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Blog

Over half of teachers are more likely to apply for a job in a 'flexible friendly' school

- Research from the Department for Education's [Teaching Vacancies](#) shows 83% of teachers surveyed feel that improving work-life balance is one of the top benefits of flexible working.
- 72% of teachers surveyed believe flexible working promotes wellbeing and 52% of teachers surveyed associate flexible working with supporting staff retention.
- Over half (57%) of all teachers surveyed are more likely to apply for roles at schools which are open to flexible working, jumping to 60% for women.

Now is a popular time for schools to advertise staff vacancies ahead of the October resignation deadline. Research commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE)'s [Teaching Vacancies](#) reveals over half (57%) of all teachers who responded to the survey page 5 of 6 are more likely to apply to schools that advertise 'flexible friendly' jobs. In addition, new flexible working regulations came into effect on 6 April 2024, giving employees the right to request flexible working arrangements from day one of employment.

Flexible working can also promote equality of opportunity in the workforce, with over half of female teachers saying they would be more likely to apply to schools which offer flexible working roles. In addition, extending flexible working may attract former teachers back into the profession.

Six months after the new flexible working legislation came into effect, many teachers are now exploring their next career step in the lead up to the October resignation deadline. Schools and trusts should carefully consider the impact their flexible working offer could have on teacher recruitment and retention. The new findings show schools the benefits of offering flexible working opportunities to attract new talent, and to support retention of existing staff, helping teachers to achieve the right work-life balance.

The research, surveying more than seven thousand teachers, explored the benefits teachers associate with flexible working. 93% believe that flexible working has identifiable benefits. The top three that were selected from a list are: improves work-life balance (83%), promotes well-being (72%), and supports retention (52%). Advertising new roles as specifically 'open to flexible working' can be appealing to those looking for a new school role.

Flexible working is increasingly a normal expectation across other sectors and teaching is no different. The [amended flexible working legislation](#) allows employees to request flexible working from their first day of employment, removing the previous requirement for an employee to have 26 weeks' continuous service before they can make a statutory flexible working request.

There are some potential challenges to implementing flexible working in schools, such as timetabling, but many schools and trusts have embedded it effectively, and with the right planning and consideration, flexible working can be compatible with a career in teaching. The Department for Education has appointed a cohort of flexible working ambassador schools and trusts to highlight good practice and provide peer support in overcoming implementation challenges. There are also a [range of webinars and a toolkit of practical resources](#) to help with implementation.

Job-seeking teachers looking for their next move should always check [Teaching Vacancies](#), or they could be missing out on their ideal role. It's the official teacher recruitment service from the Department for Education. Teaching Vacancies supports schools to put money back where it's needed most, in the classroom. More schools use the service than any other job site and it is now the biggest source of primary jobs directly listed by primary schools in England, and the second largest for secondary roles.

Jill Newbolt is Assistant Headteacher at Abbey School in South Yorkshire, a [Flexible Working Ambassador School](#):

"Flexible working has allowed me the time and freedom to explore my passions, whilst also progressing in my teaching career. Having the flexibility within my working week to be able to play football, means I am able to compete in International Walking Football, at a rather mature age, and has been incredible for my wellbeing. I would encourage any teacher looking for their next role to seek out flexible opportunities on Teaching Vacancies."

Antonia Spinks is the CEO of Pioneer Educational Trust, a [Flexible Working Ambassador Multi-Academy Trust](#) based in Berkshire:

"Our Trust offers a flexible job design process which supports colleagues at all levels to flex their roles without affecting their pay or schools' budgets. Being proactive about flexible working has helped us recruit and retain experienced teachers, by offering a work/life balance that works for them. This has allowed us to support teacher wellbeing so they can deliver the best for our pupils. We advertise new roles via Teaching Vacancies, and we make it clear that we are open to discussing flexible working requests at every stage."

Over the last academic year, schools listed over 50,000 teaching roles on Teaching Vacancies. Teachers can filter their search based on criteria including location, job title, education phase and working pattern (flexible hours, part-time). As the official jobsite for teachers, Teaching Vacancies is the go-to place to look for new flexible roles.

If you're a teacher looking for your next role, or a school looking to reduce your recruitment costs and recruit excellent staff, visit: <https://teaching-vacancies.service.gov.uk/>.