



Department
for Education

Targeted Support Fund 2017 to 2018: Analysis of the participant survey

Research brief

January 2019



Social Science in Government

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Executive Summary

The Targeted Support Fund (TSF) has provided grant funding to schools to develop and deliver leadership programmes in areas or types of school where it has traditionally been difficult to recruit (for example faith and special schools, primary, coastal and small schools). The TSF is currently running its final round in 2017/18, with most projects ending in September 2018.

This report provides findings from an online survey, which all participants from the 2017-18 programme were asked to complete during summer term of 2018.

The results of the survey provide feedback on respondents' perceptions of the programme, providing insight as to how well they feel the programme has helped them to increase their confidence, develop their leadership style and ultimately to achieve next stage promotions.

The survey was sent to the project leads in seven regions in 2017-18¹. Each project lead completed an online end of project report in July 2018, where they reported their final participant figures. For 2017-18, 1185 completed the programme, with 270 responses received – which represents a 23% response rate.

Findings

The overwhelming majority of respondents (97%) were positive about the learning gained from the programme, with 63% of respondents saying it met their expectations and 34% saying it had exceeded their expectations.

The highest ranked learning outcomes from the programme were 'understanding of your own strengths and limitations' and 'improved your strategic thinking as a leader'. The lowest ranked learning outcome was "constructed strong job applications", followed closely by "improved your facilitation and presentation skills" and "built your confidence at job interviews". These responses are broadly consistent with findings from 2016-17.

In open-ended responses, many echoed themes from the closed questions around the opportunity to reflect on their skills and career, and the benefits of networking with peers. Other common themes included a better understanding of leadership roles, and that the programme had been helpful for their career plans. These broadly echo the findings of 2016-17.

The survey asked respondents when they thought they would apply for next stage promotion; 20% (54) of respondents had already gained a promotion, while many others were planning to apply after the 2018 summer term. 14% of respondents were not planning to apply for a next stage promotion and a further 19% said they were not sure.

¹ The North-West and North-East chose not to bid for funding in 2017/18.

Background and Aim

Targeted Support Fund

The purpose of the Targeted Support Fund (TSF) in 2017-18 was to provide grant funding to schools to develop and deliver leadership programmes in areas or types of school where it has traditionally been difficult to recruit (for example faith and special schools, primary, coastal and small schools). The key performance indicator is that at least 70% of participants' have applied for or are ready to apply for next stage promotion by the end of the programme.

Seven Teaching School Council (TSC) regional representatives (one in each region²) were grant funded to lead the design and delivery of leadership development opportunities for teachers within their region.

In 2017-18 there were three strands of activity:

- **Aspiring Heads:** This strand focused on developing programmes within the priority areas to grow school leaders where it is hard to recruit to headship positions.
- **Recently Qualified Teachers:** evidence shows that some new teachers leave the profession in the 2nd, 3rd or 4th year of teaching. This fund allows school leaders to design and develop creative solutions to help this group bridge the gap to middle leadership.
- **Bespoke Regional strand:** TSC regional representatives were able to identify their own target group, based on local need, which had to be clearly identified and quantified prior to the release of funding.

The approach differed in each region. All programmes had some form of classroom-style sessions, and an element of coaching/mentoring. The programmes tended to run for between three to six sessions, most of which were half day or day sessions.

This report provides findings from an online survey which programme participants were asked to complete during the summer term of 2018. The results of the survey provide feedback on respondents' perceptions of the programme, providing insight as to how well they feel the programme has helped them to increase their presence, develop their leadership style and ultimately to achieve next stage promotions.

Approach

The survey was sent to all project leads by the TSC regional representative in their region. Each project lead completed an online end of project report in July 2018, where they reported their final participant figures. These show that 1185 people completed the

² Apart from the North-West and North-East who chose only to bid for funding for 2016/17 and not for 2017/18.

2017-18 programme. There was a clear expectation that the survey would be forwarded to all of the participants on the programme.

A total of 270 responses were received for the survey, representing a response rate of 23%.

Limitations

The results presented here only reflect the views of the 270 individuals who responded to the survey, and therefore are not a complete representation of everyone who attended the programme. This means it is not a true random sample, and it is not possible to say if these responses are representative of the wider population of TSF participants.

Some of the results commented on in this report are based on small base sizes, which may not be representative of the wider population.

The findings from this survey are respondents' retrospective perceptions of how the programme benefitted them, not an independent evaluation. Therefore, without a comparison group we cannot say how many of these people would have applied for a promotion without having participated in this programme.

Findings

The results below are for both the Aspirant Headteachers (AH) strand and the Recently Qualified Teachers (RQT) strand. These were similar programmes that looked at specific leadership styles and how to be a more confident leader. The main way that they differed was the level of the learning; the AH strand was focussed on those very close to headship so the learning tended to be more strategic, while the RQT strand was for very new teachers so tended to be more of an 'introduction to leadership'.

Demographics

Just over three quarters of survey respondents were female (204) and 88% of respondents identified as White British (236), with the remaining 12% (32) split between other ethnicities. Nearly half (129 - 48%) of respondents were between 25-34, and 24% (65) between 35-44. Respondents were evenly spread across the country, with the majority of participants based in the South-East (28%; 75), East Midlands (25%; 66) and the East of England (22%; 58).

Results

The overwhelming majority of respondents were positive about the learning gained from the programme, with 63% of respondents saying it met their expectations and 34% saying it had exceeded their expectations.

Participants were asked to rank a list of learning outcomes that they had achieved from the programme. Learning outcomes were to be ranked from 1-11, with 1 representing the most important learning outcome, and 11 representing the least important learning outcome achieved from the programme. Figure 1 shows the responses to these statements.

Learning outcomes most often selected as rank 1, 2, and 3 were 'understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses' (134 times), 'improved your confidence to apply for promotion' (109 times), and 'improved your strategic thinking as a leader' (106 times). Learning outcomes most often ranked 9, 10, and 11 were 'constructed strong job applications' (151 times), 'built your confidence at job interviews' (131 times), and 'improved your facilitation and presentation skills' (120 times). There is consistency between the median ranked learning outcomes and most commonly high/low ranked outcomes.

Participants were asked whether there were any other benefits they had experienced from attending the programme, and provided their answers in a free text box. Forty-seven participants provided additional information. Many echoed themes from the closed questions; a common theme was that the course gave them opportunity to reflect on their skills and career:

“The coaching and 360 reports have really helped me to reflect on myself as a leader throughout the process It also helped me to reflect on the fact that I have developed as a leader and that others within my work place also feel that I have developed as a leader.”

Similarly, participants found it beneficial to network with peers:

“The opportunity to meet heads and visit other schools was an inspiring experience. It helped me to consolidate my vision and recognise my own strengths and identify my areas for improvement for the future.”

Several had developed a better understanding of leadership roles:

“It gave me the opportunity to get an insight into how headteachers work on a day-to-day basis and what their worries or concerns are.”

Some participants had found the programme helpful for their career plans:

“It has allowed me to identify and focus more clearly on what I want in my career and what my reasons for teaching are.”

The survey asked respondents when they thought they would apply for the next stage promotion; 20% (54) of participants had already gained a promotion. Table 1 (see annex) provides details on when other participants were planning to apply for a promotion. Only 13.7% (37) of participants were not planning to apply for a next stage promotion.

Conclusions

The data received from the 2017-18 survey indicates that participants believed the programme had improved their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and improved their confidence to apply for promotion – but also had improved their strategic thinking as a leader. Participants were less convinced that the programme had built their confidence at job interviews, improved their ability to construct strong job applications or improved their facilitation skills.

The open-ended responses on the survey were overwhelmingly positive, with many participants stating that they now have the confidence to apply for a next stage promotion. A common theme in responses was how beneficial it was having the opportunity to interact with different teachers, with a range of experience and visit other schools to learn from them. Interestingly, whilst participants in both open and closed responses indicated improved confidence to apply for promotion, they felt that the programmes did less to build their confidence for job interviews or at constructing job applications.

The results presented in this report only reflect the views of respondents to the survey, and therefore is not a complete representation of everyone who attended the programme. It is not possible to say if these responses are fully representative of the wider population of TSF participants. The findings presented are respondents' perceptions and provide feedback on the programme rather than a full evaluation.

Annex A

Figure 1: Number of times learning outcomes gained from programme ranked as 1, 2, or 3 (1 = most important learning outcome; 11 = least important learning outcome)



Table 1: When participants are planning to apply for next stage promotion

	Percentage of participants	Number of participants
Yes – I have already achieved promotion	20%	54
Yes – I have already applied for promotion	11%	30
Yes – During summer term 2018	2%	5
Yes – After summer term 2018	35%	94
No	14%	37
I'm not sure	19%	50

Annex B

Questionnaire and data tables (2017-18)

1. Please indicate your region:

	Response percent	Response total
East Midlands	24.4%	66
East of England	21.5%	58
London	*	*
South East	27.8%	75
West Midlands	*	*
Yorkshire and the Humber	10.4%	28
South West	12.6%	34

2. What was the focus of the training

	Response percent	Response total
Aspiring to Headship (AH)	36.3%	98
Recently Qualified Teacher (RQT)	31.5%	85
Other	32.2%	87

3. Did the learning meet your expectations?

	Response percent	Response total
Exceeded my expectations	34.1%	92
Met my expectations	63.0%	170
Failed to meet my expectations	3.0%	8

4. Please tell us, by selecting all that apply from the list below, what the outcomes of your learning have been. Please rank them 1-11 with 1 being the most important reason and 11 the least important by 'dragging and dropping' the answer choices into the correct order:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Median rank
Improved your confidence to apply for a promotion	58	33	18	18	19	19	20	20	28	16	21	5
Expanded your professional support networks	23	29	34	24	25	28	24	33	18	14	18	5.5
Improved your facilitation/presentation skills	4	14	18	21	14	22	24	33	51	29	40	8
Constructed strong job applications	4	13	16	15	11	15	19	26	38	55	58	9
Built your confidence at job interviews	7	8	17	10	19	13	25	40	33	62	36	8
Understanding of your own strengths and limitations	43	52	39	38	32	24	17	15	6	4	0	4
Improved your strategic thinking as a leader	35	38	33	34	37	34	28	13	11	4	3	4
Gained a more detailed understanding of senior leadership	32	25	14	31	29	23	28	24	24	22	18	6
Improved your ability to motivate others	9	10	21	24	21	40	39	34	39	18	17	7
Improved your leadership and management skills in general	30	22	35	25	30	28	5	11	11	32	21	5
Developed better self-reflection/review techniques	25	26	25	30	33	24	23	21	11	14	38	5

5. When do you think you will apply for next stage promotion?

	Response percent	Response total
Yes – I have already achieved promotion	20%	54
Yes – I have already applied for promotion	11%	30
Yes – During summer term 2018	2%	5
Yes – After summer term 2018	35%	94
No	14%	37
I'm not sure	19%	50

6. Age category

	Response percent	Response total
22-24	7.9%	21
25-34	48.3%	129
35-44	24.3%	65
45-54	16.5%	44
55+	3.0%	8

7. Gender

	Response percent	Response total
Male	23.5%	63
Female ³	76.5%	205
Prefer not to say	0.0%	0

³ Female includes *other* responses.

8. Ethnicity:

	Response Percent	Response Total
White British	88.1%	236
White Other ⁴	4.1%	11
Asian or Asian British	1.9%	5
I do not wish to disclose my ethnic origin	*	*
Black or Black British	*	*
Indian	*	*
Pakistani	*	*
White and Asian	*	*
White and Black African	*	*
Mixed	*	*
Chinese	*	*
Any other Asian background	*	*
Caribbean	*	*
Any other mixed background	*	*
Other ethnic group	*	*

⁴ Includes White Irish.



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Reference: DFE-RB873

ISBN: 978-1-78105-969-2

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