

Dear Deputy R Ward

Thank you for the invitation to enable the National Education Union - Jersey to partake in such an important review into Teacher recruitment and retention in the island

With regards to the examination of the correct figures of recruitment and retention in relation to staff that have left, those due to retire or retired, those recruited through the JTTP and those who have actually had an exit interview has been extremely hard to come by. The data on these have not been forthcoming.

As a union we have received numerous complaints from teachers that have resigned that they have not been offered exit interviews. Only recently was a further push done by HR to remind the headteachers that they should be offering these as standard when staff hand in their resignation. It also came to light that members of school senior management were not aware that exit interviews could be conducted through various means. This has highlighted there is a distinct lack of communication between schools, teachers on the ground and HR. These interviews are vitally important as it gives valuable insight into why staff are leaving but they are just not being done.

In relation to the key areas faced in recruitment and retention below are some of the successes and views on the challenges faced and ways forward.

One of the main successes for attracting new teachers to the island is the relocation package that comes with being recruited off island. There is however very little incentive for retention. As with all teachers the motivators are the supporting of Jersey's young people to achieve their absolute maximum potential so that they can secure the most successful future possible, whether on or off the island and helping young people realise what they are capable of and improving their life aspirations.

Some of the challenges faced in schools are ineffective management and weak senior leadership teams who lack the know how to support their staff. A workload that is increasing and unsustainable and which is being compounded by the review processes. Staff are under constant scrutiny and the accountability is as high as ever. Much of the workload is being thrust upon staff by senior management and headteachers with little regard to the actual effect and wellbeing of their staff and students. We receive daily comments and complaints that the workload is beyond what is normal and it has very little effect on the actual teaching and learning which is supposed to be paramount. Work has been done to reduce workload, but teachers say they are yet to reap the benefits due to guidelines not being followed in schools. We are hearing from more and more teachers who are suffering sleeping problems, anxiety, stress and mental health issues and how it is contributing to their decisions to quit the profession. The challenge for the government is to properly address these issues and ensure that education staff are nurtured and supported in their role but there is currently little sign of any concrete action in this respect.

Teachers are also fearful of speaking out due to repercussions they potentially receive in their school or through disappointment having witnessed other colleagues essentially be ignored or issues mismanaged. There has to be more willingness from the government to listen and hear what front line staff are saying and actually do something about it.

Another concern we have as a union is the amount of issues raised by teachers about the apathy and behaviour of the pupils. We are constant fielding concerns from teachers and teaching assistants regarding the abhorrent behaviour and attitude of students. It is a continuous cycle as these

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students have to be educated but sometimes at the detriment of the mental wellbeing of staff and other students.

Action needs to be taken to improve work-life balance for teachers. This includes reducing workload, supporting early career schoolteachers, promoting flexible working, tackling accountability pressures as well as supporting schools to deal with behaviour management.

The impact of poor recruitment and retention of staff on students is overall a poorer education system. Which would reduce standards, lowering aspirations which in turn will lower overall income and therefore their standard of living. Behaviour problems will also rise due to teaching standards being poorer.

The recruitment pool has become increasingly smaller. Most recently in one school a predominantly GCSE core subject teacher has been replaced by an unqualified JTTP teacher, having only been on the course four months. Therefore the candidate is unable to properly fulfil the role and so extra pressure, workload and accountability is being placed on remaining staff to take over exam classes part way through the academic year. This was the only candidate that applied.

If you have any further queries or questions regarding our views please do not hesitate to get in to contact.

Kind regards
Lynsey Miller
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