



The First 18 Months:

Teacher Views on the Early Career Framework



Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from our third survey of early career teachers and their mentors, exploring how the Early Career Framework (ECF) has developed in the nearly two years since its launch, with the aim of improving the quality and length of early career experiences for teachers. We found a limited amount of change since our 2022 surveys, presumably because the Framework, the training, and the materials remain largely unchanged. Based on our research, we highlight three key areas for review to enhance the ECF experience for teachers.

Review of the training provided by the ECF

Our findings reveal that a significant proportion of early career teachers (44%) would opt-out of the external provision part of the ECF, and 10% would opt-out of the entire framework. Common complaints include a lack of suitability to the needs of Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and a poor use of time. Moreover, two-thirds of early career teachers feel that the training does not cover anything new, repeating a lot from Initial Teacher Training.

Desire for specialist materials tailored to subjects and phases

Fewer than one in five early career teachers feel that the materials provided, including self-study materials and external training, are specialised to their subject or phase. In open-ended questions, teachers commonly mentioned that they would most like specialist materials to be developed. Furthermore, whilst most ECTs have a mentor who teaches the same subject or phase, this is not the case for all subjects, particularly science.

Improve timetabling allocations for secondary ECTs

Those responsible for writing timetables or allocating classes must balance many competing priorities, and two-thirds feel they attend to the needs of early career teachers. However, this sentiment is not shared by newer teachers. Nearly half of second-year ECTs report dissatisfaction with their timetables, with 42% feeling that their timetable does not meet their needs.

Introduction

In September 2021, the Early Career Framework (ECF) was introduced, marking the most significant shift in the way new teachers enter the profession since the 1970s, when teaching qualifications became compulsory. The ECF is designed to enhance the quality and duration of the early career development experience for teachers. Newly qualified teachers now benefit from a comprehensive two-year professional development program, which includes in-school mentoring, training, and self-study materials, the latter of which may be provided by external organisations.

The objective of these reforms is to accelerate the rate at which new teachers improve their skills and reduce the number of newly qualified teachers leaving the profession.

Since its launch in schools, we have been surveying and reporting on teachers' experiences of the Framework. This is our third report, and we explore how early career teachers, mentors, and senior leaders perceive this set of reforms and aims to evaluate their effectiveness.

The Early Career Framework increases workload for teachers

We begin by examining the impact of the ECF on Early Career Teachers (ECTs), as reported by both mentors and the teachers themselves. Figure 1 reveals that ECTs consistently express concerns about the additional workload imposed by the ECF, with nearly two-thirds of them indicating that it is a significant factor. While it should be noted that ECTs have limited reference points, it is worth noting that those in their second year of the ECF tend to feel more burdened than those in their first year.

"The requirements of the ECF add a lot to my workload"

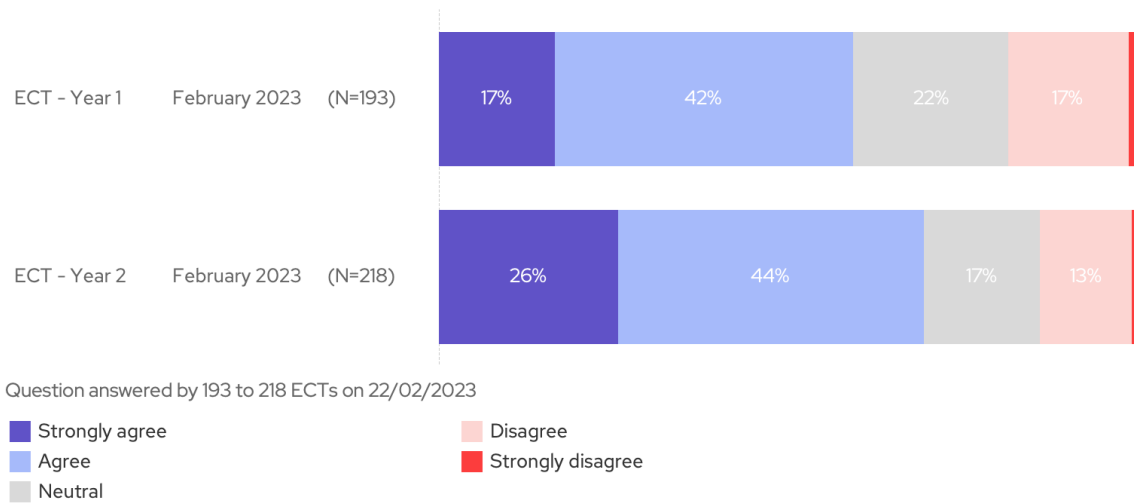
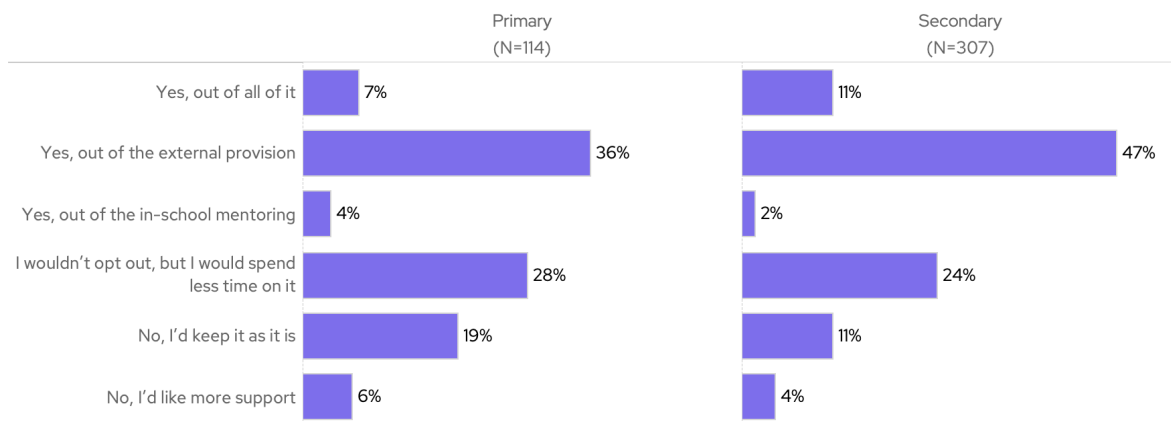


Figure 1: ECT views on the impact of the ECF on their workload

Further analysis indicates that ECTs are particularly critical of the external provision component of the ECF. Only 19% of ECTs are content with the ECF in its current form, while nearly half of ECTs express a desire to opt out of external provision. This represents a six-percentage point increase from our last survey in August 2022. Secondary mentees, in particular, are most critical of the ECF, with 60% expressing a desire to opt-out of at least one aspect, compared to 48% of primary mentees.

Given the choice, I would opt out of the support I'm getting as an Early Career Teacher.



Question answered by 421 ECTs on 22/02/2023 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

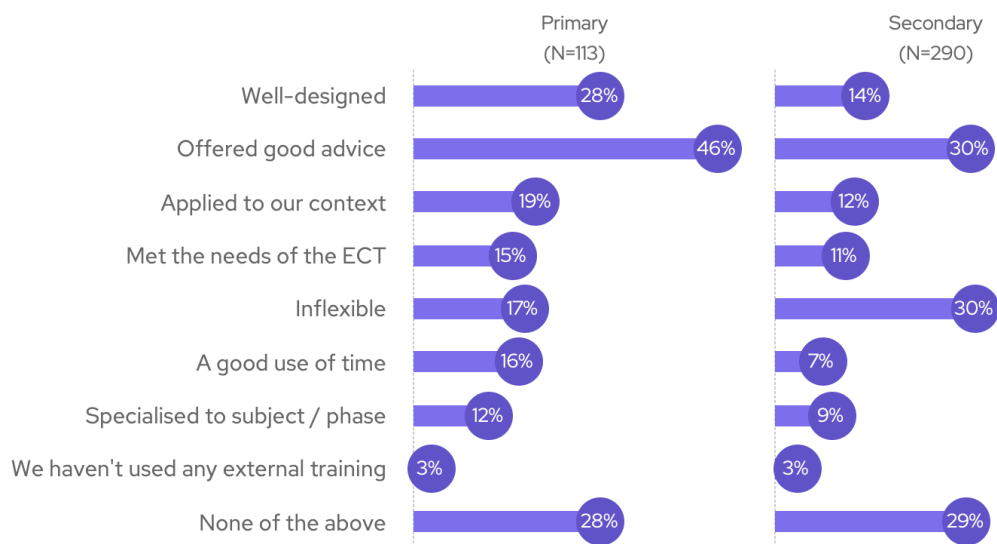
Figure 2: ECT views on what parts of the ECF they would opt-out of, if any

Many ECTs have voiced concerns about the external provision they have received as part of the Framework. A mere 12% feel that the external training adequately meets their needs, while only 10% believe it is a productive use of their time. Interestingly, primary teachers report finding the external training somewhat more beneficial than

their secondary counterparts. Nearly half (46%) of primary mentees found their external training to offer helpful advice, with 28% praising the program's design; in both cases this represents a rise of more than 10 percentage points compared to when we asked in August last year.

In contrast, secondary ECTs views hadn't changed since 2022. They were less likely to praise the external training, with just 30% reporting that it provided valuable guidance, and a mere 14% describing it as well-designed. In fact, secondary mentees were most likely to criticise the inflexibility of the Framework, with just 7% claiming that the training they received was time well-spent.

Which of these describe the *training* you have received as part of the ECF?



Question answered by 403 ECTs in February 2023

Figure 3: ECT views on the external training they have received

Despite some positive feedback, the self-study materials were not exempt from criticism. When asked about these materials, ECTs most commonly described them as easy to use (40%) and clear (27%), but only 8% felt that they met their needs. This is little different to when we asked in 2022, presumably because materials have seen no significant revision during this time. It is possible that the external training is the subject of more criticism because it demands time, while the self-study materials are self-paced and require less of a time commitment.

Mentees are still expressing concerns that the ECF covers material they already know, with less than 20% reporting that they have learned a significant amount. This holds true even for those mentees in their second year of the ECF, raising doubts about the program's ability to introduce new content that extends beyond that

encountered during initial teacher training. The "skip rate" of the ECF remains high, with two-thirds of teachers acknowledging that they have skipped at least some of the program.

"I have learned a lot from the ECF that I didn't already know (from experience or initial training)"

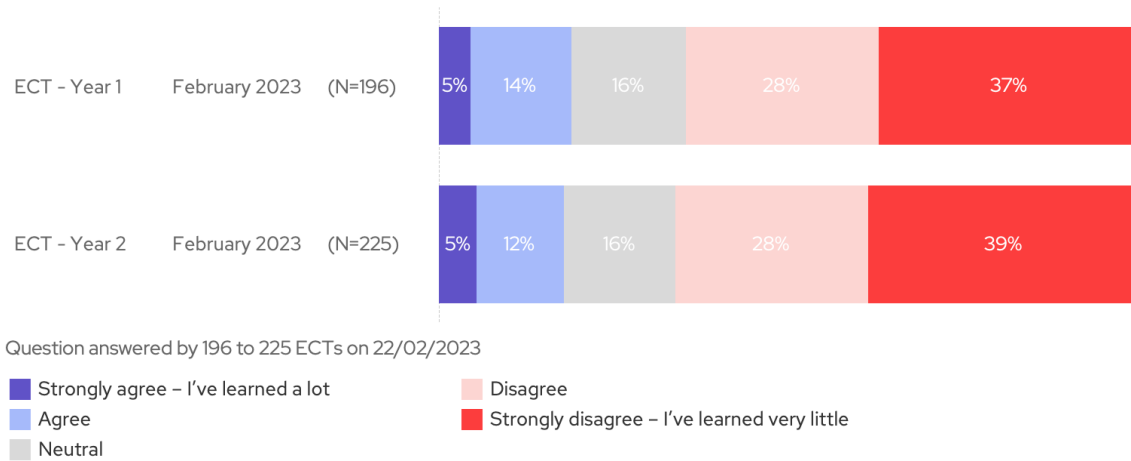


Figure 4: ECT views on what they've learnt from the ECF

To gain a deeper understanding of what could improve the early teaching experience, ECTs were asked to share their own thoughts on what would make it more manageable.

The responses to this question mirror those from more experienced teachers when asked similar questions. Many ECTs expressed that they require more time to complete their tasks, including lesson planning and ECF requirements. To accommodate this, several ECTs suggested that more off-timetable time be made available for them to complete their necessary training. In addition, many ECTs felt that they needed more support from their school, especially in managing student behaviour. It's worth noting that secondary teachers mentioned behaviour support more frequently than primary teachers, highlighting the increased level of support that many secondary ECTs require.

Keyness Analysis

Keyness Analysis of the question: 'In your own words, what could your school do to make your job more manageable this year?' with answers split by the phase taught

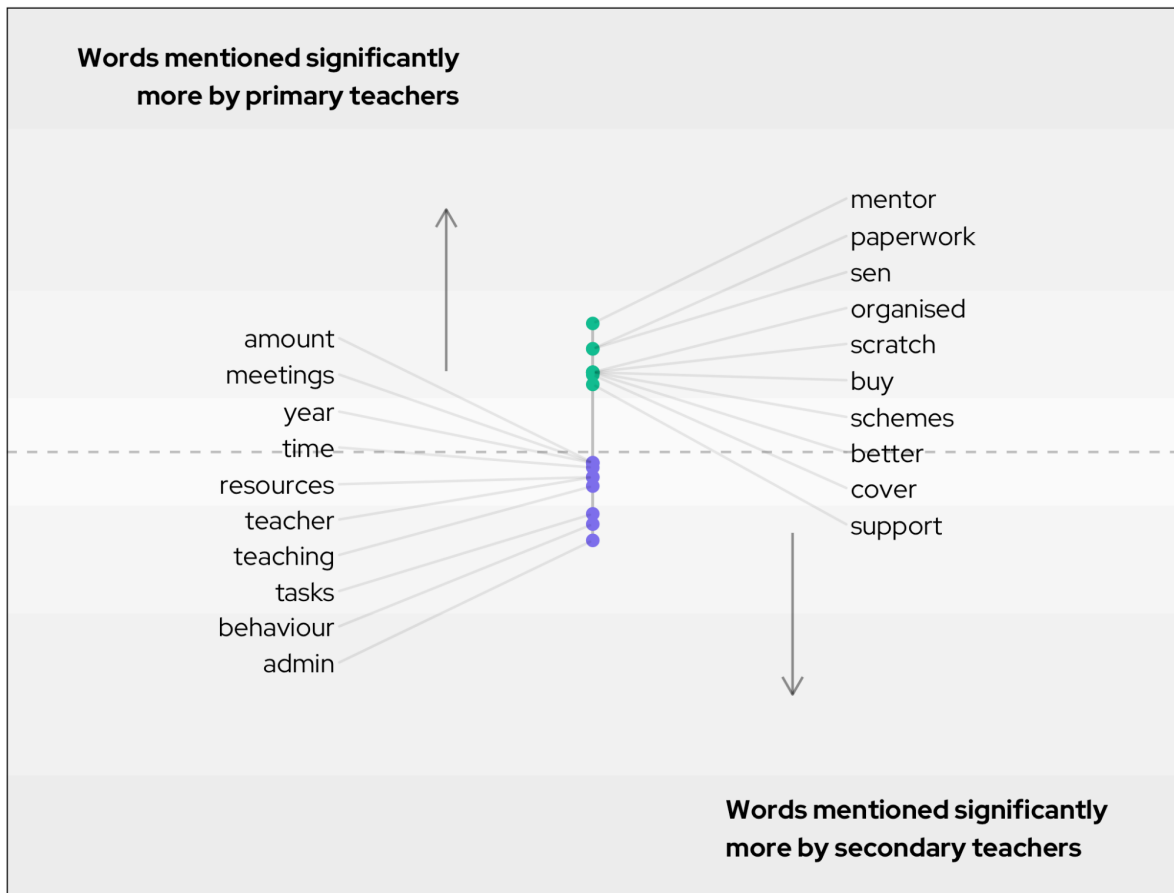


Figure 5: Open-ended responses from ECTs about what their school could do to make their job more manageable

Continued desire for more specialist materials

A recurring criticism of the ECF is the lack of specialist materials that teachers can access for either their phase or the subject. In particular, just 4% of ECTs said that the self-study materials have been specialised and 9% of ECTs say their external training has been.

Do timetables prioritise Early Career Teachers' needs?

In secondary schools, timetables need to balance several factors such as teachers' previous class allocations, subject specialisms, and assigning classes to those who are early in their profession. ECTs are allocated an 80% timetable load during their first two years, compared to 90% for experienced teachers. This lower teaching load is designed to help these teachers cope with the additional demands of the ECF.

The classes that ECTs teach can also impact their professional experience. However, less than half of secondary school teachers report that their subject department prioritises the timetabling allocation that is best suited for their least experienced teachers. All subjects show similar levels of agreement, despite subjects such as science and humanities also needing to balance subject specialisms within their department.

I feel our subject department/faculty successfully prioritises the timetabling allocation that best suits our least experienced teachers

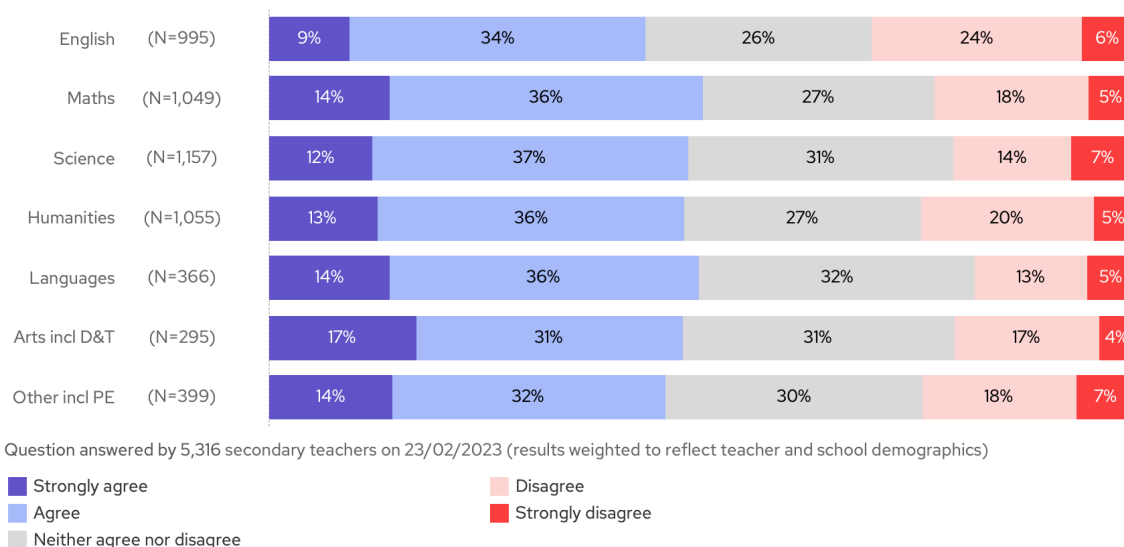


Figure 8: Teacher responses to their views on whether their departmental timetable suits their least experienced teachers

This feeling that timetabling is not able to prioritise the least experienced teachers is most strongly felt by those in the second year of teaching. This may be because this group now has a strong understanding of which classes they would be best suited to teach.

I feel our subject department/faculty successfully prioritises the timetabling allocation that best suits our least experienced teachers

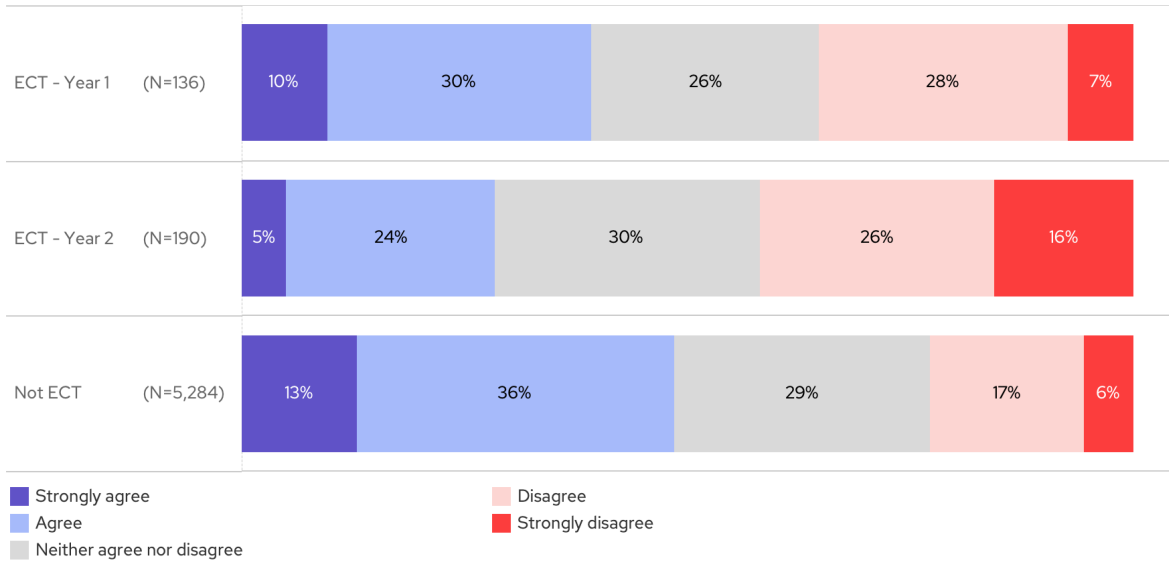


Figure 9: Early Career Teacher responses to their views on whether their departmental timetable suits their least experienced teachers

It is worth noting that the experienced teachers who are responsible for timetable allocations are those who are most likely to feel they are taking the needs of less experienced teachers into account. Around two-thirds of those involved in timetabling feel that they do this.

Did you have any influence over your timetable (or the pupils you taught) this year? (down) versus I feel our subject department/faculty successfully prioritises the timetabling allocation that best suits our least experienced teachers (across)

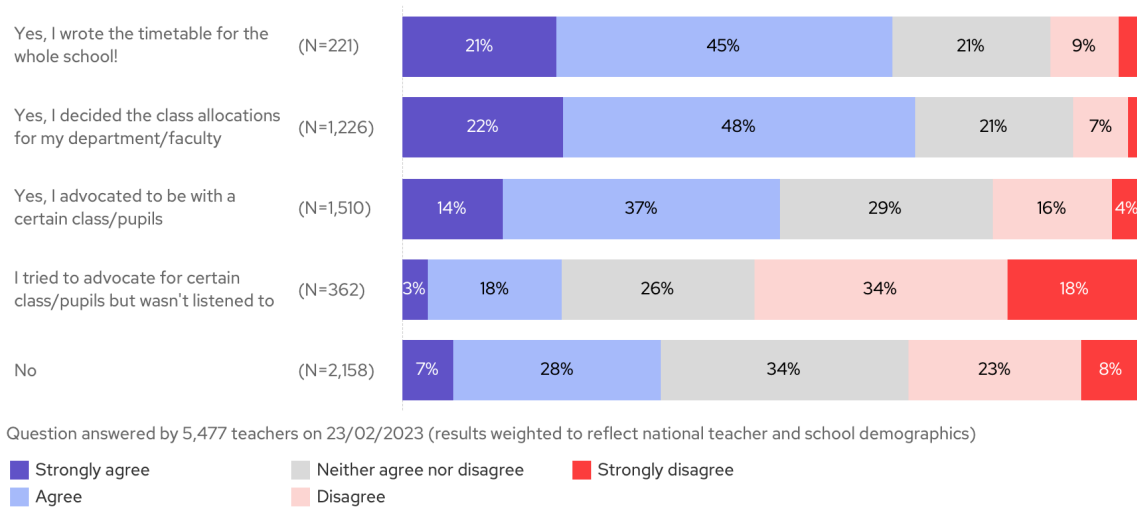


Figure 10: Teachers views on whether their departmental timetable suits their least experienced teachers by whether they influenced the timetable themselves

Despite feeling that timetabling may not prioritise their needs first, the majority of ECTs expressed contentment with their current class assignments, with over three-quarters stating they would not trade more than 25% of their classes if they were given the opportunity to do so. However, this leaves 23% of first-year ECTs who indicated they would trade more than half of their classes if they could, in comparison to only 13% of more experienced teachers.

If you could switch any of your current classes for a different class in any subject and/or year group you want, approximately what percentage of your current timetable would you trade?

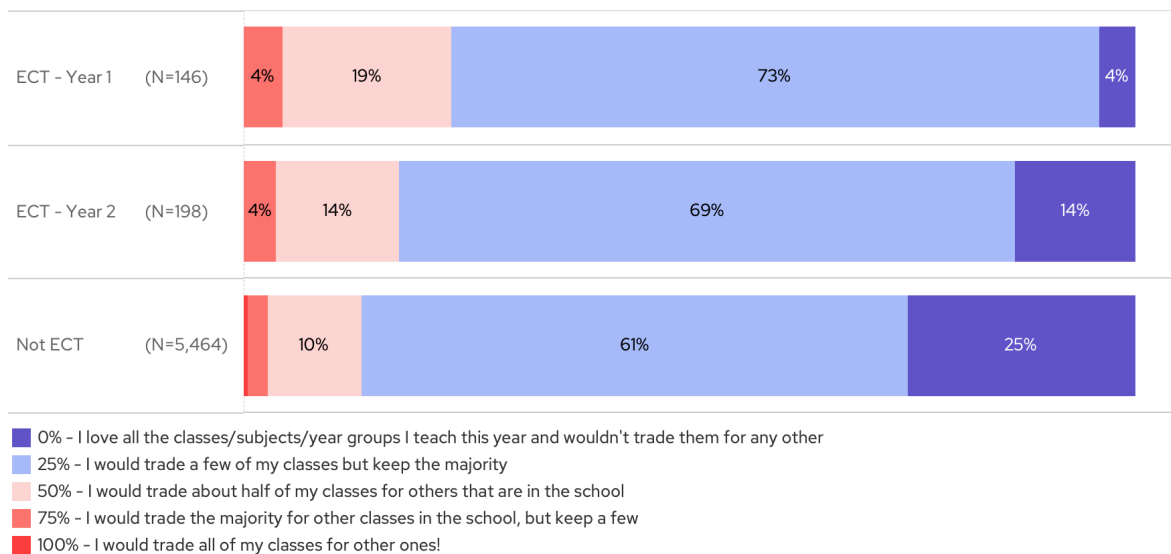


Figure 11: Teachers views on whether they would switch their classes for others

Future of the Early Career Framework

Overall, the ECF seems to elicit a relatively neutral response from many teachers, including ECTs, mentors, and senior leaders. ECTs do not express strong feelings about whether the ECF is making them more likely to stay in the profession or not. Only 23% of ECTs believe that the support they receive through the ECF makes them more likely to remain in teaching, and this proportion has remained relatively stable since we first asked this question in Spring 2022.

However, second-year ECTs appear to be less convinced of the ECF's benefits in terms of retention. In fact, 19% of them say that they are less likely to stay in teaching because of the ECF, compared to 11% of first-year ECTs.

Does the Early Career Teacher support make you more or less likely to stay in teaching?

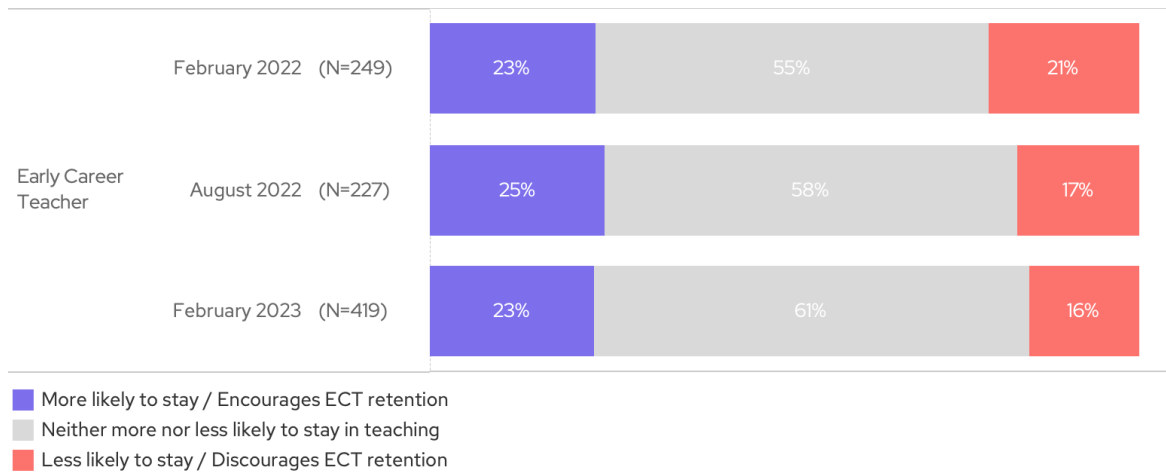
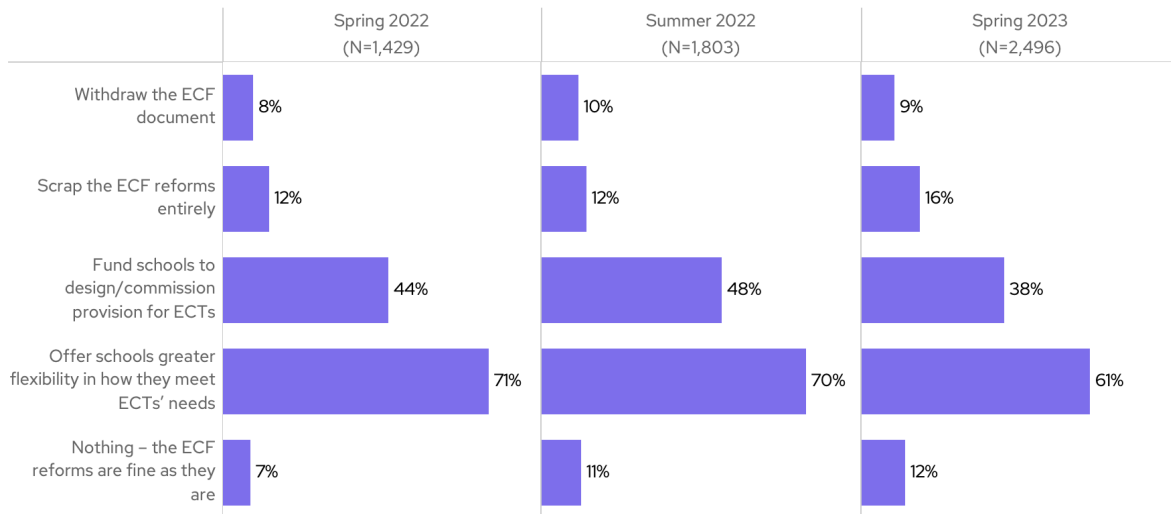


Figure 12: Early Career Teacher views on whether they are more likely to stay in teaching as a result of the Early Career Framework

Both mentors and senior leaders generally support the ECF, but with a desire for changes to better meet the needs of schools and ECTs. Only 12% felt that the current ECF reforms were satisfactory. The majority of senior leaders (61%) felt that schools should have greater flexibility in how they provide support for ECTs. These views align with those of ECTs who expressed a willingness to drop certain aspects of the ECF if given a choice, as reported earlier.

There are some indications that schools are adapting to the ECF requirements, with over one-third of senior leaders (37%) reporting that their school has made changes to the way ECF support is organised, although fewer than one-fifth of leaders (12%) say they have switched ECF providers since the start of the Framework.

You wake to find yourself transformed into the education minister. Which of these do you do?



Question answered by mentors and school leaders (members of the SLT and headteachers) between 01/03/2022 to 23/02/2023

Figure 13: Senior leader views on the future of the Early Career Framework

Survey design and sample of respondents

Teacher Tapp is a daily survey app which collects responses to around three questions from teachers in England every day at 3:30pm. Teachers are recruited to the app itself via word-of-mouth, social media, and conference events. Whilst anyone is free to download the app and use it daily, analysis is restricted to those who indicate they are indeed a teacher in England by submitting their school's name and qualifying demographic information such as job role or type of school. Teacher Tapp reweights responses to survey questions by teacher gender, age, job post and school type to ensure the panel reflects the demographics of the national population of teachers in England (using the School Workforce Census for state schools¹).

The survey questions in this study were directed to three different groups of teachers:

- Teachers who said they were in their first two years of teaching
- Teachers who said they were mentors to Early Career Teachers this academic year
- Senior leaders

Table 1 shows the survey questions asked to each target group, alongside the date the survey questions were delivered and the number of valid responses used in the analysis.

¹ Details of the School Workforce Census can be found here: Department for Education (2022). *Statistics on the size and characteristics of the schools' workforce in state-funded schools*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-school-workforce>

Target group	Question	Survey date	Responses
Early Career Teachers	I have learnt a lot from the ECF that I didn't already know (from experience or initial training)	2022/02/22	331
		2022/08/05	277
		2023/02/22	465
	"I skipped some elements of the ECF programme (for example, missing training or mentor meetings)"	2022/02/22	330
		2022/08/05	280
		2023/02/22	461
	The requirements of the ECF add a lot to my workload	2022/02/22	331
		2022/08/05	276
		2023/02/22	461
	Does your mentor teach the same subject as you?	2022/08/05	213
		2023/02/22	461
	Given the choice, I would opt out of the support I'm getting as an Early Career Teacher	2022/02/22	326
		2022/08/05	275
		2023/02/22	461

	How often does training/self-study leave you clear how what you've learned can be applied in your classroom?	2022/02/22	331
		2022/08/05	278
		2023/02/22	460
	Is more phase specialisation needed in any of these areas?	2022/08/05	69
	Is more subject specialisation needed in any of these areas?	2022/08/05	207
	Overall, the Early Career Teacher support I'm getting (in and out of school) makes me:	2022/02/22	326
		2022/08/05	276
		2023/02/22	460
	Which of these describe the self-study materials you have encountered as part of the ECF?	2022/02/22	336
		2022/08/05	281
		2023/02/22	458
	Which of these describe the training you have received as part of the ECF?	2022/02/22	332
		2022/08/05	281
		2023/02/22	456
	Which year of the ECF are you in?	2023/02/22	575

	In your own words, what could your school do to make your job more manageable this year?	2023/02/22	195
Mentors of Early Career Teachers	The requirements of being an ECT mentor add a lot to my workload	2022/08/04	696
	Have you been given additional non-contact time to work with ECTs?	2022/08/04	611
	How many ECTs are you taking next year?	2022/08/04	694
	Is more phase specialisation needed in any of these areas?	2022/08/04	171
	Is more subject specialisation needed in any of these areas?	2022/08/04	524
	What are the strengths of the Early Career Framework?	2022/02/28	583
		2022/08/04	700
	What are the weaknesses of the Early Career Framework?	2022/02/28	581
		2022/08/04	698
	Which of these describe the mentor training you have experienced as part of the ECF?	2022/02/28	601
		2022/08/04	714
	Which of these describe the self-study materials ECTs have received?	2022/02/28	595
		2022/08/04	709

	Which of these describe the training your teachers have received as part of the ECF?	2022/02/28	588
		2022/08/04	703
	Will you mentor trainees/ECTs again next year?	2022/08/04	694
	You wake to find yourself transformed into the education minister. Which of these do you do?	2022/02/28	575
		2022/08/04	694
		2023/02/23	780
	Were you an Early Career Framework (ECF) mentor last year?	2023/02/23	1029
In your own words, what has been your experience of the ECF?	2023/02/23	607	
Senior Leaders	Which of these describes your ECF provision?	2022/03/01	1199
	You wake to find yourself transformed into the education minister. Which of these do you do?	2022/03/01	1161
		2022/08/05	1430
		2023/02/22	2126
	How many ECTs are you taking next year?	2022/08/05	1436
Have you changed ECF provider since the programme started?	2023/02/22	2120	

	Have you changed the way you organise ECF provision in your school since the programme started?	2023/02/22	2117
Secondary Teachers	Did you have any influence over your timetable (or the pupils you taught) this year?	2023/02/23	6101
	I feel our subject department/faculty successfully prioritises the timetabling allocation that best suits our least experienced teachers	2023/02/23	6118
	This is a fantasy timetable game. Suppose you have to teach the same number of lessons as you do now, but you can switch any of your current classes for a different class in any subject and/or year group you want. Approximately what % of your current timetable would you trade in this game?	2023/02/23	6136

Table 1 - Survey questions and responses from target group