



Department
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Emerging findings from the NPQ evaluation: Interim Report 2

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Glossary of terms

ASO	Additional Support Offer (now known as EHCO)
CPD	Continual Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
ECT	Early Career Teacher
EHCO	Early Headship Coaching Offer
GBP	Group-based provider of early years learning, development and care, including private, voluntary and independent settings and childminders
LNPQ	Leadership National Professional Qualification
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
MI	Management Information
NPD	National Pupil Database
NPQ	National Professional Qualification
NPQEL	NPQ for Executive Leadership
NPQEYL	NPQ or Early Years Leadership
NPQH	NPQ for Headship
NPQLBC	NPQ for Leading Behaviour and Culture
NPQLL	NPQ for Leading Literacy
NPQLT	NPQ for Leading Teaching
NPQLTD	NPQ for Leading Teacher Development
NPQSL	NPQ for Senior Leadership
SBP	School-based provider of early years learning, development and care
Setting	An educational setting which includes, schools, group and school-based early years settings. Used in the text to cover a range of settings. When appropriate, more specific types of settings are used to differentiate findings.

SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SNPQ	Specialist National Professional Qualification
SPA	Sampling Point A - a survey completed when an individual starts their qualification
SPB	Sampling Point B – a survey undertaken when an individual has completed their qualification
SPC	Sampling Point C – a survey undertaken 12 months after an individual has completed their qualification
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
SWC	School Workforce Census
TRN	Teacher Reference Number

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This research report was written before the new UK government took office on 5 July 2024. As a result, the content may not reflect current government policy.

Executive Summary

The DfE commissioned CFE Research to deliver a process and impact evaluation of the 2021 reformed National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). NPQs are professional development courses which are designed to support teachers and leaders to develop skills, progress their careers and improve school outcomes. From autumn 2021 six reformed leadership (LNPQs) and specialist NPQs (SNPQs) were delivered. From 2022 the offer broadened to include a specialist NPQ for leading literacy and a leadership NPQ for Early Years leadership.

The evaluation aims to understand how the latest reforms are being implemented and what the effects of undertaking the NPQs are on the development of participants' leadership skills, teacher retention and progression, participants' school colleagues, and school attainment. This report presents interim findings based on surveys with NPQ cohorts between autumn 2021 and spring 2024 and interviews with a comparison group. The full and final findings of the evaluation are due to be reported in 2026.

Methodology

The findings presented in this report are based on fieldwork completed to date and may vary from the findings presented in the final report. They are based on the following research methods:

- A baseline Sampling Point A (SPA) survey was completed by those undertaking selected NPQs as of Cohort 2, 3 and 4 (covering all eight NPQs). This survey was carried out in the first few months of participants starting their NPQ. A total of 8,857 responses to the SPA survey were received, equating to a response rate of 21%.
- The Sampling Point B (SPB) survey was completed by Cohort 2 SNPQ participants (the only Cohort who had completed their NPQ at the time of writing this report). This was undertaken when an individual had completed their qualification, and only included the following NPQs: Leading Teaching (NPQLT), Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD) and Leading Behaviour and Culture (NPQLBC). A total of 1,002 responses were received to the SPB survey, equating to a response rate of 18%.

Comparator depth interviews were undertaken with 24 teachers or senior leaders who were currently employed in schools where no-one was undertaking an NPQ or had not undertaken a 2017 reformed NPQ.

Survey data presented in this report has not been weighted; therefore, caution should be applied when interpreting the results as they may not be representative of **all** participants undertaking an NPQ.

Key findings

Awareness of the NPQ reforms and recruitment

More than half (54%) of all SPA survey respondents were aware that the NPQs had been reformed prior to applying. Awareness of the reforms (either before, during or after applying) was higher for Leadership NPQ (LNPQ) participants (89%) than for those undertaking a Specialist NPQ (SNPQ) (77%). 44% of LNPQ respondents stated that the reforms influenced their decision, at least in part, to undertake an NPQ, whilst less than one-third of SNPQ respondents (29%) would have undertaken an LNPQ in the absence of the SNPQs. Participants reported that they commonly heard about the reformed NPQs from their line manager or senior colleagues (44%) or other colleagues in their setting (17%). Local authority or regional support (34%) was important for participants undertaking the NPQ in Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL) in group-based provider (GBP) settings.

Participants undertook NPQs for a range of reasons. The most common were related to learning new knowledge and skills (mean score of 6.3 out of 7; 95% agreement), improving pupil/child outcomes (6.3; 90% agreement) and increased knowledge of the latest evidence (6.1; 90% agreement).

Applying for NPQs

Most participants were satisfied with their application experience (mean score of 6.0 out of 7; 88% agreement). Senior leaders (6.1) were more satisfied than those in all other roles (5.9), and NPQEYL participants from GBP settings were less satisfied (5.7) than colleagues from school-based provider (SBP) settings (6.0). Aspects of the application process that a minority of participants thought would increase their satisfaction levels (as reported in an open response question) included improved provider communication and simplifying the process. The most commonly perceived concern held by applicants (before starting their NPQ) was that they might struggle to complete the qualification outside of working hours (41%). This was more common for female participants (44%) and those working part-time (44%).

The scholarship funding for NPQ participants has been crucial to many participants, with only a small proportion (12%) being certain that their school would have funded their NPQ in the absence of this. Additionally, a key reason why participants chose to complete an NPQ over other CPD was the availability of DfE funding (51%), although it

being a nationally recognised qualification was also a common reason (38%). When participants had choice over their provider, they considered provider reputation (31%), colleague recommendations (30%), and the geographical location of face-to-face sessions (26%).

SNPQ experiences of content and delivery

Satisfaction with NPQ content was fairly high amongst participants (mean score 5.5 out of 7; 80% agreement), although satisfaction rates were slightly lower for tailoring the qualification to setting context (4.8; 61% agreement) and tailoring of the qualification to the individual (4.9; 65% agreement). Overall, most participants were satisfied with the delivery of their NPQ (mean score 5.4 out of 7; 77% agreement), although the lowest satisfaction levels were related to the balance between online and face-to-face delivery (4.9; 61% agreement). The most reported valuable delivery methods were those that were face-to-face, including in-person teaching sessions (5.6; 83% agreement) and in-person peer learning sessions (5.6; 81% agreement), with lower satisfaction levels given to pre-recorded online delivery methods (4.6 out of 7; 65% agreement).

Most participants described being supported by their provider (mean score 5.8 out of 7; 78% agreement) and their setting whilst completing their NPQ (5.3 out of 7; 73% agreement). A lower satisfaction score was given for the feedback they received from their provider on work they completed during their NPQ (4.7 out of 7; 58% agreement). Senior and middle leaders provided a higher mean score (5.7 and 4.9 out of 7) when asked if their setting had given them opportunities to implement learning for their NPQ when compared with teachers (4.5). The most commonly identified challenge (when asked) for participants completing their NPQ was being able to balance the time to complete the NPQ with their day-to-day role (56%).

SNPQ self-reported outcomes and impacts

Across all SNPQs, the majority of participants self-reported improvements across all competencies outlined in the NPQ frameworks (between 66% and 90% of participants reported an improvement for each competency) when they were asked to score themselves retrospectively during the SPB survey. Alongside the development of these skills, individuals also reported an increase in their readiness for the role they were studying for (85%), confidence in the evidence base (89%) and confidence to implement changes in their setting (88%). Additionally, most participants thought that their NPQ had met their development needs (mean score 5.4 out of 7; 81% agreement). On completion of the qualification, 84% of participants agreed they would recommend their NPQ to colleagues. Whilst completing the qualification, a sizeable minority (16%) of SNPQ participants reported gaining responsibilities associated with their NPQ (e.g. leading behaviour and culture in a school), moving into a new role (37%) or taking on additional

responsibilities (not necessarily related to the NPQ content) as part of their current role (20%). Over half (56%) of all participants who had moved into a new role or had gained additional responsibilities agreed that their NPQ had strongly contributed to them securing their new position. In addition to career progression, participants identified a range of short-term impacts that they believe they have achieved at a setting level as a direct result of taking part in the NPQ (e.g. 78% stated they had improved teaching and learning standards in their setting). Only a small proportion (15%) reported no impacts on their setting so far.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The DfE commissioned CFE Research to deliver a process and impact evaluation of the 2021 reformed National Professional Qualifications (NPQs). This evaluation focuses solely on participants who receive full scholarship funding, which is available for teachers and leaders who work in state-funded settings across England. This evaluation includes NPQ Cohorts between autumn 2021 and spring 2024. The aim is to understand how these latest reforms are being implemented and what the effects of undertaking the NPQs are on the development of participants' leadership skills, teacher retention and progression, participants' school colleagues, and school attainment.

The 2021 reformed NPQs

The current delivery of NPQs is part of a wider set of [teacher development reforms](#) which together create a 'golden thread' of development which is available through the entirety of a teacher's career and is rooted in the best available evidence.

A new suite of six qualifications was first delivered in autumn 2021, replacing the previous 2017 NPQ courses. Three existing qualifications in Senior Leadership, Headship, and Executive Leadership have been reformed to ensure that they reflect the latest and best evidence, and together these are referred to as Leadership NPQs (LNPQs). The 2017 NPQ in Middle Leadership has been replaced with new NPQs for teachers and school leaders who wish to broaden and deepen their expertise in specialist areas (SNPQs).

The courses are designed to be completed flexibly around professionals' personal and professional responsibilities. This includes a new method of summative assessment designed to minimise the workload burden on participants whilst still providing an opportunity for them to apply their knowledge. The reformed LNPQ courses will typically be delivered over a period of 18 months, whilst the study of SNPQs typically lasts for 12 months.

In October 2022, two new qualifications were introduced: a specialist NPQ for Leading Literacy and a leadership NPQ for Early Years Leadership. As such, for the academic year 2022/23, the full suite of qualifications available consisted of the following:¹

- SNPQs:

¹ This part of the evaluation took place before the development of the NPQs for Leading Primary Mathematics and Special Education Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO). The NPQ for Leading Primary Mathematics began delivery in February 2024 and the NPQ for SENCOs is due to begin delivery in autumn 2024.

- NPQ in Leading Teaching (NPQLT): Participants will learn how to lead the teaching and learning of a subject, year group or phase. Qualification launched in autumn 2021.
- NPQ in Leading Behaviour and Culture (NPQLBC): Participants will learn how to create a culture of good behaviour and high expectations in which staff and pupils can thrive. Qualification launched in autumn 2021.
- NPQ in Leading Teacher Development (NPQLTD): Participants will learn how to become a teacher educator and successfully support teachers in their school to expand their skills. Qualification launched in autumn 2021.
- NPQ in Leading Literacy (NPQLL): Participants will learn how to develop literacy across their school and recognise the importance of literacy for pupils' academic achievement, well-being and success in life. Qualification launched in autumn 2022.
- LNPQs:
 - NPQ in Senior Leadership (NPQSL): Participants will develop their leadership knowledge and expertise to improve outcomes for teachers and pupils in their school. Qualification launched in autumn 2021.
 - NPQ in Headship (NPQH): Participants will develop the knowledge that underpins expert school leadership and apply it to become outstanding headteachers. Qualification launched in autumn 2021.
 - NPQ in Executive Leadership (NPQEL): Participants will develop the expertise needed to become an outstanding executive leader, leading change and establishing supportive networks to drive improvement across a group of schools or multi-academy trusts. Qualification launched in autumn 2021.
 - NPQ in Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL): Participants will develop their leadership knowledge and skills to improve delivery of high-quality early education and care as well as staff development, whilst also implementing improvements in their setting. Qualification launched in autumn 2022.

Each qualification is underpinned by a [content framework](#) that sets out what participants should know, and know how to do, after completing an NPQ. Alongside the NPQH, the Department also introduced, in 2021, a support offer specifically aimed at new headteachers. This offer must be based on the NPQH framework, enabling headteachers to apply the best evidence, knowledge and skills in their own context. For those starting their course in the academic year 2021/22, this offer was branded as the Additional

Support Offer (ASO) and was available to headteachers who had been in the role for less than two years. In April 2022, the offer was rebranded as the Early Headship Coaching Offer (EHCO), and the eligibility criteria were expanded from the first two years to the first five years in headship.

The Department originally contracted nine lead providers to deliver the reformed NPQs in different regions across the country to ensure that professionals at all levels can access this support regardless of their location. An additional provider was contracted to offer NPQs, resulting in ten providers for Cohort 3.² Not all providers deliver all eight NPQs. Providers will deliver two cohorts of courses during each academic year, namely in autumn and spring. NPQ providers are subject to a quality assurance mechanism through an Ofsted inspection to ensure that they offer the best support and development for participants and their settings.

Since autumn 2021, fully-funded scholarships have been available to NPQ participants working in state-funded educational settings. Scholarships between the academic years 2021/22 and 2023/24 were funded through the government's education recovery programme.

The reformed NPQs are designed to achieve a range of benefits for both participants and schools. Key desired outcomes for participants include enhanced career progression, improved confidence, competence, knowledge and skills, and increased job satisfaction. Outcomes for settings include increased staff retention and pupil attainment along with improvements in culture.

Evaluation methodology

CFE is implementing a mixed-methods approach for the process and impact evaluation. The approach is designed to explore participants' motivations and experiences of applying for and undertaking an NPQ, as well as assessing any impact. Impact will be considered in two ways: 1) through participants' self-reported impacts and 2) through analysis of administrative data. The perceptions of participants' line managers and colleagues are also being captured to provide a holistic understanding of the changes achieved as a result of the programme, particularly at the setting level.

The evaluation includes the following methods:

- Participant surveys at three sampling points.
- A setting survey with colleagues of those undertaking an NPQ.

² For Cohorts 1 and 2 there were nine providers, which increased to ten for Cohort 3. From Cohort 4 onwards, one of the providers will cease to operate and their future delivery will be subsumed by the newest provider, meaning that there will be a return to nine lead providers delivering the NPQ frameworks.

- Depth interviews with a range of stakeholders including participants, colleagues and providers.
- Comparator depth interviews with schools not undertaking NPQs.
- Analysis of administrative data to understand the impact of the programme utilising quasi-experimental methods.

For the purpose of this evaluation and reporting, reference is made to Cohorts. Cohorts refer to the groups of participants and when they started their qualification:

- Cohort 2: Started their qualification in February 2022. SNPQ participants ended their qualification in May 2023 and LNPQ participants ended in November 2023.
- Cohort 3: Started their qualification in October 2022. SNPQ participants ended their qualification in January 2024 and LNPQ participants will end in July 2024.
- Cohort 4: Started their qualification in February 2023. SNPQ participants will end their qualification in May 2024 and LNPQ participants will end in November 2024.

The full methodology will be detailed in the final evaluation report. The following section summarises the methods on which this report's findings are based.

NPQ participant surveys

Surveys will be used to understand participants' awareness of the NPQ reforms, their decision making around choosing and applying for an NPQ, their experience of delivery, and their perceptions of impact.

The impacts of the NPQs will be assessed at the qualification level, as well as in aggregate, to understand differences in the content and outcomes achieved. To enable change to be measured, NPQ participants will be surveyed at the baseline (Sampling Point A (SPA), when participants first start their NPQ), and at two subsequent sampling points: SPB (when participants successfully complete their NPQ) and SPC (12 months after completing their NPQ).³ The surveys will collect formative information on their motivations for participating and their experience of delivery. These surveys will produce self-reported measures of impact from the view of the participant.

Surveys include a number of outcome and impact measures. For the measures focused on confidence and skills development, participants are asked paired statements in the SPB survey where they rate themselves when completing the qualification and retrospectively on starting the qualification. These questions were not asked in the SPA survey, as previous NPQ evaluations (and wider research studies) indicate that individuals often overestimate their skills and abilities before taking part in CPD. People assess their own skill levels by comparing themselves to others—the 'others' often being

³ SPC has not yet been disseminated to any Cohorts of participants.

those who make up their peer group.⁴ Individuals therefore commonly overestimate their abilities. Following exposure to different individuals, CPD and training, and/or a new work environment, they may realise they are less competent at something than they originally thought. This can lead to individuals reporting lower skill levels than previously, as their awareness and understanding of a task has increased. Whilst this is a more accurate way of assessing change, it does rely on the ability of an individual to accurately recall their skills at the start of the NPQ.

For outcome and impact measures which rely on an individual accurately recalling how they would rate something at the time (e.g. job satisfaction, intentions to stay in the teaching profession) or those based on their knowledge at that time point (e.g. knowledge of career pathways), the question is asked in the SPA and SPB survey. Analysis is then only undertaken on a longitudinal dataset where individuals respond to both surveys. Within the report this analysis is highlighted as 'longitudinal'. It is also important to note that some questions rely on participants' recall or their assessment of what they would have done in hypothetical scenarios. The findings from these questions do not provide a robust counterfactual but provide some understanding of would have happened if the reforms NPQs were not available, or the participants had not undertaken an NPQ.

Survey data presented in this report has not been weighted; therefore, caution should be applied when interpreting the results, as they may not be representative of **all** participants undertaking an NPQ.

Sampling Point A

The baseline SPA survey was completed by those undertaking selected NPQs in Cohorts 2, 3 and 4. This survey was carried out in the first few months of participants starting their NPQ (see Appendix 1 for the fieldwork dates). The online survey was sent via email to all DfE-funded participants identified in the Management Information (MI) data provided to the DfE by lead providers. Up to three reminder emails were sent to participants during the fieldwork period.⁵

A total of 8,857 responses to the SPA survey were received, which equates to a response rate of 21%. Table 1 presents a breakdown of the responses achieved for each qualification by Cohort.

⁴ Alicke, Mark D.; Olesya Govorun (2005). "The Better-Than-Average Effect". In Mark D. Alicke, David A. Dunning, Joachim I. Krueger. *The Self in Social Judgment. Studies in Self and Identity*. Psychology Press. pp.85–106.

⁵ The number of reminders sent depended on the response rates achieved and timing of the surveys around school holidays.

Table 1: Number of survey completions at SPA, by qualification

Qualification name	Cohort 2	Cohort 3	Cohort 4
Leadership NPQs			
NPQ for Executive Leadership	125	128	115
NPQ for Headship	387	434	283
NPQ for Senior Leadership	919	994	6 ⁶
NPQ for Early Years Leadership	N/A	389	279
Specialist NPQs			
NPQ for Leading Teaching	875	719	410
NPQ for Leading Teacher Development	519	389	193
NPQ for Leading Behaviour and Culture	425	378	255
NPQ for Leading Literacy	N/A	419	216
Total	3,250	3,850	1,757
Response rate for each Cohort	23%	20%	19%

Sampling Point B

The SPB survey was completed by Cohort 2 SNPQ participants (this was the only Cohort who had completed their NPQ at the time of writing this report). The survey was undertaken around two months after participants successfully completed their NPQ (see Appendix 1 for the fieldwork dates so far). E-mail addresses were available for all individuals awarded a DfE-funded NPQ, and the online survey was emailed to all DfE-funded participants as identified in the MI. This was sent via three methods:

- To the email address listed in the DfE MI data.
- At the end of the SPA survey participants were asked if CFE could collect a personal (non-school/setting) email address to which a follow-up survey would be sent in case they moved into a new role at a different organisation. The survey was also sent to this email to boost longitudinal responses.

⁶ The qualifications listed in the table are self-reported by participants completing the survey. The NPQ which they are listed as undertaking in the NPQ MI data supplied to the DfE by providers is sometimes incorrect. The survey was not directly shared with those undertaking NPQSL (due to the large base size already achieved) as part of Cohort 4 (as identified in the MI data); however, a small number of NPQSL participants took part in the survey at Cohort 4 due to them being incorrectly specified in the MI data.

- The same SPA participants were asked if they could provide a mobile telephone number. The survey was also sent via text message in these cases.

Up to three reminder emails were sent to participants during the fieldwork period.⁷ A total of 1,002 responses to the SPB survey were received, equating to a response rate of 18%. In total 557 respondents completed both the SPA and SPB survey, representing a longitudinal sample. At this stage the longitudinal sample of participants closely reflects those who completed the SPA survey based on individual and school level characteristics.

Table 2 presents a breakdown of the responses achieved for each qualification.

Table 2: Number of survey completions at SPB, by qualification

Qualification name	Number of survey completions	Number of longitudinal survey completions
NPQ for Leading Teaching	479	263
NPQ for Leading Teacher Development	316	196
NPQ for Leading Behaviour and Culture	207	98
Total	1,002	557

Comparator interviews

Depth interviews were undertaken in June and July 2023 with teachers and senior leaders who were currently employed in schools⁸ where no-one was undertaking an NPQ and had not undertaken a 2017 reformed NPQ. In total, 24 interviews with 15 headteachers, 5 senior leaders, and 4 teachers were conducted. Interviewees were recruited from schools where MI data collated by the DfE indicated that no staff were currently enrolled on the reformed NPQs.⁹ The majority of these schools were primary schools (n=20), with a small number of colleges or alternative provision providers. There were no secondary schools in the sample.

⁷ The number of reminders sent depended on the response rates achieved and timing of the surveys around school holidays.

⁸ Only schools were included in the comparator survey. It proved impossible, through the MI data available, to identify GBP settings where none of the staff were undertaking an NPQ, and hence these settings could not be included in a sample frame.

⁹ Despite management information highlighting that these schools did not have staff enrolled on NPQs, during the interviews two schools stated that they had staff who had applied for an NPQ.

Recruiting schools and teachers to participate in the comparator interviews was challenging, particularly because the recruitment was undertaken during the summer term, when schools have busy schedules. Extensive recruitment by both email and phone was necessary to achieve the total number of interviews conducted. Just under 4,500 schools were emailed and invited to participate in a comparator interview. Schools were then randomly selected from the list within certain categories to try to obtain a spread of geographical regions of England and school size. We sourced a telephone number for each school selected so as to undertake follow-up recruitment activity.

About this report

Report structure

Following this introduction, the report is structured into five further chapters: **Chapter 2** explores participants' awareness of the NPQ reforms and their motivations to apply, and **Chapter 3** investigates their experience of the application process and choosing their NPQ and provider. The next two chapters are based on the experiences of Cohort 2 SNPQ participants only; findings may change as future Cohorts and NPQs are included and the final findings are reported in 2026. **Chapter 4** explores Cohort 2's SNPQ experiences of NPQ content and delivery and **Chapter 5** covers the early outcomes and impacts experienced whilst SNPQ participants undertook their qualification. Finally, **Chapter 6** summarises the key conclusions.

Reporting notes

Differences in the survey findings by setting and respondent characteristics¹⁰ are explored. All differences have been tested for statistical significance and only those that are statistically significant at the 5% level are reported in the commentary of the report. The tests used vary based on the type of question, but include:

- Column proportion tests (z-test)
- Paired samples t-test
- Independent samples t-test
- ANOVA with post hoc testing

¹⁰ Findings were tested for differences by: Cohort (for SPA only), NPQ studied, whether undertaking an LNPQ or SNPQ (for SPA only), role in setting, whether in the role for which they were studying on starting the NPQ, length in teaching, for EYL whether a GBP or SBP setting (for SPA only), previous leadership experience, gender, ethnicity, full-time or part-time worker, school phase, school type, school size, school Ofsted rating, school location (urban versus rural). Due to the large samples, a vast number of statistically significant differences were found at SPA—only those which showed a substantial difference have been reported. For example, a difference of only one percentage point or a 0.1 mean difference has not been reported.

- Spearman's correlation

The number of participants who responded to each question varied. This was either due to a question only being asked of a sub-group of participants (either based on their response to a previous question or the level of NPQ they were studying) or because respondents chose not to answer a question. As a result, the base sizes for questions, and specific options within questions, differed. Bases are noted in each of the figures. Where figure proportions do not equal 100%, this is due to rounding.

Within the surveys, those who studied for NPQEYL qualifications were asked to comment on their 'early years setting' rather than their school, so as to reflect the diverse nature of their workplaces. Each statement in the different surveys was adapted in this way. Throughout the report we use the term 'setting' collectively across all NPQs for ease of reporting; however, those undertaking non-NPQEYL qualifications were asked about the school in which they worked.

Throughout the report, various groups of participants are referred to. Please see below a list of how these were defined and what data source they came from:

- **Role (unless otherwise stated this was their role on joining their NPQ).** This was collected in the SPA and SPB survey and is self-reported. We recognise that these are not standard categories for some early years settings and we have incorporated early years roles into the said categories:
 - **Senior leaders:** This group includes executive headteachers; headteachers; deputy or assistant headteachers; other senior leader positions; leaders of a private, voluntary or independent nursery, school-based or maintained nursery; childminders with leadership responsibilities; and those with other EYL leadership responsibilities (e.g. deputy nursery manager or children and family centre manager).
 - **Middle leaders:** This group includes key stage leaders, curriculum area leaders, pastoral services leaders, subject leaders, SENCO¹¹, heads of departments and other middle leadership positions.
 - **Teachers:** This group includes classroom teachers and other teaching roles, including teachers/practitioners in an early years setting.
- **Group-based providers and School-based providers:** This was collected in the SPA and SPB survey and is self-reported. All participants undertaking the NPQEYL were categorised as either group-based providers (GBP) or school-based providers (SBP). The GBP category also includes childminders, due to small sample sizes. GBP includes: private, voluntary or independent nurseries,

¹¹ This was a single response question where respondents classified themselves. If a SENCO was a senior leader they could select 'other senior leader role'.

childminder registered with a childminder agency, childminder not registered with a childminder agency, and a small number of 'other' private settings. SBP includes: school-based nursery, maintained nursery school and any other school-based role in a maintained setting (e.g. in a primary school).

- **Nursery:** This was collected in the SPA and SPB survey and is self-reported. Participants in school-based or maintained nurseries were classified as 'nursery' rather than the phase allocated to the school within which they were based.

Due to small sample sizes we collapsed a number of ethnicity categories¹² into one to enable us to undertake subgroup analysis. We recognise the limitations of this analysis, as the aggregated ethnic group is likely to hide differences between the constituent groups and can mask differences between the categories.

¹² Ethnicity data was sourced from the School Workforce Census and linked to SPA and SPB survey responses using a participant's Teacher Reference Number (TRN).

Chapter 2: Awareness of the NPQ reforms and motivations to apply

Key findings

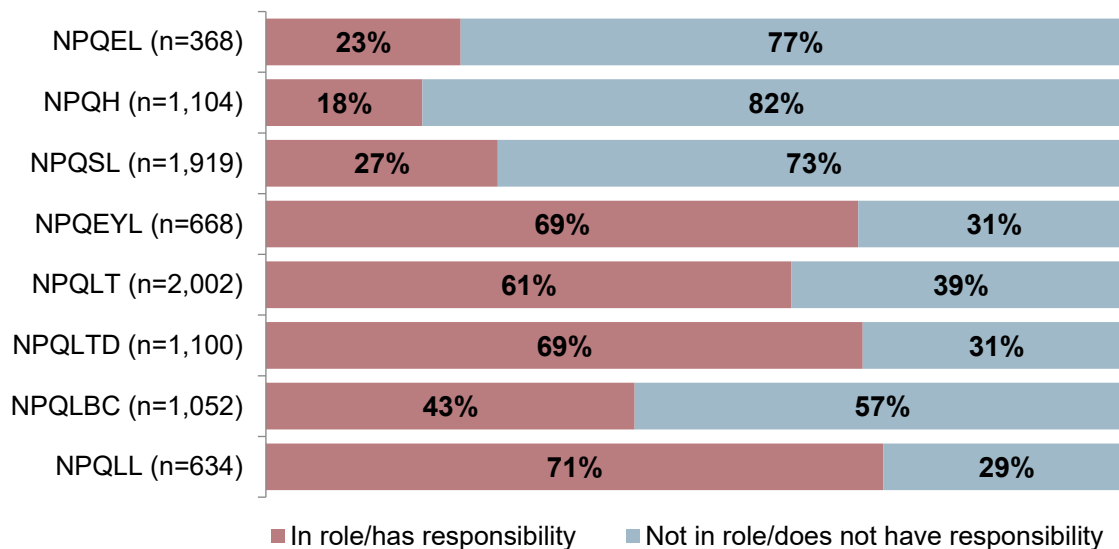
- A greater proportion (60%) of SNPQ participants were already in the role for the NPQ they were studying compared with LNPQ participants (31%).
- More than half of survey respondents (54%) were aware that the NPQs had been reformed prior to applying. Awareness of the reforms (either before, during or after applying) was higher for LNPQ participants (89%) than for SNPQ participants (77%), suggesting higher awareness amongst senior leaders in settings.
- The reforms have influenced participants' uptake of NPQs. 44% of LNPQ respondents stated that the reforms influenced their decision, at least in part, to undertake an NPQ, and less than one-third of SNPQ respondents (29%) would have undertaken an LNPQ in the absence of the SNPQs.
- Participants who were surveyed commonly heard about the NPQs from their line manager or senior colleague (44%) or their colleagues (17%). Local authority or regional support (34%) was important for NPQEYL participants in GBP settings.
- Participants undertook NPQs for a range of reasons. The most common were related to learning new knowledge and skills (mean score of 6.3 out of 7; 95% agreement), improving pupil/child outcomes (6.3; 90% agreement) and increased knowledge of the latest evidence (6.1; 90% agreement).
- When schools and teachers who were interviewed chose not to undertake an NPQ, the main reason identified was a perception that NPQs were not relevant for them. Other barriers to schools and leaders engaging with the NPQs were staff capacity within settings (e.g. cover), the perceived time to complete the NPQ alongside their 'normal' role, and budgets. Instead of NPQs, these settings preferred to engage with bespoke CPD which they perceived as being more relevant and useful to their development needs.

Who is undertaking the NPQs

Nearly one in two (47%) SPA survey respondents were undertaking an NPQ associated with their current role (e.g. a headteacher undertaking NPQH) or the area for which they were already responsible (e.g. a senior leader with responsibility for leading teacher development undertaking the NPQLTD). A higher proportion (60%) of SNPQ

respondents had responsibilities linked to the qualification that they were undertaking when compared with LNPQ respondents (31%). The exceptions were NPQEYL (where nearly two-thirds of respondents were already in a position with EYL leadership responsibilities) and NPQLBC (with a lower proportion who were in the role when compared with other SNPQ participants) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents undertaking the NPQs, broken down by those who were already in the role and those who were not



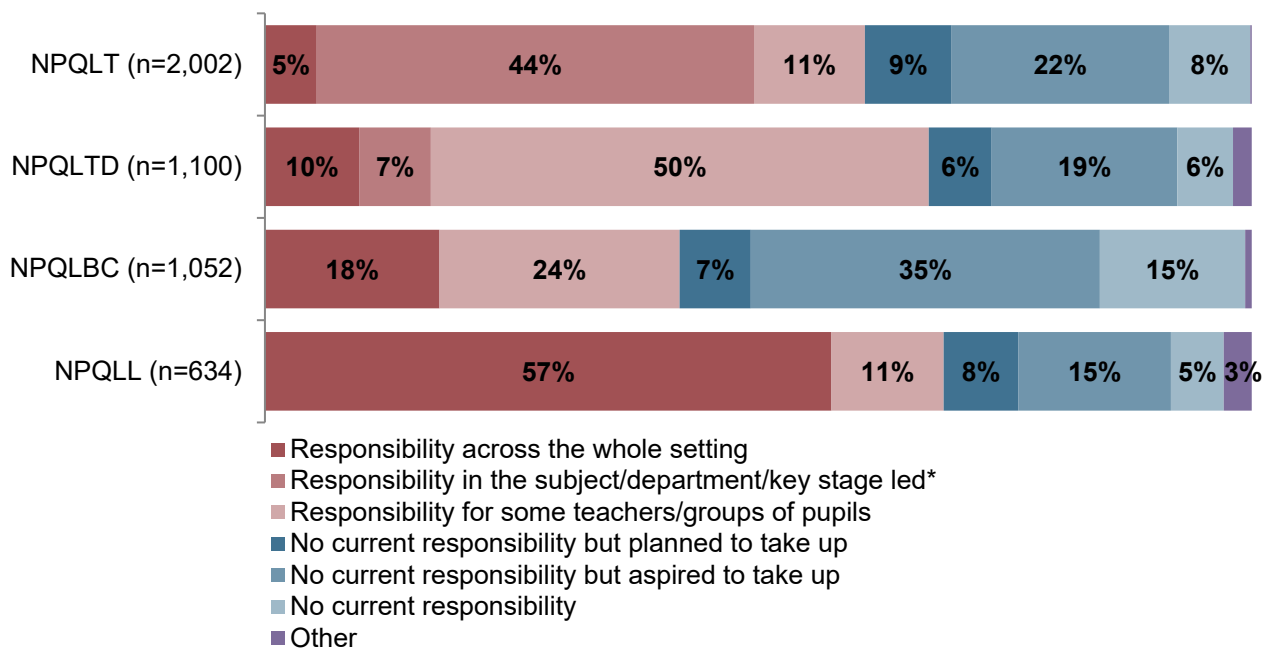
Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Bases variable.
Survey question: Derived from a number of questions in the survey.¹³

The majority of SNPQ respondents who were not already in the role had plans or aspirations to assume responsibilities linked to their qualification (81% of NPQLL and NPQLTD, 79% of NPQLT and 74% of NPQLBC). This is consistent with participants using the SNPQs to support their career progression.

Although many SNPQ respondents are currently in the role for which they are studying, the level of responsibility they have for this area across their setting varies significantly (Figure 2). For example, over half (57%) of NPQLL participants had responsibility for leading literacy across their whole setting, whereas only 5% of NPQLT participants stated that they had responsibility for leading teaching across their whole setting.

¹³ Derived from Questions 1 to 5 in the SPA survey, in addition to the NPQ being studied.

Figure 2: Proportion of respondents undertaking the SNPQs, broken down by their current responsibilities in relation to the SNPQ area they were studying



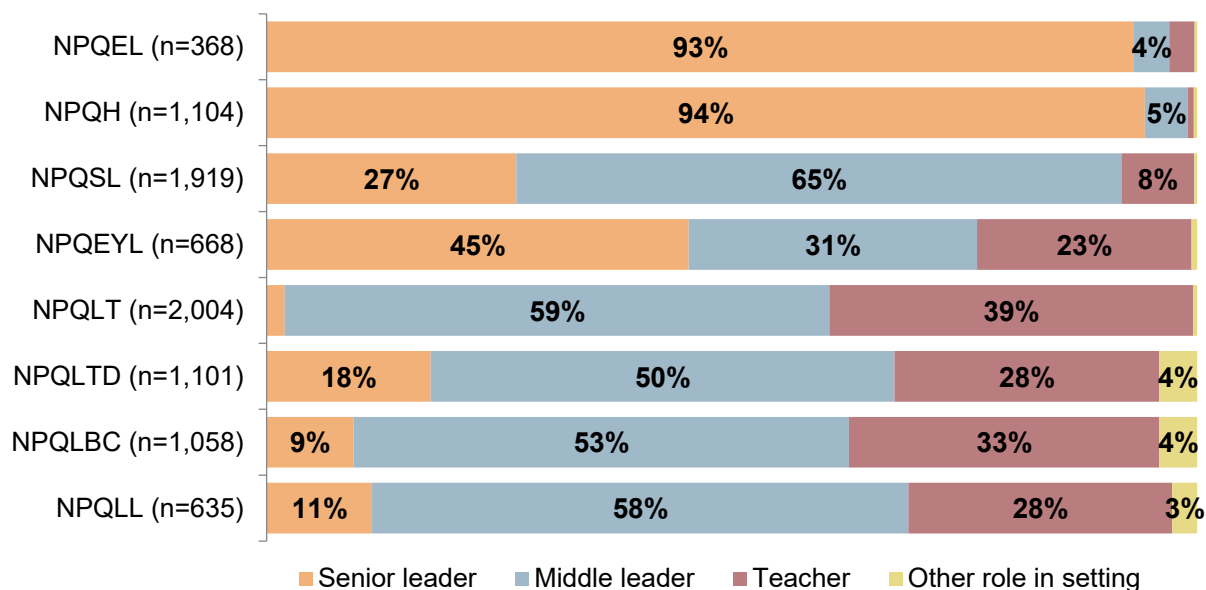
Source: SPA survey – All SNPQ respondents. Bases variable.

*Category only asked for NPQLT and NPQLTD.

Survey question: Which statement best reflects the role you played in your school prior to starting your {NPQ name}? [Response options were tailored for each SNPQ].

In line with the purpose of the qualifications, a higher proportion of respondents who were undertaking the NPQEL and NPQH were senior leaders (including early years leaders) (Figure 3). In contrast, a higher proportion of those undertaking the SNPQs were classroom teachers (including early years practitioners) or in middle leadership positions. However, the composition of SNPQs varied and ranged from teachers to senior leaders. Respondents undertaking the NPQLTD were especially varied, with 18% being senior leaders, reflecting the level at which this responsibility is sometimes held.

Figure 3: Breakdown of roles for respondents undertaking the NPQs, by qualification



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Bases variable.
Survey question: Derived from a number of questions in the survey.

Just under half (46%) of SNPQ survey respondents were from secondary schools, with a further 43% from primary schools¹⁴ and a small proportion (12%) from other phases (e.g. nursery, 16-19 provision, and all-through). However, only 31% of NPQLL participants were from a secondary, with 58% being from a primary school. By comparison, only 24% of LNPQ respondents were from secondary schools, 51% were from primary schools and 24% were from other phases. Amongst those undertaking the NPQEYL qualification, 29% were from a GBP setting,¹⁵ with 71% being from a SBP setting.

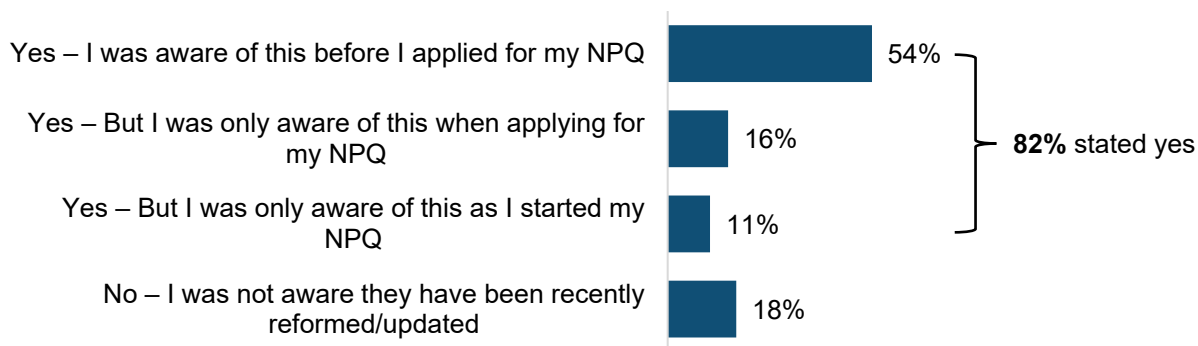
Overall awareness of the NPQ reforms

More than half of SPA survey respondents (54%) were aware that the NPQs had been reformed before they applied. Over one-quarter (27%) were only aware once they had started the application process or as they started their qualification (Figure 4).

¹⁴ Participants in school-based or maintained nurseries were classified as 'nursery' rather than the phase allocated to the school within which they are based.

¹⁵ 25% were from a GBP nursery, 3% a childminder and the remaining in another setting such as a children's centre.

Figure 4: Respondents' awareness of the NPQ reforms



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Base=8,189.

Survey question: Are you aware that the suite of NPQs were reformed/updated in 2021?

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **Leadership or specialist NPQ:** Over three-quarters of SNPQ respondents (77%) were aware that the NPQs had been reformed (either before, during or after applying) compared with 89% of LNPQ respondents.
- **Role:** Awareness was linked strongly to the seniority of the respondent. 91% of senior leaders¹⁶ were aware of the reforms (either before, during or after applying), compared with 80% of middle leaders, 74% of teachers and 74% of those in other roles. Those NPQs with higher proportions of senior leaders participating, such as NPQLTD, were more likely to state they were aware (83%) when compared with the other SNPQs, which could explain the differences by LNPQ and SNPQ.

Awareness of the reforms prior to applying appears to have reduced (rather than increased) amongst those undertaking an NPQ between Cohort 2 and Cohort 4. Only 13% of Cohort 2 respondents were still unaware the NPQs had recently been reformed compared with 19% of Cohort 3 and 28% of Cohort 4.

Influence of the reforms on NPQ uptake

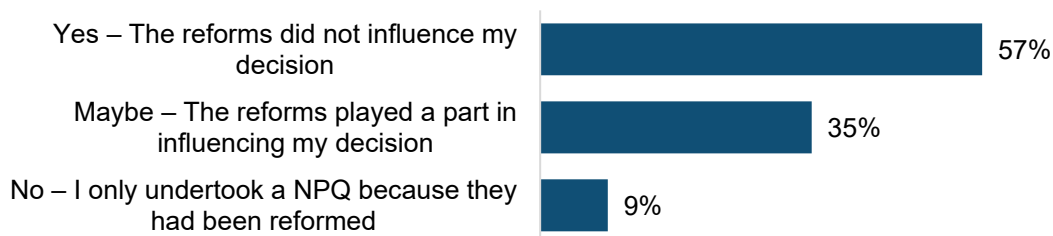
Participants reported that the reforms had influenced their decision to undertake an NPQ. While we cannot be certain about whether participants would have undertaken NPQs if the reforms had not been made, these questions give some insight into the decisions made by participants. Amongst LNPQ¹⁷ participants who stated that they knew about the reforms before they applied, 9% only undertook a qualification because of the reforms

¹⁶ Senior leaders were also more likely to specifically know about the reforms before starting their qualification (70%) compared with 50% of middle leaders and 44% of teachers.

¹⁷ Excluding NPQEYL participants.

and 35% stated they may have considered an LNPQ but the reforms did influence their decision (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Whether LNPQ (excluding NPQEYL) respondents would have undertaken an LNPQ if they had not been reformed/updated (of those who were aware of the reforms)

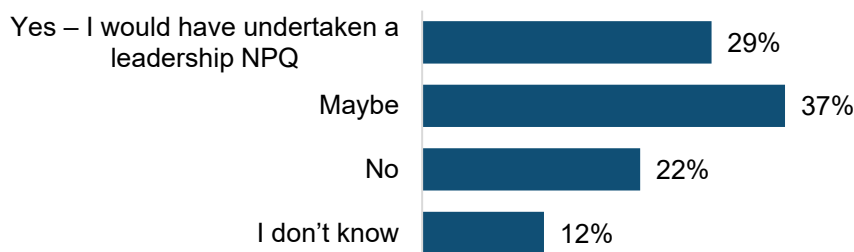


Source: SPA survey – those who were aware of the NPQ reforms and undertook an LNPQ (excluding NPQEYL). Base=2,126.

Survey question: If the NPQs had not been reformed/updated, would you have applied to undertake the {NPQ name}?

Only 29% of SNPQ survey respondents were certain that they would have undertaken an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available to them (Figure 6). More than one in five (22%) survey respondents would not have undertaken an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available.

Figure 6: Whether SNPQ respondents would have undertaken an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available



Source: SPA survey – SNPQ participants. Base=4,787.

Survey question: If the specialist NPQs had not been available, would you have undertaken a leadership NPQ (e.g. NPQEL, NPQH, or NPQSL)?

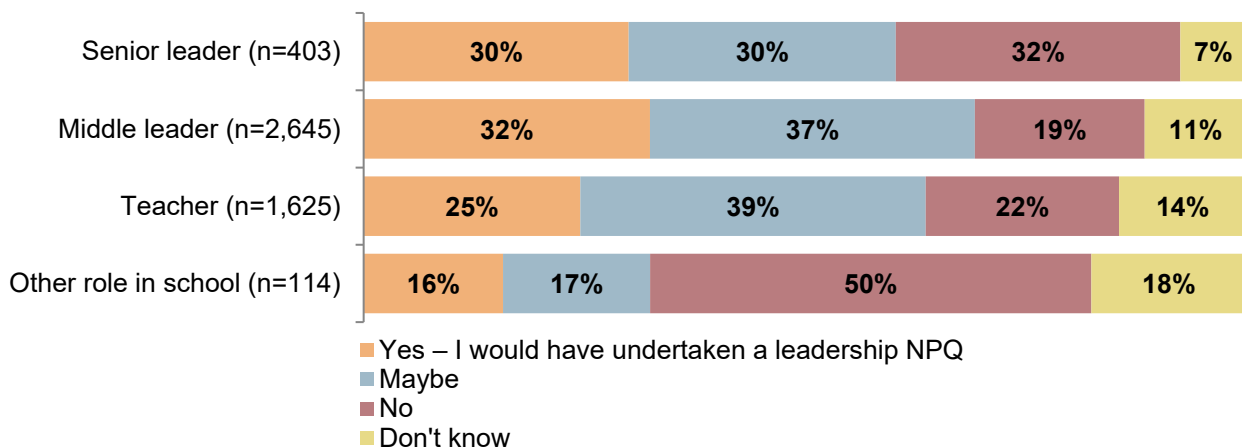
Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **NPQ:** A lower proportion of respondents (15%) undertaking an NPQLT stated they would not have undertaken an LNPQ if the SNPQs had been unavailable when compared with those undertaking all other SNPQs: NPQLBC (22%), NPQLTD

(28%) and NPQLL (35%);¹⁸ this highlights the importance of the introduction of the SNPQs for the latter groups of participants.

- **Gender:** a higher proportion (23%) of females would not have considered an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available when compared with male participants (16%).
- **Ethnicity:** 23% of white British respondents would not have considered an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available when compared with 15% for those who were Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities.
- **Working hours:** More part-time workers (27%) stated they would not have considered an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available when compared with those who work full-time (20%).
- **Role:** Half (50%) of those who were in another role in their setting reported they would not have considered an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available when compared with those in all other roles (senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers) in their setting (Figure 7). Those who were in a senior or middle leadership position were more likely to state they would have considered an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available than those in other roles; however, a high proportion of senior leaders also stated that they would not have considered an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available, showing this group had more mixed views than others.

Figure 7: Whether SNPQ respondents would have undertaken an LNPQ if the SNPQ was unavailable by role



¹⁸ The differences between NPQLTD and NPQLBC are also statistically significant, as are those between NPQLL and NPQLTD and NPQLBC.

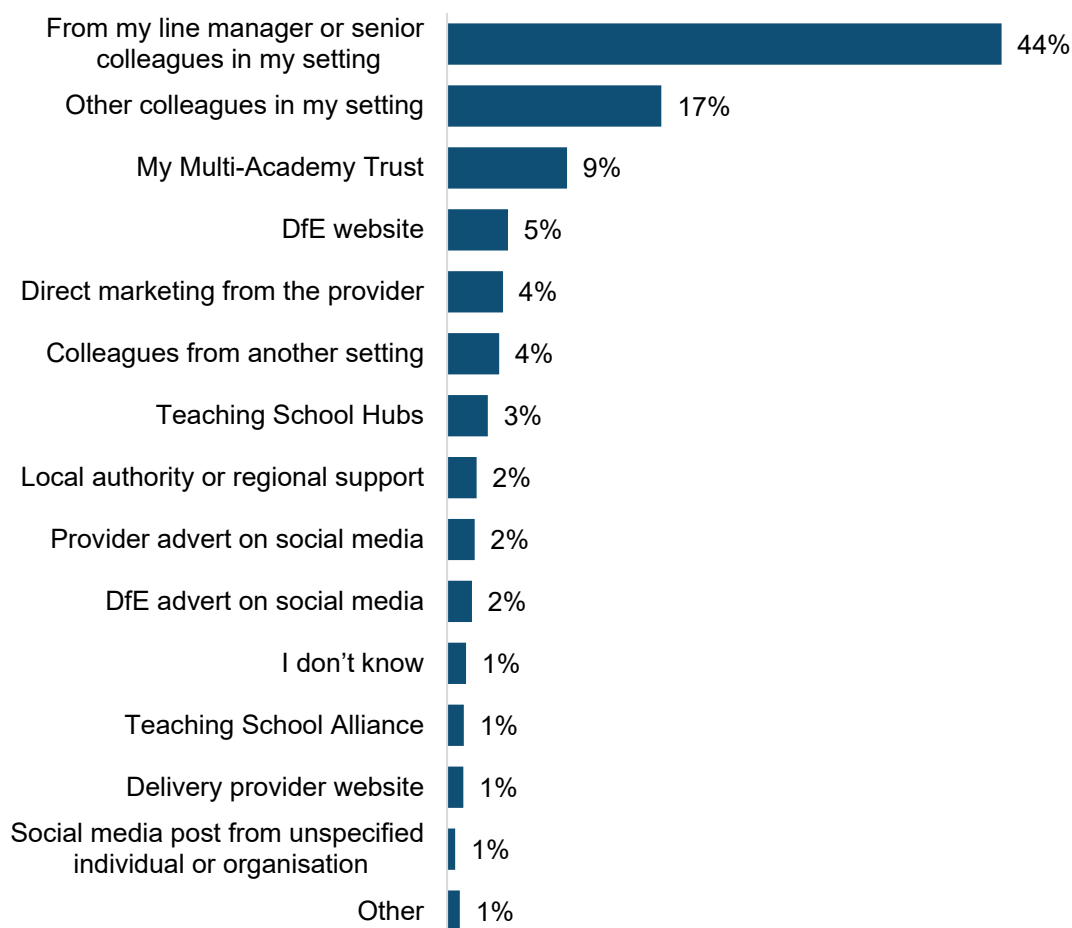
Source: SPA survey – all SNPQ respondents. Bases variable.
 Survey question: If the specialist NPQs had not been available, would you have undertaken a leadership NPQ (e.g. NPQEL, NPQH, or NPQSL)?

- **Length of time in teaching profession:** One-third (33%) of those who had been in the teaching profession longer (16 years or more) would not have considered an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been available when compared with those who had been in the profession for less than 16 years (18%).

How participants first heard about the NPQs

Participants commonly heard about their NPQ for the first time from their line manager/a senior colleague in their setting (44%); additionally, 17% found out about it from other colleagues in their setting (Figure 8). A minority of respondents heard about their NPQ via the DfE website (5%) or through direct marketing from their provider (4%).

Figure 8: How participants first heard about their NPQ



Source: SPA Survey – all respondents. Base=8,852.
 Survey question: How did you first hear about {NPQ name}?

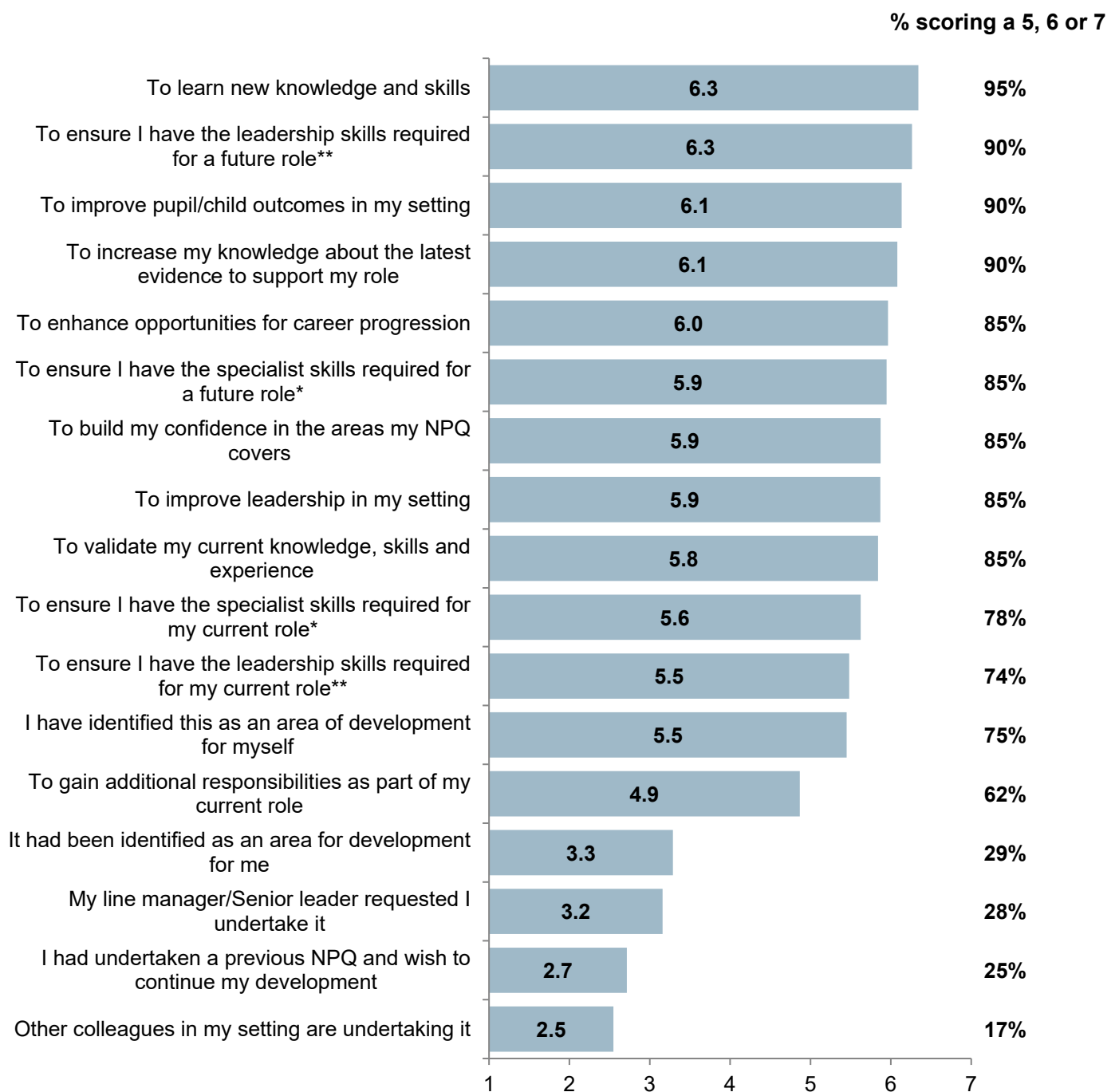
Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **NPQ:** A higher proportion of respondents (23%) undertaking the NPQEL heard about the qualification for the first time as a result of direct marketing from their provider compared with participants undertaking all other NPQs (4%). In comparison, a much lower proportion of NPQEL participants (6%) stated that they heard about the qualification for the first time from their line manager or senior colleagues compared with all other NPQ participants (45%). This reflects the role of the individual in the school undertaking the NPQEL.
- **Phase and GBP settings:** Very few participants stated that they found out about the qualification from local authority or regional support (2%) with the exception of those in the nursery phase (16%), highlighting the importance of this source in raising awareness of the NPQEYL qualification. Moreover, 34% of those undertaking the NPQEYL in a GBP setting reported local authority or regional support as a source of information, compared to 5% of those not in a GBP setting. Those participants in a nursery setting also provided higher scores for the following sources of information regarding how they first found out about the qualification, when compared with all other phases: DfE (6%) and provider (9%) adverts on social media.
- **Cohort:** Those in Cohort 2 were more likely (55%) to find out about their NPQ from their line manager or senior colleagues in their setting when compared with those in Cohorts 3 and 4 (37%).

Participants' motivations

SPA survey respondents were motivated to apply to undertake their NPQ for a wide range of reasons. Respondents were commonly motivated by a need to develop their skills and knowledge (95%), to develop leadership skills for a future role (90%), a desire to improve pupil/child outcomes (90%), and an ambition to progress in their career and to increase their knowledge of the latest evidence (90%) (Figure 9). Although some factors were not rated as being important overall (with a low overall mean score), they still influenced a substantial minority of participants. For example, on average, respondents did not rate 'other colleagues in my setting are undertaking it' as being an important factor in their decision to study an NPQ (mean score of 2.5 out of 7); however, 17% of respondents individually rated this as being important (providing a score of 5, 6 or 7).

Figure 9: Importance of factors when deciding to study for a leadership or specialist qualification (mean score and proportion stating a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7)



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Bases variable (3,816-8,428).

* Statements only shown to those undertaking SNPQs.

** Statements only shown to those undertaking LNPQs.

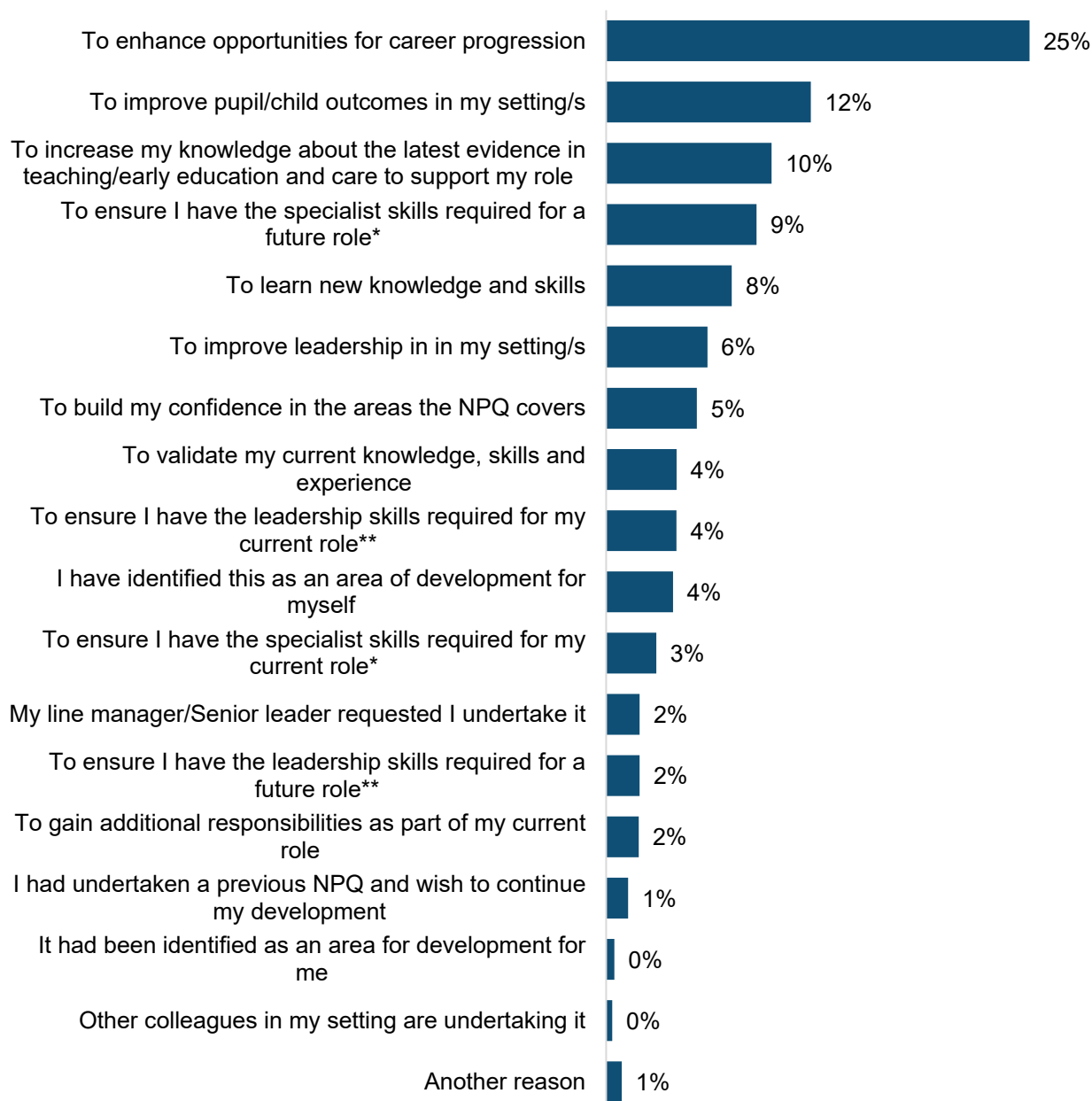
Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, how important were the following factors when deciding to study a leadership or specialist qualification, where 1=very unimportant and 7=very important? Each statement rated by participants.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **Role status:** Respondents who were already 'in the role' for which they were studying were more strongly motivated to ensure they have the skills needed for their current role (Table 6 – Please see Appendix 2). For example, respondents who were not yet in the role for which they were studying were more likely to be motivated by a need to develop the leadership skills needed for a future role (6.5 compared to a mean score of 5.8 for those already in the role) and to enhance their career progression (6.2 compared to 5.7).
- **Leadership or specialist NPQ:** In line with the purpose of the qualifications to increase leadership skills, LNPQ participants scored the statement to improve leadership in my setting (6.1) higher when compared with SNPQ participants (5.7). In contrast, LNPQ participants scored the statement to gain additional responsibilities as part of my current role lower (4.6) compared with SNPQ participants (5.1).
- **Ethnicity:** Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities appeared to be more focused on career progression or development than white British participants, the latter of whom scored all of the following statements lower:
 - To enhance opportunities for career progression (5.9 compared with 6.3).
 - I have identified it as an area for development for myself (5.4 compared with 5.8).
 - To gain additional responsibilities as part of a current role (4.8 compared with 5.3).
 - It has been identified as an area of development for me (3.2 compared with 3.7).
 - My line manager/SLT (Senior Leadership Team) requested I undertake it (3.1 compared with 3.5).

When respondents were asked to select their *main* reason for applying, career progression was the most common answer given (25%), followed by improving pupil outcomes (12%), increasing knowledge about the latest evidence in teaching/early years (10%), and learning new knowledge and skills (8%) (Figure 10). For those who were undertaking an SNPQ, ensuring they had specialist skills for a future role was the most important reason (8%).

Figure 10: Most important factor when deciding to study an NPQ



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Base=8,581.

* Statements only shown to those undertaking SNPQs.

** Statements only shown to those undertaking LNPQs.

Survey question: Of those you selected (scoring a 5, 6 or 7) which was the most important reason when you decided to study a leadership or specialist qualification? (If only one answered as 5, 6, or 7 in previous question, this was automatically selected as their most important reason.)

Reasons for not undertaking NPQs

In total 24 depth interviews were undertaken with teachers and senior leaders who were employed in schools where no one was undertaking an NPQ. Their reasons for not

undertaking an NPQ are based on their perceptions of the qualification and are not necessarily a result of the qualifications not including the elements they reference.

Comparator study interviews with teachers and senior leaders elicited a range of reasons why they/those in their school were not undertaking an NPQ. The most common reason was related to their perceived relevance both to their own role and that of colleagues in their setting. Perceptions of irrelevancy¹⁹ were often informed by interviewees' previous experience of completing a legacy NPQ. These participants felt their legacy NPQ was not useful to them as a teacher and/or leader and consequently did not wish to undertake another:

I remember doing my [legacy] NPQH, but that course didn't teach me to be a headteacher. The job taught me to be a headteacher. At the time I did my NPQH you had local authority support, and it was that network of people who developed me. And when I went into my own school, you learn on the job, and you learn with professionals who are working around you. But the NPQH, it was something that we were expected to do to get a headship, and I did it, but it didn't teach me to be a headteacher. *Comparator – Headteacher*

As a result of previously completing an NPQ, some teachers and leaders identified that external CPD was not currently a priority for them as they wanted to establish themselves in their role before they took on additional work through further CPD. There was a perception that NPQs were a strong addition to a CV, but participants were not sure they were valuable enough to warrant the extra work involved.

Another key theme which interviewees identified as a reason they perceived NPQs as not being relevant to them or their setting was a perception that the reforms to the NPQs have made them too theoretical. They described how they thought this did not align with the practical nature of being a teacher and/or leader. These interviewees did not see the value of the reformed NPQs, regularly referring to their preference for 'learning by doing':

I love sitting on the carpet with a group of kids and really picking something apart with them. We don't mind devoting all our spare time to work, that's what we do, but it's got to be something we're really excited by, and something which really motivates us. Sitting at home, reading all these [NPQ] articles on the computer, isn't what excites me. So, doing an NPQ would turn into something that's a chore that

¹⁹ The NPQ reforms were introduced partly in response to feedback the DfE received from teachers about what worked well and what could be improved in the legacy of NPQs. This theme suggests that the nature of these reforms is not informing the decisions of those who are not currently undertaking NPQs or they are not aware of the reforms.

we've got to get through, rather than something that's driving us. –
Comparator Deputy Headteacher

For experienced headteachers who wish to engage in CPD but without the desire to lead in a MAT, a common theme that emerged from the comparator interviews with senior school leaders was that neither the NPQH nor the NPQEL would meet their needs:

There hasn't been a huge amount of CPD available for me as a headteacher. Some of my middle leaders are going to be starting NPQs. I think there's a lot around for them. It would be nice to have something for established heads. – *Comparator Headteacher*

Although not the primary reason, a number of the comparator interviewees perceived that staff capacity, time (associated with completing the CPD, such as reading, attending sessions) and budget were key barriers to them and their colleagues participating in NPQs. Some interviewees were not aware of the funding available for the reformed NPQs, and thus perceived them as being out of budget for their school to support them. Additional costs highlighted were the need to buy in cover for teachers who were out of school during their NPQ commitments:

I've already overspent on my CPD budget. That's a main worry about the NPQs – it always comes down to cost. And even though they're paid for by the DfE at the moment, it's the cost within school for cover that's the issue. – *Comparator Headteacher*

CPD undertaken

Despite not engaging with the reformed NPQs, comparator interviewees were generally passionate about CPD in their school, and highlighted the non-NPQ training they were taking part in. Most highlighted local authority or Multi-Academy-Trust-run leadership CPD as a key component of their CPD offer. School-level interviews with headteachers emphasised the importance and value of engaging with bespoke leadership CPD that considered contextual factors which affect their school. For instance, rural and/or small school leaders highlighted the value of bespoke local training which is deemed to be time and budget efficient because all the training is perceived as relevant. These interviews emphasised that 'one size does not fit all' with leadership CPD:

Schools are autonomous to their communities and have their own individual needs. So DfE should be supportive of schools and support them where they are. – *Comparator Headteacher*

These schools also valued the importance of local networks and communities of practice for sharing ideas and learning. They identified the role that local authorities had previously played in bringing together leaders – both headteachers and those in specific areas of the curriculum – to share their knowledge and support each other. They acknowledged that the tightening of budgets has played a significant role in reducing these local opportunities but stated that they would like these networks²⁰ to be created again.

Other examples of CPD that interviewees were engaging with included: master's degrees in educational leadership; national headteacher conferences and networks; curriculum area leadership courses (e.g. STEM conferences/CPD); headteacher-to-headteacher mentoring; and trust-based mentoring and shadowing for leadership roles. Interviewees emphasised the value of these CPD opportunities for increasing their confidence, both for their current role and for future career progression. Most interviewees emphasised that the practical and/or bespoke nature of most of their chosen CPD meant that they were able to make changes in their settings as a result of their learning, which had impacts for them, their colleagues and their pupils. Factors identified as being influential in leading to these impacts were high-quality facilitators and their ability to contextualise learning, the role of coaching and mentoring, as well as the opportunity to meet other leaders, share practice and create networks of support.²¹

²⁰ Peer support networks are a common feature of the reformed NPQs, so it is interesting that these interviewees perceived a lack of such support.

²¹ It is interesting that many of the factors expressed here are a preference for the non-NPQ CPD are part of the NPQ offer (although these sometimes vary between providers).

Chapter 3: Applying for the NPQs

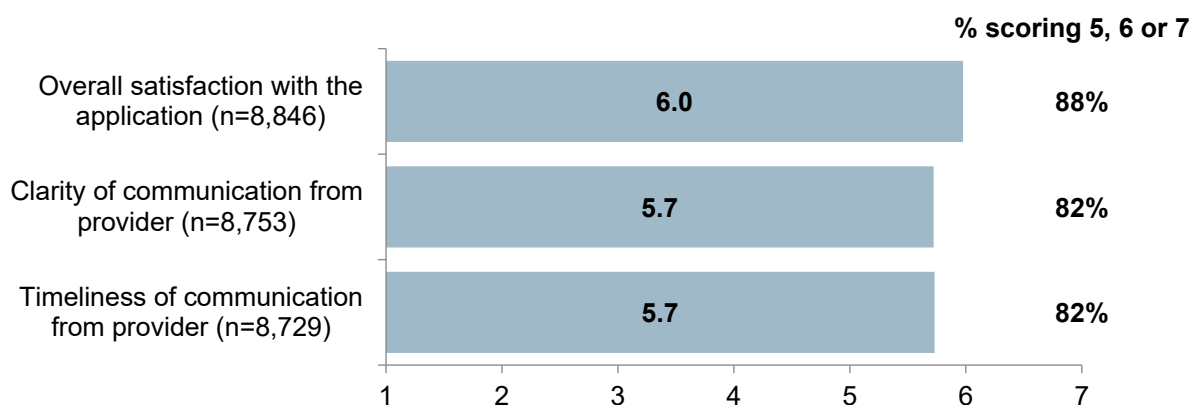
Key findings

- Overall, the majority of participants were satisfied with the application process (mean score of 6.0 out of 7; 88% agreement). Satisfaction was higher amongst senior leaders (6.1) than those in other roles (5.9). Satisfaction was lower amongst NPQEYL participants from GBP settings (5.7) compared with those from a SBP setting (6.0).
- A small number of participants who were dissatisfied with one or more elements of the application process reported (through an open response question, base=976) aspects which would improve their satisfaction: improving communication (26%), ensuring applicants are updated on the status of their applications (15%), and a simpler application process (16%).
- Only 12% of participants who were aware their qualification was being funded stated their setting would have paid for their qualification in the absence of the national scholarship funding. Funding was particularly important for NPQEYL participants (37% stated their setting would not have paid for the qualification without the national funding), especially those from GBP settings (53%). The primary reason respondents chose to undertake an NPQ instead of other CPD was the availability of DfE funding (51%); the NPQ being a nationally recognised qualification was also important (38%).
- In advance of completing an NPQ, the most common perceived concern held by applicants was that they might struggle to find time to complete the qualification outside of working hours (41%). This was more common for female participants (44% compared with 35% male) and those working part-time (44% compared with 41% full-time).
- Over half of all survey respondents (53%) had some level of choice or influence regarding which provider they undertook their NPQ with. Senior leaders (53%) had more choice than middle leaders (30%) and teachers (30%). Those in primary schools (41%) and nurseries (52%) also had more choice than respondents from secondary schools (27%). Key factors considered when choosing a provider were reputation (31%), recommendation (30%) and geographical location of face-to-face sessions (26%).
- Only 13% of NPQH participants were eligible to take up the Early Headship Coaching Offer. Of those, 16% were currently accessing the support. Amongst those who were not accessing it, reasons included already having a coach or mentor (45%) or not having enough time (23%).

Participants' experience of the application process

Overall, the majority of SPA survey respondents were satisfied with the application process as well as the clarity and timeliness of communication from their provider (Figure 11). Clarity of communication and timeliness were scored slightly lower than the overall process.

Figure 11: Participants' perceptions of the application process (mean score and proportion stating a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7)



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Bases variable.

Survey questions: On a scale of 1-7, how satisfied were you with the overall application process for your {NPQ name}, where 1=very dissatisfied and 7=very satisfied?; On a scale of 1-7, how clear was the communication from your provider during the application process, where 1=not at all clear and 7=very clear?; On a scale of 1-7, how timely was the communication from your provider during the application process where 1=not at all timely and 7=very timely? Each statement rated by participants.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **Role:** Those survey respondents who were senior leaders were slightly more satisfied with all aspects of the process than those in all other roles:
 - **Overall satisfaction:** 6.1 compared with 5.9.
 - **Clarity of communication:** 5.9 compared with 5.7.
 - **Timeliness of communication:** 5.9 compared with 5.7.
- **NPQEYL and GBP settings:** Amongst NPQEYL participants, those who were in a GBP setting were slightly less satisfied with the overall application process (5.7) when compared with those in SBP settings (6.0).

Those respondents who scored one of the statements regarding the application process less than 5 out of 7 (base=976) identified a variety of ways to improve the application process (by responding to an open response question). Despite 82% of all participants agreeing that they were satisfied with the timeliness of communication from providers (see Figure 11), the most commonly identified suggestion amongst those who were not satisfied (26% of all responses) was to improve communication from providers. Many open responses to this question suggested that participants either had too many emails which they thought included irrelevant information or found it difficult to obtain answers to any question they asked during the application process. Additionally, a further 15% of respondents identified that they wanted better updates on the progress of their application process. After submission, these participants reported having no communication and so were unsure of the status of their application, whether it had been received or if they had been accepted onto their course. In this time period, participants identified being sent generic emails from their provider asking them to submit their application or complete other tasks which were not relevant once they had submitted; this increased confusion and created anxiety for applicants. Additionally, 16% of respondents reported they would prefer a 'simpler' application process, referring to the multiple applications both to the DfE website and individual providers.

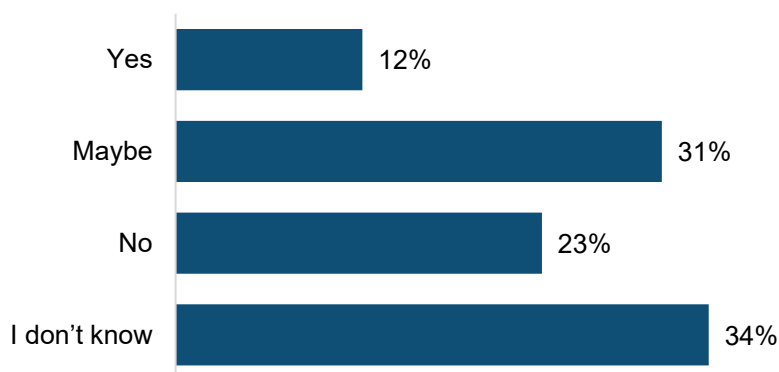
Impact of national funding

Most (88%) SPA survey respondents knew that their NPQ would be funded by DfE before they applied for the qualification.²² Only 4% were unaware that their qualification was being funded.

Most respondents (who knew their qualification was being funded) were unsure as to whether or not their setting would have supported them in undertaking the qualification in the absence of DfE funding, with 31% stating their setting may have paid for it and 34% stating they did not know if they would have paid for it. Only 12% were certain that their setting would have paid for it in the absence of national funding (Figure 12).

²² Survey question: When did you find out that your {NPQ name} was eligible for national funding from DfE?

Figure 12: Participants' views on whether the setting would have paid for the NPQ in the absence of funding (if aware)



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Base=8,460.

Survey question: Would your school/early years setting have paid for the qualification without the national funding from DfE?

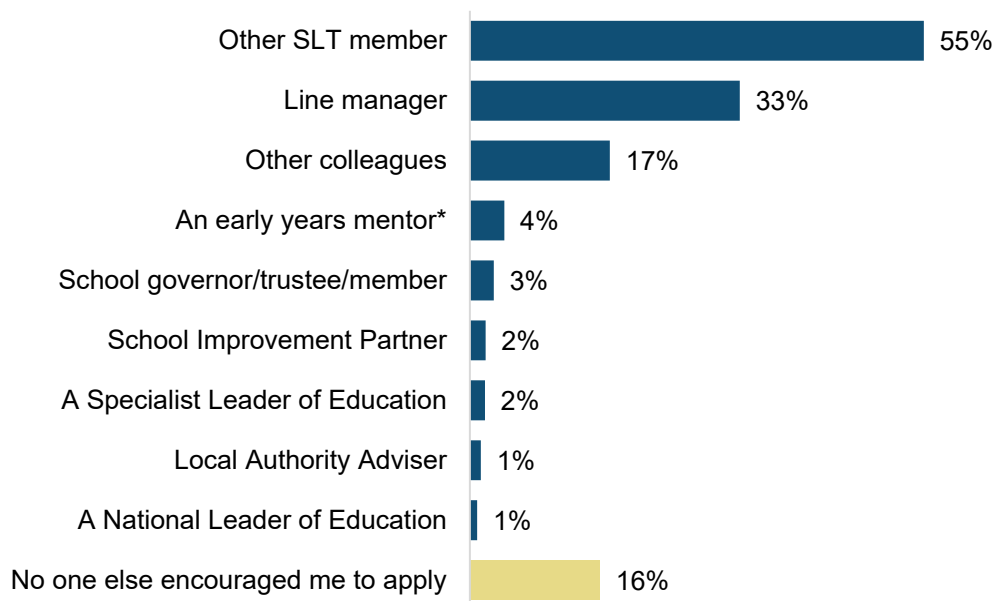
Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **NPQ:** Over one-third of NPQEYL participants (37%) stated their setting would not have paid for the qualification without the national funding when compared with respondents undertaking all other NPQs (22%).
- **NPQEYL and GBP:** A much higher proportion of EYL participants in a GBP setting stated their setting would not have paid for the qualification without the national funding (53%) compared with those in a SBP setting (30%).
- **Gender:** A higher proportion of female participants (24%) stated their setting would not have paid for the qualification without the national funding when compared with male participants (19%).
- **Full-time and part time workers:** A higher proportion of part-time workers (26%) stated their setting would not have paid for the qualification without the national funding when compared with full-time workers (22%).

Support and encouragement

One-third (33%) of SPA survey respondents were encouraged to apply for an NPQ by their line manager, over half (55%) were encouraged by another member of SLT, and 17% were encouraged by other colleagues. Only 16% of respondents had not received encouragement from anyone else (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Individuals who encouraged respondents to apply for an NPQ



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Base=8,814.

* Statement only shown to those undertaking NPQEYL (base=667).

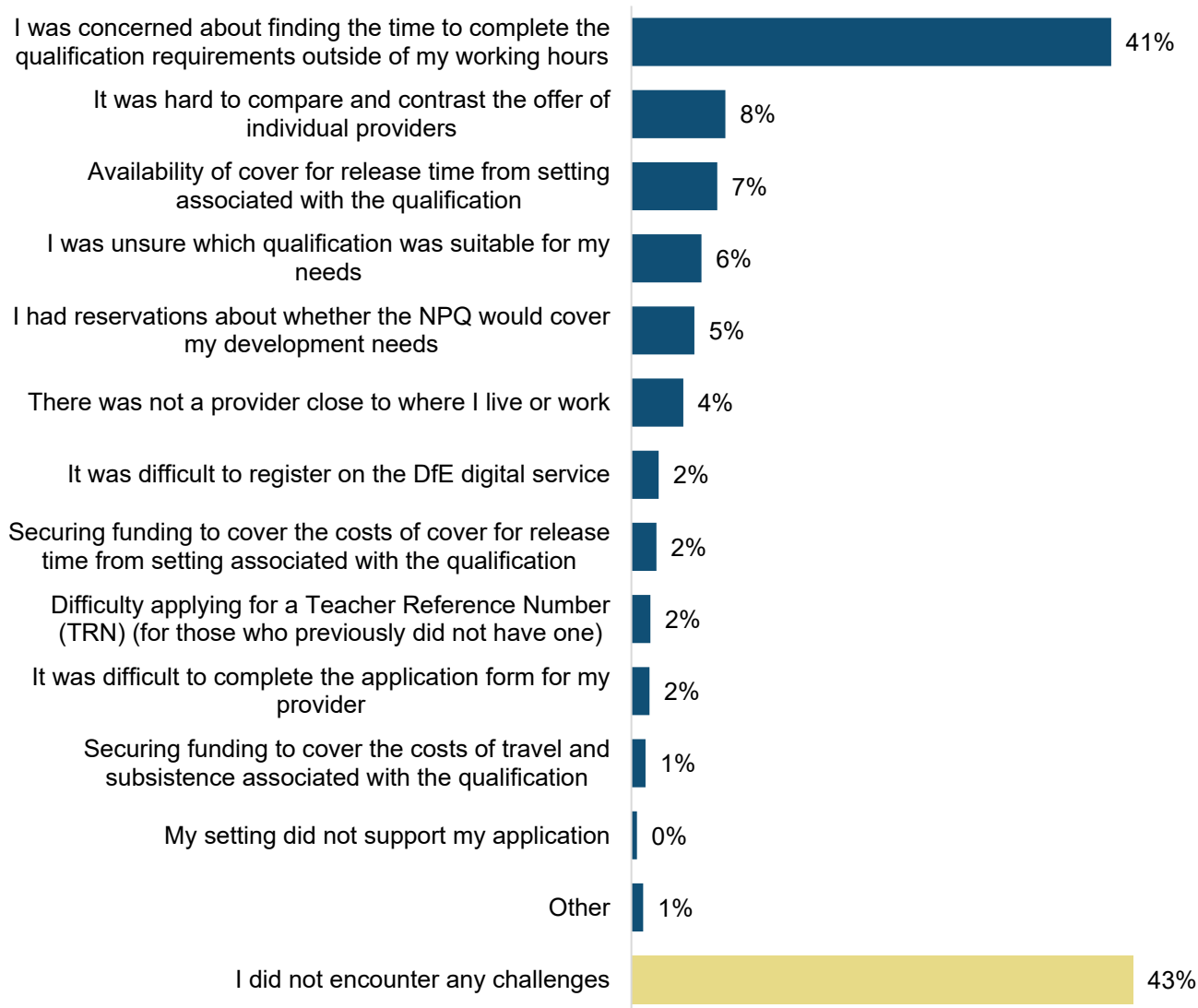
Survey question: Were there any individuals who encouraged you to apply to undertake the {NPQ name}?

Multiple response question.

Challenges faced when applying

Over four in 10 (43%) SPA survey respondents did not encounter any challenges when applying for their NPQ (Figure 14). The most common concern was thinking they would struggle to find the time to complete the qualification outside of working hours (41%). Other issues reported by a minority of respondents included difficulties in comparing providers' individual offers (8%) and being unsure as to which qualification would be suitable for them (6%). Although the qualification itself is funded, a small proportion of participants (7%) experienced challenges in the availability of cover for release time or securing funding to cover the time to undertake their studies (2%). A small proportion (5%) did have reservations about whether or not the NPQ would cover their development needs, reflecting the findings from the comparator interviews.

Figure 14: Challenges experienced when applying for the NPQs



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Base=8,682.

Survey question: Did you encounter any of the following challenges when applying for {NPQ name}?
Multiple response question.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- NPQ:** A higher proportion of SNPQ participants (8%) stated the challenge they faced when applying was that they were unsure if the qualification was suitable for their needs compared with LNPQ participants (4%). Within the SNPQ group this differed further, with 10% of NPQLT and NPQLTD stating they were unsure if the qualification was suitable for their needs compared with 6% of NPQLBC and only 3% of NPQLL. Although only reported by a minority, a higher proportion of

NPQEYL²³ and NPQLL participants reported the following challenges when compared with those undertaking all other NPQs:

- Difficulty registering on the DfE digital service (NPQEYL and NPQLL participants at 5% compared with all other NPQs at 2%).
 - Difficulty completing the application form for their provider (NPQEYL and NPQLL participants at 3% compared with all other NPQs at 1%).
 - Availability of cover for release time (NPQEYL participants at 12% and NPQLL at 15% compared with all other NPQs at 6%).
 - There was not a provider close to where they lived or worked (NPQEYL participants at 12% and NPQLL at 9% compared with all other NPQs at 3%).
-
- **Role:** Over one in ten (11%) participants in another role in their setting (this included anyone not a teacher, middle leader or senior leader in a school and included roles such as a librarian, teaching assistants, behaviour managers and professional mentors) had reservations about whether the NPQ would meet their development needs compared with 4% of senior leaders, 6% of middle leaders and 5% of teachers.
 - **GBP:** Amongst those studying the NPQEYL, 25% stated that they found it difficult to apply for a Teacher Reference Number (TRN) when compared with SBP participants (3%). Moreover, 12% of GBP participants stated it was difficult to compare and contrast the offers of individual providers compared with 7% in a SBP setting. Additionally, those in a GBP setting were less likely to state they encountered no challenges (28%) compared with 40% in a SBP setting.
 - **Gender:** A higher proportion of female participants (44%) were concerned about the time required to complete the qualification outside of their working hours compared with male participants (35%). Overall, more male participants (49%) stated they encountered no challenges when compared with female participants (42%).
 - **Full-time and part time workers:** A higher proportion of part-time workers (44%) were concerned about the time required to complete the qualification outside of their working hours compared with full-time workers (41%).
 - **Cohort:** Cohort 2 participants were more likely to state they were concerned about the time required to complete the qualification outside of their working hours (45%) compared with those in Cohorts 3 and 4 (39%).

²³ Similar differences were found for nursery when compared with primary and secondary settings due to a high proportion of NPQEYL participants being in that setting type.

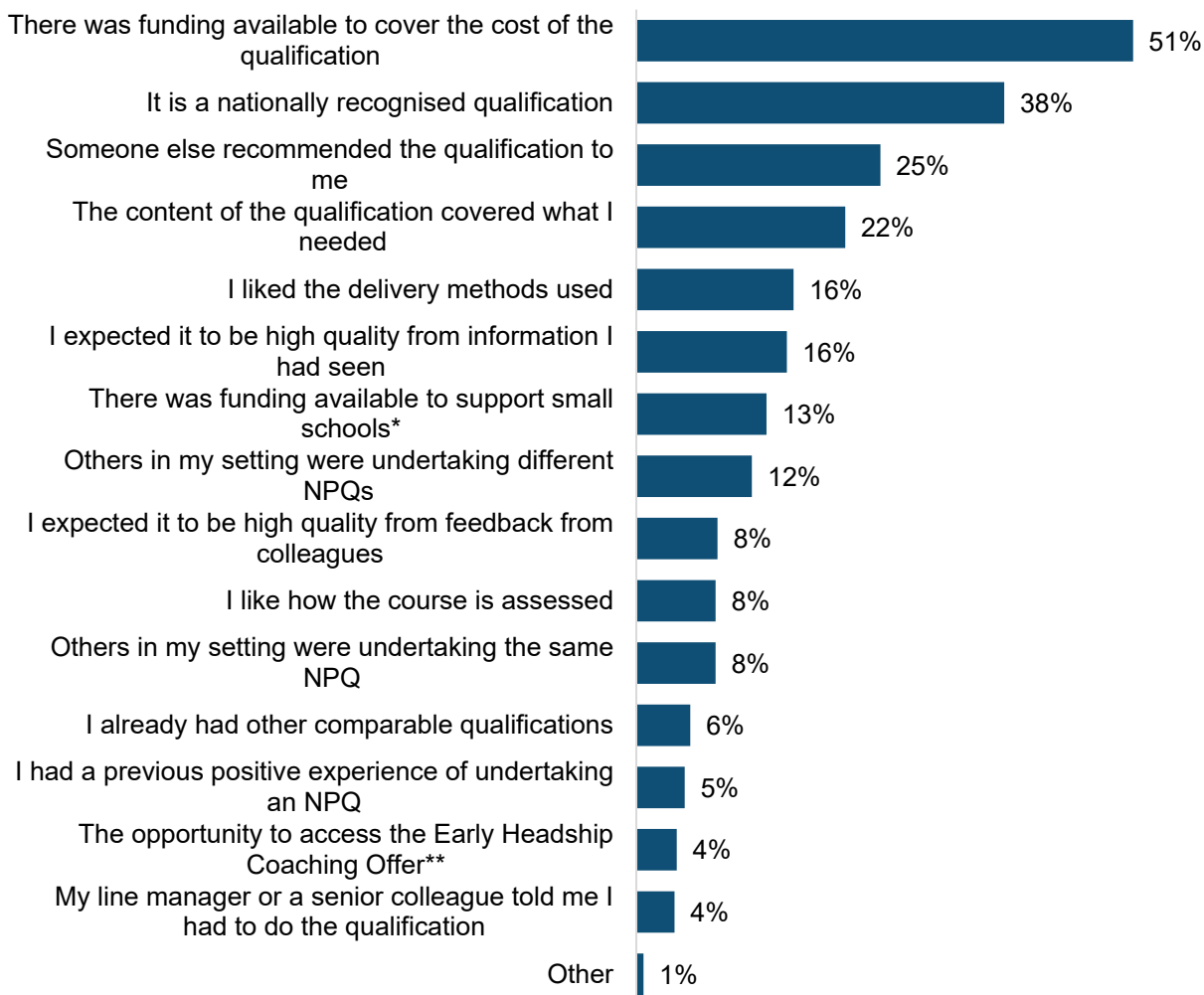
Selecting an NPQ

SPA survey respondents were asked whether they compared NPQs to other qualifications or training when they chose what to study. Just under one-quarter (23%) said they did.²⁴

Figure 15 illustrates that the primary reason respondents chose to undertake an NPQ instead of another qualification (regardless of whether or not they actively compared it to another qualification or training opportunity) was the availability of DfE funding to cover the cost (51%). This was the *only* reason selected by 16% of respondents. A substantial proportion (38%) of respondents chose an NPQ because it is a nationally recognised qualification and one-quarter (25%) reported it was because of the recommendation from someone else. A smaller proportion chose their NPQ because of the content (22%) or the delivery methods (16%). A small proportion (13%) of eligible participants stated that the funding for small schools (Targeted Support Fund) was a reason for choosing an NPQ, and 3% stated this was the *only* reason.

²⁴ Survey question: Did you compare the NPQs to other qualifications or training when choosing what to study (e.g. MA in educational leadership)?

Figure 15: Reasons why an NPQ was chosen



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Base=8,831.

Survey question: Why did you decide to undertake a National Professional Qualification instead of another qualification or form of training (e.g. MA in educational leadership)?

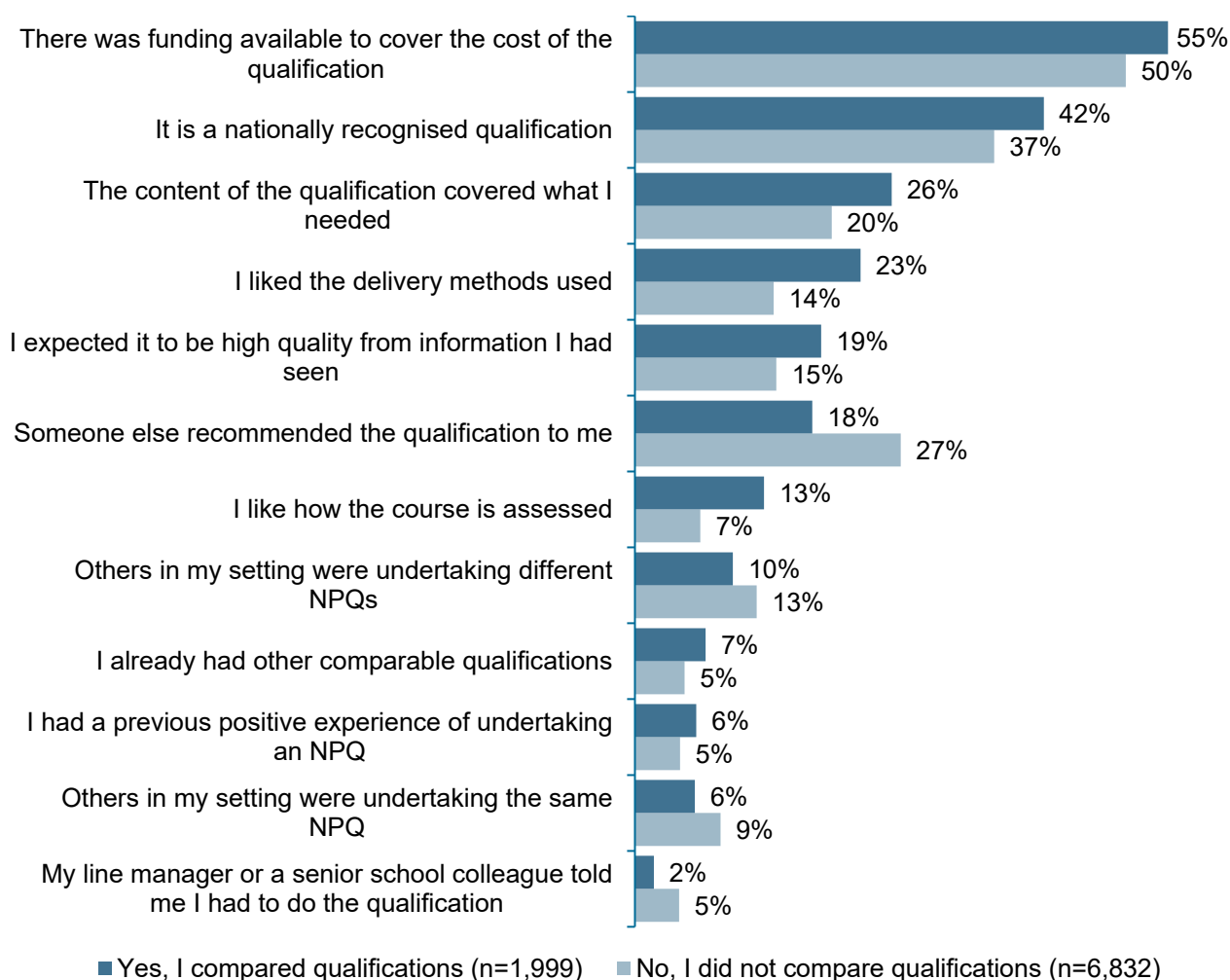
Multiple response question.

* This option was only asked to those who received the Targeted Support Funding (base=2,979).

** This option was only asked to NPQH respondents who were eligible for the ASO/EHCO (base=1,099).

Respondents who directly compared their NPQ to other qualifications were slightly more likely to choose an NPQ because of the funding available and the national recognition attributed to the qualification (Figure 16). The content, delivery and/or assessment methods and the perceptions of the quality of the programme also influenced their decision. Choosing an NPQ because it had been recommended to them was higher (27%) for those who had *not* compared the NPQs to another qualification (18%).

Figure 16: Reasons why an NPQ was chosen by whether or not comparisons to other qualifications were made



Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Bases variable.

Survey question: Why did you decide to undertake a National Professional Qualification instead of another qualification or form of training (e.g. MA in educational leadership)?
Multiple response question.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **NPQ:** A higher proportion of NPQEL and NPQH participants (51%) stated that a reason for choosing an NPQ was the importance of it being a national qualification when compared with all other participants undertaking other NPQs (35%).
- **NPQEYL and GBP:** Amongst NPQEYL participants national funding was an important reason an NPQ was chosen for two-thirds (66%) of participants in a GBP setting compared with 48% of participants in an SBP setting.
- **Ethnicity:** National funding as a reason for selecting an NPQ was also more important for white British participants (53%) when compared with those who were

Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities (46%).

- **Full-time and part time workers:** A higher proportion of part-time workers (57%) stated national funding was a reason for selecting an NPQ when compared with 50% of full-time workers.
- **Role:**
 - A higher proportion of senior leaders stated they chose an NPQ because they liked the delivery methods (20%) when compared with those in all other roles (15%).
 - Senior leaders were also more likely to state they chose an NPQ because they expected it would be high quality (20%) compared with those in all other roles (14%).
 - Senior leaders were less likely to state they chose an NPQ because others in the setting were undertaking the same NPQ (5%) compared with those in all other roles (9%).
 - Senior leaders were also less likely to state they chose an NPQ because someone else recommended it (19%) compared with those in all other roles (28%).
 - 11% of participants in another role in their setting chose an NPQ because they were told they had to do the qualification by someone compared with senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers (4%).
- **NPQ:** A higher proportion of those undertaking NPQEL, NPQH, NPQTD and NPQLL chose an NPQ because the content of the qualification covered what they needed (Table 3) when compared with those undertaking the other qualifications.

Table 3: The content of the qualification covered what I needed as a reason for undertaking the NPQ by qualification undertaken

	Proportion who selected option	Statistical significance
NPQEL (n=368)	31%	Different to NPQSL, NPQEYL, NPQLT, NPQLBC
NPQH (n=1,099)	24%	Different to NPQSL, NPQLT
NPQSL (n=1,916)	19%	Different to NPQEL, NPQH, NPQLTD, NPQLL

	Proportion who selected option	Statistical significance
NPQEYL (n=663)	21%	Different to NPQEL
NPQLT (n=2,000)	17%	Different to NPQEL, NPQH, NPQLTD, NPQLL
NPQLTD (n=1,098)	25%	Different to NPQSL, NPQLT
NPQLBC (n=1,055)	21%	Different to NPQEL
NPQLL (n=632)	27%	Different to NPQSL, NPQLT

Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Bases variable.

Provider choice

Over one-third of SPA survey respondents (37%) chose their provider themselves,²⁵ and a further 16% had some influence over the choice. The decision was made by someone else for nearly half of all respondents (48%).

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **Role:** Over half (53%) of all senior leaders stated they chose their provider themselves in comparison with only 30% of middle leaders, 30% of teachers and 26% of those in other roles.
- **NPQ:** 77% of NPQEL and 55% of NPQH respondents stated they chose their provider themselves, alongside 50% of NPQEYL participants.
- **Phase:** A higher proportion of respondents in primary (41%) and nursery settings (52%) stated they chose their provider themselves when compared with those in secondary settings (27%).
- **Cohort:** A higher proportion of participants who were in Cohorts 3 and 4 (39%) chose their provider themselves when compared with 31% of Cohort 2.²⁶

Of the respondents who had some level of choice over their provider, just over half (52%) compared different providers' offerings when reaching their decision.²⁷ A higher proportion of participants undertaking an LNPQ (57%) stated they compared different providers' offerings when compared with those undertaking an SNPQ (45%).

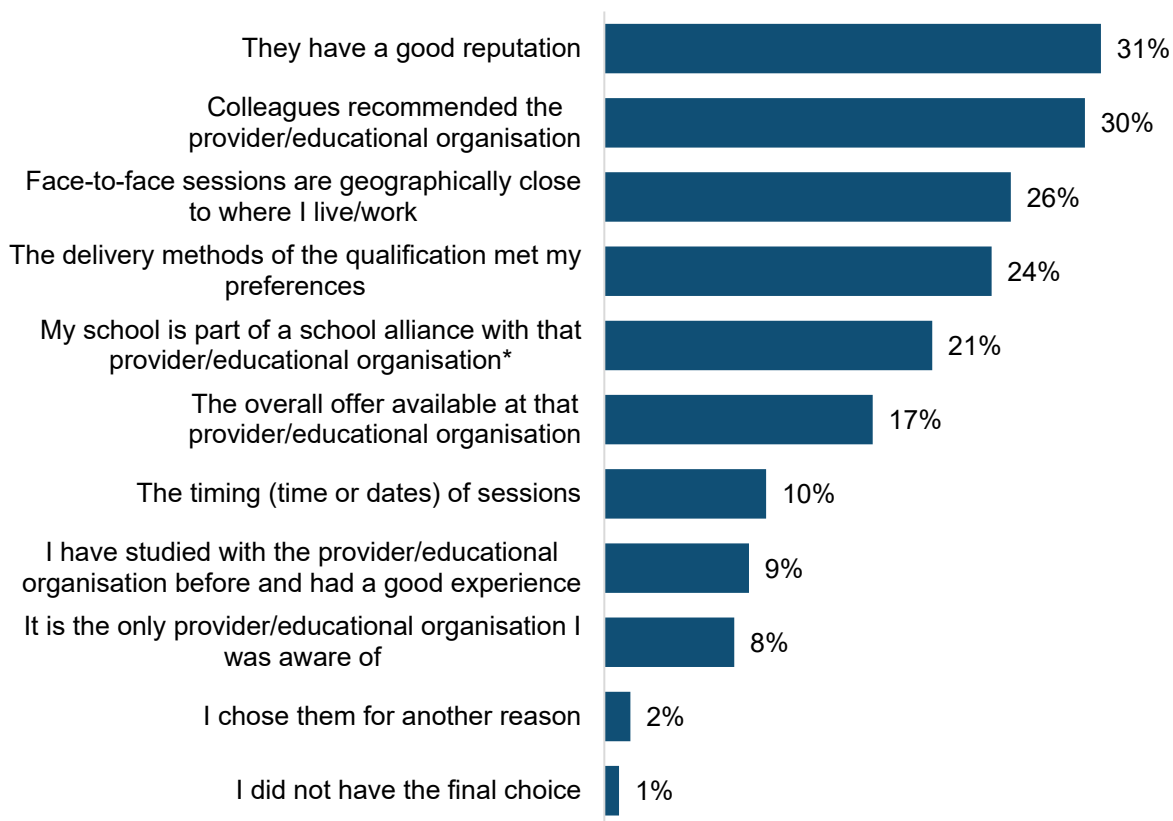
²⁵ Survey question: Did you have any choice about which provider/educational organisation to study your {NPQ name} with?

²⁶ The introduction of the new qualifications in Cohort 3 does not appear to affect the results. Across the different qualifications and Cohorts, awareness rates vary considerably.

²⁷ Survey question: Did you compare this provider/educational organisation to others offering a {NPQ name}?

Amongst those who chose their provider or had some influence over the decision, the provider’s reputation (31%) and recommendations from colleagues (30%) were the most important reasons given (Figure 17). The geographical location of face-to-face sessions (26%) was also a key influencing factor, alongside qualification delivery methods (24%). One-fifth (21%) of respondents chose their provider because they were a member of their school alliance.

Figure 17: Why respondents chose their provider



Source: SPA survey – those who chose/had some influence over the choice of provider. Base=4,623.

Survey question: Why did you decide to undertake the {NPQ name} with your provider/educational organisation?

Multiple response question.

*This option was asked of all but NPQEYL respondents (base=4,203).

A higher proportion of respondents who stated they compared providers’ offers in making a decision (compared with those who did not) reported they chose their provider because they had a good overall reputation (39% compared with 23%), the delivery methods met their preferences (32% compared with 17%), face-to-face sessions were geographically close (29% compared with 22%), and because of the overall provider’s offer (22% compared with 12%).

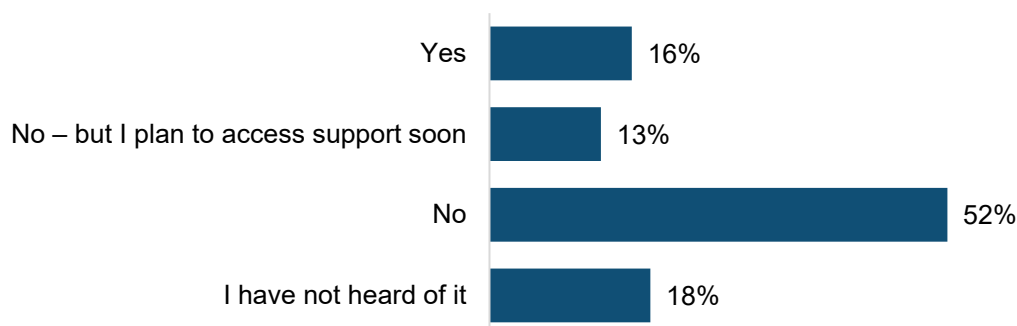
NPQEL and NPQH participants were more likely to state that reputation was important (44% and 38%) compared with all other qualifications (29%). A higher proportion of part-

time workers (31%) stated that the location of face-to-face sessions was important compared with full-time workers (25%).

Early uptake of the Early Headship Coaching Offer

Only a small proportion (13%) of NPQH participants surveyed at SPA were eligible (at the time of completing the survey) to take up the Early Headship Coaching Offer. Amongst the 141 eligible survey respondents, 16% were currently accessing the support and 13% were planning to do so soon (Figure 18). Half had not yet accessed it (with no current plans to do so) and nearly one-fifth (18%) had not heard of it.

Figure 18: Whether eligible NPQH participants are accessing Early Headship Coaching Offer

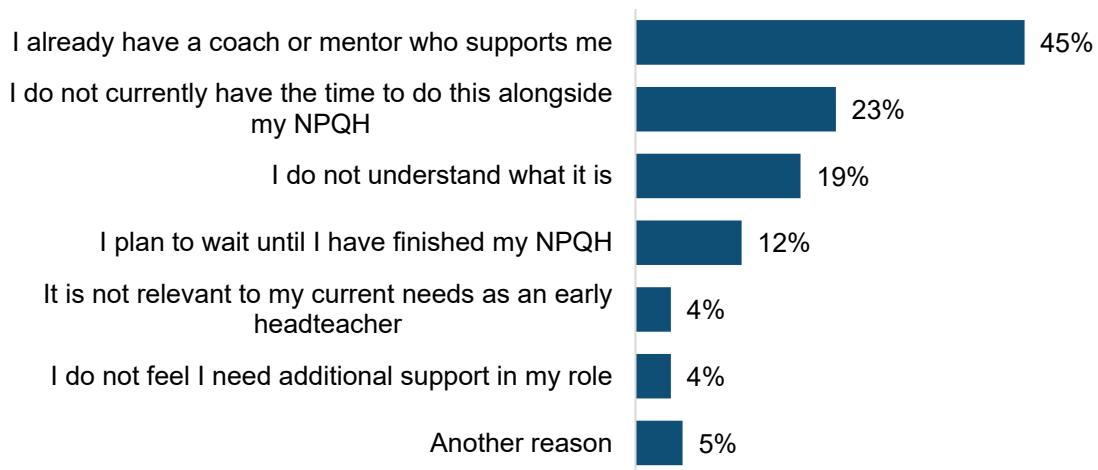


Source: SPA survey – all NPQH respondents eligible for EHCO support. Base=141.
Survey question: Are you currently accessing support through the Early Headship Coaching Offer alongside your NPQH?

Respondents who accessed the support, or planned to do so soon (base=41), were most likely to do so in order to have the opportunity to talk to an experienced headteacher (n=24), to gain confidence when making decisions as a new headteacher, gain practical advice and to receive one-to-one coaching (all n=22).

Already having a coach or mentor in their setting was the most commonly reported reason (45%) why eligible NPQH survey respondents who had heard of the offer had not yet accessed the support (Figure 19). Other reasons included not having enough time to access the support alongside their qualification (23%) and not understanding what it is (19%). A further 12% of respondents indicated that they planned to access the support after completing their NPQH.

Figure 19: Reasons why eligible NPQH participants who have heard about the Early Headship Coaching Offer were not accessing the support offer



Source: SPA survey – All NPQH respondents who had heard about the Early Headship Coaching Offer but not accessing support. Base=74.

Survey question: Why have you decided not to access support through the Early Headship Coaching Offer alongside your NPQH?
Multiple response question.

Chapter 4: SNPQ experiences of content and delivery

Key findings

- Satisfaction with NPQ content was fairly high amongst participants (mean score 5.5 out of 7; 80% agreement), although satisfaction rates were slightly lower for tailoring the qualification to the setting context (4.8; 61% agreement) and tailoring of the qualification to the individual (4.9; 65% agreement). Those at primary (4.8) and secondary schools (4.9) were more satisfied with the contextualisation of their qualification than those in other settings (4.0).
- The main gap in content (identified by a minority of participants responding to an open response question) related to interpersonal or managerial leadership skills which were not included in the SNPQ competency frameworks.
- Overall, most participants were satisfied with the delivery of their NPQ (mean score 5.4 out of 7; 77% agreement), although the lowest satisfaction levels were related to the balance between online and face-to-face delivery (4.9; 61% agreement). The most reported valuable delivery methods were those that were face-to-face, including in-person teaching sessions (5.6; 83% agreement) and in-person peer learning sessions (5.6; 81% agreement).
- Most participants felt supported by both their provider and their setting (mean score 5.5 out of 7; 78% agreement). Participants were least satisfied with the feedback they received from their provider on tasks or work they completed during their NPQ (4.7; 58% agreement). Senior leaders perceived they were more supported by their school (5.8) and had more opportunities to implement their learning than did teachers (5.1).
- Most participants (83%) experienced some challenges when completing their NPQ. The most frequently identified challenge by over half (56%) of respondents was balancing the time to complete the qualification with their day-to-day role; this was especially the case for senior (66%) and middle leaders (59%) compared with teachers (49%).

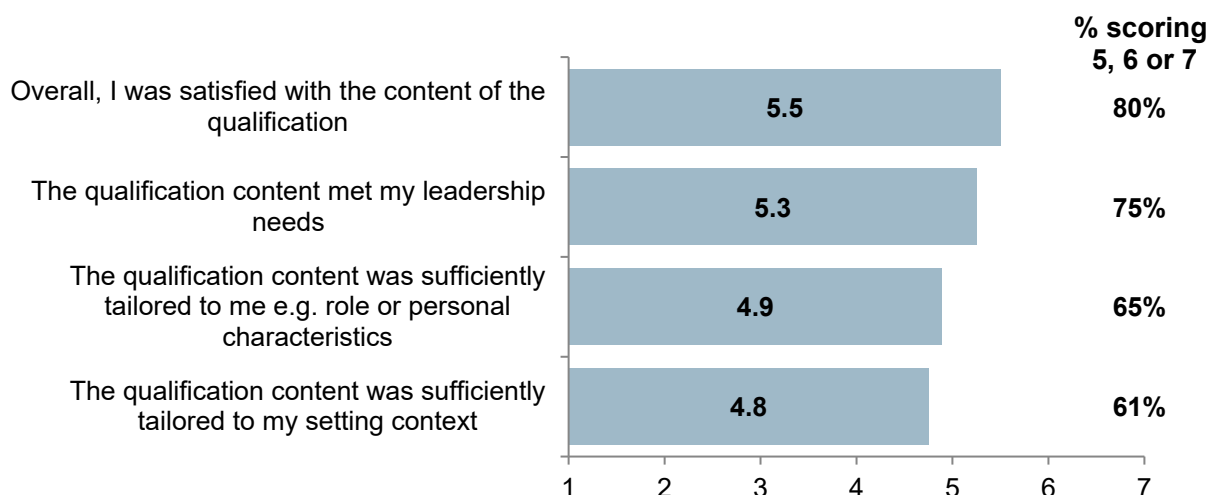
The next two chapters focus on the experience and impact of the NPQs on **Cohort 2 SNPQ participants only**.

Views on content and contextualisation of SNPQs

Satisfaction with NPQ content was fairly high amongst participants, with 80% agreeing they were satisfied with the content and a mean score of 5.5 out of 7 (Figure 20). A lower

average mean was found for participants' satisfaction with the contextualisation and tailoring of the NPQ content to their setting (4.8) and to their own personal characteristics (4.9). This reflects the qualitative findings presented in the first interim report. Additionally, those participants who were not in a primary or secondary setting scored the statement related to their setting lower (4.0) compared with both primary (4.8) and secondary (4.9) settings.

Figure 20: Participants' satisfaction with content and contextualisation of SNPQ (mean score and proportion stating a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7)



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=913-1,002.

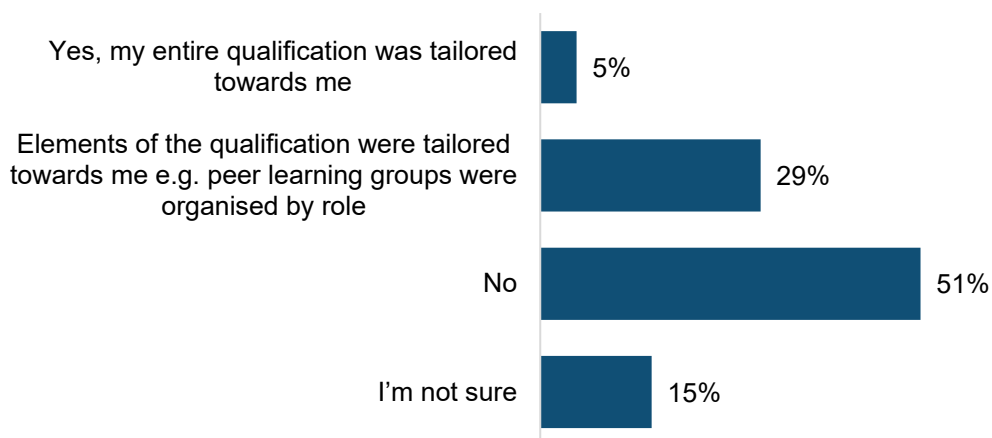
Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, overall, to what extent do you agree with the following statements about your experience of undertaking the {NPQ name}, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree? Each statement rated by participants.

Overall, white British participants were slightly less satisfied with the qualification content compared with those who were Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities:

- Overall satisfaction with the content (5.4 compared with 5.7).
- Content tailored to setting (4.7 compared with 5.1).
- Content tailored to person (4.8 compared with 5.3).

Within their delivery, providers offer opportunities for facilitators to contextualise content, often through the use of case studies and practical examples anchored in 'real-life' scenarios. Within the SPB survey, participants were asked to identify whether they perceived their NPQ as having been contextualised for them during delivery. A small proportion (5%) thought their entire qualification had been tailored towards them and nearly one-third (29%) described how elements of the qualification had been tailored (Figure 21). Just over half (51%) stated that their SNPQ had not been contextualised in any way.

Figure 21: Whether participants thought their SNPQ had been contextualised



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=988.

Survey question: When undertaking your {NPQ Code} were there any aspects of the qualification that were specifically tailored to either your school/early years setting context, role or own personal characteristics? For example, the entire qualification or aspects of it being tailored towards your phase or by your role.

Over half (55%) of those who reported that elements of their NPQ had been contextualised also reported (through an open response question) that they experienced being placed in groups with people from similar settings or backgrounds which helped them apply learning to their context. One-third (33%) reported their NPQ included activities or groupings which were based on their phase of teaching (primary or secondary), and 30% reported contextualisation based on their subject specialism or Key Stage focus.

Gaps in content

On completion of their SNPQ (NPQLTD, NPQLT and NPQLBC), participants were asked to identify whether there were any gaps in the content of their NPQ.²⁸ In total, 381 (38%) of participants described a gap; however, many described gaps or improvements they thought were needed to delivery methods or the assessment process rather than the content itself. Over one-quarter of those who reported a gap described wanting more tailored content for their school phase. The second largest identified gap (17%) was related to interpersonal or managerial content, e.g. how to have difficult conversations or leadership styles. This aligns with interim report 1 and qualitative findings from providers who perceived the NPQ frameworks as allowing less space to explore leadership attributes, akin to the 'softer' elements of people management. Other gaps included: specific areas of content relevant to the SNPQ being studied (these differed greatly between the SNPQs, e.g. trauma-informed strength-based practices for NPQLBC and

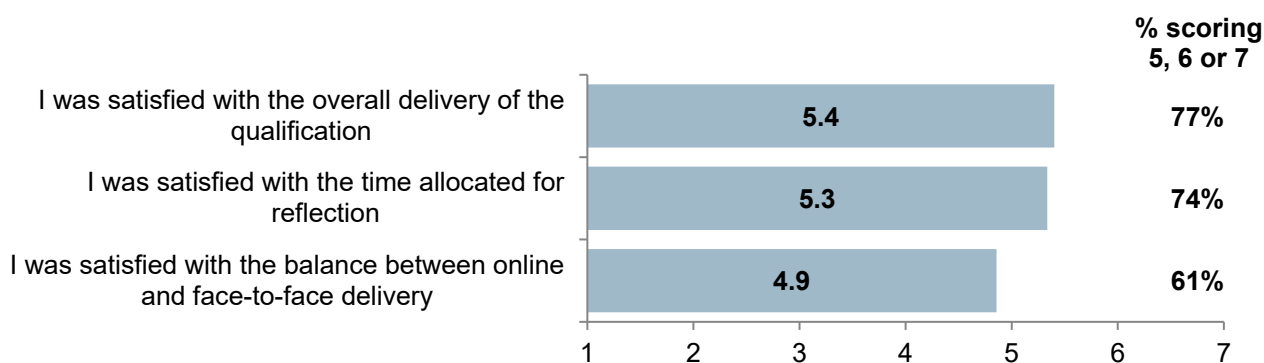
²⁸ Assessed using an open-response question, namely 'Please summarise any content you thought was missing from your NPQ'. Responses were coded.

ECT mentoring for NPQLTD), content more focused on the role the individual was currently playing in their setting, and subject-specific tailoring of the content.

Experience of delivery

Delivery methods varied between providers. Most providers combined elements of independent study with online synchronous sessions and face-to-face opportunities. Overall, most participants were satisfied with the delivery of their NPQ (mean score of 5.4 out of 7, 77% agreed by scoring the statement a 5, 6 or 7; Figure 22). However, a lower mean score (4.9) was reported for satisfaction with the balance between online and face-to-face delivery, with only 61% agreeing (by scoring the statement a 5, 6 or 7). Cohort 2 was delivered towards the end of the national COVID-19 pandemic and at times was negatively impacted by restrictions on face-to-face activities, which could partly explain this.

Figure 22: Participants' satisfaction with delivery of their SNPQ (mean score and proportion stating a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7)



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=931-966.

Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, overall, to what extent do you agree with the following statements about your experience of undertaking the {NPQ name}, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree?

Each statement rated by participants.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

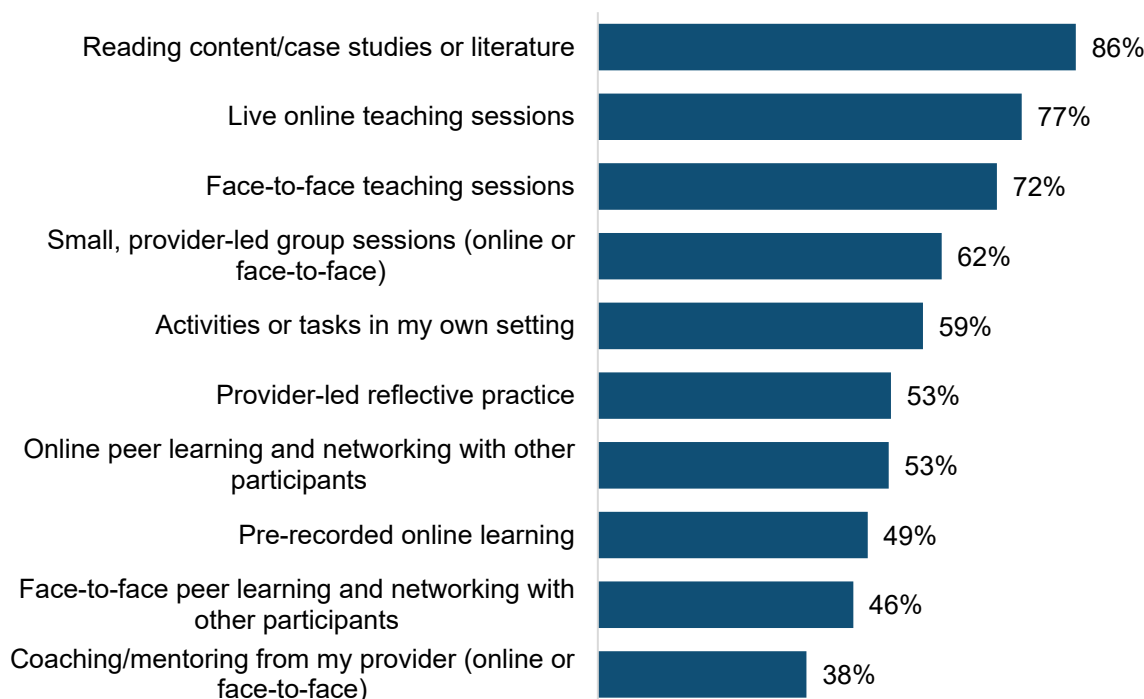
- **NPQ:** NPQLTD participants were slightly more satisfied with the overall delivery of the qualification (5.6 out of 7) and satisfied with the time allocated for reflection (5.5) when compared with NPQLT participants (5.3 and 5.2, respectively).²⁹
- **Ethnicity:** White British participants gave a lower mean score (5.3) to being satisfied with the time for reflection when compared with those who were Asian or

²⁹ There were no statistically significant differences for NPQLBC.

Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities (5.6).

Figure 23 shows the different delivery activities experienced by participants. The majority (86%) engaged with reading resources or academic content to support their learning. Over three-quarters (77%) reported live teaching sessions and nearly three-quarters (72%) experienced face-to-face teaching sessions. The first interim report highlighted that most providers interviewed described how they included coaching for LNPs but fewer included this for SNPs, with it being the least reported delivery method accessed (38%).

Figure 23: Delivery methods experienced by SNP participants



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=1,002.

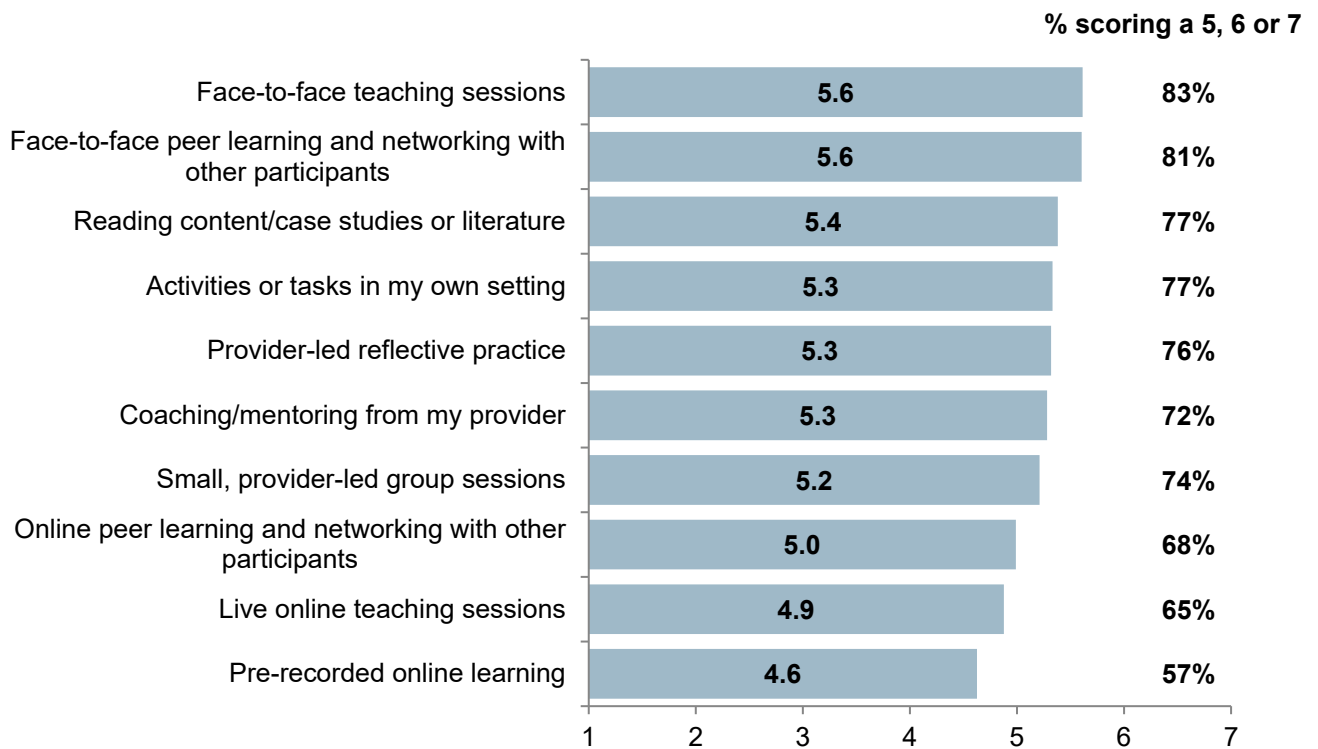
Survey question: When completing your {NPQ name} which of the following activities did you participate in or complete?

Multiple response question.

Participants were asked how valuable the delivery methods (that they experienced) were in relation to the development of their leadership/specialist knowledge, skills and attributes (Figure 24). The methods most valued by participants were those involving face-to-face delivery, including teaching sessions (with a mean of 5.6 out of 7; 83% agreement), and face-to-face peer learning (5.6; 81% agreement). In contrast, online learning received lower mean scores, including pre-recorded online learning (4.6; 57% agreement) and live online teaching sessions (4.9; 65% agreement), although many still found these valuable.

The third highest rated mean score for participants was for reading materials or case studies (5.4; 77% agreement). This suggests that participants valued the research-informed nature of the reformed NPQ, which aided development.

Figure 24: Perceived value of each delivery activity in enabling development of participant leadership and specialist knowledge, skills and attributes (mean score and proportion stating a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7)



Source: SPB survey – those who participated in each activity. Base=344-810.

Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that the following activities enabled you to develop your leadership knowledge, skills and attributes {if SNPQ: leadership reads as leadership and specialist}, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree? Each statement rated by participants who selected that delivery method.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

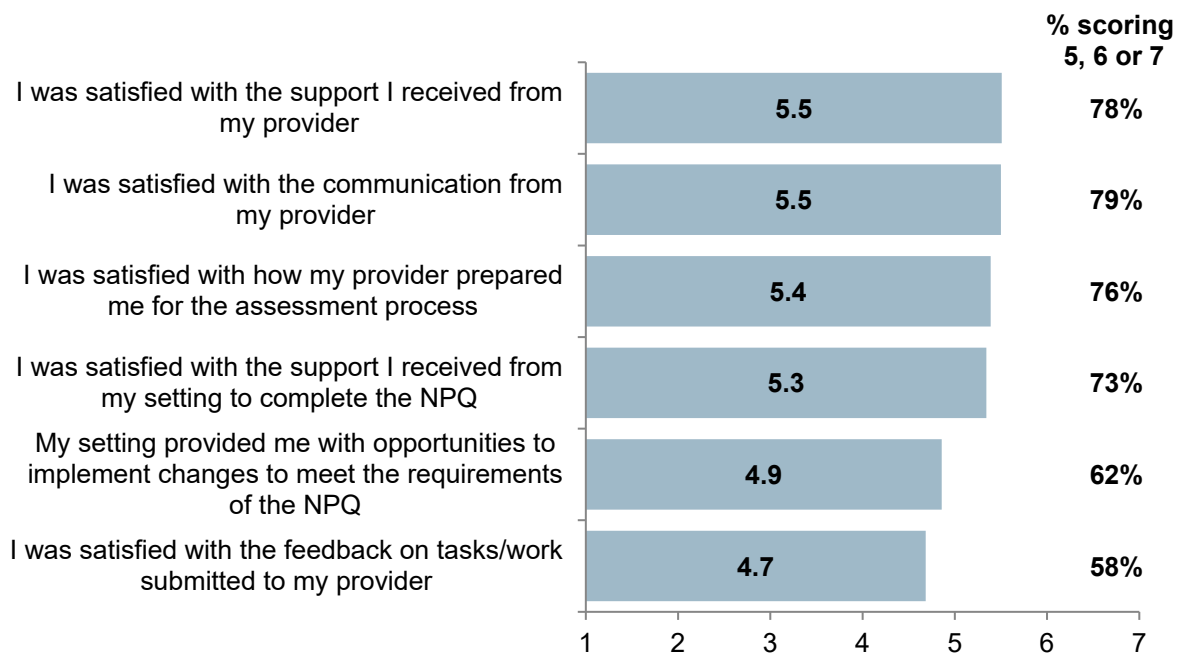
- **NPQ:** Both NPQLBC and NPQTLD participants reported higher mean scores for the extent to which provider-led reflective practice enabled them to develop their leadership knowledge, skills and attributes (both scored at 5.5) compared with NPQLT participants (5.1).
- **Ethnicity:** In addition, white British participants scored the extent to which live online teaching sessions (4.8) and pre-recorded learning (4.5) enabled them to develop their leadership knowledge, skills and attributes and when compared with those who were Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African;

mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities, scoring the statements as 5.3 and 5.2, respectively.

Support received whilst on the qualification

Most participants felt supported by their provider whilst undertaking their NPQ, with an average score of 5.5 out of 7. Overall, participants were slightly more satisfied with the different support they received from their provider in comparison to their own setting (Figure 25). The exception to this was in relation to their satisfaction with the feedback they received on tasks/work from their provider, with a mean score of 4.7, whilst 58% agreed (by scoring this a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7). This reflects the findings from the qualitative interviews in the first interim report.

Figure 25: Participants' perception of support received during their SNPQ (mean score and proportion stating a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7)



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=888-970.
 Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, overall, to what extent do you agree with the following statements about the support you received whilst undertaking your {NPQ name}, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree? Each statement rated by participants.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants for aspects of provider support:

- **NPQ:** NPQLTD participants reported higher mean scores across a number of the satisfaction statements when compared with NPQLT participants:
 - Satisfied with the support received from provider (5.7 compared with 5.4).
 - Satisfied with communication from provider (5.7 compared with 5.4).

- Satisfied with how provider prepared them for the assessment process (5.6 compared with 5.2).
- **Ethnicity:** White British participants reported higher mean scores across a number of the satisfaction statements when compared with participants who were Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities:
 - Satisfaction with communication from provider (5.4 compared with 5.8).
 - Satisfaction with how provider prepared them for the assessment process (5.3 compared with 5.6).
 - Satisfaction with the feedback they received on tasks/work (4.6 compared with 5.3).

Differences were also found for certain groups of participants for aspects of setting support:

- **Role:** Senior leaders provided a higher mean score (5.8) for their satisfaction with the support from their setting compared with teachers (5.1). Perceptions of whether their setting provided opportunities to implement changes also differed by role. Senior and middle leaders provided a higher mean score (5.7 and 4.9) when compared with teachers (4.5).
- **Phase:** Participants from primary schools also reported a higher mean score (5.2) – for whether their setting provided opportunities to implement changes – than did secondary school participants (4.7) and those from other phases (4.4).

Challenges when undertaking their qualification

When asked specifically about challenges, most participants (83%) stated that they experienced one or more challenges when completing their NPQ. Over half of all respondents (56%) identified it was challenging to balance the time required for the qualification with their day-to-day role and responsibilities. Over one-quarter (26%) reported a lack of time because of personal responsibilities, and nearly one-quarter (23%) identified difficulties in obtaining release time from their setting (Figure 26). Linked to the previous section regarding support from settings, over one-quarter of participants (28%) specifically identified ‘a lack of opportunities to apply learning from the qualification to my setting’ as a challenge.

Funding was not highlighted as a challenge for many participants completing their NPQ. Only 5% identified challenges relating to meeting the costs of travel or subsistence, and 5% stated securing funding to cover release time.

Figure 26: Challenges faced by participants during their SNPQ



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=990.

Survey question: Did you experience any of the following challenges when undertaking your {NPQ name}?
Multiple response question.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- NPQ:** Overall, participants who undertook NPQLTD reported fewer challenges than those who undertook NPQLT,³⁰ with 23% stating they did not experience any challenges compared with 13%. A higher proportion of NPQLT participants (compared with NPQLTD) stated the following challenges: obtaining release time (27% compared with 19%), lack of time due to personal responsibilities (28% compared with 21%) and understanding how to complete the end of course assessment (26% compared with 17%). These differences were not explained by the role of the individual, with no statistically significant differences for these statements by role.
- Phase:** Obtaining release time was more challenging for those in a primary setting (33%) compared with secondary (17%) and all other settings (19%).

³⁰ There were no statistically significant differences for NPQLBC.

- **Gender:** A higher proportion of females stated obtaining release time was a challenge (25%) when compared with males (18%).
- **Role:** Balancing the time required for the qualification alongside their day-to-day role was more challenging for senior leaders (66%) and middle leaders (59%) when compared with teachers (49%). Senior leaders, however, were less likely to report that they had a lack of opportunities to apply learning in their setting (11%) compared with middle leaders (26%) and teachers (36%).

Chapter 5: SNPQ Self-reported outcomes and impacts

Key findings

- Across all SNPQs, the majority of participants self-reported improvements across all competencies outlined in the NPQ frameworks (between 66% and 90% of participants reported an improvement for each competency).
- Whilst on the qualification survey participants reported increasing both their readiness (85%) and confidence (89% increased confidence for the evidence base and 88% increased confidence to make changes in their setting) for the role they were studying for, and they attributed over half of their development (54%) whilst on their NPQ to the qualification itself.
- The majority of SNPQ participants perceived their NPQ as having met their leadership and specialist skill development needs (mean score 5.4 out of 7; 81% agreement). On completion of the qualification, 84% of participants agreed they would recommend their NPQ to colleagues.
- Whilst undertaking the qualification, a number of survey respondents had moved into a new role by the time they had completed their qualification (37%) and/or now had responsibilities for the area they had studied for (16%). Over half of the participants who had moved into a new role or had gained additional responsibilities agreed that their NPQ had strongly contributed to them achieving this outcome (56%).
- The NPQs have increased 65% of participants' aspirations to move into a more senior level role in the future. Of the participants who had achieved a promotion to a more senior role, nearly three quarters (74%) agreed that their NPQ had increased their aspirations to attain that new role.
- Many participants who responded to the survey agreed that their NPQ had supported them in making changes and improving teaching and learning standards in their setting (78% agreement). Only a small proportion (15%) stated their NPQ had not had an impact yet.

This chapter focuses on the impact of the NPQs on **Cohort 2 SNPQ participants only**.

Skills development

Impact on SNPQ competencies

On completion of their NPQ, SPB survey participants were asked to score themselves retrospectively against the underpinning competencies linked to each qualification.³¹ Across all specialist NPQ qualifications, the majority of participants reported higher self-assessment scores against all of the NPQ competencies upon completing their qualification compared with when they started.³² This indicates that they perceived their competencies as having significantly improved whilst undertaking their NPQ.

NPQLT development of competencies

Figure 27 shows that NPQLT participants reported the greatest improvement in the following competencies:

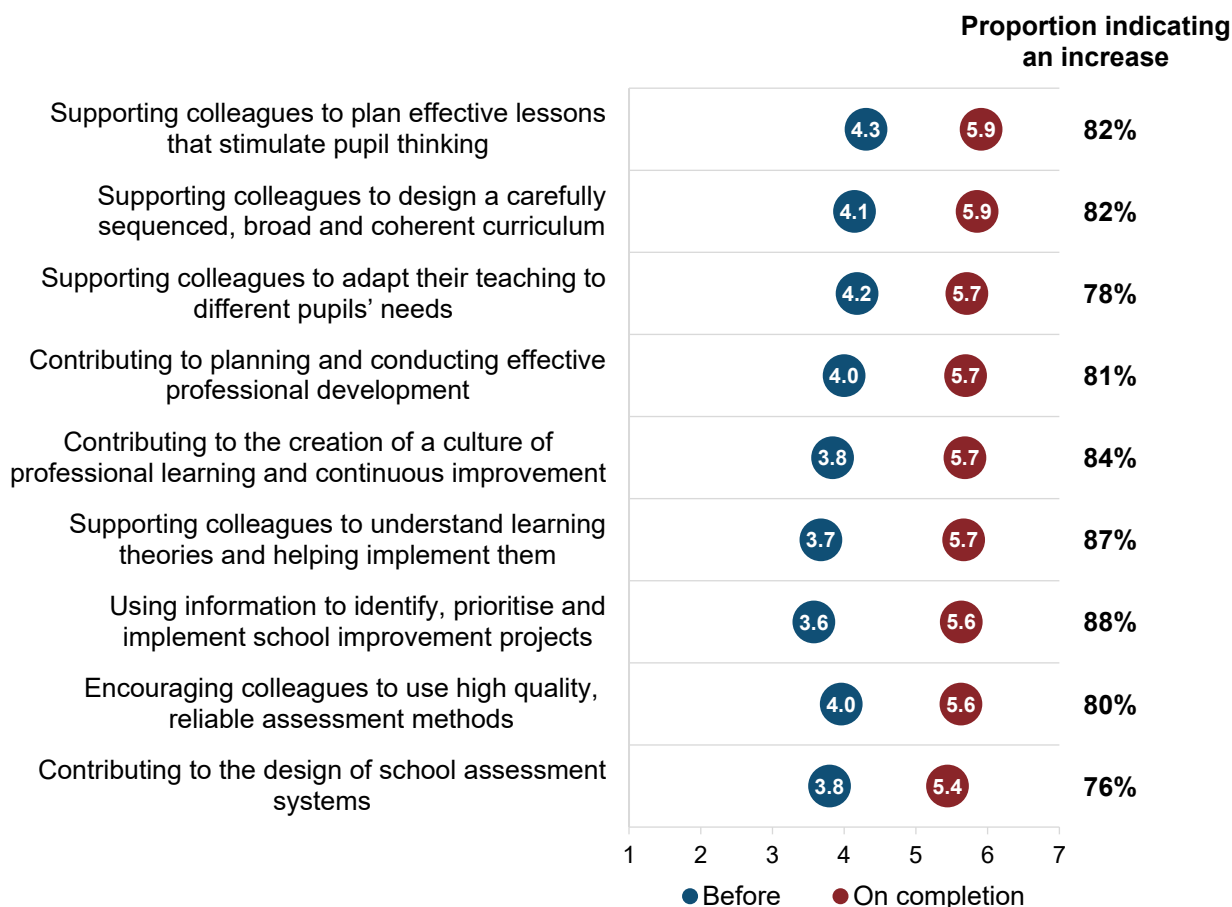
- **Using information to identify, prioritise and implement school improvement projects**, increasing from 3.6 to 5.6 (increase of 2.0), with 88% of respondents reporting an improvement in this competency. This was also the lowest self-reported competency for NPQLT participants on starting their qualification.
- **Supporting colleagues to understand learning theories and help them to implement evidence into their practice**, increasing from 3.7 out of 7 to 5.7 on completion of the qualification (an increase of 2.0). Overall, 87% of respondents reported an increase in this competency.
- **Contributing to the creation of a culture of professional learning and continuous improvement**, increasing from 3.8 to 5.7 (increase of 1.9), with 84% reporting an increase in this competency overall.
- **Supporting colleagues to design a carefully sequenced, broad and coherent curriculum**, increasing from 4.1 to 5.9 (increase of 1.8). Overall, 82% of respondents reported an improvement in this competency.

On completing their qualification, all competencies received a score of 5.4 or above, highlighting that participants agreed that they now met the competencies required to effectively lead teaching in their setting.

³¹ The full list of competencies with the exact wording used in the SPB survey can be found in Appendix 3. Throughout this section, the wording of each competency has been shortened. Respondents' self-reported competencies were measured using a scale of 1-7, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree.

³² As measured at completion and asked to retrospectively score 'before'.

Figure 27: NPQLT participants' agreement on being fully competent across the following activities before starting their qualification and upon completion (mean score and proportion reporting an increase)



Source: SPB survey – all NPQLT respondents. Base=449-459.

Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that you were fully competent across the following areas needed {NPQ role descriptor} before you undertook your {NPQ name} and now, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree? Each statement rated by participants.

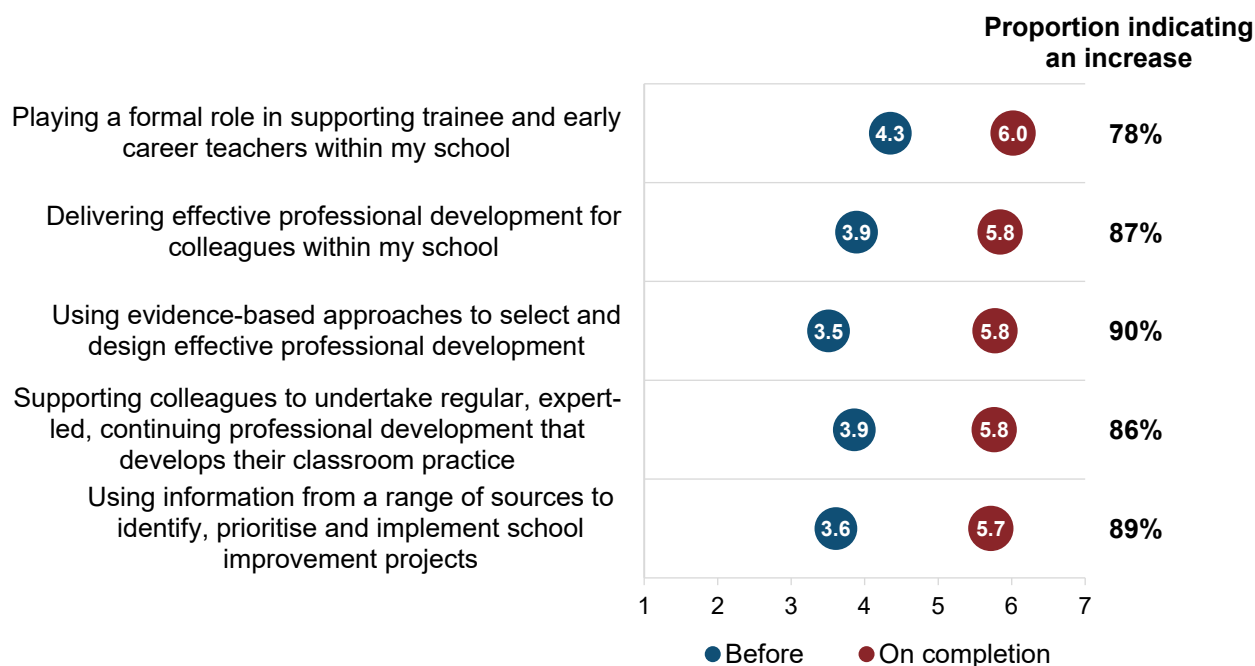
NPQLTD development of competencies

Figure 28 shows that NPQLTD participants experienced improvements across all competencies, with the largest improvements in the following competencies:

- **Using evidence-based approaches to select and design effective professional development**, increasing from 3.5 to 5.8 (an increase of 2.3). 90% of participants reported an improvement in this competency.
- **Using information from a range of sources to identify, prioritise and implement school improvement projects**, increasing from 3.6 to 5.7 (an increase of 2.1). 89% of participants reported an improvement in this competency.

On completion of the NPQLTD, all competencies received a mean score of 5.7 or higher, which suggests that participants perceived they met the competencies required for leading teacher development.

Figure 28: NPQLTD participants' agreement on being fully competent across the following activities before starting their qualification and upon completion (mean score and proportion reporting an increase)



Source: SPB survey – all NPQLTD respondents. Base=307-311.

Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that you were fully competent across the following areas needed {NPQ role descriptor} before you undertook your {NPQ name} and now, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree? Each statement rated by participants.

NPQLBC development of competencies

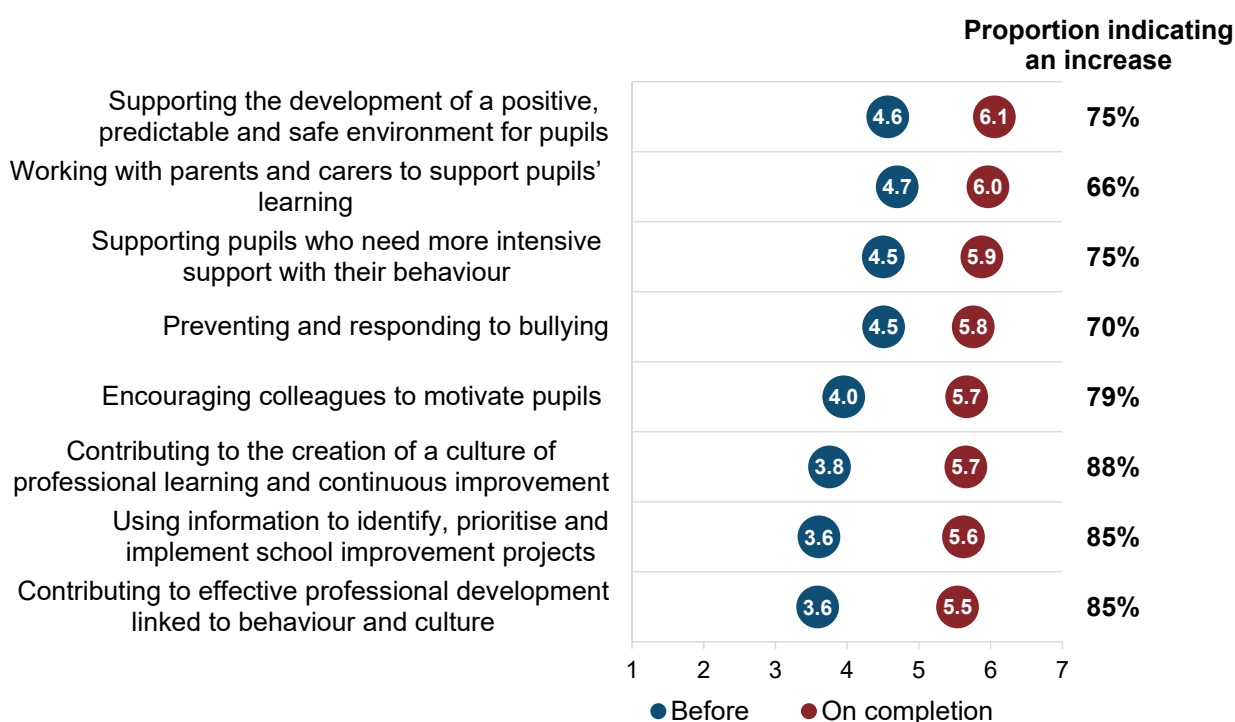
Figure 29 shows that NPQLBC participants experienced the biggest improvements in the following areas, noting that these competencies were also those that respondents rated themselves lowest on retrospectively before they started their NPQ:

- **Using information to identify, prioritise and implement school improvement projects**, increasing from 3.6 out of 7 to 5.6 (an increase of 2.0). Overall, 85% of participants reported an improvement in this competency.
- **Contributing to effective professional development linked to behaviour and culture**, increasing from 3.6 to 5.5 (an increase of 1.9), with 85% of participants reporting an increase.
- **Contributing to the creation of a culture of professional learning and continuous improvement**, increasing from 3.8 to 5.7 (an increase of 1.9), and 88% of participants reported an improvement.

- **Encouraging colleagues to motivate pupils by helping them understand how their successes are linked to their long-term goals**, increasing from 4.0 to 5.7 (an increase of 1.7). Overall, 79% reported an increase in this competency.

On the completion of the NPQLBC, all competencies had increased by at least 1.3 points on the 1-7 scale, and all were over 5.4 out of 7. This suggests that participants perceived they met the required competencies associated with leading behaviour and culture.

Figure 29: NPQLBC participants' agreement on being fully competent across the following activities before starting their qualification and upon completion (mean score and proportion reporting an increase)



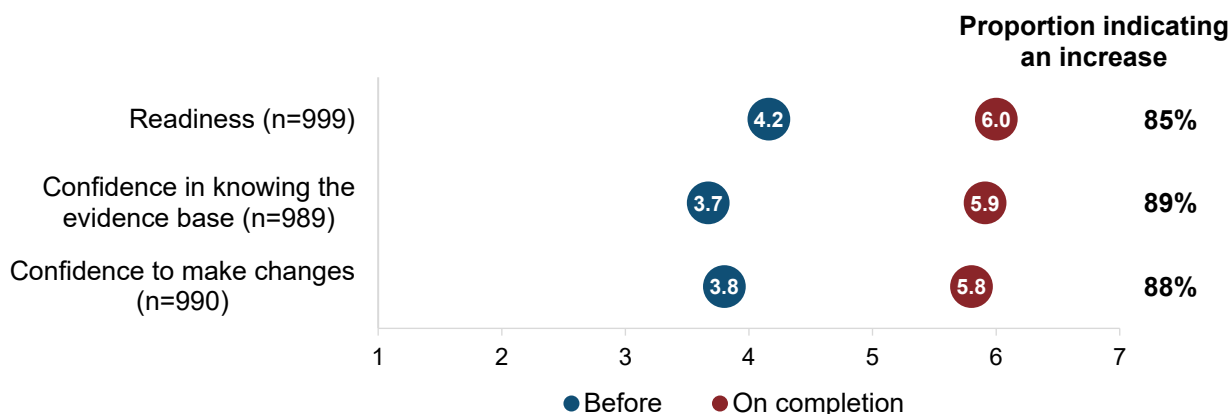
Source: SPB survey – all NPQLBC respondents. Base=200-202.

Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that you were fully competent across the following areas needed {NPQ role descriptor} before you undertook your {NPQ name} and now, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree? Each statement rated by participants.

Readiness and confidence

Participants reported an increase in their readiness for the role they were studying for as well as reporting being more confident in their knowledge and understanding of the evidence base and their confidence in being able to make changes in their setting (Figure 30). The majority of respondents (85%) reported an increase in their readiness for their role. The greatest increase in confidence was for respondents knowing the evidence base for the role, with 89% reporting an increase.

Figure 30: Perceived readiness and confidence for role before and on completion of the SNPQ (mean score and proportion reporting an increase)



Source: SPB Survey – all respondents. Bases variable.

Survey questions: On a scale of 1-7, based on your leadership knowledge, skills and attributes how ready do you think you were for {NPQ role descriptor} before you started your {NPQ name} and now, where 1=not at all ready and 7=very ready?; On a scale of 1-7, how confident did you feel about the following before you started your {NPQ name} and now, where 1=not at all confident and 7=very confident? Each statement rated by participants.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **Role status:** A higher proportion of respondents not in the role linked to their NPQ (on starting their qualification) reported an increase in readiness for their role (88%) compared with colleagues that were already in the role when they started their NPQ (83%). A higher proportion of respondents not in the role linked to their role when starting their qualification reported that their confidence in their ability to make changes increased (92%) compared with those in the role (86%).
- **NPQ:** A higher proportion of NPQLTD participants (90%) reported an increase in readiness for their role compared with colleagues on NPQLT and NPQLBC (both 83%).

NPQs meeting leadership and specialist skill development needs

The majority of SNPQ participants (81%) perceived their NPQ as having met their leadership and specialist skill development needs.³³ The mean score was 5.4 out of 7.

³³ Calculated as the proportion of respondents who answered 5, 6 or 7 on a 1-7 agreement scale to the question, 'To what extent do you agree that the NPQ met your leadership and specialist skill development needs?'

Differences were found for certain groups of participants regarding the statement that their SNPQ had met their development needs:

- **NPQ:** Participants who had completed an NPQLTD reported a higher mean score (5.6) when compared with NPQLT participants (5.3).
- **Phase:** Primary and secondary schools scored this higher (both scored this as 5.5) when compared with those in other settings (5.0).
- **Ethnicity:** White British participants rated this lower (5.4) when compared with Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities (5.7).

Most (84%) participants agreed that they would recommend their NPQ to other colleagues once they had completed their qualification (by scoring an agreement scale question 5, 6 or 7 out of 7).³⁴ On average, participants scored the recommendation statement as 4.4 before they started their qualification and 5.8 on completion. Over two-thirds of participants (68%) reported an increase in the score they gave.³⁵

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

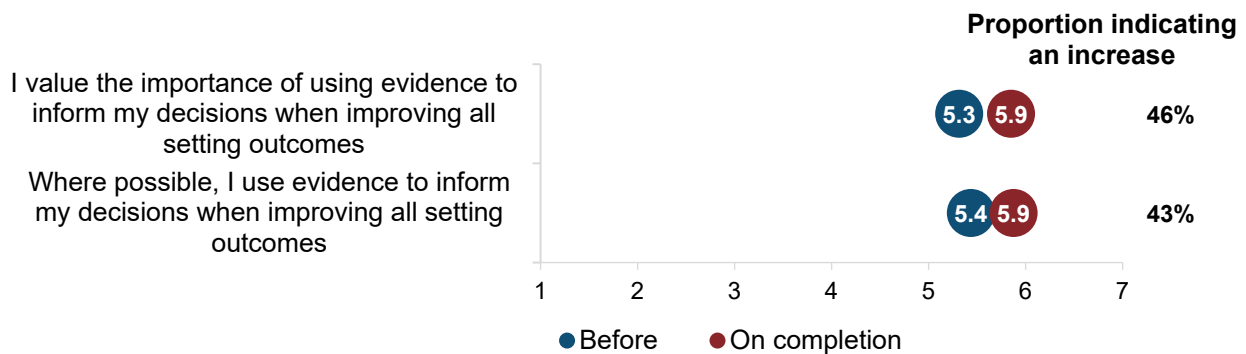
- **NPQ:** After completing their NPQ, NPQLTD participants had a higher mean score for the item which stated that they would recommend the NPQ to others (5.9) compared with NPQLT participants (5.7). In addition, 15% of NPQLT participants provided a lower score for the recommendation statement on completing their NPQ compared with 7% of NPQLTD participants.
- **Ethnicity:** White British participants scored the recommendation statement lower (5.7) when compared with those who were Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities (6.1).

A key aim of the reformed NPQs was to have a greater emphasis on evidence-informed leadership within the education sector. Qualitative findings in the first interim report highlighted the value participants placed on the quality of evidence and resources used within the delivery of the reformed NPQs. SPB survey findings (Figure 31) showed that, on completion of an NPQ, there were small increases in the value participants placed on using evidence and the actual use of evidence to improve their setting outcomes.

³⁴ Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, overall, how likely would you have been to recommend the {NPQ name} to a colleague before you undertook the qualification and now, where 1=not at all likely and 7=extremely likely?

³⁵ 12% reported a decrease in this score.

Figure 31: Perceived value and use of evidence in practice before and on completion of qualification (mean score and proportion reporting an increase)



Source: SPA and SPB survey – longitudinal analysis – all respondents who completed SPA and SPB. Base=505-520.

Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree with the following statements now that you have completed your {NPQ name}, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree? Each statement rated by participants.

Participants' attribution of impact on leadership competencies

Participants were asked to think about the development of their leadership and specialist knowledge, from before they started their NPQ to when they completed their NPQ, and to consider what proportion of their development they would attribute to their NPQ and other sources. On average, participants attributed over half (54%) of their leadership and specialist skill development to the NPQ itself and the rest to other development opportunities. The remaining attribution was split between other training they completed (22%) and other experiences (23%).

Figure 32: Mean attribution of leadership and specialist skill development



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=804.

Survey question: Thinking about the development of your leadership/leadership and specialist knowledge, from before you started your {NPQ name} to now, what percentage of this overall development would you attribute to {NPQ name} and what percentage to any other training or experience? Please give your answers as percentages which add up to 100% in total.

On average, participants who were not in the role they were studying for on starting their qualification attributed more of their development to their NPQ (58%) when compared with those who were already in the role (51%).

45% of all participants stated they would attribute at least part of their development to other types of training. When members of the group were asked what type of training this consisted of, they described provision delivered by their setting (45%; e.g. through staff meetings), subject-specific CPD (22%) and role-based leadership training (e.g. middle leader courses, 9%).

Additionally, 53% of all participants stated they would attribute at least part of their development to other experiences. When asked what experiences this group of participants undertook, they described on-the-job experience including roles with additional responsibilities (55%), working with and learning from colleagues (e.g. conversations, observations; 17%) and independent research (15%).

Career progression

Gaining responsibilities associated with the SNPQ

SNPQ participants were asked what responsibilities they had (associated with their qualification) when they started their qualification and how those had changed whilst they were on their qualification. Table 4 shows how their role changed. For instance, if a participant had no responsibility for leading behaviour and culture in their setting but had started to lead this across the whole setting or for groups of pupils in their setting, this would be classed as moving from 'not in role' to 'in role' (see Figure 2 for a full list of categories).

As reported at SPA, a high proportion of SNPQ participants already had some responsibility for the areas their SNPQ covered in their setting, and most had retained this responsibility. Overall, 16% of participants moved from not being in the role that was linked to their NPQ to now being in a related role. Despite the table showing a slightly greater increase in the proportion of participants moving from not in role to in role for NPQLBC participants compared with the other qualifications, this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 4: Change in role status for participants across SNPQ qualifications

	NPQLT (n=456)	NPQLTD (n=304)	NPQLBC (n=191)	All SNPQs (n=951)
In role → in role	63%	63%	43%	59%
Not in role → in role	16%	14%	19%	16%
In role → not in role	2%	3%	2%	2%
Not in role → not in role	20%	20%	37%	23%

Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Bases variable.

Those who were senior leaders or were in a middle leadership position were more likely to have the responsibility linked to their role both when starting and ending their qualification (89% and 71%, respectively) when compared with teachers (28%), and as such very few changed their role on completing their qualification. In contrast, 28% of teachers undertaking the SNPQs moved from not in role to in role compared with 4% of senior leaders and 11% of middle leaders.

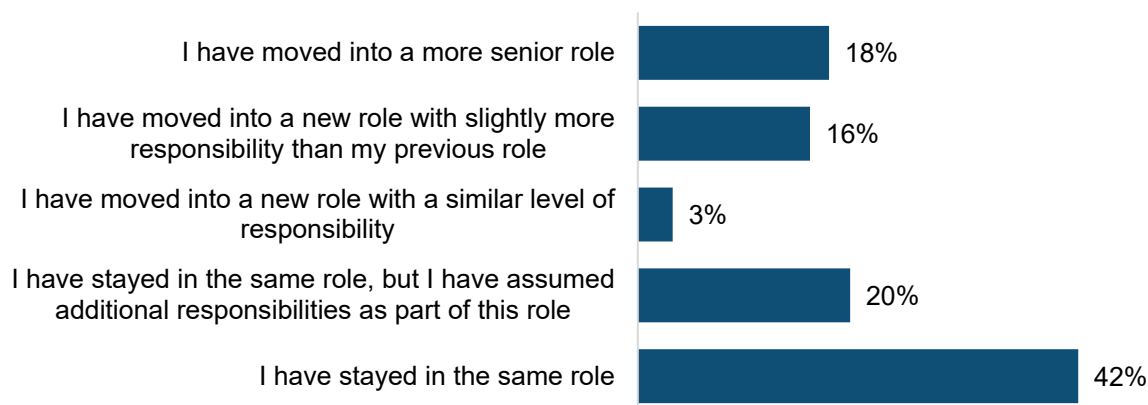
Changing roles

The survey also explored whether or not an individual had changed roles since they started their NPQ (regardless of whether this was related to the specialism outlined by the SNPQ they were undertaking). By the time participants had completed their qualification, nearly one-fifth (18%) of survey respondents had moved into a more senior role (Figure 33); of these, 38% also reported they had now gained responsibilities associated with their SNPQ (as specified in Table 4 above). Amongst those participants who had moved into a more senior role, most (74%³⁶) agreed (by scoring the statement as a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7) that undertaking their NPQ had increased their aspirations to secure that more senior role. On average, they scored the statement 5.3 out of 7.

A further 16% of participants had moved into a new role with slightly more responsibility (32% of these also reported gaining responsibilities associated with their SNPQ, as specified in Table 4 above) and 20% had taken on more responsibilities in their current role (13% of these also reported gaining responsibilities associated with their SNPQ).

³⁶ Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that undertaking your {NPQ Code} increased your aspirations to secure a more senior role, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree?

Figure 33: Changes to participant roles following the completion of their SNPQ



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=995.

Survey question: Which of the following statements reflects how your role has changed, if at all, since starting your {NPQ name}?

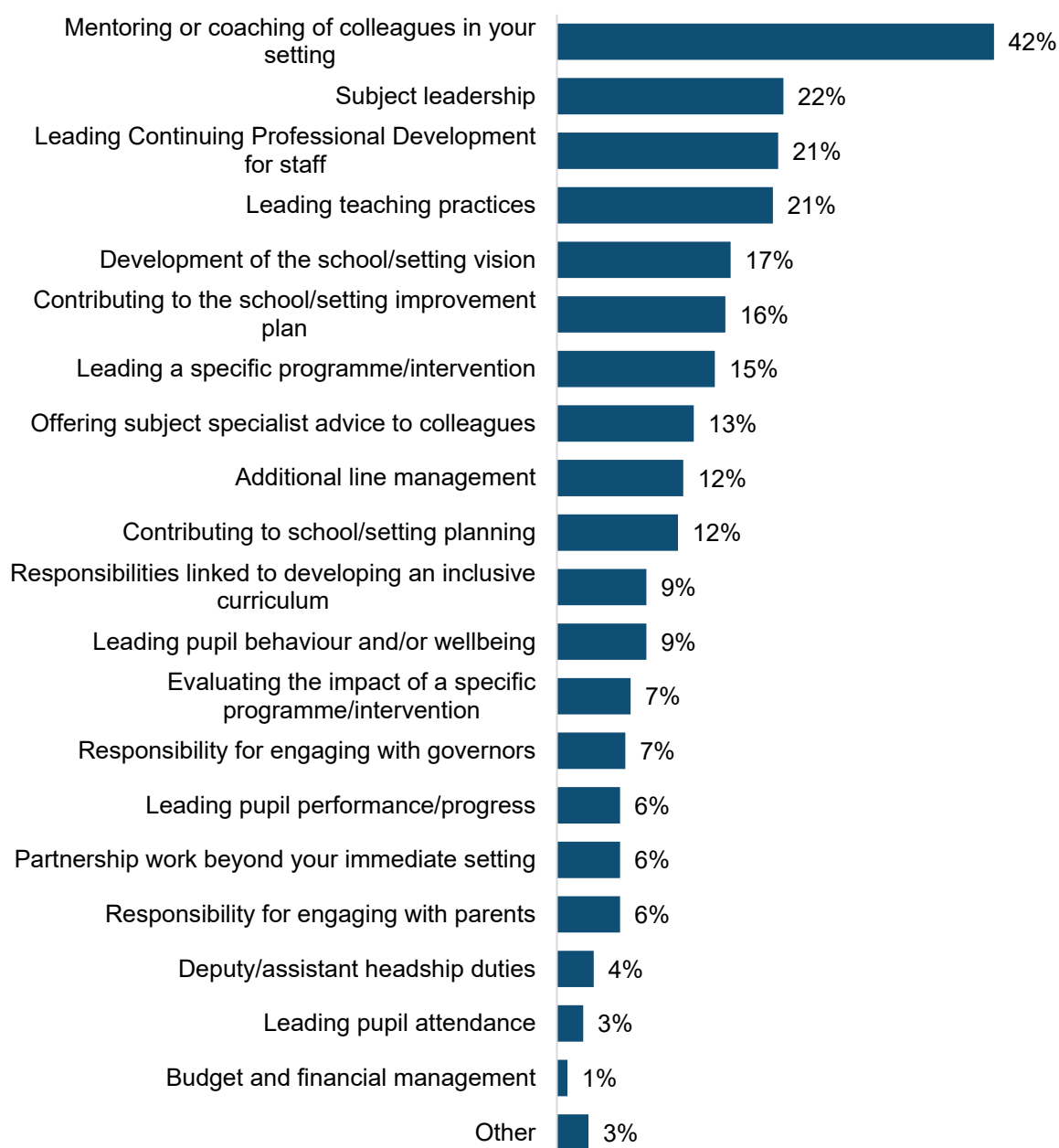
Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **Full-time and part-time workers:** One in five (20%) full-time workers reported moving into a more senior role compared with 9% of part-time workers.
- **Role:** Only 8% of senior leaders (on starting their NPQ) and 14% of middle leaders stated they had moved into a new role with slightly more responsibility compared with 22% of teachers.

Nearly one-fifth (17%) of respondents who had moved into a new role had moved to a new school/setting. A lower proportion of white British participants (13%) reported they had moved into a new school/setting compared with those who were Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities (26%).

Figure 34 describes the different responsibilities that 20% of participants have taken on as part of a current role (Figure 33). For 42% this involved mentoring or coaching colleagues in their setting. In keeping with the nature of the SNPQs and their development of specialist skills, these findings show that the increased responsibilities typically align with the topics covered in the SNPQs, such as subject leadership, leading CPD and leading teaching practices.

Figure 34: Additional responsibilities taken on by participants following their SNPQ



Source: SPB Survey – those who had taken on new responsibilities.³⁷ Base=198.
 Survey question: What additional responsibilities have you assumed?
 Multiple response question.

Over half (56%)³⁸ of all participants who had moved into a new role or had gained additional responsibilities agreed that their NPQ had strongly contributed to them

³⁷ Question 12 in the SPB survey.

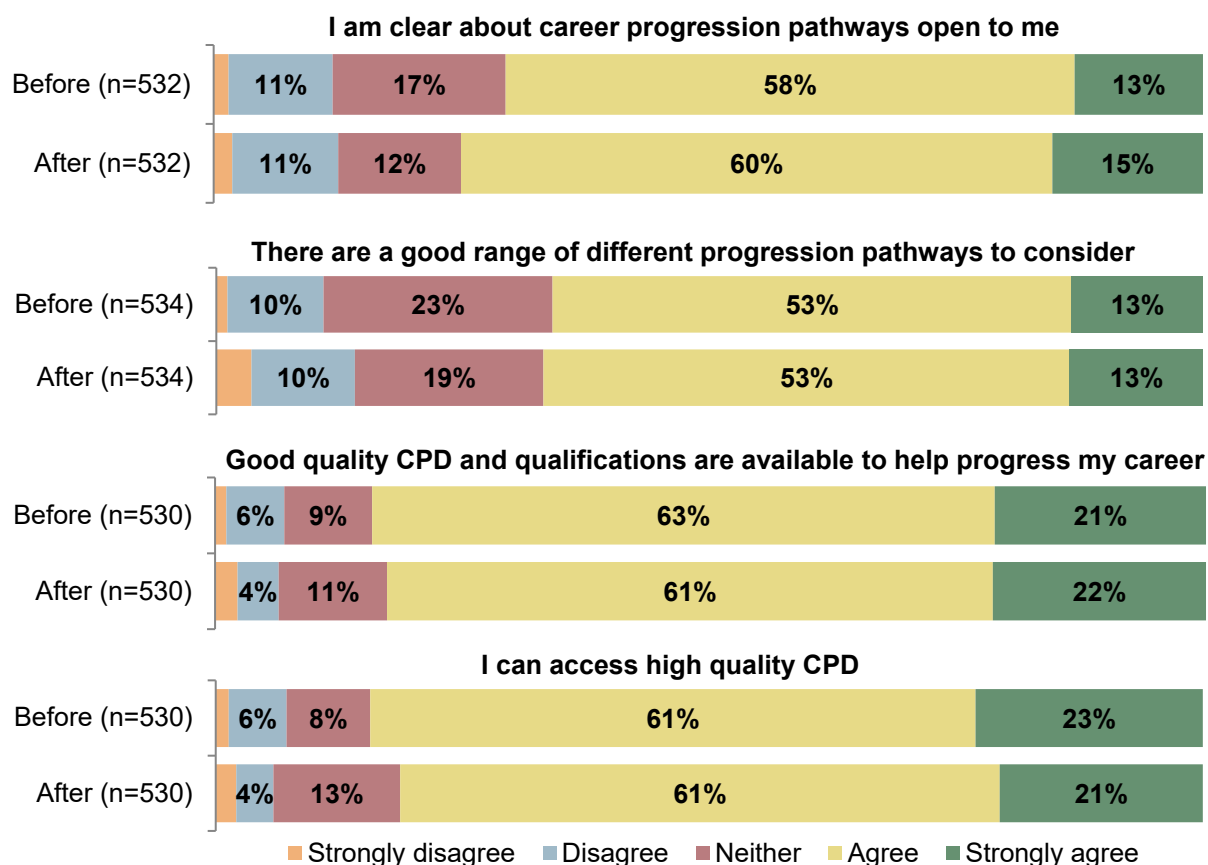
³⁸ Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that undertaking your {NPQ Code} strongly contributed to you gaining your new role/additional responsibilities, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree?

securing their new position (by scoring the statement a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7). On average, participants scored the statement 4.7 out of 7.

Knowledge of career progression opportunities

Whilst undertaking their NPQ, participants' overall perceptions of CPD remained unchanged from before they started their qualification to on completion (Figure 35).

Figure 35: Participants' perceptions of career progression options



Source: SPA and SPB survey – longitudinal analysis – all respondents who completed SPA and SPB.
Bases variable.

Survey question: Thinking about your experience in the last 12 months, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following... Each statement rated by participants.

Whilst there was no net change across all respondents, individual participants changed their view (Table 5). A higher proportion of full-time workers reported a reduction in their level of agreement (21%) against the statement 'I am clear about career progression pathways open to me' when compared with part-time workers (6%).

Table 5: Change in participants' perceptions of career progression options

Statement	Increased score	Decreased score
I am clear about career progression pathways open to me	25%	19%
I can access high quality CPD	20%	24%
Good quality CPD and qualifications are available to help progress my career	20%	22%
There are a good range of different progression pathways to consider	27%	26%

Source: SPA and SPB survey – longitudinal analysis – all respondents who completed SPA and SPB.
Bases variable.

Wider impacts and career aspirations

Wider impacts

On completion of an NPQ, participants identified some short-term impacts that have been achieved at a setting level, but these varied widely. However, this is not unexpected, as every SNPQ is unlikely to achieve every impact.³⁹ As shown in Figure 36, nearly four-fifths of participants (78%) stated that their NPQ helped them achieve improved teaching and learning standards across their setting.

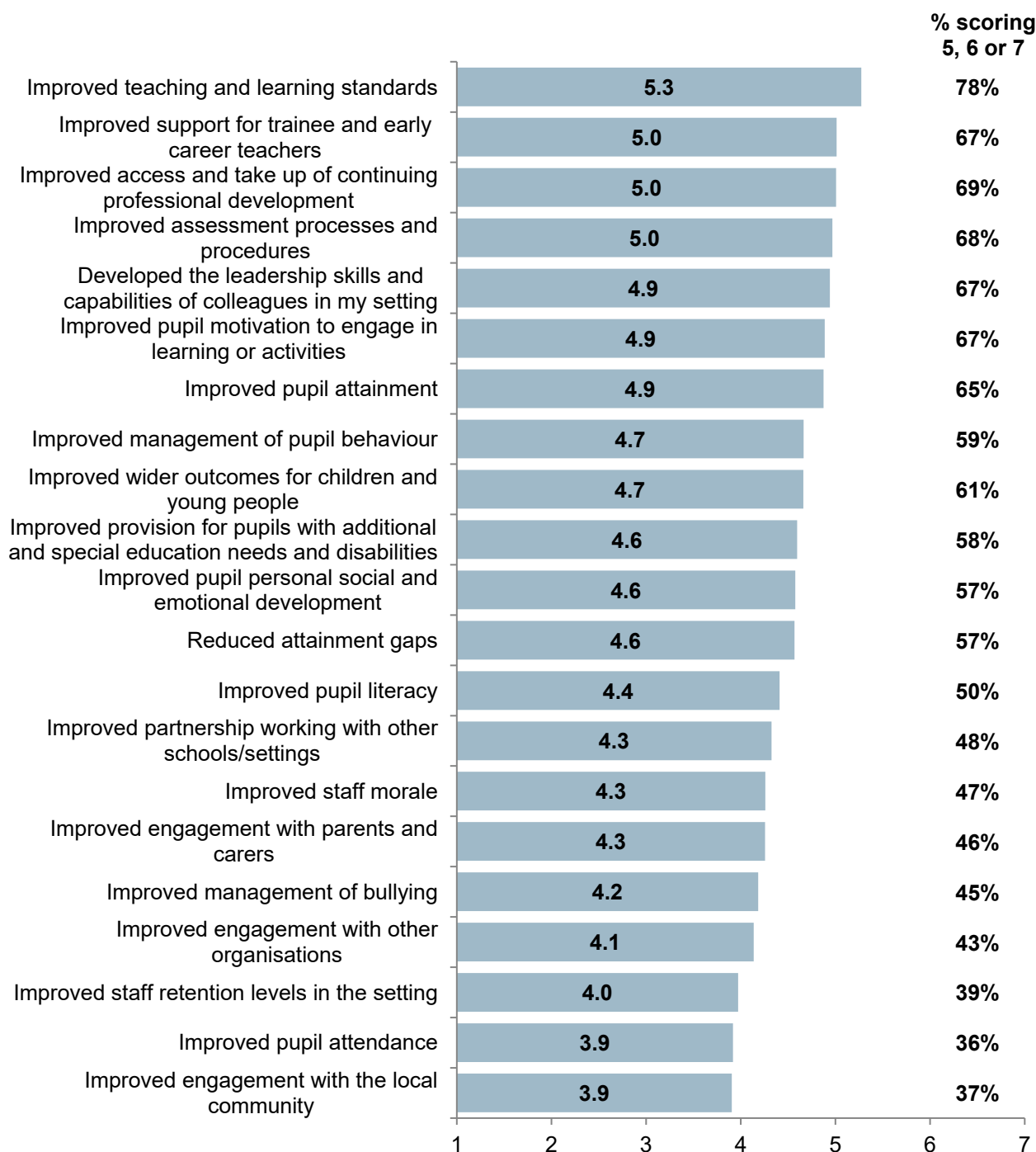
On average, participants scored 10.7 impact statements as a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7. There was a moderate correlation (correlation coefficient of 0.374) between participants who gave a high score for their satisfaction with the opportunities provided by their setting to implement their learning and the number of impacts reported. Only 15% of participants scored none of the impact statements as a 5, 6 or 7, indicating that participation had not led to any impacts in their setting yet.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **Gender:** Male participants scored a slightly higher number of impacts as a 5, 6 or 7 (11.7) when compared with female participants (10.5).
- **Ethnicity:** White British participants scored a slightly lower number of impacts as a 5, 6 or 7 (10.3) compared with participants who were Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities (12.6).

³⁹ Future reports will explore which impacts were achieved by different NPQs.

Figure 36: Participants' self-reported wider setting impacts from the NPQ (mean score and proportion stating a 5, 6 or 7 out of 7)



Source: SPB survey – all respondents. Base=735-908.

Survey question: On a scale of 1-7, to what extent do you agree that {NPQ name} has helped you to achieve long-lasting impacts in the following areas in your school/early years setting, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree? Each statement rated by participants.

Additionally, a small number of respondents identified additional wider impacts (not already listed) as a result of completing their NPQ (base=44). These related to improving relationships with colleagues (34% of coded responses), improved culture, routines and

processes in the setting (27%), improved or updated curriculum based on NPQ learning (25%), and improved use of data/evidence/research to inform behaviours (23%).

Changing career aspirations

SPB survey respondents were asked whether undertaking their NPQ has increased their aspirations to seek a promotion to a more senior-level role in the future. Across all SNPQ participants, 65% agreed with this (scoring the statement 5, 6 or 7 out of 7) and provided a mean score of 5.0 out of 7.

Differences were found for certain groups of participants:

- **Role:** Teachers and middle leaders scored the statement that 'the NPQ had increased their aspirations to move into a more senior level role in the future' higher (5.2 and 5.0) when compared with senior leaders (4.1).
- **Role status:** Those who were not in the role they were studying for on joining the qualification provided a slightly higher mean score (5.1) for the aspiration statement when compared with those who were already in the role (4.8).

Chapter 6: Conclusions

Impact of the NPQ reforms on take-up

Although some NPQ participants would have undertaken an LNPQ without them being reformed (57%), or instead of an SNPQ (29%), the evaluation findings indicate that the reforms have had an impact on take up. For those undertaking an SNPQ, a higher proportion of females (23%), white British participants (23%) and part-time workers (27%) would **not** have undertaken an LNPQ if the SNPQs had not been created as new qualifications. This was also the case for those in another role in the school, with 50% of participants stating they would not have undertaken an LNPQ in the absence of the LNPQs (50%). This highlights the importance of the SNPQs for these groups of participants. More than half (54%) of those undertaking an NPQ were aware of the reforms before they applied for their qualification. Within the first few months of them undertaking their qualification, a substantial minority (18%) were still unaware of the reforms.

Applying for the NPQs

NPQ participants and colleagues reported a range of motivations for undertaking the qualification. Respondents were commonly motivated to learn new knowledge and skills (mean score of 6.3 out of 7; 95% agreement), improve pupil/child outcomes (6.3; 90% agreement) and increase knowledge of the latest evidence (6.1; 90% agreement). Overall, the majority of participants were satisfied with the application process (mean score of 6.0 out of 7; 88% agreement). Suggestions for improvement of the application process (as described in an open response question) amongst the minority who were dissatisfied included improved communication from the provider, more regular updates on the application status from providers, and simplifying the process.

The scholarship funding for NPQ participants has been crucial to many participants, with only a small proportion (12%) being certain that their school would have funded their NPQ in the absence of this. For a sizeable minority (16%), they only chose an NPQ (over other qualifications) because of the scholarship funding available. Whilst funding was an important factor for many participants (51%), other reasons – such as it being a nationally recognised qualification (38%), it being recommended (25%), and the content covering what participants needed (22%) – were important when choosing a qualification.

When applying, the most common concern NPQ participants perceived was finding the time to complete the qualification outside of working hours (41%): this was especially the case for female (44%) and part-time workers (44%). Amongst NPQEYL participants,

those in a GBP setting were less likely to state they encountered no challenges (28%) compared with 40% in a SBP setting.

Only a small proportion of NPQH participants surveyed at SPA were eligible to take up the Early Headship Coaching Offer (13%) and, amongst those, only a minority (16%) were accessing the support. Having a mentor or coach in their school already was the primary reason given for why they were not accessing this support (45%). Some participants (18%) were unaware of the support offer.

SNPQ experience of delivery

Overall, most participants were satisfied with their experience undertaking the qualification. Satisfaction with the overall content (mean score 5.5 out of 7; 80% agreement) and the content meeting their leadership development needs (5.3 out of 7; 75% agreement) was high, with very few gaps being reported in an open response question. A lower proportion of respondents (4.8; 61% agreement) were satisfied with how the content was tailored to their setting context or how it was tailored to them as an individual (4.9; 65% agreement). Additionally, those participants who were not in a primary or secondary setting scored the statement regarding tailoring to context lower (4.0) compared with both primary (4.8) and secondary (4.9) settings. As with content, overall, the majority of participants were satisfied with the delivery of their NPQ (mean score 5.4 out of 7; 77% agreement), the support given by their provider (5.8 out of 7; 78% agreement) and (for many) the support from their setting (5.3 out of 7; 73% agreement). Aspects participants were less satisfied with included the balance of face-to-face and online delivery (mean score 4.9 out of 7; 61% agreement), the contribution of pre-recorded online delivery methods to skill development (4.6 out of 7; 65% agreement), the feedback they received from providers on submitted tasks (4.7 out of 7; 58% agreement) and their setting providing opportunities to implement changes (4.9 out of 7; 62% agreement).

Across many of the satisfaction measures, NPQLTD respondents provided higher satisfaction scores than those undertaking the NPQLT (for example, NPQLTD participants provided a mean score of 5.7 out of 7 for satisfaction with the support received from their provider compared with a score of 5.4 for those undertaking NPQLT). NPQLTD participants also provided a higher mean score for the statement that they would recommend the NPQ to others (5.9) compared with NPQLT participants (5.7). In addition, white British participants were slightly less satisfied when compared with those who were Asian or Asian British; black, black British, Caribbean or African; mixed or multiple ethnic groups; white (non-British); and other ethnic minorities. Those in senior (mean score 5.7 out of 7) and middle leadership positions (4.9) at a school reported they had more opportunities to implement their learning at a school compared with those in teaching positions (4.5).

The most common challenge reported by participants whilst undertaking their SNPQ was the time to balance the work alongside their day-to-day role at a school (56%). A higher proportion of NPQLTD participants reported experiencing no challenges (23%) compared with NPQLT participants (15%), which could, in part, explain the lower satisfaction levels reported above.

SNPQ leadership and specialist skill development

Across all SNPQs, the majority of participants self-reported improvements in every competency outlined in the NPQ frameworks (between 66% and 90% of participants reported an improvement for each competency) when they were asked to score themselves retrospectively during the SPB survey. Alongside the development of these skills, individuals also reported an increase in their readiness for the role they were studying for (85%), confidence in the evidence base (89%), and confidence to implement changes in their setting (88%). In line with satisfaction levels, a higher proportion of NPQLTD participants (90%) reported an increase in readiness for their role compared with colleagues on NPQLT and NPQLBC (both 83%). In addition, most participants thought that their NPQ had met their development needs (mean score 5.4 out of 7; 81% agreement); again, there were differences with NPQLTD scoring higher than NPQLT (5.6 compared with 5.3). Those in primary and secondary school settings also scored higher (both scored this as 5.5) than those in other settings (5.0).

SNPQ self-reported outcomes and impacts

Whilst on the qualification a substantial minority (16%) of SNPQ participants reported gaining responsibilities associated with their NPQ (e.g. leading behaviour and culture in a school), moving into a new role (37%) or taking on additional responsibilities (not necessarily related to the NPQ content) as part of their current role (20%). Over half (56%) of all participants who had moved into a new role or had gained additional responsibilities agreed that their NPQ had strongly contributed to them securing their new position. In addition to career progression, participants identified a range of short-term impacts that they believe they have achieved at a setting level as a result of taking part in the NPQ (e.g. 78% stated they had improved teaching and learning standards in their setting). Only a small proportion (15%) reported no impacts on their setting so far. There was a moderate correlation between the number of impacts reported and the satisfaction score on the question relating to opportunities for participants to implement their learning by their setting.

Appendix 1: Fieldwork completed so far and timings

Participant surveys

SPA survey was in field:

- Cohort 2 = 26th May to 17th June 2022
- Cohort 3 = 11th January to 10th March 2023
- Cohort 4 = 25th April to 28th July 2023

SPB survey was in field:

- Cohort 2 SNPQ = 30th June to 29th September 2023

Colleague survey was in field:

- Cohort 2 SNPQ = 14th September to 20th October 2023

Appendix 2: Additional analysis

Table 6: Importance of factors when deciding to study a leadership or specialist qualification, by those in the role and those not in the role

Statements	In role/has responsibility	Not in role/does not have responsibility	Mean difference between in role/not in role
To ensure I have the leadership skills required for my current role**	6.1	5.2	0.9
To ensure I have the specialist skills required for my current role*	6.0	5.1	0.8
To validate my current knowledge, skills and experience	5.9	5.7	0.2
To increase my knowledge about the latest evidence in teaching/education and care to support my role	6.2	6.0	0.2
To improve leadership in my setting	6.0	5.8	0.2
To improve pupil/child outcomes in my setting	6.2	6.0	0.2
To ensure I have the leadership skills required for a future role**	5.8	6.5	-0.7
To enhance opportunities for career progression	5.7	6.2	-0.5
To ensure I have the specialist skills required for a future role*	5.8	6.2	-0.3
To gain additional responsibilities as part of my current role	4.7	5.0	-0.3
I have identified this as an area of development for myself	5.3	5.5	-0.2

Source: SPA survey – all respondents. Bases variable.

* Statements only shown to those undertaking SNPQs.

** Statements only shown to those undertaking LNPQs.

Appendix 3: Specialist competencies in the SPB survey

Below is the full list of competencies with exact wording as used in the SPB survey. The statements in the survey were adapted from the published NPQ competency frameworks⁴⁰.

NPQLT

Contributing to the creation of a culture of professional learning and continuous improvement for colleagues within my school
Supporting colleagues within my school to understand learning theories and helping them to implement them to improve pupil learning
Supporting colleagues within my school to design a carefully sequenced, broad and coherent curriculum
Supporting colleagues within my school to plan effective lessons that stimulate pupil thinking
Supporting colleagues within my school to adapt their teaching to different pupils' needs
Contributing to the design of school assessment systems within my school
Encouraging colleagues within my school to use high quality, reliable assessment methods
Contributing to planning and conducting effective professional development within my school that is linked to teaching, curriculum and assessment
Being able to use information from a range of sources to identify, prioritise and implement school improvement projects that will make the most impact on my school

NPQLTD

Using evidence-based approaches to select and design effective professional development that aligns to my school's improvement priorities as well as meeting the needs of colleagues within my school
Delivering effective professional development for colleagues within my school
Supporting colleagues within my school to undertake regular, expert-led, continuing professional development that develops their classroom practice
Playing a formal role in supporting trainee and early career teachers within my school

⁴⁰ [National professional qualifications frameworks - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

Being able to use information from a range of sources to identify, prioritise and implement school improvement projects that will make the most impact on my school

NPQLBC

Contributing to the creation of a culture of professional learning and continuous improvement for colleagues within my school

Supporting the development of a positive, predictable and safe environment for pupils within my school

Encouraging colleagues within my school to motivate pupils by helping them to understand how their success in school and participation in extra-curricular activities is linked to their long-term goals

Working with parents and carers to support pupils' learning

Supporting pupils within my school who need more intensive support with their behaviour

Preventing and responding to bullying within my school

Contributing to planning and conducting effective professional development within my school that is linked to behaviour and culture

Being able to use information from a range of sources to identify, prioritise and implement school improvement projects that will make the most impact on my school



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