

A letter on the funding of Now Teach

Dear Sir/Madam,

A good education is as central to England's future as it is to every young person - and it's impossible without good teachers. A focus on specialist recruitment and retention initiatives, such as Now Teach for career changers, is essential at a time when national targets have been missed by 50%.

We support the Education Select Committee's recommendation that Now Teach's funding be restored (Teachers in England stretched... 17 May).

Led by the charity Now Teach, career-changers are one of the few areas of growth in teacher recruitment. They have championed teaching to middle-aged professionals and met their Department for Education recruitment target by 107%. Recent national data shows applications from over 40s are up 38% compared to 2023.

Schools are struggling to source Science and Maths teachers, roles key to young people's STEM careers and a skilled economy. Now Teach has recruited higher proportions of these teachers compared to the national picture (62% vs 34%).

Career changers' professional insight bridges the gap between school and workplace: the former seismologist who helped setup a science focussed 6th Form; the ex-City partner whose former colleagues give assembly talks; or the consultant-turned-teacher who runs an AI club.

Thousands of these educators would not be here without Now Teach – either through their programme or inspired by their long-running awareness-raising campaigns.

This funding situation risks the momentum behind career change to teaching that Now Teach are best placed to lead. Without it, these trainees and their unique impact will diminish.

We, the undersigned, urge all parties contesting the general election to follow the Select Committee's recommendation to reinstate funding for this vital specialist support.

Signed

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