



Michelle Gabriel,  
Director of HR

## WELCOME

WHMAT's first "People Matters" newsletter aims to provide you with a termly overview of people-related issues worth knowing about in the workplace. If there are any areas that you would like me to cover going forward, or for feedback or questions please email me at [mgabriel@washwoodconnect.com](mailto:mgabriel@washwoodconnect.com).

# Brexit – support for employees from the EU

Although a firm date for Britain to leave the EU is STILL unknown, WHMAT wants to ensure that its EU employees are fully supported during this period of uncertainty & change. The Home Office's EU Settlement Scheme is now officially open. The scheme is completely free & can be accessed via a laptop/PC, tablet or mobile device. You will need to complete a 3-step application proving your identity, confirming that you live in the UK & declaring any criminal convictions that you have. The scheme allows you & your family members to continue to live, work & study in the UK after 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. Successful applicants will receive digital proof of their immigration status from the Home Office within a couple of weeks & a copy of this will need to be provided to HR to prove you can still legally work & live in the UK. Later this term, HR will be running briefing sessions for its EU employees to explain more & to give you access to IT to complete your applications. If you are an EU National, please look out for further information & ensure that you attend a session.

## This issue

- Brexit & Apprenticeships updates P1
- Centralisation of Services & Perkbox P2
- Career Development Pledge P3
- Mental Health Awareness Week P4

## Apprenticeships: do you have a thirst for learning?

WHMAT is passionate about upskilling its employees so that they are motivated, engaged & can provide the best possible service to our pupils. We currently have 16 teachers & nine support staff undertaking apprenticeships i.e. on-the-job training courses that lead to a professional qualification. These are fully funded by the apprenticeship levy, which is a monthly tax that WHMAT has been paying on our total salary bill since April 2017. FAQs on the levy & how to search for relevant courses were circulated by email last term & can be obtained from your local HR contacts. The next deadline for expressions of interest, for courses starting September 2019, is **1<sup>st</sup> June 2019**. Please ensure that your expression of interest form is fully completed & signed off by your Head (CEO for head office staff) & that you are fully committed to the course & additional workload requirements. Please note that a skills audit will also be completed by the training provider to ensure the course is right for you before you can commence.

## PERKBOX – USE IT OR LOSE IT....

Since 2016, WHMAT has been financing your access to “Perkbox” – the online employee benefits platform.

As of February 2019, 642 users had logged in with 4790 perks being redeemed, saving staff £39,000 to date.

Our most popular perks currently are:

1. Discounted cinema tickets
2. Free mobile phone insurance
3. Free monthly Caffe Nero drinks
4. Discounted Hotels
5. EE Mobile discounted plans

Access Perkbox from work at

<https://whmat.perkbox.com/welcome>

[/login](#) or by downloading the

Perkbox app via Play Store

(Android) or Iphone. Look for the

Perkbox icon:



## Consultation on centralisation of our key services

WHMAT is proposing to centralise its HR, Finance, ICT & Estates functions from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019

With 685 employees across seven sites, WHMAT is now the size of a large company. WHMAT has reviewed staffing levels & functions carried out by HR, ICT, Finance & Estates across the seven sites & has been consulting on changes with affected staff & stakeholders since 26<sup>th</sup> March. The consultation period closes on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The changes would mean:

**HR** - From 4<sup>th</sup> September two central HR teams will exist:

- a transactional team focusing on pay, recruitment & contracts;
- a “People Matters Team” focusing on case work, policies & added value HR projects. I’ll directly manage both teams, with regular communication with Heads.

**What this means for you - HR** colleagues will focus on areas of expertise to ensure the best service for you. Your local HR representative may change & they may not always be based in your academy as they are looking after 7 academies. However, colleagues will be contactable by phone & email.

**Finance** - From 4<sup>th</sup> September, two central finance teams will be created & directly line managed by Mark Phillips (Director of Finance). One team will focus on procurement; the other on meeting the finance needs of all WHMAT academies.

The traditional School Business Manager role will no longer exist, but existing colleagues will have the opportunity to apply for HR or finance roles, with up to 3 redundancies being possible.

**Whole school briefings will take place later this term so that you understand the impact of the changes.**

**What this means for you - Finance** colleagues will focus on areas of expertise to ensure the best service for academies. However, your local finance colleagues may no longer be responsible for the same things & may not be based exclusively in your academy.

**ICT** - From 1<sup>st</sup> September, a new Director of ICT will be appointed to lead the ICT colleagues & to deliver on the strategic vision for WHMAT. A centralised team of ICT colleagues will be in place to provide you with the best possible ICT support.

**What this means for you -** Your ICT lead may change and/or may be based in a different location but they will receive support & guidance from an ICT lead.

**Estates** - From 4<sup>th</sup> September, estates colleagues will be expected to work flexibly across WHMAT sites & site managers will be line managed directly by David Mabey (Estates Manager).



# Career Development Pledge

I have recently had the pleasure of working with colleagues from NQT to leadership across WHMAT on a new Career Development Pledge for Teachers.

The Pledge has been created to help retain & upskill as many quality teachers as possible & sets out WHMAT's commitment to them at the different stages of their career. It seeks to not only provide opportunities for growth & development, but also to provide clarity & support.

## What it means for teachers:

- ✚ Full induction for new teachers within two weeks of starting
- ✚ Named mentor (NQT-year 3)
- ✚ Named "Reflection Partner" who is at least two years more senior from M4
- ✚ Structured Career Development Discussion as part of appraisal
- ✚ Opportunities to participate in and/or lead developmental/research

## Did you know...

WHMAT currently has 304 teachers of which:

10 are unqualified teachers

26 are newly qualified (NQTs)

10 are mainscale 2 to 6

147 are upper pay range (UPR) 1 to 3

6 are Lead Practitioner or Senior LPs

15 are Assistant Heads

11 are Deputy Heads

7 are Heads of Academy

3 are Head Office Teachers

Looking forward to developing a pledge with support staff from September 19.

## Employee Well-being

Did you know that as little as 10 minutes of regular exercise per day can help us to maintain positive mental health, by boosting our mood, relieving stress & improving sleep?

A number of WHMAT colleagues are taking part in a charity 10k in Birmingham on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May to raise money for the Penny Appeal

Sign up here <https://www.greatrun.org/great-birmingham-10k>

Interested? Please sign up & tell the following know:

If you are head office – Me

mgabriel@washwoodconenct.com

Washwood Heath – Luke Carter

[lcarter@washwoodconnect.com](mailto:lcarter@washwoodconnect.com)

Brownmead – Amanda Meally [a.meally@brownmead.com](mailto:a.meally@brownmead.com)

Saltley – Karen Liston [staffkli@saltley.bham.sch.uk](mailto:staffkli@saltley.bham.sch.uk)

Gossey – Lorraine Jeffs [l.jeffs@gosseylane.org.uk](mailto:l.jeffs@gosseylane.org.uk)

Tile Cross – Amy Hughes

[a.hughes@tilecrossacademy.com](mailto:a.hughes@tilecrossacademy.com)

Firs – Wendy Mercer (Acting School Business Manager)

[wmercerc@firs.academy](mailto:wmercerc@firs.academy)

Topcliffe – Ben Warr [bwarr@topcliffe.academy](mailto:bwarr@topcliffe.academy) or

[ibarker@topcliffe.academy](mailto:ibarker@topcliffe.academy)

## PENSIONS UPDATE

From September 2019, WHMAT will pay increased pension contributions of 23.68% for colleagues in the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The underlying rate rises by 43% from 16.4% to 23.6%. This will be government funded until 2020, then employers may need to finance this.

## HR POLICY UPDATE

In February 2019, WHMAT's Board approved a new Pay Policy & a new Executive Pay Policy. All HR Policies can be found at [www.washwoodmat.com](http://www.washwoodmat.com), policies tab.

The draft Menopause Policy was not approved in its current format as the Board would like to see it as part of a wider well-being policy rather than as a stand-alone policy. In the meantime, managers should continue to consider the principles of the policy when supporting affected staff.

## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

This national campaign to raise awareness of mental health will take place from 13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> May. This year the Mental Health Foundation (the UK's Charity for everybody's mental health) will be focusing on the theme of "body image" – how we think & feel about our bodies.

HR colleagues will be working with local well-being champions to help raise awareness of mental health issues during this time.



Remember you can access 24/7 confidential telephone counselling from:

- a) Perkbox's employee support hub. Login to your Perkbox account at <https://whmat.perkbox.com/search/perks?q=CIC>  
Click on CIC employee assistance programme & follow the instructions; or
- b) The Education Support Partnership's free helpline on 08000 562 561. They also offer grants for those suffering financial hardship.

### Saltley

Karen Liston (HR Manager)

[staffkli@saltley.bham.sch.uk](mailto:staffkli@saltley.bham.sch.uk)

### Washwood Heath

Rose Chaundy (Employee Relations Manager)

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Zareen Shaukut (HR Assistant)

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### Brownmead

Amanda Meally (School Business Manager)

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### Gossey Lane

Lorraine Jeffs (School Business Manager)

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### Firs & Topcliffe

Kaye Haynes (Strategic School Business Manager)

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Wendy Mercer (Acting School Business Manager)

[wmercerc@firs.academy](mailto:wmercerc@firs.academy)

### Tile Cross Academy

New HR Manager (Jamilia Dogaru)

starting 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 – T. 0121 566 6400

## Staff Numbers

Did you know WHMAT had 685 employees as of April 2019? Here's the breakdown:

Washwood Heath Through School	225
Saltley	161
Tile Cross	102
Firs	59
Topcliffe	56
Brownmead	43
Gossey Lane	28
Head Office	11

