

THE CHARTER SCHOOLS

EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Exit interviews – A managers' guide

Exit interviews can be an extremely useful tool to gain constructive feedback from staff leaving The Charter Schools Educational Trust (the 'Trust') and the reasons why, including their future employment destinations. It should be seen as a positive measure, which helps to improve turnover and retention and contributes to the future culture and performance of the Trust if we reflect and act upon the feedback and look to continuously improve.

Exit interviews are usually carried out during the employees notice period and conducted by a senior manager or the school HR Lead. It is not always appropriate for the senior manager to be the employee's immediate line manager and will not of course be appropriate if the individual has been summarily dismissed.

Having an exit interview is voluntary and individuals should be encouraged to be open and honest without making the feedback too personal and potentially damaging to others without good and specific reason.

The Trust exit interview questionnaire should be used to conduct the exit interview, signed by both parties, and then forwarded and discussed with the Headteacher. The CEO may ask to see the exit interview questionnaires at any time and may ask the Central Services team to do an organisation review of the reasons why people are leaving the Trust, in which case the exit interview data will be called upon.

If you are carrying out the exit interview, think about the following things:

- Give the employee notice of the interview (at least two working days), and the option to opt out if they wish.
- Ensure you have allowed sufficient time in your diary, approximately one hour.
- Have a confidential space to conduct the interview (telephone calls and virtual calls are both an acceptable way of conducting the interview as long as they are private).
- Encourage the individual to speak openly and honestly but avoid getting into personal attacks on any one individual.
- Record their responses accurately and succinctly on the questionnaire form.
- Avoid leading the individual down any one path e.g., your own agenda perhaps about the organisation!
- Thank the individual both for their service to the Trust and/or school and for agreeing to have an exit interview – let them know what will happen afterwards.
- Wish them success in their new role or chosen path.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to fully consider the feedback without dismissing it out of hand because somebody has chosen to leave. It may well be that the feedback will help inform how the role is shaped for the future, what sort of person might be recruited and whether there needs to be any changes to the role. It is likely to also contain lots of positives to be pleased about.

If there is an emerging pattern in relation to why people are leaving a particular department or school, then this will be fully explored with the Headteacher and CEO.

The exit interview questionnaire should be held confidentially on the personnel file of the employee. It must not form part of any future employment reference. The school HR Lead needs to record on the MIS for each leaving employee whether they accepted or declined an exit interview, or whether they were offered one, and who carried out the interview.