



Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust (DNDLT)

Company Number 10847279

"Every child matters and no child is ever left behind..."

**"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs."**

Luke 18:15-17

People Strategy

Strategy Reviewed and Adopted by Board of Directors: 9 July 2025

Version: 1

Date of Next Review: July 2028

Responsible Officer: CEO

Introduction from the CEO, Paul Rickeard

At the Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust, we strive for the best outcomes for all our children and our people. We are committed to ensuring that each of our schools retain what makes them unique and special, whilst ensuring that they have the support that comes with being part of our highly-regarded and growing Trust.

At the heart of Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust is our people. Through our People Strategy, we will be transparent and clear about how we attract and recruit, how we engage and retain, how we grow and develop, and how we support and nurture all of our people, whatever their role.

We aim to become employer of choice through ensuring that all our people feel valued and celebrated and are given the opportunity to reach their full potential, and our schools are the best they can be for the communities we serve.

Our Mission

The Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust is a place where we strive for the best outcomes for our children and staff. We work hard to achieve equity and flourishing for everyone. We want our staff and children to feel valued and celebrated, given the opportunity to innovate and reach their full potential. We want our schools to be at the heart of their communities serving them in the way they know best, knowing they will be supported, encouraged and affirmed by a dedicated and specialist team.

Our Vision

Let the children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Luke 18:15-17

At the DNDLT we believe everyone in our Trust is a child of God, adults and children alike. Every individual and every school matters, all are valued and celebrated, and no one should be left behind.

Strategic Objectives

We believe that Durham and Newcastle Learning Trust and the schools we incorporate are great places to work. To build on this we aim to:

- **Attract and Recruit:** Attract and recruit a workforce that is reflective of the diverse communities we serve
- **Engage and Retain:** Engage with our staff to ensure that all our people have a voice, and that we work together to continue to review and develop strategies that support retention and job satisfaction
- **Grow and Develop:** Encourage continuous learning at all levels in which we support innovation, develop, and enable all our people to be their best
- **Support and Nurture:** Promote health and wellbeing and reward and celebrate success

Attract and Recruit

To continue to thrive and grow as a Trust, we are focussed on ensuring that we attract and recruit candidates who share our values, ethos and absolute commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our children.

To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure equality of opportunity throughout our recruitment processes ensuring that we focus on widening the candidate pool to capture under-represented groups
- Streamline application processes, where possible, to ensure that they are effective, responsive and interactive through use of technology (My New Term)
- Continually review recruitment processes to ensure they are carried out robustly and safely to safeguard the Trust, pupils and staff

- Ensure all our people receive comprehensive onboarding that aligns to our culture, mission and values and equips them to be able to do their job
- Monitor and evaluate staff retention through exit and turnover data
- Create early career opportunities through appropriate work experience, apprenticeships and work placement

Engage and Retain

We recognise that our staff are one of our most valuable assets, and we are committed to fostering a supportive, rewarding and engaging work environment that encourages long-term career development and job satisfaction, with a view to ensuring long-term retention of our staff.

To achieve this, we will:

- Continue to recognise nationally agreed pay increased for teachers and support staff
- Continue to review our pay and grading structures and allowances to ensure that our people are rewarded fairly and competitively
- Review staff benefits including salary sacrifice schemes and flexible working policies and practices
- Seek the views of our people through regular surveys and staff voice
- Nurture a culture that encourages openness and innovation
- Ensure that our people are consulted on changes to policies and practices that impact on their roles

Grow and Develop

We are committed to continuous learning for all. We have strongly established Leadership Development and Early Career Teachers programmes and our aim is to build on this through clear succession planning and developing career pathways for all.

To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure a consistent approach to Appraisal that ensures that development is aligned with the strategic priorities of the role any bespoke development needs or career pathways for each individual colleague
- Use appraisal processes to develop succession plans that identify career pathways for individual development
- Ensure quality and purposeful feedback is offered to all staff on a regular basis, with staff being praised and recognised for great work
- Provide opportunities for cross-trust collaboration including through Trust networks, challenge and support work and shared online forums
- Develop current and future middle leaders and managers to ensure that they are equipped with the correct skills and abilities to embed the culture of the Trust and encourage further development
- Focus on building resilience within staff, equipping teams to deal effectively with internal and external drivers and change

Support and Nurture

We are committed to ensuring a safe and health working environment that promotes staff wellbeing and reduced levels of sickness absence and have a range of wellbeing initiatives in place. We are looking to build on this to ensure a consistent approach across our Trust as we continue to grow.

To achieve this, we will:

- Ensure our vision's commitment that every individual, including every member of staff and every school matters, all are valued and celebrated, and no one should be left behind.
- Continue our commitment to reducing workload and creating a working environment that is focused, purposeful and considers individuals' wellbeing.
- Ensure there is a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing embedded within leadership practice, the curriculum, the school's vision and associated values, and the social and physical environment
- Support Mental Health First Aiders in every school and continue the Mental Health First Aider network as a means to discuss and consider resources, ideas and the culture of wellbeing across our schools
- Enhance the wellbeing offer to all staff, including ensuring and encouraging staff awareness
- Ensure a Wellbeing Policy which is consistent in across all schools and that wellbeing is supported through a range of strategies and signposts
- Further develop and embed our policy and practices in relation to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) with a focus of ensuring a climate that continues to promote Christian values, and where people feel safe to take risks by speaking up and sharing concerns, questions or ideas
- Ensure HR policies and practices are effective, consistent and support the full employee lifecycle

