

## **Consultation on the draft specification for nationally accredited training for teachers new to the role of leading coordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs**

- 1 In 2006, the Government asked the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to develop proposals for a framework of nationally accredited training for teachers new to the role of special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) – leading the coordination of provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in schools. This was in response to the Education and Skills Select Committee’s report on special educational needs (SEN).
- 2 Since 2006, the TDA has consulted SENCOs in primary and secondary settings, headteachers, teachers and other school staff, local authorities and voluntary sector bodies, including those representing parents. We asked them about:
  - key issues that currently affect SENCOs’ work
  - the attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills SENCOs need for the role
  - what a system of nationally accredited training for new SENCOs should provide.

### **Framework of nationally accredited training for SENCOs**

- 3 We have used this to draw up a draft specification for nationally accredited training for SENCOs (annexes 1, 2 and 3). It is based on teachers demonstrating, through completing locally developed training modules and/or gaining credit for prior learning and experience, the minimum level of knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the specification.
- 4 We would invite training providers to apply to offer accredited SENCO training. They must meet the requirements of the specification to be approved to provide the training. The specification requires providers to demonstrate that their training programmes:
  - have an impact on raising the achievement and improving the well-being of children and young people in relation to all five Every Child Matters outcomes
  - respond to participants’ training and development needs
  - offer flexible provision
  - are informed by stakeholders’ needs
  - are of high quality and subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures
  - include academic accreditation from a higher education institution, and
  - provide effective continuing professional development (CPD) in action research, practical activity in school, collaborative working and reflection.
- 5 The draft specification is designed to make sure the training will help teachers new to the SENCO role to fulfil the responsibilities set out in the Special

Educational Needs Code of Practice. The professional attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills set out in the minimum outcomes in the draft specification (see annex 3) relate to the *lead* SENCO role. They also reflect the fact that schools organise provision for pupils with special educational needs in a range of ways to suit their particular circumstances, and that some of the SENCO's functions will often be carried out by a number of staff, including support staff, who make a significant and important contribution to improving the achievement and well-being of pupils with SEN and disabilities.

- 6 We expect that accreditation will be at masters level (60 credits), and that for a teacher starting 'from scratch' accredited training would involve around a year's part-time study. Providers will be required to offer a range of options for the training, including in school hours, after school, distance learning and school-based activity.
- 7 We aim to be ready to approve courses to start from September 2009. The Department for Children, Schools and Families intend to make funding available for SENCOs new to the role to undertake such training in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

### **Consultation**

- 8 Your views are sought on the draft specification as follows:
  - the Introduction and guidance for training providers on how to apply for approval to offer nationally accredited training for SENCOs
  - the requirements training providers will need to meet to be approved to offer nationally accredited SENCO training, including the minimum outcomes teachers successfully completing the training will be required to demonstrate