



# SPT PEOPLE STRATEGY

Created/Approved: July 2023

Review Date: July 2025

The Special Partnership Trust was formed in 2016 as a partnership between 4 SEN schools and 2 ARBs within Cornwall. At that time, we employed less than 300 staff and provided a SEN curriculum offer for 400 learners. The Trust was founded on a belief that **partnership, collaboration and co-operation** is the best way to **improve, innovate and develop**. Supporting pupils, staff and the local community to reach personal goals and to flourish.

Over the last 6 years, the Trust has grown and by September 2023 will comprise of 6 schools and 4 ARB's, in Cornwall and Devon with a further 2 free schools opening in 2024/5. By 2026 we expect to have at least 915 pupils on roll and employ over 600 staff. Whilst our vision and values remain the same as in 2016, there is an increasing need to be agile and able to adapt to change.

The Special Partnership Trust growth strategy ensures that we are able to effectively play our role in the implementation of the SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan. The SPT provides quality education for pupils in Special schools and in addition, by working as a specialist Trust, focuses on the development of quality, trained staff and specialist resources to support mainstream schools and Alternative provisions. Thereby meeting the needs of pupils with SEN in the mainstream environment wherever possible and appropriate. The SPT works in partnership across the South West to develop and enhance the provision map for pupils with SEN.



The Special Partnership Trust recognises the importance of developing a properly implemented **'People Strategy'** to underpin the overall strategic aims of the Trust and enable successful delivery of high quality provision across the Trust. Our People Strategy reflects **our belief in putting people first**. This does not mean, putting our learners second. It is based on the philosophy that if we create a positive and rewarding work environment, if our staff feel motivated, well managed and well supported, they in turn, will **provide the best possible outcome for our learners**.

More specifically, the Trust's People Strategy has been created to ensure the right people are in the right place and that the right resources are available to them. In an environment of uncertainty and change, **we need people who are equipped and motivated to adapt and work to the best of their ability**.

The ambition for the Trust is to become the employer of choice for those seeking a career in SEND. We want to attract and retain the very best people and to do that, we need to be an attractive, competitive employer that fairly rewards staff and looks after their wellbeing. We have started this process and we know we have further work to do. Attitudes towards work have changed following the pandemic and there has been a major shift in employee expectations, which means **we need to consider different/innovative ways of doing things**.

We are committed to developing an approach that puts the Trust ahead of other career options, as we begin an exciting period of growth, and the building and opening of new schools across Cornwall and Devon.







**Within our People Strategy, we recognise the importance of including our pay and reward principles.**

In the same way that our values define our culture, our reward principles define our approach to pay and reward.

We want our staff to know they work in an environment where they are making a difference, where they will be encouraged and appreciated. The right reward strategies can help us achieve this, creating motivated staff who are willing to go the extra mile and contribute towards organisational success, resulting in a thriving environment that also helps us attract new talent.

Effective reward principles must consist of more than just pay and we continue to provide staff with a diverse range of benefits that support their day to day needs, both at work and outside of work. The Trust's Pay Proposal principles were introduced in 2018/19 and continue to be maintained along with performance management and health & wellbeing policies.

The principles:

- Ensure our Trust wide approach is fair and equitable
- Demonstrate fairness and employer responsibility
- Support the Trust's ability to attract, retain and motivate staff
- Commit to increasing the wages of the lowest paid
- Avoid redundancies wherever possible





Running alongside these principles, we also have to consider the outcomes of national pay negotiations, national and regional benchmarking information and affordability.

Our People Strategy is designed to help us attract prospective high calibre candidates, as well as drive engagement, productivity and retention of our high performing and high potential employees. Key actions will be outlined on a prioritised people plan, detailing how we will attract, develop, retain and generally inspire our most important asset; our people.

The Trust will deliver the people strategy through clear, outcome-focused projects and tasks, steered where necessary, by specific working groups.

The tasks align to key focus areas:

- **Recruitment**
- **Retention**
- **Reward**
- **Reputation & Culture**





# RECRUITMEN



**T**  
**Aim:** To attract talented people who are inspired by the Trust's vision and values and are seeking a collaborative, innovative and supportive environment to work.

**We will:**

- Develop positive commercial relationships with Agencies, who clearly understand our school profiles and staffing requirements.
- Develop (and promote) a strong employer brand so that it reflects our vision, core values and culture and helps us to attract the best talent to work with us (now and in the future). Ensuring that the Special Partnership is seen as the place to develop a career in Special Education in Cornwall.
- Constantly strive to develop flexible working options and career opportunities that attract talented and aspirational candidates and are beneficial to both employee and employer.
- Create an effective approach to safe recruitment and selection that removes process barriers and actively seeks out innovative and collaborative people by putting the candidate experience at the centre of our approach.
- Deliver an excellent candidate experience at all stages of the recruitment process.





# RETENTION



**Aim:** To provide effective leadership who are well equipped to manage/support their staff and help retain talented people who are inspired by the Trust's vision and values. To enable and encourage colleagues to take responsibility for their own careers by providing clear career pathways, opportunities and resources for progression and ongoing development.

## We will:

- Invest in our middle leaders to ensure they have the necessary 'people management' skills to support their staff.
- Help our staff to identify their own career progression pathways and enrichment opportunities to enable staff to achieve their goals and aspirations.
- Provide access to quality assured training and learning programmes to enable individuals to reach their full potential.
- Analyse why staff decide to leave the Trust and act on any trends/themes identified as appropriate.
- Provide a clear strategic Wellbeing Plan linking trust wide actions to the outcomes of staff surveys and the work of the Wellbeing focus group.
- Provide regular feedback and coaching to staff to help them identify areas for improvement and develop their skills.
- Ensure managers are able to support staff to maintain a manageable workload and healthy work-life balance.





# REWARD

**Aim:** To offer a competitive, flexible range of employment options that are beneficial for all parties and are fair and equitable and attract talented staff. To provide a supportive performance management process, where clear and regular feedback is given and excellent performance can be recognised and celebrated.

**We will:**

- Consider/develop flexible approaches to working, creating opportunities that benefit both employee and employer.
- Support opportunities for personal and career development.
- Foster a performance excellence culture, through clear goal-setting and ongoing feedback and performance management conversations between managers and their reports.
- Provide a competitive benefits programme (both financial and non-financial) that meets people's diverse needs.
- Consider recognition initiatives that acknowledge employees hard work and ensure they feel valued.





# REPUTATION & CULTURE



**Aim:** To deliver excellent SEN provision and become the SEN employer of choice for those seeking a career in SEND in the South West.

To strengthen our employer brand to further engage our employees and help us compete for the best talent in our sector.

To inspire our workforce to be collaborative 'doers' who share knowledge openly and strive for continuous improvement.

For people to be agile and creative in their work, supported by a culture of innovation that empowers everyone to contribute to the Trust's vision, values and ethos ensuring quality provision for all our learners.

## **We will:**

- Develop passionate leaders who believe in our vision and work to create a better way forward.
- Produce a clear succession planning framework to identify, nurture and prepare those people who will fill critical roles in the future.
- Develop and communicate a clear narrative about what it means to work for the Trust that helps all staff understand how their role contributes to the impact to our pupils.
- Seek to remove unnecessary process bureaucracy, so colleagues can make decisions efficiently and respond to needs as required.
- Provide a positive and inclusive workplace culture where staff feel their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential.
- Create physical and virtual spaces where colleagues can collaborate on projects/work streams.
- Listen and respond to feedback and use this insight to consider future changes/ improvements.
- Ensure clear systems of quality assurance are applied across the Trust provision – including the staff CPD and appraisal offer.







## Employees of the SPT can expect:

- To be part of a team who delivers quality provision to pupils with Special Educational Needs
- Visible, collaborative and innovative leadership
- An environment for collaborative working and the sharing of good practice
- To understand how your role contributes to the impact on our learners
- Open and honest communication across the Trust
- Opportunities for career development and ongoing learning
- A competitive and flexible benefits package
- To receive regular and ongoing feedback about your performance

## As an employer, we will:

- Provide effective leadership with a clear sense of direction
- Provide the support and resources to make our people strategy a reality
- Make decisions that are in the best interests of the Trust
- Communicate honestly and effectively so that you understand key messages and developments within the Trust
- Be supportive, approachable and demonstrate a “can do” attitude
- Ensure you have clarity on your role and the expectations of leaders
- Provide continuous feedback on your performance, helping you reach your full potential

All managers and leaders within the Trust, will play a part in delivering our People Strategy, not only through their own actions but also in helping to create a culture and environment that supports new ways of working.

