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Centre for Understanding Behaviour Change

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## Teachers Pay Flexibilities

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CUBeC delivers evidence and insight into the drivers of behaviour change to inform and improve policy-making. The Centre combines expertise in a wide range of academic disciplines: economics, psychology, neuroscience, sociology, education, and social research.

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.



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## *Acknowledgements*

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## **Background:**

The Government is keen to promote the use of flexibilities in teachers' pay with a view to raising teaching standards and the status of the profession. In order to better understand recruitment and retention allowances and the motivations of schools in using them the Department for Education commissioned the Centre for Understanding Behaviour Change (CUBeC), to investigate schools' use of pay flexibilities. The aims were to explore:

- the extent to which different allowances were implemented;
- the circumstances under which recruitment and retention allowances were considered; and
- the benefits and challenges of allowances.

Pay flexibilities are allowances that maintained schools and Academies can give to classroom teachers to reflect additional responsibilities that they have undertaken, or to support recruitment and retention. The main types of allowance available to schools, in the sample, were:

- teaching and learning responsibility payments (TLRs);
- retention allowances;
- recruitment allowances;
- special educational needs payments; and
- payment of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) above the M1 point on the salary scale <sup>1</sup>.

## **Methodology:**

The study was designed as a census of all schools using recruitment and retention allowances; schools identified through the School Workforce Census (2011) as using recruitment and retention allowances (RAR) were invited to take part in a telephone interview for this study. Short telephone interviews were carried out in the summer

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<sup>1</sup> M1 is the lowest point on the Main Pay Scale. Classroom teachers with qualified teaching status may start above M1 at the discretion of the school.

of 2012 with head teachers or other senior managers following a small pilot. The questionnaire focused on the types of allowances used, the reasons for using recruitment and retention allowances, the effectiveness of the allowances, the benefits, challenges and plans for the future use of RAR.

It is important to bear in mind when interpreting the findings in this report that they apply to this specific group of schools using RAR and not to all maintained schools and Academies in England.

### **Key findings:**

Of the 1,529 schools contacted, interviews were completed with head teachers/senior managers from 308, a response rate of 20 per cent of all eligible schools. Because of the small numbers involved the findings are presented as a summary, rather than individual percentages and tables.

Overall, school leaders used recruitment and retention allowances to maximise the quality of teaching staff at their school - although a number of other uses were identified, including increasing stability/reducing turnover and maintaining staff morale - and the majority of schools considered the allowances to be effective. In most cases, these allowances were only used for a small number of staff (typically between one and five in the 2011-12 academic year) and a minority of schools were planning to extend their use. The evidence suggests that financial considerations were the main reason for the fairly limited use of pay allowances, but operational difficulties and concerns over fairness were also evident. Leaders of primary and secondary schools had different priorities in their use of pay allowances.

### **Primary schools:**

The majority of primary schools in the study used retention allowances, but they were less likely than secondary schools to use recruitment allowances. Where they did use them, the main reason was to attract candidates to fill certain roles within the school. Similarly, retention allowances were used primarily to keep staff who held certain roles and responsibilities within the school.

### **Secondary schools:**

Secondary schools used a wider range of allowances, and were considerably more likely than primary schools to use recruitment allowances. The focus for secondary school leaders was on attracting and holding on to staff in certain subject areas. Secondary schools were more likely than primary schools to consider extending the use of allowances.

Compared with primary schools, secondary schools referred to recruitment allowances more frequently when advertising a vacancy. They were also more likely to discuss allowances when a teacher was considering leaving a post, a request was made by a teacher or when a teacher was offered another job. These findings appear to reflect the greater difficulties reported by secondary schools in finding

suitable candidates to fill job vacancies.

Academies:

The study reported here was not designed to address statistically the experiences of Academies in relation to maintained primary and secondary schools. The schools selected for the study comprised a census of schools categorised in the School Workforce Census as using pay flexibilities and this did not include a sufficient number of Academies on which to derive reliable estimates. Only six per cent of the schools identified in the SWC 2011 as using pay flexibilities were Academies.

On most questions, the responses for the Academies closely mirrored those for the secondary schools in general. One question where the responses of Academies differed notably was in the circumstances under which schools offered recruitment allowances. When listing these situations, none of the Academies cited 'persuading a good candidate to accept the job', compared to nearly a fifth of secondary schools.