

RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



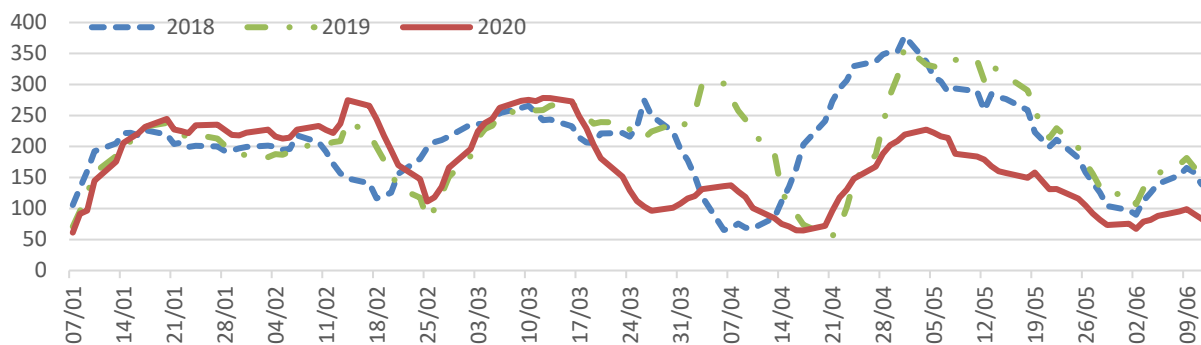
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1 Research suggests that one consequence of COVID-19 will be a very significant reduction in teacher mobility this year. The shift will be welcomed by many schools that have struggled to replace teachers who have moved to more affluent schools or left the profession, but it is likely to make it very hard for newly qualified teachers to find their first job. Unless action is taken to support them, they are likely to be lost to the profession and in time this loss will exacerbate teacher shortages.

2 Regular monitoring of teacher vacancies shows that recruitment typically follows a clear seasonal pattern, reaching a peak immediately after the Easter holidays and gradually tailing off over the summer. As such, year-on-year analysis of recruitment activity at this time is a strong indicator as to the health of recruitment and retention in the sector. This year, the closure of schools in March coincided with the peak period of teacher recruitment.

3 With the support of the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, SchoolDash and Teacher Tapp undertook research and data analysis to determine the impact of COVID-19 on recruitment of teachers in England. The resulting report, *Musical Chairs: Understanding and Tackling COVID-19 Disruption to the Teacher Recruitment Market* indicates that recruiting activity in English secondary schools, as measured by posts advertised on school websites, fell suddenly in mid-March. By early April advertising was down by about 50-60% compared to the same period last year. This fall took place against a backdrop of an extremely buoyant recruitment market until early March. Although the market saw some recovery, unseasonably low recruitment was seen throughout April and May. The report estimates there has been a reduction of more than 5,000 advertised posts in secondary schools alone (which translates to over one per school, on average). This reduction includes shortfalls of about 1000 science, 800 English and 500 maths job advertisements. Figure one below shows the number of secondary school adverts on a 7-day rolling average compared over the last three years.

FIGURE 1 – NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ADVERTS (7-DAY ROLLING AVERAGE)



4 The reduction appears to be caused by a fall in teacher turnover, rather than a lack of recruiting. Teacher Tapp found that many teachers who had previously been thinking about changing jobs this summer had reconsidered. In primary schools the proportion of teachers who told Teacher Tapp they had handed in their notice fell to just 5% on 4th May 2020, down from 9% exactly one year earlier. Half of all primary teachers believed all the teaching staff in their school would be staying put next year; in a normal year, this figure is closer to one-third. The figures for secondary schools are slightly less marked, however 57% of secondary teachers report that there are no teacher movements expected in their department, compared with 44% one year earlier.

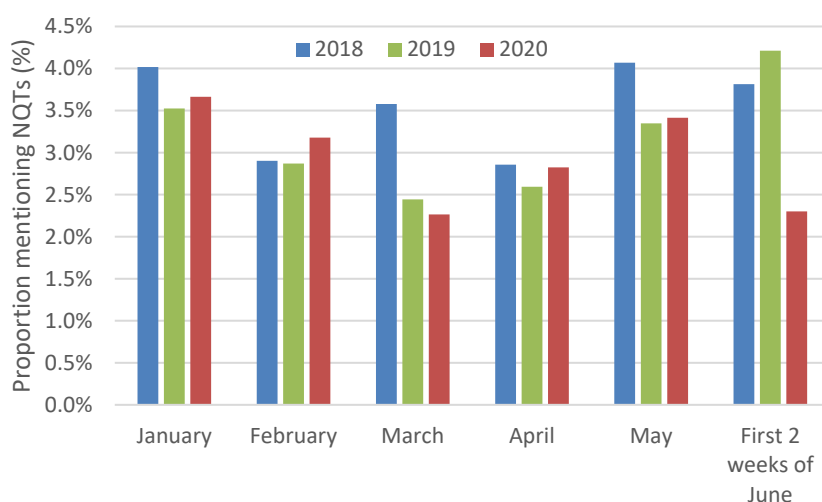
5 Lower teacher turnover can of course be a good thing; although if it is due in this instance to the COVID-19 pandemic, it may mean that once initial apprehension has passed, there is greater movement in January and Easter next year, causing more disruption for students.

6 Again, this may be a positive for schools in disadvantaged areas which, in general, have higher levels of teacher turnover compared to other schools. In Spring 2019, 37% of teachers in the most disadvantaged schools were uncertain whether all jobs in their school would be filled. This year, that figure has dropped to 23%, suggesting a reprieve for schools who usually find it difficult to replace their departing experienced staff. The recent announcement by Teach First that they will not be able to place all their participants with schools this summer confirms that recruitment difficulties have eased.

7 The smaller number of vacancies appears to be the result of more teachers choosing to stay in their current post due to social and economic uncertainty. In normal years, teachers are lost to related job markets – international schools, private tutoring, teacher training, professional development work, employment at education companies, and so on. These opportunities have largely dried up during this recruitment season. **Therefore, we do not now believe there will be a flurry of advertisements suitable for newly qualified teachers in July. This means that some Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) will find it hard to secure teaching roles.**

8 Data on job adverts from SchoolDash, shown in figure 2 below, corroborates this view. In the first two weeks of June, not only are there fewer job advertisements overall the job adverts are less likely to mention that they are suitable for NQTs.

FIGURE 2 – FALL IN FREQUENCY OF ADVERTS MENTIONING NQTS



9 Even if there are reduced number of vacancies in the short-term it is extremely unlikely that the long-standing shortage of teachers of subjects such as maths and physics will permanently disappear. Almost half of the reduction in job advertisements are in the core subjects of science, English and maths so it is likely that NQTs in these subjects will struggle to secure positions. It is crucial that all NQTs, but particularly those in shortage subjects do not leave the profession if they are unable to secure roles in the short-term.

10 **It is therefore recommended that government provide additional funding to appoint NQTs on a short-term supernumerary basis, to ensure teachers are not lost from the profession. Such measures could provide additional capacity to help with potentially greater demand for teachers in September due teacher absences, shielding and social distancing measures.**