

## Trust in Learning Academies supports growth and transformation with **centralised HR and payroll**



With centralised HR and payroll systems, a multi-academy trust optimises its people strategy and gives time and money back to its schools

### Aiming for 'outstanding'

Bristol-based Trust in Learning Academies (TILA), formed in 2012, is a multi-academy trust (MAT). Some 3,500 pupils attend its five schools, and it employs a total of around 450 staff. Among the trust's priorities are continued growth in the Bristol area, and transformation of as many schools as possible to 'outstanding'.

"Developing the right people strategy is critical to achieving our growth and transformation goals," says Sue Elliott, TILA's Director of HR. "To help us do that, we needed data and metrics that only a schools-specific people management solution could provide."

Following extensive research, the trust chose Civica HR & Payroll for Schools to manage its people and its payroll processing. Among the deciding factors were the Civica solution's unique ability to integrate with Capita's School Information Management

System (SIMS), which all the schools use to manage daily life. "This integration is critical, as it gives us the real-time information about staff absences we need to bring in the right supply teachers to cover lessons," says Sue.

### Outcomes

- ▶ **Centralised delivery of HR and payroll services releases £145,000 in additional funding for teaching and learning in the first year**
- ▶ **Consolidation and ownership of both HR and payroll data enables increased staffing insight for individual schools and the trust as a whole**
- ▶ **A data-driven people strategy supports the trust's vision for growth and transformation**
- ▶ **Real-time information about staff absences enhances supply teacher provision**
- ▶ **HR self-service increases transparency and helps employees feel like part of the trust**

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Sue Elliott, Director of HR, Trust in Learning Academies



**£145,000** cost savings for schools



A better informed **people strategy**



Increased **organisational transparency**

Centralisation and ownership of payroll and HR data provides the trust with comprehensive workforce information to inform its people strategy; while control over solution reconfiguration allows the trust to keep pace with legislative changes.



### A data-driven people strategy

Each of the trust's schools used to outsource payroll processing to a different provider, which meant payroll data was both fragmented and outside the trust's control. Now, the trust uses the Civica payroll bureau to handle processing for all its staff. Because the bureau works directly in the trust's own payroll system, the trust has regained ownership of its payroll data, and can integrate it with its finance and budgeting systems to compare actual time and expenditure against forecasts.

With both payroll and HR data centralised in the Civica solution, Sue has the information she needs to inform the trust's people

strategy. "The Civica solution gives us a clear line of sight into the metrics of our workforce — something we've never had before," she says. "We have transparency about what our workforce looks like, how it moves around, and where the pinch points are. The ability to shape our people strategy with live data in this way has been transformational."

Additionally, reports from the Civica solution provide the trust with other information that wasn't available before. One example is the cost and impact of staff absence: previously, the trust only knew what it was spending on supply teachers. "With the Civica solution, I can report on the actual hourly cost of staff absence to the trust," says Sue. "That gives me and our schools absolute clarity about the impact of absence on the trust's bottom line."

### Staff get on board with self-service capabilities

As well as standard reports, the solution provides an ad-hoc reporting tool the schools' business managers love. Instead of requesting reports from the HR team, they can interrogate HR data themselves. "It's quick and easy for the business managers to get the information they need — whether for a governing body report, or to answer a query such as: how many staff fall within a certain age bracket," says Sue. "This is yet another benefit of having all our data centralised in the Civica solution."

All TILA staff are also benefiting from the Civica solution's HR self-service, which lets them retrieve their payslips and see their personal files. "As well as increasing trust and transparency across the organisation, this helps everyone to feel like part of TILA, no matter which school they work at," says Sue.

### Autonomy delivers results and cost savings

As well as control over its data, the Civica solution gives the trust control over reconfigurations to reflect changes to legislation. The solution design, combined with Civica-provided training and efficient service desk support, mean the trust can do the work without relying on consultants.

When, for example, a government overhaul of terms and conditions meant staff pay bandings had to be restructured, Sue and her colleagues handled the task from start to finish. "The transition went without a hitch, we had no consultancy costs, and everyone's pay was correct from day one," says Sue. "That's more than I can say for other MATs I know that had to rely on third-party providers to update their systems."

### More funding for teaching and learning

With centralised HR and payroll functions supported by the Civica solution, the trust enabled its schools to make significant cost savings. Money previously spent by the schools on delivering HR and payroll services now goes directly into the classrooms.

"Total savings in the first year were £145,000 across our schools. That, combined with a reduced workload and improved service, has had a very beneficial impact," says Sue. "In addition, the schools' business managers have more time to focus on the strategic improvements to teaching and learning, which are vital to our transformation agenda."

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