



The National Association of
School-Based Teacher Trainers

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**NASBTT statement:
NASBTT hails Early Career Framework but warns it could “fail to deliver all its promises” without funding**

Emma Hollis, Executive Director of the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT), has used her opening speech at the organisation’s annual conference to hail the Early Career Framework (ECF) as the “most critical initiative” yet for new teachers but warned that a commitment to funding it is needed.

Speaking at Woburn House in London in front of over 150 delegates, Emma described the ECF as a potential “game-changer”. “The ECF offers a longer period of support and guidance with clear entitlement (and entitlement, I think, is a key word) to professional development, access to mentoring and coaching and, potentially, reduced timetabling,” she said. “Schools remain concerned about the costs of such an ambitious programme and yet, if funded and resourced appropriately, this really could be a game-changer. Without the time and resources where necessary, I fear the ECF could fail to deliver all its promises. We will be advocating for accredited providers to be automatically licensed to offer the framework to schools. A complex and expensive bidding process could stagnate the market – and who is better placed to understand the needs of early career teachers than Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers?”

Emma then turned her attention to mentoring. “The entitlement to a longer induction period means there will be an increased need for highly-qualified mentors in schools,” she explained. “The issue of mentoring is one I am particularly passionate about and, in my most positive moments, I can foresee a situation whereby schools must have a dedicated mentoring lead in the same way they do for safeguarding and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). This individual would have overarching strategic responsibility for mentoring early career teachers, training all staff on what it means to be a mentor – this should be a set of skills common to all teachers and not simply held within one formal teacher-mentor relationship – and to whom all staff ultimately report back.”

She also suggested the formation of local hubs which provide access to accredited mentors. “Together with colleagues at the Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), I have argued that accredited teacher training providers, who know what early career teachers need and have a wealth of expertise, are ideally placed to offer this service to schools,” Emma revealed. “By tapping into the existing network of accredited training providers, we could give more time to the mentors we have already got, and importantly avoid setting up a whole new mentor recruitment and procurement system. The big elephant remaining in the room is funding and, as yet, a firm government commitment to the funds that will be allocated to schools has not been made. What is obvious is schools are not in a position to provide the additional support that is required within existing budgets.”

Describing 2017-18 as “a year of great promise for change”, Emma reflected on the Department for Education (DFE) consultation on Strengthening Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Improving Career Progression for Teachers and other major developments in the sector. “The QTS consultation set out the possibilities for seismic shift in the teacher training landscape,

revolutionising the early career support offered to teachers and going not an inconsiderable way to making the profession attractive once more,” she said. “Changes to skills tests offered great candidates the chance to access courses without an arbitrary lock on entry for the sake of a few marks on a flawed testing system and uncapped allocations allowed providers to truly serve the needs of their communities – using genuine local knowledge to meet genuine local demand. There were celebrations for the sector as a whole too, with 99% of provision now rated either good or outstanding and a staggering 43% of School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) provision rated outstanding.”

However, Emma warned that the 2018-19 academic year is “arguably the most critical yet” in terms of addressing the issues facing schools on teacher recruitment. “The apprenticeship agenda cost many of us more than one sleepless night and has been fraught with hurdles and difficulties,” she explained. “Adding to an overcrowded ITT market does not appear to have given any additionality and yet has created unmanageable workloads for very little return. We have seen a move towards simplifying the messages given to candidates – with less unhelpful distinctions being made between types of provider and a greater focus on what are actually only three routes to becoming a teacher: Undergraduate; Postgraduate fee-paying and Postgraduate-salaried. Underneath these routes are a wide range of providers – something which we believe offers healthy choice and variety – but which can be overwhelming for outsiders and which should not be the focus of applicants’ early experiences. We also welcome the policy decision to widen participation by offering more bursaries to applicants holding 2:2 degrees. We are repeatedly told that there is very little correlation between class of degree held and outcomes for teachers and are pleased to see this is now being recognised in bursary payments offered for shortage subjects.”

On teacher retention, Emma highlighted the DfE’s latest teacher workforce and statistics analysis. This report has recognised that there are now 3,000 more teachers leaving the profession each year than are entering – with leavers increasing across all subjects and phases, and it is the crucial age group of under-35s who are most likely to leave. “Recognition is being given to wider issues around teacher retention and workload and whilst the work in these areas is yet young, we must celebrate the fact that the need to tackle them has been acknowledged and steps are being taken to address these matters at a national level,” she said. “The DfE’s response to the QTS consultation set in motion a series of initiatives which should – if resourced and funded appropriately – make a huge difference to teachers in this country. But one has to question, will it be enough?”

Finally, Emma reflected on the achievements of NASBTT over the past 12 months. “NASBTT has continued to grow, widening its offer to members to include our suite of Teacher Educator Programmes, uptake on which has been phenomenal and for which feedback has exceeded even our high expectations,” she said. “We have been represented on, and made genuine contributions to, policy advisory groups. We finally broke through the arbitrary difference in fee scales between SCITTs and HEIs and received confirmation that these will have parity from 2019. And, in consultation with Ofsted, we heard that changes to the ITE inspection framework will, most sensibly, be delayed until the new Education Inspection Framework has had time to embed. Innovation and perseverance are the watch words for the ITT sector and I am heartened to see how relatively small providers are able to weather the storm and make lemonade from the barrels of lemons they are handed.”

NASBTT also announced a new partnership with Pearson Publishing, offering a wide range of online CPD modules to support and enhance members’ training offer for trainees, and the launch of the NASBTT Awards which will “recognise the excellent practice and innovative work” being undertaken by school-led teacher trainers.

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NASBTT is a registered charity committed to promoting high-quality schools-led programmes of training, education and professional development of teachers.

NASBTT represents the interests of schools-led teacher training provision in relation to the development and implementation of national policy developments. Our members include SCITT providers, School Direct Lead Schools, Teaching Schools, HEIs as well as a range of other organisations involved in the education and professional development of teachers. We have 195 members representing almost 7,000 individual trainees.

Website: www.nasbtt.org.uk

Social: <https://twitter.com/nasbtt> (@NASBTT)

Media Resources: nasbtt.org.uk/media-hub

Media Contact:

Phil Smith

NASBTT PR consultant

Office: 01778 218180

Mobile: 07866 436159

Email: phil@philsmithcommunications.co.uk