

EXECUTIVE PAY POLICY

Learning Academies Trust
Effective from 1st September 2025

Version: 2.0

Approved by: People Committee

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CHANGES

Policy date	Effective date	Summary of change	Author	Version	Review date
25/09/2024	01/09/2024	Implementation of senior executive pay policy.	Kay Mabin, CFO Amy Bosworth, HR Lead	1.0	31/08/2024
17/11/2025	01/09/2025	Review of policy to include reference to STPCD 2025 and SORP 2019 (previously 2015) and Kreston Reeves 2025 benchmark report.	Kay Mabin, CFO Amy Bosworth, HR Lead	2.0	30/11/2026

1. INTRODUCTION

1. AIMS

This policy aims to ensure that:

- the **Learning Academies Trusts'** funds are used only in accordance with the law, its articles of association, its funding agreement and the latest Academy Trust Handbook.
- The Trust and those associated with it operate in a way that commands broad public support, has due regard to propriety and regularity and ensures value for money in the use of public funds.
- Trustees fulfil their fiduciary duties and wider responsibilities as charitable trustees and company directors.

The **Learning Academies Trust** is committed to taking decisions in accordance with the 'key principles of public life':

- objectivity
- openness
- accountability.

and it recognises the requirement for a fair and transparent policy to determine the pay and grading for senior executive staff.

The Trust Board acknowledges that all Trust and school leaders are public servants in how they serve their pupils and surrounding communities. They are not only expected to lead the **Learning Academies Trust** and its schools but also to model best behaviours including adhering to the Nolan Principles:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

As such, appropriate expenditure of public money and transparent reporting and accounting procedures, including around the setting of senior executive pay, are essential elements in maintaining public trust and confidence.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

As a Multi Academy Trust, we are free to determine our own approach in deciding senior executive pay, however the Trust Board must operate within the provisions set out in the Academy Trust Handbook when setting or agreeing increases to senior executive pay.

This policy is based on the Academy Trust Handbook 2025 which states:

SETTING SENIOR EXECUTIVE PAY

*2.27. The board of trustees **must** ensure its decisions about levels of executive pay (including salary and any other benefits) follow a robust evidence-based process and are a reasonable and defensible reflection of the individual's role and responsibilities. No individual can be involved in deciding their remuneration. Decisions about executive pay may be challenged by DfE.*

*2.28. The board **must** discharge its responsibilities effectively, ensuring its approach to, and levels of, pay and benefits is transparent, proportionate and defensible. This **must** be documented in an agreed pay policy, which sets out the process for determining executive pay and includes:*

- *independent scrutiny by the board*
- *robust decision-making that demonstrates justifiable pay*
- *proportionality – that pay and benefits represent good value for money and are defensible relative to the public sector market*
- *documented decision-making with rationale and approval by the board*
- *a basic presumption that executive pay and benefits should not increase at a faster rate than that of teachers, in individual years and over the longer term*

The Trust is also legally required under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 to publish information on its website about the gender pay gap within the organisation.

This senior executive pay policy also confirms the **Learning Academies Trust's** compliance with the following legislation:

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Employment Act 2002
- Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
- Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
- Agency Workers Regulations 2011
- Employment Act 2008.

The Trust recognises the competitive nature of the labour market within the education sector when considering executive pay, and as such, this will have an impact on the reward package made available. In recognising this and having the ability to attract the right candidates, this document sets out arrangements that are designed to:

- recruit, retain and motivate high calibre individuals
- provide a framework that allows flexibility but that is fair and equitable
- works within the parameters of the Academy Trust Handbook
- can be justified and are in the best interests of the charity and taxpayer
- reflect the individual's responsibilities

- demonstrate value for money

The Learning Academies Trust Board has adopted the policy set out in this document to provide a clear framework for the management of pay and grading issues for executive staff employed by the Trust.

The Learning Academies Trust Board is committed to taking decisions in accordance with the 'key principles of public life': objectivity, openness and accountability. It recognises the requirement for a fair and transparent policy to determine the pay and grading for CEO/Executive staff employed by the Trust, which takes account of the conditions of service under which staff are employed and relevant statutory requirements.

The Learning Academies Trust Board recognises the requirement that all pay progression decisions for all executive staff must be linked to annual appraisal of performance. The process set out in this document seek to ensure that this is achieved in a fair, equitable and transparent way. The Board also recognises any contractual uplifts to pay i.e. cost of living increase.

As a multi academy trust we recognise we are free to determine our own pay policy, but we also fully recognise that any policy must be within the requirements of The Academy Trust Handbook, which states:

'The Board of Trustees must ensure its decisions about levels of executive pay (including salary and any other benefits) follow a robust evidence-based process and are a reasonable and defensible reflection of the individual's role and responsibilities'.

3. DEFINITIONS

The Trust has defined the following roles as 'Senior Executive Officer' roles for the purposes of setting and reporting pay:

1. Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
2. Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees ('Trustees') must discharge its responsibilities effectively, ensuring its approach to pay is transparent, proportionate and justifiable. This includes:

- **Process** - that the procedure for determining senior executive pay is agreed by Trustees in advance and documented. See section 5 below.
- **Independence** - decisions about senior executive pay reflect independent and objective scrutiny by Trustees and that conflicts of interest are avoided.
- **Decision-making** - factors in determining pay are transparent and evidence-based, including whether performance considerations, and the degree of challenge in the role, have been considered.
- **Documentation** - the rationale behind the decision-making process, including whether the level of pay reflects value for money, is recorded and retained.
- **Increases** - will be in line with and/or mirror national pay awards.

- Understanding that inappropriate pay can be challenged by ESFA, particularly in any instance of poor financial management of the Trust.

Trustees will ensure that funds are used in a way that commands broad public support, pays due regard to propriety and regularity, and provides value for money.

The Trust accepts that absolute independence in any review process may not always be possible. In circumstances where this may be the case, reasonable steps should be taken to protect the integrity of the process and ensure any challenges to its independence are limited and justifiable.

4.2 JOB ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Executive staff will be provided with a job description outlining the roles and responsibilities of the post. This will also include the pay range and any additional payments or allowances covered by this policy. The job description will state the reason for any additional allowances or payments and whether this is a permanent or temporary payment.

Any significant changes to duties and responsibilities of a post will be subject to consultation with the member of staff with a view to reaching agreement. Where there is a significant change in duties and responsibilities of a post a new job description will be issued.

Where the staffing structure of the Trust needs to be changed, resulting in broader changes to roles and responsibilities, this will be the subject of consultation with staff and the recognised trade unions before any changes are made and with a view to seeking to agree the changes before new job descriptions are issued.

4.3 PAY ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW

1. The Learning Academies Trust Board will ensure that the CEO and CFO salaries are reviewed on an annual basis with effect from 1st September, no later than 31st October for Senior Executives and 31st December for the CEO. Any pay changes will be implemented in line with terms and conditions relevant to the post (1st September STPCD & 1st October NJC/Support staff).

The Executive's PMR will contain a recommendation on pay. The CEO will be responsible for submitting any recommendations for pay progression for the CFO. A member of the Trust Board involved with the PMR for the CEO will submit any recommendations for the CEO. In accordance with the relevant sections of this process, these recommendations will go to the People, Wellbeing and Remuneration Committee for consideration.

It must be noted that either support staff or teaching terms and conditions will be applicable. The People/Remuneration Committee will be responsible for submitting any recommendations for pay progression after considering all the evidence presented and in accordance with the relevant sections of this process. To aid the process, HR and a Trustee with an education specialism will be available to the People committee to resolve any points of concern or advise on the relevant terms and conditions.

The CEO/Executives will receive an annual salary statement including details of any salary and financial benefits to which they are entitled, including any salary safeguarding arrangements that may apply. In addition, they will receive a copy of their job description. Any significant changes to job descriptions may require a re-evaluation of the post.

A review may occur at other times where there has been a significant change affecting the CEO/Executive's pay or on reasonable request for a full review. A revised written statement will be issued in such circumstances, including any salary safeguarding arrangements that may apply.

The People/Remuneration Committee will award pay in line with the agreed salary scale and range attached to the role under consideration.

Where the individual is at the top of the pay range their post has been appointed, a discretionary payment **of no more than** 25% may be awarded. This 25% uplift mirrors the % referenced in the STPCD for exceptional circumstances.

[School teachers' pay and conditions document 2025](#)

Senior Executive Officers must:

- Ensure appropriate safeguards are observed such that no individual can be involved in deciding their own remuneration.
- Provide appropriate pay and benefit disclosure in the Trust Annual Report regarding senior executive pay.

Within this, the following should be included:

Details of the arrangements for setting the pay and remuneration of the Trust's key management personnel and any benchmarks, parameters or criteria used in setting their pay. 'Key management personnel' is a term used by FRS 102 for those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of a reporting entity, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise). This definition includes Trustees and those staff who are the senior management personnel to whom the Trustees have delegated significant authority or responsibility in the day-to-day running of the Trust.

Remuneration and benefits received by key management personnel

SORP 2019 [sections 9.31 and 9.32] state:

9.31. Although the trustees control and manage the administration of a charity, the day-to-day management of its activities may be delegated to senior management personnel who report to the trustees. FRS 102 uses the term 'key management personnel' to describe the trustees and senior management of the charity.

9.32. All charities must disclose the total amount of any employee benefits received by trustees and its key management personnel for their services to the charity. The trustees of charities, particularly larger charities, should give consideration to the information needs of their funders and other stakeholders in making their accounting disclosures. For example, it may be helpful to provide details of the employee benefits received by the charity's Chief Executive Officer or highest paid staff member, or alternatively a charity may choose to disclose the amount of employee benefits paid to its key management personnel on an individual basis.

Publication of Pay

The Academy Trust Handbook 2025 states:

2.29. The trust **must** publish on its website in a separate readily accessible form the number of employees whose benefits exceeded £100,000, in £10,000 bandings, for the previous year ended 31 August. Benefits for this purpose include salary, employers' pension contributions, other taxable benefits and termination payments. Where the academy trust has entered into an off-payroll arrangement with someone who is not an employee, the amount paid by the trust for that person's work for the trust **must** also be included in the website disclosure where payment exceeds £100,000 as if they were an employee.

The HR and Finance departments must ensure remuneration is paid in accordance with the rates approved by Trustees.

5. PROCESS FOR SETTING SENIOR EXECUTIVE PAY

The following process must be followed when considering and setting the pay for senior executive officers working for the Trust.

- i. The People/Remuneration Committee has delegated responsibility for undertaking an annual assessment of senior executive pay, supported by the HR Lead and a Trustee with an education specialism if needed.
- ii. Reviewing the remuneration package for the CEO must be exclusively a Trustee-led process overseen by a member of the People/Remuneration Committee.
- iii. Reviewing the remuneration of senior executive officer roles other than the CEO may be undertaken by the CEO. The CEO should present evidence-based recommendations to Trustees for approval.
- iv. Trustees may choose to out-source the annual senior executive pay review process to an independent third-party. In these circumstances the standard procurement policies and procedures of the Trust must be followed.
- v. Evidence to support changes to senior executive pay, including appropriate independent benchmarking data, must be documented in, or appended to, the assessment form provided in Appendix 1.
- vi. The review should take place in the Autumn term of the academic year when national teacher and support staff pay awards have been announced and performance reviews have been completed.
- vii. The People/Remuneration Committee should make recommendations for any changes to senior executive pay to the December meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- viii. The Board of Trustees must approve changes to senior executive pay before they take effect.

6. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

The **People/Remuneration Committee** is responsible for monitoring that the process for setting senior executive pay described within this policy document has been fully adhered to and properly documented.

APPENDIX 1: ASSESSMENT FORM FOR DOCUMENTING SENIOR EXECUTIVE PAY DECISIONS

Please note that the individual preparing this report must not be the person whose role is being considered.

Role	
Employee	
Date	
Factors to be considered in setting pay	
Date of last pay review	
Current salary (£)	
Other benefits (e.g. bonus, honorarium, pension)	
Nature of the role Has the nature of the role changed since the previous pay review (size, scope, risk, challenge)?	
Performance Please comment on the performance of the individual relative to agreed targets. This should reflect comments in the persons most recent performance review.	
Benchmarking* Please provide evidence of any changes in pay for equivalent roles in the marketplace (increases or decreases). Due consideration must be given to ensuring comparisons are timely and appropriate. Mark 'no change' if the marketplace has remained unchanged.	
Teaching and support staff uplifts Please describe the most recent average pay uplifts awarded by the Trust to teaching staff and support staff.	
Affordability Does the current level of pay for the role remain affordable? Is a pay uplift affordable?	

Role	
Employee	
Date	
Factors to be considered in setting pay	
Reputation If disclosed to a third party, would the absolute value of pay award or proposed uplift in pay risk damaging the reputation of the Trust?	
Proposal	
Proposed salary (£) <i>Please note if any proposed change in pay should start from a date other than 1st September.</i>	
Uplift from current salary (%)	
If applicable, please describe any changes to other benefits	
Approval	
Date of Board of Trustee approval**	

Notes:

* The marketplace review does not need to be completed every year. It must be undertaken:

- Annually if there has been a material and noticeable shift in remuneration awards in the marketplace.
- In the absence of a material shift then once every 3 years.

**The individual whose role is being considered must be excused from any part of any meeting where formal discussions on their salary are undertaken.

APPENDIX 2: BENCHMARKING DATA TO SUPPORT NEW SENIOR EXECUTIVE PAY SCALE

The Learning Academies Trust currently has approximately 900 staff and 5,500 pupils.

When considering this Executive Pay policy, we continue to benchmark against the Kreston UK Benchmark Report 2025 (page 17) to ascertain we are classed as a **Medium MAT** as a result of our pupil numbers:

We also segment the MAT category into small, medium, and large based on the following pupil numbers to provide a more useful benchmark:

Small MAT - Fewer than 3,000 pupils

Medium MAT - 3,000 to 7,500 pupils

Large MAT - More than 7,500 pupils

Sample size: This year's report (2025) includes data from 260 Trusts representing over 2,300 schools.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO) PAY

Below is the CEO Salary extract from the Kreston UK Academies Benchmark Report 2024 (page 44):

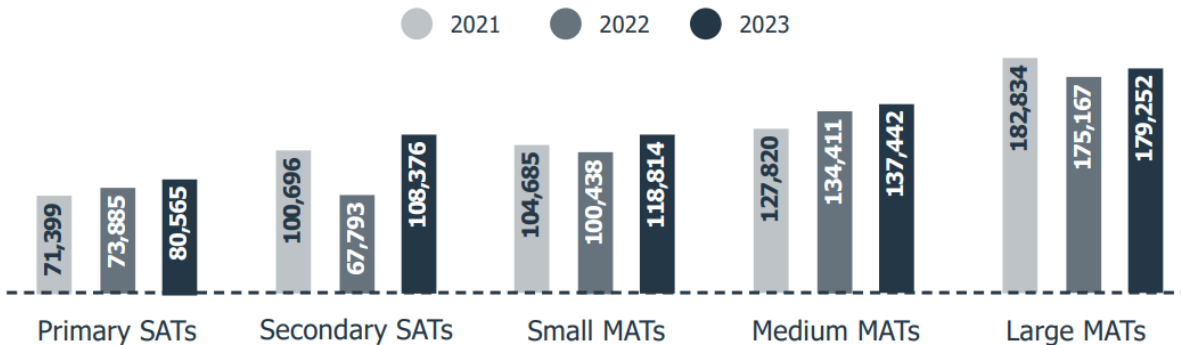
CEO Salary

Last year we reported that there had only been very modest increases or stagnation in CEO and Headteacher salaries. This year we can provide further breakdown based on the size of the MAT to give us a better understanding of the trends.

We are not seeing the increase we would expect in line with the increase in the cost of living. Small MATs have seen the greatest increase of 18% from 2022 to 2023 compared to a 4% decline last year. Where we saw very small increases in average secondary SAT and primary SAT CEO salary last year, we are seeing an increase of 8% and 9% respectively, which would appear to be a bit of a catch up on last year's percentage. It is now at the medium and large MAT level that we are seeing stagnation with only a 2% increase. We know that in previous years there has been a spotlight on the highest paid CEOs, so it is no surprise that for the highest paid CEOs the rate is increasing very slowly.

Guidance on executive pay was updated in November 2023. This gives examples of evidence Boards should consider when setting executive pay and the questions that should be asked. Trust Boards, who are responsible for setting executive pay must ensure pay is transparent, proportionate, and justifiable. This may be a challenge where it is difficult to recruit, but it is important that the Trust board ensures that pay is in line with the size and type of Trust they are recruiting for.

Average CEO salary (£)

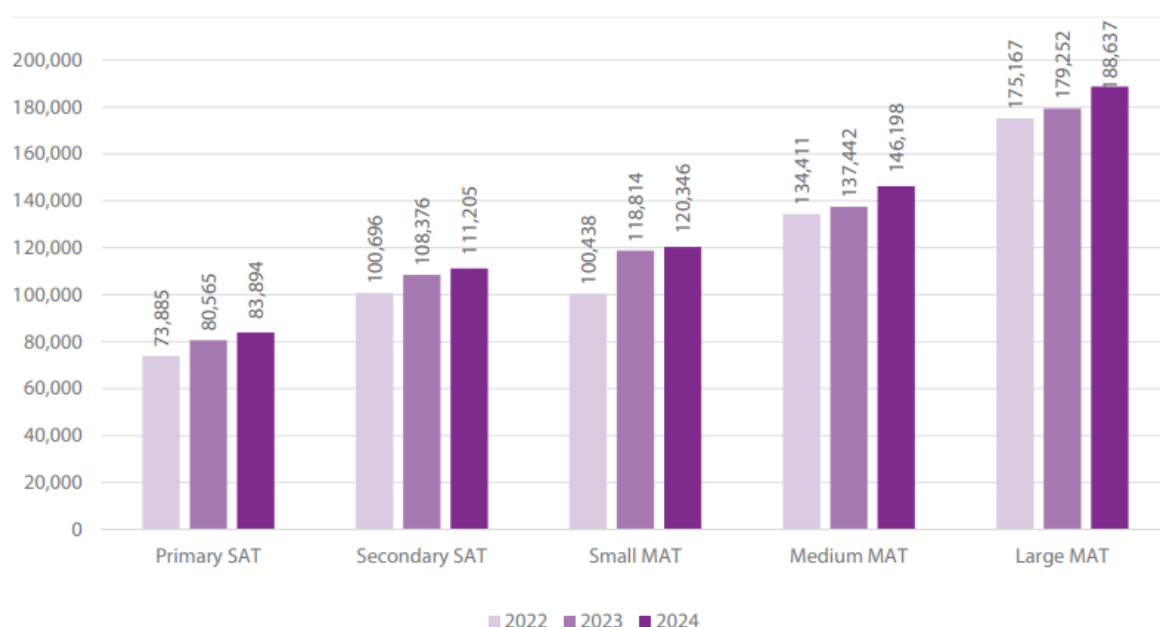


Below is the CEO Salary extract from the Kreston UK Academies Benchmark Report 2025 (page 46):

CEO Salary

CEO salaries have grown across all Trust types. For primary, secondary and smaller MATs, CEOs tend to be headteachers on the applicable leadership scale point. As such it is consistent with the general movements in these bands to see a fairly uniform increase in salaries. This is a smaller step than in 2023 when cost of living pay increases on those scales were much higher. For medium and larger MATs, many CEOs are remunerated on a different basis, assessed by a remuneration committee. In 2023 we saw greater stagnation in their pay compared to smaller Trusts, with increases of only around 2%. We attributed this to the near-constant spotlight on executive pay, especially those paid more than £150k, which until a few years ago incurred public letters from the ESFA requiring justification. In 2024 this has reversed with increases of 5 to 6% on average for the CEOs of medium and large MATs, in what looks to be an element of catching up. This coincides with a softening of approach by the ESFA, putting the onus back on Trust boards to take a more holistic approach to CEO pay awards.

Average CEO salary (£)



The most recent guidance, published in November 2023, which we referenced in our last report, has now had a year of circulation (and importantly a pay review cycle) to take effect on salaries in the year. Its focus on core procurement principles of best interests of the Trust, value for money and relative level of responsibility rather than a round target is perhaps an important factor in the movement in our data.

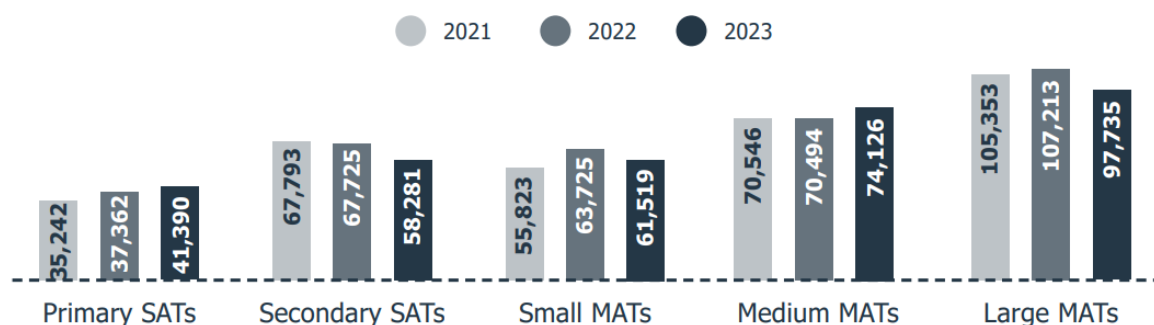
CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (CFO) PAY

Below is the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Salary extract from the Kreston UK Academies Benchmark Report 2024 (page 44):

CFO Salary

We are seeing a range of movement in CFO salary against last year, perhaps indicating a lot of mobility in this key position; primary SATs and medium MATs have increased whilst secondary SATs and small and large MATs have fallen. The biggest fall is in the average CFO salary for secondary schools of £9,512 being a 14% fall. It is hard to tell whether the falls are due to budget pressures or market conditions. We still hear that Trusts have vacancies they are unable to fill but perhaps the salaries are now more in line with the commercial sector with similar professional qualifications.

Average CFO salary (£)

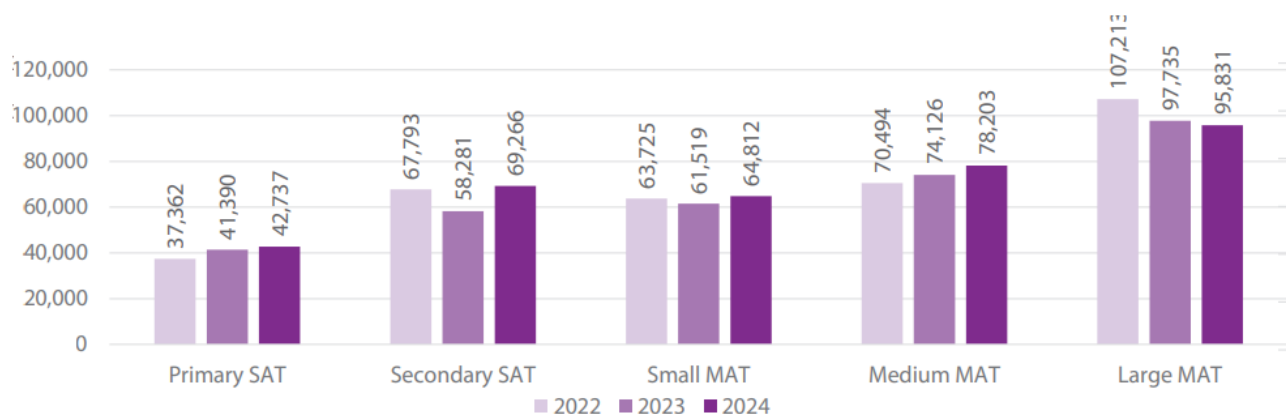


Below is the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Salary extract from the Kreston UK Academies Benchmark Report 2025 (page 47):

CFO Salary

We are seeing a range of movement in CFO salary against last year, perhaps indicating a lot of mobility in this key position; SATs, small and medium MATs have increased while large MATs have fallen for the second year in a row. We are seeing increased recruitment from outside the sector especially into larger MATs. Falling salary costs in that group suggest that pay rates are settling after a period of high wage inflation for this role, that peaked in 2022

Average CFO salary (£)



APPENDIX 3: EXECUTIVE PAY PROCESS

EXECUTIVE PAY PROCESS

The first step in developing a process for assessing executive pay is to ensure the People/Renumeration committee have access to all the information in order to make informed decisions in line with the parameters in this policy. The committee should engage HR advice as well as the education specialist Trustees on the Board for guidance if needed.

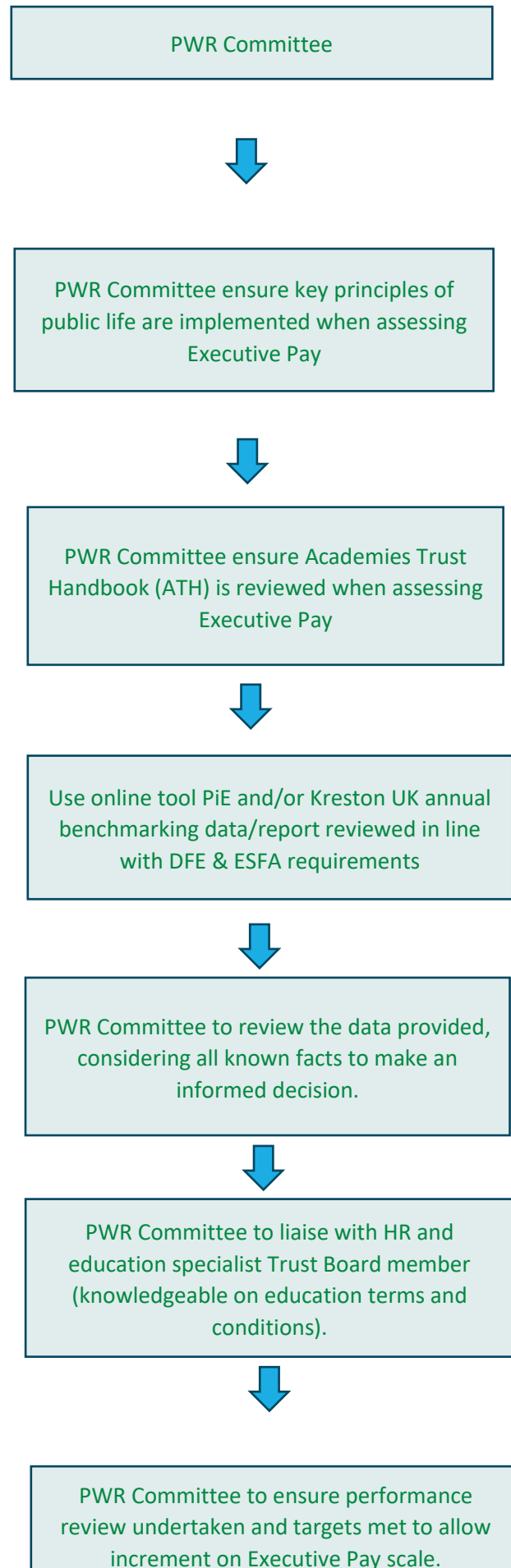
The next step is to determine the executive pay philosophy that will guide the committee in assessing executive pay. The philosophy should be based on the 'key principles of public life': objectivity, openness, and accountability. It should also consider the specific roles of the executives in Finance, HR, and Operations.

To enable the committee to manage pay responsibly in line with DFE and ESFA requirements. The committee may conduct benchmarking using Pay in Education and/or the relevant Kreston Reeves UK annual academies benchmarking report for example:

- [NEW Pay In Education | Home](#)
- [Kreston-UK-Academies-Benchmark-Report-2024-updated.pdf \(krestonreeves.com\)](#)
- [Kreston Reeves Benchmark Report 2025](#)

The committee should review the CEO/Executive pay award on a regular basis and adjust as necessary to ensure that it remains fair and effective. The committee should also solicit feedback from stakeholders to ensure that the executive pay process is meeting their needs.

EXECUTIVE PAY PROCESS (FLOWCHART)



APPENDIX 4: PAY APPEALS PROCEDURE

The Learning Academies Trust Board has adopted the following procedure to consider any pay appeals and has delegated the responsibility to the People/Remuneration Committee:

Stage 1 - Informal

If, following receipt of the written confirmation of the pay determination and where appropriate the basis upon which the decision was made, the member of staff is not satisfied, he / she should seek to resolve this by discussing the matter informally with the decision maker (People/Remuneration Committee) within 10 working days of the decision.

Where this is not possible, or where the member of staff continues to be dissatisfied with the decision, he / she may follow the formal Stage 2 Appeal process below.

Stage 2 - Formal

The member of staff should submit a written appeal, setting out the grounds and the detail upon which the pay decision is appealed. This should be sent to the Trust's Head of Governance, within 5 working days of the notification of the decision being appealed against, or the outcome of the informal discussion.

The Trust's Head of Governance will arrange a hearing, within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal, at which the People/Remuneration Committee will consider the appeal and give the staff member an opportunity to make representations in person and / or be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.

Stage 3 – Right of appeal

Following the hearing the member of staff will be informed in writing of the decision and the right of appeal. Any appeal must be submitted within 5 working days from receipt of written confirmation of the decision.

An independent review panel of 3 members (none of whom to be involved in any of the earlier decisions) will be convened. At least one person must have experience in setting executive pay in an education setting and/or have an education specialism. One person must be external to the Learning Academies Trust.

The decision of the independent review panel will be given in writing within 5 working days and where the appeal has been rejected this will include a note of the evidence considered and the reasons for the decision.

The decision of the panel will be final. There will be no further right of appeal.