



The National Association of  
School-Based Teacher Trainers

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## **Change and Renewal: NASBTT announces five key Initial Teacher Training priorities for the year ahead**

The National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) has outlined five key priorities for 2019-20, which includes playing a pivotal role at the forefront of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) policy formation, following “a time of preparation for the change that is to come”.

In her opening speech at today’s NASBTT Annual Conference, ‘Change and Renewal’, Executive Director Emma Hollis told over 150 delegates how “the world of education is ever shifting and the wider political upheaval has meant that, perhaps even more so than usual, there has been uncertainty about the future”. However, despite that upheaval, NASBTT has defined its strategic focus for the year ahead.

Firstly, Emma highlighted how NASBTT is represented on the Department for Education (DfE) Initial Teacher Education (ITE) curriculum content advisory group, which has drafted new guidance that will underpin the training programme for new teachers, starting with the core content for ITT and leading into the Early Career Framework (ECF). “As with the ECF, the importance of high-quality mentoring is fundamental to the success of ITT and this is recognised in the new guidance,” she explained. “Our first priority over the coming year, therefore, is to help the sector recognise the importance and develop the skillset of our teacher educator workforce, both within training providers and within their partner schools.”

Secondly, NASBTT is part of an ITE advisory group which is supporting Ofsted as it designs its new framework for the inspection of ITE, aligning it more closely with the Education Inspection Framework for schools. “Our sincere hope for the framework is that it should value and measure those things which indicate high-quality provision and should allow providers the freedom to innovate, without the need to be arbitrarily data-driven,” Emma said. “To this end, we will continue to work closely with Ofsted and our members to provide the best possible advice and guidance on matters which we know will be of crucial importance, including curriculum design, subject knowledge and mentoring.”

Thirdly, NASBTT is prioritising subject knowledge enhancement for trainee teachers – creating a Subject Knowledge and Curriculum Design toolkit, teaming up with a range of subject specialists including Vretta, and its innovative Elevate My Maths online programme, and negotiating a mix of discounts and offers for members with a range of subject associations. However, Emma emphasised a wider issue. “We remain concerned about the difficulty of training teachers ‘in depth’ in all subjects within the timeframe of teacher training,” she said. “It is particularly unclear exactly how much subject knowledge is expected of primary teachers. The development of subject knowledge for teaching is an iterative process which takes many years for a professional to develop. ITT has an important role to play in laying the foundations of subject knowledge for trainees but the development of in-depth subject knowledge cannot solely be the remit of ITT providers and this is a message we will continue to drive home through our work with the DfE and other stakeholders.”

Fourthly, and linked directly to the need for ongoing professional development for subject knowledge enhancement, and other areas, is the ECF delivery mechanism. “We are working hard to ensure that the delivery mechanism which is agreed for the ECF is in providers’ favour and does not overcomplicate the system – as part of this, we are pushing for a bigger role for providers in the appropriate body sector,” Emma stressed. “We will also continue to champion the role of the mentor in making the aims of the ECF a reality and will develop ongoing support and guidance for school-based mentors and those that are involved in their professional development. To this end, we have established a professional framework for teacher educators which will be launched later this year through our new Teacher Educator Zone.”

NASBTT’s fifth – but by no means least important – priority for the next 12 months is in supporting the mental health and wellbeing for trainee teachers. “The prominence and importance of mental health and wellbeing is growing in schools – both for pupils and school staff,” Emma said. “In order for teachers to best support the children in their care, looking out for their own wellbeing is of the utmost importance. We are now working with the Royal Foundation on advice and guidance on mental health and wellbeing of children for all trainee teachers. We have also devised and delivered an Establishing a Counselling, Wellbeing and Mental Health First Aid Provision for Trainee Teachers workshops programme. We will therefore continue our work in this important area, seeking ways to support providers in supporting their trainees towards mentally healthy lives.”

The full agenda for the NASBTT Annual Conference, ‘Change and Renewal’, is available here: <https://www.nasbtt.org.uk/nasbtt-annual-conference-2019/>

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