

A Professional Expectation: Improving access to CPD for teachers and school leaders



1st March 2024

Introduction

The professional development of teachers and school leaders is essential for the maintenance of a strong and flourishing teaching profession. This is self-evident: if we want teachers to pass knowledge and learning onto our children, it stands to reason that we also want them to engage in the pursuit of learning themselves, to be looking to progress and improve. Thankfully, this is an area where common sense is supported by clear evidence. We know that the single most important in-school factor affecting pupil outcomes is the quality of the teacher at the front of the class¹, and we know that the right leadership has a profound impact on the ability of teachers to perform well².

These facts have been a key motivation in the government's increased investment in recent years in the so-called 'Golden Thread' reforms - the collection of policies that have transformed ITT, introduced a new induction programme for teachers in the shape of the Early Career Framework, and overhauled and funded new National Professional Qualifications. These reforms have also motivated a sharp upturn in interest from across the education sector in how to promote the best quality teaching, with many thousands of teachers and school leaders engaging in communities of practice, reading and researching evidence, and finding ways to explore and implement new ideas in their schools and classrooms.

If it wins the next General Election, The Labour Party wants to take reforms a stage further by introducing an entitlement to CPD for every teacher and school leader. We should acknowledge that this idea is based on past work - it was under active consideration by the last Labour administration, and most recently has been explored in a project led by the Wellcome Trust³. We also need to be clear that this proposed investment in CPD is not just about improving teacher practice or pupil outcomes; it is a sign of an increased trust in the workforce and a commitment to moving ever more towards supporting an independent professional identity and purpose.

Like all ideas that seem good in principle, it is important to consider how they might turn out in practice. This is what this report sets out to do: if Labour (or indeed any party) wants to introduce an entitlement to CPD for every school teacher and leader, how best should it be done? Throughout the report, we have tried to help frame the

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<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/1-high-quality-teaching>

² <https://evidencebased.education/school-environment-and-leadership-evidence-review/> and <https://tdtrust.org/coi/>

³ <https://cms.wellcome.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/final-cpd-challenge-evaluation-report.pdf>

key issues that must be considered and decisions that need to be made by asking questions under three broad themes:

- What CPD should be funded?
- How should any entitlement be delivered?
- What steps should be taken to turn this policy idea into a practical reality?

Underpinning everything we have discovered, and indeed recommend in this report, is the idea that an entitlement has to be rooted in a strong professional culture in order to have a full impact. This cannot be dictated from Whitehall, by the trust CEO, or from the Head's office. It needs to be part of the fabric of teaching, built in from the very first day of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) through to the last day in the job after a fulfilling career. It must involve both providing support and removing barriers to job-embedded professional learning. Individual teachers have to want to learn, to improve, and to appreciate how an understanding of pedagogy has evolved since they qualified. School leaders need to do this, too, for themselves, but also to support a culture of learning and development for staff which is linked to school improvement plans as well as individual needs. The government and the wider education sector need to operate in service of this approach, accepting that supporting professional development for teachers and school leaders takes both time and a willingness to accept diverse views and ideas.

We are grateful for the involvement of dozens of experts who have given freely of their time to help us understand different issues and perspectives, and to teachers and school leaders across the country who have sent in thoughts and ideas and have taken part in focus groups. Needless to say, this report is not a reflection of what any individual person or group might think. Rather, it is our attempt to do justice to the collective wisdom and enthusiasm of the people we have consulted with and learned from across this process.

We hope that this report helps those in government, whether now or in the future, to introduce an entitlement to CPD in a positive and considered way. If that happens, we believe it can help to transform the teaching landscape, creating a sustained cycle of improvement and professionalism that is sorely needed against the backdrop of recruitment and retention crises and declining morale and wellbeing.

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1. Executive Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1. An investment in the professional development of teachers and school leaders is an investment in children. Helping teachers and school leaders develop and grow is amongst the best ways we have to improve the ways schools work, the way teaching happens, and the way that children learn.
- 1.2. We are at a moment in time when the case for investing in CPD for teachers and school leaders has never been more widely accepted. The introduction of the so-called 'Golden Thread' is transformative - creating a consistent approach from initial teacher training, through the induction period in school (via the Early Career Framework), and onto established teaching roles (via National Professional Qualifications). It has led to an investment of money, time, and expertise - underpinned by a delivery infrastructure - that helps to embed effective CPD throughout the system. In the Chartered College of Teaching, we have a professional body that increasingly leads debate about effective practice, alongside other evidence-driven institutions such as the Education Endowment Foundation and the National Institute for Teaching. We have also seen an increase in the number of teacher-led networks, inspired by a desire within the profession to engage with the latest research, ideas, and thinking.
- 1.3. This backdrop helps to create a positive context within which to go further and introduce an entitlement to CPD for every teacher and school leader. The Labour Party has committed to doing this if it forms the next government, and we would recommend that all political parties consider the benefits of such an approach. The report helps to unpack the issues involved in delivering such an entitlement and makes clear recommendations about how the policy should be taken forward.
- 1.4. Despite this positive context, the findings of this review demonstrate the introduction of a new entitlement is not straightforward. It is important that time and care are taken to implement changes so that they are based clearly on evidence - not just of what makes effective CPD in isolation, but of how an understanding of the evidence can translate into tangible improvements in the classroom. It is also important that changes are made *with* the sector rather than *to* the sector: teachers and school leaders should be involved meaningfully in decisions about design and implementation. This should be seen as a joint endeavour between the government and the profession.

- 1.5. That is why we prefer the idea of creating an expectation that CPD is an embedded part of a professional teaching career, rather than an entitlement through which CPD is accessed. It may be a matter of semantics, but 'entitlement' suggests a disparity between the roles of government and the profession, whereas we think framing this policy in terms of an expectation is a better way to consider the mutual trust and obligation needed to make it a success: teachers and school leaders should expect the government to provide the necessary funding and structures to support the delivery of CPD, and the government should expect teachers and school leaders to show professionalism and judgement in the choices they make. Most of all, for us to collectively realise the full benefits of this idea, teachers and school leaders must be supported to, and take responsibility for, increasing their expectations of their own commitment to CPD, and that of their peers. Professional development should not just become part of what teachers do, but part of what being a teacher is.
- 1.6. In order for this to work, we need to move beyond a focus on prescription, with a tight control over what constitutes acceptable evidence on what CPD is effective and how that CPD is delivered. This is not a criticism of the current government - there is a strong case to be made that such prescription has been necessary to make the case for funding and to build up the body of professional knowledge in the system. But a prescriptive approach is limiting, and it is time to build on the positive work undertaken hitherto and forge a new approach that emphasises the agency and responsibility of the individual teacher and school leader.
- 1.7. This report sets out a programme of reform that is inclusive, thorough, and based on mutual trust and accountability. We ask that the government play a critical role by:
 - 1.7.1. continuing to fund the ECF and NPQs (with some specific ideas on how they can be improved further) so that they can be accessed by any teacher and school leader that can benefit from them;
 - 1.7.2. working with the sector to review the *Teachers' Standards for Continuing Professional Development*, before creating a new fund to support the development of a CPD offer that teachers and school leaders can choose, based on their specific professional needs and areas of development, confident in the quality of the offer;

- 1.7.3. commissioning the development of support tools to help school leaders and teachers have effective professional development conversations, and make effective decisions about what they need; and,
- 1.7.4. engaging teachers and school leaders meaningfully in the design and delivery of this work.
- 1.8. The wider education system needs to continue to step up. The Chartered College of Teaching has an opportunity to extend its reach across the profession, providing a source of advice and expectations more akin to comparable organisations in other sectors, such as health, law, or accountancy. Those organisations already involved in the development and delivery of CPD - including the Education Endowment Foundation, the lead providers of the ECF and NPQs, and research organisations - have a role to play in promoting evidence-based approaches. And every single teacher and school leader needs to play a part in embracing the opportunity provided by additional funding.
- 1.9. With this in place, the majority of any new funding should be distributed to schools, with decisions on how it is spent taken by school leaders and teachers as part of conversations around professional development. Our starting assumption is that the easiest way to do this would be in line with the National Funding Formula, although careful consideration should be given to ensure that the specific needs of special schools, alternative provision, and small schools are properly accounted for.
- 1.10. CPD can serve a number of purposes - it can drive recruitment, develop individual skills and learning, contribute to the management and improvement of performance, and help to retain quality teachers within the profession. It is important that CPD can support these different purposes, but equally important that the specific interventions chosen in any specific circumstance are done so with a clear understanding of what they are seeking to achieve and why they are the best option to achieve it.
- 1.11. There is a potential tension between CPD that exists to serve the needs of a school or a MAT, and the professional needs and interests of individual school leaders and teachers. Our view is that the current programme of INSET days should be the main route for school-wide training and development - for example, on safeguarding or on the details of a new behaviour management policy. Teachers and school leaders should consider their own development needs on top of such training, with a

distinction between operational training and individual professional development.

- 1.12. That does not mean that there is no link between the CPD undertaken by an individual and the needs of a school. The best CPD often responds to an immediate issue and is able to be implemented quickly. What is needed is a professional dialogue between the school and the teacher (or the governing body and the head) to strike a balance between the needs of the individual and those of the school, supported by the tools to be commissioned by the government as outlined above and elsewhere in this report.
- 1.13. Although tempted by the idea of a specified number of funded hours for CPD - say 35 hours a year per teacher or school leader - we do not recommend this approach. There are clear benefits - it is easy to articulate, can be implemented quickly, and can be tracked. However, it is also only likely to have a superficial impact as it does nothing to promote the right kind of CPD for the individual, would encourage box-ticking, and fails to acknowledge the significant workload of teachers and school leaders. Ultimately, we fear it would end up being cosmetic rather than substantive.
- 1.14. Rather, we want to encourage a deeper commitment to professional development that focuses on what will actually make a difference to the professional practice of a teacher or school leader. This could be a formal course of study - for example, an NPQ or a Masters qualification - or it could be informal - for example, shadowing a peer, engaging with an expert relevant to their subject area, or reading an article. The important point is that the activity is considered and has a line of sight to the impact it is trying to achieve and to the potential and needs of the individual accessing it.
- 1.15. The big 'win' available by expanding funding for CPD is not just the benefit to the teacher or school leader of engaging in a positive professional development opportunity, to the school that sees improvements, or even to the child who achieves a better experience or results. It is also the reinforcement of a professional identity for teachers and school leaders that demonstrates that it is a profession that takes its own improvement seriously, regardless of whatever other systems of oversight and accountability exist, not because of them.

Recommendation 1

Government should commission an independently-led review of the *Teachers' Standards for Professional Development*, to take account of the increase in our understanding and expectations since the previous version was published in 2016.

Recommendation 2

Government should commit to fully funding the so-called 'Golden Thread'. This includes funding the ECF, including the time needed for mentors to perform their roles successfully, and funding NPQs so that no teacher is prevented from accessing them due to cost or capacity pressures, if it is the right CPD opportunity for them.

Within this, the content of leadership NPQs should be reviewed to ensure they provide the right support for leaders to manage CPD conversations within their settings, and that the frameworks are fit-for-purpose in offering school leaders the full range of knowledge and understanding they need to perform their roles.

Recommendation 3

Government should create a new *Teachers' Professional Development Fund*, either delivered directly by the DfE or by a commissioned national organisation, to seed fund the development of CPD in areas of need (e.g. creating an offer for mentoring throughout a teacher's career, or looking at subject specific CPD). This funding is not for the delivery of CPD - that will need to be paid for by schools - but for the piloting and creation of CPD that meets a clear quality threshold so that schools know they can invest in it with confidence. We suggest a starting figure of £3m per year be made available for such a fund.

Recommendation 4

The remaining money available for the entitlement should be given to schools to spend based on the application of their judgement. This may be used to fully or partly pay for courses, cover costs, travel or any other reasonable expense that clearly serves the professional development of teachers and school leaders.

Our starting assumption is that this should be distributed in line with the National Funding Formula, but we recommend that the government should consider whether that meets the specific needs of special schools, alternative provision, and those with additional needs in mainstream settings. We do not think the money should be specifically ring-fenced - that has drawbacks in terms of administrative burdens and can lead to poor decision making. Instead we recommend that a substantive programme of evaluation is established at the beginning to inform our understanding of the quality, effectiveness, and impact of this approach, including how schools use the funding, and determining if tighter controls are required.

Recommendation 5

We do not recommend that the entitlement is defined in terms of a specific number of hours. Although attractive as an idea, in practice we are concerned that this will lead to a culture of box-ticking and compliance rather than development and curiosity. Rather, we believe the entitlement should be framed in terms of a professional expectation that all teachers and school leaders engage in professional development and that the government should ensure that the funding and systems are in place to enable them to do so.

Recommendation 6

CPD funded by the entitlement should be focussed primarily on the individual needs of the teacher or school leader. It should not, generally, fund training related to operational or policy issues across a school, which should ordinarily be undertaken on INSET days.

Recommendation 7

To support this, we recommend that the Chartered College of Teaching be commissioned and funded by the government to create and maintain a *Professional Development Portal* for all teachers and school leaders (including non-members) to access. This digital portal will help teachers and school leaders consider what CPD might be most appropriate, taking into account the context of the school and the developmental needs and ambitions of the individual. It should include specific

advice on how to undertake a professional development conversation, to help school leaders balance competing demands and individuals understand their needs.

Recommendation 8

Alongside this, guidance should be produced that helps individual teachers and school leaders understand different career pathways and how different CPD options can help them meet their own professional aspirations. This should be considered as a tool for the individual, helping them explore opportunities with curiosity and supported by evidence rather than as an attempt to create a rigid career structure. There should be no link to specific levels of promotion or pay. This can be developed by the DfE or by a commissioned organisation, but regardless should fully embrace a co-production approach with schools and the wider education sector to ensure it reflects the realities of working in an increasingly varied school system.

2. What is the scope of this work?

- 2.1. This report is being written in the light of an indication by the Labour Party that it intends to introduce an entitlement to professional development for all teachers if it wins power at the next election. Specifically, in *Breaking Down the Barriers to Opportunity*, the Labour Party has said:

“Labour will work with schools to deliver a ‘Teacher Training Entitlement’, including backfilling roles so teachers at every stage of their career can be released for training, and ensuring guidance is available on evidence-based, high-quality professional development.”⁴

- 2.2. This pledge forms part of a section about retaining teaching staff, and is framed as much about recruitment and retention as it is about supporting the quality of teaching. This is consistent with the approach taken by the current Conservative Government: the investments in the so-called ‘Golden Thread’ of professional development reforms - the reform of ITT, introduction of the Early Career Framework (ECF), and the reform of NPQs - all formed a key part of the *Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy*⁵ published in 2019.
- 2.3. The two are not, of course, mutually exclusive. It is reasonable to make the link that offering an exceptional professional development opportunity for teachers both improves outcomes for pupils and helps encourage people to join, and remain in, the profession. But we must be mindful that there are likely to be tensions and trade-offs in different options, and be honest about what they are.
- 2.4. This report is not a political piece of work - we encourage any party to consider and take forward these ideas and recommendations - but it does respond directly to the Labour Party’s pledge. It is an attempt to provide a view on what approach a future Labour government should take if introducing an entitlement to professional development for teachers.
- 2.5. In line with the Labour Party announcement, this report focuses exclusively on teachers and leaders in school settings only. It does not consider other phases of education - e.g. early years or further education - or other roles in schools - e.g. teaching assistants, although we would

⁴ <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Mission-breaking-down-barriers.pdf>, p.11

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c8fc653ed915d07a80a33fa/DFE_Teacher_Retention_Strategy_Report.pdf

encourage any government to learn from the successful implementation of an entitlement to CPD in for teachers and leaders to support the professional development of people in these situations and settings too.

What is the purpose of funding CPD?

- 2.6. Effective CPD is vitally important for a variety of reasons. It can drive recruitment, develop individual skills and learning, contribute to the management and improvement of performance, and help retain quality teachers within the profession. Importantly, these aims can co-exist and be mutually reinforcing: a teacher who is better able to manage behaviour in their classroom as a result of accessing a specific piece of professional development may be more likely to stay in the profession, and more likely to contribute to a positive atmosphere and culture in a school, so that it can recruit more teachers in the future.
- 2.7. The evidence for investing in professional development to improve the quality of teaching is strong. We know that teachers can benefit from a variety of professional development opportunities⁶ - from formal courses through to informal mentoring or peer collaboration - and that effective teachers are the most important in-school element to helping children achieve better educational outcomes⁷.
- 2.8. In this report, we don't only consider 'set piece' CPD such as courses or specific conversations, but we also recognise that much vital job-embedded professional learning comes about through opportunities to simply work alongside others in working conditions and culture that are supportive and enable effective collaboration and discussion. It is this combination of the formal and the informal that supports a school culture in which teachers feel supported, can improve, and are able to achieve their potential.
- 2.9. Rather than ask why CPD should be funded, it might be more apposite to ask why it is funded so poorly, given its outsized beneficial impact on the system. Governments - of all political hues - tend to invest more time in curriculum reform, qualification creation and overhaul, accountability tweaks, and system changes (such as the promotion of MATs). Each of these might be important in its own right, but the teachers and school

⁶ <https://tdtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/DGT-Full-report.pdf>

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<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/support-for-schools/school-planning-support/1-high-quality-teaching>

leaders involved in implementing and responding to these reforms are often overlooked in terms of the workload implications, with the training needed to respond to changes too often replacing CPD that would have a beneficial impact in the classroom, and for them as professionals.

What CPD already exists in the system?

- 2.10. There are a number of broad ways in which formal professional development currently takes place within the English school system:
 - 2.10.1. INSET (IN-SERVICE TraininG) Days, sometimes known colloquially as 'Baker Days' after the former Secretary of State for Education, Kenneth Baker. Each school is required to offer five days a year for in-service training of staff and completion of administrative tasks, with content typically organised by the school leadership team, often to respond to school-wide priorities (such as a new behaviour management policy), and areas of particular concern (such as literacy outcomes), or to deliver statutory training (on safeguarding), for example;
 - 2.10.2. Specialist and statutory training. As mentioned above, this includes safeguarding training but may also include regular practice updates around dealing with allergies, and procedural training for all or just specific staff, such as safe-handling or minibus training. In some specialist and alternative settings, this category can be particularly wide-ranging and time-consuming, with significantly more training required to meet statutory, liability and insurance requirements around, e.g. healthcare, equipment or specialist needs.
 - 2.10.3. Mandatory government requirements. These start with the consolidation of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), which, although granted initially at the end of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) stage, is not certain until an induction period has been successfully completed. This phase is now embodied in the Early Career Framework (ECF), which takes two years to complete at the very beginning of a teacher's career. At the end of the two years, QTS is re-confirmed by an Appropriate Body⁸;

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-teacher-induction-appropriate-bodies/find-an-appropriate-body>

- 2.10.4. Government-awarding qualifications and programmes, the most notable of which are National Professional Qualifications (NPQs), which have existed for more than twenty years and initially focused on supporting aspirant and current heads (with a mandatory NPQ in Headship under the last Labour government). NPQs have expanded in recent years and are funded by the state to offer free access by teachers and school leaders in state schools. As well as NPQs, there are a variety of government-provided CPD options, including Maths Hubs, English Hubs, Behaviour Hubs, Attendance Hubs, and Music Hubs;
- 2.10.5. Programmes of academic or professional study. These include apprenticeships (generally funded through the Apprentice Levy), master's and doctoral level study through HEIs (with varying funding splits between schools and individuals), professional certifications and qualifications (including Chartered Teacher Status, diplomas in school business management, coaching qualifications, etc.)
- 2.10.6. Commercial, informal, industry-led, and school-led CPD. Despite the increase in state investment in recent years, a significant proportion of time and money spent on CPD in schools is still focused on a mix of buying in external expertise or resources along with mobilising their own staff to deliver training to others. Delivered by a mixture of not-for-profit and for-profit organisations, schools continue to spend money on courses and content they feel will improve the quality of their offer to pupils. This can include, for example, video CPD subscription services, buying books for teacher 'CPD libraries', commissioning external consultants to come in and speak or deliver training, engaging with external courses (whether in-person, hybrid or fully online), and so on. Sometimes, CPD is the result of investments in externally created schemes of curricula and other programmes of improvement that include elements of training to use them. Other times it is led from within a school, often with dedicated staff time allocated to designing and implementing programmes. This CPD is generally unregulated and of varying quality, albeit in theory

guided by the creation of the *Standards for Teachers' Professional Development*⁹, published in 2016.

- 2.11. There are also a number of informal ways that teachers engage with professional development opportunities directly. This might be through establishing their own networks of peer support or coaching, sometimes supported by schools or MATs. Or it might be through engagement with wider networks of practice online, with groups using social media to share ideas and approaches, creating and attending conferences (often at weekends), and building communities of practice that seek to enlighten and support.

"When presented with a free-response question asking them to imagine what they would do with a free CPD entitlement, it became clear that informal, and peer-to-peer forms of training were particularly attractive to teachers."

Becky Allen, Loic Menzies & Iain Ford - Teacher Tapp & Gatsby Foundation Report

- 2.12. It is also worth considering the number of competing systems that support the delivery of CPD in the system. At their best, these systems work in complementary ways, but there are few incentives for them to do so. They include:
- 2.12.1. Teaching School Hubs. These are a network of 87 schools given money by the DfE to support local CPD¹⁰. This funding does not cover the delivery of the ECF or NPQs, although Teaching School Hubs are expected to be involved in these, too. Schools are not obliged to work with their local Teaching School Hub, although they are encouraged to do so;
- 2.12.2. The Chartered College of Teaching is the professional body for teachers. It offers a range of pathways to achieve Chartered Status as well as other development resources and courses for teachers across the country;

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a750b16ed915d5c54465143/160712_-_PD_Expert_Group_Guidance.pdf

¹⁰ <https://tshc.org.uk/find-your-local-teaching-school-hub/>

- 2.12.3. MATs. Increasingly, Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) have their own leaders of professional development who coordinate trust-wide activity and either buy in external support or create internal CPD opportunities. Some Trusts contain a Teaching School Hub and align offerings between these structures, while others work separately from local systems. The ability to do this is affected by the size of the MAT;
- 2.12.4. Local Authorities. Varying enormously in size and scope, some authorities still run significant training programmes and support services (such as school improvement advice and services, subject networks, local assessment moderation, and governor training) in-house, while others have spun these off into either 'co-op' style organisations or commercial organisations, many of whom now work outside of their traditional geographic boundaries;
- 2.12.5. Lead Providers. The government funds lead providers to deliver the ECF and/or NPQs. Only those organisations that have been successful in a procurement process are able to deliver these programmes, working with local Delivery Partners, which may be Teaching School Hubs, but are often not. These Lead Providers typically offer their own CPD as well as that funded directly by the government;
- 2.12.6. Local organisations. Sometimes formed from previous Teaching Schools unsuccessful in the last round of procurement to become a Teaching School Hub, from local authority services, or from an established private provider of CPD, these organisations often have a strong local presence and reputation;
- 2.12.7. Higher Education. Many teachers remain interested in extending their knowledge through Masters programmes or other higher education qualifications. Universities continue to offer a range of Masters in Education and Doctoral programmes (PhD and EdD) as well as shorter courses and access courses; and,
- 2.12.8. Educator-led networks. Recent years have seen growth in networks of support and development, sometimes under a generic banner (e.g. ResearchEd¹¹, which has events covering multiple topics) or with a more specific focus (e.g. BAMEed¹², a grassroots

¹¹ <https://researched.org.uk/>

¹² <https://www.bameednetwork.com/>

network promoting diversity in the education workforce, or LitDrive¹³ which offers subject-specific resources for English teachers). This could also include subject associations that engage directly with subject leads in the profession¹⁴.

- 2.13. Taken together, these systems and approaches are both a cause of optimism and concern: optimism because they demonstrate the appetite and scale of interest in CPD for teachers and school leaders, but concern because they reflect a fragmented reality that teachers and school leaders often find hard to navigate.

What conditions would need to be established to ensure CPD is considered a priority for the profession?

- 2.14. Any CPD is unlikely to be successful if framed and delivered as a 'one-off' initiative - a day at a course or reading an article, without any consideration of how any lessons learned can be taken forward in tangible ways. Much work has been done to try to establish the elements that make CPD effective - for example, the Developing Great Teaching review¹⁵ (2015) and the EEF Guidance on Effective Professional Development¹⁶ (2021) - but no matter how good the CPD itself, it is only of value to the participant, their colleagues and their pupils if a good choice of CPD content and approach is chosen in the first place, if it is engaged in effectively by the participant, and if that participant is working in conditions that allows it to have impact in the school and the classroom by the teacher or school leader who has engaged in it.
- 2.15. This means the choices around what CPD to take and how it is taken forward throughout a career are crucial when considering how any CPD entitlement should operate. In particular, what should the balance be between allowing freedom to choose CPD and ensuring that public investment is well spent? Is this inevitably a tension?

¹³ <https://litdrive.org.uk/>

¹⁴ <https://www.subjectassociations.org.uk/the-cfsa-directory/>

¹⁵ <https://tdtrust.org/about/dgt/>

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<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development>

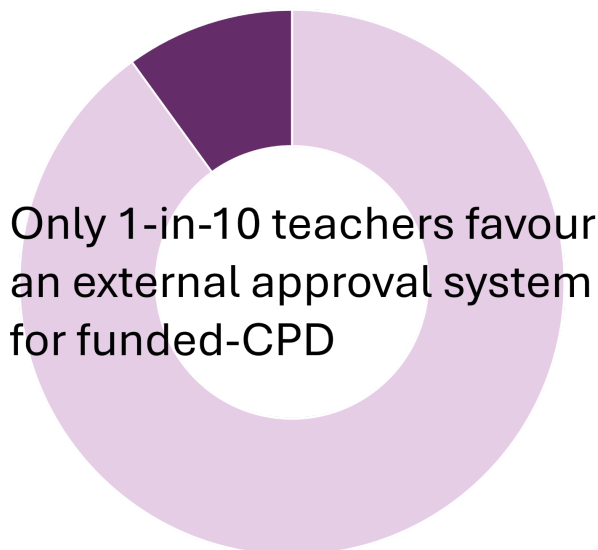
- 2.16. We welcome investments over the last decade which have seen the current government gradually expand the types of CPD funded for teachers and school leaders. We also reflect that it has, in general, moved towards more prescription in terms of the types and content of the CPD undertaken. Although there has been no overt attempt to prevent any particular school or individual from spending money on any particular CPD, the creation and promotion of the 'Golden Thread' has meant pushing a central view on what evidence should be considered robust in terms of CPD. The ECF is, of course, a mandatory element of training that is heavily prescribed from the centre, as is ITT (which has gone through a number of reforms that have attempted to standardise approaches and evidence and create a narrower pool of approved providers). Reformed NPQs are more prescriptive than their predecessors, and the control from the DfE has increased (with fewer lead providers, content reviewed by the DfE and Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) before it can be delivered, and lead providers of both NPQs and the ECF subject to Ofsted inspection).
- 2.17. The current Conservative government has also attempted to create structures that guide CPD choices in ways aligned with a defined vision of excellence. This includes taking the network of teaching schools (a Coalition policy from 2011 which built on previous New Labour initiatives that sought to designate individual system leaders (National Leaders of Education (NLEs) to grow a network of over 700 schools by 2019) and reducing them to 87 Teaching School Hubs, with closer control over what CPD can be promoted (with requirements to engage with central government programmes, including Maths Hubs, etc.). It also includes supporting the creation of the EEF, now designated as an official government 'What Works?' centre for education, to promote evidence-based interventions in the system. This includes evidence on effective professional development in general terms and also some specific studies by phase and subject¹⁷.
- 2.18. The broad rationale for this more prescriptive approach has been the idea that the CPD market has not worked effectively, with the promotion of fads over evidence, with too much time and money wasted on interventions that were either useless or actively harmful. In other words, too many teachers and school leaders were making ineffective choices about the CPD undertaken. This reflected a sense that the education profession itself did not have sufficient systems, structures and

¹⁷ <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence>

institutions that could act to improve quality and choice in this area. So, the rationale suggests, the government has had a role to play in promoting courses and structures that prioritise evidence-based CPD, with a need for tight control and direction in order to have maximum impact in the short term. Government engagement with the sector has been deliberately narrow, focusing on trusted experts and representatives rather than looking for broader (and inevitably slower and less aligned) ways of working more openly with the system.

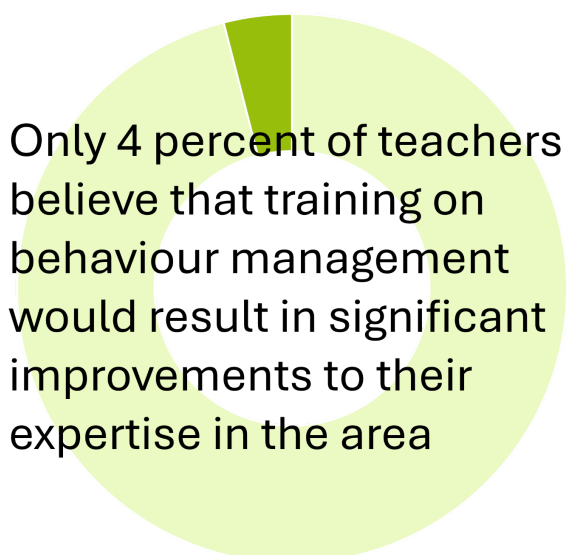
- 2.19. It is important to note that, without this clear prescription and sense of control over approach and quality, it would have been difficult for the DfE to persuade His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) to invest so heavily in the Golden Thread. HMT is motivated predominantly by ensuring that public money is spent correctly, and is far more likely to focus on immediate impact (say over the 2-3 year funding cycle of a programme) rather than thinking about a longer-term, systemic change. The combination of reformed ITT, the ECF, and reformed NPQs, along with a tighter delivery infrastructure, has been essential to achieving the levels of funding the sector has enjoyed in recent years, even against the backdrop of constrained finances elsewhere.
- 2.20. The inevitable - indeed intended - consequence of an increase in prescription is a decrease in local choice and agency. Nonetheless, if teachers and school leaders engage with the more heavily prescribed central offer, gain value from the programme, and implement new strategies that improve pupil experiences, then that is a price worth paying. In some ways, this is the case, with growing numbers of teachers engaging in the reformed NPQs and the vast majority of schools choosing a centrally-designed ECF programme. But the picture is not universal.
- 2.21. Recent work undertaken by Teacher Tapp and the Gatsby Foundation¹⁸ shows that, despite the number of teachers and school leaders engaging in the ECF and NPQs, faith in the concept of centrally determined offers is low, with only 1 in 10 teachers preferring the idea of external approval for funded CPD.

¹⁸ <https://teachertapp.co.uk/app/uploads/2024/01/The-State-of-CPD-FINAL1.pdf>



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- 2.22. This lack of enthusiasm is matched by a lack of belief in the efficacy of some centrally prescribed CPD. For example, there has been a significant focus on behaviour management training based on a consistent, centrally determined set of evidence - forming a core part of the ECF and of all NPQs, with a specific NPQ in Learning Behaviour and Culture, as well as underpinning the work of the DfE-funded Behaviour Hubs. Yet, just 4 percent of respondents felt that training on behaviour management would result in improvements in their expertise in this area. There seems to be little faith in the centrally-prescribed approach which cannot but limit its effectiveness.



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¹⁹ <https://teachertapp.co.uk/app/uploads/2024/01/The-State-of-CPD-FINAL1.pdf>
²⁰ <https://teachertapp.co.uk/app/uploads/2024/01/The-State-of-CPD-FINAL1.pdf>

- 2.23. It is still too soon to know the impact of the ECF and NPQ reforms in terms of teacher expertise - and there is early evidence of positive impact for ECTs²¹ - but there is a mixed picture in terms of the ability of participants to apply learning within their context. For ECTs, this can mean the newest members of the school with the most up-to-date knowledge and the least agency to act on it. The same can be true of NPQ participants who have acquired knowledge but are not given the space to lead change in their schools.
- 2.24. The focus on a centrally prescribed approach and the consequent lack of local and individual agency around CPD works against evidence that suggests this is a problem in terms of teacher satisfaction, retention, and managing workload. A 2020 report by the NFER²² showed that autonomy is its own reward in terms of these crucial areas, and that the most important area of autonomy for teachers is around their own career professional development. The report states: *Increasing teachers' reported influence over their professional development (PD) goals from 'some' to 'a lot' is associated with a nine-percentage-point increase in intention to stay in teaching*".
- 2.25. This means that a short-term approach that focuses too heavily on pushing a set of highly-controlled professional development opportunities has limited utility in isolation because - although it helps to create a better evidenced CPD offer - it does little to help ensure that the right CPD opportunities are being taken by the right teachers, or to ensure that the learning from CPD is able to be implemented in practice to deliver better outcomes for children. It also suggests that the potential downsides - around job satisfaction, manageability, and retention - have not been properly considered as relevant impacts. In other words, a central approach to the understanding of evidence and the creation of programmes has proven invaluable over the last decade, but it is not enough to ensure effective practice; it is necessary but insufficient.
- 2.26. The NFER work also demonstrates that giving teachers and school leaders agency over their CPD is not the same as there being no structures or guidance in place. The agency to choose between considered options is likely to be more effective than starting with a blank page. Working with

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/642304f82fa848000cec0dcc/Early_career_framework_evaluation_year_one_research_brief_2023.pdf

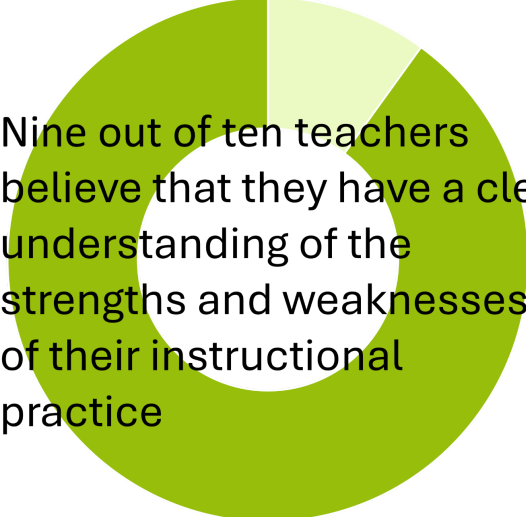
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<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/press-releases/new-study-suggests-teacher-autonomy-over-their-professional-development-is-strongly-linked-with-job-satisfaction-and-retention/>

the NFER, the TDT developed some advice on how teachers and school leaders could exercise their professional judgement and expertise when considering development opportunities.²³

Do we know what CPD individual teachers and leaders need?

- 2.27. If the overall entitlement policy responds to different needs (quality of teaching, retention, etc.), then the same is also true for individual teachers and school leaders who have their own professional ambitions and plans. Alongside this, we have to accept the human element, that is, what is happening in the life of any person - the specific factors that are not relevant at a macro-policy level, but are important to an individual (e.g. family responsibilities and circumstances, ambitions, illness, etc.). In addition, it is difficult to separate the needs of the individual and the school they work in.
- 2.28. This means it is impossible to know with any degree of certainty what the right CPD might be for any specific individual at any specific time. As a general principle, the more the specific context of a school or individual is understood and valued, the more likely it is that CPD that is appropriate and effective will be selected. As the Teacher Tapp and Gatsby work already cited shows, 9 out of 10 teachers feel they have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their instructional practice.



Nine out of ten teachers believe that they have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their instructional practice

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²³ <https://tdtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Guidance-on-Teacher-Goal-Setting-1.pdf>

²⁴ <https://teachertapp.co.uk/app/uploads/2024/01/The-State-of-CPD-FINAL1.pdf>

- 2.29. It is nonetheless a leap to suggest that the individual - who, after all, knows their own personal context better than anybody else - is always well-placed to make effective decisions. A new teacher in the profession will lack the benefit of multiple classroom experiences to help shape decisions, for example, and it is unreasonable to expect busy teachers and school leaders to also fully understand the latest research and evidence as they select their CPD. Even if a teacher has a good understanding of their areas for development, it does not follow that they understand how to access CPD that responds effectively to that need.
- 2.30. One of the clear causes for celebration over the past decade and more has been the improving evidence base for what makes effective CPD for teachers and school leaders. As an area of research and applied practice, it has become both more respected and effective and has motivated those involved in assessing the quality of evidence used in government-sponsored programmes - ITT, the ECF, and NPQs - to help to ensure that the content of these programmes can be trusted by those undertaking them. Organisations such as the Chartered College of Teaching - through its Impact Journal²⁵ - are helping to take evidence and 'operationalise' it, helping teachers and school leaders understand how to turn research into realisable and effective improvements within a classroom or school.
- 2.31. This takes us to a place where the understanding of what CPD might be best at any time for any person has to be a joint endeavour: with central government and other sector organisations playing a role in establishing a robust evidence base and providing frameworks for teachers and school leaders to navigate, and schools and individuals being able to make choices that reflect the context that only they can understand. And, importantly, CPD needs to be accessible and affordable, which means the state plays a role in terms of funding and structures.

What is the difference between the needs of teachers and the schools they work in?

- 2.32. Too often, the individual development needs of a particular teacher and those of the school they work in are conflated. It is common - perhaps near universal - for a school's understanding of CPD to be framed almost exclusively through the lens of a school improvement plan: what does the school need to do in order to improve outcomes? There is a short hop

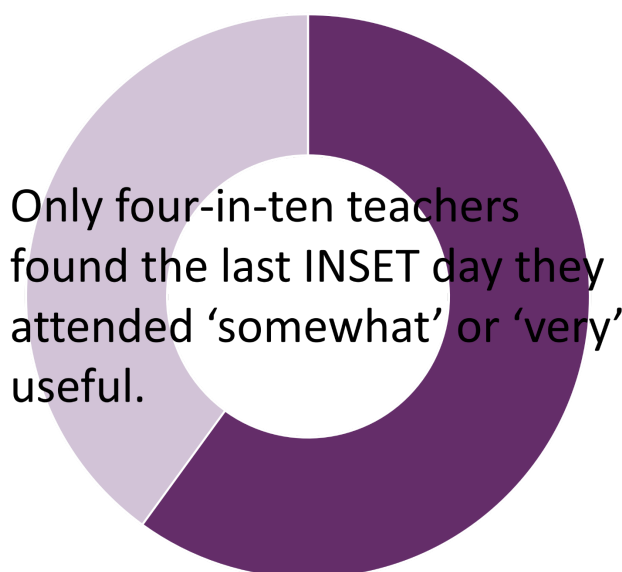
²⁵ <https://chartered.college/impact/>

from this question to planning how INSET days will be used to respond to school priorities, either as collective acts with the whole staff body, or as discrete activities (for individuals or groups (e.g a department)) to respond to a school need.

“Senior leaders can sometimes identify school priorities and training needs as the same thing, whilst staff may identify their own training needs and wider school priorities as entirely separate entities.”

Kat Howard, CPD Expert

- 2.33. It is both striking - and unsurprising - how little faith teachers have in the impact of INSET day activity. Taken with the evidence on the importance of teacher autonomy over their own CPD, it suggests that the current conception of how professional development should be decided and delivered is flawed.



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- 2.34. This is not to say that there is no place for whole school development. There will always be a need for collective work to understand, say, changes to safeguarding policies or how a new behaviour management approach will be introduced. These are school-wide issues that require all staff to have an understanding of them in order to be effective. It is also entirely appropriate that schools have plans to respond to challenges

²⁶ <https://teachertapp.co.uk/app/uploads/2024/01/The-State-of-CPD-FINAL1.pdf>

around teaching and learning. If a school needs to improve its results in maths, a focus on that area involving the relevant staff is a must. There is also clear evidence that demonstrates that the needs of the school and the needs of the individual are not separate, that investing in supportive professional environments improves overall school performance, for example, Kraft and Papay (2014)²⁷.

- 2.35. These activities, whilst important in their own right, are not the same as individual CPD, although they may overlap. It could be that a member of the maths department is keen to undertake subject specific training that can be directly linked to the improvement of maths outcomes overall in a school. But it may also be the case that the maths department is working very well and that subject specific training is not a school priority. Does that mean the maths teacher should not do it?
- 2.36. Our work suggests we need a sophisticated understanding of how the needs of the wider system, schools, and individuals are connected and how they are different in order for an entitlement to be effective.

“There needs to be a link back to what a school or a MAT is trying to do as a larger group, there needs to be some level of choice for the individual, and there needs to be some organisation about how those things align”

Reuben Moore, National Institute of Teaching

Should the entitlement specify the number of hours of CPD each teacher is entitled to access within a specified timeframe?

- 2.37. Finding a way to quantify any entitlement is important for the government in the practical business of establishing how much money is needed and what impact it might have - important questions when it comes to justifying the policy across government and with the wider public. This can either be done by setting a funding amount and then exploring what can be achieved with it, or by setting a clear need and working from the bottom up to establish how much that would cost. More likely, both of

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<https://scholar.harvard.edu/mkraft/publications/can-professional-environments-schools-promote-teacher-development-explaining>

these approaches will be used, and judgements then applied and compromises made before a final policy is confirmed.

- 2.38. A clear quantum is useful for the wider system as well, so that all involved - from providers through to participants - are able to plan with more certainty. What needs to be developed and delivered? What is the size of the market being created? How much time needs to be set aside for study and engagement?
- 2.39. Most commonly, an entitlement is framed in terms of a number of hours - say 30 or 35 hours a year - as was the case with the Wellcome Trust pilot project and subsequent economic analysis by the EPI²⁸ that sparked this latest round of thinking on an entitlement. Such an approach is attractive because it offers clarity for all involved and can be used as the basis on which to arrive at a required funding figure.
- 2.40. Moreover, the DfE could make a specific change to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document²⁹ (STPCD), which specifies, in paragraph 51.5, that *"A teacher employed full-time must be available to perform such duties at such times and such places as may be specified by the headteacher ... for 1265 hours, those hours to be allocated reasonably throughout those days in the school year on which the teacher is required to be available for work."* The DfE could change that '1265' figure to, say, '1230' and specify additionally that 35 hours are to be set aside for CPD.
- 2.41. However, the idea of a specified number of hours also has significant drawbacks:
- 2.41.1. Some CPD - including the ECF and NPQs - require more than 35 hours of engagement in a year, so how are these opportunities to be captured and promoted?
 - 2.41.2. How do we avoid the figure becoming a target, creating a tick-box approach to meet a number rather than focusing on effective CPD?
 - 2.41.3. Would the 35 hours become limiting, in effect preventing those who want to do more?
 - 2.41.4. Why 35 hours? Why not 20 hours, 50 hours, or 100 hours?
 - 2.41.5. Should the number of hours be measured every year or be taken over, say, a five-year period (175 hours over five years)?

²⁸ https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/EPI-Wellcome_CPD-Review_2020.pdf

²⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/652950f96b6fbf0014b7564d/2023_STPCD.pdf

2.42. Moreover, the '1265' hours contained in the STCPD is itself contentious and bears little relation to the amount of hours that teachers actually work - it specifically only applies to the hours of work that teachers can be directed to work by school leaders, with paragraph 51.7 making clear, "*...a teacher must work such reasonable additional hours as may be necessary to enable the effective discharge of the teacher's professional duties, including in particular planning and preparing courses and lessons; and assessing, monitoring, recording and reporting on the learning needs, progress and achievements of assigned pupils.*" Moreover, the STCPD does not apply to school heads.

2.43. In the last TALIS survey³⁰, conducted in 2018, the number of hours worked by teachers in England was shown to be much higher than the OECD average, and teacher workload has been an ongoing issue³¹. Given that context, would the addition of a 35 hours entitlement here create space for teachers and leaders, or just add more to the workload pile?

"Some of the worst CPD feels like superficial box ticking"

Focus group participant, Durham

2.44. There are other options but they also have challenges. For example, rather than setting a number of hours, an entitlement could be linked to a specific amount of funding so that every teacher knows exactly how much they have allocated to them to invest. There is some appetite from the profession for this, with the previously cited survey by Teacher Tapp and Gatsby suggesting that more than one in ten teachers and two-thirds of heads would choose CPD vouchers over a pay rise. So giving a CPD allowance could be an option, but unless funding was effectively unlimited, it would also mean some opportunities are likely to be forever unaffordable through the entitlement (say, a masters course) whilst other teachers scramble to spend their entitlement on CPD that might not be effective.

³⁰ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7222/>

³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-taskforce-to-tackle-teacher-workload>

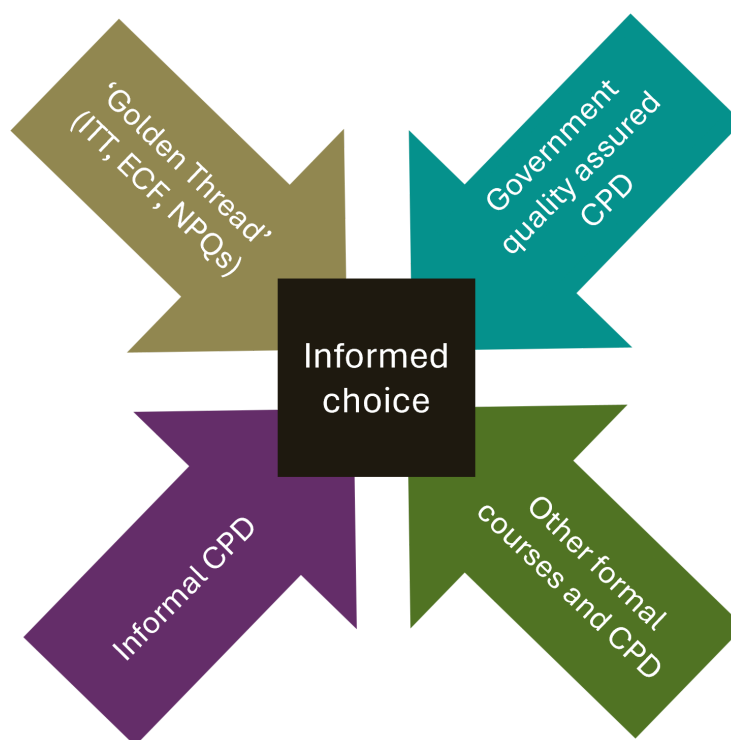
Should an entitlement, in fact, be a requirement?

- 2.45. To be clear, there is no sense from the Labour Party proposals that the CPD entitlement will be a requirement. It is being framed firmly as a supportive investment in the profession, not as another mechanism to hold teachers and school leaders to account.
- 2.46. This is understandable, especially in the current context of the teacher recruitment and retention crisis. Any policy that imposes an additional burden on the system, especially one linked to a sense of requirement and accountability, risks exacerbating an already difficult situation. It is also worth noting that requirements in other sectors - for example in health - are determined not by the government but by the specialist colleges and deaneries that medical professionals must be members of. In other words, it is a sector-led requirement, not one imposed by the government.
- 2.47. Nonetheless, we should be honest about the drawbacks of introducing an entitlement rather than a requirement. These include:
- 2.47.1. Inconsistency of take-up, not least because of workload pressures in schools, meaning teachers and school leaders are unable to prioritise CPD, even if funded;
 - 2.47.2. Deadweight, as those most likely to engage with an entitlement being those who would be keen to access CPD in any event, with less enthusiastic 'harder to reach' teachers and school leaders continuing to avoid CPD opportunities;
 - 2.47.3. A slower pace of change, as the effects of the entitlement will rely on take-up, which in turn relies on persuasion rather than compulsion, and this takes more time; and,
 - 2.47.4. Lower effectiveness, as it is likely that a significant proportion of the workforce will not take up the opportunities of the entitlement (however framed), so the benefits will be less universally felt.
- 2.48. Aside from the possible negative impact on recruitment and retention, a CPD requirement also has potential drawbacks, including pushing unenthusiastic participants towards ineffective CPD in the name of meeting a target, wasting both time and money. What has been a surprise is the appetite for a requirement amongst some of the teachers and school leaders we have engaged with in the production of this report.

Whilst not universal, the fact that such an appetite exists at all was a surprise. It is also why we prefer the term 'expectation' rather than 'entitlement' as it carries that connotation of responsibility and agency, without it being a requirement.

3. What CPD should be funded?

- 3.1. As we have attempted to demonstrate, context matters. It is not sufficient to focus solely on the content and provision of CPD. For entitlement to be fully effective, it needs to operate within a culture of effective decision making and implementation running throughout the entire system. It has to rely in large part on the professionalism and judgement of the teachers and school leaders that make up the teaching profession.
- 3.2. This means it is implausible for an entitlement to be effective if directed from Westminster alone, and a significant amount of local discretion - both at a school level and at an individual level - is needed. This is not the same, however, as saying that there should be no structure. The DfE has a clear role to play in shaping the system to ensure that teachers and school leaders are able to make choices about what CPD to take with confidence in the quality and its likely impact.
- 3.3. We also want to acknowledge once again the progress that has been made over the last decade and more in terms of our collective understanding of what makes a CPD intervention effective, and the significant and positive impact of DfE initiatives in this area. Although there are elements of the ECF and reformed NPQs that could be improved (what policy could not be made better?) the combination of government funding and a solid evidence base are undoubted boons for the system.
- 3.4. On this basis, we believe that an entitlement needs to consider how different levels of central and local decision making work together towards a common purpose.



- 3.5. We start with the 'Golden Thread', which should continue to be funded by the DfE. Every new teacher should benefit from a structured and supportive induction offer, and more experienced teachers should be able to access advanced NPQs without being subject to the whims of location or funding cycles. These should become long-term commitments, embedded in the system in the same way that ITT is. We believe it is right that the DfE should oversee these elements of CPD - either directly or in partnership with the Chartered College of Teaching - to ensure that they offer a consistent experience for all teachers and school leaders regardless of where they are working, not least because they provide transferable qualifications that can be used in any school in the country. We are clear that the introduction of the ECF and funding for NPQs is necessary and positive for the system. We are also clear that there are areas that should be considered for improvement, including funding for mentor time to ensure that ITT and ECF programmes are properly supported, and that work is needed to ensure that leadership NPQs are fit for purpose.
- 3.6. We then suggest that more work is done to provide structured CPD opportunities for individuals to choose from. These are not qualifications designed by the centre or regulated and quality assured by the DfE to the same extent as the ECF and NPQs, but they will be expected to demonstrate how they adhere to the best understanding of what effective CPD should look like. This means that teachers and school leaders can be

confident when choosing them, that they meet a clear quality standard, are based on relevant evidence, and respond to the improving understanding of how CPD can be most effective.

- 3.7. This is likely to require the DfE to spend some time reinvigorating the *Standards for Teachers' Professional Development*³², expanding them to demonstrate how evidence should be used, courses should be designed, and CPD implemented and evaluated. This set of CPD opportunities will not be funded directly by the DfE (although some of the infrastructure will require investment), with CPD being paid for by schools and individuals at a local level after initial seed funding has helped create a sustainable offer.
- 3.8. The DfE may want to commission the creation of some new content within this activity to support consistent approaches across the system where demand is clear. In particular, there is a case for investing more in creating coherent mentoring programmes that are available for all teachers and school leaders throughout their career given the success of such interventions in the ECF. It is important to note other work in this area, including a separate commitment by the Labour Party to support coaching and mentoring for head teachers³³ (which links to the Early Headship Coaching Offer (EHCO) already in the system). As well as supporting the creation of mentoring programmes for all teachers and school leaders, it will be important to understand the additional funding requirements of such programmes (with multiple cover costs, for example) and the latest evidence³⁴ to decide if wider mentoring programmes should become part of the 'Golden Thread' of fully funded opportunities in the future.
- 3.9. The DfE also has a role to play in understanding the market of CPD, to see where there are gaps in either quality or scale and to commission CPD to respond to hitherto unmet needs. This may be around subject specific training or the use of emerging ideas and technologies, for example.
- 3.10. This means that a significant proportion of entitlement funding - in fact, we think the majority - will need to be made available to schools to spend as they see fit. This could be on courses that respond to the reinvigorated *Standards for Teachers' Professional Development*, or it could be on other CPD activities that are determined to be beneficial. This might include

³² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/standard-for-teachers-professional-development>

³³ <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Mission-breaking-down-barriers.pdf> p. 11

³⁴ See, for example, <https://niot.org.uk/teacher-mentoring-research>

formal opportunities - such as support for a masters qualification or attending a subject conference - or less formal opportunities such as shadowing a peer, engaging with an expert relevant to a subject or other specialism, or reading relevant articles, all of which may require support for supply and cover costs.

- 3.11. What this also means is that we need to carefully consider how to help the profession exercise this judgement effectively. These are new expectations and we should not place them upon individuals or schools without understanding how to help them understand and meet these expectations, else the entitlement funding risks becoming a source of unhelpful workload and stress rather than a benefit to individuals and the system.

“You need choice [when looking at CPD] but not so much that it becomes unwieldy. For our learners we create pathway approaches, it is almost like you need those pathway approaches to broaden or narrow down the right training for each individual”

Focus Group Participant, Uxbridge

- 3.12. In order to make local spending go further, it may be appropriate to cover only part of the costs of a specific CPD activity. For example, a school may reasonably agree to fund, say, half the costs of a masters course. These should be decisions made at a local level, as part of a professional development discussion and considering the different calls on what will be a limited pot of money. There are already teachers paying for such courses entirely out of their own pockets who would not shun a contribution, even if the whole costs of some courses and programmes are not covered in all cases.
- 3.13. Some will feel uncomfortable with the idea that local spending is entirely discretionary and that there are no formal restrictions on how money is spent. This runs counter to the recent trend for prescription, and it is likely that not all decisions will be effective. While we understand the concern, two factors persuade us that this is nonetheless the right approach:
- 3.13.1. First, the costs of an alternative approach - that is much greater prescription from the centre, need to be factored in as well. As

noted above, prescription is unpopular with teachers and unable to respond to local circumstances, which means it is limited in its utility;

- 3.13.2. Second, the advances made in the understanding of effective professional development in recent years mean that the profession is in a better place to make effective decisions without these being prescribed. There is much to build on that can create a culture of better decision making, and this should continue to be invested in, not least through the emergence of a strong professional body in the shape of the Chartered College of Teaching.

“Teachers are very intelligent people, I think what we do as leaders is we remove too much control from them in terms of their own learning... [we] won't be truly successful until a culture of judgement from external bodies like Ofsted changes. It should be done with us, rather than to us”

Focus Group Participant, Durham

- 3.14. Overall, we think that an entirely prescriptive approach provides a false comfort. It gives a sense of control, but cannot meaningfully respond to the shifting demands of the system. Prescription from the centre is not the same as impact on the ground. The approach outlined above seeks to strike a balance between some central prescription, collective direction and expectation setting, and local discretion. We know that at some point, CPD will be funded that some disagree with, CPD that might fail the test for effective use of taxpayer money, and it is right that this is questioned where it happens. But it is a false move to build an entire system on the basis of avoiding this possibility, if the cost is to remove any option of local discretion, the vast majority of which will be positive and effective.

“What CPD should qualify towards teachers’ entitlement? Teachers’ response to this question is unambiguous. They want autonomy for them and their school, with more than nine-out-of-ten calling for teachers to be given free choice, or believing that Headteachers should be able to approve attendance at any CPD.”

Becky Allen, Loic Menzies & Iain Ford - Teacher Tapp & Gatsby Foundation Report

- 3.15. We are pleased that the Labour Party has already explicitly stated that funding can be used to backfill roles so that teachers and school leaders can be released to attend training. The inability of staff to find the time to undertake CPD can be a major reason why they decline opportunities, or accept them at the cost of increasing an already challenging workload. This commitment needs to be delivered in a measured way as the costs of supply can soon add up and so local decision making here needs to take a balanced view about where to invest money.

Special schools and alternative provision

- 3.16. Too often, special schools and alternative provision are not considered at the beginning of a policy process. There is a general tendency to develop policy that works for the majority of provision, and then make small tweaks to respond to the specific needs of special schools and alternative provision. Such an approach is clearly to the detriment of some of the most vulnerable children and young people.
- 3.17. Such settings will have additional funding needs that should be recognised from the start. These include a recognition that there are often extra mandatory training requirements, for example to understand how to use a new piece of required equipment or respond to a difficult diagnosis, as well as an understanding that specialist training can be both more expensive and time-consuming. It can also be harder and more expensive to secure properly trained supply to release permanent staff.
- 3.18. Therefore, the funding made available to special schools and alternative provision to pay for CPD should be proportionally greater than that made available to mainstream schools.

Small schools

- 3.19. It is also worth noting that smaller schools can face greater challenges when it comes to releasing staff for CPD, because they lack the staff numbers to provide cover as easily as larger settings. This should be considered when the allocation of funding is determined, learning for example, from the recent decision by the DfE to provide additional targeted funding to boost NPQ take-up in small schools.

4. How should CPD be funded, delivered, monitored, and measured?

- 4.1. The DfE has already created a system for the development and delivery of the ECF and NPQs, and we think this should continue to be fully funded and supported. The Golden Thread is a positive step in the creation of an effective culture of CPD within the profession, still new in policy terms, and it should be given the chance to become fully embedded.
- 4.2. A DfE review of the ECF³⁵ - which it has undertaken alongside ITT to strengthen synergies between the two - has already suggested some changes, and further work is shortly to be published by the Teacher Development Trust and the Gatsby Foundation³⁶, which will provide further insights into possible ways that the ECF can continue to evolve and improve even further. Without wanting to prejudice that separate report, we believe that there are two areas that should be considered as part of an entitlement offer:
 - 4.2.1. First, we have already noted how the ECF has demonstrated the importance of effective mentoring and the need to ensure that time for mentors is funded. We believe that lessons from the ECF should be drawn so that mentoring can become part of a wider offer of support that extends throughout a teacher's career. In time, this may lead to mentoring for all teachers and school leaders becoming a core part of the fully-funded 'Golden Thread'; and,
 - 4.2.2. Second, the content and materials of the ECF should be made more widely available to all those working in schools. Although the ECF is structured so that content is not read in isolation, but forms part of a facilitated training programme, we believe that it could be adapted so that all teachers and school leaders are able to access it.
- 4.3. NPQs are also due to be reviewed by the DfE, and we would encourage that review to pay particular attention to the content of the leadership NPQs - especially the NPQs for Senior Leadership, Headship, and Executive Leadership - to ensure that they provide sufficient support for

³⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65b7dfdd31079b0013b06661/Outcomes_of_the_review_of_the_initial_teacher_training_core_content_framework_and_the_early_career_framework.pdf

³⁶ <https://tdtrust.org/2024/02/28/findings-from-the-ecf-review/>

people in positions of leadership to help make effective decisions about CPD. If we are going to ask our school leaders to decide how to invest money locally, we should ensure they are helped to discharge this responsibility effectively. If necessary, a future Labour government should consider an additional review of these NPQs, in particular, to ensure they are responding to the latest thinking and evidence on effective leadership in schools. There are increasing calls that the NPQs for leaders are too narrow and fail to provide the full range of knowledge and understanding to help leaders be effective in their roles.³⁷

- 4.4. As suggested above, we believe the DfE can play a role in supporting the development of more evidence-based CPD that schools and individuals could choose to spend entitlement funding upon. This is likely to require some investment from government, in return for which potential recipients of development funding will need to demonstrate that they are creating CPD that meets reinvigorated *Standards for Teachers' Professional Development*, including a commitment to a proper evaluation of impact over time. The most straightforward way to achieve this is to allocate a proportion of the entitlement funding to a new *Teachers' Professional Development Fund*, run either directly by the DfE or by a commissioned organisation (for example, the Chartered College of Teaching, working with other relevant organisations such as the Education Endowment Foundation and the National Institute of Teaching). This fund would run annual rounds, targeted on identified needs over time (perhaps starting, for example, with subject specific training for STEM subjects), to provide seed funding for organisations to develop high-quality CPD that will then need to be funded by schools spending their entitlement in the future.
- 4.5. Beyond this, the remainder of the entitlement should be allocated directly to school budgets, most likely in line with the National Funding Formula allocations, although particular consideration must be given to the additional funding needs of special schools and alternative provision, as well as small schools. We are wary of recommending a specific ring fence for this funding as it is unlikely to be of an amount that would justify the burden and cost of such an approach. Instead, we think that the focus should be on creating a culture within schools and across the profession within which the desire to invest in effective professional development is the key check against poor decision making or underinvestment.

³⁷ See, for example, <https://cfey.org/reports/2024/02/rethinking-leadership-what-else-what-next-what-if/>

- 4.6. It is therefore crucial that local decision making is supported to be effective. This is not about dictating a decision, but rather about providing a framework to help those making a decision to consider the different options and evidence.
- 4.7. At its heart, this entitlement has to be about the conversation between an individual - a teacher or school leader - and the setting they are working in. We are pleased that the DfE has already announced its intention that performance related pay is to be removed from the STPCD³⁸. The false link between development and salary made it harder to have honest and open conversations about CPD opportunities and needs.
- 4.8. An effective professional development conversation needs to recognise four areas, as set out by the TDT³⁹:
 - 4.8.1. School development goals – key areas of the organisation development plan to which the teacher can contribute through learning and developing professionally;
 - 4.8.2. Team development goals – priorities for a year group, phase, subject or house, set by the team in which the teacher mainly works, led by the middle leader’s development plan for that area and team, helping the teacher see how their learning helps their colleagues;
 - 4.8.3. Personal performance goals – areas of learning that are directed to improve the performance of a key task, typically around class teaching or a leadership responsibility; and,
 - 4.8.4. Personal development goals – areas of learning that are related to career development, including academic study or taking on recent or future responsibilities.
- 4.9. Sometimes, these goals may be aligned and complementary, whereas at other times there may be competing ideas and demands. There is no single answer to how any conflict should be resolved as local context is so important, and no framework can fully take account of the very personal motivations that might be operating at any given moment. What matters most, therefore, is that the conversation is undertaken in an open way, recognising tensions and working through them.

³⁸

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65a10648e8f5ec000d1f8c2f/Workload_reduction_task_force_-_initial_recommendations.pdf

³⁹ <https://tdtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Guidance-on-Teacher-Goal-Setting-1.pdf>

- 4.10. To help with this, we recommend that a *Framework for Professional Development Conversations* be developed for all schools and teachers to use. This is not about prescribing outcomes, but rather about helping with effective decision making by creating a set of questions to work through. These might include, *inter alia*:



- 4.11. To maximise the effectiveness of such a framework, we recommend that an organisation is commissioned to create an online portal to host it that will enable teachers and school leaders to keep a record of the professional development undertaken, the reasons for it, and the lessons that have been learned and implemented. This will help within the context of a particular job, but also help as a teacher moves between schools throughout their career so that there can be a shared record of development. Given its role in the system, the obvious organisation to take on this role is the Chartered College of Teaching as it is both independent of government (so there can be no question of government dictating local decision making) and has a key role in supporting the teaching profession. The development of such a system should take account of where schools are already investing in such approaches to

avoid the need for multiple places or mechanisms for teachers and school leaders to record information.

- 4.12. The final role of the DfE is to undertake a proper evaluation of the introduction of the entitlement - either directly or by commission. This should be developed at the very beginning of the programme, and ways should be looked into to assess the long-term impact of the investment. Although we are certain there will be immediate and short-term benefits from the introduction of an entitlement, it will take time for these to be shown (not least because children's outcomes and teacher recruitment and retention rates take time to be impacted). The real prize here is not a short-term one, but the further strengthening of a professional ethos of curiosity and development. Steps are already in train to create a better evaluation structure for professional development, not least through work recently announced by the National Institute of Teaching⁴⁰. We should build on this work to ensure that we have as thorough an understanding of the efficacy of the investment overall and the different ways in which it is spent.

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<https://niot.org.uk/news-events/nuffield-foundation-awards-24m-grant-to-national-institute-of-teaching-led-project-to-revolutionise-teacher-development>

5. What actions should a Government take?

- 5.1. The following section details the specific recommendations that we believe need to be taken forward in order to ensure that an entitlement is delivered effectively. But underpinning these recommendations and running through the report is a consistent theme of supporting increased professionalism. This means that the overall approach is not simply about what should be done, but *how* it should be done to support the growth of an ever-growing expectation of high professional standards. It speaks to an expectation that comes not from a top-down imposition but rather becomes part of the fabric of the profession. It means that understanding the latest research in the teaching of a subject, working with and supporting the development of peers, and looking for ways to improve is done not because the government says so, but because it is what it means to be a teacher.
- 5.2. This is not to say that the government has no role to play. In fact, the government has a critical role to play in providing needed funding and creating the structures and systems to support the growth of this professional expectation of CPD as an integral part of being a teacher or school leader. But we need to move beyond the current - and historically necessary - approach of prescription from the centre so that the lessons learned from the last few years can become fully embedded in the profession.
- 5.3. First and foremost, this means that the government - current or future - has to accept that this reform should be done *with* the profession rather than *to* it. This means working with teachers and school leaders in the widest sense - through the various representative organisations (the Chartered College of Teaching, unions, etc.) but also directly with teachers and school leaders, involving them in the substance of decisions about the design and delivery of policy.
- 5.4. It also means that the government needs to accept that the benefits of an entitlement will take time to realise. The promise of additional funding from the Labour Party is welcome and needed, but that does not mean that the introduction of an entitlement should be viewed as a 'retail offer' - a way of spending money to achieve a direct outcome in the short term. Rather, the great hope of introducing a funded entitlement to CPD is that it can be the spark for a broader approach that is based on mutual trust and respect and can have impacts in terms of the development of

professional expectations that reach far beyond the narrow confines of investing in a particular bit of CPD.

5.5. Within this context, and in line with the discussions contained within this report, the government has four broad roles to play as the recommendations detailed below are introduced:

- 5.5.1. First, the government should continue to fully fund the 'Golden Thread' of ITT, the ECF, and NPQs, with a robust regime of quality assurance. This not only ensures that core development is available for all in the system, but helps to set a standard for others to follow;
- 5.5.2. Second, the government should play a fuller role in supporting the development of effective, evidence-led CPD outside of the 'Golden Thread', supporting mechanisms to promote effective practice to give teachers and school leaders confidence as they make choices on how to invest in CPD;
- 5.5.3. Third, the government should support the creation of tools and guidance that help teachers and school leaders make effective decisions about the CPD needed for their careers and their settings. This should help to reduce workload and improve decision making; and,
- 5.5.4. Fourth, the government should commit to rolling out an entitlement with a proper process of evaluation built in from the start and with an approach that prioritises effectiveness over speed. This means a commitment to piloting, to learning lessons, and to improvement based on evidence of effectiveness.

"Perhaps one way forward is for the government to retain control over what CPD is funded, but for it to ensure the menu is broad enough to give teachers the freedom to choose from a range of funded options, alongside self- and school- funded alternatives."

Becky Allen, Loic Menzies & Iain Ford - Teacher Tapp & Gatsby Foundation Report

5.6. It is important to be clear that the profession needs to play its part too. The *quid pro quo* of the government placing greater trust in the profession

is that teachers and school leaders, schools and MATs, training providers and sector organisations need to rise to the responsibility they are being given. Rather than frame this as an entitlement, we prefer to frame it as an expectation - one that means that teachers and school leaders should expect the government to provide funding and structures, and that the government should expect teachers and school leaders to act with professionalism and exercise effective judgement. More than this, we believe that for this policy to be truly effective, teachers and school leaders need to hold this expectation of themselves and their peers.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. It is clear that an entitlement to continuous professional development cannot be deployed in isolation as a 'one-size-fits-all' solution. If the ambition is to have a meaningful impact on the sector, the government has to commit to this for the long term, accepting it will require a decade or more to have the necessary impact upon the profession. Although this is responding to the specific policy aim stated by the Labour Party, whichever party is in government should take this approach, and it should remain consistent even as the party of government changes.
- 6.2. As noted above, a starting point for this would be to work with teachers across all stages, phases and education settings, to co-produce a policy and CPD entitlement that reflects the reality of the sector. Working with the sector will establish a culture of collaboration and trust, with the common goal of enhancing professionalism and providing children and young people with a quality education. This should be the norm of how policy is made, not the exception.
- 6.3. Taking these general points into consideration, we recommend:

Recommendation 1

Government should commission an independently-led review of the *Teachers' Standards for Professional Development*, to take account of the increase in our understanding and expectations since the previous version was published in 2016.

Recommendation 2

Government should commit to fully funding the so-called 'Golden Thread'. This includes funding the ECF, including the time needed for mentors to perform their roles successfully, and funding NPQs so that no teacher is prevented from accessing them due to cost or capacity pressures, if it is the right CPD opportunity for them.

Within this, the content of leadership NPQs should be reviewed to ensure they provide the right support for leaders to manage CPD conversations within their

settings, and that the frameworks are fit-for-purpose in offering school leaders the full range of knowledge and understanding they need to perform their roles.

Recommendation 3

Government should create a new *Teachers' Professional Development Fund*, either delivered directly by the DfE or by a commissioned national organisation, to seed fund the development of CPD in areas of need (e.g. creating an offer for mentoring throughout a teacher's career, or looking at subject specific CPD). This funding is not for the delivery of CPD - that will need to be paid for by schools - but for the piloting and creation of CPD that meets a clear quality threshold so that schools know they can invest in it with confidence. We suggest a starting figure of £3m per year be made available for such a fund.

Recommendation 4

The remaining money available for the entitlement should be given to schools to spend based on the application of their judgement. This may be used to fully or partly pay for courses, cover costs, travel or any other reasonable expense that clearly serves the professional development of teachers and school leaders.

Our starting assumption is that this should be distributed in line with the National Funding Formula, but we recommend that the government should consider whether that meets the specific needs of special schools, alternative provision, and those with additional needs in mainstream settings. We do not think the money should be specifically ring-fenced - that has drawbacks in terms of administrative burdens and can lead to poor decision making. Instead we recommend that a substantive programme of evaluation is established at the beginning to inform our understanding of the quality, effectiveness, and impact of this approach, including how schools use the funding, and determining if tighter controls are required.

Recommendation 5

We do not recommend that the entitlement is defined in terms of a specific number of hours. Although attractive as an idea, in practice we are concerned that this will lead to a culture of box-ticking and compliance rather than development and

curiosity. Rather, we believe the entitlement should be framed in terms of a professional expectation that all teachers and school leaders engage in professional development and that the government should ensure that the funding and systems are in place to enable them to do so.

Recommendation 6

CPD funded by the entitlement should be focussed primarily on the individual needs of the teacher or school leader. It should not, generally, fund training related to operational or policy issues across a school, which should ordinarily be undertaken on INSET days.

Recommendation 7

To support this, we recommend that the Chartered College of Teaching be commissioned and funded by the government to create and maintain a *Professional Development Portal* for all teachers and school leaders (including non-members) to access. This digital portal will help teachers and school leaders consider what CPD might be most appropriate, taking into account the context of the school and the developmental needs and ambitions of the individual. It should include specific advice on how to undertake a professional development conversation, to help school leaders balance competing demands and individuals understand their needs.

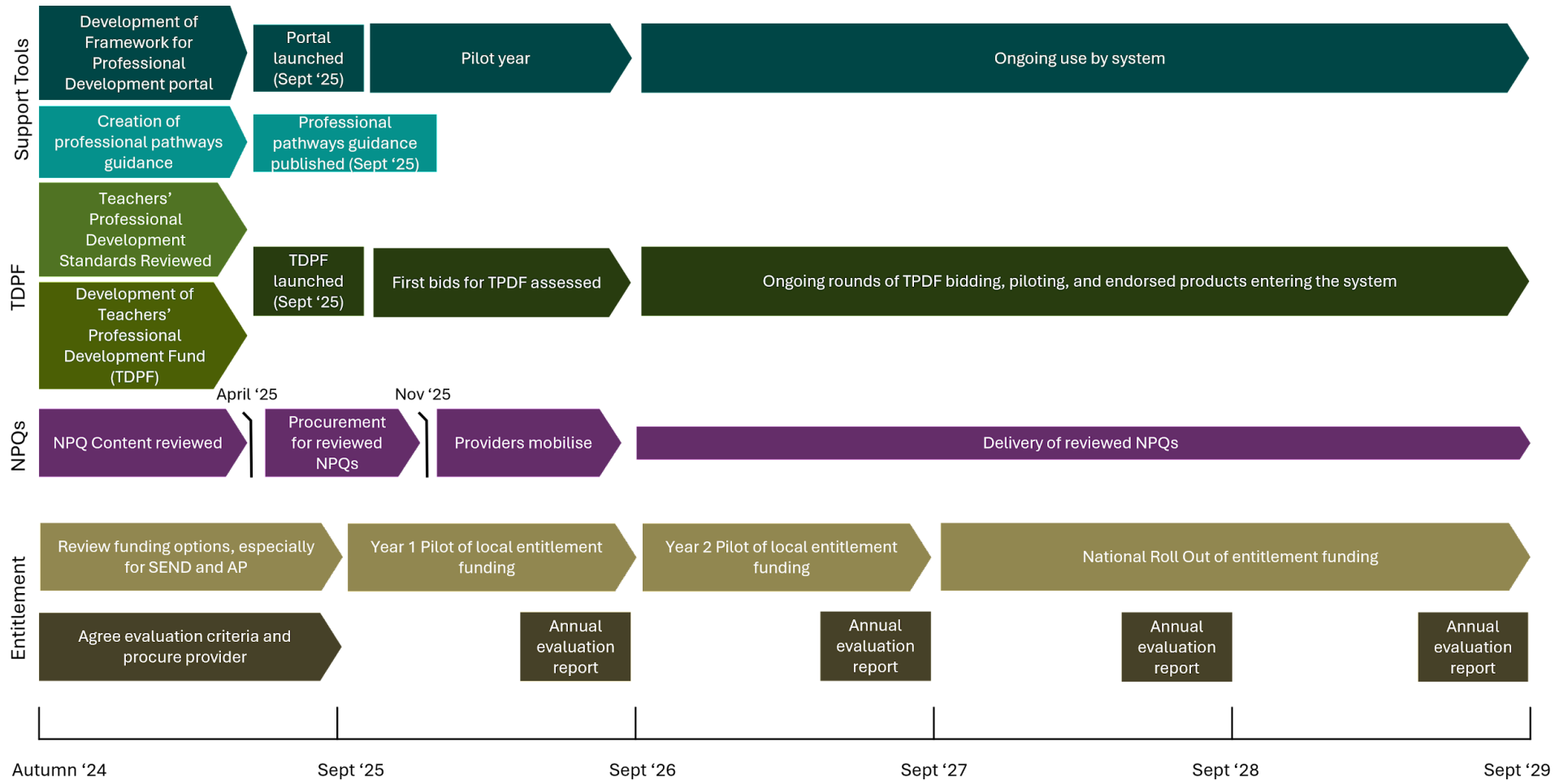
Recommendation 8

Alongside this, guidance should be produced that helps individual teachers and school leaders understand different career pathways and how different CPD options can help them meet their own professional aspirations. This should be considered as a tool for the individual, helping them explore opportunities with curiosity and supported by evidence rather than as an attempt to create a rigid career structure. There should be no link to specific levels of promotion or pay. This can be developed by the DfE or by a commissioned organisation, but regardless should fully embrace a co-production approach with schools and the wider education sector to ensure it reflects the realities of working in an increasingly varied school system.

Timeline

- 6.4. We cannot be precise about a timeline for implementation without knowing when activity in this space might begin, something which is likely to be largely dictated by the timing of the next General Election and what that means for the priorities of an incoming Government. As an illustration, the timeline below assumes that activity to introduce the policy begins in the autumn of 2024.

A Professional Expectation: Improving Accesses to CPD for Teachers and School Leaders - March 2024



All work should fully engage teachers and school leaders in design and delivery decisions. This could be as a stand-alone co-production group focusing on professional development, or as part of a wider government process of engaging the teaching profession. Regardless, engagement should start at the very beginning.

7. Summary of what the process has entailed

7.1. We would like to thank everybody who has been involved in the delivery of this project. Without the generosity, wisdom, and time of so many people, this report could not have been possible.

7.2. In compiling this report, a number of activities have taken place:

7.2.1. An Expert Group has been created to oversee the development of this report, and in whose name this report is issued;

7.2.2. That Expert Group has been lucky to take expert witness statements from the following people:

Steve Rollett - Confederation of School Trusts

Chris Paterson - Education Endowment Foundation

Katerina Sarafidou - Royal College of Surgeons of England

James Zucollo - Education Policy Institute

7.2.3. In addition, the team at the Teacher Development Trust held interviews with the following people:

James Bowen - National Association of Head Teachers

Liz Robinson - Big Education

Oli de Botton and Nicola Hall - Careers and Enterprise Company

Sarah Leonardi and Hayley Lamb - CFE Research and Consulting

Kat Howard - CPD Expert

Howard Pilott, Jo Swindells, and Vicki Smith - Education and Training Foundation

Becky Francis, Nick Worsely, and Chris Paterson - Education Endowment Foundation

Julie McCulloch and Sara Tanton - Association of School and College Leaders

Anne Heavy - Ambition Institute

Patrick Roach and Darren Northcott - NASUWT

Will Bickford-Smith - Department for Education

Reuben Moore - National Institute of Teaching

Loic Menzies - Policy Specialist

- 7.2.4. The team at the Teacher Development Trust are grateful to Jane Kennedy and Sarah Blakeman at Education Durham, and to Ivan Talbott at Eden Academy Trust for arranging and hosting a series of focus groups with teachers and leaders. We are also grateful to James Bowen and Ian Hartwright at the National Association of Head Teachers for organising a focus group specifically with head teachers.
 - 7.2.5. An online call for evidence was also made available for anybody who wished to share ideas and views.
- 7.3. In addition, we are indebted to Jenni French at the Gatsby Foundation and the team at Teacher Tapp for engaging with us as they developed and ran their own research into the current state of CPD⁴¹, the findings of which have proved invaluable in supporting our thinking.

⁴¹ <https://teachertapp.co.uk/app/uploads/2024/01/The-State-of-CPD-FINAL1.pdf>



About Us



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Teacher Development Trust (TDT) is the smart, heart, humble charity for effective professional development in schools.

Founded in 2012 by teachers and school leaders, our mission is to support extraordinary leaders to empower staff and build expert schools.

We want to see powerful professional development in every school and college so that teachers thrive and children succeed.

With support from globally leading partners, researchers and advisors, we curate and disseminate the most rigorous evidence and support school leaders around the country to network, and to improve their staff development approaches.

Our work is underpinned by the key principles of effective teacher professional development and learning. Using a strong international evidence base of what constitutes successful teacher professional development, we are working with the entire education sector to promote the principles of good CPD.

