Workload and Bullying Main Reasons for Teachers Leaving the Profession

Survey and Interviews of over 200 teachers explain the main reasons why teachers are leaving the profession, and reveal the jobs they move onto.

A survey and interviews commissioned by UKEdChat.Com has revealed the main reasons why teachers are leaving the profession, and the careers they move onto once they have made the switch.

The survey revealed that workload and bureaucracy are the top reasons why teachers leave, followed by bullying behaviours, and poor school leadership all adding to the burden of many. A lack of a sensible work-life balance and stress were also cited as the top reasons for why teachers decide to leave.

The survey and interviews were conducted towards the end of 2015, mainly receiving responses from teachers in England, however all other UK countries were represented, with similar outcomes coming from different groups of teachers.

One former secondary school teacher told us, “The workload demands are crazy meaning there is no work/life balance - you just have no life. There were constant instances of ungrateful children and parents. I wanted to make a difference but I felt what I was doing was useless and it was making me ill.”
Another former primary teacher listed his reasons as “Ofsted, workload, Academy agenda, lack of respect for profession, continual assessment” all contributing to his decision to move into Accountancy.

Other comments included:

“Increasing narrow curriculum that was not meeting the needs of the children, an obsession with data, data entry and ticking boxes for the sake of it and a head teacher who believed data was the most important thing - not the children. It was demoralising, depressing and incredibly frustrating.” (Former Primary School Teacher, England)

“Intellectual burn-out; frustration that assessment and data analysis had become ends in themselves to education; and acceptance that in term time the job took over from absolutely everything else in life - with a headteacher who seemed to think that was fine and dandy, as she did nothing else but work either.” (Former Primary School Teacher, England)

“There was just too much work and too much pressure to get results” (Former Secondary School Teacher, Wales)

The results table shows the reasons stated by teachers, indicated by frequency:
The Jobs Teachers do after they leave:

The survey responses revealed an eclectic mix of occupations that former teachers move onto once they leave the classroom. Some simply turned their back altogether and have not entered the job market since their departure, but a majority have moved into other careers - all offering different challenges themselves. Consultancy, and working within the education industries remained the most popular occupation choices, but jobs in retail, youth work, sales, research, or work within the health services. A sizeable number break free of the teaching profession, setting up their own businesses and following their passions.

Other occupations declared are shared in the infographic below:
1. Workload & Bureaucracy
2. Bullying & SLT Behaviour
3. Lack of a Work/Life Balance
4. Pressure and Stress
5. Pupil Behaviour
6. Too Much Testing
7. The OfSted Game
8. Disillusioned
9. Poor Pay
10. Targets
11. Burnout
12. No Path

Full Story at: [UKEdChat](https://www.ukedchat.com)
Note to Editors

– The research was completed during September, October and November 2015, with 205 responses received from teachers mainly in England, but other contributions from teachers in all UK educational jurisdictions, as well as USA, Australia, and Asia.

– UKEdChat is a Social Enterprise initiative, and has been supporting teachers with an interest in UK Education since it was formed in 2010.

– All enquiries or further questions can be directed to:

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