



Department
for Education

Further education workforce survey

Research report

October 2026

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Educational Research**



Government
Social Research

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Executive summary

This report presents key findings from a national online survey of the Further Education (FE) workforce conducted between 6th November 2025 and 5th January 2026.

Responses were received from 4,440 leaders, managers and teachers across General FE Colleges (GFECs), Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs), Independent Training Providers (ITPs), and Adult Community Learning (ACL) providers.

For analysis purposes, responses from ITP and ACL staff were combined because sample sizes were too small to analyse separately. This allowed for more robust analysis and clearer comparisons with GFECs and SFCs, while still reflecting meaningful variation across the sector.

The survey was designed to address gaps in existing administrative data by capturing workforce experiences, perceptions, and intentions on a range of issues, including pay, continuing professional and development (CPD), wellbeing, recruitment and retention. It complements sources such as the FE Workforce Data Collection (FEWDC), which provides structural workforce data but does not capture staff views, motivations, or career pathways.

The survey therefore provides new evidence on the lived experiences of FE leaders, managers and teachers, including early career teachers (ECTs) and dual professionals. These findings are intended to inform workforce policy and provider-level strategies aimed at improving recruitment, retention and workforce sustainability.

As a cross-sectional survey, the results presented here represent a snapshot in time and may not reflect more recent policy changes or developments.

Selected characteristics of survey respondents

The survey captured views from a diverse workforce, with respondents varying by role, provider type, teaching experience, qualifications, contract type and demographic profile. These differences are important because staff experiences were not uniform across the sector. In particular, teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities often reported less positive experiences than leaders and non-teaching managers. Experiences also varied by provider type, with staff in ITPs/ACLs tending to report more positive views than those in GFECs and SFCs. This suggests that recruitment and retention strategies need to be sensitive to both role and provider context.

After weighting, the characteristics of survey respondents broadly aligned with FEWDC data, although some differences remained. For example, the survey sample included a higher proportion of respondents on permanent contracts than the FEWDC. This highlights the importance of interpreting survey findings alongside administrative data.

Career history and experience outside of FE

The FE workforce draws heavily on experience from outside the sector. Nine in ten respondents (90%) had worked outside FE before entering the sector, and just over half (51%) had been working outside education prior to starting work in FE. Entry routes differed by provider type: 53% of respondents in GFECs and ITPs/ACLs had entered FE from outside education, while SFCs drew more heavily on secondary school teachers, with 52% of SFC respondents having previously taught in secondary schools.

These findings highlight both a recruitment opportunity and a retention risk. FE benefits from staff with industry, school and wider education experience, but many staff also have alternative career options. Retention therefore depends on whether FE can offer a sufficiently attractive combination of pay, workload, flexibility, support and progression compared with other sectors.

Workload

Full-time leaders reported working an average of 44.7 hours in their most recent full working week. Full-time teachers reported working an average of 43.4 hours in their most recent full working week, with full-time managers who taught reporting the longest hours, at 47.2 hours.

Overall views on workload were divided: 45% of respondents agreed that their workload was acceptable, while 40% disagreed, indicating that concerns about workload levels were widespread. 44% agreed that unfilled vacancies had increased their workload. Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were least positive about workload acceptability, while staff in GFECs and SFCs were less positive than those in ITPs/ACLs.

These findings suggest that workload is central to retention and may also affect the attractiveness of FE roles to potential recruits.

Flexible working

Flexible working was available to many staff, but access was uneven. Just over half of respondents (55%) reported using at least one form of flexible working, while 45% said that none of the listed arrangements applied to them. The most common forms were home or remote working (25%) and time off in lieu (24%), while compressed hours (4%), job sharing (3%) and phased retirement (1%) were rare.

Leaders and managers without teaching responsibilities were more likely than teaching staff to report using and being satisfied with flexible working arrangements. While flexibility may help strengthen the FE employment offer, its impact is likely to be limited unless more meaningful forms of flexibility can be developed for classroom-facing roles, alongside wider action on workload and pay.

Working environment

Respondents were generally most positive about support from colleagues and managers, and least positive about workload-related support, resources, CPD and career progression. Among staff with teaching responsibilities, 83% agreed that they received support from teaching colleagues and 72% reported receiving support from managers. However, access to high-quality CPD, facilities and equipment and receiving support from non-teaching staff to help reduce workload were also viewed less positively (all 41%). Career progression was the weakest area: only 28% agreed that they had good opportunities to progress, while 45% disagreed.

These findings suggest that supportive relationships are a strength of FE, but that retention may be undermined where staff perceive limited workload support, constrained resources and weak progression pathways.

Wellbeing

Work-related stress was reported to be widespread. Overall, 72% of respondents agreed that they experienced stress at work, while 42% agreed that their job did not leave enough time for their personal life and 36% agreed that it negatively affected their physical health. Pressures were greatest among classroom-facing staff: 82% of managers with teaching responsibilities and 72% of teachers reported stress at work, compared with 67% of leaders and 64% of managers without teaching responsibilities.

Despite these pressures, around two-thirds of respondents were satisfied with working in FE overall, including 19% who were very satisfied and 47% fairly satisfied. However, satisfaction with career development was much lower: only 39% were satisfied with opportunities to develop their career within FE. This suggests that many staff value working in FE, but may still consider leaving if workload, wellbeing and progression concerns are not addressed.

Pay

Pay emerged as a major workforce issue. Across all respondent groups, salary dissatisfaction was high. 58% disagreed that FE offered a good salary compared with alternative careers they could pursue, 57% disagreed that they were satisfied with their current salary, and 54% disagreed that they were satisfied with their longer-term salary prospects. Teachers were particularly negative, although perceptions varied by setting: only 19% of teachers in GFECs, 27% in SFCs and 36% in ITPs/ACLs agreed that they were satisfied with their salary.

These findings suggest that pay is central to both recruitment and retention. Targeted incentives may help in shortage areas, but broader concerns about pay competitiveness and salary progression remain important risks to workforce sustainability.

Recruitment and retention

Recruitment and retention pressures were linked to pay, workload, stress, limited progression, and competition from schools, industry and other sectors. These pressures were particularly important because 90% of respondents had experience outside FE and many therefore had alternative career options. Providers reported difficulties recruiting in some vocational and technical areas (particularly Engineering and Manufacturing, Construction and Digital/IT), while Mathematics was the academic area reported to be the most difficult to recruit to. The findings reflect competition for staff with specialist subject or industry expertise.

The findings suggest that no single intervention will be sufficient to improve recruitment and retention. Pay and targeted incentives may be important, particularly in shortage areas, but they need to be combined with action on workload, professional development, flexible working, wellbeing and career progression.

Continuing professional development (CPD)

CPD plays an important role in supporting the FE workforce pipeline, but access to CPD and perceptions of its value varied. Workload and lack of time were key barriers to CPD (60%), reinforcing the wider finding that workload pressures affect not only wellbeing and retention, but also staff's ability to develop professionally.

The working environment findings suggest that access to CPD is a particular issue for teaching staff: fewer than half of staff (41%) with teaching responsibilities agreed that they had access to high-quality CPD. Leaders were much more positive, with 85% agreeing that staff had access to high-quality CPD, compared with 64% of managers without teaching responsibilities and 45% of managers with teaching responsibilities. Strengthening CPD, ensuring it is relevant and accessible, and linking it more clearly to progression could help improve staff capability, job satisfaction and retention.

Views on the best part of working in FE

Many respondents were strongly motivated by the opportunity to make a difference to learners' lives (74%), build positive relationships (54%) and teach their vocational or subject specialism (36%). These intrinsic rewards are a major strength of FE and should be reflected in recruitment messaging. They are particularly important given the high proportion of staff entering FE from other sectors.

However, intrinsic motivation is unlikely to be sufficient to sustain the workforce if staff continue to experience concerns about pay, workload, wellbeing and progression. The findings suggest that recruitment messages should emphasise the purpose and impact of FE work, but retention will depend on whether the wider employment offer enables staff to remain in the sector.

Future plans, including intentions to leave

Future career intentions indicate a substantial retention risk. Overall, 42% of respondents said they had no plans to leave FE, while 37% planned to leave, 17% were unsure and 4% preferred not to say. Reasons for considering leaving were closely aligned with the pressures identified across the report, including workload, pay, stress and limited progression.

These findings suggest that retention strategies need to focus both on immediate risks of exit and on making FE a more sustainable long-term career. Addressing pay and workload pressures, improving wellbeing, and strengthening career development routes could help reduce the proportion of staff considering leaving or who are uncertain about their future in the sector.

Views and experiences of ECTs

ECTs reported being attracted to FE by the opportunity to support learners and teach a trade, vocation or subject they valued. Most ECTs reported receiving a range of support, including support from colleagues, managers, mentoring or peer support, and access to CPD. These forms of support are important because ECTs may be adapting to FE teaching, developing their pedagogical confidence, and learning how to manage the wider demands of the role.

However, their views on workload, working environment and CPD suggest that early career staff are not insulated from the wider challenges facing FE teachers. Where workload is high, progression routes are unclear, or access to high-quality development is limited, ECTs may be less likely to see FE as a sustainable long-term career. Improving mentoring, CPD, workload support and early career progression could therefore help strengthen the future FE workforce pipeline.

Views and experiences of dual professionals

Dual professionals bring current industry expertise into FE, strengthening the teaching of vocational and technical provision. This is a key asset for the sector, particularly given that 51% of respondents had been working outside education immediately before entering FE. However, given the higher salaries that can be commanded in industry, retention of dual professionals will be more challenging if FE roles do not offer competitive pay, manageable workload, flexibility and recognition of occupational expertise.

Supporting dual professionals through flexible arrangements, relevant CPD, clear recognition of industry expertise and manageable workloads could help retain staff in areas where current occupational knowledge is especially important. These actions are likely to be particularly relevant in vocational and technical areas where providers face competition from industry employers.

Overall, the findings show that FE continues to benefit from a committed and highly experienced workforce, many of whom are motivated by the opportunity to support learners and contribute specialist subject or industry expertise. However, the survey also points to significant risks to workforce sustainability. Pay dissatisfaction, workload pressures, stress, limited flexibility for teaching roles and weak progression pathways were all closely linked to recruitment and retention challenges. Addressing these issues will require a broad workforce strategy that combines targeted support for shortage areas with wider improvements to the employment offer. Strengthening pay, workload, wellbeing, CPD and career development together will be important if FE is to remain attractive to new entrants and sustainable for those already working in the sector.

1. Introduction and context

This chapter introduces the study and sets out the context for the national survey of the further education (FE) workforce conducted in Autumn 2025. It outlines the policy and sector landscape within which the survey was commissioned, summarises existing evidence on workforce challenges, and explains why new, teacher-level data were needed. The chapter also provides an overview of the survey methodology and the structure of the report, to support interpretation of the findings presented in later chapters.

1.1 Background to the survey

The strategic role of the further education sector

The FE sector plays a critical role in contributing to the Government's economic and social priorities. FE providers support the growth agenda through vocational education, apprenticeships and adult skills development, addressing skills shortages in England. These shortages are particularly acute in highly skilled industries such as construction, engineering, manufacturing and digital, which are also central to the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy (Winterbotham *et al.*, 2020).

Alongside its economic contribution, FE is central to advancing social mobility. The sector serves a disproportionately high number of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, supporting the Department for Education's Opportunity Mission to break the link between background and future success. Around half of FE students are in the lowest two material deprivation index quintiles (DfE, 2026) and learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to progress into higher education via FE than through school sixth forms (Lisauskaite *et al.*, 2021). The effectiveness and sustainability of the FE workforce is therefore fundamental to both economic growth and social inclusion.

Composition of the FE sector and breadth of provision

The FE sector in England is diverse in terms of provider type, scale and the provision it offers. The 2024/25 FEWDC recorded just under 1,700 FE providers, including 176 General FE Colleges (GFECs), 38 Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs) and 848 Independent Training Providers (ITPs). This report includes all of these provider types, as well as Adult and Community Learning (ACL) providers, of which 132 were recorded in the 2024/25 FEWDC.

GFECs typically deliver qualifications up to level 3, including A levels and T Levels, but also provide higher-level provision such as Higher National Certificates and Higher National Diplomas, some of which have been approved as Higher Technical Qualifications. SFCs are more specialised, focusing primarily on academic and level 3 study programmes for 16–19 learners, often with a strong emphasis on A levels and progression to higher education.

ITPs are a significant part of the sector, particularly in the delivery of apprenticeships and work-based learning across a wide range of occupational areas and levels. They often work closely with employers to design and deliver provision that is responsive to industry needs. ACL providers, including local authority services and community organisations, play a complementary role by offering flexible provision for adult learners, including basic skills, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), employability programmes, and community-based learning.

Across these provider types, FE colleges continue to play a particularly important role in the delivery of apprenticeships, especially at levels 2 and 3, and have been at the forefront of recent technical education reforms. The breadth of provision across the wider FE sector places wide-ranging demands on the workforce and requires staff with both strong pedagogical expertise and up-to-date occupational and industry-relevant skills, alongside the capacity to respond to diverse learner needs and pathways.

Workforce challenges in FE

Despite its strategic importance, the FE sector has faced long-standing workforce challenges. These include difficulties recruiting new teachers and high levels of staff turnover, particularly in priority subject areas such as construction and the built environment, engineering and manufacturing, and digital. These challenges risk constraining the sector's capacity to support growth sectors identified in the UK's Industrial Strategy.

Recruitment pressures are substantial. By the end of the 2024/25 academic year, the teaching position vacancy rate was 3.5 per 100, a small fall from the 3.9 per 100 figure reported for 2023/24. Retention is also a significant concern. Of those teachers who joined the sector in 2021, nearly half of FE teachers left the profession within three years, compared with about 27% of state school teachers (DfE, 2026). Staff churn between FE institutions is relatively high. Data from the 2019 College Staff Survey showed that 13% of FE teachers and leaders had moved college within a year, and that nearly half of those moving had been in their original college for less than three years (Thornton *et al.*, 2020).

Pay, working conditions and retention

Pay and working conditions are widely recognised as contributing to workforce pressures. NFER research showed that in 2025, the pay gap between FE teachers and secondary (state school) teachers had widened to its highest level since at least 2010. Evidence from the schools sector suggests that bursary increases can have a significant positive effect on recruitment (McLean, Tang and Worth, 2023). While robust FE-specific evidence remains limited, similar impacts are expected.

Workload and limited opportunities for career development further affect retention. Evidence from the (now dated) University and College Union's 2021 Workload Survey indicates that staff across post-16 education work substantial unpaid hours, equivalent to

around two extra days per week, and that around 42% of college staff report their workload as unmanageable (University and College Union, 2022).

Policy responses to workforce pressures

In response to these challenges, the government announced additional funding of £190 million for colleges and other 16-19 providers for AY 2025/26 to help them address immediate pressures, including supporting recruitment and retention of specialist FE teachers. Additionally, the Department for Education has introduced a range of policy measures aimed at supporting recruitment and retention. These include bursaries of up to £31,000 for shortage subjects and the extension of the levelling up premium, now renamed the FE Targeted Retention Incentive (TRI), to the FE sector in 2024/25. The DfE is currently evaluating the impact of the TRI on FE teacher retention. There has also been a national FE teacher recruitment campaign that has run since January 2022 supported by the dedicated website and support service.

Alongside government initiatives, the Association of Colleges has published proposals to address systemic workforce challenges. These include raising awareness of FE careers, closing the FE-school teacher pay gap, increasing investment in staff development and prioritising education within local skills planning (Association of Colleges, 2023, 2024).

Gaps in the evidence base

Despite sustained policy attention, there is a lack of recent, robust, teacher-level evidence on the FE workforce. Previous surveys, including the 2018 College Staff Survey and the 2020 Education and Training Professionals Survey, highlighted key issues such as workload and uncompetitive pay across different provider types. A follow-up to the CSS in 2019 identified significant levels of staff movement, with 13% of respondents leaving their college within a year and 16% leaving the education sector entirely (Thornton *et al.*, 2020). However, these sources are now outdated.

More recent information is available through administrative sources such as the FE Workforce Data Collection (FEWDC), first collected in 2021/22. While the FEWDC provides valuable information on workforce composition and contractual arrangements, it does not capture teachers' experiences, perceptions of working conditions or career intentions. In addition, response rates have been incomplete, with an overall response rate of 73% in 2024/25, disproportionately affecting some provider types, including ITPs. Coverage was stronger among general FE colleges and sixth form colleges. However, FEWDC is a relatively new data collection, and work is continuing by the DfE to improve this.

Rationale for the national FE workforce survey

There is a clear need for up-to-date evidence on the FE workforce, particularly at the teacher-level. This national survey of the FE workforce, which was conducted in Autumn

2025, was designed to address this gap. The survey captures the lived experiences of FE leaders, managers and teachers in GFECs, SFCS and ITPs/ACLs, providing insight into recruitment, retention, workload and working conditions. It offers evidence to inform the design of targeted and effective workforce policies and complements existing administrative data by addressing questions that cannot be answered through provider-level or contractual information alone.

This evidence is critical to developing sustainable responses to workforce pressures that risk undermining the FE sector's ability to fulfil its economic and social role, including delivery of national skills priorities and the ambitions of Skills England and the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy.

1.2 Methodological overview

The survey was designed as a cross-sectional instrument to capture the views of leaders, managers and teachers, including newly qualified teachers and dual professionals, across selected provider types at a single point in time. Support staff roles were outside the scope of this survey and were therefore not included. We adopted a census approach to engaging GFECs, SFCs, ITPs and ACL providers. Survey administration was online-only, using Questback (an online survey platform), with each participating provider issued with a unique organisation link for internal dissemination.

Questionnaire development included a programme of internal review and cognitive piloting with FE staff. The cognitive piloting tested how respondents understood key terms and questions, whether response options were interpreted consistently across roles and provider contexts, and whether the routing and survey length were manageable. Findings from the piloting were used to refine question wording, clarify definitions where needed, and improve the overall usability and accessibility of the online survey prior to launch.

The contacting strategy involved emailing the heads of eligible providers, using contact information supplied by the Department for Education. Initial communications sought to identify a named contact in each provider, who would be later contacted to circulate the survey materials with their teachers, managers and leaders. During fieldwork, we closely monitored response levels and implemented a structured reminder strategy, using email and, where needed, targeted telephone follow-up with non-responding providers, and tailoring reminders to boost participation among under-represented provider types and staff groups.

The survey was administered between 6th November 2025 and 5th January 2026.

Analysis combines descriptive statistics with statistical modelling to identify key patterns and explore differences between groups. This includes subgroup analyses by provider type and role, and modelling approaches designed to account for the clustering of staff responses within providers. Population sizes for each provider type and staff group were derived from the Further Education Workforce Data Collection (FEWDC) (2023/24).

Survey data were weighted to account for differential responses by provider type and staff group and to improve representativeness.

While recognising the distinctive characteristics of ACL providers and ITPs, due to the small size of the ACL sample, responses from ACL providers have been grouped with the ITP sample and their collective findings are presented together throughout this report. Overall, 103 responses were achieved from ACL providers (19 leaders, 32 managers and 52 teachers).

Response rates by provider type and staff subgroup are summarised in Table 1. After data cleaning, the final survey sample is 4,440. Overall, achieved responses exceeded targets for leaders and managers but fell short of the teacher target, reflecting lower participation among teachers across provider types.

Despite lower response among teachers in some provider types, the achieved sample size and coverage across provider types and roles provide a robust evidence base for understanding key patterns in FE workforce experiences, particularly when interpreted alongside the weighting and modelling described in the accompanying technical report.

Respondents self-identified their provider type. These responses matched administrative records in 96% of cases but differed for the remaining 4%. Further investigation suggested that some discrepancies may reflect errors in the administrative data, while others may be due to provider group structures masking variation between member organisations, or to respondents working across more than one setting and answering from the perspective of a different provider type from the one that issued the survey invitation. As it was not possible to determine which source was more accurate in these cases, the analysis uses self-reported provider type. Using administrative records instead would result in small changes to the percentages reported in the figures. Further detail is available in the technical report.

While full details of the methodology are provided in the technical report, it is important to note some high-level limitations when interpreting the findings presented here. As with most survey-based research, the responding sample may not be fully representative of all providers (including GFECs, SFCs and ITPs), due to differences in response rates and participation across groups. Although weighting has been applied to improve alignment with the known population profile, this process can only partially correct for these differences and cannot account for all potential sources of bias. As a result, the findings should be interpreted as broadly indicative of patterns across the sector, rather than precise estimates that can be assumed to apply equally across all provider types.

Table 1: Response rates to the 2025 FE Workforce Survey by role and provider type

Provider Type	Staff sub-group	Population	Target*	Sample achieved**	Response Rate – population***	Response Rate – target***
GFEC	Leader	2,607	173	226	9%	131%
	Manager	10,728	712	700 (418/282)	7%	98%
	Teacher	48,957	2,815	1,642	3%	58%
SFC	Leader	350	23	52	15%	226%
	Manager	1,154	77	191 (37/154)	17%	248%
	Teacher	4,675	269	345	7%	128%
ITP/ACL ****	Leader	3,018	180	419	14%	233%
	Manager	6,300	336	321 (241/80)	5%	96%
	Teacher	21,758	917	544	3%	59%
All	Leaders overall	5,975	376	697	12%	185%
	Managers overall	18,182	1,125	1212 (696/516)	7%	108%
	Teachers overall	75,390	4,000	2,531	3%	63%
	Statutory FE sector overall*****	68,471	4,069	2,265	5%	78%
	Total	99,548	5,500	4,440	4%	81%

Source: NFER survey of the FE workforce, 2025 (N=4,442). FEWDC 2023/24

* Note that no target was set for respondents from ACL providers. These were recruited after targets had been set.

** The sample achieved for managers shows the overall number and the split between those without/with teaching responsibilities in brackets. It is not possible to split managers into those with and without teaching responsibilities in the national data, and so targets were set at the aggregate level.

*** Numbers may not sum to totals shown due to rounding

**** ACLs were sampled after the original sample was drawn and, due to the small number of responses, have been grouped with ITP providers for analysis. Overall, 103 responses were received from ACL providers (19 leaders, 32 managers and 52 teachers).

***** Statutory FE sector refers to GFECs and SFCs.

To aid interpretation and presentation, certain response categories have been combined (for example, 'Strongly agree' and 'Tend to agree' are reported as 'Agree'). Aggregated survey response categories have been calculated using the underlying unrounded data, in line with DfE analytical standards. Figures are rounded only at the final stage for presentation purposes. Consequently, aggregated percentages presented in the survey

report may differ by 1 to 2 percentage points from totals derived by summing rounded percentages presented in the technical report.

1.3 Selected characteristics of survey respondents

To provide context for interpreting the findings presented in later chapters, this section provides an overview of the selected characteristics of survey respondents. The FE workforce is not homogeneous: respondents worked in different provider types, occupied different roles, had varied teaching and industry backgrounds, and differed in their employment arrangements and demographic profile. These characteristics are likely to shape staff experiences of workload, pay, wellbeing, professional development and intentions to remain in the sector. Further details on the characteristics of survey respondents are included in the Technical Report.

The survey sample included 4,440 leaders, managers and teachers from GFECs, SFCs, ITPs and ACL providers. Leaders were most commonly in senior executive roles, such as chief executive, principal, managing director or vice-principal/equivalent, with 53% of leaders selecting this as their main role. Managers were much more likely to have curriculum leadership responsibilities: 50% of managers reported oversight of a subject, course, department or programme area as their main role. This distinction is important because later findings show that experiences often differ between strategic leadership roles, management roles and classroom-facing roles.

Respondents also varied in the length of time they had worked at their current provider and in FE more broadly. Staff in ITPs/ACLs were more likely than those in GFECs or SFCs to have been at their current provider for less than three years, at 45%, compared with 30% of respondents in GFECs and 25% in SFCs. Conversely, respondents in GFECs and SFCs were more likely to have been at their current provider for more than five years, at 54% and 57% respectively, compared with 40% of staff in ITPs/ACLs. However, respondents across provider types showed more similar patterns in their total length of time working in FE, with the most common response across all provider types being more than ten years. This suggests that current provider tenure varies more by provider type than overall FE sector experience. These differences matter because staff who are newer to their provider may experience induction, workload, support and progression differently from longer-serving staff.

Among respondents with teaching responsibilities, a substantial proportion had relatively limited teaching experience within FE. Overall, 39% had been teaching in FE for less than five years. This proportion was highest among respondents working in ITPs/ACLs, at 45%, compared with 34% in GFECs and 33% in SFCs. Respondents also varied in the age groups they taught. Almost all respondents working in SFCs mainly taught 16–19-year-olds (97%), compared with 66% of those in GFECs and 21% of those in ITPs/ACLs. By contrast, respondents in ITPs/ACLs were most likely to report mainly teaching adult learners (56%). These differences reflect the different missions and delivery models of

provider types and should be borne in mind when comparing staff experiences across the sector.

Teaching qualifications and professional status also differed by provider type. Respondents in SFCs were much more likely than those in GFECs and ITPs/ACLs to hold a level 7 teaching qualification, such as a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), at 76%, compared with 36% in GFECs and 17% in ITPs/ACLs. SFC respondents were also more likely to hold Qualified Teacher Status, reported by 63%. By contrast, respondents in GFECs and ITPs/ACLs were more likely to report holding none of the listed teaching-related professional statuses, at 51% and 59% respectively. These differences are likely to reflect varied training routes, professional backgrounds and recruitment patterns across FE. They are relevant to interpreting later findings on professional development, career progression and support needs.

Most respondents reported being employed on permanent contracts, and most were contracted to work full time. At least nine in ten respondents in each provider type were on permanent contracts: 97% in SFCs, 92% in GFECs and 90% in ITPs/ACLs. Full-time working was also the most common arrangement among respondents across all provider types. Part-time working was most common among respondents in SFCs, at 30%, compared with 25% in GFECs and 20% in ITPs/ACLs. Respondents in ITPs/ACLs were somewhat more likely than those in college settings to report zero-hours, minimum-hours, flexible-hours or sessional arrangements, although these remained uncommon overall, at 6%, compared with 3% in GFECs and less than 1% in SFCs. These differences are relevant to later discussion of workload, flexibility, pay and retention.

The demographic profile of respondents was broadly similar across provider types, although some differences were evident. Women made up over half of respondents in each provider type, with the proportion highest among respondents in ITPs/ACLs (67%), compared with 55% in GFECs and 53% in SFCs. The age profile was broadly similar across provider types, although SFCs had a slightly younger respondent profile, with 11% aged under 30, compared with 7% in both GFECs and ITPs/ACLs. SFCs also had fewer respondents aged 65 or over (1%, compared with 5% in GFECs and 6% in ITPs/ACLs). Most respondents identified as White, with 77% doing so overall; this proportion was higher in SFCs (84%) than in GFECs and ITPs/ACLs (both 77%). Around one in five respondents reported having a long-term physical or mental health condition, with the proportion highest in GFECs (24%), compared with 19% in ITPs/ACLs and 18% in SFCs.

Overall, the respondent profile provides important context for the rest of the report. It shows that survey findings should not be interpreted as reflecting a single, uniform FE workforce. Differences in role, provider type, teaching background, qualifications, contract type and demographic characteristics are likely to influence how staff experience their work and how they respond to questions about workload, wellbeing, pay, professional development and future career intentions. Where later chapters report differences by role or provider type, these should be understood in light of the different workforce profiles described here.

1.4 Structure of the report

Chapter 1 introduces the study, setting out the policy and workforce context, background to the survey, a methodological overview, including survey design and respondent profile by provider type, and the key characteristics of survey respondents.

Chapter 2 examines respondents' career histories and experience outside the FE sector.

Chapters 3-7 focus on core workforce issues, exploring workload, flexible working, the working environment, wellbeing, and pay and financial incentives, drawing on descriptive analysis and modelling.

Chapter 8 examines recruitment and retention challenges, including subject-specific pressures, barriers and enablers, and strategies used by providers.

Chapter 9 explores initial teacher training and continuing professional development, including access, quality, barriers and future training needs.

Chapters 10-11 consider what staff value about working in FE and their future career plans, including intentions to remain in or leave the sector.

Chapters 12-13 provide focused analyses of the experiences of early career teachers and dual professionals.

2. Career history and experience outside of the FE sector

In recognition of the fluid nature of the FE workforce and the movement of staff between FE and industry, this chapter explores survey respondents' experiences of working outside of FE, including, where relevant, where they were working immediately prior to FE.

2.1 Where respondents were working prior to entering FE

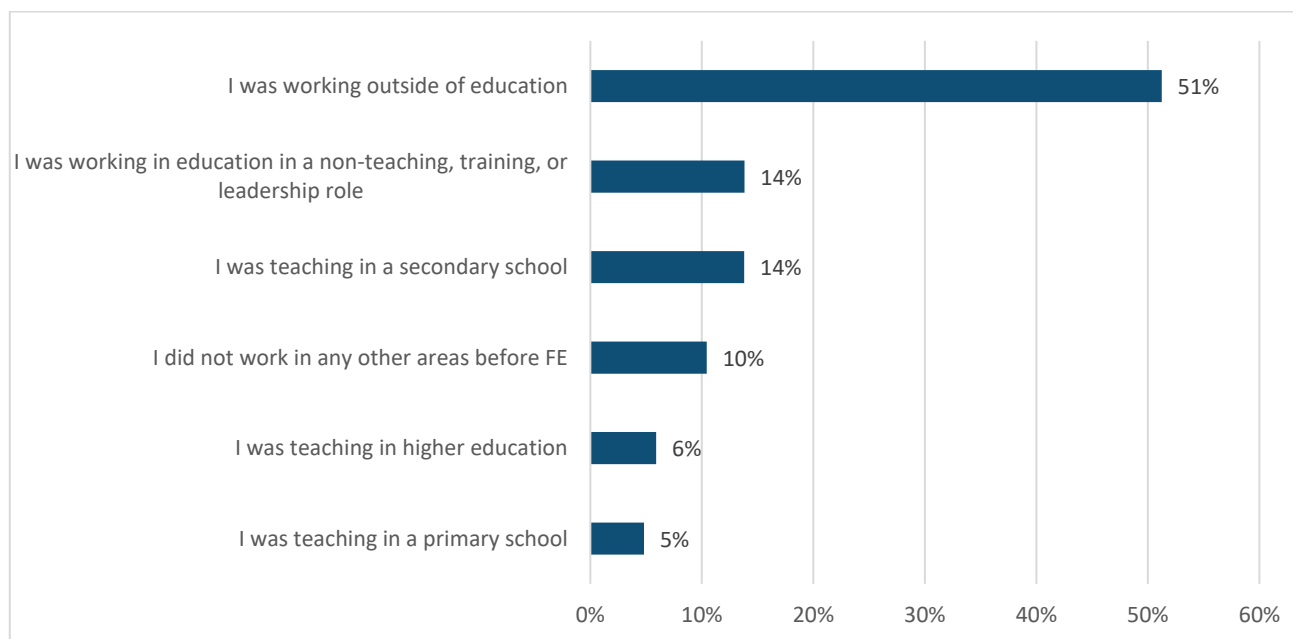
The vast majority of leaders, managers and teachers (90%) reported having experience of working outside FE prior to entering the sector. This means that only 10% of respondents had not worked in any other sector before entering FE.

Just over half of survey respondents (51%) had been working outside education immediately before they started working in FE. The remainder had been working in education in a teaching or non-teaching role. Around a quarter had been teaching in another phase:

- 14% in a secondary school
- 6% in higher education
- 5% in a primary school.

An additional 14% had been working in education in a non-teaching role.

Figure 1: Working situation prior to starting work in FE



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 1.11: Which of the following best describes your working situation immediately before you started working in FE?

Single response. All respondents. N=4,439

Variation by role and provider type

There were variations by role, with overall patterns highlighting varied entry routes into FE, with differences linked to current role and teaching responsibilities:

- Around half of respondents across all roles reported working outside education immediately before entering FE (49–54%).
- Managers without teaching responsibilities and leaders were most likely to have previously worked in non-teaching education roles (26% and 19% respectively).
- Similarly, managers with teaching responsibilities and teachers were more likely to report previous teaching experience, particularly in primary or secondary schools.

There were also variations by provider type:

GFECs

- Just over half of respondents (53%) reported working outside of education prior to entering FE.
- Around one in seven had been teaching in secondary schools (14%).
- 13% had worked in non-teaching education roles.
- 10% reported no prior work outside FE.

SFCs

- The most common entry route was from secondary school teaching (52%).
- Around a quarter (24%) had been working outside of education before FE.
- 8% had worked in non-teaching education roles.
- A similar proportion (8%) reported no prior work outside FE.

ITPs/ACLs

- As with GFECs, just over half (53%) reported working outside of education prior to FE.
- 16% had worked in non-teaching education roles, the highest across provider types.
- Small proportions reported prior teaching in higher education (7%), primary schools (6%) or secondary schools (5%).
- 12% reported no prior work outside FE.

Variation by contract type

There is some variation by contract type, with part-time dual professionals more likely to have been working outside of education (57%) compared to 53% of those on full-time contracts, 43% of those working part-time in FE only and 51% of those on other types of contracts.

2.2 Summary

The findings in this chapter suggest that the FE workforce draws heavily on experience gained outside the sector. Nine in ten survey respondents had worked outside FE before entering the sector, and just over half had been working outside education immediately beforehand. This reinforces the importance of FE's ability to attract people from wider labour markets, in addition to supporting internal progression and traditional teacher training routes.

The findings also show that entry routes into FE differ by provider type, which helps explain some of the qualification differences described in the previous chapter. GFECs and ITPs/ACLs drew most strongly on people who had been working outside education, while SFCs drew heavily on teachers from secondary schools. This aligns with the finding that SFC respondents were more likely to hold level 7 teaching qualifications and QTS, while respondents in GFECs and ITPs/ACLs were more likely to report lower-level teaching qualifications or no listed teaching-related professional status. This suggests that recruitment strategies may need to reflect both the labour markets from which provider types recruit and the different training and professional development needs of new entrants.

These patterns have important implications for retention as well as recruitment. A workforce with substantial prior experience outside FE is likely to bring valuable occupational knowledge, sector insight and professional networks, but it may also have alternative employment options beyond FE. This means that retention is likely to depend on whether pay, workload, flexibility, career development and professional support compare favourably with opportunities available in other sectors.

The chapter also highlights the importance of recognising different forms of prior expertise. Some respondents entered FE from teaching roles in other phases, while others brought industry or non-teaching education experience. Recruitment and induction approaches therefore need to reflect varied starting points: some new entrants may need support to adapt occupational expertise to teaching, while others may need support to transfer existing pedagogical experience into FE contexts.

Overall, the findings underline FE's distinctive position as a permeable sector, with movement into FE from education and industry. This is a strength, because it enables providers to draw on a wide range of professional backgrounds. However, it also means that recruitment and retention policies need to account for competition from both schools

and industry, and for the different motivations, expectations and support needs of staff entering FE through different routes.

3. Workload

This chapter examines the hours worked by leaders, managers and teachers, and, for those with teaching responsibilities, the time spent teaching in the classroom. It also explores the time spent on non-teaching tasks and respondents' perceptions of whether this is too much, too little, or about right.

3.1 Hours worked in full working week

The survey asked all respondents 'In your most recent full working week, approximately how many hours did you work?' Respondents were informed that this referred to their last working week (Monday to Sunday) that was not shortened by illness, religious observance, public holidays, or other exceptional circumstances, and that time spent travelling to work should not be included.

The mean response among all full-time workers was 43.5 hours. Based on the survey data, we estimate that the true average for the wider population is likely to be between 43.0 and 44.0 hours (95% confidence interval (CI)). For part-time workers, the average reported working week was 31.0 hours (95% CI: 30.0 to 32.0 hours).

Variation by role and provider type

There was notable variation in hours worked by role, among both full-time and part-time staff:

- Managers with teaching responsibilities worked longer hours on average than all other roles at 47.2 hours for full-time staff (95% CI: 46.0 to 48.4); part-time staff worked on average 35.9 hours (95% CI: 31.4 to 40.3).
- By contrast, managers with no teaching responsibilities worked fewer hours than other roles (41.2 hours for full-time staff (95% CI: 40.4 to 42.1); and 28.1 hours for part-time staff (95% CI: 23.4 to 30.9).
- On average, full-time leaders worked 44.7 hours (95% CI: 43.7 to 45.6); part-time leaders worked 32.2 hours (95% CI: 29.5 to 34.9).
- Finally, full-time teachers reported working an average of 43.4 hours per week (95% CI: 42.7 to 44.0). Part-time teachers worked an average of 31.0 hours per week (95% CI: 29.9 to 32.2).

There was also variation in average hours worked across provider and contract types. Overall, those in SFCs reported the longest working hours, on average, followed by those in GFECs and then those in ITPs/ACLs:

- Among full-time staff, average weekly hours were highest in SFCs (49.1 hours), followed by GFECs (44.2 hours), and lowest in ITPs/ACLs (40.9 hours).

- A similar pattern was observed for part-time staff, with SFC respondents reporting the highest average hours (33.1), followed by GFEC respondents (31.5) and ITP/ACL respondents (29.1).

3.2 Hours spent teaching

The survey also asked respondents with teaching responsibilities 'In your most recent full working week, approximately how many hours did you spend teaching in the classroom (including online classes)?'

The mean response among all full-time workers was 21.1 hours per week (95% CI: 20.6 to 21.7) and for part-time workers it was 15.5 hours (95% CI: 14.8 to 16.2).

Variation by role and provider type

Not surprisingly, both full- and part-time teachers reported working longer hours in the classroom, on average, than managers with teaching responsibilities (21.9 hours and 15.5 hours versus 14.6 and 14.4 hours respectively). Combined with the data in the previous section, this suggests that, on average, full-time managers with teaching responsibilities are spending around 30% of their time teaching. Their part-time counterparts spend less time teaching but this makes up a greater proportion of their working time, at 40%. By contrast, teachers spend approximately half of their working time teaching, regardless of whether they work full-time (51%) or part-time (50%).

There were also variations by provider type. Overall, teaching hours varied by provider type, with staff in ITPs/ACLs spending fewer hours teaching, on average, than their counterparts in GFECs and SFCs, for both full-time and part-time roles:

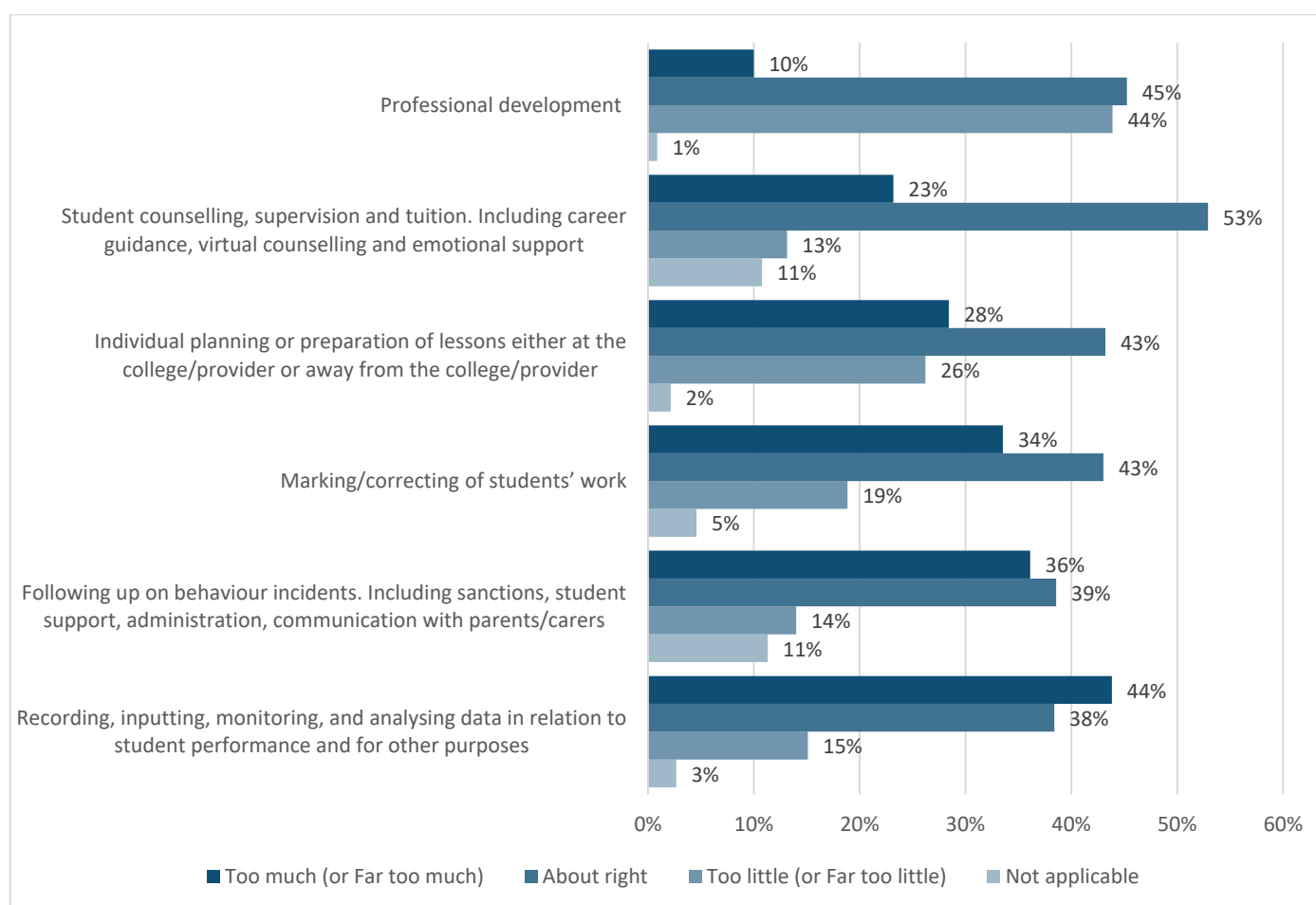
- Among full-time teaching staff, average teaching hours were similar in SFCs (22.3 hours) and GFECs (22.2 hours), and lower in ITPs/ACLs (18.2 hours).
- Among part-time staff, those in GFECs also reported similar teaching hours (16.0) than to those in SFCs (15.9), with ITPs/ACLs again reporting the lowest average teaching hours (13.6).

3.3 Time spent on non-teaching tasks

Time spent by teachers on activities outside of lessons

All respondents with a teaching role were asked whether they thought the amount of time they spent on a range of activities outside of lessons was too little, too much, or about right.

Figure 2: Teachers' perceptions about whether the amount of time they spent on activities outside of the classroom was too little, too much, or about right



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.5: Across the whole academic year, is the amount of time you spend outside lessons on the following far too little, too little, about right, too much, far too much, or is the statement not applicable to you. Single response. All respondents with teaching responsibilities. N=3,042

Looking at which activities respondents said they spent too much time on:

- More respondents said they spent too much time on data activities relating to student performance than any other activity, at 44%.
- More than one in three respondents also felt they spent too much time on 'Following up on behaviour incidents' (36%) and 'Marking/correcting students' work' (34%).
- A minority of respondents (10%) said they spent too much time on professional development.

Turning to which activities respondents said they spend too little time on:

- 44% of respondents said they do not spend enough time on their professional development, the highest rate of the six activities.

- Over one in four (26%) respondents said they do not spend enough on preparing and planning lessons.
- A relatively small proportion of respondents (less than 20%) said they do not spend enough time on all other activities. Student counselling, supervision and tuition saw the lowest rate, at 13%, but this was not because respondents were particularly likely to say they spend too much time on this. Instead, this statement received the highest rate of respondents saying the amount of time they spend on it was 'About right', at 53%.

The rate of respondents replying 'Not applicable' to each statement also varied. For 'Student counselling, supervision and tuition' and 'Following up on behaviour incidents' the rates of 'Not applicable' responses was more than 10%. This suggests a small minority of respondents do not engage in these activities.

Variation by provider type

We can also look at difference in responses by provider:

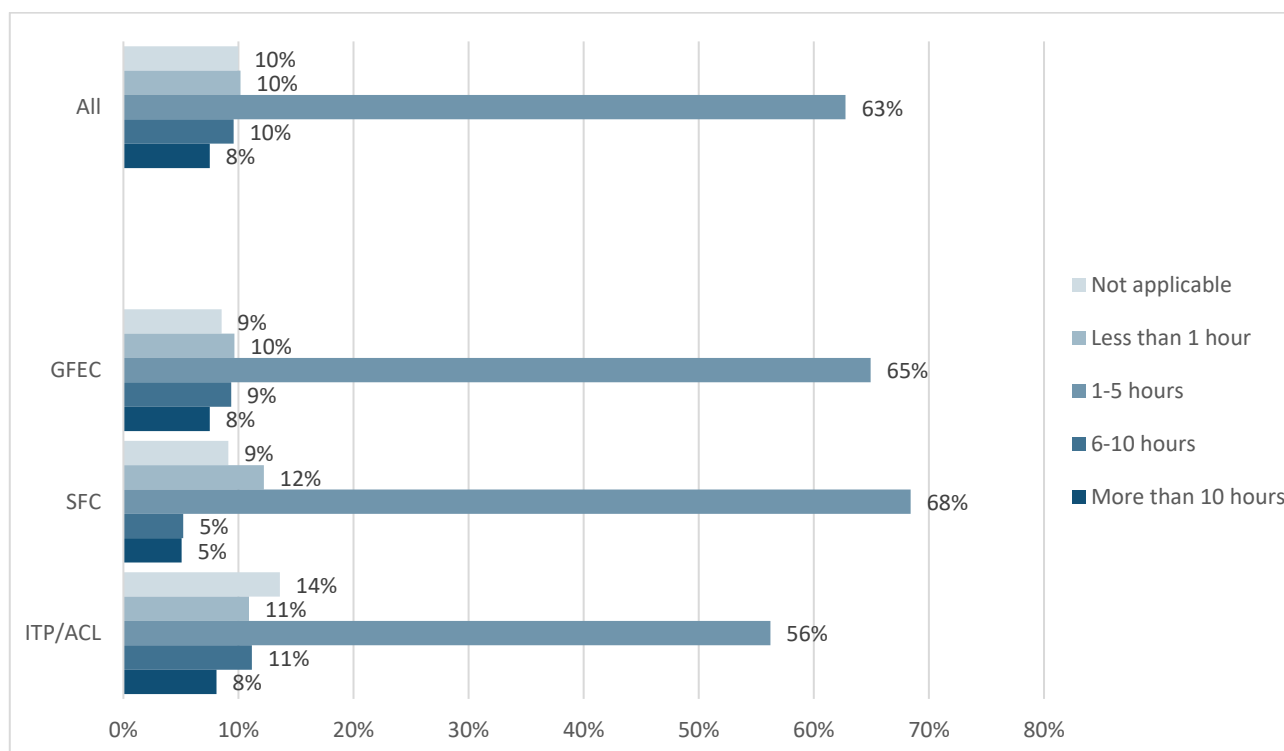
- Respondents in ITPs/ACLs were less likely to say they spent too much time on activities than their counterparts in either GFECs or SFCs. This was true for all six statements and, for some statements, the gap is large. For example, just 11% of respondents in ITPs/ACLs said they spent too much time (or far too much time) on behaviour incidents. For those in GFECs or SFCs, the rate was 46% and 47% respectively.
- On a related note, respondents in ITPs/ACLs were generally more likely to say the amount of time on a given activity was 'About right' than their counterparts in other providers. For example, 61% of respondents in these settings said this in relation to marking, compared to 37% in GFECs and 33% in SFCs. Respondents in ITPs were also more likely to give a 'Not applicable' response. For example, 25% gave this response when asked about time spent on behaviour incidents, compared to 6% of respondents in GFECs and just 3% in SFCs. This may suggest more respondents in ITPs/ACLs do not spend any time on some activities more often than at other providers.
- Respondents in GFECs and SFCs tended to give similar responses in terms of where they spend too much time (or far too much time). The biggest difference is seen in marking; 38% of GFEC respondents said they spent too much time on this, compared to 54% of those in SFCs.
- Respondents in GFECs were more likely than their counterparts to say they spent too little time (or far too little time) on all activities.

Time spent by staff with teaching responsibilities on pastoral support for learners

Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were asked how many hours, on average, they spent per week on pastoral support for learners. Their responses are summarised below and are broken down by provider type.

Just under two in three respondents (63%) reported spending between one and five hours per week on pastoral support. A minority reported spending longer than this, with 30% spending 6–10 hours and 10% more than ten hours per week. At the other end of the spectrum, 10% reported spending less than one hour per week, while a further 10% selected ‘Not applicable’, which may indicate that they did not have pastoral support responsibilities.

Figure 3: Average time per week spent on pastoral support for learners across all respondents with teaching responsibilities, by provider type



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.3: On average how many hours per week do you spend on pastoral support for learners?

Response categories have been collapsed.

Single response. All respondents with teaching responsibilities. N=3,043

Responses 1-2 hours and 3-5 hours have been grouped together to give 1-5 hours to aid graph interpretation

When the data were broken down by provider type, respondents working in SFCs were found to spend less time on pastoral support than those working in other provider types. For example, only 10% of respondents from SFCs reported spending more than five hours per week on pastoral support, compared with 17% of respondents in GFECs and 19% of those working in ITPs/ACLs.

Time spent by leaders on activities

Leaders and managers without a teaching role were asked about their views on how much time they spent on a range of management activities. The results are presented below.

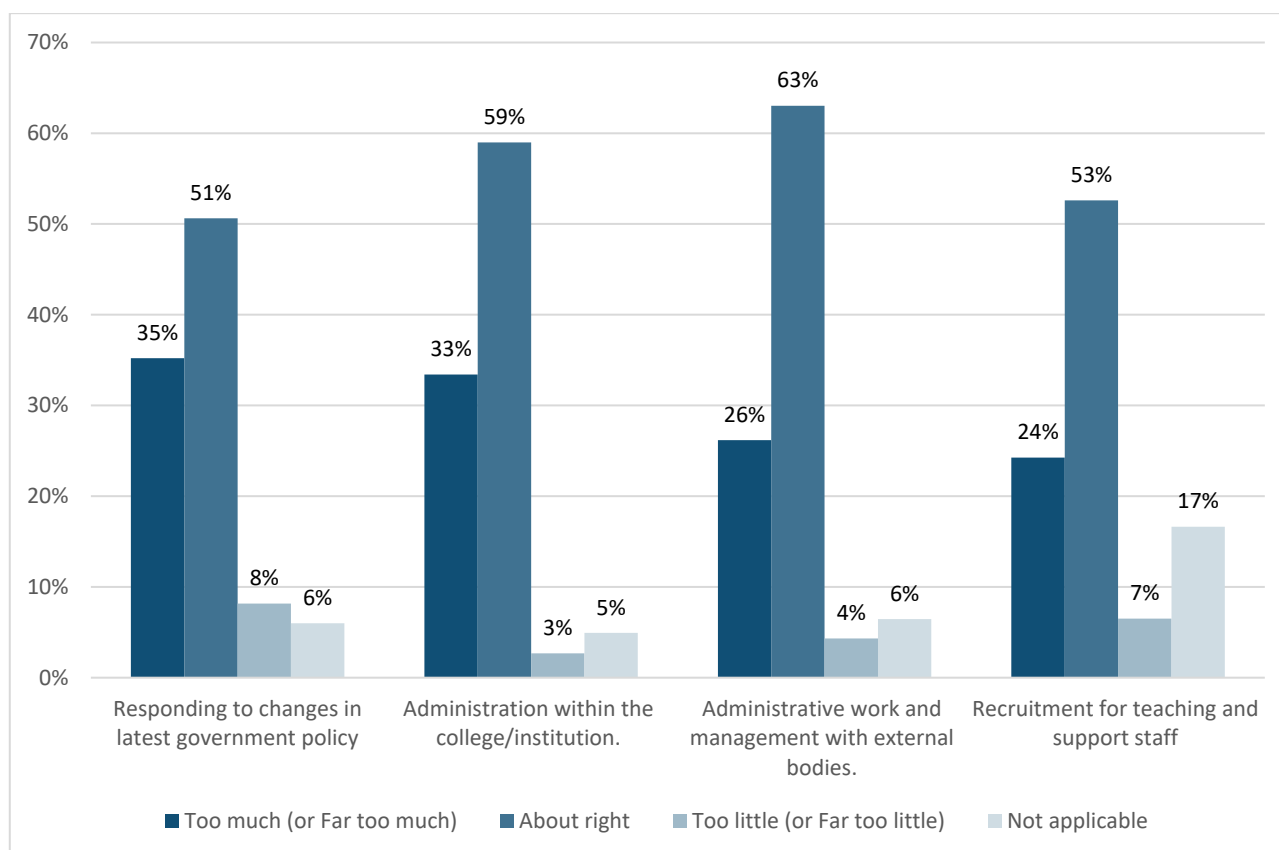
Overall, respondents gave a broadly positive assessment of the amount of time they spent on these activities. For each activity, more than half reported that the amount of time they spent was 'about right'.

Of the six activities, respondents were most likely to report spending too much (or far too much) time on responding to changes in government policy (35%) and internal administration (33%). They were least likely to report spending too much time on performance management of staff (21%) and data analysis (22%).

Respondents rarely said they spent too little time (or far too little time) on each of the six activities. 9% said they spent too little time on data analysis, which was the highest rate.

Finally, 17% of respondents gave a not applicable response when asked about how much time they spent on recruitment. This response was substantially more common for this activity than any other. This may suggest that some FE leaders are not involved in recruitment or that the provider they have worked for has not routinely recruited staff recently.

Figure 4: Leaders' and non-teaching managers' perceptions of whether the time spent on specific activities was too little, too much, or about right



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.6: Across the whole academic year, is the amount of time you spend on the following far too little, too little, about right, too much, far too much, or is the statement not applicable to you?

Single response. Leaders and Managers without teaching responsibilities. N=1,392

Variation by provider type

- Across all activities and provider types, leaders and managers were most likely to say the amount of time they spent was 'about right', though views varied by activity.
- Administration within the college/institution was most negatively perceived in GFECs, where over two in five respondents (41%) reported spending too much or far too much time. Respondents in SFCs and ITPs/ACLs were most likely to say the time spent was about right (67% for both).
- For administrative work with external bodies, around two-thirds of respondents (63%) across all provider types felt the time spent was about right, but just over a quarter in GFECs (28%) and SFCs (24%) reported spending too much or far too much time on this.
- Performance management of staff was viewed most positively, particularly in SFCs and ITPs/ACLs, where around three-quarters of respondents (72% and 76%, respectively) reported the time spent was about right. Respondents in GFECs were more likely to report spending too much time on this activity (30%).

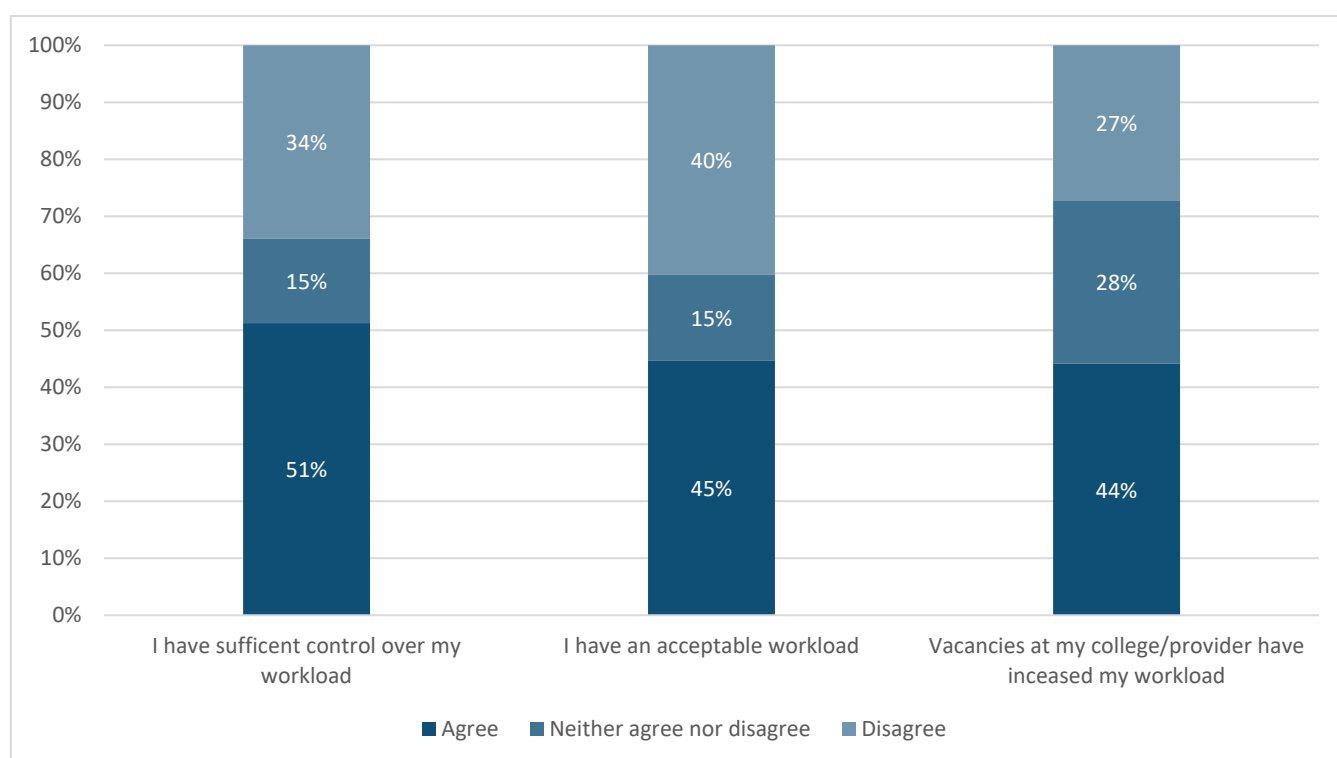
- For data analysis, most respondents felt the time spent was about right, especially in SFCs (72%). Respondents in GFECs were the most likely to report spending too little time on data analysis (11%).
- Recruitment had the highest proportion of 'not applicable' responses across all provider types (17%), suggesting that a substantial minority of leaders were not directly involved in recruitment. Among those for whom it was applicable, respondents in GFECs (31%) were more likely than those in SFCs (17%) and ITPs/ACLs (19%) to report spending too much time.
- Responding to changes in government policy was consistently identified as a pressure point, with around one third (35%) of respondents across all provider types reporting spending too much time or far too much time.

3.4 Satisfaction with workload

Finally, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with three statements about workload during the current academic year. Views were mixed, but the findings pointed to clear tensions between workload control, overall acceptability of workload, and the impact of vacancies.

- Just over half of respondents (51%) agreed that they had sufficient control over their workload, while a further 15% neither agreed nor disagreed. Over a third (34%) disagreed, suggesting that a substantial minority felt they lacked control over how their workload was managed.
- Perceptions of workload acceptability were divided. While 45% of respondents agreed that they had an acceptable workload, 40% disagreed, indicating that concerns about workload levels were widespread. A further 15% neither agreed nor disagreed, suggesting some uncertainty or variation in individual experiences.
- Around 44% respondents agreed that unfilled vacancies at their college or provider had increased their workload, compared with 27% who disagreed. A relatively large proportion (28%) neither agreed nor disagreed, indicating that the impact of vacancies was not experienced uniformly across respondents.

Figure 5: Attitudes towards workload



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.4: Thinking about the current academic year, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Single response. All respondents. N=4,435

Variation by role and provider type

Analysis by role showed that workload challenges were more pronounced for managers with teaching responsibilities and teachers than for managers without teaching responsibilities and leaders.

Control over workload

- The substantial majority of leaders (88%) and managers without teaching responsibilities (74%) agreed that they had sufficient control over their workload. By comparison, fewer than half of teachers (46%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (43%) agreed that they had sufficient control over their workload.

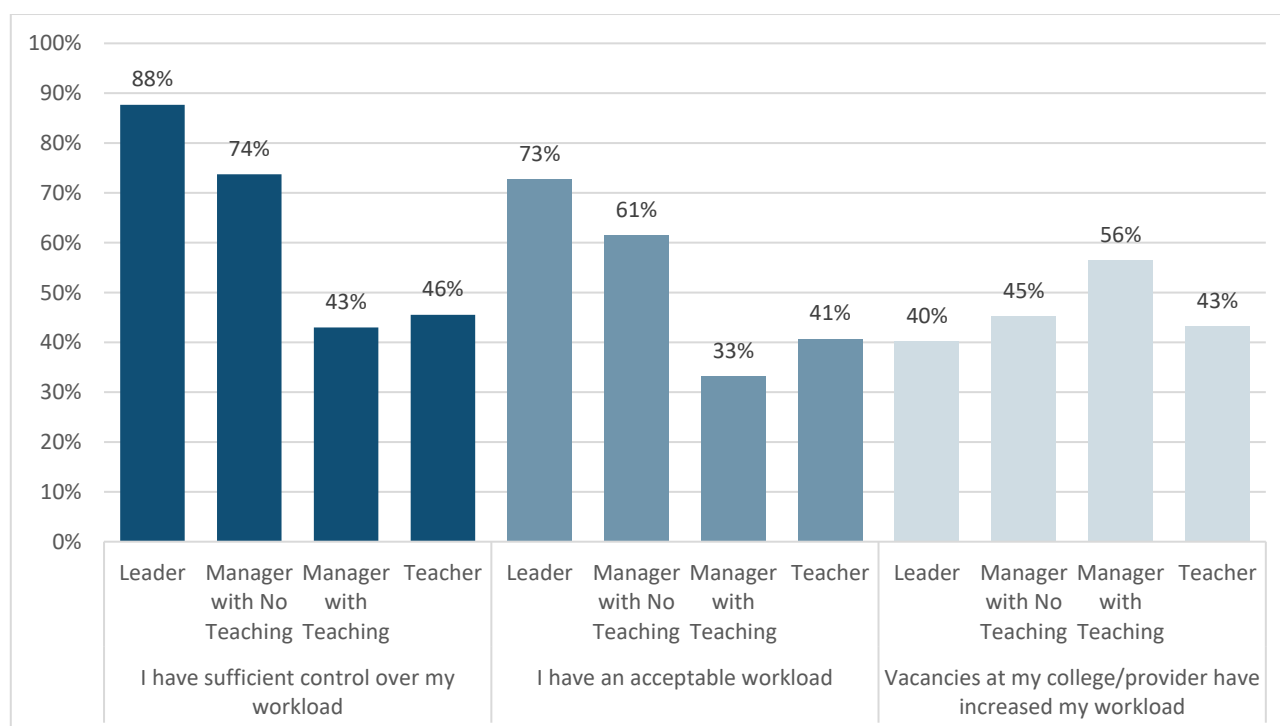
Acceptable workload

- Almost three-quarters of leaders (73%) and 61% of managers without teaching responsibilities agreed that their workload was acceptable. By contrast, only a third (33%) of managers with teaching responsibilities and four in ten (41%) teachers agreed that they had an acceptable workload.

Impact of unfilled vacancies on workload

- Managers with teaching responsibilities were the most likely to agree that vacancies at their college or provider had increased their workload (56%), compared with managers without teaching responsibilities (45%), teachers (43%), and leaders (40%).

Figure 6: Attitudes towards workload, split by role (proportion in agreement)



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.4: Thinking about the current academic year, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Only 'agree' responses are shown.

Single response. All respondents. N=4,435

Analysis by provider type showed that staff in ITPs/ACLs were generally more positive about workload than staff in other settings, while staff in SFCs tended to be the least positive. For example:

Control over workload

- Nearly three-quarters of staff in ITPs/ACLs (72%) agreed that they had sufficient control over their workload, compared with 38% of staff in SFCs and 42% of staff in GFECs.
- Over half of staff in SFCs (51%) disagreed that they had control over their workload, compared with just over two-fifths of staff in GFECs (43%).

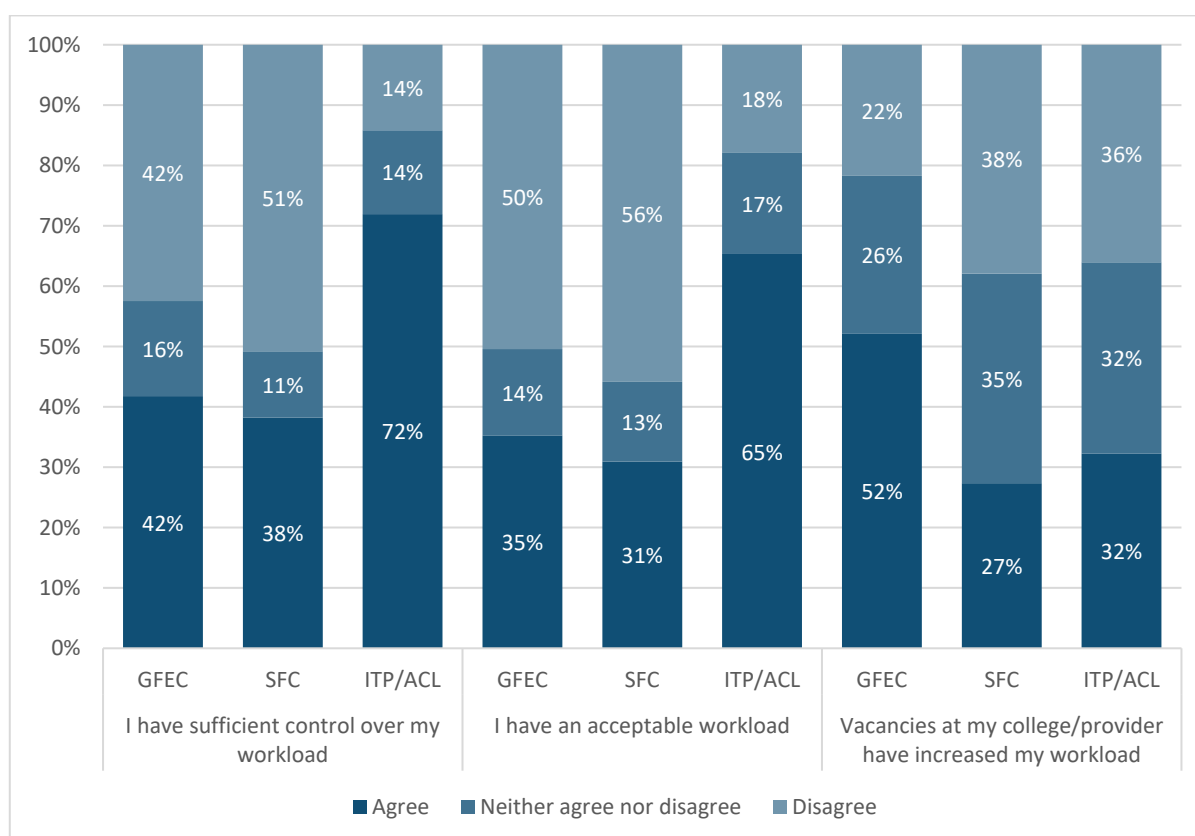
Acceptable workload

- Around two-thirds of staff in ITPs/ACLs (65%) agreed that they had an acceptable workload, compared with 31% of staff in SFCs and 35% of staff in GFECs.
- Over half of respondents in both SFCs and GFECs disagreed that they had an acceptable workload (56% and 50% respectively).

Impact of unfilled vacancies on workload

- Unfilled vacancies had the greatest reported impact on staff in GFECs, with over half (52%) agreeing that vacancies had increased their workload. This compared with just over a quarter of staff in SFCs (27%) and around one-third of those in ITPs/ACLs (32%).

Figure 7: Attitudes towards workload, split by provider type



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.4: Thinking about the current academic year, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Single response. All respondents. N=4,435

3.5 Summary

This chapter shows that workload is a significant pressure for many FE staff, especially teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities. Full-time staff reported working an

average of 43.5 hours in their most recent full working week, with managers who teach reporting the longest hours. Workload pressures were also more pronounced in SFCs and GFECs than in ITPs/ACLs.

For staff with teaching responsibilities, workload concerns were not only about teaching hours, but also about activities outside lessons. Respondents were most likely to say they spent too much time on data activities relating to student performance, following up behaviour incidents, and marking or correcting students' work. At the same time, many reported spending too little time on professional development and lesson planning, suggesting that workload pressures may be limiting time for activities that support teaching quality and professional growth.

Perceptions of workload were divided. While 45% agreed that their workload was acceptable, 40% disagreed, and 44% agreed that unfilled vacancies had increased their workload. Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were least positive about workload acceptability and control, while staff in GFECs and SFCs were less positive than those in ITPs/ACLs.

Overall, the findings suggest that workload is central to recruitment and retention in FE. High working hours, limited control over workload, pressure from non-teaching tasks and the impact of vacancies may make FE roles less sustainable, particularly for classroom-facing staff. Addressing workload is therefore likely to be important both for retaining existing staff and for making FE roles more attractive to potential recruits, as further evidenced in Chapter 11.

4. Flexible working

This chapter examines flexible working, explored in terms of arrangements that allow leaders, managers and teachers to vary the amount, timing or location of their work. It also explores the extent to which staff were satisfied with the flexible working options available to them at their current college or training provider.

4.1 Use of flexible working

Respondents were asked whether they currently worked in any of a range of flexible working arrangements. They were able to select all options that applied. The findings are presented below.

Just over half (55%) reported that they were currently making use of some form of flexible working arrangement. By contrast, just under half (45%) reported that none of the listed flexible working arrangements applied to them, highlighting a relatively even split in experiences.

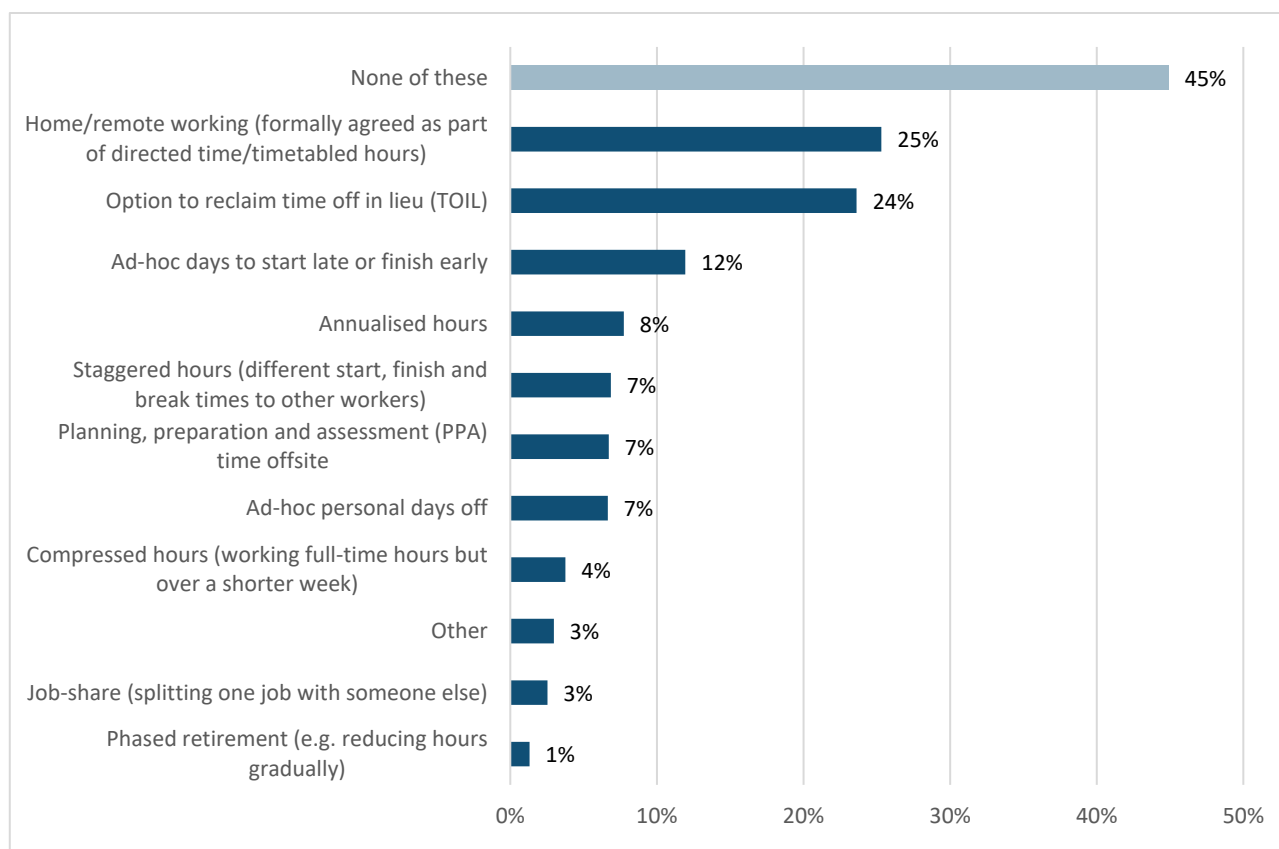
The most frequently reported flexible working arrangement was home or remote working that was formally agreed as part of directed or timetabled time, which was selected by a quarter of respondents (25%). This suggested that although remote working was available to some staff, this was not universal.

Around one quarter of respondents (24%) reported having the option to reclaim time off in lieu (TOIL), making this one of the more common forms of flexibility in practice.

More informal or ad-hoc forms of flexibility were less common. Around one in eight respondents (12%) reported being able to start late or finish early on an ad-hoc basis, while fewer than one in ten reported access to annualised hours (8%), staggered hours (7%), Planning, Preparation and Assessment (PPA) time offsite (7%) or ad-hoc personal days off (7%).

More structural or longer-term flexible working arrangements were rare. Only small minorities reported compressed hours (4%), job-share arrangements (3%) or phased retirement (1%).

Figure 8: Leader, manager and teacher flexible working arrangements



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.7: Do you currently work in any of the following ways?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Multiple response. All leaders, managers and teachers. N=4,436.

Variation by role and provider type

- Staff in roles without teaching responsibilities were more likely to report using flexible working arrangements overall, with the highest uptake being among managers with no teaching responsibilities (72%), followed by leaders (63%).
- By contrast, over half of managers with teaching responsibilities (57%) and teachers (52%) reported making use of flexible working arrangements.
- Almost half of managers with teaching responsibilities (43%) and teachers (48%) reported that none of the listed flexible working arrangements applied to them.
- Home or remote working was much more prevalent among staff without teaching responsibilities, with uptake highest amongst leaders (41%) and managers without teaching roles (44%), compared with just over one in five managers with teaching responsibilities and teachers (both 21%).
- Teachers were least likely to report access to informal flexibility. Only around one in ten reported being able to start late or finish early on an ad-hoc basis, compared with around one-fifth of respondents in other roles.

- There was marked variation by provider type in the use of home or remote working. Nearly half of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (45%) reported this arrangement, compared with much smaller proportions in GFECs (16%) and SFCs (11%).

Variation by other characteristics

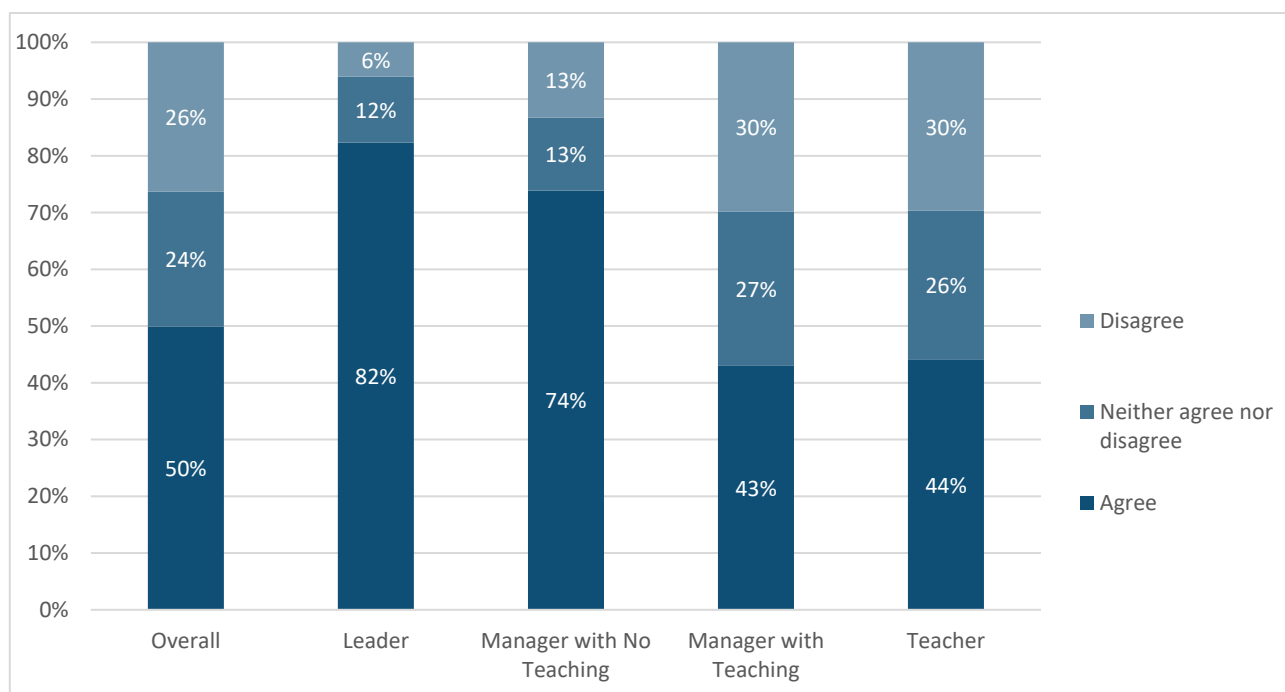
- Women were more likely to report working flexibly than men, 58% compared to 51%.
- With regards to specific flexible working approaches, women are more likely than men to make use of home/remote working (29% and 20%, respectively).
- By contrast, there was little difference by contract type. 56% of those on full-time contracts reported working flexibly, compared to 54% of those on part-time contracts, regardless of whether they were dual professionals or not.
- Within this, there is little difference for specific flexible working arrangements, with the exception of home/remote working. Those on full-time contracts are more likely to make use of home/remote working (27%) compared to those working part-time in FE only or dual professions (24% and 19%, respectively).

4.2 Views on flexible working

Respondents were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the availability of flexible working options. The findings are presented below.

Overall, half of respondents (50%) reported being satisfied. Patterns by role and provider type closely mirrored those reported in Section 4.1, indicating considerable variation in agreement across the workforce.

Figure 9: Level of satisfaction with availability of flexible working options, by role



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.8: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'I am satisfied with the flexible working options available to me at my current college/training provider'

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response. All leaders, managers and teachers. N=4,435.

Specifically:

- Across roles, respondents without teaching responsibilities were much more likely to report satisfaction with the flexible working arrangements available to them. More than four in five leaders (82%) and almost three-quarters of managers without teaching responsibilities (74%) agreed that they were satisfied, compared with fewer than half of managers with teaching responsibilities (43%) and teachers (44%).
- Marked differences were also evident by provider type. Nearly three-quarters of respondents working in ITPs/ACLs (73%) reported being satisfied with the availability of flexible working options, compared with much lower proportions of respondents in GFECs (39%) and SFCs (36%).
- Conversely, there are few differences by gender. 51% of women reported being satisfied with the availability of flexible working options compared to 48% of men.
- Similarly, there are few notable differences by contract type, with 49% of full-time staff reporting being satisfied with the availability of flexible working options. This compares to 45% of part-time, dual professionals and 53% of part-time, FE only respondents.

4.3 Summary

This chapter shows that flexible working is already a feature of employment for many FE staff, but access to it is uneven across roles and provider types. Just over half of respondents reported using at least one form of flexible working, while just under half reported that none of the listed arrangements applied to them. This suggests that flexible working is available within the sector, but not yet consistently accessible across the workforce.

The most common forms of flexible working were home or remote working and time off in lieu, while more structural arrangements such as compressed hours, job sharing and phased retirement were rare. This indicates that flexibility in FE may often be limited to specific activities, roles or circumstances, rather than forming part of a broader redesign of working patterns. From a recruitment and retention perspective, this matters because flexibility is likely to be an important part of the employment offer, particularly for staff comparing FE with opportunities in schools, industry or other sectors.

Access to flexible working varied substantially by role. Leaders and managers without teaching responsibilities were much more likely than teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities to use home or remote working and to be satisfied with the flexible working options available to them. This reflects the constraints associated with teaching timetables and learner-facing work but also highlights a potential retention risk for teaching staff, who are among the groups most exposed to workload pressures mentioned elsewhere in the report. Where flexibility is perceived as less available to teaching staff, it may limit providers' ability to retain staff who need greater control over when or where they work.

There were also marked differences by provider type. Respondents in ITPs/ACLs were much more likely than those in GFECs or SFCs to report home or remote working and to be satisfied with flexible working options. This may reflect differences in delivery models, organisational structures and learner groups, but it also suggests that some forms of flexibility may be more feasible in certain FE settings than others. For GFECs and SFCs, where satisfaction with flexible working was lower, limited flexibility may add to wider recruitment and retention pressures, particularly where staff also face high workload, lower pay satisfaction or competition from other sectors.

Overall, the findings suggest that flexible working is an important but currently unevenly distributed part of the FE employment offer. While flexibility may help attract and retain staff, particularly where it is embedded in organisational practice, its benefits are less evident for teaching staff and those in college settings. This points to the need for providers and policymakers to consider how flexibility can be made more meaningful for classroom-facing roles, while recognising the operational constraints of FE delivery. Greater attention to flexible working could strengthen recruitment and retention strategies, but it is unlikely to be sufficient on its own without parallel action on workload, pay, career development and staff support.

5. Working environment

This chapter explores leaders', managers' and teachers' views on their workplace, including their views on support, resources, and opportunities for career progression. The findings are split between those with teaching responsibilities, and those without.

5.1 Staff with teaching responsibilities

Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were asked about their views on different aspects of their workplace. Overall, perceptions were most positive in relation to support from colleagues and managers, and least positive in relation to resources, workload-related conditions, and career progression.

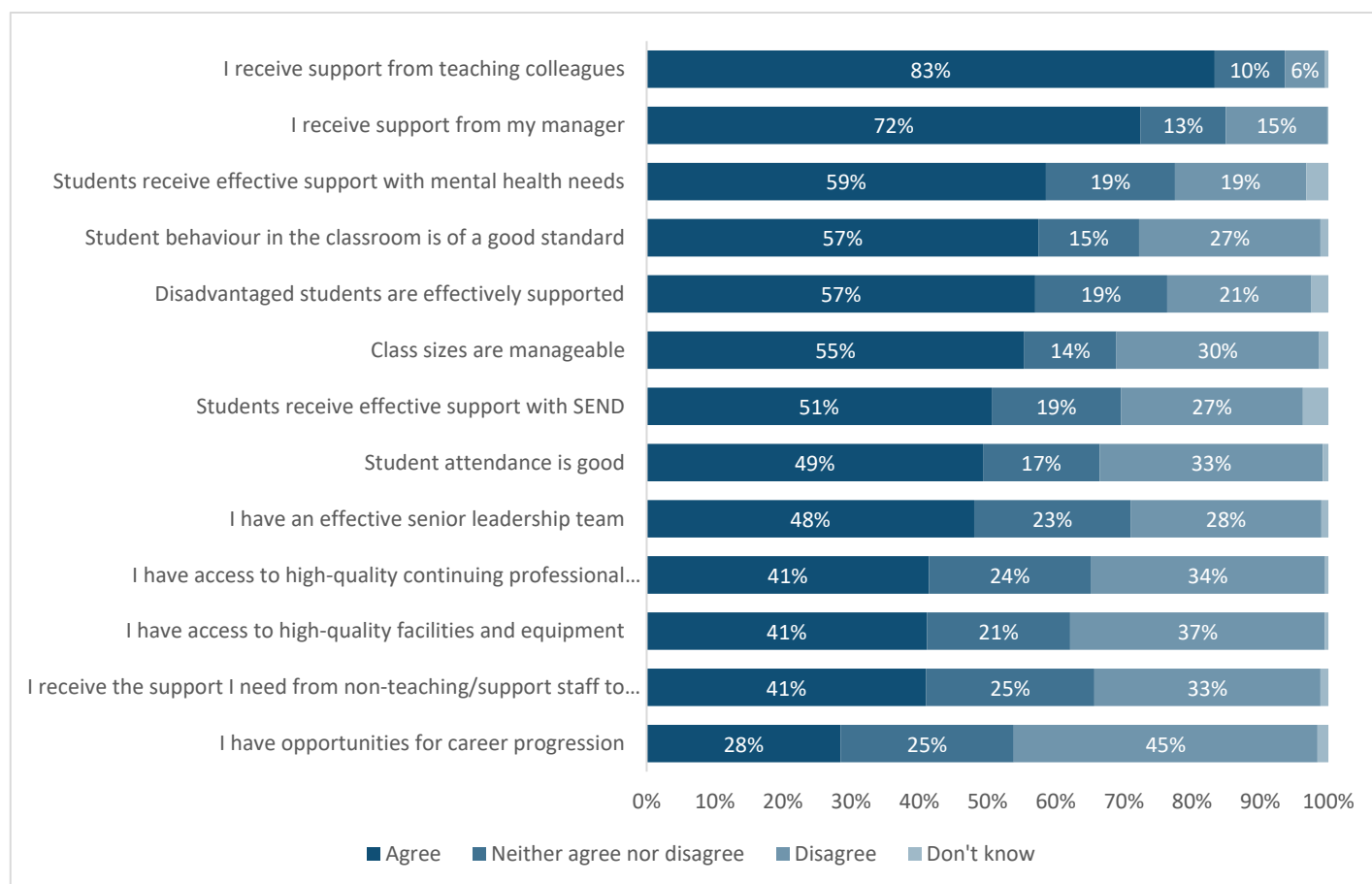
Most respondents agreed that they received support from teaching colleagues, with over four in five (83%) reporting this. A slightly lower proportion (72%) agreed that they received support from managers, with a minority (15%) disagreeing.

Perceptions of student support and the learning environment were more mixed. Around three in five respondents agreed that students received effective support with mental health needs (59%) and that disadvantaged students were effectively supported (57%). Similar proportions agreed that student behaviour was of a good standard (57%) and that class sizes were manageable (55%), though around three in ten disagreed with each of these statements. Views were slightly less positive in relation to support for students with SEND, with just over half (51%) agreeing that these students received effective support, and in relation to student attendance, with a similar proportion (49%) agreeing that attendance was good.

Fewer than half of respondents (48%) agreed that they had an effective senior leadership team. Access to high-quality CPD, facilities and equipment and receiving support from non-teaching staff to help reduce workload were also viewed less positively (all 41%), with only around two in five respondents agreeing in each case.

The least positive views were expressed in relation to career progression. Just over a quarter of respondents (28%) agreed that they had opportunities to progress, while nearly half (45%) disagreed, making this the area of greatest dissatisfaction overall.

Figure 10: Teaching staff views on aspects of their working environment



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 5.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your workplace?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response for each statement. All teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities. N=3,043.

Percentages below 5% are not shown.

Variation by provider type

- Across nearly all statements, respondents working in ITPs/ACLs expressed the most positive views, with higher agreement on student outcomes, support, leadership, resources, and career progression than those in college settings.
- SFCs tended to sit between ITPs/ACLs and GFECs on most measures, though views on student behaviour being good were particularly positive in SFCs (81%), with much higher agreement than in other provider types (48% for GFECs; 74% for ITPs/ACLs).
- Respondents in GFECs were consistently the least positive, particularly in relation to agreement that class sizes were manageable (48%), student attendance was good (40%), support for SEND was effective (44%) and disadvantaged students were effectively supported (51%), receiving support to reduce workload (33%), and access to career progression opportunities (23%).

- Differences were especially pronounced for manageable class sizes and student attendance, where agreement was substantially higher in ITPs/ACLs (76% and 70%) than in either GFECs (48% and 40%) or SFCs (41% and 53%).
- Perceptions of support from managers and senior leadership were also more favourable in ITPs/ACLs (70%), while GFEC respondents were more likely to disagree that leadership was effective (34%).
- Access to high-quality CPD, facilities, and non-teaching support to reduce workload was viewed much more positively by respondents in ITPs/ACLs (59%, 53% and 59%) than by those in GFECs (34%, 36% and 33%) and SFCs (36%, 44% and 39%).
- Career progression was the weakest area across all provider types, but dissatisfaction was greatest in GFECs (50%) and SFCs (49%), with around half of respondents disagreeing that they had good opportunities to progress.

5.2 Leaders and non-teaching managers

Leaders and managers without teaching responsibilities were asked about their views on a similar albeit different set of aspects about their workplace.

Overall, views were most positive in relation to staff professionalism, leadership support and support for students, while workload and some aspects of resourcing were viewed less positively.

Perceptions of staff culture and leadership were generally favourable. Four in five respondents (80%) agreed that staff behaviour and professionalism were of a good standard. Around three-quarters agreed that they received support from leadership colleagues (77%) and that they had an effective senior leadership team (72%).

Views on student support were more positive among leaders and non-teaching managers than among staff with teaching responsibilities. Three-quarters or more of these groups agreed that students received effective support with SEND (75% vs 51% of teachers), mental health needs (76% vs 59% of teachers) and that disadvantaged students were effectively supported (79% vs 59% of teachers). However, for SEND specifically, this represents a notably higher level of agreement than that reported by teaching staff, indicating a substantial difference in perceptions between staff groups. This divergence suggests that leaders and managers, who may be more removed from day-to-day delivery, view SEND provision more positively than teaching staff, who are typically closer to learners' experiences. This difference in perspective is important to consider when interpreting overall findings on student support.

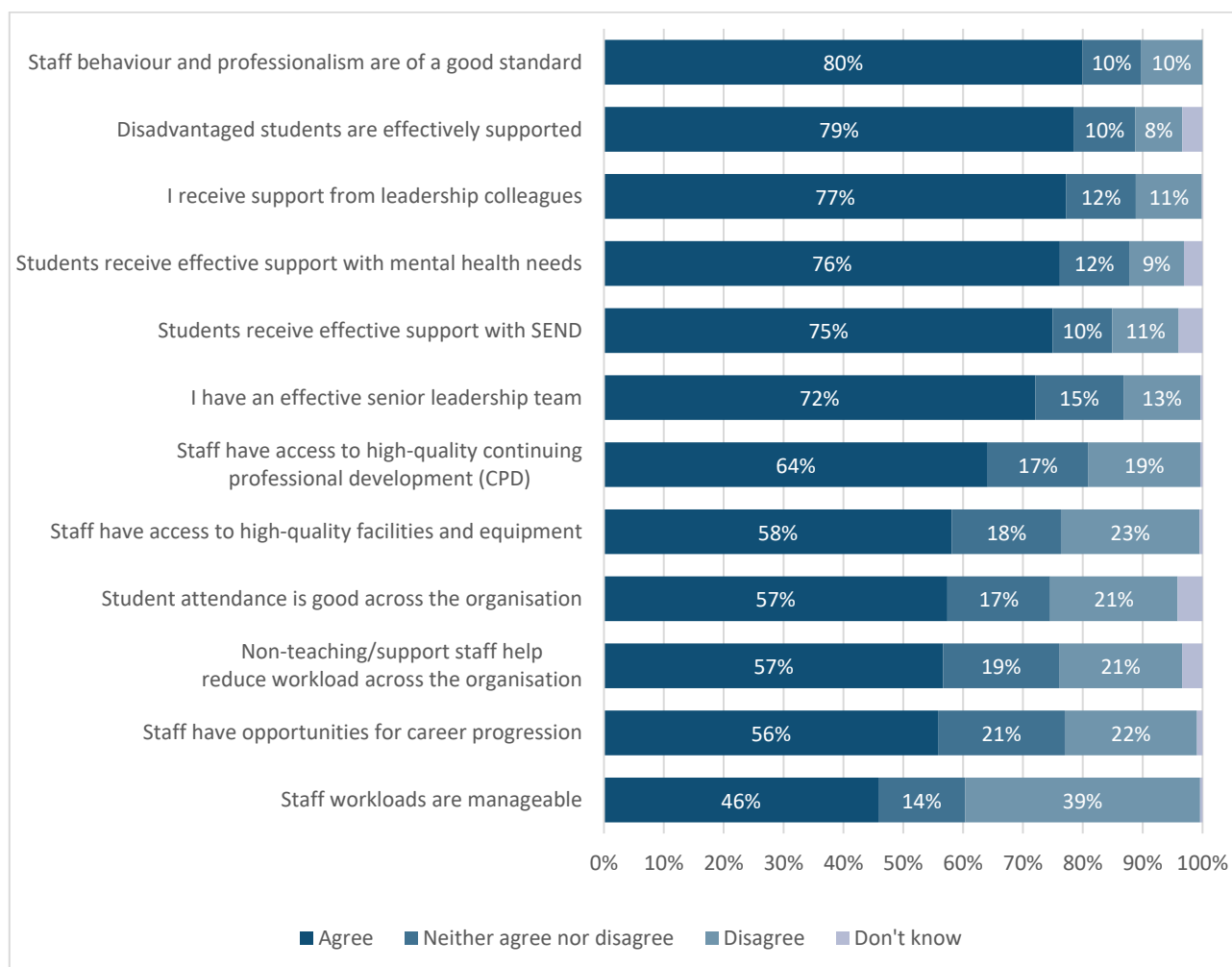
Perceptions of student attendance among leaders and non-teaching managers were more mixed, with 57% agreeing that student attendance was good across the organisation and 21% disagreeing.

Workload was a key area of concern. Fewer than half of respondents (46%) agreed that staff workloads were manageable, while a similar proportion (39%) disagreed. Views on support to reduce workload were also mixed, with 57% agreeing that non-teaching or support staff helped reduce workload and 21% disagreeing.

Perceptions of resources and development opportunities were also less positive. Around six in ten respondents agreed that they had access to high-quality facilities and equipment (58%) and high-quality CPD (64%), while around one in five disagreed. Just over half (56%) agreed that they had opportunities for career progression, while 22% disagreed.

Taken together, the findings suggest strong confidence in professionalism, leadership and student support, alongside persistent concerns about workload manageability and, to a lesser extent, resourcing and career development.

Figure 11: Leaders' and non-teaching managers' views on aspects of their working environment



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 5.2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your workplace? Single response for each statement. All leaders and non-teaching managers. N=1,907

Percentages below 5% are not shown.

Variation by provider type

- Across most statements, responses were most positive in ITPs/ACLs, followed by SFCs, and least positive in GFECs.
- Workload manageability showed the sharpest differences: around two-thirds of respondents in ITPs/ACLs agreed that workloads were manageable (67%), compared with fewer than three in ten in both GFECs (29%) and SFCs (28%).
- Views on student attendance were much more positive in ITPs/ACLs and SFCs than in GFECs. For example, 76% of ITP/ACL respondents agreed student attendance was good, compared with 60% of respondents in SFCs and 41% in GFECs.
- Respondents in ITPs/ACLs were consistently more positive about support for students, including SEND, disadvantaged students and mental health needs, with agreement close to or above 85% for each. By contrast, respondents in SFCs were generally a little less positive about the levels of support available for students. Around three-quarters agreed that students with SEND received effective support (74%), that disadvantaged students were effectively supported (73%) and students with mental health needs received effective support (72%). A similar picture emerged among respondents at GFECs, with 65% agreeing that both students with SEND and mental health needs received effective support, and 69% agreeing that disadvantaged students received effective support.
- Perceptions of support and leadership were strongest in ITPs/ACLs, where around 85% of respondents agreed they received support from leadership colleagues and had an effective senior leadership team, compared with around two-thirds agreeing in GFECs and SFCs.
- Resources, CPD and career progression were rated more positively in ITPs/ACLs than in college settings. Career progression was weakest in SFCs, where only 37% agreed they had good opportunities to progress.

Variation by role

There are some notable differences in responses by role.

- Across all statements, leaders and managers without teaching responsibilities were more likely to respond positively than managers with teaching responsibilities.
- The sharpest difference was seen for staff's access to high-quality continuing professional development (CPD). 85% of leaders agreed with this statement, compared to 64% of managers without teaching responsibilities and under half (45%) of managers with teaching responsibilities.
- In a similar vein, the role that non-teaching/support staff play in reducing workload across the organisation is viewed very differently by respondents. Over seven in ten

(72%) of leaders agreed that non-teaching/support staff helped reduced workload, compared to 60% of managers without teaching responsibilities and under four in ten (37%) of managers with teaching responsibilities.

- Views about the effectiveness of the senior leadership team were similarly varied. 90% of leaders agreed that they have an effective senior leadership team, compared to 73% of managers without teaching responsibilities and just over half (53%) of managers with teaching responsibilities.

5.3 Summary

This chapter shows that perceptions of the working environment vary substantially between staff groups and provider types. Across the workforce, respondents were generally most positive about support from colleagues, managers and leadership, and least positive about workload-related support, access to resources and opportunities for career progression. This suggests that many providers have a foundation of supportive professional relationships, but that wider organisational conditions may be limiting the extent to which staff feel able to thrive and develop in their roles.

Among staff with teaching responsibilities, support from teaching colleagues and managers was viewed positively, indicating that peer and line-management support are important strengths within the FE working environment. However, views were much less positive in relation to facilities and equipment, support from non-teaching/support staff to reduce workload, access to high-quality CPD and opportunities for progression. From a retention perspective, this matters because these are areas that shape staff's day-to-day experience and longer-term commitment to the sector. Where teaching staff feel under-supported in managing workload or developing their careers, this may increase the likelihood that they consider alternative employment opportunities.

The findings also highlight important differences in perceptions between teaching staff and leaders or non-teaching managers. Leaders and non-teaching managers were generally more positive about student support, senior leadership and organisational conditions than staff with teaching responsibilities. This gap was particularly evident in relation to support for students with SEND and the effectiveness of senior leadership. The difference in perspective suggests that leaders' assessments of the working environment may not always fully reflect the day-to-day experiences of staff closest to delivery. For recruitment and retention strategies to be effective, providers may therefore need to ensure that workforce planning and improvement activity is informed by the experiences of classroom-facing staff.

Provider type differences were also pronounced. Respondents in ITPs/ACLs were consistently more positive about most aspects of their working environment, including workload manageability, leadership, support for learners, access to CPD, facilities and career progression. By contrast, respondents in GFECs were often the least positive, particularly in relation to class sizes, student attendance, support for SEND and

disadvantaged learners, workload support and career progression. SFC respondents tended to sit between these groups on many measures, although they were more positive about student behaviour and less positive about some aspects of workload and progression. These differences suggest that recruitment and retention challenges are likely to be shaped not only by sector-wide issues, but also by the specific operating contexts of different provider types.

Career progression emerges as a particular weakness, especially for teaching staff and staff in college settings. This is important for retention because staff may be more likely to remain in FE if they can see viable routes for developing their expertise, taking on new responsibilities and progressing without needing to leave their provider or the sector. Conversely, limited progression opportunities may weaken FE's employment offer, particularly for staff who have transferable skills or alternative career routes outside FE.

Overall, the findings suggest that improving the working environment should be central to recruitment and retention strategies. Supportive colleagues and managers are important assets, but they are unlikely to be sufficient on their own if staff continue to experience limited workload support, constrained resources and weak progression pathways. Strengthening CPD, improving access to appropriate support and resources, and developing clearer progression routes, particularly for teaching staff, could help make FE roles more attractive and sustainable.

6. Wellbeing

This chapter explores wellbeing and job satisfaction among leaders, managers and teachers, and examines the relationship between work-life balance and wellbeing.

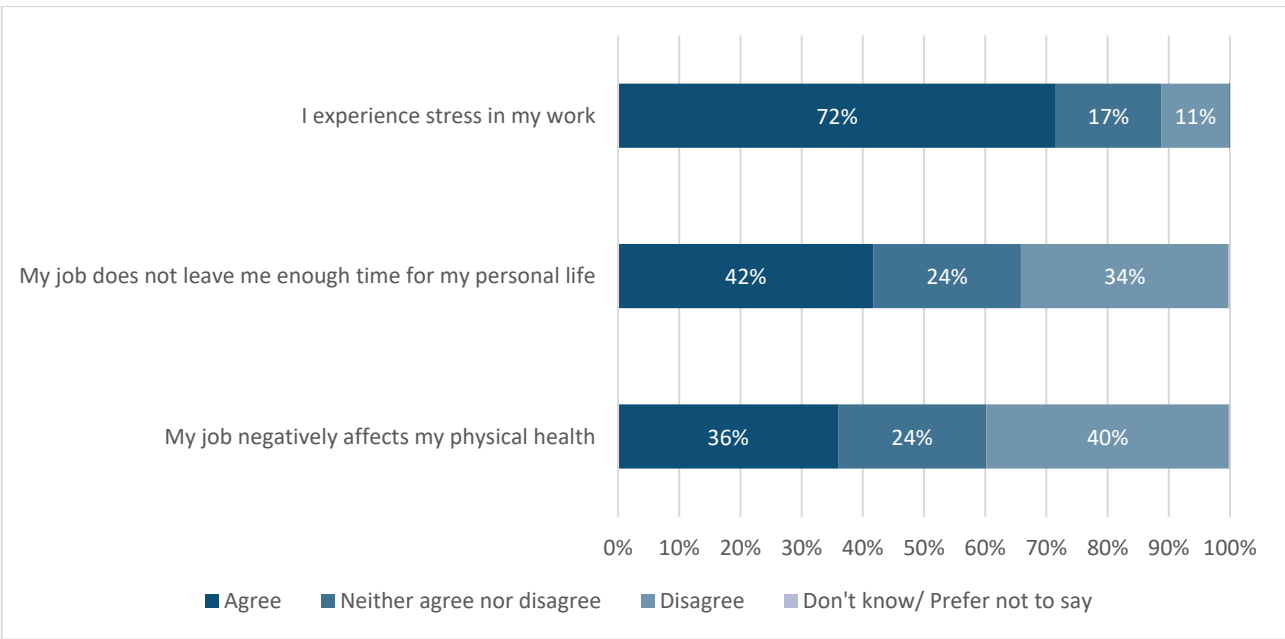
6.1. Views on wellbeing

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with three statements related to wellbeing at work.

A majority (72%) agreed that they experienced stress at work. Smaller proportions agreed that their job did not leave them enough time for their personal life (42%) or that their job negatively affected their physical health (36%). For physical health, a slightly larger proportion (40%) disagreed that their job had a negative impact.

Overall, the pattern points to high prevalence of workplace stress, but more mixed and nuanced effects on work-life balance and physical health.

Figure 12: Wellbeing



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025
Question 6.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Some response options have been collapsed.
Single response. All respondents. N=4,436.

Variation by role and provider type

There was clear variation by role. Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were more likely to agree with all three negatively framed wellbeing statements, indicating

that they reported poorer overall wellbeing than leaders and managers without teaching responsibilities and leaders.

Specifically:

- Experiencing stress at work: Nearly three-quarters of teachers (72%) and over four-fifths of managers with teaching responsibilities (82%) agreed that they experienced stress at work, compared with lower proportions of managers without teaching responsibilities (64%) and leaders (67%).
- Insufficient time for personal life: Around half of teachers (45%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (54%) agreed that their job did not leave them enough time for their personal life. This compared with much lower agreement among managers without teaching responsibilities (22%) and leaders (31%).
- Negative impact on physical health: Around two-fifths of teachers (39%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (44%) agreed that their job negatively affected their physical health, compared with just over one in five managers without teaching responsibilities and leaders (both 22%).

There was also variation by provider type, with respondents working in GFECs and SFCs more likely to agree with all three statements than those working in ITPs/ACLs.

Specifically:

- Experiencing stress at work: Four in five respondents in GFECs (80%) and SFCs (82%) agreed that they experienced stress at work, compared with just over half of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (54%).
- Insufficient time for personal life: Half of respondents in GFECs (50%) and over three-fifths in SFCs (61%) agreed that their job did not leave them enough time for their personal life, compared with fewer than a quarter of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (22%).
- Negative impact on physical health: Around two-fifths of respondents in GFECs (43%) and nearly half in SFCs (48%) agreed that their job negatively affected their physical health, compared with one in five respondents in ITPs/ACLs (20%).

6.2. Overall satisfaction

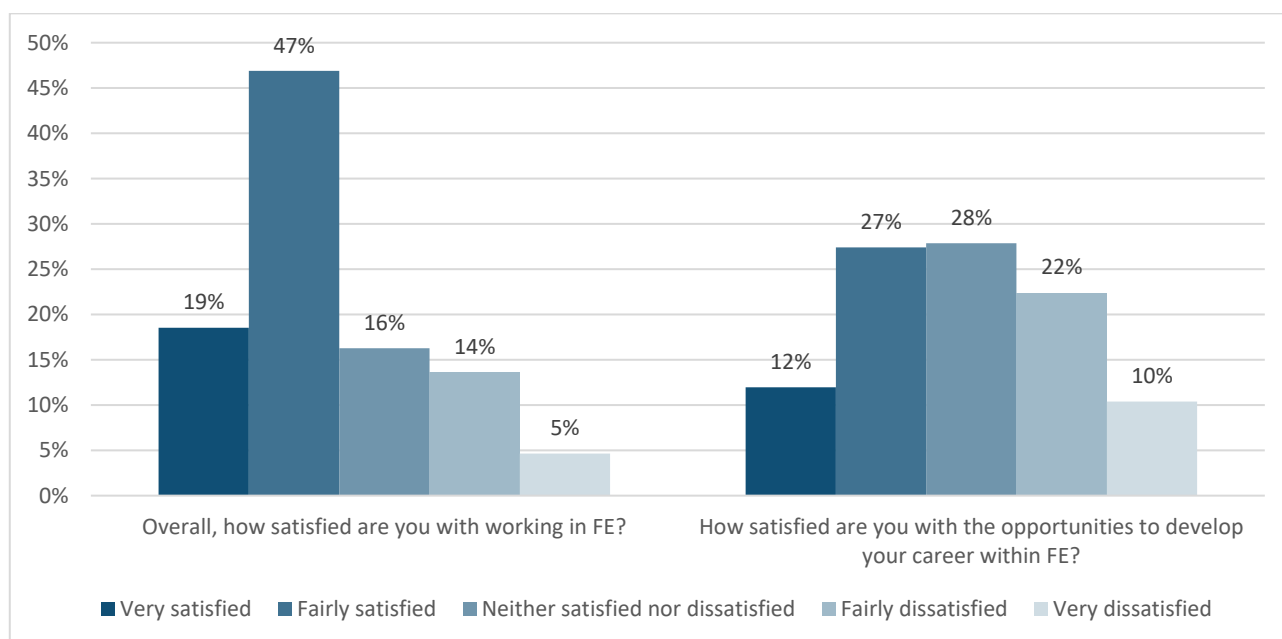
Respondents were asked how satisfied they were overall with working in FE, and separately how satisfied they were with opportunities to develop their career within FE. The responses highlight a clear contrast between general satisfaction with FE as a sector and views on career development.

Overall satisfaction with working in FE was relatively high. Around two-thirds of respondents were satisfied, including 19% who were very satisfied and a further 47% who were fairly satisfied. Smaller proportions reported dissatisfaction, with 14% being fairly dissatisfied and 5% very dissatisfied, while 16% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This suggests that, overall, most respondents were positive about working in FE.

By contrast, views on career development opportunities were much less positive. Fewer than four in ten respondents were satisfied with opportunities to develop their career within FE (12% were very satisfied and 27% fairly satisfied). A substantial proportion reported dissatisfaction, with around one-third reporting that they were fairly dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (22% and 10% respectively), and a further 28% being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. This reinforces the finding in the previous chapter that career progression was one of the least positively viewed aspects of the working environment, particularly among teaching staff.

Taken together, the findings suggest that, while many staff valued working in FE overall, significantly fewer felt positive about their longer-term career prospects within the sector. This points to career development as a key area of weakness relative to overall job satisfaction.

Figure 13: Overall satisfaction



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 6.2: Overall, how satisfied are you with working in FE? How satisfied are you with the opportunities to develop your career within FE?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Some response options have been collapsed.
Single response. All respondents. N=4436

Variation by role and provider type

Leaders and managers without teaching responsibilities were more likely to report positive views on both measures than managers with teaching responsibilities and teachers.

Specifically:

- Overall satisfaction with working in FE: More than four-fifths of leaders (84%) and managers without teaching responsibilities (82%) reported being either fairly or very satisfied with working in FE, compared with around three-fifths of managers with teaching responsibilities (63%) and teachers (61%). There were also notable differences in the proportion who were very satisfied, at 37% among leaders and 32% among managers without teaching responsibilities, compared with 16% of managers with teaching responsibilities and 15% of teachers.
- Satisfaction with career development opportunities: Nearly three-quarters of leaders (72%) and three in five managers without teaching responsibilities (60%) reported being fairly or very satisfied with opportunities to develop their career within FE. This compared with much lower levels of satisfaction among managers with teaching responsibilities (39%) and teachers (34%). Again, leaders and managers without teaching responsibilities were more likely to report being very satisfied (33% and 23%) than managers with teaching responsibilities (11%) and teachers (9%).

There was also variation by provider type, with respondents working in ITPs/ACLs more likely to report being fairly or very satisfied on both measures.

Specifically:

- Overall satisfaction with working in FE: Around four-fifths of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (79%) reported being fairly or very satisfied with working in FE, compared with 65% of respondents in SFCs and 58% in GFECs. Respondents in ITPs/ACLs were also more likely to report being very satisfied (31%), compared with 18% in SFCs and 12% in GFECs.
- Satisfaction with career development opportunities: Over half of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (56%) reported being fairly or very satisfied with opportunities to develop their career within FE, compared with around one-third of respondents in GFECs (31%) and SFCs (29%). Differences were again evident in the proportion reporting being very satisfied (22% in ITPs/ACLs, compared with 7% in GFECs and 6% in SFCs).

6.3. Modelling

This section explores the relationships between wellbeing and a range of explanatory variables. These are listed in Table 9 in the Appendix, along with the model results. The purpose of estimating this statistical model was to examine the association between different variables and wellbeing more effectively than looking at variables on their own, as in the previous sections of this chapter.

A measure of wellbeing has been created by summing the total responses from the questions:

- I experience stress in my work.
- My job does not leave me enough time for my personal life.
- My job negatively affects my physical health.

A higher score indicates higher wellbeing.

The discussion below focuses on statistically significant differences, with significance defined at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). The raw data behind these findings can be found in the technical report, alongside full details of the model specification and estimation.

Interpreting the model

Wellbeing varied relatively little overall. However, some statistically significant differences emerged.

- Respondents working for ITPs/ACLs had significantly higher wellbeing than those working in GFECs.
- Respondents without a disability reported higher wellbeing than those with a disability.
- Respondents in the lowest 20% of hours worked reported higher wellbeing than all other groups, including those who did not know or did not report their hours.
- Respondents reporting spending either 3-5 hours or 6-10 hours on pastoral support had significantly lower wellbeing than those reporting less than one hour on pastoral support.
- Respondents teaching more than one qualification type or vocational qualifications only, had significantly lower wellbeing than those teaching only academic qualifications.
- Increased levels of staff support from colleagues were associated with significantly higher wellbeing.
- Similarly, increased levels of support for students were associated with significantly higher wellbeing.

6.4. Summary

This chapter highlights the importance of wellbeing in shaping both retention and recruitment in the FE workforce. While overall satisfaction with working in FE is relatively high, many staff, particularly those in teaching roles, experience significant pressures that may undermine longer-term workforce stability.

Work-related stress is widespread, with a large majority of respondents reporting that they experience stress in their role. These pressures are most acute among teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities, who also report poorer work-life balance and more negative impacts on their physical health than other staff groups. From a retention perspective, this suggests that classroom-facing roles carry a disproportionate burden, increasing the risk of attrition among key delivery staff.

There are also clear differences by provider type, with staff in GFECs and SFCs reporting poorer wellbeing than those in ITPs/ACLs. This indicates that recruitment and retention challenges are shaped by organisational context, as well as sector-wide factors.

Despite relatively high overall job satisfaction, views on career development are much less positive, with fewer than four in ten satisfied with opportunities to progress. This is particularly true for teachers, with only around three in ten satisfied with opportunities to progress. This gap is important: limited progression opportunities may weaken retention and reduce the attractiveness of FE careers to potential entrants.

Overall, the findings suggest that improving wellbeing should be a central part of recruitment and retention strategies. However, this will require more than standalone wellbeing initiatives. Addressing workload pressures, strengthening career progression pathways, and improving the experience of teaching roles will be critical to making FE employment more sustainable and attractive.

7. Pay

This chapter explores salary satisfaction among leaders, managers and teachers and their views on how their providers manage pay. It also explores experiences of pay increases, and leaders’ use of pay flexibilities.

7.1. Views on salary

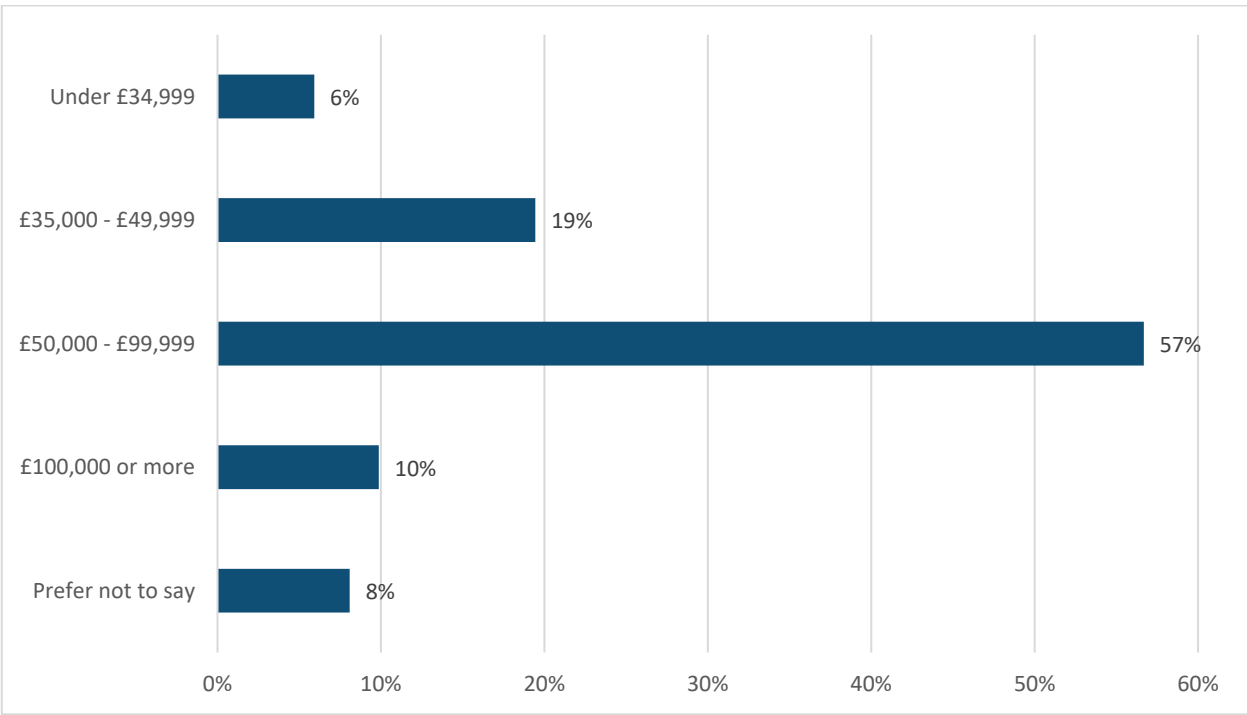
Survey respondents were asked a series of questions about their income from working in FE. The findings are presented below.

Annual salary band

Leaders were asked what their annual salary band was. If respondents were part-time or on a variable hours contract, they were asked to include their actual annual pay before tax.

Most leaders (76%) reported earning between £35,000–£99,999. The single most frequently cited payment band was £50,000–£99,999, as indicated by 57% of leaders. This compares with the median FTE salary for leaders reported in the 2024/25 FEWDC, which was £72,142 for GFECs, £76,923 for SFCs, £60,000 for ITPs, and £56,882 for ACLs.

Figure 14: Leaders’ annual pay bands

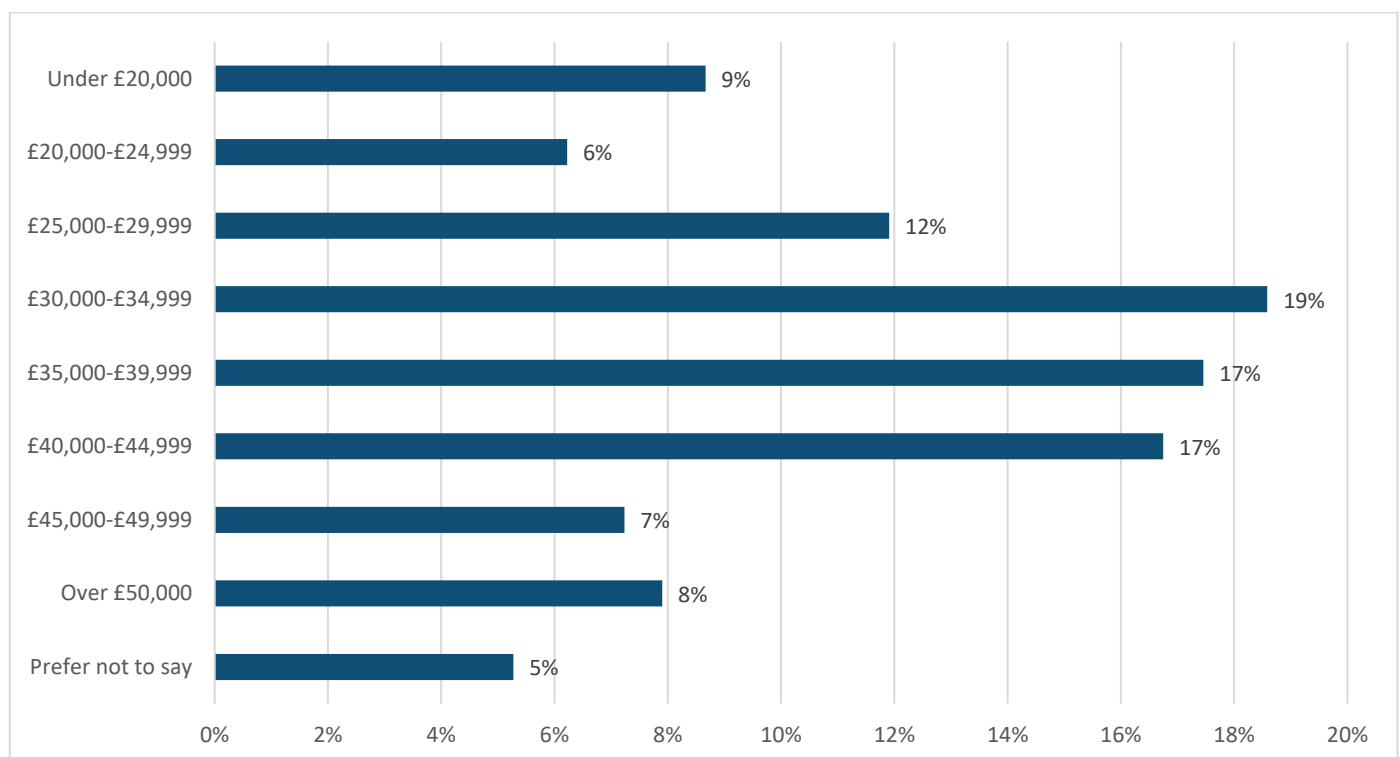


Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025
Question 4.10: What is your annual salary band from your current college/training provider?
Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Some response options have been collapsed.
Single response. All leaders. N=697

Managers (both teaching and non-teaching) and teachers were asked the same question but using a different scale. Most (65%) reported earning between £25,000–£44,999. The single most frequently cited pay band was £30,000–£34,999, as indicated by 19% of managers and teachers.

There were some differences between roles, with 10% of teachers reporting they earn less than £20,000 (compared to just 2% of managers). At the other end of the spectrum, 29% of managers reported earning more than £50,000 per year, compared to just 3% of teachers. However, there are differences among higher-earning managers, depending on whether they have teaching responsibilities or not. Those with teaching responsibilities tend to earn less than those without. Just under half (46%) of those with teaching responsibilities earn in the £40,000 - £50,000 bracket compared to 28% of those without. This is offset by a higher proportion of those without teaching responsibilities earning over £50,000 (33%) compared to those with teaching responsibilities (21%).

Figure 15: Managers' and teachers' annual pay bands (aggregate)



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

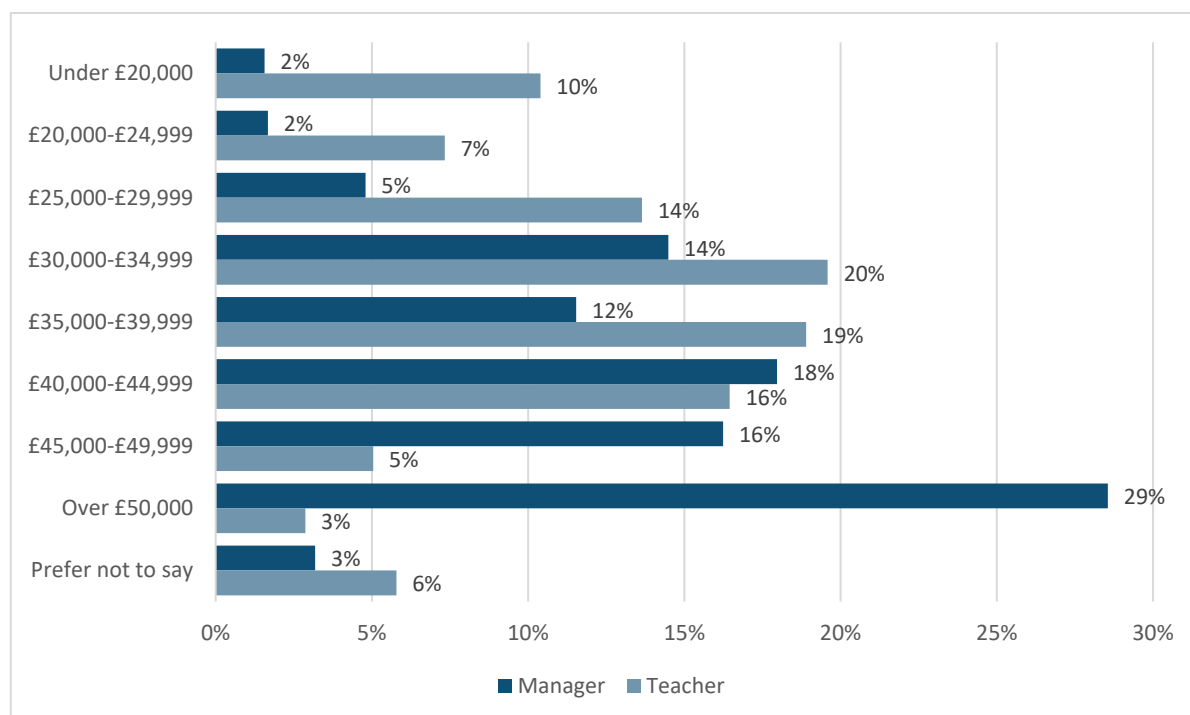
Question 4.9: What is your annual salary band from your current college/training provider?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Some response options have been collapsed.

Single response. All managers and teachers. N=3739

Figure 16: Managers' and teachers' annual pay bands, split by role



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.9: What is your annual salary band from your current college/training provider?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Some response options have been collapsed.

Single response. All managers and teachers. N=3739

Variation by role and provider type

There were variations in leaders' pay by provider type:

- Leaders in SFCs were more likely to report being paid in the upper band: they had the largest share at £100k or more (36%), almost double GFECs (20%) and far above ITPs/ACLs (5%).
- Leaders in ITPs/ACLs reported receiving lower salaries overall: they had notable representation below £50k (35% combined), versus ~1–2% in GFECs/SFCs in that same range.
- The proportion of White respondents earning under £50k (23%) is less than half that of Asian/Asian British and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British respondents (both 48%). This difference is largely driven by the much higher share of White respondents earning between £50k and £99k (61%), compared with 29% of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British respondents and 53% of Asian/Asian British respondents¹.
- By contrast, there is little difference in reported pay by gender, with similar proportions of men and women reporting pay above £100,000 (10% for both

¹ Weighting has been applied to account for imbalances and systematic under-representation, reducing the likelihood that these differences are purely methodological, though caution is needed when interpreting aggregated ethnic groups.

women and men) and pay below £50k (85% and 78% for women and men, respectively).

These patterns by provider type are consistent with the 2024/25 Further Education Workforce Data Collection², which shows that leaders in SFCs have higher median salaries than those in GFECs and ITPs/ACLs, while leaders in ITPs/ACLs have substantially lower median pay overall.

Variation was seen in teachers' and managers' pay, both by role and provider type:

- As might be expected, all managers were consistently paid more than teachers across all provider types. Within managerial roles, those without teaching responsibilities typically earned more than those with teaching responsibilities, particularly those working at GFECs. The exception to this was SFCs, where managers with teaching responsibilities were paid more than those without teaching responsibilities.
- Managers in SFCs earned the highest salaries overall, regardless of teaching responsibilities. For example, 65% of managers with teaching responsibilities, and 53% of managers without teaching responsibilities earned £50,000 or more, compared to GFECs (17% for managers with teaching responsibilities; 42% for managers without teaching responsibilities) and ITPs/ACLs (8% for managers with teaching responsibilities; 19% for managers without teaching responsibilities).
- Similarly, teachers in SFCs had a higher reported salary profile than those in GFECs and ITPs/ACLs. For example, 54% of teachers in SFCs earned between £35,000-£49,999, compared to 46% of GFECs and 23% of ITPs/ACLs. However, these broad bands likely mask important variation within them; external FEWDC data suggest SFC teachers are more often clustered towards the top of this range, while GFEC teachers are more often towards the bottom.

Pay increase

All survey respondents were asked whether they had received a pay increase during the 2024-25 academic year. This excluded any one-off financial assistance or support payments.

Around two-thirds (67%) reported they had received a pay increase, while about a quarter (24%) reported they had not. The remainder (10%) did not know.

Of those who had received a pay increase, over half (63%) reported this was between 1.00–4.99%. The single most frequently cited pay increase was between 2.00–2.99%, as indicated by 21% of respondents.

² <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/further-education-workforce/2024-25>

Variation by role and provider type

Leaders in SFCs and GFECs were much more likely to report they had received a pay increase during the 2024-25 academic year than those in ITPs/ACLs (88% and 85% compared to 52%).

There was a similar pattern among managers and teachers. Over eight-out-of-ten managers with no teaching responsibilities in SFCs and GFECs (89% and 85%) reported receiving a pay increase, compared with 61% of managers with no teaching responsibilities in ITP/ACLs. A similar pattern was seen among managers with teaching responsibilities. 89% of those at SFCs reported a pay increase compared with 77% of this at GFECs and 66% of those at ITP/ACLs. Similarly, a greater proportion of teachers in SFCs and GFECs (78% and 70%) reported receiving a pay increase, compared with 51% of teachers in ITPs/ACLs.

7.2. Views on pay satisfaction

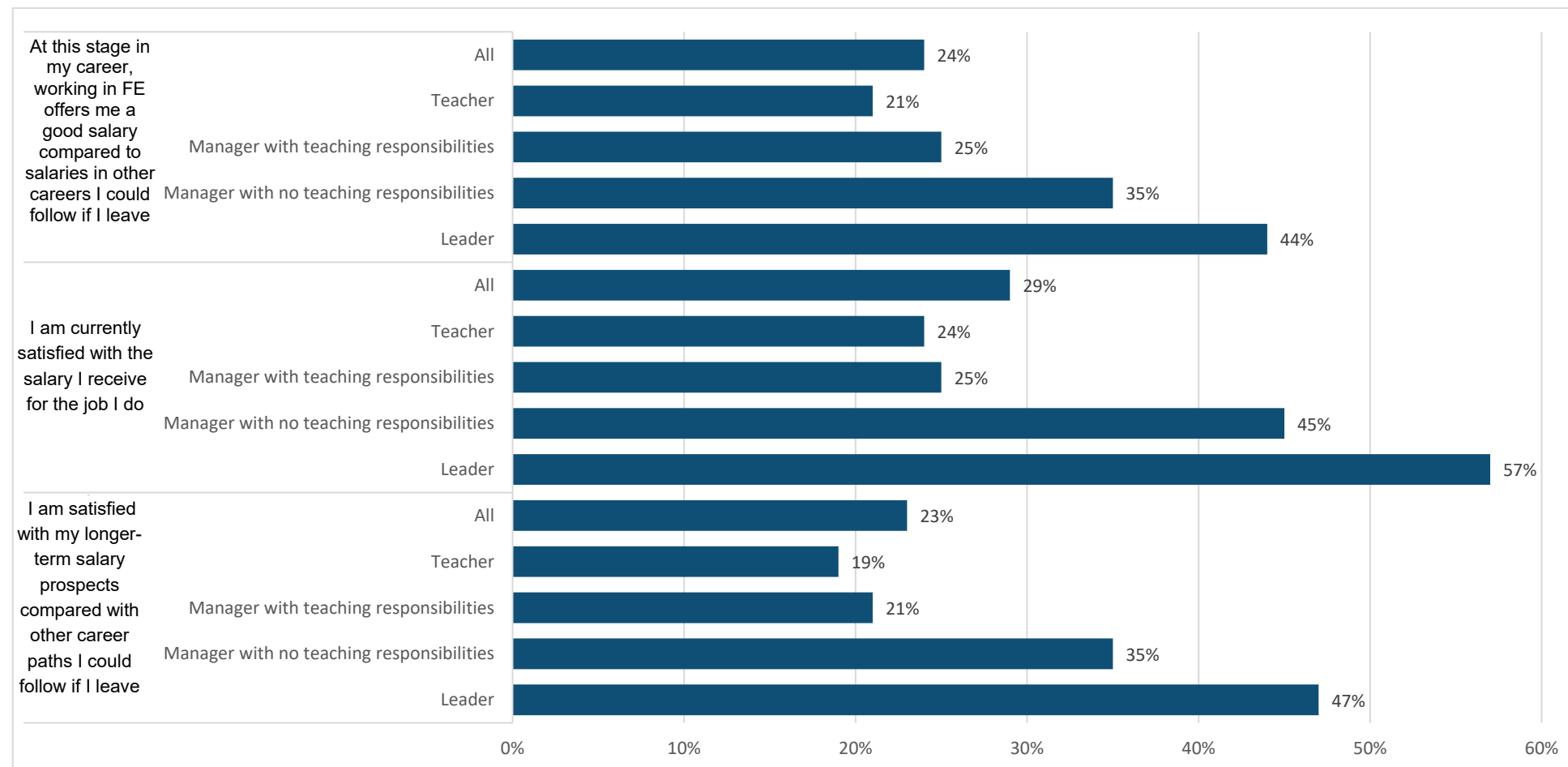
Across all respondent groups, levels of salary dissatisfaction were high. Less than a third of leaders, managers and teachers expressed positive views about their current pay and future salary prospects.

Specifically:

- 24% *agreed* that, at their current career stage, working in FE offers a good salary compared with alternative careers they could pursue.
- 29% *agreed* that they were satisfied with the salary they currently receive for the work they do.
- 23% *agreed* that they were satisfied with their longer-term salary prospects compared with other career paths available to them.

Taken together, these findings indicate widespread concern about both current remuneration and future earning potential among the FE workforce.

Figure 17: Leaders', managers' and teachers' levels of satisfaction with their salary (proportion who agree)



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 4.13: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your pay and your job?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Response options are collapsed.

Single response. All leaders, managers and teachers. N=4,435.

Variation by role and provider type

There were large differences in the extent to which respondents were satisfied with their current pay and future salary prospects.

Teachers were generally the most negative.

- Overall, most teachers reported they were not satisfied with the salary they received for the work they do. Satisfaction was highest among teachers in ITPs/ACLs (36% *agreed*), followed by those in SFCs (27%) and GFECs (19%).
- Most teachers reported that they did not agree that, at their current career stage, working in FE offered a good salary compared with alternative careers they could pursue. Teachers in ITPs/ACLs and SFCs were the most positive (both 25%), followed by those in GFECs (19%).
- The majority of teachers indicated dissatisfaction with their long-term salary prospects in comparison to alternative career paths. Teachers in ITPs/ACLs expressed the highest level of positivity (26%), followed by those in SFCs and GFECs, each at 17%.

Managers reported mixed views in response to the three statements, but those with teaching responsibilities were the least positive.

- Managers reported mixed levels of satisfaction with their salary. Satisfaction was higher among managers without teaching responsibilities than among those who taught (45% vs 25%). Across provider types, satisfaction was highest in ITPs/ACLs for both groups (48% for non-teaching managers, 32% for teaching managers), followed by GFECs (43% and 21%) and SFCs (36% and 27%).
- A minority of managers in ITPs/ACLs, both with teaching responsibilities (24%) and without (42%) agreed that, at their current career stage, working in FE offered a good salary compared with alternative careers they could pursue. This was followed by GFECs (26% and 30%) and SFCs (22% and 32%).
- Most managers also expressed dissatisfaction with their longer-term salary prospects compared with other career paths they could have followed. Managers with teaching responsibilities (32%) and without (42%) in ITPs/ACLs were the most positive, followed by those in GFECs (18% and 30%) and SFCs (17% and 33%).

In comparison, leaders consistently expressed the highest level of positivity when asked about their salary.

- The majority of leaders reported being satisfied with the salary they currently receive for the work they do. Satisfaction was highest among leaders in SFCs (75% *agreed*), followed by those in ITPs/ACLs (57%) and GFECs (55%).

- Although leaders were the most positive of all respondent groups, fewer than half agreed that, at their current career stage, working in FE offered a good salary compared with alternative careers they could pursue. Leaders in SFCs were again the most positive (48%), followed by those in ITPs/ACLs (45%) and GFECs (40%).
- Leaders' satisfaction with their longer-term salary prospects, relative to other available career paths, were more mixed. Leaders in SFCs were the most satisfied (65%), followed by those in ITPs/ACLs (48%) and GFECs (44%).

7.3. Financial assistance

Respondents in a teaching role (including teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities) were asked whether they had ever received any of a specified list of financial incentives to support their FE teaching career.

The majority (69%) reported that they had not received any of the forms of support listed. Among those who had received support, the most commonly reported forms were:

- Funded teacher training apprenticeship or other funded teacher training course (not covered by a bursary) (10%).
- Funded participation in CPD (8%).
- FE Targeted Retention Incentive (TRI) (7%).

Table 2: Teachers' use of financial assistance schemes

Incentive	GFEC	SFC	ITP/ACL	Average
Funded teacher training apprenticeship or other funded teacher training course	9%	5%	10%	9%
Funded participation in CPD	6%	7%	10%	7%
FE Targeted Retention Incentive (TRI)	9%	13%	1%*	7%
Some other financial support	4%	2%	5%	4%
FE Initial Teacher Education (ITE) bursary	5%	6%	2%	4%
Targeted salary uplift or payment	2%	2%	3%	3%
A retention payment directly from your employer	2%	0%	0%	1%
A recruitment payment directly from your employer	1%	1%	1%	1%

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 3.1: Have you ever received any of the following types of financial assistance to support your FE teaching career?

*ITP staff are not eligible for the FE TRI. Those who reported receiving it may have done so while working for an eligible provider.

Multiple response. All respondents with a teaching role. N=3,045.

Variation in experience by provider type

There were some differences by provider type. Staff in ITPs/ACLs were more likely to report accessing funded teacher training apprenticeships or other funded teacher training courses (10%, compared with 9% in GFECs and 5% in SFCs). They were also more likely to report receiving funding to participate in CPD (10%, compared with 7% in SFCs and 6% in GFECs).

By contrast, staff in SFCs were more likely to report receiving the FE TRI (13%, compared with 9% in GFECs and 1% in ITPs/ACLs). While the findings are weighted to reflect the national distribution of staff across provider types, they may still reflect the specific experiences of survey respondents and therefore should be interpreted with this in mind.

7.4. Use of pay flexibilities to support recruitment and retention

Leaders were asked what strategies their settings used, if any, to support staff recruitment and retention. Items relating to pay are presented below. The full list of items can be found in Section 9.5.

Leaders were most likely to report that their settings offered higher salaries to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (39%), as well as indirect ways to boost pay for some teaching staff (34%), such as by providing greater opportunities to take on additional responsibilities to support recruitment and retention.

Smaller proportions reported their settings supported faster pay progression for high performing staff (16%), offered retention payments to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (14%), or offered recruitment payments to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (12%).

Variation by provider type

There were some differences by provider type. Leaders in GFECs were more likely to report that their settings offered:

- higher salaries to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (56%, compared with 33% of ITPs/ACLs and 30% of SFCs).
- retention payments to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (35%, compared with 12% of SFCs and 6% of ITPs/ACLs).
- recruitment payments to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (27%, compared with 10% of SFCs and 6% of ITPs/ACLs).

By contrast, leaders in SFCs were more likely to report that their setting:

- used indirect ways to boost pay for some teaching staff, such as providing greater opportunities to take on additional responsibilities (39%, compared to 35% of GFECs and 34% of ITPs/ACLs)
- supported faster pay progression for high performing staff (26%, compared to 17% of ITPs/ACLs and 12% of GFECs).

It should be noted that, while many leaders reported offering higher salaries and retention payments to selected staff groups, this was not reflected in teachers' responses regarding the use of financial assistance schemes or their satisfaction with pay. This may reflect differences in how the questions were interpreted, the possible underrepresentation of recipient groups in the survey, or differing perspectives between leaders and teachers.

7.5. Modelling

This section explores the relationships between pay satisfaction and a range of explanatory variables. The purpose of estimating statistical models was to examine the association between different variables and pay satisfaction more effectively than looking at variables on their own, as in the previous sections of this chapter.

Separate models were run for leaders, and for managers/teachers, with a slightly different set of covariates for each model. They are listed in the Appendix along with the model results (see Tables 10 and 11 below). The discussion below focuses on statistically significant differences. Full details of the model specification and estimation are provided in the technical report.

Interpreting the model for leaders

Pay satisfaction among leaders showed little variation across the covariates included in the model. However, some statistically significant differences emerged. Male leaders were significantly less satisfied with their pay than female leaders. As might be expected, leaders earning between £100,000 and £149,000 reported significantly higher pay satisfaction than those earning less than £35,000. Leaders working in ITPs/ACLs were also significantly more satisfied with their pay than those in GFECs.

Interpreting the model for managers and teachers

The results for managers and teachers offer more complexity than those found among leaders. Men continue to express less satisfaction with their pay, as do respondents who work within GFECs.

At first glance, pay band results seem surprising. For instance, individuals earning £16,000 to £39,999 were less satisfied with their pay than those earning under £10,000. There are several plausible explanations - structural, motivational, and compositional - that might explain these findings. Staff earning under £10,000 are typically part-time or sessional. FE

may not be their primary income source, so their expectations of pay levels may be lower. It is possible these staff may also self-select into roles they find intrinsically rewarding. However, these interpretations remain speculative, and additional research is necessary to examine these patterns in greater detail.

7.6. Summary

This chapter highlights the central role of pay in shaping both recruitment and retention in the FE workforce. While pay is only one part of the employment offer, the findings suggest that it remains a key area of dissatisfaction relative to other aspects of working in FE.

Overall, satisfaction with salary is mixed, with a substantial proportion of respondents expressing dissatisfaction. This is particularly evident among teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities, who report lower levels of pay satisfaction than leaders. These differences reinforce a broader pattern seen across the report, where classroom-facing roles tend to have less positive experiences across multiple dimensions of the employment offer.

There are also clear differences by provider type, with respondents in ITPs/ACLs generally more positive about pay than those in GFECs and SFCs. This suggests that pay-related recruitment and retention pressures may be more acute in college settings, where staff are more likely to report dissatisfaction.

The findings reported here and in Chapter 9 point to a strong relationship between pay and wider workforce outcomes, indicating that perceptions of pay are likely to influence both retention decisions and the attractiveness of FE roles to potential entrants. Where pay is seen as uncompetitive, particularly in comparison with schools or industry, this may limit providers' ability to recruit and retain staff, especially in high-demand subject areas.

The chapter also highlights the use of financial incentives and pay flexibilities as tools to support recruitment and retention. However, their use appears uneven and, in some cases, limited. This suggests that, while such approaches may offer targeted benefits, they are unlikely to fully offset underlying concerns about base pay levels.

Overall, the findings suggest that improving pay should be a key component of recruitment and retention strategies in FE. However, as with other areas explored in the report, pay is unlikely to operate in isolation. Strengthening the overall employment offer - including workload, career progression and working conditions - will be important in ensuring that improvements to pay translate into sustained gains in workforce stability and attractiveness.

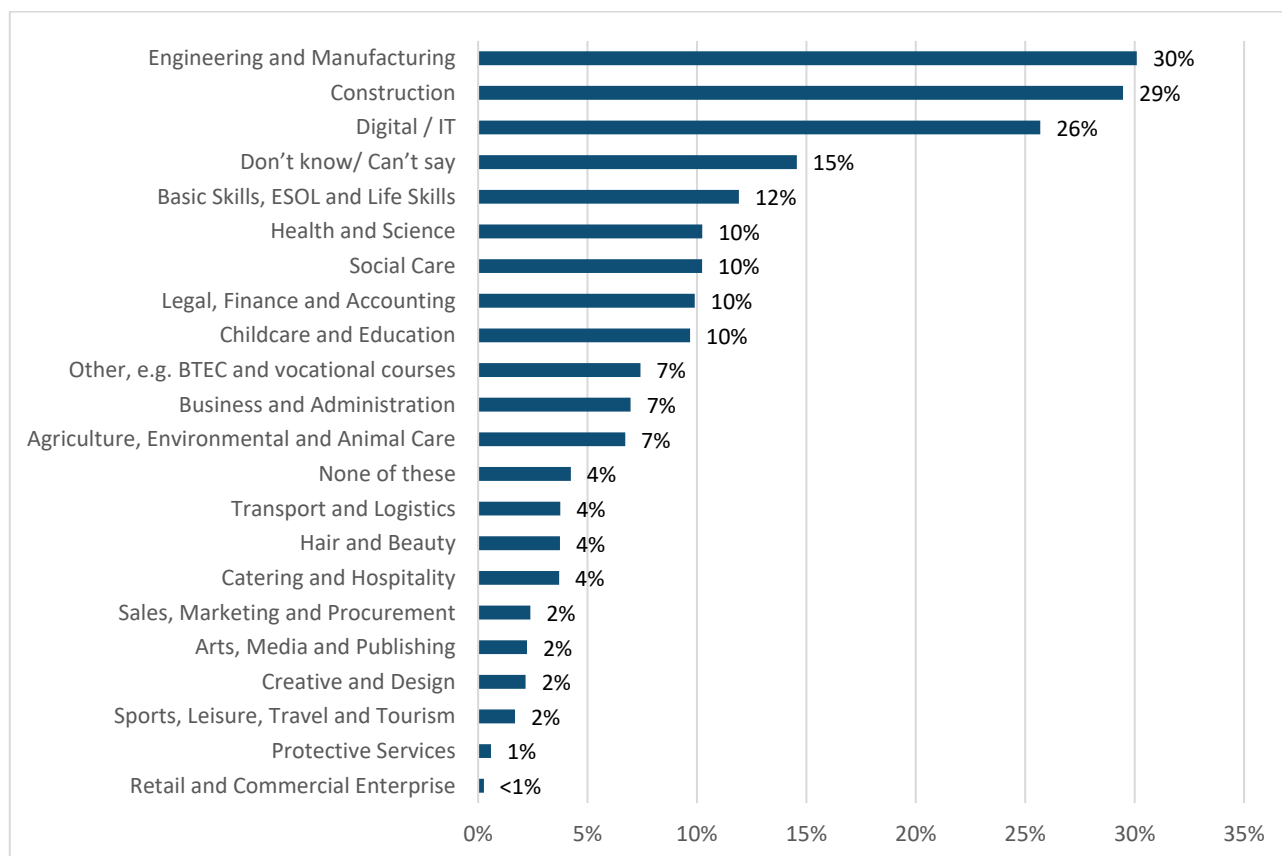
8. Recruitment and retention

This chapter explores the recruitment and retention of teaching staff, including managers with teaching responsibilities, defined as those with direct responsibility for teaching, training, lecturing and instructing learners.

8.1 Vocational and technical areas

Leaders were asked in which vocational or technical areas / subjects it was the most difficult to recruit skilled teaching staff. The most frequently cited areas were Engineering and Manufacturing (30%), Construction (29%) and Digital/IT (26%), with these areas being notably higher than the others.

Figure 18: Difficult to recruit vocational and technical areas



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 7.1: In which of the following vocational or technical areas / subjects would you say it is most difficult to recruit skilled teaching staff?

Some response options have been collapsed.

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Multiple response, up to 5 options. All leaders. N=697

Variation by provider

There was variation across the three provider types for the most frequently cited vocational and technical areas in which it was difficult to recruit.

GFEC leaders cited Engineering and Manufacturing (72%) and Construction (67%) as the most difficult subjects in which to recruit skilled teachers. In contrast, much lower proportions of leaders in ITPs/ACLs (16% and 14%) and in SFCs (1% and 16%) indicated the same for these subjects. The low proportions for these subjects in SFCs is likely due to providers of this type not generally teaching this area.

Leaders in SFCs (46%) and a similar proportion from GFECs (39%) indicated that Digital / IT-related areas were hard to recruit in. Only 19% of ITPs/ACLs leaders cited this area.

In terms of other subjects, business-related subjects were cited notably more frequently by SFC leaders (26%) compared to GFECs (8%) and ITPs/ACLs (6%). Similarly, legal and finance-related subjects were most indicated by SFC leaders (30%) compared to leaders in GFECs (15%) and ITPs/ACLs (7%).

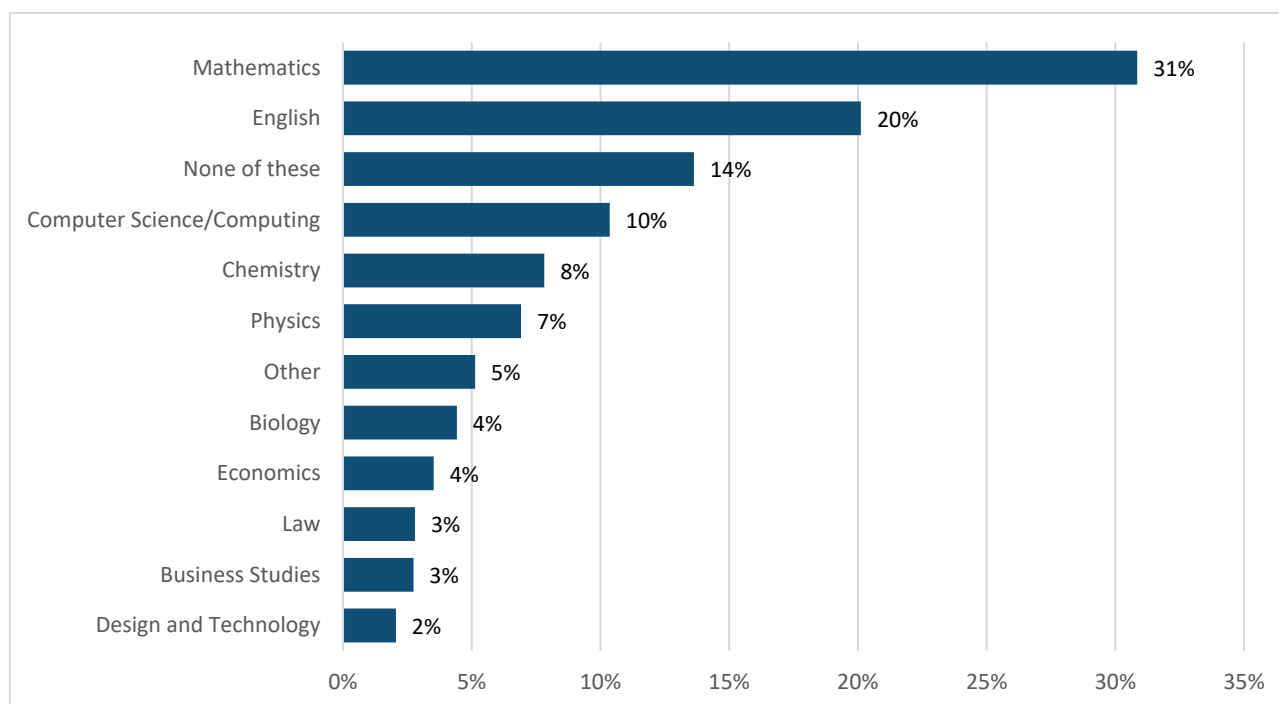
A small proportion of respondents (4%) reported no difficulties in recruiting teaching staff. However, this included variations by provider type: 5% of SFCs and ITPs/ACLs reported no recruitment challenges, compared with just 1% of GFECs.

8.2 Academic areas

Regarding academic areas / subjects in which it was the most difficult to recruit skilled teaching staff, nearly a third of leaders (31%) indicated Mathematics and a fifth (20%), English. The reasons for these shortages are likely to be varied and may include competition from the schools sector, competition with higher private-sector salaries in some fields, and increased demand for teachers able to deliver GCSE Mathematics and English resits.

Interestingly, other STEM subjects such as Chemistry (8%) and Physics (7%), which are often shortage subjects in secondary education, were cited by only a low proportion of leaders as being difficult to recruit to.

Figure 19: Difficult to recruit academic subjects



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 7.2: In which of the following academic areas / subjects, including but not limited to A-levels and GCSEs would you say it is most difficult to recruit skilled teaching staff?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Multiple response, up to 5 options. All leaders. N=696

Variation by provider

There was also variation across the three provider groupings for the two most frequently cited subjects in section 9.2 above.

Mathematics was cited by leaders as a subject in which it was hard to recruit skilled teachers, by around half of GFEC leaders (52%), compared to lower proportions of leaders from SFCs (36%) and ITPs/ACLs (22%). More GFEC leaders also cited English (36%) compared to leaders from ITPs/ACLs (15%) and SFCs (2%).

This pattern may reflect both labour market factors and differences in provision across provider types. Shortages in Mathematics and English are likely to be exacerbated by wider evidence from this survey on low satisfaction with pay and the competitiveness of FE salaries relative to alternative careers, particularly in subjects where staff have strong external labour market opportunities. In addition, GFECs are more likely to deliver large volumes of GCSE resit provision in English and Mathematics, which may increase demand for teachers in these subjects and make recruitment more challenging.

Other notable differences in subjects across provider types were:

- half of SFC leaders (50%) indicated that Computer Science / Computing was difficult to recruit to, compared to a quarter of GFEC leaders (25%) and a very small proportion of ITPs/ACLs (3%)
- higher proportions of SFC leaders indicated that Economics (37%) and Law (23%) were difficult to recruit to compared to leaders in GFECs (7% in both subjects) and ITPs/ACLs (1% and 0%).

The mainly negligible percentages for academic subjects in ITPs/ACLs are likely due to their emphasis on a vocational and job-specific training offer.

8.3 Barriers and enablers to recruitment

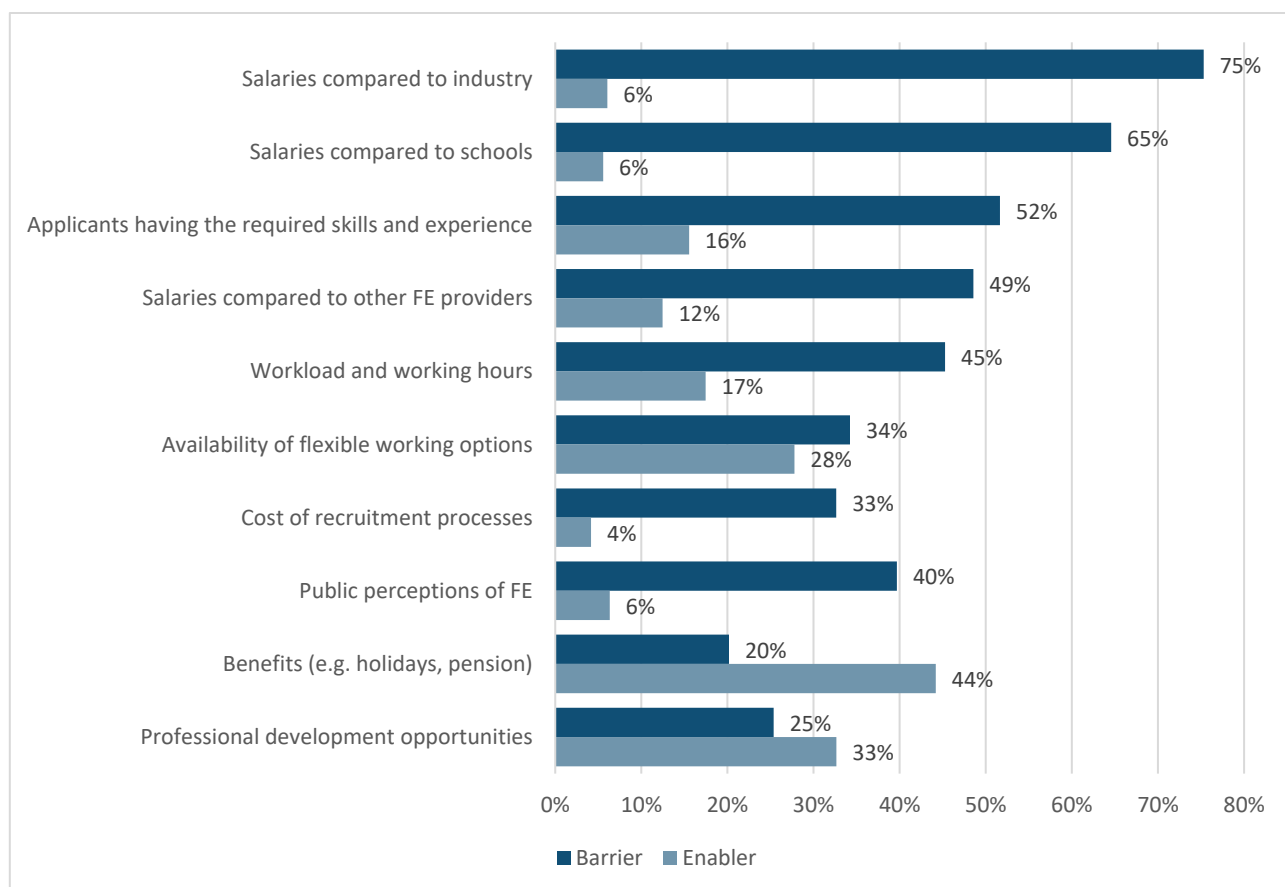
Leaders, middle and junior managers were asked to indicate the extent to which a range of factors were barriers or enablers to recruiting staff in their organisation or department.

The key findings on barriers were around:

- salary comparisons: salary compared to industry (75%) and compared to schools (65%) were the most-cited barriers, with around half of respondents (49%) citing salaries compared to other FE providers such as colleges and ITPs/ACLs
- recruitment challenges related to applicant capabilities and costs: around half of respondents cited applicants' skills and experience (52%) and the cost of recruitment (33%)
- workload and job quality factors: around a half of respondents reported workload and working hours as a barrier to recruitment (45%), and around a third cited the availability of flexible working options (34%)
- wider perceptions of the sector: public perceptions of FE were cited by 40% of respondents as a barrier to recruitment.

There were fewer enablers to recruitment identified, with benefits, such as holidays and pensions (44%), and professional development opportunities (33%) the most frequently cited.

Figure 20: Factors affecting the recruitment of staff



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 7.3: To what extent do you think the following factors are enablers or barriers to recruiting staff in your organisation/department?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response per factor. All leaders, middle and junior managers, N=1,907

Responses for Neither/Don't Know/Not Applicable are not shown.

Variation by provider

Some differences in reports of the key barriers to recruitment emerged when comparing the three provider groupings:

- salary competition with industry and schools:
 - four out of five respondents in SFCs (84%) and GFECs (82%) identified salaries compared to industry as a barrier to recruitment, with two-thirds of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (66%) reporting this
 - salary comparison with schools was reported as a barrier by over three-quarters of respondents in GFECs (78%), and around a half of respondents in SFCs (55%) and ITPs/ACLs (51%)
- workload and working hours: this was a challenge for just less than three-quarters of respondents in SFCs (70%), over a half of respondents in GFECs (58%) and just over a quarter of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (28%)

- applicants lacking required skills and experience: this was reported by around half of respondents in all settings: GFECs (55%), ITPs/ACLs (49%) and SFCs (47%)
- public perceptions of FE: this was identified by just less than half of respondents in GFECs (49%) and SFCs (45%) and a lower proportion of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (29%)
- the cost of recruitment processes: these were a lesser barrier for all provider types, with around a third of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (34%) and GFECs (33%) reporting this barrier to recruitment compared to just less than a quarter of respondents in SFCs (23%).

The key enablers for recruitment were:

- benefits such as holiday and pensions: these were seen as enablers by over half of respondents in SFCs (57%) and GFECs (54%) compared to a third of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (32%)
- professional development opportunities: these were important enablers for similar proportions of respondents in GFECs and ITPs/ACLs (both 33%) and a lower proportion of respondents in SFCs (23%)
- flexible working options: these were perceived to be important for around a third of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (35%), and lower proportions of respondents in GFECs (22%) and SFCs (19%).

8.4 Barriers and enablers to retention

Leaders and managers were also asked to indicate the extent to which a range of factors were barriers or enablers to retaining staff in their organisation or department.

As with recruitment, pay-related factors were the most-cited challenge for the retention of staff. Salaries compared to industry were identified by 73% of respondents, with salaries compared to schools by 61%. Salaries compared to other FE providers were cited by around half of respondents (48%), lower than comparisons with industry or schools.

Other notable challenges reported by respondents were:

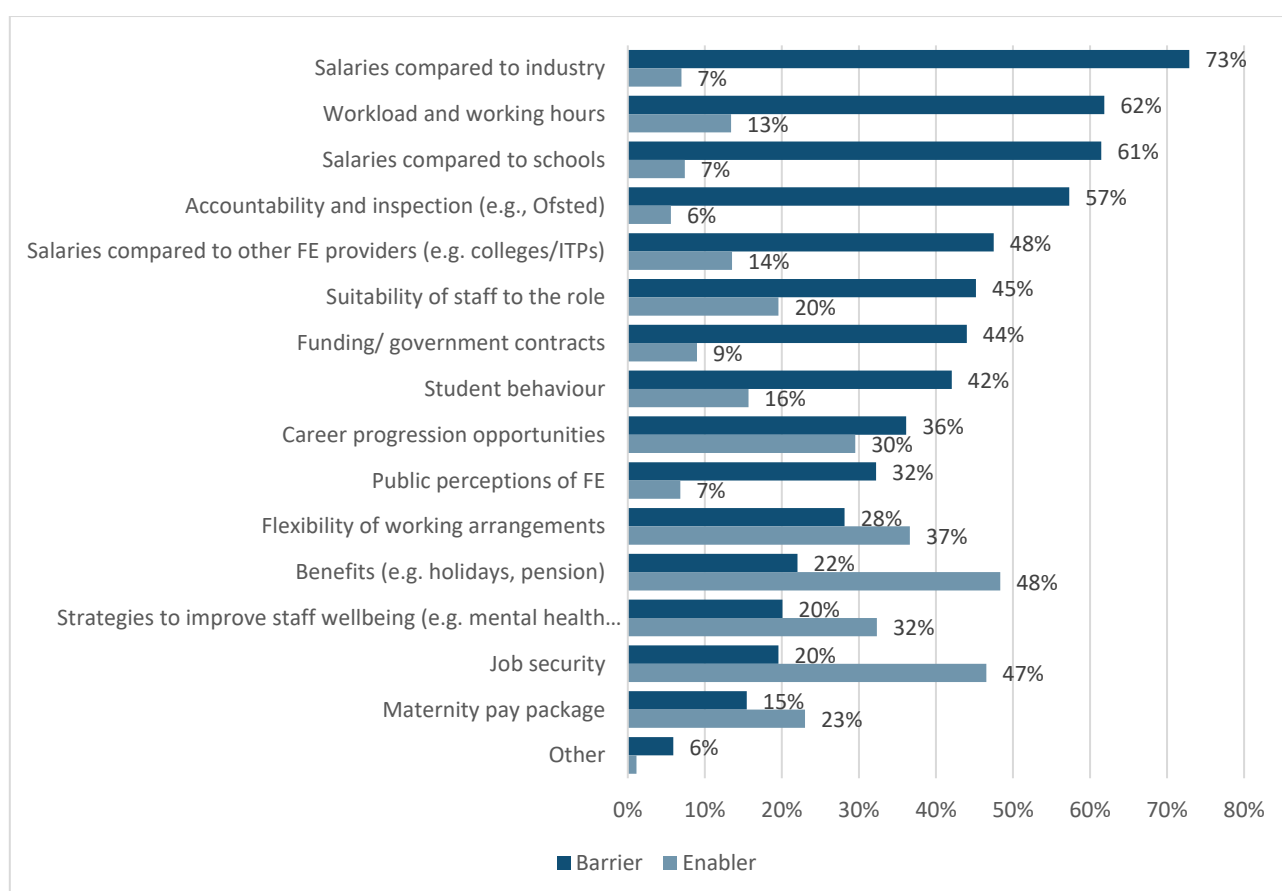
- workload and working hours (62%)
- accountability and inspection, for example, Ofsted (57%)
- suitability of staff to the role (45%)
- funding / government contracts (44%)

- student behaviour (42%)
- career progression opportunities (36%).

Nearly half of respondents identified benefits such as holidays and pensions and job security (48% and 47%, respectively) as enablers for the retention of staff. Other, less commonly cited, but clear enablers were:

- flexibility of working arrangements (37%) and strategies to improve staff wellbeing (32%), both of which outweighed the proportion of those who saw these as barriers (32%),
- career progression opportunities (30%), which also emerged as a notable barrier.

Figure 21: Factors affecting the retention of staff



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 7.4: To what extent do you think the following factors are enablers or barriers to retaining staff in your organisation/department?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response per factor. All leaders, middle and junior managers, N=1,907.

Percentages below 5% are not shown.

Responses for Neither/Don't Know/Not Applicable are not shown.

Variation by provider

Comparing the key barriers to retention by the three provider groupings:

- workload and working hours: this was reported by similarly high proportions of respondents in SFCs and GFECs (81% and 78%, respectively) and was a barrier for a lower proportion of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (41%)
- accountability and inspection: this was also cited more frequently by SFCs and GFECs (72% and 66%, respectively), and much less so by ITPs/ACLs (46%)
- pay: respondents in GFECs highlighted salaries compared to schools (77%) more often than respondents in both SFCs (48%) and ITPs/ACLs (46%); salaries compared to industry was a stronger factor for respondents in both GFECs (84%) and SFCs (80%) but less so for respondents in ITPs/ACLs (60%)
- student behaviour: this was a notable barrier for respondents in GFECs (59%) but less of a barrier for respondents in ITPs/ACLs (25%) and SFCs (23%).

In terms of the main enablers to retention:

- benefits such as holidays and pensions: similar proportions of respondents in SFCs (60%) and GFECs (57%) but a lower proportion of ITPs/ACLs (37%) reported this
- job security: this followed a similar pattern to benefits, with over a half of respondents in SFCs (61%) and GFECs (51%) reporting this as an enabler compared to a lower proportion (40%) of respondents in ITPs/ACLs
- flexibility of working arrangements: more respondents in ITPs/ACLs saw as an enabler (42%) compared to respondents in GFECs (33%) and SFCs (22%)
- wellbeing strategies: these were reported by around a third of respondents in GFECs (32%) and ITPs/ACLs (34%) but by a lower proportion of respondents in SFCs (26%).

8.5 Strategies used to support recruitment and retention

Leaders were asked to indicate which strategies their college / provider used to support both staff recruitment and retention. The more frequently cited approaches were developmental and wellbeing related, specifically:

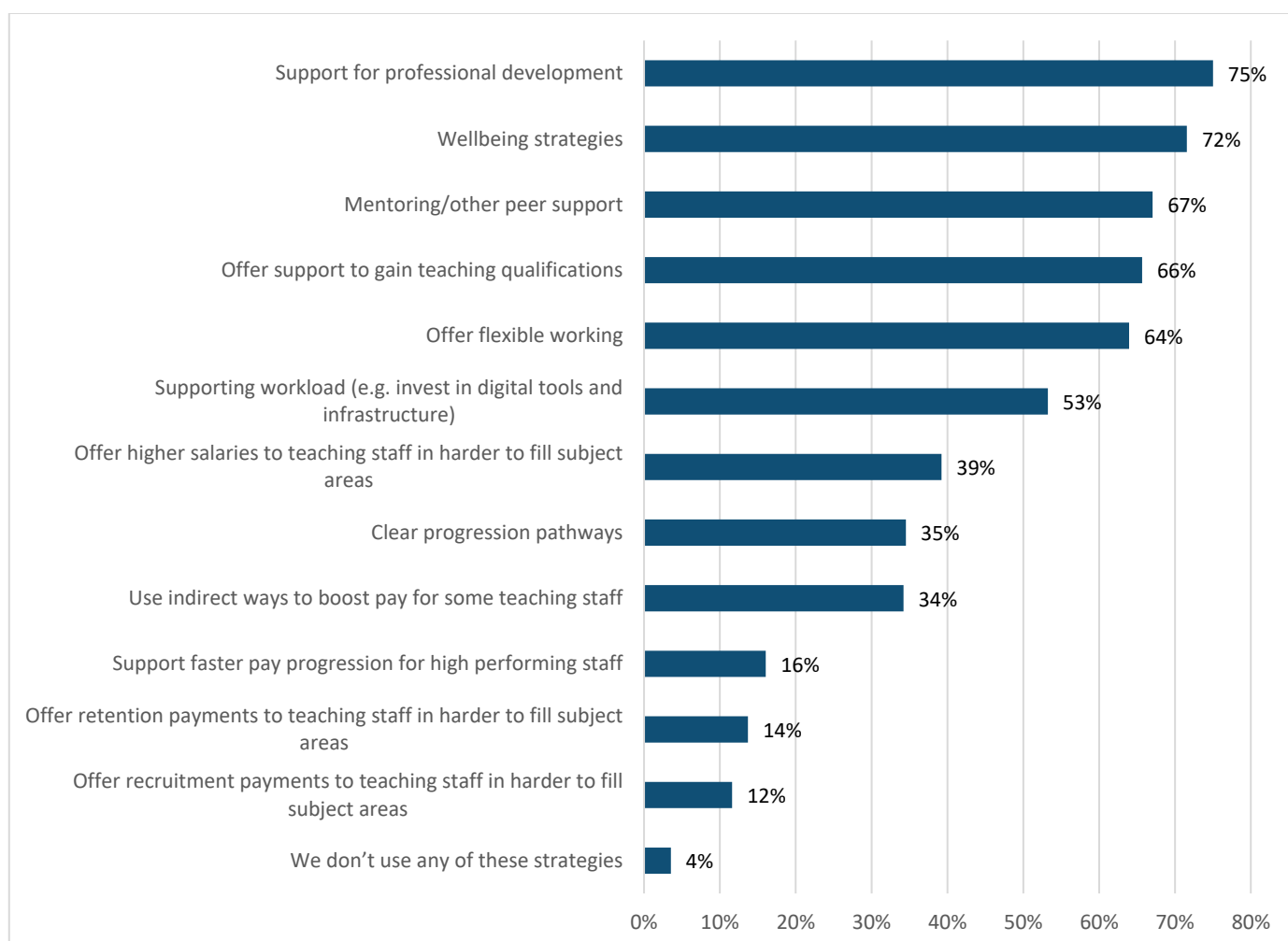
- support for professional development (75%)
- wellbeing strategies e.g. mental health support, employee assistance schemes (72%)
- mentoring or other peer support (67%)
- support to gain teaching qualifications (66%)
- flexible working arrangements (64%³)
- support with workload e.g. investing in digital tools and infrastructure (53%).

³ While flexible working arrangements were reported by 64% of leaders as a strategy used to support recruitment and retention, earlier findings show that just over half of staff (55%) reported using such arrangements, and satisfaction with their availability varied considerably across roles and provider types.

Salary and other payment-related strategies, in particular retention and recruitment payments to teachers in harder to fill areas, on top of salary, were used much less frequently, specifically:

- offering higher salaries to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (39%)
- clear progression pathways (39%)
- using indirect ways to boost pay for some teaching staff e.g. providing greater opportunities to take on additional responsibilities (34%)
- supporting faster pay progression for high performing staff (16%)
- offering retention payments to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (in addition to salary) (14%)
- offering recruitment payments to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (in addition to salary) (12%).

Figure 22: Strategies used by leaders to support recruitment and retention



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 7.5: Which of the following strategies does your college/provider use to support staff recruitment and retention? Select all that apply

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response per strategy. All leaders. N=697

Variation by provider

As shown in the previous section (9.5), leaders used developmental and wellbeing / supportive strategies more frequently than financial incentives to support staff recruitment and retention. GFECs, however, were more likely to use payment-related approaches for teaching staff in harder to fill subjects compared to SFCs and ITPs/ACLs. The differences between providers here were as follows:

- retention payments to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (in addition to salary): these were most commonly reported by leaders in GFECs (35%) and by only small proportions of leader in SFCs (12%) and ITPs/ACLs (6%)
- recruitment payments to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas (in addition to salary): again, these were more commonly reported by leaders in GFECs (27%) and by only small proportions of leaders in SFCs (10%) and ITPs/ACLs (6%)
- higher salaries to teaching staff in harder to fill subject areas: again, these were most commonly offered in GFECs (56%) compared to ITPs/ACLs (33%) and SFCs (30%).

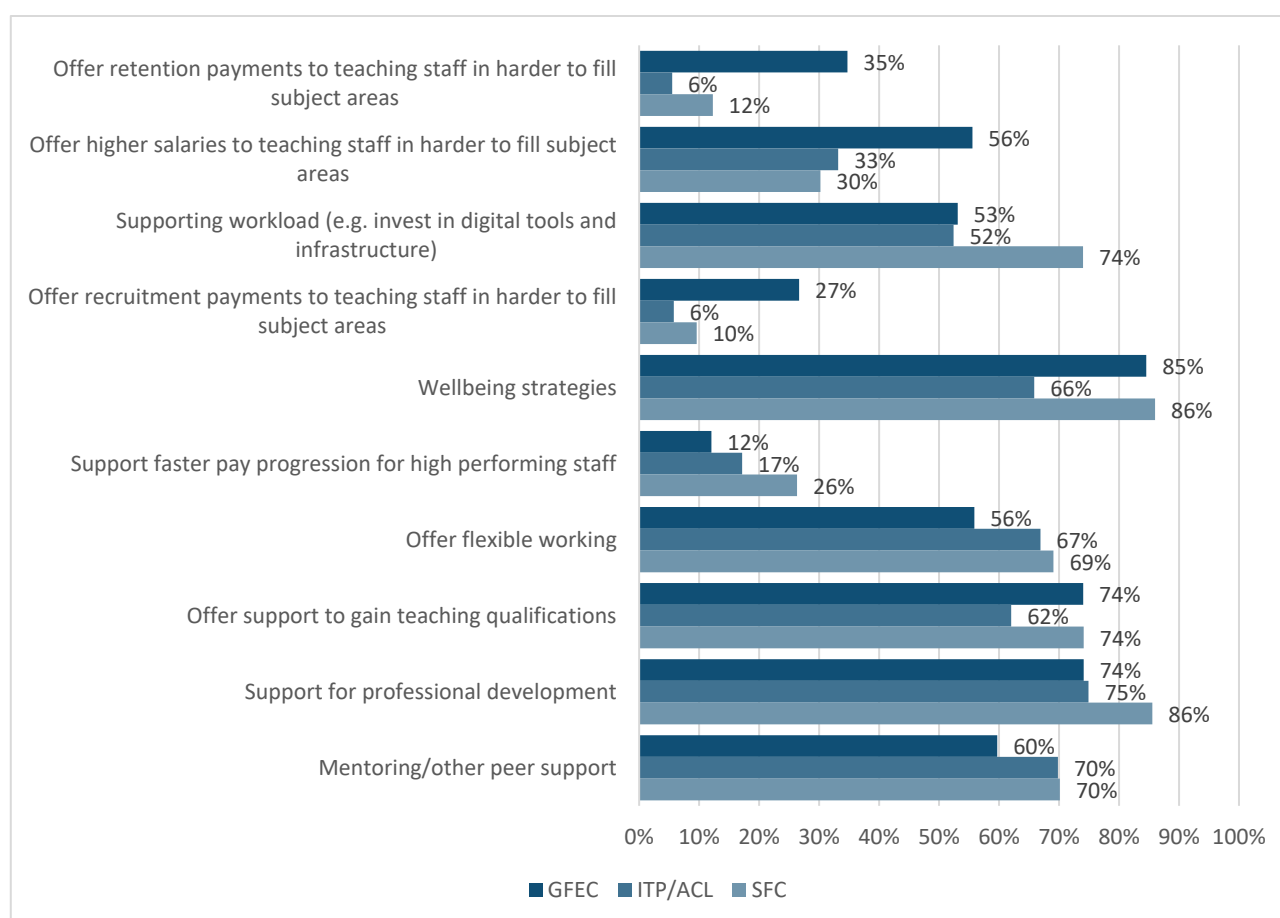
In relation to supporting workload, for example investing in digital tools and infrastructure which incurs a financial cost, nearly three-quarters of leaders in SFCs reported using this strategy (74%) compared to around half of leaders in GFECs (53%) and ITPs/ACLs (52%).

Wellbeing strategies were more likely to be used by colleges, with similarly high proportions of GFECs (85%) and SFCs (86%) using these, compared to two-third of ITPs/ACLs (66%).

There were smaller differences between the provider types for a range of other supportive strategies, specifically:

- supporting faster pay progression for high performing staff was reported by a quarter of leaders in SFCs (26%) and smaller proportions of leaders in ITPs/ACLs (17%) and GFECs (12%)
- offering flexible working was reported by over two-thirds of leaders in SFCs (69%) and ITPs/ACLs (67%) and a slightly lower proportion of leaders in GFECs (56%)
- offering support to gain teaching qualifications was reported by three-quarters of leaders in GFECs and SFCs (both 74%) and a lower proportion of leaders in ITPs/ACLs (62%)
- support for professional development was a commonly used strategy across all provider types but reported by a higher proportion of leaders in SFCs (86%) than leaders in ITPs/ACLs (75%) and GFECs (74%)
- mentoring/other peer support was commonly reported by leaders in all settings: SFCs and ITPs/ACLs (70%, both) and GFECs (60%).

Figure 23: Strategies used for recruitment and retention by provider type



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 7.5: Which of the following strategies does your college/provider use to support staff recruitment and retention? Select all that apply

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response per factor. All leaders, N=697

Recruitment challenges and use of pay-related strategies: crosstabs analysis

To provide additional insight, we explored how responses to questions on recruitment difficulty aligned with reported strategies used by providers.

Bringing together the findings on the vocational areas reported as most difficult to recruit in (Section 9.1) and those on the use of payment-related strategies (Section 9.5) shows that providers who reported difficulties recruiting in these subjects were more likely to report offering higher salaries to teaching staff in these areas.

However, as these findings are based on responses to separate questions, they should be interpreted as descriptive associations rather than evidence that higher salaries reduce recruitment difficulties. It is not possible to determine from these data whether higher salaries are a response to recruitment challenges, or whether they are associated with improved recruitment outcomes.

This pattern was evident across all three of the hardest-to-recruit areas, with higher salaries offered for Engineering and Manufacturing (58%), Construction (56%) and Digital/IT (45%). Higher salaries were also more commonly reported than other strategies by leaders who indicated that these areas were not difficult to recruit in: Engineering and Manufacturing (31%), Construction (32%) and Digital/IT (37%).

These findings indicate that higher salaries are reported across both hard-to-recruit and less challenging areas. However, as this analysis is based on responses to separate questions, it is not possible to determine the direction of this relationship. In particular, the data do not show whether higher salaries are associated with improved recruitment outcomes, or whether they reflect responses to recruitment difficulties or wider labour market conditions.

Table 3: Relationship between hardest to fill vocational areas and payment strategies

Pay-related strategy offered	Difficulty of recruitment	Engineering and Manufacturing	Construction	Digital/IT
Higher salary	Difficult to recruit	58%	56%	45%
	Not difficult to recruit	31%	32%	37%
Recruitment payment on top of salary	Difficult to recruit	24%	24%	15%
	Not difficult to recruit	6%	6%	11%
Retention payment on top of salary	Difficult to recruit	25%	26%	17%
	Not difficult to recruit	9%	9%	12%

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 7.1: To what extent do you think the following factors are enablers or barriers to retaining staff in your organisation/department? Multiple response, up to 5 options. All leaders. N=697

Question 7.5: Which of the following strategies does your college/provider use to support staff recruitment and retention? Select all that apply. Multiple response. All leaders. N=697

Similarly, bringing together the findings on the academic subjects reported as most difficult to recruit in (Section 9.2) and those on the use of payment-related strategies (Section 9.5)

showed that providers were more likely to offer higher salaries to teaching staff in these subjects, rather than using recruitment or retention payments in addition to salary.

This was evident for both of the hardest-to-fill subjects: Mathematics (45%) and English (47%). Higher salaries were also offered by leaders who indicated that these subjects were not difficult to recruit in, with similar proportions reported for Mathematics and English (both 37%). This again suggests that higher salaries may be a useful strategy for recruiting in shortage academic subjects.

These findings indicate that higher salaries are reported across both hard-to-recruit and less challenging subjects. However, as this analysis is based on responses to separate questions, it is not possible to determine the direction of this relationship. In particular, the data do not show whether higher salaries are associated with improved recruitment outcomes, or whether providers offer higher salaries in response to recruitment challenges or wider labour market conditions.

Table 4: Relationship between hardest to fill academic areas and payment strategies

Pay-related strategy offered	Difficulty of recruitment	Mathematics	English
Higher salary	Difficult to recruit	45%	47%
	Not difficult to recruit	37%	37%
Recruitment payment on top of salary	Difficult to recruit	19%	21%
	Not difficult to recruit	8%	9%
Retention payment on top of salary	Difficult to recruit	19%	20%
	Not difficult to recruit	11%	12%

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 7.2: In which of the following academic areas / subjects, including but not limited to A-levels and GCSEs would you say it is most difficult to recruit skilled teaching staff? Multiple response, up to 5 options. All leaders. N=696

Question 7.5: Which of the following strategies does your college/provider use to support staff recruitment and retention? Select all that apply. Multiple response. All leaders. N=697

8.6 Modelling results

This section examines how intention to leave relates to a range of explanatory variables, using two models: one for all respondents and one for respondents with teaching responsibilities. The covariates are set out in the Appendix (see Tables 12 and 13). Separate models were run for leaders and for teachers, with slightly different covariates for

each group. The discussion focuses on statistically significant results; the full specification and outputs are reported in the technical report.

The first model examined intention to leave across all roles. The results suggest that intention to leave reflects a combination of contract type, role, demographics, workload and job satisfaction. Staff on non-full-time contracts - particularly part-time and dual-profession roles - were more likely to consider leaving. Leaders appeared most likely to leave, with teachers and managers less likely to. Higher pay satisfaction and working in ITP/ACL settings were associated with lower intentions to leave.

Work-related perceptions were strongly associated with intention to leave - stress increased intentions, whereas satisfaction with workload, flexibility and being satisfied with working in FE overall, reduced them. Teaching-related factors were also associated with intention to leave. Tenure also mattered: very long tenure (which would increase likelihood of retirement) and some mid-career stages (10–20 years) were associated with higher intentions to leave.

The second model examined intention to leave for teachers. Greater pay satisfaction and stronger staff support were associated with a lower likelihood of leaving, as was working in an ITP/ACL compared to a GFEC. Conversely, dissatisfaction-related factors, such as workplace stress, tended to increase the likelihood of leaving.

Patterns in CPD engagement and contract type also indicated higher leaving intentions among those more recently engaged or in non-full-time roles. Demographic differences emerged, with some ethnic minority groups more likely to express intentions to leave, while Asian or Asian British staff were less likely to be considering leaving. Notably, longer tenure was associated with increased attrition risk.

8.7 Summary

This chapter shows that recruitment and retention challenges in FE are substantial and unevenly distributed across subject areas and provider types. Leaders reported particular difficulties recruiting skilled teaching staff in vocational and technical areas such as Engineering and Manufacturing, Construction and Digital/IT, alongside academic subjects such as Mathematics and English. These pressures were especially acute in GFECs, reflecting both the breadth of their vocational offer and their role in delivering high-volume English and Mathematics provision. SFCs reported more subject-specific pressures in areas such as Computer Science, Economics and Law, while ITPs/ACLs were generally less likely to report difficulties in academic subjects, reflecting differences in their provision.

Pay emerged as the most prominent barrier to both recruitment and retention. Leaders and managers most often identified salaries compared with industry and schools as barriers, reinforcing findings from the previous chapter on low pay satisfaction and concerns about FE's competitiveness against alternative career paths. This is particularly

important in subjects where staff have strong external labour market opportunities, such as engineering, construction and digital, and in areas where FE competes directly with schools for qualified teachers, such as for teachers of Mathematics and English.

The findings also show that recruitment and retention are shaped by wider aspects of the employment offer. Workload and working hours were important barriers, especially for retention and particularly in GFECs and SFCs. Accountability and inspection, student behaviour, funding and government contracts, and limited career progression opportunities were also identified as retention challenges. These findings suggest that improving retention is unlikely to be achieved through pay alone: workload, working conditions, progression and wellbeing also need to be addressed.

At the same time, the chapter highlights factors that providers can build on. Benefits such as holidays and pensions, job security, professional development, flexible working and wellbeing strategies were identified as enablers of recruitment and/or retention. Leaders also reported widespread use of these and other supportive strategies, including mentoring, support to gain teaching qualifications, and workload-related support. These approaches are important because they strengthen the wider employment offer and may help providers compete with other sectors where salary levels are difficult to match.

However, the use of more direct financial strategies appears more limited and targeted. Some providers, particularly GFECs, reported offering higher salaries or recruitment and retention payments in harder-to-fill subject areas, but these approaches were used less frequently than developmental or wellbeing-related strategies. The crosstab analysis suggests that providers experiencing recruitment difficulties in vocational areas and academic subjects were more likely to report using pay-related strategies, although the data cannot show whether these strategies reduced recruitment difficulties or were introduced in response to them.

Overall, the findings underline that FE recruitment and retention pressures are driven by a combination of pay, workload, subject-specific labour market competition, working conditions and career development. Addressing these challenges is likely to require a balanced strategy: targeted financial incentives may be important in shortage areas, but they need to sit alongside wider improvements to workload, progression, professional development, wellbeing and the attractiveness of FE careers.

9 Continuing professional development

This chapter explores the continuing professional development (CPD) undertaken by teachers, managers and leaders. Not all questions were asked of all groups, and this is explained in each section.

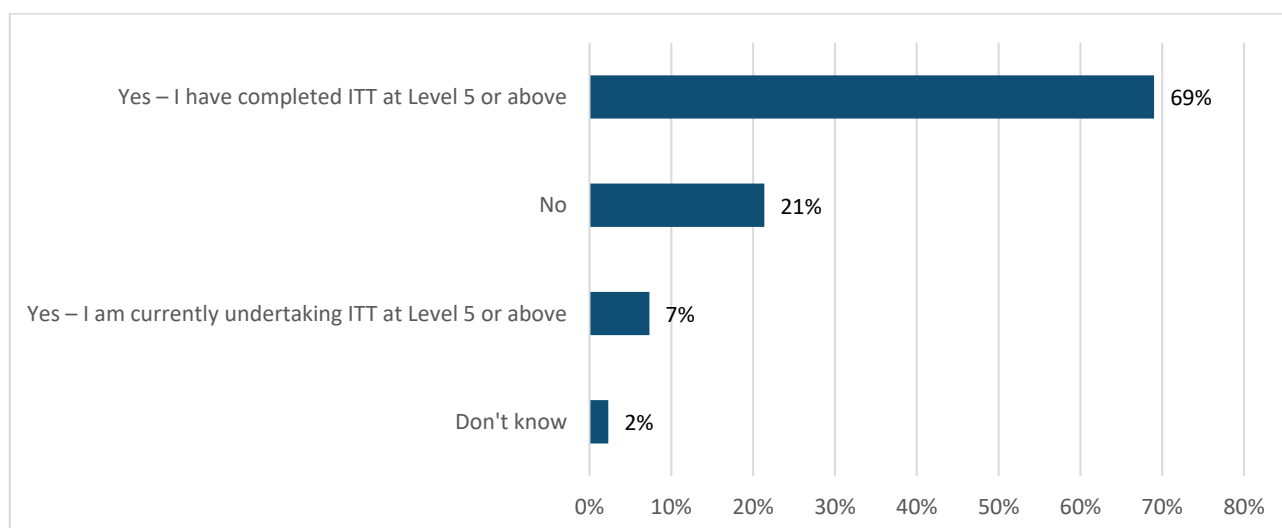
9.1 Proportion of teachers undertaking ITT

Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were asked whether they had completed initial teacher training (ITT), defined as a Level 5+ qualification (for example, a Diploma in Teaching or Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, a Certificate in Education, a PGCE, a Learning and Skills Teacher Apprenticeship, or an equivalent).

As shown below, most respondents (69%) reported they had completed ITT at Level 5 or above, with a further 7% reporting they were currently undertaking ITT. Around one-in-five (21%) indicated they did not have, and were not working towards, ITT at Level 5 or above. A further 2% said they did not know whether they had Level 5+ ITT.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was a clear relationship between time teaching and whether respondents had completed or were undertaking ITT. Of those who were currently undertaking ITT, nearly six in ten (59%) had been teaching for less than three years, and 41% were still in their first year of teaching. Alongside this, among those who had completed ITT, 86% had been teaching for at least three years, with over half (52%) teaching for at least ten years.

Figure 24: Proportion of teachers who had completed or were currently undertaking ITT



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 2.1: Have you undertaken Initial Teacher Training (ITT)?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response. All teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities. N=3,045.

Variation by role and provider type

Teachers were less likely than managers with teaching responsibilities to report they had completed ITT at Level 5 or above (67% compared to 86%). Conversely, they were more likely to be currently undertaking ITT (8% vs 1%).

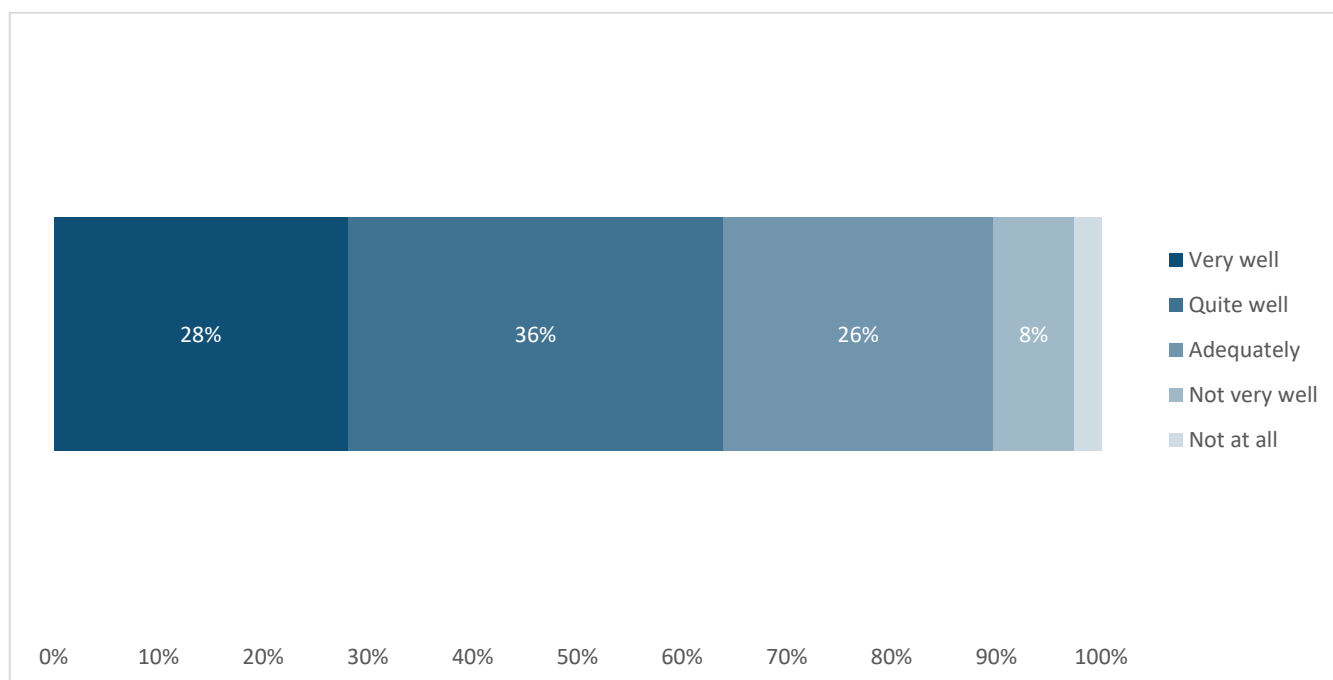
There were also differences by provider type, with staff in SFCs most likely to report they had completed ITT at Level 5 or above (91%), followed by those in GFECs (77%) and ITPs/ACLs (44%). Fewer than one-in-ten reported they were currently undertaking ITT in ITPs/ACLs (9%) and GFECs (7%), with only 2% reporting this from SFCs.

9.2 Preparedness following ITT

Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities who reported they had completed ITT at Level 5 or above were then asked to what extent ITT had prepared them for teaching in the FE sector.

The findings show that most respondents thought ITT had prepared them 'Quite well' (36%) or 'Very well' (28%), with a further 26% reporting it had prepared them 'Adequately'. A minority reported it had prepared them 'Not very well' (8%) or 'Not at all' well (3%). This gives a net positive score of 54%.

Figure 25: Extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed that ITT had prepared them for teaching in the FE sector



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 2.2: To what extent did your ITT programme prepare you for teaching in the FE sector?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response. All teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities. N=2,257.

Percentages below 5% are not shown.

Variation by role and provider type

There are some notable differences between provider types, with respondents from ITPs/ACLs more likely to have considered ITT prepared them 'Very Well' or 'Quite well' (35% and 38%) for teaching in FE compared to GFECs (27% and 35%) or SFCs (24% and 41%). This leads to some differences in net positive scores, with respondents from ITPs/ACLs having a high net positive score (74%) compared to those at GFECs (61%) or SFCs (66%).

By contrast, there was very little difference between teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities responding either 'Very Well' (28% vs. 29%) or 'Quite well' (36% vs. 38%). While both groups reported positive perceptions overall, managers with teaching responsibilities achieved a higher net positive score (60%) than teachers (53%).

9.3 CPD undertaken in the past three years

Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were asked about the types of formal CPD they had undertaken in the past 12 months, the past three years, and more than three years ago, or whether they had not undertaken any CPD.

Formal CPD was defined as 'structured or planned learning activities designed to develop your skills and knowledge'.

As shown in the figure below, the most common types of CPD undertaken in the past 12 months were training led by the college/training provider and receiving lesson observation feedback, which over three-quarters of respondents had undertaken (both 79%). These were followed by professional reading or self-study (63%), observing others' lessons (51%) and training led by an external provider (46%).

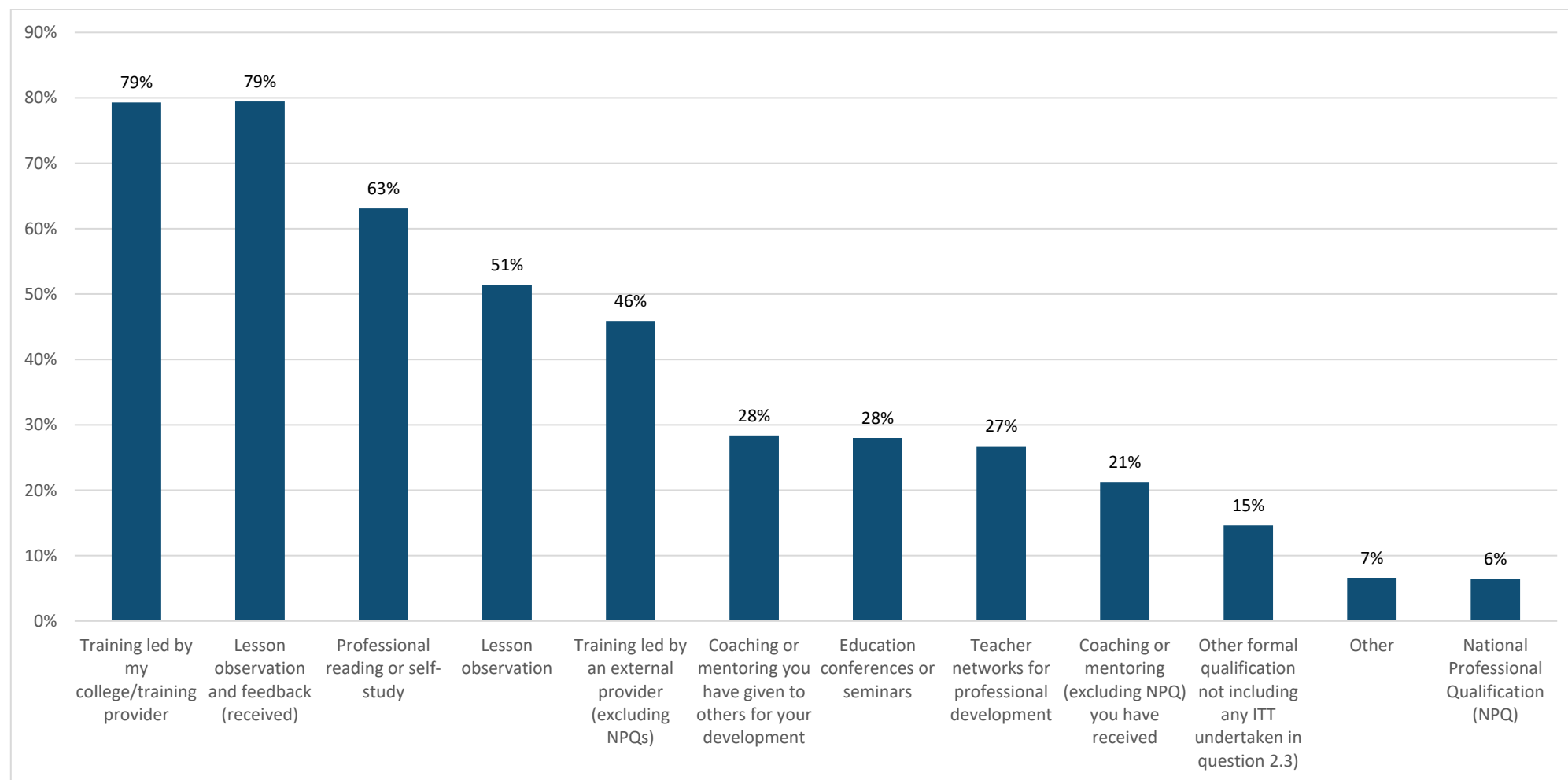
The least common CPD activity was undertaking National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). Only small proportions of teachers reported having undertaken NPQs in recent years (6% in the past 12 months, 4% in the past three years, and 8% more than three years ago), and almost half (48%) reported never having undertaken NPQs.

Overall, the pattern of CPD participation suggested that teachers' recent professional learning was dominated by activities embedded within their own institutions rather than externally accredited or qualifications-based routes. The high prevalence of college- or provider-led training and lesson observation feedback indicated a strong emphasis on internal, practice-focused development that was closely aligned with day-to-day teaching roles. This may reflect the relative accessibility of in-house CPD, both in terms of cost and time, as well as its alignment with organisational priorities.

The low uptake of NPQs suggested that nationally recognised leadership and specialist qualifications were not a common route for professional development among this cohort. The Department has been undertaking wider work to understand barriers to accessing

NPQs, which are being addressed as part of commitments to increase the uptake of NPQs in the FE sector.

Figure 26: CPD undertaken in the past 12 months



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.1: Which of the following CPD activities have you undertaken?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Chart shows responses to the option: 'I have undertaken this activity in the past 12 months'.

Single response per factor. All teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities. N=2,528.

Variation by role and provider type

Analysis by role, comparing teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities, showed that higher proportions of managers with teaching responsibilities had undertaken a wide range of CPD activities in the past 12 months. This included activities that managers might reasonably be expected to engage in more frequently, such as observing others' lessons and providing coaching or mentoring, as well as several other forms of CPD.

In particular, compared with teachers, higher proportions of managers with teaching responsibilities reported having undertaken the following activities in the past 12 months:

- lesson observations of others for their own professional development (73% compared with 51%)
- coaching or mentoring provided to others (48% compared with 28%)
- training led by the college or training provider (87% compared with 79%)
- training led by an external provider, excluding NPQs (60% compared with 46%)
- participation in teacher networks for professional development (39% compared with 27%)
- attendance at educational conferences (42% compared with 28%)
- coaching or mentoring received, excluding NPQs (29% compared with 21%)
- professional reading or self-study (69% compared with 63%).

By contrast, slightly higher proportions of teachers than managers with teaching responsibilities reported having undertaken other formal qualifications or other CPD. Fairly similar proportions of both groups reported having received lesson observation feedback on their own teaching and having undertaken NPQs.

Looking across a longer timeframe, participation in CPD over the past three years was broadly similar for teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities although, in some cases, proportions remained slightly higher among managers with teaching responsibilities.

Across all CPD activities except NPQs, teachers were more likely than managers with teaching responsibilities to report never having undertaken that activity. Around a third or more of teachers reported that they had never received coaching or mentoring (37%), provided coaching or mentoring (33%), attended educational conferences or seminars (32%), participated in teacher networks for professional development (33%), or undertaken other formal qualifications (36%).

Around a half of both groups reported never having undertaken NPQs (56% of managers with teaching responsibilities and 48% of teachers).

Looking at differences by provider type suggests that CPD participation was shaped by institutional context. Teaching staff in ITPs/ACLs were more likely to engage in coaching and mentoring, professional reading or self-study, and other formal qualifications, indicating a greater reliance on informal, peer-based and self-directed learning. In contrast, staff in SFCs and GFECs were more likely to take part in institution-led and externally delivered training, pointing to more structured CPD provision.

In summary, higher proportions of teaching staff in ITPs/ACLs had:

- received coaching or mentoring (33% as opposed to 16% of SFCs and 17% of GFECs)
- provided coaching and mentoring to other staff (38% as opposed to 20% of SFCs and 25% of GFECs)
- undertaken professional reading or self-study (73% as opposed to 59% of both SFCs and of GFECs)
- undertaken other formal qualifications (21% as opposed to 5% of SFCs and 13% of GFECs).

A higher proportion of teaching staff in SFCs and GFECs had:

- undertaken training led by their institution (85% and 80% respectively) compared to 76% of staff in ITPs/ACLs
- training led by an external provider (50% and 47% respectively) compared to 43% of staff in ITPs/ACLs.

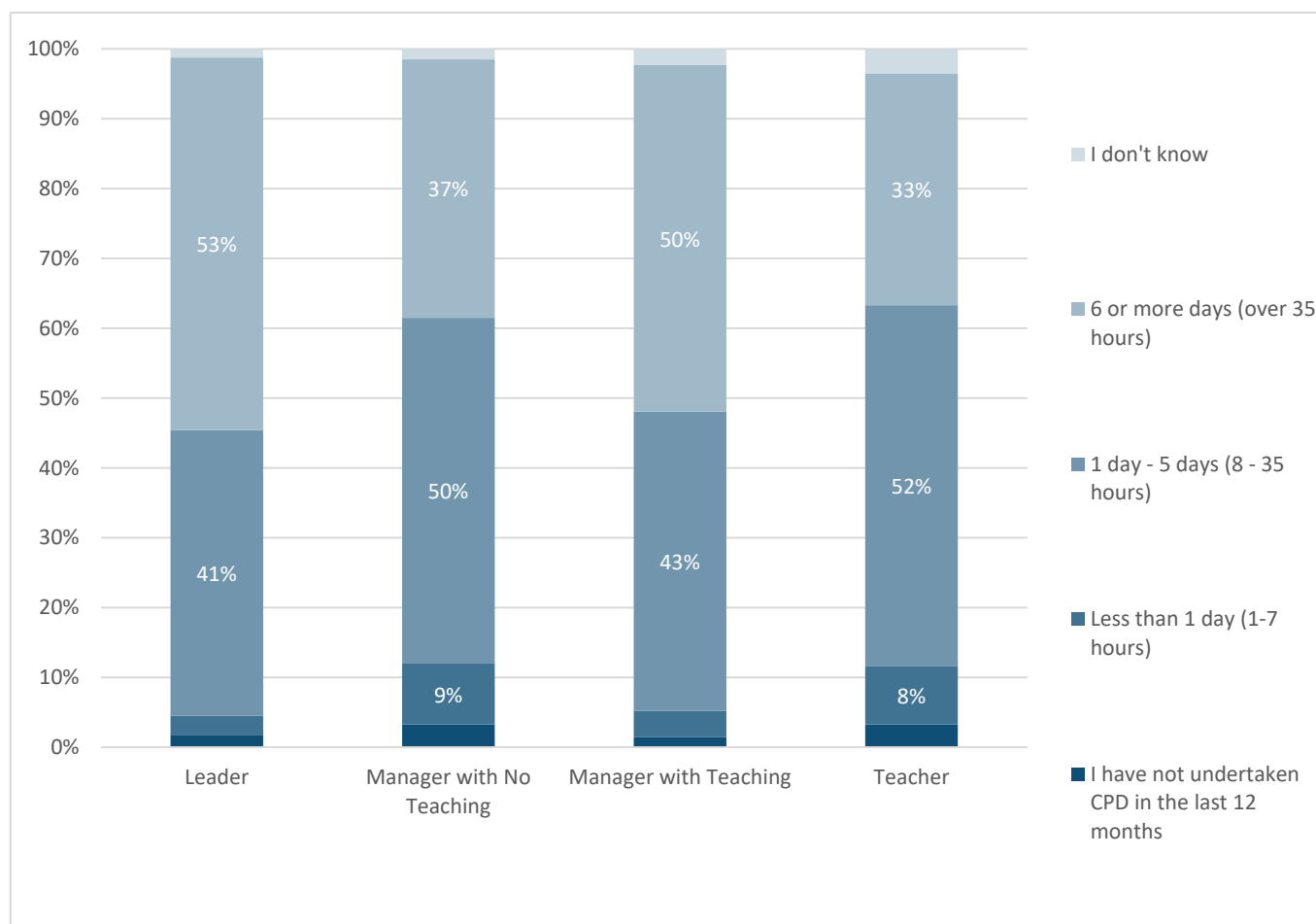
A higher proportion of teaching staff in SFCs and ITPs had undertaken observations of others' lessons for their own development (58% and 59% respectively) than staff in GFECs (48%).

9.4 Time spent on CPD in the last 12 months

All groups - teachers, managers without teaching responsibilities, managers with teaching responsibilities, and leaders - were asked about the number of days they had spent on CPD in the past 12 months. The largest proportion of respondents (36%) reported undertaking more than six days of CPD. This was followed by around a third (34%) who had undertaken three to five days, and 16% who had undertaken one to two days.

Only small proportions reported very low levels of CPD, with 3% having undertaken no CPD and 8% having undertaken less than one day.

Figure 27: Time spent on CPD in the last 12 months by role



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.3: Approximately how much time in days have you spent on CPD activities in the last 12 months?

Response options have been collapsed.

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response. All respondents, N=4,434.

Percentages below 5% are not shown.

Variation by role and provider type

Looking at differences by role showed that:

- Higher proportions of leaders and managers with teaching responsibilities had undertaken 6 days or more of CPD (53% and 50% respectively) than the other groups: managers with no teaching responsibilities (37%) and teachers (33%).
- Around half of teachers (51%) and managers with no teaching responsibilities (50%) had undertaken 1-5 days CPD. This compared to 41% of leaders.

Looking at differences by provider type showed that:

- Staff in ITPs/ACLs tended to have undertaken more CPD than staff in other providers with a quarter (25%) having undertaken 11 or more days of CPD compared to 14% of staff in GFECs and 5% of staff in SFCs.
- The largest proportion of staff in GFECs and SFCs had undertaken 3-5 days of CPD (37% and 40% respectively).
- Only a small proportion of staff (2-4%) in all provider types had not undertaken any CPD.

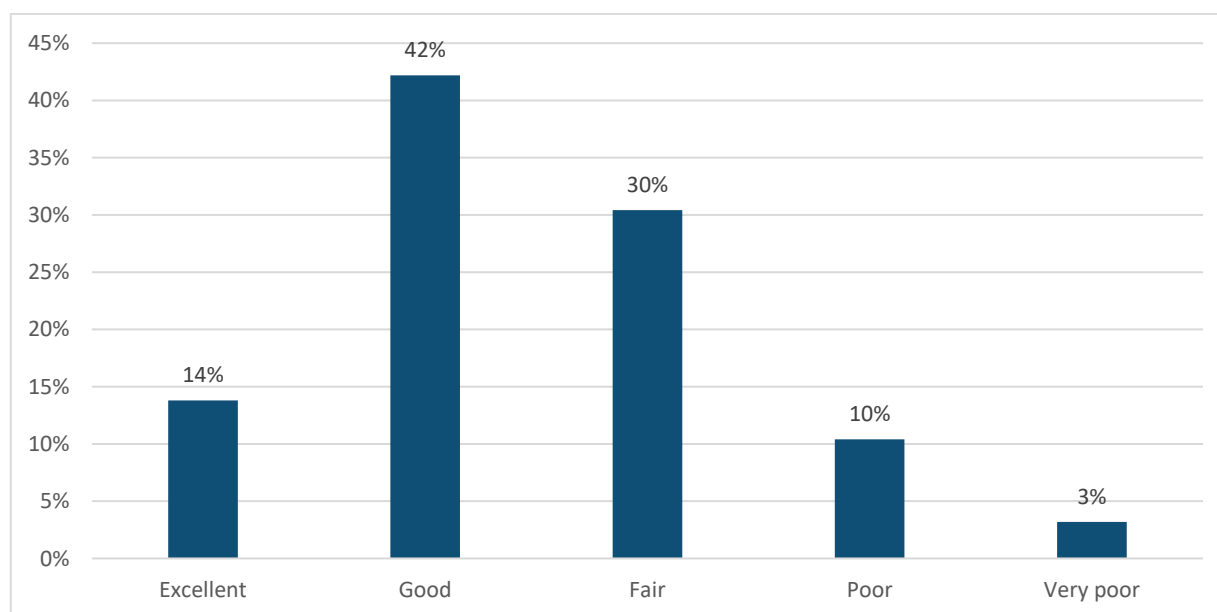
9.5 Rating of the quality of CPD undertaken in the last 12 months

All groups were asked to rate the quality of the CPD they had undertaken in the past 12 months. Overall, the findings suggested that most respondents viewed the CPD they had undertaken positively.

Over half of respondents (56%) rated the CPD they had undertaken as excellent or good. A further 30% rated it as fair. Only small proportions rated their CPD as poor (10%) or very poor (3%).

It should be noted that no specific definitions were provided for these response categories. As such, respondents may have interpreted terms such as 'excellent', 'good' and 'fair' differently, based on their own expectations and experiences. The findings should therefore be understood as reflecting subjective perceptions of CPD quality, rather than a standardised or consistently defined measure.

Figure 28: Rating of the quality of the CPD undertaken in the last 12 months



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.4: How would you generally rate the quality of the CPD that you have undertaken in the last 12 months?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response. All who reported they had undertaken CPD in the last 12 months in Question 8.3, N=4,201.

Variation by role and provider type

Looking at differences by role showed that:

- Leaders and managers without teaching responsibilities were much more positive about the CPD that they had undertaken than the other groups; almost nine out of ten leaders (88%) and just less than three-quarters of managers without teaching responsibilities (72%) reported that the CPD they had undertaken was excellent or good.
- Conversely, teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were less satisfied with the CPD they had undertaken with a third of each group (both 33%) reporting that the CPD they had undertaken was fair and 16% and 12% respectively rating it as poor or very poor. Just over a half of both groups (51% of teachers and 55% of managers with teaching responsibilities) rated it as excellent or good.

Looking at differences by provider showed that staff within ITPs/ACLs were the most satisfied with the CPD they had undertaken in the last 12 months. Almost three-quarters (73%) rated it as excellent or good (with a fifth (25%) rating it as excellent), a quarter as fair (24%) and just 3% as poor or very poor.

Staff within SFCs were the least satisfied with 43% rating the CPD they had attended as excellent or good, 37% as fair and a fifth (20%) as poor or very poor.

Staff in GFECs were in the middle with just less than a half (48%) rating the CPD they had attended as excellent or good, a third (33%) as fair and 18% as poor or very poor.

9.6 Barriers to accessing CPD

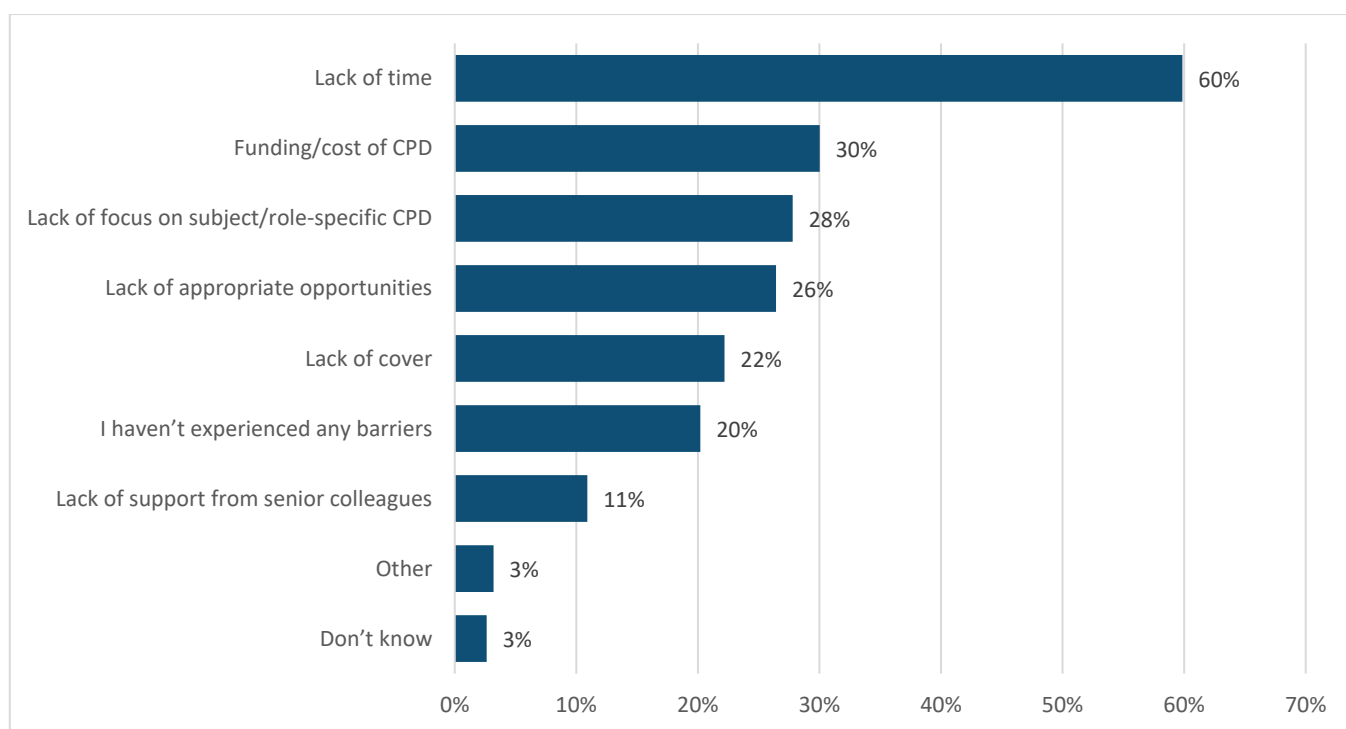
All groups were asked about the barriers they had encountered in accessing CPD, with respondents able to select multiple options, meaning the responses did not sum to 100%. A fifth of respondents (20%) reported that they had not experienced any barriers.

By far the most commonly reported barrier was lack of time (e.g. due to workload or competing priorities), which was cited by six in ten respondents (60%). Other barriers reported by around a quarter of respondents were the funding or cost of CPD (30%), a lack of subject- or role-specific CPD (28%), a lack of appropriate opportunities available (26%), and difficulties securing cover (22%). Lack of support from senior colleagues was not widely reported, with only 11% of respondents identifying this as a barrier.

The findings highlighted workload and time pressures as the primary constraint on access to CPD, outweighing financial, organisational, or support-related barriers. While cost and

the availability of relevant opportunities were also notable obstacles for some respondents, these affected a much smaller proportion than time constraints. The relatively low level of concern about senior support suggested that barriers to CPD were driven more by structural and practical factors than by a lack of encouragement or endorsement within institutions. This pattern underlined the challenge of integrating CPD into existing workloads, even where there was institutional support for professional learning.

Figure 29: Barriers to accessing CPD



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.5: What, if any, of the following barriers to accessing CPD have you experienced in the past 12 months?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Multiple response. All respondents, N=4,436.

Variation by role and provider type

Looking at differences by role showed that:

- Managers with teaching responsibilities consistently reported the greatest barriers to accessing CPD. They were most likely to cite lack of time (70%), funding or cost (41%), lack of cover (30%), and lack of role-specific CPD (33%), indicating particular pressure at the intersection of teaching and managerial duties.
- Teachers also reported substantial barriers, particularly lack of time (61%), funding or cost (29%), lack of cover (24%), and lack of subject- or role-specific CPD (30%), suggesting limited flexibility to engage in CPD alongside teaching workloads.

- Managers without teaching responsibilities reported fewer barriers overall, though around half still cited lack of time (51%) and nearly a third cited funding or cost (31%). They were less likely to report cover-related barriers.
- Leaders were least likely to experience barriers, with higher proportions reporting no barriers (30%). While over a half cited lack of time (53%), they were much less likely to report issues relating to cover, role-specific CPD, or senior support.
- Across all roles, lack of senior support was rarely reported, reinforcing that barriers to CPD were largely structural rather than cultural.

Analysis by provider type showed clear differences in the barriers staff reported to accessing CPD. Staff in GFECs and SFCs were more likely than those in ITPs/ACLs to report barriers related to time and the relevance and availability of CPD.

In particular:

- Lack of time due to workload or competing priorities was reported by around two thirds of staff in GFECs (64%) and SFCs (65%), compared with just over half of staff in ITPs/ACLs (52%).
- Lack of focus on subject- or role-specific CPD was reported by 35% of staff in both GFECs and SFCs, compared with 13% of staff in ITPs/ACLs.
- Lack of appropriate CPD opportunities was reported by 31% of staff in GFECs and 27% in SFCs, compared with 17% in ITPs/ACLs.

Staff in GFECs were also more likely than those in other provider types to report barriers related to organisational support:

- Lack of cover was reported by 28% of staff in GFECs, compared with 16% in SFCs and 12% in ITPs/ACLs.
- Lack of support from senior colleagues was reported by 14% of staff in GFECs, compared with 8% in SFCs and 6% in ITPs/ACLs.

By contrast, staff in ITPs/ACLs were much less likely to report barriers overall. Around a third (32%) reported experiencing no barriers to CPD, compared with 15% of staff in GFECs and 13% in SFCs.

Similar proportions of staff across all provider types reported funding or cost of CPD as a barrier (32% in GFECs, 28% in SFCs, and 27% in ITPs/ACLs), suggesting this was a common constraint irrespective of setting.

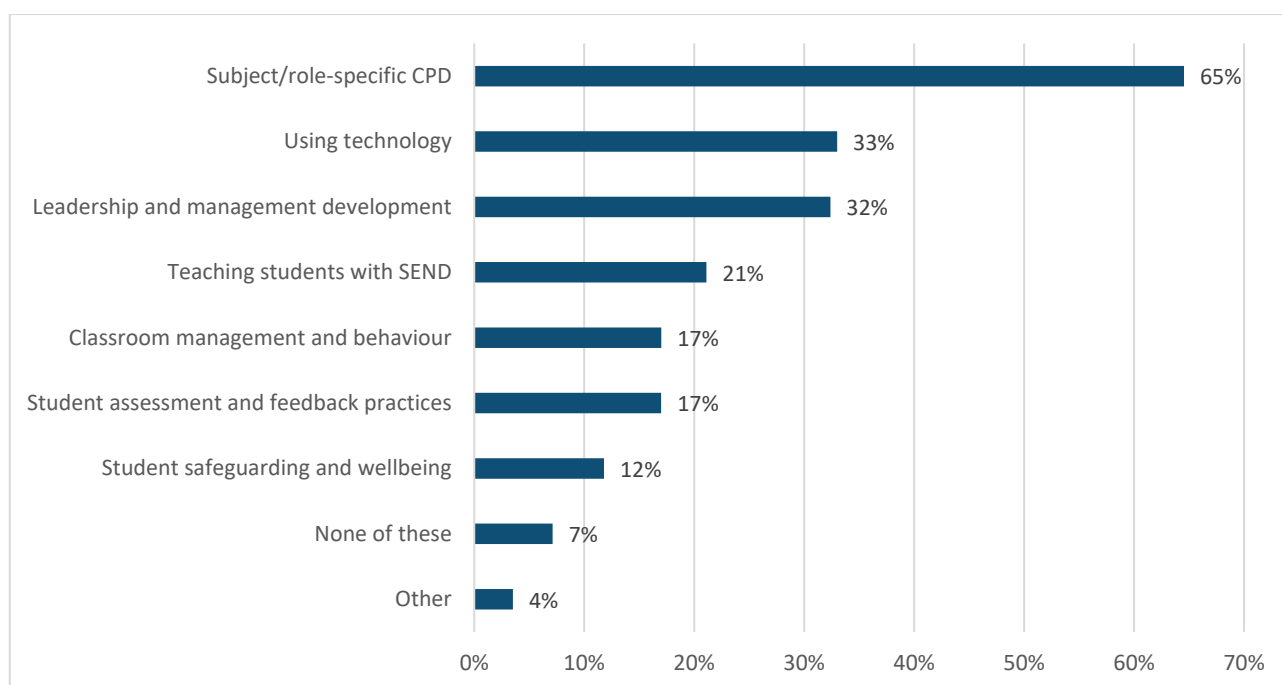
9.7 Areas of learning and development required over the next 12 months

All respondents were asked to select up to three types of CPD that would be most helpful for their learning and development over the next 12 months. Subject- or role-specific CPD

was by far the most commonly identified priority, with around three-fifths of respondents (65%) indicating that this would best support their development. This suggested a strong demand for CPD that was closely aligned with individuals' roles and subject expertise.

Around a third of teachers reported that CPD focused on using technology (33%) and leadership and management development (32%) would be beneficial, reflecting both the increasing role of digital tools in teaching and a perceived need for support with broader professional responsibilities. Just over a fifth reported a need for CPD on teaching students with SEND (21%), highlighting this as a significant but more specialised development priority. Smaller proportions identified a need for CPD relating to classroom management and behaviour, student assessment and feedback practices, and student safeguarding and wellbeing, suggesting that these areas were either less pressing or more likely to be addressed through existing provision.

Figure 30: Areas of learning and development required over the next 12 months



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.6: Which of these areas would help you most with learning and development in the next 12 months?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Multiple response up to three options. All respondents, N=4,436.

Variation by role and provider type

Looking at differences by role showed that:

- Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities were more likely than managers without teaching responsibilities and leaders to want subject- or role-specific CPD (68% of both teachers and managers with teaching

responsibilities, compared with 54% of managers without teaching responsibilities and 35% of leaders). They were also more likely to identify a need for CPD focused on student assessment and feedback practices (20% of teachers and 14% of managers with teaching responsibilities, compared with 7% of leaders and 4% of managers without teaching responsibilities) and classroom management and behaviour (19% and 14%, compared with 10% and 7% respectively).

- Leaders, and managers both with and without teaching responsibilities, were more likely to report a need for leadership and management development (47% of leaders and 55–56% of managers, compared with 25% of teachers), reflecting their broader organisational roles.
- Teachers, managers with teaching responsibilities, and leaders showed higher demand for CPD relating to teaching students with SEND (23% of teachers, 20% of managers with teaching responsibilities and 21% of leaders, compared with 11% of managers without teaching responsibilities).
- Demand for CPD on using technology was relatively similar across roles, though it was most commonly reported by leaders and teachers (36% and 34%, compared with 28–30% of managers).

Analysis of CPD requirements by provider type highlighted several differences.

Classroom management and behaviour was more commonly identified as a CPD need among staff in GFECs (20%) than in other provider types. Staff in SFCs were least likely to require CPD in this area (8%), while staff in ITPs/ACLs fell in between (12%).

Staff in ITPs/ACLs and GFECs were more likely than those in SFCs to report a need for CPD on:

- Teaching students with SEND (24% of staff in ITPs/ACLs and 20% in GFECs, compared with 17% in SFCs).
- Student safeguarding and wellbeing (13% in ITPs/ACLs and 11% in GFECs, compared with 6% in SFCs).

Staff in SFCs were more likely than those in other provider types to identify a need for:

- Subject- or role-specific CPD (74% in SFCs, compared with 68% in GFECs and 56% in ITPs/ACLs).
- Student assessment and feedback practices (23% in SFCs, compared with 17% in GFECs and 15% in ITPs/ACLs).

Similar proportions of staff in all provider types required CPD on:

- Leadership and management development (32% of staff in GFECs, 34% of staff in ITPs/ACLs and 27% of staff in SFCs).

- Using technology (34% of staff in GFECs, 32% of staff in ITPs/ACL and 28% of staff in SFCs).

9.8 Modelling

This section explores the relationship between CPD attendance, time spent on CPD, and perceived quality of CPD, and two outcomes explored in the following models: satisfaction with working in FE and satisfaction with opportunities to develop a career within FE. It also examines the association between satisfaction and the recency of CPD related to wellbeing. The discussion focuses on statistically significant results; the full specification and outputs are reported in the technical report.

CPD and satisfaction with working in FE

This model examined the impact of a range of covariates, including CPD-related factors, on satisfaction with working in FE. In relation to CPD, the model found that:

- Respondents who reported experiencing barriers to accessing CPD were less satisfied with working in FE.
- Higher levels of CPD participation were associated with higher satisfaction with working in FE. However, satisfaction was highest among those who reported undertaking between 11 and 15 days of CPD per year.
- Respondents who rated the quality of CPD they had undertaken as less than excellent were less satisfied with working in FE than those who rated it as excellent.

The model also found that respondents who had last undertaken CPD more than three years ago were less likely to be satisfied with working in FE than those who had never undertaken CPD. While this finding may appear counter-intuitive, it may reflect raised expectations among those who had previously accessed CPD. As time passed without further development opportunities, satisfaction may have declined relative to those who had never undertaken CPD and may therefore have had lower baseline expectations.

CPD and satisfaction with opportunities to develop career within FE

This model examined the impact of a range of covariates on satisfaction with opportunities to develop a career within FE. In relation to CPD-specific factors, the model found that:

- Respondents who reported experiencing barriers to accessing CPD were less satisfied with opportunities to develop their career within FE, echoing the findings from the previous model and lending confidence to the results.
- Respondents who had undertaken between 11 and 15 days of CPD in the past 12 months were more likely to be satisfied with career development opportunities than those who had not undertaken any CPD in the last 12 months.

- Respondents who rated the quality of CPD they had undertaken as less than excellent were less satisfied with opportunities to develop their career within FE than those who rated it as excellent, mirroring the pattern observed in the previous model.

CPD attendance and wellbeing

This model explored whether overall wellbeing varied according to several covariates, including CPD attendance and how recently respondents had attended CPD. The results indicated that CPD attendance did not have a measurable effect on overall wellbeing.

9.9 Summary

This chapter shows that CPD is an important part of the FE employment offer, but that access, time and perceived value are uneven across the workforce. Most respondents had undertaken some form of CPD in the previous 12 months, and many rated the quality of that CPD positively.

However, the findings also suggest that CPD is not yet consistently meeting workforce needs. Time was a key constraint, with many respondents reporting limited time for professional development and identifying workload as a barrier to accessing CPD. This reinforces findings from earlier chapters showing that workload pressures affect not only wellbeing and retention, but also the workforce's ability to engage in development that could improve confidence, effectiveness and career progression.

The chapter also highlights variation in access to, and experiences of, CPD by role and provider type. Teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities, appeared less positive than leaders and non-teaching managers about access to high-quality development. Respondents in ITPs/ACLs were generally more positive than those in GFECs and SFCs. These differences matter for recruitment and retention because staff may not view FE as an attractive long-term career if development opportunities are limited, inconsistent or difficult to access alongside day-to-day responsibilities.

The areas of future development identified by respondents point to the breadth of skills needed in FE roles. Professional learning needs included support for subject or role-specific knowledge, digital skills, leadership and management development, SEND and classroom management. This suggests that CPD has a dual role: helping staff maintain up-to-date occupational and pedagogical expertise, while also supporting them to respond to increasingly complex learner needs.

Overall, the findings indicate that CPD should be seen as a core component of recruitment and retention strategy, rather than an optional add-on. High-quality, relevant and accessible CPD can strengthen staff capability, support career progression and improve job satisfaction. However, its impact is likely to be limited unless providers and policymakers address the conditions that enable staff to participate, particularly protected time, workload pressures, and clear links between professional development, progression and recognition.

10. Views on the best part of working in FE

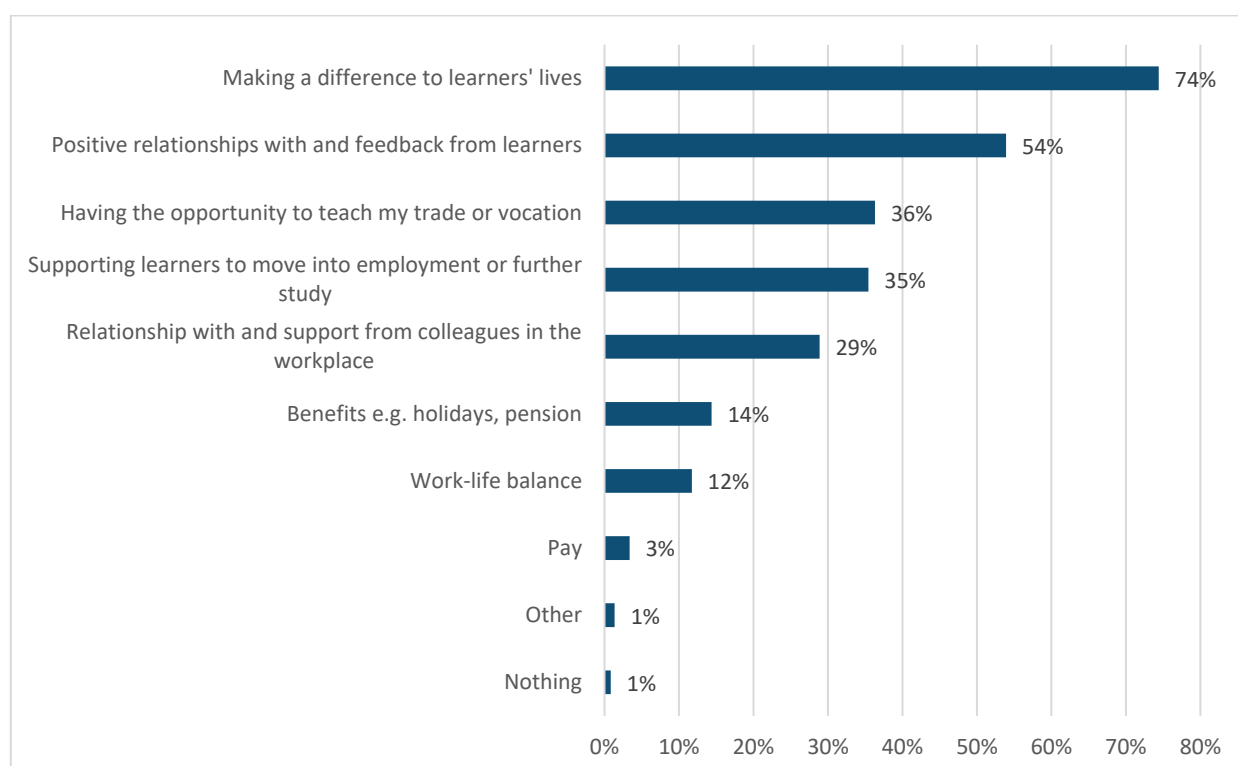
This chapter explores the key factors that encouraged early career teachers (ECTs) - of whom 356 were included in the survey sample - to join the FE sector. It also explores what more experienced respondents (leaders, managers and teachers) reported was the best or most rewarding part of working in FE.

10.1 All staff except ECTs

All respondents, except ECTs, were asked to identify up to three options from a list of ten, that they regarded as the best or most rewarding part of working in the FE sector. The findings are presented below.

The most rewarding factor was 'Making a difference to learners' lives' (74%). This was followed by 'Positive relationships with and feedback from learners' (54%) and 'Having the opportunity to teach my trade or vocation' (36%). Pay was rarely cited (3%), and only 1% selected 'nothing'.

Figure 31: The factors that leaders, managers and teachers identified as the best or most rewarding part of working in the FE sector



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 9.1: What would you say is the best or most rewarding part of working in FE?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Multiple response up to three options. All respondents, except ECTs. N=4,078

Variation by provider type and role

There were some variations in response by provider type:

- Making a difference to learners' lives was most commonly cited by respondents working in ITPs/ACLs (78%) and GFECs (73%), compared with a lower proportion of respondents in SFCs (67%).
- Work-life balance was identified as the most rewarding aspect by a higher proportion of respondents in ITPs/ACLs (19%) than respondents working in GFECs (8%) or SFCs (6%).
- In contrast, wider benefits, such as holidays or pensions, were less frequently cited by respondents in ITPs/ACLs (5%) than by respondents working in GFECs (18%) or SFCs (27%).

Clear differences also emerged by role:

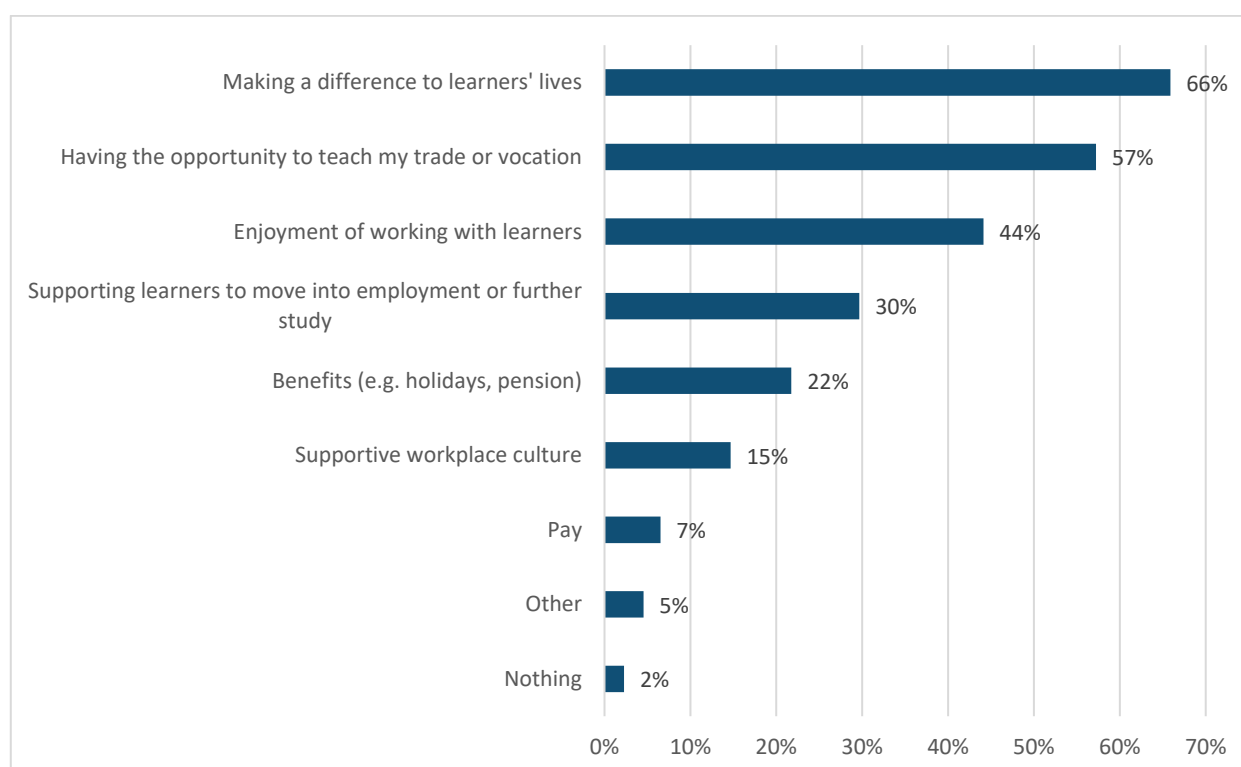
- Across all roles, the most rewarding aspect of working in FE was making a difference to learners' lives, cited by around three-quarters or more of respondents (73–84%), and highest among leaders (84%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (82%).
- Direct relationships with learners featured much more strongly for staff with teaching roles. A majority of teachers (60%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (56%) highlighted positive relationships with and feedback from learners, compared with around a quarter of managers without teaching responsibilities (26%).
- Supporting learners to progress into employment or further study was also widely valued, particularly by leaders (45%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (42%), though this was less frequently selected by teachers (34%).
- Collegial relationships and workplace support were more important to leaders and non-teaching managers (both 40%) than to teachers (26%), suggesting differences in how peer support is experienced across roles.
- Teaching one's trade or vocation was a key source of reward for teachers (44%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (37%), but, not surprisingly given their role, was rarely reported by leaders or managers without teaching responsibilities.
- Practical employment conditions, such as work-life balance and benefits, were secondary motivators overall, though they were cited more often by managers without teaching responsibilities (24% for work-life balance; 20% for benefits).
- Pay was rarely identified as the most rewarding aspect of FE work across any role (2–5%), and very few respondents said there was nothing rewarding about working in the sector (around 1–2%).

10.2 Early career teachers (ECTs)

ECTs⁴ were asked to identify up to three options, from a list of nine, that they regarded as the key factors that encouraged them to join the FE sector. The findings are presented below.

The most common motivation in joining FE for ECTs was 'Making a difference to learners' lives' (66%), followed by 'Having the opportunity to teach my trade or vocation' (57%) and 'Enjoyment of working with learners' (44%). Pay was rarely cited (7%), and only 2% selected 'nothing'. Of those who answered 'Other' (5%), the most commonly given factors were work/life balance and flexibility. Overall, the findings suggest that ECTs were primarily motivated to join FE by intrinsic and vocational factors linked to learner impact and subject expertise, rather than by financial considerations.

Figure 32: The key factors that encouraged ECTs to join the FE sector



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 9.2: What are the key factors that encouraged you to join the FE sector?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Multiple response up to three options. All ECTs. N=356

Variation by provider type

Notable differences emerged between ECTs by provider type. Key findings were:

⁴ ECTs were defined as those teachers in their first three years of teaching if full-time, or the first five years if part-time.

- SFC respondents were most motivated by learner impact and relationships. They were more likely than those in GFEC and ITP/ACL settings to cite making a difference to learners' lives (80% compared to 68% and 61% respectively) and enjoying working with learners (58% compared to 42% and 46%).
- GFEC and ITP/ACL respondents placed more emphasis on teaching a trade or vocation than respondents in SFCs (56% and 62% versus 34% respectively). GFEC respondents were more likely than ITP/ACL respondents to cite wider benefits (for example, holidays and pension) (29% vs 9%), while ITP/ACL respondents placed greater emphasis on a supportive workplace culture than those in SFCs and GFECs (21% compared to 19% and 11% respectively).

10.3 Summary

This chapter highlights that staff's positive motivations for working in FE are strongly rooted in the intrinsic value of the work. Respondents most commonly identified making a difference to learners' lives, positive relationships with learners and supporting learners to progress as the best or most rewarding aspects of working in the sector. This suggests that, despite the workload, pay and wellbeing pressures identified elsewhere in the report, many staff continue to derive considerable satisfaction from the core purpose of FE.

The findings suggest that the FE sector's ability to attract and retain staff rests heavily on its intrinsic rewards, particularly making a difference to learners and building positive learner relationships. Recruitment and retention strategies are therefore likely to be more effective if they foreground learner impact, vocational identity and supportive working cultures, while also recognising that motivations vary by provider type and role.

11. Future plans, including intentions to leave

This chapter explores leaders', managers' and teachers' future plans, including whether they intended to leave the FE sector and, if so, when and why. Respondents who expected to stay in FE were asked about their short-term plans.

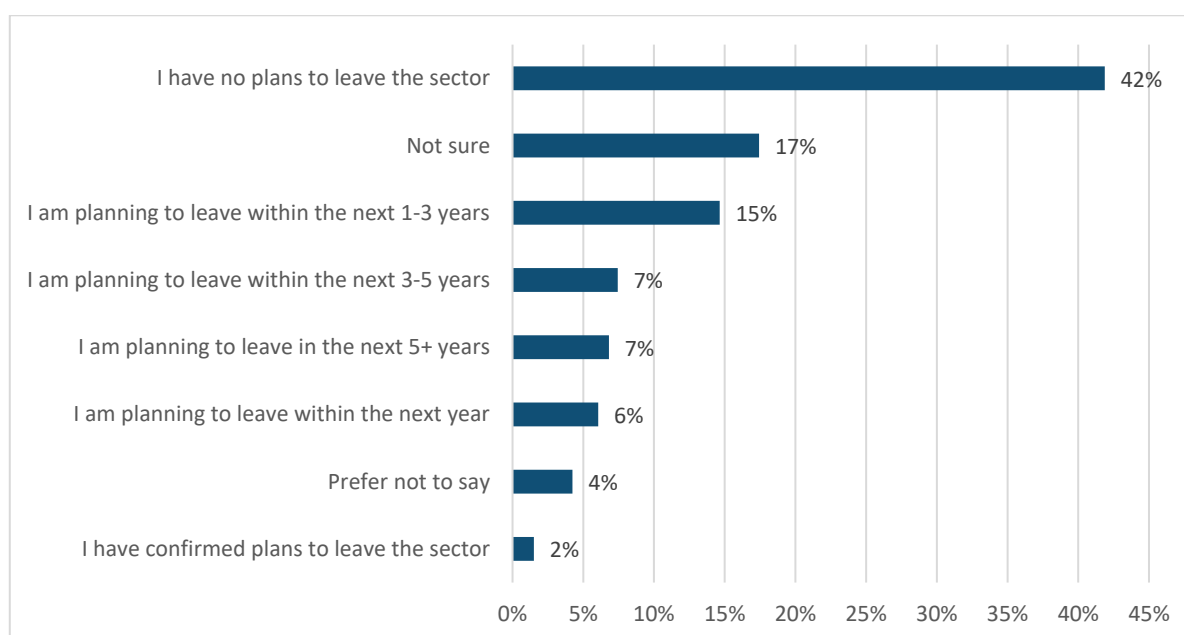
11.1 Future plans

All survey respondents were asked about their plans to continue working in the FE sector. The results are summarised below.

Overall, 42% said they had no plans to leave the sector, 37% planned to leave, 17% were unsure, and 4% preferred not to say.

Looking more closely at those planning to leave, 8% planned to do so within the next year, or already had confirmed plans to leave. 15% expected to leave within 1–3 years and 7% within 3–5 years and 7% after 5+ years.

Figure 33: Leaders', managers' and teachers' plans for continuing to work in the FE sector



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 10.1: What are your plans regarding continuing to work in the FE sector?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response. All respondents. N=4,434

Some people will be planning to leave because they plan to retire. If we remove these people from the analysis, we find that 46% of the remaining respondents had no plans to leave the sector, 31% of respondents planned to leave, 19% were unsure, and 5%

preferred not to say. Of all respondents who did not plan to retire, 7% planned to leave within the next year or already had confirmed plans to do so.

Variation by role and provider type

There were some variations in respondents’ plans by both role and provider type:

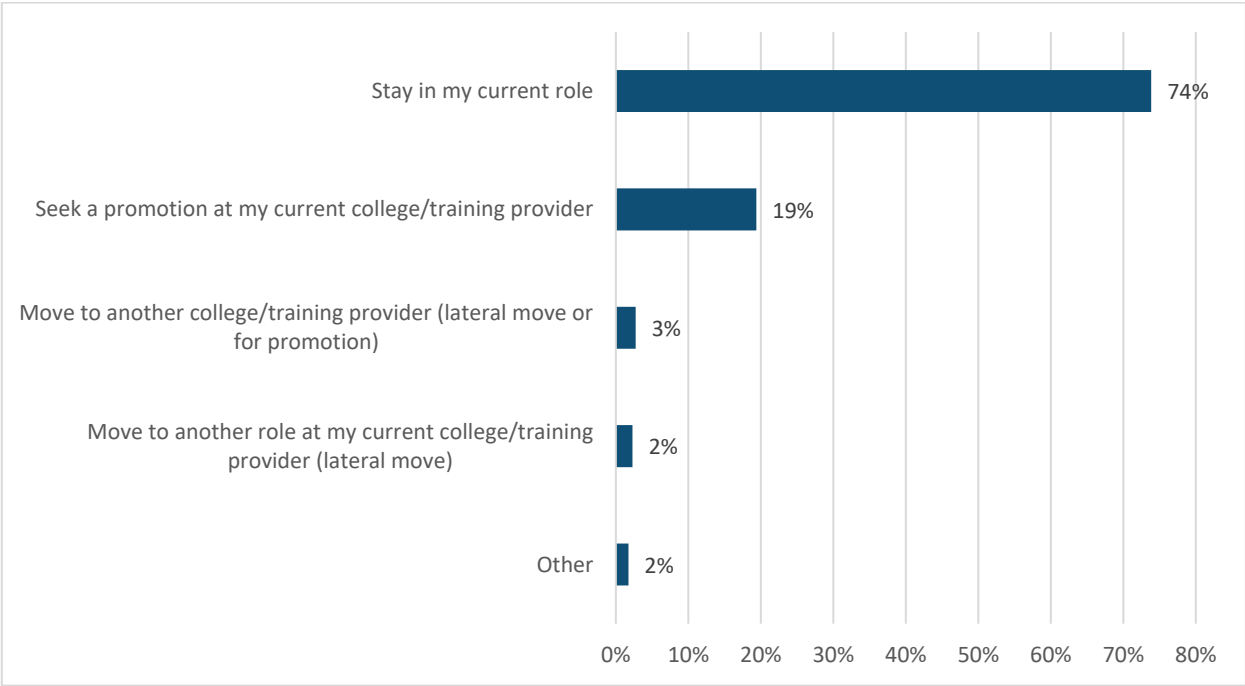
- Leaders and managers with no teaching responsibilities were more likely to report they had no plans to leave the sector (56% and 51% respectively) compared to teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities (40% and 37% respectively).
- Staff in ITPs/ACLs were more likely to report they had no plans to leave the sector (55%) compared to staff in GFECs and SFCs (both 36%).

11.2 Plans if staying

Those who reported staying were asked what their plans were for the next 12 months.

Most respondents (75%) expected to stay in their current role, while 19% planned to seek promotion. Smaller proportions planned to move provider (3%), move into a different role at the same provider (2%), or had other plans (2%).

Figure 34: Plans for the next 12 months among respondents staying in FE



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025
Question 10.2: In the next 12 months, which of the following best describes your plans?
Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Single response. Respondents who had no plans to leave the FE sector. N=1,928.

Variation by role and provider type

There was limited variation in respondents' plans by role, and no notable differences by provider type:

- Leaders were most likely to report they planned to stay in their current role (81%), with managers with teaching responsibilities the least likely (69%).
- Managers with teaching responsibilities were the most likely to report they planned to seek promotion with their current provider (26%), with leaders the least likely (13%).

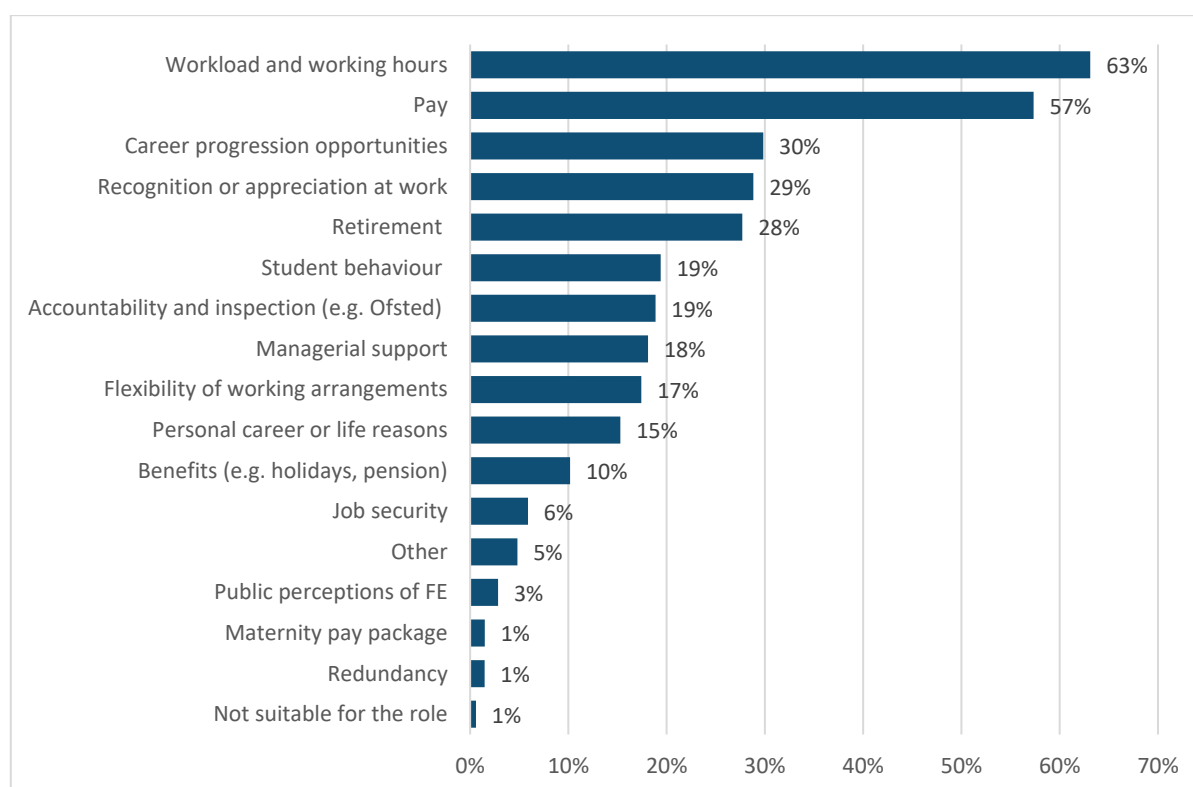
11.3 Reasons for considering leaving

Respondents who planned to leave the FE sector within the next five years were asked which factors most influenced their decision. They could select up to five options from a list of 17.

The most common factors were workload and working hours (63%) and pay (57%), followed by limited career progression (30%), a lack of recognition or appreciation at work (29%), and plans to retire (28%).

Other, less frequently cited factors included student behaviour (19%), accountability and inspection (19%), and a perceived lack of managerial support (17%).

Figure 35: Factors that influenced leaders', managers' and teachers' decisions to leave the FE sector in the next five years



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 10.3: Which of the following factors have been most influential in making you consider leaving the FE sector?

Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Multiple response up to five options. Respondents who planned to leave the FE sector within the next 5 years. N=1,303.

Variation by role and provider type

Drivers of potential FE exit varied by provider type:

- Workload and working hours was the most influential factor across all provider types, particularly for respondents at SFCs (72%) and GFECs (66%), with a lower proportion of respondents at ITPs/ACLs (47%) reporting this.
- Pay was a major push factor for respondents at GFECs (60%) and ITPs/ACLs (53%) but was less frequently cited by those working at SFCs (38%).
- Concerns about recognition or appreciation at work were more prominent among respondents at SFCs (35%) and GFECs (30%) than among those at ITPs/ACLs (21%).
- Student behaviour was a notable factor for respondents at GFECs (23%) but was rarely cited by those working at ITPs/ACLs or SFCs (both 8%).

The pattern was also quite segmented by role, with three clear themes: workload and pay pressures among teaching staff, financial and career considerations among managers, and retirement/accountability among leaders.

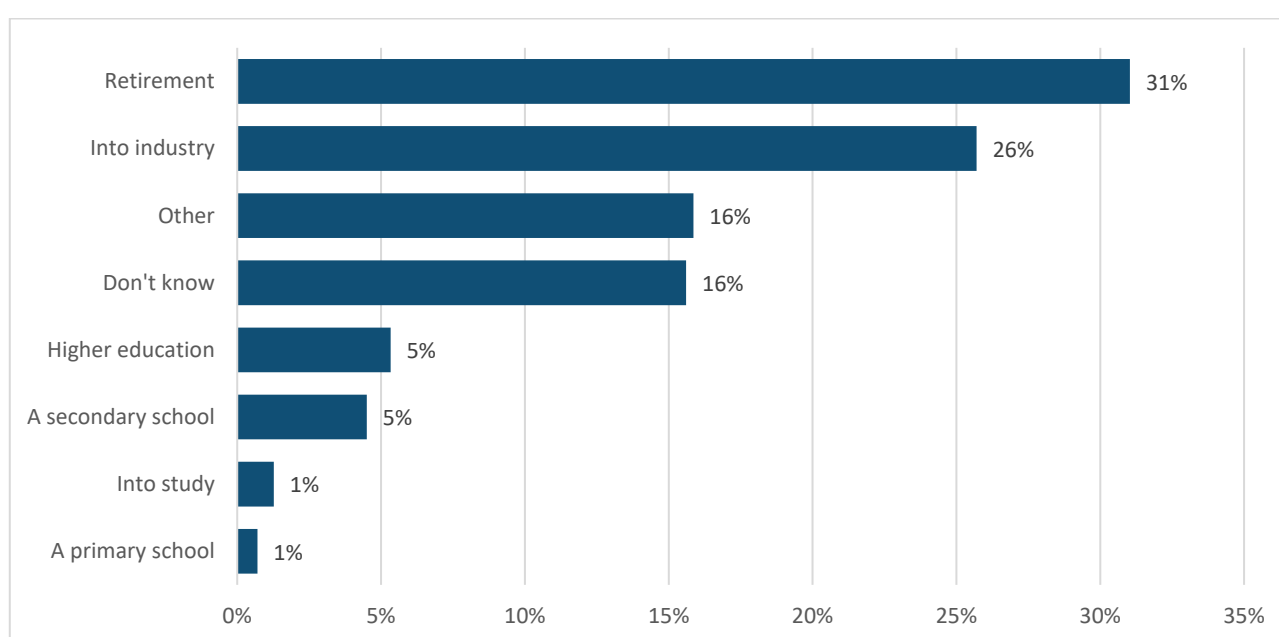
- Workload and working hours was the most influential factor for staff with teaching responsibilities, cited by around two thirds of managers with teaching responsibilities (69%) and teachers (67%), compared with lower proportions of leaders (42%) and managers without teaching responsibilities (39%).
- Pay was also a key factor for teachers (61%), managers with teaching responsibilities (51%) and managers without teaching responsibilities (50%), whilst a lower proportion of leaders (33%) reported this factor.
- For leaders, retirement was the single most influential factor (43%), cited more frequently than by any other role group, indicating that planned exits linked to career stage are a significant contributor to leadership turnover.
- Career progression opportunities were rarely cited by leaders (9%) but were identified by around a quarter to a third of managers and teachers (27–32%), suggesting more limited perceptions of advancement opportunities below senior leadership level.
- Recognition or appreciation at work was more influential for managers with teaching responsibilities (37%) and teachers (30%) than for leaders (13%), pointing to differences in how valued staff feel across roles.
- Concerns relating to managerial support were uncommon among leaders (3%) but were cited by one in five managers with teaching responsibilities and teachers (both 20%), highlighting potential pressures in line management and support arrangements for teaching staff in some settings.
- Student behaviour was rarely cited by leaders (2%) but was a more notable factor for managers with teaching responsibilities (19%) and teachers (22%), reflecting differences in day-to-day operational pressures.
- Accountability and inspection, such as Ofsted, had greater influence on leaders' considerations of leaving (27%) than on managers and teachers (15–19%), consistent with leaders' greater accountability for inspection outcomes.
- Other factors were cited by smaller proportions of respondents across all roles although there were some differences between roles. For example, flexibility of working arrangements was more commonly cited by teachers (18%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (21%) than leaders or other managers (12%-15%). 27% of managers with no teaching responsibilities were more likely to cite personal career or life reasons than any other group.
- Factors such as benefits, job security, public perceptions of FE, redundancy, and maternity pay were rarely identified as influential across all role groups.

11.4 Intended destinations for leavers

Respondents who planned to leave the FE sector were asked about their intended destinations.

The most common destination was retirement (31%), followed by a move into industry (26%). Very few respondents planned to move into higher education (5%), the school sector (1-5%), or into study (1%), indicating that these are marginal exit routes from FE. Around one in six (16%) were unsure or had some other destination in mind (such as becoming self-employed/running their own business).

Figure 36: Intended destinations of leaders, managers and teachers following exit from the FE sector



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025
Question 10.4: If considering leaving, where are you intending to go?
Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Single response. Respondents who planned to leave the FE sector. N=1,624.

Variation by role and provider type

- Among all respondents who said they planned to leave the FE sector, retirement was the most commonly cited intended destination across all provider types, particularly among respondents in ITPs/ACLs (38%) and SFCs (35%), compared with just under three in ten respondents in GFECs (29%).
- Moving into industry was more frequently cited by respondents at SFCs (30%) and GFECs (27%) than by respondents in ITPs/ACLs (19%).

- A substantial minority of respondents selected 'Other' destinations, particularly at GFECs (18%), compared with lower proportions at ITPs/ACLs (11%) and SFCs (12%), indicating a wider range of alternative pathways for GFEC staff.
- Retirement was the most commonly cited intended destination for leaders (40%), falling steadily across the role spectrum to just under three in ten teachers (29%). This reinforces the importance of career-stage factors in senior leadership exits.
- A substantial minority of respondents reported that they did not know where they would go if they left FE, particularly leaders (25%) and managers with teaching responsibilities (20%), suggesting greater uncertainty about next steps among more senior roles.
- Moving into industry was more commonly cited by non-leaders, especially managers without teaching responsibilities (29%) and teachers (26%), compared with leaders (19%), pointing to stronger perceived transferability of skills outside FE among these groups.

11.5 Summary

This chapter shows that many FE staff intend to remain in the sector in the short term, but that a substantial minority are considering leaving within the next five years. This points to a retention challenge that is not limited to immediate turnover risk, but includes a wider group of staff whose future commitment to FE may depend on whether working conditions, pay, workload and progression opportunities improve.

Among those who planned to stay in FE, many expected to remain in their current role or continue working for their current provider. This suggests a degree of stability and attachment to existing workplaces. However, some respondents also expected to move roles, change provider or reduce their hours, indicating that retention within FE does not necessarily mean retention in the same role or organisation.

The reasons respondents gave for considering leaving reinforce the importance of the wider employment offer. Workload and working hours, pay, career progression, recognition and appreciation at work and retirement all appear to be key in shaping future career intentions. These factors align closely with findings from earlier chapters, where staff reported concerns about salary satisfaction, workload manageability, wellbeing and limited opportunities to develop their careers. This consistency suggests that intentions to leave are not isolated from day-to-day experiences, but are closely linked to the cumulative effect of working conditions over time.

The chapter also highlights the risk that staff who leave FE may move to other sectors, including schools, industry or other employment outside education. This matters for recruitment as well as retention, because FE providers are competing in multiple labour markets. Where staff have transferable skills, occupational expertise or prior experience outside FE, they may have credible alternatives if FE roles become less attractive. This is

particularly important in shortage areas where industry pay or school teaching conditions may be perceived as more favourable.

For leaders, retirement was the single most influential factor, cited more frequently than by any other role group, indicating that planned exits linked to career stage are a significant contributor to leadership turnover. This is a particular challenge for the FE sector, given the FE workforce tends to be older than the school teaching workforce, reflecting FE's greater reliance on recruiting experienced professionals and career changers from outside education.

Overall, the findings suggest that retention strategies need to focus not only on preventing immediate exits, but also on strengthening the workforce's longer-term confidence in FE as a sustainable career. Addressing pay and workload pressures, improving wellbeing, offering clearer progression routes and supporting flexible career pathways may help to reduce the proportion of staff considering leaving. At the same time, recruitment strategies should emphasise the aspects of FE that staff value, while being realistic about the practical conditions needed to make those positive features sustainable over time.

12 Views and experiences of early career teachers

This chapter explores the views and experiences of ECTs, defined as those in their first three years of teaching if full-time, or the first five years if part-time. It includes analysis of questions that were asked specifically of ECTs, as well as analysis of selected questions that were answered by both ECTs and more experienced teachers. This distinction is explained at the start of each relevant section.

Among teachers and managers with teaching responsibilities who responded to the survey, 352 (12%) were identified as ECTs, including 15 managers with teaching responsibilities. This chapter focuses on comparing the responses of ECTs with those of teachers later in their careers. To ensure a like-for-like comparison, all managers with teaching responsibilities, including those identified as ECTs, have been excluded from the analysis. This is because the roles and experiences of staff with management responsibilities are likely to differ substantially from those of classroom teachers.

12.1 Support received

ECTs were asked a series of questions about how well prepared they were for teaching in FE. Their responses are summarised below.

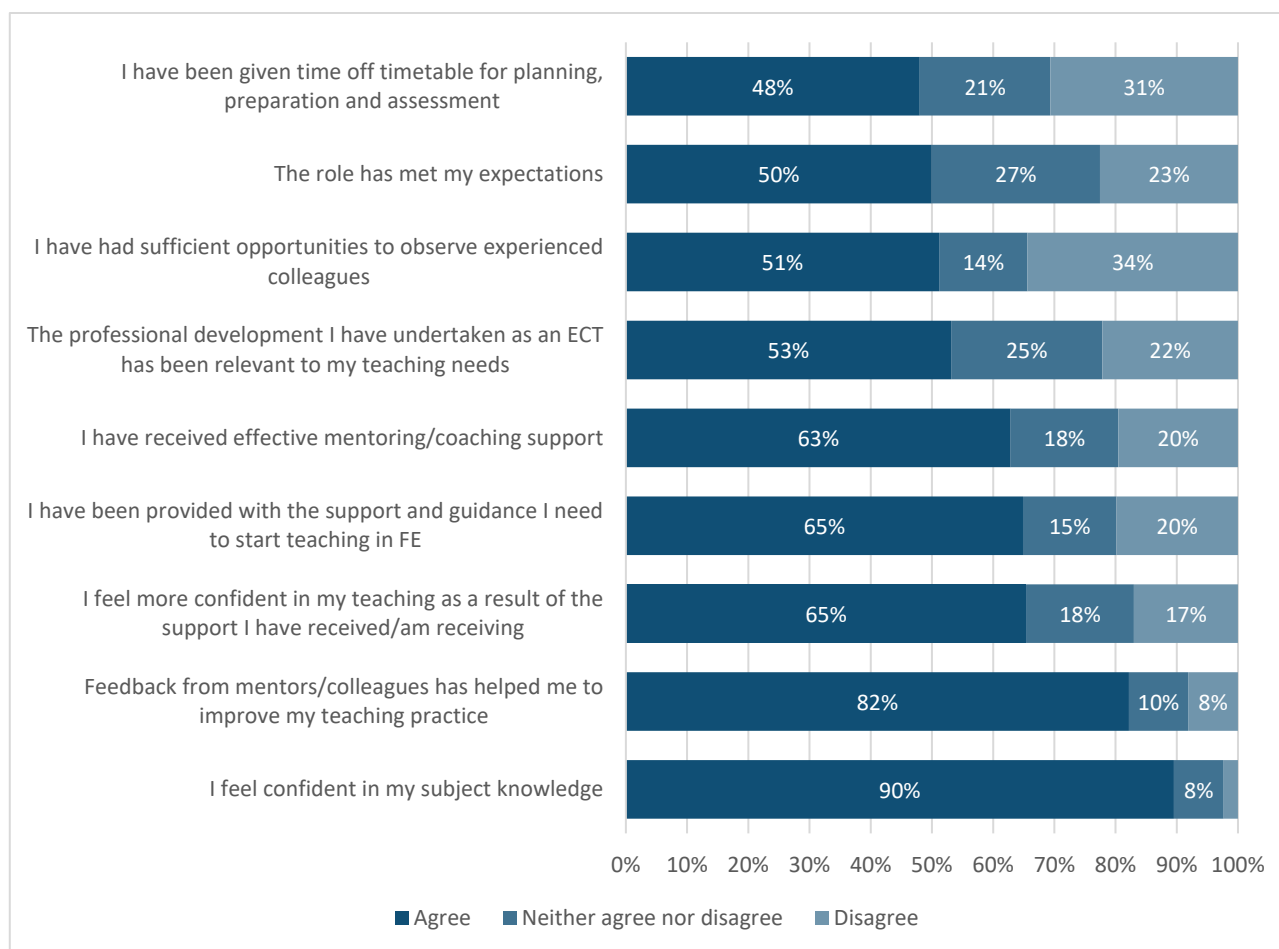
The vast majority of ECTs reported feeling confident in their subject knowledge (90%). In addition, around two-thirds reported that they had been provided with the support and guidance they needed to start teaching in FE (65%), and that this support had increased their confidence in their teaching (65%).

Over four-fifths of ECTs (82%) reported that feedback from mentors/colleagues was valuable and had helped them improve their teaching practice. In addition, around two-thirds of teachers (63%) reported that they had received effective mentoring/coaching support.

However, some aspects of support appeared to be working less well for a minority of ECTs. Indeed, 20% of ECTs disagreed with the idea that they had been provided with the support and guidance needed to start teaching in FE. 17% also said they did not feel more confident in their teaching as a result of the support they had received. While around half agreed that they had sufficient opportunities to observe experienced colleagues (51%), over a third disagreed (34%). Similarly, although nearly half agreed that they had been given time off timetable for planning, preparation and assessment (48%), almost a third disagreed (31%).

In terms of the relevance of the professional development to their teaching, around half of ECTs (53%) agreed that it was relevant, while just over a fifth (22%) disagreed. A similar proportion (50%) agreed that the role had met their expectations while over a fifth disagreed (23%).

Figure 37: Support received by ECTs



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.2: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements as an FE teacher early in your career?

Percentages for each statement may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Some response options have been collapsed and the statements have been sorted by rates of agreement.

Single response per statement. All ECTs. N=337

Percentages below 5% are not shown.

12.2 Working environment

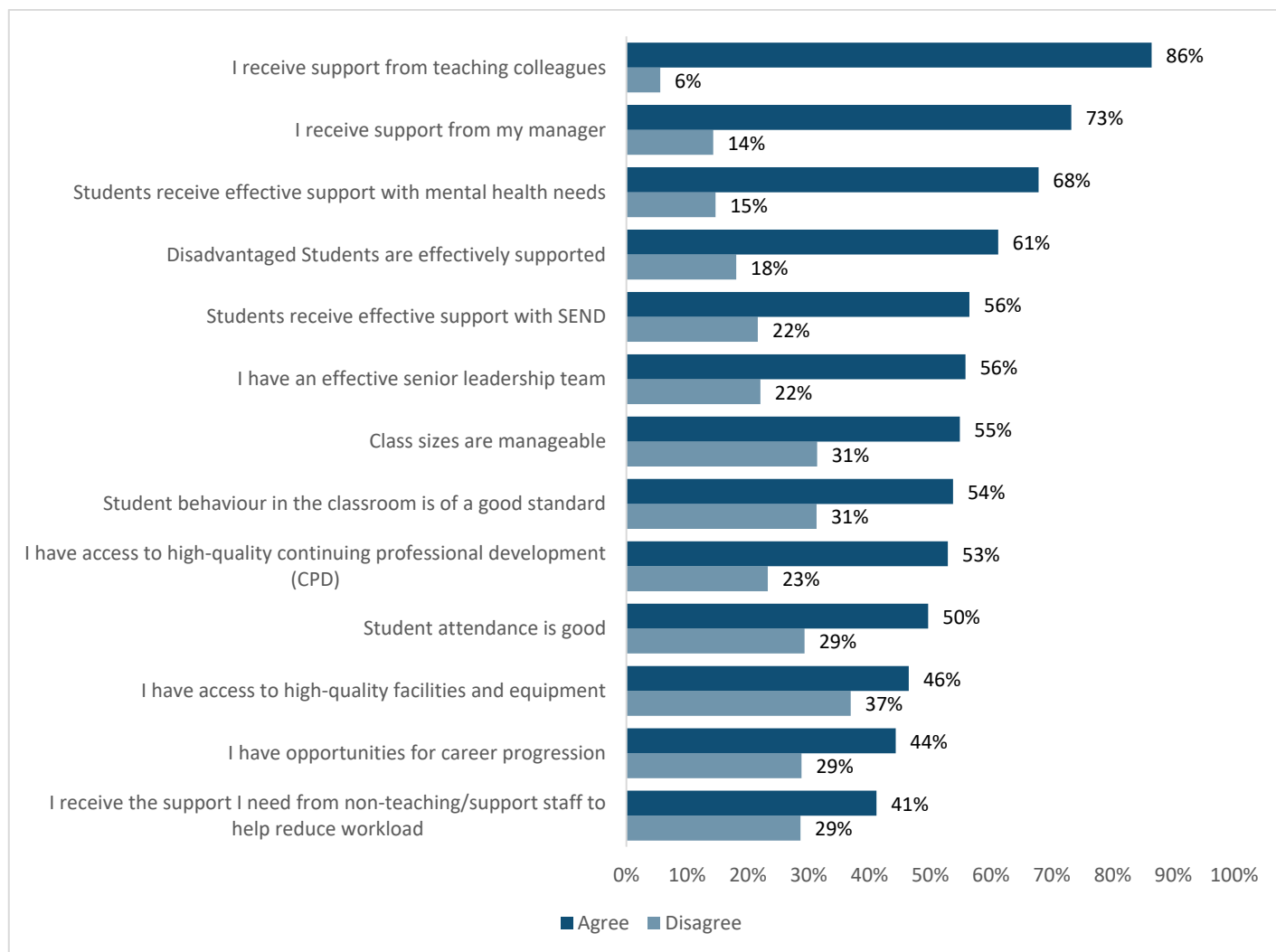
All survey respondents were asked about their working environment. Findings relating specifically to ECTs are presented below.

Among all the aspects ECTs were asked about, they were least likely to agree that they received support from non-teaching or support staff to reduce workload, with only two in five (41%) agreeing with this statement. Just less than or around half agreed that they had opportunities for career progression (44%) or access to high-quality facilities and equipment (46%). Notably, over a third of ECTs (37%) disagreed that they had access to high-quality facilities and equipment, representing the highest level of disagreement across all questions.

ECTs were also relatively likely to disagree that their class sizes were manageable (31%) and that student behaviour was of a good standard (31%).

More positively, ECTs were highly likely to agree that they received support from teaching colleagues, with 86% agreeing with this statement. Nearly three-quarters (73%) also agreed that they received support from their manager.

Figure 38: Working environment of ECTs



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 5.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your workplace? Percentages for each statement may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Some response options have been collapsed and the statements have been sorted by rates of agreement. Single response per statement. All ECTs. N=337

The table below shows responses from both ECTs and other teachers in the survey and the differences in agreement and disagreement with each statement between each group. For example, ECTs were 4 percentage points more likely to agree with the statement 'I receive support from teaching colleagues' than other teachers, but rates of disagreement to this statement were the same across both groups.

In reviewing the table below, we can see that ECTs tended to express more positive views than their counterparts. They typically agreed with these statements more often than other teachers and disagreed less often. However, this is not the case for every statement. For example, the two groups' opinions on the level of support they receive from their managers and how manageable they find class sizes were very similar.

Table 5: ECTs' perceptions of their working environment, compared to other teachers

Statement	ECTs	ECTs	Other teachers	Other teachers	Difference	Difference
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
I have opportunities for career progression	44%	29%	25%	48%	19%	-19%
I have access to high-quality continuing professional development (CPD)	53%	23%	39%	36%	13%	-13%
Students receive effective support with mental health needs	68%	15%	57%	20%	11%	-5%
I have an effective senior leadership team	56%	22%	46%	29%	10%	-7%
Students receive effective support with SEND	56%	22%	49%	27%	7%	-6%
Disadvantaged Students are effectively supported	61%	18%	56%	22%	6%	-3%
I have access to high-quality facilities and equipment	46%	37%	40%	37%	6%	-1%
I receive support from teaching colleagues	86%	6%	83%	6%	4%	0%
I receive support from my manager	73%	14%	72%	15%	1%	-1%
Student attendance is good	50%	29%	50%	33%	0%	-3%
I receive the support I need from non-	41%	29%	41%	34%	0%	-5%

Statement	ECTs	ECTs	Other teachers	Other teachers	Difference	Difference
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
teaching/support staff to help reduce workload						
Class sizes are manageable	55%	31%	56%	29%	-1%	2%
Student behaviour in the classroom is of a good standard	54%	31%	57%	26%	-4%	5%

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 5.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your workplace?
Some response options have been collapsed, and the statements have been sorted by differences in rates of agreement between the two groups.

Single response per statement. All teachers. N=2,531.

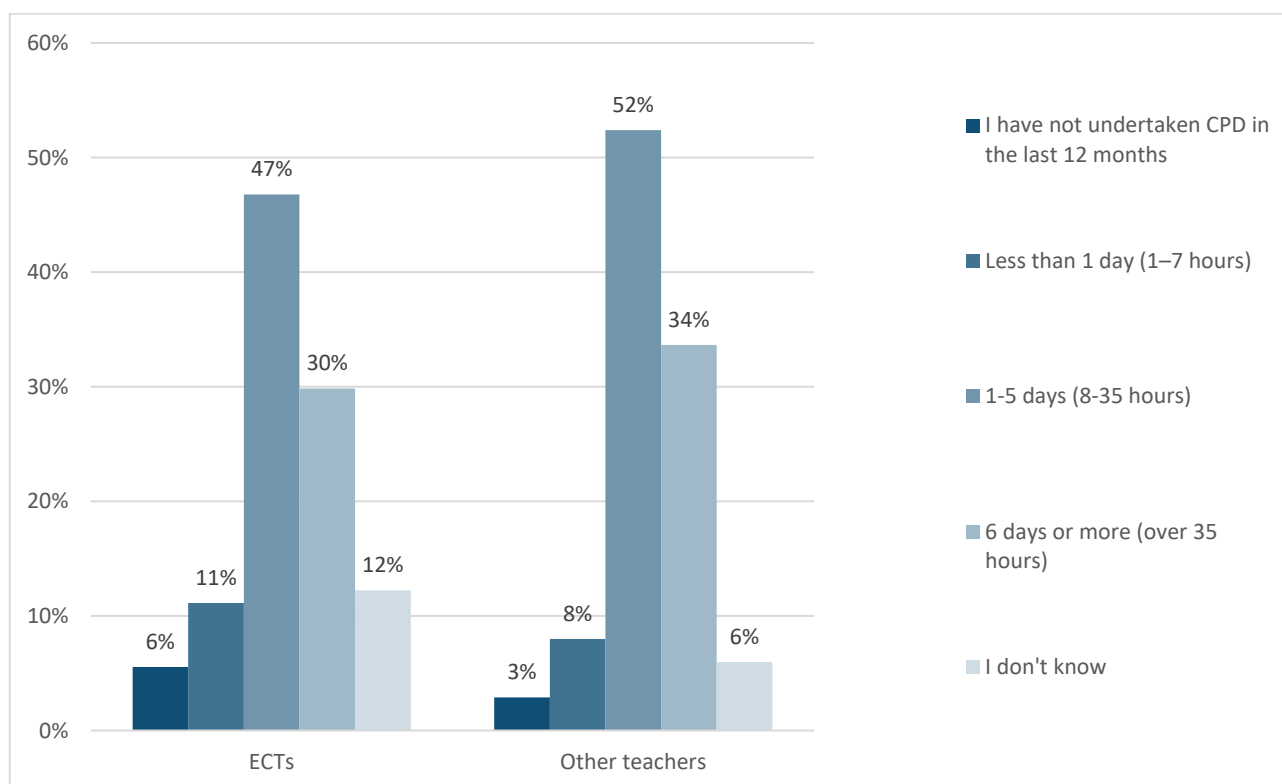
We can also see where the average opinion of ECTs differs most significantly from other teachers:

- While ECTs agreed with the statement 'I have opportunities for career progression' less than almost all other statements, they still agreed with this statement much more often than other teachers. 44% of ECTs agreed with this statement, compared to just 25% of other teachers, a gap of 19%. We see an equivalent gap in rates of disagreement, where 29% of ECTs disagreed compared to 48% of other teachers. A possible explanation for this is that other teachers are more likely to have already experienced some career progression and face a more limited set of routes for further progression compared to ECTs.
- ECTs were more likely to agree with the statement 'I have access to high-quality CPD'. 53% of ECTs agreed with this, compared to just 39% of other teachers.
- ECTs were more likely to agree that 'Students receive effective support with mental health needs' than other teachers (68% compared to 57%). They were also more likely to agree that they have an effective senior leadership team (56% compared to 46%).
- As noted, ECTs were more likely to agree with most statements than other teachers in the survey. The biggest gap the other way was observed on the statement 'Student behaviour in the classroom is of a good standard'. 54% of ECTs agreed with this, while 31% disagreed. 57% of other teachers agreed with the statement and 26% disagreed.

12.3 CPD and career progression

The figure below shows the amount of time ECTs reported spending on CPD in the 12 months prior to completing the survey, compared with responses from other teachers.

Figure 39: Time spent in CPD activities in the past 12 months for ECTs and other teachers



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.3: Approximately how much time in days have you spent on CPD activities in the last 12 months?

Percentages for each statement may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Some response options have been collapsed.

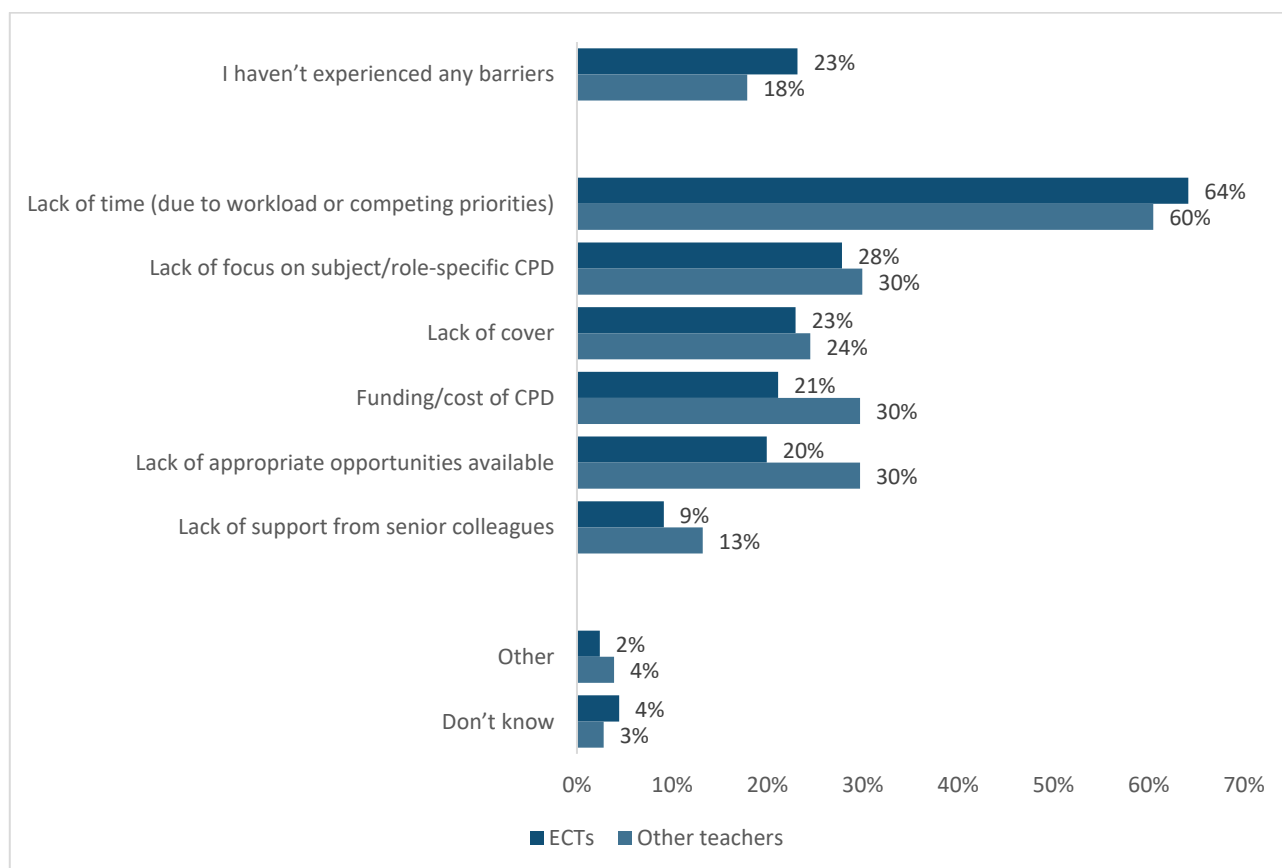
Single response. All teachers. N=2,527.

Overall, the patterns of CPD look relatively similar between the two groups. For example, 30% of ECTs reported undertaking six days or more CPD, compared to 34% of other teachers. This may be surprising given we previously saw that ECTs were more likely to say they had access to high-quality CPD than other teachers. A possible explanation is that some responding ECTs may have spent less than 12 months in FE and so reported less CPD than they would have done in a full year. This is less likely to be the case for other teachers in the survey.

Teachers who undertook CPD activity in the last 12 months were also asked to rate the quality of that CPD. Here, we see a gap between ECTs and other teachers, with ECTs generally having a better opinion of their CPD than their counterparts. 59% of ECTs rated their CPD activity as 'Excellent' or 'Good', compared to 50% of other teachers. Only 12% of ECTs said their CPD activity was 'Poor' or 'Very Poor', compared to 17% of other teachers.

All ECTs and other teachers were asked whether they had experienced any barriers to accessing CPD in the past 12 months and if so, what those barriers were. Respondents could cite more than one barrier if they chose to. The results for this question are in the figure below.

Figure 40: Access and barriers to CPD for ECTs and other teachers



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.5: Which, if any, of the following barriers to accessing CPD have you experienced in the past 12 months?

Barriers sorted by response rates among ECTs.

Barriers are multiple response. Other responses were single response. All teachers. N=2,529.

ECTs were more likely to say they had not experienced any barriers to accessing CPD than other teachers, suggesting they have better access to CPD. 23% of ECTs said they had not experienced any barriers, compared to 18% of other teachers.

Where teachers cited different barriers to accessing CPD, a lack of time for CPD was the most commonly cited by both ECTs and other teachers. Indeed, 64% of ECTs cited this as a barrier, more often other teachers (60%). All other barriers in the survey were more commonly cited by other teachers, which reinforces the significance of a lack of time as a key barrier to ECTs.

Around three in ten ECTs said a lack of focus on subject- or role-specific CPD was a barrier and just under a quarter said a lack of cover was a barrier. Results were similar for other teachers. However, ECTs were around ten percentage points less likely to say a lack

of funding or the cost of CPD was a barrier than other teachers and that a lack of appropriate opportunities were available, compared to the responses from other teachers.

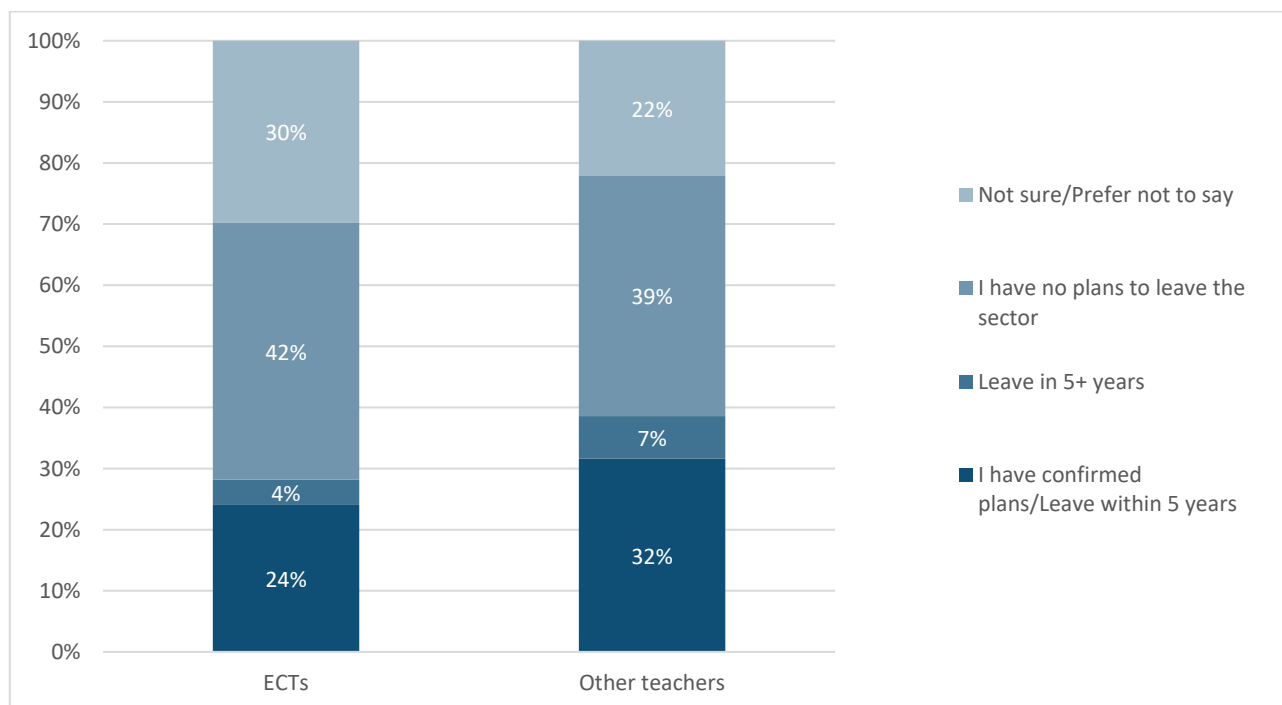
12.4 Future career plans

ECTs and other teachers were asked about their future career plans in the survey:

- When asked whether they planned to continue working in the FE sector, 28% of ECTs said they planned to leave within the next five years or have confirmed plans to leave, which was less than the proportion of other teachers who said the same thing, at 39%.
- ECTs were also slightly more likely to say they had no plans to leave. 42% of ECTs said this, compared to 39% of other teachers.
- ECTs were more likely to say they were not sure about their future plans or preferred not to say, 30% compared to 22%.
- Among teachers who said they were considering leaving, ECTs were more likely to indicate they are likely to leave in a shorter time period than other teachers.

A more detailed breakdown of responses is show below.

Figure 41: ECTs' and other teachers' reported plans for continuing to work in the FE sector



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 10.1: What are your plans regarding continuing to work in the FE sector?

Percentages for each statement may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response. All teachers. N=2,527.

Percentages less than 5% are not shown.

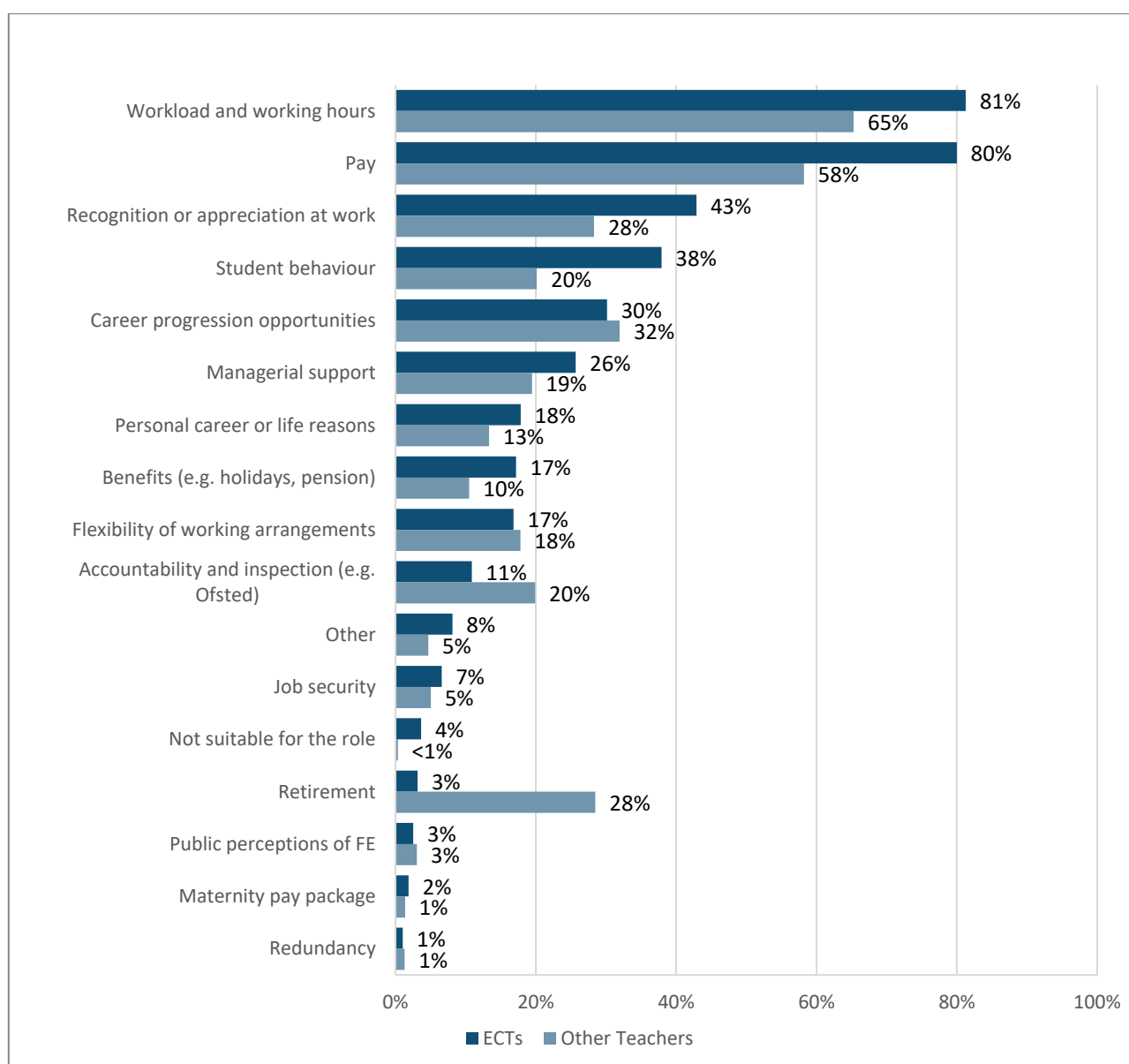
It is important to note here that teachers who are not ECTs were more likely to say they planned to leave to retire. If anyone who says they plan to retire is removed from the analysis, then ECTs are still less likely to say they plan to leave the sector, but the gap between ECTs (31%) and other teachers (28%) is reduced.

ECTs who indicated they planned to stay in the sector were asked about their future plans in the sector:

- By far the most common answer was that the respondent planned to stay in their current role, for both ECTs (77%) and other teachers (72%).
- ECTs were also slightly more likely than other teachers to say they were planning to seek a promotion. 21% of ECTs said this, compared to 19% of other teachers. This may reflect that other teachers are more likely to already be working at a higher level.
- Among those teachers who said they planned to stay in the sector, neither ECTs nor other teachers were very likely to say they planned to move roles within their current college or provider, they planned to move to another college or provider or stated a different intention to those already listed.

Teachers who indicated that they were likely to leave the sector (meaning they planned to within five years) were asked which factors have been most influential in making them consider doing so. These respondents could select up to five options from those listed in the figure below, which shows the percentage of ECTs and other teachers who selected each option.

Figure 42: Key factors influencing ECTs and other teachers to consider leaving the FE sector



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 10.3: Which of the following factors have been most influential in making you consider leaving the FE sector?

Barriers sorted by response rates among ECTs.

Multiple response. All teachers who said they were planning to leave FE within five years on Q10.1. N=790

Pay, along with workload and working hours, were cited as an important reason for considering leaving by at least 80% of ECTs. These responses were far more common than any other response. The next most important factors - recognition at work (43%) and student behaviour (38%) - were only cited around half as often by ECTs.

When comparing the reasons cited by ECTs and other teachers, it is important to note that ECTs tended to select more reasons in the survey. This explains why most options are

cited more often by ECTs than other teachers. We can account for this and when we do, we find:

- ECTs are more likely to cite student behaviour as an important factor in considering leaving, compared to other teachers.
- ECTs are less likely to say accountability and inspection is an important factor than other teachers.
- As noted above, ECTs are far less likely to say they plan to leave the sector compared to other teachers.

Finally, all teachers who said they had any plans to leave the sector at all were asked where they intended to move to. Responses for both ECTs and other teachers are shown in the table below. As intentions will not necessarily translate into actual exits, these findings should be interpreted as indicative of potential rather than realised movements out of the sector.

Moving into industry was the most commonly cited destination for ECTs, at 29%. While a similar proportion (26%) of other teachers who answered this question also said they intended to move into industry, this was not the most common answer for that group. Instead, it was retirement, at 32%. 8% of ECTs said they planned to retire, which suggests some ECTs have come into FE teaching late in their careers.

ECTs were more likely than other teachers to say they planned to go into higher education if they left FE teaching (16% compared to 5%) or into further study (6% compared to 1%). This also probably reflects the differences in ages between the two groups.

Finally, a relatively large proportion of both groups said they planned to move to a different route not listed (22% of ECTs compared to 17% of other teachers), with the most commonly quoted routes being self-employment or something not related to education. Many ECTs (18%) also did not know where they planned to move to, even though they had said they planned to leave the FE sector. 14% of other teachers said the same thing.

Table 6: Intended destination of those ECTs and other teachers who have any plans to leave the FE sector

Intended destination on leaving FE	ECTs	Other teachers
Into industry	29%	26%
Higher education	16%	5%
Retirement	8%	32%
Into study	6%	1%
A secondary school	1%	5%
A primary school	1%	1%
Other	22%	17%
Don't know	18%	14%

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 10.4: If considering leaving, where are you intending to go?

Percentages for each statement may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Destinations sorted by response rates among ECTs.

Single response. All teachers who said they were planning to leave FE on Q10.1. N=979

12.5 Summary

This chapter highlights that ECTs are an important group for understanding recruitment and retention in FE. Their experiences provide insight into how well the sector supports new entrants during the early stages of their teaching careers, when decisions about whether to remain in FE may still be forming.

The findings suggest that ECTs receive a range of support, including support from colleagues, managers, mentoring or peer support, and access to professional development. These forms of support are important because ECTs may be adapting to FE teaching, developing their pedagogical confidence, and learning how to manage the wider demands of the role. Effective induction, mentoring and development opportunities are therefore likely to play a key role in strengthening early retention.

However, the chapter also indicates that ECTs experience some of the same pressures reported by the wider teaching workforce. Their views on workload, support, working environment and CPD suggest that early career staff are not insulated from the wider challenges facing FE teachers. Where workload is high, progression routes are unclear, or access to high-quality development is limited, ECTs may be less likely to see FE as a sustainable long-term career.

The chapter also shows that ECTs' future plans are broadly similar to those of other teachers, although there are some important differences. ECTs were slightly more likely than other teachers to say they planned to remain in the FE sector for more than five years, but they were also more likely to be unsure about their plans. Among those considering leaving, the most commonly reported reasons for ECTs were workload and working hours, followed by pay and recognition or appreciation at work.

Overall, the findings suggest that recruitment strategies need to be matched by strong early career retention strategies. Attracting new teachers into FE is only the first step. Providers and policymakers also need to ensure that ECTs receive the support, time, development and working conditions needed to establish themselves and remain in the sector. Strengthening mentoring, CPD, workload support and clear progression pathways for ECTs could help improve retention and support a more sustainable FE workforce pipeline.

13 Views and experiences of dual professionals

This chapter summarises responses from dual professionals. These are defined as respondents who work in a permanent, part-time role in FE and combine this with work in another industry or profession.

13.1 Proportion of dual professionals

Overall, 234 (5%) of survey respondents reported working as dual professionals.

Among permanent, part-time respondents, dual professionalism was more common. 25% of this group reported being a dual professional.

Variation by role and provider type

Looking at variation in dual professionalism by role showed that dual professionalism is more common among teachers than other roles. 8% of teachers reported being dual professionals. Only 1% of leaders and 2% of managers said the same.

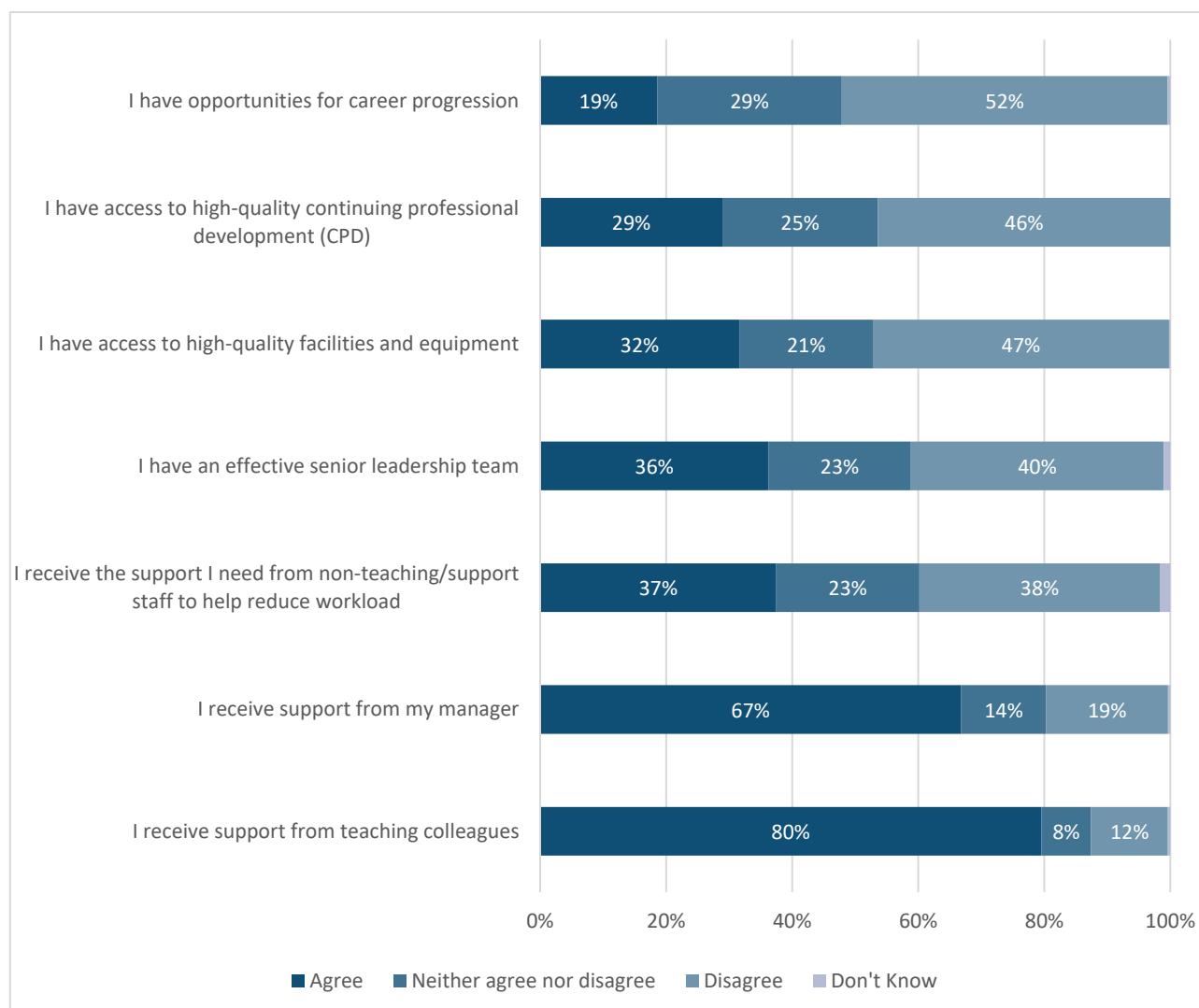
Among different providers, rates of dual professionalism varied very little, with 5% of respondents being dual professionals across all provider types.

Among respondents on permanent, part-time contracts, dual professionalism was more common in both ITPs/ACLs and GFECs than SFCs. 27% of these respondents in ITPs/ACLs and 26% in GFECs reported working as dual professionals, compared to 17% in SFCs.

13.2 Support received by dual professionals

Dual professionals were asked about the support they received in their role in FE. Their responses to seven statements are presented below.

Figure 43: Support received by dual professionals



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 5.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your workplace? Percentages for each statement may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Statements selected by researcher because they are relevant to support being received by dual professional respondents.

Some response options have been collapsed. The statements have been sorted by rates of agreement.

Single response per statement. All dual professionals with a teaching role. N=211.

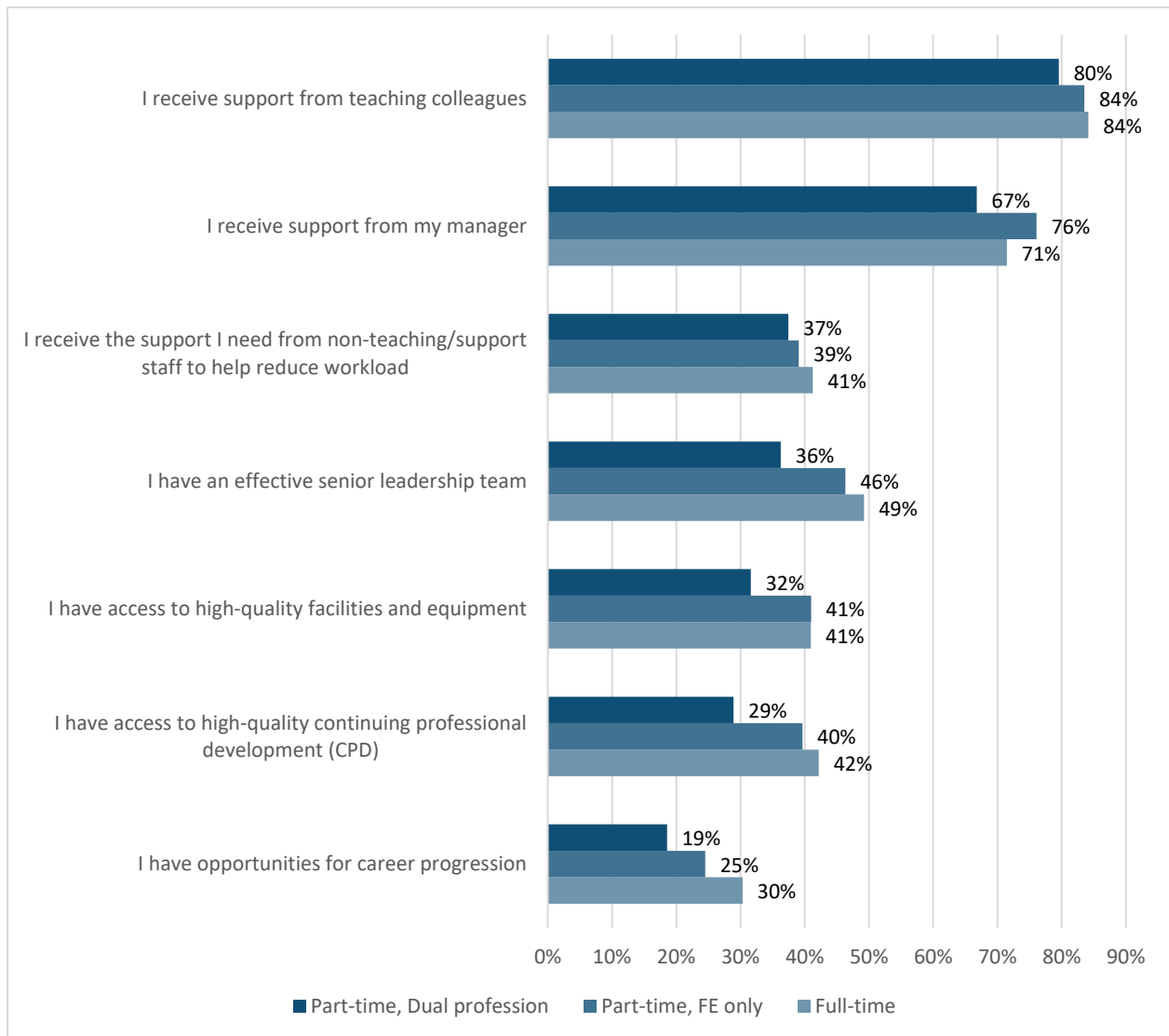
Percentages below 5% are not shown.

The figure shows that, dual professionals:

- Tend to agree that they receive support from teaching colleagues and from their manager, with 80% and 67% agreeing to these statements, respectively.
- Tend to disagree that they have opportunities for career progression, with 52% of dual professional respondents disagreeing with that statement.
- Are more likely to disagree than agree that they receive the support they need from non-teaching/support staff to help reduce workload, have an effective leadership team, have access to high quality facilities and equipment, and have access to CPD.

We can compare the responses of dual professionals to those of other respondents. The figure below shows the percentage of dual professionals who agree with these statements, along with those of full-time respondents and other part-time respondents.

Figure 44: Support received by dual professionals compared to other respondents (percentage who agree)



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 5.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your workplace? Statements selected by researcher because they are relevant to support being received by dual professional respondents.

Some response options have been collapsed. The statements have been sorted by rates of agreement among dual professionals with a teaching role.

Single response per statement. All respondents with a teaching role, excluding those on other types of contracts. N=2,908.

The figure shows that dual professionals agree less with each of these statements than the other groups. As such, dual professionals appear to feel less supported in their roles than other workers.

Part of the difference between the responses of dual professionals and full-time respondents can be explained by the fact that dual professionals work part-time. However, this does not account for the differences observed for all statements. For example:

- Both dual professionals and other part-time workers were less likely than full-time workers to agree that they had opportunities for career progression. This suggested that part-time FE staff face specific barriers to career progression. However, the findings also indicated that these barriers are more pronounced for dual professionals, who are even less likely than other part-time workers to report having such opportunities.
- By contrast, respondents who worked only in FE were more likely than dual professionals to agree that they had access to high-quality facilities and equipment, regardless of whether they worked full-time or part-time.

13.3 The wellbeing of dual professionals

In the survey, respondents were asked about elements of wellbeing related to stress, time for their personal life and their physical health. The results for dual professionals can be seen in the table below, along with results for other groups of respondents.

Dual professional respondents were more likely to say they experienced stress at work than other respondents. 78% of dual professionals agreed with the statement 'I experience stress in my work', compared to 72% of full-time respondents and 74% of part-time staff who only work in FE.

We see a similar result when we look at responses to the statement 'My job negatively affects my physical health'. 43% of dual professional respondents agreed with this. This compared to 36% of full-time respondents and 35% of part-time respondents.

When asked whether they agreed that their job did not leave enough time for their personal life, dual professionals' responses were not substantially different to those of full-time or other part-time staff. 42% of dual professional respondents agreed with this, compared to 43% and 41% for full-time staff and part-time staff who only work in FE, respectively.

In Chapter 7, we reported findings from a regression model examining which factors explained differences in reported wellbeing between groups. Dual professional status was included as a control variable in this model. The estimated effect of being a dual professional on wellbeing was negative, but not statistically significant. This suggested that some of the differences observed in the table below may be explained by a wider set of characteristics distinguishing dual professionals from respondents on other types of contracts, rather than by dual professional status alone.

Table 7: Dual professionals' responses to wellbeing questions about stress, their personal life, and physical health, and comparison to other respondents (proportion who agreed)

	Part-time, Dual professional	Full- time	Part- time, FE only
I experience stress in my work	78%	72%	74%
My job does not leave me enough time for my personal life	42%	43%	41%
My job negatively affects my physical health	43%	36%	35%

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 6.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Percentages for each statement for dual professionals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Some response options have been collapsed.

Single response per statement. All respondents excluding other contracts. N=4,279.

Respondents were also asked about their job satisfaction and their satisfaction with CPD opportunities. The results are presented in the table below.

Dual professionals were less likely to report being satisfied with working in FE than respondents on other contract types. Around half of dual professionals reported being satisfied with working in FE, compared with 65% of full-time workers and 68% of part-time workers just working in FE. However, modelling presented in Chapter 7 showed that the gap between full-time workers and dual professionals was not statistically significant once other observed differences between groups were controlled for. This suggested that lower levels of job satisfaction among dual professionals were explained by their characteristics or experiences of CPD, rather than by dual professional status alone.

Dual professionals were also less likely to report being satisfied with their opportunities to develop a career within FE. Only 24% of dual professionals reported satisfaction with career development opportunities, compared with 42% of full-time workers and 34% of other part-time workers. As discussed previously, this suggested that some of the challenges experienced by dual professionals in this area were also shared by part-time staff more generally.

However, modelling of satisfaction with career development opportunities in Chapter 7 showed that the gap between full-time workers and dual professionals remained statistically significant, even after controlling for a wider range of factors. This indicated that lower satisfaction with career development among dual professionals was not fully explained by observed characteristics or CPD experiences, and may reflect a broader set of underlying factors not captured in the model.

Table 8: Dual professionals' responses to wellbeing questions about FE job satisfaction and career development opportunities, and comparison to other respondents (proportion who are satisfied)

	Part-time, Dual profession	Full-time	Part-time, FE only
Overall, how satisfied are you with working in FE?	51%	65%	68%
How satisfied are you with the opportunities to develop your career within FE?	24%	42%	34%

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 6.2: Please select one option for each statement.

Percentages for each statement for dual professionals may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Some response options have been collapsed.

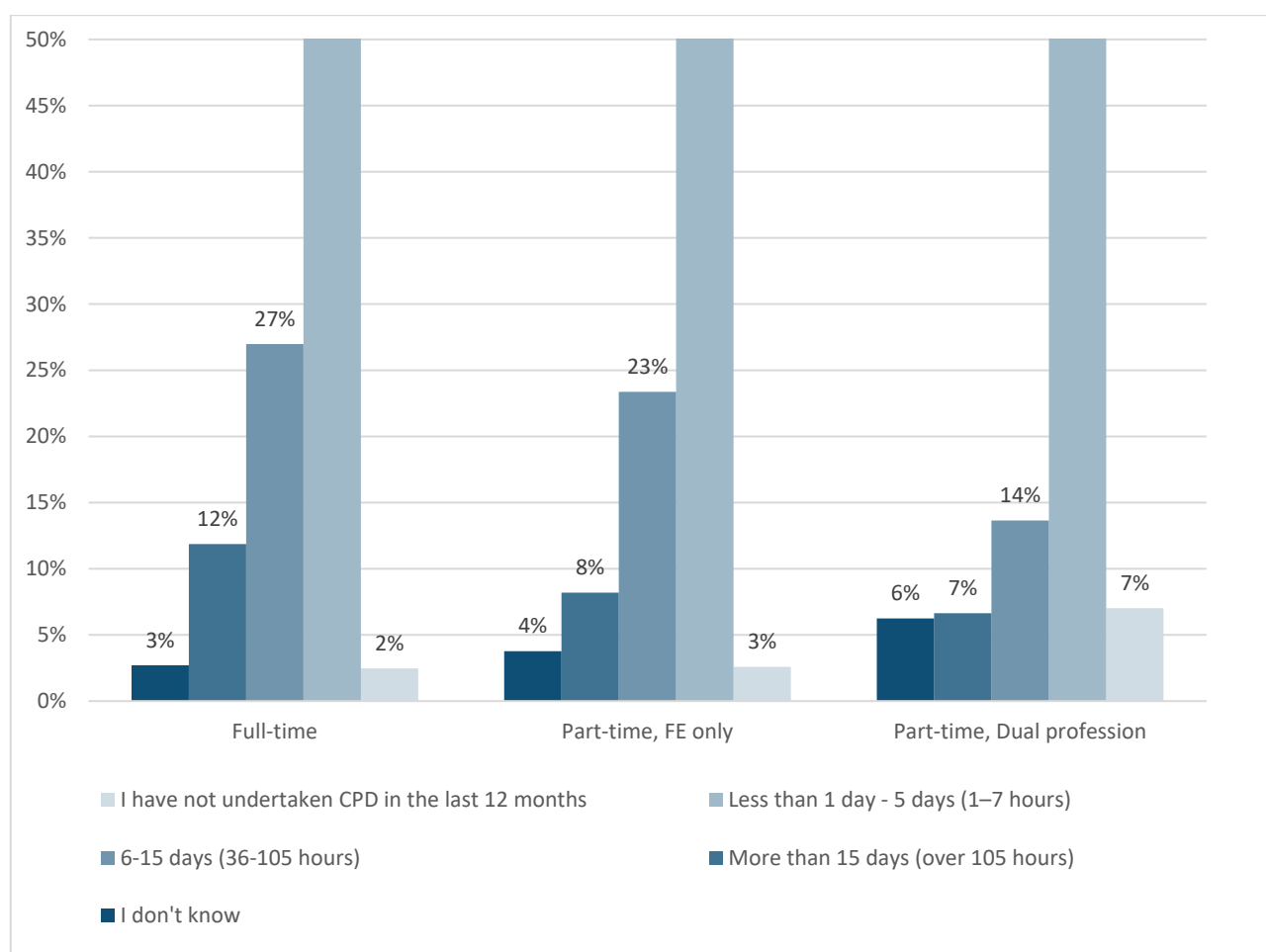
Single response per statement. All respondents excluding those on other contracts. N=4,279.

Overall, responses to the wellbeing questions suggested that dual professionals reported lower levels of wellbeing than other workers on most measures. They did not report higher levels of wellbeing on any of the items included. However, it should be noted that, for some measures, modelling showed that the gap between dual professionals and full-time FE workers was not statistically significant once a range of underlying differences between these groups were taken into account.

13.4 Dual professionals' engagement with CPD

Dual professionals were also asked about their engagement with CPD. Their responses, along with those from other respondents on permanent contracts, are shown below.

Figure 45: Dual professionals' views on the time spent on CPD in the last 12 months, compared to other workers on permanent contracts



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

Question 8.3: Approximately how much time in days have you spent on CPD activities in the last 12 months? Percentages for each statement may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Single response per statement. All respondents excluding other contracts. N=4,277.

Looking at the figure, we see some evidence that dual professionals report a lower level of CPD participation than other workers who are also on permanent contracts:

- A very small proportion of each group reported not undertaking any CPD in the last 12 months, but this was more common among dual professionals, at 7%, compared to other part-time respondents (3%) and full-time respondents (2%).
- Dual professionals were less likely to report undertaking 6 or more days of CPD than other workers. Only 20% of dual professionals reported this level of participation. For other part-time respondents the proportion was 32% and, for full-time workers, it was 39%.

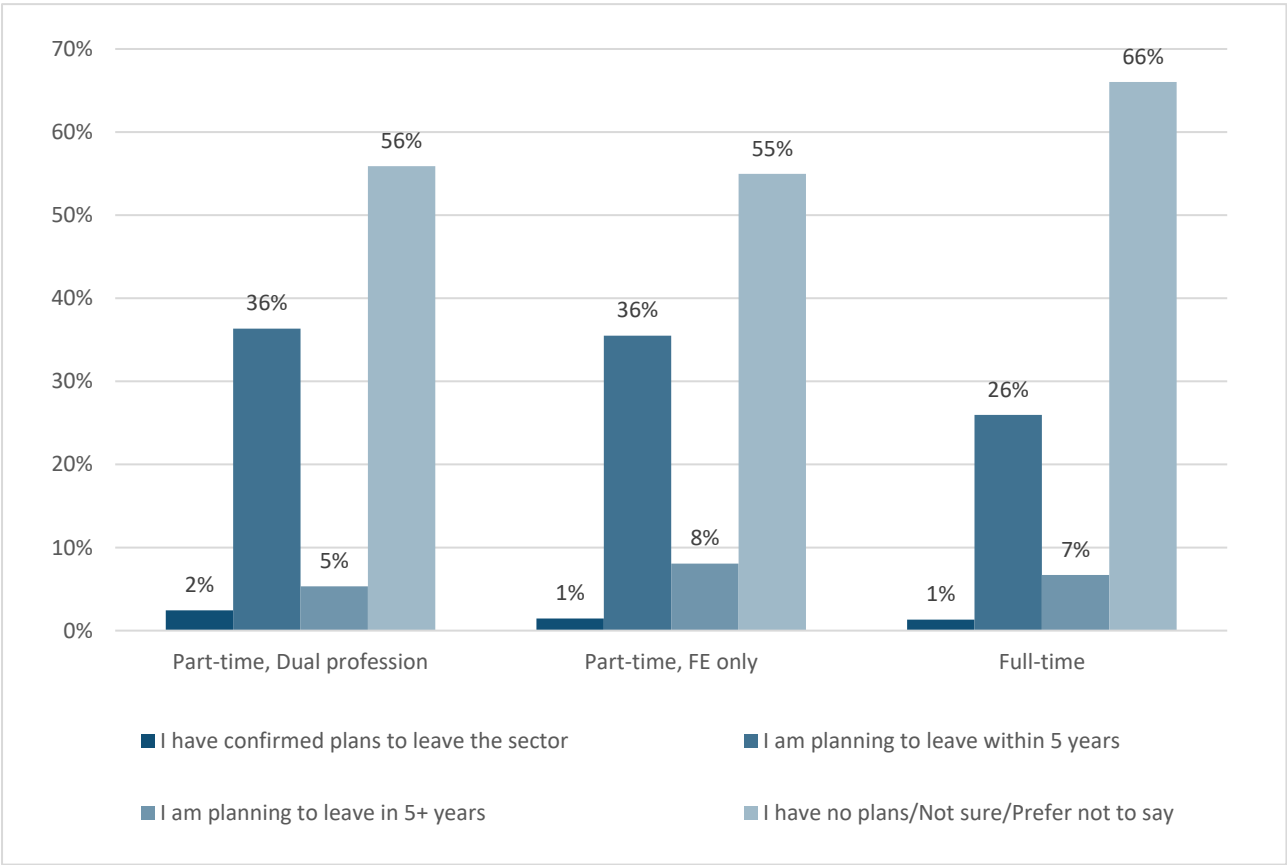
Other part-time workers reported slightly lower levels of CPD participation than full-time workers, while dual professionals reported the lowest levels of participation overall. This suggests that working part-time in FE is associated with barriers to CPD participation, but

that these barriers are more pronounced for those combining FE work with employment in another role.

13.5 Dual professionals' intentions to remain in the sector

In the survey, dual professionals were also asked about whether they intended to remain in the sector. The figure below compares their responses to other types of respondents on permanent contracts.

Figure 46: Dual professionals' plans regarding continuing to work in the FE sector, compared to other workers



Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025
Question 10.1: What are your plans regarding continuing to work in the FE sector?
Percentages for each statement may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
Single response per statement. All respondents excluding those on other contracts. N=4,277.

Around 44% of dual professionals reported plans to leave the FE sector within any time period. A very similar proportion of other part-time FE staff also reported plans to leave (45%). Among those intending to leave, dual professionals tended to report shorter intended timeframes for leaving than other part-time staff. By comparison, a smaller proportion of full-time staff planned to leave the sector (34%). Model One assessed the association between intention to leave the sector and a set of covariates, including

dual-professional status. Dual professionals were more likely than full-time respondents to report plans to leave the sector even after controlling for a wide range of differences in characteristics and responses between groups. This difference was statistically significant.

A similar pattern was observed when looking at respondents who reported having no plans to leave the FE sector. One-third of dual professionals (33%) reported no plans to leave, a proportion similar to that of other part-time staff (34%), but notably lower than the proportion of full-time FE staff who reported no plans to leave (44%).

13.6 Summary

This chapter shows that dual professionals report broadly positive levels of support from colleagues and managers, but some differences are evident compared with other staff. Dual professionals were less likely than other part-time FE respondents to agree that their manager supported them, that they have access to effective professional development, or opportunities for career progression. This points to a potential retention issue: while day-to-day support from teaching colleagues may be available, support for longer-term development may be less consistent for staff combining FE work with occupational practice.

The wellbeing findings suggest that dual professionals' experiences are slightly worse than those of other staff. Dual professionals were more likely than other part-time FE respondents to report experiencing stress at work, that their job did not leave enough time for their personal life, and that it negatively affected their physical health. Overall satisfaction levels with working in FE were also lower, as was satisfaction with opportunities to develop a career within FE.

Finally, a similar proportion of dual professionals reported plans to leave FE compared to other part-time FE staff, suggesting that holding a dual professional role does not in itself mitigate intentions to exit the sector. This indicates that, despite the potential benefits associated with maintaining links to industry, such as enhanced relevance of teaching or access to wider professional opportunities, dual professionals may be equally exposed to the same structural challenges affecting the wider part-time workforce, including pay, workload and limited progression. As a result, dual professionalism alone appears insufficient as a retention lever, and efforts to retain these staff may need to address broader employment conditions rather than assuming that their connection to industry will sustain their engagement with FE.

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Appendix: Results from the multi-level modelling

Table 9: Results from model of wellbeing

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Wellbeing
CPD attendance	more than 3 years ago	Never completed CPD	Lower Wellbeing
	more than a year, less than 3 years		Lower Wellbeing
	Within last 12 months		Lower Wellbeing
Contract Type	Other contract	Full-time	Lower Wellbeing
	Part-time, Dual profession		Lower Wellbeing
	Part-time, FE only		Lower Wellbeing
Ethnicity	Asian/Asian British	White	Lower Wellbeing
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British		Improved Wellbeing
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups		Lower Wellbeing
	Other ethnic group		Lower Wellbeing
	Prefer not to say		Improved Wellbeing
Gender	Identifies in another way	Female	Lower Wellbeing
	Male		Improved Wellbeing
	Prefer not to say		Lower Wellbeing
Prior Industry Experience	Prior industry experience	No prior industry experience	Improved Wellbeing
Provider Type*	ITP/ACL*	GFEC	Improved Wellbeing*
	SFC		Lower Wellbeing
Disability*	No*	Yes	Improved Wellbeing*
	Prefer not to say		Improved Wellbeing
Hours Worked*	DK/Prefer Not to say*	Lowest 20%	Lower Wellbeing*
	Highest 20%*		Lower Wellbeing*

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Wellbeing
	Middle 20%*		Lower Wellbeing*
	Next Highest 20%*		Lower Wellbeing*
	Next Lowest 20%		Lower Wellbeing
Hours Taught	DK/Prefer Not to say	Less than one hour	Improved wellbeing
	Highest 20%		Improved Wellbeing
	Middle 20%		Lower Wellbeing
	Next Highest 20%		Lower Wellbeing
	Next Lowest 20%		Lower Wellbeing
Hours on pastoral support*	1-2 hours	Less than one hour	Lower Wellbeing
	3-5 hours*		Lower Wellbeing*
	6-10 hours*		Lower Wellbeing*
	More than 10 hours		Lower Wellbeing
	Not applicable		Improved Wellbeing
Sufficient control over workload*	Agree*	Disagree	Improved Wellbeing*
	Neither agree nor disagree*		Improved Wellbeing*
Acceptable workload*	Agree*	Disagree	Improved Wellbeing*
	Neither agree nor disagree*		Improved Wellbeing*
Satisfied with flexible working arrangements*	Agree*	Disagree	Improved Wellbeing*
	Neither agree nor disagree*		Improved Wellbeing*
Pay Band	£10,000-£15,999	Under £10,000	Lower Wellbeing
	£16,000-£19,999		Lower Wellbeing

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Wellbeing
	£20,000-£24,999		Lower Wellbeing
	£25,000-£29,999		Lower Wellbeing
	£30,000-£34,999		Lower Wellbeing
	£35,000-£39,999		Lower Wellbeing
	£40,000-£44,999		Lower Wellbeing
	£45,000-£49,999		Lower Wellbeing
	£50,000-£54,999		Lower Wellbeing
	£55,000-£59,999		Improved Wellbeing
	£60,000-£64,999		Lower Wellbeing
	£65,000-£69,999		Lower Wellbeing
	Prefer not to say		Lower Wellbeing
Teaching Qualification	Other Qualification	ITT	Improved Wellbeing
Teaching Qualification	Teaching with no Qual		Improved Wellbeing
Qualification Type*	Functional only	Academic Only	Lower Wellbeing
	More than one type*		Lower Wellbeing*
	Vocational only*		Lower Wellbeing*
Subject	STEM	Non-STEM	Improved Wellbeing
Student support (derived variable measuring the degree of support available for students) *		N/A	Higher support = Improved Wellbeing*
Staff support (derived variable measuring the degree of		N/A	Higher Support = Improved Wellbeing*

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Wellbeing
support available for staff) *			
Time Teaching	3 years but less than 5 years	Less than three years	Lower Wellbeing
	5 years but less than 10 years		Lower Wellbeing
	10 years but less than 20 years		Lower Wellbeing
	More than 20 years		Improved wellbeing
	Missing		Lower Wellbeing

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

* Indicate rows where the p-value is < 0.05

Table 10: Results from model of leaders' pay satisfaction

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfaction with pay*
Contract Type	Other contract	Full-time	Less Satisfied
	Part-time, Dual profession		More Satisfied
	Part-time, FE only		More Satisfied
Ethnicity*	Asian/Asian British	White	Less Satisfied
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British		Less Satisfied
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups		Less Satisfied
	Other ethnic group		Less Satisfied
	Prefer not to say*		Less Satisfied*
Gender*	Male*	Female	Less Satisfied*
	Prefer not to say		More Satisfied

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfaction with pay*
Industry Experience	Prior industry experience	No prior industry experience	Less Satisfied
Provider Type*	ITP/ACL*	GFEC	More Satisfied*
	SFC		More Satisfied
Disability*	No*	Yes	More Satisfied*
	Prefer not to say		More Satisfied
Pay Band*	£35,000 - £49,999	Under £35,000	Less Satisfied
	£50,000 - £99,999		More Satisfied
	£100,000 - £149,999*		More Satisfied*
	£150,000 - 199,999		More Satisfied
	£200,000 - £249,999		More Satisfied
	£250,000 or more		More Satisfied
	Prefer not to say*		More Satisfied*

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

* Indicate rows where the p-value is < 0.05

Table 11: Results from model of managers' and teachers' pay satisfaction

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfaction with pay*
Contract Type	Other contract	Full-time	More Satisfied
	Part-time, Dual profession		Less Satisfied
	Part-time, FE only		More Satisfied
Ethnicity*	Asian/Asian British	White	More Satisfied
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British		More Satisfied
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups		Less Satisfied
	Other ethnic group		More Satisfied
	Prefer not to say*		Less Satisfied*
Gender*	Identifies in another way	Female	More Satisfied
	Male*		Less Satisfied*
	Prefer not to say*		More Satisfied*
Role	Manager with teaching responsibilities	Manager with no teaching responsibilities	More Satisfied
	Teacher		Less Satisfied
Prior Industry Experience	Prior industry experience	No prior industry experience	More Satisfied
Institution Type*	ITP/ACL*	GFEC	More Satisfied*
	SFC		More Satisfied
Disability*	No*	Yes	More Satisfied*
	Prefer not to say		Less Satisfied
Pay Band*	£10,000-£15,999	Under £10,000	Less Satisfied
	£16,000-£19,999*		Less Satisfied*
	£20,000-£24,999*		Less Satisfied*
	£25,000-£29,999*		Less Satisfied*
	£30,000-£34,999*		Less Satisfied*
	£35,000-£39,999*		Less Satisfied*
	£40,000-£44,999		Less Satisfied

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfaction with pay*
	£45,000-£49,999		Less Satisfied
	£50,000-£54,999		Less Satisfied
	£55,000-£59,999		More Satisfied
	£60,000-£64,999		Less Satisfied
	£65,000-£69,999		More Satisfied
	Over £70,000		More Satisfied
	Prefer not to say		Less Satisfied
Teaching Qualification*	Manager with Teaching - ITT	Manager with no teaching responsibilities	Less satisfied
	Manager with Teaching - Other Qualification		More satisfied
	Teacher - ITT*		Less satisfied*
	Teacher - Other Qualification		Less satisfied
Qualification Taught	Manager with Teaching - Academic only	Manager with no teaching responsibilities	Less satisfied
	Manager with Teaching - Functional only		Less satisfied
	Manager with Teaching - More than one type		Less satisfied
	Teacher - Academic only*		Less satisfied *
	Teacher - Functional only		Less satisfied
	Teacher - More than one type*		Less satisfied*
STEM	Manager with Teaching - Not STEM	Manager with no teaching responsibilities	Less satisfied
	Teacher - Not STEM		More satisfied
Time Teaching	Manager with Teaching - 10 years but less than 20 years	Manager with no teaching responsibilities	More satisfied
	Manager with Teaching - 3 years but less than 5 years		More satisfied
	Manager with Teaching - 5 years but less than 10 years		More satisfied

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfaction with pay*
	Manager with Teaching - Less than 3 years		More satisfied
	Teacher - 10 years but less than 20 years		Less Satisfied
	Teacher - 3 years but less than 5 years		More Satisfied
	Teacher - 5 years but less than 10 years		More Satisfied
	Teacher - Less than 3 years		More Satisfied

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

* Indicate rows where the p-value is < 0.05

Table 12: Intention to leave among all respondents

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Intention to Leave
Contract Type*	Other contract*	Full-time	More Likely to Leave*
	Part-time, Dual profession*		More Likely to Leave*
	Part-time, FE only*		More Likely to Leave*
Ethnicity*	Asian/Asian British*	White	Less Likely to Leave*
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British		More Likely to Leave
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups		More Likely to Leave
	Other ethnic group		Less Likely to Leave
	Prefer not to say*		More Likely to Leave*
Gender	Identifies in another way	Female	Less Likely to Leave
	Male		More Likely to Leave
	Prefer not to say		More Likely to Leave
Role Type*	Manager with No Teaching	Leader	Less Likely to Leave
	Manager with Teaching*		Less Likely to Leave*
	Teacher*		Less Likely to Leave*
Pay Satisfaction*		N/A	Higher Pay Satisfaction = Less Likely to Leave*
Prior Industry Experience	Prior industry experience	No Prior Experience	More Likely to Leave

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Intention to Leave
Provider Type*	ITP/ACL*	GFEC	Less Likely to Leave*
	SFC		More Likely to Leave
Disability*	No	Yes	Less Likely to Leave
	Prefer not to say*		Less Likely to Leave*
Hours Worked*	DK/Prefer Not to say*	Lowest 20%	Less Likely to Leave*
	Highest 20%		Less Likely to Leave
	Middle 20%*		Less Likely to Leave*
	Next Highest 20%*		Less Likely to Leave*
	Next Lowest 20%*		Less Likely to Leave*
Hours Taught*	DK/Prefer Not to say	Lowest 20%	More Likely to Leave
	Highest 20%		More Likely to Leave
	Middle 20%		More Likely to Leave
	Next Highest 20%		More Likely to Leave
	Next Lowest 20%*		Less Likely to Leave*
I have sufficient control over my workload	Agree	Disagree	More Likely to Leave
	Neither agree nor disagree		Less Likely to Leave

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Intention to Leave
I have an acceptable workload*	Agree*	Disagree	Less Likely to Leave*
	Neither agree nor disagree*		Less Likely to Leave*
I am satisfied with the flexible working options available to me at my current college/training provider*	Agree*	Disagree	Less Likely to Leave*
	Neither agree nor disagree*		Less Likely to Leave*
I experience stress in my work*	Agree*	Disagree	More Likely to Leave*
	Neither agree nor disagree		More Likely to Leave
Overall, how satisfied are you with working in FE*	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*	Dissatisfied	Less Likely to Leave*
	Satisfied*		Less Likely to Leave*
Qualification Type	Functional only	Academic Only	Less Likely to Leave
	More than one type		More Likely to Leave
	Vocational only		More Likely to Leave
Subject taught	STEM	Non-STEM	More Likely to Leave
Time Teaching*	3 years but less than 5 years	Less than three years	More Likely to Leave

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Intention to Leave
	5 years but less than 10 years*		More Likely to Leave*
	10 years but less than 20 years*		More Likely to Leave*
	More than 20 years*		More Likely to Leave*

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

* Indicate rows where the p-value is < 0.05

Table 13: Intention to leave (teachers only)

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Intention to Leave
Number of CPD events attended		N/A	More Likely to Leave
When CPD was attended*	more than 3 years	Never attended	Less Likely to Leave
	more than a year, less than 3 years*		More Likely to Leave*
	within last 12 months		More Likely to Leave
Contract Type*	Other contract	Full-time	More Likely to Leave
	Part-time, Dual profession*		More Likely to Leave*
	Part-time, FE only		More Likely to Leave
Ethnicity*	Asian/Asian British*	White	Less Likely to Leave*
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British*		More Likely to Leave*
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups		More Likely to Leave
	Other ethnic group		More Likely to Leave
	Prefer not to say*		More Likely to Leave*
Gender	Identifies in another way	Female	Less Likely to Leave
	Male		More Likely to Leave
	Prefer not to say		Less Likely to Leave
Pay Satisfaction*		N/A	Higher Score = Less Likely to Leave*

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Intention to Leave
Prior Industry Experience	Prior industry experience	No Prior Experience	Less Likely to Leave
Provider Type*	ITP/ACL*	GFEC	Less Likely to Leave*
	SFC		Less Likely to Leave
Disability	No	Yes	More Likely to Leave
	Prefer not to say		Less Likely to Leave
Hours Worked*	DK/Prefer Not to say*	Lowest 20%	Less Likely to Leave*
	Highest 20%		Less Likely to Leave
	Middle 20%*		Less Likely to Leave*
	Next Highest 20%*		Less Likely to Leave*
	Next Lowest 20%*		Less Likely to Leave*
Hours Taught	DK/Prefer Not to say	Lowest 20%	Less Likely to Leave
	Highest 20%		Less Likely to Leave
	Middle 20%		Less Likely to Leave
	Next Highest 20%		Less Likely to Leave
	Next Lowest 20%		Less Likely to Leave
I have sufficient control over my workload	Agree	Disagree	Less Likely to Leave
	Neither agree nor disagree		Less Likely to Leave

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Intention to Leave
I have an acceptable workload	Agree	Disagree	More Likely to Leave
	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Less Likely to Leave
I am satisfied with the flexible working options available to me at my current college/training provider*	Agree	Disagree	Less Likely to Leave
	Neither agree nor disagree*	Disagree	Less Likely to Leave*
I experience stress in my work*	Agree*	Disagree	More Likely to Leave*
	Neither agree nor disagree		More Likely to Leave
Overall, how satisfied are you with working in FE*	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*	Dissatisfied	Less Likely to Leave*
	Satisfied*		Less Likely to Leave*
Qualification Type	Functional only	Academic Only	More Likely to Leave
	More than one type		More Likely to Leave
	Vocational only		More Likely to Leave
Subject taught	STEM	Non-STEM	Less Likely to Leave
Student support		N/A	Higher Score = More Likely to Leave

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Intention to Leave
Staff support*		N/A	Higher Score = Less Likely to Leave*
Time Teaching*	3 years but less than 5 years	Less than three years	More Likely to Leave
	5 years but less than 10 years*		More Likely to Leave*
	10 years but less than 20 years*		More Likely to Leave*
	More than 20 years*		More Likely to Leave*

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

* Indicate rows where the p-value is < 0.05

Table 14: Results from model of CPD and satisfaction with working in FE

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfied with Working in FE
Whether there were any barriers to attending CPD*	Barrier	No barrier	Less Satisfied*
Number of CPD events attended*		N/A	More attended = More satisfied*
CPD attendance*	more than 3 years ago*	Never completed CPD	Less Satisfied*
	more than a year, less than 3 years		Less Satisfied
	Within last 12 months		Less Satisfied
Contract Type	Other contract*	Full-time	More Satisfied*
	Part-time, Dual profession		Less Satisfied
	Part-time, FE only*		More Satisfied*

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfied with Working in FE
Ethnicity*	Asian/Asian British*	White	Less Satisfied*
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British*	White	More Satisfied*
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups		Less Satisfied
	Other ethnic group*		Less Satisfied*
	Prefer not to say*		Less Satisfied*
Gender	Identifies in another way	Female	More Satisfied
	Male		More Satisfied
	Prefer not to say*		More Satisfied*
Prior industry experience	Prior industry experience	No prior experience	Less Satisfied
Provider Type*	ITP*	GFEC	More Satisfied*
	SFC		More Satisfied
Disability*	No*	Yes	More Satisfied*
	Prefer not to say*		Less Satisfied*
Amount of time on CPD*	1–2 days (8–14 hours)	Not attended in the last 12 months	Less Satisfied
	11–15 days (71–105 hours) *		More Satisfied*
	3–5 days (15–35 hours)		More Satisfied
	6–10 days (36–70 hours)		More Satisfied
	More than 15 days (over 105 hours)		Less Satisfied
Quality of CPD*	Fair*	Excellent	Less Satisfied*
	Good*		Less Satisfied*
	Poor*		Less Satisfied*
	Very poor*		Less Satisfied*
Teaching Qualification*	ITT*	No teaching responsibilities	More Satisfied*
	Other Qualification		More Satisfied
Qualification Type	Functional only	Academic Only	Less Satisfied

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfied with Working in FE
	More than one type		Less Satisfied
	Vocational only		More Satisfied
STEM subject	STEM	Not STEM	More Satisfied
Time Spent Teaching*	10 years but less than 20 years	Less than 3 years	More Satisfied
	3 years but less than 5 years		More Satisfied
	5 years but less than 10 years		More Satisfied
	More than 20 years*		More Satisfied*

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

* Indicate rows where the p-value is < 0.05

Table 15: Results from model of CPD and satisfaction with opportunities to develop career within FE

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfied with the opportunities to develop career within FE
Whether there were any barriers to attending CPD*	Barrier*	No barrier	Less Satisfied*
Number of CPD events attended		N/A	More attended = More satisfied
CPD attendance	more than 3 years ago	Never completed CPD	Less Satisfied
	more than a year, less than 3 years	Never completed CPD	More Satisfied
	Within last 12 months	Never completed CPD	More Satisfied
Contract Type*	Other contract*	Full-time	More Satisfied*
	Part-time, Dual profession*	Full-time	Less Satisfied*
	Part-time, FE only	Full-time	More Satisfied
Ethnicity*	Asian/Asian British	White	More Satisfied
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British*	White	More Satisfied*
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups*	White	Less Satisfied*
	Other ethnic group	White	More Satisfied
	Prefer not to say*	White	Less Satisfied*
Whether respondent had received financial support	Some financial support	No Financial Support	More Satisfied
Gender	Identifies in another way	Female	More Satisfied
	Male	Female	Less Satisfied
	Prefer not to say	Female	Less Satisfied
Prior industry experience	Prior industry experience	No prior experience	Less Satisfied
Provider Type*	ITP*	GFEC	More Satisfied*
	SFC	GFEC	More Satisfied
	No*	Yes	More Satisfied*
Disability*	Prefer not to say	Yes	Less Satisfied

Covariate	Category	Reference group	Satisfied with the opportunities to develop career within FE
Amount of time on CPD*	1–2 days (8–14 hours)	Not attended in the last 12 months	More Satisfied
	11–15 days (71–105 hours) *	Not attended in the last 12 months	More Satisfied*
	3–5 days (15–35 hours)	Not attended in the last 12 months	More Satisfied
	6–10 days (36–70 hours)	Not attended in the last 12 months	More Satisfied
	More than 15 days (over 105 hours)	Not attended in the last 12 months	More Satisfied
Quality of CPD*	Fair*	Excellent	Less Satisfied*
	Good*	Excellent	Less Satisfied*
	Poor*	Excellent	Less Satisfied*
	Very poor*	Excellent	Less Satisfied*
Qualification Type	Functional only	Academic Only	More Satisfied
	More than one type	Academic Only	More Satisfied
	Vocational only	Academic Only	More Satisfied
STEM subject	STEM	Not STEM	Less Satisfied
Time Spent Teaching*	3 years but less than 5 years*	Less than 3 years	Less Satisfied*
	5 years but less than 10 years*	Less than 3 years	Less Satisfied*
	10 years but less than 20 years*	Less than 3 years	Less Satisfied*
	More than 20 years*	Less than 3 years	Less Satisfied*

Source: NFER survey of FE leaders, managers and teachers, 2025

* Indicate rows where the p-value is < 0.05



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Reference: RR1667/1

ISBN: 978-1-83870-845-0

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