

Job Description

Job Title	Director of People and Culture
Grade	
Responsible To	Chief Operating Officer
Staff Managed	HR Officers
Job Family	Human Resources
Job Purpose	<p>The Director of People and Culture will lead the strategic and operational delivery of Human Resources across Heartwood Learning Trust. This includes shaping a high-performing, inclusive culture, ensuring compliance with employment legislation, and supporting the Trust's growth and improvement through effective people management.</p> <p>The role combines strategic leadership with hands-on delivery across workforce planning, employee relations, organisational culture, learning and development, wellbeing, and regulatory compliance. As a member of the Trust's Executive Team, the post-holder will contribute to Heartwood Learning Trust's strategic priorities and will help build a positive culture where staff feel valued and empowered and where children and young people thrive, as we help them prepare to live 'life in all its fullness'.</p>
Job Context	<p>The Director of People and Culture is an associate member of the Executive Team, leading a centralised HR function across the trust. The role works closely with the CEO, COO, Trustees and school leaders to deliver strategic priorities through effective workforce leadership.</p> <p>Operating in a complex and regulated education environment, the post-holder balances strategic leadership with operational delivery, including organisational change, employee relations and stakeholder engagement. The role is key to shaping a high-performing, inclusive culture that supports staff wellbeing and improved outcomes for children and young people.</p>
Accountabilities / Main Responsibilities	
Key Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide strategic HR leadership to the Trust, advising the CEO, COO, Executive Team and Trustees on workforce strategy, risk and culture ● Lead the development and delivery of a Trust-wide People Strategy supporting growth, inclusion and organisational effectiveness ● Oversee a high-quality, compliant and centralised HR service delivering consistent operational support across all academies ● Lead complex employee relations, change management, TUPE and restructuring activity across the Trust ● Drive workforce planning, recruitment, talent management, succession planning and leadership development ● Champion equality, diversity, inclusion and staff wellbeing, ensuring legal compliance and positive employee engagement ● Lead pay, appraisal and terms and conditions frameworks aligned with Trust priorities and national requirements ● Ensure robust HR governance, safeguarding, safer recruitment and statutory compliance across the Trust ● Develop strong partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, including trade unions and professional networks ● Model ethical leadership, Trust values and professional excellence
Strategic Leadership and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead the development and delivery of a Trust-wide HR strategy aligned with the Trust's vision, values and strategic priorities ● Act as the principal HR advisor to the CEO, COO, Executive Team and the Board of Trustees, providing expert guidance and insight to inform strategic decision making ● Develop and implement the Trust People Strategy, supporting the Trust to be the employer and Trust of choice. This involves leading on workforce planning, talent

	<p>management and succession planning to support organisational sustainability and improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build HR capacity within the Trust, helping Trust leaders to develop their knowledge and skills ● Shape and sustain a high-performing, inclusive organisational culture, championing equity, diversity and inclusion across the Trust ● Drive organisational change initiatives including workforce remodelling, organisational restructuring and innovation ● Provide strategic HR insight through robust analysis of workforce data, KPIs and trends to inform strategic decision making at Trust and academy level ● Represent the Trust externally on HR matters, building effective regional and national partnerships and professional networks ● Research specific HR topics relevant to organisational change within education, ensuring that policy development within the Trust is timely and robust
<p>Operational Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead and develop a high-quality, centralised and effective HR service, delivering consistent, responsive and legally compliant support across the Trust ● Lead the Trust’s central HR team, ensuring clear lines of accountability, effective line management and appraisal ● Oversee and manage HR systems, processes and data management, including the Management Information System, ensuring data accuracy, reporting capability and continuous improvement ● Develop, implement and review HR policies, procedures and employment documentation in line with legislation, best practice and Trust priorities. These include but are not limited to those on pay, appraisal, attendance, whistleblowing, capability, grievance, flexible working, maternity/ paternity/ adoption/ parental and shared parental leave, as well as establishing new, relevant policies where required ● Manage the Trust’s use of external HR providers e.g. Employee Assistance and Occupational Health to ensure value for money and high standards of service ● Develop and maintain effective professional working relationships with stakeholders at all levels, including colleagues, HR advisors, legal teams, local governing bodies, Trustees, trade union representatives and external agencies ● Lead HR consultations with trade unions and contribute to Trust risk management and assurance processes ● Review and update allocated HR sections of the Trust strategic risk register and Trust KPI tracker ● Provide timely and accurate HR information to the CEO, COO, Trust leaders and Trustees, as appropriate, to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities ● Facilitate effective collaboration with payroll and finance colleagues to ensure contractual and pay changes are implemented accurately and efficiently
<p>Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Act as the senior point of contact for more complex and high-risk employee relation matters across the Trust ● Provide expert professional advice and expertise in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discipline and grievance matters including leading high-level and complex casework, conducting investigations, drafting reports, attending hearings as the Trust HR representative and drafting associated correspondence ○ Sickness absence management including ensuring the effective implementation and monitoring of the procedure, attendance at formal meetings and hearings, making referrals to occupational health or other agencies, and drafting associated correspondence ○ Performance management including advising on the process for managing appraisal and attendance at meetings to address performance concerns including formal hearings/appeals under appraisal procedures

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Pay and grading including job analysis, job evaluation and pay appeals as well as implementation of updates to pay, terms and conditions o Redundancy and restructure processes including supporting leaders in the identification of vulnerable employees, attendance and support at consultation meetings, hearings and appeals and drafting associated correspondence/ documentation o Maternity, paternity, adoption, parental leave entitlements and implementation of the flexible working policy o Recruitment including development of recruitment exercises and materials, ensuring compliance with safer recruitment, organisation of recruitment events and participation in the delivery of recruitment panels/assessment activities where appropriate ● Ensure proactive conflict resolution, early intervention and mediation approaches are embedded across the Trust ● Lead TUPE processes including due diligence, consultation and implementation for academies joining the Trust ● Ensure fair, consistent and timely application of HR procedures across the Trust
<p>Employee Engagement and Wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote staff wellbeing, engagement and job satisfaction through Trust-wide wellbeing and work-life balance initiatives and staff voice mechanisms. ● Develop and oversee a competitive package of employee benefits and rewards across the Trust ● Maintain constructive relationships with trade unions and professional associations to support positive employment relations
<p>Resource / People Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead Trust-wide recruitment, retention, onboarding and offboarding strategies to attract and retain high-quality staff, using insights to drive continuous improvement ● Establish talent management and succession planning frameworks to build leadership capacity and address future skills needs ● Work with the COO to collate data that tracks the talent pathway across the Trust and its academies – supporting and reporting on opportunities for growth and promotion ● Ensure a robust staff induction and onboarding process is in place across all academies, quality assuring the process ● Provide support, coaching and training to leaders on the people management implications of policy and strategy ● Develop and deliver HR focused training e.g. investigations, conduct, absence management
<p>Skills Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead a Trust-wide learning and development strategy aligned to organisational priorities ● Develop leadership capability and support talent progression and succession planning ● Identify skills gaps and implement targeted development initiatives ● Embed a culture of continuous professional development and coaching ● Deliver and oversee training in key people management areas (e.g. ER, performance, safer recruitment) ● Evaluate impact of development activity and drive continuous improvement
<p>Compliance, Risk and Safeguarding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure full compliance with employment law, equality legislation, safeguarding requirements and safer recruitment standards across the Trust ● Maintain responsibility and oversight of the Single Central Record, ensuring it is accurate and compliant across the Trust ● Ensure all HR related statutory reports and returns (e.g. workforce census, gender pay gap reporting etc) are accurate and completed on time. ● Maintain accurate HR records and salary data, ensuring robust controls between HR and payroll processes so that all contractual changes are authorised, recorded, reconciled and implemented correctly and on time ● Hold responsibility for the Trust’s Sponsorship Licence, managing applications and renewals, ensuring immigration compliance and risk mitigation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advise Trustees and the Executive Team on HR-related risk, governance and statutory obligations ● Ensure all HR policies, processes and documentation remain legally compliant, current and are consistently applied ● Ensure that relevant legislative and educational employment knowledge is kept up to date ● To be committed to safeguarding and to promote the welfare of children, young people and adults, raising concerns as appropriate. ● Maintain confidentiality as appropriate. ● Have an awareness and knowledge where appropriate of the most recent safeguarding legislation.
Systems and Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead the development and implementation of pay frameworks and appraisal processes across the Trust, ensuring these remain appropriate and support the Trust's efforts to recruit and retain the best possible staff ● Provide expert advice on terms and conditions in line with Burgundy and Green Book arrangements. ● Oversee job evaluation, pay progression, pay appeals and implementation of national and local pay changes
Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To comply with the Trusts policies and supporting documentation in relation to Information Governance this includes Data Protection, Information Security and Confidentiality ● Know about data protection issues in the context of your role
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be aware of and implement your health and safety responsibilities as an employee and where appropriate any additional specialist or managerial health and safety responsibilities as defined in the Health and Safety policy and procedure. ● To work with colleagues and others to maintain health, safety and welfare within the working environment
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lead the Trust's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty ● Lead initiatives that support the recruitment, retention, and progression of a diverse workforce reflective of the communities the Trust serves ● Monitor workforce diversity data and use insights to inform strategic planning and drive continuous improvement ● Provide training and guidance to leaders and staff on inclusive practices and unconscious bias ● We aim to make sure that services are provided fairly to all sections of our community, and that all our existing and future employees have equal opportunities ● Ensure services are delivered in accordance with the aims of the Equal Opportunities Policy Statement ● Develop your own understanding of equality issues
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whilst this job outline provides a summary of the post, this may need to be adapted or adjusted to meet changing circumstances ● Reasonable additional duties commensurate with the grading of the job role may be requested from your line manager ● Permanent & significant changes would be subject to consultation. All staff are required to comply with Policies and Procedures
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Trust requires a commitment to equity of access and outcomes, this will include due regard to equality, diversity, dignity, respect and human rights and working with others to keep vulnerable people safe from abuse and mistreatment ● The Trust requires that staff offer the best level of service to their customers and behave in a way that gives them confidence. Customers will be treated as individuals, with respect for their diversity, culture and values ● Understand your own role and its limits, and the importance of providing care or support

Person Specification

Job Title	Director of People and Culture	
Grade		
Responsible To	Chief Operating Officer	
Staff Managed	HR Officers	
Job Family	Human Resources	
Essential		Desirable (if not attained, development may be provided for successful candidate)
Knowledge		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expert knowledge of UK employment law ● Knowledge of payroll and pension schemes ● Expert knowledge of HR policies and procedures ● Knowledge of pay, appraisal and T&C frameworks ● Understanding of workforce planning, talent and succession planning ● Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, safer recruitment and public accountability 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Familiarity with school workforce census and education-specific HR systems ● Knowledge of education workforce legislation and data requirements ● Knowledge of public sector pay frameworks (Burgundy/Green Books)
Experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minimum 5+ years' experience working at a senior HR level ● Experience advising CEOs, Executives, Boards/Trustees ● Proven track record of strategic HR leadership in a complex, multi-site organisation - preferably in education or the public sector ● Experience in HR policy development and implementation ● Experience leading organisational change, restructure, redundancy ● Experience handling TUPE including legal considerations ● Experience working with Trade Unions ● Experience developing/implementing HR systems ● Experience developing/delivering people/workforce strategies ● Experience leading and managing HR teams 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Experience in talent management ● Experience of Trust risk management and assurance
Occupational Skills		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strong strategic thinking and ability to translate vision into delivery ● Ability to influence/challenge at senior level ● Excellent negotiation skills ● Ability to lead cultural change and promote high performance ● Strong decision-making with balanced judgement ● Strong analytical skills using workforce data ● Ability to lead and develop high-performing teams ● Ability to work positively within a team ● Excellent communication and interpersonal skills ● Ability to interpret information and devise policy ● Ability to prioritise/manage workload ● Ability to plan, review and improve systems 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent administrative and IT skills • High attention to detail and accuracy 	
Qualifications	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), preferably Level 7 • Willingness to obtain relevant HR qualifications • Educated to degree level 	
Other Requirements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced DBS clearance 	