. The gap between the two has widened over the span of the time series.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)

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The gap in median FTE salary between provider types has slowly increased since the start of the time series in 2002/03.

		Median FTE salary
Sixth Form College	2002/03	£29,089
	2003/04	£30,693
	2004/05	£31,395
	2005/06	£32,701
	2006/07	£33,519
	2007/08	£34,357
	2008/09	£35,199
	2009/10	£35,727
	2010/11	£36,279
	2011/12	£36,279
	2012/13	£36,279
	2013/14	£36,642
	2014/15	£37,008
	2015/16	£37,378
	2016/17	£37,984
2017/18	£38,748	

2018/19	£39,329
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2019/20	£39,919
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2020/21	£41,226
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2021/22	£42,149
----------------	----------------

2022/23	£44,256
----------------	----------------

2023/24	£47,133
----------------	----------------

2024/25	£48,783
----------------	----------------

Total statutory FE

2002/03	£26,423
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2003/04	£27,313
----------------	----------------

2004/05	£27,960
----------------	----------------

2005/06	£28,904
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2006/07	£29,364
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2007/08	£29,805
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2008/09	£30,726
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2009/10	£31,310
----------------	----------------

2010/11	£31,764
----------------	----------------

2011/12	£32,040
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2012/13	£32,299
----------------	----------------

2013/14	£32,118
----------------	----------------

2014/15	£32,258
----------------	----------------

2015/16	£32,550
----------------	----------------

2016/17	£32,850
2017/18	£33,183
2018/19	£33,516
2019/20	£33,948
2020/21	£34,245
2021/22	£34,607
2022/23	£35,732
2023/24	£37,975
2024/25	£39,338

General FE College incl Tertiary, Specialist and Designated

2002/03	£26,134
2003/04	£26,868
2004/05	£27,587
2005/06	£28,354
2006/07	£28,782
2007/08	£29,250
2008/09	£30,245
2009/10	£30,726
2010/11	£31,142
2011/12	£31,364
2012/13	£31,597
2013/14	£31,597

2014/15	£31,665
2015/16	£31,821
2016/17	£32,040
2017/18	£32,431
2018/19	£32,912
2019/20	£33,380
2020/21	£33,696
2021/22	£34,186
2022/23	£35,271
2023/24	£37,388
2024/25	£38,813

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Source: Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS)

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In 2024/25, the three regions with the highest median salary for teachers in statutory FE were:

- London: £44,500
- West Midlands: £41,100
- North West: £39,900

Providers in London have historically led with the highest median FTE salary. The gap between the median FTE salary in London and the region with the next highest salary has existed throughout the data series.

The South West has had the lowest median pay since the time series begins in 2002/03, with the exception of Yorkshire and the Humber in 2023/24.

The largest gap between the lowest paying region and second-lowest was in 2011/12, where median pay in the South West was £27,400 compared to £31,100 in the East Midlands. This gap has narrowed in more recent years.

[Chart](#)

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Median FTE salary varies between regions, with those in London receiving the highest pay

	Median FTE salary
	2024/25
London	£44,526
West Midlands	£41,058
North West	£39,948
South East	£39,809
North East	£39,338
East of England	£38,500
East Midlands	£38,179
Yorkshire and The Humber	£37,345
South West	£37,130

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Source: Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS)

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Pay progression

In 2024/25, teachers two or three years into their career saw the biggest percentage

increase in salary on their previous year. The observed year on year increase shows a downward trend the more years a teacher has worked.

Teachers at SFCs have historically had a higher salary increase after 1 year working in FE than those at GFECs. Teachers who joined the FE sector in 2023/24 earned on average an 11.2% higher salary in their next year at an SFC, compared to a 6.9% higher salary at a GFEC. In subsequent years, salary increases are no longer consistently higher at SFCs, showing greater variation year by year.

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Origin and retention

Origin of new teachers

In 2024/25, 7,500 teachers joined the statutory FE sector for the first time. Of these, 11.7% were in a teaching role elsewhere in the education sector in the previous year, and 0.2% were in a teaching role at an academy converter. The remaining 88.0% had no teaching records the previous year (percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding).

The proportion of new teachers in statutory FE with a teaching role the previous year elsewhere in education has fluctuated over the time series, reaching its lowest point in 2006/07 (7.3%) and its highest point in 2015/16 (13.7%)

New teacher retention

First, second and third year retention rates in 2024/25 for the most recent cohorts of new teachers increased on the previous year 2023/24:

- 75.5% of teachers who started service in 2023/24 were still in service one year later; an increase of 3.2 percentage points on those who started in 2022/23.
- 61.2% of teachers who started service in 2022/23 were still in service two years later; an increase of 2.3 percentage points on those who started in 2021/22.
- 52.0% of teachers who started service in 2021/22 were still in service three years later;

an increase of 1.3 percentage points on those who started in 2020/21.

Retention rates for those in their fourth year (44.9%) decreased on the previous year by 2.0 percentage points. Retention rates for teachers in later years showed a variation in trend when compared to the previous year.

GFECs had a higher first year retention rate of teachers who started in 2023/24 (75.3%) than SFCs (73.5%). Across the majority of new teacher cohorts since 2003/04 however, SFCs have had the higher first year retention rate, with the exception of new teachers from 2004/05 and 2018/19. Of teachers who started in 2022/23, 76.6% were retained in SFCs the following year compared to 71.3% in GFECs.

[Chart](#)

[Table](#)



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.

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The proportion of teachers in service 1 year after joining has increased since 2021/22

		2024 December	
Total statutory FE	1 year after joining	2002/2003	84.7%
		2003/2004	82.8%
		2004/2005	82.5%
		2005/2006	82.7%
		2006/2007	75.4%
		2007/2008	72.8%
		2008/2009	74.9%
		2009/2010	69.8%

2009/2010	69.0%
2010/2011	72.2%
2011/2012	71.2%
2012/2013	69.6%
2013/2014	70.5%
2014/2015	68.5%
2015/2016	68.1%
2016/2017	65.4%
2017/2018	69.9%
2018/2019	69.5%
2019/2020	73.2%
2020/2021	71.2%
2021/2022	70.6%
2022/2023	72.3%
2023/2024	75.5%

10 years after joining	2002/2003	37.5%
	2003/2004	36.9%
	2004/2005	35.7%
	2005/2006	35.5%
	2006/2007	29.1%
	2007/2008	25.9%
	2008/2009	25.4%

	2009/2010	23.4%
	2010/2011	24.5%
	2011/2012	23.3%
	2012/2013	22.8%
	2013/2014	24.7%
	2014/2015	24.9%
3 years after joining	2002/2003	65.8%
	2003/2004	64.5%
	2004/2005	65.8%
	2005/2006	66.0%
	2006/2007	60.3%
	2007/2008	55.3%
	2008/2009	54.9%
	2009/2010	50.9%
	2010/2011	51.5%
	2011/2012	49.2%
	2012/2013	46.8%
	2013/2014	47.9%
	2014/2015	44.1%
	2015/2016	45.9%
	2016/2017	47.8%

	2017/2018	52.9%
	2018/2019	53.1%
	2019/2020	53.8%
	2020/2021	50.7%
	2021/2022	52.0%
5 years after joining	2002/2003	55.7%
	2003/2004	54.3%
	2004/2005	57.5%
	2005/2006	57.2%
	2006/2007	49.6%
	2007/2008	44.8%
	2008/2009	43.3%
	2009/2010	39.4%
	2010/2011	38.9%
	2011/2012	37.2%
	2012/2013	35.0%
	2013/2014	37.1%
	2014/2015	36.4%
	2015/2016	37.3%
	2016/2017	39.3%
	2017/2018	41.7%

2018/2019	40.7%
------------------	-------

2019/2020	42.1%
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Footnotes

1. Teachers who join the statutory FE sector and later are based at an academy converter are considered still in service. This is to avoid misleadingly low retention rates where an SFC converts and teachers have not in fact left their role.

Source: Teacher Pension Scheme (TPS)

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Attrition and destination

Teacher attrition

Of the teaching workforce in 2023/24, 14.7% had left the sector the following year. This is

a decrease in attrition rate from the previous year of 1.9 percentage points (16.6%). This latest attrition rate is the lowest since 2019/20, and before that since 2008/09.

The attrition rate was higher in GFECs (14.9%) than in SFCs (12.5%), a relationship which has persisted throughout the time series. The 2.4 percentage point difference in the most recent year is the lowest since at least 2002/03 when the time series began.

Destination of leaving teachers

Of those teaching in statutory FE in 2023/24, 8.7% of those who left the following year were seen to be working elsewhere in the education sector. This is a decrease of 2.0 percentage points on the previous cohort working in 2022/23.

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Contact us

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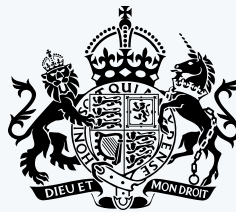
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