

# THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCOTLAND

## 'Into Headship' Qualification

### Introduction

The 2016 AGM adopted the following Resolution:

***"That this AGM instruct Council to investigate and report on the potential effects of the requirement that all newly appointed Headteachers from session 2018/19 must have completed the 'Into Headship' qualification."***

The Resolution was passed to the Education Committee for action, where it was decided to liaise with the Employment Relations Department on the issue of current Headteacher shortages and to consult the HT and DHT Network.

### Background

The 2014 Education Act stipulated the requirement that all new Headteachers hold the 'Into Headship' qualification from session 2018/19. The Scottish Government announced in March 2016 that the qualification will be fully funded for the first three years, supporting up to 500 teachers to complete the course.

These developments have occurred against a backdrop of concerns raised in recent years and were reflected in the Scottish Government commissioned 'ADES Report on Headteacher Recruitment' (March 2016), about declining numbers of applications for Headteacher posts nationally, consequential increases in the numbers of multi-establishment Headteacher posts in rural areas and particular recruitment challenges in the denominational sector. Meanwhile the age profile of a sizeable portion of the Headteacher cohort in Scotland exceeds 55.

### Findings

#### Views of the EIS HT and DHT Network

Reasons cited for the diminishing attractiveness of the Headteacher role by members of the EIS HT and DHT Network and echoed by the ADES report include:

- Excessive workload and the potentially detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of Headteachers;
- Increased complexity and diversity of the role;
- Reductions in the numbers of support staff compounding difficulties related to workload;
- Salary erosion;
- Lack of opportunity for teachers to gain experience in promoted posts in preparation for headship as a consequence of reduction in the number of such posts and consequential flattening of structures;
- Variable degrees of support by local authorities for Headteachers both newly appointed and experienced.

Members of the HT and DHT Network were of the view that the mandatory nature of the 'Into Headship' qualification could be a further barrier to Headteacher recruitment.

The Network also suggested that there may be a further decline in the number of applicants for Headteacher posts when the requirement becomes mandatory, similar to that which occurred following the introduction of the Scottish Qualification for Headship.

The workload of Headteachers and Deputies was highlighted as a significant issue in Network discussions, particularly in the context of teacher shortage. Many Headteachers and Deputies, in the absence of supply teachers, are teaching classes during what would otherwise be time set aside for management duties. The EIS HT and DHT Network was clear that in order for the learning associated with gaining the headship qualification to be overtaken, adequate protected time is required. Without this being available, the likelihood of uptake of the course will be diminished and the drop-out rate high, with resultant implications for future Headteacher recruitment.

Network members were of the view that rather than make qualification a prerequisite of appointment, a more effective means of incentivising and supporting prospective Headteachers would be to provide adequate levels of support to those newly appointed.

### **EIS Response to the Scottish Government Consultation on Draft Headteacher and Training Standards**

In a recent response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the draft Headteacher and Training Standards, the EIS expressed the view also that the availability of this headship qualification will not in itself incentivise people to seek to become Headteachers.

In addition to the matter of Headteacher workload, the issue of under-representation of particular groups within the Headteacher cohort as shown in teacher census data, was highlighted as an essential factor for consideration with regards to addressing recruitment challenges.

Attention was drawn to the significant under-representation of women in Headteacher posts within the Secondary sector- around 41% of Secondary headteachers are women yet they are 67% of the whole workforce.

Similarly, the stark under-representation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people within senior management, and specifically Headteacher, roles was underlined. BME teachers comprise 1% and 1.7% of the Primary and Secondary teacher workforce respectively, yet hold Headteacher posts in such small numbers that they do not appear within Scottish Government school census data for either sector.

Such under-representation both of women and of BME people within Headteacher posts and the underlying reasons for this, must be a matter for consideration in

any analysis of the challenges around Headteacher recruitment. The ADES report makes no mention of this.

A final issue highlighted in the consultation submission and which may become a factor in the future recruitment of Headteachers is the unhappiness of many of our Headteacher members with the Scottish Government intention to confer onto them more of the responsibility that currently sits with education authorities.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

While some concerns have been raised about its prospective introduction there is insufficient evidence on which to base firm conclusions about the potential impact of the requirement that all newly appointed Headteachers from session 2018/19 must have completed the 'Into Headship' qualification.

In light of current recruitment challenges, general teacher shortage and of the uncertainty around the outcomes of the Governance Review of Scottish education, the EIS has suggested that the introduction of the mandatory element of the qualification be delayed for two years.

Regardless of the Scottish Government response to this suggestion, it will be necessary for the EIS to continue to lobby around the issues that directly impact on Headteacher recruitment as outlined in this paper, with a view to healthier patterns of recruitment being achieved. It is also recommended that the EIS continues to monitor the impact of all related developments.

The EIS believes that leadership is vital at all levels within the profession and has consistently lobbied for the funding of Masters-level learning for all teachers.

In this context, the EIS welcomed the funding of the 'Into Headship Qualification' but continues to stress the need for the principle of equity to be fully reflected in the new arrangements, both in terms of equity of access to the qualification by prospective Headteachers from all local authorities, and in terms of extension of the commitment of the Scottish Government to support Masters-level learning pathways for all teachers.