Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP
Minister for Schools

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Munira Wilson MP
By email: munira.wilson.mp@parliament.uk

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Dear Munira,

I am writing to address the point of order, which you raised on 29 April following Education Questions, regarding post graduate initial teacher training (PGITT) targets.

I had misheard what you said during our exchange in the House – I took your statement to be referring to overall secondary recruitment in key subjects, and in relation to the number of teachers overall; I now understand that you specifically asked about entrants to teacher training through the PGITT route.

Current teacher numbers at the most recent count were the highest on record with 468,371 full-time equivalent teachers in the workforce. This is an increase of 27,000 since 2010. However, the wider labour market has remained highly competitive, especially in STEM subjects, and we have continued to focus on evidence-based interventions, allocating nearly £200m per year towards bursaries and scholarships to incentivise more people into teacher training. In addition, we are investing a further £100m from 2024/25 to double our levelling up premium and give teachers in the first 5 years of their career, who are teaching key subjects in more deprived areas, up to £6,000 tax free on top of their salaries to improve retention.

The Career Changers programme, currently run by Now Teach provides wrap around support for up to 250 candidates out of the thousands of career changers who enter initial teacher training per year. We remain committed to continuing to recruit and support career changers into initial teacher training and, as part of our ongoing commitment to ensure our interventions provide best value for taxpayers' money, we are reviewing how best to meet the future needs of a wider range of career changers.

Simply looking at PGITT recruitment, and related targets, as an indicator of broader teacher recruitment is misleading as it is not the only route into teaching, nor does it represent the available number of teachers in the workforce. The PGITT target is calculated using the Teacher Workforce Model, which considers a broad range of factors, including but not limited to: projected pupil numbers, historical recruitment performance, teacher retention forecasts, economic factors, and recruitment from other non-ITT related routes such as returners and those teachers that are new to the state-funded schools sector.
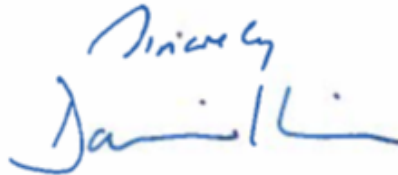
The PGITT target is not, therefore, based on the total number of entrants schools need, but rather on the forecast residual need after accounting for other projected non PGITT inflows, such as undergraduate ITT and returners. If retention and entrants from other routes are higher than expected during the time that trainees are applying for and completing their course, this can offset the projected PGITT requirement.

This point is well illustrated when looking at the change in PGITT target over the last two years. The secondary PGITT target in 2023/24 was 26,360 and although only 50% of the target was achieved, the department's teacher workforce model produced a *lower* target of 23,955 for 2024/25. This is because we are now forecasting better supply through routes other than PGITT. For example, recruitment forecasts for both returners and teachers that are new to the state-funded sector are more favourable for almost all subjects this year. In addition, while secondary pupil numbers are still growing, they are now growing more slowly which reduces the rate at which the workforce needs to grow.

Therefore, considering the PGITT target alone ignores other key routes into teaching, provides an incomplete view of recruitment, and can present a misleading view of overall teacher sufficiency.

I will deposit a copy of this letter in the House library.

Thank you for raising this important matter. I hope my response provides clarity and reassurance.

Damian Hinds
Minister for Schools