

Mid-Term Update on People Systems



Colleagues,

Now that we've passed the mid-point of the term, it feels like the right time to reflect on the recent changes within the People team - particularly our systems.

The introduction of **Neo iTrent** has been one of several system changes that have affected how our schools operate, and I recognise the impact this has had on everyone. I'd like to share why we moved to Neo, the challenges we've faced, and what we're doing to resolve them.

Previously, we used a system that worked directly with **MHR**, requiring payroll and pensions to be managed centrally, within the Trust, and by one HR team member. This setup became unsustainable as the Trust grew – the pressure and dependency on a single specialist were simply too great.

When the MHR contract neared its end, we reviewed our options. The system was costly, didn't fully meet our needs, and renewal would have meant a **50% price increase** alongside further expensive upgrades and ongoing support costs.

After thorough research and consultation with schools, IT, and HR procurement specialists, **Neo** was chosen. It offered a better value, serviced version of iTrent with integrated payroll and pensions, scalable outsourced services, and the promise of a smooth transition from MHR.

Over the summer, the People Team worked intensively with Neo to migrate all data and systems. Our first pay runs in **September and October** achieved **99% accuracy**, covering pay, pensions, income tax, and NI. This means we retained normal service despite the system change.

However, it soon became clear that some promised functions — such as **additional hours, expenses, and mileage** — were missing. Other Trusts using Neo manage these manually, and we've had to adopt similar temporary measures. We're now working closely with Neo to build these functions into the system while maintaining payroll accuracy. This focus has, at times, slowed our response to individual queries, and I appreciate your understanding.

In the long term, Neo will deliver what we need in an economical way without relying on one person in the team. We are assured that Neo will deliver everything we need by **early in 2026**.

Mileage, expenses and additional hours are our priority.

Please do share these key points in discussion within your schools. I hope the background to the decision making and the work that is ongoing will provide some assurance that we are dealing with the system issues and aiming to reach a sustainable resolution as soon as we can.

Thank you for your patience and continued support as we work through this transition.

David