

NQT Quality improvement study

5.5 Retention of NQTs

5.5.1 Overview

Although the literature review for this study (see section 2 above) suggests that there is a problem with the retention of NQTs, the data from the survey of SLT members indicate that they do not perceive such a problem. Only 1% of SLT respondents thought retention was definitely a problem and only 11.5% saw it as a problem to some extent (Table 89).

Table 90, which gives the responses of the NQTs surveyed to the question 'Do you intend to stay in teaching?' supports the perception of the SLTs, with over 90% saying that they intended to do so.

Table 89 How far retention of NQTs is seen as a problem: SLT responses

		Total
	%	n
Yes, definitely	1.0	5
Yes, to some extent	11.5	58
No	87.5	443
Total n	100	506
NA		158

Table 90 NQT respondents' intentions to remain in teaching: NQT responses

Yes	No	Don't know	Total
%	%	%	n
91.1	0.4	8.5	270

SLT respondents from secondary schools were more likely than those from primary schools to perceive a problem (Table 91). There were also some differences between independent and non-independent schools, with SLT respondents from non-independent schools likely perceive problems than independent schools (Table 92) and there were some regional differences (Table 93), with SLT respondents in the North the least likely to perceive problems and those in London the most likely to do so. There seem to be no great differences between routes taken and in the ratings of deprivation (see Appendix 1 Tables 28 and 29) or in relation to school ethnicity (see Appendix 1 Table 30).

Table 91 How far retention of NQTs is seen as a problem, by type of school: SLT responses

	Primary	Secondary
	%	%
Yes, definitely	0.9	1.2
Yes, to some extent	9.8	15.1
No	89.2	83.7
Total	325	172

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Table 92 How far retention of NQTs is seen as a problem, by independent and non-independent schools: SLT responses

	Non-independent	Independent
	%	%
Yes, definitely	1.0	0.0
Yes, to some extent	11.8	4.3
No	87.1	95.7
Total n	482	23

Table 93 How far retention of NQTs is seen as a problem, by region: SLT responses

	North	Midlands	South	London
	%	%	%	%
Yes, definitely	1.2	1.3	0.9	0.0
Yes, to some extent	8.8	12.1	11.5	16.2
No	90.0	86.6	87.6	83.8

Where NQTs had left the schools surveyed, SLT responses indicated that they tended not to do so during the NQT year (Table 94) and they seemed most likely to leave 2 years or more after appointment. Table 95 indicates that NQTs in secondary schools are more likely to leave than are those in primary schools. Table 31 in Appendix 1 suggests that the patterns are similar for independent and non independent schools. NQTs may not wish to leave during the NQT year as they need to complete the year to get fully qualified status, and they may not wish to leave in the first year thereafter because of financial incentives. For example, some secondary school teachers who started their PGCE or SCITT programme in maths or science from September 2006 can receive a 'golden hello' payment of £5,000. Teachers in other secondary subjects such as ICT, modern languages and English can receive £2,500. The 'golden hello' payments are made after successful completion of induction year, at the start of second year of teaching.

Table 94 Retention of NQTs recruited since 2002: SLT responses

	All	Most	Some	A few	None	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	n
Are still with you	24.9	49.1	16.6	6.2	3.3	634
Left less than one year after appointment	0.6	1.1	7.2	22.8	68.3	360
Left one year after appointment	1.4	0.6	8.8	45.2	44.1	363
Left two years after appointment	1.1	2.0	16.0	43.8	37.1	356
Left more than two years after appointment	1.9	5.4	26.0	45.0	21.7	369

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Table 95 Retention of NQTs recruited since 2002 by type of school: SLT responses

	Are still with you		Left less than one year after appointment		Left one year after appointment		Left two years after appointment		Left more than two years after appointment	
	Pri %	Sec %	Pri %	Sec %	Pri %	Sec %	Pri %	Sec %	Pri %	Sec %
All/Most	74.2	72.5	1.9	1.4	3.2	0.0	4.3	1.4	8.1	5.6
Some/A few	21.2	26.9	27.4	34.0	47.5	63.1	43.8	83.4	63.3	82.4
None	4.6	0.5	70.8	64.6	49.3	36.9	51.9	15.2	28.5	12.0
Total	434	182	212	144	217	141	208	145	221	142

Table 96 indicates that schools in the North are most successful in retaining NQTs. NQTs in London were the least likely to leave during the first year but the most likely to leave after two years. The proportions leaving more than 2 years after appointment are similar across the regions. Table 32 in Appendix 1 suggests that patterns are similar for the least and most deprived schools and similarly for the middle categories in the deprivation variable.

Table 96 Retention of NQTs recruited since 2002: SLT members views by region

		North	Midlands	South	London
		%	%	%	%
Are still with you	All/Most	80.2	74.9	64.5	70.9
	Some/A few	18.5	21.5	29.1	26.6
	None	1.4	3.7	6.4	2.5
	Total n	222	191	141	79
Left less than one year after appointment	All/Most	0.8	2.0	1.1	3.7
	Some/A few	29.4	38.4	30.7	14.8
	None	69.7	59.6	68.2	81.5
	Total n	119	99	88	54
Left one year after appointment	All/Most	2.5	2.0	0.0	3.8
	Some/A few	55.0	50.0	60.0	49.1
	None	42.5	48.0	40.0	47.2
	Total n	120	100	90	53
Left two years after appointment	All/Most	1.7	3.1	4.8	3.6
	Some/A few	58.5	59.2	56.0	69.6
	None	39.8	37.8	39.3	26.8
	Total n	118	98	84	56
Left more than two years after appointment	All/Most	7.3	7.7	8.5	5.1
	Some/A few	71.0	68.3	72.0	74.6
	None	21.8	24.0	19.5	20.3
	Total n	124	104	82	59

Comments by SLT members: what encourages the retention of NQTs?

Support for NQTs is considered very important by SLT respondents, from a range of sources: colleagues; SLT; mentor. Support for planning is specifically mentioned by a small number of respondents, suggesting that this is an area that NQTs struggle with. The support of the school governors for staff development is mentioned by some. Support in dealing with parents is mentioned by one respondent. The ability of the school to offer classroom support in the form of teaching assistants is important in some schools, as is the financial capacity to achieve this.



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Some SLT respondents mention the NQT's expectations upon commencing their post and the importance of having a realistic understanding of the job, so that it is important for the school to present a realistic picture at interview. One respondent commented that the NQT having teachers in the family helps. The recruitment and selection process must also be effective, ensuring that the right person was recruited in the first place.

Many comments about encouraging retention relate to the school environment, for example reasonable demands being made of the NQT, good team working, encouragement, being valued, good leadership, a good working atmosphere, job satisfaction and opportunities for all. Some respondents commented that these are motivators for all staff, not only for NQTs, and that they are important in the NQT year and beyond. The NQT needs to fit into the school and understand its ethos. A 'no blame' culture is mentioned by some. NQTs need to be treated with respect as part of the school team and seen as professionals, equal with other staff. 'Having a say' is seen as important, so that the NQT is able to contribute to the school. It is important for NQTs to become involved in the school community. A disciplined school environment encourages retention, as does one where there are high expectations of pupils. Pupil behaviour is mentioned as being significant for retention, with well-behaved pupils encouraging retention and NQTs needing effective strategies for behaviour management. Feeling successful in the job is important and difficult school experiences are likely to reduce retention. NQTs also need a good work-life balance.

Respondents commented that NQTs need to plan to stay in teaching for at least the next few years and to be fully committed. One comment was that if NQTs stay for more than two years, they are likely to stay in the longer term, implying that the first two years are the most challenging. This is reinforced by numerous comments referring to 'into second year and beyond...'.

Some SLT respondents mentioned the need for affordable housing within the locality, and there were a few mentions of cash incentives, and having salaries compatible with the cost of living and that are competitive with those offered in industry.

Budgetary concerns were mentioned by some SLT respondents. Comments about having the financial capacity to keep teachers in post beyond their NQT year suggest that the NQTs had been appointed on a temporary basis. Some schools seem unable to offer security in contracts, their budgets dictate that they repeatedly offer short-term contracts, and NQTs leave for more security. Less significant is the ability of schools to pay for progression and responsibilities.

The volume of paperwork and administration is seen as a factor preventing retention, as it adds to the stress of teaching. Comments offered about induction and CPD are given in section 5.6 below.



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5.5.2 Reasons for NQTs leaving and their destinations

The reasons offered by SLT respondents for NQT's leaving their posts supports the data in 5.5.1 above about the point at which they tend to leave (i.e. 2 years or more after appointment), since the most common reason is for promotion (Table 93).

Over 90% of NQTs surveyed indicated that they intended to stay in the profession. For those who did not intend to do so (i.e. not just leave their current post but leave the profession), the main reasons for leaving were heavy workload and pupil behaviour.

Table 97 Main reasons why NQTs leave their posts: SLT responses

	Yes	Total
	%	n
For promotion	51.0	575
Other (please specify)	33.7	575
End of contract	31.8	575
Mismatch between skills and demands of the job	18.3	575
Heavy workload	13.7	575
Issues to do with pupils behaviour	12.2	575
Type of class taught	6.6	575
Change of subject specialism	4.5	575

Table 98 Reasons why NQTs consider leaving the profession: NQT responses

	No	Yes	Total
	%	%	n
End of contract	83.3	16.7	24
For promotion	100.0	0.0	24
Change of subject or specialism	95.8	4.2	24
Heavy workload	37.5	62.5	24
Type of class taught	87.5	12.5	24
Mismatch between skills and demands of the job	87.5	12.5	24
Issues to do with pupil behaviour	79.2	20.8	24

There are differences here between types of school. Table 99 suggests that temporary contracts are more common in primary schools and that NQTs in secondary schools are more likely to leave for promotion. More SLT respondents in secondary schools indicated that a mismatch between the NQT's skills and the job and pupil behaviour were reasons for NQTs leaving.

Although the number of SLT respondents from independent schools is small, Table 100 below suggests some different perceptions there of why NQTs leave from perceptions in non-independent schools. The respondents in independent schools suggest that NQTs are more likely to leave for promotion and less likely to leave because of the end of a contract or because of heavy workload or the type of class taught (although pupil behaviour is similar in both as a reason for NQT's leaving).



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Table 99 Main reasons why NQTs leave their posts by type of school: SLT responses

	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
	%	%	Total n	Total n
End of contract	36.4	24.0	382	183
For promotion	40.3	72.7	382	183
Change of subject specialism	5.0	3.8	382	183
Heavy workload	14.1	13.7	382	183
Type of class taught	7.6	4.9	382	183
Mismatch between skills and demands of the job	16.5	22.4	382	183
Issues to do with pupils behaviour	8.6	20.2	382	183

Table 100 Main reasons why NQTs leave their posts, by independent and non-independent schools: SLT responses

		Yes	Total
		%	n
Non-independent	End of contract	33.0	545
Independent	End of contract	7.1	28
Non-independent	For promotion	50.5	545
Independent	For promotion	60.7	28
Non-independent	Change of subject specialism	4.6	545
Independent	Change of subject specialism	3.6	28
Non-independent	Heavy workload	14.1	545
Independent	Heavy workload	7.1	28
Non-independent	Type of class taught	7.0	545
Independent	Type of class taught	0.0	28
Non-independent	Mismatch between skills and demands of the job	17.6	545
Independent	Mismatch between skills and demands of the job	32.1	28
Non-independent	Issues to do with pupils behaviour	12.3	545
Independent	Issues to do with pupils behaviour	10.7	28

Table 101 indicates that temporary contracts are more common in the North, leaving for promotion is slightly more common in the Midlands and London and a mismatch between NQT skills and the needs of the job is slightly more common in the South and London.



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Table 101 Main reasons why NQTs leave their posts, by region; SLT responses

		Yes	Total
		%	n
End of contract	North	48.5	198
	Midlands	26.3	167
	South	26.3	133
	London	10.4	77
For promotion	North	49.5	198
	Midlands	56.9	167
	South	45.1	133
	London	51.9	77
Change of subject specialism	North	3.5	198
	Midlands	6.0	167
	South	6.0	133
	London	1.3	77
Heavy workload	North	15.7	198
	Midlands	12.6	167
	South	13.5	133
	London	11.7	77
Type of class taught	North	7.1	198
	Midlands	7.8	167
	South	3.8	133
	London	7.8	77
Mismatch between skills and demands of the job	North	15.2	198
	Midlands	17.4	167
	South	22.6	133
	London	20.8	77
Issues to do with pupils behaviour	North	10.1	198
	Midlands	13.8	167
	South	12.8	133
	London	13.0	77

Overall, SLT respondents considered that most of those who had left had done so to go into other teaching jobs, again belying the literature review that suggests a problem in NQTs leaving the profession (section 2 above). There seems to be very little difference between SLT members in primary and secondary schools in their views on how many NQTs go into other teaching jobs. Fewer secondary school NQTs are seen as leaving for reasons other than to go to another job.



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Table 102 Destinations of NQT's leaving since 2002: SLT responses

	All	Most	Some	A few	None	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	n
Gone to other teaching jobs	49.0	31.5	5.5	10.9	3.1	457
Gone to jobs in education or working with children other than teaching	2.4	1.8	9.0	24.7	62.0	166
Gone to a job not working with children	3.4	1.1	9.0	34.8	51.7	178
Have left but not gone to another job	3.4	0.6	5.7	36.8	53.4	174
Other (please specify)	9.1	6.1	6.1	60.6	18.2	33

Table 103 Destinations of NQT's leaving since 2002 by type of school: SLT responses

	Gone to other teaching jobs		Gone to jobs in education or working with children other than teaching		Gone to a job not working with children		Have left but not gone to another job	
	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec	Pri	Sec
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All/Most	77.6	85.2	8.0	0.0	7.7	1.2	7.1	0.0
Some/A few	18.5	13.0	32.2	35.1	28.6	59.5	46.9	37.8
None	3.9	1.8	59.8	64.9	63.7	39.3	45.9	62.2
Total n	281	169	87	77	91	84	98	74