The NAHT school recruitment survey 2015

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Overview

NAHT members are reporting that in the last academic year recruitment across all roles and phases has been very difficult and in many cases unsuccessful. NAHT conducted a survey in 2014 confirming that there was a growing issue with recruiting teachers, middle leaders and senior leadership roles. To assess how the recruitment issue has progressed we repeated that survey this year, also asking a number of additional questions on the role of teaching supply agencies.

The survey ran between 19th October and 9thNovember 2015 and received 2,135 responses. This was a significant increase on the 1187 responses to last year's survey and highlights the growing concern about this issue from NAHT's members. The survey was sent to NAHT head teachers and school business manager members in England and Wales, with the majority of responses (97%) received from members in England.

Key recommendations

The survey of 2,135 NAHT members conducted in October and November 2015 highlighted a number of key findings that point to the issues that must be addressed if we are to ensure that there are sufficient good teachers in schools:

1. NAHT's survey showed that schools are struggling to recruit across both the primary and secondary sector, and we therefore **urge the government to reconsider their recent decision to reduce the investment in primary sector initial teacher training, and review their modelling assumptions about the numbers of new primary teachers needed**.

2. There is a significant difference between official statistics and the perceptions of those in schools. Recruitment difficulties are masked in the official data by the timing of information gathering and interim solutions put in place to keep schools operational. Headline figures also mask local, regional and subject variations. T**he DfE needs to work with key partners to develop more nuanced approaches to measuring recruitment.**

3. Our submission to the School Teacher Review Body's review of teacher's pay and conditions on the 27th of November 2015 has highlighted how the erosion of teachers' pay since 2010 means that it is falling behind relative to other graduate professions, at a time when the private sector is starting to recover and be in a position to recruit more graduates and as schools are increasingly struggling to recruit and retain teachers. The STRB's 25th Report had already identified this as a challenge in concluding that: "Looking ahead, we remain of the view that there should be a fuller review of the national pay framework in future, to ensure it enables schools to attract and retain high calibre graduates in an increasingly competitive labour market." **NAHT are clear that without such a review of teaching pay scales comparable to other professions, the profession will increasingly struggle to recruit and retain good graduates**

4. The language of criticism and failure deployed by successive governments is a serious deterrent to recruitment and retention. Teachers need to believe they can and do make a difference. It is possible to be both proud of past achievements and ambitious for more. **Government needs to develop a better way of engaging with the profession for improvement.**

5. As well as concern about the number of teachers, our research has shown that schools are struggling to recruit the right kind of skills. The growing and changing demands on teachers and an increasingly challenging accountability framework for schools sets high expectations for teacher recruitment. **There needs to be more investment in the professional development of teachers, both at a school and at a national and regional level**. NAHT supports the work of the DfE appointed expert group developing a standard for professional development as a first step to support schools to be more effective in arranging CPD.

6. **There also needs to be ongoing funding to support teaching school alliances to deliver low cost CPD, mentoring and coaching that is delivered by experienced practitioners**. As the core funding is starting to run out for the first set of teaching school alliances, our survey suggests real potential for them to improve the skills and knowledge of teachers if properly resourced.

7. There is a role for both higher education and practical experience in developing new teachers, but it seems that school experience is crucial in honing some of the practical skills that schools are concerned about. **It may be time to consider a two year NQT process, with the final award of full QTS given by the school.**

8. The data on the struggle to recruit middle leaders shows that an increasingly punitive accountability framework can make middle leadership a risky proposition. We need to encourage teachers into middle leadership roles and understand the workload and accountability pressures that are deterring applicants to these roles. **NAHT Edge will undertake work with its middle leadership members to understand the issues and develop strategies to address them.**

9. Perceptions of risk are also serious deterrents to applicants for senior leadership roles. **School accountability needs to depend on more than just data; needs to be applied over a number of years; and needs to be coherent among different agencies**. It also remains the case that the task of leading a challenging school is more risky than leadership in other contexts. This deters applicants. A more genuine and widespread use of progress as a defining feature of accountability would assist in this.

10. There is market failure in the development of senior leaders, especially head teachers, as the school that benefits from their professional development is often not the school that pays for it. **This makes a strong case for the centralised funding of leadership development programmes**.

11. The recruitment crisis has created a growing role for teacher recruitment and supply agencies, adding cost and complexity to teacher recruitment for schools. **NAHT will work with ASCL, the DfE and the trade associations**

representing supply agencies to improve schools' experiences of such agencies.

Key Findings

- Across all roles, the survey showed a growing problem with the recruitment of teachers and school leaders, and increasing numbers of cases where schools were unable to recruit at all.

- Overall a very high proportion (79%) of those who had advertised vacancies said recruitment was problematical; 59% recruited with a struggle and 20% were not able to recruit at all.

- Where schools were not able to recruit at all, they said this was most commonly the case in relation to:
  - Teaching roles with a teaching and learning responsibility payment (TLR) (33%). These are middle leader roles such as head of department or head of subject or key stage.
  - Teachers on the upper pay scale (31%)
  - Teaching roles with a special educational needs (SEN) allowance (27%)

- If we look at the main middle leadership roles in schools, posts with a TLR and Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), only 14% of roles were recruited to with ease, 56% with difficulty, and for 30% of cases the school failed to recruit.

- Schools also said they struggled to recruit to school leadership roles, with schools that had vacancies struggling to recruit head teachers/principals in 72% of cases, deputy head/vice principal in 64% of cases and assistant heads in 63%.

- The main reasons given why schools struggle to recruit are the overall shortage of staff (in 52% of cases) and the suitability of staff applying for vacancies (47%). We believe that this reflect the growing and changing demands on teachers arising out of an increasingly punitive accountability framework for schools, that sets high expectations for teacher recruitment that can be hard to meet.

- This year, respondents reported in much greater numbers that their struggle was down to the number of teachers leaving the profession in their area. This figure more than doubled over the last year, being cited by 33% of respondents, up from 15% in 2014, and emerged as the third highest reason behind their recruitment problems.

- In London and the South East over half of respondents said their recruitment difficulties were because of high housing and living costs (this was highest in inner London at 63%). Nationally this has risen from the 7th most common reason in 2014, to the 4th in 2015.

- We compared the data for academies and maintained schools and found that despite the greater flexibilities that academies have in terms of offering pay and conditions, they struggle just as much to recruit.

- A regional breakdown of the data shows a nationwide problem, with some regional variations but all regions are struggling and failing to recruit to the required levels.

- In some regions, there are also significant problems in recruiting to school business manager roles.

- Maths, English, SEN and General Science were the subjects most respondents struggled to recruit to when seeking subject specialists.
- When asked specifically about the recruitment of NQTs, 47% of those who struggled to recruit attributed this to the lack in quality of applicants in their area, 40% said the difficulties were down to the overall shortage of NQTs and 24% highlighted the high cost of living.

- When asked what respondents thought was missing in the preparedness of NQTs the top three responses were;
    - A good understanding of the demands of the role (77%),
    - Understanding classroom/behaviour management (70%),
    - Subject knowledge (55%).

- We found that those schools involved in delivering initial teacher training through School Direct had a much better experience of working with NQTs:
    - 63% of them reported that the NQTs they recruited were well prepared to start working in schools, compared to 48% of those not involved in School Direct.
    - This is a concern as those schools that are not delivering School Direct are sometimes the schools with the greatest challenges and that need the best teachers.

- The growing struggle to recruit means that nearly half of schools now use recruitment agencies to recruit their permanent roles, and 69% of those said that they do so as they have failed to recruit previously. This is adding to schools' recruitment costs which average £3,000 per vacancy but can run up to £10,000

We analysed our results by different school types, school phase and regionally and found that results were broadly consistent. Where we found any statistically significant difference this has been highlighted in the full report.

Respondent Profile

The overwhelming majority of responses were received from members in England, 1,992 of respondents (97%),

The survey was distributed to NAHT members who were involved in recruitment of the staff within their schools, head teachers and school business managers.

The majority of responses (91%) were received from leaders working in the primary phase of education (including nursery, infant and junior schools). Nine percent were from secondary phase schools.

The table below shows the type of settings that respondents were working in, including the numbers working in special schools or alternative provision

School Type	Mainstream		Special		Alternative provision		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Academy - within a multi academy trust	216	10.1%	13	0.6%	6	0.3%	235	11.0%
Academy - single	120	5.6%	14	0.7%	2	0.1%	136	6.3%
Independent School	14	0.7%	9	0.4%	3	0.1%	26	1.2%
Community school	945	44.0%	73	3.4%	3	0.1%	1021	47.6%
Foundation school	79	3.7%	7	0.3%	1	0.0%	87	4.1%
Voluntary aided school	351	16.4%	2	0.1%	2	0.1%	355	16.5%
Voluntary controlled school	223	10.4%	2	0.1%	1	0.0%	226	10.5%
Free school	10	0.5%	2	0.1%	2	0.1%	14	0.7%
Non-maintained school	35	1.6%	9	0.4%	2	0.1%	46	2.1%
TOTAL	1993	92.9%	131	6.1%	22	1.0%	2146	100.0%

The most common school size was between 251 and 450 pupils (e.g. a two-form entry primary school).

Experiences in recruitment

We asked members about how easy it had been over the last year to recruit to various roles and the table below shows responses from those who had advertised vacancies for these roles:

Answer Options	Recruited with ease (i.e. received a lot of good quality applications)		Recruited with difficulty (i.e. received few applications or had to advertise more than once)		Failed to recruit	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Head teacher/principal	28	13%	161	72%	34	15%
Head of school	10	20%	29	59%	10	20%
Deputy head/vice principal	90	22%	258	64%	55	14%
Assistant head/principal	62	23%	172	63%	41	15%
Teaching role with TLR	84	13%	357	55%	213	33%
Teaching role with SEN allowance	36	17%	121	56%	58	27%
SENCO	40	15%	158	60%	64	24%
Teacher on the upper pay scale	71	14%	273	55%	153	31%
Newly Qualified Teacher	433	32%	773	58%	127	10%
Teacher on the main pay scale (excluding NQTs)	201	14%	902	61%	378	26%
School Business Manager	111	41%	144	53%	19	7%

Looking at the total number of vacancies recruited to, 21% were recruited to with ease, 59% were recruited to with difficulty, and for 20% of roles the school failed to recruit. Combining just those roles within middle leadership (TLR and SENCO), 14% were recruited to with ease, 56% with difficulty, and for 30% of cases the school failed to recruit.

The top three roles that schools failed to recruit altogether were:

- o Teaching role with TLR (33%)
- o Teachers on the upper pay scale (31%)
- o Teaching roles with SEN allowance (27%)

We found that the data for struggling to recruit was very similar to that reported by our members in our 2014 recruitment survey, but what was most worrying was the increase in instances where schools failed to recruit altogether. The comparison can be found below, although data for three of the roles was only collected in 2015.

Percentage of respondents failing to recruit

Role	2015	2014
Teaching role with TLR	33%	29%
Teacher on the upper pay scale	31%	26%
Teaching role with SEN allowance	27%	22%
Teacher on the main pay scale (excluding NQTs)	26%	24%
SENCO	24%	
Head of school	20%	
Head teacher/principal	15%	
Assistant head/principal	15%	20%
Deputy head/vice principal	14%	15%
Newly Qualified Teacher	10%	8%
School Business Manager	7%	13%

■ 2015   ■ 2014
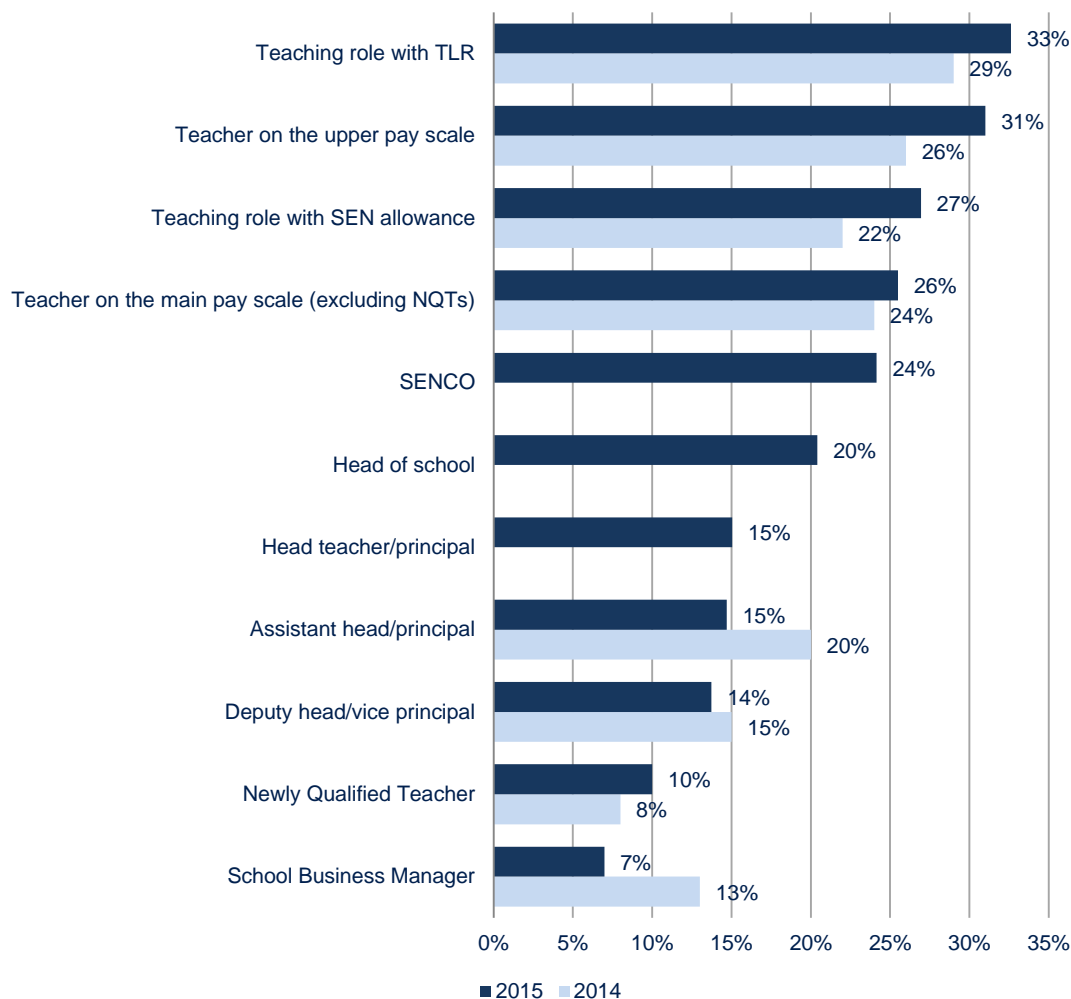
The area of most concern is in the recruitment of teaching roles with an SEN allowance (an increase of 5 percentage points in those failing to recruit), teachers on the upper pay scale and teaching roles with TLR (an increase of four percentage points in both cases).

When the responses were broken down by the school type the three roles that schools most often failed to recruit were slightly different for maintained schools compared with academies, however in both cases the roles were in the middle leadership and SEN categories.

It is clear from the data is that despite the greater flexibilities that academies have in terms of offering pay and conditions, they struggle similarly with recruitment.
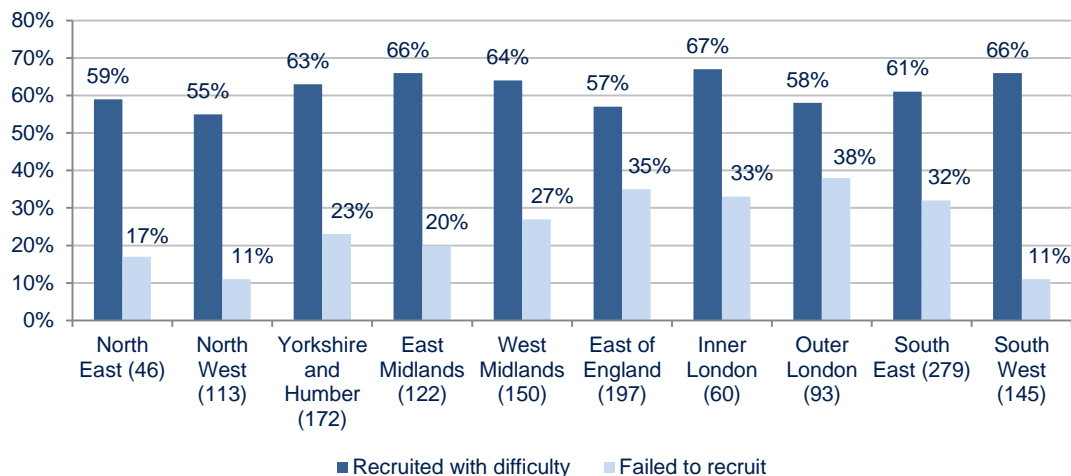
Roles that schools failed to recruit	Academies and free schools		Maintained schools	
	No of instances where failed to recruit	%	No of instances where failed to recruit	%
Head teacher/principal	13	22%	21	13%
Head of school	6	32%	3	12%
Deputy head/vice principal	13	14%	40	13%
Assistant head/principal	13	19%	29	14%
Teaching role with TLR	45	32%	168	34%
Teaching role with SEN allowance	12	24%	45	29%
SENCO	19	34%	46	23%
Teacher on the upper pay scale	43	36%	109	30%
Newly Qualified Teacher	29	12%	97	9%
Teacher on the main pay scale (excluding NQTs)	83	28%	292	25%
School Business Manager	6	8%	13	8%

In academies, the main roles they failed to recruit were teachers on the upper pay scale (36%), SENCOs (34%) and joint third, head of school posts and teaching roles with TLR (both 32%). In maintained schools, the top three roles were teaching roles with TLR (34%), SEN allowance (29%) and roles on the upper pay scale (30%).

Regional analysis

The percentage of respondents who recruited with difficulty or failed to recruit by region is displayed in the graphs below. The number in brackets gives the number of respondents for that region who had been involved in recruiting for the role displayed. While the small sample sizes in most cases mean that differences between regions cannot be reliably identified, it is nonetheless clear that the recruitment crisis is not confined to one area of the country.

Teachers on the main pay scale (excluding NQTs)

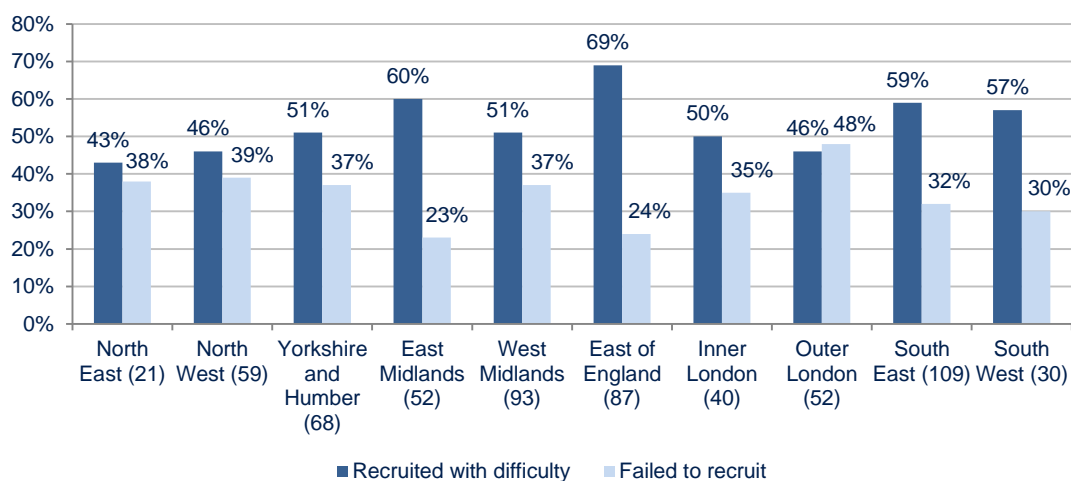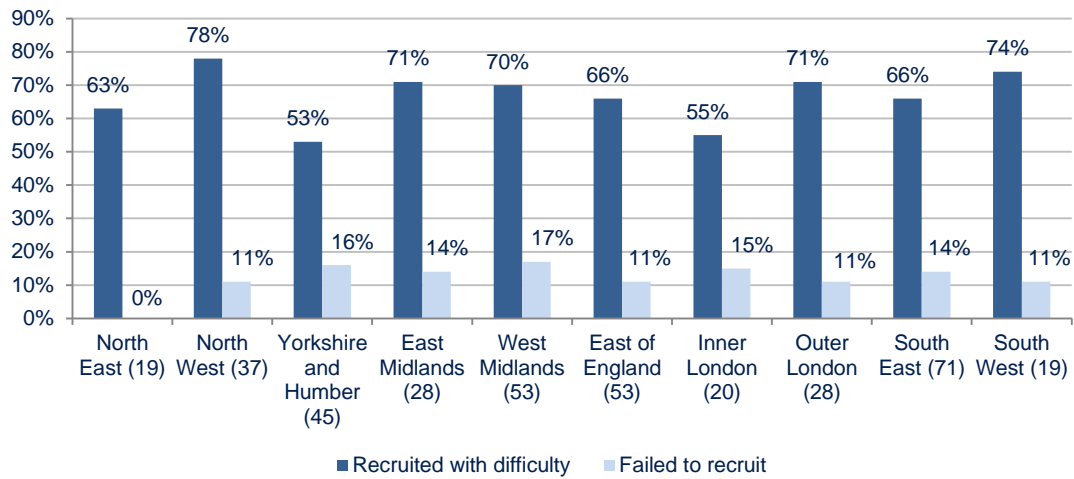| Region	Recruited with difficulty	Failed to recruit
North East (46)	59%	17%
North West (113)	55%	11%
Yorkshire and Humber (172)	63%	23%
East Midlands (122)	66%	20%
West Midlands (150)	64%	27%
East of England (197)	57%	35%
Inner London (60)	67%	33%
Outer London (93)	58%	38%
South East (279)	61%	32%
South West (145)	66%	11%

■ Recruited with difficulty   ■ Failed to recruit

Newly Qualified Teacher

Region	Recruited with difficulty	Failed to recruit
North East (50)	40%	0%
North West (141)	40%	1%
Yorkshire and Humber (153)	67%	8%
East Midlands (107)	66%	8%
West Midlands (149)	60%	11%
East of England (179)	56%	15%
Inner London (48)	56%	10%
Outer London (82)	60%	18%
South East (221)	63%	15%
South West (127)	58%	3%

■ Recruited with difficulty   ■ Failed to recruit

Teaching role with TLR

Region	Recruited with difficulty	Failed to recruit
North East (21)	43%	38%
North West (59)	46%	39%
Yorkshire and Humber (68)	51%	37%
East Midlands (52)	60%	23%
West Midlands (93)	51%	37%
East of England (87)	69%	24%
Inner London (40)	50%	35%
Outer London (52)	46%	48%
South East (109)	59%	32%
South West (30)	57%	30%

■ Recruited with difficulty   ■ Failed to recruit

Deputy head / vice principal

Recruited with difficulty ■ **Failed to recruit**

North East (19): 63%, 0%
North West (37): 78%, 11%
Yorkshire and Humber (45): 53%, 16%
East Midlands (28): 71%, 14%
West Midlands (53): 70%, 17%
East of England (53): 66%, 11%
Inner London (20): 55%, 15%
Outer London (28): 71%, 11%
South East (71): 66%, 14%
South West (19): 74%, 11%

Teacher on the upper pay scale

Recruited with difficulty ■ **Failed to recruit**

North East (11): 73%, 9%
North West (37): 30%, 30%
Yorkshire and Humber (46): 52%, 33%
East Midlands (41): 66%, 22%
West Midlands (58): 60%, 28%
East of England (79): 61%, 27%
Inner London (29): 48%, 41%
Outer London (32): 50%, 47%
South East (89): 51%, 36%
South West (43): 65%, 28%

SENCo

Recruited with difficulty ■ **Failed to recruit**

North East (7): 71%, 14%
North West (26): 54%, 27%
Yorkshire and Humber (22): 59%, 36%
East Midlands (22): 68%, 18%
West Midlands (31): 52%, 29%
East of England (36): 72%, 11%
Inner London (14): 36%, 50%
Outer London (19): 68%, 21%
South East (48): 63%, 27%
South West (16): 56%, 13%

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School Business Manager

Bar chart showing recruitment difficulties for School Business Manager by region. Legend: Recruited with difficulty (dark blue), Failed to recruit (light blue).

Region	Recruited with difficulty	Failed to recruit
North East (6)	67%	0%
North West (25)	40%	16%
Yorkshire and Humber (33)	45%	0%
East Midlands (21)	43%	10%
West Midlands (22)	59%	5%
East of England (34)	53%	12%
Inner London (14)	57%	0%
Outer London (28)	71%	11%
South East (52)	50%	4%
South West (19)	42%	0%

Head teacher / principal

Bar chart showing recruitment difficulties for Head teacher / principal by region. Legend: Recruited with difficulty (dark blue), Failed to recruit (light blue).

Region	Recruited with difficulty	Failed to recruit
North East (11)	73%	18%
North West (16)	75%	13%
Yorkshire and Humber (24)	83%	0%
East Midlands (19)	84%	5%
West Midlands (17)	65%	18%
East of England (31)	74%	13%
Inner London (14)	71%	21%
Outer London (15)	73%	13%
South East (40)	68%	30%
South West (18)	72%	22%

Reasons that schools were struggling to recruit

Newly qualified teachers (NQTs)

We asked members who had struggled or failed to recruit NQTs to provide reasons for this, allowing them to tick any of the responses that applied in their experience. By far, the two most common reasons given for difficulty in recruiting were quality and shortage of NQTs.

Reasons for struggling or failing to recruit NQTs
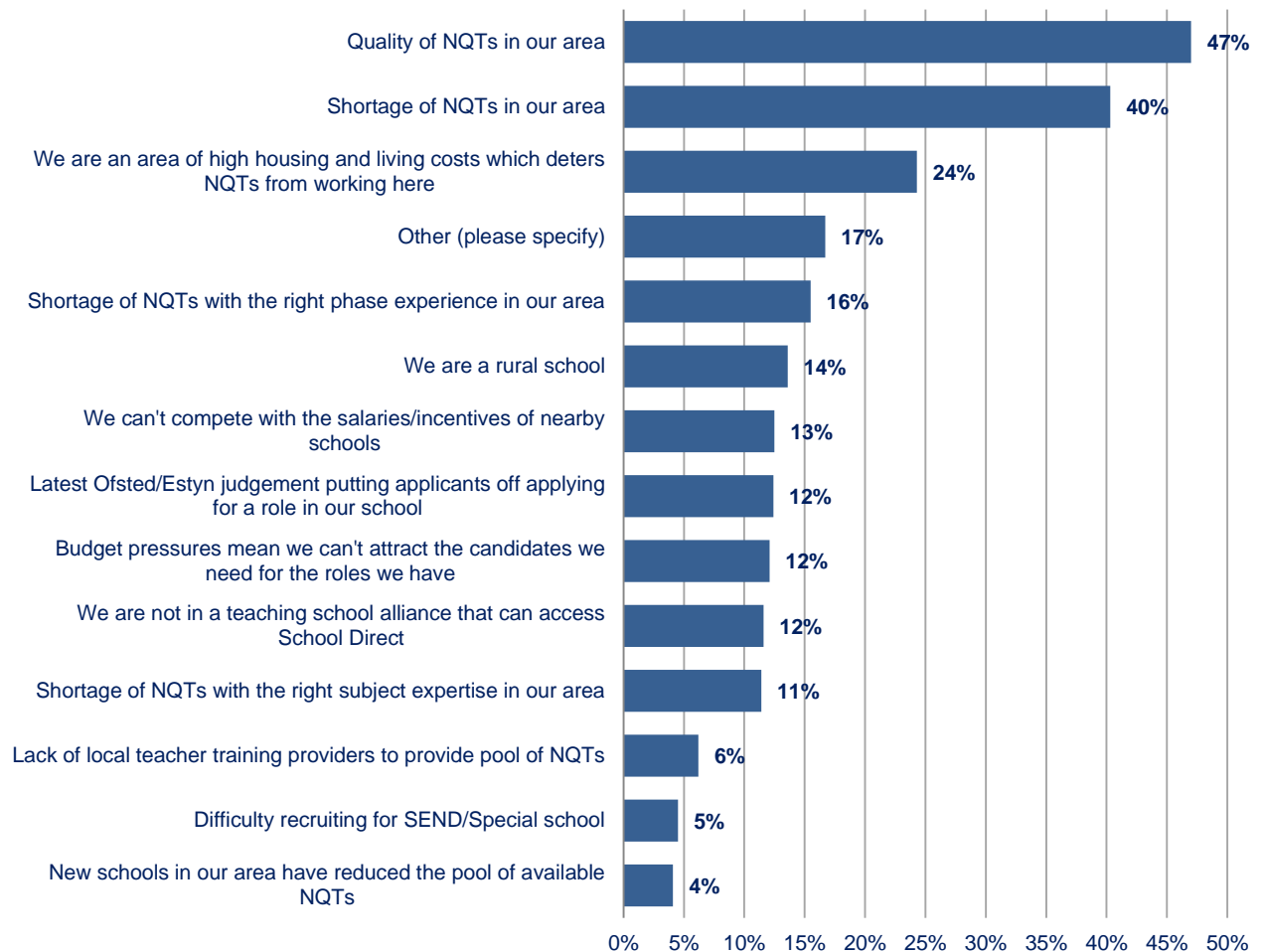
The most common reason for failing to recruit was the shortage of good quality applicants available in the area with 47% of respondents stating this reason.

40% of respondents felt that there were not enough newly qualified teachers in their area and the third highest reason given for failing to recruit NQTs was a school's location in an area with high housing and living costs (24%).

We also analysed the results based on whether schools were offering their own teacher training through School Direct, and thereby creating their own NQTs, compared to those who are not involved in this programme.

The reasons given for struggling to recruit NQTs in both types of schools were very consistent except that those not involved in NQTs cited quality of NQTs in 50% of cases compared to only 44% of those who do run School Direct. This suggests that those excluded from School Direct may struggle more to find high quality NQTs.

We also asked respondents whether they thought that the NQTs that they had recruited within the last two years were well prepared to start working in schools, there was a significant difference in the views of those involved in training NQTs through School Direct and those who weren't.

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This is concerning as only good and outstanding schools can deliver School Direct through teaching school alliances, whilst schools that are struggling more are those who most need the best teachers, and are less likely to have access to them.
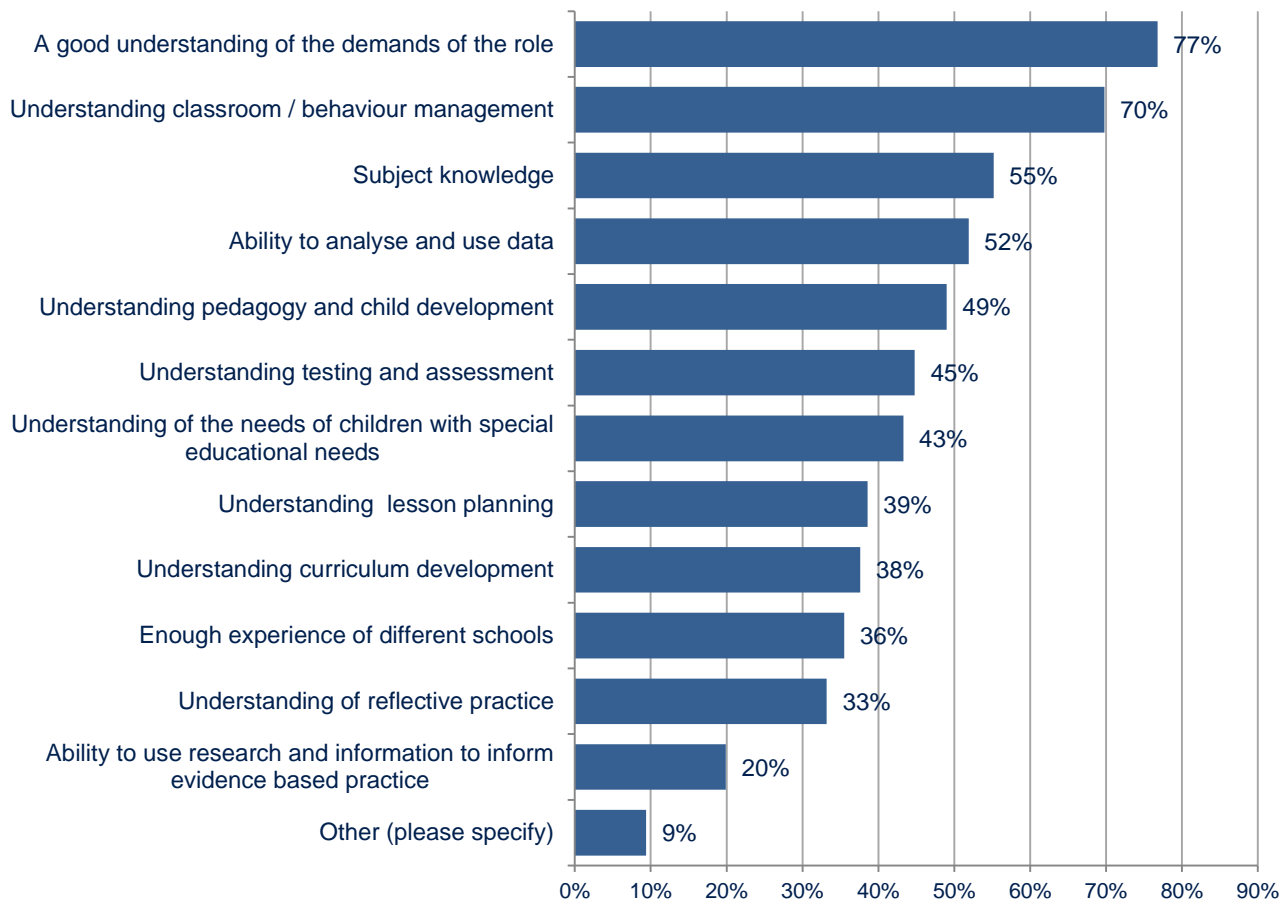
Are NQTs well prepared to start working in schools?

School Direct

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Not School Direct

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
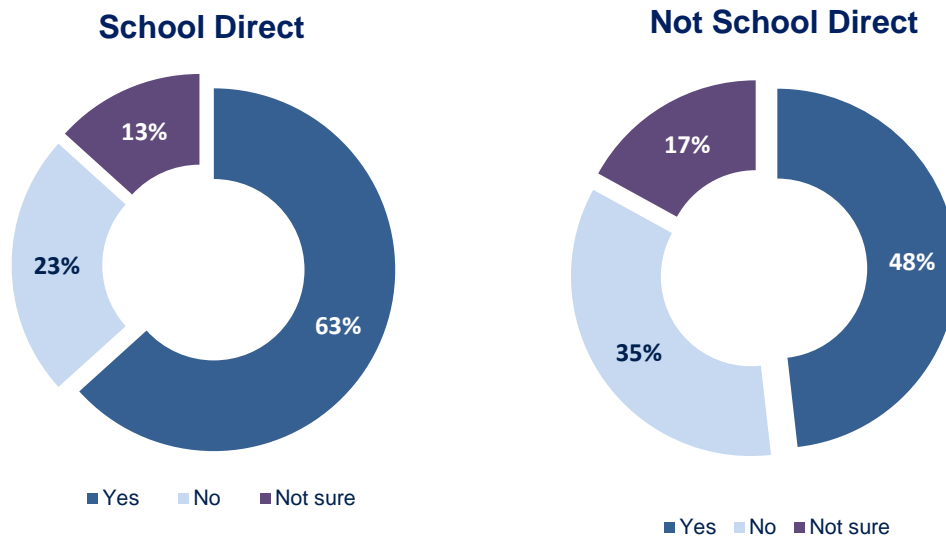
When we asked respondents whether they thought that the extent to which NQTs are well prepared has changed in the last five years, they responded as follows;

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
No, about the same	35%	591
Yes, I think they are less well prepared for work in the classroom	37%	629
Yes, I think they are better prepared for work in the classroom	17%	292
I'm not able to comment	11%	186

We asked respondents what areas they thought were lacking in NQTs' knowledge and skills and theirs responses are outlined below:

## Areas where respondents felt NQTs were not prepared

Area	Percent
A good understanding of the demands of the role	77%
Understanding classroom / behaviour management	70%
Subject knowledge	55%
Ability to analyse and use data	52%
Understanding pedagogy and child development	49%
Understanding testing and assessment	45%
Understanding of the needs of children with special educational needs	43%
Understanding lesson planning	39%
Understanding curriculum development	38%
Enough experience of different schools	36%
Understanding of reflective practice	33%
Ability to use research and information to inform evidence based practice	20%
Other (please specify)	9%

We asked members where their trainees were recruited from and they responded as follows:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
A higher education institution at post graduate level	59%	995
A higher institution teaching degree with QTS	55%	928
School Direct (England)	29%	488
Graduate teacher programme (Wales)	3%	44
Other School Centred Initial Teacher Training	17%	283
Teach First	6%	106
Other (please specify)	2%	26

Struggles to recruit other teaching roles and school business managers

Respondents were asked about the reasons in struggling to recruit to roles other than NQTs; the responses from 2015 and 2014 are shown below to compare their experiences over the last two years.
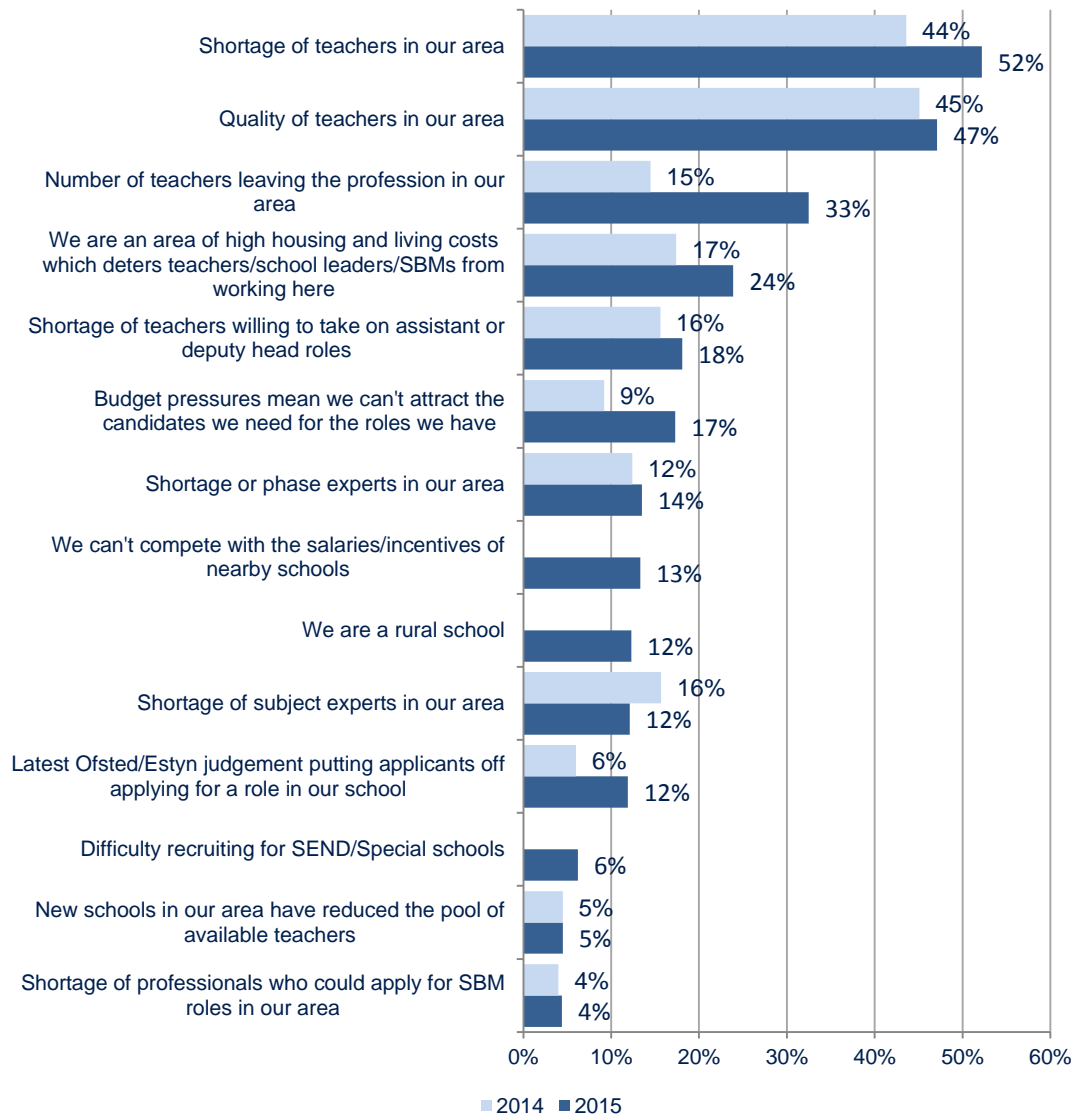
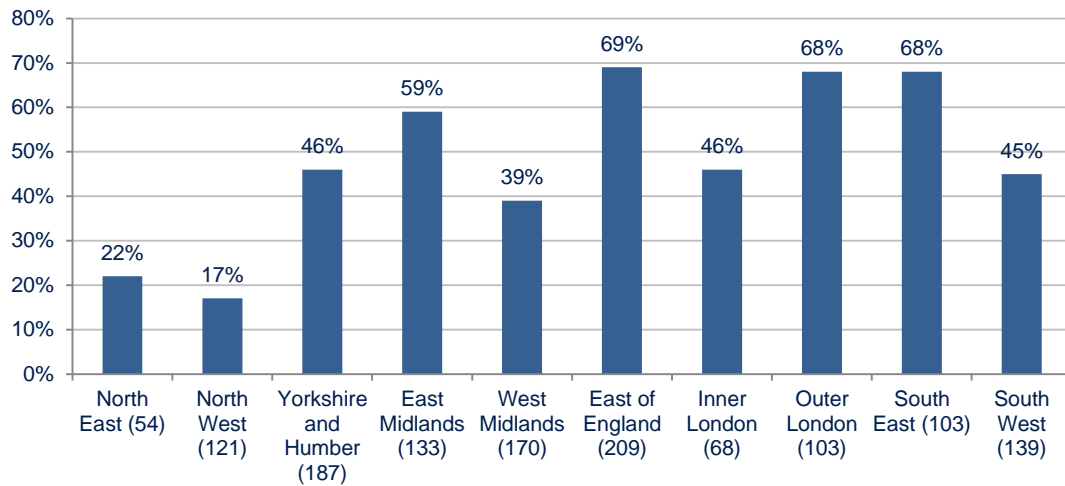This shows that the top three reasons given were:
- Shortages of teachers in their area (52%),
- Lack of quality teachers in their area (47%).
- Number of teachers leaving the profession (33%).

The third reason has increased dramatically since last year's survey more than doubling to reach 33% over the past year.
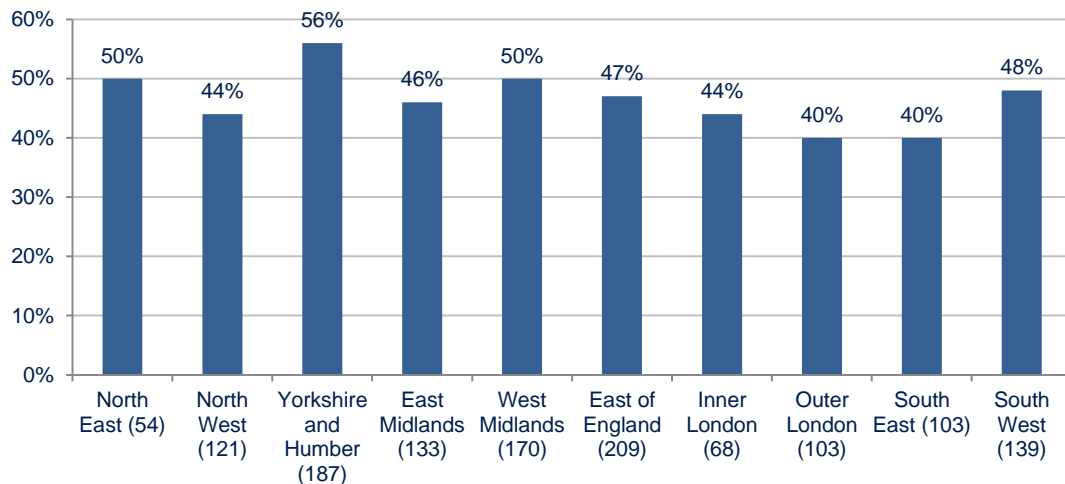
The top four reasons remained fairly consistent across the regions, although varied in order. The graphs below show how the top four reasons overall varied by region.

Sample size for this question, for each region, is indicated by the number in brackets.

Shortage of teachers in our area

Chart values by region:
- North East (54): 22%
- North West (121): 17%
- Yorkshire and Humber (187): 46%
- East Midlands (133): 59%
- West Midlands (170): 39%
- East of England (209): 69%
- Inner London (68): 46%
- Outer London (103): 68%
- South East (103): 68%
- South West (139): 45%

Quality of teachers in our area

Chart values by region:
- North East (54): 50%
- North West (121): 44%
- Yorkshire and Humber (187): 56%
- East Midlands (133): 46%
- West Midlands (170): 50%
- East of England (209): 47%
- Inner London (68): 44%
- Outer London (103): 40%
- South East (103): 40%
- South West (139): 48%

Number of teachers leaving the profession in our area

Chart values by region:
- North East (54): 6%
- North West (121): 10%
- Yorkshire and Humber (187): 31%
- East Midlands (133): 32%
- West Midlands (170): 34%
- East of England (209): 39%
- Inner London (68): 22%
- Outer London (103): 41%
- South East (103): 41%
- South West (139): 29%
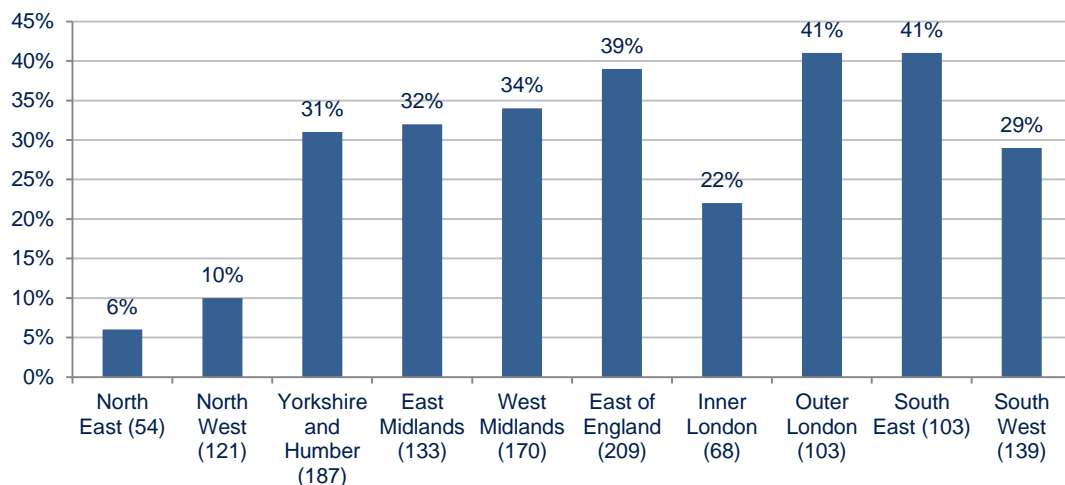
The biggest difference was in relation to high housing and living costs, which predictably was a much bigger problem for London and the South. The graph below shows how the situation compares to last year. The number in brackets illustrates the sample size for 2014, which was the smaller of the two samples (the sample size for 2015 is the same as in the graphs above). While the small samples mean there will be a fairly large margin of error, it is clear that the problem is worsening. Nationally, the percentage of respondents cited this problem increased from 17% in 2014 to 24% in 2015, and rose from the 7th most common reason to the 4th.

We are in an area of high housing and living costs which deters applicants from working here
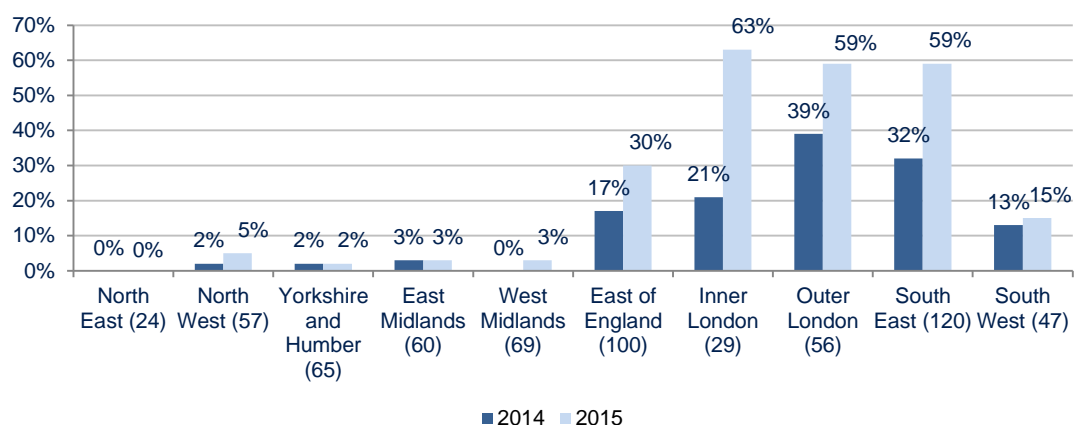
Difficulty in recruiting subject experts

We asked members in which subject areas they struggled to recruit. The subject experts that were highlighted as most difficult to recruit were:

- Maths (37% had difficulty recruiting),
- SEN (27%),
- English (24%),
- General Science (15%).

These three subjects were the hardest to recruit across all regions.

Teaching specialisms that schools struggled to recruit to

Specialism	Percentage
Mathematics	37%
SEN	27%
English	24%
Science: general science	15%
Other	14%
Music	13%
Computer science / ICT	12%
Modern and ancient languages	7%
Design and technology	6%
Science: physics	5%
Physical Education	5%
Religious Education	4%
Science: chemistry	4%
Geography	4%
Art	3%
Science: biology	3%
History	2%
Business studies	2%
welsh second language	1%
Social studies	1%
Media studies	1%
PSHE	1%
welsh first language	1%

Difficulty in recruiting phase experts

When recruiting phase specialists, primary schools struggled most to recruit Key stage 2 teachers (67%), while in secondary schools this was Key stage 3 (64%), closely followed by Key stage 4 (60%).

Recruiting through agencies

The recruitment crisis highlighted in this survey means that schools are increasingly resorting to the use of recruitment agencies, adding to the costs that they bear to recruit posts.

We asked our members whether they used teaching supply and/or recruitment agencies to recruit to permanent posts and 56% said that they recruited through a recruitment agency.
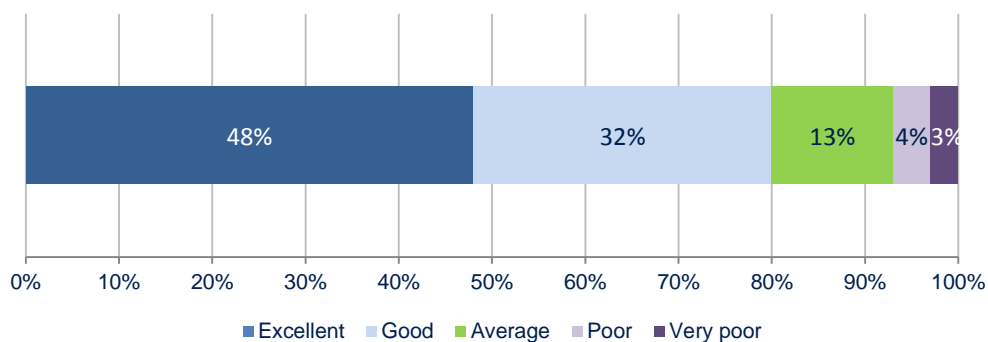
We asked for the reasons why agencies were used:
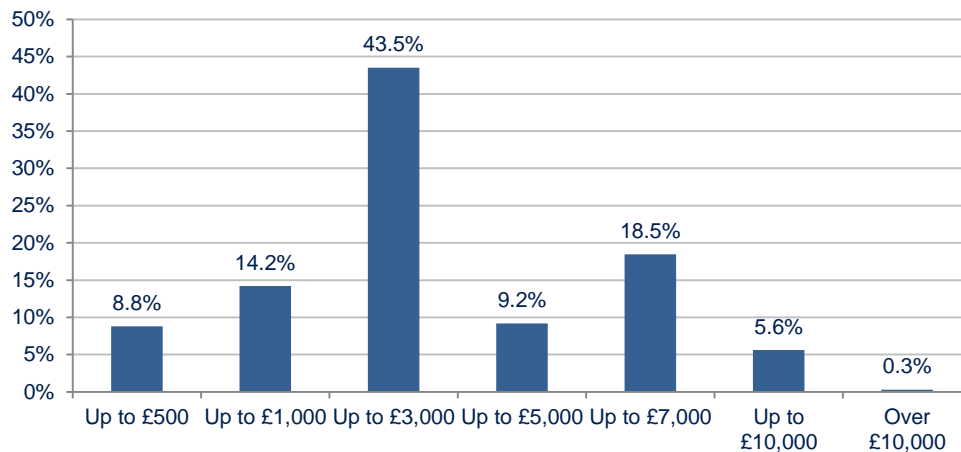
Reasons for using supply agencies
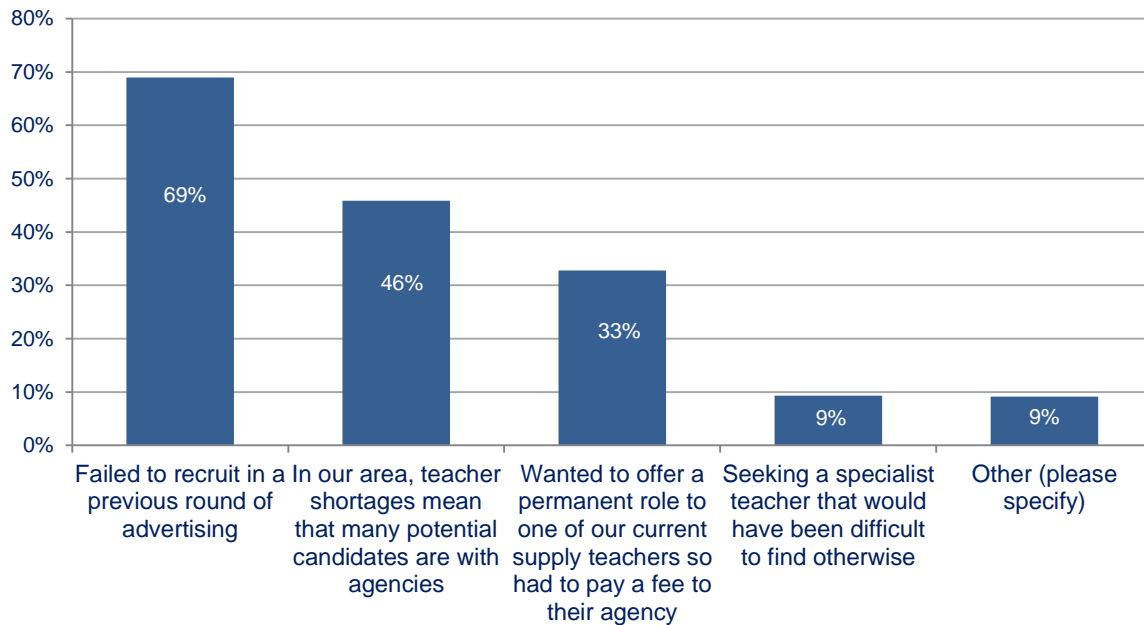
We also asked about the quality of applicants who were recruited through agencies.

Quality of permanent staff recrtuited through agencies

Respondents were also asked about the costs per vacancy to recruit permanent staff through recruitment agencies. The chart below highlights the fact that the recruitment crisis and resorting to recruitment agencies is adding significantly to schools' costs.
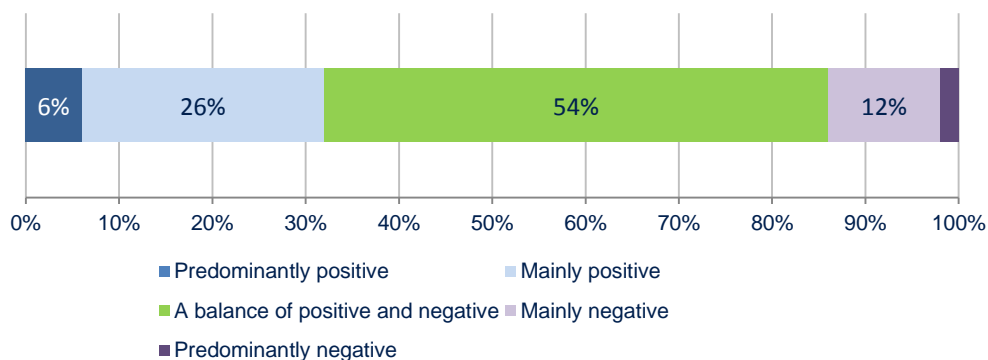
Cost per vacancy recruited through supply/ recruitment agencies

Category	Percentage
Up to £500	8.8%
Up to £1,000	14.2%
Up to £3,000	43.5%
Up to £5,000	9.2%
Up to £7,000	18.5%
Up to £10,000	5.6%
Over £10,000	0.3%

The most common fee paid per vacancy recruited was £1,000 - £3,000 (44% of respondents paid a fee in this range). At the highest end 6% paid more than £7,000, including two schools that paid more than £10,000.

We also asked members about their experience of working with supply and recruitment agencies and they reported the following:

Experience of working with teacher supply and recruitment agencies

Category	Percentage
Predominantly positive	6%
Mainly positive	26%
A balance of positive and negative	54%
Mainly negative	12%
Predominantly negative	(remaining)

Over half of respondents (54%) said that the overall experience of working with a teacher supply and recruitment agency has been a balance of both positive and negative experiences. Only 14% said their experience had been mainly or predominantly negative.

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