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Dear Richard

NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP : FURTHER REMIT

In my launch letter to you of 25 September I set out my intention to transfer to the National College responsibility for the administration of the national headship training programmes at an appropriate point this year. I am now writing to set out the arrangements for that transfer and for the transfer to the College of full responsibility for the management and development of its website : ncslonline. I intend to transfer responsibility for the administration of the national programmes and for ncslonline to the College with effect from 1 April 2001. These are significant responsibilities and I set out in the attachment to this letter the key tasks, targets and timelines I will expect the College to meet in respect of them.

This letter is accompanied by a new grant in aid letter which sets out the additional funding which the College will receive to match these responsibilities. This supersedes the earlier grant in aid letter sent to the College on 25 September 2000.

As you know, we have been consulting key stakeholders on proposals to transfer funding responsibilities for the national headship training programmes to the College. That consultation closed at the end of January and I am pleased that there was strong support for the principles of the Government's proposals. Consequently I am announcing today that all elements of the centrally managed budgets that currently support the national programmes will be transferred to the College with effect from 1 April 2001. Responsibility for managing the resources for the programmes that are currently channelled through the Standards Fund is to be transferred to the College according to a staged timetable. The detailed arrangements are set out in relation to each of the programmes in the attachment to this letter.

The activities detailed in this letter relate to England only. My officials will be in touch further about related activities elsewhere in the UK.

This letter needs to be read alongside my original launch letter and I will expect you to undertake these specific tasks in the context of the wider policy responsibilities I set out there. I expect the National College to take forward all its work and responsibilities in close consultation with key partners and stakeholders and to work closely and constructively with local education authorities and the national and regional providers of the national headship programmes.

The College now has its full remit and responsibilities. I and my Ministerial colleagues continue to wish you every success in your major role in transforming our schools and supporting school leaders.

I am releasing this letter publicly.

Best wishes.

DAVID BLUNKETT

NATIONAL COLLEGE FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP : NATIONAL HEADSHIP TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND NCSLONLINE – DETAILED TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NPQH

1. The content and structure of NPQH has been significantly revised and streamlined by the DfEE following a wideranging consultation with the profession led by Dame Pat Collarbone. New materials are being prepared using a team of professional writers again led by Pat Collarbone. Online materials and discussion rooms have been developed with professional support from Ultralab. Access candidates are already well into their programme and candidates on the Development route will begin work from April. Once the College assumes responsibility for administering NPQH, I will expect you to establish arrangements for keeping the materials content under review and agreeing with my officials amendments needed to reflect significant developments in policy and practice. Those arrangements will need to be operational soon after transfer and there will therefore need to be some preparatory discussion with my officials before then. I would also welcome more substantive advice from the College when and if you feel elements of the NPQH programme may need to be adjusted in the light of the experience of participants. I am delighted that the College has invited Pat Collarbone to continue to advise on the NPQH programme and that she has agreed to do so. Her personal commitment and vision has been a major factor in its success.
2. A regional delivery structure for new NPQH is already in place. I will be novating to you with effect from 1 April 2001 the existing contracts with the regional providers and others involved in the delivery and administration of the programme. I am also novating to you with effect from 1 April 2001 the contract with Ultralab for the online NPQH programme and expect the College to ensure this element is managed efficiently and effectively and developed to its full potential and, at an appropriate point to be agreed with DfEE, fully integrated within the College's website.
3. As a major initial task I look to the College to manage and run the next and subsequent recruitment rounds for the qualification. The College will need to work closely with my officials from the date of this letter on the planning and marketing for the next recruitment round, which I expect to open on 23 April 2001. Given the very positive response to the online application arrangements available in the initial round – with over 20% of applicants taking advantage of the opportunity to apply online – I expect you to build on and improve where necessary, the online application procedures available for this round.
4. I look to the College to maximise recruitment to the programme. In doing so, I expect the College to work with regional providers and my Department to ensure that application rounds support equal opportunities and achieve an appropriate balance between primary, secondary and special school candidates. I will want the College to develop strategies to ensure that currently under-represented groups increasingly apply for and progress through the qualification and that the NPQH is fully accessible to candidates with disabilities.
5. The NPQH has a local and national appeals and complaints process which is summarised in the candidate handbook. My Department at present monitors the local appeals and complaints process and conducts the national appeal process. From 1 April 2001, responsibility for these functions will transfer to the College and I will expect you to conduct the national appeals process on my behalf. I continue to expect, however, that recommendations will be put to me as a result of each individual appeal.
6. My Department has maximised the opportunities for existing NPQH candidates to complete their training and assessment before April. However there will be up to 2,000 candidates still working to complete the qualification on the previous NPQH programme. I expect the College, on the basis of the information which my Department will supply, to support these candidates through to the completion of their qualification. I expect all existing candidates to have completed, at the latest, by April 2002. For any who have still to complete after this date I will expect either their transfer to the new version of the qualification or their withdrawal. The funds for these candidates' fees and support costs will remain in the Standards Fund for the 2001-02 financial year.

7. The centrally managed funds that support NPQH will be transferred to the College with effect from 1 April 2001. The fees and candidate support funds for NPQH candidates from the first recruitment round will be channelled through the Standards Fund and LEAs were informed of their allocations in December. However, the fees and candidate support funds for those candidates whom you recruit in the April recruitment round and who will start their studies in September 2001, will be transferred to the College.

8. I look to the College to act as the regulatory body for the NPQH, ensuring a consistently high standard of achievement by candidates nationally by maintaining and where necessary strengthening the existing strategy for moderating final and school-based assessment including chairing moderation panels and disseminating lessons from moderation to providers.

9. With effect also from 1 April, I look to the College to manage and administer the issuing of NPQH certificates, which will continue to bear the Secretary of State's signature. Certificates will be awarded on the basis of a periodic submission from the Director of the College with a list of candidates who are deemed to have met the national requirements. The College will be responsible for arranging for the printing of certificates to a design agreed with DfEE. The College will also need to liaise with the General Teaching Council, which holds data on all teachers' qualifications, to put in place processes to ensure that details of successful NPQH candidates are passed to the GTC so that individuals' records are up-to-date. You will want to liaise with my officials to ensure the smooth transfer of such procedures to the College.

The Headteachers Leadership and Management Programme (HEADLAMP)

10. I will be transferring to the College, with effect from 1 April 2001, the responsibility for administering the HEADLAMP programme as it currently exists. I look to the College to ensure that HEADLAMP participation meets or exceeds current levels and that information available to eligible heads and to participants continues to be timely, clear and comprehensive. The funds for HEADLAMP grant and for the costs of the administration of the programme, and the funds for the annual conference for new heads, will be transferred to the College with effect from 1 April 2001. At the same point I intend to novate to the College the existing contract with Park Place for the administration of the programme and the responsibility for processing payments will pass to the College from the Teacher Training Agency.

11. In addition, I would also welcome wider advice from the College on the scope for improvement and development to the HEADLAMP programme. In particular I would like you to consider:

- < how effectively the programme supports heads in raising achievement for all pupils in their schools;
- < whether the aims and outcomes of the programme should be made clearer and, if so, in what respects;
- < the content and coverage of current provision, reflecting on any lessons learnt from the College's programme of pilot activities;
- < whether the administrative arrangements can be streamlined, in particular for registration and claims;
- < the range of delivery options for the programme, including the scope for more innovative and effective use of ICT;
- < the role of initial needs assessment;
- < the range of providers and their quality assurance and accreditation; and
- < how to extend equality of access.

12. I would like to receive the College's preliminary advice by 1 October 2001, with a view to any plans for further development of HEADLAMP being announced at this year's new heads conference. The College's advice should take account of participant feedback secured through OFSTED's recent work on this area and the evaluation evidence held by Park Place; headteachers' views on HEADLAMP expressed via the Talking Heads site; the Teacher Training Agency's 1998 review of HEADLAMP; relevant developments in headship induction training elsewhere in the UK; and any further consultations that the College may wish to undertake.

13. I have already asked the College to take over responsibility for the planning and administration of the annual new heads conferences. I will expect the 4th such conference to take place towards the end of 2001. Given the national profile of these conferences, I would expect you to be in a position to discuss your provisional plans with my officials by the end of May 2001.

The Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH)

14. Some 6500 headteachers have participated in the LPSH programme since its national launch in 1998. The external evaluation undertaken in 1999 reported that the programme is a powerful, positive and successful experience for participants.

15. From 1 April 2001, the responsibility for the administration of the programme will transfer to the College and I will novate the contracts with the national providers and other partner organisations involved in the delivery of the programme to the College with effect from that date. The government has committed about £10m annually through the Standards Fund in support of the programme allowing for some 3500 participants per year. I look to the College to work with national providers to ensure participation is maximised. In doing so, I will expect the College to ensure that appropriate systems are in place to administer, market and quality assure the programme against national standards.

16. The centrally managed funds that support LPSH will be transferred to the College with effect from 1 April 2001. The funds for fees and participant support are currently distributed through the Standards Fund by means of a LEA matched-funded grant. LEAs were notified of their allocations for the 2001-02 financial year in November. The total funds that support the programme – ie both the central government grant and the LEA contribution - will be transferred to the College with effect from 1 April 2002.

17. I look to the College to liaise with my officials to develop national criteria for eligibility and participant support that will deliver equality of access to the programme for those who wish to undertake it as well as ensuring funding is targeted on those who would gain most from the programme. The College will need to consult on these proposed arrangements and have them in place in good time for the 2002-03 financial year, when it takes on the responsibility for the funds currently delivered through the Standards Fund. To ensure that arrangements are in place on time, I would like to receive details of the College's proposed eligibility criteria and plans for the distribution of funding by 3 September 2001.

18. In addition to ensuring the efficient management of the existing programme, I would also welcome wider advice from the College on the future development of the LPSH programme and on the case for widening the range and scope of leadership programmes for serving heads. In particular I would like you to consider:

- < how effectively the programme supports heads in raising achievement for all pupils in their schools, including the contribution of the Partners In Leadership scheme;
- < the potential role for online learning, through ncslonline and Talking Heads, and a focus on the strategic management of ICT in the school, to be integrated into the programme;
- < the coherence of LPSH alongside the other national programmes and the National College's own activities as part of the development of a coherent national framework; and
- < the quality, relevance and timeliness of the development experience provided by the LPSH, including whether heads receive sufficient and appropriate support and guidance in choosing

to undertake the programme and afterwards.

In preparing its advice, the College will want to draw on the experience of the national providers; participants' and other key stakeholders' perspectives; the updates OFSTED have provided to my officials; and the outcomes of the evaluation into the four-day workshops undertaken by Christ Church Canterbury University College for the TTA in 1999-2000. I would like to receive the College's advice by 3 December 2001.

19. The arrangements for LPSH programmes in future years clearly will need to reflect the outcomes of this work. However, I look forward to receiving details of the information and application materials for future opportunities to undertake workshops from March 2002 by the end of December 2001.

Tackling Bureaucracy and Workload

20. In reviewing existing headship training programmes and in developing new provision, I would like the College to give particular attention to how heads in particular can be helped to tackle practical management issues that can give rise to unnecessary bureaucracy and workload within schools. This could include, for example, supporting the proper delegation of administrative tasks and the efficient use of management ICT.

There are a number of important areas of activity which underpin the national programmes where responsibilities will in future fall to the College:

Data

21. The Department has been working to establish databases to track information on candidates following the NPQH. I intend to novate the support system contract to the College with effect from 1 April 2001. The College should develop a single database with candidate information on all three headship training programmes, to meet its own and the DfEE's management information requirements. I shall look to the College to provide LEAs and the Department with management information on candidate progress on the programmes as required.

Inspection, Evaluation and Quality Assurance

22. I will expect the College to co-operate as necessary with OFSTED in relation to the inspection of the national headship training programmes and to work with my officials to identify future inspection priorities in this area.

23. My Department is currently conducting a research study into perspectives on school leadership development amongst heads and other school leaders. The outcome of this study will serve two purposes. It will act as a baseline to assist my Department in a future evaluation of the College's impact but more immediately it will also assist the College in planning and designing its programmes, to maximise their impact. I expect the College to work closely with my Department in the steering of this research to ensure that it fully meets the needs of both my Department and the College.

24. I look to you to carry forward the quality assurance arrangements which exist already for the national headship programmes and advise me as necessary on the case for their further development. This will include production of a quality assurance strategy for the programmes as part of the wider strategy for the college; maintaining liaison with and monitoring the work of the NPQH QA consultants, whose contracts will be novated to the College with effect from 1 April 2001; monitoring all aspects of delivery; and monitoring providers' internal QA systems.

Headship Information Line

25. I will also novate to you, with effect from 1 April 2001, the contract with EWA for the Headship Information Line, which provides the first point of contact for school leaders requesting information on the national programmes.

The National Standards for Headteachers

26. The National Standards for Headteachers provide the benchmark for headship, setting out the skills, knowledge and characteristics required of headteachers alongside a specification of the purpose, outcomes and key areas of headship. They underpin the content and assessment of NPQH. They inform the current HEADLAMP and LPSH programmes. They are widely used by schools and others to inform professional development, performance assessment and appointments. The Department will continue to set the standards for headteachers and to take forward the development of a national framework of standards covering the whole professional structure for teachers. I will expect the College to take an active and direct role in ensuring the headteacher standards remain current, up to date and appropriate. I will also look to the College to play a part in the continuing work to develop a national standards framework.

Other Leadership Training

27. I will also look to the College, working with the Department, to develop a national programme of training for those with subject or specialist leadership responsibilities in schools outside the senior management team. This should fit within the national training and development framework for heads, deputies and others in leadership positions in schools being developed by the College.

ncslonline

28. I will novate to you with effect from 1 April 2001 the existing contracts with BT for the development and operation of ncslonline, and with Ultralab for the facilitation of the Talking Heads online community. From this date the College will assume full responsibility for the further design, development and maintenance of the website.

29. I look to the College to continue to work in partnership with BT and other partners to develop up to date and relevant content and provide access to good practice in teaching and learning and leadership and management, both nationally and internationally. The website should reflect emerging issues within education and should provide access to other teacher portals. It will be important that the College's online presence is properly integrated alongside other electronic communication being developed by the Department and its agencies, so that school leaders and the wider profession are presented with coherent and easy to use support. I look to the College to work with my officials and BECTa in particular to ensure this integration is effectively managed. I expect ncslonline to reflect leading edge technologies and play a major role in helping school leaders use ICT to bring about school improvement. I look to the College to ensure that ncslonline becomes the first virtual point of contact for all school leaders seeking information about all school leadership issues.

30. I also look to the College to continue the rollout of access to the Talking Heads online community to all serving heads in England, and over time to other members of the leadership group. The College will be responsible for developing the Talking Heads community so that it becomes a key tool that heads use in the running of their schools. As part of this process the College should undertake a thorough evaluation of the online community. I expect the College to share the findings of this evaluation with my officials by the end of October 2001. The College should ensure that the development of the community and the networking opportunities it provides spark lively discussion and debate that might be used to inform future policy development.

Award-Bearing INSET

31. My Department has worked with the Teacher Training Agency to administer funding available for award bearing INSET. School leadership and management remains one of the priorities for the distribution of these funds. I expect the College to work with the Department to establish the range and coherence of award bearing activities funded and to consider and advise on the appropriate future distribution of these funds to ensure coherence with the College's programme of activities and the national programmes.