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Teacher workload has been a hot topic for some time - four separate Ed Secs have now tried to sort this out: Morgan, Greening, Hinds & Williamson!

[@JohnPeterJerrim](#) [@AsmaBenhenda](#) [@profbeckyalen](#) and I looked at the data, and found some surprising results

[@CEPO_UCL](#) Thread 🙄

Surveys consistently show that teachers in England work much longer hours than their international counterparts – almost one day *per week* longer than the rich-world average!

Table 3.1.3. International comparison of the reported average number of hours worked by full-time lower-secondary teachers per week.

Country	Total hours (single question)	Total hours (multiple questions)
Japan	58.9	58.5
England	49.3	53.1
Alberta	47.9	53.9
Singapore	46.2	55.2
Shanghai (China)	45.5	57.9
OECD	40.8	47.0
Estonia	39.4	45.1
Chinese Taipei	36.1	48.3
South Korea	34.2	47.1
Finland	34.1	37.1

Notes: Full-time teachers. Source: TALIS 2018 database; questions 16, 17 and 18.

Many blame declining teacher retention (falling since ~2008) on increasing workload. But we actually know very little about how workload has changed over

time. The government's workload surveys often have teacher response rates of ~10%, so the data is, frankly, not great.

Our analysis uses 4 datasets:

- 1) TALIS 2013/18, ~80% resp rate, ~4000 teachers
- 2) LFS 1992-2018, ~60% resp, ~1,400 teachers per wave
- 3) Time Use Diaries 2001/15, detailed data on every 10 minute slot across 2 days, but a small sample
- 4) [@TeacherTapp](#), ~1000 teachers on 7 days

First finding. Working hours are high: a quarter of teachers (P75) work more than 60 hours per week during term time.

40% report that they usually work in the evening and around 10% during the weekend.

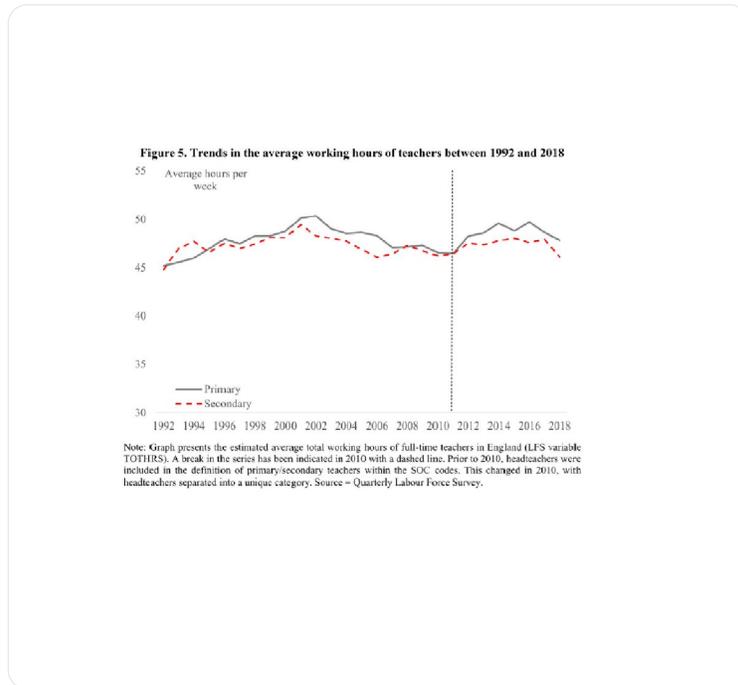
Table 1. Differences in descriptive statistics for teachers working hours depending upon the data collection method used

	TALIS 2013 (weekly)		TUDs (daily hours)		Teacher-Tapp (weekly)	
	Single weekly question	Questions for different tasks	Single weekly question	Day diary	Single weekly question	Seven daily questions
P10	35	36	7.0	7.7	46	37
P25	42	42	8.0	8.8	52	44
P50	50	50	9.4	9.8	55	51
P75	59	60	10.6	10.7	66	58
P90	65	69	12.0	11.5	74	66
Mean	50.1	51.3	9.5	9.8	54	51
P90 - P10	30	33	5.0	3.8	28	29
n	2,020	2,069	81	81	845	845

Notes: Figures for TALIS 2013 refer to weekly hours for full-time lower secondary teachers who reported more than 20 hours and less than 100 hours per week. TUD data refers to daily hours for teachers in 2014/15 who were not on leave, working full-time and who worked for five-hours on the diary day in question. Teacher Tapp refers to mid-point of categorical/range responses for panellists working full-time in the week in question.

But if workload is to blame for declining retention, presumably we would see workload increasing over time?

Nope (between 46 and 49 hours per week back to 1992)



OK, maybe it's not the overall amount of workload but the increase in certain draining/annoying tasks?

Nope (at least not since this series began in 2013)

Table 3. Change in the average amount of time full-time lower-secondary teachers in England spend upon different tasks between 2013 and 2018

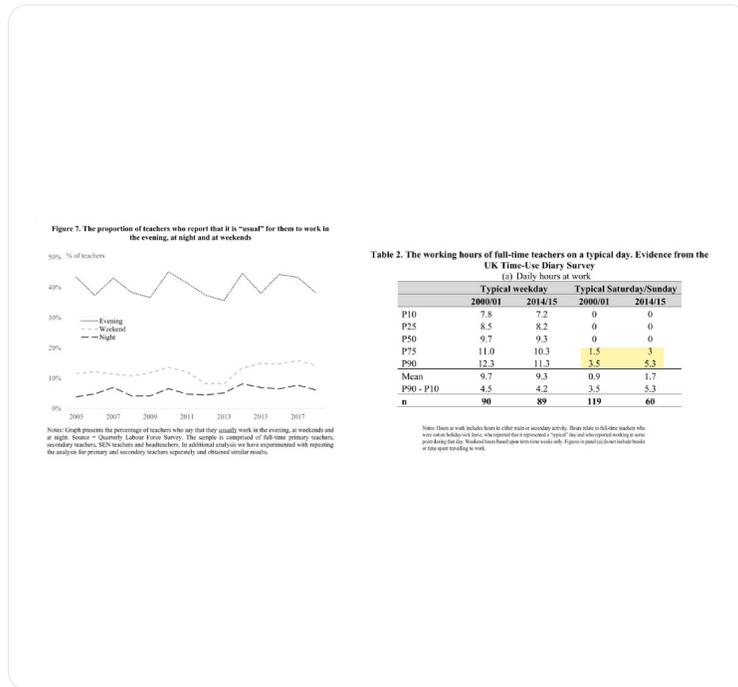
	2013	2018
Teaching	20.3	20.5
Planning/preparation	8.0	7.5
Teamworking	3.5	3.2
Marking	6.3	6.3
Pupil guidance/discipline	1.8	2.7
Management	2.4	2.3
Administration	4.2	4.0
Talking to parents	1.6	1.6
Extracurricular activities	2.2	1.7
Other	2.4	3.4
Total non-teaching tasks	32.5	32.7
Ratio teaching:non-teaching	0.62	0.63

Notes: TALIS 2013 and 2018 databases. Figures refer to average working hours per week during term-time.

Table 3 suggests that the working hours of lower-secondary teachers remained stable between 2013 and 2018. Average hours spent teaching (20.3 versus 20.5 hours) and time spent upon non-teaching tasks (32.5 versus 32.7 hours) were virtually unchanged. Critically, there was little sign of any substantial reduction in marking (6.3 hours per week in both 2013 and 2018)

OK, maybe it's not the total hours, or the specific tasks, but an increase in work invading evenings/weekends?

Not really (besides an increase for the 10% busiest (P90) teachers)



So why the confusion?

- a) Govt surveys with low and variable response rates painted an unrepresentative (inaccurate) picture
- b) As individual teachers progress into leadership, workload increases. Perhaps this contributes to a misconception that *average* workload is rising? 😞
- c) Workload *is* high and teachers (very understandably) complain about this. This gets picked up a lot in qualitative research. But the data on hours is incongruent with this being the cause of declining retention.

You can read the full analysis, now published as a [@CEPEO UCL](#) working paper here:

Working papers

Our working papers demonstrate our research in progress. They are multidisciplinary, reflecting CEPEO's broad research themes.

<https://tinyurl.com/qtse7cq>

Thanks to [@NuffieldFound](#) for funding this work and the brilliant [@JohnPeterJerrim](#) for leading the project

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