
Addressing the Post-Pandemic Teacher Recruitment and Retention Challenges in England

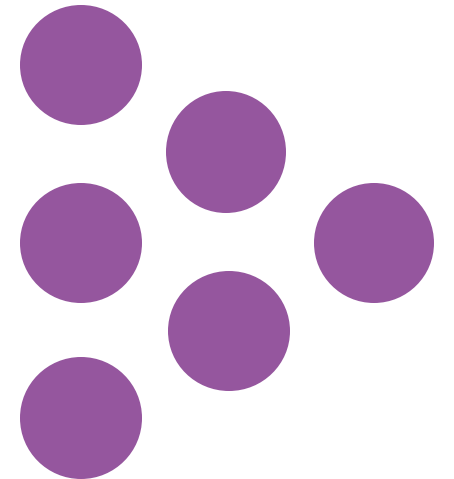
Nuffield Foundation Teacher Workforce Seminar

June 2023

Jack Worth, NFER School Workforce Lead

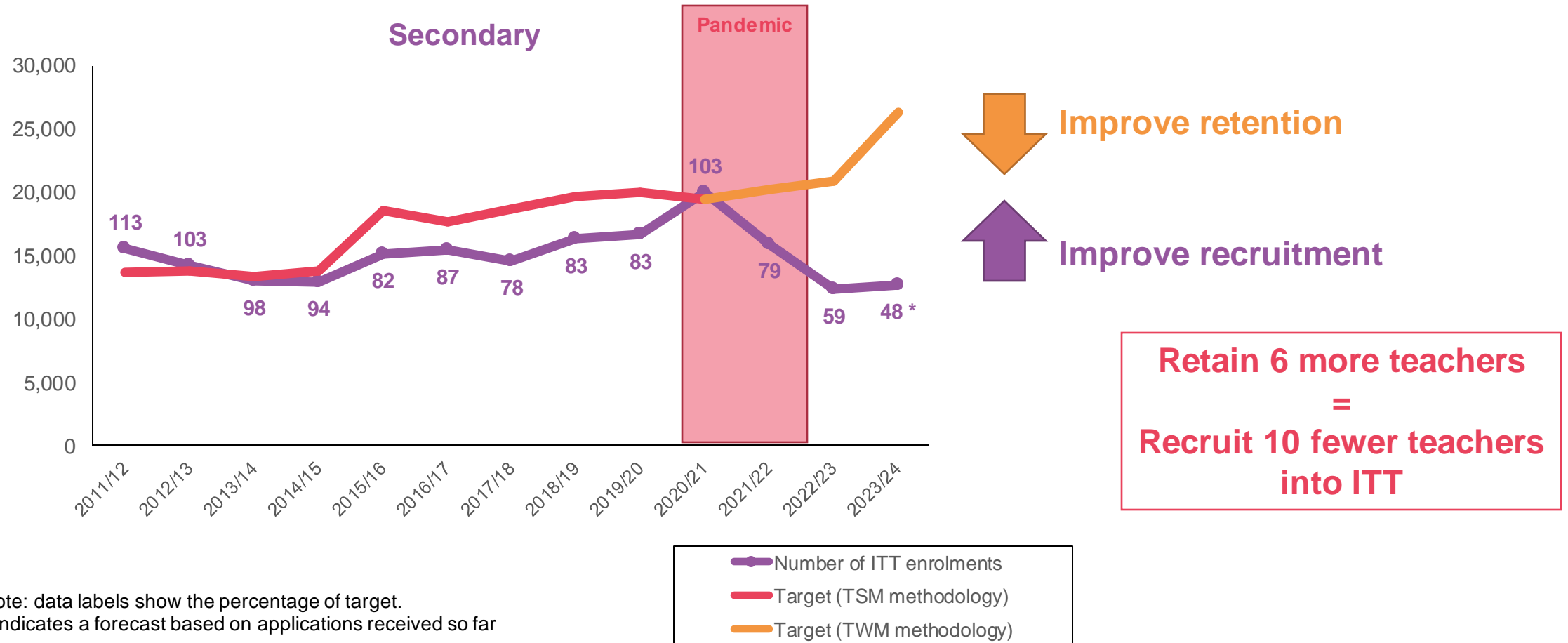


@JackWorthNFER



The teacher supply challenge in England has intensified after the pandemic

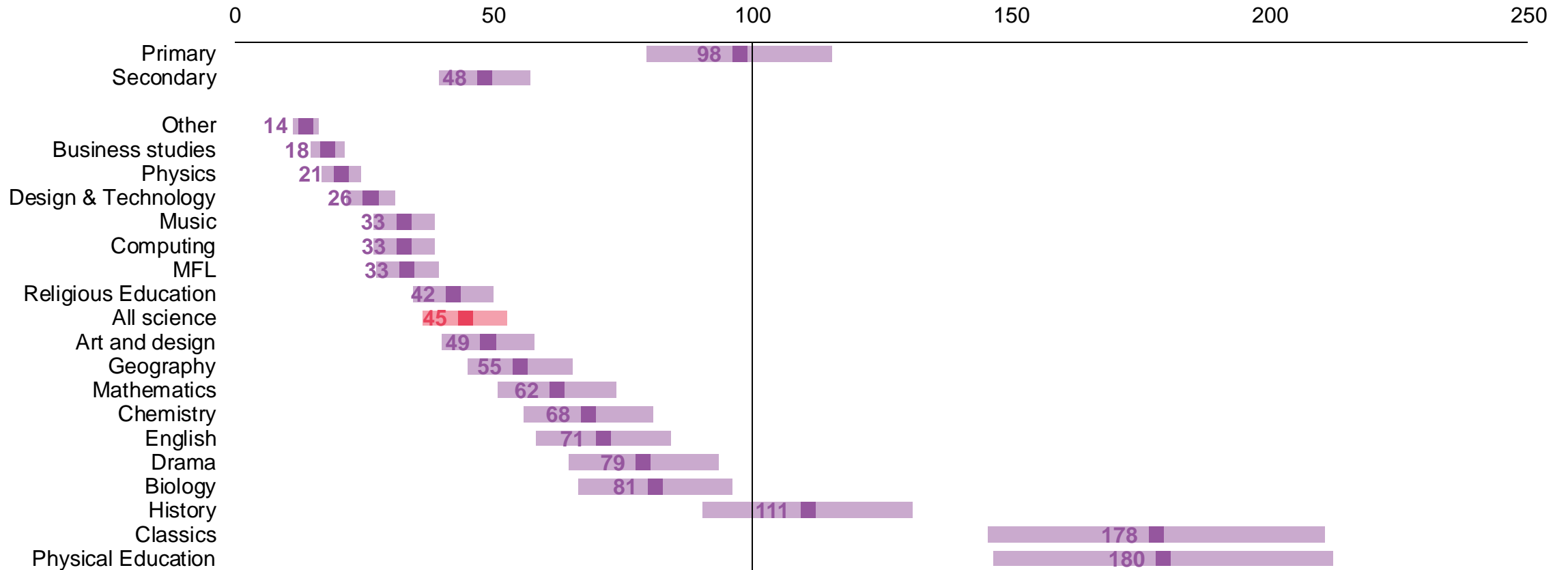
Postgraduate ITT recruitment and target numbers in England



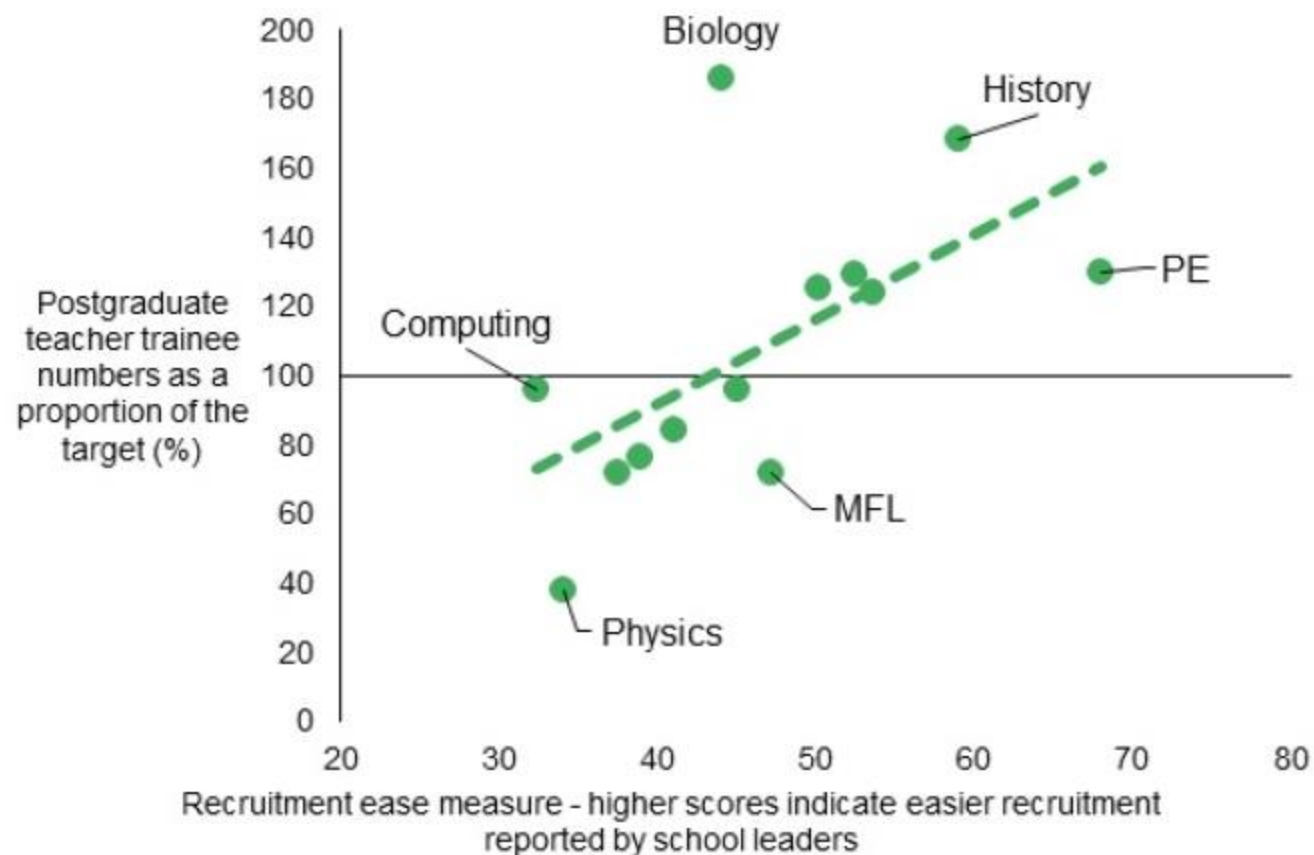
Note: data labels show the percentage of target.
* indicates a forecast based on applications received so far

Almost all secondary subjects are highly likely to be below target this year

NFER forecast of 2023/24 ITT Census recruitment vs target
(%, based on applications up to May 2023)



Not recruiting enough teachers has implications for schools' recruitment



Subjects that did not meet ITT recruitment targets were reported by school leaders as being **more difficult to recruit for**

School leaders take actions to mitigate impact of recruitment difficulty on pupils

Recruitment challenges

Budget challenges

Assembling field of quality applicants/ issues with the suitability of staff applying

Mitigations

Recruit inexperienced, unqualified or low-quality teachers

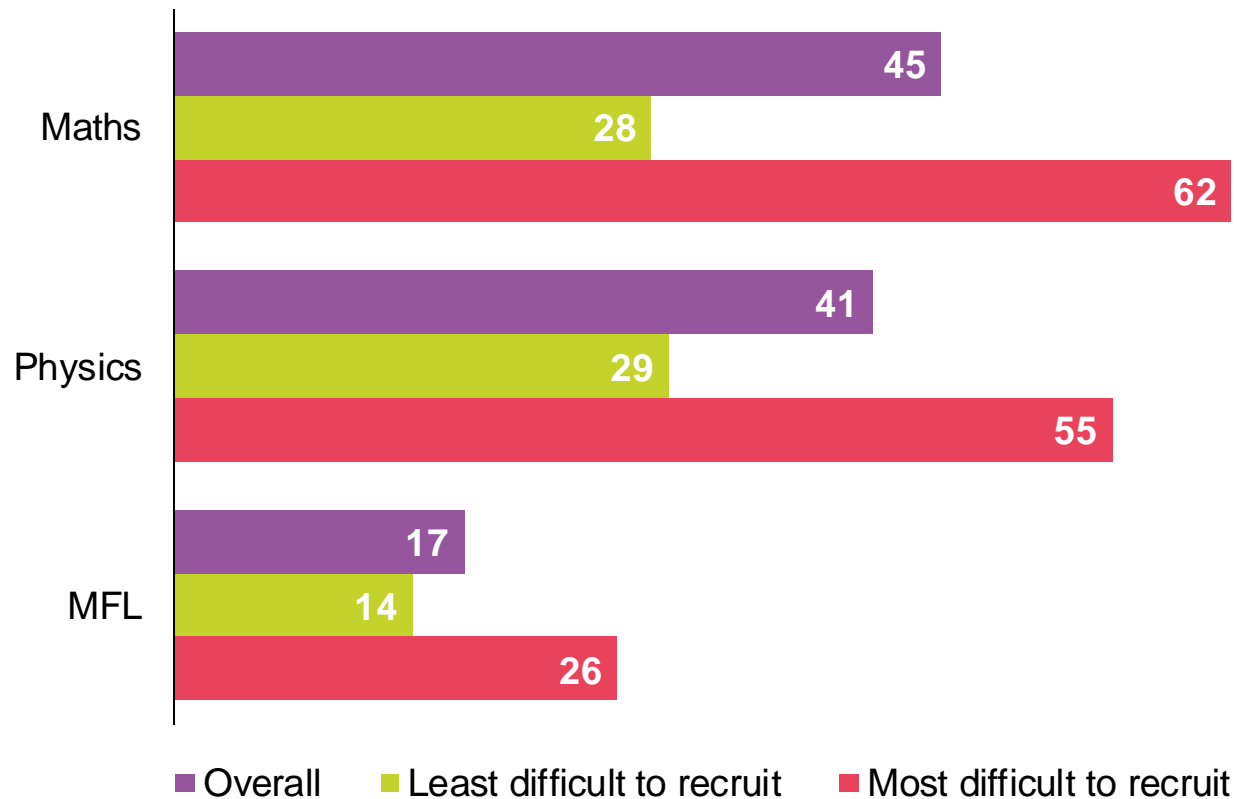
Deploy non-specialist teachers

Reduce non-contact time for existing teachers

School leaders teach more than usual

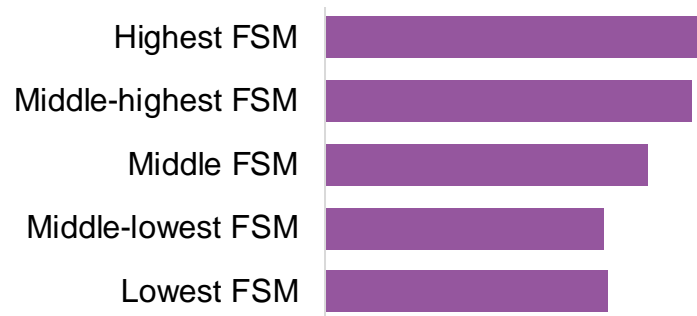
Deploying non-specialist teachers has negative implications for education quality

Proportion of secondary schools in which at least some lessons are taught by non-specialist teachers

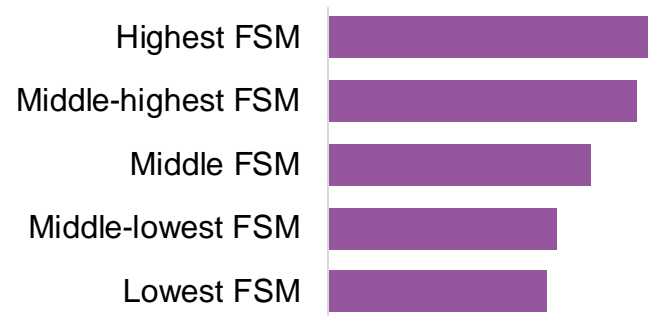


Disadvantaged schools struggle more with retaining teachers and experiencing shortages

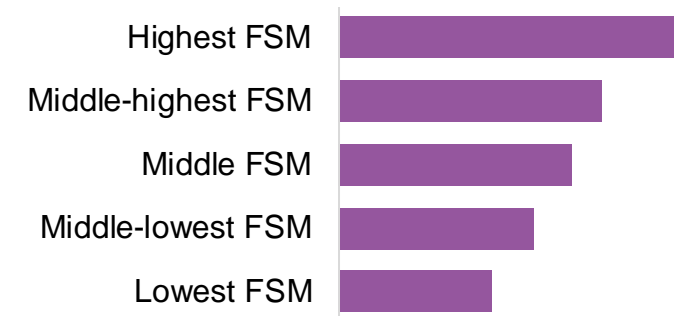
Attrition



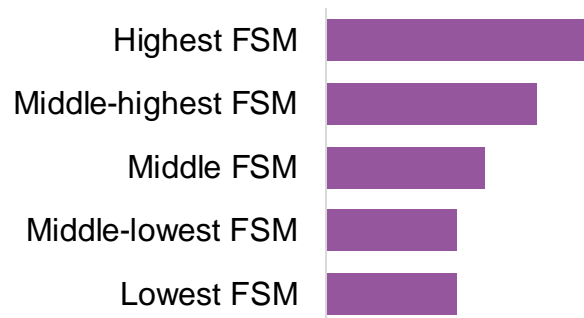
Turnover



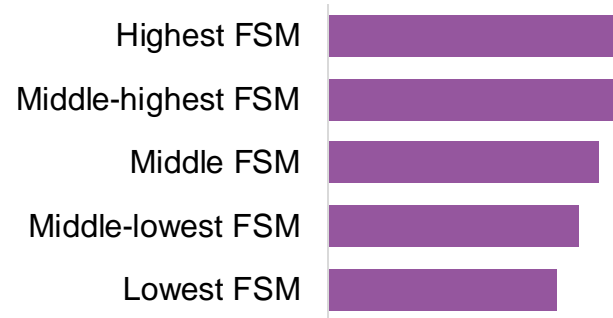
Supply teachers (£)



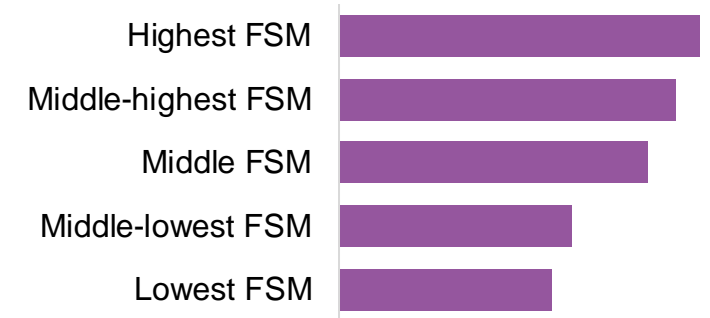
Vacancies



Maths non-specialists

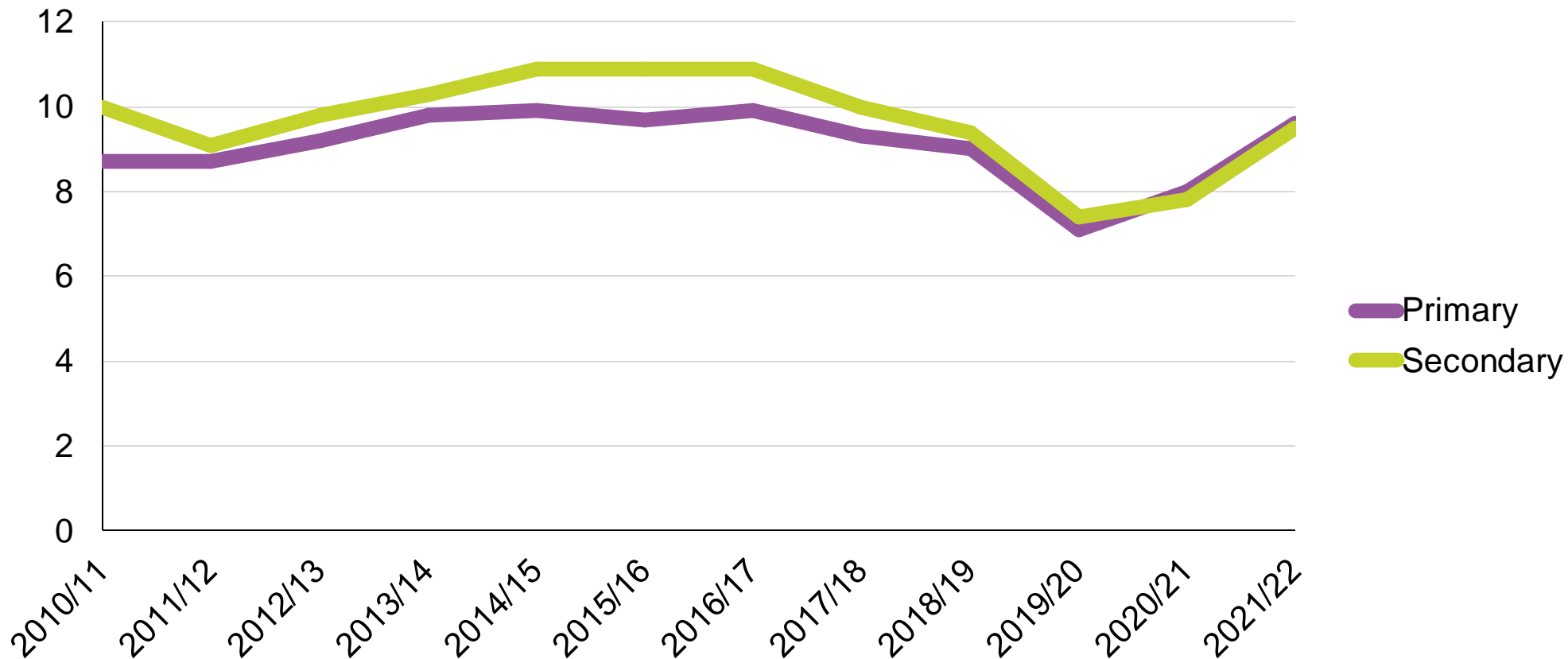


Science non-specialists



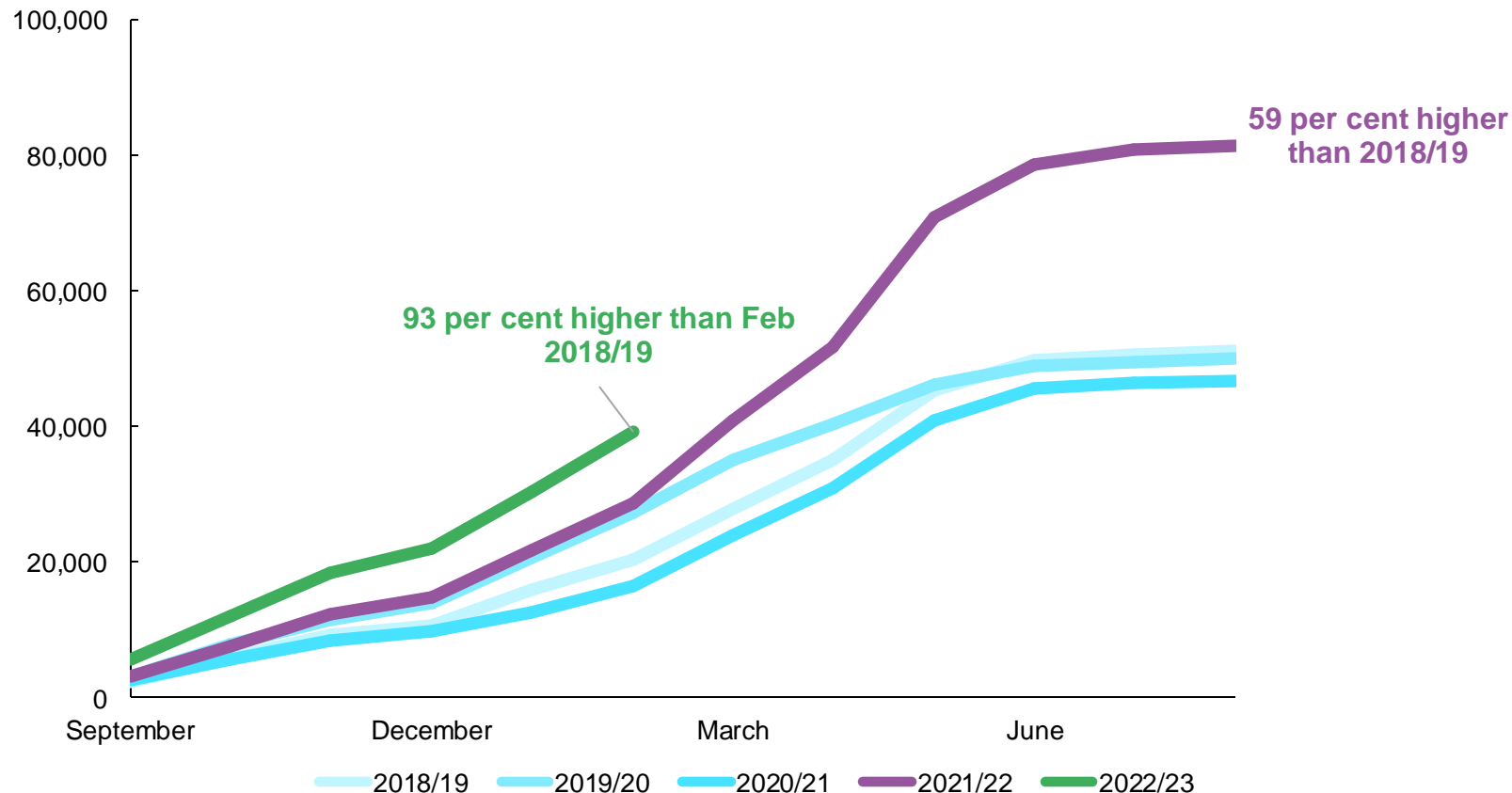
Leaving rates were substantially lower during the pandemic, but have risen again

Teacher leaving rate (%)



Teacher vacancies posted by schools are substantially higher than before the pandemic

Cumulative number of classroom teacher vacancies in state-sector schools in England, 2018/19 - 2022/23



Source: Teach Vac

What to do?

Teacher supply challenges in England have intensified after two years of having eased somewhat due to the pandemic

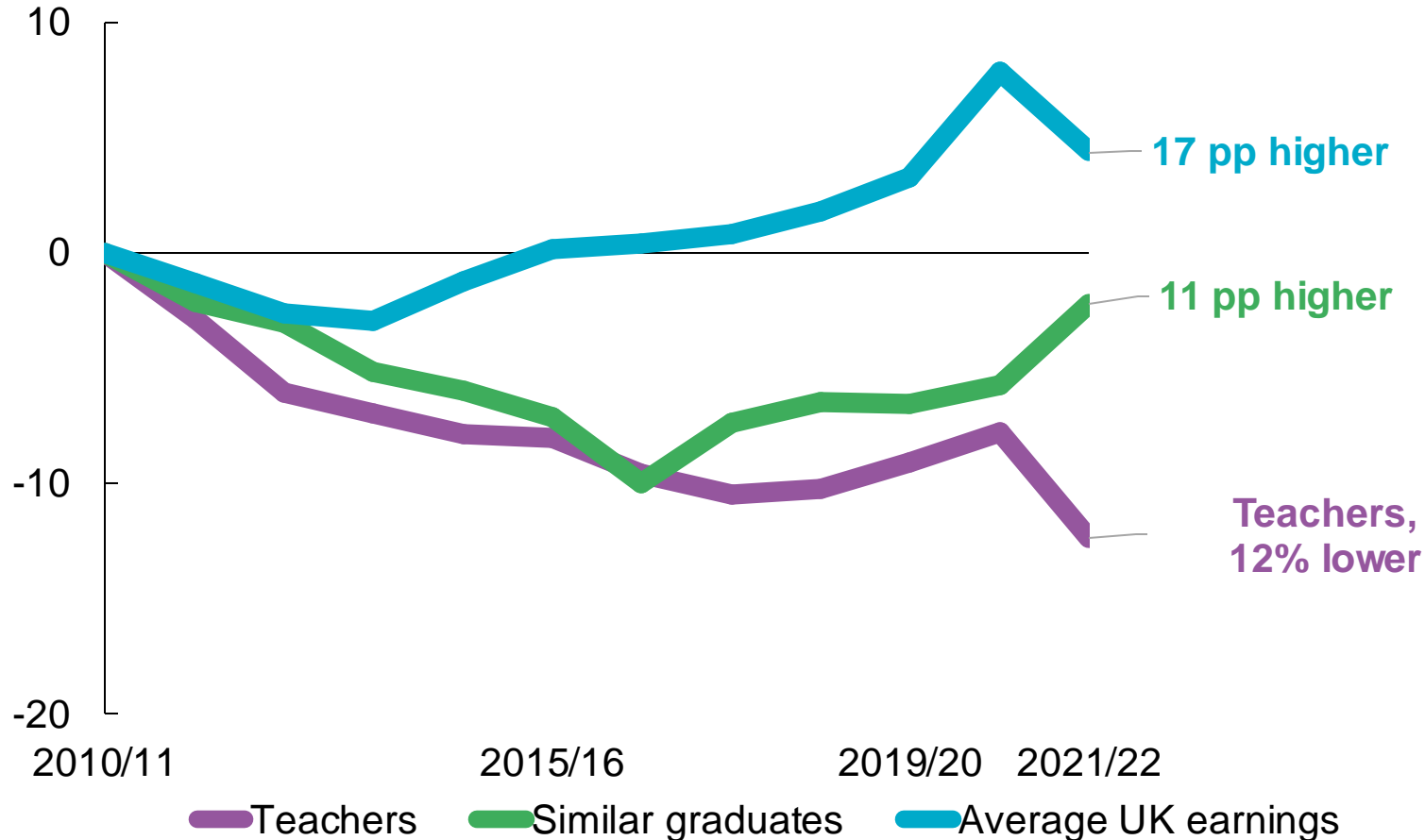
Tackling this challenge effectively requires action to improve the financial and non-financial attractiveness of teaching

Actions for policymakers (and school leaders)

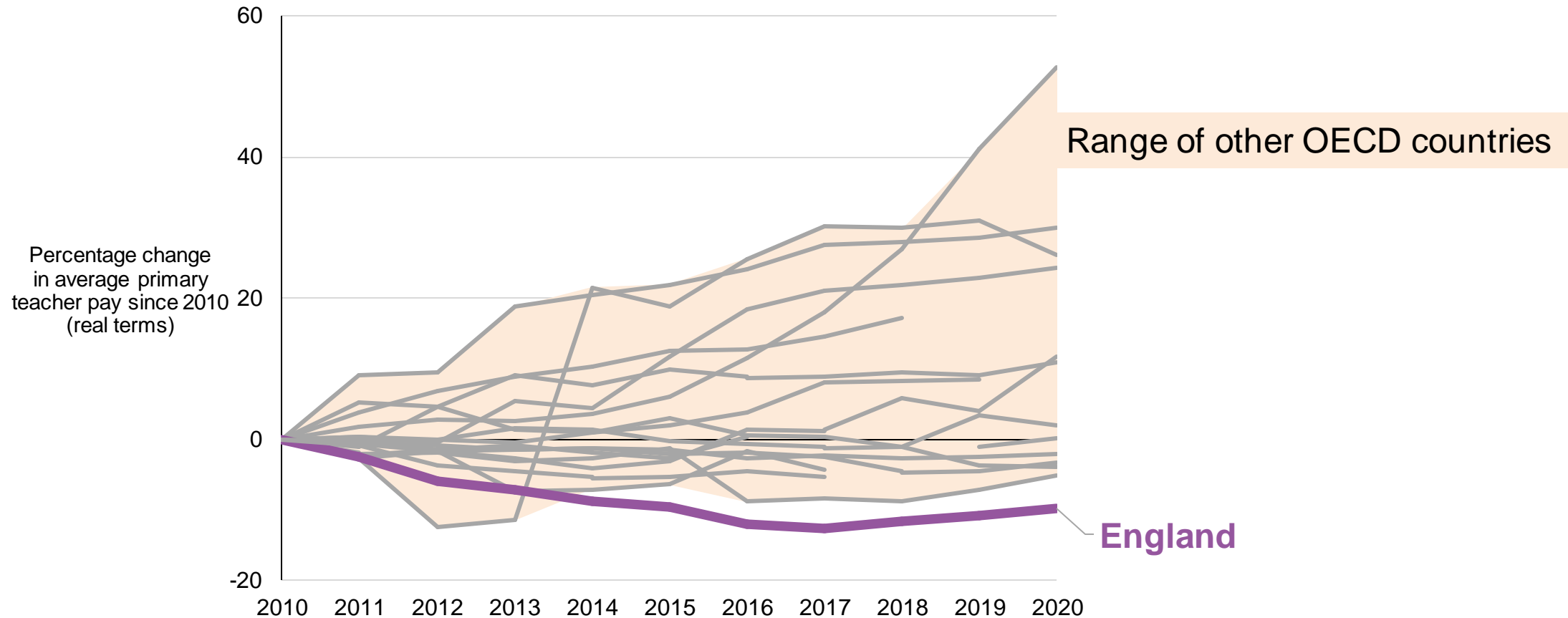
- Pay and financial incentives
- Teacher workload
- Flexible working

Teacher pay has lost competitiveness compared to average earnings and similar graduates

Real-terms earnings growth since 2010/11 (%)



Teacher pay growth in England since 2010 has been the lowest in the OECD



Financial incentives are a key policy tool

- ✓ **Pay boosts recruitment**

(Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022)

- ✓ **Pay boosts retention**

(DfE, 2020 - review)

- ✓ **Bursaries boost recruitment**

(NAO, 2016; Worth, Tang and Galvis, 2022)

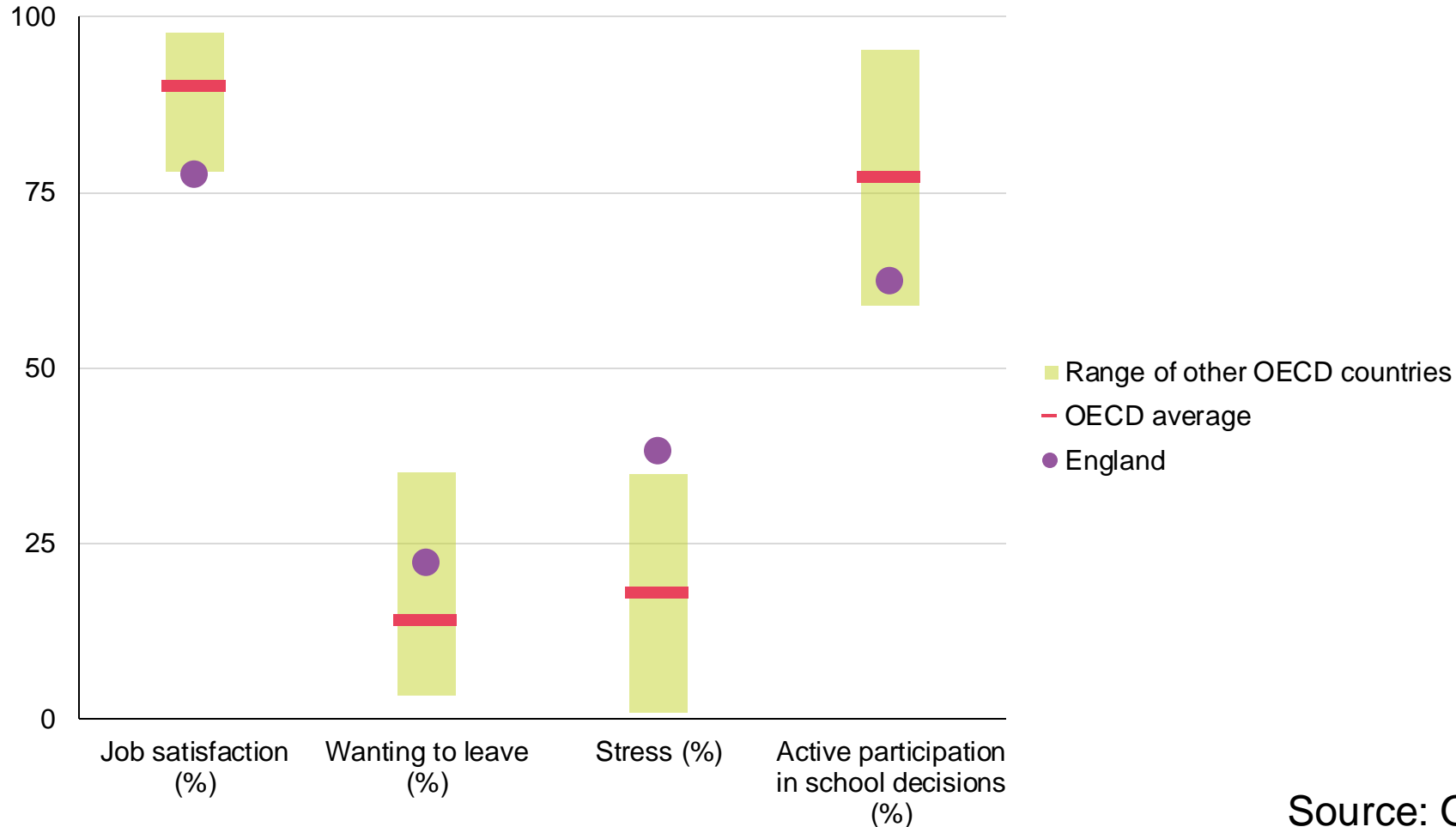
- ✓ **Early-career payments boost retention**

(Sims and Benhenda, 2022)

Targeted by
subject/ area

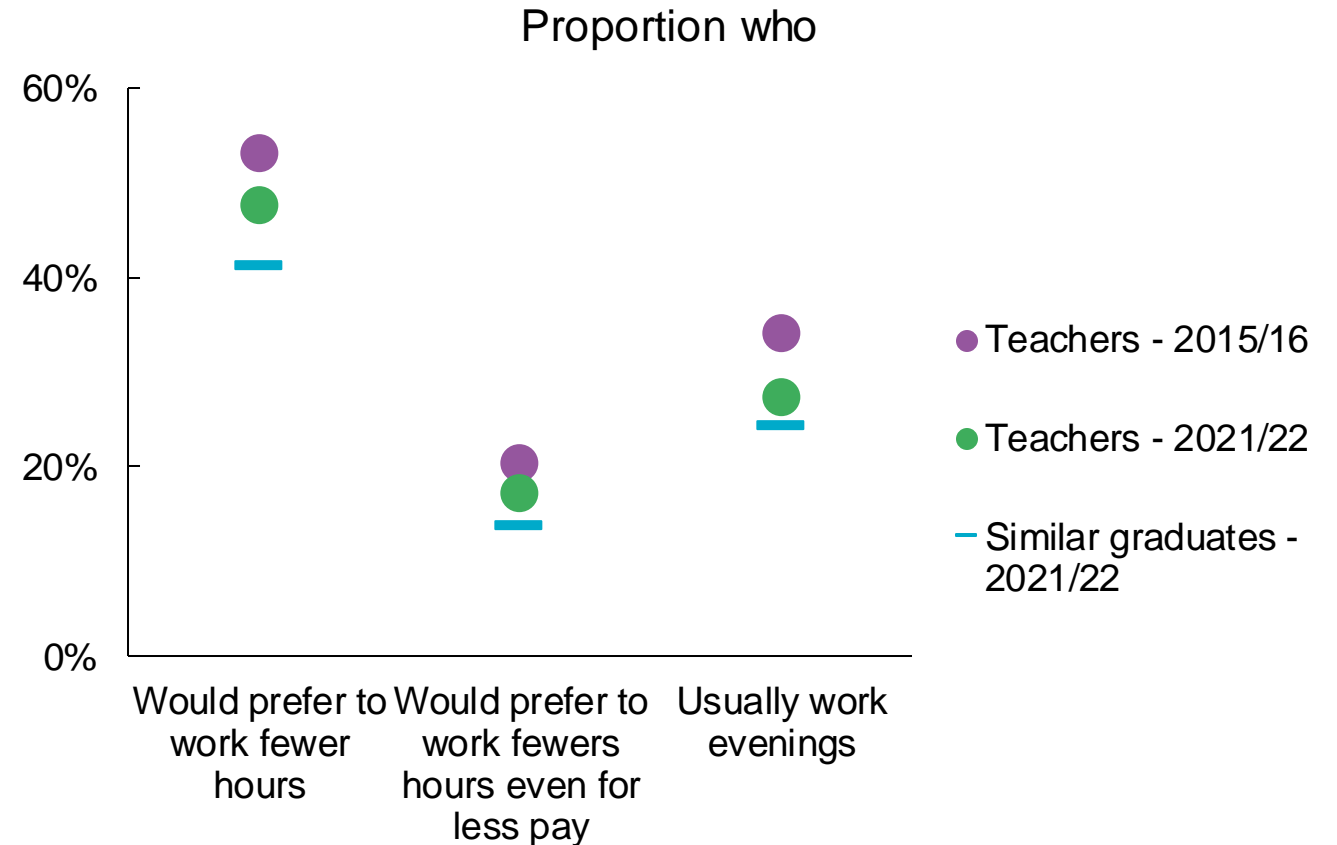
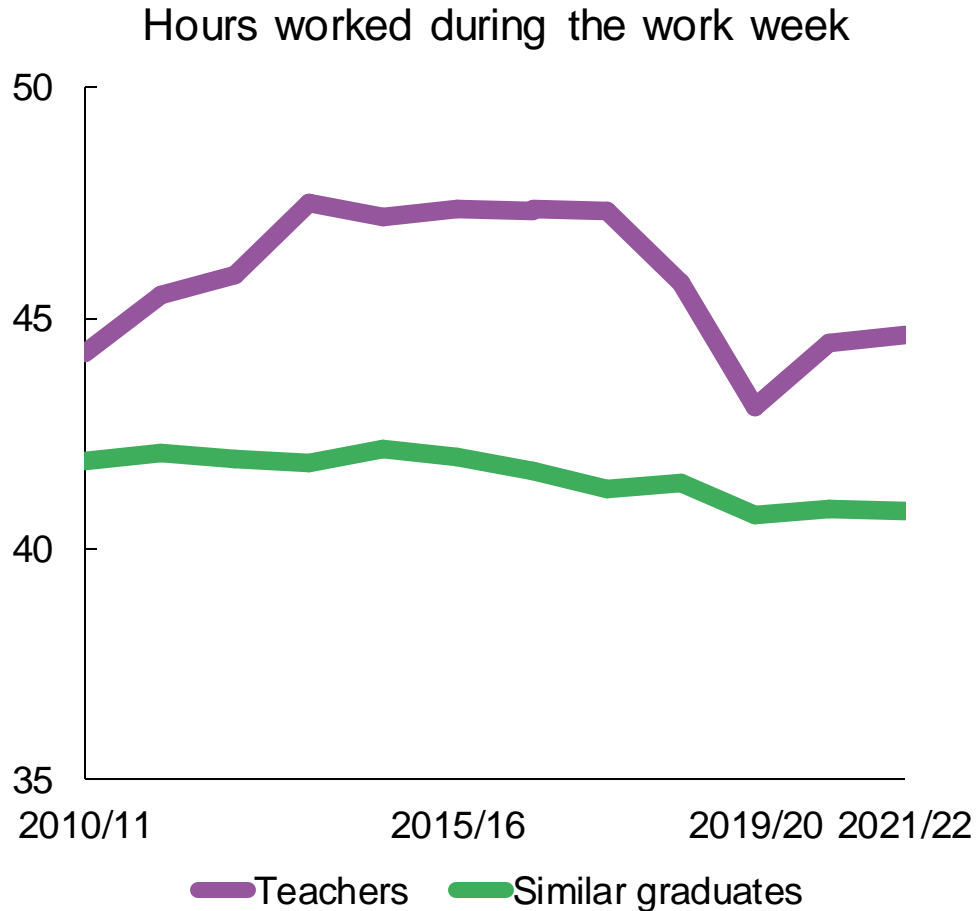
Government needs to develop a long-term pay & incentives strategy

Non-financial attractiveness of teaching in England stands out internationally



Source: OECD TALIS 2018

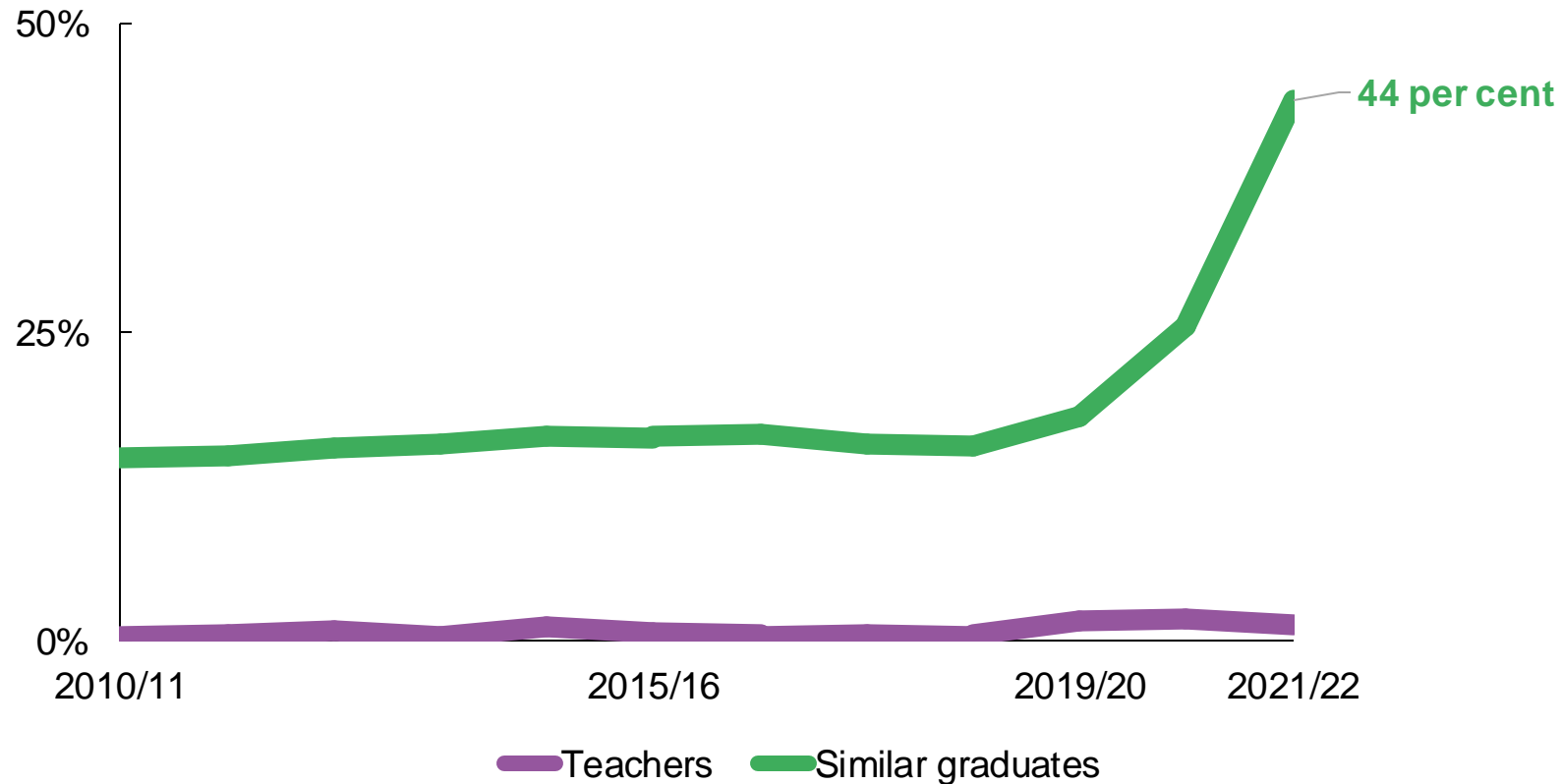
Teacher working hours higher than similar graduates but lower than 2016



Source: NFER analysis of Labour Force Survey.

Flexible working is challenging for schools, but more prevalent in wider labour market since Covid

Proportion who mainly worked from home (%)



Source: NFER analysis of Labour Force Survey.

Conclusions

**Low teacher recruitment + rising leaving rates and vacancies =
significantly intensifying teacher recruitment and retention challenge in England**

- **Teacher pay has lost competitiveness with wider labour market since 2010**
- **Workload appears to have improved since 2016, but working hours remain high**
- **The lack of ability to work from home may be a competitive threat against teaching**

Recommendations

-
- **Long-term pay strategy to address competitiveness**
 - **Remain focussed on reducing teacher workload**
 - **Understand teachers' flexible working preferences**
 - **A workforce strategy that reflects post-pandemic realities of working life**

