

ForumStrategy

Reflections on system leadership in 2024

**System leadership in focus: How the challenge
of teacher retention can be better addressed
through system leadership**

August 2024

Executive summary

System leadership is grounded in collaboration and ensures we work across boundaries to achieve shared goals that bring improvement and value for all. In Forum Strategy's two system leadership papers published in 2023 we explored how system leadership has emerged in an increasingly trust-led system, and why it is so vital for education (and the young people and communities we serve) that system led improvement is prioritised; generated and enabled by trust leaders and others.

In this paper, Forum Strategy's latest system leadership professional learning community of CEOs, builds on this work by focusing on teacher retention as an example of widespread challenge, outlining how effective system leadership can help to better address it. We know that we have a fast-burning platform; we are losing teachers faster than we can recruit them in. If we are not careful, we will reach a severe crisis point very quickly. So, we must come together as a system to solve this.

The education system currently has some excellent pockets of practice (see Appendix A) but, overall at a system level, we are still losing more great teachers (and staff) from areas where retention work is non-existent or worse still, actively driving people out of the profession. This paper offers something new; a view of how we come together as a system, to better address our challenges.

Using the three defining areas of system leadership identified in the previous two papers (trust to trust support; locality leadership; and informing national policy and direction) we outline actions that can be taken forward by leaders to effectively contribute to addressing retention across the education system. We also put forward a number of recommendations and next steps, including the proposal for a system-wide retention promise (in Appendix B) that all schools and trusts could sign up to, to demonstrate their commitment to teachers and staff within their organisation but also, crucially, across the education system as a whole.

With thanks to the CEOs who took part in our professional learning community (PLC) and for their valued contributions to this paper:

- Kathy Hardy, CEO, The de Ferrers Trust
- Sam Vickers, CEO, Batley Multi-Academy Trust
- Carla Whelan, CEO, Empower Academy Trust

With thanks also to Jane Creasy and Jonny Uttley for their contributions.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Short examples of retention practice within and beyond education

Appendix B: A proposed sector-wide retention promise

Appendix C: Recommended Forum Strategy resources to support retention

1. Why is system leadership important?

Many in the education system agree that the current system is fragmented and that we must bring it closer together if we are to ensure an inclusive education system for all. System leadership is the vehicle through which we achieve greater coherence and effectiveness, by committing to working together towards a common vision and goal.

This year's professional learning community of CEOs believed this shared vision in education to be about **creating an equitable system whose sole purpose is to improve the learning, lives and futures of all children and young people, and to support the betterment of their immediate and broader communities and thus, society as a whole.** Effective system leadership brings people together through a shared commitment to an overarching goal and harnesses the knowledge, expertise and experience of those within the sector, to enable it to self-improve and deliver more effectively and more equitably for those it serves.

“We need to share and celebrate emerging, impactful examples of system leadership. They have emerged from the sector itself rather than government policy, and the challenge now is to make them a system habit.” ~ Schools Week, Alice Gregson & David Horn¹

2. The context

Education has faced enormous challenges in recent years and these only continue to grow in complexity and scale. Growing levels of child poverty, the COVID19 pandemic, a lack of sufficient funding for schools, and a culture of 'high stakes' accountability that impacts on workload and wellbeing are just some of the examples. The list could go on. Despite this, indeed in response to much of it, collaboration and the continuation of strong support for children and young people and communities across the country has been achieved through the leadership, determination and collective commitment of those who work within the system, with support from our partners in other related sectors and agencies. This demonstrates the power and potential of system-led thinking and action.

However, system leadership too often only occurs in small pockets and/or in times of crisis, particularly when the government (and other high level decision makers) fail to act. Instead, we should explore how we create wide-reaching, sustainable system leadership between organisations across the education system (and beyond it), ensuring, whether through good times or bad, the system meaningfully collaborates in a way that supports efficiency, equity, effectiveness and most importantly, the best possible outcomes for those who access public services (in this case, education). Through this, we will restore faith and confidence in public services - when our communities and those we serve, know the system will act on their behalf.

1 <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/school-leaders-are-starting-to-shape-the-system-as-they-should/>

In 2023, Forum Strategy began a programme of work to offer some definition around system leadership; particularly in the context of a much-changed education system where academy trusts have become significant drivers of innovation and change in the sector. Our ambition is to offer some deep, reflective thought leadership to a space which, in the last decade or so, has been light on up-to-date thinking and exploration.

In April and September 2023, we published two system leadership thinkpieces. The first ['What does system leadership look like in 2023 and beyond?'](#) explored some of the historical background to system leadership across education and began to offer questions and areas to explore as we considered what system leadership looks and feels like now, across the current landscape. The second ['Reflections on system leadership in 2023: Why it matters in the evolution of the English education system and how it can be done'](#), built on the first by setting out the key thinking of ten academy trust CEOs (working as part of professional learning communities) and outlined some recommended next steps to keep pushing system leadership work forwards.

In effect, we have produced two papers which provided background, some areas for exploration and some thinking on how system leadership has evolved in an education context, particularly so with the introduction of academy trusts and trust leaders. But the thinking needs to build further; becoming more practical and more specific, if we are really to understand the potential of system leadership and how it underpins our collective ambition to create an education system within which all individuals thrive.

In March 2024, we formed our third CEO professional learning group focused on system leadership - building upon the work of the two groups in 2023. It became apparent early on, that we need to consider a big system challenge through the lens of system leadership if we are really to bring to life its potential and demonstrate how addressing complex, wide-reaching issues must be done at a system level to achieve significant traction and impact. Of course, the system as it stands, faces many challenges of this nature and magnitude. However, by focusing on one complex issue, this paper (and the principles within it) has the potential to be drawn upon and applied in a similar vein to further system issues.

This professional learning community decided upon poor and declining levels of teacher retention as the system issue to be explored, with a specific focus on answering the question ***'How can the challenge of teacher retention be better addressed through effective system leadership?'*** The caveat to this was, with limited time available, the focus needed to be very specific (i.e. focused predominantly on teaching staff) but that much of what would be explored would be applicable to the wider education workforce too. To guide and structure our thinking about how system leadership can help to address retention, we used a tried and tested model; 'Theory of Change'², a comprehensive framework that enables the articulation of why and how a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.

2 <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>

3. A burning platform

Teacher retention levels in England are at their lowest in over a decade, particularly for more experienced teachers (with more than 10 years of experience). A decade after qualification, only 59% of teachers remain in the profession today. New entrants to the profession were just about keeping overall numbers steady (when data was collected in 2022)³. However, we know that since then, numbers of individuals undertaking Initial Teacher Training (ITT) has been falling. Alongside this, findings from Teacher Tapp show that teachers in their first five years of teaching are typically more susceptible to leaving the profession. Among this group, intentions to remain a teacher have dropped the most, plummeting from 72% in May 2022 to 55% today⁴.

A wealth of research points consistently towards the same conclusion, that we have a significant retention crisis across the profession which will only worsen if it goes unaddressed. Furthermore, we are also seeing a disproportionate impact on our teachers from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background as outlined in research from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) where they found “teacher retention is lower for teachers of colour than for their white counterparts”⁵. Therefore, not only are we facing a retention crisis, we are also facing a crisis which disproportionately affects groups that are already severely underrepresented in our workforce. We cannot let our retention challenges reach a stage where we do not have enough high quality, diverse teachers in our classrooms and as a result, our children and young people (and their communities) cannot access the quality of education they deserve.

Jonny Uttley, CEO of The Education Alliance (TEAL), describes the criticality of retaining teachers so well when he said this:

“The success of our schools going forward depends on our ability to ensure we have a good teacher in every classroom, delivering an excellent curriculum, supported by effective systems for behaviour and care.”

This statement should apply system wide. The system cannot afford to have pockets of good practice, where some trusts and schools or localities do this really well and manage to retain great teachers, whilst others struggle. We cannot have areas where our children are taught by great teachers and other areas where they struggle to fill roles. If we allow this, then this inevitably means we cannot achieve our ambition of an equitable system within which **all** individuals thrive and it therefore makes this a significant system leadership issue; and one that needs urgent attention.

3 Education Policy Institute: Six charts that explain the state of the teaching workforce in England; June 2023

4 Teacher Tapp: Teacher Recruitment and Retention in 2023; June 2023

5 NFER: Ethnic diversity in the teaching workforce - an evidence review; January 2024

4. Issues affecting retention

A growing body of research and evidence points to the following issues being at the heart of the retention crisis across our profession:

- Unmanageable workload and accountability pressures
- A lack of flexible working opportunities and/or lack of a work/life balance
- Reduced levels of safety at work (psychological and physical)
- Lack of development and/or progression opportunities
- A negative, unsupportive work culture (including poor leadership and management)
- Lack of staff voice and/or communication from leadership to the rest of the workforce
- Reduced levels of wellbeing (often as a result of the factors outlined above)

Pay levels are inevitably a factor for some people, but are rarely cited as the number one reason for leaving (or considering leaving) the profession.

In considering these issues above, the solutions become clear. They are, unsurprisingly, the opposite side of the same coin. If we are to retain our teachers (and, in fact, our wider workforce too as much of this also applies to non-teaching staff) we need to address issues around workload (perceived and actual), accountability pressures, flexible working, safety at work, culture, communication and wellbeing.

And there are some excellent pockets of practice that can be identified and shared from across the education system, wider public and charitable services and the private sector, proving that staff can be retained, feel engaged and feel positive about their work environment (in Appendix A we share some examples of this). The challenge, however, is that this is not a consistent experience across the sector and this must change if we are to support recruitment and retention in **all** schools and trusts and ensure an equitable education experience for all.

We must also capture and share more positive feedback and anecdotes from the profession, because these do exist. Many teachers across the sector have elements to their roles that they love and derive 'professional joy' from and too often these stories are not being told or not being shared widely enough. The issues we face as a sector absolutely need to be addressed but while we do this, we must also remember to communicate all of the aspects about teaching (and working in education) that bring so many people great professional pride and satisfaction.

5. How system leadership can help address the challenge

Addressing retention as a whole system and not only as individual organisations, means we can create consistency across localities and contexts and, going back to the words of Jonny Uttley, 'ensure we have a good teacher in every classroom'. Having a good experience at work, shouldn't be locality or organisational 'roulette'. Teachers and staff should have confidence that, on the whole, retaining their skills, knowledge and expertise is a priority to the sector and through this, we also take steps to win back our hard-won reputation as a profession to aspire to.

In our first two system leadership papers⁶, we identified three defining areas of system leadership which, when brought together, enable effective system level change and progress across education. The professional learning community identified some potential actions under each, that will help in addressing retention across education as a whole.

i. Trust to trust support

Trust to trust support was perceived by this professional learning community as being critical to system level retention work but, it would take an important shift in mindset from 'competitive' to 'collaborative' to be effective. For trust to trust support to be effective around retention, it requires a foundation of trust to be built between organisations; centred around ethical and transparent leadership that balances the need of our own organisations with the system level need. A good example of this is where there is movement of staff between trusts, considering how the receiving trust can ensure the transition is as fair as possible, mitigating the impact on the other trust as far as possible. Another example is by ensuring recruitment approaches and processes are open and transparent for all and that where there is movement from trust to another, the trust from which the staff member exits is given as much notice as possible. Trust and transparency are vital for system level collaboration in this area.

Thinking specifically about where effective trust to trust working can add particular value around system wide retention, the following were identified as potential areas of collaboration and indeed, areas where the group had witnessed this happening (in pockets) across the system already:

- **A peer review model** could be introduced at a local, regional or national level that focuses specifically on reviewing recruitment and retention practice and processes to identify areas of strength and improvement, drawing on trusts who are doing this well and matching them with trusts who are struggling and/or want to improve
- **Sharing aggregated and anonymised data and intelligence across trusts** (for example around retention and exit; staff survey feedback; diversity data) to highlight where similarities and differences are for trusts and learn from one another's areas of success and challenge

⁶ <https://forumstrategy.org/system-leadership/>

- **Sharing evidence informed, effective retention practice and approaches** (through reciprocal trust visits, collaboration meetings or at networking events), particularly around flexible working, culture development and how to offer as much as possible to staff within very limited budgets
- **Sharing staff and expertise across other trusts and schools** to support CPD and progression opportunities such as cross trust coaching and mentoring or offering training on particular areas of expertise⁷. More formal arrangements might also be explored in terms of sharing roles across trusts but this would be with the caveat that T&Cs would need to be looked at beforehand to ensure clarity, consistency and compliance. System leadership capacity could be developed across trusts and schools, ensuring there are opportunities to contribute to the whole education system alongside the trust/school and locality.

It is clear that the success of trust-to-trust work (much like locality leadership below), is firmly rooted in the quality of relationships and the sense of trust and openness developed between trusts. Moving away from competing (to feed growth and perceived sustainability) to collaborating is essential, if we are to address our issues meaningfully.

ii. Locality leadership

The discussions around locality leadership tended to focus on the wider strategic partnerships that trusts and schools might draw upon in addressing retention issues. The following areas were identified as being helpful for retention from a locality perspective:

- **Collaborating with and learning from other 'frontline' services in the area** (such as the police, NHS, fire service, social care etc.) to find out more about how they approach retention and delve into how they have tackled particular challenges such as how flexible working can be applied in frontline roles or supporting staff to manage high levels of workload (for example)
- **Explore the possibility of a local public services pipeline or talent pool**, area (such as the police, NHS, fire service, social care etc.) to find out more about how they approach retention and delve into how they have tackled particular challenges such as how flexible working can be applied in frontline roles or supporting staff to manage high levels of workload (for example)
- **Identifying local businesses to partner with** that might offer opportunities or benefits to support local education establishments. For example, some local businesses have worked with trusts and schools to provide benefits to their employees (e.g. a restaurant offering a discount or a discounted local gym membership). Other opportunities include reciprocal job swaps or work experience, potentially piquing the interest of people who have never considered teaching and also offering teachers and staff opportunities to learn from businesses and other organisations. Partners could also contribute towards enhancing the curriculum and the exposure of pupils to the opportunities within the wider economy.

⁷ <https://forumstrategy.org/developing-a-trust-led-service-model-that-maximises-expertise-and-resources-to-meets-pupils-and-communities-needs-the-rivermead-solutions-model/>

The main barrier to this work identified by the professional learning community was knowing where to start in terms of reaching out to wider local organisations and being conscious of their scarce time and resources too. An idea was raised about offering this work to someone (or a group) in the trust who might be interested in undertaking this as a CPD or leadership project, asking them to research and then map out the key contacts across the locality⁸. In the spirit of trust-to-trust support, this might then also be shared with other trusts who may also want to establish similar partnerships.

iii. Informing policy and national direction

This area was identified as the trickiest of the three given consistent experiences of not 'being given a seat at the table' or not having an avenue to influence/inform policy makers. However, it was acknowledged that organisations such as Forum Strategy and other national level organisations have been (and continue to be) important in offering support with this aspect through the elevation of voices and perspectives from across the sector. Avenues such as participating in roundtables, the development of reports and papers and the offer of development opportunities, have encouraged trust leaders to be proactive in sharing their experiences and views.

In relation to addressing issues around retention, it is recognised and accepted that some changes and shifts around national policy and direction would be necessary. Areas of policy making and direction setting at a national level to support system led retention work would include:

- **Support the sector to become a profession of choice again** by listening to the issues raised across the system and offering trusts and schools meaningful support to address them through practical tools and materials, sharing examples of effective retention practice and ideally, funding to enable the system to improve itself. This could include the introduction of a sector-wide retention promise (a proposal for which is included in Appendix B)
- **Sharing national and regional retention data sets to enable trusts and schools to benchmark their position and progress**, particularly data in relation to teacher and staff retention rates and the number of schools/trusts offering flexible working arrangements
- **Collating and sharing good practice at a national level** would be extremely helpful, particularly around what is working well in trusts around retention (and specifically in terms of workload reduction, implementing flexible working and supporting teacher mental health and wellbeing). Whilst this happens very effectively through organisations such as Forum Strategy currently, there is a potential need for one nationally available 'hub' that shares effective employer of choice practice across the whole education system
- **Involving trust and school leaders in discussions (and subsequent work) to reshape the current system of accountability across education.** Given the significant impact accountability and workload is having on teacher retention (cited across many different types of research), it is clear that changes need to be made and there is an opportunity to reshape accountability in a way that reduces its impact on teacher retention

8 <https://forumstrategy.org/navigating-the-cost-of-living-crisis-team-education-trusts-collaborative-approach-with-local-businesses/>

- **Regional directors (and their teams) should have more of a role in brokering and supporting collaboration between trusts.** For example, in this area, if RDs have sight of retention data for each trust in their region, they are well placed to suggest (from the data and wider intelligence / conversations) which trust could support another trust to improve. However, the barrier to this currently is that the trust quality indicators and discussions around growth are breeding more competition than collaboration and therefore feeding a level of distrust. This needs to change in order for RDs to be more effective in supporting collaboration. Linked to this, supporting trust to trust and school to school collaboration should form part of RDs performance indicators, ensuring they are incentivised to work on (and deliver) meaningfully on this area. The new Labour government has announced the establishment of new regional improvement teams which may well consider these important points so we will wait to see how the new teams will work with RDs to foster collaboration and share good practice regionally.

As with the other two areas, this approach requires a foundation of trust and openness to be created but specifically for this area, it would first require a meaningful 'reset' of relationships between the government (and its departments) and the profession⁹, so that leaders within education feel heard and that they can contribute (no matter the size, context, geography or circumstances of the trust or school).

9 <https://schoolweek.co.uk/the-new-government-must-reset-the-relationship-with-the-sector-heres-how/>

Overall recommendations and next steps

We already have some good practice happening across the sector (see Appendix A) but it is not yet consistent enough to be making a difference at a national level. Some trusts are seeing great results and their hard work isn't to be underestimated; many significant changes in society have been achieved by starting at a smaller level.

But we know that we have a fast-burning platform; we are losing teachers faster than we can recruit them in. If we are not careful, we will reach a severe crisis point very quickly. So, we must come together as a system to solve this.

If we are to ensure that we retain our teachers across the education system as a whole, it will require clear system level commitments that ensure teachers have a consistent guaranteed quality of experience wherever they work (within reason as we know that context is important to factor in). In ensuring that, we can also support recruitment efforts as applicants will feel confident that whichever organisation they work within, in education, they can expect certain things that support their satisfaction, engagement and wellbeing at work.

Our proposal (alongside the suggestions of practice made earlier in this paper) is for the development of a sector-wide **retention promise** to our teachers (a draft of which has been started in Appendix B). It is acknowledged that this initial document –developed by our professional learning community of CEOs - will need further work and refinement in order to be adopted system-wide, but we believe the principle behind it is valuable. This would mean that a teacher or future teacher (or member of the wider workforce) can see this promise in every school and trust and feel assured that the organisation (and importantly, the wider sector) is committed to their retention and wellbeing. This would be a huge step forward.

Linking back to what we have outlined as being critical to effective system leadership, we know that a collective vision and a commitment to collaborative endeavor sits at its heart. Through this sector promise we have this. We can commit **as a system** to changing the lived experiences of teachers across the country and make it clear and explicit to them what they should expect from their employers. Whilst this may not be a standalone solution that moves the dial entirely on its own, it is a starting point from which we can then build our future collective efforts.

Appendix A: Trust and cross-sector examples of effective retention practice

The de Ferrers Trust

Issue:

Staff voice showed one of the highest value things the academy trust could do to improve staff wellbeing would be the introduction of flexible working hours.

Action:

Several areas of flexibility have been introduced. One example of this is that where time for CPD used to need to take place during set dedicated staff CPD hours, the trust has changed this to make this more flexible to suit different needs. Teaching staff will have one day a week (of their choice) where they are able to either arrive 1hr later than their directed time starts or to leave 1hr earlier than their directed time finishes. If this means a morning briefing is missed, this will be recorded and shared to ensure staff do not miss key messages or vital information. There are a number of operational logistics that wrap around this to ensure no adverse impact on teaching delivery and there is some variance depending on the role in the trust.

Impact:

This has only recently been implemented so impact will be captured once enough time has passed to measure it. But this is a good example of where the trust is responding (as far as it can) to staff voice and feedback.

The Education Alliance (TEAL)

Issue:

Workload pressures were adversely affecting staff wellbeing and as a result, work was needed to identify where the trust could help to relieve pressure and offer support.

Action:

A workload charter was developed for the trust, outlining the trust's commitment to staff when it comes to managing workload and ensuring their time is spent on the most important things. The charter addresses aspects such as culture, lesson planning, marking and feedback, emails, data collection, inspection and working practices. Making it crystal clear for employees, what they can expect from the organisation.

Impact:

Data from 2024 shows that 62% of staff agree that workload is manageable in the trust compared with 44% in 2023 and compared with the national figure in 2024 of 20%. This shows marked improvement in an area that we know is one of the top reasons for teachers choosing to leave the profession.

Batley Multi-Academy Trust

Issue:

A lack of diversity in all layers of organisational leadership. This was important to the trust for many reasons but not least as it linked to raising aspirations in the community 'you cannot be what you cannot see'.

Action:

The trust implemented a proactive campaign to recruit, and retain more diverse leaders including Members, Trustees, Governors and School Leaders (including a specific focus on gender, ethnicity and age). This included advertising on social media, leaflet drops to local businesses and attending business networks in the trust's local community, visiting local universities and recruitment fairs, plus "open house" events (Batley Breakfasts), and the production of a monthly community newsletter (Batley Buzz) showcasing the work of the Trust schools and improving their mission to be "the trust at the heart of the Batley community."

Outcome/Impact:

The trust has recruited (and retained) greater diversity in leadership positions. This work will be an ongoing process now to ensure the diversity achieved so far is never lost, and will form part of their wider succession planning/talent spotting strategy.

NHS

Issue:

As with many public services, the NHS faces a shortage of highly skilled and qualified workers to undertake important roles across the service. This is particularly the case for experienced nursing professionals.

Action:

The national return-to-practice scheme for nurses¹ was set up in 2014 and provides experienced nurses with training and a route back into the NHS. There are three ways offered for nurses to return – re-registering with the NMC by showing evidence of continued practice and CPD, undertaking the 'return to practice' course over 3-12 months, or undertaking a 'test of competence'.

Impact:

The programme has supported 7978 nurse returners since its inception in 2014, ensuring patients and service users have access to experienced and well-trained care staff equipped with the right skills.

Policing

Issue:

Staff working in 'high-risk' areas of policing are potentially at risk of higher burnout, stress and absences related to this and/or have a higher potential to leave the role.

Action:

Pause Point, introduced by Cambridgeshire Constabulary in 2018, is a dedicated wellbeing intervention for officers and staff in high-risk areas of policing². All new starters have Pause Point explained to them at induction and within the first year of being in a high-harm role, the staff member is seen for a Pause Point assessment by their line manager at three, six, nine and 12 months. After that, assessments are annual. A staff member can request a pause from their role at any point during the assessments. If they do so, this is supported by the senior leadership team and in consultation with the staff member, a suitable posting is found for them for either three or six months to give them some respite. They can either return to their role

1 <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/return-practice>

2 <https://www.college.police.uk/support-forces/practices/wellbeing-intervention-police-of-ficers-and-staff-pause-point>

refreshed and suitable to carry on, or allow time for honest discussions about whether a permanent move is best for their long-term wellbeing.

Impact:

- A reduction in long term absence linked to work trauma. This has been reduced, especially in terms of psychological illness.
- An increase in retention of staff in high-harm roles. Compared to other investigative teams within the organisation, retention of staff is high.
- An increase in recruitment to high-harm roles. This is currently difficult to assess due to overall detective numbers, but certain roles that use Pause Point are frequently over-subscribed when advertising. However, the direct impact of Pause Point above other job satisfaction aspects cannot be accurately measured.
- An increase in scores on workforce satisfaction surveys for those in harm-harm roles. However, Pause Point cannot be singled out as the driving factor.

Timpson

Issue:

An aim to be known across their workforce and local and national communities as an excellent company to work for. As a family business, they want their workforce to feel like extended family members – cared for and content at work.

Action(s):

Timpson implement a great number of staff benefit and retention approaches which can be viewed through visiting the footnote link³ Some examples include:

- Employing a dedicated mental health counsellor for staff across the company to access
- Offering a hardship fund for staff to apply to for an interest-free loan, paid back in installments from their salary
- Long service recognition scheme with a range of different recognition types depending on length of service
- An additional day's leave to celebrate birthday

Outcome:

Overall retention rates for the organisation could not be found but a retention rate of 75% across The Timpson Group for staff recruited from prison or who have a criminal conviction has been shared.

3 <https://www.timpson-group.co.uk/working-for-us/benefits/>

Appendix B: A sector-wide retention promise

When you work in education, you should feel valued and appreciated for the important difference you make. If you undertake a role within education, regardless of where you work in the sector, you can expect the following, to support you to be the best that you can be in your role. Underpinning this is our commitment to the [Nolan Principles of Public Life](#) and these should be apparent in our behaviour as individuals and as organisations.

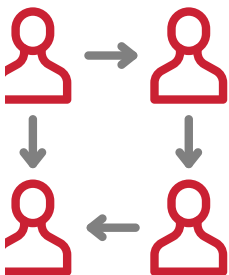
Our promise to you is...



You will have access to **learning and development** opportunities throughout your career so that you can continually learn, grow and develop your skills and knowledge



You will have **access to support to help with workload management**. We will aim to keep your workload manageable, enabling you to focus on what makes the biggest difference and supporting you to feel confident and content at work.



You will be able to **shape the culture you work within** and contribute to building positive, supportive work cultures, within which all individuals are valued and respected



We will **consider options to support greater work life balance** including flexibility in working arrangements where possible, balancing personal needs with requirements of roles.



We will provide **safe environments** within which you can work, prioritising the safety of all children and young people and staff across the organisation



We will ensure **accountability is utilised as a force for good**, ensuring we take a broad view of aspects that demonstrate how well we are delivering for all our children, staff and communities.

Appendix C: Useful resources from Forum Strategy to support retention

Utilising and sharing staff skills and expertise: [Developing a trust-led service model that maximises expertise and resources to meet pupils' and communities' needs: The Rivermead Solutions Model](#)

Trust-wide CPD: [Trust-wide CPD: ensuring value, impact and sustainability](#)

Building local partnerships: [The Education Alliance – Building partnerships with local business and industry for the benefit of students](#)

Building local partnerships: [Navigating the Cost of Living Crisis: TEAM Education Trust's Collaborative Approach with Local Businesses](#)

Valuing and motivating Headteachers: [Why we must remember how important Headteachers are to the success of a trust](#)

Developing a trust employer of choice strategy: [Members Workshop – Developing and sustaining an effective employer of choice strategy](#)

Thriving Trusts Thinkpiece - [Being an employer of choice: Thriving Trusts Thinkpiece 6: Drawing on collective expertise, resource and support to become an employer of choice](#)

Supporting staff wellbeing: [Becoming an employer of choice by putting staff wellbeing front and centre: a case study from the New Collaborative Learning Trust](#)

Financial advice and support for staff and it's links to retention: [Why financial wellbeing matters – for you and your workforce](#)

Prioritising EDI across the trust: [Making equality, diversity and inclusion a Trust-wide priority – Lionheart Educational Trust](#)

Flexible working: [Flexible Futures](#)

Flexible working: [The rise of the flexible workplace: An update for trust leaders on the changes to the law on flexible working requests](#)

Culture: [MAT Leaders resource: ensuring a positive culture for recruitment & retention](#)

Culture: [The CEO's role in enabling and reinforcing a positive culture at scale](#)

Culture and psychological safety: [Fearless Cultures: developing and leading cultures of psychological safety and wellbeing across multiple sites](#)

Staff voice: [The key to being an employer of choice? Know your staff well](#)

Reducing workload: [Reducing Workload Through Collaboration and Digital Platforms Across Academy Trusts](#)

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