



# Pathfinder Schools People Strategy 2022-2025

“

I wanted to join Pathfinder Schools as I was attracted to the Trust's values – a belief that anyone can find their own greatness always strikes a chord with me and I know that the Trust really believes in its students and staff  
Pathfinder  
Schools Colleague

”

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# Introduction

The The Pathfinder Schools People strategy for 2022-2025 has been prepared taking account of the views and in consultation with the Pathfinder Schools Trust Board, the Trust Central Team, Schools Leaders and all Trust staff.

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To enable us to do this we have considered;

- Data from our annual staff surveys in 2019 and 2020
- Exit interview data
- School data returns
- Trust Board strategic objectives for 2021-2022
- Discussion and feedback from the Trust Board People Pay and Performance Committees
- Discussion and feedback from Trust Heads and Trust Bursars/HR colleagues

Our strategy is underpinned by our values of Humanity, Independence and Collaboration and our intention is to ensure that Pathfinder Schools is an employer of choice, providing excellence in people practices which enables our pupils to achieve greatness.

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We recognise this remains a time of rapid change and uncertainty, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact this has had on our pupils, colleagues and communities. However, we strongly believe that this is also a time of opportunity which has driven the ambition in our strategy.

In recognition of our current environment of change our HR strategy will remain flexible and adaptive, in line with the wider objectives of Pathfinder Schools and we acknowledge that objectives and measures of success may evolve to reflect changes in the education sector, our environment or changing priorities.

## **Background**

The HR function at Pathfinder Schools has undergone significant change over the last two years, transitioning from a service delivered by an external provider and historic county council policies to an internal function.

# HR at Pathfinder Schools



## The HR function at Pathfinder Schools

The Central Team HR team is presently composed of a full time HR Manager and a temporary part-time administrative assistant who both work closely with School Business Managers, Managers and Headteachers across our trust schools.

HR Administration is presently a hybrid model with some aspects of people practices being undertaken by Schools Bursars and others undertaken by the Trust. Where HR Administration is undertaken at a school level, Pathfinder Schools policies and procedures are followed to ensure compliance, minimise risk and to maintain a consistent staff experience across all work locations.

## How many staff do we support?

All staff-512  
Teaching-196  
Support staff- 313



This strategy applies to;

- Trust Central Team
- Havelock Infant School
- Havelock Junior School
- Hawthorn Community Primary School
- Hawthorn Extended Services-After School and Holiday Clubs
- Loatlands Primary School & Nursery
- Montsaye Academy
- Montsaye Community Sports Centre
- Rothwell Infant School & Nursery
- Rothwell Junior School
- Rushton Primary School
- Wilbarston CE Primary School

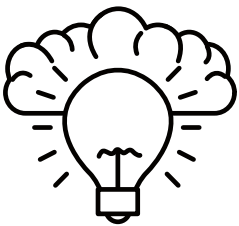
## • What do we do?

- Recruitment, selection and grading advice and support
- Provide information and access to employee benefits
- Provide HR data to support strategic and operational decision making
- Reward and recognition support and advice
- Facilitate career progression and succession planning
- Support organisational change
- Diversity, inclusivity and wellbeing advice
- Develop policies, procedures and tools to support the full employee lifecycle
- Consult and engage with staff and trade unions
- Provide HR administration
- Coach leaders and managers on resolving employee relations issues
- Manage employee relations cases
- Advise on employment related risk
- Drive people strategy
- Respond to staff queries and concerns
- Support and attend informal and formal employee relations meetings and hearings

# Trust Board Strategy



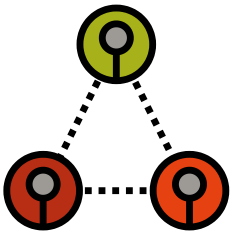
The dynamic risk register informs the strategic plan which ensures that the culture, values and ethos of Pathfinder Schools permeate all layers of the organisation



Accountability is based on useful and timely data provided for all committees enabling trustees to make informed decisions which have a positive impact on the schools and community



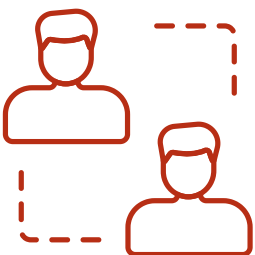
The Board is made up of the appropriate people with relevant expertise



Structures of governance enable the Board to triangulate evidence



The Board can demonstrate that it is meeting all statutory compliance requirements



Self and peer review are embedded in Trust Board processes to ensure self-reflection and continual development and are a feature of the organisation.

# Pathfinder Schools People Strategy



The main objective of the People Strategy is to support and contribute to the achievement of the overall Trust strategic plan, through our Trust values, whilst enabling recognition of Pathfinder Schools as an employer of choice both inside and outside of the education sector and our region.



## **Strategic Area 1-Recruitment & retention**



## **Strategic area 2- Health and Wellbeing**



## **Strategic Area 3-Inclusion, engagement and culture**



## **Strategic Area 4-Leadership & management**



## **Strategic area 5-Learning and development**

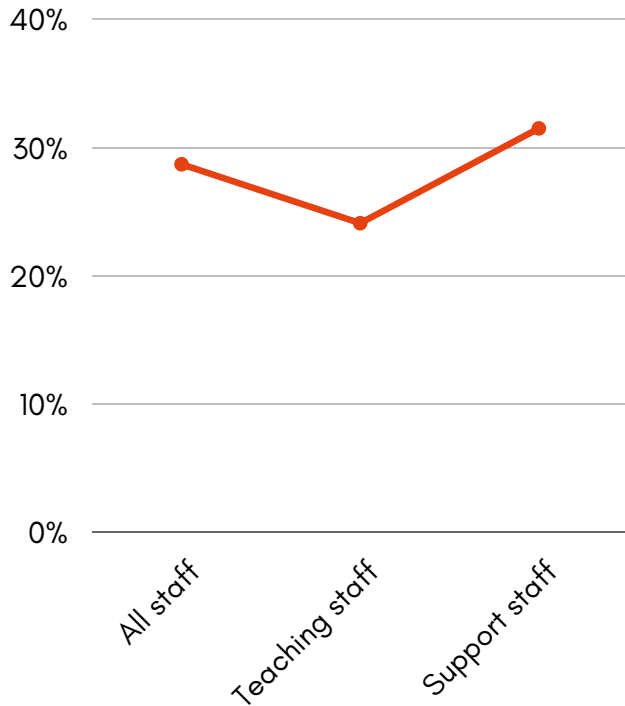
The section of this document which addresses each of the above areas outlines our current position through key data, our objectives, the actions we will take to achieve these and indicative measures of success by 2025.

# 1. Recruitment & retention

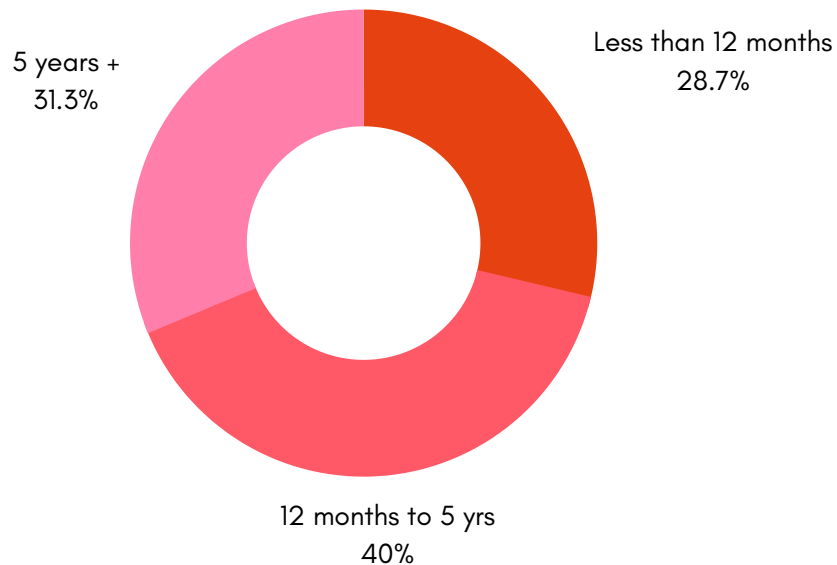


## Key Data 20/21

Staff turnover



Leavers length of service



By the close of the academic year recruitment campaigns that were successful during the first recruitment exercise had dropped from 91% to 65%, we acknowledge that this has likely been affected by the competitive job market further to the pandemic.

77% of staff leavers responding to the exit questionnaire stated that they had decided to leave the Trust in the last 3 months

11% of staff leavers stated limited access to flexible working as their reason for leaving the Trust

55% of staff leavers responding to the exit questionnaire stated that they were supported and encouraged to achieve life-work balance

In the staff survey when asked-How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the options for flexible working currently available to you (including options for part-time work)44% of staff stated they were either quite or very satisfied.



# Objectives



- To attract, identify, appoint and retain exceptional staff who enable the achievement of the Trust's strategic objectives and ensure a high quality of education for our students and communities.
- To develop and embed a culture across Pathfinder Schools which values staff experience and influences senior decision making
- To ensure that all Pathfinder Schools staff feel valued and that their work and commitment are recognised, appreciated and rewarded.
- To ensure staffing across the Trust is at the appropriate level and staffing structures are financially viable and efficient.
- To ensure our culture is reflective of the changing needs of our staff and schools and we truly embrace flexible/agile working



# Next steps

- In collaboration with school leaders the HR Manager will ensure that any decisions to recruit are made following full consideration of the options available.
- The Pathfinder Schools Recruitment and Selection Policy will be reviewed annually by the HR Manager and Trust Board PPP Committee to ensure that it meets the needs of the Trust, facilitates safer recruitment, and is responsive to the job market regionally and nationally.
- All recruitment activity will be in line with the Pathfinder Schools Recruitment and Selection Policy; workplaces and those responsible for recruitment will be provided with professional and effective documents, process and training to ensure the highest standards are met.
- Our recruitment and selection procedures will be clear, robust, fair, professional and efficient, providing a positive experience equally for applicants and internal colleagues contributing to the recruitment process.
- We will only recruit individuals who demonstrate Pathfinder Schools values, skills, knowledge, experience and motivation to help the Trust achieve its objectives.
- All recruitment panel chairs will be appropriately trained, for example in safer recruitment and unconscious bias, and all staff who sit on recruitment panels will follow correct processes in conducting recruitment interviews and shortlisting.





- Where necessary, we will take positive action through our recruitment and selection activity to make sure our workforce reflects an inclusive and diverse community.
- We will work with stakeholders to ensure that recruitment advertising is effective, focused, good value for money, uses language and imagery that maximises potential interest from a diverse range of candidates, promotes the Trust and is legally compliant. Our strong safeguarding culture and Trust values will be at the forefront of our recruitment activity.
- We will develop the careers section of our website to provide attractive and welcoming first impressions, which demonstrate Pathfinder Schools as an employer of choice. Taking advantage of staff testimonials, blogs and staff survey data.
- We will research opportunities to enhance the use of technology in our application process and the feasibility of online application methods.
- Feedback will be offered to candidates who were unsuccessful at interview stage, feedback will be factual and constructive. We recognise that interview feedback contributes to a positive candidate experience and to the reputation of the Trust as an employer, increasing opportunities that candidates will apply for future appropriate positions at the Trust and will share their experience with others.
- School to Trust data returns will include reporting on flexible/agile working to ensure the Trust has an accurate picture of its prevalence and consistency of approach across our schools
- We will undertake a flexible working benchmarking/diagnostic exercise to understand the culture at each of our schools and the current experiences/perceptions of our senior leaders. Including sharing strategies to implement more agile working successfully, reduce pre-conceptions, including sharing case studies/examples from success stories outside of the Trust and inside the Trust where appropriate
- We will raise awareness of flexible/agile working to existing and potential staff, through promotion in the recruitment process, promoting to current staff through successful case studies (for example leadership at Havelock), ensuring staff are aware of the breadth of options outside of part-time working
- We will ensure that part-time and agile workers are represented on staff committees and are identified as a responding group in staff surveys
- We will embed conversations about flexible/agile working during performance/career development discussions/meetings and ensure this is a discussion point on our performance appraisal paperwork
- We will ensure flexible/agile working and life/work balance is part of our internal marketing/communications plan for staff



## Measures of success

- All recruitment panel chairs will be appropriately trained, for example in safer recruitment and unconscious bias, and all staff who sit on recruitment panels will follow correct processes in conducting recruitment interviews.



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- All schools achieving a green rating in temperature check visits for recruitment procedures
- Production of a Pathfinder Schools recruitment brochure which is professional, engaging and attractive
- Production of candidate packs for each Trust vacancy with key information on the school and post, these will promote the school, trust and position and will be visually appealing
- Number of applications per post to increase year on year
- % of school survey and exit data confirming that the recruitment process was positive and their role was in line with what was presented during the recruitment process increases year on year
- % of vacancies filled on the first recruitment run to increase year on year
- Proportion of leavers completing exit questionnaires increasing year on year
- Staff turnover rates will be in line with or an improvement of internal, national and regional education data where available
- Staff survey responses addressing approach to flexible/agile working are positive and improve year on year
- Trust data on flexible working application to approval conversion to improve year on year
- Exit interview data stating limited access to flexible working as a factor in leaving Trust employment to reduce year on year

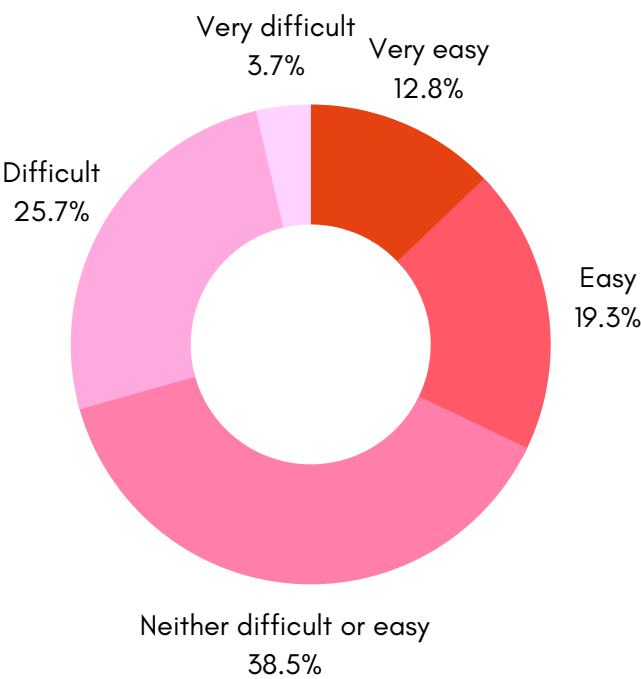


# 2. Health and Wellbeing

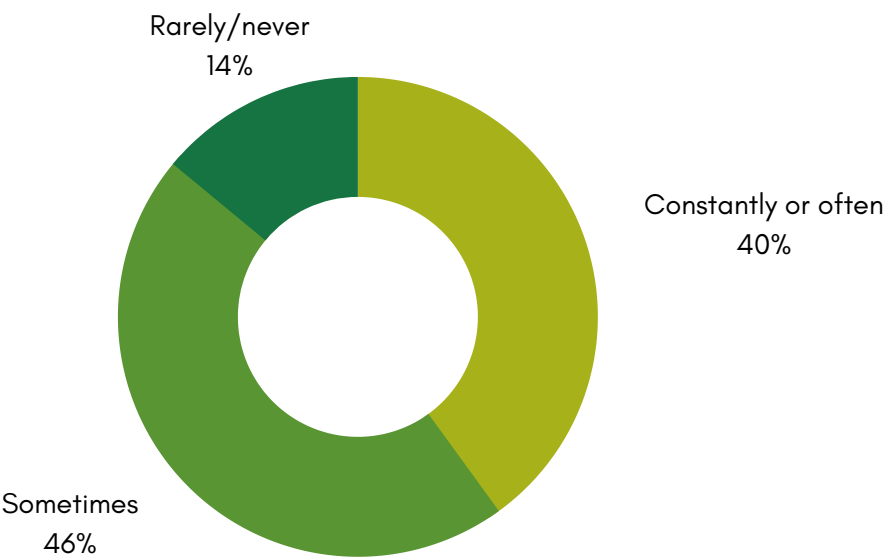


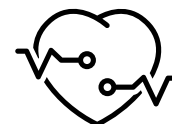
## Key Data 20/21

How easy or difficult is it to stay on top of your work responsibilities?  
Staff survey responses



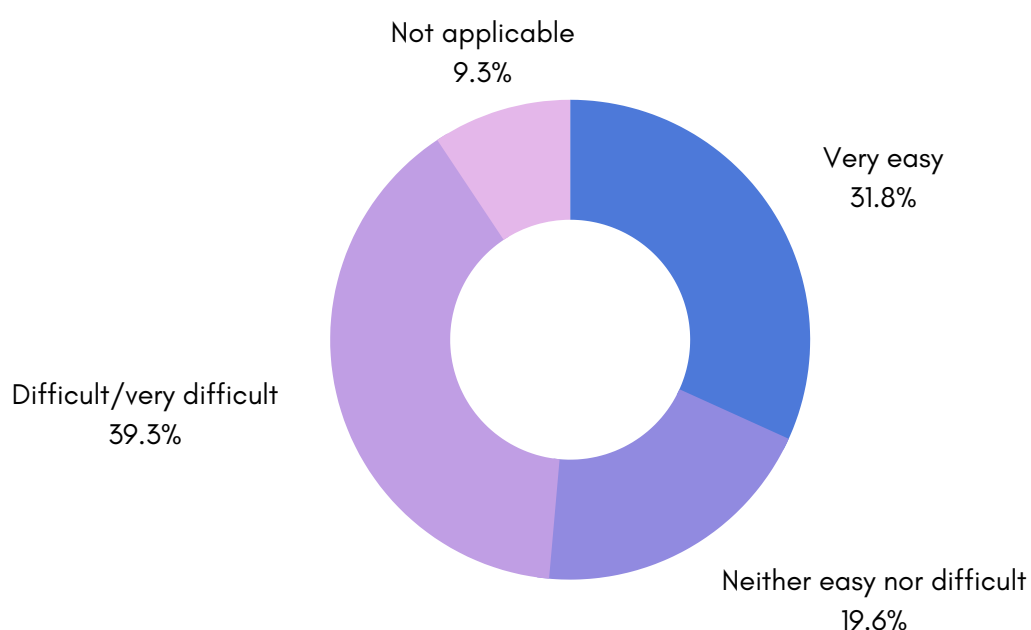
How often do you feel overworked?  
Staff survey responses



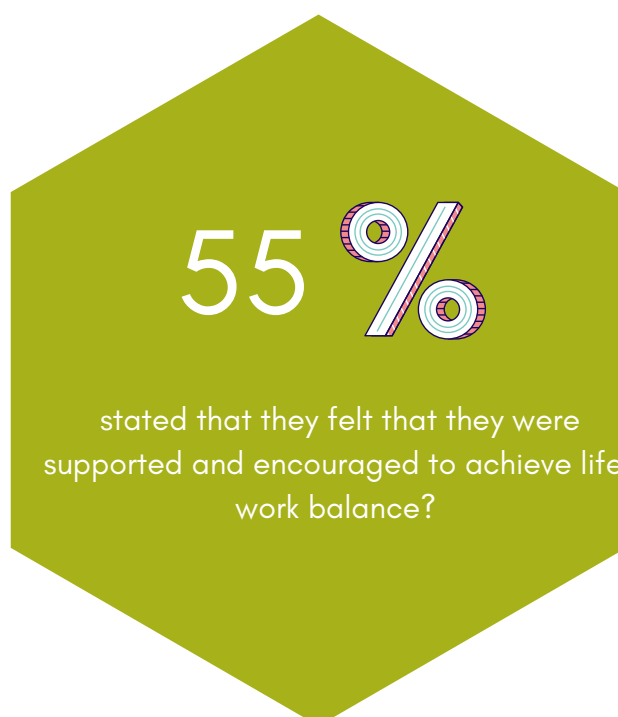
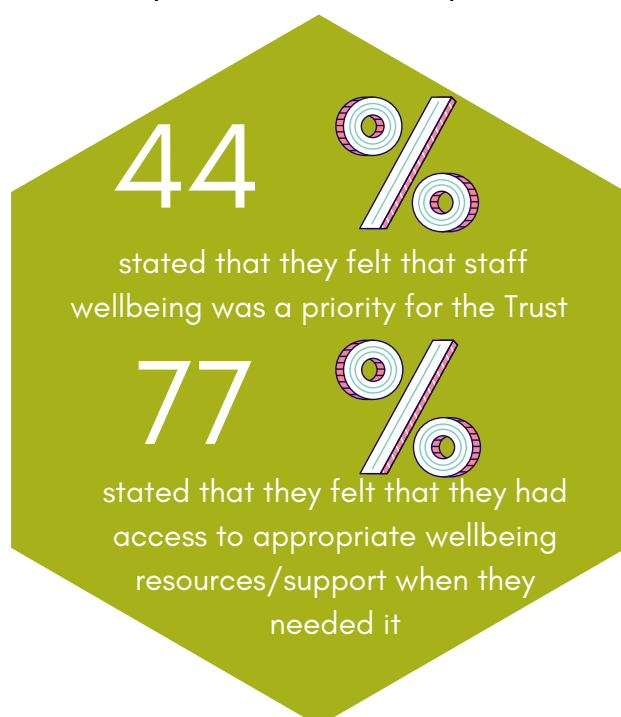


How easy or difficult is it to get support with your mental and emotional well-being?

Staff survey responses

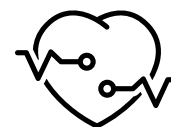


Staff exit questionnaires responses





# Objectives



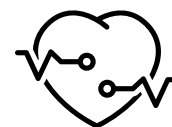
- To improve the health, safety and wellbeing of Pathfinder Schools staff and volunteers
- To prevent work associated ill health, in particular work related ill health
- Health and wellbeing is a strategic priority for senior leaders across the trust
- To create a culture which values, promotes and supports employee health and wellbeing where mental and physical health are equally valued, are openly discussed and support is preventative rather than reactive
- To create an environment that aims to further reduce the stigma associated with mental health and promote positive mental health and wellbeing within the Trust;
- To ensure senior and middle leaders are appropriately trained and supported to safeguard employees' health and wellbeing and they are engaged in promoting health and wellbeing initiatives
- Staff understand and take responsibility for their own wellbeing, working together with their workplace and the Trust to enhance workplace wellbeing, confidently report stress and ill health, and participate in training and programmes of support.



# Next steps

- We will raise the profile of health and wellbeing through delivery of structured initiatives , communication, awareness events, training, volunteering, staff stories/case studies
- We will use Trust staff data and ongoing participation in academic research programmes (MHPP) to support health and wellbeing, which will enable us to identify trends and tailor our future strategies appropriately
- We will create a Trust wellbeing commitment/charter created in collaboration with the Wellbeing Committee, the committee will play a key part in promoting our commitment to staff and volunteers
- We will sign the Mental Health at Work Commitment and support our schools to work within the framework of the commitment
- We will complete the DWP Workplace Wellbeing Tool and share the outcome with leaders and other stakeholders to highlight the impact of not investing in staff wellbeing
- We will deliver effective support for staff and managers that is easy to access and supports a wide range of staff needs, including the importance of seeking early advice and guidance on support available for staff.
- We will actively encourage early disclosure of issues via open discussion, and further promote Wellness Action Plans as a proactive tool for staff to support their own wellbeing.
- The role of the 'people manager' and its responsibility in supporting staff health and wellbeing will be included in the Pathfinder Schools Career Development Pathways





- Selection processes for leadership and people management roles will include assessing commitment and approach to supporting staff health and wellbeing, this will be achieved via the introduction of designated interview questions to be included in all interviews for people managers across the trust
- We will ensure that all people policies and procedures are designed with staff health and wellbeing as a priority, including flexible working, absence management and family friendly policies
- We will support the retention and rehabilitation of all employees as appropriate through reasonable adjustments which could include: phased return to work, flexible working, supporting treatment time or adjustments to jobs or premises
- We will regularly seek feedback from staff (e.g. surveys on wellbeing issues) to measure the impact of our interventions and inform our future strategies.
- Flexible working will be promoted and authentically encouraged
- We will create a Health and Wellbeing Directory accessible online to staff and our wider community, numbers reviewing and/or downloading resources to be measurable
- We will research and consider the viability of cash plans for staff-medical/dental etc. support
- We will research how we can use Thriving People Index Data 'TPI' as a benchmark for the wellbeing of our workforce in a local context



## Measures of success

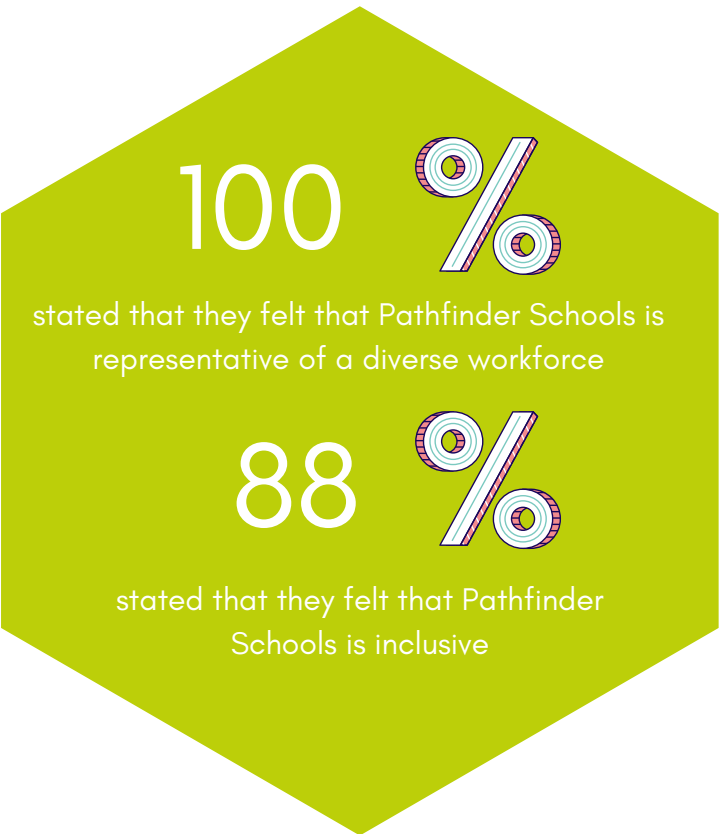
- Staff survey data on approaches to staff health and wellbeing improves year on year
- Embedded, recognised and effective Wellbeing Committee with an accompanying charter/commitment
- Mental Health at Work Commitment signed and the associated framework followed by all trust workplaces
- Staff/volunteer participation in voluntary training and programmes focused on health and wellbeing to increase year on year.
- Wellbeing is an established component of staff communications and wider marketing
- Health and Wellbeing resources are readily available and are regularly accessed by staff
- Prevalence of OH management referrals to mirror staff attendance and health and wellbeing
- Instances of work related ill health to reduce year on year

# 3. Inclusion, engagement and culture



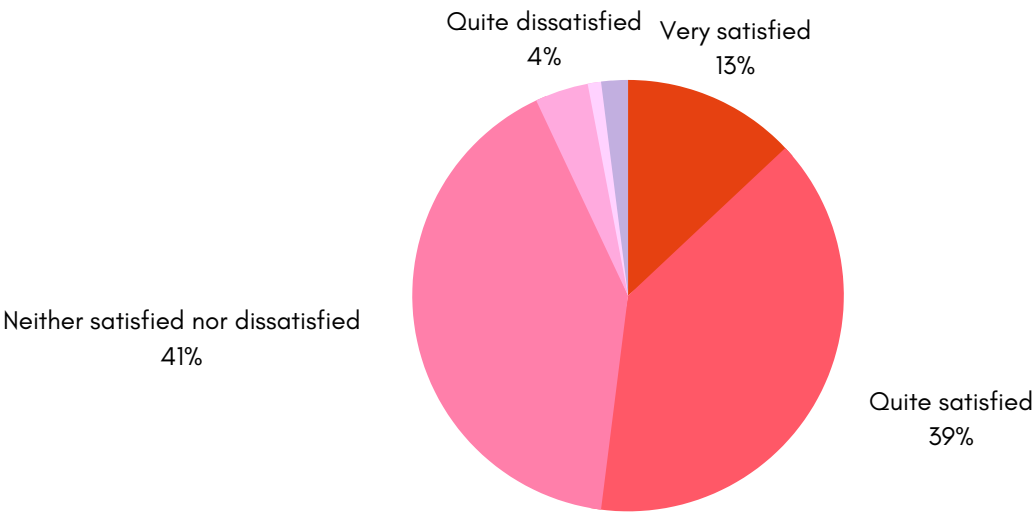
## Key Data 20/21

Exit survey data



In general, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the communication between the Trust and the school staff?

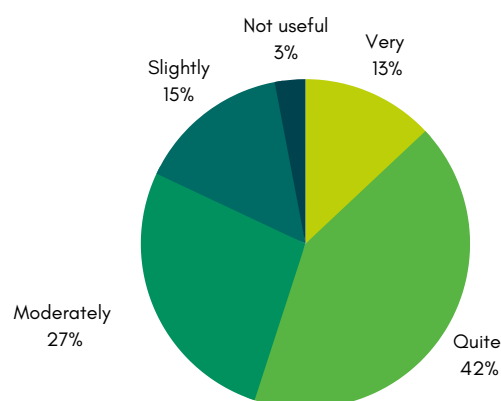
Staff survey responses



How useful is the information you receive from the Trust?

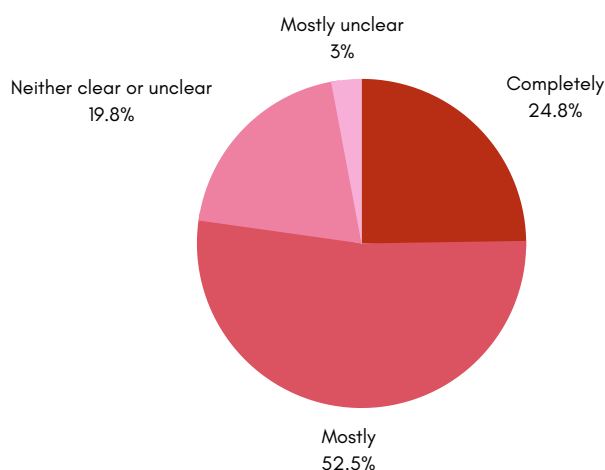


Staff survey responses



How clear are the Trust vision and values to you?

Staff survey responses



## Objectives

- Foster and facilitate a culture that encourages collaboration, independence and humanity to enable all employees to fulfil their potential
- Sustainability and accountability – identify and breakdown barriers to full inclusion by embedding diversity and inclusion in policies and practices and equipping leaders with the ability to manage diversity and be accountable for the results
- To have respectful and supportive workplaces that enable us to attract and retain a diverse workforce that represents our communities.
- Ensure our Trust Board and Governing Bodies are representative of our communities
- Inappropriate behaviours are always challenged and addressed
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a strategic priority for senior leaders across the trust



## Next steps



- We will raise the profile of equality, diversity and inclusion as an important part of our culture through the delivery of structured initiatives , including awareness events, training, volunteering and case studies
- We will proactively collect and review diversity data and use this to drive appropriate strategies
- We will establish a representative staff and volunteer Trust Inclusion and Diversity Committee
- We will appoint Inclusion and Diversity Champions at each Trust workplace and will promote and celebrate our Champions
- We will recognise staff who exemplify our Trust values, through Trust awards and peer to peer recognition
- We will ensure policies and procedures recognise and embrace diversity and inclusion
- We will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is an agenda point at every trust board strategic meeting focused on staffing
- We will provide inclusive leadership training for managers
- We will establish employee advocacy groups
- The potential for unconscious bias will be acknowledged and we will take steps to minimise the impact of unconscious bias through all staff training
- We will seek to increase high levels of staff engagement through regular high quality and informative internal communications, which provide staff with support but also increase engagement with Pathfinder Schools values.
- We will seek to engage staff to contribute towards Trust wide communications such as blogs, testimonials and features.
- We will maintain a positive relationship with recognised trade unions and other employee representatives when appropriate.
- We will conduct an annual Staff Survey which is valued and engaged with
- Interim, pulse and focus surveys will be implemented to measure the impact of any interventions or to explore areas of potential concern and risk
- Survey results will be published in an engaging format, with areas of strength and improvement equally promoted





## Measures of success

- Retention of Disability Confident Committed recognition and award, achievement of Disability Confident Employer and an achievable plan to achieve Disability Confident Leader
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion questions to be added to the annual staff survey
- Increase in the representation of diverse employees and leaders
- Established calendar of Trust wide events and initiatives
- Established Inclusion and Diversity Committee
- At least one established staff advocacy group
- Staff engagement with staff surveys to increase year on year
- Membership of Diversity and Inclusion networks

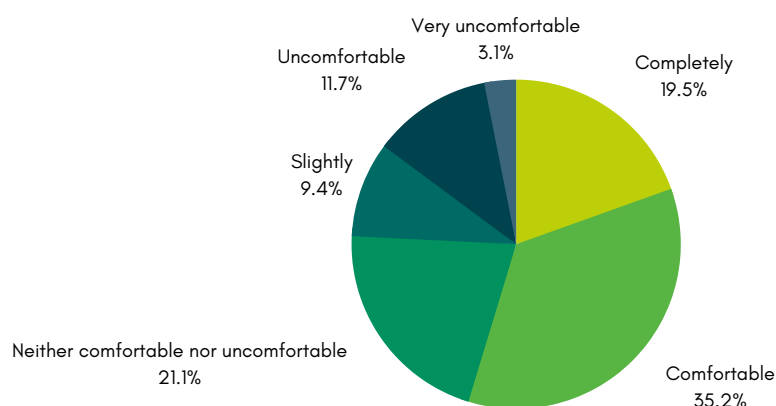
## 4. Leadership and Management



### Key Data 20/21

How comfortable do you feel about openly voicing work-related concerns to leadership?

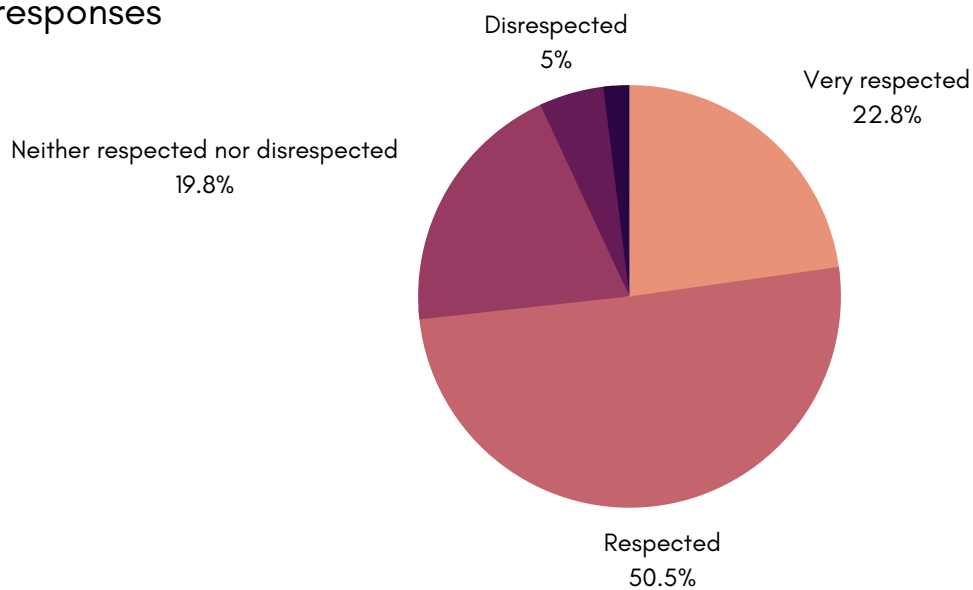
Staff survey responses





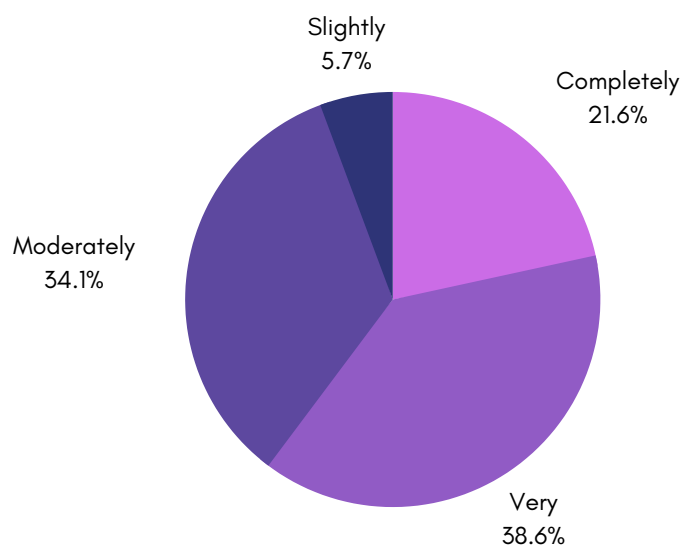
## How respected by the leadership do you feel?

Staff survey responses



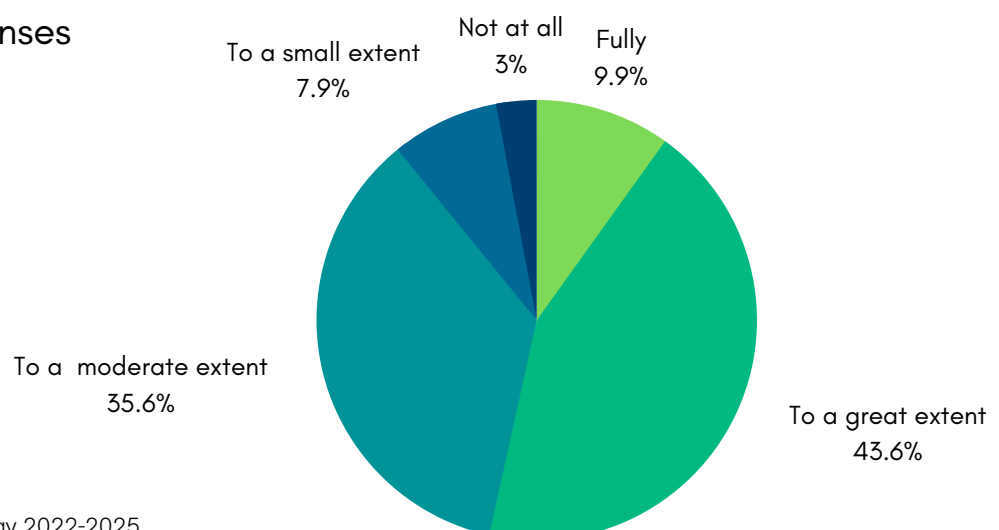
## How appreciated by the leadership do you feel for your work?

Staff survey responses



## To what extent do you think the Trust values are embedded into the culture of your school?

Staff survey responses





## Objectives

- To develop the leadership skills of current leaders and to identify and develop new leaders
- Invest strategically in staff to inspire and equip leaders to influence and lead in line with Pathfinder Schools values
- Our leaders will exemplify the Trust values of collaboration, humanity and independence in all that they do
- To develop and implement a succession planning strategy



## Next steps

- Through performance appraisal we will identify and nurture talent at the earliest opportunity to enable effective succession planning.
- We will support managers and leaders (senior, middle and beginning leaders) to increase their awareness of HR procedures, employee relations, best practice and in taking responsibility for their workforce. This will be achieved by regular interactive training, resource guides and support.
- We will invest in line managers to ensure they are equipped to take decisive action and accountability for their decisions and teams.
- In collaboration with the Director of School Improvement we will provide a range of management and leadership development opportunities, linked by clear career pathways.
- We will support the development and growth of newly appointed/promoted leaders and managers through effective induction procedures.
- We will promote secondment opportunities across the Trust and beyond to support staff to broaden their experience and their professional development.
- Through staff survey, appraisal and exit data we will identify areas where leadership skills could be improved and will implement appropriate interventions
- We will develop a framework of aspirational leadership behaviours that are reflective of Pathfinder Schools values and other relevant standards including the Department for Education guidance such as the Headteachers' Standards.
- We will set out the expectations that staff at all levels can have of those in leadership and management roles by promoting and championing our leadership behaviours.



## Measures of success

- The number of internal (and external) leadership promotions/secondments to increase year on year
- Positive responses from staff surveys and exit data on leadership and management to increase year on year
- Internal and/or external recognition of excellent leadership and management practices to be achieved
- The number of staff undertaking leadership qualifications/training/career pathways to increase year on year
- Succession planning policy and procedure in place
- Partnerships with training providers and associated organisations will continue to be developed
- Accreditation to deliver NPQ and leadership qualifications to continue

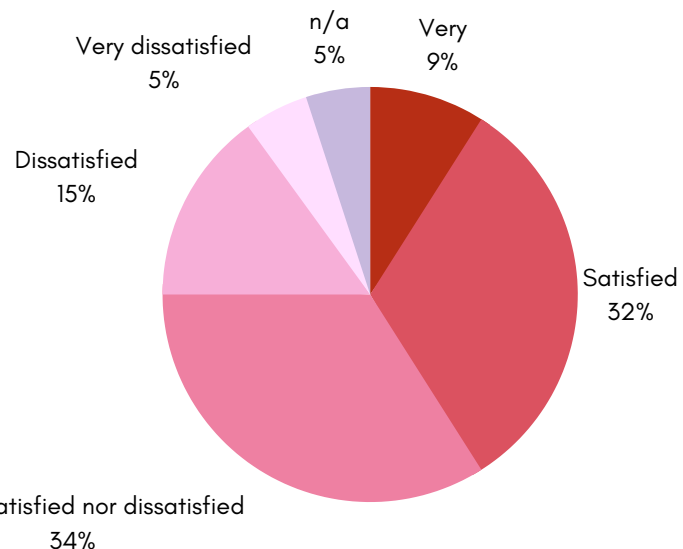
## 5. Learning and development



### Key Data 20/21

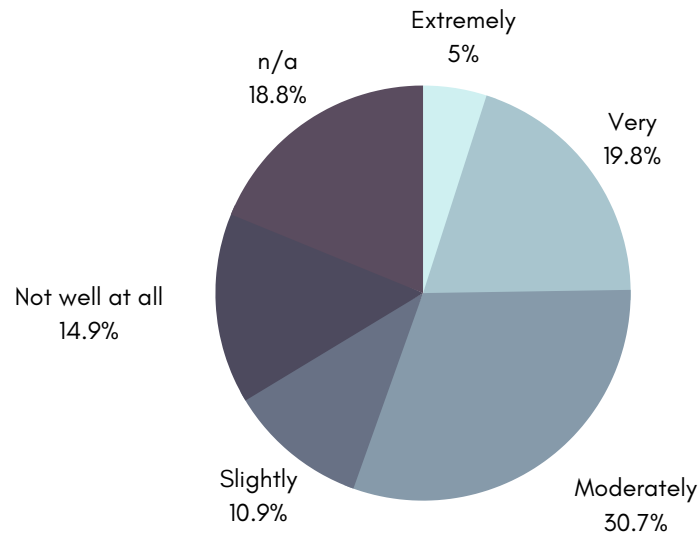
How satisfied are you with the performance management (appraisal) procedures in your workplace?

Staff survey responses



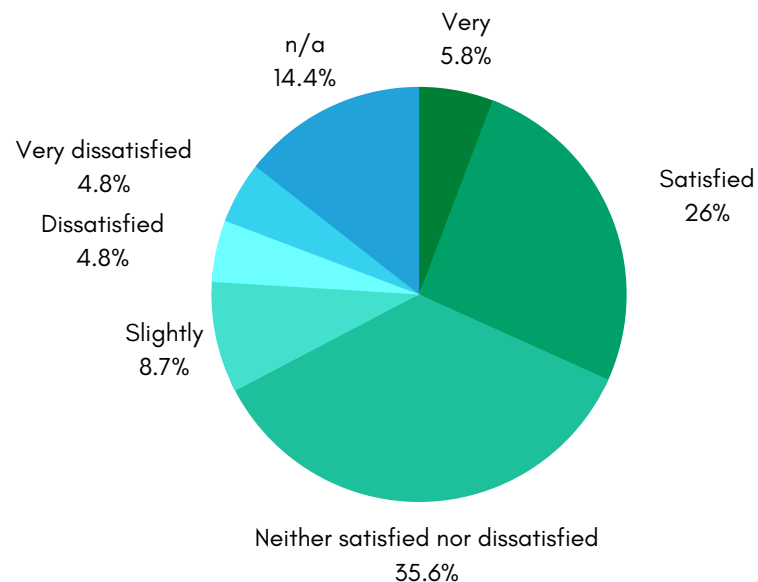
How well do the professional development activities available to you suit your needs?

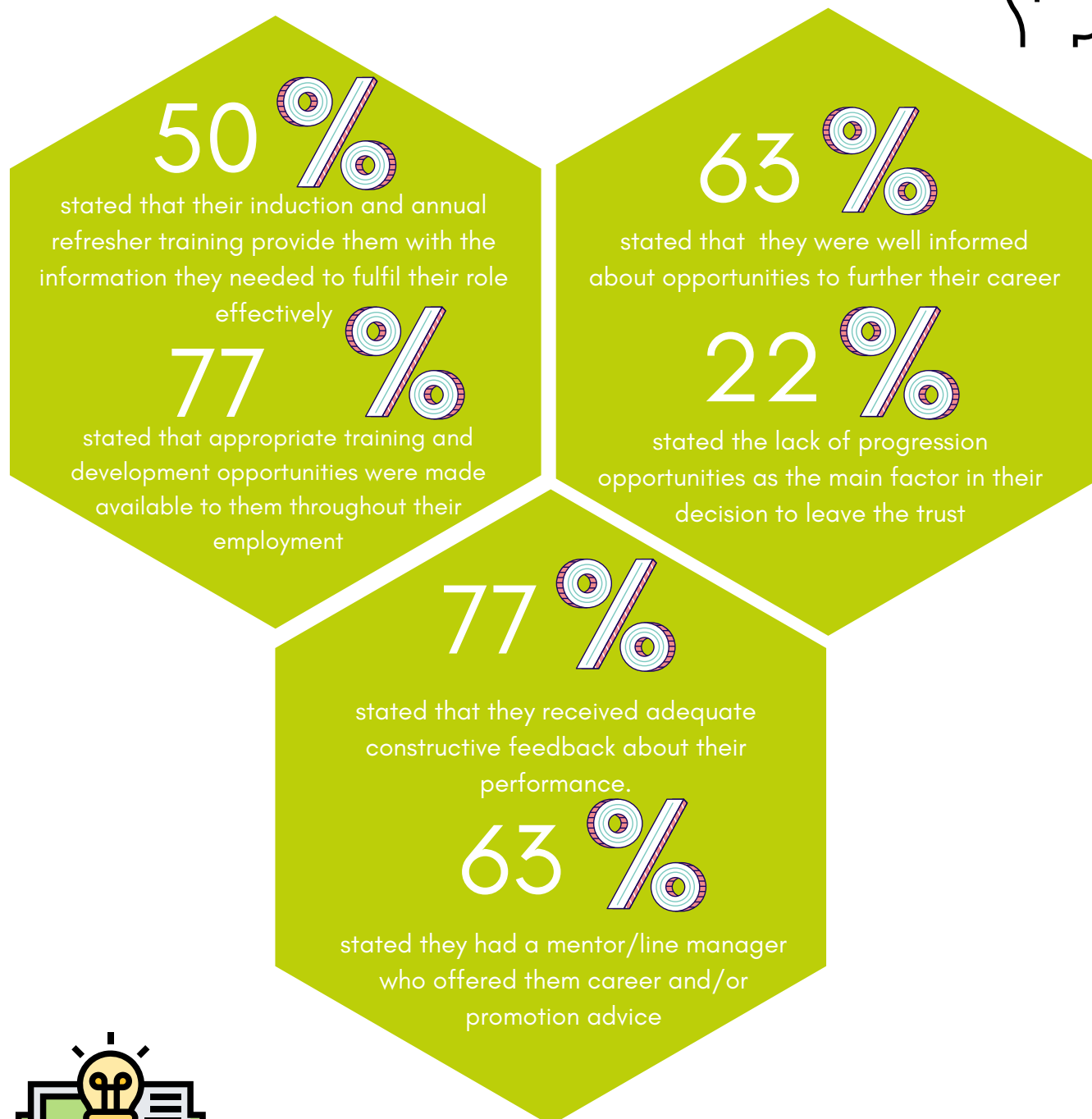
Staff survey responses



How satisfied are you with opportunities for career progression in your workplace?

Staff survey responses





## Objectives

- To enable the development of a high performance culture in which staff are engaged and their performance can be supported, rewarded, enhanced and managed effectively
- Managers and staff work together to ensure they have access to opportunities that align with current and future needs, utilising strengths and building a successful, sustainable organisation.
- Staff understand what is expected of them and how their contribution supports the work of their team, school/workplace and Trust as a whole
- Staff are provided with the resources and encouragement to enable them to perform at their best, and have the freedom and confidence to share best practice, innovate and collaborate
- Our appraisal system strikes an appropriate balance between being forward looking whilst encouraging reflection





## Next steps

- School leaders will be reminded of the Pathfinder Schools Performance Appraisal feedback form and they will ensure it is made available to all staff
- Appraisers will be provided with training and guidance to develop their skills as an appraiser, to fully understand their responsibilities to their teams but also to the school when making recommendations and deciding on outcomes
- Staff will be provided with advice, training and guidance so they have the tools available to actively participate in the performance appraisal process, to demonstrate their progress and to shape future objectives and CPD
- Performance Appraisal feedback data will be reviewed and will form part of the research process into new models of appraisal
- Research into different Performance Management Models and the theories they are based on will be undertaken.
- Performance Appraisal Focus Groups will be established to support new procedures and policies
- Findings from focus groups will be included when reviewing new performance appraisal models
- Trial new performance appraisal models-teaching and support
- Based on research, feedback and trials we will draft, consult, and implement Pathfinder Schools Performance Management policies for teaching and support staff
- Pathfinder Schools Policies for Performance Management will work in harmony with the newly developed Pathfinder Schools Career Pathways



## Measures of success

- Staff survey and exit data focused on performance appraisal and CPD to improve year on year
- Staff survey and exit data focused on the understanding of Trust values and the capacity to which they are embedded within their schools to improve year on year
- Performance appraisal feedback to improve year on year
- All appraisers will have received support and training on the appraisal process
- All staff will have a performance appraisal within defined timescales
- Performance appraisal/pay appeals will reduce year on year