

# THE SHORTAGE OF PHYSICS TEACHERS

TARGET  
**1,000**

Recruiting sufficient physics teachers has been a long-standing problem. The school workforce census published in 2013 showed that 26% of physics lessons are taught by a teacher without a relevant post A-Level qualification. The subject is often taught by 'non-specialists' usually qualified in chemistry or biology. Modelling by the Department for Education supports the Institute of Physics' assertion that over 1,000 new physics teachers need to be recruited every year for the next ten years to meet demand.



In 2013 there were 3,060 physics graduates. We would need to recruit almost one third of these to fulfill the teacher-training quota with just physics graduates.



GATSBY

For further details and sources visit: [www.gatsby.org.uk](http://www.gatsby.org.uk)  
Twitter: @GatsbyEd

## TACKLING THE SHORTAGE

During this period, government, the Institute of Physics, Gatsby and others collaborated on a range of initiatives to recruit and retain high-quality physics teachers.

### PROMOTING GROWTH



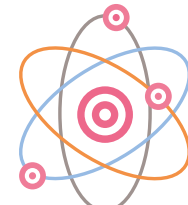
Gatsby invest over £4 million on initiatives to promote the growth in the number

### MENTORING



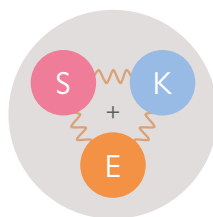
Gatsby has worked with the Institute of Physics which continues to provide mentoring support for early career teachers

### SEPARATE TARGETS



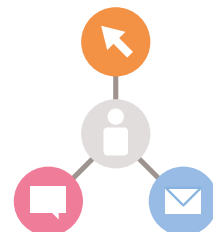
By creating separate recruiting targets in 2011 for physics, chemistry and biology teachers, greater emphasis was placed on recruiting physics specialists.

### SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENT (SKE)

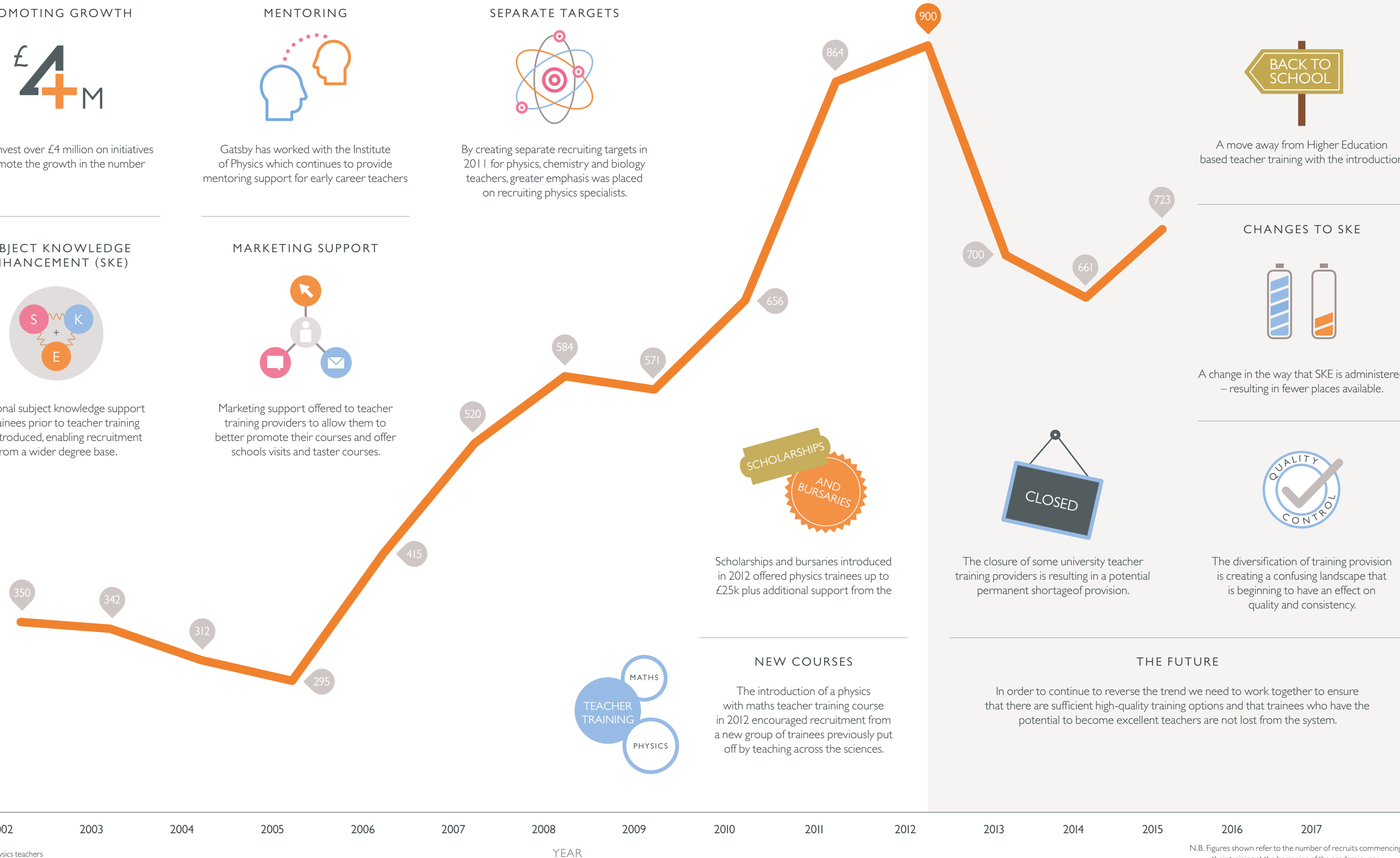


Additional subject knowledge support for trainees prior to teacher training was introduced, enabling recruitment from a wider degree base.

### MARKETING SUPPORT



Marketing support offered to teacher training providers to allow them to better promote their courses and offer schools visits and taster courses.



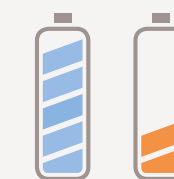
## A FALL IN NUMBERS

In September 2012 a peak of 900 recruits was reached; close to the target of 1,000 per year. The next two years saw a significant downturn. The numbers increased in 2015, probably due to a rise in the bursaries and scholarships available.



A move away from Higher Education based teacher training with the introduction

### CHANGES TO SKE



A change in the way that SKE is administered – resulting in fewer places available.



The closure of some university teacher training providers is resulting in a potential permanent shortage of provision.



The diversification of training provision is creating a confusing landscape that is beginning to have an effect on quality and consistency.

### NEW COURSES

The introduction of a physics with maths teacher training course in 2012 encouraged recruitment from a new group of trainees previously put off by teaching across the sciences.

### THE FUTURE

In order to continue to reverse the trend we need to work together to ensure that there are sufficient high-quality training options and that trainees who have the potential to become excellent teachers are not lost from the system.

N.B. Figures shown refer to the number of recruits commencing their training at the beginning of the academic year.