

Headteacher Reference Groups

Information pack for applicants

July 2019

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# The Department for Education and the Headteacher Reference Groups

The Department for Education (DfE) is committed to engaging school leaders in national education policy. The Primary Headteacher Reference Group and Secondary Headteacher Reference Group act as a confidential sounding board, advising on the potential impact of policies on the school system, including any barriers to implementation.

The Headteacher Reference Groups support policy development and implementation across DfE by contributing views, offering valuable challenge and advice, and providing feedback to ministers and officials.

The groups are not representative and have no power of veto over policy decisions.

Information on the Department can be found at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education). Further information on the [Headteacher Reference Groups](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/headteacher-reference-group) is also available.

## The role of Headteacher Reference Group members

Members will be expected to:

* maintain confidentiality;
* work constructively, making points in an appropriate manner, listening to the views of others, ensuring everyone gets the opportunity to speak;
* be open-minded and consider the whole picture, not seeking to promote sectional or subject interests;
* be able and willing to do follow-up work or contribute to some developments between meetings when required;
* act as a channel of communication between schools, the Department and other agencies, including local authorities and MATs, to convey issues pertinent to school policies (where appropriate);
* attend and prepare for up to five one-day meetings spread over the year at DfE offices. These meetings are currently held in London, though other locations may be used in future.

## Eligibility for the role

To be considered eligible for membership of the Headteacher Reference Groups you must fulfil the following criteria:

* be employed in a Headteacher role (‘Principal’; ‘Executive Headteacher’ etc.) or currently employed in a MAT executive leadership role (‘CEO’; ‘Director of Primary’ etc.) and have experience as a Headteacher within the last 5 years. Deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers, middle leaders and classroom teachers are not eligible to apply.
* must lead a school in which one of the below criteria applies OR; lead a MAT where at least one school within the MAT meets one of the below criteria:[[1]](#footnote-2)
  + at least 90% of eligible Year 1 students met the required standard of phonic decoding in the Phonics Screening Check in 2017/2018 (if Primary)
  + at least 45% of pupils were entered for EBacc in 2017/18 (if Secondary)
* not hold a Department for Education public appointment[[2]](#footnote-3); or serve on a current DfE advisory group or Headteacher Board.

### Person Specification

To be considered for a member of one of the Headteacher Reference Groups you must be able to demonstrate that you have the relevant skills and experience as set out below.

We would expect you to demonstrate:

* a strong track record of improving pupil outcomes;
* how you have improved pupil outcomes beyond your own school and contributed to the wider school system;
* how you have implemented national policy changes and have an understanding of the challenges and opportunities policy change brings across a variety of contexts

For those candidates selected for interview, we will also assess ability to fulfil the wider requirements of the role, including:

* working constructively, listening to the views of others; and
* thinking strategically and considering the whole picture.

We would particularly encourage applications from:

* candidates with experience of leading and improving schools in challenging contexts;
* candidates from LA-maintained schools; special schools; alternative provision; free schools; and faith schools
* candidates in schools who have been judged outstanding by Ofsted in the 2018-2019 academic year
* BAME candidates

We welcome applications from all people irrespective of their race; gender; religious belief; disability; age; sexual orientation; or whether they are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership; or whether they have undergone or are undergoing or intend to undergo gender reassignment.

## Terms and conditions

### Remuneration

This is a voluntary, unpaid post. Standard travel expenses will be reimbursed after each meeting.

### Period of Appointment

The term of appointment is for one year, with the opportunity to extend up to three years.

Should either of the Headteacher Reference Groups be dissolved, restructured or wound up during the period of your appointment, your appointment would cease with effect from that event or such other date as is specified in any relevant decision letter or legislation.

### Time commitment

Members will be expected to attend up to five one-day meetings per year at the Department’s offices (usually held in London), for which preparation time will be required. Meetings are spread evenly over the course of the year. In addition to attending meetings, members will be expected to provide high quality and relevant contributions to policy development in the Department by responding to commissions via email or participating in workshops or focus groups.

### Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct and follow the standards of probity required by public appointees outlined in the “Seven Principles of Public Life” set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (see [Annex](#Annex)).

You may be removed from office before the end of the term of appointment if you:

* have received a prison sentence or suspended sentence at any time in respect of a conviction which is not spent for the purposes of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
* are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or interim order;
* have had an earlier term of appointment terminated due to misconduct or performance issues;
* are under a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
* have been removed from trusteeship of a charity;
* are subject to disciplinary/investigation for allegations of misconduct by a regulatory, governmental or professional body;
* have been found guilty of misconduct by a regulatory, governmental or professional body; or
* breach the expectations of group members as set out in the Terms of Reference.

### Conflict of Interest

You should note the requirement to declare any conflict of interest that arises in the course of Department business and the need to declare any relevant business interests, positions of authority or other connections with organisations relevant to the business of the Department for Education.

## Your personal information

Your personal information will be held in accordance with Data Protection legislation. You will not receive unsolicited paper or electronic mail as a result of sending us any personal information. No personal information will be passed on to third parties for commercial purposes[[3]](#footnote-4). The monitoring information you provide is not used in the selection process and will not be shared with the selection panel assessing your application. Information that you provide may be used for statistical analysis by the Department for Education but it will not be used in a way that enables you to be identified.

# The application process

## The timetable

This section provides an overview of the recruitment process and how your CV and application form will be considered.

Your CV and application forms must be returned to the DfE using the following mailbox:[**Recruitment.HTRG@education.gov.uk**](mailto:Recruitment.HTRG@education.gov.uk). Please use the following reference codes in the subject line of your email, depending on which group you are applying for:

Primary Headteachers Reference Group

PRIMARY-LASTNAME-FIRSTNAME

Secondary Headteachers Reference Group

SECONDARY-LASTNAME-FIRSTNAME

The closing date for applications is **5pm on Friday 2 August 2019**. You will receive an acknowledgement from us on receipt of your application.

Once acknowledged we will work to the recruitment timetable below.

### Stage 1 (August)

Your application will be subject to a two stage sift and will be assessed against the published criteria. Those unsuccessful at the first stage will be notified, those selected to move to Stage 2 will be invited for interview, which may be by telephone.

### Stage 2 (September)

Applicants will be contacted by officials to arrange interviews and will be informed of the format and assessment criteria. Where a candidate is unable to attend an interview on the set date then an alternative date will only be offered at the discretion of the panel.

### Stage 3 (October - November).

Interviews will be held in October and/or November.

At interview the panel will question you about your experience and expertise based on the requirements of the post. If the interview panel determine that you are suitable for the post they will make recommendations to the Secretary of State and Minister of State for School Standards, who will then review the recommendations and make the final decision on appointments to the Headteacher Reference Groups.

### Stage 4 (December)

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of interviews.

Successful applicants will join the following Headteacher Reference Group meetings either in January or September 2020.

## Dealing with your questions and feedback

For general queries, or if you are unhappy with any aspect of this recruitment exercise, please contact [Recruitment.HTRG@education.gov.uk](mailto:Recruitment.HTRG@education.gov.uk).

Please note that we are only available to provide feedback if you have an interview.

# Annex - The seven principles of public life

All applicants for public appointments are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service. The seven principles of public life are:

### Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

### Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

### Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

### Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



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write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

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1. Schools without this performance data (such as special schools; alternative provision; middle and junior schools) are welcome to apply if they can demonstrate strong performance. We will also consider applications from headteachers or CEOs who have worked in schools or trusts within the past 2 years that meet these criteria. Those wishing to apply under these circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis and can contact the mailbox with any questions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Information about DfE’s public bodies can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-education-non-executive-appointments [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For more information about the standards you can expect from DfE in how we hold your personal data, please see the DfE’s personal information charter: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/personal-information-charter> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)