

Understanding the SENCo workforce

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Understanding the SENCo workforce

A re-examination of selected studies through the lens of an accurate national dataset

All schools in England are required to have a ‘Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator’ (SENCo). Although the DfE collect data relating to the demographics of this large population of teachers, this has not until now been analysed or published, meaning that much research relating to SENCos has had to proceed on the basis of estimates. A Freedom of Information (FOI) request was made to the DfE, from which I established actual numbers, with breakdowns by age, gender, ethnicity, position of responsibility, and level of qualification. The data describe a professional who is most likely to be female, white and in the middle or towards to the end of their career, and often part-time. Most are on the class teacher pay scale rather than being on the leadership scale, with a minority holding a Masters level qualification. I proceed to evaluate several research studies in the field against this analysis.

Keywords: SENCo, teacher workforce, Freedom of Information.

Introduction

It is now quarter of a century since the SENCo was first made an official role within English Schools. A product of the first SEN Code of Practice (Department for Education [DfE], 1994), the role has developed organically over time in response to the symbiotic relationship between a wide range of interested parties including policy makers, schools, researchers and the SENCos themselves. Much research has been undertaken on the role, which has provided many answers to how the role should be operationalised; however, it has also left many unresolved tensions, issues and questions.

The research on the SENCo role has used a variety of research methods, with methodologies using a range of lenses and worldviews. Qualitative studies from groups

of participants are frequently used to look at the lived experiences of SENCOs within their day-to-day role. Often these address complex issues such as shifts in the understanding of inclusion, utilising the work of Foucault (see Glazzard, 2014; Morewood, 2012), issues such as emotional labour (Mackenzie, 2012b), or career interest (Dobson & Douglas, 2018). Other studies have attempted to provide more of a broad overview of the SENCO's role. However, missing from the literature has been an accurate picture of the demography of SENCOs in English schools. Pearson (2008) noted this as an issue over ten years ago commenting on the lack of 'reliable national data' (p. 40) against which to evaluate the representativeness of samples employed in empirical work.

Recently, large surveys have been conducted on the work of the SENCO by Curran et al. (2018) and Passy et al. (2017). Again, as with the earlier work by Pearson (2008) and Pearson et al. (2015), it is significant that the authors are unable to compare their own datasets against an accurate national picture. Although demographic data about the constitution of the SENCO population is collected by the DfE regularly, it is not published. This article provides the first accurate analysis of the population of English SENCOs from data collected by the DfE in November 2017 and reconsiders many research claims and assumptions in the light of these data.

With these issues in mind, in this paper I provide a definitive breakdown of the current SENCO population's demography with a view to offering a critical analysis of sampled literature on the topic of the SENCO role. In doing this, I shall be able to i) evaluate the trustworthiness of claims to generalisability where research using samples of SENCOs have been used, and ii) provide a basis for the evaluation of elements of policy which have been enacted without an accurate assessment of the demography of the SENCO population.

The selection of articles for review

Search criteria

Two types of article were evaluated: i) peer reviewed research articles , and ii) national surveys commissioned by interested bodies such as the DfE or national associations. The timespan was set from 1994 to the present day to ensure that the evolving role since 1994 was reflected in the analysis. Any work undertaken directly outside the English context was not used.

The analysis of the corpus of work was carefully structured against set criteria:

- The findings of the research and claims made.
- The method through which the data were collected.
- The sample size and demographic consistency of the sample.
- Whether caveats have been made within the research concerning generalizability or external validity.
- Any worldview or theory used to frame the analysis, given that differing expectations exist about external validity in work from different traditions.

(Yardley, 2015)

Selected examples of this analysis will be discussed in the latter part of this paper.

SENCOs: the missing link in the published data on the school workforce

The original analysis here (concerning SENCOs) is offered against census data collected by the Department for Education for the whole school workforce in England in November 2017 (DfE, 2018b). The school workforce dataset provides for a range of different analyses including:

- (1) The size of the school workforce. This includes teachers, teaching assistants and support staff.
- (2) Teacher flows. This represents those entering or leaving the profession for a variety of reasons.
- (3) Pupil-teacher ratios. This provides pupil teacher ratios over time for all state funded schools and an additional separate analysis for ratios in state funded primary and secondary schools.
- (4) Teachers' pay. This analysis enables comparison of different types of school and levels of teaching professionals (namely, headteachers, those on the leadership scale and classroom teachers).
- (5) Teacher qualifications and curriculum taught. This provides a breakdown of certain levels of teacher qualifications and the first qualifications of those teaching a range of secondary aged subject areas.

While the government statistics (DfE, 2018b) give these breakdowns of the workforce, there is no facility in the published data to isolate and/or extract data specifically relating to the SENCO. While additional analyses provide a more in-depth overview of the school workforce data including sickness absence, hours taught, qualification, gender and ethnicity, the SENCo position here is not evident. Indeed, throughout the whole dataset, there is no mention of the role of the SENCo.

The lack of breakdown is surprising, given that the census guide (DfE, 2017b) which provides the basis for the statistics requests data on SENCos, and reminds respondents that there are only two expectations of every school, namely, 'to have a SENCO and to have a headteacher or executive headteacher.' (p. 15). Indeed, to comply with legislation, SENCos are expected to hold an appropriate qualification, information

on which is specifically requested: ‘The SENCO qualification must be recorded where present for any SENCOs’ (DfE, 2017b, p. 61). While the DfE must therefore hold records to be able to ascertain whether schools are compliant with SENCo regulations for both appointment and necessary training, there are no data on this published.

Later in the document, there is a list of standard code sets extracted from the Common Basic Data Set held by the DfE (2018a). These enable the classification of discrete items such as gender, ethnicity, post and role. For example, ‘gender’ code 1, ‘ethnicity’ code MWAS, ‘post’ code TCH and ‘role’ code SENC would translate as a male teacher with a mixed white and Asian background. They would be employed as a class teacher with the role of SENCo. The addition of code Z201 would indicate that they hold the National Award for SENCo (NASENCo) qualification.

There is an obvious discrepancy therefore between the wealth of data collected through the census and that which is published by the DfE for the purposes of understanding the workforce.

Filling the gaps via the Freedom of Information Act (FoI)

The Freedom of Information Act (2000) provides a right of access to information which is held by public authorities such as the DfE. Naturally, under the auspices of data protection regulations, personal or sensitive data is restricted; however, the Act sanctions the extraction of data such as that relating to the demographics of the SENCo population. A Freedom of Information request was lodged by the author on 20th September 2018. The request was designed to align with standard sets of tables present in the published workforce data. The request read as:

Based on the data from the School workforce in England: November 2017

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/school-workforce-in-england->

november-2017. Please could you provide the following information for the role identifier of SENCoS only (ROLE SENCo). The following is based on the working and format of Tables: school workforce census 2017.

The request was then structured to comply with how data is presented within the additional tables in the School Workforce Survey and related to one occupation definition – SENCo. All questions asked were aligned with the presumption of known data sets based on two criteria:

- (1) The information is known about all teachers
- (2) A code exists within the DfE dataset to identify and isolate SENCoS.

Specific questions related to the DfE dataset under the Freedom of Information Act (2000)

The following questions were asked as part of the Freedom of Information Request. The tables referred to within the questions are those present in the appendix of the School Workforce document. These were provided to the DfE for clarity and to provide an example of what was required.

Request 1: This request is based on **Table 3a**. In a similar fashion please could you provide the head count and full-time equivalent numbers of SENCoS in state funded schools (Thousands) – The data from this request is presented in Table 1.

Request 2: This request is based on **Table 4**. In a similar fashion please could you provide the **full-time equivalent** number of SENCoS in state funded schools by gender and age (Thousands) – The data from this request is presented in Table 2.

Request 3: This request is based on **Table 5**. Please could you provide the percentages of the head count of SENCoS in state funded schools by ethnic origin (percentages) -

The data from this request is presented in Tables 3a, 3b and 3c.

Request 4: Please provide the percentage of SENCOs for all state schools who are classified as headteachers, deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, classroom teachers – The data from this request is presented in Table 4.

Request 5: The percentages of SENCOs identified under the following qualification codes in the school staff survey. PGCE, MAST, DOCT, BEDO, FRST, CTED, NQF4, NNUK – The data from this request is presented in Table 5.

An analysis of the data emerging from the FoI request

Tables 1 to 5 present an analysis of the new data following the FoI request. To reiterate, these figures give a hitherto unpublished account of the entire population of SENCOs in England at the time of the 2017 census. After the presentation of the tables, I shall proceed to discuss the significance of various elements via a review of key pieces of research.

Table 1 here

Table 2 here

Table 3 a, b, c here

Table 4 here

Table 5 here

Figure 1 here

Figures exclude estimates for missing schools.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 SENCOs. Totals may not appear equal to the sum of the component parts because of rounding.

2. Percentages are calculated from figures rounded to the nearest 10 SENCOs.
Totals may not appear equal to the sum of the component parts because of rounding.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 teachers. Totals may not appear equal to the sum of the component parts because of rounding.
4. Percentages are calculated from figures rounded to the nearest 100 teachers.
Totals may not appear equal to the sum of the component parts because of rounding.
5. SENCOs are counted against each qualification they hold, if more than one qualification is held, they will be included more than once.

With this analysis it is possible now to review several existing claims from previous research and to discuss various elements relating to the discovered demography.

External validity and generalisation: general issues

The issue relating to the representativeness and external validity of the corpus of work about SENCOs can be succinctly reflected upon using the work of Szwed (2007a). She conducted research with a group of SENCOs but caveated this by acknowledging that her work was not representative and highly localised. She asserted, for example, the likelihood of the SENCO being female but was unable to verify this. Despite her concerns, Szwed's paper has since been cited over 10 times to support several claims about various aspects of the SENCO population. These claims include the complexity and variability of the role (Göransson et al., 2017 and Griffiths & Dubsky, 2012), the lack of whole school oversight (Klang et al., 2017), the highly gendered nature of the profession (Brown & Doveston, 2014) and that 'Research supports the leadership aspect

of the SENCo role' (Tissot, 2013, p. 34). All these pieces of research building upon the word of Szwed have then gone on to make further claims which are often based on Szwed's (2007a) work offering a robust basis for generalisation.

The 'Primary – Secondary' split

The new data reveal that the number of SENCOs is as expected across the phases, given the stipulation that all schools must have a SENCO. It is important to know, in self-selecting samples used in much survey research, that the actual balance of the self-selected sample reflects that in the population, given the differences in curriculum, working style, etc across the phases. Given this issue, the lack of a national dataset has proved problematic. For example, Brown & Doveston (2014) conducted an appreciative inquiry into the perceived impact of the NASENCo award without reference to any accurate phase-based dataset.

The problem is compounded when studies use each other's samples as indications of the population. Brown and Doveston (2014, p. 498), for example, talk of 'research populations [sic] in other studies' citing the work of authors such as Cole (2005) to validate their analysis. This is despite Cole noting that her sample 'is self-selecting and not necessarily representative...' (Cole, 2005 p. 289). As before, the issue for Brown and Doveston has been the lack of a national dataset via which they could compare their sample to the overall population. Pearson (2008, p. 98) later critiques the sample presented by Cole (2005) due its geographical limitations and sample size, arguing that more research with a larger sample was needed. The difficulty with this approach is evident when comparing her dataset against the national picture. Of the 266 respondents, 136 (51%) were received from primary schools and 110 (41%) from secondary schools suggesting that despite her small sample size, the work of Cole

(2005) is more representative of the primary/ secondary split. The current study provides a backdrop against which to resolve issues of this kind.

Gender and part-time working

Table 1 presents the SENCo headcount rounded to the nearest 10 and associated percentages. This is compared to data extracted from the school workforce data for teachers as a whole. We can now state definitively that SENCos are overwhelmingly likely to be women, with a large proportion working part-time in this role. This means that some school communities will not have access to a SENCo for a proportion of the week. This can now be said with certainty.

The extent of the gender split is surprising, with 90.6% of SENCos being women compared to 75.9% for all teachers. Several studies have reported the gender imbalance within the SENCo role (e.g. Szwed, 2007a; Mackenzie, 2012b). Studies that have made unvalidated assertions about the gender imbalance have perhaps underestimated the extent of this imbalance.

In other research, Mackenzie (2012a) conducted a narrative study with 19 teachers. She suggested a range of factors that kept SENCos within their position. These included being able to plan their time around the needs of their own children and the flexibility of the role including part-time working. She also argued the ‘caring’ aspect of the work may explain the highly gendered nature of the role. The new analysis provided here adds validity to her argument: it is noteworthy that nearly one-third of SENCos are part-time compared with fewer than one-quarter in other qualified teaching roles. Again, the highly gendered split is evident here with only 120 of the part-time SENCos being men out of a possible 5920. The dataset can also be used to re-appraise the gender balance in other studies. For example, Cole (2005) commented on the gender imbalance

of her study with 87% of her respondents being female. Despite her caveats about the potential unrepresentativeness of her sample and lack of comparative data, the figures broadly mirror the national picture at present.

Age, gender and part-time working

It should be noted that the full-time equivalence (fte) aggregates all part-time SENCos to create full-time positions. This derivation in the statistics reduces the overall fte number to 18030. This is telling in understanding the potential impact of SENCo presence in many mainstream schools. It is worth noting that the fte number is 10.1% less than the actual numbers. It is impossible to ascertain the overall effect of this reduction on individual schools, but clearly ‘the role’ is not present in some schools for a significant portion of the week – on average, 10%, though likely to be much higher in individual cases. This has implications for a wide variety of functions of the role, not least parent access and support systems for teachers and other staff.

Another implication of the data is in succession planning. Of the fte of 18030 SENCos, 5110 are over 50. This represents 28.3% of the SENCo population who may be retiring or considering retiring within a 10 year period. Additionally, 62.8% of SENCos are over 40 which makes the current population slightly younger than the more limited sample used by Cole (2005) at 74%. Over 10 years ago, Pearson (2008) noted several reasons for SENCo attrition including high turnover due to the role being used to aid promotion. She also argued that the increase in SENCos approaching retirement can be further related to teachers as a whole. With 27.9% of SENCos as opposed to 15.3% of teachers being over 50, the issue with succession planning for SENCos is as relevant today as it was in 2008.

Ethnicity and the SENCo

Tomlinson (2014, p. 47) noted the imbalance of the ethnic origin of those professionally involved in special education and those whom special education was claimed to help, noting that

‘... where large numbers of ethnic minority pupils are processed into special education, the professional groups are still not only middle class but also predominantly white’.

Table 3 a, b, c presents the head count of SENCos in state funded schools by ethnic origin expressed as percentages. These data are compared to all other teacher roles including SENCos in state funded primary, secondary and special schools.

An analysis of table 3a suggests that despite a more diverse workforce throughout all schools, it is more likely that anybody who seeks advice from a SENCo is likely to be talking to an individual of White British origin.

Leadership status and the SENCo

Leadership status is a common theme running thorough the literature (for example, Szwed 2007b, Tissot, 2013). Table 4 presents the different roles that SENCos hold. Despite the Code of Practice advocating that the SENCo should be a leadership role, only 38.2% of SENCos are currently identified on the leadership scale with 61.8% who identify as a class teacher. Again, this highlights validity concerns with existing research. For example, Passy et al. (2017) questioned different groups including SENCos and Headteachers. The national dataset reported here suggests that in 10.6% of cases these are the same person whereas in Passy et al.’s research only 4.2% of the respondents were headteachers.

The research has differed on the extent to which SENCOs indeed fulfil leadership roles. Pearson et al. (2015) suggests that the proportion may be as low as 19% whilst Tissot suggests it could be as high as 50% (Tissot, 2013). The actual national figure for SENCOs on the basis of the current research here is near to the mean of these with 38.2% being senior leaders, unless of course, these ‘senior’ leaders are being remunerated by Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) allowances rather than being on the leadership scale.

The findings here may explain the differences in the role found by Griffiths and Dubsky (2012) who reported that some SENCOs were strategic leaders or ‘landscapers’ and others were managers or ‘gardeners’. The findings here suggest that the position is that there are now 38.2% who are ‘landscapers’ and 61.8% who are ‘gardeners’.

However, there is added confusion with the teacher scale due to the ability to pay teachers additional allowances. The class teacher scale also includes teachers who have extra allowances such as a SEN points and TLR payments. It is likely that some SENCOs receive these; however, it is not possible to identify these using the current dataset. It is questionable as to whether SENCOs qualify for the SEN allowances under the stipulations made under Teachers Pay and Conditions (DfE, 2017a); however, the role may fit with many requirements of the Teaching and Learning Responsibility payment (TLR). A TLR should only be awarded for significant additional responsibilities which:

- a) is focused on teaching and learning;
- b) requires the exercise of a teacher’s professional skills and judgement;
- c) requires the teacher to lead, manage and develop a subject or curriculum

- area; or to lead and manage pupil development across the curriculum;
- d) has an impact on the educational progress of pupils other than the teacher's assigned classes or groups of pupils; and
- e) involves leading, developing and enhancing the teaching practice of other staff.

The specifications of the TLR payment are notable by their absence for the requirement of the strategic leadership within the present within the leadership scale (DfE, 2017a pp. 45-6). Indeed, if many SENCos do receive TLR payments, it highlights the issues that Brown and Doveston (2014) commented on within their sample that SENCos described their role as more fitting of a middle rather than a senior leadership role. Pearson (2008) noted within her sample that 59.6% were awarded a TLR for the position and that 54.5% of her respondents did not report being part of the 'senior management team'. She notes the requirement of the TDA national award requirements for strategic leadership (a leadership scale function) of being able to promote teaching and learning to influence the whole school culture. This descriptor is not dissimilar to those found with the leadership section of teachers pay and conditions (DfE, 2017a, p. 45).

What can be asserted, though, is that SENCos may or may not be part of the school leadership team but may be rewarded differently and may be accountable to different sets of rules and expectations. At least 38.2% are school leaders by definition of their position on the leadership scale and should be adhering to 'Headteacher standards' (DfE, 2015). Some SENCo roles may be akin to middle management roles and may be remunerated through a TLR payment and therefore will be operating under 'Teacher Standards' (DfE, 2011; DfE, 2017a). Whether this is appropriate remains a matter for debate.

The new data reported here contributes to discussion attempting to understand if SENCoS are operating in schools in ‘leadership’ or ‘management’ roles (Oldham and Radford, 2011). It also raises concerns about the tensions that arise between where SENCoS perceive their role to be and how the role is envisaged by the Headteacher within the school leadership structure.

The SENCo and qualifications

The National standard SENCo award for SENCoS in mainstream schools maintained schools is a level 7 qualification. Since 2009, all SENCoS new to post have been required to achieve this award within three years of appointment. Indeed, since the award of NPQH was made non-mandatory for headteachers, this is now the only award which is mandatory for the two designated positions which all schools must fill by law (namely, the Headteacher and the SENCo).

Table 5 presents an overview of the qualifications of SENCoS, Figure 1 explains this code set. Two figures are especially noteworthy here. Firstly, nearly half of SENCoS (48.3%) qualified as teachers through a postgraduate route. This suggests that they had degrees in subject-specific areas such as the arts or sciences. Secondly, the number of SENCoS who have completed a Masters level qualification is 6.4%. This represents approximately 1312 SENCoS from a total of 20500. It is not possible to interrogate what the subjects of these degrees are, neither is it possible to identify whether SENCoS have completed postgraduate certificates, diplomas or full degrees. Over 30 SENCo providers deliver the NASENCo qualification, a postgraduate certificate at Masters level. This makes the figure of 1312 suspect, especially considering it is requirement for SENCoS to achieve this qualification. This suggests that either the DfE dataset is inadequate, there is significant misunderstanding on the

part of schools when inputting this data or the DfE dataset does not record the NASENCo qualification within the MAST code. Whatever the explanation, it is of note that no investigation into this potential issue has been launched, especially considering that the NASENCo qualification is a legal requirement.

What it does suggest, though, is the need to ensure, as a matter of entitlement, that all schools should be able to employ a SENCo who has experience and suitable critical analysis skills. The latter is a requirement of the QAA framework for level 7 (Masters) qualifications (QAA, 2014). Brown and Doveston (2014) noted that in one institution, those who had enrolled on the NASENCo programme were often not prepared for the role due to only having been enrolled on several short courses. Additionally, they reported that the lack of postgraduate experience for several students caused several issues when that were expected to engage in critical thinking activities.

Passy et al. (2017) conducted a DfE sponsored evaluation of the NASENCo award. The survey reported on data derived from 1109 survey responses from SENCos, school leaders and teachers. They acknowledge that the respondents may not be representative due to their self-selecting nature. However, for a report which is designed to report on an aspect of mandatory training required by law, the lack of DfE data through which to establish the external validity of their sampling is notably absent. Many respondents commented that they wanted the course to be a ‘how to’ approach to be a SENCo (p. 33). It is noteworthy that one of these ‘how to’ approaches asks for guidance on ‘improving quality-first teaching, selecting interventions, identifying SEND [Special educational needs and disability] and details on the day to day role of the SENCo’ (p. 33) as though these are unproblematic ‘givens’. This depth of critical

understanding is notionally present in all Level 7 courses, yet this is something which many SENCoS appear not to have experienced.

Conclusion

This is the first time that a description and analysis has been published of the entire SENCo population. The work reflects on the external validity of many of the claims that have been made about the characteristics of this group.

These datasets will prove valuable in further empirical research on the role and in policy development. One might ask why it has taken 25 years for these datasets to come into the public domain when earlier publication could have helped frame research and policy over the period. For example, policy makers may be interested in understanding how many SENCoS were school leaders. If one national survey commissioned by the DfE was used (Passy et al., 2017) then it would be possible to argue that 67.5% of SENCoS are senior leaders. If the data presented here are used, however, then the national picture would suggest that up to 62% of SENCoS are *not* senior leaders. This clearly has significant impact on any future policy decisions which need to be made both at a central or local level.

For a key statutory position such as the SENCo these datasets should be produced as a matter of course. Firstly, the data could be issued to i) providers of the NASENCo award so that they may better understand the characteristics of their cohorts; ii) the National Standards SENCo Provider Group who peer review the NASENCo award and quality assurance providers; iii) any DfE contract work relating to the SENCo. This is essential to ensure that the any survey work or policy work conducted on behalf of the DfE holds external validity and truly represents the population of

SENCOs working across mainstream school settings.

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Table 1. Headcount and percentages of SENCoS in state funded schools divided by gender and full-time or part-time status compared to all teachers in state maintained schools.

	SENCo headcount ⁽¹⁾	SENCo percentage ⁽²⁾	Teacher headcount ⁽³⁾	Teacher percentage ⁽²⁾
Men				
Total head count	1,920	9.4%	114,300	24.1%
Full-time head count	1,790	8.7%	105,700	22.3%
Part-time head count	120	0.6%	8,600	1.8%
Women				
Total head count	18,580	90.6%	359,400	75.9%
Full-time head count	12,780	62.3%	258,500	54.6%
Part-time head count	5,800	28.3%	100,900	21.3%
Men and Women				
Total head count	20,500	100.0%	473,700	100.0%
Full-time head count	14,580	71.1%	364,200	76.9%
Part-time head count	5,920	28.9%	109,500	23.1%

Table 2: Headcount and percentages of SENCoS in state funded schools divided by gender and age compared to all teachers in state maintained schools.

	SENCo headcount ⁽¹⁾	SENCo percentage ⁽²⁾	Teacher headcount ⁽³⁾	Teacher percentage ⁽⁴⁾
MEN				
Under 25	0	0.0%	5,500	1.2%
25-29	80	0.4%	19,000	4.2%
30-34	270	1.5%	21,100	4.7%
35-39	360	2.0%	19,700	4.4%
40-44	360	2.0%	16,500	3.7%
45-49	330	1.8%	15,100	3.3%
50-54	270	1.5%	11,400	2.5%
55-59	140	0.8%	6,800	1.5%
60 and over	50	0.3%	2,500	0.6%
All ages	1,860	10.2%	117,700	26.0%
WOMEN				
Under 25	50	0.3%	23,100	5.1%
25-29	950	5.2%	62,500	13.8%
30-34	2,100	11.5%	57,200	12.7%
35-39	2,720	14.9%	49,700	11.0%
40-44	2,900	16.1%	43,800	9.7%
45-49	2,800	15.5%	39,500	8.7%
50-54	2,490	13.8%	32,100	7.1%
55-59	1,530	8.5%	19,000	4.2%
60 and over	640	3.5%	7,100	1.6%
All ages	16,180	90%	334,100	73.9%
MEN AND WOMEN				
Under 25	50	0.3%	28,600	6.3%
25-29	1,020	5.6%	81,500	18.0%
30-34	2,370	12.9%	78,300	17.3%
35-39	3,080	16.8%	69,400	15.4%
40-44	3,260	17.8%	60,400	13.4%
45-49	3,130	17.1%	54,600	12.1%
50-54	2,760	15.1%	43,500	9.6%
55-59	1,670	9.1%	25,800	5.7%
60 and over	680	3.7%	9,700	0.0%
All ages	18,030	100.0%	451,900	100%

Table 3a: Percentages of male SENCoS in all state funded schools by ethnic origin compared to all other male teachers in primary, secondary and special schools.

MEN	SENCoS	STATE FUNDED NURSERY AND PRIMARY	STATE FUNDED SECONDARY	STATE FUNDED SPECIAL/ PRU/AP
White - British	91.4	90.1	84.5	84.4
White - Irish	1.8	1.7	2.1	1.7
Any other white background	2.4	2.8	3.4	5.0
White and Black Caribbean	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.6
White and Black African	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
White and Asian	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Any other mixed background	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5
Indian	0.9	0.9	1.8	0.9
Pakistani	0.4	0.5	1.3	0.6
Bangladeshi	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.2
Any other Asian Background	0.2	0.4	0.8	0.5
Black Caribbean	0.7	0.7	1.0	2.0
Black - African	0.5	0.5	1.7	1.6
Any other Black background	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.6
Chinese	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1
Any other ethnic group	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.6
Ethnicity details provided	93.5	93.7	92.9	93.8
Refused	0.9	0.5	0.9	0.6
Information not yet obtained	5.6	5.8	6.2	5.6
Numbers (Thousands)	1,920	35,300	78,900	6,500

Table 3b: Percentages of female SENCos in all state funded schools by ethnic origin compared to all other female teachers in primary, secondary and special schools.

WOMEN	SENCos	STATE FUNDED NURSERY AND PRIMARY	STATE FUNDED SECONDARY	STATE FUNDED SPECIAL/ PRU/AP
White - British	93.2	88.7	82.2	87.6
White - Irish	1.0	1.3	1.9	1.3
Any other white background	2.1	2.9	5.5	5.1
White and Black Caribbean	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.4
White and Black African	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
White and Asian	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2
Any other mixed background	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.4
Indian	0.8	1.8	2.4	1.1
Pakistani	0.4	1.0	1.3	0.4
Bangladeshi	0.1	0.5	0.6	0.2
Any other Asian Background	0.2	0.5	0.9	0.4
Black Caribbean	0.8	0.9	1.3	1.3
Black - African	0.3	0.4	1.0	0.7
Any other Black background	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3
Chinese	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1
Any other ethnic group	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.6
Ethnicity details provided	95.3	94.3	92.7	94.0
Refused	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.5
Information not yet obtained	4.4	5.3	6.5	5.5
Numbers (Thousands)	18,580	213,600	140,700	18,200

Table 3c: Percentages of male and female SENCoS in all state funded schools by ethnic origin compared to all other teachers in primary, secondary and special schools.

MEN AND WOMEN	SENCoS	STATE FUNDED NURSERY AND PRIMARY	STATE FUNDED SECONDARY	STATE FUNDED SPECIAL/ PRU/AP
White - British	93.0	88.9	83.0	86.7
White - Irish	1.1	1.4	2.0	1.4
Any other white background	2.1	2.9	4.7	5.1
White and Black Caribbean	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4
White and Black African	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
White and Asian	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3
Any other mixed background	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.4
Indian	0.8	1.6	2.2	1.0
Pakistani	0.4	1.0	1.3	0.5
Bangladeshi	0.1	0.5	0.6	0.2
Any other Asian Background	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.4
Black Caribbean	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.5
Black - African	0.3	0.4	1.3	0.9
Any other Black background	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.4
Chinese	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.1
Any other ethnic group	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.6
Ethnicity details provided	95.1	94.2	92.8	93.9
Refused	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.5
Information not yet obtained	4.5	5.3	6.4	5.5
Numbers (Thousands)	20,500	248.9	219.7	24.7

Table 4: Head count and percentages of SENCoS in different school roles.

Role of SENCo	Number⁽¹⁾	Percentage⁽²⁾
Headteachers	2,170	10.6
Deputy Headteachers	2,490	12.1
Assistant Headteachers	3,170	15.5
Classroom teachers	12,670	61.8

Table 5: Percentages of SENCOs who hold qualifications (note: If SENCOs hold more than one qualification, they will be represented in more than one column).

Highest Qualification of SENCO	Percentage ⁽⁵⁾
PGCE	48.3
MAST	6.4
DOCT	0.2
BEDO	44.2
FRST	77.5
CTED	7.1
NQF4	2.4
NNUK	0.9

Figure 1: Qualification codes within the DfE workforce survey (DfE, 2017b p. 60)

Qualification code	DfE Descriptor
PGCE	Post-graduate Initial Teacher Training Qualification
MAST	Masters Degree, for example MSc, MEd or other level 7 qualifications such as postgraduate certificates and diplomas
DOCT	Doctorate, for example PhD, or other level 8 qualification
BEDO	BEd or other first degree combined with teacher qualifications
FRST	Other first degree (that is; degrees other than BEd or other first degree combined with teacher qualifications) such as BA and BSc, or other level 6 qualification such as graduate certificates and diplomas
CTED	Certificate in Education or equivalent
NQF4	Any other qualification at level 4 or 5, for example level 4 NVQ, diplomas of higher education and further education, foundation degrees and higher national diplomas, and certificates of higher education.
NNUK	Non-UK teaching qualification