



Academies Trust

# Chief People Officer

Co-op Academies Trust  
Candidate Pack

## Introduction

**An exciting opportunity has arisen for a proven and experienced Human Resources (HR) leader to join Co-op Academies Trust as Chief People Officer. This is a pivotal role within a large and dynamic Multi Academy Trust spanning the North of England and West Midlands.**

You will be the strategic leader for all HR matters across the Trust, line managing a large HR team within the central services team and academy-based staff. We are looking for someone with substantial and proven experience in HR leadership who leads by example and serves as a role model for their team. You will have a strong track record of driving strategic initiatives, fostering innovation and cultivating an inclusive culture that aligns with our “Ways of Being” who can bring our current People Strategy to life.

This role places you at the heart of our Central Senior Leadership Team, where you will help shape the future of our Trust. We encourage active participation in national networks, offering you the opportunity to grow as a system-wide leader within the education sector. As a HR leader we would want you to be at the forefront of national policy assisting the Trust to be an employer of choice within the communities we serve.

Co-op Academies Trust is a diverse and transformative organisation. Our schools range from small primaries to large secondaries, as well as special schools and a college. Many of our schools have achieved their first-ever ‘Good’ or better Ofsted ratings since joining our trust and we are proud of the progress we are making.

As Chief People Officer, you will represent the Co-op, building meaningful relationships that enhance the Trust and its mission. We want someone who will challenge others in the right way but will also bring new and innovative strategic thinking to the Trust within HR so we are the employer of choice within education.

Together, we will create a workplace culture where every staff member feels valued and empowered, ensuring that Co-op Academies Trust is truly a great place to work.

# Welcome

Dear Applicant,

## Thank you for showing an interest in our Trust.

We are a large Multi Academy Trust spanning the North of England and West Midlands. Our Trust includes a wide variety of schools, from small and large primary schools to secondary schools, a college, and special schools that offer all-through, primary, and secondary education.

We are currently based in Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Staffordshire, Stoke, Wirral, Manchester, Oldham, and Salford, structured into four regional hubs.

We are focused on growing the Trust to ensure that all our schools are strong, reliable and offer exceptional pupil experiences that positively impact our communities. It's the quality of our schools that matters, not the quantity.

We have the highest ambitions for the communities we serve. Our commitment to school-to-school collaboration drives continuous improvement across our schools. We are also dedicated to investing in our staff, with a strong CPD programme and succession planning that provides clear pathways for career progression.

We are looking for staff who are passionate about making a difference and transforming our communities through their daily work, embodying our "Ways of Being." These core values - Do What Matters Most, Succeed Together, Be Yourself Always, and Show You Care - are evident in everything we do.

What sets our Trust apart is our sponsorship by the Co-op Group. Co-op values are also embedded in how we work and our close relationship with the Co-op means we benefit from the expertise that has made it one of the most respected and ethically driven businesses in the country. We began in 2010 with just two academies and have since taken a pragmatic approach to growth, working collaboratively to improve every academy in our Trust which now contains 37 schools.

By providing a great education, we are changing the lives of young people. Grounded in cooperative principles, we empower both staff and students to work together for a better education and stronger communities.

We are proud of the rich diversity across our Trust, which strengthens our ability to make a real difference. We are committed to ensuring that each student receives an excellent, memorable school experience that prepares them for future success, while also instilling a strong sense of moral integrity and responsibility.

Thank you,

**Dr Chris Tomlinson, CEO**

# Our Values

## Co-op Academies Trust is committed to the values shared by co-operatives everywhere:

<b>Self-help</b>	we support learners, parents, carers and staff to help themselves
<b>Self-responsibility</b>	we encourage learners, parents, carers and staff to take responsibility for, and answer to their actions
<b>Democracy</b>	we give our learners, parents, carers and staff a say in the way we run our schools
<b>Equality</b>	we believe that the voice of each individual should be heard
<b>Equity</b>	we run our schools in a way that is fair and unbiased
<b>Solidarity</b>	we share interests and common purposes with our learners, parents, carers and staff, and with other schools in the communities we serve

## We strive to demonstrate the following ethical values in everything we do:

<b>Openness</b>	we believe in being open with colleagues in our schools and beyond, children and their families, sharing information and ideas to raise standards and life chances
<b>Honesty</b>	we act in a professional and respectful manner in our dealings with everyone
<b>Social responsibility</b>	we maximise our impact on the people in our communities while minimising our footprint on the world
<b>Caring for others</b>	we treat everyone as we wish to be treated ourselves, understanding that children only have one childhood

## We use our simple 'Ways of Being Co-op' to demonstrate our values:

- Do what matters most
- Be yourself, always
- Show you care
- Succeed together



# Job Description

## Chief People Officer

Co-op Academies Trust

**Salary:** £90,000 to £100,000  
(open to negotiation)

**Reports to:** CEO

**Contract:** Permanent

**Start date:** Summer term or  
September 2025

**Location:** Manchester or West Yorkshire

**Closing date for applications:** 1pm, Friday 31st January 2025

**Shortlisting week** beginning Monday 3rd February 2025

**Recruitment Days** Thursday 13th and Friday 14th February 2025

### How to apply

All applications must be made using the Trust's recruitment platform, which can be accessed via the Chief People Officer job listing at [coopacademies.co.uk/vacancies](https://coopacademies.co.uk/vacancies)

If you would like to have an informal discussion about this role, please contact Dr Chris Tomlinson, CEO: [chris.tomlinson@coopacademies.co.uk](mailto:chris.tomlinson@coopacademies.co.uk)



# Job Description

## Strategic Role

Be at the forefront for all issues involving the national framework for HR. Become a system leader within HR for the education sector.

Be innovative and creative in terms of ensuring our People Strategy comes to life in all our venues and school settings. Review, evaluate and improve our People Strategy to ensure all our schools are great places to work. Ensure throughout the whole organisation and workforce that our Co-op values are evident in all that we do and the direction we take within HR.

Review and evaluate the implementation of the People Strategy constantly looking for improvement and progress in every area. We want someone who will challenge others in the right way but will also bring innovative and strategic thinking to the Trust.

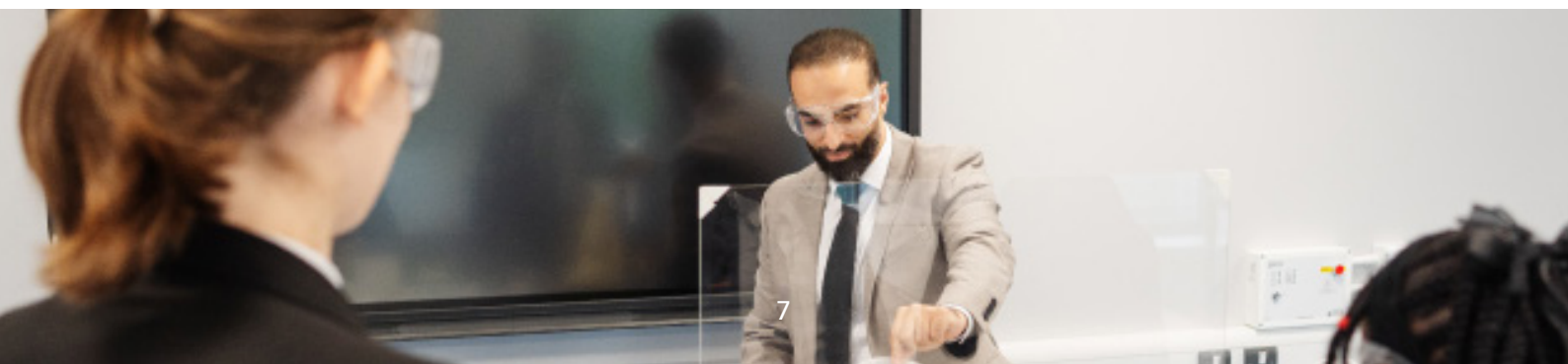
Ensure we become an employer of choice for all regions we serve. This includes being a Trust champion for all matters that involve equality, diversity and inclusion so our workforce truly represents the communities we serve.

Strategically work with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Deputy Chief Executive Officer and the Central Senior Leadership Team to produce schools that foster a positive and supportive work environment, enhancing staff satisfaction and improving recruitment and retention across all levels.

As part of the Senior Leadership Team, prioritise succession planning and staff development, embedding a culture where cultivating talent is an integral part of our daily practice. Develop and implement a successful Talent Management Plan and work with other relevant leaders to support and lead on areas of Career Professional Development for all our staff.

Ensure that reports and data analysis provided to Trustees are relevant, informative and actionable, enabling well-informed decisions and strategies for Trust-wide improvement. Take a leadership role in the People and Remuneration Committee, keeping Trustees informed about key strategic matters but also appreciating the challenge they provide to ensure a continuous improving HR ethos.

Work strategically with the Co-op to maximise HR opportunities for our staff, fostering a positive and mutually beneficial partnership.



# Job Description

## Strategic Leadership

Leading by example to ensure the HR team is working effectively and efficiently, delivering an exceptional service across all our schools and settings.

Driving the development of a unified culture across the Trust, ensuring alignment with the 'Ways of Being,' establishing our Trust as the employer of choice within the education sector.

Providing leadership within the Trust by collaborating across departments to deliver an HR service rooted in Co-op values, while maintaining the right balance of accountability for all staff.

To establish a practical accountability framework within HR, ensuring consistent implementation of our policies in every area.

To lead by example, offering appropriate challenge and support to drive improvement and progress on a daily basis within the HR service, reflecting our high challenge and high support culture.

Be an integral member of the Central Senior Leadership Team, collaborating with colleagues to establish ourselves as a leading Multi Academy Trust. In every area we develop, we aim to be an employer of choice, with a strong focus on progress and ensuring we fully reflect and represent the diverse communities we serve.

Be an active listener and embody all our Co-op values in your leadership and management of the HR team and staff, serving as a role model for leadership development.





# Job Description

## Strategic Operations

Prepare reports and data analysis using our HR platform for the Central Senior Leadership Team and the Trust Board e.g. Gender and Ethnicity Pay Report. You will be the lead for the People and Remuneration Committee.

Collaborate within the Central Senior Leadership Team to ensure the Trust operates effectively. Play a key leadership role in the operational model, ensuring systems such as Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning and the HR platform are valuable and supportive in decision-making for the Trust's direction.

You will take the lead in ensuring the Wellbeing Strategy is innovative, consistently implemented across the Trust, and contributes to making the Trust the employer of choice within the education sector.

Be a strong representative of the Trust at national network meetings, local JCNC meetings, and other key forums. Foster positive relationships with organisations such as unions, while ensuring the Trust successfully achieves its objectives.

Support the CEO and Deputy CEO in ensuring HR is appropriately represented and prioritised within key documents of the Strategic Plan, helping the Trust become an employer of choice. In terms of HR service risk, maintain a balanced approach - avoiding excessive caution or risk - to provide an effective and efficient service.

Ensure HR cases and issues within schools are well-led, organised and are resolved efficiently in the best possible way for everyone's best interest.

Act as an operational leader across all levels of HR, and when necessary, utilise the HR platform to enhance our data collection and analysis.

Line manage all central HR team members, fostering a strong sense of team spirit, belonging and collaboration. Inspire and support your team to stay motivated and positive, ensuring they feel engaged and empowered in their work.





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## Academies Trust

Co-op Academies Trust, as an aware employer, is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults as its number one priority. This commitment to robust recruitment, selection and induction procedures extends to organisations and services linked to the Trust on its behalf. Appointment to this post is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure and pre-employment checks.

We value variety and individual differences, and aim to create a culture, environment and practices at all levels which encompass acceptance, respect and inclusion. All our colleagues are expected to demonstrate a commitment to co-operative values and principles, and the Ways of Being Co-op.