



Robin Walker MP

Minister of State for School Standards

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By email:

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Dear colleague,

I write to update you on the government's reforms to teacher training and development.

As we all know, there are no great schools without great teachers, which is why the Department for Education (DfE) has continued to focus on the training and support we provide for the profession.

We are creating a world-class teacher development system, building from Initial Teacher Training, through to early career support, specialisation and onto school leadership. At each phase, teachers will have access to high-quality training and professional development underpinned by the best available evidence, as assured by the Education Endowment Foundation. This is creating a golden thread of professional development that teachers can draw on at every stage of their careers.

Progress this year

In September we launched both the national roll out of the Early Career Framework (ECF) and the reformed suite of National Professional Qualifications (NPQs).

I would like to thank you for your efforts in delivering the seismic shift in the support and development we give to early career teachers through the ECF programme. This year over 25,000 new teachers (the vast majority of new teachers) and nearly 23,000 mentors are undertaking a new high-quality and structured professional development programme for the first time. By enrolling them on an ECF programme in such high numbers, you and your teams are providing your early career teachers with the firm foundation they need for a long career in the profession.

Additionally, the new suite of NPQs offers training programmes for teachers and leaders at all levels, from those who want to develop expertise in high quality teaching practice, such as behaviour management, to those leading multiple schools across trusts. Fully funded training scholarships are available for

teachers and leaders employed in state funded schools and 16-19 organisations.

The implementation of these reforms at pace and at a national scale has been made possible in part by our investment in Teaching School Hubs – a national network of teacher development centres of excellence, providing all schools, teachers, mentors and leaders access to national frameworks.

Supporting early career teachers, mentors and school leaders to focus on what matters most

We are committed to building on your hard work. We have listened to your feedback on the ECF and, although it has been largely positive, we are making improvements in areas that you have told us are causing some difficulties.

Establishing new ECF-based induction programmes – part of a two-year statutory entitlement for early career teachers to access structured training and mentoring – in thousands of schools across England has been a huge undertaking for those implementing it, particularly mentors.

To help with this, we are:

- reviewing materials to make them as user friendly as possible
- simplifying the digital service, making it easier to navigate and reducing the amount of information you need to provide
- streamlining the registration process to ensure it is quick and easy to sign up your early career teachers and mentors

We want early career teachers and mentors to use the funded time set aside for the induction programmes in the most effective way. To support that, we've created new materials for school leaders, mentors and early career teachers to answer common questions about induction and ECF-based training. These are available [here](#).

Adapting ECF to the needs of individual early career teachers

The provider-led programmes are designed to ensure that early career teachers receive support based on the best available evidence of what works and ensure that every teacher gets a consistently high-quality induction. This means that programmes are carefully structured and sequenced, particularly in the first year, with more opportunity for selective focus in the second year.

Some of the feedback we've received from mentors raises the question of how they can apply this structure flexibly to meet the particular needs of early career teachers.

It is crucial that we maintain early career teachers' entitlement to all of the high-quality content contained in these carefully sequenced programmes, but we also want mentors to be able to use their professional judgement in supporting early career teachers to understand and apply the content of the programmes to their particular context and role. We will therefore work with the lead providers and headteachers to produce guidance ahead of September so that mentors are clear how they can do this.

We are also exploring other ways to encourage appropriate flexibility in the delivery of the programmes, including giving mentors more options for when they engage (including commencing training in the preceding summer term) and using more online delivery where appropriate. We are also looking into the possibility of introducing more flexibility regarding when the induction programmes are delivered, especially in the autumn term of the first year.

What's next for schools?

Thanks to the huge number of participating schools, increased familiarity with the ECF-based induction training programmes, and the greater flexibility in the second year of the programmes, we are confident that we can continue to build on the success of the ECF to date. You will be contacted in May with details of how to enrol new ECTs for next year – [more details of next steps to September are here](#). Also, you can always contact your local [Teaching School Hub](#) for more information.

You can find out more about our world-class teacher development system [here](#). This includes NPQs, for which fully funded training scholarships are available for every teacher and school leader employed in state funded schools and 16-19 institutions in all corners of the country. We are launching two more of these qualifications from this autumn, in Leading Literacy and in Early Years Leadership, and encourage all schools to consider enrolling staff where appropriate.

Additionally, Ofsted has recently published the [new framework and handbook for inspecting ECF and NPQ lead providers](#). These inspections will only be for lead providers, not schools, and will ensure that the provider-led programmes are delivering the highest quality of training and that teachers and school leaders are getting the best possible support.

Once again, I would like to thank you and your teams for your continued hard work and dedication in delivering the best possible professional development for teachers and leaders across your school, and for the impact this will have on the children they serve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Waller'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J' and 'W'.