



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

The customer journey to initial teacher training

Research report

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Glossary

BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
BME	Black and minority ethnic
DfE	Department for Education
EY ITT	Early years initial teacher training
EYPS	Early years professional status
EYTS	Early years teacher status
GiT	Get Into Teaching
HEI	Higher education institution
ITT	Initial teacher training
NCTL	National College for Teaching and Leadership
NQT	Newly qualified teacher
PGCE	Post graduate certificate in education
PSHE	Personal, social and health education
QTS	Qualified teacher status
SCITT	School-centred initial teacher training
SEND	Special educational needs and disabilities
SKE	Subject knowledge enhancement
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and maths
UCAS	University and Colleges Admissions Service

Executive summary

In 2015 The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), commissioned the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) to enhance their understanding of the 'customer journey' – the experience of those who register an interest in, and progress towards, Initial Teacher Training (ITT) – in order to identify where changes can best be made to maximise efficient and cost-effective recruitment to ITT. The study built on earlier research¹ to understand: why potential teacher trainees make the choices they do, choosing specific routes and phases (including School Direct and early years); and what happens as individuals move along the customer journey and why some become Lost and withdraw from the process.

The research gathered indicative data on the decisions and experiences of potential teacher trainees from an online survey of 1,378 individuals who were either registered with the Get Into Teaching Website, had applied for ITT through the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) or had applied for early years initial teacher training (EYITT) through a registered provider. However the core of the research was in-depth telephone interviews and focus groups with 89 individuals (participants in the initial survey). Interviewees were from a mix of backgrounds and prior experiences including family commitments, age, gender, ethnicity, degree result, and home region; but half (46) were Lost applicants, in that they did not go on to apply for ITT. Additional contextual evidence was gained from bespoke analysis of a survey of postgraduate students and a brief review of academic and policy literature.

The research points to a number of actions the NCTL could take to reduce the barriers to ITT and amplify the attraction to ITT.

Key findings

- Many individuals have always wanted to be a teacher, and often feel strongly that they would make a good teacher. For others the interest in teaching develops over time and is sparked by formal or informal work experience in schools, nurseries or with youth groups. Some intend to use teaching as a way back to the labour market, to regain control of their careers and do a more satisfying job. Yet for individuals to look seriously into making an application for ITT they need a sufficient push or for the pull to overcome the benefits of their current situation

¹ In particular Matthias C (2014) Qualitative Research with Shortage Subject Teaching Candidates: The Journey to Teacher Training, National College of Teaching and Leadership

(such as a comfortable job); they need to see teaching as a positive move that they could achieve and that would bring greater rewards than they are currently receiving.

- The key motivating factors to teaching careers and ITT are the opportunity to inspire children, and have a positive impact on people's lives and the local community. Teaching is regarded as a positive, meaningful and recognised profession; helping children to gain the skills and confidence needed for their lives.
- Individuals have strong preferences for undertaking training with specific age groups. Preferences are influenced by: a) potential for greatest impact; b) current and previous experiences with children; c) perceptions about behaviour (who are easiest to interact with and how to manage behaviour); and d) preference for learning style, focus and structure.
- Understanding of the full range of ITT options is not universal. Some individuals are only vaguely aware that training can take place in schools or in university and are unaware of the differences between the school-led options. Lack of awareness appears to be driven by: the evolving nature of routes; availability and visibility of local options; and difficulties accessing appropriately tailored and impartial information.
- Location (which is often about accessibility and affordability) is often the primary motivator and shaping factor when it comes to choosing ITT options. Applicants frequently choose positions and higher education institutions (HEIs) close to home.
- Internet searches are a common way to start research on ITT and two in five remembered registering with the Get Into Teaching website to access unbiased and impartial information, and often other targeted services such Premier Plus (a valuable resource helping individuals with choosing options, making applications, encouraging them through to interviews and beyond, and getting experience in schools).
- There appears to be a large volume and spread of information about ITT and teaching careers but this can be confusing, contradictory and overwhelming. Many potential trainees would therefore value a central source of information to compare different options and understand the differences between the routes; and the chance for face to face or telephone based support where they could receive personalised advice and guidance to find the programme and provider that is right for them.
- Individuals can and do drop out all along the journey to ITT and there are a number of pressure points: initial fact finding and decision-making (research); gathering experience and evidence (getting prepared); the application process;

and securing a training place. Individuals need support at each of these pressure points.

- Drop-out from the customer journey is neither necessarily negative nor final. It can result from individuals making informed decisions before committing time and resources that teaching is not right for them at that stage in their life journey. Also many of those dropping out might consider ITT again in the future, if their circumstances change or perceived barriers are removed or reduced. However some of those who drop-out may not have had the motivation and resources to finish the customer journey into a teaching role or perhaps the conviction and qualities looked for by the department. The danger is however that some of those who are Lost could make effective teachers.
- It was rare for individuals to face no issues, challenges or barriers on their customer journey to ITT, and the majority of individuals faced a number of difficulties (especially as they moved further along the pathway to ITT). However it may only need one significant barrier to stop an individual from progressing.
- Key barriers include fitting the course around their existing work, family and financial commitments (often the first hurdle) and funding, that is meeting the costs of studying (fees and living costs) and dealing with the opportunity costs of lost earnings whilst studying. Although there are numerous forms of funding available, the levels of support involved can feel disappointing when compared to previous salaries earned and the prospects of adding to already substantial debt too troubling.
- Individuals also need to: a) confirm that they can meet the criteria set for the ITT programme (eg passing the skills tests, having the requisite work experience) – criteria which can appear inflexible, difficult to understand or justify, and time consuming to gather; b) find a suitable programme of good quality and personal fit and ideally within an easily commutable distance; c) navigate the application process which can be time consuming, complex, difficult, and complicated by a lack of communication and feedback and lack of time to properly research options; and d) have confidence in their abilities to cope with the course and the realities of the teaching role.

Key findings for early years ITT

- Those with a preference for early years are more likely than those considering primary or secondary ITT to be women, to consider teaching at a later age (25+), have parent/carer responsibilities, and to have pursued a career in the education sector before considering ITT. These will have a bearing on their motivations and on the challenges faced.

- Indeed those considering an early years teacher training option are particularly likely to do so while already working within the sector (eg in teaching assistant, room leader or nursery manager roles) and are motivated by a desire for personal and professional development, looking to formalise their experience and increase their employment opportunities. However they are also strongly motivated by the opportunity to work with and inspire children. Availability of funding can be a way to encourage individuals to take up early years ITT.
- Often individuals want to work with 'younger children' and so consider both early years and primary ITT. Some of these individuals weigh up Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) against primary qualified teacher status (QTS) in terms of potential employability, and on balance QTS is viewed to offer wider opportunities and flexibilities and provide better career progression. However those with a clear preference for early years feel this is the most important stage in the development of children, and perceive it to offer more freedom in teaching and individual interaction.
- Early years has become more visible recently with new options for training and professional recognition yet there are concerns that early years does not yet have the same perceived profile and status in the education sector; and that EYTS is still new and experimental and has not yet gained widespread traction across schools and nurseries leading to gaps in awareness and uncertainties as to the utility of EYTS for individual career progression and its value to employers.
- Those researching early years options often rely on universities as a key (or only) source of information and support. In general potential trainees feel there is less information available about their early years training options. This group of individuals are more concerned about understanding the nuances of, and meeting the requirements for, eligibility criteria; and specifically the skills tests and so look for information and support with this aspect of ITT.
- Prospective early years trainees appear to face particular problems fitting training in with their existing commitments, reflecting their profile (female, older, with family responsibilities and an established career) suggesting they need greater flexibilities in provision and support from their employers, if already working in the sector. They are also much more concerned about meeting the eligibility criteria and passing the skills tests, which can feel excessive for working with babies and toddlers.
- Whether or not a programme leads to QTS is an issue for only a very small and specific group of early years potential applicants. These tend to be using early years ITT as a way in to teaching or are unsure of whether to specialise in early years or primary.

Key findings for School Direct

- Factors influencing preferences for the School Direct route included: location; preferences for learning style; potential flexibilities of the programme; extent of prior work experience and thus confidence in the workplace; perceived employment advantages; views of others; availability of funding; and reputation of, and familiarity with, the provider.
- Although HEI-led provision is the most commonly considered and applied for route to ITT this is often considered alongside school-based provision. School-led provision is perceived to be more ‘hands on’ suited for those who prefer to learn through ‘doing’ and thus more appropriate for career changers whether within or outside of the education sector; offer deeper insight into the realities of the teaching environment; forge close relationships with schools and increase the likelihood of employment post-training; and to offer a wider pool of local training and thus make training more accessible.
- Those most likely to consider School Direct fee are young and from white backgrounds; and those most likely to consider School Direct salaried are older, with families to support and with a career history, and are often looking to change careers.
- There is a considerable drop off between consideration and actual application for School Direct salaried and SCITT courses. Indeed only one in five of those considering a School Direct salaried ITT programme actually go on to apply for one, and two in five do not apply for ITT at all; indicating that for many if a salaried place is not available they don’t have or want an alternative (it is in effect ‘a deal breaker’). School Direct salaried places are particularly sought after, as they present a viable means for applicants to both retrain and also continue to meet their wider obligations, yet these are hard to come-by given their limited availability and the strong competition for places.

1 Introduction and methodology

This first chapter gives an overview of the context within which the research was commissioned (drawing on findings from a brief review of the academic and policy literature) and how the findings will be used. It provides an introduction to the research by explaining the key research questions and methods taken to address them.

1.1 Research aims and objectives

The National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), an Executive Agency of the Department for Education (DfE), is responsible for ensuring that enough high quality trainees enter teacher training and early years teacher training to secure sufficient supply of new teachers. NCTL routinely reviews processes and procedures to ensure they are able to meet the targets set by DfE as well as the needs of trainees.

NCTL have worked to understand more about the current experience of those progressing towards Initial Teacher Training (ITT), the 'customer journey'. By understanding more about the experiences of those who register an interest and or apply for ITT and early years ITT, NCTL hope to identify where any changes can be most appropriately made to maximise efficient and cost-effective recruitment to ITT.

The aim of this current research is to build on earlier research² and further explore how and why people enter ITT, their preferences and the factors influencing their choices, the support that really makes a difference, and the barriers and challenges they face. Of key interest to NCTL and stakeholders is the customer journey of those applying to early years ITT the new professional graduate and undergraduate, pathways for those who want to support the educational development of younger children. Two further groups were also of particular interest: those who exit the customer journey before making an application (termed Lost applicants), and those who expressed an interest in School Direct, a pathway to ITT that is gaining in popularity.

In order to gain as full an understanding as possible the research comprised two main strands; a quantitative phase gathering data via an online survey and a qualitative phase gathering in-depth information about the experiences of individuals through telephone interviews and focus groups. This report presents the final

² In particular Matthias C (2014) Qualitative Research with Shortage Subject Teaching Candidates: The Journey to Teacher Training, National College of Teaching and Leadership

findings synthesising all of the research; the online survey, and the findings from the qualitative interviews; alongside a brief literature review and secondary analysis of wider data on initial teacher trainees.

1.2 Complex pathways

Routes or pathways into school teaching and the systems for applying are constantly evolving; and indeed have changed since the customer journey research in 2014 (Matthias, 2014). There are undergraduate pathways involving studying with a university for a Bachelor degree leading to Qualified Teaching Status (QTS) or early years teacher status (EYTS); and a number of postgraduate pathways, either Higher Education Institution (HEI)-led training (leading to a postgraduate certificate in education³ (PGCE)) or school-led training (SCITT, School Direct (fee), School Direct (salaried, which is aimed at career changers)) or indeed Teach First. Individuals can now apply via the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS, replacing the former Graduate Teacher Training Registry GTTR and applications made direct to schools) for all programmes/routes except Teach First and the majority of early years programmes. Appendix 2 sets out a short summary of each of these programme types.

The variety of options present individuals with arguably a much broader array of choices than faced by those considering other professional training. A House of Commons Children, Schools and Families Committee report (2010) highlighted that there are more possible entry options into teaching in England than any other country. Key choices are: a) when in their educational career or life journey do they want to train to be a teacher; b) what age group and specialism do they want to teach; c) and where do they want to be based (and supported) throughout their training; alongside more general choices about which specific institution/provider to work with, and whether to study full or part-time.

Figures drawn down from the latest ITT census Statistical First Release 2015/16 (DfE, 2015b⁴) indicate that there were 28,148 new entrants to postgraduate ITT programmes in the academic year 2015/16. Across all new postgraduate entrants, 51% were on school-led routes (made up of 37% on School Direct, 9% on SCITT, and 6% on Teach First), and 49% were on HEI-led courses. The total number of School Direct new entrants has increased from the previous year, following the trend

³ PGCEs are not only available through HEI-led training

⁴

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478098/ITT_CENSUS_SFR_46_2015_to_2016.pdf

of increasing popularity since the introduction of this route in 2012/13. Within the School Direct new entrants, 69% were fee paying, and 31% had salaried places; and 52% were primary and 48% were secondary.

Early years: Increasing professionalisation of early years training

Following a government commitment to raise the standard and quality of the early years workforce, alongside a desire to raise the status of the sector and simplify the range of qualifications available, the early years teacher status (EYTS) was introduced in September 2013. This replaced the early years professional status (EYPS) that was introduced in 2006. In September 2014 School Direct was opened-up for early years training to create more employer-led training.

1.3 Challenges

The academic and policy literature highlights how for a number of years reforms to the provision of teacher training have been in progress. The reforms have sought to increase the role that schools take in training future teaching professionals. As discussed above there are now many different training options.

The government set how many training places are available due to their funding responsibilities. They provide funding through a combination of student finance; covering tuition fees, providing maintenance loans and maintenance grants and direct grant funding. Since 2013 the government has been shifting the balance of ITT provision to School Direct – an employment-based route.

A recent paper from DfE (DfE, 2013a) highlighted that the single most important school-based factor in determining pupils' educational outcomes is quality of teaching and therefore improving quality of teaching is a key priority for the department. The programme of policy reform aims to drive improvements to the quality of teachers and teaching by giving schools much greater responsibility for developing and delivering ITT:

“rigorous selection and training is essential to building a strong pool of new entrants to the profession...This puts a premium on having in place an effective system of initial teacher training (ITT) that is able to identify and develop the best”

DfE, 2013

The recent Ofsted annual report (Ofsted, 2015) recognises the ongoing improvement made in the standard of education in primary and secondary schools but again emphasises “the importance of increasing the number of good leaders and teachers if we are to meet the challenge of securing further improvement in our schools,

particularly since many schools and colleges are facing problems recruiting the skilled professionals they need". The report highlights that teacher recruitment is a 'very real' problem, particularly for lower performing schools, and points to insufficient numbers of high standard entrants to the profession, in part due to unmet targets for ITT entrants; and there being areas of the country with little or no secondary teacher training available (including isolated parts of South East, North West and East of England). It calls for a national strategy to ensure "teacher training flourishes in the areas that currently lack it", but also calls for providers to give their trainees experience in schools facing challenging circumstances.

Overall new entrant numbers to state funded teaching programmes have fallen short of the challenging targets over recent years (see ITT census results). Hodgson (2014) cites Howson (2013 in Hodgson, 2014) and predicted that School Direct places will remain unfilled as recruitment has been lower than anticipated and that this could lead to a crisis in teacher recruitment. NCTL are taking steps to address potential shortages of teachers by removing limits on trainee numbers for each individual training provider⁵. However, national allocations for the number of trainees in each subject remain. There will also be controls to ensure there continues to be a mix of School Direct, SCITT and HEI-led courses. The latest statistics (DfE, 2015b) indicate that the 28,148 new entrants to postgraduate ITT programmes in the academic year 2015/16 represents an increase on the preceding year. However recruitment targets were not met and this was driven by unfilled places in secondary subjects (achieving only 82% of the recruitment target, with particular shortfalls in design and technology, art, religious education, business studies, and physics) and follows the trend of falling contributions towards the targets set via the Teacher Supply Model (TSM).

1.4 Research context

This current research must acknowledge the work that has gone before looking at the customer journey and the wider context of this research such as career decision making research and information on the postgraduate population.

Policy drivers and work to improve ITT

In 2014 the Government launched an independent review of the quality and effectiveness of ITT courses, the review was conducted by Sir Andrew Carter, with the results published in January 2015 (Carter review of initial teacher training (ITT), Sir Andrew Carter OBE, January 2015). The review found that ITT is generally good

⁵ <https://www.tes.co.uk/news/school-news/breaking-news/teacher-training-free-all-announced>

but with some room for improvement in particular areas. The government then published a response to these recommendations (Government response to the Carter review of initial teacher training (ITT), January 2015 DfE). Both the review and response contained a number of pertinent recommendations for ITT:

- “Recommendation 14: Building on the development of school-led ITT, DfE should work in collaboration with the sector (all those involved in ITT) to consider the way in which teachers gain qualified teacher status (QTS) with a view to strengthening what has become a complex and sometimes confusing system. We would like applicants to understand that QTS is the essential component of ITT and that a PGCE is an optional academic qualification.”

It is too early to tell what actions will be taken by the current government on this issue. However this customer journey research has shown that applicants and potential applicants to ITT also see the ITT system as complex and confusing; and for many potential trainees the PGCE is still the dominant qualification and draw. This will be discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

- “Recommendation 15: DfE should undertake a review of the effectiveness of the skills tests in selecting high quality trainees.”

The government responded that the skills tests are ‘constantly’ evaluated to make sure that high quality trainees are recruited and they would continue to consider the relevance of the tests based on the evidence. This customer journey research presents views on the skills tests in Chapter 5 and indicates how it they can deter individuals from applying. However it is not known whether the individuals put off by the skills tests would have been suitable candidates.

- “Recommendation 16: In order for applicants to make well informed decisions when choosing a course, we recommend the development and expansion of the NCTL’s “Get Into Teaching” website. This should signpost information that applicants might consider when choosing a course, for example: provider Ofsted rating and inspection report; completion rates; NQT survey results; and employability rates.”

The government welcomed this recommendation and agreed that NCTL would develop a page on the ‘Get Into Teaching’ website to signpost relevant information for applicants to consider.

During the period of this customer journey research the Get Into Teaching website was re-launched, so the comments made by research participants about their use of the website should be noted in consideration of this. Feedback on information, advice and support including the use of the Get Into Teaching website are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 3 also presents some evidence that these types of quality or reputation-based information do play a factor in individuals’ choices alongside

location, their own feelings about particular course options (personal fit), how they would measure up against eligibility requirements and elements of the course structure. However it also indicates that choices may be somewhat constrained by a lack of time to research a wide range of options or a lack of local options open to them.

Findings from previous customer journey research

NCTL first published research on the customer journey in October 2014 (Matthias, 2014). This first customer journey research differs somewhat to the current research as it largely focussed on: a) shortage subjects and on School Direct pathways to teaching; and b) focussed on the latter stages of the customer journey, working with applicants. The current research is broader in scope as it includes those interested in all subjects, pathways and phases (including early years) and focusses on the whole customer journey to ITT playing particular attention to losses between registration and application.

The previous research found that candidates applying to join ITT in 2013 did not follow a standardised or consistent approach although they did often share common sources of motivation and experienced similar fears and concerns such as concerns over the complex routes into ITT. This previous customer journey research also identified bursaries, salaries and scholarships as often 'critical' to decisions about ITT. NCTL followed up the original research with a second piece of primary research specifically looking at the role of scholarships (Porter and Bear, 2014). This survey of past applicants for scholarships from the four professional bodies⁶ found that less than half of applicants were aware of the existence of scholarships before they were considering applying for ITT. The research found that availability and awareness of scholarships can turn an interest in teaching into an application for teacher training but perhaps cannot ignite an interest.

The previous customer journey research also identified a number of further research needs; further investigation to understand why individuals choose a particular ITT route; the perceptions of School Direct (introduced in September 2012) in terms of its qualification status; the attitudes towards School Direct now that it has been more established as a route to ITT; and how the support mechanisms NCTL offers can be focussed to most effectively support successful applications. Furthermore, the NCTL Initial Teacher Training Census (2014⁷) identified that the proportions of Black and

⁶ Royal Society of Chemistry, British Computer Society - The Chartered Institute for IT, Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, Institute of Physics

⁷

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380175/ITT_CENSUS_2014-15_FINAL.pdf

minority ethnic trainees varied by route, with a smaller proportion undertaking School Direct training, so would be worthy of further investigation.

A pathway to teaching – the customer journey

The customer journey is understood to comprise a number of stepping stones: pre-registration activity (thinking about teaching as a career and undertaking initial research); registering interest with the Get Into Teaching website hosted by the Department for Education or with an early years provider to access personalised and more formal information and advice; application for a training place; enrolment onto a programme; successful completion of training; and retention in a teaching career.

This current research starts from the understanding of the transition from consideration of teaching as a career (identified by registration with the Get Into Teaching website), to application and starting on ITT as a 'journey' and those participating in this as the customers of NCTL. This journey can also be understood as a pipeline as there are various 'leakages' at different stages where people exit the application process and do not continue with their application to ITT.

NCTL estimate that based on current numbers of registrations with the Get Into Teaching website, just one quarter of registrants convert into applicants to ITT, and thus there are significant leaks in the pipeline. There are also concerns about withdrawals from ITT programmes once enrolled, however programme retention is not the focus of this current research. Research that specifically explores retention on ITT programmes can indicate the types of challenges faced during training and by which types of individuals, challenges which may also act as deterrents earlier in the customer journey. For example Hobson et al (2009) found that the main causes of withdrawal from ITT relate to 'workload and an apparent lack of support from ITP [initial teacher preparation] providers.' Also that withdrawal rates from ITT differed by type of route (Graduate and Registered Teacher Programme trainees were less likely to withdraw than HEI-led PGCE students), phase (secondary phase trainees were more likely to withdraw than primary), trainees' age (older trainees were more likely to withdraw than those under 25), gender (males were more likely to withdraw than females) and prior commitment to the profession (people who were more attracted by financial incentives were more likely to withdraw). The authors conclude that withdrawals from ITT courses could be seen in several ways; as an example of a failing ITT system or as a positive indicator of the effectiveness at 'preventing underperforming trainees from entering the teaching profession'.

Career decision making

Deciding to embark on ITT involves career decision making, and the literature here provides some insights for this current research. Career decision making literature initially focussed on decisions as the outcome of completely rational choices. However, some studies have shown that the career decision-making process is not

straightforward and rational, but rather a combination of intuitive and rational decision-making. Experiments have indicated that the rational mind constructs reasons why an initial decision of the intuitive mind was attractive in order to justify that particular choice (Blustein and Strohmer, 1987, Gazzaniga, 1985). Behavioural science suggests that individuals will tend to give more weight to information that seems particularly salient to them if it comes from people they know and that people generalise from a very small number of personal examples (availability bias) (see for example Dolan et al, 2010). In addition, people tend to under-weight evidence from more objective sources, like a careers service (Foskett and Johnston study, 2010). Foskett and Johnston found that careers guidance came too late in the person's life and insufficient linkages between employment and education were made. This point is particularly important because Purcell et al. (2008) found that career plans and future employability were core reasons why individuals chose a training course and this was particularly true for people from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds.

IES have previously undertaken research for BIS entitled 'Adult Career Decision-Making: Qualitative Research' (Gloster et al, 2013a). This also found that the career decision-making process is a complex construct, is not linear, and does not involve 'rational' behaviour. Decisions including learning decisions are influenced by career values which can change throughout life, and the expectations and support (or lack of) from employers, family and friends. They can also be constrained by various (inter-related) labour market, personal and social factors essentially acting as barriers, such as health, confidence, prior experience of learning and access to finance.

Profile of the postgraduate applicant pool

The ITT census (SFR November 2015, DfE, 2015b), showed that entrants to ITT are becoming better qualified following trends in the graduate population, with 75% of new degree-level entrants to postgraduate ITT holding a first class or 2:1 classified degree, and 18% holding a first class degree. The figures also showed how the new entrant profile is not as diverse as the undergraduate leaver profile, some groups are under-represented, and that some programme types and pathways attract individuals with different characteristics.

The majority of new entrants are:

- Female (69%) although males are better represented in School Direct places, particularly salaried places. Males are also better represented in secondary ITT than primary ITT.

- Young, under 25 (55%), and this was particularly the case with the HEI-led route (62%). The exception though is the School Direct (salaried) route where the majority of new entrants are older (79%).
- White (86%). The proportion from Black or minority ethnic backgrounds was 14% in 2014/15 and has remained relatively stable in recent years. A higher proportion of BME new entrants are found on HEI-led courses.
- Non-disabled (92%). Just 8% of new entrants declared themselves as disabled students, and this group were more likely to be found on HEI-led courses.

Additional insight into the profile and also the decisions and experiences of *some* initial teacher trainees is provided through a large survey of postgraduates studying in England⁸ that was commissioned by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (Pollard et al, 2016). This survey captures data from students on HEI-led PGCE programmes, and compares this to postgraduates studying for other professional qualifications such as nursing, social work or law.

The study found that overall, PGCE respondents tended to be young, female, and white, and just under one half had parents who had attended university. They also tended to be single and have no dependents. Their profile is therefore somewhat different, and arguably less diverse when compared to the rest of the group of postgraduate students on professional postgraduate study programmes. The approach of using bursaries and scholarships to attract applicants to PGCE study with a higher class of first degree (generally a first or upper second class degree) is reflected in the sample group: among those with a bachelor's degree, a higher proportion of PGCE students than other professional postgraduate students had a first (17% compared with 12%) or upper second (56% compared with 47%) classification. Looking across the subjects studied by the professional postgraduate group, those studying law, teaching via PGCE and other subjects allied to medicine (excluding nursing) were the most likely to have a high degree classification.

Also the majority of PGCE students had either no gap or only a short gap of up to three years between their undergraduate or postgraduate studies (moving straight or relatively quickly from their first degree to postgraduate study) This was very different

⁸ Transitions to Postgraduate Study dataset

The dataset for this survey consisted of over 10,000 responses from postgraduate students, drawn from 45 higher education institutions in England during the academic year 2013/14. The analysis for this report was drawn from a smaller sub-sample of respondents, who were studying postgraduate qualifications at the time of completing the survey. Analysis here compares the experiences of those studying for PGCEs, against the experiences of other postgraduate students on professionally oriented programmes such as law, nursing and social work. It should be noted that this 'PGCE sample' is not representative of all prospective initial teacher trainees as it represents only recent students that had applied and successfully secured HEI-led PGCE teaching places.

to the rest of those on professional postgraduate study programmes who were much more likely to have reported having gaps of four years or longer between their undergraduate and postgraduate studies. This more direct movement is reflected in the younger age profile of PGCE students noted above.

1.5 Key research questions

This new research updates the 2014 study now that the School Direct route has become more established and the application process has simplified; and probes further into the drivers, motivations, influences and triggers that lead individuals to choose one particular programme type/provider over another, including perceived value, status or quality. The research builds on the 2014 report to understand why individuals make the choices they do about teaching as a potential career. The specific questions set for the research were:

- 1a: What factors influence individuals' application to phase and subject?
- 1b: What factors influence choice of early years ITT (which provides Early Years Teacher Status) over other options for teaching in the early years?
- 2a: What factors influence individuals' choice of a particular ITT route and type of provider?
- 2b: What perceptions do individuals have of School Direct and what factors influence these perceptions?
- 2c: Does quality factor in decisions about training provider and type of programme?
- 2d: Does the application process factor in decisions about training provider and type of programme?
- 3: Why are some potential teacher trainees Lost to the customer journey?
- 4a: What are individuals' views of the support mechanisms provided by NCTL?
- 4b: What delivery decisions may influence customer choices regarding recruitment to ITT and Early Years ITT?

1.6 Methodology

1.6.1 Online survey

The initial phase of the research was an online survey with customer journey participants. The primary aim of this survey was to generate a population to draw a purposive sample in order to conduct qualitative research. However the data captured from the survey respondents also provided some indicative qualitative and quantitative background information about those who undertake the journey from interest in ITT to application. The survey included questions to collect: demographic information; details of the individual's application to ITT including preferred routes, ages/phases and specialisms; stage reached on the customer journey; factors influencing choices; and willingness to participate in follow-up interviews. Interest in teaching was taken as a given, and respondents were asked their thoughts about and experiences of the journey to ITT (for however long this was for each individual) rather than what they think of teaching per se. The survey drew on a number of sources to develop appropriate questions: a) the research literature outlined above; b) questions from a successful survey of postgraduate entrants undertaken for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills; and c) questions used and thus tested in the previous customer journey research. It included open questions for text responses, closed questions and ranking questions.

Given the research aims and key questions, the sample for the survey was designed to be broad and wide reaching and thus draw in individuals from all backgrounds, considering all routes to ITT including School Direct, those considering early years ITT as well as ITT, and those at different stages of the customer journey including those who may have decided not to apply (referred to as those 'Lost' to the customer journey or lost applicants). It was not designed to represent the population of those undertaking ITT as this is known to under-represent certain groups (such as males, mature individuals, those with disabilities and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds) and thus would miss out on feedback from the very groups the NCTL are interested to hear from. It was also not designed to represent the population of those who could be interested in ITT as this would be very difficult to estimate. The sample was therefore drawn from three main (potentially overlapping) populations: 1) those who registered an interest in teaching through the Get Into Teaching website (hosted by DfE but managed by TPUK); 2) those who had applied to ITT programmes via UCAS; and 3) those who had contacted providers of early years ITT⁹. The relevant data holders (TPUK, UCAS and individual providers) drew the

⁹ Sample 1 comprised a random sample of 12,000 ITT candidates registered with the website approx. one quarter who registered during 11/12, one quarter during 12/13, and one half during 13/14; plus.

sample to a specification provided by the researchers and the data holders distributed the survey invitations to the selected individuals. Potential respondents were reminded that they only needed to complete the survey once (even if contacted by more than one source).

It should be noted that the survey captured respondents perceptions, expectations and experiences from their own perspectives, it therefore provides, amongst other things, an indication of awareness of the realities of ITT. However it was not designed to test their knowledge nor indeed to test their responsiveness to certain options if information was provided (ie market research). It was also not possible to capture or verify the actual actions taken by individuals (beyond that reported in the survey) as the survey data was anonymous and could not be linked (via personal data) to that held and processed by the data holders.

The online survey was emailed to 25,460 individuals and was open from 9 March to 30 March 2015 (a period of 3 weeks¹⁰). When the survey was closed there were a total of 1,378 responses, which represented a response rate of 5.4% (given the limitations noted above it was also not possible to provide a response rate for each sample type). Of this number, 628 agreed to further participation in the research (46%) including: 79 'Lost' to the customer journey to ITT, 129 male and 492 female, 243 who had considered the early years age group (0-5), 269 who had considered older age groups (3-11) and 283 who had secured a place on (any) ITT at the time of the survey.

Analysis of the survey results (frequencies, cross tabulations and simple tests for statistical associations at the 95% significance level) provides some quantitative insights into the outcomes and experiences of those following the customer journey. However these should be treated as indicative due to:

- a) the sampling design – three separate random samples of an unknown total population were obtained with no ability to check for and account for overlap (ie individuals could be in more than one sample). The most robust sampling design is a random probability design and weighting according to probability of selection but this requires the total population to be known; and

2,900 early years candidates, all those who had registered with the website since October 2013. Sample 2 comprised a random sample of 10,000 UCAS applicants, applying for ITT places in the 2014/15 academic year via UCAS, this encompassed 5,000 who were known to have been placed on a course and 5,000 not (yet) placed. Sample 3 comprised of 560 individuals who applied directly for early years ITT to specialist early years providers.

¹⁰ The timeframe for the survey was constrained by the start of the campaigning for the 2015 UK general election and dissolution of parliament which restricts the government's use of public surveys.

- b) the small proportional response (although this was higher than achieved in the previous customer journey research) which increases the risk of non-response bias: that is distinct differences between the people who responded to the survey versus those who did not respond. Where the characteristics of the sample are known it is possible to weight for non-response to reduce this bias but was not possible in this case as there was no information available either on the total sample or the total population (ie anyone considering ITT).

Although it was not possible to correct for these potential biases, a level of certainty and confidence in the survey responses can be calculated.

For example the table below presents the level of precision of the responses from a sample of 1,000 respondents taken from a much larger population. The table shows that if 40% of respondents said 'Yes' to a particular question, the reader can be 95% certain that the proportion of the total population who would say 'Yes' would be between 37% and 43%, and 99% certain that the true proportion would be between 36% and 44%.

Table 1.1: Confidence interval examples

Survey response	95% confidence interval	99% confidence interval
50%	± 3.1%	± 4.1%
40%	± 3.0%	± 4.0%
30%	± 2.8%	± 3.7%
20%	± 2.5%	± 3.3%
10%	± 1.9%	± 2.5%
5%	± 1.4%	± 1.8%

Characteristics of the survey respondents

The whole responding sample

Females made up the majority (79%) of survey respondents, as did those from white backgrounds (78%) which reflects the general teaching population and the ITT entrant pool. In addition just over half (56%) lived with a partner, and just under half (45%) had caring responsibilities; and London, South East and the North West accounted for the largest proportions of respondents. Respondents were fairly evenly split between early career individuals (those still studying, 27%; or had recently finished their studies, 18%) and those with some existing labour market experiences/career pathway (those working in the education sector and looking to formalise their teaching career, 14%; those working elsewhere and looking to move

into teaching, 38%). Over seven in 10 respondents were aged 25 and above (71%). The majority of respondents had an undergraduate degree qualification, and over half had achieved either a first class honours degree (15%) or a 2:1 (40%).

Early years

An early years sub-sample was identified from the survey, these were individuals who had considered and/or applied for at least one early years ITT course (n=344, 33%). Compared with the full responding sample there was a noticeably greater proportion of females compared to males in this early years sub-sample. Likewise, respondents within this group appeared more likely to consider teaching at a later age (25+), have parent/carer responsibilities, and to have pursued a career in the education before considering ITT: these education-based careers may include teaching English as a foreign language, but most commonly involved nursery and pre-school based careers (indicated by the open text responses). Indeed 50% of those looking to progress their careers within education had considered or applied to early years.

'Lost' applicants

Another sub-sample of particular interest to NCTL were Lost applicants (n=127, 12%). These were defined as individuals who although had considered ITT (or early years ITT) were no longer making an application for training, and so their customer journey had come to an early end. This group were distinguished from those who at the time of the survey were still considering whether to make an application (referred to as 'Pending applicants'¹¹) and those individuals who had made or were in the process of making an application (referred to as 'Applicants'). There were some notable (and statistically significant) differences in the profile of the Lost group when compared to the pending and applicant groups.

- On average, the Lost group were older (mean age of 38) when compared to those pending (37 years) and particularly applicants (the youngest with a mean age of 32 years).

Table 1.2: Average age of Lost applicants

Type of applicant	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Applicant (applied or in process of applying)	31.8	692	10.3
Pending (still considering applying)	37.3	205	10.3

¹¹ Note that the pending group could become either Lost or applicants as they progress along the customer journey.

Lost (not applying)	37.8	117	11.6
Total	33.6	1,014	10.8

Source: IES Survey, 2015

- Career changers from outside of the education sector were more likely than other career changers or early career respondents to have become Lost to the customer journey: 15% of those who had followed a different career path for a number of years were Lost, compared to only 9% of those early in their career (including those just graduated or still studying).
- Those with a lower degree classification (or no degree including current undergraduates) were more likely to become Lost than those with a 1st or upper second class of degree.
- Those with greater caring responsibilities (whether sole or shared) were also more likely to become Lost than those without.
- Those living in London and the South East were far more likely to be Lost applicants than those in other regions: 16% of respondents in the South East were Lost; compared to just 6% in the East Midlands and 7% in Yorkshire and the Humber.
- Additionally, those interested in teaching early years were marginally less likely to be Lost than those considering teaching other ages. Conversely those considering teaching middle or secondary level ages were marginally more likely to become Lost (these relationships were not statistically significant).
- However there was no significant relationship between gender or ethnicity and likelihood of being Lost to the customer journey among the sample of respondents.

Table 1.3: Lost applicants profile (row %)

	Applicant %	Pending %	Lost %	Base (N)
Circumstances*				
Early career/current student/recent graduate	79.0	11.9	9.1	463
Career changers – outside of education sector	55.8	29.4	14.8	391
Career changers – within education sector	68.9	20.9	10.1	148
Age range*				
16-24	84.9	8.5	6.6	272
25-34	70.6	18.6	10.8	323

	Applicant %	Pending %	Lost %	Base (N)
35+	55.6	29.1	15.3	419
First degree classification*				
1st or 2:1	75.1	13.4	11.5	567
2:2 or Other	63.5	23.9	12.6	373
No degree**	39.4	46.8	13.8	94
Caring responsibilities*				
No caring responsibilities	74.1	16.9	9.0	556
Caring responsibilities, with partner	60.5	24.1	15.5	349
Caring responsibilities, without partner	58.3	25.0	16.7	108
Region*				
South East	62.6	21.1	16.3	190
London	59.6	23.9	16.5	188
North West	72.0	18.1	9.9	182
Yorkshire and the Humber	69.7	23.6	6.7	89
West Midlands	77.3	13.3	9.3	75
East of England	76.7	12.3	11.0	73
South West	67.1	24.7	8.2	73
East Midlands	77.3	16.7	6.1	66
North East	75.8	15.2	9.1	66
All	67.7	20.2	12.1	1,034

Notes: applicants includes those who applied or are in the process of applying, pending includes those still considering applying, and Lost includes those not applying for ITT.

* denotes statistically significant difference

** includes Undergraduate applicants

Source: IES Survey, 2015

School Direct

A further sub-group of interest were those who had either considered or applied to a School Direct ITT, including: School Direct (fee), School Direct (salaried) or the newly introduced School Direct early years (n=519, 50%). Again there were significant differences in the profile of this group. Males were more likely than females to be interested in School Direct (58% compared with 48%), as were those from white backgrounds (52% compared with 44%), and those changing career from outside of the education sector (55% compared with 44% of those moving from within the education sector, and 49% of those still studying or in their early career). There were marginal difference by age and family circumstances but these were not significant. Similarly those in the Lost group were less likely to have considered School Direct but this was not a statistically significant association.

The tables detailing these figures and further details of the responding sample profile are provided in Appendix 3 (in a separate appendix report).

1.6.2 Qualitative research

Interviews and focus groups

The second key stage of this research involved in-depth interviews and focus groups lasting up to an hour and a half with a sample of customer journey participants (including individuals still considering making an application and those Lost to the journey) drawn from respondents to the online survey. A discussion guide was developed and used with participants. The interviewers were able to draw on individuals' responses to the survey in order to clarify issues and probe further on preferences, choices, decisions, challenges and experiences. The guide covered:

- background including career to date;
- experiences during consideration phase including when first thought about teaching as a career, the questions they had and information needed to help with decisions, ITT options explored and researched, understanding of options and perceptions of apparent suitability, and support accessed;
- experiences during application stage including triggers to make an application to ITT, what was appealing about final choices made, perceptions of differences between routes (school-based and HEI-based), what options were not considered suitable and why, factors considered when applying and support received, experience of the application process, challenges faced and any remaining concerns about choices;
- experiences of those Lost to the customer journey and choosing not to apply including support required and received (if any), challenges faced, factors influencing decisions, reasons for dropping out, what could be done to change their mind and future intentions.

In addition all participants were asked to provide any final reflection on their experience of considering and (where applicable) applying for ITT and for any suggestions to improve the customer journey to ITT.

The data provided in the survey enabled individuals to be targeted based on their backgrounds and/or experiences of the customer journey. A selection matrix was developed to purposively over sample groups of particular interest to the research: Lost applicants, those interested in teaching the early years age group, those interested in School Direct ITT, males and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Opt-in sample

Respondents to the survey indicated whether they would like to opt-in to this second stage of research.

There was no significant relationship between an individual's decision to opt-in to further participation in research and their: circumstances, first degree qualification, caring responsibilities, gender, or region. However a higher proportion of those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds (70%, compared to 58% of those from white backgrounds, 58%), and from older age groups opted in to the qualitative stage of the research providing an excellent pool for the interview sample selection.

Table 1.4: Characteristics of the opt-in sample

Whether opted-in to further research	Yes %	No %	All %
Circumstances			
Applicant (applied or in process of applying)	67.7	67.6	67.7
Pending (still considering applying)	20.5	19.5	20.1
Lost (not applying)	11.8	12.9	12.2
Base (N)	628	411	1,039
Ethnicity			
White	74.8	83.7	78.3
BME	25.2	16.3	21.7
Base (N)	624	406	1,030

Source: IES Survey, 2015

Characteristics of the interviewees

Three focus groups were held in addition to one-to-one telephone interviews to provide individuals with varied opportunities to participate in the qualitative stage of the research. Interviews and focus groups took place between 25th May 2015 and 19th June 2015.

In total 89 individuals took part in the qualitative research: 12 attended a focus group and 77 participated in a telephone interview. The total number of qualitative interviews was relatively large for a study of this size and focus, and provided a good spread of experiences.

The individuals participating in the interviews and focus groups were from a mix of backgrounds to ensure a diversity of viewpoints and to ensure NCTL key interest groups were included: 46 of those interviewed were Lost¹² (representing 51% of the

¹² In addition there were 35 applicants (people who had applied or were still in the process of applying) and 8 still considering applying (pending).

interviewees), 34 had at least considered early years ITT (38% of interviewees), and (36%) had considered a School Direct route.

In addition:

- 73% of those interviewed were white and 27% were from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds (Asian/Asian British and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British were the most frequently given backgrounds);
- 26% (N=23) interviewees were male;
- most commonly interviewees had achieved a 2:1 degree classification (46%);
- there were roughly equal proportions of participants who were single (40%), married/living with partner (30%), and married/living with a partner and with caring responsibilities (30%);
- the mean age of those interviewed was 36, and 48% of interviewees were aged 35 or over.

Analysis methodology

All interviews and focus groups were recorded on encrypted devices with the permission of the interviewees, these recordings were supplemented with handwritten notes. The notes and recordings were analysed using a matrix mapping approach whereby findings were organised and summarised under key headings reflecting the research questions, and alongside key characteristics of the participant. In addition, the research team discussed emerging findings and themes at an analysis meeting which helped to frame the exploration of the interview data.

1.7 Structure of the report

Each chapter starts with a list of summary points or key findings (with a separate note of the summary findings for the early years sub-sample), then follows an introduction establishing the content and focus and then, where appropriate, a section setting the scene which highlights pertinent findings from the literature and secondary data analysis. The main bulk of each chapter, structured around sub-themes, reports briefly on findings from the online survey of those considering and/or applying for ITT, followed by more extensive interview feedback. Where appropriate charts are used to report key survey findings, and short vignettes and quotes are used to illustrate themes and topics and to provide real-life examples. Quotes from the online survey are distinguished from interview quotes and vignettes, and these vignettes and quotes have been anonymised to ensure individuals cannot be identified (however a note is provided setting out a few key background characteristics of the individual for context). Where possible differences in the

experiences of survey respondents and groups of interviewees due to their different backgrounds or circumstances are highlighted.

2: Motivations and triggers

This explores: initial motivations, considerations and perceived benefits of teaching and triggers to action (i.e. registering an interest or making an application for ITT).

3: Preferences and application behaviour

This examines: awareness and understanding of options – HEI-based, school-based, early years programmes; preferred options and attraction factors and the perceived relative benefits of one programme type above another; other factors affecting and influencing decisions; experiences of the application process and factors influencing choice of provider. It takes a specific focus on the perceptions of and decisions around early years ITT and School Direct ITT.

4: Information about, and advice and support for teacher training

This focuses on: initial research activity and information sought; perceived ease of accessing information; sources of information advice and support (including experience of the Get Into Teaching website and experience of other NCTL support mechanisms), influence of other individuals and sources, and the most valued information, advice and support.

5: Challenges and barriers

This looks at: key pressure points and where people can drop out of the customer journey; and barriers encountered, relative strengths of barriers and key reasons for drop-out. It takes a specific focus on the experiences of those Lost to the customer journey, arguably those for whom the barriers were too great.

6: Areas for consideration

This final chapter draws together feedback from respondents on suggestions to improve the customer journey, and indicates areas where NCTL could: influence and support decisions, encourage and support individuals through to application, convert Lost individuals to applicants, or enable Lost individuals to return at a later stage; or undertake further research.

Appendices

There are a number of appendices to this report. They contain: a bibliography; details of the online survey questions; contents of the telephone interview discussion guide; additional details and tables from the survey and secondary analysis; and glossary of ITT programme types. Some of these are attached to this report, however the majority are contained in a separate annexe document.

1.7.1 Reporting conventions

Throughout the report, where we refer to initial teacher training (ITT) this also includes early years ITT. However at some points early years ITT is discussed separately.

The fully completed survey responses were imported into a statistical analysis package (SPSS). Survey results were analysed descriptively and where comparisons in the report are made between sub groups it is indicated whether the differences described were statistically significant at a 0.05 threshold. Percentages based on less than 25 cases (column or row bases as applicable) are not reported. Percentages based on 25 to 49 cases (column or row bases as applicable) should be interpreted with caution and as such are reported in square brackets.

2 Motivations and triggers

This chapter explores in greater detail the initial factors and considerations that drew individuals to teaching, the aspects and perceived benefits that motivated them to consider a teaching career and, for some, to make an application for teacher training. It also looks at the motivations for teaching different age ranges, particularly the attraction of teaching early years. This chapter also charts the flows into teaching and indicates at what point in their career individuals consider teaching and what triggers them into action. The next chapter digs deeper in choices and explores perceptions of and preferences for particular ITT programmes, and the various attraction factors for the different routes.

Chapter Summary

ITT findings

- Many individuals had always wanted to be a teacher, and often felt strongly that they would make a good teacher. For others the interest in teaching develops over time; and the interest is often sparked by formal or informal work experience in schools, nurseries or with youth groups (see Section 2.2)
- Some develop an interest in teaching whilst further into their careers and life journey, intending to use teaching as a way back to the labour market or as a way to regain control of their careers and do a rewarding/more satisfying job (Section 2.2).
- Individuals tended to have multiple motivations but the strongest motivating factors to teaching careers and ITT were the opportunity to inspire children, and to have a positive impact on people's lives and their local community. Location is a key factor in choices about ITT and local options are important in seeing ITT as accessible (Section 3.5.5). In general teaching was regarded as a positive, meaningful and recognised profession; with education critical in enabling children to gain the skills and confidence needed for their lives (Section 2.3).
- Other key motivators were: passion for a specific subject and desire to pass on this interest to others plus the potential to use skills and knowledge gained. The longer holidays and job stability offered by teaching was also a motivator, although not generally the primary motivator. Teaching was also believed to be a career that could facilitate greater geographic mobility within the UK and abroad (Section 2.3).
- In general individuals had strong preferences for undertaking training with specific age groups (or phase) and thus not easily deterred from their choices.

This was indicated by the options considered and the spread of applications made, and relatively few applied for ITT in all potential age ranges (Section 3.2). Phase preference was one of the first decisions made before deciding on a programme or provider. This preference tended to be influenced by: a) potential for greatest impact; b) current and previous experiences with children; c) perceptions about behaviour (which age group would be the easiest to interact with and manage); and d) preference for learning style, focus and structure (Section 2.4).

- Individuals often needed a trigger (push or pull) to consider teaching as a career or to actually make an application for ITT. Push factors most commonly related to dissatisfaction with current job, career or situation or a change in circumstances such as redundancy or ill-health. Pull factors included positive recent experience working with young people; encouragement or inspiration of others; more (visible and local) options/ways in to teaching; and availability of funding. Push factors are clearly aspects beyond the influence of NCTL but pull factors are potentially areas where NCTL can have an influence (Section 2.5).
- For individuals to look seriously into making an application for ITT they needed a sufficient push or for the pull to overcome the perceived benefits of their current situation (such as a comfortable job); they needed to see teaching as a positive move that they could achieve and that would bring greater rewards than they were currently receiving (Section 2.5).

Early years ITT findings

- The findings for the sub-sample who had considered an early years ITT programme were similar to those noted above with one or two exceptions:
- Those who considered and/or applied for an early years teacher training option were particularly likely to consider teaching as a career while already working within the sector (eg in teaching assistant, room leader or nursery manager roles) and many were motivated by a desire for personal and professional development, looking to formalise their experience and increase their employment opportunities (Section 1.6).
- This group were more strongly motivated by the opportunity to work with and inspire children than those interested in teaching other ages, but were relatively less likely to have been strongly motivated by the opportunity to use specific subject knowledge and skills (Sections 2.3 and 2.4).

- In terms of triggers to consider applying for ITT, the early years sub-group were more likely to be encouraged by availability of funding than those considering other routes (Section 2.5).
- For some there was a blurring between a desire to work with early years or primary aged children (reflected in the spread of their programme choices) and these were generally conceptualised together as ‘younger children’. This suggests the distinction made in the sector and in ITT may not be perceived in the same way by potential trainees (Section 2.4).
- Those with a clear preference for early years felt strongly that this was the most important stage in the development of children, they would be easy to control (manage behaviour), and there would be more freedom in teaching and individual interaction. Some also felt (perhaps wrongly) that early years would provide an easier route into teaching (Section 2.4).

2.1 Background

Heinz (2015) in a review of the international research evidence on motivations and commitment to teaching careers highlights that many work motivation theorists suggest ‘salient motivations trigger, sustain, and concentrate behaviour’ and therefore impact on commitment. Motivations can originate within and without the individual and can be influenced by social networks, culture, education and the labour market (so can be influenced by factors beyond an individual’s control). Heinz’s research shows that the motivational factors for those entering the teaching profession include:

- **Intrinsic** factors such as enjoyment of teaching, job satisfaction, creativity, and an interest in teaching subject(s) (subject interest is of particular importance to secondary level teaching);
- **Altruistic** factors such as to contribute to society, address inequalities and work with children/adolescents (child-centred factors were more important for primary level teaching candidates, and addressing inequalities more important for those from minority backgrounds);
- **Extrinsic** such as job security, hours, pay, status but also compatibility to family responsibilities which is particularly important for mature candidates or career changers, or inability to find work in a favoured profession (overall extrinsic factors tend to be ranked lower in more affluent societies);
- **Wider factors** such as teaching ability beliefs, prior teaching and learning experiences (received) such as teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) or volunteering in education settings, and the influence of others.

Analysis of the large survey of postgraduates studying in England (Pollard et al, 2016) provides an additional insight into the motivations of some initial teacher trainees, those who chose a university-based programme and to study for a PGCE. For this group of initial teacher trainees the five most commonly cited reasons for undertaking postgraduate study were: because it was a requirement to enter that profession (77%), to improve employment prospects (36%), out of an interest in their subject (36%), because it felt like a natural step (35%), and to develop specialist skills and knowledge (26%).

This motivation profile can be compared to the profile of others studying on professionally focused postgraduate programmes, for example those on nursing, other subjects allied to medicine, business or management, law, social work, and architecture, building and planning postgraduate programmes. PGCE students were considerably more likely to be driven by the desire for the qualification, without which they would not be able to practice, and were relatively less likely than other students to be motivated by a desire to improve their employability, to study a subject in more detail, or develop specialist skills. It was clear that for PGCE students, postgraduate study was more about enabling them to enter a career rather than progress in a career. However almost one quarter (24%) had undertaken the PGCE in order to change career rather than start a (their first) career, and one in five (20%) were doing so in order to progress in their current career (but this represents a much lower proportion than found across other professional postgraduate programmes). Availability of funding influenced less than one in five (18%) and PGCE students were much less likely to have been motivated by availability of funding than those on other professional postgraduate study programmes (particularly those studying social work or nursing postgraduate programmes). For PGCE students, the programme was also much less about just continuing with study, proving themselves capable of further study or indeed developing networks than for other groups of students.

Table 2.1: Motivations to postgraduate study among those studying for a professionally focused postgraduate course (%)

	PGCE %	Other professional postgraduates %
Requirement to enter chosen profession	76.5	45.3
To improve employment prospects	35.9	52.7
Interested in the subject	35.7	52.5
Felt like a natural step	34.5	36.6
To develop specialist skills and knowledge	25.9	48.3
Want a career in higher education (HE)	24.0	6.6
To change current career	24.0	21.3
To develop broader range of skills and knowledge	24.0	40.2
To progress in current career	19.5	49.5
Funding available	17.9	30.6
Wanted to continue studying	14.0	23.9
Had enjoyed previous HE studies	13.5	18.9
To progress to a higher level of study	12.4	21.1
Develop professional networks	10.7	24.7
To prove was capable of postgraduate study	9.3	18.1
Had been unable to find a suitable job	6.8	7.6
Encouraged by a former academic tutor/supervisor	6.8	6.4
Encouraged by an employer	6.1	20.5
Requirement of current job	5.2	15.7
To postpone job-hunting	2.0	0.6
Other reason	3.2	3.6
Base (N)	591	497

Source: IES/NatCen survey 'Postgraduate Transitions', 2014.

2.2 Thinking about teaching as a career

The online survey indicated the key motivations to taking up a teaching career and when, in an individuals' life and career, they had first begun to think about teaching as something they would like to do.

Table 2.2: How long ago had they first considered a career in teaching (%)

	Early years	Non early years	Lost applicants*	All %
In the last year or two	32.1	28.1	26.4	29.4
Three to 10 years ago	36.7	43.5	44.0	41.3
Longer than 10 years ago	11.1	13.1	18.4	12.4
Always wanted to be a teacher	20.1	15.3	11.2	16.7
Base (N)	343	687	125	1,030

Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents; * indicates significant difference

Many had always wanted to be a teacher

The online survey of individuals considering or applying for ITT indicated that approximately one in six (17%) of respondents had always wanted to be a teacher, so could not really remember the point at which this became a consideration. Female, younger respondents and those interested in early years teaching were more likely to report having always wanted to be a teacher, as did those already working in the education sector who may well have been working their way towards a teaching role, preparing themselves for teacher training or testing it out before making their final decisions.

Table 2.3: Always wanted to be a teacher (%)

		%	N
Route*	Early years	20.1	343
	Not early years	15.3	687
Gender*	Male	6.4	204
	Female	19.7	812
Ethnicity	White	16.1	801
	BME	20.4	221
Age*	16-24	25.2	270
	25-34	14.6	321
	35+	20.7	415
Family*	No caring responsibilities	18.0	551
	Caring responsibilities, with partner	13.2	348
	Caring responsibilities without partner	18.9	106
Career*	In early career	19.8	460
	Career in education	22.4	147
	Career elsewhere	11.9	387
	All	16.7	1,030

Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents; * indicates significant difference

This was confirmed in the interviews, and there were many incidences of interviewees talking about always having wanted to be a teacher. These individuals often had family members who were teachers. Indeed one individual talked about wanting to be a teacher as being 'hereditary'. And another noted:

"I worked with a lot of ex-teachers, and I'm married to somebody who was an adult teacher, so I've always known a lot of teachers. It had always been something that had interested me"

Career changer, applicant, salaried School Direct

Some of those who had always wanted to be a teacher were making conscious moves to ready themselves for ITT, choosing appropriate qualifications at school, college and university and/or finding jobs to gain experience. Whereas others talked about being pulled in another direction, and putting their thoughts about teaching on hold – due to being offered a good (alternative) job opportunity or starting a family and having to prioritise others needs and careers. This latter group, often needed a trigger (see below) to help them to reconsider ITT.

For others the interest in teaching emerges over time

The online survey showed how, for those who had not always wanted to be a teacher, most commonly individuals considered a career in teaching whilst studying – either during their early studies at school or college, or whilst at university particularly during their final year (53%: 21% and 32% respectively). However a substantial group (31%) had first considered a career in teaching when working in another sector so were essentially career changers. This compares to almost one quarter (23%) who were already working in the education sector and so were perhaps thinking more about career progression rather career change. A small group noted how they had first considered teaching at some other point during their life, this was most commonly during or at the end of an extended period of parenting/caring responsibilities, after a career break or other time out from working in the UK, or after redundancy/during a period of unemployment.

Those who considered and/or applied for early years training option were considerably more likely to already be working in the education sector when they developed their interest in teaching and ITT and subsequently less likely to be career changers or to have developed their interest in early years during their studies. The group of Lost applicants were conversely the most likely group to have considered teaching whilst working elsewhere (so were considering switching their career, also noted in Chapter 1).

Table 2.4: When first considered a career in teaching (%)

	Early years	Non early years	Lost applicants	All
Whilst working elsewhere	22.6*	34.6*	40.9*	30.8
Whilst working in the education sector	38.0*	15.9*	19.1	23.0
During school/college	17.9	22.8	14.5*	21.2
During final years of university	13.5*	22.0*	21.8	19.2
During early years at university	10.9	13.3	9.1	12.6
Other	3.6	4.7	2.7	4.3
Base (N)	274	578	110	852

Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents (who haven't always wanted to be a teacher); * indicates statistical significant difference; multiple response question so sum may \neq 100%

... during school, college or university

The in-depth interviews also indicated how an interest in teaching can develop or become stronger over time, as a young child or in their early teens whilst at school or college or later still whilst at university. This interest often coincided with formal or informal school or university based work experience with local schools, voluntary work with youth groups or sporting clubs, or the birth of younger siblings, cousins, nieces or nephews. These experiences could also help individuals decide where to focus their teaching career.

Cheryl

Cheryl first considered teaching when she was about fourteen, when she spent two weeks at a primary school for work experience, which she really enjoyed. At age 15, Cheryl gained more school experience when she volunteered at lunch times at a primary school, situated next to her secondary school. Whilst at university studying for a bachelor's degree in Geography she took a course called 'Geographers into Schools', which gave her theoretical knowledge and direct experience of teaching; and really convinced Cheryl that she wanted to teach.

Career changer, applicant, School Direct general primary

For a couple of interviewees their interest in teaching whilst at university was initiated purposefully by their university.

Becky

Becky had considered early years teaching during her A levels and went on to start a BA (Hons) Childhood Studies course at university. In her second year, the course leader of EYTS programme told her about the option of doing EYTS either after the

BA or during the third year. She gained advice and support from her personal tutor, who gave her information about the course and funding options, helped her gain the required work experience in a nursery and helped her with her application. She decided to do the EYTS during her third year; and she successfully gained a funded place and completed both the BA and EYTS last summer and was offered a placement at the nursery where she had been working.

Early career, applied, early years ITT

... or further into careers

Interest in teaching can also develop whilst working in the education or early years sector and there were numerous examples of interviewees having a long career in education in technician, teaching assistant, room leader or nursery manager roles finding out about the opportunity and new ways to train as a teacher (and thus progress their careers). For these individuals ITT was not a change in career but a formalising of their experiences and skills. Alternatively interest in teaching can occur after having developed a career in another sector and again there were numerous examples of interviewees coming to teaching from a wide variety of backgrounds: social care, management, finance, IT, retail. For some the career change represented a deliberate break and a complete change, but for others it represented a move into a related field that could build on their experiences.

“after bouncing around the ledgers of a number of companies, and starting a formal accountancy course I knew I didn’t want to carry on doing it... it is a bit like a regression, like stepping back in time [to go back to university], a big jump but even if I didn’t get a job at the end of the course it would be better than what I was doing”

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

Anna

Anna had a varied career before settling on teaching. She gained a degree in Hospitality Management from her local Polytechnic and went into catering. She then married and wanted a better work life balance so went into recruitment but after having her second child she retrained and became a child minder to fit work around looking after her own children. She did this for about five years and then decided that she could do more and wanted to learn more so she became interested in teaching. She did a teaching assistant (TA) course at night school, did some voluntary work in a school to get experience and then got a job in a nursery attached to a private school as a TA. She has been doing this for 18 months and is ready for a new challenge “there is more about me, I want to learn more, study more, I want to get more from my day, not do the same old thing”. So she applied for ITT.

2.3 Key motivators

2.3.1 Survey findings

The online survey gathered feedback on the motivators to teaching careers (and thus teacher training) and the extent of their influence (through a ranking question¹³). Across all respondents: perceived ability to make a difference/have a positive impact on people's lives, and the ability to work with children were the most influential factors affecting respondents' decision making processes (reflecting the work of Heinz noted above); with more than four in five citing these as having a lot of influence.

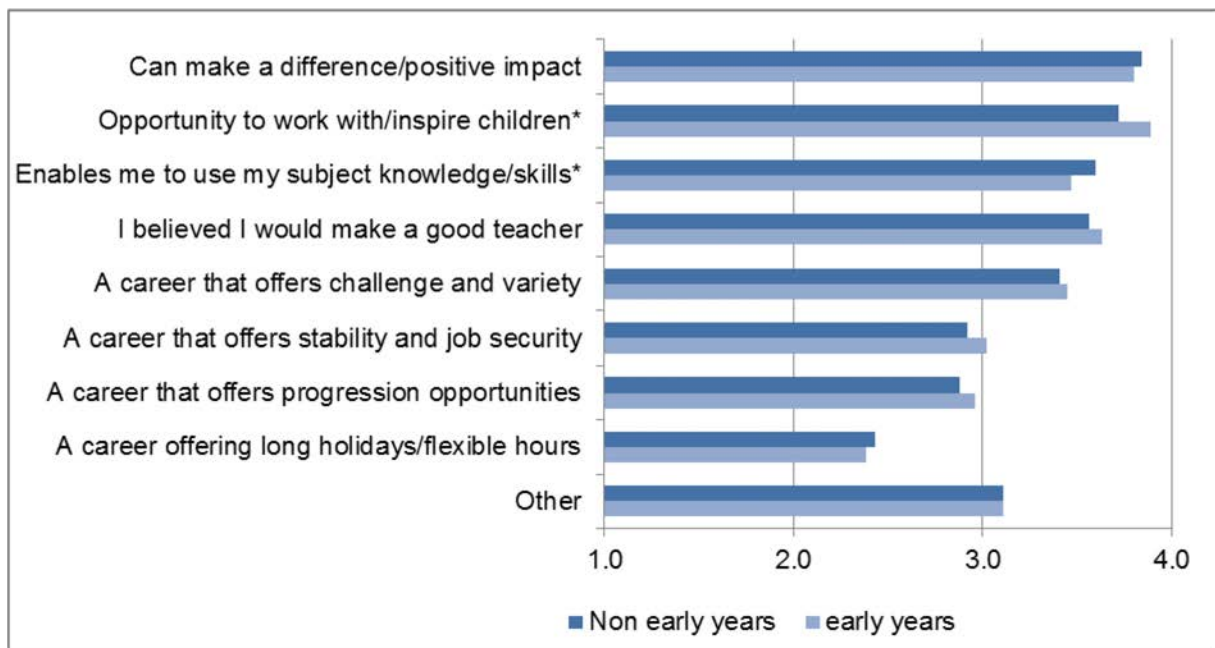
The next most influential motivators were: ability to use one's prior knowledge and skills in an area they were passionate about and the perception that they would make a good teacher (teaching self-belief). Enjoyment of a specific subject or field and the desire to share this with others can act as draw towards teaching but it also suggests that there are some individuals who are 'subject-loyal' and so perhaps more challenging to convert to teaching a different discipline. Those most likely to be motivated by subject related drivers (as noted below) tended to be older individuals with an existing career history (within or outside of education) and aiming for teaching at secondary level. This is worthy of further research.

The working conditions of teachers and opportunities offered by teaching also played a part in motivation. Half of respondents strongly felt that teaching was a career that would offer them challenge and variety. However the hours and holidays, progression routes, and job security offered with a career in teaching were the least influential factors (although still important to at least two in five respondents). Other reasons given for considering teaching by a small number of respondents included: perceptions that the teaching profession granted geographic mobility, that the training would allow them to enter a formal profession and gain a qualification; and from being inspired by their own teachers.

¹³ Using a four point Likert scale. The scales were reversed in the analysis so that the higher the mean score the greater the impact on motivation so the scale were: 1 'not at all', 2 'a little', 3 'some', and 4 'a lot'. Respondents were also given the option to tick 'not applicable to me'. This last category was excluded in the analysis of each item.

Among those considering and/or who applied for at least one early years ITT course the strongest motivators were again the opportunity to work with and inspire children (this was of greater influence to the early years group), and one where they could make a difference (Figure 2.1). In general the relative importance of motivating factors were very similar for the early years sub-sample when compared to the whole sample but the early years group were less likely than those considering teaching other ages to have been strongly motivated by the opportunity to use specific subject knowledge and skills (again this fits with research by Heinz noted above).

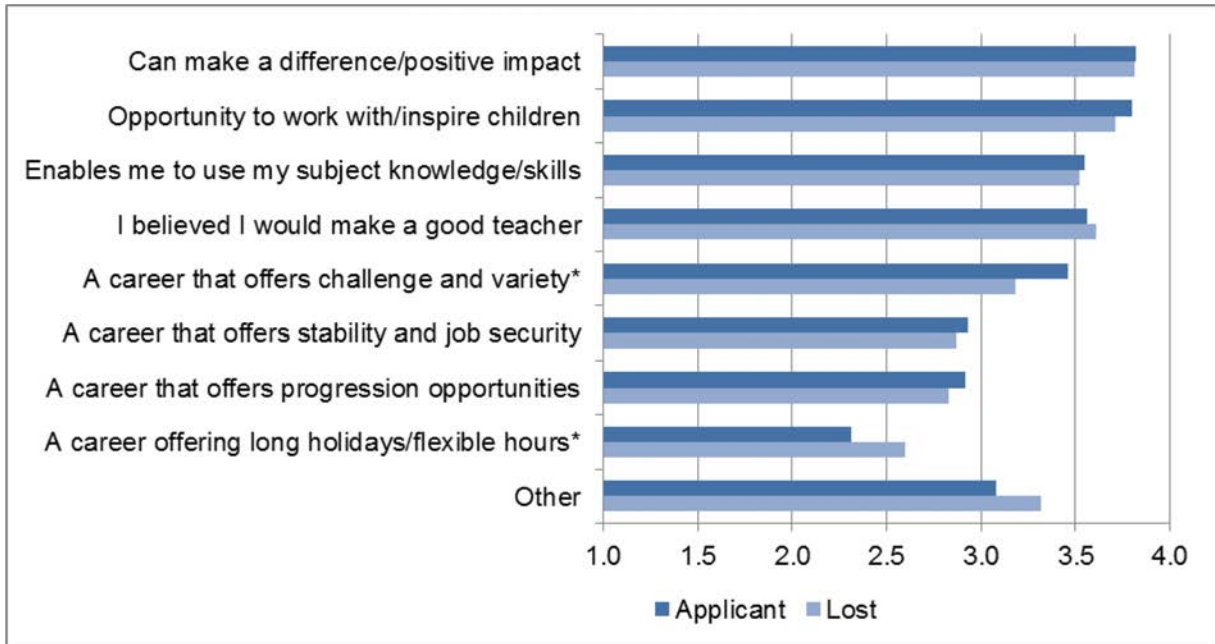
Figure 2.1: Motivations to considering a career in teaching by whether considered early years ITT or not (mean score of influence, where 4 is the most influential)



Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents, * indicates significant difference

Among those Lost to the customer journey the strongest motivators were similarly desire to make an impact, work with children, belief they would make a good teacher, and feeling that teaching would enable them to use their particular subject knowledge and skills (Figure 2.2). However as these individuals were Lost to the journey it would suggest that these motivators were not strong enough to overcome any barriers and encourage them to apply. Lost applicants were significantly less likely than those who went on to apply for ITT to motivated by the perceived challenge and variety in teaching but more likely than applicants to be attracted by long holidays and flexible working hours (the latter hints at the need for flexibility required by some individuals when considering ITT as they may have more concerns around fitting work and training in with other commitments – this is explored further in Chapter 5).

Figure 2.2: Motivations to considering a career in teaching by whether applied to ITT or became Lost (mean score of influence, where 4 is the most influential)



Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents, * indicates significant difference

Those who had always wanted to be a teacher tended to be more strongly influenced by most of the motivators but were significantly more likely than those who first considered a teacher career further into their lives/careers to be strongly influenced by the desire to make a positive impact, to work with children and perceived career progression opportunities (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Motivations to considering a career in teaching by whether always wanted to be a teacher (mean score of influence, where 4 is the most influential)



Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents, * indicates significant difference

Further analysis to explore differences in the strength of motivators for respondents with different backgrounds and circumstances found several additional statistically significant¹⁴ differences:

- Female respondents were significantly more likely to be strongly influenced by wanting to work with and inspire children (85% felt this motivated them a lot).
- Respondents from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds were significantly more likely than those from white backgrounds to be strongly influenced by being able to use knowledge and skills in a subject they were passionate about (74%), challenge and variety (62%), stability and job security (48%), long holidays and flexible hours (31%), career progression opportunities (46%), and because they felt they would make a good teacher (78%).
- Older respondents (those aged 35 and above when they completed the survey) were significantly more likely than younger respondents to be strongly motivated by their passion for a particular subject and wanting to make use of their knowledge and skills (70%), and believing they would make a good teacher (71%).
- Those who were already working in the education sector were more likely to be strongly influenced by being able to use their skills and knowledge (77%), and because they felt they would make a good teacher (76%). In general, respondents already working in the sector were more motivated by many of the factors perhaps indicating their greater awareness of the benefits and working conditions, and reflecting what drew them into the sector in the first place.
- Finally those with more challenging family circumstances, having dependent children but no partner, were significantly more likely to be strongly motivated than those with other family circumstances towards teaching by the job stability and security (45%), career progression opportunities (44%), and long holidays and flexible hours (34%).

These findings suggest which ‘messages’ about teaching to emphasise, and to which groups, in order to attract potential initial teacher trainees.

2.3.2 Interview findings

The interviews showed how potential applicants to ITT tended to have multiple motivations for considering teaching as a career, rather than there being one key draw. Some motivations related to their interest in teaching (as a career) whereas others related directly to their thoughts about undertaking ITT.

¹⁴ Using Chi-square tests, $P < 0.05$

Making a difference

The finding of the survey, that common and overriding motivators to a career in teaching were the desire to work with and inspire children, and to make a positive impact, was echoed in the interviews. This was often linked with a preference (or 'affinity') to work with a particular type of child – so either early years, primary, or secondary; or those with special educational needs and disabilities or those from disadvantaged communities – as this was where individuals felt they could make the most difference (see Chapter 3). Interviewees here also tended to talk about making a difference and improving their local community, and so wanted to train and then work locally.

Gerry

Gerry changed careers from managing a call centre to teaching and was attracted by the potential to make a real difference:

“It's more rewarding. I'd come away from school helping out, and you know, seeing the kids, helping them read. I got a lot more out of that, I felt like there was more... more job satisfaction from that type of thing than ever I would get from you know, at work, where you might get a few extra pound in your pay packet if you sold a few extra policies or something, or if your team sold a few extra policies.... I was not really happy at work, and then realising that the good feeling you can get from helping children, seeing how they can learn, seeing that you can make a difference... I can help students to stop them making the same mistakes I did when I was at school. I felt like I could come from a different angle, felt like I had a bit of a unique offer, if you like, I didn't get on in secondary school, so appreciating that some others wouldn't... I could try and work them from that point, to try and get them engaged... trying to make a difference, make it more relevant, making them see that it is actually important, that it does actually affect what your outcomes can be later on.”

Career changer, applicant, secondary maths, School Direct salaried

Teaching was regarded as a positive and recognised profession, a line of work with a 'greater social consciousness' and 'more meaningful' than other careers. Those considering teaching enjoyed spending time with young people and working with children was regarded as positive and rewarding. Interviewees talked about the importance of education and how they would enable children to gain knowledge, motivate and engage them, help them to progress on to further levels of learning and give them the skills and confidence needed for their lives. This perceived benefit could outweigh any concerns they had about pay and the value society placed on teaching;

“I would give everything up today to go into teaching... it is rewarding...I know nursery teachers don't get paid that much, but that doesn't bother me”

Career changer, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications),
early years ITT

This over-riding and strong motivation often sustained individuals through long and sometimes difficult journeys to ITT (to a stage where they felt confident enough or to have all the required factors to make a good application).

Personal and professional development

Some interviewees, often those already working in the early years sector, wanted to do ITT to develop their careers and formalise their experience, knowledge and skills.

Miriam

Miriam had a long career working in nurseries, schools and children's centres. She applied and recently successfully completed her EYTS programme and she noted how she had been motivated out of both a desire for professional development and personal interest so she could keep up to date and share ideas with other early years professionals.

Career changer within education, applicant, early years ITT

Gwen

Gwen had worked as a nursery manager for almost 20 years when she first read about early years qualifications in Nursery World magazine. This was in 2006 and it was stated that the Government were considering making it a requirement for there to be at least one early years professional in each institution. She recently completed a BA Early Years and is now looking to study for the EYTS.

Career changer within education, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications),
EYTS

Good working conditions and job security

Though not generally stated as the major motivation to considering teaching as a career, interviewees often mentioned positive aspects of working conditions and the profession as a whole. Here interviewees talked about holiday periods allowing them to spend more time with their families; a few talked about pay which they described as 'a decent salary'; and others mentioned progression opportunities.

In addition, it was thought to be a 'stable line of work' which was particularly important given the recent challenging economic climate. This aspect was attractive to those facing difficulties and insecurities in their current job roles including, for example, one interviewee who was trying to earn his living through acting which he acknowledged to be difficult and precarious and thus was attracted to teaching as he felt it was a career that could perhaps offer greater certainty. Another noted:

"My family's finances when I was a bit younger were always a bit here and there, a bit sketchy, so I like kind of, the security of it [teaching career] as well... it seemed like it was something you could always depend on to be there, education, it was always something that was going to be needed".

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

However it should be noted that this was not a universally held view, and some interviewees were concerned about their potential employability once they had completed their training (see Chapter 5).

It was felt that teaching as a career could also facilitate greater geographic mobility within the UK and even lead to work overseas, with the qualification (generally the PGCE) enabling individuals to gain work easily in other countries (e.g. Australia). Whilst one interviewee noted that a key draw for her of teaching was that it was an alternative to an office based career.

Interest and/or passion for a subject

As indicated by the survey responses, some interviewees (often males) were motivated by a passion for a particular subject and wanted to pass on a love and interest in this subject to others.

Sean

Sean did a BSc in Product Design and then went to work in the retail sector in merchandising. However he had always been interested in teaching and after several years in work he reached a point where he was considering how he wanted to go forward in his career. He was attracted to secondary teaching as a way to share his passion for design and technology, a subject he finds challenging and interesting so decided to apply for ITT.

Career changer, applicant, SCITT design and technology

2.4 Motivation to working with different groups

As noted above, interviewees generally had strong preferences for working with and thus undertaking training in certain phases either early years, primary or secondary; and deciding upon their preferred age group was an important part of their choice process. Indeed, there tended to be a certain sequencing of decisions around training choices, after individuals had made the decision to become a teacher. The first decision focused on the age to teach followed by type of programme and then actual provider. When thinking about age or phase, interviewees often made a clear distinction between working with secondary aged children and those younger. However for some there was a blurring between a desire to work with early years or primary aged children (generally conceptualised together as younger children); and so was reflected in the spread of their programme choices. Thus at the point of applying they were still unsure of their final preference for age range. A few interviewees who still had not yet settled on an age range were concerned that they make the right choice about phase before applying, as they felt it would be difficult, costly and a waste of time to have to retrain at a later stage. In some cases the lack of decision meant they did not apply at all. This is discussed further in Chapter 3 when looking at the views on early years ITT options (compared with primary ITT and early years PGCE)

For those who were certain about the age they wanted to teach, this preference tended to be influenced by: a) where they felt they could have the greatest impact; b) their current and previous experiences with children; c) perceptions about behaviour and behaviour management; and d) preference for learning style, focus and structure. Preferences could be motivated by positive experiences and perceptions drawing them towards a particular age range but also negative experiences making certain age ranges less attractive.

2.4.1 Wanting to work with early years

Survey findings

Those considering training in early years teaching were asked in the survey 'what was it about early years teacher training that particularly attracted you, rather than primary teacher training?'. This was an open text question requiring respondents to type in their answer (rather than select from a given list of potential reasons). The most common reason given was that individuals wanted to work with children in this age group: either due to a sense of civic duty, personal enjoyment/interest, the fact that one could affect long term development, or because it was felt to be the age when one observes the most rapid period of child development. Here individuals often emphasised the crucial importance of early cognition, and valued being able to lay foundations for development. Examples of responses here include:

“early years is a crucial age. At this age children are open to accept many possibilities. It is [a] teacher’s task to guide them and develop good scaffolding in social, emotional and cognitive skills”

Survey response

“I prefer the age range – the responsibility of influencing children's lives and teaching them about the world but it isn't all serious. My personality fits well with the career path”

Survey response

“I would rather make a positive influence on younger children and early years is more child-centred than primary teaching, which I believe is important”

Survey response

The next most common group of survey responses related to early year options fitting with their previous or current experience of working with the age group and/or suiting their educational experience or formal skills set. This reflects the relatively high proportion of those in the early years sub-sample who were already working in the sector and thus looking to validate their skills and progress. Examples of responses include:

“Where I worked at the time/my experience and what I thought I'd enjoy, plus being part of the movement to raise standards”

Survey response

“I love working with that age group as I have been a nursery practitioner and currently I'm a teaching assistant in a reception class. I also enjoy assisting them on their learning journey”

Survey response

“My college course and university degree focused on early years so it naturally followed on for me. I didn't really consider my options and just went for it without looking into it”

Survey response

“I have worked in the early years for over 10 years and it's my area of expertise and also my area of passion”

Survey response

“I am a Teaching Assistant in a Reception class. I chose this as part of my continued professional development. Following experience in Years 1-3, early years is my favourite and is the area I want to specialise in”

Survey response

Other, though less common, themes in the survey responses were that the early years routes allowed individuals to continue in paid employment while studying, allowed for good career development and enabled individuals to take on more responsibilities and greater salaries at work, and acted as a means to develop professional practice. A small group also mentioned the attraction of funding (free training).

“I work in early years and wanted a higher qualification than the one I currently hold specifically for early years. I also thought it might open up other job opportunities”

Survey response

“I currently work with nursery children as an unqualified teacher and I wanted to get a qualification that reflected my 5 years’ experience and enabled me to take more responsibility and a higher salary or would enable me to work at a different nursery”

Survey response

“early years ITT attracted me because it could be free, and I could do it whilst staying in my current job as a nursery nurse. I have a 2:2 degree and a PGCE would now cost me £9,000. As I am 52, and not sure that I want to practise as a teacher, this cost is quite a big consideration, as is taking a year out of work to study”

Survey response

Some of the responses however indicated how individuals felt that early years was perhaps (unfairly) held in lower status in the education sector and this could influence their choices (also see Chapter 3).

Interview findings

In the interviews, those wanting to work with early years age children also felt strongly that this early age was where they could have a great potential for impact. It was felt to be an important time for child development:

“early years are the most important years in a person's life, because that's when a person's brain's most active, that's when the brain's developing, when they're learning all these different things. This is when learning impacts on internal working models and the way people perceive the world and relationships throughout their life... they're learning everything for the first time, they've never come across this before.”

Early career, applicant, PGCE EY

“early years makes such an impact. It is amazing how much they can learn. They are so needy, you can set them up for school life. You can really see them change.

Career changer within education, pending, early years ITT

They also enjoyed working with very young children, or this is where their experience (personal and professional) has focused to date:

“I love this age group. I love to see them grow and develop and excel in life and meet their potential. They are a joy to me, when they learn to do something they brighten up.

Career changer within education, Lost (due to financial concerns),
early years ITT

“I love pre-school and reception, how children learn through play and learn without realising. I want to teach reception or below.”

Career changer within education, pending, early years ITT

“I loved my placement in a nursery and loved working with the younger age group. I can give them more, it works better and I communicate better with this age group”

Early career, applied, early years ITT

Another key motivator emerging from the interviews was the teaching approach with early years, which was felt to have more freedom and enable more individual tailoring. One interviewee spoke about early years teaching as being child-centred rather than “focussed on what the adult thinks they should learn”. Another spoke about how she did not like the approach taken with older children:

“it is one teacher just in front of a whole class, and it couldn't ever really be individual, even if you wanted it to be, because there are just so many children...you can see all the different learning styles, and I know that I would want to individually help all of them, and tailor it somehow, and I don't think I'd be very good at doing that in front of a group.”

Early career, applicant, PGCE EY

They were also drawn to early years because they were concerned older children would be more difficult to manage:

“I love three year olds, they ask the cutest questions. I feel I can control this age group and have a real affinity with them. Older children [primary and above] are rude and difficult to handle”

Career changer, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications),
early years ITT

Finally, particular to the early years pathway to teaching, some interviewees also noted how they became interested in teaching this age group due to the greater promotion and visibility of this route and the new options for training and professional recognition. Although (as suggested in a few open text responses to the survey) there were still some concerns raised about early years not yet having the same perceived status in the education sector and that it was still subject to change. For example one interviewee was very interested in the recent push to improve the profile of early years teachers, but she was worried that this campaign was still in its early stages and that any improvements were not yet cemented. She feared that the government might call a halt to the drive to improve early years teaching and then any progress that has been made might be Lost.

A couple of interviewees also felt that early years might provide an easier pathway into teaching, perhaps with less criteria to meet:

“I wanted to work in Primary PGCE from the outset. However, when I found out that lacking maths GCSE I couldn’t get onto this course I started looking at other courses to see if there was any other way to enter ITT without maths.... So I started considering early years as I found providers that would take me without a Maths GCSE if I passed my skills test”

Early career, Lost (unplaced applicant), considered early years and primary

Another interviewee with a long history of teaching overseas had wanted to start on a pathway to teaching in the UK. The first opportunity he got was working with the early years age group in a local children’s centre. So he undertook an early years ITT assessment only programme and now works as an early years teacher in a nursery.

2.4.2 Wanting to work with primary aged children

Survey findings

In the online survey, those considering teaching at primary level (ages 3 to 11) were asked ‘what was it about primary teaching training that particularly attracted you, rather than early years teacher training?’. Again this was an open text question requiring respondents to type in their answer (rather than select from a given list of potential reasons). The survey responses indicated that those who were considering training for primary (either alongside or instead of early years) were keen to work with children older than the early years age group. Other themes reflected in the comments were a preference for: the variety and flexibility of the levels taught at this

older age, the use of more challenging materials, and teaching a variety of subjects. Examples of survey responses included:

“I felt I was more able to relate to and understand older primary school children, rather than nursery or early years children”

Survey response

“I preferred preparing more challenging lessons”

Survey response

“I believe that primary education is where the greatest challenge and influence is in terms of ensuring children get an interesting and inspiring education which evokes the need (within them) to stay in education and excel above global standards”

Survey response

“The children who were slightly older were easier to set routines for. Also felt like I was actually teaching something important to the children”

Survey response

“Primary teacher will teach more specific subjects where the student group is more developed in their cognitive skills. The student's thinking ability is more than early years with lot of words [they] can understand and the teaching and learning process will much easier”

Survey response

A small group also felt the primary environment allowed for good career progression, greater flexibility in teaching options, greater employability and recognition/value in the education sector (especially when compared with early years). An example here of a survey responses includes:

“I really like working with that age group of children and firmly believe that if you help children start their education positively and with the right teacher then you can set them up for life with skills and attitudes that help children learn effectively. I consulted a local headteacher I had worked for who suggested I apply for primary teacher training and take an early years module to show that I was capable of teaching across the ages as this would give me the widest range of opportunities after the completion of the PGCE”

Survey response

“I had always wanted to be a primary school teacher and it is seen as more professional than early years teachers who are seen as nursery nurses”

Survey response

“More options of year groups to teach leading to higher chance of obtaining a job. Once qualified, primary teachers can still teach in early years”

Survey response

“It means that I am able to choose where in the school I would like to work. This means that if I grow to love KS2 then I can teach in there”

Survey response

Interview findings

These themes were reflected in the interviews. A key motivator identified in the interviews was the potential for impact, which for some individuals was felt to be greater with primary aged children:

“This is such an important time of life [primary]; they change, they develop and are growing up, what happens at this age sets up for their future. At this age can have the most impact and see personalities develop”.

Early career, applicant, early years ITT

“It's the learning aspect... when the penny drops and you think, yeah, I've explained that, they understand, they know what to do and they've come up with their own ideas as well. It's all that that I wanted to see”

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult), School Direct

“I think for the younger kids, their mind, it's so interrupted. It's the stage where they do not know anything, and if they are told the right thing, at the right time, explained in a proper way, then they register it. Their mind is not diverted. When things are explained in a way that they will understand, explained in bits, they do understand and respond to you”

Career changer, pending, PGCE EY

One male interviewee was particularly keen to work with primary aged children in order to provide a positive role model as he felt there was a real lack of male primary teachers, and good male role models:

“The male role-models these days are the rappers and the footballers that crash their cars”.

Career changer, Lost (due to financial concerns), School Direct, Primary

Primary aged children were also felt by some interviewees to be easier to relate to, easier to manage, and more enthusiastic about learning, ‘mouldable’, positive and fun (particularly when compared to secondary-aged children). One interviewee felt

primary children were less jaded than secondary aged children, another found 'teenagers annoying', and another noted how he found secondary school children often had bad attitudes and moodiness. One interviewee spoke about how primary children want to have fun and that this really relates to him, it appeals to his character that wants to have fun, but also means he can be the responsible one.

"younger [primary] children are more positive, smiley people and are fun to people around...I was making my decision about who was going to be a more fun, positive group of children to be around, and where I feel that my skills and the things that I like to do fit better. That's more suited to the primary age than to the secondary"

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

Another described how having experience with secondary children in a pupil referral unit had confirmed his preference for working with younger children:

"I'm not meant for it! ... I just can't take such rude behaviour or arrogance. I know it's their teens, their age, I understand everything... I just can't take it at my workplace, I can't work with children who are arrogant and not listening"

Career changer, pending, PGCE EY and primary

As indicated by the survey responses, the style and approach to primary teaching also had a greater appeal to some interviewees. Here they spoke of working intensively with just one year group, being able to teach a range of subjects, and having some structure to lessons:

"I like the idea of spending the whole time with one year group, watching them develop, feeling like you are making more of a difference and connecting more [with] them. In secondary it might be that you're the subject they hate, so you might see the bad side of one person every time, and you've got to get to know 200 different pupils"

Career changer, applicant, university-led, maths

"I think it's just the range of different subjects, the interest level that they have. You could be doing a topic on World War I and it could be bringing that into your history, into your geography, all the different subjects, whereas if I was in secondary I would be restricted to one subject. At the time I was thinking maths would be my strongest subject, but would I get a bit fed up teaching maths, particularly to people who find it hard teaching maths – not motivated to learn"

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult), School Direct primary

2.4.3 Wanting to work with secondary aged children

Interview findings

Those with a preference for teaching at secondary level often spoke about the teaching style and focus afforded by the secondary system and by working with older and more able children. Here interviewees talked about being able to focus on one subject and to teach it at a more advanced/deeper level, introducing more complex concepts ('not just the absolute basics') and also working with children, who by that stage, would be studying the subjects they were most interested in.

Some interviewees also enjoyed working with older children, and felt that they would be easier to manage:

"I like them being cheeky and their banter, I can talk more in-depth and inspire them"

Early career, applicant, PGCE, SCITT, secondary religious studies

"I'm teaching sixth form next year... sixth form I did want to teach, I'm quite happy with that, but primary, I can't... to be perfectly honest, I can't put up with all the pastoral stuff that comes with it... I just didn't want to deal with that kiddy nature, I don't have the patience with it"

Early career, applicant, secondary, PGCE

"I wanted to work with secondary school children. Younger children are more difficult to reason with".

Early career, applicant, secondary business studies, university-led

2.5 Triggers to action

2.5.1 Survey findings

The survey indicated what key factors causing respondents to actively consider *applying* for a ITT were, these were effectively the triggers to moving from just thinking about teaching as a suitable career to taking steps to find out more and thinking about making an application. The two most frequently cited triggers were a recent experience of working with young people (47%); and a desire for a change in one's career/lifestyle (43%). This was closely followed by having a long-term desire to be a teacher (42%). Funding and encouragement acted as a trigger for approximately one third of the survey respondents (32% and 31% respectively). Advertisements and information about the profession were much less frequently cited as triggers (7%), as was the notion that respondents considered teaching after being unable to find an alternative job (7%). Other triggers noted included: the

perceived need for qualifications to progress in current roles/organisations, the desire to improve childcare skills/practice, and moves/returns from overseas.

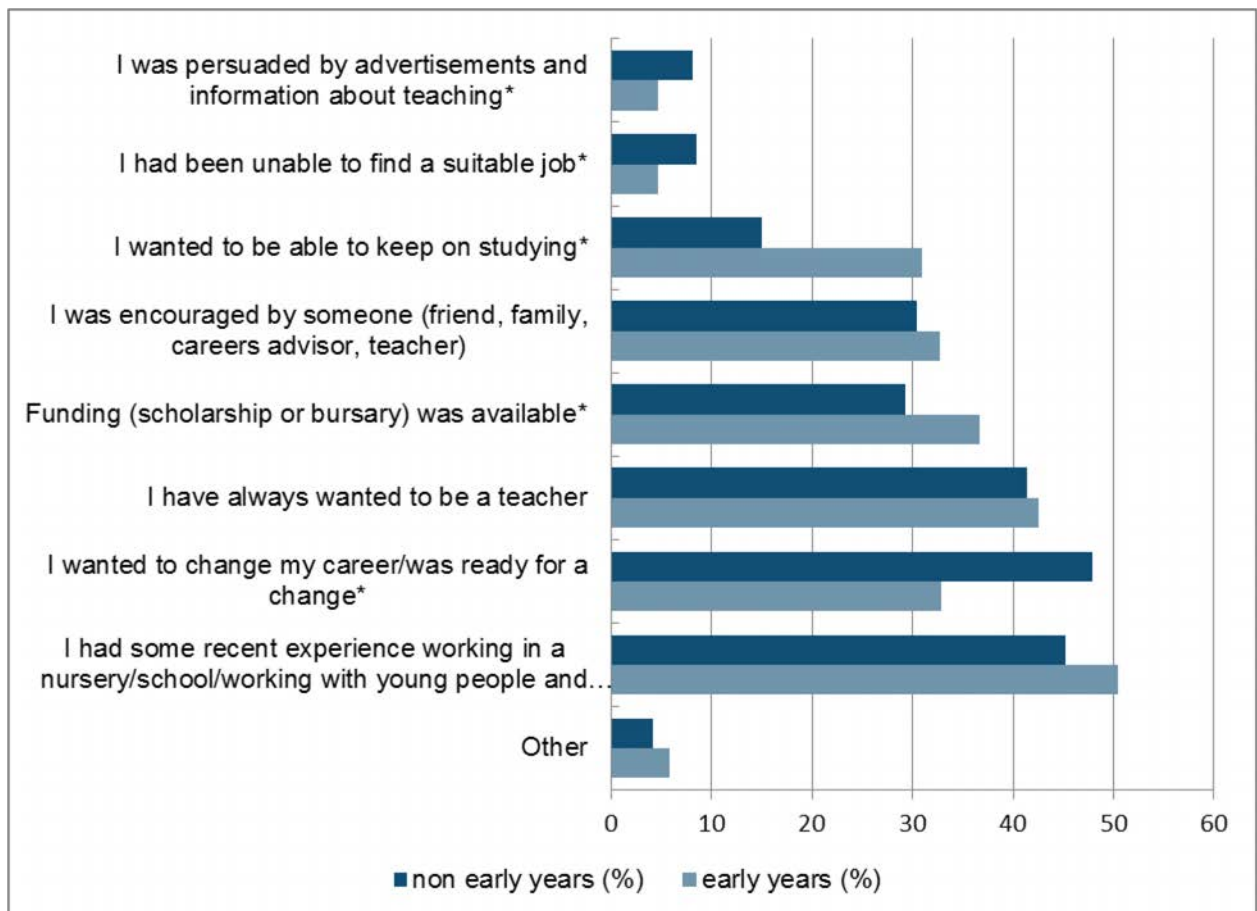
Table 2.5: Triggers to considering a career in teaching

	Early years	Non early years	Lost applicants	All
I had some recent experience working in a nursery/school/working with young people and enjoyed it	50.4	45.2	33.3*	46.9
I wanted to change my career/was ready for a change	32.8*	48.0	56.3*	43
I have always wanted to be a teacher	42.3	41.5	34.9	41.8
Funding (scholarship or bursary) was available	36.5*	29.4	19.8*	31.8
I was encouraged by someone (friend, family, careers adviser, teacher)	32.5	30.5	22.2*	31.2
I wanted to be able to keep on studying	30.7*	15.1	14.3	20.3
I had been unable to find a suitable job	4.6*	8.5	8.7	7.2
I was persuaded by advertisements and information about teaching	4.6*	8.1	11.9*	6.9
Other	6.1	4.1	5.6	4.7
Base (N)	345	691	126	1,036

Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents, ; multiple response question so sum may \neq 100%
*indicates statistically significant difference

Among those considering and/or who applied for at least one early years ITT course the most common triggers were recent experience in a nursery or early years environment, or always wanting to be a teacher (thus requiring no trigger). This early years sub-sample were significantly more likely than those who hadn't considered or applied to early years initial training to be persuaded by availability of funding and the desire to keep on studying but relatively less likely than others to want to change career or have difficulties finding a suitable job or indeed to be persuaded by advertising and information about teaching. Figure 2.4 below shows the relative occurrence of these triggers for both those considering early years and those who did not.

Figure 2.4: Triggers to considering a career in teaching



Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents; multiple response question so sum may \neq 100%, * indicates significant difference

Those in the end who decided not to make an application for ITT (those Lost to the customer journey) were most likely to have been persuaded to consider teaching by the desire to change career followed by a long-held desire to be a teacher and some recent experience working with children. They were the least likely group to be triggered by availability of funding or by the encouragement of a friend, family member or other person; but were the group most likely to be influenced by adverts and information about teaching. Although these things may have triggered them to consider ITT they were not sufficient to see them through to actually making an application (at least on this occasion).

Additional analysis of the survey responses on the relative frequency of triggers shows that:

- Male respondents were significantly more likely to be triggered by the desire to change career (58%), because they could not find a suitable job (12%), or were persuaded by adverts and information about teaching (12%). Whereas female respondents were relatively more likely than males to be triggered by the desire

to continue with their studies (22%), or because they had always wanted to be a teacher (44%).

- There were no real differences in triggers experienced by those from white or from Black and Minority Ethnic groups. The one exception is always wanting to be a teacher, which was more likely to be a trigger among those from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (48%).
- Older respondents (ie those aged 35 or over at the time of the survey) were more likely to be triggered by wanting to change career (57%, reflecting their greater likelihood of having an existing career). Whereas mid aged respondents (aged between 25 and 34) were relatively more likely than other aged respondents to be triggered by difficulties in the labour market (unable to find a suitable job). Younger respondents (aged under 25) were the most likely to be triggered by having recent experience in a school or nursery environment (58%), or always wanting to be a teacher (59%). This indicates the importance of providing access to teaching work experience in school, college, and university.
- Those already in the education sector were significantly more likely to be triggered by their recent experience in schools/nurseries (54%) and their desire to continue with their studies (28%). Unsurprisingly those who had built a career elsewhere but considering moving into teaching were the most likely to do so in order to change career (73%), this group were also relatively more likely to be influenced by adverts and information about teaching (10%). Those early on in their careers (still studying or recently graduated) were relatively more likely than other groups to be triggered by recent school or nursery experience (52%) or because they had always wanted to be a teacher (51%). These findings are linked with the age patterns above.
- Those with a partner but no caring responsibilities were the most likely to be triggered by a desire to change career (55%) perhaps because they felt more able to risk a drop in salary whilst re-training.

2.5.2 Interview findings

The in-depth interviews allowed for a more detailed discussion of triggers and highlighted the differences between push and pull factors. Push factors pushed individuals from their current situation and into considering applying for ITT, and these most commonly related to dissatisfaction with their current job, career or situation. Whereas pull factors made teaching seem an attractive option. For individuals to look seriously into making an application for ITT they needed a sufficient push (although not all individuals experienced push factors, these tended to be found in the stories of career changers) or for the pull to overcome the benefits of their current situation (such as a 'comfortable job'). They needed to see teaching

as a positive move that they could achieve and that would bring greater rewards (in terms of personal satisfaction, personal development, and good working conditions) than they were currently receiving.

Importance of gaining experience of teaching (of any kind)

There were numerous examples of how individuals had a notion about teaching as an interesting or suitable career but after being on hold or at the back of their mind for some time, their interest became reignited later on and they began to more seriously consider teaching and to make efforts to find out more (see Chapter 3). Often, as indicated in the survey, the trigger was recent experience working in a school or nursery; or in a role that involved working with young people or training or tutoring individuals (of any age). However for others, an unplanned bout of related work experience made them consider teaching for the first time.

Tom

After graduating with a BA in Geography Tom found a graduate job which involved working on university and college campuses and teaching people about the Christian faith. It was during this job that Tom first considered teaching, something he had not previously considered at all.

Early career, applicant, School Direct primary maths

Shirley

Shirley had always been interested in teaching, and enjoyed the work experience she did in a primary school whilst at secondary school but decided against teaching as a career as she felt it would be too challenging and difficult to maintain a good work/life balance. Instead she decided to study business studies at university as she was good at this at college and felt she could make it her career. However during the second year of her degree she was recruited as a volunteer by Young Enterprise to go into local schools and do enterprise activities with primary and secondary school children. It was this experience that drew her back towards teaching. Now in the final year of her BA programme she has been researching teaching options (and is intending to apply for ITT).

Early career, pending, primary

Feeling unsatisfied in current job

For those considering a career change, the trigger often related to their current work situation. For some this involved redundancy (or potential redundancy) so a forced career change. For others it was about becoming disillusioned or bored with their careers/current jobs: finding their work no longer enjoyable and seeking a new

challenge or finding that they had reached a plateau and could not progress or develop further. This acted as a push (often back towards) a teaching career.

Fiona

Fiona had long wanted to become a teacher but had moved into the retail sector after returning to the labour market once her children were at school. Her recent application to an early years ITT course was triggered as she started to become unsatisfied with her retail job, stating that it was never what she wanted to do in the long term; and that her work hours had been shifted so that she would finish work late in the evening, thus missing spending time with her children after they finished school.

One interviewee talked about being fed up of drifting in her career and wanting to take decisive control and to make a planned change:

Mags

Mags is a creative person who did her first degree (BSc) in Special Effects. After graduating she did some freelance film work but found the work too unstable and so got an office job working in HR, from there she moved in IT work and changed companies when her work was relocated and again when she met her husband and moved to be with him. She has worked for her current company for many years, firstly in IT and then in project management; and both roles involved her training individuals, which she enjoyed. She noted 'I had to devise ways of training people to use software, people who were scared of technology'. Recently she has begun to feel that she needed to take control of her career rather than drifting into jobs and she was attracted by teaching.

Career changer, Lost (due to financial considerations and lack of clear information),
primary

This was echoed in other interviews, where individuals felt they had not really consciously chosen a career but had ended up working for some time in a job or sector almost by accident before deciding to follow a career in teaching. Whereas others talked about how their jobs had become increasingly precarious, they felt at threat of redundancy and in some cases interviewees had indeed been made redundant for them to consider an alternative career.

Rupert

Rupert now in his 50s, had studied maths at university and has a long history of working in the banking industry. In 2001 he was made redundant and became a self-employed consultant within the financial sector but regulation changes made it too difficult to continue so he began looking into other options and teaching was one option. He always enjoyed the training aspects of his various work roles and had previously run a scout group and ran courses in sailing for young people so 'teaching seemed an obvious route'. He felt he was good at explaining maths concepts to smart people and felt he therefore had something to offer that was perhaps lacking. He was attracted by the opportunity to work with and inspire young people.

Career changer, Lost (decided he was unsuited to teaching), secondary,
School Direct Salaried

Returning to teaching or refocusing their teaching career

There were a few examples in the interviews of individuals wanting to return to a career in teaching, or to return and finish training that they had started or contemplated some time ago. Returning to teaching is a key area of focus for the NCTL, and they have established a pilot scheme¹⁵ to attract qualified but inactive teachers back into the profession. Thus not all potential trainees are new to ITT. Some of the interviewees had been teaching in or had teaching qualifications from other countries. There were also examples of interviewees who wanted to refocus their teaching career to work with another age group, either to reflect their changing interests and career goals or in response to difficulties gaining work in the area they had been trained. Often those returning or refocusing their teaching careers were already qualified but were thinking about retraining or refreshing their skills through ITT.

¹⁵ The intention is that the pilot will be delivered by school partnerships selected through a competitive bidding process for grant funding. The pilot will aim to attract in excess of 600 returning teachers, through a national marketing campaign as well as more localised marketing activity. Returners will then be offered a package of support tailored to tackle obstacles to re-entry, such as lack of part-time jobs, evidence of recent classroom experience and up-to-date curriculum/subject knowledge. Grant funding will be provided to partnerships of schools which struggle to recruit trainees in EBacc subjects. Examples of support will include: subject knowledge training; training to update knowledge of classroom practice, behaviour management etc., and access to classroom experience and mentoring support.

Kelly

Kelly graduated with a BA in German and English Language and worked abroad for several years as an English as a Foreign Language teacher. She returned to the UK to do a PGCE secondary in German and English but she subsequently found that there was little demand for this combination of subjects and wished she had known about this beforehand. She then worked in a number of training, tutoring and supply teaching roles. She is once again considering teaching, this time teaching English at primary level. She knows she can teach at primary level with her PGCE qualification but she feels she would need to update skills and get up to speed.

Career changer, Lost (would like to study part-time due to family commitments),
university-led secondary

Ella

Ella received her QTS in 1985, but struggled to find a teaching job so took a job in the Civil Service, where she stayed until 2011 when she took voluntary redundancy. Ever since completing her QTS Ella had teaching in the back of her mind. When she was offered voluntary redundancy, she took the opportunity to actually pursue teaching again. She had always regretted not becoming a teacher so wanted to find out how easy it would be to get back into teaching, whether her QTS was still applicable despite never actually having working as a teacher and whether she needed to do any other training.

Career changer, Lost (SKE course cancelled and went into other employment),
secondary

Encouragement (or inspiration) of others

Family, friends and work colleagues can also trigger or inspire individuals to take action. Interviewees noted how someone had 'put the idea into their heads' or provided them with the information that made teaching seem attractive and the training seem attainable. These were often people who were undertaking or involved in teacher training, or who had recently trained themselves – acting as role model – so had a good understanding of (at least some) routes into ITT and a good understanding of the realities of both training and of working as a teacher.

Miriam

Miriam started considering EYTS after 13 years working in schools when she heard a colleague who was mentoring on an EYTS programme talk about it and thought it sounded interesting. The colleague told her about a six month 'fast-track' course for people already working and Miriam thought it would fit around her current part-time

work and she could do all the necessary placements at her workplace (a children's centre). The colleague encouraged her to apply and emailed her an application form.

Career changer within education, applicant, early years ITT

Rosa

Rosa worked in banking for a number of years, working her way up from a typist to manager of the cashier department before taking a career break to have children. When her son started primary school she started volunteering and then trained and gained work as a teaching assistant and then higher level teaching assistant. She felt inspired to train as a teacher once exposed to this environment as she saw how new younger staff got on with teaching, saw what they did and thought 'I can do this'. She feels like she has chosen a profession for the first time in her life.

Career changer within education, applicant, early years and primary

Employers can be an important source of encouragement and support (see Chapter 4), but conversely can also act as a barrier. There were numerous examples of interviewees working in the education sector who felt encouraged by their employers (local authorities, head teachers etc.) to consider and apply for ITT.

Lily

Lily has a long career history in early years '*it is all I have ever known*'. She was a manager in a pre-school for over ten years and decided she wanted a broader experience so left to work in a day nursery and then later moved to work in a nursery attached to a school in a deprived inner-city area. When working full-time at the day nursery she looked into the possibility of undertaking early years teacher training as she enjoys the challenge of learning but felt her employer was not very supportive (focusing on the short-term inconveniences of organising cover whilst Lily was training rather than the long-term benefits of a qualified member of staff). After moving to her current job, she looked into early years training again and found her employer was incredibly supportive and encouraging. She also worked alongside two qualified teachers in the nursery and was able to experience first-hand how they could bring theoretical knowledge to underpin their practice, another factor which encouraged her to apply.

Career changer, Lost (employer was not supportive, has now applied for one year part-time graduate employment-based programme), early years

More/different ways in to ITT

A couple of interviewees talked positively about the changes in routes to teacher training. These individuals had often looked into training in the past and felt the choices were too limited, not local enough and not quite right for them.

“I wondered if things had changed, if it was more straight forward and if there were other ways in, so it might be something I could easily do’

Career changer, Lost (due to lack of confidence and guidance),
secondary, university-led

Availability of funding

NCTL has recently been focussing on how financial levers can be used to secure entries into the teaching professions. Work is in train to improve available bursaries (of up to £25,000) and introduce tax-free scholarships (worth £25,000) largely directed towards the high priority subjects, namely physics, maths, chemistry, computing and languages; plus give schools greater flexibility over pay, and refine marketing in order to foster interest and encourage new entrants into teaching. Making ITT financially attractive is likely to be increasingly important as the costs of undergraduate and postgraduate study rise (increasing debt levels and concerns amongst potential teacher trainees); and as the economic recovery continues making other graduate occupations more accessible.

Indications from analysis of a large survey of postgraduates including PGCE students (Pollard et al, 2016) shows that PGCE students were more likely than those studying on other professionally focused postgraduate programmes (such as law, business and management, social work, nursing etc.) to report that the funding support affected their decisions about whether to study or not (60% compared with 52%), and that without funding they would not have studied at all (71% compared with 61%). Similarly previous customer journey research for the NCTL found bursaries, salaries and scholarships are often crucial to decisions about ITT (Matthias, 2014) and the majority of scholarship applicants (66%) identified the financial incentive of a scholarship as being important or very important when they considered their application to ITT. Funding support was also relatively more important to computing and to physics teacher trainees (Porter and Bear, 2014).

However as noted above the survey found funding to be a middle level trigger for considering applying for ITT affecting a minority of respondents. This could be caused by the complex array of scholarships and bursaries available (including salaried training places), with different levels available for different pathways and for those with different levels of prior attainment. This has some synergies with the previous research focused on scholarship applicants which found availability and awareness of scholarships can turn an interest in teaching into an application for

teacher training but perhaps cannot ignite an interest (Porter and Bear, 2014). Some interviewees talked about how finding out about funding to support their training had triggered them to make an application. In some cases it was an increase in the amount of funding that particularly stimulated action. Availability and level of funding support could also influence preferences for different ITT routes (see Chapter 3 for a further decision of the factors influencing preferences).

Sean

Sean changed career from retail merchandising to teaching, something that he had always been interested in. He considered applying for secondary level school-based training last year but delayed so that he could save up more money to fund his training. The Design and technology bursary went up this year (to £9,000) and he felt this helped him to apply, it 'made it possible', although he still needs to rely on his savings whilst studying.

Career changer, applicant, SCITT design and technology

Influence of advertisements

There were relatively few examples in the interviews of individuals being triggered by adverts, which corresponds to the survey findings. However national campaigns could help to tip the balance and make teaching seem an accessible career especially if individuals felt the adverts were aimed at people like them.

Robert

Robert worked for three decades in ICT and decided five years ago that he was getting tired of the sector and was not happy with his current role. A friend advised him to think about teaching and at the time he remembered an advertising campaign that was focusing on career changing to teaching. The campaign made him think "I could do that", particularly as when he was in school himself several teachers told him he would have an aptitude for teaching.

Career changer, Lost (financial considerations, would prefer part-time study),
primary +, all routes

Change in circumstances

For some interviewees a change in their family life could trigger thoughts about teaching or enable someone to actually take up training. This included having children, or children leaving home, or even children starting school and allowing interviewees to re-engage with teaching as a parent; or could include a change in

partner or partner's circumstances so that the interviewee could be supported financially. There were also a couple of examples of interviewees suffering from ill-health or moving house and looking towards teaching as an alternative career.

Duncan

Duncan had already changed career in his late 40s from engineering to careers guidance after being made redundant, setting up his own careers guidance company. Now seven years later he found himself with more time on his hands after his son left for college 'I've got more time to do things', Duncan wanted to explore teaching (specifically secondary school teaching) as he enjoyed working with young people in a voluntary capacity (being involved in a local youth theatre), he felt his experience of providing careers guidance 'sitting down on a one to one basis and taking them through a process' would be similar to teaching, and thought he might enjoy it. 'I'd rather do something where I'd enjoy doing it all the time'. He's very positive about his career change, and is motivated by a desire to help people, and in this regard sees it as a continuation of his careers guidance career.

Career changer, applicant, secondary, SCITT

3 Preferences and application behaviour

This chapter moves on from exploring the attraction of ITT per se to explore in greater detail preferences and application behaviours, and application experiences. It examines awareness and understanding of the various options available for ITT; and provides details of individuals preferred options for ITT programme types and specialisms. It looks at which options individuals have considered, and then which they actually apply for; exploring how spread or narrow these are, the perceived benefits and attractions of specific options over others and the factors that can influence the perceived suitability of programmes. It also examines the final application choices individuals make and experiences and outcomes of the application process.

Chapter Summary

ITT findings

- Some individuals were only vaguely aware that training can take place in schools or in university. Lack of awareness appeared to be driven by: the evolving nature of routes; availability and visibility of local options; and difficulties accessing appropriately tailored and impartial information (see Section 3.5.1).
- Location (which was often about accessibility and affordability) was often the primary motivator and shaping factor when it came to choosing ITT options. Applicants frequently chose positions and HEIs that were close to home (Section 3.5.5). Other factors influencing preferences for route included: preferences for learning style; potential flexibilities of the programme; extent of work experience and thus confidence in the workplace; perceived employment advantages; views of others; and availability of funding (Section 3.6).
- HEI-led provision was the most commonly considered and applied for route to ITT but this was often considered alongside school-based provision (Section 3.4). HEI-led programmes were perceived to offer greater theoretical underpinning, international recognition and progression to other higher level qualifications (Section 3.5.1).
- School-led provision was perceived to be more 'hands on' and more appropriate for career changers whether within or outside of the education sector. It was seen to make training more accessible by widening the pool of local training opportunities, allowing some individuals to stay near families or support networks (Section 3.5.3).
- However there was a considerable drop off between consideration and actual application for School Direct salaried and SCITT courses. Indeed only one in five

of those considering a School Direct salaried ITT programme actually go on to apply for one, and two in five don't apply for ITT at all (Section 3.4.1). This indicates that for many if a salaried place is not available they don't have or want an alternative as they need the continued income that this option offers (it is in effect 'a deal breaker'). School Direct salaried places were particularly sought after, yet were hard to come-by given their limited availability and the strong competition for places (Section 3.5.3).

- A number of points during the application process were found to be especially tricky: fitting application requirements around existing work or study commitments, the difficulties in identifying or communicating with School Direct-offering schools, gaining school-based experience, evidencing eligibility, obtaining referees and writing a personal statement. Some of these difficulties could perhaps be eased through support from NCTL (Section 3.7).
- Some individuals received several offers and decisions about which training place to accept were heavily influenced by instinct, and those chosen were valued for their pleasant environment, friendly and professional attitudes, and helpful and nurturing ethos (Section 3.8).

Early years ITT findings

- The most popular early years programmes were early years ITT followed by undergraduate degree course leading to EYTS. Few considered or applied for School Direct early years programmes (but these are still very new, Section 3.4).
- Those with a preference for early years are more likely than those considering primary or secondary ITT to be women, to consider teaching at a later age (25+), have parent/carer responsibilities, and to have pursued a career in the teaching sector before considering ITT. Most commonly they are working in nursery and pre-school settings with early years age groups eg as nursery assistants/nursery nurses, reception class assistants, room leaders, nursery/preschool/children's centre managers, rather than working with older ages in primary schools (Section 3.2).
- Some individuals want to work with young children and this can span both the early years age range (0 to 5) and the primary age range (3 to 11). Similar numbers considered teaching early years as did teaching primary, and there was considerable overlap in preferences. Thus there are those firmly committed to teaching the under 5's and those not wholly decided between early years and primary (Section 3.2.1).
- There is recognition that early years has become more visible recently with new options for training and professional recognition. However there are concerns

that early years does not yet have the same perceived profile and status in the education sector; that policy and practice around early years ITT has changed significantly and may be subject to further (destabilising) changes; and that Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) is still new and experimental. There is a feeling that EYTS has not yet gained widespread traction across schools and nurseries leading to gaps in awareness and uncertainties as to the utility of EYTS for individual career progression and its value to employers (Section 3.5.4).

- Some individuals do weigh up EYTS against primary QTS when making choices about ITT, forming part of considerations about future employability. QTS is viewed to offer wider opportunities and flexibilities and provide better career progression (Section 3.5.4).

3.1 Consideration of options

The application system for ITT via UCAS allows individuals to make up to three choices. The online survey of potential applicants found that respondents who went on to apply for ITT were likely to have considered a greater number of training types, specialisms, and, to a certain extent, age groups than the number actually applied for. This broad pattern remains true for the early years subsample (those who considered and/or applied for early years) despite the different approach to recruitment and application (ie direct to providers).

Also individuals tended to apply for more than one programme, with feedback from the interviews suggesting that they tended to use all three options offered (characterised by the feeling that *'you may as well used them'*).

Table 3.1: Mean average number of training types, ages groups, and subjects considered and applied/in process of applying for

	Early years	non early years	All
Number of training types considered	2.3	2.2	2.2
Number of age groups considered	1.5	1.5	1.5
Number of subjects considered	1.6	1.7	1.7
Base* (N)	343	686	1020
Number of training types applied for	1.2	1.5	1.4
Number of age groups applied for	1.2	1.1	1.1
Number of subjects applied for	1.1	1.2	1.2
Base** (N)	226	466	683

Source: IES survey, 2015. *All respondents;

**All respondents that have applied or are applying for ITT

3.2 Expressed preferences for phase

Respondents to the online survey were asked to indicate which age groups they had considered teaching and, where relevant, applied to teach. The majority considered just one age range (59%), and of those considering more than one age range they tended to be considering early years and primary. Similarly the vast majority applied to just one age range (87%). This further strengthens the finding noted in Chapter 2 that, in general, individuals had strong preferences for undertaking training with specific age groups

Across all respondents 45% had considering secondary age groups (ages 11-16/18), 44% had considered primary (ages 3-11), and 39% had considered early years (ages 0-5). In terms of applications, secondary was again the most common with 44% of those making at least one application applying for secondary ITT, followed by early years 34% and primary 31%.

Thus from 'consideration' to 'application' stages in the customer journey, commitment to secondary school age remains relatively consistent, yet commitment to other age groups decreases, particularly dramatically for middle school. The lower proportions of respondents both considering and/or applying for middle school provision may reflect how both middle school and Key Stage 2/3 routes are still less commonplace in ITT.

Table 3.2: Age groups considered and applied to

	Considered*	Applied**
Early years	38.9	33.6
Primary	43.9	31.3
Middle school	19.0	6.5
Secondary	45.2	43.4
Base (N)	1,036	681

Source: IES survey, 2015. *All respondents responding to the question; ** All those applying or have applied for ITT; multiple response questions so sums may \neq 100%

There was very little difference in the age groups considered among those who became Lost to the customer journey when compared to those who went on to make an application

Table 3.3: Age groups considered by whether applied, still considering applying or Lost applicant

	Considered		
	Applicant	Pending	Lost
Early years	37.1	46.4	36.2
Primary	44.0	46.4	39.4
Middle school	16.1	23.4	27.6
Secondary	46.7	39.7	45.7
Base (N)	700	209	127

Source: IES survey, 2015. *All respondents responding to the question; multiple response questions so sums may \neq 100%

Further analysis of the survey data finds that:

- Women were significantly more likely to consider early years (48%) and primary (49%), whilst men were significantly more likely to consider working with middle school (28%) and secondary (78%) age groups.
- White respondents were significantly more likely than those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds to consider primary ITT (47%)¹⁶. This could be linked to motivations to teaching whereby those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to be influenced by being able to use knowledge and skills in a particular subject which secondary teaching rather than primary settings allows (see Chapter 2).
- Additionally those with a preference for early years were more likely than those considering primary or secondary ITT to consider teaching at a later age (25+), have parent/carer responsibilities, and to have pursued a career in the teaching sector before considering ITT.
- Looking in further detail at those with a preference for early years phase: 23% were still a full-time student or had only recently graduated; 21% had graduated more than one year ago but were still in the early stages of developing a career; 39% had followed a career in another sector; and 17% were already working in the education sector (having followed a career in teaching without completing ITT). When looking at those who only considered early years phases the proportion who had followed a career in education rises to 29%. The interviews indicate the vast majority of those with experience in teaching are most commonly working in nursery and pre-school settings with early years age groups

¹⁶ This also links with findings reported in the department's Statistical First Release (DfE, 2014) that a higher proportion of BME new entrants were found in secondary programmes and teaching maths.

(eg as nursery assistants/nursery nurses, reception class assistants, room leaders, nursery/preschool/children’s centre managers) rather than working with older ages in primary schools.

Table 3.4: Backgrounds of those who considered early years age groups

	Considered early years phase only	Considered early years phase and other phases
University student or recent graduate	21.1	22.5
Graduated more than one year ago but still in the early stages of a career	12.3	21.1
Followed a career in teaching without completing ITT	28.7	16.9
Followed a different career path but looking to pursue a career in teaching	38.0	39.4
Base (N)	171	213

Source: IES survey, 2015. *All respondents responding to the question; ** All those applying or have applied for ITT; multiple response questions so sums may \neq 100%

3.2.1 Blurring between early years and primary

The relative size of the group considering primary was similar to the group considering early years and the survey indicated a strong degree of overlap in preferences between early years and primary age groups. Individuals often have a desire to work with young people but are not wholly decided between early years and primary, and indeed many wish to teach both (also discussed in Chapter 2). The survey found:

- 53% of those considering early years also considered primary (but rarely considered middle or secondary ages); and 47% of those considering primary also considered early years.
- Alternatively whilst 18% of respondents only considered early years teaching, a similar sized group also representing 18% considered both early years and primary teaching.
- Of those considering early years who then go on to make an application the vast majority go on to actually apply for early years (86%) but 30% apply for primary ITT.
- Similarly of those considering primary who then go on to make an application the majority (69%) go on to actually apply for primary but 35% apply for early years ITT.

Thus there are those firmly committed to teaching the under 5's and those not wholly decided between early years and primary.

Table 3.5: Age groups considered

	early years		Primary	
	Considered*	Applied**	Considered*	Applied**
Early years	100.0	86.1	47.0	35.1
Primary	53.1	29.8	100.0	69.4
Middle school	6.0	0.4	20.4	4.4
Secondary	6.2	1.2	22.0	13.2
Base (N)	403	252	455	297

Source: IES survey, 2015. *All respondents responding to the question; ** All those applying or have applied for ITT; multiple response questions so sums may \neq 100%

Table 3.6: Most common combinations of age groups considered (%)

	All
Secondary only	26.4
Secondary and middle school	8.7
Primary only	13.2
Primary and secondary or middle	10.0
Early years only	17.7
Early years and primary	17.9
Base (N)	1,036

Source: IES survey, 2015; derived from multiple response questions so sums may \neq 100%, not all combinations shown

Exploring the open text responses from the online survey to the question 'what was it about early years teacher training that particularly attracted you rather than primary teaching training' suggests the distinction is not clear cut (and may be particularly problematic around the 'reception' age group):

"having gained a few years' experience in several primary schools, I find myself torn between early years and key stage one. I have experience with all year groups from key stage two to early years thus I intend on applying to courses related to any of these age groups. I am currently gaining experience in a SEN setting to see if this is also a role I would enjoy".

Survey response

“I believe when children are very young it is the most important part of their lives in order to shape who they will become as a person. I was unsure as to whether I wanted to work with really young children, or children a little older who were developing their skills more”

Survey response

“I felt that I could offer a lot in this age group and had previously worked in early years and enjoyed the rewards in watching and assisting in the development of young children. I do not prefer one over the other. I would have been pleased to work in both areas”

Survey response

“Because I have been working as an Early Years assistant for the past 2 in a primary and really love my job. I am particularly interested in Early Years, KS1 and Lower KS2”

Survey response

However other comments clearly indicate that individuals are attempting to weigh early years options against primary options (see below section 3.5.4 on views on early years provision) to help them decide which age group to train in.

3.3 Expressed preference for subject (specialism)

Respondents to the online survey were asked which specialisms they had considered and, where applicable, had begun an application for. Focusing on the preferences of those considering teaching at middle and secondary level (where individuals were able to elect specialisms), the most commonly cited specialisms considered were: mathematics (27%), modern foreign languages (18%) and English (17%). However, there was a large number of ‘other’ options considered (19%) which included personal, social and health education (PSHE) or equivalent lessons, religious education, physical education, business studies or economics, non-listed social sciences or humanities, and creative and performing specialisms (art, design, drama, dance, music). These patterns were broadly reflected in the specialisms at application.

Table 3.7: Types of specialisms (school subjects) considered and applied for, middle and secondary

	Considered*	Applied**
Maths	26.6	20.9
Modern Foreign Languages	18.3	15.6
English	16.7	12.6
Chemistry	14.6	14.0
Physics	13.0	10.3
Biology	12.4	7.6
Computing/Computer Science	11.8	7.6
History	8.7	6.0
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) (any key stage)	7.7	1.0
Design & Technology	6.5	5.0
Geography	6.1	2.3
Other	18.7	15.0
Don't know	1.0	0.3
Base (N)	508	301

Source: IES survey, 2015. *All respondents who attempted survey item ** All those applying or have applied for ITT, multiple response questions so sums may \neq 100%

Further analysis of the survey found:

- Men were significantly more likely to consider computing or computer science (20%), maths (38%) and physics (36%) whilst women were significantly more likely to consider modern foreign languages (21%). This pattern was replicated when it came to applications; men were once again more likely to apply to computing or computer science (17%), maths (30%) and physics (20%) whilst women were significantly more likely to apply for modern foreign languages (20%).
- Those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds were significantly more likely to consider a specialism in maths (36%), as well as apply for a specialism in maths (31%).

As noted earlier age group preference was linked to subject choice for some individuals. The interviews indicated that many were attracted to primary in part because of the diversity of disciplines they would be teaching. Preferences for specific secondary specialisms however tended to be influenced by: a) the

individual's educational attainment, b) their perceived personal strengths and c) availability of funding.

"My music ability was not high enough to be a music teacher. A lot of the time they want music teachers who can read music, know a lot about classical music and sing, play all these weird and wonderful instruments, and I can't read music. I taught myself how to play guitar, purely as a hobby, went into music technology... So, learned very quickly that that wasn't going to work out for me"

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

Other examples include one interviewee who was a native Spanish speaker so chose Modern Foreign Languages; another chose maths as he reflected how maths had always been his strength and he regretted never taking it forward; and a further was attracted to chemistry as this was eligible for a scholarship.

The interviews indicated that, for some, finance played a role in influencing their choices and preferences for ITT; particularly for subject specialisms. Thus targeted scholarships and bursaries could be helping to 'fill' shortages subjects. Indeed the availability of funding in certain areas could 'tie' individuals to specific subjects (as more preferable options were non-funded so regarded as inaccessible) or caused some people to specialise, or consider specialising, in a subject they would not otherwise have done and that could require additional study (through Subject Knowledge Enhancement courses). For example, once it became clear they would be unable to secure their preferred, salaried (School Direct salaried) position, one individual changed the focus of their application at the last minute, to switch from primary to primary maths: because they were more likely to receive grants for this specialisation. And another noted:

"If the grant hadn't been there, I probably wouldn't have spent much time considering the [School Direct Primary] maths course. It did entice me [more than the general Primary teaching option]."

Early career, applicant, School Direct primary maths

However, for many the desire to teach a preferred subject was stronger than the potential incentivising power of scholarship and bursaries.

Other factors influencing selected specialism included: perceived level of in-school support; and perceived employability (eg one individual felt a SEND specialism may be too narrow; and another felt their employability as a maths teacher would be tempered by their history degree). It was also noted how the UCAS application system made it difficult to consider more than one specialism as only one personal

statement could be submitted regardless of the number of applications made (thus denying the flexibility required to apply for several different disciplines).

3.4 Expressed preference for type of training programme (route)

Respondents to the online survey were also asked which type of training they had considered, and (if appropriate) applied for. As with phase (age group) and subject specialism, the survey found that individuals also tended to consider a wider range of types of ITT than they applied for. Across all respondents, HEI-led postgraduate degrees were the most commonly considered programmes (53%); followed by School Direct (fee) (33%), School Direct (salaried) (33%) and SCITT (32%). The most common type of early years programme considered was early years ITT followed by undergraduate degree course leading to EYTS. Few considered early years assessment only or a School Direct early years programme (perhaps reflecting that School Direct for early years has only recently been introduced¹⁷). The ‘other’ types of training considered included undergraduate courses leading to QTS; post-16, college based qualifications; and flexible/modular/distance learning PGCE with QTS courses.

Although HEI-led programmes were the most commonly considered, in the main those considering a postgraduate degree course based in a university (or indeed considering an undergraduate degree course leading to EYTS in a university) also considered school-led programmes such as School Direct (fee or salaried) and SCITT. Only 18% of survey respondents were what could be termed HE loyalists – in that they only considered HEI-led options; whereas 42% considered HEI-led options alongside school-led programmes. Males, those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, younger individuals (aged under 25), those in their early career (including those still studying), and single individuals (including single parents) were all more likely to be HE loyalists.

¹⁷ School Direct (Early Years) was introduced in September 2014, therefore it is likely that very few survey respondents would have been in a position to consider or apply for this training.

Table 3.8: Types of training considered and applied for (%)

	Considered *	Applied for **
A postgraduate degree course based in a university	53.1	53.3
A School-Centred ITT (SCITT) programme	31.6	12.6
A School Direct programme	33.3	21.5
A School Direct salaried placement	32.5	10.3
Teach First	16.7	3.9
An undergraduate degree course leading to EYTS (early years teacher status) in a university	9.5	6.2
A School Direct early years' programme	6.8	1.0
Early years ITT	22.7	19.5
Early years ITT (Assessment Only)	5.3	2.2
Other	3.4	3.3
Don't know	4.3	3.3
Base (N)	1,035	692

Source: IES survey, 2015. *All respondents; ** All those applying or have applied for ITT; multiple response questions so sums may \neq 100%

Table 3.9: Types of training considered and applied for by interest in early years programmes (%)

	Early years		Non early years	
	Considered*	Applied**	Considered*	Applied**
A postgraduate degree course based in a university	25.0	15.0	66.8	71.3
A School-Centred ITT (SCITT) programme	21.2	3.1	36.7	16.9
A School Direct programme	16.9	4.8	41.5	29.5
A School Direct salaried placement	22.4	4.8	37.5	12.7
Teach First	8.7	1.3	20.5	5.3
An undergraduate degree course leading to EYTS (early years teacher status) in a university	28.5	18.9	0.0	1.1
A School Direct early years' programme	20.3	3.1	0.0	.4
Early years ITT	68.0	59.0	0.0	1.1
Early years ITT (Assessment Only)	15.7	6.2	0.0	.0

Other	1.7	3.1	3.9	3.0
Don't know	0.3	3.1	6.3	3.4
Base (N)	344	227	701	474

Source: IES survey, 2015. *All respondents; ** All those applying or have applied for ITT; multiple response questions so sums may \neq 100%

In terms of applications the programmes most commonly applied for were again HEI-led postgraduate degrees (53%). And among the early years programmes, early years ITT were the most commonly applied for.

Looking across groups of respondents and the training courses they had considered, differences were noticed:

- Male respondents were significantly more likely than women to consider a postgraduate degree based in a university (60%), a School Direct programme (43%), a School Direct salaried programme (40%) or Teach First (22%). Men were also significantly more likely apply for an HEI-led postgraduate course (64%), a School Direct programme (30%) and a School Direct salaried placement (15%). However the female bias towards early years options is likely to mask gender patterns of training preferences within the non-early years group.
- Indeed, women were significantly more likely than men to consider early years ITT (28%) an undergraduate degree leader to EYTS (12%), School Direct early years programmes (8%) or early years ITT (Assessment Only) (7%). They were additionally significantly more likely to apply to early years ITT (23%).
- White respondents were significantly more likely to consider a School Direct programme (36%), than those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Those aged between 16 and 24 were significantly more likely to consider a postgraduate degree based in a university (70%) and Teach First (24%), and also apply to a postgraduate degree based in a university (69%) and Teach First (7%). Those aged 35+ were significantly less likely to consider a School Direct (fee) programme (28%) yet significantly more likely to consider a salaried School Direct placement (37%) as well as apply for a salaried place (15%).
- Those in the early stages of their career were significantly more likely to consider a postgraduate degree based in a university (66%), School Direct fee (37%) and Teach First (21%), and less likely than career changers (within the education sector or elsewhere) to consider a School Direct salaried programme (23%). Those changing career from outside of the sector were significantly more likely than others to consider School Direct salaried placements (43%). Those who had followed a career within teaching were significantly less likely than others to consider and/or apply to a HEI-led postgraduate course (34%).

- Those with no caring responsibilities were significantly more likely to consider a postgraduate degree course based in a university (62%), Teach First (21%) and School Direct fee (36%). They were additionally significantly more likely to apply for Teach First (5%). These patterns are likely to reflect age patterns.

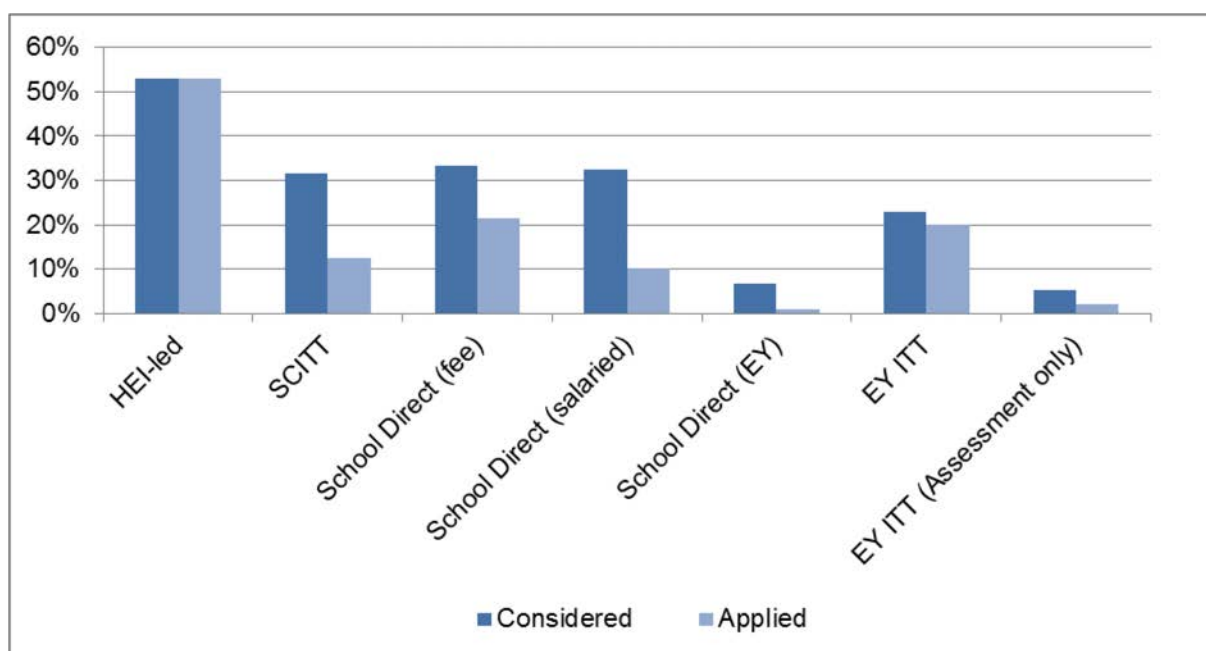
Some further findings relating to early years training reveal that:

- Younger candidates aged 16 to 24 were significantly less likely to consider School Direct early years provision (an option which is available to those with experience) and those aged 35+ were more likely to consider Assessment Only early years routes (8%). Those aged 35 and older were more likely to apply for early years ITT (26%) and early years assessment only routes (5%).
- Career changers from within the sector were significantly more likely to consider both early years ITT (33%) and assessment only (13%). Those in the early stages of their career were significantly less likely to consider a School Direct early years programme (4%).
- Those with caring responsibilities with a partner were more likely to consider School Direct early years programmes (10%), early years ITT (29%) and early years assessment only (8%). This cohort was also more likely to apply for early years ITT (31%) as well as assessment only (5%).

3.4.1 A focus on School Direct

It is interesting to note the considerable reduction in the proportion of applications compared to considerations found for School Direct salaried and SCITT programmes (see Figure 3.1). School Direct salaried programmes were considered by 33% of respondents, but only 10% of those making an application for ITT actually applied for a School Direct salaried course. Similarly 32% considered a SCITT programme but only 13% of applicants applied for one. This drop off may be due to the limited number of places available and the perceived intense competition for them (see also Chapter 5).

Figure 3.1: Types of training programmes considered and applied for (%)



Source: IES survey, 2015

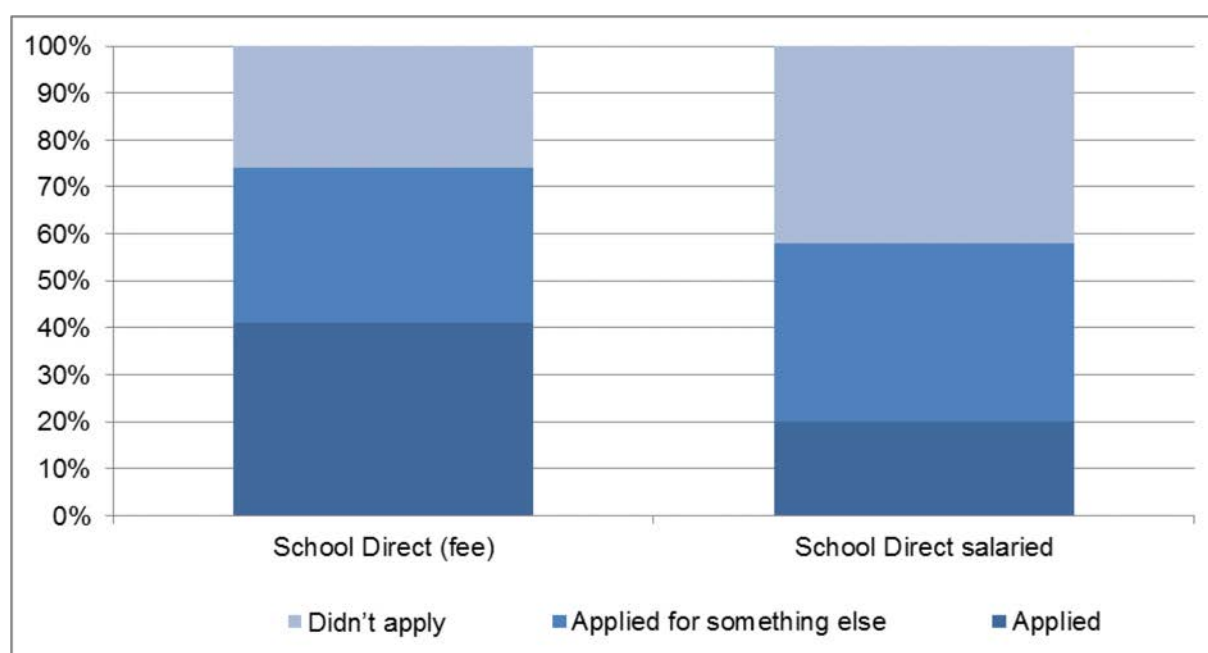
Exploring the figures in further detail. Of those who considered **School Direct (fee)**:

- Half (53%) also considered School Direct salaried and over half (57%) also considered SCITT;
- Two-in-five (41%) do go on to actually apply to School Direct (fee) but one-third (33%) apply to something else (most commonly HEI-led programmes with a much smaller proportion applying to SCITT or School Direct salaried) and one-quarter (27%) don't apply to any ITT.

Of those considering **School Direct salaried**:

- Half (54%) also considered School Direct (fee) and marginally more (55%) considered SCITT
- Just one-in-five (20%) do go on to actually apply to School Direct salaried which is a much smaller conversion rate than found for School Directed (fee), two-in-five (38%) apply to something else (again most commonly HEI-led programmes but a substantial group go on to apply for School Direct salaried or SCITT); and two-in-five (42%) don't apply. This indicates that for two in five of those considering School Direct salaried if places are not available for them they will not apply for ITT at all, it in effect becomes a deal-breaker (see Section 3.5.3).

Figure 3.2: Conversion rates for School Direct programmes (%)



Source: IES survey, 2015

Further analysis of the survey data (excluding those who considered early years) indicates that those who considered School Direct (fee) were significantly more likely to be younger individuals (16-24, 48%) and from white backgrounds (45% compared to 29% from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds). Higher proportions of males and those in their early career were also more likely to consider School Direct (fee) but these differences were not statistically significant. Those most likely to consider School Direct salaried were older individuals (25-35, 46%; or aged 35 plus, 46%), with families (48%) and those with careers, particularly those looking to change career (51%).

3.5 Perceived suitability of options

3.5.1 Awareness and understanding of options

There are a wide range of options available for ITT but the survey responses and particularly the interviews indicated that understanding of the full range of options and the differences between these is not universal. Some potential teacher trainees have only vague awareness that training can take place in schools or in university. More engaged individuals had explored (or were at least aware of) the wider range of options including salaried and unsalaried School Direct options, School-Centred ITT (SCITT) and Teach First. Lack of awareness appeared to be driven by: the evolving nature of routes (for example, School Direct was introduced in 2012/13); availability and visibility of local options; and difficulties accessing appropriately

tailored and impartial information. Some individuals can feel overwhelmed by the information available and find it difficult to navigate through it; and find the numerous pathways highly confusing (see also Chapter 4). Indeed one interviewee spoke about applying for the wrong course as they could not understand the information in the way in which it was presented. Others noted:

“I must say I received plenty of information, but at the same time it was quite confusing, because you thought OK I'm standing at this point, and they're offering me all these possibilities, but if I take this road, I can't really... what I really want to do is take a bit of the other road as well... a bit of mix and match”

Lost (due to lack of eligible equivalent qualifications and financial considerations), secondary Modern Foreign Languages, School Direct salaried

“The whole thing seemed really blurred... I found it hard to understand how everything worked”

Career changer within education, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications (Maths GCSE)), School Direct and PGCE, secondary

Individuals who were more unsure about the options tended to be Lost to the customer journey – this either indicates that they decided against ITT before they had properly researched all their options or that they were confused by the array of options which prevented them from making an application (this is worthy of further investigation). Whereas those who went on to apply tended to have better understanding, than those Lost, of the training landscape and variety of options offered when they were in the early stages of their research and decision-making. Yet, even some of those who went on to make an application for ITT still expressed some doubts about the actualities of the training landscape. Individuals often made value based judgements about the different options available based on previous experiences of work and learning and the feedback from others. However, being aware of an option did not necessarily mean it was considered viable, as a number of interviewees were aware of school-led provision but had immediately discounted it. Likewise, awareness of unsalaried places was irrelevant for some who would only consider waged or funded positions.

“Obviously... salaried School Direct would be great, but the unpaid one wasn't really an option with my circumstances, so that went out. And then there weren't any paid School Direct ones, so that wasn't an option. But the PGCE also appeals to me”

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

“I looked at PGCEs and.... Teach First. Teach First wouldn't have me, and PGCE... I couldn't afford it. I've got two kids, so the salaried route was the one that was the only viable option”

Career changer, applicant, salaried School Direct

A number of early years interviewees explained that the vocabulary of early years study had been particularly fluid over recent years, including the change from early years professional status (EYPS) to early years teacher status (EYTS), which may in part account some of their gaps in awareness.

Often individuals wanted a helping hand to guide them through the information about study options and routes into teaching, and as discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 4). This kind of help is considered the most useful source of support provided to potential teacher trainees.

3.5.2 Views on HEI-led courses

Having for the most part gained at least some degree of understanding, interviewees proceeded to describe, as they saw it, the suitability and unsuitability of different types and aspects of teacher training provision. The discussion was heavily focused on the distinction between school- and HEI-led provision. Opinions were often based on both experience of prior learning, extent of work experience either within or outside of the education sector, and caring or other responsibilities.

Not all interviewees had a choice of ITT available to them. One interviewee explained that he had moved straight in to employment after college, but now wanted to retrain as a primary school teacher. Despite the positive messages he had seen and heard about entering teaching, he discovered the only option available was to undertake a three year undergraduate degree.

Interviews indicated that some felt HEI-led courses with PGCE qualifications¹⁸ courses were the ‘*classic*’ or ‘*traditional*’ ITT choice, and these options were valued for both their delivery and their reputation.

“I went for a PGCE because I was happy with the uni environment, it seemed like a sensible place to me. I guess all along PGCE had been the only option in my mind”

Applicant, secondary Modern Foreign Languages, HEI-led,
Manchester Focus Group

¹⁸ It should be noted that the HEI-led route is not the only way to gain a PGCE

“I am old fashioned, I want a proper qualification, I feel it is the right one to have”

Career changer, Lost (waiting for support from school for PGCE, will re-apply next year), PGCE primary or early years ITT

Henry

Henry graduated in Human Geography and Town Planning and after travelling and working in a range of short-term jobs decided to look into ITT. Henry had long considered becoming a teacher, even when at school, and did a lot of cricket and football coaching with young people, which he really enjoyed. It was this that really created his desire to become a teacher and he wanted to teach upper primary ages so he could teach a range of subjects.

Henry looked into a range of options and sought the opinions of teachers or trainees to help him decide. He decided that a PGCE was the best option for him. He believed that PGCEs were generally held in higher regard than other routes, ‘it would stand me in good stead when I was applying for jobs.’ He also thought that a HEI-led postgraduate course would give him the chance to be taught by experts in the field, who had a range of knowledge about various teaching methods and schools. This would allow him to gain non-school-specific theory that he would then be able to apply in a range of settings. Also, he recognised that a PGCE would give him credits towards a master's degree so if he later wanted to do a master's then he would already have completed part of it.

Henry was also worried that school-led routes would be too narrow and that he may pick up ‘bad habits’ that may just be particular to the school that he would be based at. He has now secured a place on a PGCE primary programme.

Early career, applicant, PGCE primary

HEI-led courses were thought to embody a greater theoretical underpinning to ITT (see Association of Teachers, 2013 and University and College Union, cited in Hodgson 2014). Interviewees felt they could immerse themselves in the theory of education, gaining intense and grounded pedagogical knowledge around special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), safeguarding, psychology and teaching more generally. It would also combine theory and reflection, before entering the classroom. As training was seen to be provided by active researchers and experts in the field, this opened up a range of knowledge about teaching methods and schools, a ‘*wonderful opportunity*’ that would not be easily accessed again. Individuals also felt that the delivery environment was more supportive, so they would not feel ‘*thrown in the deep end*’ at the beginning of their teaching careers. A support

network comprising of tutors and peers who have experienced the same challenges were on hand to help and to share ideas with.

“Some of the theory you learn, you start going into the classroom ... [and] look at things, oh that’s why that person’s doing that, that’s why that person’s behaving like this. It is handy to have the theory I think. I wouldn’t have realised that at the time, I don’t think I realised how much theory you’d need”

Career changer, applicant, university-led, maths

“I preferred the HEI route due to the level of training, the resources that would be accessible and the variety of expertise within the university; I just wanted to be within that type of institution, I felt safer doing it that way. I get quite anxious about my work, and I wanted to be pushed, I wanted to be supported, I wanted to connect with a particular level of thinking, and I felt that that wouldn’t be provided by someone else, that was literally just a platform for providing the course”

Early career, applicant, PGCE EY

For some, HEI-led PGCEs were felt to offer greater employability, particularly where individuals held aspirations of moving and working abroad. It was thought this was the only internationally recognised form of ITT, therefore essential for would-be migrants.

“It would stand me in good stead when I was applying for jobs”

Early career, applicant, PGCE primary

“I really like travelling, and if you want to teach abroad, it’s a lot easier if you have a PGCE... an internationally recognised qualification rather than “I worked at a school in England and they say I can do it”

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

Numerous individuals added that the opportunity to gain credits equivalent to one-third of a Master’s degree was highly appealing, as they could later top-up should they wish to. As such, one applicant noted that:

“I thought the quicker I actually got a full Master’s, I could smash up the career ladder”

Early career, applicant, secondary, PGCE

However, HEI-led provision was unsuitable for some, such as people considering non-shortage subjects or those with lower bursaries where courses were perceived to be unaffordable and giving up the security of employment for training was a

frequent concern. Individuals often intended to fund their studies through a combination of bursaries, scholarships, loans (student loans and informal loans), earnings (by continuing in work), personal savings, windfalls or partner's salaries. So for some, the finance package offered through HEI-led programmes were not sufficient.

In addition, with HEI-led programmes the bonds that could be fostered with schools were seen to be less close, raising some concerns that future job opportunities would be restricted. Inflexibility was another issue, both in terms of accommodating caring responsibilities as well as finding suitable matches between trainees and schools ("I didn't want to be pushed into a school I didn't like"). Whilst some relished the chance to engage in theory, others felt that undertaking a 'theoretical exercise' detracted from the more beneficial, practical side of teaching.

3.5.3 Views on school-based provision including School Direct

Interviewees' reflections on their preference for school-led ITT options indicated how they viewed these to offer multiple benefits, with rarely any one perceived benefit outweighing any others. In addition, each individuals' list of perceived benefits were very similar. There therefore appeared to be no real hierarchy of benefits

Hands-on learning and real insight

In contrast to HEI-led ITT, school-based provision (most frequently understood as School Direct, in the face of lower awareness of SCITT), was cherished for its 'very hands on' nature, and considered to be particularly appropriate for those who 'learned through doing'. More on-the-job experience was viewed by some interviewees as highly important for familiarising oneself with the realities of the teaching environment.

"Your ability to practice your in-class delivery, learning about the rhythms and the demands of the school day, are obviously far greater if you spend time in school as you would in the School Direct programme"

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

"You'd meet more teachers and see them in practice, really, what they're doing. It would just be more practical, rather than just head knowledge... working hands-on, in the environment, would give you an idea of what the real pressures are like, and what is expected, rather than idealising it"

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult),
School Direct primary

"In addition to the fact it is salaried, I think 'learning on the job' is ideal for people like me with extensive experience/qualifications of working with

young people. For me particularly I learn far better from watching others and being...made to deal with situations and apply the theory immediately.... my experience from my MA is that sometimes universities go off on tangents and provide you with information that isn't relevant to your actual career”

School Direct salaried Primary, applicant – placed

Gerry

Gerry was a career changer after working in retail for a number of years. He began enjoying his job less, and when he had children he began volunteering at their school, helping out classes, supporting reading and was on the board of governors. He then retrained as a primary Teaching Assistant, and worked in this role for eight years, finding that it was so much more fulfilling than he previous job. However, he knew he wanted the responsibility of being a teacher.

He completed a degree in Maths whilst working as well as GCSEs in Maths and Physics to enable him to train as a teacher. When it came to applying, the school he wanted to work at had not arranged their School Direct place in time, so they offered him a year as an unqualified teacher within the trust, where he worked across primary and secondary sites. This gave him valuable experience in planning lessons, running classes and behaviour management, and this time round when the applications opened, he felt more ready.

He preferred the School Direct option as it offered a salary “I just wanted to know how I could make the transition, because I could never stop earning, because I've got a family to support – having two children, it was never an option just to drop off and go the normal university route, so for me, the School Direct route was always a very attractive proposition”. Also he was attracted by the practical work-based learning: “I'm definitely glad that it's more school based, I don't know how you're prepared going through the 'normal' route just give little bits [of classroom experience]. Having had a feel for planning your own lessons day in day out, week in week out, month in month out, attending parents evenings and everything like that as an unqualified teacher, I think that's really opened my eyes more than any sort of classroom-based could ever really prepare me for... I think that suits me better to learn on the job, just in a classroom, just seeing the difference you can make... Rather than the theory side of things”.

He successfully applied for a salaried place at his first choice, which he is due to start at in the next academic year.

Career changer, applicant, secondary maths, School Direct salaried

Interviewees anticipated that they would be able to gain more ‘up to date’ skills through school-based provision, with one explaining she assumed HEI tutors may not have been in the classroom for several years, so would be less familiar with current challenges. Furthermore, embedding oneself within a school to this extent was felt to increase the likelihood of employment post-training, as closer relationships would be built with the schools themselves.

Where individuals already possessed classroom experience, or had well-established careers outside of the education sector, returning to university felt less appropriate. Indeed, going back into full-time education was a concern for some career changers, who wanted to feel closer to a work environment. Generally, those to whom school-based training appealed, tended to be older, more experienced, and expected they would feel comfortable stepping straight into a classroom.

“I’ve got certain life skills and employment skills... I’m quite organised... Just being employed straight away meant the children treated me like a teacher, the children don’t know I’m a trainee. I expect they know PGCE students are trainees, and their attitude towards them is very different”

Career changer, applicant, salaried School Direct

“the School Direct route would allow me to get far more classroom teaching experience, which I was told is very important...I think more hands-on training probably prepares you better and I didn’t want to spend another year in uni, I’d rather be based in the workplace. Also it establishes stronger links with a school, so there’s probably more chance of you getting taken-on by one of those schools afterwards. Also the uni could just place you anywhere and give you little choice about which school you want to work at”

School Direct General Primary, successful applicant

Location and local options

School-based provision was seen as a means by which training was made more accessible and a way to widen the scope of what was available locally. For those in rural locations, facing relocation or long commutes, this was especially important, and meant they were able to stay near their families or support networks. Interviewees noted how staying local reduced travel costs but also made childcare costs easier to predict and manage. This degree of choice also, in the eyes of one interviewee, meant that candidates could pick a school that suits them best, whether that be large or small, urban or rural, or aligned with a particular specialism.

“One good thing about School Direct is that there are a lot more options about where you can do it, as there are a lot of schools near me, every

village has a school, every town has a secondary school but there are not many universities. My closest university is Cambridge University, which isn't the easiest to get in to! There are other ones but then it was balancing up how close is close enough. If it's still far enough away that I have to move, well I may as well move somewhere that I want to be... that played... more of a factor in making me think, ooh maybe School Direct would be a good idea, [but] it wasn't something that stood out as being important”.

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

“There were the School Direct salaried and unsalaried routes available through schools locally, so I didn't really ever look into the option of doing a PGCE... I know there was someone at the school I was working at who was a teaching assistant and one day a week he would go and do PGCE, and I wasn't sure that was something I could go and do from [location], I would have [to] travel , and I wasn't really sure of the logistics of it all. I am geographically restricted, and because I've got a family as well I had to consider that. I guess if I was a bit footloose and fancy-free, I could have gone to a school that wasn't in [location], and done the training that way. But that was impossible, so I could only look at the ones that were close by...”

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult),
School Direct primary

Work, earn and learn

Salaried School Direct placements were particularly sought-after, especially by those later career changers with caring responsibilities or other accountabilities like mortgage repayments and those used to guaranteed income streams. Some felt that ITT presented a dual burden – a lack of income stream (opportunity cost from giving up work income) coupled with the need to pay out for training fees and other course costs, so salaried School Direct placements presented a viable means to both retrain, but also continue to support others.

Indeed, one Lost applicant only ever considered the salaried route, as a career changer he could not see any other way to still meet his obligations. This was also the case in another example:

“For me, because I've got a small child, the option of being out of work was a bit daunting, to go back to uni and the fear of not finding a job straight away, I think that's why [School Direct salaried] appealed to me”

Career changer within education, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications and financial considerations),

Some confusion and concerns

However, there was some confusion around school-based courses: whether or not one could gain a PGCE through the programme¹⁹; and the differences (from a 'customer' perspective) between School Direct and SCITT. In one of the rare occasions where an interviewee was informed about this, they explained they rejected SCITT as they could only gain QTS, and felt that it would be a lot harder to be employed without a PGCE.

Perceived limitations to school-based training courses were also outlined by a range of interviewees (including those who had seriously considered the school-led route, weighing it up against HEI-led programmes), however some of the feedback indicated a lack of awareness of the realities of the school-led routes. For instance some interviewees talked about the reliance on just one school for training which they found troubling as they felt you could risk learning a singular teaching style. Yet in reality school-led training will always include two placements²⁰. This highlights how myths can develop, and serve to reinforce decisions. Other concerns were that a school-based trainee was felt to face additional pressures to those mainly based in universities. It was thought they would have expectations to perform right from the start (rather than 'easing' in), especially where salaried, and must deliver results to 'two masters', both the school and the accrediting HEI:

“your ability to practice your in-class delivery, learning about the rhythm and the demands of the school day, are obviously far greater if you spend time in school as you would in the Schools Direct programme.... But it is more demanding, because you have two masters - you've got the university who want you to complete the academic side of it, but then you also have the school who are feeling that you need to commit to that”

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

In addition places were thought to be limited, and thus hard to come by if a candidate lacks teaching assistant (TA) or other school experience, or comes to the process a little later when there are few places left. Another interviewee further noted that School Direct would necessitate a drop in hours and salary, making it unsuitable.

¹⁹ In reality it will depend on the individual school-led programme/course as to whether you receive a PGCE, it will depend on the link to and provision from the related HEI.

²⁰ Note that individuals were asked for their views on what made some ITT routes suitable for them and what made others unsuitable in order to understand the basis upon which perceptions of suitability were formed and awareness and potential inaccuracies. They were not prompted with information about the detail and nature of each option and then subsequently asked whether they would be interested in that route.

Indeed even with salaried training, the salary was not always deemed sufficient (not offering a wage that would fully cover study costs and current living expenses such as mortgages and childcare costs) and large relative cuts in income prevented some from continuing to explore ITT.

In spite of the nuanced understandings as evidenced above, it is important to note that some Lost individuals or those yet to make an application – and even some applicants prior to training – could not see any differences between school- and HEI-led training courses. For example, one interviewee noted the only difference he could see was that for one you were in university for a bit, and the other you were in school the whole time. Alternatively, another individual regarded course type as having no importance at all as what really mattered was the possibility of part-time or flexible study to allow for part-time work alongside. Finally, a couple of Lost applicants explained they would accept anything, any route, so long as it allowed them to get into teaching. One of whom became Lost to the journey because of fears of the maths skills test, concerns over finance and the complexity of information about different options. The other also became Lost to the journey due to a lack of A-C grade GCSE Maths and lack of recognition of an Adult Numeracy diploma.

3.5.4 Views on early years options

Given the different landscape of early years provision, it is considered separately here. Interviewees were often notably engaged with their potential career progression and considered the impact that early years qualifications may have, rather than solely the means of training delivery. One interviewee who had previously gained a foundation level qualification in early years found this left them unable to progress for years, so they were compelled to gain further certification.

Early years versus primary

As noted above there is a considerable overlap between those considering early years options and primary ITT, and a sizeable group consider both routes. Thus a good deal of discussion in the interviews was purposely focused upon weighing up these options – in terms of fit with preferences and experiences but also future employability and career flexibility.

“They [early years children] are empty vessels at that age... you have the ability to instil this want and desire to learn... whereas some 8 year olds I have worked with have already developed a concept that they couldn't learn, and I want to be able to combat this at a younger age”

Career changer, applicant, primary, School Direct salaried

Employability considerations often involved individuals comparing early years teacher status (EYTS) versus primary school QTS²¹. QTS was generally seen to open more doors due to the persistent inequality of status, employability and remuneration. Despite often expressing the desire to work with younger children, several interviewees expressed a preference for a primary ITT which would lead to QTS which they felt would expand horizons, in part because of encompassing a wider age range. Knowledge that the government would only fund one ITT could also tip the balance towards primary ITT where individual's felt there was even a possibility that they would like to change the focus of their teaching and change age groups at a later point in their career. Thus options for career progression were perceived to be greater in primary contexts. Indeed, a number of candidates indicated they may wish to progress to teach at Key Stage 1 or 2 in future, which they felt would not be possible with EYTS.

“I would have skipped early years and gone straight to primary teaching if I had known, it is too restrictive. I have had no career progression for the last 6 years”

London Focus Group 2

Lily

Lily had a long career history in early years; ‘it is all I have ever known’. She was a manager in a pre-school for over ten years and later moved to work in a nursery attached to a school in a deprived inner-city area. She really enjoys her job and working with young children (especially those aged three and above): ‘early years makes such an impact. It is amazing how much they can learn. They are so needy, you can set them up for school life. You can really see them change.’ Whilst working, Lily gained an early years Foundation Degree which she later ‘topped up’ to a BA with the support and encouragement of her family.

When working full-time at the day nursery she looked into the possibility of undertaking early years teacher training as she enjoys the challenge of learning but felt her employer was not very supportive; focusing on the short-term inconveniences of organising cover whilst Lily was training, rather than the long-term benefits of a qualified member of staff. After moving to her current job, she looked into early years training again and found her employer was incredibly supportive and encouraging.

²¹ Individuals were referring to the choice between opting for an early years ITT course which would give EYTS, and qualify them to teach children aged between 0 and five, or options for a primary ITT course, which would lead them to gain QTS and be qualified to teach ages 3 to 11. Please see the appendix for further details.

She also worked alongside two qualified teachers in the nursery and was able to experience first-hand how they could bring theoretical knowledge to underpin their practice, another factor which encouraged her to apply.

She considered a PGCE programme but has now applied for the one year part-time early years ITT (graduate employment based) programme with her local university. The key aspects of this course that were attractive were: a) the ability to continue working in her current school which she enjoys ('and I need the money'), b) to have her course fees covered: 'funding is a massive thing, you come out of it without a student loan', and c) to study locally (within easy commute) at a university with an established history of early years training.

Career progressor, early years, applicant

How individuals weighed up early years ITT against primary ITT (and vice versa) on perceived employability grounds was also echoed in the open text responses to the survey, and a theme emerged that early years was felt to be generally held in lower regard in the education sector:

"I wanted to work with children in the younger primary range rather than older. Also a government grant became available for EYTS [but the Early Years teacher training would not qualify me to work in schools as a reception teacher only in nurseries whereas the PGCE would qualify me to work in both nursery settings and in schools so it offered more security and development"

Survey response

"All of my training and degree is also in early years, so it was an obvious choice. But I wanted to allow myself more options by teaching primary aged children, but would probably still only wanted to stay in key stage 1"

Survey response

"I love working with children under five year old as teachers and practitioners can bring a classroom into life. I love turning my passion and creativity into providing children with the life skills they need to succeed in life as well as nurturing in them a love for learning. Sadly, early years teachers are not given the recognition they deserve so at first I intended to apply for a Primary PGCE programme which has better status and salary. Unfortunately Primary teachers earn twice as much as an early years teacher. But in the end, I could not afford to stop working in order to enrol into a PGCE course. So I eventually applied for early years training which is my true passion"

Survey response

“I prefer working with KS1 and considered early years however, after speaking to professionals I decided I had more options to explore if I applied to primary teaching”

Survey response

“I work in early years and particularly enjoy it. I don't really want to teach older than KS1 and much prefer Nursery and Reception ages. I think it is important to 'fly the flag' of early years and I wholeheartedly feel that it requires a particular skill set and teaching style that is different to other age ranges. I am disappointed that the EYTS is not deemed suitable for teaching in a state school though and I think this imbalance needs to be redressed”

Survey response

“The view of early years teachers was seen as a nursery nurse and not a worthy job in comparison. The view is that you teach children in primary but 'look after' them in early years. Pay is terrible in the early years”

Survey response

“I have vast experience of working within early years and have a real passion for supporting Children's learning and development within their early years. Because although early years teacher training is equivalent to QTS it does not have a QTS attached and therefore means you aren't guaranteed to have the same pay and conditions as teachers with QTS”

Survey response

The interviews indicated how some individuals saw value in the introduction of EYTS, “the status that will then say you are a professional within early years” for aspects such as allowing individuals to work unsupervised or open their own preschools. Likewise, some were happy with the inclusion of additional entry requirements for early years ITT, taking it as a sign of greater recognition and respect. Although some struggled to see the relevance of the eligibility requirements. A few interviewees felt that the ever-changing landscape of recent years has made it hard for people to keep up to date or to understand the changes, and that despite these changes early years was still not considered part of the mainstream educational system. Indeed a number of early years interviewees explained that the vocabulary of early years study had been particularly fluid over recent years, including the change from early years professional status (EYPS) to early years teacher status (EYTS), which may in part account some of their gaps in awareness.

Preference for different early years programmes

There was less discussion around the different early years course types, but some elements emerged. Shorter study periods afforded by the assessment only route

provided a faster pathway for those already possessing sufficient experience. For those lacking such experience (and thus struggling to find employers), as well as those who wanted theoretical or academic underpinning, EYTS was viewed as more appropriate. Furthermore, graduate employment based provision was attractive as it allowed early years career-progressing candidates to continue working. One Lost interviewee described the difficulties she had experienced in trying to find a course, as most required applicants to have nursery places, yet most nurseries required relevant qualifications which is challenging for career changers. For some early years applicants, many courses, without associated funding or salary, were perceived as unaffordable

“It [EY assessment only] didn’t have an impact on my life the way the PGCE did, where you’re giving up work and your income and you’re making yourself quite vulnerable with travelling a lot...this just fitted in really”

Career changer within education, applicant, early years ITT

3.5.5 Other factors influencing the suitability of ITT

Aside from the perhaps more instrumental elements of ITT, interviewees discussed other influencing factors which had shaped their views. Most important for many was the dimension of location, in addition, many discussed the influence of individuals including education sector employees, family or friends, whilst others discussed marketing approaches.

Location for some people was a concrete and absolute shaping factor when it came to what training options were suitable. Both Lost and placed candidates were frequently geographically immobile, and even many recent graduates could not travel further afield for training. As such, many described wanting to be within an hour commute, and were also often restricted to cycling or public transport. Therefore, regardless of their view on course type, many looked at what was around them, and then came to their conclusions on this basis (see also Chapter 5). Location was often tied to finances as indicated by other research. For example analysis of a survey of postgraduate students including PGCE students and other professional postgraduate students (Pollard et al, 2016) indicates how finance can influence decision making about postgraduate study. This finds that those studying for a PGCE were more likely than other professional postgraduate students to report that financial concerns caused them to decide to study locally so that they could live their family and reduce the costs (17% compared with 9%).

Teachers that interviewees knew or worked with heavily encouraged the School Direct route, and outlined the value of in-work knowledge and learning; actual school

experience was couched as highly important in the eyes of current practitioners. Further discussion of information and advice is provided in Chapter 4.

Although not necessarily an especially common theme, some interviewees concluded that teaching was suitable following exposure to marketing. This could include national marketing in terms of TV advertisements, websites or road shows, or more targeted contacts such as direct advertising from a HEI. However one individual described their negative reaction to such exposure, explaining they decided against Teach First on the basis of a TV documentary which portrayed it as 'too intense'.

3.6 Choosing a provider

During the early researching stage interviewees appeared to have clear preferences for either course type, subject specialism and/or age group to teach and these continued to hold when it came to making choices around applications. However over time and progression along the customer journey, decisions about which institution or school to apply to became more important.

"It was mainly... is it a good course? Does it look good? Does the uni look good? As far as the academic side, and then there was the, how will this affect my current lifestyle and circumstances? And there was the financial side of it... they were kind of the three things that had to be balanced up. It had to be something that fulfilled each one up to a certain point to be considered an option"

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

The quote above indicates how the choices that were made were influenced by a number of different factors: location, institutional and school reputation, candidates' feelings about particular course options, eligibility requirements and some elements of course structure.

3.6.1 Location

The interviews highlighted how location often guided interviewees in their shortlisting of institutions. It was apparent that applicants frequently applied to HEIs and schools that were near to home. When making their selection, interviewees described their geographical ties and these often centred on the support network of family and friends around them, or the necessity to be close to home for caring responsibilities. Also it was explained how the ability to stay at home allowed training to be more affordable, as there was a potential for accruing debt in moving away. Many spoke of the desire for saving costs on petrol or public transport by limiting their potential

commuting distance. For those on a single income, this proved even more crucial. As such, many looked at what choices were around them, and made their selection from this (sometimes limited) pool. For some individuals, this necessitated applying for a particular course type, or opting for a less favoured course type to fill second or third choice UCAS place.

“I didn’t want anything very local, but local enough not to travel”

Career changer, applicant, secondary maths, School Direct salaried

However, some interviewees were more prepared to look at options further afield. A number of individuals noted that London had a particular draw. It was described as a convenient central location, attracted a larger maintenance loan, and would allow for more ‘*complex*’ classes that would be more fulfilling and engaging. A few individuals did discuss moving to a different city, but this was mostly focused on a single location where they already had connections, indicating a persistent level of geographical restriction.

3.6.2 Reputation

Reputation was a further key factor when it came to making application choices. Some interviewees looked towards independent rankings, and many were very much attracted by the prestigious nature of some training providers. This was not only limited to HEI-led applicants, as the same attention was paid to accrediting institutions by a number of school-led applicants. Other factors included selection of institutions based on the best employment rates on graduation. More unusually, one interviewee rejected a particular institution on moral grounds, disagreeing with their approach to their selected discipline. This does not mean that a ‘good’ reputation was a homogeneously attractive proposition. One placed applicant described the nerves they felt when faced with the risk of not getting in to their well-regarded first choice, and another dismissed one top-ranked institution altogether due to fears the pressure would be too intense.

School reputation was similarly important, but the approach of applicants was more varied. Some made choices on the basis of positive Ofsted reports, choosing schools perceived to be ‘good quality’, with one interviewee choosing not to use all three choices as they did not want to be somewhere ‘*second best*’. However, a few used Ofsted reports and schools’ own websites in order to identify where they felt the environment would be more ‘challenging’ or where the children needed more support (as mentioned above in discussion of ‘*complex*’ London schools, and in Chapter 2). However, others made their decision based on informal word of mouth, for example about the level of support that the school offered to teachers.

Roger

Roger did an undergraduate degree in War Studies at university and had intended to enrol in the Armed Forces as an army officer after university. He began thinking about teaching in his last year of university, but found it was too late to apply, so instead worked as a Teaching Assistant for a year in a London secondary school, where he built experience around Special Educational Needs. This confirmed for him that he wanted to teach older age years especially years 10, 11 and into sixth form.

His applications to (HEI-led) teacher training were based in part on location and in part on reputation. As he and his partner are not geographically mobile, he could not relocate, so he looked for the “best” in his area. He had interviews at three universities, but withdrew his application from one because he felt the process was manipulative and designed to make people feel under pressure. The others were much more collaborative, he felt they listened and cared about his opinions. In the end he was successful in securing a place at one of these local institutions and at the time of the interview was a few weeks from the end of his course, and still enjoying it.

Early career, applicant, secondary, PGCE

3.6.3 Connection

Another hugely important factor affecting application decision making – yet one immeasurably hard to pin down – was the personal reactions engendered by particular choices. For example, many interviewees mentioned that the schools and training providers they chose were valued for their pleasant environment, friendly and professional attitudes, and nurturing or helpful ambience and ethos. Some of this was down to familiarity, with a number of individuals describing how they had previously completed courses at an institution, had got to know it and appreciated it a lot.

“I thought, well, I really like the course leaders [there], I’ve already got to know them and I know they’ll offer me a particular type of support because of my dyslexia”

Early career, applicant, PGCE EY

“They were really helpful, without them I would have been put off. I would have needed more time to sort it out, time to dedicate to researching options and requirements. [I]t is really not easy. They were very responsive, made you feel welcome, had time for you”

Career changer within education, pending, early years ITT

Conversely experiences of a disorganised admissions service or a more daunting, bigger campus were perceived negatively, putting individuals off from applying. Also

where institutions had been unresponsive to communication or speculative enquiry, they had been discounted.

The importance of familiarity in institutional choices reflects wider research on postgraduate choices (Pollard et al, 2016). The research found that a higher proportion of PGCE respondents were studying at the same institution where they had studied for their undergraduate degree (26%) than those on other professionally focused postgraduate courses (such as those studying nursing, business and management or other subjects allied to medicine).

This wider research into postgraduate also confirms the customer journey research in finding that location and reputation were particularly important in institutional choice. When asked why they chose to study at their current institution, the most common responses among PGCE students were: the location of the institution (66%), the overall reputation of the institution (43%), the reputation in their chosen subject area (39%), graduate employability (because graduates from the institution have good career and employment prospects, 24%), and the reputation of the department (23%). Location and reputation were much more important for PGCE students than other professional postgraduate students; however availability of funding and flexibility of programme delivery was relatively more important to other professional postgraduates than to PGCE students when choosing their postgraduate institution.

3.6.4 Eligibility

Perceived eligibility was also a factor. Each ITT route has a standard set of eligibility requirements and many of these are standard across routes (requiring a degree, GCSEs in English and Maths, school/nursery based experience, and pass marks in skills tests); however some providers may set additional requirements, particularly around the extent and nature of work experience.

“I considered SCITT when I made my second lot of applications. I thought hands-on learning would be better suited to my learning style and also, I didn't meet many university's entry requirements, I didn't have enough in-school experience, like 10 days in the last year. The SCITT routes were more likely to initially demand you have some in-school experience, and then place an 'x amount of days' requirement within their conditional offers. This makes it [SCITT] much more accessible if you work full-time”

Early career, applicant, Primary School Direct, found out about different routes' admission criteria through UCAS website

Some individuals – either with lower education attainment or who had previously submitted an unsuccessful application – thus placed eligibility requirements at the

centre of decision making. For example, one potential early years applicant looked for training providers who did not stipulate a maths GCSE grade C, although remained fearful it would still remain an informal requirement. Another opted to apply for unsalaried School Direct (fee) as opposed to salaried School Direct ITT, as they felt their lower second class degree classification would mean they stood a lesser chance of securing a paid position due to the intense competition for places. Unrelated to grades, several applicants described concerns about having insufficient school-based experiences, with one applicant having used UCAS's own filtering system in order to look for courses with less prescriptive requirements.

3.6.5 Funding

Funding and finance was, unsurprisingly, another motivator, with individuals particularly attracted to consider: courses attached to bursaries and scholarships; those offering salaries; and also those with alumni discounts (to encourage former students to return to their institutions).

3.7 Experience of application

Experience of the application process was explored in the in-depth interviews. Interviewees characterised the application process as having two stages. The first was the application itself involving UCAS or direct-to-provider forms, personal statement and gaining support from referees; whilst the second covered the multi-stage interview process.

The first stage was perceived to be relatively straightforward. UCAS was seen to function as a 'one stop shop', housing useful information such as deadlines; and found to be 'user friendly throughout', and similar to the experiences of those who had more recently applied for undergraduate or postgraduate study. Although a few interviewees found the wholly electronic nature of this stage tricky, and would have welcomed further support or another means of submission (see Chapter 4 for more discussion of support mechanisms).

The second stage was regarded as more complex and multi-staged. Although there were differences in the exact makeup or particularities according to course type (route), application interviews tended to involve a combination of: group interview or task to demonstrate team working and communication; a one-to-one interview regarding motivations and current teaching issues; presentation on present-day topics or teaching methods; preparation (and delivery) of a lesson; written tasks about an aspect of teaching and some additional tests, commonly for maths and English. There was also variation in terms of interview panel. Some interviewees spoke of being questioned by representatives of different schools simultaneously,

whilst others had separate stages for both their school and accrediting HEI. Some individuals clearly felt more prepared and informed about all these selection activities than others.

Overall interviewees who had reached the application stage of the customer journey fell into three categories: there were those who found the process wholly unproblematic, those who experienced only minor grievances, and those who had experienced deep challenges.

- Where individuals experienced no issues, the *'methodical and logical'* process was thought to be quite straightforward. Particular things that appeared to support the process were encouraging and passionate interviewers, experience and familiarity with job applications, and Premier Plus advisers who proved to be 'the icing on the cake' to resolve queries.

"I suppose compared to quite a few younger people, I've had quite a few interviews, I've had day long interviews and I've had group interviews. So, I didn't find it as daunting as some people"

Career changer, applicant, university-led, maths

- Where individuals encountered minor troubles, these tended to relate to the length of the process, or concerns about the interviews.
- A small proportion of interviewees found the whole application process tremendously hard, very formal and often highly pressured, and the complexity of the journey and the numerous pathways highly confusing,

"[It was] really long and it was quite challenge, but I think that is a good thing because I don't think you want to make it too easy to apply for teaching, because it is a hard job so I think it needs to reflect, and it does reflect, the level of effort you need to do throughout the PGCE"

Career changer, applicant PGCE early years and primary

"The information was not very helpful. It was difficult to find information on School Direct, and the information I did find made it sound very difficult and complex. I have to apply with UCAS and put the school code in etc. Then there is Apply 1 and Apply 2. I haven't had to deal with UCAS before as I studied part-time. I found it difficult, it is so long-winded, it almost put me off. There is no School Direct website which is bizarre, why isn't there one? It is difficult to find out how it all works, until you find a lead school it is hard to find the information you need"

London Focus Group 2

Unpacking these application experiences in more detail, there were a number of steps and processes that appeared particularly problematic:

- The difficulties in identifying or communicating with School Direct provider schools, here interviewees experienced challenges finding out about the availability and suitability of placements and when attempting to arrange visits in order make informed decisions about their application.

“We appreciate that teachers are really busy, and a lot of them who take on School Direct roles or training roles within the school, they’re taking it on additionally ... but the lack of response that I got was beyond... [I was] calling so many times... they were listed on UCAS as being available, but it wasn’t it was gone. I, in vain, tried to contact them... and they can’t even respond to your phone call”

Applicant, secondary Art and Design, School Direct unsalaried
Manchester Focus Group

- Gaining nursery or school-based experience, which could require the support of personal contacts or other intermediaries such as employment agencies, and a catch-22 situation whereby to get experience in a school you needed a relevant qualification.
- Evidencing eligibility, obtaining referees and writing a personal statement. Here interviewees spoke of: difficulties locating proof for exams completed many years ago, or needing to retake qualifications that had not been obtained at school; the time taken to collect references from tutors, teachers and headteachers and whose responsibility it was to collect references (UCAS or the applicant); and the time taken to draft their personal statement (there was consensus that the personal statement cannot be entered ‘off the cuff’ and takes a good deal of drafting).

“If for some reason they hadn’t have been able to find [my certificates], I would have had to re-sit GCSEs, or taken equivalency, even although I passed the exams years ago”

Career changer, applicant, university-led, maths

“[NQT friends] were very generous in giving me time to look through it and giving me ideas about what they would be looking for. The personal statements take a little while to get right”

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

Fitting requirements of the application process around existing work or study commitments was also a challenge for some interviewees – here they described having difficulties preparing for and taking the skills tests, difficulties securing the required school-based experience and needing to take time off to attend interviews. Interviews were often particularly problematic, and as many individuals were in work they described how trying to fit in interviews at very short notice was tricky

particularly without a supportive employer. A few noted how they had received offers of interviews at too late notice, and felt they had not enough time to prepare to a good enough standard or take more days off work.

For some these aspects of the application process stage of the customer journey were too challenging and caused them to become Lost (see Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion of the challenges and barriers experienced in the customer journey).

3.8 Securing a place on a course

Many of those interviewed, who had made an application for ITT, had successfully navigated the application process and secured places. In some cases individuals received several offers and had to make a decision about which to accept and which to reject. The factors influencing these decisions were, unsurprisingly, very similar to those which shaped application decisions, although 'instinct', 'hunch' or emotional attachment to a particular school or institution became much more important at this final stage

"The other reason I was really happy to go [there], aside from location, was the tutors seemed really nice, really talkative, really interested in what you had to say, we could sort of have a conversation"

Early career, applicant, secondary, PGCE

Reasons given for turning down offers included receiving an offer for another training place; poor experiences such as finding the institutions to be negative, unprofessional; or wanting to hold out for their first (preferred) choice.

"I put down three options, one never replied or got back to me. One school, they were third on my choice then [another] I had an interview with them but I was up to my neck in school work and stuff, and I was waiting to see whether I'd got an interview with [my first choice]... so I got an interview for that [second choice] but I opted out, at the time I just couldn't cope with anything else, to go actually for an interview or anything, so I just waited for [the first choice] to come up, and I was offered an interview there, and went straight in and onto a place there"

Career changer, applicant, secondary maths, School Direct salaried

A number of interviewees described how they had been unsuccessful in securing a place, although the precise reasons for this were not always clear to them. Some felt their lack of success could be due to applying for competitive placements (either salaried School Direct options or at *'better universities'*), and others felt it could be caused by provider inefficiencies (such as offering places that were no longer

available or failing to respond within a reasonable time period leaving the individual little time to find an alternative).

“I didn’t think that it would be that difficult to be honest, it was a bit upsetting to have a lot of rejections, that you kind of needed it really, to keep on going, it was harder than I thought and it was a bit disheartening but I got through it in the end”

Early career, applicant, PGCE, SCITT, primary

However some individuals had a more positive experience either with Apply Two²² or when they reapplied in a subsequent year, ending up in a ITT course they felt much better suited to them.

It is important to note that a small number of interviewees, despite being successful applicants and securing a place in ITT, did not continue either in training or in teaching. Research by Hobson et al (2009) found that the main reason for withdrawal from ITT relates to workload and this is supported by the interview feedback (see Chapter 1 further discussion of other research). A number of interviewees had actually started their ITT by the time of the research but a couple had had negative experiences. They described having been suspended from training due to an inability to meet work requirements or deciding to leave the sector as they felt teaching was not the right career for them.

²² Apply 2 is a second round of applications for ITT that opens in January through UCAS, although a candidate can enter Apply 2 later than this. It can be used where an applicant has been unsuccessful, withdrawn from their choices, or declined their offer(s).

4 Information about, and advice and support for teacher training

This chapter considers the research activity undertaken and information sought by those considering and applying to initial teacher training (ITT) and the advice and support received. The findings from the survey and interviews are discussed broadly in line with the customer journey; sources of support and information that were accessed from initial research into ITT options and teaching as a career, considering different ITT options and then moving on to support with applications. This chapter also highlights suggestions from individuals about what information, advice and support they would have liked more of or they felt was missing. This provides NCTL with an insight into areas or channels (ie methods of communication) to raise awareness about ITT and help support those considering ITT/early years ITT to make effective decisions.

Chapter Summary

ITT findings

- The vast majority of individuals reported receiving support or advice during their decision making about ITT. However experiences of accessing information and support varied greatly according to gender, ethnicity, age, career circumstances, caring responsibilities, and eligibility for scholarships. Those lost to the customer journey were less likely to have received any support during their decision making (See section 4.1.1).
- Internet searches were a common way to start research into ITT but the large volume and spread of information could be confusing. Interviewees therefore wanted a central source for information about teacher training where they could compare different options and understand the differences between the routes. Some individuals preferred face to face or telephone based resources where their individual questions could be answered and they could receive personalised advice and guidance as to which options would suit them (Sections 4.1.2 and 4.3.1).
- Across all respondents, two in five remembered registering with the Get Into Teaching website but a large proportion had either not used it or were unsure if they had registered at some point in the past. The main reason for registering with the website was to access further information and it was felt to offer a range of information, that was unbiased and impartial, and provide access to further positive services such as advisers, roadshows and help with gaining school experience. In general Get Into Teaching was regarded as a good starting point

for research but some found it complex and jargon heavy (Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2).

- Premier Plus was felt to be a very valuable resource helping individuals with choosing options, making applications, encouragement through to interviews and rejections phases, and getting experience in schools. School based experience was felt to be extremely valuable: to gain a first-hand understanding of the sector and how schools worked; and in helping decide upon or confirm preferred phase and (if relevant) specialism. Interviewees recommended getting as much experience as possible (Sections 4.1.2 and 4.3).
- Many interviewees had talked to friends, family, acquaintances or colleagues who were teachers, and these individuals could help with writing personal statements and wider advice and encouragement (although given the evolution of ITT, their knowledge may not cover all the potential training options available). Another key source of information and support were training providers, who were particularly valued for providing information about courses and funding (Section 4.1).
- Interviewees provided feedback on their unmet support needs, and key topics that individuals felt they would have liked more information about included: training options and suitability, course content and structure (including time commitments required, and opportunities to study part-time), funding and eligibility, practical insights into teaching, and a better understanding of the application process. These do not necessarily indicate gaps in provision but, at least, gaps in awareness; and suggest areas for increased marketing and reach of support arrangements. (Section 4.3).
- Those who had previous qualifications from outside of the UK felt it was difficult to find information on whether their qualification was eligible or how to convert a teaching qualification (Section 4.3).
- Several interviewees felt that there were limited resources available to prepare and inform oneself about the skills test, reporting that there were few examples on websites (Section 4.3).

Early years ITT findings

- There was no significant difference in the likelihood of receiving support between those who considered and/or applied for early years and those who didn't. However the early years group tended to receive support from fewer sources than other groups of respondents. Universities were a key source of support for early years applicants (often advising them during their applications) as applications tend to be made directly to institutions; and thus, for many, their only source of help and advice (Section 4.1.1).
- Those considering or applying for early years were significantly less likely than others to have received information about study options. Interviewees considering early years training felt that there was less information available about their training option and that the main information sources were more focused on teaching older age groups. They were also less likely to have received information about the financial support available, help making an application for a course, chance to talk to a newly qualified teacher (NQT) or help with accessing school-based experience. However they were relatively more likely than others to have received training and support with the skills test (something that was ranked as more useful by the early years group than those opting for other ITT, Section 4.2.1).
- Interviewees recognised that the early years sector had undergone a number of changes which led to confusion. They felt that the early years teacher status needed to be better promoted as schools and nurseries (as the employers who could facilitate training) were not necessarily familiar with it, and those considering applying to early years ITT were themselves no longer confident in their understanding of what a qualification would mean in practice and what eligibility criteria they would now have to meet (Section 4.3).

4.1 Sources of support

4.1.1 Survey findings

Respondents to the online survey were asked whether they received any help and support during their decision making about teacher training, which types of help and support they received (from a given list) and who or where did they get this support from.

Table 4.1: Whether received any support or advice during decision making about ITT

	Received some support	Received no support**	Base (N)
Gender*			
Male	79.7	20.3	734
Female	70.9	29.1	276
Ethnicity			
White	71.3	28.7	794
BME	77.9	22.1	222
Age*			
16-24	79.9	20.1	269
25-34	71.7	28.3	314
35+	69.5	30.5	417
Career			
In early career	74.8	25.2	456
Career in education	74.7	25.3	146
Career elsewhere	70.7	29.3	386
Family*			
No caring responsibilities	75.7	24.3	547
Caring responsibilities with partner	67.4	32.6	347
Caring responsibilities without partner	74.8	25.2	107
Early years			
Early years	70.6	29.4	343
Non-early years	74.0	26.0	681
Applicant type*			
Applicant	80.0	20.0	695
Pending	58.0	42.0	205
Lost	57.3	42.7	124
All	72.9	27.1	1024

Source: IES survey, 2015. Base: All respondents. * Denotes statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$), **none of the types of support given or no 'other' type of support provided in open text.

More than a quarter (27%) said they received none of the support types listed. This is likely to reflect a combination of factors: a) awareness of support; b) perceived (or real) access and availability of support; c) inclination (whether an individual felt they wanted or needed help and support); and d) responsiveness of the sources of support, ie an individual may have sought support but was not given it. It is important to note that not all individuals will have access to all these channels of support. For example the dedicated advisory service Premier Plus is targeted towards those considering teaching in secondary schools and in shortage subjects and have (or are predicted to get) at least a 2:2 degree classification; and the recruitment process for early years ITT differs from other ITT in that individuals will not normally register with the Get Into Teaching website nor use UCAS for application.

Those significantly less likely to have received any of the types of help and support noted in the survey were: female, older (particularly those aged 35 and older), had caring responsibilities and a partner, and were either still thinking about applying or already Lost to the customer journey at the time of the survey. There was no significant difference in the likelihood of receiving support between those who considered and/or applied for early years and those who didn't.

However, most commonly respondents reported receiving between one and three different types of support (50%). Those reporting at least one form of support were asked who provided this, and most commonly this was received from government websites such as Get Into Teaching (53%).

Use of the Get Into Teaching website

Analysis suggests that across all respondents approximately two in five (39%²³) had been supported by government websites and this was most likely to be the Get Into Teaching website.

Respondents who had not used the Get Into Teaching website were asked why. Most commonly this was because they were not aware of the site's existence followed by not needing to use the site because they gained the information they needed from other sources (either directly from their chosen university or training provider, or from UCAS, or even from another site or from their Local Authority) or felt they already had a good knowledge of the sector. However other reasons given were: they didn't have time to use it, or they didn't think it would cover the options they were interested in (eg early years ITT),

Survey respondents were asked separately and much earlier on in the questionnaire whether they had ever registered an interest in ITT or early years ITT with the Get Into Teaching website. It was found that overall 39% had reported that they had registered with the Get Into Teaching website and exactly the same proportion 39% said they hadn't; but a further 22% were unsure whether they had or not (as some individuals may well have been considering and researching ITT for several years and found it hard to remember registering or not). Thus 62% had not used the website or were unsure if they had²⁴.

Further analysis of the online survey data showed that there was no real difference between those who became Lost to the customer journey or not in whether they said they positively remembered registering with the website; but those Lost and still considering making an application for ITT were more uncertain about whether they

²³ This is calculated as 53.2% of the 72.9% receiving support.

²⁴ Given the nature of the samples, it was not possible to link survey responses to sample information and thus verify whether individuals had actually registered with Get Into Teaching.

had registered. However those considering early years programmes were significantly less likely to register with Get Into Teaching (just 28%). Those also less likely to have registered were: females (this holds true even when accounting for the early years bias), younger individuals, those in their early careers, and those not considering School Direct options. As would be expected those positively remembering registering with the Get Into Teaching website were much more likely to feel they gained support from government websites (of which Get Into Teaching is one), than those who didn't register (68% and 40% respectively).

Table 4.2: Whether registered an interest in ITT with the Get Into Teaching Website (%)

	Yes	No	Unsure	Base (N)
Gender*				
Male	50.2	27.5	22.2	207
Female	35.5	42.2	22.3	816
Ethnicity				
White	37.1	40.8	22.1	806
BME	44.8	32.3	22.9	223
Age*				
16-24	30.9	50.7	18.4	272
25-34	39.9	34.1	26.0	323
35+	42.6	34.7	22.7	418
Career*				
In early career	34.4	45.2	20.3	462
Career in education	41.9	34.5	23.6	148
Career elsewhere	43.2	32.7	24.0	391
Family				
No caring responsibilities	37.1	39.0	23.9	556
Caring responsibilities with partner	43.1	37.4	19.5	348
Caring responsibilities without partner	37.0	38.9	24.1	108
Early years*				
Early years sub-sample	28.1	50.4	21.4	345
Non-early years	43.8	33.4	22.8	692
Applicant type*				
Applicant	39.2	42.1	18.7	701
Pending	36.4	31.6	32.1	209
Lost	38.6	34.6	26.8	127
Route considered*				
School Direct (fee or salaried)	47.5	28.6	23.9	518
Not School Direct	29.7	49.5	20.8	519

	Yes	No	Unsure	Base (N)
All	38.6	39.1	22.4	1037

Source: IES survey, 2015. Base: All respondents. * Denotes statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$).

Other sources of help

Other common sources of help and support during decision making about ITT included universities (used by 37% of respondents), the UCAS website (34%), and family/friends (29%). Respondents less commonly gained support and/or advice from a school, the Teaching Line, a dedicated advisory service or a current trainee. Other sources of support noted included: colleges/other training providers, former tutors, formal careers services, teaching roadshow/job-fair type events, and their current employer (which may or may not be a school).

Those who had considered or applied for early years programmes tended to receive support from fewer sources than other groups of respondents, 80% had received support from two or fewer different types of sources. Those considering or applying for early years programmes were significantly less likely than others to have received help from government websites, UCAS (which reflects the different application arrangements for most early years programmes as the majority of early years ITT providers do not use UCAS for recruitment on to their courses), family and friends, current or recently qualified teachers or current trainees, schools, and advisory services (teaching line and Premier Plus, reflecting the focus of these services). However they were relatively more likely than others to have received help from a university, and this was the most commonly reported source of support for early years applicants and for many their only source of help and advice.

Table 4.3: Sources of support received during decision making about ITT – differences by whether considered early years programmes or not

	All %	Early years %	Non early years %
From government websites (NCTL, gov.uk, Get Into Teaching etc.)*	53.2	39.4	59.8
University*	37.1	55.1	28.5
From the UCAS Teacher Training website*	34.1	13.6	43.8
Family/friends*	28.6	20.8	32.3
Current teacher/NQT*	21.2	8.9	27.1
School*	16.7	9.7	20.0

From the Teaching Line*	13	5.1	16.8
From a dedicated advisory service (eg Premier Plus Recruitment Advisers)*	11.4	1.3	16.2
From Teach First *	8.8	4.2	10.9
Current teacher trainee*	8.8	4.2	10.9
Other	7.7	9.7	8.7
Base (N)	731	236	494

Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents who reported receiving support; multiple response question so sum may \neq 100%; * indicates statistically significant difference

Further analysis of the online survey data finds some statistically significant differences in the access to/or take up of information and support mechanisms from different sources:

- Younger individuals (those aged 16 to 24) received support from more different sources than those aged 25 to 34 followed by those aged 35 and over. They were also significantly more likely than older individuals to have received support from universities, UCAS, family and friends, current teachers/NQTs, schools and current teacher trainees. However older individuals were significantly more likely than their younger peers to have received support from the Teaching Line.
- Male respondents received support from more different sources than females (as noted above women were less likely to have received any support). Males were also more likely than female respondents to report receiving information from sources such as: government websites (60%), the UCAS teacher training website (41%), and Teach First (13%). More than twice as many males as females reported receiving support from the Teaching Line (24%), and a dedicated advisory service such as Premier Plus (23%). Females were however relatively more likely to receive support from a university (42%). It should be noted that gender differences could in part be attributed to the different propensity of males and females in the survey to have applied for and considered ITT rather than early years ITT (whilst 40% of females considered or applied for early years ITT just 9% of males did so). Removing the effect of the early years sub-sample (and their differing access to some sources of support) and focusing on those who neither considered nor applied to early years ITT: women were more likely to get help from a university but less likely to receive support from the Teaching Line or a dedicated advisory service. These latter patterns are likely to be driven by subject choice (see Chapter 3, as males are more likely to consider secondary specialisms supported by the dedicated advisory services such as maths, physics and computing).
- Those from a Black and minority ethnic background (particularly those identifying as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British) received support from fewer sources

than those from white backgrounds. White individuals were much more likely to have received support from a university or current teacher/newly qualified teacher (41% and 25%) compared with those from a Black and minority ethnic background (24% and 10% respectively)

- Respondents who were in their early career (including current students and recent graduates) received support from more sources than those who were already working in the education sector (without having trained as a teacher), followed by those who were changing from an existing career outside of education. Early career respondents were significantly more likely than others to have received support from: a university (47%), the UCAS Teacher Training website (43%), family or friends (37%), a current teacher or newly qualified teacher (27%), or a school (23%). This reflects the likely improved access to some of these sources as they will be much closer to and more familiar with universities, students and graduates, and UCAS; and also reflects their younger age profile. Whereas career changers were more likely than other groups to report using the Teaching Line (20%) or a dedicated advisory service such as Premier Plus (16%). Individuals looking to progress from within the education sector were the least likely to receive support from a dedicated advisory service such as Premier Plus. These patterns are likely to reflect respondents ages and access to certain forms of support.
- Respondents who did not have caring responsibilities received support from more sources than both those with caring responsibilities with a partner and single parents. Respondents who had no caring responsibilities were more likely than those with caring responsibilities to receive support from the UCAS Teacher Training website (40%), family or friends (36%), a current teacher or newly qualified teacher (27%), a school (20%) or a current teacher trainee (11.5%). Again these patterns are likely to reflect respondents ages.
- The targeted nature of some support can be seen when looking at the relationship between scholarship eligibility and source of support. Of those who were eligible for a scholarship with a specialism in mathematics, physics, chemistry or computing, 31% reported receiving support from a dedicated advisory service such as Premier Plus; compared with 7% of those who were ineligible for these scholarships. The latter group were much more likely to receive support from a university (40%, compared with 22% of those eligible for scholarships).

4.1.2 Interview findings

Interviewees and focus group participants were asked to describe where they had looked for advice and information, and which sources they had found useful and why.

Online resources

For most interviewees (reflecting the online survey findings), online search was a major part of their initial search strategy, although not necessarily the clearest or most helpful. While many interviewees agreed that there was a lot of information available online, it was often felt to be spread across many different websites (a mix of formal online government or sector facilitated resources and informal, peer group resources), and the process of navigating and sifting through this was time consuming and difficult. One interviewee reported that she:

“felt like a detective who had to bring together evidence from all over the place”

Career changer, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications), PGCE primary

And another noted:

“it's vast, all of the information, it's just vast”

Career changer, pending, PGCE EY and primary

Government and official teaching training websites, such as the DfE websites (including Get Into Teaching see below), UCAS, and Teach First, were often described as useful but not able to answer all the questions that individuals had. One interviewee commented how one government website containing early years information was a good starting point for research but mostly just listed courses with not much linking. Another interviewee commented on the SCITT website that it did not have much information and just some contact details. Some interviewees reported finding the Student Finance website useful but one individual found it ‘difficult to use and unprofessional’

Some found university websites to be more helpful and found information relevant to them on funding, qualifications required and different training options. One interviewee commented that the university websites often had better optimisation for mobile phones. Other interviewees used sector websites to find information. These included teaching recruitment websites, teaching resources websites, nursery based websites, education websites and publications such as the Teachers’ Standards or Nursery World.

While interviewees may have reported that official teaching and government websites could be difficult to navigate and leave them with questions unanswered, there were also some quite positive comments regarding the services associated with the Get Into Teaching website.

Online forums, such as The Student Room or those on tes.co.uk, were used by several interviewees to find out more about what it was like to be a teacher and what the training was like by someone who was going through it at the time. It was felt that

the first-hand accounts on forums provided a more honest, ‘warts and all’ picture but that they could be a little negative. A few interviewees found online advisers and webchats very helpful (whereas experiences of telephone information lines were mixed with some feeling they didn’t receive clear answers to their questions).

Clearly individuals shopped around and had different preferences for which best suited their needs and thus different experiences with online resources. The feedback highlighted a need for self-service information retrieval but with the potential for follow-up to answer more specific questions or help them get started. The interviews also indicated the need for bringing information together in one place. Indeed several interviewees commented that they would have liked one central resource providing an overview of the information:

“I was looking for a website that summarised all the different routes so that you could almost sort of compare them, and see what it was all about. I seem to remember that being very difficult to find.”

Career changer, Lost (due to financial and childcare concerns), HEI-led, SCITT, School Direct, Teach First, primary

Babs

Babs graduated one year ago with a Geography degree and has since then been combining temp work with gaining experience in primary schools. She first considered teaching whilst in her final years at high school after helping in a summer school for talented primary school children in years 6 and 7. Then at university she volunteered one day a week in a secondary school for ten weeks maintaining her interest in teaching and finding out more about it.

To find out about teaching she spoke to teachers at the schools she volunteered at, looked at websites for courses, universities and UCAS, and looked on forums such as The Student Room. She found talking to teachers the most helpful and found The Student Room forum to be quite negative. She considered both HEI-led ITT and SCITT routes and wanted a PGCE qualification as she felt ‘it covers all bases’. She could not apply for salaried routes as she found they required three years’ work experience. She also wanted to stay local to be with her partner which limited her choices.

Eventually she applied for university-based courses and SCITTs. A teacher where she worked gave her advice on writing a personal statement. She looked at school websites and OFSTED reports to choose schools that didn’t have top ratings because she felt a challenging environment would be more rewarding as she could have a greater potential to have an impact.

She rejected one offer from a school and one from a university course because of negative impressions at the interviews, and was rejected by one SCITT scheme so her application moved on to Apply 2²⁵. She then accepted an offer from another institution which she liked at interview and whose course included specialising by key stage. She was glad that she rejected her first set of institution choices and went on to Apply 2. She felt she was not prepared for how difficult it would be and the level of rejection, but was glad that she kept going.

Early career, applicant, PGCE, SCITT, primary

The Get Into Teaching website and Premier Plus recruitment advisers

Exploring experiences of the Get Into Teaching website with interviewees found that opinions varied greatly. Often individuals found it hard to recall one particular website as they had looked at many during their online search and were unable to remember one particular resource standing out. It is not possible to ascertain whether this was due to not having visited the Get Into Teaching website or whether it had not 'stood out' as a unique resource. This reflects the findings of the survey above where a substantial minority were unsure whether they had registered with the Get Into Teaching website or not.

Of the interviewees who were aware of the Get Into Teaching website, many reported registering with the site. The main reason cited for registering was to gain access to more information and take full advantage of opportunities available such as speaking to an adviser or to get regular updates to remind them during the year.

Many interviewees were positive about Get Into Teaching. The positive features mentioned included: perceived impartiality (one interviewee felt that it had less of an agenda than training providers' websites); that it was comprehensive (another said it gave them 'everything I needed to know'); and it was clear and easy to use.

"From what I remember it was quite good as far as giving me, like, *facts* about what it's like to be a teacher, or like, the kind of admin side of becoming a teacher... I guess it didn't really push an opinion, either upon me or... it didn't have a secret agenda. Because obviously if you go to a university's website about their PGCE, they're pushing why their PGCE is better than everybody else's, whereas Get Into Teaching didn't really have that, it was kind of just, this is teaching, this is what it is, this is what you get"

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

²⁵ Apply 2 is a second round of applications for ITT that opens in January through UCAS, although a candidate can enter Apply 2 later than this. It can be used where an applicant has been unsuccessful, withdrawn from their choices, or declined their offer(s)

Whilst some felt it provided them with everything they needed to know, others felt it was a good starting point (one user said that it seemed like a *'good first step'*) or was perhaps more useful further into the customer journey. One user noted they had found the site more useful once they had decided to go into teacher training than when they were first considering it. The site appeared to be useful at different points in the customer journey.

Some of the information that individuals accessed or hoped to find on the site included that focused on: funding (bursaries and scholarships), the skills test, types of teaching (including early years, one interviewee found out about early years through the site and another said they had liked the videos of different people and their different experiences), getting school experience, how to apply and application deadlines. Users also reported finding out about open days and roadshows via the email list. Users were also positive about the range of features and further resources accessed through the Get into Teaching website including the email mailing list, road shows, registering for school experience, Premier Plus recruitment advisers, open days, the telephone line and the questionnaire for choosing a route. Also the social media opportunities such as the Twitter account (to provide prompt answers to questions) and Facebook feeds.

The Premier Plus service was highlighted as an especially helpful resource although relatively few of the interviewees and focus group participants had accessed this resource. Help provided by this service was described as 'stand out', 'fantastic' and 'the best', and included information on funding, making an application (and help with making an application), writing a personal statement, application dates, addressing concerns and with advisers even doing further research to answer questions. Just one interviewee reported a negative experience where she felt her adviser was generally negative.

Not all users of the Get Into Teaching website were positive about it²⁶. Some interviewees had not found the website to be useful and therefore had sought information elsewhere, for example direct from training providers; another described it as the best of a bad bunch. Further criticisms of the Get Into Teaching website was that it presented a great deal of information but it was complicated to use and hard to navigate. One interviewee reported that they were constantly being directed to external websites and ended up with a lot of open tabs and feeling confused. Other criticisms of the site were that it: had not answered their questions; contained jargon; was not concise; and was not so good for information about processes. Some interviewees complained that it was limited in the experiences it described and that information was focused more on primary and secondary phases and graduates

²⁶ It should be noted that the Get into Teaching website was updated during this research, so findings on the content and utility should be considered as historical.

undertaking PGCEs; and with early years feeling like an afterthought. Another user felt that they knew more than the advisers on the telephone line accessed via the site.

Margot

Margot has an undergraduate degree and a master's in Psychology with Distinction. During her studies she took modules on child development and her dissertation was focused on 5-8 year olds. She prefers early years as she feels it is an important time for child development and a time when you can have an impact and build a foundation for learning. She considered both university-based and nursery-based ITT options. Initially, she preferred nursery-based options as these would be paid but she found out that she would need six months experience in a nursery to apply and felt it was too late for her to get this.

She approached several nurseries about working with them and studying for an early years qualification but many had not heard of early years ITT and EYTS or could only offer a position for a few months because she was unqualified. She looked for information about training options on the government website but felt that they struggled to advise her: she used a webchat function on the early years webpage but was told that they only knew about primary and secondary and gave her a number to call. She did not call the number but found details of a course at a nearby higher education institution. She approached them and received very helpful advice from a lecturer on the course.

She applied directly to the institution and found that straightforward. She was offered a place with paid tuition fees and a £4,000 bursary as she had a 2:1 despite having a master's degree.

She feels that early years training is treated like an extra add on to the ITT landscape with less information available and less options, for example part-time or different start dates in the year. She feels it should be promoted more as not many people or nurseries know about it. Raising awareness is important as early years has changed a lot over the last few years from early years professional status to early years teacher status.

Early career, applicant, early years ITT

Events

Road shows and open days were considered by interviewees as quite useful in that they provided opportunities to speak to training providers including School Direct and SCITT schools and also current or newly qualified teachers. Individuals could talk through different training options and ask about workload, course content or aspects

of ITT they had particular concerns about. However, only some interviewees had attended such events, and one interviewee commented that training providers who attended were not always that helpful and there were large queues to speak to teachers. Another interviewee reported attending a two day introduction to teaching course where they heard talks and observed a lesson which they found very useful and inspiring. Other interviewees talked about attending talks by training providers, course directors or careers services at their university, or seeing adverts for teaching programmes more generally.

Advice from others

Another important source of information reported by many of the interviewees was speaking to someone in the sector, and many people did this. This reflects the findings of the survey. Advisers here included friends, family, partners, acquaintances or colleagues. Speaking to teachers was particularly useful for learning about syllabuses, workloads, gaining a pragmatic view of the realities of teaching, as well as general advice (again key things of concern for potential initial teacher trainees).

“I spent a year in a primary school and I saw a teacher there, I worked very closely with her... that teacher really inspired me... she kind of encouraged me as well: go for it! ... [It was] just the way she got on with the children, the way they wanted to do the best for her - it seemed to be specifically for her, not all teachers. She had a sense of fun, and discipline as well, and explained things really well”

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult),
School Direct primary

However, it was noted that those who had graduated recently or were currently training were the most helpful sources of advice, as training options and requirements had often changed and teachers were not always aware of the latest information, especially for early years training.

“Things have changed so much that they don't understand what we're going through now”

Career changer within education, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications (Maths GCSE), failed skills test, and lack of confidence),
School Direct and PGCE, secondary

A couple of interviewees also reported that getting experience in a school was particularly valuable in confirming which phase/age group best suited them and with gaining confidence (about their ability to cope with teaching). Some felt that speaking to someone face to face was more useful than a website as it gave a more balanced view.

Training providers and careers/employment services

Another key approach used by many of the interviewees was speaking to a training provider – universities or schools. Most of those who used this approach reported a positive experience with providers responding promptly, and able to answer specific queries about funding and course structure and contact time. Where interviewees were able to speak to course leaders or the course director, this was considered particularly valuable as they were able to answer many of their questions and give advice. However, it was acknowledged that lecturers and staff would not have time to do this for everyone. There were also cases where interviewees had reported receiving inappropriate or inaccurate advice, or being directed to the website after directly contacting an institution.

Some interviewees also tried to find information through non-specialist sources such as their local job centre, university careers services or fairs, and council websites. A couple of interviewees reported finding little information or support at their job centre or from their local careers development officer. General careers advisers at universities were also not found to be that useful for information about teaching.

Further resources

Most interviewees did not report being aware of sources of information that they then did not or could not use. The exception here were ‘information lines’ or telephone advice lines. Several interviewees reported being aware of these helplines but had not used them either because: they didn’t need to, as they had obtained information from another source; or because they felt they couldn’t be helped as their query was too specific. An example of the latter is seeking feedback whether (older) age had a bearing on unsuccessful interviews. Some interviewees felt confident that they had used all available sources. Others felt they didn’t need additional sources as they: had been proactive (for example, arranging to speak to newly qualified teachers themselves); were already knowledgeable; and had insight from friends who were teachers.

4.2 What types of information and support did customers receive?

4.2.1 Survey findings

The online survey found that almost three quarters (73%) of respondents received at least one of the listed forms of support during their decision making about teacher training. Most commonly respondents reported receiving advice about study options and routes into teaching (48%), advice about which option would suit them (31%), and about the financial support available (30%). It also appeared more common for

respondents to have (or take up) opportunities to talk to providers (24%) than to newly qualified teachers (16%). Approximately one in five gained help to access school-based experience (19%) and help making their ITT application (19%); whereas far fewer had help with the skills test (14%), something that ranked quite highly among the concerns of applicants/those considering applying and also Lost applicants (see Chapter 5). Relatively few reported receiving information and advice about classroom management (6%), applying for financial support (7%) or general support to boost their confidence (8%).

The ‘other’ support received tended to describe sources of support rather than content or focus of support (eg support from training providers, personal advisers supporting the Premier Plus service, current employers, and extended peer networks/family).

Differences in the types of support received:

Those who had considered or applied for early years programmes were significantly less likely than others to have received information about study options, information about the financial support available, help making an application for a course, chance to talk to a newly qualified teacher (NQT) or help with accessing school-based experience or information about Subject Knowledge Enhancement programmes (which are not applicable to early years specialists). However they were relatively more likely than others to have received training and support with the skills test.

Table 4.4: Support received during decision making about ITT

	All %	Early years %	Non early years %
Information about study options/routes into teaching*	47.9	42.6	50.7
Advice about which option/route would suit me best	30.9	30.0	31.3
Information about the financial support available*	30.0	25.4	32.3
The opportunity to talk to an ITT provider (school or university)	23.6	22.4	24.2
Help with accessing school based experience*	18.8	9.6	23.5
Help with making an application for a course*	18.8	12.5	21.9
Chance to talk to a newly qualified teacher/gain real feedback about teacher training*	15.6	10.2	18.4
Training/support with the skills test*	13.6	17.8	11.5
Information about Subject Knowledge Enhancement programmes/courses*	9.1	4.4	11.5
Help to boost my confidence	7.8	8.5	7.5

	All %	Early years %	Non early years %
Help with making an application for financial support (scholarship/bursary/student loan)*	7.3	5.2	8.4
Information and advice about classroom management (including managing children's behaviour)	6.0	4.1	6.9
Other	1.4	0.6	1.8
None of the above	27.1	29.4	26.0
Base (N)	1,024	343	681

Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents; multiple response question so sum may \neq 100%;* indicates statistically significant difference

Those Lost to the customer journey were less likely than those that remain within the pipeline (ie applicants/those considering applying) to have received a number of key support mechanisms, including: information about study options/routes into teaching; information about financial support; help with making an application; and opportunities to talk to teacher training providers or newly qualified teachers. This may reflect that they were already Lost to the pipeline before they needed to seek support but could suggest that a lack of support led to their withdrawal. Looking only at the group of respondents who reported receiving at least one type of support, those Lost respondents were still significantly less likely to receive information about the financial support available or to have an opportunity to talk to a provider.

Analysis of the online survey data identified further statistically significant differences in overall access to or take up of information and support mechanisms:

- Males received more types of support than females. More specifically, females were less likely than males to report receiving: information about study options/routes into teaching; which option/route would best suit them; information about financial support; chances to talk to a newly qualified teacher/gain real feedback about teacher training; help with accessing school-based experience; and information and advice about classroom management. Females however were more likely than males to report receiving assistance with the skills test. Again these patterns are likely to be influenced by the greater propensity of females to have applied and considered ITT rather than early years ITT. Removing the effect of the early years sub-sample (and their differing access to some sources of support) and focusing on those who neither considered nor applied to early years ITT most of these patterns still hold true. Males were still more likely to get information about study options, access school based experience, talk to a newly qualified teacher and get information about classroom management. However although females in this group were relatively more likely than males to get help with the skills test, the difference is no longer significant.

- Those in the 16-24 age group received a greater number of support types than those in the 25-34 and 35 and over age groups. More specifically younger aged respondents were more likely to have received information about study routes, help making an application for a course, help with accessing school based experience, support with the skills test, the chance to talk to newly qualified teachers, and help to boost confidence.
- Respondents from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely than white respondents to report receiving support with the skills test, but were less likely to report having had an opportunity to talk to an ITT provider.
- Those who were in their early career, received the greatest number of types of support (reflecting age patterns), followed by those looking to progress within the education sector; and those who were looking to change from a different career path into teacher received the least types. Early career individuals (including full-time students/recent graduates) were the most likely to have received help with making an application for a course, and chance to talk to a newly qualified teacher/gain real feedback about teacher training. Those who had followed a previous career in teaching were the most likely group to have received help with the skills test, but the least likely to have received support in accessing school based experience (possibly due to a lack of need) or help in applying for a course.
- Respondents with no caring responsibilities reported receiving more types of support than both those with caring responsibilities with a partner and those with caring responsibilities without a partner; particularly help making an application for a course, accessing school based experience and talking to training providers and newly qualified teachers. Again these findings are likely to reflect age patterns.
- Respondents who were eligible for a scholarship with specialisms in mathematics, physics, chemistry or computing were more likely to access: information about study routes into teaching (58%), information about financial support available (38%), help with accessing school based experience (30%), chances to talk to a newly qualified teacher or gain real feedback about teacher training (22%), information about Subject Knowledge Enhancement programmes (17%) and 'other' sources of information (4%). This is likely to reflect the targeted support offered to these individuals.

Perceived utility of support

The online survey not only explored which types of support individuals received but also which they found most helpful. Information about study options/routes into teaching was by far the most valued support mechanism offered (and as noted above, was the support most commonly received). Other types of support ranked

highly were: tailored advice (which options would suit them best), information about financial support, and the opportunity to talk to a provider. In the discussion of career decision making in Chapter 1, it was seen that people give more weight to information from people they know and undervalue objective advice.

Focusing on those who considered or applied for an early years programme, the most highly ranked types of support were also information about study options and routes into teaching, advice about most suitable options, and information about the financial support available. This group however appeared to rank help with the skills test more highly than the cohort overall but ranked help accessing school based experience lower than the cohort overall.

Further analysis of the survey identified:

- Respondents at different points in their professional careers had differing preferences as to which of the listed support mechanisms they believed to be most valuable. Early career graduates most valued: help with making an application for a course, and a chance to talk to a newly qualified teacher/gain real feedback about teacher training. Whereas those already working in the education sectors found training and support with the skills test the most useful support. Career changers placed the least value on support to boost their confidence compared with other groups.
- Males were more likely than female respondents to find useful: information about study options and routes into teaching, and help with accessing school based experience.
- Those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds compared to respondents from white backgrounds were more likely to value: training or support with the skills test, help with making an application for financial support such as scholarships, bursaries or students loans, and information about Subject Knowledge Enhancement programmes or courses.
- Respondents with no caring responsibilities placed more value on help with accessing school based experience compared with other respondents. Where respondents are caring for a child, they may have more opportunity to interact with or access schools.

4.3 Support needs

Considering the customer journey to ITT, interview participants were asked what questions they had when first finding out about ITT and considering teaching as a career. These are the aspects individuals needed to research and gain help with. Individuals reported a very broad spectrum of questions ranging from more general queries such as what teaching would actually be like and what age group might be suitable for them to teach, to more specific queries regarding whether individual qualifications held were valid or about the ratio of taught time to practical experience for a specific course or training option. In the main, interviewees had multiple questions they needed to research rather than just one thing they need to know to help them with their decisions as illustrated by this older interviewee:

“You have quite a few questions that arise, and you start to think about all these things, because it's easier when you're 18, 20 years old and you've got no kids and you're living with your parents and all that sort of thing, it's much easier. But when you've got a life and a family and you've got to meet ends... Where would I have to study? Would I have to go somewhere and stay there and do my training? Would I be able to combine theory and at the same time do practical things? I know there was funding as well, how would that work, would I be able to survive on that funding... I couldn't afford to be three years in training because I've got to look after my family... I have 3 children. Also what are the real possibilities of work after?”

Early career, Lost (lack of eligible qualifications), School Direct secondary

However the questions broadly clustered into 7 themes which are detailed below. Interviewees and survey respondents were also asked: what additional support they would have liked or could have made a difference to them during their decision making about ITT; and, reflecting on their experiences, what information did they wish they had known at the beginning of their journey. Again the issues discussed tended to map against these 7 key areas. It is important to note that these are based on individuals' own experiences and needs and do not necessarily indicate gaps in information or support but gaps in the visibility, accessibility and suitability of provision. The kinds of help that individuals need may be available but they are unaware of it – suggesting areas for increased marketing and reach of support arrangements.

1: Overview (and suitability) of training options

The interviews found that, understandably, a substantial proportion of initial questions that individuals had when thinking about ITT related to understanding the different training options leading into teaching, the qualifications the different options could lead to, and which of these pathways would best suit them. Some interviewees

found it difficult trying to find relevant information among all the sources and others found it difficult finding time to research options (particularly when working full-time and looking after a child).

“I wanted to know what the different routes were like and which would be most suitable? I was interested to know, for me, what be more suitable: doing it through a PGCE in a university, or doing it more hands-on in a school-direct course where you are learning on the job”

Early career, applicant, School Direct primary maths

“I looked at "How could I get in?"... I'm not young, I'd be a very mature candidate [50+]. When I was at university, PGCE was the only really route in, so I started by looking to see if this is still what you would do, and how much it would cost”

Career changer, Lost (concerns about stability of the teaching sector, and working conditions of teachers), School Direct/SCITT secondary STEM

“I researched the range of courses ... BA in education, PGCE, etc. My main consideration was do they all offer same qualification at the end?. It was really important to me that no matter what route I was doing, the same stuff would be covered and it would be the same qualification at the end”

Early career, applicant, Primary School Direct

Interviewees also had questions around possible age groups to teach. Here they wanted to know which training options and qualifications would allow them to work with which ages and which age group would they be most suited to working with. This was an especially important question for those considering either early years teacher status or a primary PGCE that would lead to qualified teacher status, as this could affect whether they would be able to work in schools or whether their career would be more nursery based (see Chapter 3). A concern raised by those considering applying to early years ITT was that they felt qualifications and requirements for early years had changed a lot recently so that some were no longer confident in their understanding of what a qualification would mean in practice and what eligibility criteria they would now have to meet.

Feedback from the survey and interviews indicated that potential ITT candidates would have appreciated a clear set of information about the different training routes; and more (high quality) guidance on which pathways to choose. Interviewees felt that it would have been helpful to have just one place where the different options were laid out, perhaps with diagrams of the different pathways and allowing comparisons; to have information about options (including advertising and promotion) earlier in the academic year; and for more tailored support to identify and talk through what would be suitable for individuals. One interviewee wanted more

advice and support about the suitability of options for those considering changing careers later in life; and that career changers or those from wider backgrounds could feel somewhat atypical, marginalised (or at worst alienated) by the information and support available.

When thinking about what they wished they had known about at the beginning of their customer journey, interviewees felt they would have liked a better understanding of the different training options so they could focus their attention and not waste time and effort on unsuitable options. Additional information and support here could include providing details of the benefits of individual training options and how they fit with different career goals.

2: Eligibility requirements

Following on from questions about available routes, key questions when first thinking about ITT surrounded entry requirements and the eligibility criteria for each option.

Several respondents voiced concerns about what was involved in the skills tests and felt they would have liked more information about the nature of the tests and rules around the number of attempts that can be made. They also had concerns around the GCSE requirements, particularly for the early years teaching programmes that require GCSEs in maths, English and science (see Chapter 5). Some had very specific questions about their own potential eligibility such as: whether an individual who already had teaching qualifications but was not currently working could join a newly qualified teacher cohort; the opportunities for existing teachers to retrain (and refocus their specialism); or the options for individuals who do not hold a degree or mathematics GCSE. Several interviewees had encountered difficulties or uncertainty regarding the eligibility/equivalency of their qualifications, for example whether adult numeracy diploma or Learn Direct qualifications were deemed equivalent to a GCSE.

More generally individuals wanted clear guidance on the criteria for eligibility and wanted advice about the skills test, support getting school based experience, and support with their subject knowledge (and what was involved in subject knowledge enhancement courses).

Jenny

Jenny had always planned to enter primary school teaching after her undergraduate course in English. However, when she began her research prior to applying and looked into primary PGCE, she found that lacking a maths GCSE meant she wouldn't be able to get onto this course. She started looking at other courses to see if there was any other way to enter ITT without maths but found this was a major barrier. She noted that no training provider seriously considered her applications, despite the fact that when she took her Adult Numeracy diploma during college she

was told it would be viewed as equivalent to Maths GCSE in all contexts. Jenny did apply to any and all training providers in the local area that might formally consider people lacking maths, but found in practice her application was not considered.

She is planning to redo her Maths GCSE and apply again for Primary PGCE, in the same university where she had studied – and enjoyed – her undergraduate degree.

Early career, Lost (unplaced applicant), considered early years and primary

3: Content, nature and location of courses

Another prominent theme for individuals' initial research about ITT but also in terms of what support interviewees would have liked concerned the delivery, content and commitment required of specific courses or options. Here interviewees had questions about and wanted more information on the general content of the courses (eg whether they would be trained to meet the challenging elements of teaching), specific modules within a course, and the nature of the academic work involved. Interviewees wanted to know about ratios of taught time to practical experience, the commitment expected by employers when staff participated in ITT, and what kind of placements they would get with the training, for example, could they be placed in a private institution. There were questions around the structure of the course, the workload and particularly about the time commitment involved, and whether it would be possible to study part-time or flexibly to combine study with other work or caring commitments. They wanted to know about the range of training providers programmes available and, often, what was available locally to them; and others also explored rankings for courses and institutions.

“What being in a school was like, the training possibilities - how to train? That was about the extent of it ... more detailed information, such as what exactly a School Student does each day, what I would do each term, how many classes I would teach, what will the burden/hours be like, what skills I'm expected to have, how does the workload develop over the year, what's the employment commitment at the end of the year – any of that”

Career changer, applicant, salaried School Direct

“I needed to get my head around what was required in the training process. Everyone thinks that they know what it would be like to be a primary school teacher, because they have gone through it all themselves. People think of having a class of kids, having a wide range of subjects you have to teach, everyone really focuses on the delivery side of things, but that's about 20% of what the job is – planning and marking take up so much time, and that's so crucial to get it right. I don't think people are prepared enough, don't think enough about this aspect”

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

Reflecting back on their experiences, some interviewees noted that they would have benefited from more information about: how challenging the training would be; and the significant time commitment involved which could mean those with other commitments such as family or work may struggle. Interviewees recommended that those thinking about ITT should find out about course requirements and content by talking to NQTs and teachers with experience of the different pathways/routes to ITT.

4: Funding

One important area of enquiry that emerged throughout both the questions the interviewees had about training options and also about individual courses and providers was that of funding. Interviewees wanted to know what funding might be available to them, such as bursaries, scholarships or loans, and how they might be able to access these. They wanted to know: which funding was available for which routes/programme types; how they could keep earning during ITT (perhaps, for example, through salaried School Direct places and linked to questions around time commitment involved in ITT); and what were the eligibility requirements needed for different funding streams such as degree classifications, subject specialisms, or experience in schools. They felt they needed this information so that they could decide which options might be financially viable for them; and ideally wanted more financial support and funding options.

“I researched how to finance PGCE. It was my biggest concern so I looked into all the different routes.. School Direct, Teach first etc... my constant question was financial viability”

Early career, applicant, secondary business studies, university-led

Carole

At college, Carole did a BTEC in Health and Social Care and went on to receive a BA in Social Work (2:1 qualification).

When it came to researching how she would finance the ITT course, Carole found that the information was unclear and complex, claiming that ‘it was difficult to decipher who is entitled to what.’ She also could not find out exactly when the courses would run and what days she would have to attend the course. This was important for her because she needed to know how much paid work she could fit in whilst training. She was also worried about adding to her already large student debt, especially with the recently implemented tuition-fee increase. ‘It just worried me how much debt I would manage to put myself in’. As she was fully supporting herself, financing her teaching training was a real worry for Carole.

Ultimately, Carole didn’t progress very far at all with her application to teacher training as she was offered another job, which she now thoroughly enjoys.

Resources such as the UCAS website and Student Finance England website were found to be useful by some interviewees in providing information about loans and offered helpful features such as the 'student finance calculator' which could help to reassure individuals that they were not 'missing out' on their entitlements.

The interviews confirmed that although many felt they were able to find the information about finances they needed, some found the information about bursaries, loans and scholarships confusing. Indeed a small group experienced real challenges and so found it difficult to make decisions about ITT. Here interviewees noted difficulties in: knowing where to look for information about funding and finances; finding out about the availability of funding and what they might be eligible for (with contradictory, confusing and unclear information provided online); and navigating the complex array of scholarships, bursaries, loans and other financial support (and indeed in distinguishing differences between the sources of funding). These appeared particularly problematic for older individuals and career changers who felt the information that was provided tended to be tailored towards recent graduates rather than 'atypical' potential trainees.

Confusions around finances could leave individuals feeling unsure about how they would cope financially and could deter them from making an application. Similarly some individuals' presumed themselves to be ineligible for support due to their existing income, age etc and so decided not to continue with ITT. More advice about financial coping strategies and avoiding debt were suggested by some Lost individuals as a support mechanism that could encourage them to make an application for ITT.

One interviewee wanted a central source of information where they could compare and contrast the financial support available through different types of course and different training providers. Whereas others wanted more personal support to help them understand about potential financial support.

5: Realities of teaching

In the early stages of decision making about ITT, interviewees also had questions beyond the immediate scope of training and wanted to know what teaching was actually like to see if it was something they would be suited to. They wanted to know specifics such what the job involves, employment prospects, and what were the opportunities to progress and build a career in teaching. Here they wanted advice from educational professionals and current students. There were questions around what it was actually like in the classroom, classroom and behaviour management, dynamics and respect, syllabuses, and what it is like to teach children. There were

also questions about pay scales and salaries (for a range of different teachers not just NQTs in shortage subjects), and career progression. Some wanted to know about what was expected of NQTs and about work prospects after completing training or where their qualifications would allow them to teach, for example, Australia. Among more specific questions, was whether those who had retrained from other careers were happy or whether they missed their previous career.

Reflecting on their experiences, those who had considered or applied to early years programmes felt they had been unaware that the early years teacher status could lead to what they felt was a career with lower pay and less progression. Several also considered the early years teacher status to be 'new' and 'experimental' and so unfamiliar to schools and nurseries. Some interviewees felt that the early years training landscape had changed a lot in the past few years and were uncertain about what the early years teacher status would mean in practice and whether this would change again in the future. They were also uncertain as to what the status would mean for their career progression and its value to the employers they worked for.

"In terms of career development now, I'm not too sure what this EYTS is going to offer me, and the postgraduate one is going to offer me, because it's not really recognised as the equivalent as QTS or a PGCE, and I find that quite dismaying really. I'm glad I didn't pay for it"

Early career, applicant, PGCE EY

They felt the reality of early years teaching careers needed to be understood so that potential trainees could make properly informed decisions. One interviewee reported that she withdrew her application when she realised that the early years course would not give her qualified teacher status (QTS). However, others felt that being able to specialise in early years was more important to them and that the early years teacher status (EYTS) involved different skills than a primary teaching qualification and could draw upon skills acquired in other roles.

6: Application process

Individuals indicated that although initial research tended to focus on pathways and specific programmes, they also had some questions about the application process itself. Their questions about the application process could be more general, such as how much competition there was for different options or information about important dates and when to complete certain stages; or could require more specific, tailored and personal support such as help with writing a personal statement, application letter or CV, and information and advice about the interviews (interviewees found that interview requirements could differ substantially for different providers). One interviewee noted how this would have been particularly helpful as they had dyslexia and felt under pressure producing suitable application materials.

Another common question or support need was how to get experience in the classroom; an element which could help with deciding on a pathway, or contribute to strengthening an application or fulfilling a requirement.

“there was no resource to help me go and find the school experience placement. [...] I just didn’t really know where to start”

Career changer, Lost (SKE course cancelled and lack of clear information), secondary

Several interviewees spoke of the importance of school placements prior to application in helping them to understand how schools worked, what it was like to work with children of different ages, and to see first-hand that teaching can be a challenging profession. Interviewees recommended that those considering ITT get as much experience in schools (and nurseries) as possible.

The application process itself was clearly an area of concern and an aspect where individuals would appreciate support. Their feedback suggests they would have appreciated more information so that they could know what to expect and to help them prepare effectively; and also support and encouragement to help them persist with the process especially in the face of rejections.

Interviewees were asked to describe any support they had received with their application process and how helpful they found this support. Only a few interviewees who were Lost applicants (in that they didn’t make an application) talked about receiving support. However interviewees who went on to apply for an ITT programme were able to talk about the support they actually received with the process. They received help writing their personal statements, most commonly help came from someone in the teaching profession whether this was a friend or colleague, but also from Premier Plus advisers, former tutors and (in one instance) careers staff. Typically, they would be given pointers, such as demonstrating awareness of the challenges of teaching, and to target statements towards specific providers.

“[friends were] very generous in giving me time to look through it [personal statement] and giving me ideas about what they would be looking for.”

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

They also described receiving help with the application form and general encouragement, again often from current teachers and friends and family (often those already in the sector and/or had gone through the same situation). One example of help involved a tutor at college who helped with an application and in doing so was able to identify a gap in the applicant’s experience which they were then able to address. Another example provided was of a head teacher from the

local primary school who was really supportive and that this little bit of encouragement really helped the interviewee to continue with application to ITT.

It would appear that Premier Plus advisers were particularly helpful during the application process. Here interviewees described how the service had held their hand and guided them through the whole process, and how their adviser had kept them going through setbacks, when they were having difficulties and when they were considering dropping out. Among other things, Premier Plus recruitment advisers read and gave feedback on personal statements, talked applicants through the application stages, explained teaching in the UK, gave advice, and helped via email or phone conversation. Indeed, the role of support provided by Premier Plus recruitment advisers featured throughout various narratives in the information seeking and also the application phases, with interviewees describing seeking advice and guidance from their advisers not just while choosing a training option and completing an application but also throughout the application process as they interviewed for programmes and, where necessary, reconsidered options after initial rejections. Some interviewees reported being in regular weekly contact with their adviser throughout their journey. One interviewee noted how much better informed she felt about the application process to ITT as she had a Premier Plus adviser compared to a colleague who didn't have an adviser.

Other support received with the application process included: funding for a course to prepare for the skills test; granting annual leave to allow individuals to gain school-based experience; help to prepare for the interview; providing references or testimonials; and help to proof-read and check applications before submission.

Sean

Sean studied for a BSc in Product Design and then went into retail and visual merchandising, which he has done for several years. He is considering how he wants his career to progress, and is interested in teaching Design and Technology in secondary school. He hopes to share his passion and he finds the subject challenging and interesting. He mostly considered School Direct and SCITT routes because he preferred to 'just get in there and do it, and receive a salary'. He considered applying last year but delayed so that he could save up more money to fund his training. It helped that the Design and Technology bursary increased in this year.

He researched teaching through friends who were teachers, looking online and through the support of a Premier Plus adviser. He used and has registered with the Get Into Teaching website. He found it good for inspiring stories but found it less helpful for giving an overview of the application process or advice on personal statements. His Premier Plus recruitment adviser was very helpful and assisted him with his personal statement and explained about different routes into teaching and what teaching was like. He also attended open evenings where he could talk to School Direct and SCITT providers to see who offered his specialism (design and technology) and who might be a good fit.

He accepted a place with one SCITT after finding them to be positive and professional at interview and because they offered more support and training than others. He turned down his other offer.

Career changer, applicant, SCITT design and technology

7: Equivalency of overseas qualifications

Individuals who had completed previous qualifications in a country other than the UK often shared key concerns and questions when they started their journey to ITT. The foremost question was how their existing qualifications were valued in the UK; whether it was an existing teaching qualification gained elsewhere, for example, QTD from Australia and early years qualifications from Germany; or an undergraduate degree gained in Spain. Indeed several interviewees had encountered difficulties or uncertainty regarding the eligibility of qualifications they held. The other key concern was what was teaching in the UK like. Similar to those who were from the UK, those who qualified overseas also had questions about hours, workload, the skills teachers were expected to have, how the schools were run/administered, and what classes were like.

Interviewees therefore advised that those considering ITT understood the eligibility of qualifications gained overseas before making an application.

4.3.1 Preference for personal support

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was a preference for accessing information and support either face to face or by phone. Several interviewees wanted the opportunity to speak to people who had completed or were currently participating in different training options. Interviewees also wanted a well-informed phone line that they could call if they had specific questions, Others suggested workshops or face to face guidance sessions where they could talk through information and become more familiar with it.

“I would have loved it if there was a person I could phone”

Career changer, Lost (due to financial considerations), School Direct,
Primary

“Somebody reaching out and saying 'Would you like to find out more, can we send you something, we're having an open meeting in the city of London would you like to come and hear somebody talk about this? Rather than this computer interface, having an opportunity to meet up with some people because I certainly would have made the effort to attend an open day.’”

Career changer, Lost (due to ineligible qualifications and lack of support),
School Direct/SCITT secondary/primary

The personal support was felt to be particularly helpful for those less familiar with the school or university system and/or with less time available for researching the options, for example for older individuals, those working full-time and those educated outside of the UK. Some interviewees described trying to gain personal support - trying to speak to someone directly – and having negative experiences particularly with training providers.

Further discussion of potential ways to amplify the attraction of ITT and support people along their journey to ITT are discussed in Chapter 6.

5 Challenges and barriers

This chapter explores the potential challenges and barriers encountered by those considering or making the journey to ITT. It looks at key pressure points to see where in the journey people might drop-out and the reasons why. It also examines the relative strengths of challenges faced.

Chapter Summary

ITT findings

- Individuals can and do drop out all along the journey to ITT and there are a number of pressure points: initial fact finding and decision-making (research); gathering experience and evidence (getting prepared); the application process; and securing a place. Individuals need support at each of these pressure points (See Section 5.1).
- Drop-out from the customer journey is neither necessarily negative nor final. It can result from individuals making an informed decision before committing time and resources that teaching is not right for them at that stage in their life/career. Also many of those dropping out (as many as three in five) might consider ITT again in the future, perhaps if their circumstances change or perceived barriers are removed or reduced (Section 5.1).
- Some of those who drop-out may not have had the motivation and resources to finish the customer journey into a teaching role or perhaps the conviction and qualities looked for by the department. The danger is that some of those Lost could make effective teachers. Exploring the barriers and challenges encountered during the customer journey can help to identify areas that stakeholders, including the NCTL could tackle to enable more individuals to take up ITT (Section 5,1).
- It was rare for individuals to face no issues, challenges or barriers on their customer journey to ITT, and the majority of individuals faced a number of difficulties (especially as they moved further along the pathway to ITT). However it may only need one significant barrier to stop an individual from progressing (Section 5.2 and 5.3).
- Survey responses of those further along the customer journey (either having made an application and/or secured a place, or very close to making an application) indicated that they felt they faced a different set of key challenges to those that were Lost from the journey. This suggests that as individuals progress

towards ITT, different aspects about the process come into view and different worries emerge (Section 5.3).

- The first barrier faced by potential ITT candidates is fitting the course around their existing work, family and financial commitments, and this first hurdle is where many Lost applicants fall. Individuals really need to understand the realities of training so they can decide if they can make sufficient 'space' to study (Sections 5.2 and 5.4.1).
- The second and arguably the most critical barrier faced is funding. Individuals worry about meeting the costs of studying (fees and living costs) and the opportunity costs of lost earnings whilst studying, and lack information about costs and sources of funding. Also the levels of funding available can feel disappointing when compared to previous salaries earned; the eligibility criteria too stringent; and the prospects of adding to already substantial debt too troubling. Taken together financial barriers are the most common form of barriers faced by those who eventually drop-out of the customer journey (5.4.2).
- Individuals also need to confirm that they can meet the criteria set for the ITT programme. Concerns around the criteria relate to: a) organising, taking and passing the skills tests; b) having and proving they have the required entry qualifications; and c) having the required work experience. The criteria can appear inflexible, difficult to understand or justify, and can take considerable time to gather the required evidence. Meeting the criteria can also seem like an overly complex process which can deter applicants; or individuals can fail, and despite wanting to, cannot progress (Section 5.4.3). Another challenge faced is to find a suitable programme. For many individuals location is particularly critical (especially for those considering only one type of ITT option, less flexible in their outlook) and they ideally want an ITT programme that is within an easily commutable distance that will allow them to balance their other commitments and reduce the costs (of travel, and childcare, and possibly allowing for some part-time work). Location is also a concern after training, as individuals want to find work locally. A perceived lack of suitable local options, (which may reflect the reality of opportunities but could reflect a limited awareness and understanding of options), can deter individuals from applying (Section 5.4.4).
- Having the information and support individuals need to make decisions about which programme and provider is right for them is also a challenge. Individuals can feel overwhelmed with the information available, and can find it contradictory or not appropriate to their needs and circumstances. If individuals are unable to find the information they need, or are too confused and do not feel able to make decisions which will have a financial and lasting career implication (and affect

their families), they may put their plans for initial teaching training on hold (Section 5.4.5).

- The application process itself can act as a barrier particularly for those further from the education system and not used to UCAS. Individuals can find the application process, including attending interviews, time consuming, complex and difficult, and they can be frustrated with a perceived lack of communication and feedback throughout the application process, and feel rushed leaving them with little time to properly research their options. This can leave individuals feeling they are not valued which could prevent them from continuing with an application (Section 5.4.6).
- A lack of confidence can also act as a barrier, particularly when added to other more structural barriers such as concerns about finances and difficulties fitting in study with other commitments. Here individuals lacked confidence about their abilities to cope with the course; but as they moved through the customer journey and became more focused on outcomes after training, they were also worried about their ability to manage behaviour in classrooms and concerns about the realities of a teaching career (particularly the long working hours and heavy workload) and teaching can begin to look like a risky option. Lack of confidence was often linked to age and length of time since individuals were last in education (Sections 5.4.8 and 5.4.7).
- Across all the interviews there was a sense that each person had their own story to tell, their own experiences, and individuals often felt that these experiences and their circumstances or preferences were different to the 'norm' and so felt the odd one out. This could affect confidence and motivation to proceed with the application; and the 'outsider' feeling could be amplified by the general information and support provided which appeared to be geared towards 'other' types of people (Section 5.4.8)

Early years ITT findings

- Those making an application to early years programmes had very similar concerns to those aiming for primary or secondary teaching. However they were much more likely to fall at the first hurdle in trying to fit training in with their existing commitments, reflecting their profile (female, older, with family responsibilities and an established career) suggesting they need greater flexibilities in provision and support from their employers, if already working in the sector. They were also much more concerned about meeting the eligibility criteria and passing the skills tests, which were felt to be excessive for working with babies and toddlers. The early years applicants were however relatively less concerned than others about managing classroom behaviour (Section 5.3.1).

- Whether or not a programme led to qualified teacher status (QTS) was an issue for only a small and specific group of early years potential applicants. These tended to be using early years ITT as a way in to teaching or were unsure of whether to specialise in early years or primary. They could be unaware that early years ITT would not confer QTS and continue with their plans but some were deterred from making an application (Section 5.4.7).

5.1 Stages at which individuals drop out

The online survey of individuals identified two categories of potential ITT candidates: those who become lost to the customer journey in that they had decided against making an application, accounting for 12% of respondents and referred to as Lost applicants (or the Lost group); and those who are still considering applying (20%), those in the process of applying (9%) or have already completed an application (59%), together referred to as applicants. However, half of all those who participated in the interviews were Lost applicants, in order to allow NCTL to really understand the challenges faced during the customer journey (see Chapter 1).

It is worth noting that the Lost applicants differed in a number of key aspects to those who were still considering applying or had applied. Older respondents (aged 35 and over) were much more likely to be Lost to the customer journey as were those with caring responsibilities (these two characteristics are likely to be interrelated). Similarly those considering changing career and those with a degree classification of less than a 2:2 or without a degree were also more likely to be Lost applicants (see Chapter 1).

It is interesting to see where in the customer journey individuals face barriers and challenges and where those lost to the process (the Lost applicants) drop-out. The interviews indicated that individuals can and do drop out all along the pathway and there are a number of (generally) consecutive pressure points.

- The first pressure point centres around the **initial fact finding and decision making**. Here individuals can drop out because they fail to find the information they need to feel confident in making a decision that will clearly have lasting and financial implications. However they can also drop out because their research reveals teaching itself and ITT is not quite what they had expected and is not for them or that it is perhaps too early for them to make an application (e.g. in the early years of their undergraduate studies).
- The second pressure point relates to **gathering the experience and evidence required** to meet eligibility criteria – both to be able to apply for a programme and/or to access funding. Interviewees spoke of facing a number of challenges which could prevent them from progressing to make an application, or at least delay application until they felt better prepared. Some individuals at this point noted how they realised that they were not perhaps right for teaching:

“Four observations days in two schools, I knew within a few hours it was not for me.”

Lost applicant

“I did some experience days in a couple of schools and decided I did not want to be a teacher.”

Lost applicant

- The third pressure point is **the application** itself where individuals can make applications for up to three different programmes and, for all except some early years ITT, is administered by UCAS. For some this process is lengthy, complex and confusing and can cause individuals to drop-out.
- The fourth pressure point is **securing a place** on a programme, this is where individuals can fail to be invited to interview or can fail at interview and find themselves without an offer.

The customer journey to ITT, for the purposes of this research, could be regarded as complete once an individual has enrolled on a programme but due to the nature of the research sample (drawn from the Get Into Teaching registrant population across a number of years) there were examples of individuals dropping out even once they had secured a place and started their programmes. A few however failed to start ITT because they were attracted by alternative offers – jobs in other sectors or different (often academic) training opportunities. Some left ITT before completion because they found the workload on the course too demanding and left voluntarily; and some failed and were forced to leave (a few of these felt let down by their programme and provider and felt their failure was caused by a lack of support). These findings reflect existing research (Hobson et al, 2009 discussed in Chapter 1).

For example, one individual who entered ITT straight after completing his undergraduate course was suspended from his secondary ITT as he was unable to meet the work requirements of the course. He hasn't ruled out teaching for the future but is now studying to be a youth worker.

“The extra demands of the course were too much – doing educational research whilst I was struggling to improve my teaching practice, get lesson plans done etc... I am not entirely surprised that I didn't make it through... it takes a particular person to make it through, particularly nowadays when it is a very challenging career”.

Early career, applicant (placed but subsequently dropped out due to suspension), HEI-led, Secondary

There were also examples of individuals completing their ITT but failing to secure a job or deciding against looking for a teaching position. These later stages of the customer journey are worthy of further focused research.

The interviews indicated that drop-out from the customer journey, especially before starting training, was neither necessarily negative nor final. It could result from

individuals making an informed decision before committing time and resources that teaching is not right for them at that stage in their life/career, but something they might consider in the future. This indicates the importance of providing potential candidates with information that will enable them to truly understand the realities of training and of teaching. Also those who felt forced out from the customer journey, could reconsider ITT in the future but might need a change in their circumstances or a removal of the barriers they faced in order to do so. Indeed the survey found that 60% of Lost applicants might apply in the future (including 9% who would try again within the year).

5.2 The barriers faced by Lost applicants

5.2.1 Survey findings

In the online survey those who had decided not to make or complete an application to ITT – those Lost applicants – were asked a series of questions about why they had become Lost to the customer journey. This feedback is particularly helpful as it could indicate aspects causing drop-out from the customer journey. Firstly they were asked an open question ‘What was it that put you off or prevented you from making an application for teacher training (ITT or early years ITT)’?. This question was asked first so as to capture any unprompted thoughts and reactions. They were then given a list of potential challenges and barriers and were asked whether any had prevented them from making an application for ITT. The list was developed from research with postgraduate students (Pollard et al, 2016) and from the previous customer journey research (Matthias, 2014), and included 19 items. Finally they were asked which, of the potential barriers and challenges they had selected, they felt was the most important or significant barrier, which was the second most significant and which was the third most significant (in order to give an element of weighting).

The responses to the open text question indicated areas including personal circumstances that proved challenging but also how these challenges affected individuals and acted as barriers preventing them from making an application to ITT. The barriers that emerged were as follows (in no particular order) and as the example quotes illustrate they were often experienced in combination²⁷:

- **Difficulties with the application process and eligibility issues** such as finding the application process too confusing and/or time consuming, inability to get

²⁷ In the survey feedback there was no sense of the sequencing or ordering of the barriers faced, they tended to be described all together.

references, difficulties securing (any or local) school-based placements or fitting these around existing work commitments, lack of local SKE course places, transferability of qualifications gained overseas, concerns about adequacy or suitability of first degree or lack of GCSE qualifications, failing the skills test, failing to secure a place after interview, and lack of feedback from interview. This aspect attracted the greatest number of open text responses, and examples include:

“The effort of going to take English and maths tests and paying for these and not being able to get on to the course if I did not pass the exams that were required of me to have passed”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“The bottleneck and form filling put me off.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“I had previously had interviews at an institution but came away feeling very disillusioned with the application and interview process, I found the university was very disingenuous with their feedback and the interview process as a whole. They did not seem overly concerned getting to know candidates and their suitability to the role.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“I have not worked since 2009 and found that I could not get any references.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

- **Lack of finance** including the opportunity costs of losing a wage whilst training, and more general concerns about a lack of funding to train. Individuals noted:

“I would love to be a teacher, but I can't afford the training. I currently have a full salary job and couldn't afford a year/years without that salary.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“Salary – I would have to make a significant cut in salary to train to be a teacher.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“Other opportunities came along that would have been lost if I had started teaching. If those opportunities come to naught then I will consider reapplying to teach.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

- **Personal circumstances** such as concerns about their age, family commitments, location and convenience, ill-health or medical conditions, employer willingness to support training and visa restrictions; and thus ability to fit in the training and cope with the workload, Examples of responses include:

“A feeling that I was probably too old.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“My previous education was to a[n] O level standard, I would need to study for at least 3 years to qualify to teach whilst working, as I have 3 children to support and a mortgage to pay. I could not achieve a work life balance juggling all 3 commitments.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“I applied for a PGCE course and was accepted, however at that time I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Also I am a single mother of a daughter who needed to also prepare for 11+ exams, which I had to help her with therefore I did not accept the offer knowing that I will not be able to give my training 100% under the circumstances.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“The school where I work are unwilling to fund/support any training until I have been in continuous employment for a minimum of 2 years”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

- **Perceived unsuitability of courses** including paucity of suitable courses available locally, concerns about quality of available courses, lack of part-time options, no routes for experienced practitioners, and difficulties finding information to help decide about suitability of options, For example:

“I was unable to follow a course of study that would suit me. I am currently teaching sixth form A levels in an independent school and could not find a course to do 16-18 teaching part time to suit me. I also don't want to leave a job I love in a good school.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

- **Changing their mind** including being discouraged during school-based experience, having concerns about the recognition/value of teaching particularly the early years profession, deciding to teach in adult learning (not focus on schools), prioritising other studies, finding out that ITT was not needed (as their qualification was equivalent to QTS), and taking up an alternative opportunity. Here examples include:

“Four observations days in two schools, I knew within a few hours it was not for me.

Lost applicant, survey respondent

“I did some experience days in a couple of schools and decided I did not want to be a teacher.”

Lost applicant, survey respondent

- A **lack of confidence** in their ability and their existing qualifications.

“The fact that my degree subject is not a core subject/taught in many schools. Therefore, I felt that although doing subject enhancement courses in Maths/Physics may have allowed me to teach these subjects (I have Maths and Physics A-Levels), I did not feel I would be able to successfully compete for competitive jobs and teach to sixth form level in the future.”

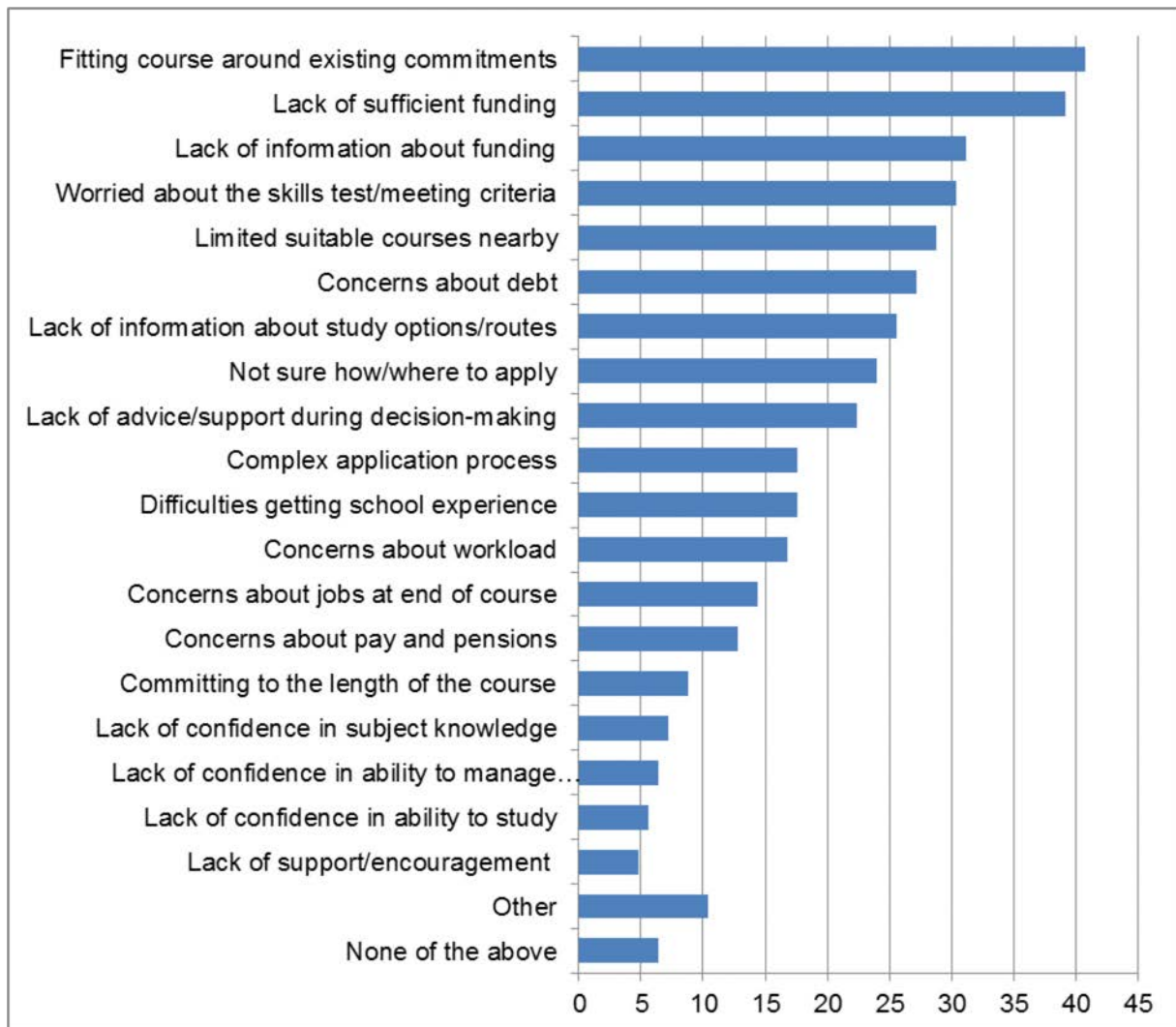
Lost applicant, survey respondent

The online survey also found that most Lost applicants faced barriers and challenges during their customer journey; only 8% said they had not experienced any of the potential difficulties listed. Respondents generally experienced more than one barrier, and the average number of barriers noted by Lost applicants was between 3 and 4. Interestingly those still considering applying or had made an application appeared to experience more barriers than those Lost applicants. This suggests that those Lost to the journey may only need one significant barrier to stop them progressing, whilst those further along the journey encounter more concerns as they progress.

The most commonly reported barriers encountered by Lost applicants were: difficulties in fitting courses around one's existing commitments (noted by 41%) which closely links to the 'personal circumstances' set of open responses noted above and how they can prevent individuals from taking up ITT; and also concerns regarding sufficiency of funding (39%). The high proportion of Lost applicants who had experienced challenges due to their existing commitments may reflect their profile (eg older and more likely to have family commitments and to be career switchers). These were followed by: lack of information about funding/bursaries (31%), worries about the skills test and meeting the eligibility criteria (30%), and the limited availability of suitable courses nearby (29%). Other barriers cited by approximately a quarter of Lost applicants were: concerns about getting into debt/increasing existing levels of debt (27%), lack of information about study options/routes into teaching (26%), and not being sure of how and/or where to apply (24%). Of less frequent concern were: lacking support or encouragement (5%),

lacking confidence in study ability (6%) or lacking confidence in ability to manage classroom behaviour (6%).

Figure 5.1: Barriers experienced by Lost applicants



Source: IES survey, 2015. All those who did not make an application

When taking into account perceived strength or significance²⁸ of the barrier on decisions not to continue with the customer journey to ITT the most significant barriers were deemed to be: difficulties in fitting courses around existing commitments where 13% felt it was the most significant barrier they faced, and 29% ranked it in the top 3 barriers; and worries about having sufficient funding, where 15% ranked it as the most important barrier they faced and 28% ranked it in the top 3 barriers. Worries about the skills test/meeting eligibility criteria was also ranked

²⁸ A score of three was assigned to each factor listed as the most important reason, a score of two for the second most important given, and a score of one given for the third. If the factor was not ranked it was given a score of 0.

highly as a barrier (24% ranked it top 3, and 13% ranked it as most important) as was limited availability of suitable courses nearby (24% also ranked it in the top 3, and 7% ranked it most important). It is interesting to note how lack of information about funding and bursary support though frequently cited as a barrier (see above) was not as significant a barrier as others,

Table 5.1: Strength of barriers preventing Lost applicants from making/successfully completing an application to ITT

	Rank of importance			Not ranked	Rank score
	1st	2nd	3rd		
Difficulties in fitting a course around my existing commitments	12.6	9.4	7.1	70.9	0.6378
Lack of sufficient funding	15.0	4.7	8.7	71.7	0.6299
Worried about the skills test/meeting the eligibility criteria	12.6	6.3	5.5	75.6	0.5591
Limited availability of suitable courses nearby	7.1	12.6	4.7	75.6	0.5118
Lack of information about study options/routes into teaching	8.7	4.7	6.3	80.3	0.4173
Not sure how/where to apply	6.3	5.5	3.9	84.3	0.3386
Concerns about getting into debt/increasing my existing levels of debt	1.6	8.7	7.1	82.7	0.2913
Complex application process	3.9	3.9	7.1	85.0	0.2677
Concerns about pay and pensions	4.7	4.7	2.4	88.2	0.2598
Difficulties in getting school experience	3.1	5.5	3.9	87.4	0.2441
Lack of advice and support during my decision making processes	3.9	3.9	3.9	88.2	0.2362
Concerns about availability of jobs at the end of the course	3.1	3.9	0.8	92.1	0.1811
Concerns about workload	2.4	1.6	4.7	91.3	0.1496
Lack of information about funding/bursary support	0.8	4.7	3.1	91.3	0.1496
Concerns about committing to the length of the course	1.6	0.8	0.8	96.9	0.0709
Lack of confidence in my ability to manage behaviour	0.8	0.8	1.6	96.9	0.0551
Lack of confidence in my subject knowledge	0.8	0.8	0.8	97.6	0.0472

Source: IES survey, 2015. All Lost applicants (N=125)

5.2.2 Creating a typology of barriers

As indicated above individuals often encountered several barriers so to explore which barriers tended to cluster together and to see which groups of barriers were more likely to deter which groups of potential ITT candidates, a factor analysis²⁹ was undertaken. This is a method which looks at the variability in survey responses to see whether groups of items (in this case barriers) are representing or measuring an underlying aspect or factor. The analysis grouped the 19 barriers into 6 factors³⁰: financial barriers, self-confidence barriers, informational barriers, teaching profession barriers, lifestyle barriers, and course accessibility barriers.

- The most common group of barriers encountered by Lost applicants was **financial barriers** (lack of sufficient funding, lack of information about funding/bursary support, and concerns about getting into or increasing levels of debt). More than half of Lost applicants (54%) had experienced a financial barrier that prevented them from applying.
- This was followed by **informational barriers** (not sure how or where to apply, lack of information about study options and routes into teaching, lack of advice and support during decision making, and complexity of the application process) which were experienced by 47% of Lost applicants;
- **Course accessibility barriers** (worried about the skills test/meeting the eligibility criteria, and concerns about workload³¹) were experienced by 38% of Lost applicants;
- **Lifestyle barriers** (concerns about committing to the length of the course, difficulties fitting a course around existing commitments, and lack of support from family and friends) were experienced by 42% of Lost applicants.
- Concerns about the **teaching profession** itself (difficulties getting school experience, concerns about availability of jobs at the end of the course and concerns about pay and pensions) were less common and were experienced by 30% of Lost applicants.

²⁹ Factor analysis is a statistical method used to describe variability among observed, correlated variables in terms of a potentially lower number of unobserved variables called factors.

³⁰ Factor analysis was conducted using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), varimax rotation (with Kaiser Normalisation), and reliability analysis of the resultant factors was undertaken using Chronbach's Alpha. PCA reduced the 19 dichotomous variables to 6 factors. 18 items loaded positively onto the factors, however one item had a negative loading so was not included in the construction of the factors. 125 cases were used in the analysis, all cases where individuals did not progress to making or successfully completing an application to ITT.

³¹ Limited availability of suitable courses nearby also loaded onto this factor but had a negative value. This means that those who were concerned about the course, felt these were barriers once they felt reassured that there were local opportunities.

- **Self-confidence** issues (lack of confidence in subject knowledge, ability to manage behaviour or ability to study and cope with the courses) were also less common, experienced by just 14% of Lost applicants.

Table 5.2: Experience of groups of barriers

Barrier group		Mean	% no items	% one item	% some items	% all items
Financial barriers (b)Lack of sufficient funding (c) Lack of information about funding (f) Concerns about debt	◆	0.325	46.4	23.2	16.8	13.6
Course accessibility barriers (d) Worries about eligibility criteria/skills test (l)Concerns about workload	◆	0.236	61.6	29.6	na	8.8
Informational barriers (h)Unsure how/where to apply (g)Lack of information about study options (i)Lack of advice/support during decision making (j)Complexity of application process	◆	0.224	52.8	17.6	26.4	3.2
Lifestyle barriers (o)Concerns committing to length of course (a)Difficulties fitting course around commitments (s)Lack of support from family	◆	0.181	57.6	32.0	8.8	1.6
Teaching profession barriers (k)Difficulties getting school experience (m)Concerns about jobs at the end (n)Concerns about pay and pensions	◆	0.149	69.6	18.4	9.6	2.4
Self-confidence barriers (p)Lack confidence in subject (q)Lack confidence in behaviour management (r)Lack confidence in ability to study/cope with course	◆	0.064	86.4	9.6	2.4	1.6

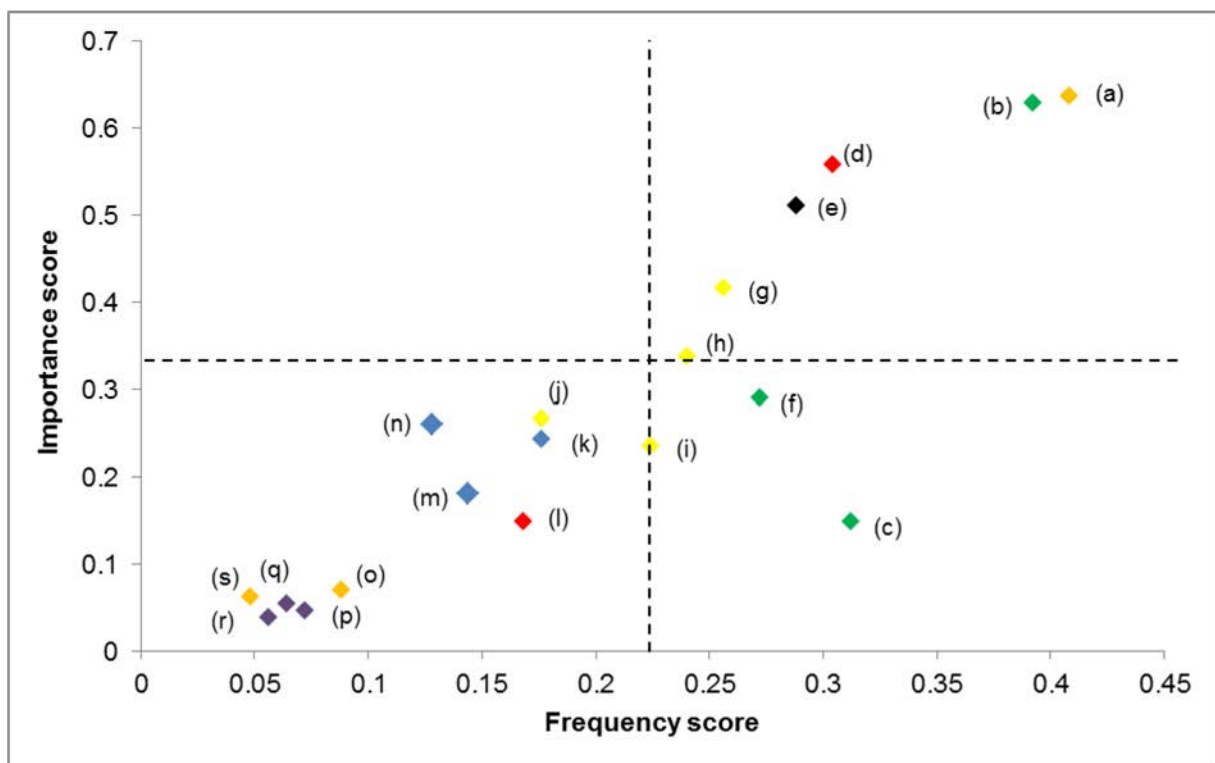
Source: IES survey, 2015. All Lost applicants (N=125)

Plotting the frequency score and the derived significance score (or ranking weight given by Lost applicants, see earlier for how this is derived) for each of the barriers among the Lost group gives an indication of the potential challenge these issues provide prospective trainees and the NCTL. Each barrier is colour coded to indicate

the barrier category it belongs to. Focusing on the top right hand quadrant indicates the barriers that exert the most frequent, commonly experienced and the most significant influences. This shows how finance (in green) is a strong and ubiquitous barrier but the issue is mainly related to insufficiency of funding for training. Similarly lifestyle barriers (in orange) exert a strong and common influence but this is largely due to worries about fitting the course around existing commitments rather than length of course or lack of support.

Other aspects to note are that informational barriers (in yellow) are clustered together and thus all of relatively similar frequency and importance, and are grouped around the middle of the plot. Similarly teaching professional barriers (in blue) are clustered together towards the bottom left hand quadrant of the chart; and confidence issues (in purple) are relatively negligible in terms of the overall picture as they are placed in the far left hand bottom corner of the plot (but that is not to say it isn't a key barrier for a small number of individuals).

Figure 5.2: Plotting significance (or relative strength) and frequency of barriers faced by Lost applicants



- (a) Fitting course around existing commitments
- (b) Lack of sufficient funding
- (c) Lack of information about funding
- (d) Worried about the skills test/meeting criteria
- (e) Limited suitable courses nearby
- (f) Concerns about debt
- (g) Lack of information about study options/routes
- (h) Not sure how/where to apply
- (i) Lack of advice/support during decision-making
- (j) Complex application process
- (k) Difficulties getting school experience
- (l) Concerns about workload
- (m) Concerns about jobs at end of course
- (n) Concerns about pay and pensions
- (o) Committing to the length of the course
- (p) Lack of confidence in subject knowledge
- (q) Lack of confidence in ability to manage behaviour
- (r) Lack of confidence in ability to study
- (s) Lack of support/encouragement

Source: IES survey, 2015. All Lost applicants (N=125)

Further analysis of the groups of the barriers finds:

- Males were more likely than females to experience barriers relating to the teaching profession; but females were more likely to experience barriers relating to course accessibility and self-confidence. There were no significant differences between males and females in experience of financial, informational or lifestyle barriers
- Respondents from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely than those from white backgrounds to be concerned about the teaching profession.
- Younger respondents were more likely to report self-confidence barriers than older respondents.
- Those with no caring responsibilities were less likely to report lifestyle barriers than those with children or elder care responsibilities (with or without a partner)
- Those considering changing career from another sector were less likely to experience course accessibility barriers than those in their early career or those with a career already in the education sector.

5.3 Potential challenges and barriers

Those who had applied or were still considering applying to ITT were also asked what challenges (if any) may still prevent or could have prevented them from making an application. As with the Lost applicants, the vast majority faced barriers and challenges during their customer journey. Just 6% said they had not experienced any of the potential difficulties listed.

Applicants were further along the customer journey (either having made an application and/or secured a place, or very close to making an application) and their responses to the survey indicated that they felt they faced a different set of key challenges to those that were Lost from the journey. This suggests that as individuals progress towards ITT, different aspects about the process come into view and different worries emerge. For applicants, the most frequently reported challenges were: concerns about debt (experienced by 37% of respondents), limited availability of suitable courses nearby (37%), lack of sufficient funding (36%), worries about the skills test/meeting the eligibility criteria (35%), and concerns about the workload (32%). This group appeared more likely to be concerned about availability of local options, debt, and workload than Lost applicants. They were also more likely than Lost applicants to experience challenges around lacking confidence in behaviour management, their ability to study and subject knowledge, and to experience concerns about availability of jobs at the end of the course. This could suggest that these issues are more likely to present themselves as challenges the further individuals progress along the customer journey. Conversely applicants were

less likely to be concerned about fitting a course around their existing commitments or lacking advice and support during decision making, suggesting that these potential barriers have been overcome.

Table 5.3: Barriers or challenges facing respondents

	Lost %	Applicants %
Concerns about getting into debt/increasing my existing levels of debt	27.2	37.3
Limited availability of suitable courses nearby	28.8	36.7
Lack of sufficient funding	39.2	36.2
Worried about the skills test/meeting the eligibility criteria	30.4	35.4
Concerns about workload	16.8	31.9
Lack of information about funding/bursary support	31.2	29.3
Difficulties in fitting a course around my existing commitments	40.8	28.5
Lack of information about study options/routes into teaching	25.6	24.3
Concerns about availability of jobs at the end of the course	14.4	23.8
Difficulties in getting school experience	17.6	22.2
Not sure how/where to apply	24.0	20.8
Lack of advice and support during my decision making processes	22.4	18.8
Lack of confidence in my ability to manage behaviour	6.4	18.4
Complex application process	17.6	18.1
Lack of confidence in my ability to study/cope with the course	5.6	17.4
Concerns about pay and pensions	12.8	12.7
Lack of confidence in my subject knowledge	7.2	11.3
Concerns about committing to the length of the course	8.8	5.6
Lack of support/encouragement from my family and friends	4.8	5.3
Other	10.4	5.7
None of the above	6.4	5.5
Base (N)	125	910

Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents; multiple response question so sum may \neq 100%; No significant differences were tested for as the data were collected across different sets of questions..

When taking into account perceived strength or significance of the challenges that might have or still could prevent individuals from making an application for ITT the most significant challenges were deemed to be: lack of sufficient funding, where 15% felt it was the most significant barrier they faced, and 30% ranked it in the top 3 barriers. Other important difficulties were the skills test and meeting eligibility criteria

(12% ranked it as the most important challenge and 26% in the top 3); availability of local options (8% and 25%), and workload (8% and 25%). It is interesting to note how concerns about debt though frequently cited as a challenge was not as significant a barrier as others (suggesting some degree of acceptance).

Table 5.4: Strength of challenges that could deter applicants from making/successfully completing an application to ITT

	Most important	2nd most important	3rd most important	Not ranked	Rank score
Lack of sufficient funding	14.5	10.1	5.5	70.0	0.6908
Worried about the skills test/meeting the eligibility criteria	12.0	5.7	8.1	74.2	0.5537
Limited availability of suitable courses nearby	8.1	9.3	7.2	75.3	0.5022
Concerns about workload	8.2	8.0	7.9	75.9	0.4857
Concerns about getting into debt/increasing my existing levels of debt	6.9	8.9	5.5	78.7	0.4397
Difficulties in fitting a course around my existing commitments	7.1	6.1	4.6	82.1	0.3827
Lack of information about study options/routes into teaching	7.1	5.6	2.6	84.6	0.3520
Lack of support/encouragement from my family and friends	0.2	0.7	1.3	97.8	0.0329
Difficulties in getting school experience	5.2	4.4	5.7	84.8	0.2993
Concerns about availability of jobs at the end of the course	3.5	4.6	7.2	84.6	0.2697
Lack of confidence in my ability to manage behaviour	4.2	4.1	4.3	87.5	0.2489
Not sure how/where to apply	3.5	4.2	3.3	89.0	0.2215
Lack of information about funding/bursary support	2.6	3.9	5.3	88.2	0.2105
Complex application process	2.7	2.4	3.9	90.9	0.1700
Lack of confidence in my ability to study/cope with the course	2.0	3.2	2.9	92.0	0.1513
Lack of advice and support during my decision making processes	1.8	2.5	3.0	92.8	0.1327
Concerns about pay and pensions	1.0	2.9	2.2	94.0	0.1086
Lack of confidence in my subject knowledge	0.8	2.4	2.5	94.3	0.0965
Concerns about committing to the length of the course	0.5	0.8	1.3	97.4	0.0450

Source: IES survey, 2015. All applicants who made or are still considering making an application to ITT (N=912)

5.3.1 Early years applicants

Those applicants who had considered and applied for early years training programmes had very similar experiences of challenges to those who applied to other ITT programmes. The most common barriers or challenges experienced were: difficulties fitting a course around existing commitments (41%), lacking sufficient funding (40%), concerns about the skills test and eligibility criteria (39%) and availability of suitable courses nearby (39%). However the early years group were significantly more likely than others to be concerned about difficulties with existing commitments; but were relatively less likely to be concerned about debt, be concerned about workload, experience difficulties getting school experience, or to lack confidence in managing behaviour or in their subject knowledge.

Table 5.5: Challenges facing respondents who applied for early years programmes compared with those applying for other phases

	Early years	non early years
Difficulties in fitting a course around my existing commitments*	41.3	21.8
Lack of sufficient funding	40.0	34.2
Worried about the skills test/meeting the eligibility criteria	39.0	33.5
Limited availability of suitable courses nearby	38.7	35.7
Lack of information about funding/bursary support	32.6	27.7
Concerns about getting into debt/increasing my existing levels of debt*	31.9	40.0
Lack of information about study options/routes into teaching	26.8	23.0
Concerns about workload*	25.2	35.3
Concerns about availability of jobs at the end of the course	21.9	24.8
Not sure how/where to apply	20.6	20.8
Lack of advice and support during my decision making processes	17.4	19.5
Complex application process	15.8	19.3
Difficulties in getting school experience*	15.5	25.7
Lack of confidence in my ability to study/cope with the course	14.2	19.0
Concerns about pay and pensions	12.9	12.7
Lack of confidence in my ability to manage behaviour*	9.7	22.8
Concerns about committing to the length of the course	7.1	4.8
Lack of support/encouragement from my family and friends	6.1	4.8
Lack of confidence in my subject knowledge*	6.1	14.0
Other	4.8	6.2
None of the above	4.8	5.8
Base (N)	310	600

Source: IES survey, 2015. All applicants who made or were still considering making an application to ITT; multiple response question so sum may \neq 100%; %; * indicates statistically significant difference

Within the early years group of applicants, those looking to progress their careers within the education sector and those looking to switch careers were more likely to experience difficulties fitting a course around their existing commitments than those in the early stages of building a career. Similarly those already in the sector or later career changers were much less likely to experience concerns about managing behaviour than new entrants. Other differences noticed (though not statistically significant) were that those already in the sector were less likely than new entrants to feel unsure about how or where to apply for early years programmes, to lack information about funding/bursary support, lack confidence in their ability to cope with the course, or have difficulties gaining experience. However they were relatively more likely to be concerned about debt.

5.4 Exploring barriers in greater detail

The interviews also indicated that individuals face different challenges and barriers as their journeys' progress and as they reach each of the pressure points noted above. For some individuals these challenges can be overcome but for others (Lost applicants) they prove to be too great and act as barriers causing them to drop-out of the customer journey. In addition the interviews indicated how individuals often faced multiple and interrelated challenges and barriers such as aspects relating to their personal circumstances, concerns around finance and worries about meeting entry criteria. Each potential barrier or challenge is explored in greater detail below,

5.4.1 Work and family life

The online survey indicated that difficulties fitting courses around one's existing commitments was among the most commonly noted barriers among those Lost to the customer journey (noted by 41% of the Lost group), alongside concerns about sufficiency of funding. It was also considered the most important or significant barrier putting them off or preventing them from applying, when they were asked to rank the barriers they faced. This is likely to reflect the older age profile and generally more complex current work and family circumstances of the Lost group of respondents (as noted above). However when grouped together with other lifestyle factors (such as concerns about committing to the length of the course and support from family and friends) it becomes of lower significance.

In contrast difficulties fitting in a course around work and family life was much less likely to feature as a challenge or potential barrier among those who were applying or still planning to apply for ITT (essentially those further along the customer journey, noted by 29% of applicants). However, those considering and/or who applied for at least one early years ITT course, were much more likely to have faced difficulties with existing commitments (41%) than those considering other ITT programmes.

Balancing commitments and making 'space' to be able to study therefore seems to present an initial hurdle many individuals face when considering ITT, particularly those in the early years sector, and has to be overcome before individuals can even contemplate what the course would involve, where they could study, and how to apply.

Other groups of applicants who were more likely to find their existing commitments a barrier to ITT were: those with an established career (looking to progress within the education sector or to change career); older; female; and with caring responsibilities

Many of the Lost group of interviewees reflected how concerns about fitting things around their existing commitments and lifestyle related to the preparatory stages of gathering the required evidence and not just to the training programme itself. Here interviewees talked about their worries of fitting in time to gather the necessary work experience, gather references, and complete complex application forms on top of working full-time, as well as their worries that they would struggle to manage the course workload on top of their existing commitments. Thus the challenges around personal circumstances can be linked to concerns around finances (ie being able to work and learn) and concerns around eligibility criteria (see below). One interviewee was also concerned about the initial years beyond the training as an NQT (newly qualified teacher) which she felt would be very time consuming and difficult to manage with two young children. Others noted:

"I'll be coming home with double work, lesson planning and marking, and I thought "am I going to spend enough time with my own children"

Career changers, Lost (due to family commitments), early years and primary, various routes

"Routes into teaching are incompatible with childcare and difficult to fit around other commitments. Having to do more exams (Maths and English), even though I have studied both in Secondary school, Spain (Bachillerato Science). Tedious application process."

Lost applicant, survey respondent

"although I feel very fit and able [in her 50s] I think teacher training is geared to younger people just leaving university...to make it [as an older person] you would have to fight your way through, you need to be very determined. I need to have relevant work experience but this is difficult for me as I work full-time. Really I don't have the confidence to go ahead and do it... I think if I was out of work and desperate to do it I would, but it is not that important, I am not as motivated as I could be."

Career changer, Lost, secondary, university-led

5.4.2 Funding and finance

The online survey found concerns regarding sufficiency of funding to support individuals whilst they were training/studying was among the most commonly cited barriers to ITT among Lost applicants (39%) so too was the lack of information about funding/bursaries (31%) and concerns about getting into debt or increasing existing levels of debt (27%). This meant that when grouped together financial barriers was the most commonly encountered set of issues that Lost applicants felt prevented them from making an application to ITT.

Financial concerns were also a worry for those still considering making or who had made an application. It was ranked as the key source of concern, and thus could still cause individuals to drop out of the customer journey. For applicants, concerns about getting into (more) debt was the most common challenge they reported (37%), with a similar proportion reporting concerns about a lack of sufficient funding (36%) and fewer reporting a lack of information about funding or bursary support (29%). As concerns about getting into and increasing debts are more frequent for those that remain within the customer journey, this could indicate that financial concerns, such as how they will pay for their training, are more thoroughly considered in the latter stages of customers' journeys.

Among those considering or who had applied for early years ITT lack of sufficient funding was also a key concern (40%), more so than increasing debt (32%).

Other groups of potential candidates still considering or applying for ITT who were more likely to find financial issues a challenge were: those in the early stages of their careers, younger, female, and white.

The in-depth interviews confirmed that many individuals were worried about: the costs involved in studying and training, the costs of the course fees, the costs of supporting themselves (and possibly their families, especially if they were the main breadwinner) and meeting their regular financial commitments such as mortgages whilst studying and training, and the potential loss of earnings if they had to leave their jobs or cut down their hours. Several individuals noted how an ITT programme was very intensive (regarded as a full-time job) and so would not accommodate other work commitments or indeed allow them to get a part-time job to help with their finances, a strategy some had been able to adopt when undertaking their first degree. This suggests that concerns with finance are linked with concerns around fitting study around their existing commitments (noted above).

“if you're committed to doing something you've got to be committed to doing that thing, you can't say, 'I'm studying certain hours, and then I'll

work'. 'If you're doing all different kinds of things, at the end you're not concentrating on what you want to really do"

Early career, Lost (due to lack of appropriate qualifications),
School Direct secondary

"it is the double impact of needing money for course fees and also money to live whilst studying... I've heard that it's like up to five [o'clock] and you don't have any time to do any other jobs, because you have to prepare yourself as well. You can't do justice to it if you're not doing it right".

Career changer, pending, PGCE EY and primary

Some interviewees were also worried about adding to their already considerable existing debt (generally student loan debt).

"I would love to be a teacher, but I can't afford the training. I currently have a full salary job and couldn't afford a year/years without that salary."

Lost applicant, survey respondent

"I was really reluctant to take out an additional student loan and do the PGCE where you didn't get funding. I didn't want to add to my existing student loan and I was quite annoyed that the tuition fees had gone up to £9,000. With the maintenance loan as well it was quite a lot of debt to take on. As a mature student... it was quite worrying financially"

Career changer, applicant PGCE early years and primary

"The grants I could get were not enough. If I was single maybe, but with a family it is not enough. It is too difficult."

Early career, Lost (due to lack of appropriate qualifications),
School Direct secondary

In general, interviewees described how they intended to fund their studies through a combination of bursaries, scholarships, formal loans such as student loans (particularly critical to those aspiring to teach non-shortage subjects, and/or recent graduates who tended to be most unconcerned about taking on additional loan debt), informal loans from family members (which were especially important to younger interviewees), and personal savings. Indeed family members (normally parents or partners, but occasionally others such as siblings) played 3 major financial roles: i) gifting or loaning cash; ii) subsidising living costs (particularly younger interviewees) or taking on primary earning responsibilities (particularly later career changers); and iii) offering financial advice, such as on the 'wisdom of taking on extra loans'. However families could also represent significant costs that have to be factored into individuals' affordability calculations. Some interviewees also talked about other sources of financial support: using redundancy packages; looking to their local

authorities to fund some of the study costs (particularly those exploring early years ITT); hoping to gain support from universities who can provide (often small) maintenance grants; or securing financial support from their employer (paying for fees or matched funding where individuals can carry on working in their established role whilst studying, usually only applicable for those working in the education sector). A considerable number of interviewees planned to fund their studies, partially or totally through work (recent graduates as well as those looking to change or progress in their careers). Younger interviewees appeared more likely to consider supporting themselves with non-teaching roles, while older interviewees and those with established non-teaching roles in schools or early years institutions were more eager to secure salaried ITT (School Direct Salaried). Most interviewees concluded that numerous complementary revenue streams were needed to fund the full costs of study and concurrent living expenses:

“I don't think you can do it on the loan alone, you need that bursary to supplement it otherwise you can't live”

Early career, applicant, secondary, PGCE

They worried how they would meet these costs, whether the finance they hoped to access would be sufficient, and how they could deal with the drop in household income. They talked about the need to tighten their belts (eg down-grading on groceries and cutting back on holidays), to look for potential means of finance, and to find information about the affordability of different training options and programmes. Although in general ITT candidates didn't experience a lack of information about funding or bursaries, the interviews indicated that the process of finding out about costs and funding was for some difficult, stressful and time-consuming, and some individuals found the information around financial support (including eligibility) confusing and unclear and largely tailored towards recent graduates. Several people indicated that it was difficult to adequately inform themselves about the availability of funding, and that when uncertainty reigned they were put off pursuing their applications. The complex web of scholarships, bursaries and loans available could prove difficult to navigate and this could be exacerbated by the large number of competing and often contradictory sources of information available online which could leave interviewees feeling 'completely overwhelmed'. Some, particularly later career changers, were left unable to work out what sources of funding, if any, were available to them (and thus could presume themselves to be ineligible) or what were the differences between each type and source of funding. This led to some interviewees suggesting that a central portal to compare and contrast financial support would be useful.

“It was quite difficult to try and see who was entitled to what on the [provider] website, it was really difficult to understand... it was difficult to decipher who is entitled to what... that, really, was one of the major

factors that stopped me from applying... I couldn't commit to a course while still in the dark about finances and worrying about rent, bills, travel expenses etc."

Career changer, Lost (due to financial concerns), early years ITT

Others also found the amounts of support available disappointing or the eligibility criteria attached (either linked to type of programme or previous qualifications) too stringent. For example some interviewees hoping to access student fee and maintenance loans talked about how the size of such loans was simply too small, and so the 'calculations did not add up', particularly when childcare expenses were factored in. If individuals were unable to find the information they needed to make decisions or indeed some or all of the finances they needed they did not feel able to apply (or at least defer their application).

"I looked up financial support but didn't find anything useful. It was all geared towards university leavers, young people. I struggled to find information for people like me, in their 30s or 40s looking for a change, making the leap from a decent wage, people with bills and things like mortgages to pay"

Career changer, Lost (due to financial concerns and lack of support),
primary

"it just worried me how much debt I would manage to put myself in... it was quite difficult to try and see who was entitled to what [bursary and scholarships] on the [university] website, it was really difficult to understand...It just put me off"

Career changer, Lost (due to financial concerns), early years ITT

Fred

Fred was considering changing career from acting to teaching but felt his biggest challenge was how he would finance the training. He not only had to think about supporting himself financially, but also his girlfriend and his soon-to-be-born child. In order to make a responsible choice, Fred felt he needed to choose a route that he would be able to afford. However, he found it incredibly difficult to get any definite answers about which funding (if any) he would be eligible for, and so without this information, he felt that he could not apply. When thinking about what would change his mind about ITT he noted 'I would do it [ITT] tomorrow if I could get the funding'

Career changer, Lost, School Direct, Primary

School Direct Salaried was a popular preference, particularly among those considering changing career, because individuals were reluctant to give up their

regular income which their families often relied upon (see also Chapter 3) or indeed to accrue additional debt via student loans. If they were unable to gain a salaried place or felt the salary on offer was too low (represented too much of a compromise) they did not feel able to continue with the customer journey.

Holly

Holly wanted to move out of a career in IT and the only route considered was the School Direct Salaried course, yet this proved unsuitable. She felt the salary was far too low 'the package offered was not adequate'. Whilst she did not want to appear 'greedy', Holly felt she had experience and skills that would be beneficial and stressed that her circumstances required her to have a 'decent' salary. However the salary she would receive whilst on the School Direct salaried course would be significantly less than her current earnings, and this drop would not only cause her financial difficulty, but would also make her feel as if she had regressed. She was also worried that, after the training, there was no guarantee of a job, particularly one that would allow her to stay in her local area. Together these concerns represented too great a risk so she decided not to apply. She felt that she would still like to move into the teaching profession and would consider applying in the future if a 'better deal' was offered (higher salary whilst training and a guaranteed job at the end), or when her child was older and her mortgage commitment was smaller.

Career changer, Lost, School Direct salaried, secondary

Reflecting Holly's story, several interviewees talked about the risks of aiming for a teaching career and undertaking training, weighing up the costs (and loss of income) against the perceived potential rewards. For some the costs were too high or the perceived rewards were not sufficient (nor guaranteed) to overcome their concerns. For example one interviewee (Lost applicant) was not sure about giving up a job tutoring in private schools, which she loved, in order to train when she felt there was no guarantee of a job at the end. Also others noted:

"You don't get paid loads as a teacher, considering the amount of hassle you have to go through and the amount of paperwork you have to do. You're benefitting future generations in terms of their learning, and I don't feel that's valued. Also, from a practical point of view, if I took on a loan, I've got two sons going off to Uni, so I wouldn't be able to support them as much, so that would have been quite difficult"

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult),
School Direct primary

"They don't make it easy... if you're looking at doing a PGCE, you're only stopping work for like, a year, well less than that really... and then certain

subjects, they're throwing money at you. But I'm looking at four years where they're not throwing anything at you. And it's very scary, the idea of giving up a career, because I was a manager, to go and do a job that actually, I'll probably when I start doing it, be earning less than when I started this process”

Career changer, applicant, university-led, maths

Insight into the barriers and challenges faced by initial teacher trainees who choose a HEI-led PGCE programme is also provided by the BIS survey of postgraduates studying in England (Pollard et al, 2016). This shows that the most commonly reported challenges PGCE students felt they faced when thinking about postgraduate study were: concerns about increasing the level of their existing debt (39%) and concerns about getting into debt (36%). In general PGCE students appeared more concerned about financial issues than students on other professional postgraduate programmes, which could reflect their younger age profile. Finance was also more of an issue because PGCE students tended to have lower household incomes (reflecting their younger age), were more likely to self-fund (using own savings and help from their families) and to feel they struggled financially, than those studying other professionally focused postgraduate programmes. They were also relatively more likely to report that funding and support factored in their study decisions; however they were more likely to feel informed about funding.

5.4.3 Meeting eligibility criteria

Another common barrier among Lost applicants in the survey was worries about the skills test and meeting the eligibility criteria (reported by 30%, and the third highest ranked barrier). This forms part of the course accessibility group of barriers (alongside concerns about workload) and is the second most common set that were reported to have prevented Lost applicants from applying.

Meeting the eligibility criteria was also a common concern among those applying or still considering applying for ITT (reported by 35%) and was ranked as the second most significant barrier (second only to lacking sufficient funding). It was also more of a concern among those applying or considering applying for early years ITT (reported by 39%, and was the highest ranked barrier).

Other groups of potential candidates considering or applying for ITT who were more likely to be worried about the skills test and meeting the eligibility criteria were: those already working in the education sector (who had followed a career in teaching without completing ITT) and female (this partly reflects the profile of early years applicants). Generally, respondents were less concerned about getting school based experience than the skills tests aspects of the eligibility criteria: reported by 18% of Lost applicants, and 22% of applicants (including 16% of early years applicants).

This barrier or challenge perhaps received the most comments during the in-depth interviews from both Lost applicants and those who had made or were still considering making an application for initial teaching training. The interviewees indicated there were a number of different concerns around meeting the criteria: a) organising, taking and passing the skills tests; b) having and proving they had the required qualifications; and c) having the required work experience. Many interviewees felt these criteria were too inflexible (not taking into account their own experiences and backgrounds) and often difficult to understand or justify, and in working to meet these it could add substantially to the time it would take them to become a teacher (over and above the actual ITT period). Additionally, some interviewees were concerned about criteria shifting or changing so, although they had felt prepared, when they actually went to apply they found their qualifications, skills or experience were no longer adequate.

For some individuals however their qualifications essentially made them ineligible for ITT because they were already trained teachers or educators – either qualifying in the UK or overseas. These individuals were interested in changing the focus of their practice or refreshing their training (after being out of teaching for some time) but found they could not access ITT.

However it is worth noting that some interviewees were not fazed by the eligibility criteria and felt they were appropriate:

“it [skills test] is a good idea, it is important to have strong English and maths skills... and the more [work] experience you gain before applying the better as it gives you a realistic insight into the teaching career and gives you more to talk about in interviews”

Early career, applicant, early years ITT

Skills tests

The **skills tests**, particularly the maths test, were somewhat daunting to some interviewees but represented a major obstacle to a number of interviewees. These individuals spoke of the fear of the tests (‘sleepless nights’, ‘nerve-wracking’), especially the mental maths aspect; the pressure involved to pass (due to limited number of attempts allowed); and the speed required to complete the answers.

“I've got an A-level in maths, but that obviously doesn't mean I'm good at mental maths. That's probably what I was a bit nervous about really. I probably would have liked, if I was being honest, I would have preferred if they'd said had you got a GCSE, have you got a whatever, qualification, and that would do, rather than having to do a test under timed conditions”.

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult), School Direct primary

Some interviewees also noted how it had been challenging to book the skills tests as the test centres were not very close and had few appointments available, meaning that individuals often had to book slots well in advance and/or at less convenient times and dates. Several interviewees spoke of taking the tests, retaking them (at a cost) and failing them so being forced to abandon their application; whereas others were so distressed by the tests they decided not to continue:

“my maths was quite poor, and I really struggled with that, I'm not going to lie, there are times when I wake up and think, should I even bother doing it? It's so totally stressing me out, if I fail it again... I don't know how I will feel. I remember how I felt that day when I failed the maths and realised I couldn't do the course, so I am totally petrified that I'm going to put myself through that again”

Career changer within education, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications, Maths GCSE), School Direct and PGCE, secondary

Lucy

Lucy was considering applying for primary or early years ITT after working in nurseries as a room leader, deputy and then assistant manager for a few years. She applied to do a PGCE with QTS at her local university but spoke about how the skills test ‘put a stop to it’. She lacked confidence in her maths ability and thus her ability to pass the maths skills test despite having a Maths GCSE. She was very concerned about the maths skills test: ‘I didn’t think it [skills test] would be as hard. I had a tutor and I did online practice tests. It was a huge thing for me. At school I was told that I would never be good at maths’. She was particularly troubled with the mental maths aspect of the test and the time pressure with some questions having a specific time limit in which to provide an answer ‘I felt rushed all the time. If you don’t get the question, reading it again eats into your answer time’. She was also worried about the limited number of attempts (just three) a candidate has to pass the test ‘You only get three attempts and then you have to wait another two years. If it was a test I knew I could take as many times as I wanted it would be much better...I read the forums and there is so much online about people feeling the same and struggling, it [the maths skills test] is stopping people fulfilling their wish’.

Early career, Lost (failed the skills test), early years ITT

Others had practical challenges including not being sure how long the skills tests lasted for example, one interviewee had passed the skills tests during her first (unsuccessful) applications to ITT but did not know if she would need to re-test. Some based decisions to drop out based on fear of failure and a lack of understanding as to why the tests had to be undertaken.

Meeting the qualifications requirement

Having the required **qualifications**, generally maths or science GCSE, was also a concern for many interviewees. Here interviewees talked about: having just missed the grade criteria and how they would have to study and re-take one or two GCSEs; having difficulties finding the proof of qualifications achieved some time ago; being unsure about (or given misinformation about) the equivalency/recognition of alternative UK-based qualifications such as GNVQs; or waiting for their degree results to be able to get accepted on a programme. They were often mystified as to why GCSEs would be needed, especially those planning to work in the early years sector, or those with higher level qualifications than GCSE in a related field (such as computer science):

“it [science GCSE] was a barrier, there was no getting around it. I understand the need for English and Maths but not for science. I have so much experience, so it is not about not having the knowledge, it just feels like a GCSE is unnecessary. I think other things should be taken into consideration...other qualifications, experience. Gaps in learning could be plugged with something not as scary as a GCSE...a short course on teaching science would be OK.”

Career changer, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications),
early years ITT

“I am struggling to fill the requirements for the EYTS. I have D grades in Maths and English. I re-sat my maths last year but got a D again and this year I am doing my English...but now I have to do a science GCSE. I just feel they're pushing the goalposts the whole time, and I just feel it's so totally unfair. Here I started off with good intentions and now I think I'm just throwing the bucket in now I've got to do science as well”

Career changer within education, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications), EYTS

However for one or two interviewees the requirements made them reconsider their choices. For example, one interviewee described wanting to change career from Town Planning to primary teaching but felt the main barrier preventing her from completing an application was that she lacked GCSE level C maths (she had a D). She felt that her poor maths ability was not merely a barrier in the sense that she needed a C in GCSE Maths to be eligible, but more that she had strong moral reservations about becoming a teacher when she lacked such an important skill.

Proving they had the required qualifications was a particular issue for those educated overseas, many of whom experienced challenges getting confirmation about the equivalency of their qualifications – GCSE equivalents, undergraduate degrees and even teaching qualifications. Here interviewees talked about the

complexity of having to provide proof of their qualifications and having these 'translated and checked', and felt they lacked information or were given the wrong information about whether they needed to, and how to, do this. The organisation NARIC³² is dedicated to providing information, advice and expert opinion on worldwide qualifications and comparing international qualifications but interviewees had varied experiences finding and dealing with them. However the key frustration was the need to seek equivalency in the first place when they felt they were clearly more qualified:

"it [application process] was lengthy, lacked logic and was a cumbersome process. I was amazed it was so complicated, it was just silly.. England is very poly-cultural, the application process needs to cater for this"

Career changer, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications), secondary

"I was stonewalled by having an American degree. The people I spoke to about it didn't make it easy and they didn't care... the attitude of the advisers was like they couldn't be bothered, so the wind just went out of my sails. I couldn't move forward until the conversions were done"

Career changer, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications and support), School Direct/SCITT secondary/primary

However, even after gaining equivalency, individuals could still experience problems.

Lizzie

Lizzie had a Masters degree and a teaching qualification from Spain, and several years' experience teaching in an international school. When she came to England she wanted to teach but she had struggled to find good advice. She was told (by two different universities) her Spanish qualifications would not be enough and she would need to retrain so she looked into a PGCE. Eventually she met a retired teacher who advised her where to apply to have her qualification converted and she received her QTS a week after she sent off for it. However she now finds herself stuck as she feels schools will not employ her in a teaching role as her qualifications and experience are Spanish yet she cannot retrain as she is already deemed qualified. She is therefore working as a learning support assistant and feels very frustrated.

Career in education sector, Lost (problems with equivalency of overseas qualifications), PGCE

³² (www.Naric.org.uk)

Gaining school experience

Another concern was gaining the right type and amount of school or early years **experience**, and interview feedback suggested requirements were unclear and differed according to the training provider. Interviewees were also concerned about being able to find the time to be able to undertake placements to gain experience; especially how they could take time out from full-time jobs or looking after families. This might require them having to take their whole annual leave in one go or leave their jobs (particularly if their employers were unsupportive). This indicates how this barrier can overlap with concerns around fitting the course and preparation for the course around existing commitments.

Trish

Trish had worked in the early years sector for more than ten years and recently completed a BA in early years studies. In order to further her career, she wanted to gain early years teacher status but when she applied for a programme she found the requirements had changed and she was no longer able to use her current work as an early years adviser as relevant work experience. She did not feel able to take time off from her full-time work to be able to undertake placements so decided not to carry on with her application.

Career changer within education, Lost (ineligible work experience) , EYTS

Many were also at a loss how to find and organise these placements, often noting that they did not know anyone who could help. Indeed, there was a feeling that those with family connections or friends already in schools would be at an (unfair) advantage. Others noted how they found schools unreceptive when contacting them (for example 'cold-calling') or that schools could require individuals to have some experience before allowing them to do a work experience placement which put individuals essentially in a 'catch-22' situation. Some also felt that there was a high (often off-putting) degree of competition in securing a placement.

"No schools replied to my letters to ask for placements. No help from universities."

Survey response, Lost applicant

"That was so hard. That was a nightmare. Some universities were asking for six weeks teaching experience but that was impossible when I was working full time. I went into so many schools but it was so hard to find a place as there are too many others trying to find a teaching experience position"

Career changer, applicant PGCE early years and primary

For example, one interviewee was thinking of returning to teaching after a career in the civil service and was recommended to find a school experience placement in order to give her some up to date experience. Whilst she did not want to be "spoon fed", she noted: "there was no resource to help me go and find the school experience placement. I just did not really know where to start". She therefore did not manage to find a placement which contributed to her decision not to continue with her idea of returning to teaching [Lost applicant].

Another interviewee was also frustrated that generally to get teaching experience, placements were unpaid:

“sure they'd give me the experience I need, and be able to work in the age range I want, but I wouldn't have any money to pay for my house, or food or anything, it just wasn't an option”

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

Even those working in the education sector could face challenges, some noted how they needed to get experience with a different age group (which could sometimes be facilitated by their schools) and a couple of interviewees also raised the issue of their experience in private schools not being accepted.

However where individuals were able to get some experience it helped them to confirm ‘by seeing and experiencing teaching in action’ whether teaching was the right option for them and to decide which age group they would prefer to teach (see also Chapter 2).

5.4.4 Limited opportunities

A group of Lost applicants in the survey felt they had limited availability of suitable courses nearby (29%, this was also the fourth highest ranked barrier) and this had put them off or deterred them from making an application. However this appeared to be more of a concern to those still considering making an application or in the process of making an application (37%), and was the most commonly cited challenge along with concerns about debt. It was also more common among those living in the North of England (and least likely to be reported as a barrier among those living in London and the South East)³³. The survey also indicates that limited availability of suitable options nearby was more likely to act as a barrier or challenge to those considering only one type of ITT – either School-led (School Direct, SCITT) or HEI-led – rather than those considering a wider range of options and perhaps more flexible in their choices. It would also suggest perceived limited availability of local options was more likely to affect those looking to apply for SCITT or School-Direct training places (which is counter-intuitive as these programmes were introduced to provide more locally accessible options, and thus highlights potential lack of awareness or visibility).

Location was a factor in many interviewees decisions. They spoke of looking for training options near to home, or that they could easily commute to (often due to their family commitments and/or housing commitments thus again indicating the centrality of existing commitments to decisions around ITT) which limited their options. This appeared to be particularly problematic when looking for School Direct

³³ No further detailed analysis on location was possible as cell sizes were too small when looking at region and ‘Lost’

Salaried ITT places which were perceived to be in short supply. Travelling too far to study would either require relocation which many could not or would not do, or would increase the study costs in terms of transport costs but also the additional childcare to cover the time spent commuting to prohibitive levels. Some interviewees talked about not having a driving licence which they felt narrowed their options even further.

“I can't look for accommodation over there, I can't cope with that it would just be too much. Financially, I wouldn't be able to do it”

Early career, Lost (lack of eligible qualifications) School Direct secondary

Interviewees were also concerned about whether, after completing training, they would be able to find work locally; again due to commitments tying them to a location but also because for many the attraction of becoming a teacher was to be able to support their local community (see Chapter 2).

The interviews identified that some individuals were frustrated about the lack of part-time study options (as part-time study would allow individuals to better balance their commitments and/or allow them to work part-time to help manage their finances), limited local options, and limited options to work with their preferred age group. For some individuals therefore they perceived a lack of suitable options, this may well reflect the reality of opportunities but could reflect a limited awareness and understanding of options (see below and also Chapter 3), and lack of information accessed.

5.4.5 Lack of appropriate and tailored information, advice and support

Some individuals felt confused about their options and lacked information and/or advice about what programmes would suit them, despite undertaking research, and this could prevent them from progressing with an ITT application. The online survey indicated that about a quarter of Lost applicants felt they lacked information about study options/routes into teaching (26%) or lacked advice and support during their decision-making process (22%). The proportions were very similar (although marginally lower) among the group of respondents who were still considering applying or had made an application for ITT (24% and 19%). They were also very similar among those considering early years ITT. Further analysis of the responses indicated that those still considering their options were more likely to feel they had experienced a lack of information than those who had already applied.

The interviews indicated that individuals tried to find information and some had been looking into training or re-training for several years but were confused by the changing names and nature of the supporting organisations and (from their perception) the shifting criteria (see above and also Chapter 3). Some also felt that

the information provided was not aimed at career changers, but instead was 'all about young people coming straight from university'. Others felt very alone when considering their options and found the information confusing:

"All you have is the written information on the page, on the website, but you have questions and there's no-one to ask - or there certainly wasn't when I was originally looking... when I did try contacting different universities... I just felt so unsupported, and there was no-one who really seemed available or who wanted to help me make that kind of decision. And I felt, if it's like this now, what's it going to be like later on?"

Early career, applicant, PGCE early years

"I had an Excel document with all the schools that were participating in it [School Direct], with a list of codes... it didn't really make a lot of sense to me, I battled my way through the information to dig out what I wanted to know, but it was a struggle. If I wasn't that interested, I would have given up pretty early on... I only found [the spreadsheet of schools] because I knew one of the schools that was doing the programme, and therefore I searched the school, and their programme, and that's how I found the rest of them, it wasn't like it was an easy Google search to find what schools in my region were doing School Direct."

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

Vicky

Vicky knew from an early age that she wanted to be a teacher and chose her GCSE's and A levels to help her along this path. She then took a four year BEd (with QTS) to provide the theoretical unpinning and preparation she felt she needed. She really wanted to work with early years and felt her degree did not give her enough time with this age group so has been working to manage her career towards early years and was looking into early years ITT. She had lots of questions about early years training but found it difficult to find the information. She wanted to know about what training was available to her (as someone already qualified), what the training could give her (benefits/future career options), the costs and the ways to fund the training. She looked into both the work based route and the university based route but felt the information and training was aimed at those working in nurseries or leaving university rather than those looking to change their teaching specialism.

Career changer, Lost (concerned about the costs and unsure of the benefits of ITT),
early years ITT

Of less frequent concern among Lost applicants and those considering or applying reported in the survey was lacking support or encouragement (both 5%). However

the interviews indicated that some encouragement from family, friends and employers would be appreciated, and when this was lacking could cause them to reconsider or doubt their decisions. For example one interviewee considering changing from a long career in accountancy spoke of how his friends and family emphasised that he already had a good job and questioned what they perceived as the risk of going into teaching. However he persevered and gained a place on a primary science PGCE.

5.4.6 Difficulties with the application process or system

The survey showed that respondents generally found it easy to find the information they needed from the Get Into Teaching website (although not all had used the website, either because they were not aware of it or did not see a need to use it, see also Chapter 4). Overall respondents also found it easy to follow the application process (45%) but a substantial minority (28%) found it difficult. Those who had applied or were in the process of applying for ITT programmes found both the website and general application process considerably easier to navigate than those Lost to the customer journey, as did those who were still studying or had only recently graduated. There was no significant difference in the experience of the Get Into Teaching website or the application process between those considering and/or applying for early years ITT and those who were considering other ITT programmes (despite the difference in application arrangements, see Chapter 4).

Table 5.6: Ease of finding information and the application process

	All %	Early years %	Non early years %
...of finding information			
Difficult	20.7	22.0	20.2
Neither	28.6	30.8	27.7
Easy	50.7	47.2	52.2
Base (N)	807	237	570
...of application*			
Difficult	28.1	25.0	27.1
Neither	27.4	32.1	28.9
Easy	44.5	43.0	44.0
Base (N)	497	240	737

Source: IES survey, 2015. All respondents (excludes don't know and not applicable);

*All respondents who applied for ITT (excludes don't know)

This is reflected in the survey questions about barriers and challenges, as 24% of Lost applicants reported that not being sure how or where to apply was a barrier to

them making an application and 18% found the application process complex. These were ranked as the sixth and eighth most significant barriers. In the typology of barriers, not being sure about the application process and finding it complex formed part of the informational group of barriers, the third most common set of issues preventing Lost applicants from continuing to application.

Very similar results were found for those still considering applying or had made an application (21% not sure how/where to apply and 18% finding the process complex) but generally the application process was ranked as a much lower concern (12th and 13th place) among those further along the customer journey. Other differences noticed were that those still considering making an application, those from a Black and minority ethnic background or those without a degree qualification were more likely to find the application process complex.

These results suggested that the application process itself could act as a barrier, particularly for those older individuals considering changing career and perhaps those who had not recently studied at university or college or had studied part-time (and therefore not used to the UCAS system), causing some individuals to drop-out of the customer journey. These individuals may welcome additional targeted support.

This was confirmed in the interviews. The interviews uncovered how some individuals found the application process – looking through all the options and making choices, filling in the online forms (particularly the personal statement), gathering references, and being interviewed for a place on a programme – both time consuming and challenging. One interviewee noted when he compared his application for a primary PGCE to his previous experience of applying for university:

“I was surprised about how many steps there were before you even got to interview, and that even then the interview was no guarantee”

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

Indeed, individuals noted how interviews or assessment days themselves were complex, and could involve panel interviews, tests, presentations, or preparing for a class. Some interviewees reported how they felt unprepared for these activities and could find the admission interviews confusing (such as feeling uncertain as to who was interviewing them and for which programmes). Those considering early years ITT also commented that there was no central application system and how instead they had to apply directly to the provider.

Other criticisms noted included: difficulties with the online forms, dealing with word limits on the forms, and lack of communication throughout the process (*‘there are many months when you just don’t hear anything’*) and particularly no feedback at the end. Interviewees expressed frustration with communication around training places,

noting how the places ‘*come out too late*’ leading to an ‘*application scramble*’. This meant they did not really have the opportunity to research and choose their favourite provider or indeed to choose from a full range of options. Whilst others were very frustrated about the lack of feedback when their applications had been unsuccessful, as they wanted to know why so they could make improvements, be better prepared and perhaps could try again. The lack of constructive feedback could leave individuals feeling that they were discriminated against, and that it would be hopeless to try and apply again in the future.

“Until the opening date for applications went live – which I now remember was mid-November or mid-October – you didn't know which schools were going to be offering School Direct salaried placements, which is a really stupid way of doing things, because it means the minute the application system went live, people would be putting in applications... You didn't know until then which schools were even offering the programme, and without knowing that, of course you wanted to speak to those schools before you put in an application, preferably you'd like to go visit them, to find out whether they're the sort of schools you want to work in, and that wasn't really possible because there was this crazy scramble to get applications in. They advised you at the time to get your application in as soon as possible, because it's a competitive system, so I remember bunging in an application, putting in three schools, essentially I did it on more or less geographic location to my house, the three nearest my house that looked vaguely suitable, that I could get to quite easily. I didn't have an opportunity really to go and visit them beforehand.”

Career changer, applicant, salaried School Direct

“I got to the interview stage, and I didn't get past that. I rang them up, because I wanted some feedback. I rang them twice, I emailed them twice, and I didn't get any response. So, I thought, well, this is just rubbish really, I don't want to work for an organisation that can't even answer emails, so I kind of gave up”

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult),
School Direct primary

There was also an example of a SKE (subject knowledge enhancement) course being cancelled at short notice, with no alternative offered, which stopped one interviewee from continuing with her application [career changer, Lost, secondary].

Several interviewees felt that the complex application process, often coupled with the requirements to meet perceived excessive, unnecessary and inflexible criteria (see above), meant they did not feel valued which could prevent them from continuing with an application:

“I don’t think I’m going to bother pursuing this anymore, it just seemed a little bit hard. I didn’t expect to be just welcomed with open arms, but I didn’t feel as though the Teacher Development Agency [sic] really minded whether I went back into teaching or not. When you’re under the impression that there is a shortage in a profession, you would have thought that there would have been a bit more encouragement.”

Career changer, Lost, secondary

“I had to do an assessment day [at university] with around 50, 60 people. The tasks were OK, I didn't mind the tasks, but the attitude of the interviewers... unnecessary harsh, I felt. They went out of their way to make you feel uncomfortable. I don't know whether that's part of their test to see whether you have the resilience to be a teacher or not. But simple things, I'd walk into the interview room... the table would be right in the corner, and you'd sit behind the table with it quite pushed in... it seemed to me that was on purpose to... pressure you. Then halfway through the day they publicly cull half of the people, in front of everyone – those who have got through have to walk past those who have not, and it felt it was really horrible and awkward. When you're trying to encourage people to be teachers, and you haven't got enough anyway, I didn't really get that”

Early career, applicant, secondary, PGCE

5.4.7 Concerns about teaching itself

Barriers and challenges were not only focused on the preparatory stages of the customer journey but also covered expectations beyond the ITT programme, essentially what would happen to individuals once they finished the course. Generally those Lost to the customer journey were less concerned about these aspects: 17% reported they were worried by the workload (on the course and of teachers); 14% were worried about the availability of jobs at the end of the course, and 13% were concerned about pay and pensions. However those still considering making an application or had made an application were more likely to worry about the workload (32%, ranked as the 4th most significant challenge), and employability (24%). Although the same proportion of applicants compared to Lost applicants (13%) felt the pay and pensions on offer to teachers could put them off.

Further analysis of the applicant group showed that workload was more likely to be a concern for those who were: applying or had applied (rather than just considering), female, younger, white, were still studying or had recently graduated. Workload was however less of a concern among early years applicants (25%).

Interviewees did indeed express concerns about the heavy workload and long working hours faced by teachers. They seemed a little apprehensive but felt aware of this issue, which they took into account in their decision making:

“teaching is a seven day commitment”

Career changer, Lost (would like to study part-time due to family commitments), university-led secondary

“Teachers definitely work a lot of hours...you’re expected to do a lot at home, after school and at weekends.”

Career changer, applicant, School Direct general primary

Employability concerns also featured strongly in the interviews, and interviewees were worried by the lack of a guaranteed job at the end of the training and indeed about the education sector as a whole. This was often linked to concerns around finance (see above) and a desire to remain local. So, for some, teaching became viewed as a risky option – too risky for them to make an application. Whereas for others, those moving on to make an application, although it had not deterred them it remained a real concern often coupled with a concern about lack of progression opportunities

“After I finish teacher training, would I just be back doing the same thing I was doing before the training, or would I be back in the dole queue looking for work?”

Career changer, Lost (due to financial concerns), School Direct, Primary

“The teaching sector is in constant flux and I want stability.... There is too much uncertainty.”

Career changer, Lost (due to lack of necessary qualifications),
PGCE primary

Perhaps another aspect to employability was the issue of whether the programme led to qualified teacher status (QTS) or not. However relatively few interviewees considering early years appeared to be deterred from making a full application when they found out that the programme would not confer QTS. The issue that early years options do not confer QTS appears to be an issue for only a certain segment of the early years group, those looking to continue in teaching but potentially with an older age group in the future. These were either using early years as a stepping stone/way in to teaching within a familiar or ‘less pressured’ environment or were not wholly decided between early years or primary. Some of these may be unaware that they would not be able to teach primary in a maintained setting without QTS and could effectively be blocked from their desired progression. Whereas the majority of those considering early years were looking to stay within the early years sector and to

progress to management roles or owning their own nurseries so QTS was not an issue (see also Chapter 2).

5.4.8 Lack of confidence

Of less frequent concern to Lost applicants in the survey were: lacking confidence in their study ability/ability to cope with the course (6%), in their subject knowledge (7%) or in their ability to manage classroom behaviour (6%). Confidence was also rarely ranked as a significant or primary barrier among Lost applicants. Thus when grouped together, confidence issues were the lowest ranked factor that could prevent an individual from pursuing ITT.

Confidence was however much more of an issue for applicants, who were relatively more concerned about their confidence to manage classroom behaviour (reported by 18%) and ability to cope with the course (17%). Concerns about managing classroom behaviour were considerable lower among those applying for early years programmes (10%).

Further analysis of the applicant group showed that those who were applying or had applied (rather than just considering), younger respondents, and those still studying or had recently graduated were significantly more likely to be concerned about their study ability than other groups. Similarly those more concerned about managing behaviour were female, younger and either still studying or only recently graduated. Female and younger respondents were also more likely to be concerned about their subject knowledge.

The in-depth interviews identified that lack of confidence was often linked to age and length of time since individuals were last in education. Here interviewees talked about not having used their degree subject knowledge for some time, or feeling that they were perhaps too old now to change careers to become a teacher.

“I wanted to do a year long subject enhancement course in maths to feel confident in teaching and refresh my knowledge before starting the PGCE, the closest university that I could commute to only offered this course for a few weeks during the summer which I didn't feel was enough.”

Survey response, Lost applicant

Robert

Robert after working in IT for several decades was looking to teaching IT in primary schools as he felt this age group is underserved with ICT training at this crucial development stage. He was concerned that his age was an issue 'teaching now is a young person's market' and he was worried that schools might discriminate against older career changers. However he eventually decided not to apply as he couldn't find a course that would allow him carry on with his work alongside studying and thus maintain his income.

Career changer, Lost (wanted part-time study) primary, all routes

Some interviewees talked about the challenges of studying, were worried about the level of support they would receive, and were thus somewhat daunted:

"I realised the course would be a lot of hard work. I was told on the day of the interview that trainees come in at 7.30 or 8am and leave at 6pm, so it's kind of a ten hour day on site, and then it doesn't finish at 6pm. You come home and have to prepare for the next day so you're talking about 12 to 13 hour shifts"

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult),
School Direct primary

"I need a certain level of support and I would then be nervous whether that would then be provided or whether they would be too busy or I'd be too much of a burden, things like that."

Early career, applicant, PGCE EY

Others, generally those who had made or were still considering making an application talked about their worries about classroom management.

Across all the interviews there was a sense that each person had their own story to tell, their own experiences, and individuals often felt that these experiences and their circumstances or preferences were different to the 'norm' and so felt the odd one out. This could affect confidence and motivation to proceed with the application; and the 'outsider' feeling could be amplified by the general information and support provided which appeared to be geared towards 'other' types of people (see above). Interviewees talked about information on key websites being dominated by stories and images of white young people and those taking perceived 'traditional pathways' to teaching (moving straight from university).

6 Areas for consideration

Understanding and discouraging drop-off from the customer journey is important for NCTL to ensure that all of those who are interested in and capable of progressing to ITT and into a teaching career are able to do so. This chapter draws on direct feedback from the survey and interview participants on how NCTL can help to influence and support the decision-making process and applications to ITT: essentially how barriers can be reduced and the attraction of ITT amplified. It also synthesises the key messages from across the research to make suggestions for NCTL to consider, recognising that the customer journey is highly individual and personal and thus extremely varied and that not all barriers that individuals face are within the sphere of influence for NCTL.

6.1 Suggestions to reduce barriers

One of the key research questions for this project was to understand more about those who are Lost to the customer journey and how support mechanisms can be focussed to most effectively support progression to successful application. This section considers how interviewees thought that some of those barriers and pressure points discussed in Chapter 5 could be addressed.

6.1.1 Information, advice and support

Feedback from respondents in general, was that there was no shortage of information available (other than perhaps less focused on early years routes and options). However, the information was felt to be narrowly focussed on younger people and recent graduates and so not applicable to a more diverse population (older people, those considering changing career, those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds or with disabilities). The information therefore needed to be **broadened** to relate to a more diverse candidate pool.

Another suggestion was for NCTL to make **more use of technology**, and social media in particular. The opportunity to directly ask questions via twitter or online webchats was welcomed as this could provide answers to questions that people had been unable to find on their own and thus potentially overcome a barrier to ITT. Further discussion of steps that could be taken to increase the utility of information, advice and support are presented later in this chapter.

6.1.2 Earning and learning

Difficulties fitting course requirements around existing commitments ranked among the highest of the barriers faced by those Lost to the journey and was often linked with financial considerations. Several Lost applicants gave feedback on the difficulties of potentially giving up an income to start ITT (early years or mainstream). Some were concerned that individuals do not have the ability to take a year out to re-train. **Part-time ITT** would have allowed interviewees to work and train at the same time, and interviewees felt there were very few (if any) part-time options available. Part-time options would be attractive for a number of reasons: they could provide a safety net for career changers so they would not have to give up work, and would enable people with caring responsibilities to continue working part-time and thus manage existing commitments.

“you're going to start at eight at finish at six, for a year, and then you have to go home and sort out your kids, and their learning, then you've got to prepare for the next day, that's quite a lot to expect really, for a mature person.”

Early career, Lost (found application process difficult),
School Direct primary

However there was a concern about the perceived value and resources available to part-time study. It was felt that part time options (if offered) should provide the same level of tuition/support and employability as full time courses; and that there should be part time employment options available once ITT has been completed. However the down side to part-time study acknowledged by interviewees was that it would increase the length of time they would have to wait until they were earning a teacher's salary and so some of those facing challenges balancing finances and commitments would still prefer to undertake ITT over one year.

“another year before I'm earning and qualified”

Career changer, applicant, secondary, SCITT

Linked to the need to earn whilst learning was the desire to see **more salaried places** and also **higher salaries offered** to encourage those who cannot take out loans or who have caring responsibilities and related childcare costs to take up ITT. A number of interviewees wanted to see more School Direct salaried places made available and they felt the paucity of places currently leads to intense competition which could put people off applying. Others talked about increasing the salaries offered as they felt the offer was relatively low, considering the skills and experience individuals (particularly those switching from other long and established careers) expected to bring to the role.

A further suggestion (from Lost applicants) was for a **childcare entitlement**, bursary or subsidy as for some individuals their childcare costs had made ITT prohibitive.

“Childcare is a really big issue, maybe I will be past that stage in a few years, but I really needed it”

Career changer, pending, PGCE EY and primary

6.1.3 Rigidity of requirements

There was frustration at the rigidity of the application requirements, with interviewees describing the ‘hoops’ they had to get through and reliance of training providers on set criteria.

Jimmy

‘It can be purely based on, you've got to do this course. Like, your life experience, what you've done in the past, what you've studied in the past. I think they should take all this into account, which I think they haven't...I was born in England, brought up in Spain, I'm fluent in Spanish. I just found the thing overcomplicated, like going back to square one, all the training again, I thought it's just too much... In the end I just didn't carry on, because there were so many possibilities, so many different ways of going into training, there must be a shorter way. They're asking for too much to get into teaching. I know obviously you can't just walk in to reception and say OK I'm here to teach, you have to train I absolutely agree with that, but I think, particularly in my case, they were overcomplicating the thing, because I have plenty of experience and I have references, I've done all my studies over there, I've got a degree over there,... they don't seem to take anything into account.’

Early career, Lost (due to ineligible qualifications), School Direct secondary

Suggestions here therefore focused on **reducing the complexity and rigidity of the application process**: opening up the application system earlier on in the year; later deadlines for completion of forms and securing references, increased flexibility in the recognition of relevant experience and qualifications, changes to the skills test, and more support with the application process.

Relevant Experience

In order to reduce barriers to applications, interviewees wished that **more and different types of experience should count as relevant** for training providers, examples given included Brownies leadership and play work. Many interviewees felt they had a lot of related experience but lacked school-based experience and experienced difficulties in securing placements; and called for greater support to help them (perhaps from NCTL):

“I think the one thing that is ambiguous is the school experience that you have to get before actually applying for the teacher training. I don't understand exactly, I don't think there's a certain amount of how much school experience you should have, or if there is, I'm not aware of it. I know some people who've had school experience, who were actually sent away, or rejected, to get more school experience and I think some information about that would be more useful or if there's not a set amount then how you can make the most of your school experience.”

Early career, applicant, PGCE secondary

Skills Tests

The skills tests were daunting and a major obstacle for a number of interviewees. Suggestions to help reduce this hurdle were to have **more options for skills tests** and information around location of test centres and **more of the online practice tests** which were considered ‘very useful’. One interviewee went a step further and suggested abandoning the skills tests altogether:

“Just get rid of the numeracy and literacy tests. They're not necessary, especially the three strikes and you're out rule”

Early career, applicant, PGCE, SCITT, secondary religious studies

Qualifications

Meeting the qualifications requirement of ITT courses was a concern for many and some had experience of their qualifications not being accepted when they came to apply – in particular adult numeracy courses or GNVQs. This was a particular issue for career changers who felt disadvantaged by grade inflation over time and less supported than recent graduates.

“at the moment... everything's being done for a quick win, you know, there's a load of people out there with degrees, lets encourage them to be teachers, let's throw some money at them, and in a year's time they'll be in the classroom and bang the teachers shortage has gone. But people like me who didn't go to university – and there's a lot of us – there's nothing there at all. No money to help me out giving up my job”

Career changer, applicant, university-led, maths

Other application requirements

Further suggestions to reduce difficulties faced with the application process included;

- **Personal statement:** more support could be provided to help with this aspect and the statement could be separated into thematic sections to make it more like job applications;
- **Interviews:** more notice and flexibility was called for from career changers, this would enable them to fit with existing commitments and understand further in advance what would be expected in this part of the process.

6.1.4 Early years

A key message from early years interviewees was that they were concerned about the lack of stability in the early years system and would like to see more clarity about the changes (and the implications of the changes for them) and **time for the system to bed-in**.

“Early years is in crisis, there are lots of changes and it's going through a transition period”

Early career, applicant, early years ITT

“They keep changing the goalposts, they have done throughout this year. So we think we're doing something, going in a particular way, and suddenly they'll come in and say, yeah, so, we're changing this, or, you now need to do this, or you need to do that, and it just makes it really difficult. I just feel that if they're going to put this in place, and invest so much of the public's money in training us up to professionalise the early years, they should make sure certain things are in place alongside that.”

Early career, applicant, PGCE EY

Relatively few were deterred from early years ITT due to the lack of QTS conferred on these courses, although it was an issue for some.

“EYTS is not the same status as QTS. They're meant to be equal but I don't think schools see it that way. Schools like PGCE so it can limited your job opportunities. You're told it's the same, but they're not considered that way.”

Career changer within education, applicant, early years ITT

6.2 Amplifying attraction

6.2.1 Information, advice and support

The main way that interviewees proposed to help to increase the attraction of ITT, or to help people move along the journey from thinking about ITT to applying, was for there to be improved information, advice and support.

For some, this simply meant **more information** for example, more information from providers on their course content, more information about the different options (or routes) for ITT, and more information and advertising about the 'second chance' offered by Apply 2³⁴:

“not fearing about having applications in by day one”

Career changer, applicant, primary, School Direct salaried

There were many positives comments about the support that was accessed (see Chapter 4 for more detail), for example the recruitment advisers that some could access through Premier Plus were generally seen to be very helpful. Interviewees (especially career changers) found it difficult to find the time to do all the research needed and so an **opportunity for a one-to-one discussion** with someone with specialist knowledge of the available provision, taking into account an individual's circumstances was welcomed and interviewees wished that others had that same opportunity

“Because there's lots of different places you can go [for information], I think knowing there was one point of contact for advice for anything and they would know everything.”

Early career, Lost (due to financial concerns and lack of information),
PGCE, secondary

“a named person that knows who you are and what you're doing, that's the single best thing”

Career changer, applicant, secondary maths, School Direct salaried

Allied to this, was a desire for **comprehensive, jargon-free information to be housed in one place** was seen by many as a way of improving the customer journey.

³⁴ Apply 2 is a second round of applications for ITT that opens in January through UCAS, although a candidate can enter Apply 2 later than this. It can be used where an applicant has been unsuccessful, withdrawn from their choices, or declined their offer(s).

“Difficult to find a site and compare, it's all individual and disjointed. Streamline it. Simplify it.”

Career changer, Lost (due to financial and childcare concerns), Uni, SCITT, School Direct, Teach First; primary

Suggestions to include in this information were:

- Visual representation of all possible routes and potential outcomes³⁵ (more specifically QTS or not) – taking people step by step from no qualifications through to teaching, including information or eligibility calculator for funding, bursaries and scholarships.

“Obviously there are rough guidelines – if you want to work at a school nearby, do School Direct, if you want the money, you can cross your fingers and hope there's a salaried position going, if you want to do the academic route you can go off to university, but that's... just information of what it is, not why it's right for you. I think that people could get put off, because they don't see all the options are there for some reason, so they think, there's nothing round nearby where I am, so, I can't get loans, I can't afford it. So, being aware of all of the different options, being able to see what sort of suits them.”

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

- Eligibility requirements – what qualifications are needed, what equivalents are accepted, including what exam boards
- Information on early years ITT to be given an equal footing

“Early years should be on an equal level to primary and secondary in all aspects. I still feel like it's a lot less known about and it's a lot more difficult to find out information about, and it's kind of the extra add on one rather than being on an equal to the PGCE.”

Early career, applicant, early years ITT

- Interactive elements, potentially a quiz or visual mapping of skills, abilities and interests to different types of training provision

“These are the things that you need to meet. It can list all the different options, and say this is good for this one, but it doesn't hit this one, and then it's like overall score, it seems like this one would be a better fit for

³⁵ For example the Association of School and College Leaders have produced their own diagram of the routes and pathways, included in this report in Appendix 1.

you due to your circumstances... it shows you if you're willing to sacrifice this thing, then this one will be the best option for you in the long run.”

Career changer within education, applicant, PGCE primary

- A kite mark or directory to identify which training providers offer robust training or employability
- Glossary of terms, in particular of teacher training provision types

Many interviewees also commented on the need for **more inclusive marketing** materials and believed that marketing could be made more attractive and relevant to them by including more examples of people from diverse backgrounds. One interviewee thought that the prevalence of white, non-disabled faces ‘doesn’t represent the global community’. As discussed in Chapter 5, each person had their own story to tell and felt different from the ‘norm’ and that marketing was aimed at ‘other’ types of people. Career changers (those older and in work) also wanted to see more examples of ‘people like them’ within marketing materials:

“I'd like to see profiles saying “it doesn't matter if you are over 40, we want those applications from you”...some reassurance...a little quote and a little profile... saying it's not just for youngsters and mid-life career changers...[saying to +50s] there is still time to change and have a worthwhile career”

Career changer, Lost (concerned about the political situation affecting the educational sector), School Direct/SCITT secondary STEM

“maybe having more male advocates as part of a national advertising programme, or having them more accessible at universities, in some way, to encourage males to apply. Not just encouraging you to apply because we need more males”

Career changer, applicant, PGCE primary

In addition, one suggestion from someone considering early years ITT was that this type of marketing information could be sent directly to nurseries to raise awareness both among employees and employers.

More realistic view of the demands of ITT were sought by interviewees, and for this to be unfiltered by training providers or other official sources, People wanted to see an acknowledgement of potential difficulties that could be faced along the way, such as managing workloads with other commitments when training. Also, once teaching, they also wanted to know about support structures for NQTs and pay for non-specialist subjects.

“to acknowledge that it is not all a sunny right of enlightenment and satisfaction for all, then I could take it a bit more seriously”

Career changer, Lost (concerned about the political situation affecting the educational sector), School Direct/SCITT secondary STEM

One final suggestion for increasing the availability of advice and support was to **increase the number of open days and road shows**. As seen in Chapter 4 these were very well received by interviewees. They suggested that more open days run by an independent organisation (like NCTL) in a wider variety of settings would increase opportunities to learn more about different ITT types:

“at the library, at centres, places where people gather - give leaflets around the houses, in community cafes or centres”

Career changer, Lost (due to financial concerns), PGCE EY and primary

6.2.2 School experience

Gaining experience in schools was seen as a good way to make sure that teaching is the ‘right option’ for individuals as it provides opportunities to test themselves in a real school environment (test the strength of their motivations and expectations), helps them to refine choices and learn about the UK education system. Interviewees felt it was important that those considering ITT understood the value of school-based experience (beyond just obtaining the necessary ITT entry requirements) and that people should aim to get more than the minimum required: ‘Get as much experience as possible’, and ‘start as early as possible’.

6.2.3 Other suggested improvements

Other suggested improvements for the customer journey to ITT included.

- Improve feedback from interviews so that lessons can be learnt for future applications.
- More clarity when training providers and schools overlap so that people do not inadvertently waste an application.
- Avoid changing the goalposts so often; in particular raising the qualification requirements for early years ITT
- Have a programme to encourage people from abroad into teaching, perhaps similar to the approach used with nursing.

6.3 Overcoming barriers: Suggestions for NCTL

Drawing on the suggestions from interviewees and the individual experiences and stories of those who were successful and those who were unsuccessful in their journeys to ITT, this section presents a number of suggestions that NCTL might like to consider to help overcome barriers and ensure challenges do not deter applications to ITT. These will have differing resource implications and may well be beyond the remit as well as budget for NCTL; some may also question the quality thresholds established by the department to ensure a quality teaching supply.

Financial barriers. An obvious way to overcome financial barriers would be to provide free training and financial support for the living and childcare costs of trainees which would have significant budgetary implications for NCTL. However NCTL does already provide a generous support package for some programmes and some types of trainees through scholarships, bursaries and salaried places. A less resource intensive and more immediate means to tackle financial barriers would be to raise awareness of the support it does provide. The NCTL therefore needs to give a clear picture of the support it provides and the related eligibility criteria, and to provide personal support where appropriate to help individuals to understand the complexities of funding. However individuals also need: a) clear information about the true costs of training and how they differ by provider; b) information about other potential methods beyond bursaries and scholarships of financing study costs; and c) information about likely pay and progression opportunities once qualified to help them weigh up the risks versus rewards. This information may need to be packaged differently for those coming to ITT from different backgrounds – those looking to change career, those looking to formalise their experience in the education sector, as well as university leavers. Finally, School Direct Salaried places are particular popular and competitive, and more salaried places may be required.

Lifestyle/personal barriers – fitting in with existing commitments. Although there is little NCTL can do here to change individuals' circumstances they can: a) help individuals to understand the realities of training (particularly for people like them) so they can decide if they can make sufficient 'space' to study; b) encourage providers to communicate in advance the structure/commitment of the training programme to enable individuals to plan work and childcare effectively; c) explore where training can be flexible, and make flexible options more visible; and d) look at the spread of provision to ensure training can be local for individuals wherever they live (see below); actions a and b would be relatively easy to achieve but c and d would require substantial change.

Another action NCTL could consider that would be somewhat simpler to implement is to be ready to re-engage individuals, if and when their circumstances change, by: keeping in touch with those who registered but didn't apply for ITT; and through

advertising campaigns targeted at older individuals and highlighting any changes in the types of programmes or the accessibility of programmes, when these are introduced.

Course accessibility barriers – meeting the eligibility criteria. The department have set criteria to meet to be eligible for ITT, but there is confusion around these, with some myths springing up. NCTL could do more here to clarify the criteria and the related rules and regulations (and de-bunk myths) around: the skills tests; the qualifications requirements (GCSEs and first degrees), and work experience (length and level, what counts and what does not). They could also provide a clear justification of the eligibility requirements as currently they are felt by some to be inflexible and unjustly stringent. A more substantial change would be to look to see where flexibilities could be reasonably made without compromising real quality requirements, and this may require further research including scenario testing and statistical modelling.

More specific (and less resource intensive changes) could include:

- For the skills test in particular, NCTL could look into: making tests easier to book with more appointments and more centres; having more practice papers available; providing mentoring to help those with confidence problems; and revisit the time limits and number of attempts permitted.
- For the school-based experience, NCTL could: provide more support to help individuals access local schools and nurseries; provide materials to help individuals to help themselves, putting them on a more even footing with those who have friends and family working in schools, such as a good practice guide in how to approach schools, and a list of contacts; and provide schools and nurseries with materials explaining the importance of work experience prior to training (to encourage them to be receptive to requests for placements).
- For the qualifications, NCTL need to provide clearer guidance on how to check the equivalency of qualifications gained overseas, and whether those wishing to re-enter teaching after training some time ago or those wishing to refocus their teaching specialism can access (or are required to undertake) training. They may also consider having an appeals process, as this clearly is an emotive issue for many individuals.

Informational and location barriers – finding a suitable programme: NCTL could provide more information about the range of opportunities available within localities. However this needs to be provided with enough time to allow individuals to fully research and make their choices, so needs to be supported by training providers (schools and universities). In addition, NCTL could look at the geographical spread of programme types and School Direct Salaried places in particular, and look to fill

cold spots with more opportunities to enable individuals to train locally. This would however require substantial change and resources. The uneven spread of training provision is highlighted as a concern in the 2015 Ofsted annual report (Ofsted, 2015), where it was reported that there are *'large areas of the country with little or no secondary teacher training available, including the more isolated parts of the South East, North West and the East of England'*.

Informational barriers – accessing appropriate information, advice and support. There is a wealth of information readily accessible from the internet to those considering ITT but individuals wanted a key impartial source, a 'one stop shop': that they could trust, that would be up-to-date, and understandable (jargon free). This would need to summarise the key points but also provide further detail when required, and offer the potential to tailor information to users' needs and circumstances. Individuals come to ITT from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences and can often feel that the information provided is aimed at 'others'. Tailoring the information and providing support so individuals can interact with a real person and ask questions (and can then save the responses to use as a reference source) helps individuals feel they understand the options and can make the best choice to suit their preferences. This also helps individuals to feel valued, which was a key draw towards teaching as a career. NCTL have the Get Into Teaching website which is a key information resource and one that has been undergoing considerable change. The profile of this source could be raised and the content continue to be adapted so that it does become the one stop shop and offer the tailoring opportunities that individuals crave.

Poor information and a lack of responsive communication can put individuals off and make the customer journey seem not worth their while. Providers play a key role here, and they need to be aware of the importance of positive, expedient, responsive and supportive communication when approached. Many undertake a range of outreach activities to engage with a variety of potential candidates and engender an interest in ITT, and this is appreciated. However provider based activity can be regarded by potential trainees/students as biased (towards a particular type of programme) or overly positive; so individuals still need an objective and realistic picture of the whole range of training options as a first port of call. NCTL could work to encourage providers to enhance their communication before, during and after the application process; and to stress the importance of provider communication in helping a potential trainee feel valued and positively influence their choices.

Informational barriers - the application process. Although the majority of individuals once they reach the actual application process find it relatively easy, a substantial minority face challenges completing the application and being successful at interview. Those further from the education system and not used to UCAS may have particular difficulties. NCTL could provide those individuals with targeted extra

support and guidance perhaps with the personal statement and gathering references.

Individuals also need timely information to enable them to fully research and choose providers, clear information so they know what to expect in interviews and assessment and can prepare effectively, to feel engaged and valued during the application process through regular communication and progress updates, and to be provided with constructive feedback. Providers again play a key role, and can be pivotal in whether individuals successfully achieve a place on a programme or feel motivated to try again.

Self confidence and teaching profession barriers – concerns about a teaching career. Across all the interviews there was a sense that each person had their own story to tell, their own experiences, and individuals often felt that these experiences and their circumstances or preferences were different to the 'norm' and so felt the odd one out. This could affect confidence and motivation to proceed with the application; and the 'outsider' feeling could be amplified by the general information and support provided which appeared to be geared at 'other' types of people. Self-confidence is a difficult barrier for NCTL to tackle, but there are various actions NCTL can take. Here NCTL could provide tailored information about options, tailored support taking account of the different likely anxieties and challenges of different groups of potential candidates (outlined in this research study), and provide a variety of case studies presenting the realities of both the training but also a teaching career so individuals could make a true appraisal of the risk versus reward and see their own stories reflected in the experience of others.

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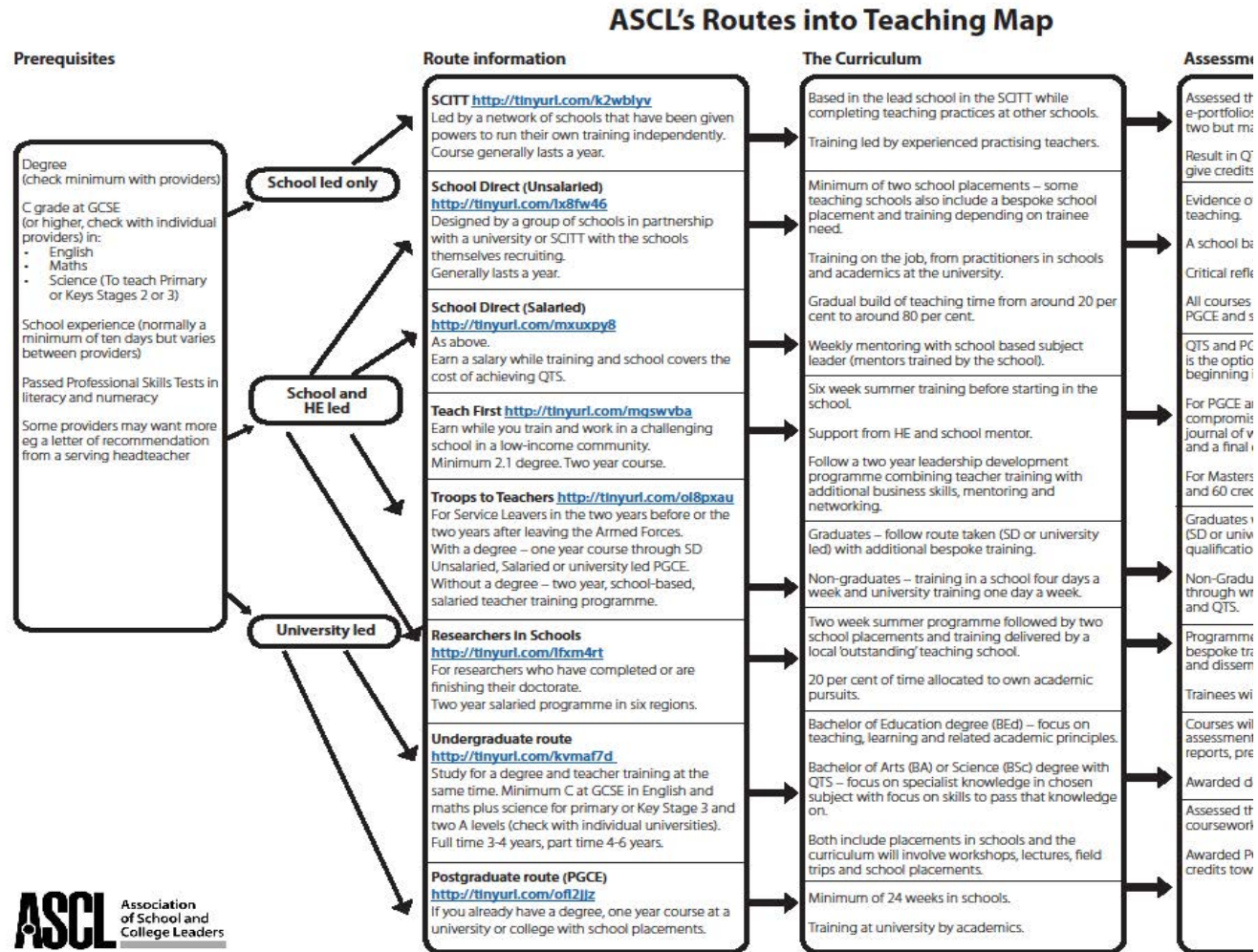
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Appendix 1: ASCL's Routes into Teaching Map



Appendix 2: Programme types

School Direct (SD):

School Direct (SD) This route was introduced in the academic year 2012 to 2013, for postgraduates and can be delivered in partnership with an HEI or SCITT. Schools select the candidates they need (with a job in mind) and courses are designed based on the skills they are looking for in a newly qualified teacher (NQT). School Direct courses generally last a year, and participants train in at least two schools. Most award a PGCE and all result in QTS. Trainees can either receive a salary, **School Direct (salaried)**, SD(S), and be employed by the school or pay their own fees **School Direct (fee)**, SD(fee). To qualify for School Direct (salaried) applicants require around three years' work experience.

Higher Education institutions (HEI):

Undergraduate – these 3-4 year courses result in a degree and QTS. The types of degree that lead to QTS are - a bachelor of education (BEd) degree, bachelor of arts (BA) and bachelor of science (BSc) degrees with QTS. Some can take two years if participants already have undergraduate credits from previous studies.

Postgraduate – result in a PGCE and QTS. These courses blend academic training with placements with at least two schools lasting a minimum of 24 weeks.

School centred ITT (SCITT):

Groups of schools that offer practical, hands-on teacher training delivered by experienced, practising teachers based in their own school or at a school in their network. Training is for one year and most include a PGCE

Teach First:

A charity that runs a salaried, two-year leadership development programme, placing highly qualified graduates in schools in deprived areas.

Early years:

Graduate entry – typically a year of full-time study, with a £7,000 grant to cover course fees as well as bursaries of up to £9,000 for graduates with a first class degree³⁶ and £4,000 for graduates with 2:1 degrees

School Direct (Early Years) graduate entry – enables you to train within a group of schools or nurseries with the expectation of employment once you achieve early years teacher status

Graduate employment-based – a one-year part-time route for graduates working in an early years setting who need further training to demonstrate the Teachers' Standards (Early Years). Funding of £14,000 is available, this covers course fees of up to £7,000. The remaining £7,000 is a contribution to the costs incurred by your employer, for example supply cover or salary enhancement

Undergraduate – a full-time three to four year route leading to EYTS for those studying for a degree in an early childhood-related subject, with tuition fee loans available from Student Finance England (SFE)

Assessment Only – taking place over three months, this self-funded route is ideal for graduates with experience of working with children from birth to age five, who meet the Teachers' Standards (Early Years) with no need for further training, for example an early years teacher from overseas

Source: Get into Teaching website <https://getintoteaching.education.gov.uk>

³⁶ These were the rates for 2014/15 and 2015/16, the bursaries for 2016/17 are £5,000

For Appendix 3: Additional tables from the survey; Appendix 4: Online survey questions; and Appendix 5: Discussion guide, see separate annexe.



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