

MAT Peer Support Network

Partnership Overview 2020-21

Context

The Foundation began to establish Peer Support Networks (PSN) in 2016 and is now working in partnership to run networks for over 1200 school leaders.

These networks aim to meet the needs of specific school communities and include a Rural Schools Network, National Secondary Leadership Network, and a Diocesan Peer Support Network in addition to the fast growing MAT Peer Support Network.

The MAT PSN seeks to add capacity to local priorities for development, through its support both for MAT senior and middle leaders.

The Foundation's vision is to develop Called, Connected, and Committed leaders. Participating in Peer Support Networks enables leaders to feel called to their role, build their connections to others and develop a deeper commitment to school leadership, thus enhancing retention of quality staff and preparing them for future school leadership roles.

Who are the Foundation's MAT Peer Support Networks for?

Our MAT networks are for any MAT which is interested in exploring the Church of England's vision and how that might look in practice.

They can be for primary MATs, secondary MATs or a combination.

The Foundation's materials are based upon the Church of England's Vision for Education which means that network sessions are particularly suitable for schools who wish to understand how this can be applied and embedded within their own context.

The Foundation's MAT Peer Support Networks can be used as a mechanism to empower leaders at a variety of levels, including Headteachers, Senior Leaders, Middle Leaders and Governors.

What are the benefits of the MAT Peer Support Networks?

1. **Cost Effective Leadership Development:** a cost-effective way of facilitating high quality leadership development for a strong number of school leaders, complementing the other provision of the Foundation, including for example the CofEPQH.
2. **High quality resources:** making use of high-quality resources and a range of current thinking about leadership, pedagogy and theology, the networks provide highly stimulating and thought-provoking material for individual use and use back in school.
3. **Deep discussion:** the networks offer a forum for in-depth discussion about leadership matters, which is rarely available to school leaders, within a group of peers.
4. **Collaborative learning:** excellent opportunities for sharing good practice, providing peer to peer feedback, self-reflection and building lasting professional relationships.

How is the MAT Peer Support Network delivered?

The model for the MAT Peer Support Network for 20-21 takes into account the uncertainty around the possibilities for meeting physically. It therefore builds on models we have used within our Rural Schools' Networks and the CofEPQH in offering a mixed-mode way of networking. During the summer term 2020, we have developed our network approach with school and church leaders online and trained diocesan staff to do this at a local level. Many leaders have found their networks a safe space to explore highly challenging issues together and explore thinking about what the future holds.

In 2020-21, our MAT Peer Support Network will involve a virtual launch session, interim virtual or physical sessions locally throughout the academic year and one full-day physical session (where possible) - all facilitated by the Foundation. These networks would usually be for groups of around 15-20 school leaders. The sessions are based around the Vision Resources produced by the Foundation, but also extend to deeper development work in relation to a range of themes pertinent and relevant to school leadership

The network approach means the delivery of the Peer Support Network is undertaken in partnership between a member of the Foundation's team and a Network Lead from the MAT.

The Foundation provides all the facilitation and resources for the sessions, as well as a dedicated online community for sharing materials and examples of good practice within the network.

An *example* of a MAT PSN Network is outlined below, showing the type of input that can be expected from the Foundation (dates are indicative and may vary).

MAT PSN Theme: Building Resilience and Wellbeing



The MAT needs to provide:

- logistics (setting dates with the Foundation's facilitator, organisation and provision of venues where appropriate, invitations and communication with participants, ensuring sufficient IT support for the smooth running of the sessions, organising refreshments, uploading material to the online portal)
- a MAT PSN Champion (usually the CEO or similar), who attends the launch session and promotes the network within their MAT
- a MAT PSN Lead (either a member of the school improvement team, or an experienced head) who will attend all the sessions, supporting the relationships within the group, providing follow-up support and engagement in the activities. There is the option that the lead could be involved in part of the delivery as a CPD opportunity, with supervision and guidance from the Foundation's facilitator.

How do we get started?

1. **Identify your audience and key priorities**

The network should add additional capacity and value to what you are able to offer locally; this works best when it aligns with the priorities of the MAT and is carefully aimed towards a specific group of leaders. This will then shape which theme is explored through the network.

2. **Choose a theme for your network**

Currently, the Foundation is able to offer the following themes for MAT Peer Support Networks: Curriculum leadership, Leading Teaching and Learning, Wellbeing and resilience, Character Education, Inclusion and Faith at Home (see appendix to see an outline of these themes). Other themes may be available on request, but development of these will attract an additional fee.

3. **Identify a Network Champion and Network Lead**

The Network Champion is usually the MAT CEO or someone with enough seniority to promote the network sufficiently well. They will need to attend the launch day and communicate their commitment to the network. The Network Lead will attend all sessions and is usually a member of the MAT school improvement team, or an experienced headteacher. The Network Lead will have the opportunity to engage in the sessions, build relationships with the schools and receive CPD themselves.

4. **Set the dates for your network**

The network launch day and network sessions should all be planned in advance so that schools can prioritise these in their diaries. These dates will need to be checked with the Foundation first, to ensure there is availability on those days.

5. **Choose the location of your network**

Decide where you will hold any physical sessions. It may be most convenient to hold them in the MAT office, but the benefit of participants to visit each other's schools should also be considered. Will this take place between sessions, or will the sessions be held in schools?

6. **Invite your participants**

It is entirely for the MAT to decide how school leaders are invited to participate; in some MATs this is obligatory due to a specific priority area, in others it is optional. Also decide how the network will be funded for these schools.

7. **Off we go...**

Begin with a launch day which is really attractive and interesting to school leaders, ensuring the network has a high value to schools.

How much will this cost?

The cost of running a MAT Peer Support Network for 2020-21 is: £2,270 (see Appendix 2)

This includes: facilitation of the virtual launch session by a member of the Foundation's senior team; the facilitation of three subsequent network sessions (a mixture of virtual and physical); resources and materials for the sessions; an online community for sharing resources and accessing all the presentations; support and CPD for the Network Lead.

Appendix 1: Network Themes

Network theme	What sort of topics? (examples, not exhaustive)	Suitable for...?
Curriculum Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does visionary curriculum leadership entail? • How does your school's vision shape its curriculum, and what needs to be considered? • Working in partnership to enhance your curriculum – how can networking enable the sharing of high-level subject expertise? • Curriculum for the long-term – how can you build sustainability into your curriculum? 	<p>Ideal for middle leaders, who are exploring the expectations of the new Ofsted schedule</p> <p>Good for headteachers and deputy heads with oversight for the curriculum</p> <p>Could also be run for governors</p>
Leading Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your approach to teaching and learning enable pupils and adults to flourish? • What impact is your school vision and culture having on what happens in classrooms? • How is the best practice in teaching and learning shared through collaborative practice? • What sort of leadership practices do you want to see your teachers and students demonstrating? How can you achieve that? 	<p>Leaders of teaching and learning, anyone involved in observing, appraising and developing teachers</p>
Wellbeing and resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for your own wellbeing as a leader, to ensure a positive impact on both own life and on others • How do you support the wellbeing and mental health of: staff, pupils, parents, wider school community? • What are the factors which affect your ability to sustain leadership in the long-term? • How can you ensure the wellbeing of all is embedded in the heart of school life? 	<p>Headteachers and governors; inclusion managers, SMSC leads, senior leaders and governors</p>
Character Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is character education important and what is its connection to the flourishing of all? • The Leadership of Character Education – why this matters and what it means for leaders • Exploring different leadership models and considering their impact on school life • Sharing case studies, examples and research around 'what works' in character education • How does courageous advocacy develop character as well as make a difference to the community? 	<p>Headteachers and governors; aspiring senior leaders</p>
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sort of outcomes are you seeking for your pupils? Is this broad enough to enable everyone in the school to flourish? • What is your approach to exclusions? Why does this matter? • What does it mean to be a hospitable school, and how can this be realistically achieved in the current climate? • How do we collaborate with others to deliver the best possible outcomes for <i>all</i> pupils? • What are the challenges of being an inclusive school and how does working in partnership help with these? 	<p>Headteachers, deputy heads and inclusion managers; governors</p>

Faith at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can you connect communities (church, school, households) in order to enable faith development in your area? • What do young people need in order to develop their spirituality? • What might hinder faith development in young people? • How might you start to think differently about young people’s faith development? • What is already working well from which we can all learn? 	Headteachers and clergy; SMSC leads, governors
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APPENDIX 2 – COST & OTHER OPTIONAL ITEMS

The cost of a MAT PSN, covering one theme, is calculated thus:

Virtual sessions facilitated by the Foundation x3	£675
Planning, communication, support for Network Lead	£450
1 physical day of input from CEFEL	£650
Online Community	£495
Total:	£2,270

The Foundation can also develop additional topics, in line with a MAT’s specific priorities. These will attract an additional development fee.

In addition, the Foundation’s full pack of Vision Resources is available for purchase, at a discounted cost of £20 per set for participating MATs (the usual price for these is £35).