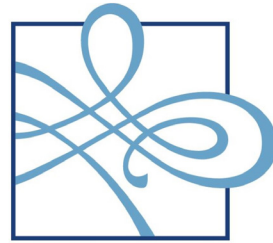


Our People Strategy



BCAT
Barton Court
Academy Trust



Introduction

At the Barton Court Academy Trust (BCAT) we place the child first in all that we do and all that we aspire to do. We recognise that it is only through our people that we will achieve our mission of “**Opportunity, Excellence and Equity**” for both pupils and the adults who support them.

Our People Strategy has been created to align with the Vision and Values of our Trust, set out to the right. Its purpose is to ensure that every pupil benefits from excellent teaching, strong leadership and a culture where staff thrive. It is one of our most important commitments and it provides a framework upon which to build over the coming years, through effective monitoring and staff feedback.

By investing in our people, recruiting and retaining talented staff, encouraging capacity and growth, valuing and supporting each other and providing a positive working environment, we provide aspirational education opportunities and improve the life chances of the young people in all of our Schools.

BCAT Vision and Values

BCAT Mission Statement:
“**Opportunity, Excellence, Equity**”

“BCAT provides **aspirational** educational opportunities in all its schools to improve the life chances of its children and young people; delivered through **strong partnerships** between staff, students, parents and the local community that share our core values of **excellence and equity**”. BCAT Values:

- Achievement
- Challenge
- High Aspiration
- Independent Thinkers
- Equality
- Valued
- Excellence



Ms Kirstin Cardus
BCAT CEO



Mr Peter Anderson
Chair of the Board of Trustees



BCAT People Vision

BCAT is a Trust that is sought out by brilliant, talented people, where every colleague feels valued and empowered to deliver exceptional outcomes for pupils, to face challenges and to continuously develop into their “best selves”.

Our people are a community of responsible, professional adults, committed to BCAT’s Vision and Values, and we treat each other as such. We take individual and collective responsibility for the working and learning environments in our Schools. School leaders and the Trust provide aspirational and inspirational leadership, direction, guidance and assistance.

Our people are individuals. We respect and value our differing strengths and contributions, backgrounds and characteristics. We recognise the significant impact that our actions and behaviour can have on each other, and we strive to challenge and support each other, to achieve our best.

Strategic Intent

- Build a unified Trust culture with shared values to create an environment where all can succeed and thrive.
- Ensure every school has the right people, in the right roles, at the right time.
- Develop a sustainable workforce and leadership team.
- Provide high quality professional development and training so employees can be highly successful and achieve their own personal career aspirations.
- Prioritise the employee experience so staff can perform at their best.

BCAT Trust People Strategy – Our Commitments

- Excellence, Achievement and Challenge
 - Positive and Purposeful Environment
 - Culture of Support and Challenge
 - Attract and Retain Talent
- High Aspirations and Opportunity
 - Building Capability and Future Roles
 - Professional Growth
 - Culture of Continuous Improvement and Growth Mindset
- Valued People and Fair Systems
 - Empowerment and Involvement
 - Recognition and Reward
 - Culture of Fairness and Wellbeing
- Inspirational Leaders, Strong Partnerships
 - Lead and Inspire People
 - Collaborative Contributions
 - Clarity of Expectations



Excellence, Achievement and Challenge

Our Aims

At BCAT we strive to achieve excellence in all that we do, supporting each other and challenging ourselves to be the best that we can be. We hold ourselves and each other to account and we celebrate our achievements.

The Trust ensures that the right people, resources, systems and processes are in place to enable our people to achieve their best, strive for excellence and face challenges with confidence.

Our Aspirations

Positive and Purposeful Environment

- Our Schools are a positive and purposeful environment in which staff can thrive and excel.
- Our people take responsibility for their performance, skills and learning, within a framework which promotes excellent, evidence-backed practice across all roles.
- All staff can access professional support through regular line management conversations, performance management and appraisal systems.
- BCAT Values are embedded in systems, policies and practices, which encourage and reinforce positive adult behaviour and professional relationships.
- Behaviour policies provide a calm environment where staff and pupils can focus on learning and education.

Culture of Support and Challenge

- Our people are empowered to strive for high performance at all times and to face challenges with confidence.
- Our people engage in performance discussions and coaching as a core part of the day-to-day running of the organisation.
- Our people collaborate, share ideas and help each other to excel, within and across our Schools.
- Our people feel comfortable to challenge behaviours that are not in line with the organisation's values and ensure people are held to account.

Attract and Retain Talent

- Our reputation and our inspirational "employer brand" develop as we celebrate our successes and achievements.
- We understand our employee's experience is fundamental to our reputation and recognise that our people are our best ambassadors.
- We consider where and how we advertise, to actively seek the best candidates from diverse backgrounds and increase our talent pool.
- We have a consistent, robust approach to recruitment across all our Schools and central teams, to minimise recruitment costs and time-to-hire, maximise our talent pool and increase consistency and fairness.
- Our leaders are empowered, equipped and resourced to make robust recruitment decisions.
- Our new staff experience effective induction and probation processes, which enable them to settle in quickly, achieve success and make positive contributions.

High Aspirations and Opportunity

Our Aims

At BCAT we do not stand still. Collectively and individually, we seek out better ways to achieve our goals, and improve our practices and processes. We face up to challenges and we engage positively with new opportunities.

Our people have a sense of purpose and autonomy in their roles and their careers, enabling everyone to feel able to develop their skills and understanding, and achieve their ambitions.

Our Aspirations

Building Capability and Future Roles

- Our people take ownership of their learning and development to effectively realise their potential while supporting the organisation's objectives and building capacity for sustained success at all levels.
- Our organisation offers a professional learning framework which assists staff to plan their own development. This offer will emphasise collaboration and the sharing of best practice, and will focus on professionalism and pedagogy.
- Our organisation sets out clear pathways for upward mobility, continuous learning and skills training.
- We look to the future to identify and plan the roles and capabilities people will need to deliver success, meet the changing needs of communities, markets and organisational strategy.
- We create a pipeline of talent which secures succession planning, and which enables staff to see and secure their next steps.

Professional Growth

- We develop people's personal and professional skills and knowledge throughout their careers, and actively promote professional learning opportunities.
- Staff development and wellbeing are an integral part of discussions on a regular basis, and individual development is planned through well-targeted training and on-the-job activities.
- Our people take responsibility for continuous improvement, looking forward and outward for new ideas and innovation to deliver change in line with this.
- We nurture innovation, and act quickly in response to new ideas and opportunities.
- We review and improve policies and practices regularly to speed up decision making.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Growth Mindset

- Continuous learning is part of the culture of the organisation.
- Change is viewed as "business as usual", where mistakes are accepted and valued, as an opportunity for learning and improvement.
- Change is communicated in a timely and transparent way across the organisation.
- Benefits and effects of change are measured and captured, and successes and failures are openly communicated.
- Our people use intelligent insight to review our progress, and address any shortfalls in a timely and supportive way.
- Our people demonstrate optimism and drive; they champion change and support others to understand and engage with it.

Valued People and Fair Systems

Our Aims

At BCAT we truly value each member of staff as an individual, and recognise the special contribution that each person makes to the success of our organisation and our pupils.

We respect and value the different characteristics and backgrounds of our people. We understand that our differences drive a healthy, positive and purposeful environment, that promotes wellbeing and enables us to be our best selves.

We nurture our professional, adult-to-adult relationships and maintain a supportive, respectful and inclusive environment where employee voices are actively heard and valued.

The physical environment, management of people in schools and departments, and provision of innovative wellbeing initiatives all contribute to a positive, productive and rewarding environment, as well as individual health and wellbeing.

Our Aspirations

Recognition and Reward

- Our people feel appreciated and valued, and are recognised for their efforts and performance.
- We recognise and reward our people through the year in a way which is meaningful to them.
- We involve our people in designing BCAT's approach to recognising and rewarding people.
- We work to develop our employee benefits and encourage their uptake.

Empowerment and Involvement

- We give and seek timely, constructive feedback on an informal basis.
- Our people can clearly see and understand the contribution they make to achieving our strategic priorities.
- Our people feel a sense of belonging in our Schools and our Trust; they identify with our aims and values, have opportunities to shape the direction of the Trust and can raise concerns with confidence.
- We communicate policies, procedures and practices clearly and regularly to increase individual ownership and understanding.
- We listen to new ideas that will deliver positive outcomes for the organisation, our staff and our young people.
- We encourage people to engage in collaboration and create productive networks across the Trust.

Culture of Fairness and Wellbeing

- We provide a safe, happy, and purposeful environment for our people that promotes their wellbeing and enables them to be at their best, where people are valued for their contribution, empowered to manage their workload effectively and feel engaged with the wider Trust.
- Our people take responsibility for their own physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing, feel safe to ask for assistance and advice when it is needed, and know how to access help and support.
- Our culture is based on fairness and transparency.
- We promote an inclusive and diverse workforce, and our policies and processes reflect our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Inspirational Leaders, Strong Partnerships

Our Aims

At BCAT we each take a lead, whatever our role, creating forward momentum through collaboration, positive relationships and clear, open communication, thus maximising our performance at Department, School and Trust level.

Our leaders and managers inspire trust and confidence, and motivate our people to reach a high standard of excellence. They are empowered to communicate with and lead their teams, in line with the Trust values, ensuring that everyone has a clear set of accountabilities and responsibilities which support Trust aims and strategies.

We recognise the impact that line managers have on our people, their engagement and their experiences at work. All leaders and managers demonstrate effective, ethical and inclusive leadership. Our leadership style and approach are set by our Senior Leadership Teams.

Our Aspirations

Lead and Inspire People

- Our leaders are role models, leading by example, trusted by people in the organisation and providing clarity around purpose, vision and objectives.
- We empower our leaders and develop their capability by providing leadership and coaching frameworks and supporting them in their roles.
- Our people are motivated and inspired by our leaders at all levels to achieve and exceed expectations, and empowered to challenge themselves and others.
- Line managers know what is expected of them to lead, manage and develop their people effectively.
- Our people to use their initiative to lead and take ownership over delivering the organisation's objectives.

Collaborative Contributions

- Our people participate, collaborate and work effectively in their teams to achieve our goals and face our challenges.
- We implement effective mechanisms to enable all our people to contribute.
- Our people communicate clearly and transparently with each other, championing the free exchange of ideas and managing conflict quickly in an adult and positive manner.
- Our central services are trusted to provide our Schools with expertise and value; they are solution-focused and approachable, ensuring we do the right things at the right time, in the right way and the right cost.

Clarity of Expectations

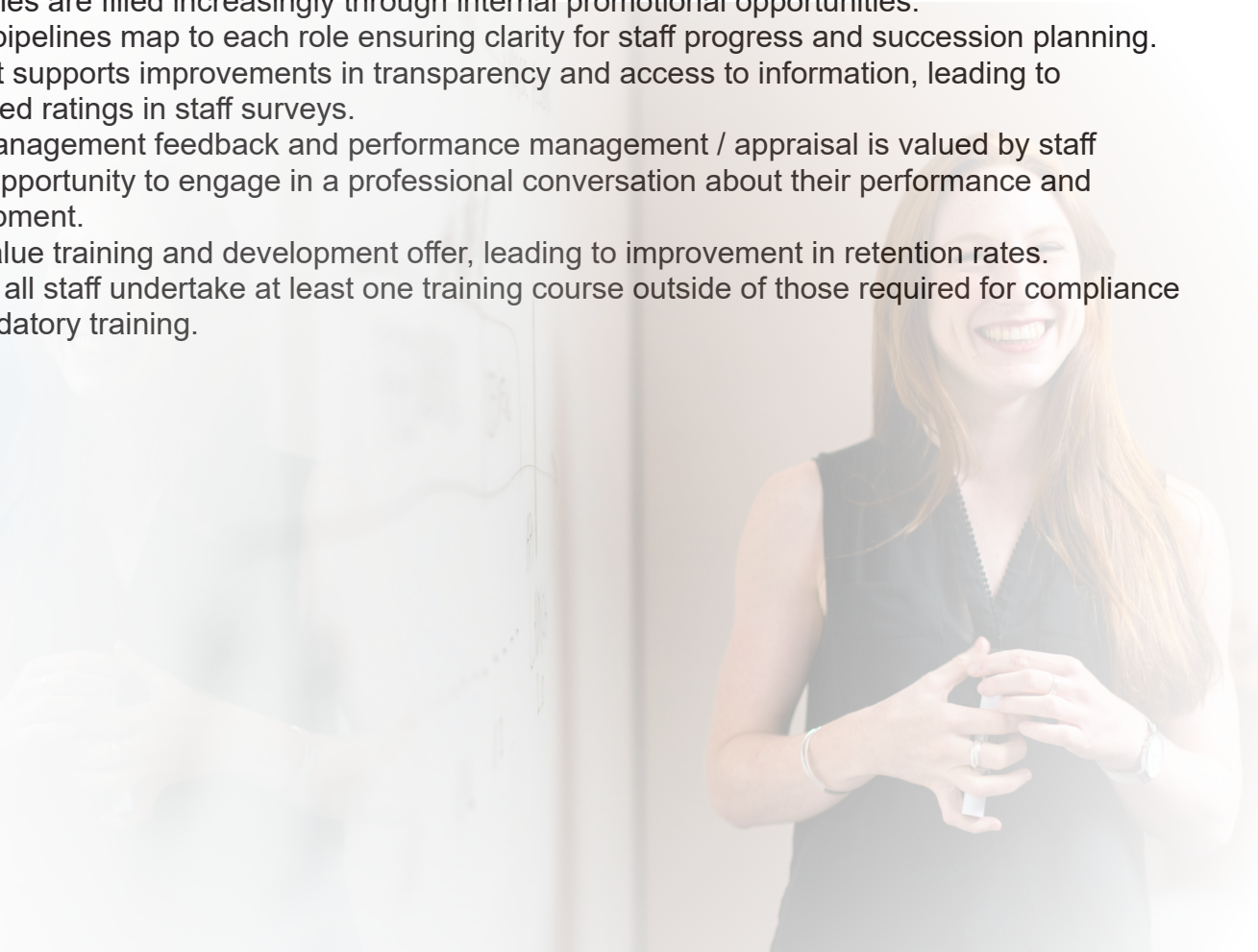
- We provide clarity in all aspects of people management, ensuring consistency of approach, expectation and entitlement.
- Our leaders and managers nurture a culture of trust and empowerment, while ensuring accountabilities and responsibilities align with School and Trust strategies.
- We support all our staff to understand the contribution they make to achieving our strategic priorities.
- Line managers support people to deliver the organisation's objectives.
- Our people know what to expect from their managers.
- Our people engage with feedback mechanisms about their experiences at work, and how they are managed and developed.

Realising Our Aims and Aspirations

What we already do:	What we plan to do:
BCAT Leadership Programmes for middle leaders, SLT and support staff, encourage collaboration across the Trust, sharing of best practice and leadership opportunities. CPD Brochures for each School setting out priorities, CPD pathways, mandatory training and leadership pathways. Teachers use the Flourish system to structure a professional conversation led by the individual, about individual development and performance, and their goals in the year ahead and longer term. Support staff complete appraisal forms, based upon their job descriptions and meet with line managers to discuss their performance and development needs. Consistent induction and probation processes are in place. Effective behaviour management policies across all our Schools allow teachers to focus on learning. BCAT senior leader collaboration through 'Connected Learning Communities'; strategic forums attended by Deputy Headteachers, Assistant Headteachers and link Governors. Focus is on elements of the Ofsted framework, compliance and the development of best practice across the Trust Schools. Staff Wellbeing Survey Staff Workload Survey Pulse Surveys (CDS and BMS) Workload and Wellbeing Forums meet regularly within each School with senior leaders to ensure we follow the DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit and the DfE Wellbeing Charter. Staff benefits include: • BYond discount card (BHN Extras) • Discounted gift cards • Cycle to Work • Kent Rewards • Blue Light Card • Specsavers voucher for screen users 'Thank-yous' for all staff: Friday break – drinks and chocolate End of term doughnuts Vouchers at Christmas and Summer Christmas lunch / Summer barbeque Celebrate excellence within our Schools at these events, through staff awards.	Launch a Trust Culture Charter co-created with staff. Create training and development activities to support the culture charter, for example EDI, and unconscious bias. Refresh surveys to measure performance against people strategy aspirations and staff engagement. Establish our employer brand and engage staff as ambassadors. Introduce a Trust-wide succession plan to identify talent with the potential to progress at all levels, using Flourish and support staff appraisal to gather information about staff aspirations and identify potential leaders in all roles. Develop career pathways for Teaching Assistants, Pastoral Teams and Operations staff. Create a Leadership Framework to identify strengths and areas for development, and provide coaching and mentoring. Increase use of secondments and cross-school placements to broaden experience. Create a data dashboard to support the People Strategy, to include turnover and absence trends. Review recognition and reward systems to ensure that they are effective and appreciated by staff. Use surveys to canvas feedback from candidates at each stage of the recruitment process, up to the end of probation. Explore recruitment systems to improve administration and monitoring of the process. Create easy-access staff and manager areas in Microsoft Teams or SharePoint, with increased access to key information, guidance on processes, our strategic aims etc. Plan for the Trust expansion and due-diligence on incoming Schools. Plan cultural alignment with new Trust Schools.

Measuring Success

- Outcomes for our young people
- High engagement in Staff Surveys (70%+) and repeated survey/questions show improvement in identified areas:
 - a positive culture and an employer brand – staff feel like they belong within the organisation and would recommend BCAT as an employer.
 - a high level of trust in our leaders and their capacity to lead a successful organisation in line with the Trust's Values.
 - staff understand their objectives and accountabilities, and how they contribute to the overall organisation goals and aims.
 - recognition strategies and benefits offer provides a range of options and rewards, valued by staff.
 - staff feel that they have an opportunity to engage in a professional conversation about their career and how they can further their ambitions. Perceived barriers to progression are identified and minimised.
 - staff value our leadership development offer, also leading to improvement in retention rates.
- The Trust demonstrates improved outcomes from the Workload and Wellbeing Surveys.
- Exit interview responses show positive or neutral reasons for leaving (personal reasons, promotions).
- Leadership programmes and courses are valued by current and potential leaders.
- Turnover rates are decreased.
- Absence rates are below the regional / education average.
- EDI statistics are reflective of our local communities.
- Vacancies successfully achieve a range of appropriately qualified / experienced staff with the competencies and values that match those of our Trust commitments.
- Vacancies are filled increasingly through internal promotional opportunities.
- Talent pipelines map to each role ensuring clarity for staff progress and succession planning.
- Intranet supports improvements in transparency and access to information, leading to increased ratings in staff surveys.
- Line management feedback and performance management / appraisal is valued by staff as an opportunity to engage in a professional conversation about their performance and development.
- Staff value training and development offer, leading to improvement in retention rates.
- 50% of all staff undertake at least one training course outside of those required for compliance or mandatory training.



Next Steps

We will continue to have an open and transparent dialogue, together with close collaboration and consultation between HR, the Executive Team, Heads and our people, which will shape this strategy and implementation plans to achieve engagement and positive outcomes.

We will refine and improve communications between the Trust with staff and with our Schools.

Our HR Team will ensure that policies and practices are in line with this strategy, and provide clarity for staff who will be supported in understanding the processes around them.

We will review and develop the underpinning HR management information systems, to improve service delivery, efficiency of administrative processes and reporting capability. We aim to share accurate and timely management information with our Schools to inform their decision making.

There will be increased use of benchmarking within education and beyond to support decision making.

The Trust Development Plan will be integral to the delivery of the People Strategy, enabling our Schools to align this with their School Improvement Plan.

We will explore accreditations for people management and wellbeing, such as Investors in People.



Our Long-term Plan

2026 / 27	Launch the People Strategy, seek feedback from staff and managers, secure engagement and adjust the People Strategy as needed.	DEVELOP
2027 / 28	Develop strategies, data and policies to underpin the People Strategy. Set meaningful KPIs.	
2028 / 29	Create a sustainable culture and climate across our Trust enabling people to deliver their best for our students.	ENHANCE
2029 / 30	Our people recognise positive change and are engaged with the People Strategy. They have a sense of purpose and autonomy in their roles shaping their success.	
2030 / 31	BCAT is recognised as a great place to work, where staff feel they belong and are valued, both within and outside the organisation.	EMBED

Agreed Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

