MAT STRATEGY FORUM

Multi-Academy Trust Strategy Forum

9th, 10th & 11th May 2023

Interim Client Research Report
Total Delegate Group: **74**

This interim report is based on survey findings of the 74 delegates who have confirmed their attendance at the upcoming Multi-Academy Trust Strategy Forum on the 9th, 10th & 11th May 2023, which will rise to over 100 chief officers and directors from UK multi-academy trusts.

To deepen our insights, we interviewed the highest decision-makers in video and telephone interviews to discuss the trends and issues being tackled in their organisations.

39
Chief
Officers

22
Directors

13
Senior
Management

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are focusing on recruitment and retention due to the shortage of teachers in the education sector, making it increasingly challenging for schools to find and keep qualified teachers. This shortage has been exacerbated by the pandemic, with many teachers leaving the profession or taking early retirement. MATs recognise the importance of recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers to provide students with a high standard of education, maintain school standards, and promote staff development.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The senior delegate group in attendance are focusing on change management to ensure smooth and effective implementation of new policies and practices across their schools. As the education landscape is constantly evolving, MATs need to be agile and adaptable to keep up with the changes. Change management helps them to implement new ideas and initiatives in a way that is well-planned and well-communicated, minimizing disruption and ensuring the best outcomes for students and staff alike.

CYBER-SECURITY

As more technology becomes integral to education, cyber security is becoming a key focus for all trusts. As schools adopt more digital tools and platforms, they become more vulnerable to cyber threats, such as data breaches and ransomware attacks. Protecting student and staff data and ensuring the continuity of education services is critical to building trust and maintaining reputation.

DATA ANALYTICS

With the help of data analytics, trusts can identify any areas of underperformance or challenges that students may be facing, and then create targeted interventions to address them. Moreover, data analytics can help trusts to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions and make evidence-based decisions to improve student learning and progress.

The challenges being prioritised by the Chief Executive Officer for Learning Academies Trust

- Managing the growth of schools under our remit
- School & IT Security improvement
- Utilising additional economies of scale

The key issues being tackled by the Director of IT from the Ormiston Academies Trust

- Centralising services & IT Provision
- Training & development of staff and edtech practice
- Building effective teams across multiple sites
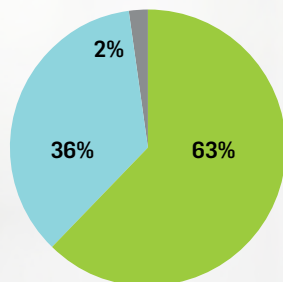
COMBINED SPENDING POWER OF GROUP

£1.8billion+

PERCENTAGE %

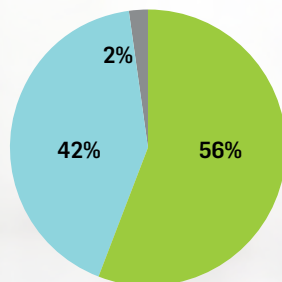|									
20									
15									
10									
5									
0									

£100,000 – £250,000   £250,000 – £500,000   £500,000 – £750,000   £750,000 – £1,000,000   £1,000,000 – £5,000,000   £5,000,000 – £10,000,000   £10,000,000 – £25,000,000   £25,000,000 – £50,000,000   £50,000,000 – £100,000,000   £100,000,000+

BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY PER PERSON

SPEND MAPPING

DATA ANALYTICS

- 2%
- 36%
- 63%

● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

- 2%
- 42%
- 56%

● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

CLOUD SERVICES

- 41%
- 59%
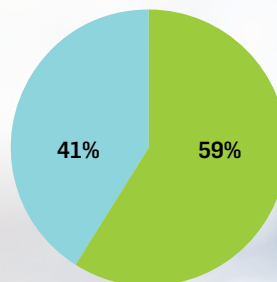
● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

CYBER SECURITY

- 31%
- 69%
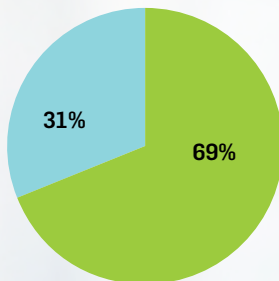
● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

ONLINE SAFEGUARDING
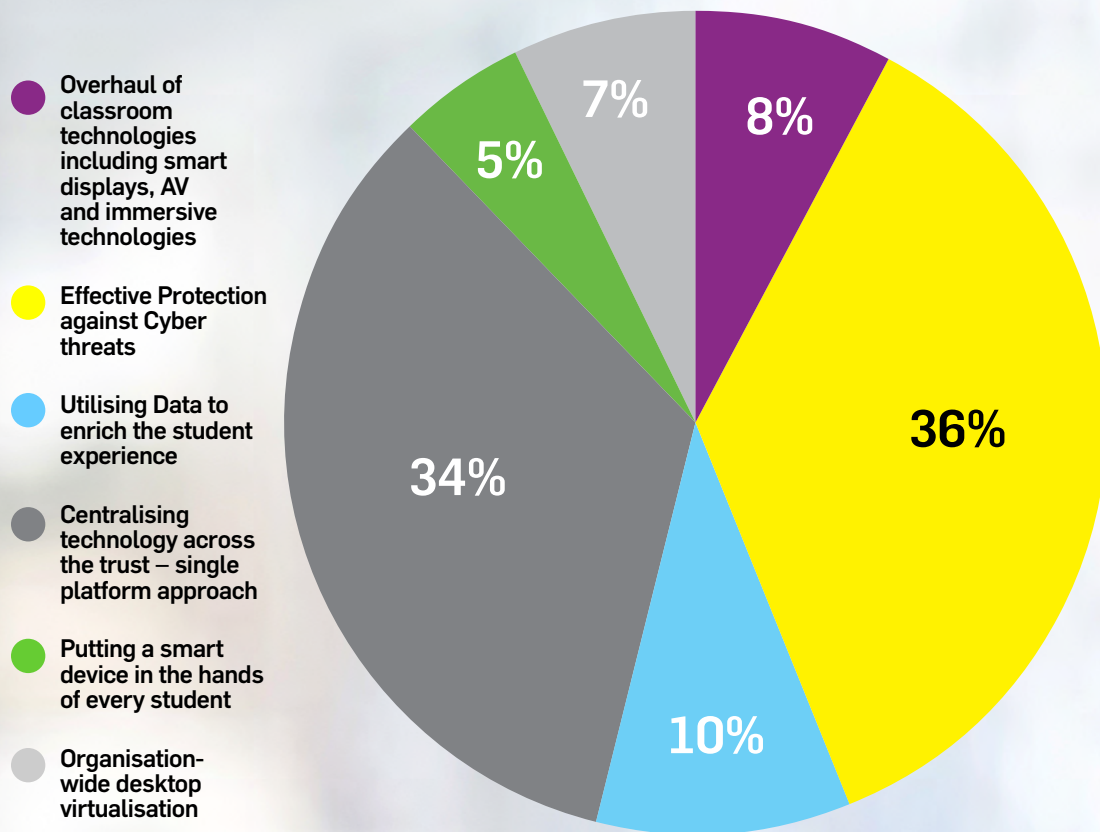

- 2%
- 32%
- 65%
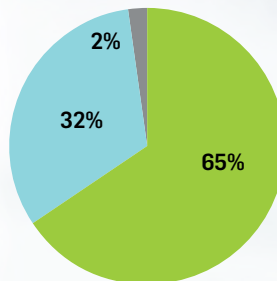
● Increase ● Stay the same ● Decrease

Multi-academy trusts (MATs) are complex organisations managing multiple schools and requiring significant resources to manage and maintain their operations. In order to effectively allocate resources and ensure value for money, it is important for MATs to have a clear understanding of their spending patterns. By investing in these areas, MATs can improve their efficiency, effectiveness, and resilience, ultimately enabling them to better support the schools under their management.

The attending delegates have highlighted that spend on data analytics is increasing by 62%, reflecting a growing recognition of the value of data-driven decision-making in education. Similarly, spend on business intelligence is increasing by 56%, indicating that MATs are investing in tools and processes to help them better understand their operations and make informed decisions. Cloud services are also seeing significant investment, with spend increasing by 58%. This likely reflects the desire of MATs to modernise their IT infrastructure and take advantage of the benefits of cloud computing. Finally, spend on cyber security is increasing by 69%, reflecting the growing importance of protecting sensitive data and systems from cyber threats.

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST STRATEGY FORUM
INTERIM CLIENT RESEARCH REPORT MAY 2023

TOP TECHNOLOGY PRIORITY

Overhaul of classroom technologies including smart displays, AV and immersive technologies — 8%

Effective Protection against Cyber threats — 36%

Utilising Data to enrich the student experience — 10%

Centralising technology across the trust – single platform approach — 34%

Putting a smart device in the hands of every student — 5%
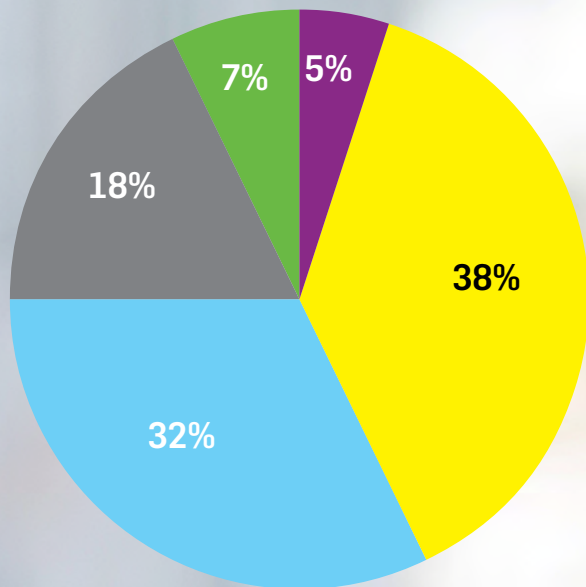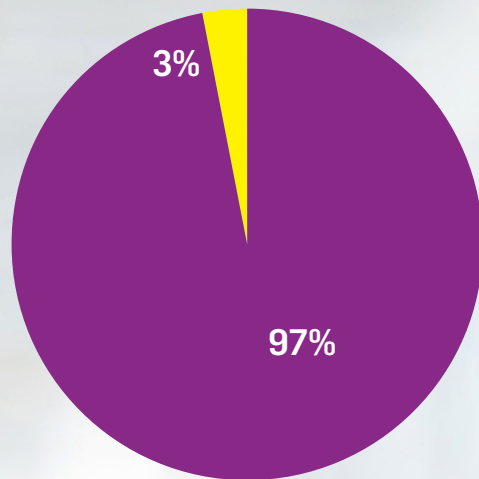
Organisation-wide desktop virtualisation — 7%

The attendees of the Multi-Academy Trust Strategy Forum have identified a range of technology priorities that they believe are critical to improving student outcomes and supporting effective school operations. One key focus is the effective protection against cyber threats. With the increasing prevalence of cyber attacks and data breaches, it is essential that MATs have robust security measures in place to protect sensitive information and systems.

Centralising technology across the trust and implementing a single platform approach is also a key priority for attendees. This can help to streamline operations and reduce costs, while also enabling greater collaboration and knowledge-sharing across different schools within the trust.

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST STRATEGY FORUM
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TRUSTS PLANNING TO EXPAND

- 🟣 YES
- 🟡 NO

3%

97%

ADDITIONAL SCHOOLS ANTICIPATED IN NEXT 18 MONTHS

- 🟣 1
- 🟡 2-3
- 🔵 4-5
- ⚫ 6-10
- 🟢 10+

5%

38%

32%

18%

7%

The UK government has announced plans for all schools in the country to become part of multi-academy trusts (MATs) by 2030. This represents a major shift in the way that schools are managed and governed and is part of the government's wider education reform agenda. Under the plan, all schools will be required to join an existing MAT or form a new one, with the aim of creating a more cohesive and collaborative education system.

By bringing schools together under a single management structure, the hope is that MATs will be better able to support effective teaching and learning, raise standards, and drive innovation. This also means that suppliers working within MAT's as expansion begins are in a prime position to scale up the services provided.
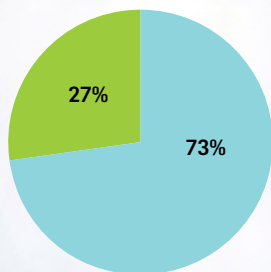
STREAMLINING CORE FUNCTIONS PRIORITIES
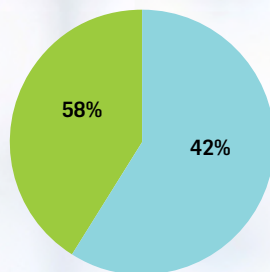
CASHLESS PAYMENT SYSTEMS

39% 61%
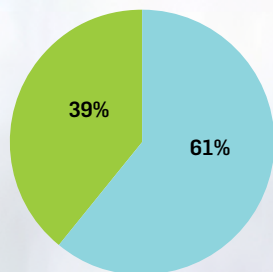
● Increase ● Stay the same
● Decrease

BUDGETING AND FORECASTING SOFTWARE
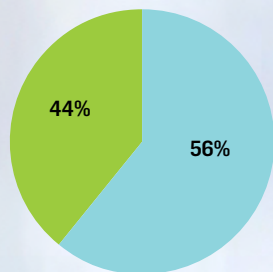
27% 73%

● Increase ● Stay the same
● Decrease

CENTRALISED SIGN-IN/ ACCESS SYSTEMS
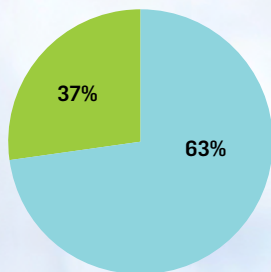
58% 42%

● Increase ● Stay the same
● Decrease

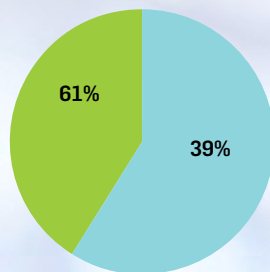### CENTRALISED PAYROLL AND FINANCE SYSTEMS

44% 56%

● Increase ● Stay the same
● Decrease

SAFEGUARDING CASE MANAGEMENT

37% 63%

● Increase ● Stay the same
● Decrease
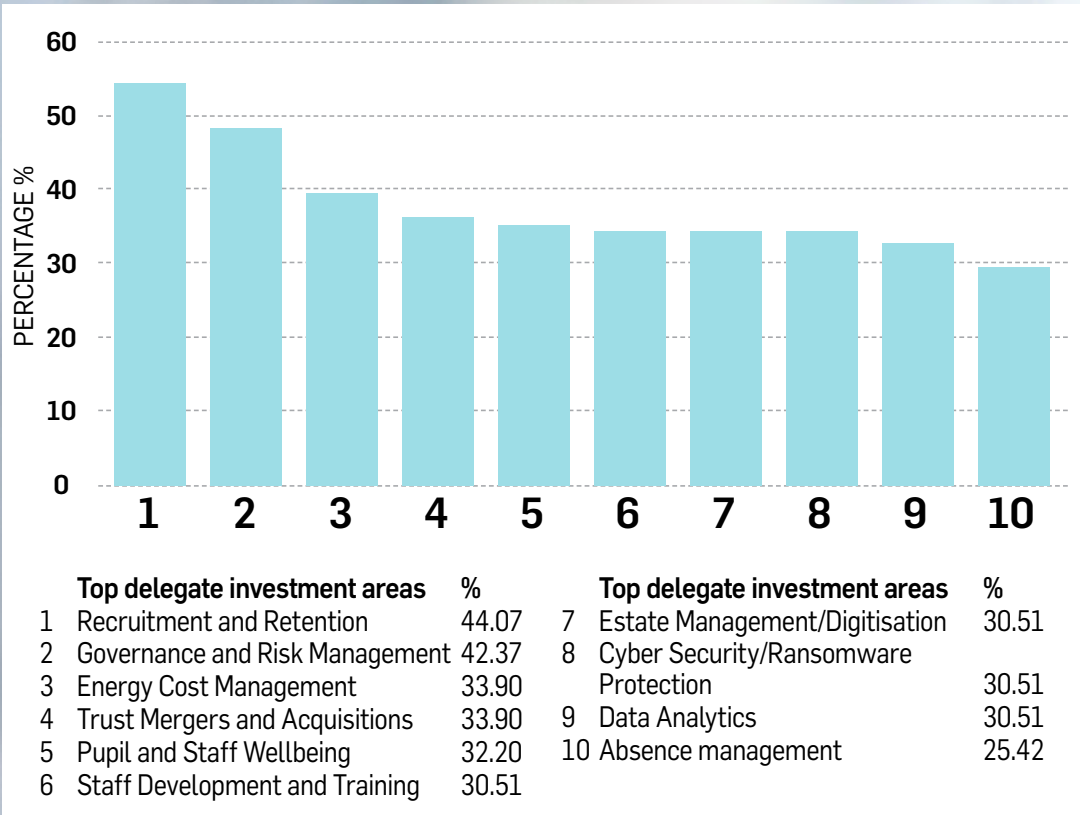
WORKFLOW MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

61% 39%

● Increase ● Stay the same
● Decrease

Multi-Academy Trusts are complex organisations that require effective management of core processes to ensure efficient operations and the best possible outcomes for students. Streamlining core processes can help MATs save time, reduce costs, and improve accuracy and consistency across different schools. One area where streamlining can have a significant impact is in budgeting and forecasting. By adopting specialised software for budgeting and forecasting, MATs can improve their financial planning and control, enabling them to make informed decisions about resource allocation and investment.

Another area where streamlining can have a positive impact is in safeguarding case management. MATs are responsible for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of their students, and this requires effective safeguarding procedures. By adopting specialised software for safeguarding case management, MATs can create a centralised system for recording and tracking safeguarding concerns and incidents. This can help ensure that all concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively, reducing the risk of incidents occurring and ensuring that appropriate actions are taken when necessary.

DELEGATE INVESTMENT AREAS

PERCENTAGE %

	Top delegate investment areas	%		Top delegate investment areas	%
1	Recruitment and Retention	44.07	7	Estate Management/Digitisation	30.51
2	Governance and Risk Management	42.37	8	Cyber Security/Ransomware	
3	Energy Cost Management	33.90		Protection	30.51
4	Trust Mergers and Acquisitions	33.90	9	Data Analytics	30.51
5	Pupil and Staff Wellbeing	32.20	10	Absence management	25.42
6	Staff Development and Training	30.51			

The top investment areas, as ranked by the senior delegate group was governance and risk management, with over 45% of the attendees indicating they plan to focus on this area. By investing in these areas, MATs can ensure that they have robust and effective systems in place to manage risks and comply with regulatory requirements, while also providing clear direction and leadership to their schools.

Recruitment and retention is another key area where attendees of the forum plan to invest heavily, with 43.64% indicating that they intend to focus on this area. MATs face a range of recruitment and retention challenges, including competition from other employers, skills shortages, and changing workforce demographics. By investing in recruitment and retention, MATs can attract and retain the best possible talent and create a supportive and engaging work environment.

STRATEGY FORUMS
Live Events

FORUM iQ
Analytics & Research

FORUM LINK
Collaboration App

All our Strategy Forums combine industry leading searchable analytics through Forum IQ - our delegate discovery platform. Key client investment data is blended with enhanced networking capability via our Forum Link app for everyone to intelligently connect through multi-channel exchanges during our live Strategy Forums.

Deep understanding and clever tech connecting smart people in smooth interactions. Goodbye static conferences, hello evolution.

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www.matstrategyforum.com
t. +44 (0) 1293 850 300
e. info@ahmediauk.com