

Evaluation of early roll-out of the Early Career Framework: Information for schools and teachers

What is the Early Career Framework, and how is it being rolled out?

The Department for Education's (DfE) Early Career Framework (ECF) sets out what newly qualified teachers in their first two years of teaching need to learn. From September 2021, the government is funding an entitlement for all early career teachers to access high quality professional development at the start of their career. New teachers will receive development support and training over two years instead of one. The offer for early career teachers includes:

- two years of new, government-funded, training
- freely available development materials based on the ECF
- additional government funding for five per cent time away from the classroom for teachers in their second year
- a dedicated mentor and new training for these mentors
- government funding to cover mentors' time with the mentee in the second year of teaching.

The government is taking a phased approach to introducing these reforms, starting with early roll-out of the ECF from autumn 2020 in selected areas. The findings from the early roll-out will help to develop the programme ahead of national roll-out from September 2021.

Where is the early roll-out of the ECF taking place?

The early roll-out of the ECF is being delivered to eligible schools in the North East, Greater Manchester, Bradford and Doncaster. In addition, up to 4,000 new teachers outside of these areas can also sign-up to a one-year funded offer of early career framework-based support. However, schools participating in this expanded offer will not form part of the evaluation.

Who is delivering the early roll-out of the ECF?

As part of the early roll-out of the ECF the DfE have commissioned four providers: Ambition Institute; Education Development Trust; Teach First; and a consortium led by UCL to design and deliver support programmes to early career teachers and mentors.

What are the aims of the evaluation?

The primary aim of the evaluation is to explore the impact of the early roll-out of the ECF on the retention rate of early career teachers in the teaching profession. Secondary aims include an assessment of the impact on the retention rate of early career teachers within their original schools, as well as on teaching quality and self-efficacy. The evaluation will run from July 2020 to December 2023.

Who is conducting the evaluation?

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has been commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) to independently evaluate the early roll-out of the ECF. The EEF is a charity that aims to support teachers and senior leaders to raise

attainment and close the disadvantage gap by generating new evidence of 'what works' to improve teaching and learning.

What will the evaluation involve for schools?

Involvement in evaluation activities is entirely voluntary for all stakeholders. However, it is important that the evaluation captures the views of a range of stakeholders, including teachers in a comparison group of schools that are not participating in the early roll-out of the ECF, in order to understand what is working well or otherwise and identify challenges and solutions to scaling up the programme as part of the national roll-out.

Evaluation activities for schools participating in the early roll-out of the ECF *and* those in the comparison group will include:

- Online survey of early career teachers between June and October 2021 and in June/July 2022 to explore: type, frequency and engagement in early-career professional development activities; perceptions of the quality and impact of early-career support; information about the time/costs associated with the activities; perceptions of self-efficacy, job satisfaction, workload; and intentions to remain in teaching.
- Online survey of induction leads/senior leaders between June and October 2021 and in June/July 2022 to explore: the type and frequency of early-career professional development activities they have delivered, the training and support they have received, the time/costs associated with the activities and their perceptions on its quality and impacts.

Additional evaluation activities for selected schools participating in the early roll-out of the ECF will include:

- Telephone interviews with a selection of induction leads/senior leaders between autumn 2020 and spring 2021 to explore experiences of recruitment and early delivery
- Case-study interviews in a selection of schools initially in May-July 2021 and followed-up in May-July 2022 with induction leads/senior leader, mentors and up to two early career teachers. Interviews will explore detailed perspectives of the programme, implementation of the learning and impacts.

Evaluation activities for schools not-participating in the early roll-out of the ECF will include:

- Telephone interviews between autumn 2020 and spring 2021 with a selection of induction leads from early roll-out areas who declined to participate to explore reasons for this decision, perceptions of the offer, and what could be done to support engagement as part of the national roll-out.

Other evaluation activities include:

- Collation of monitoring information collected by the ECF training providers and shared with NFER (e.g. engagement with training and support materials).
- Observation of remotely delivered induction/training events for early career teachers and/or mentors in autumn 2020 to gain early insights into delivery.
- Matching of early career teacher data to the School Workforce Census using Teacher Reference Numbers to assess impacts on teacher retention.

- Interviews with delivery staff, including providers and the DfE.

How will schools and teachers benefit from taking part in the evaluation?

Participation in the early roll-out of the ECF has the potential to have an enormous impact on participating early career teachers, mentors and their schools. By sharing their experiences, teachers can support policy makers to better understand what is working well or otherwise, and to identify challenges and solutions to scaling up as part of the national roll-out. In addition:

- Induction leads in both intervention and comparison group schools who complete an online survey will be offered tailored feedback reports based on selected responses to the induction leads questionnaire, allowing them to compare their responses to those of other schools in the same phase.
- Early career teachers in comparison schools will be offered a small financial incentive for completing the surveys in recognition of the fact that they are not receiving the potential benefits of participating in the early roll-out of the ECF.

All schools that participate in any form with the evaluation activities will contribute to the evidence base on what works in supporting teachers early in their careers. The findings of the evaluation will be published in a final report, which will be freely available online, in early 2024.

How will NFER use and protect the data collected?

Full details of how research participants' personal information will be collected, stored and used can be found in our privacy notice, which is on the project web page:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/for-schools/participate-in-research/evaluation-of-early-roll-out-of-the-early-career-framework/>

Who to contact?

For further information about the evaluation, please contact Priscilla Antwi at ecf@nfer.ac.uk.