



Professional Growth Policy

Version 1

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Professional Growth Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust working within academies, UTCs and the Central Trust Team. It sets out the Trust's approach to professional growth and is intended to support all staff in developing their practice to become an expert in their role through coaching, professional dialogue and continuous improvement.

This policy does not apply to employees who are:

- employed on contracts of less than one term
- undertaking an apprenticeship
- within a probationary period
- undertaking statutory induction (including Early Career Teachers)
- subject to formal action under the Trust's Capability Policy

All employees will be introduced to this policy as part of their induction to ensure clarity of expectations and consistency of approach across the Trust.

Policy Statement

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to professional growth for all employees. In adopting this policy, the Trust aims to support excellent outcomes for all pupils by developing a highly skilled and motivated workforce. The Trust is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement through regular professional dialogue, coaching and feedback. The Trust's approach is based on the principle that high-quality performance is best achieved through ongoing development rather than periodic evaluation.

Professional growth is supported through regular coaching check-ins and feedback from a range of sources. These processes are developmental, forward-looking and focused on improving practice in teaching, operational responsibilities and leadership dependent on role. Leaders are responsible for ensuring that processes are implemented consistently and that all staff are supported to engage fully. The Trust recognises that effective professional growth is underpinned by a culture of trust, respect and high expectations, and employees are expected to engage actively, including participating in coaching and reflecting on feedback. This policy complements the Trust's wider framework for quality assurance, teaching and learning, line management and capability. Where serious concerns arise, these will be addressed in accordance with the Capability Policy. The Trust is committed to ensuring that all processes are fair, transparent and applied consistently, and will comply fully with equality legislation.

Through this approach, employees will:

- feel supported, valued and motivated through regular professional dialogue and coaching
- have opportunities to shape their own professional growth and career development

- engage in meaningful development aligned to both current role and future aspirations
- benefit from a collaborative and supportive professional culture
- experience improved confidence, wellbeing and job satisfaction

This approach supports staff retention and ensures that all employees are able to develop and succeed within the Trust.

All employees are expected to consistently meet the professional standards associated with their role, as defined by their job description and, where applicable, relevant professional standards. The professional growth process operates within this expectation, supporting employees to maintain and enhance effective practice. Where performance falls below expected standards, this will be addressed promptly through appropriate support and, where necessary, in line with the Trust's Capability Policy.

Where concerns about performance are identified, these will be addressed promptly through targeted support and coaching as part of the professional growth process. Where sufficient improvement is not secured within a reasonable timeframe, or where concerns are significant, this will lead to formal processes in line with the Trust's Capability Policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and delivers the Trust's aims for professional growth. The Trust Board will review the impact of the policy on a regular basis, ensuring that it supports high-quality professional development, improves outcomes for pupils and is applied consistently across the Trust.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring a consistent and strategic approach to professional growth across the Trust. This includes overseeing implementation, ensuring appropriate structures and resources are in place, and supporting the development of leaders to deliver high-quality coaching and professional development.

Executive Headteachers and Headteachers /Principals are responsible for the implementation of this policy within their academy or service. They will ensure that professional growth processes, including coaching and the use of Professional Growth Plans (PGPs), are embedded consistently, that appropriate training and support is provided, and that all staff are able to engage meaningfully in the process.

Line managers, or coaches appointed by the Headteacher/Principal or CEO, are responsible for facilitating developmental coaching conversations and reviewing Professional Growth Plans (PGPs). They will ensure that coaching and wider role development opportunities are purposeful, focused on improvement and responsive to the needs of the individual.

Where a specific development need is identified, it may be agreed that an employee will receive targeted coaching. In such cases, the appointed coach will have appropriate training and expertise, and a clear coaching arrangement will be agreed

with the employee. The coach may not necessarily be the individual's line manager but may be selected based on relevant expertise.

All employees are expected to engage fully with the professional growth process. This includes participating in coaching, identifying areas for development and contributing to the creation and ongoing review of their Professional Growth Plan (PGP).

Trust Expectations and Local Flexibility

The Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust is committed to ensuring a consistent and high-quality approach to professional growth across all academies, UTCs and central services, while recognising the importance of context and operational flexibility. This approach is underpinned by the principle of aligned autonomy, whereby core expectations are defined at Trust level and implemented with fidelity, while allowing flexibility in how these are enacted locally.

Trust Expectations (Non-Negotiables)

The following expectations apply to all settings and must be implemented consistently across the Trust:

- All employees will engage in the professional growth process and have an active Professional Growth Plan (PGP).
- Professional Growth Plans will be maintained as live documents and reviewed regularly through coaching and professional dialogue.
- All Professional Growth Plans must include:
 - clearly defined development priorities
 - agreed actions or next steps
 - an indication of how success will be evaluated
 - regular review notes capturing progress and impact
- Coaching check-ins will take place at the minimum frequency outlined in this policy and will be prioritised as a core component of professional practice.
- Coaching will be developmental, focused on improving practice, and aligned with the Trust's agreed approaches, including instructional coaching where appropriate.
- Outcomes from coaching check-ins will be recorded in a concise and purposeful manner within the Professional Growth Plan.
- Line managers and leaders will ensure that coaching leads to sustained improvement in practice and will address underperformance promptly where it arises.
- Leaders at all levels are responsible for ensuring that professional growth processes are implemented with fidelity to the Trust's model.

Local Flexibility

Within the framework of these expectations, academies, UTCs and central teams may determine the most appropriate methods for implementation in their context. This may include:

- the format and platform used to record Professional Growth Plans
- the scheduling and structure of coaching check-ins, beyond the minimum expectations

- the use of additional tools, systems or approaches to support professional development
- the integration of professional growth processes within existing leadership and organisational structures

Any local adaptations must remain aligned with the principles and expectations set out in this policy and must not dilute the quality, frequency or intent of professional growth processes.

Quality Assurance and Consistency

The Trust will undertake regular quality assurance to ensure that professional growth processes are implemented consistently and effectively across all settings. This will include:

- sampling of Professional Growth Plans
- review of coaching practices and their impact
- engagement with staff voice to evaluate experience and effectiveness
- oversight by Executive Leaders to support consistency and identify areas for development

Where variation in implementation is identified, appropriate support, guidance or intervention will be provided to ensure alignment with Trust expectations.

Improvement will be evidenced through professional dialogue, observation, review of practice and, where appropriate, outcomes relevant to the role.

Principles of Professional Growth

At the Brighter Futures Learning Partnership Trust, aligned autonomy underpins our approach to professional growth. We are united by our mission and values, which are non-negotiable, while ensuring that all employees are empowered with the agency and self-determination required to perform at their best. This balance enables the Trust to create a healthy, high-performing organisation in which individuals are both supported and accountable for their own development.

A key principle arising from this approach is organisational agility. By prioritising responsiveness and removing unnecessary barriers, the Trust enables talent to flourish and ensures that improvement is continuous and adaptive. Traditional performance management approaches are not aligned with this model, as they are often overly bureaucratic, infrequent and focused on retrospective evaluation rather than future improvement. A range of national and international evidence indicates that performance-related pay has limited impact on improving teacher performance. Analysis, including that undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, suggests that where base pay levels are sufficient, the use of performance-related pay has little or no positive effect on outcomes and, in some cases, may have a negative impact. Further research highlights that an over-reliance on extrinsic financial incentives can undermine intrinsic motivation and reduce collaboration between colleagues. This evidence reinforces the Trust's decision to prioritise high-quality professional development, collaboration and continuous improvement over traditional performance management approaches. Teacher Development Trust (2021) *The dangers of performance-related pay*.

Progression through pay ranges will be automatic, subject to employees meeting the expectations of their role and not being subject to formal action under the Trust's Capability Policy.

Within this model, conversations about performance are regular, purposeful and focused on improvement. The emphasis is on problem solving, goal setting and continuous development rather than written evaluations of past performance or burdensome administrative processes. The Trust recognises that honest, straightforward and frequent discussions about practice lead to better outcomes, and over time, all employees are expected to both give and receive constructive feedback as part of a mature professional culture.

The Trust's approach to professional growth is underpinned by four key elements: continuous learning, regular professional dialogue, the development of trust, and a strong sense of belonging within the Trust community. Staff are supported through a continuous cycle of positive and purposeful interactions, including collaboration between colleagues and line managers, peer-to-peer engagement, the identification and reinforcement of effective practice, and the timely recognition of contributions. These interactions are characterised by professionalism, mutual respect and a commitment to improvement, while maintaining appropriate levels of challenge.

All professional interactions are founded on strong, trust-based relationships, moving away from traditional hierarchical models towards a more collaborative and developmental culture. Academy and functional leaders are responsible for ensuring that these processes are implemented consistently and effectively. This includes providing appropriate structures, training and support to enable high-quality professional dialogue, as well as using feedback from staff to quality assure and continuously refine the Trust's approach to professional growth.

Coaching Check- Ins to Support Professional Growth

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all employees are supported through regular and purposeful coaching check-ins as part of the professional growth process within roles, to improve outcomes for pupils and improve Central Trust functions and efficiency. Evidence from research, including Harvard Business Review, demonstrates that frequent and consistent check-ins between employees and line managers are a key component of effective performance management, strengthening clarity, trust and overall performance. Coaching check-ins within the Trust are therefore structured to ensure consistency and impact. Coaching is a regular, structured and developmental process through which employees are supported to refine their practice, address areas for development and build on existing strengths. Coaching will take place through regular and planned check-ins between colleagues and their line managers, for associate staff, coaching check-ins will take place at least once every half term. For teachers, there will be a minimum of two coaching check-ins per half term. The frequency of coaching for middle and senior leaders will reflect the expectations of their role and may occur more regularly where appropriate. **Cappelli, P. and Tavis, A. (2016) *The Performance Management Revolution*. Harvard Business Review.**

The Trust recognises that effective coaching must be responsive to individual need and level of expertise. For colleagues at an earlier stage of development, a more directive and mechanism-rich coaching approach will be adopted, characterised by

clear guidance, modelling, rehearsal and specific feedback to secure rapid improvement in practice. For more experienced colleagues, coaching will be increasingly problem-based and facilitative, drawing on professional dialogue, reflection and questioning to support self-directed improvement and refinement of practice. In practice, coaches will move flexibly between these approaches, often within the same interaction, to ensure maximum impact, drawing on established models such as Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's framework where appropriate.

In addition to structured coaching conversations, the Trust will utilise live coaching approaches, including in-class modelling, in meeting discussion and real-time feedback. Senior leaders and trained coaches may work alongside teachers within the classroom to model effective practice, co-teach or provide immediate feedback to support rapid improvement. For non-teaching roles the coach may model or shadow meetings and role functions to support development within a specific role. Evidence from instructional coaching and teacher development research (including Paul Bambrick-Santoyo and Education Endowment Foundation) highlights that feedback is most effective when it is timely, specific and directly linked to practice. Live coaching enables immediate application of feedback, supports deliberate practice and strengthens the transfer of new learning into classroom practice, leading to more sustained improvements in teaching and learning. For non-teaching roles coaching will be facilitated by leaders and colleagues within the trust or external partnerships who possess the relevant knowledge and skills to support improvement. Feedback used to inform coaching check-ins will be drawn from a range of sources, including formative observations, line management meetings, professional interactions and peer feedback. The Trust recognises that no single individual can observe all aspects of practice; therefore, a collaborative approach will be adopted, enabling feedback to be gathered from across the professional community. This ensures that development is informed by broad evidence base and remains closely aligned to day-to-day practice. Coaching conversations will focus on identifying clear, actionable next steps, supporting problem solving and enabling staff to refine and improve their practice.

Leaders are responsible for ensuring that coaching is implemented consistently and with fidelity across the Trust. This includes providing appropriate structures, training and time to enable high-quality coaching to take place. Leaders will quality assure coaching processes and use feedback from staff to continuously refine and strengthen the approach. Coaching is integral to improving teaching and learning and expert performance in all roles, as it supports staff to continuously develop their knowledge, skills and professional judgement, ensuring high-quality provision and improved outcomes for all pupils, supported by a high performing trust infrastructure and wider workforce.

Outcomes from coaching check-ins will be recorded within an individual's Professional Growth Plan (PGP). This will capture agreed successes, next steps and areas for development. The Professional Growth Plan will also include a longer-term goal which provides a clear direction for development, typically looking across multiple cycles. This plan will be reviewed regularly and may be adapted as practice develops, recognising that professional growth is a continuous and responsive process rather than a fixed event.

The Trust's approach to professional growth is informed by principles of self-determination, recognising that individuals are most effective when they experience a sense of competence, belonging and autonomy. Coaching and growth planning will therefore be designed to support staff to develop mastery through appropriately challenging goals, align their work with the Trust's mission and values, and maintain ownership of their professional development with appropriate support and guidance. Positive recognition and timely feedback will be used to reinforce effective practice and support motivation, contributing to a culture in which all staff are supported to improve continuously and deliver high-quality outcomes for pupils.

Line Management and Coaching Check-Ins

The Trust recognises the importance of both line management meetings and coaching check-ins as complementary processes that support effective performance, professional growth and organisational alignment. Together, these approaches ensure that employees have clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities, while also fostering a strong sense of connection and shared purpose. Both processes contribute to enabling all staff to make a meaningful contribution to the Trust's mission and strategic priorities.

Coaching check-ins are developmental in nature and are designed to support continuous improvement through regular, focused professional dialogue. These interactions provide an opportunity to identify specific areas for development, set clear goals and receive timely, constructive feedback to improve practice. Coaching may take a range of forms depending on the needs of the individual; however, for teaching staff, the Trust's instructional coaching model will normally be used as the default approach. Coaching priorities may be informed by observations and discussions arising from line management meetings or may be identified by the individual as part of their professional growth. Where appropriate, coaches may draw on wider knowledge of performance to ensure that feedback is relevant, precise and impactful.

Line management meetings provide a structured opportunity to discuss current and future priorities, ensuring that employees have clarity regarding expectations, responsibilities and key tasks. These meetings are more operational in focus and will typically involve reviewing progress, setting priorities and sharing information. Line management meetings will normally take place on a fortnightly basis and, as a minimum, at least once every four weeks.

While there may be natural overlap between line management and coaching discussions, it is essential that coaching check-ins remain clearly distinct. Coaching time will be protected and will not be subsumed within operational line management discussions. Clear expectations and boundaries will be established to ensure that coaching remains focused on professional development, enabling staff to engage fully in reflective practice and continuous improvement.

For more experienced colleagues, including senior leaders, coaching may be increasingly integrated within line management interactions, where professional dialogue, reflection and problem-solving form part of routine leadership practice. This reflects evidence that coaching behaviours are most effective when embedded within day-to-day leadership, rather than operating as a separate process. Grant, A.M.

(2014) *The efficacy of executive coaching in times of organisational change*. Journal of Change Management, 14(2), pp. 258–280.

Professional Growth Plans (PGPs)

The Trust requires that outcomes from coaching check-ins are captured within an individual's Professional Growth Plan (PGP). The PGP will record agreed successes, next steps and areas for development, providing a clear reference for ongoing professional dialogue. Academies/UTCs may use existing systems or agreed approaches, as determined by the Headteacher/Principal. Any example formats provided within this policy are illustrative and are not intended to prescribe a single method.

The PGP is designed to support professional growth and will remain simple, focused and easy to maintain. Recording will be concise and purposeful, capturing key actions and the direction of development without unnecessary detail. Professional Growth Plans will typically include a small number of focused development priorities to ensure clarity and impact, with goals proportionate to the role and context.

Each PGP will identify clear areas for development, including what the employee intends to improve or do differently and the approaches that will support this. Employees will also consider how success will be evaluated to ensure that development is focused and impactful. In addition, each PGP will include a longer-term development goal to provide a clear and sustained focus over time.

Employees are responsible for engaging fully in the development and ongoing review of their PGP, supported by reflection and professional dialogue with their line manager or coach. The 'BFLPT Professional Growth Plan' is a live document and will be reviewed and adapted regularly to reflect ongoing learning and development. It will form the basis of continuous professional growth throughout the year, with appropriate time provided to support meaningful engagement with the process.

Professional Growth Process

The Trust's approach to professional growth is continuous and cyclical, underpinned by regular professional dialogue, coaching and reflection. While the process is flexible and responsive to individual need, it is supported by a clear framework to ensure consistency and impact across the Trust.

Professional growth will typically begin with the identification of development priorities in the autumn term. This will be informed by self-reflection, professional dialogue and relevant feedback, including reference to job descriptions, professional standards and organisational priorities. Employees will be supported to identify areas for development that are purposeful, achievable and aligned to both individual and Trust priorities. Development goals will be proportionate in number to ensure focus and impact and may evolve over time as practice develops.

Professional growth priorities may be linked to a range of factors, including teaching and learning, leadership, operational practice, statutory requirements and longer-term career aspirations. Professional Growth Plans (PGPs) will be reviewed by the line manager, senior leader or coach to ensure clarity and appropriate support. Where

required, additional guidance and support will be provided to ensure that development has sustained impact.

Professional growth activity will be undertaken through a range of approaches, including coaching, mentoring, collaboration, Trust networks and professional development programmes. Learning will be embedded through regular practice, reflection and feedback. The Trust places particular emphasis on the role of coaching and ongoing feedback in supporting continuous improvement. Feedback may be provided by a range of colleagues and professionals, ensuring that development is informed by relevant expertise and aligned to day-to-day practice.

Professional Growth Policy Version 1 agreed at Trust Board July 2026

Appendix 1

Instructional Coaching Model

The Trust recognises that coaching check-ins may take a range of forms depending on the needs, experience and context of the individual. Coaches will apply professional judgement in selecting the most appropriate approach to ensure that coaching is targeted, effective and responsive. For teaching staff, the Trust's instructional coaching model will normally be used as the default approach.

Where a clear next step for development has been identified, coaching will typically adopt a more directive and instructional approach. In such cases, the coach will act as the expert, providing clear guidance, modelling and demonstration to support improvement. This approach may also be used where the coachee has identified a specific area for support or where coaching forms part of a planned sequence of development.

Appendix 1: Instructional Coaching Model (Indicative Structure)

Stage	Focus of Interaction	Indicative Duration
Praise	Recognise effective practice through precise and specific feedback	1 minute
Probe	Use targeted questioning to identify the key area for development	4 minutes
Next Step	Agree one clear, incremental next step with the greatest potential impact	2 minutes
Practice	Rehearse or model the improvement to support implementation	8 minutes
Plan ahead	Plan or adapt upcoming teaching or activity to embed the agreed next step	4 minutes
Follow-Up	Agree a clear timeline for implementation and review	1 minute

Facilitative Coaching Approach

The Trust recognises that, in some contexts, a more facilitative approach to coaching will be appropriate, particularly for colleagues with greater experience or where the focus is on reflection, problem solving and professional judgement. In these instances, coaches will adopt a structured, discussion-based approach, enabling the coachee to take greater ownership of identifying priorities, exploring solutions and determining next steps.

Facilitative coaching will typically draw on established coaching techniques, including active listening, effective questioning, summarising and appropriate challenge, to support the coachee in developing clarity and direction. The purpose of this approach is to build forward momentum, ensuring that coaching conversations lead to clear actions and sustained improvement in practice.

Coaching interactions using a facilitative approach will normally follow a structured process. This will include establishing the focus of the session, exploring the current context, considering potential options and agreeing clear next steps. Coaching may also begin with a brief check-in to support professional relationships and wellbeing. Throughout the process, the coach will support the coachee to reflect on their practice, identify solutions and commit to specific, achievable actions, with appropriate support and follow-up agreed.

Live Coaching Approach

The Trust recognises that, in some contexts, coaching may be most effective when delivered through live practice within the working environment. Live coaching involves senior leaders or trained coaches working alongside colleagues in real time to model, demonstrate and support improvements in practice. This approach enables immediate feedback and application, reducing the need for separate coaching sessions while maintaining a strong focus on professional development.

Research in instructional coaching and teacher development, including work by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo and the Education Endowment Foundation, highlights that feedback is most effective when it is timely, specific and directly linked to practice. Live coaching supports this by allowing colleagues to see effective practice modelled, rehearse approaches in context and receive immediate, actionable feedback, leading to more rapid and sustained improvements.

Live coaching will be planned in advance between the colleague and the coach, who will typically be a senior leader or trained practitioner. A clear and agreed focus will be established prior to the session to ensure that the coaching remains purposeful and aligned to identified development priorities. While this approach may reduce the need for separate coaching check-ins, it does not diminish the importance of professional dialogue; rather, it integrates development directly into practice in a way that is efficient and impactful.

Leaders are responsible for ensuring that live coaching is implemented appropriately and consistently, and that it supports both individual development and wider improvements in teaching and learning. This approach contributes to reducing workload by embedding coaching within existing practice, while maintaining a high level of support, clarity and professional growth for all staff.

Appendix 2a

Professional Growth Plan (PGP) – possible template

Name:	Position: Assistant Campus Manager	Coach:
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Longer-term goal: Establish myself as a credible leader through developing positive relationships and improving my communication skills to give honest and timely face-to-face feedback which supports the development of the team.

Date	Check-in goal	Review notes	Agreed follow-up
13.09.22	Agree contracting of coaching conversations and boundary setting.	Agreed to meet every 4 weeks and wider agreements noted down	Briefly re-visit agreement each session.
22.09.22	Review longer-term goal linked to being new to post consider communication skills in particular.	Coaching around communication with different stakeholders and how to overcome conflicts between different areas.	Future check-in to focus on communication with different audiences.
12.10.22	Coaching on Estates regular cycle actions as new to post to improve clarity of understanding of the role and responsibilities.	RAG demonstrated an area of focus knowledge about building relationships with OBM and Principal	Complete the Cycle 1 default actions RAG to help inform coaching throughout Cycle 1.
02.11.22	Consider how to build relationships with different audiences	Mapped out what each person needs to know, and communication needed for each person.	Book in meetings with OBM and Principal to review progress this Cycle and improve communication of work to be done on each site over half term.
21.11.22	Explore how to improve clarity of written communication of who must do what and by when to ensure collective deadlines are met.		Minutes template to include action, deadline and lead for each action to improve clarity and accountability.
22.12.22	Longer term goal check-in. Discuss providing honest and kind feedback to team when the conversations might be challenging.	Coaching in relation to 1 team member who had not responded well to feedback. Discussed approach. Laura has settled into role really well – celebrated successes with team and positive feedback from academy.	Read the 'Challenging Conversations WTD' in preparation for future coaching check-in. Come with a challenging piece of feedback ready for next time.

Appendix 2b

Professional Growth Plan (PGP) – possible template

	Name:	Position: MFL teacher	Coach:
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Longer-term Goal: Improve my behaviour management strategies, particularly to support lower ability boys, to help address gains in attainment.

	Date/Time	Activity / Observer	Successes (including improvements)	Next Steps
Week 1	Wed 29 Aug p5	Person A	Clear evidence of effective organisation including Family Dining and Appreciation rotas.	Frontload instructions so that students do not have the opportunity or feel the need to shout out to clarify what to do.
	Coaching Focus	Person A	Successful microscripting and practice of frontloading instructions for your 9e1 class which will maximise student engagement.	Implement frontloading practice into your lessons – you could use visual prompts to help you and your students.
Week 2	Mon 3 Sep p1	Person A	Excellent frontloading of instructions which ensured students remained on task. Positive reinforcement with off task student identified.	Find the spot in your room where you have no blind spot and can monitor all students so that you identify any off-task behaviours.
	Coaching Focus	Person A	Successful identification of a central position to be seen looking and successful practice of this technique.	Identify the spot in the other rooms you teach in so that you can replicate the practice in other learning environments.
Week 3	Tue 11 Sep p2	Person A	Good lightning-quick corrective instruction to maintain the flow of the lesson.	Avoid talking when your hand is up (the students were eventually silent, though you needed to talk because of organisational issues of Group 4 students, so consider giving prior warning of when hands go up and narrate what you expect to happen).
	Coaching Focus	Person A	Successful micro scripting of narrating what you expect to see when you use hands up for silence so that you do not have to talk when you raise your hand.	As discussed, arrange a time to watch XXx (or agreed alternative) teach Group 4 in next week to look at clarity of instructions but economy of language