



The National Association of
School-Based Teacher Trainers

Release date: 9th May 2023

“Every possible avenue to recruiting trainees being explored” – NASBTT ITT barriers to recruitment and delivery survey

New research undertaken by the National Association of School-Based Teacher Trainers (NASBTT) has highlighted the breadth of recruitment tactics being adopted by school-based ITT providers as they seek to attract more recent graduates and career changers to the profession.

Despite the survey confirming the challenges around ITT recruitment, with 77% of respondents reporting that trainee applications are down at this stage of the year compared to last year, NASBTT members have said that those who are applying are doing so for career prospects (27%), changing jobs (17%) and working locally (10%).

When asked what else DfE should do to address the recruitment crisis, 17% of respondents called for an increase in wider hardship support during training, 16% for an increase in bursaries/scholarships, and 8.5% for an increase in starting salaries. Starting salary was not selected as a reason by any of the 70 respondents as to why trainee applications are down, or a reason given to providers by trainees who have applied.

However, it is the range of recruitment tactics cited by NASBTT members that is arguably the most practically useful insight from the survey completed in March and April 2023. From targeting internal candidates in schools (especially Teaching Assistants and existing cover/support staff) and former students, to sponsorship of a local football team, contacting the armed forces and town centre or roadside advertising for additional visibility, ITT providers are exploring every possible approach to recruitment.

Other free-text responses, summarised below, are:

- Events: Get into Teaching, Train to Teach, Teaching School Hub, local recruitment fairs, open days, drop-in events, virtual meetings, one-to-one advice sessions.
- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, TikTok.
- Direct marketing: posters, leaflets, banners, flyers, e-shots.
- Advertising: Google ads, job boards, school newsletter, ParentMail, other school comms.
- PR: articles in local/regional media.
- Visiting partnership schools/universities to speak to undergraduate students on education/child development courses.
- Experience or taster days.
- Word-of-mouth advocacy.

In a further key finding, 43% of respondents reported that school placements are down at this stage of the year compared to last year, with the majority (36.5%) have decreased by 20-30%. A further 30% said that placements are down by 10-20% and 16.5% by 30-40% from 2022.

“Our latest member survey underlines the hugely challenging picture that ITT providers are facing around trainee applications this year,” said NASBTT Executive Director Emma Hollis. “As we know, this is a national issue and is a cause for concern for providers of any size, but it is to the credit of the ITT sector as a whole that every possible avenue to recruit trainees is being explored. The sector’s resilience never ceases to amaze me. It is too early to say what the impact of continuing lower recruitment will be, but clearly those in power are aware of the issues as demonstrated by the Education Select Committee inquiry into Teacher Recruitment, Training and Retention that NASBTT responded to last month.”

Emma explained that the impact of the Early Career Framework (ECF) on capacity in schools, and in particular on mentoring capacity, was a significant contributory factor. “This has led to unintended consequences of some schools preferring not to employ Early Career Teachers (ECTs) as they cannot meet the additional capacity needed to support them,” she commented. “Even more significantly, however, we are increasingly hearing of schools withdrawing from offering ITT placements due to the capacity issues created by mentoring and ECTs. Our survey, which shows that nearly half of respondents are experiencing issues with placements at this stage of the year compared to last year, backs this up.”

This could lead to a placement crisis for ITT providers, Emma stressed, which “must be considered very seriously and addressed before it creates an even greater crisis” in the ITT sector. “We have given this message before, but should placement opportunities not be readily available on their doorstep, the requirement to travel will become a further barrier to entry from applicants who are unable or unwilling to travel significant distances for their training and could further adversely affect teacher supply,” she said. “To mitigate this, we suggest that DfE may wish to consider hardship funding for all trainees to apply for help with costs. This could be managed through providers under existing grant funding agreements. DfE has allocated relocation funding for overseas trainees so it feels reasonable to also earmark funding for domestic students who are struggling to pay travel costs.”

Emma added: “Teaching is a unique profession. It is incomparable with any other sector in terms of workload (in and out of the ‘workplace’ and outside of core hours) and scrutiny (from Ofsted, governors and parents/carers). At the heart of the issue is how the profession is presented (mainly negatively) in the media, through DfE marketing campaigns (counter productive), combined with the fact ‘everyone knows a teacher’ and perceptions often reflect that. Government needs to lead the charge for making teaching an attractive profession for both recent graduates and experienced professionals once again. We should emphasise (and evidence) that employment opportunities are extremely high for qualifying teachers, which is an important message not least in the current economic climate.”

Overall, the majority of NASBTT member respondents (28%) said that trainee applications are down by 10-20% followed by 30-40% (26%), 20-30% (22%), 40%+ (18.5%) and 0-10% (5.5%). When asked why they thought applications are down, underlying issues cited included the cost-of-living crisis (22%) and perceptions of the profession (15%).

-ENDS-

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 SCITTs, School Direct Lead Schools, Teaching School Hubs, Higher Education Institutions as well as a range of other organisations involved in the education and professional development of teachers. We have more than 225 members representing in excess of 10,000 individual trainees.

Website: www.nasbtt.org.uk

Social: [@NASBTT](https://twitter.com/nasbtt)

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

Media Contact:

Phil Smith

NASBTT PR consultant

Telephone: 01778 218180 / 07866 436159

Email: phil@philsmithcommunications.co.uk