

# Department for Education

## Appropriate body reforms

### Briefing Pack for ABs to share information with schools

## December 2022

On 15 November 2022, the Department for Education published a [response to the consultation](#) on appropriate body reform and induction assessment, held from 26 May to 21 July 2022.

This information pack is to help appropriate bodies (ABs) provide schools with the information they need about what is changing with local AB services, and any choices school leaders and induction tutors may need to make about how they access appropriate body (AB) services in the future to support the induction of early career teacher (ECTs).

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## **Summary of changes to AB sector**

- From September 2024 Teaching School Hubs (TSHs) will become the main provider of AB services (except for specialist ABs for some independent and overseas schools)
- Local authorities (LAs) will withdraw from their AB role in two stages:
  - From September 2023 they will not take on any new ECTs.
  - From September 2024 they will cease operating as ABs.
- Schools who access AB services through a local authority will need to ensure that from September 2023 they register all new ECTs with a TSH AB.
- Schools will also need to ensure that any ECTs who are registered with an LA AB and who do not complete their induction by September 2024 are then transferred to a TSH AB.
- The intention of this two-stage withdrawal for LAs from AB services is to allow the majority of ECTs who began induction in September 2022 to complete their induction without needing to transfer to a new AB mid-induction.
- Arrangements for LAs winding down services will vary per area, so schools currently accessing AB services through an LA are advised to check with them what services are available until when in their local area and what TSH AB services are available to them longer term.

## **Overview and rationale for the reforms**

Appropriate bodies (ABs) play a vital statutory role quality assuring induction, ensuring Early Career Teachers (ECTs) receive statutory entitlements during induction and are assessed fairly and consistently against the Teachers' Standards.

It is essential to the successful delivery of induction reforms that we ensure ABs are fit for purpose and accountable, and that there is greater consistency of quality in the AB services that schools receive.

We know that many ABs, both TSHs and local authorities, have significant experience and expertise as ABs and show great commitment to their ECTs and schools.

However, the responses to the consultation provided further evidence that variation in quality and approach is currently an issue across ABs. So, the key

rationale for the reforms is based on the need to find a cost effective way to introduce greater quality assurance of the AB sector.

For local authorities, there are no direct accountability mechanisms to ensure quality across local authority AB services. This creates a barrier to addressing the long standing issues around inconsistency in AB services. The Department already has a formal agreement in place with each TSH and holds them to account against key performance indicators. This relationship with TSHs provides an existing mechanism through which to introduce more robust quality assurance without the need to set up a costly and duplicative quality assurance or accreditation system.

We recognise that schools provided a variety of responses to the consultation, some of which raised their concerns about local authorities losing the AB role and we are grateful to all respondents who took the time to share their views and highlight potential issues, particularly around minimising the impact on ECTs. In response, in the interests of maintaining stability for ECTs already in the system, the phased transition for local authorities is intended to ensure that for the majority of ECTs, schools have the option not to move those who already began induction in September 2022 to a new ABs during their induction.

Recognising that arrangements will vary by local area, the department is committed to ensuring ABs are supported to collaborate during this transition period to help schools make a smooth transition to new ABs where this is necessary. This briefing pack is intended to help answer some questions that schools may have and provide them with core information to help them plan ahead.

### **Questions and Answers (Q&A)**

(Please note that references to 'schools' are intended to be read more broadly as all settings and institutions in which induction can be served.)

#### **Q: What is changing when?**

**A:** From 2024 Teaching School Hubs (TSHs) will become the main provider of AB services (except for specialist ABs for some independent and overseas schools). Local authorities (LAs) will withdraw from their AB role<sup>1</sup> in two stages:

- From September 2023 they will not take on any additional ECTs.
- From September 2024 they will cease operating as ABs.

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<sup>1</sup> To note that the National Teacher Accreditation AB (NTA) will also be withdrawing from offering AB services on the same timeline as local authorities. NTA has already contacted schools currently accessing its AB services about this change.

**Q: What actions schools must take?**

**A:** There are two key actions for schools:

1. From September 2023 use a TSH AB for all new ECT registrations
2. If currently accessing AB services from a local authority (or National Teacher Accreditation (NTA)), talk to the AB about how long their services will be available in your local area and what alternatives are available longer term.

Schools are then advised to:

3. Decide whether ECTs registered with an LA AB or NTA prior to September 2023 will continue with that AB until they complete induction (or September 2024, whichever is sooner), or whether to move all ECTs to a TSH from September 2023, and
4. Talk to the LA/NTA and TSH ABs concerned at the earliest opportunity to confirm plans.
5. Give permission to share data on transferring ECTs if you are asked to do so, to ensure your current AB can share relevant information with the next AB to provide any transferring ECTs with a well-supported transition.

Where an LA provides a range of services and support alongside its AB role, schools may also want to clarify with their LA which services they will continue to receive from the LA as part of its wider role (such as in relation to HR, school improvement or wider training) and which core AB services will be provided by their new TSH AB.

**Q: What choices do I have about when to transfer ECTs?**

**A:** Schools who currently access AB services through a local authority or National Teacher Accreditation (NTA) will need to ensure that after September 2023 they register all new ECTs with a TSH AB.

If a school has already registered an ECT with an LA AB prior to September 2023, that LA AB can continue to offer AB services to that ECT until September 2024.

If an ECT is registered with an LA AB before September 2023 but does not complete their induction by September 2024, their school will need to ensure that the ECT is then transferred to a TSH AB from September 2024.

**Q: In the transition year 2023/24 are schools required to work with two ABs to avoid moving ECTs mid-year?**

**A:** We support schools to make choices in the interests of their ECTs and wherever possible provide stability for them during induction.

Many respondents to the consultation called for a longer transition period so the majority of ECTs who began induction in September 2022 would have the option to avoid disruption by remaining with one AB through the course of their induction. For that reason we have extended the period LA ABs may operate with existing ECTs until September 2024.

But we recognise that local options will vary according to LA capacity, and that schools may need to make practical choices about how they access AB services. So, while stability for ECTs should be the priority wherever possible, schools currently accessing AB services from LAs should discuss the options available to them locally, including the availability of services during 2023/24.

From that discussion with their LA AB, schools will need to work out whether they can and would prefer to keep ECTs starting induction in 2022/23 with their current LA AB until September 2024 to provide stability. If LA AB services in their area are not continuing to September 2024, or if they also have ECTs starting in September 2023 who must register with a TSH AB, schools can consider the option to also move all existing ECTs to the new AB at the same time if they would prefer to work only with one AB during academic year 2023/24.

**Q: What if an ECT starts induction after September 2022? Or if they work on a part-time basis or require an extension beyond 31 August 2024? Will the LA be able to complete their induction?**

**A:** No, any ECTs registered with an LA AB who have not yet completed induction by 31 August 2024 will be required to transfer to another AB. It is not feasible to ask LAs to continue to run services for very small numbers of ECTs after that point, and it is necessary to agree a clear cut off point by when transition must take place in order for all schools and ABs to plan ahead with certainty.

**Q: If I have an ECT starting in September 2023 who is already halfway through induction can I register them with an LA AB to complete their final year?**

**A:** No this will not be possible because LA ABs will not be able to make new registrations after 1 September 2022. All new registrations after this date will need to be with a TSH AB.

**Q: Do I have to use a TSH AB in the future? What if I can't or don't want to work with my local TSH?**

**A:** As part of this reform, schools will be encouraged to use the TSH that makes the most sense for their circumstances. For most schools we would expect this to be their local teaching school hubs TSH or their delivery partner for ECF-based induction programme. Larger trusts might make this choice based on the AB closest to the majority of their schools. Where a school's local TSH has a conflict of interest in delivering AB services to a specific

school or ECT, schools will have flexibility to make alternative arrangements with another TSH.

TSHs will become the main provider of AB services from September 2024, with the exception of two specialist ABs that will offer services to some independent and overseas schools.

**Q: Do schools have to use the same TSH as their provider-led ECF-based training delivery partner and to provide their AB services?**

**A:** No. Although we think many schools will choose to do this for efficiency, it is not a requirement for schools to use the same organisation for both services. The roles of training provider and AB are separate, and schools can receive these services from different organisations if they wish to. For example, if a school is satisfied with their current training provider, they can still access AB services from a different TSH AB or vice versa.

**Q: Why do different ABs charge different fees? Will I have to pay more?**

**A:** Regulations only allow ABs to recover their costs in the fees they charge for AB services. It may be the case that some schools will not previously have been charged the full cost of providing these services as part of their AB fee, particularly where they may have accessed other services alongside or had funding arrangements with their LA. It is a matter for ABs to determine their fee structure according to their costs and operating models. We are clear that charges for AB services must not exceed the cost of supplying the service and should be agreed in advance with the school. TSHs will be supported by the Teaching School Hubs Council (TSHC) in considering their fee structure to reflect the reform and ensure value for money for schools.

**Q: What if a local TSH doesn't have capacity to offer my school services?**

**A:** From September 2023, (when LAs will not be able to claim new ECTs for AB services), we will ensure that every TSH offers AB services so that every school has access to a TSH AB. Many LAs and TSHs are already working effectively in partnership to ensure a smooth, managed transition of AB services for schools in their areas.

While TSHs are in the process of increasing their capacity during transition, if some are unable to meet demand and offer services to all schools who approach them, they are expected to support schools to find suitable alternative AB provision with a neighbouring AB.

DfE is providing local area ECT data to all ABs to assist their transition and capacity planning and is working with the TSHC to ensure that the TSHs with the most capacity increase demands are supported.

**Q: What about independent schools? Which schools and types of institution can access AB services from a TSH?**

**A:** The Department is clear the default expectation is that TSH ABs should meet local demand for AB services in their area and accept all ECTs when approached regardless of the induction routes the ECTs are on or the type of school or institution they are from. TSH ABs should be prepared to offer services to all schools and settings that are eligible to offer statutory induction, including fee-paying independent schools.

If a TSH, during the transition period, is unable to take on any new ECTs because of capacity challenges, then they should support the school who approached them to find an alternative provision with a neighbouring TSH as a temporary capacity backstop.

**Q: Do schools have to be signed up to a provider-led ECF-based training programme to receive AB services from a TSH?**

**A:** No. Since all ECTs must be registered with an AB before induction can commence, whether this is induction via the DfE-funded programme or any other route, it is vital they can access AB services. The Department is clear the default expectation is that TSH ABs should meet local demand for AB services in their area and accept all ECTs when approached regardless of the induction routes the ECTs are on or the type of school they are from. TSH ABs should be prepared to offer services (including ECF fidelity checking for non-funded ECF-based programmes) regardless of the type of ECF-based training a school chooses to deliver.

**Q: Why are TSHs best placed to do the AB role longer term?**

**A:** The Department is committed to improving the quality and consistency of AB services.

TSHs offer national coverage through their network of 87 TSHs, they play a significant role in the delivery of DfE-funded ECF-based induction programmes, and each TSH is held accountable against key performance indicators through their formal agreements with the Department.

This makes TSHs ideally placed to offer high-quality and consistent AB services. We intend to work closely with the TSHC to build capacity in and encourage consistency across ABs, ensuring all schools have access to high quality AB services.

**Q: How is the Department helping TSHs with capacity?**

**A:** During academic year 2022/23 the TSHC is providing a programme of training and peer support to help TSHs build their capacity and expertise. TSHs will also be provided with templates and asked to create local transition plans in partnership with local authorities and neighbouring TSHs. TSHs will be asked to submit draft transition plans by early 2023 followed by final transition plans in spring once local plans are firmed up.

The Department will work alongside the TSHC to ensure that throughout the transition process there is capacity to meet the demand for AB services.

**Q: What happens to induction records after LAs cease to be ABs - what is their responsibility regarding the data they hold? Can they share this with my new TSH AB?**

**A:** As part of their duties in providing AB services, organisations agree to hold ECT data for a minimum of six years in line with GDPR requirements. It remains the responsibility of the AB that provided these services to keep these records of the ECTs that they offered services to regardless of whether the organisation continues to function as an AB.

For any ECTs transferring to a new AB before they complete induction, schools and ECTs may be asked by their current/previous AB to provide permission to share information with their new AB. Schools are encouraged to provide the necessary permissions around data when requested, to facilitate a well-supported transition for any ECTs moving AB during their induction.

**Q: Where can I get more information?**

**A:** For information about your local appropriate body services or moving to a new AB, please speak to your current AB in the first instance. All LA and TSHs have been tasked with working together on transition planning and should be able to provide coordinated information about how long local LA AB services are available for and what TSH AB options are available to schools in their area. You can also contact your local TSH directly. A list of ABs is available on this page: [Find an appropriate body - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/appropriate-bodies)

Information about statutory induction can be found in the Induction statutory guidance: [Induction for early career teachers \(England\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/induction-for-early-career-teachers) and guidance for appropriate bodies: [Appropriate bodies guidance: induction and the early career framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/appropriate-bodies-guidance-induction-and-the-early-career-framework)

**Q: How do I set up my school's Early Career Framework training programme with the DfE's digital service?**



**A:** To sign up to a provider-led programme for ECF-based training in their school, or sign up to access accredited materials, nominated induction tutors must set up their programme through [DfE's online \*\*Manage training for early career teachers service\*\*](#). Induction tutors need to have been nominated or sent sign in details to access this service.

For more information on DfE's online service and how to get an account, please visit this GOV.UK page: <https://manage-training-for-early-career-teachers.education.gov.uk/check-account>.