

The Truth about Teachers' Salaries: Are They Really Underpaid?



Despite the perceived “perks” of teaching – such as the long holidays and generous pension – most people understand it can be a challenging and stressful profession. The government is struggling to fill teaching vacancies in many schools and [annual recruitment targets have been repeatedly missed](#). The well-publicised national shortage of teachers aside, there is a high number of people choosing to leave the English education system for more favourable conditions [teaching abroad](#). Few people would contradict the notion that education is one of the most valuable elements of our society and something we all feel entitled to. Without teachers, there is no education – at least, not as we know it today. Are salaries a factor in the national teacher crisis? How much is a teacher’s salary and should it be more? Would a higher salary help to boost recruitment and retention? We’ve looked back at the results of recent Teacher Tapp surveys to dig a little deeper into these questions.

How Much Is a Teacher’s Salary?

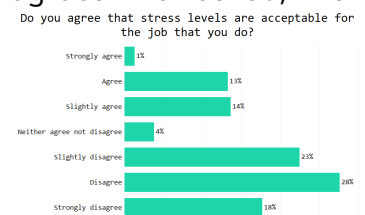
A teacher’s salary will vary depending on their location, experience and level of responsibility. A newly qualified teacher will start on a minimum salary of [£23,720 or £29,664 in London](#) and the average salary for a secondary school teacher in the UK is [£28,493](#). On 22nd July 2019, the government approved a [2.75% pay rise for teachers](#) (an above-inflation increase). Some teachers may also qualify for a Special Educational Needs (SEN) allowance of £2,149 to £4,242 per year.

How Does This Compare to Other Professions?

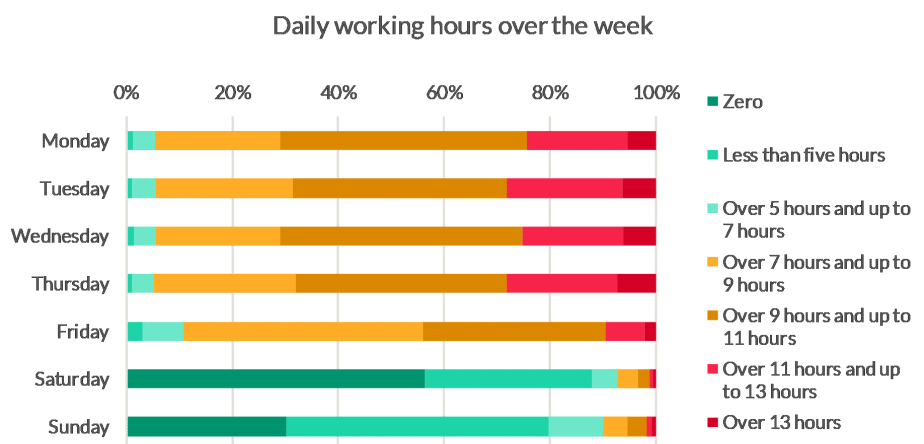
The [average salary in the UK](#) is £28,677 for full-time employees – almost the same as the average teacher's salary. However, when compared to some other public service jobs – such as policing – the [average hourly wage for a teacher is lower](#). Indeed, it has dropped more than the hourly rate for both policing and nursing in recent years.

Is a Teacher's Salary Fair?

Teachers work long days during term time and are often juggling the need to manage classroom behaviour, meet government targets, respond to parents' expectations and many more responsibilities. Many teachers are crumbling under the [stress of heavy workloads](#). In a recent Teacher Tapp survey, 69% of teachers disagreed to varying degrees when asked, "Do



A significant percentage of teachers reported working between 9 and 11 hours a day and



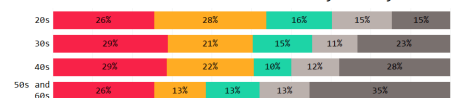
The challenges of teaching are an important factor to consider when considering whether or not teachers are underpaid. Does the salary compensate teachers sufficiently for the hours and stress they are required to manage? There are, of course, additional benefits teachers enjoy and these must be taken into consideration too. Teachers receive significantly more than the average 28 days' paid annual leave. A full-time teacher in a state school works for 195 days per year. Teachers in independent schools receive even more paid holiday time. However, for many teachers, the long hours they work during term time are not offset by the generous holiday allowance. Teachers also receive a generous pension and they can top up ~~their salary by the weekend~~ ^{they work by the weekend} more teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) or opting to work with SEN pupils. In any profession, people choose to remain or leave by weighing up the pros and cons. For many teachers, it seems the negatives of the role have begun to outweigh the positives. But how much of a factor is salary in the [decision to leave teaching](#)? Do teachers think they are underpaid?

What Do Teachers Think?

One way to determine if teachers' salaries are fair is to compare their pay and responsibilities

to those of other professionals. We've already seen that the average teacher's salary is comparable to the national average salary across all professions. But how do teachers feel their earnings compare to those of their contemporaries? We asked teacher tappers if they earn more or less than colleagues on their degree course. 36% said their colleagues earn more

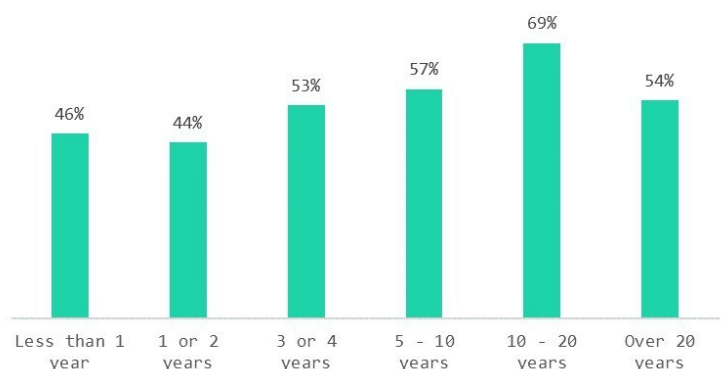
Think about anyone you are still in touch with from your undergraduate degree course. Do the majority of them now earn more or less money than you?



Answer Text
 ■ I'm not really in touch with anyone from my undergraduate course
 ■ I'm still in touch with people, but can't guess how much they earn
 ■ The earn less money
 ■ They earn about the same
 ■ They earn more money

We also asked teachers if they are satisfied with their salary. More than half of Tappsters said they are moderately or very satisfied with their current salary. People tend to become more satisfied the longer they are in the profession, possibly due to annual pay increases or higher

Salary satisfaction



than them and only 17% said their friends

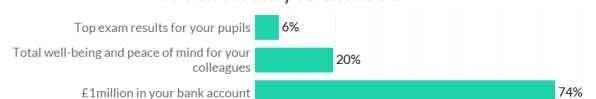
Maths teachers are the most satisfied with their salary, which could reflect the tendency to pay higher wages to teachers whose skills are in greatest demand.

Would Raising Teachers' Salaries Ease the National Teacher Shortage?

The recent 2.75% pay rise for teachers and [plans to offer some maths and physics teachers extra money](#) in addition to the [£10,000 early-career payment](#), suggests a government move towards boosting recruitment and retention rates with cash incentives. But is this the best approach to tackling the national teacher shortage? Money does matter to teachers, as

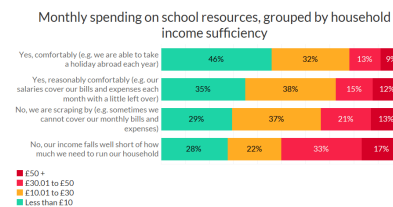
If a genie appeared and allowed you one of the following for 2019, which would you choose...

compensation for greater responsibility.

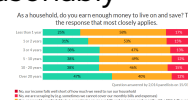


Question answered by 2,405 panellists on 01/01/2019

responses to our "genie question" demonstrate.



However, the majority of teachers we surveyed feel they earn enough to live reasonably



Qualified teachers also have access to various means of supplementing their income. If the majority of teachers are satisfied with their salary and the lifestyle it affords them, would a slightly higher salary make a significant difference to the number of people choosing to join or remain in the profession? Could the current and planned government schemes to boost the salary only of specific subsets of teachers – e.g. maths teachers – actually [do more harm than good](#)? The move is likely to enhance the value placed on core subjects – Maths, Science, English – and further marginalise the arts. It could also lead to low morale and workplace tensions if teachers in a school are performing the same role and facing similar challenges – yet are paid at different rates. As long as the teaching shortage continues, there will be a debate about teachers’ salaries and whether boosting these would improve recruitment and retention. Teacher’s salaries depend on a variety of factors, but it seems the majority feel satisfied with their income. The average teaching salary reflects the average salary of all professions. What constitutes a fair salary and whether a teacher feels underpaid will depend on that individual’s unique situation. Pay as a solution to the ongoing teacher shortage may be worth considering, but only as part of the much bigger picture. The majority of teachers who [burn out and leave the profession](#) do so due to workload and stress – not salary. These are the issues that need addressing urgently.

Do you feel you’re underpaid as a teacher? What do teachers around the UK think about this topic and other current issues in education? [Download the app today](#) and have your say.