

Inspiring leaders;
improving children's lives

“The joy of being a headteacher is making a difference to the lives of children. It's really really rewarding seeing happy children who enjoy coming to school.”

Bibi Laher, Headteacher,
Spring Grove Junior Infant and
Nursery School, Huddersfield

ASPIRING
HEADTEACHERS

Provision

National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)

**Information for headteachers
and line managers of applicants**

The redesigned NPQH

Introduction by the Secretary of State

In the Children's Plan we set out our ambitions for improving the lives of children and young people so that we can make this the best country in the world in which to grow up. To achieve this, it is absolutely crucial that we have the best leaders running our schools.

Leaders of 21st century schools operate within fast-moving, highly accountable, multi-agency environments and face increasingly complex and diverse demands. We need to ensure that our new leaders have the breadth of skills and knowledge that are needed to take on this challenging role. I believe the revised NPQH will be key to achieving this.


The re-design builds on the strengths of the current model but with more emphasis on managing multi-disciplinary teams and on collaboration with other children services and the local community of parents and residents. The revised model is flexible and personalised, and should allow aspiring headteachers to take account of prior experience and take full control of their own learning.

I am confident that that the new NPQH will help inspire the next generation of school leaders, and make a real difference to the schools and pupils of the future.



Ed Balls

Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families

A photograph of a man with short brown hair and a beard, smiling. He is wearing a dark grey suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie. He is standing in a school hallway with other people blurred in the background. A large, semi-transparent green star graphic is overlaid on the lower left of the image.

**“Being a headteacher
is an honour and
a privilege.”**

David Bateson, Headteacher,
Ash Field School and Assistive
Technology Assessment Centre, Leicester

NPQH – a fresh perspective on leadership

NCSL is currently working on a number of activities designed to encourage and support leaders with the potential for headship. The National Professional Qualification for Headship is a vital part of this strategy and, as a line manager, you can play a key role in helping us prepare a new generation of headteachers for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities.

What is NPQH?

NPQH is the mandatory qualification for those looking to apply for a headship in the maintained sector in England. From April 2009 all headship applicants must be NPQH graduates.

“Good leaders build confidence in others and they believe in the potential of their staff. The best leaders don't just distribute leadership and empower others, they develop and coach them.”

Steve Munby

Chief Executive, NCSL

Since it was first introduced in 1997, NPQH has played a vital and successful role in preparing individuals for headship.

Why is it changing?

Headship has changed significantly since NPQH was last redesigned in 2001 and the role is now more complex, challenging and diverse. Headteachers today have new responsibilities and there are radical changes to the way schools interact with each other and with other services. It is now time to revise the qualification to reflect the changing nature of the role of headteachers and school leadership in general.

NPQH has been redesigned following extensive consultation. It now provides a flexible, personalised development pathway to prepare aspiring headteachers for 21st century leadership and management challenges. It will give them the confidence and competence to apply for their first headship immediately on graduation.

More than half of the country's headteachers will be reaching retirement within the next five to ten years. We need to work together to sustain the flow of high quality school leaders to ensure the best outcomes for children, young people and their families. The redesigned model NPQH will ensure that the provision for aspiring headteachers helps to attract sufficient high quality headteachers for the future.

Who should apply?

The redesigned NPQH is for those who aspire to headship. It is not for those just seeking really good professional development. Applicants should be highly motivated towards headship and ready and competent to take up a headship post on graduation. To signal this change, participants on the redesigned NPQH will be known as trainee headteachers.

How long will NPQH take to complete?

Trainee headteachers will spend between 4 - 12 months on NPQH depending on their personal professional development needs.



There are three stages to the redesigned NPQH, devised to ensure that the right people apply and are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential for headship, as soon as possible.

Prospective applicants will be encouraged to discuss their aspirations and leadership capabilities with you before registering their interest. They will also be able to access online diagnostic tools and materials designed to help them find out more about headship, reflect on their readiness for the role and identify their learning and development needs.

Entry stage

After completing an online application with your support, successful applicants will engage in online self-assessment activities, including a 360° diagnostic to which you will be asked to contribute. The applicant will then attend a two-day assessment and development event. This event will further assess their motivation, capability and readiness to progress onto NPQH, and enable them to create a personalised leadership development plan.

Development stage

Following an introductory day at which trainee headteachers will meet NCSL regional and national leaders and form self-directed learning groups, they will follow their own personalised development plan. According to their needs trainee headteachers will:

- access NCSL's leadership and management materials, modules and online communities
- engage in peer learning
- access coaching for improvement
- engage in a short school placement
- attend NCSL seminars and master classes
- learn about the latest leadership research and national education policies
- access additional local leadership development activities

Graduation stage

When they feel they are ready for headship, trainee headteachers will present a portfolio of leadership and management evidence to a board, including serving headteachers. If the evidence presented meets the National Standards for Headteachers, NPQH will be awarded and this will signal their immediate readiness for headship.

First headship

Support will continue into headship, through NCSL's Early Headship Provision. Learning on NPQH and any further development needs will inform new headteachers' performance management discussions with governors.



Benefits of the redesigned NPQH for schools

- through personalisation and self-directed learning, school leaders with a place on NPQH will be more aware of their individual strengths and areas for development, and committed to undertaking whole-school responsibilities
- through supporting those with the potential for headship, headteachers have the opportunity to demonstrate their confidence in the next generation of school leaders
- through enabling those very close to headship to focus on their own development, the school has an opportunity to enable others to step up to leadership and management roles
- through hosting short placements for trainee headteachers, schools will have an opportunity to gain an external perspective on the organisation's strengths and areas for improvement
- schools will be able to fill headship vacancies with high quality NPQH graduates appropriate for their context

I am a headteacher. How can I help?

As a headteacher you have a vital role to play in encouraging those with leadership potential to aspire to headship. You can help to grow the next generation of school leaders by:

- being an ambassador for the role
- talking to potential headteachers in your school about what you do
- sharing your experience and leadership expertise
- identifying and encouraging those with headship potential through performance management
- assisting them in reflecting on their readiness for headship
- giving open, honest feedback about strengths and development needs
- supporting them in making an application
- contributing to the trainee headteacher's 360° diagnostic process

- supporting and coaching them as they work through their NPQH development plan
- enabling them to address development needs
- hosting short placements for trainee headteachers from other schools
- considering applying for a role as an NPQH assessor or coach

I am managing an aspiring headteacher who doesn't currently work in a school. How can I help?

You have a vital role to play in encouraging those with leadership potential to aspire to headship. In doing so, you will be making an important contribution to the education system and the life chances of children, young people and their families. You can help to grow the next generation of school leaders by:

- supporting prospective applicants
- giving them opportunities to refresh their knowledge of schools
- identifying and encouraging those with headship potential through performance management
- assisting them in reflecting on their readiness for headship
- giving open and honest feedback about their strengths and development needs
- supporting them in making an application
- supporting and coaching them as they work through their development plan
- supporting them in undertaking a short placement in a school
- sharing your leadership and management expertise
- contributing to the trainee headteacher's self-assessment
- supporting them to gather a portfolio of evidence of leadership and management expertise

Redesigned model NPQH - The line manager's role

Pre-entry

Encourage those with potential to consider headship and support them in assessing their readiness to apply



Entry stage

Support the application process
Contribute to the applicant's self-assessment and give feedback



Development stage (4 to 12 months)

Be supportive as trainee headteachers work through their personal development plan, and access NCSL materials, peer learning, supporting for improvement and other aspects of core provision

Support trainee headteachers through core leadership development provision as they:

- Access a range of NCSL leadership and management materials
- Undertake a placement in another context
- Attend NCSL seminars and master classes
- Access the latest research and policy
- Engage with online activities
- Connect with local leadership development activities



Graduation stage

Play a part in contributing to a trainee headteacher's portfolio of leadership and management evidence



First headship

Support new headteachers in further professional development through performance management

Also available from NCSL:

- **www.ncsl.org.uk/leadershipnetwork**

The Leadership Network brings together the experience and ideas of school leaders across the country to create a powerful focus for change and development in school leadership. The Leadership Network is free to join and members can access a range of topical regional events.

- **www.ncsl.org.uk/leadershiplib**

The Leadership Library is a free unique resource bringing together some of the best leadership and management thinking from around the world.

- **www.ncsl.org.uk/tomorrowsleaderstoday**

The Tomorrow's leaders today campaign is about finding, developing and keeping great headteachers. The web pages include a range of resources designed to inspire and support aspiring heads.

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