



Catholic Multi Academy Trust Development Programme Frequently Asked Questions – Version for Staff

Last updated: 23 March 2021

This document reflects questions raised informally during discussions with schools, particularly staff working in admin roles. It is intended as a starting point and will be added to as and when we have more detail about structures for the new CMATs.

Please read this FAQ in conjunction with the document “Update from the MAT Steering Group February 2021” and the general FAQ document both of which can be found in the Schools section of the Diocese of Hallam website under the heading CMAT Development.

Q 1. What are the overall objectives of creating the CMATs?

We have summarised our shared vision in the document “Update from the MAT Steering Group February 2021”. This explains why the CMAT model is key to securing Catholic Education for the long term. This is supported by the letter from Bishop Ralph Heskett January 2021 setting out his intentions for all schools in the Diocese and is consistent with previous correspondence from the Bishop and the strategic direction shared with all schools by the Schools Department webinar last year. These documents are available on the Diocese of Hallam website on the MAT Development page which is listed under the Schools section.

Q 2. Will schools in the same family be in the same CMAT?

Yes – see lists of schools in the document “Update from the MAT Steering Group February 2021”.

Q 3. Are we joining a CMAT or are we forming one?

We are forming two new CMATs. Each will be a separate Company and legal entity.

Q 4. How will the decision be made around which schools will be in which CMAT – is this a financial matter?

The list of schools in each CMAT is unchanged and is based on the family of school groupings – see CMAT lists in the document “Update from the MAT Steering Group February 2021”. The financial status of each school is not a determining factor. Each CMAT contains a balance of schools and is aligned with Deaneries.

Q 5. What is the timeline for decision-making of final detailed plans to share with the Regional Schools Commissioner?

The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) Headteacher Board meets on 29th April 2021 to receive an update on proposals. The outline plans will draw on the work of the theme groups, particularly the School Improvement Strategy Group, the outcome of the initial due diligence, discussions with Headteachers with oversight from the Schools Department. The outline plans will be shared with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors prior to the meeting. These plans will not be “final” as detail around road maps, staffing structures, central services and systems will not have been proposed by that date. The purpose of the meeting is for the RSC to receive an outline and provide support/challenge so that timescales can be agreed. Following the meeting we will share outcomes with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors for them to share more widely with staff, governors and parents.

Q 6. Will one CMAT start before the other?

The two MATs will be launched on the same date.

Q 7. Will all schools join one of the CMATS at the start date?



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Schools will join in phases so that the growth is manageable but at a pace which ensures that no school gets left behind or is not supported by the new CMATs.

Q 8. What is the timeline for my school to join a new CMAT?

This will be established through discussion with your Headteacher and the Schools Department taking into account the context of the school, the capacity to provide support and the need for support. There are also legal and logistical factors to consider which will feed in to the decision making on when will be the most appropriate time for your school to join. Where a school is part of a Federation then all schools in that Federation will join at the same time. The CMATs will grow in phases. We know we need to move at pace but this will not be at the expense of getting the model right.

Q 9. What does the line management structure look like?

The line management structure within the CMAT central team will evolve as the project progresses with the CEO being ultimately responsible and accountable. The CEO will have an executive team which will include a Chief Finance Officer. The CFO will advise on appropriate staffing and resourcing centrally to ensure all schools are supported in their finance duties. Staff based in schools will retain their current line management arrangements on transfer.

Q 10. How should we proceed with contract renewals or new contracts? Should we consult with our project lead on all of them going forward?

We will be looking at procurement in more detail during the summer term. In the meantime if you have major contracts with imminent expiry dates, please contact your project lead for discussion about next steps.

Q 11. How will the top slice work and how much will it be?

There will be a top slice which will fund central services, including the school improvement model. The exact % will be determined through due diligence, the work of the theme groups and the funds required to deliver the central services. The top-slice will be no more than 5%.

Q 12. How will schools afford to pay the top slice on top of the services they already buy in?

There will be services which schools and academies currently buy into which will be provided centrally by the CMAT and so there will be a process of giving notice on those contracts to avoid double funding prior to the set-up of the CMAT. There will also be significant savings to be made from central procurement of services such as audit where currently every Single Academy Trust pays for an annual audit. In the CMAT, there is one set of financial statements and one audit contract.

Q 13. Will we still need to pay the Diocesan per pupil contribution?

This will be paid by the CMAT as part of the top slice.

Q 14. Will schools keep their surpluses when they transfer?

Yes, these transfer as part of the Commercial Transfer Agreement.

Q 15. Will schools be able to keep their self-generated income?

Yes, we expect that schools will retain their self-generated income.

Q 16. Will there be a transition phase where schools can get ready and adjust staffing and budgets if necessary?



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Yes, there is already work being carried out on financial forecasting based on initial due diligence information and this will be shared with Headteachers during early May and will inform discussions about budgets and staffing. Leading up to the launch of the new CMATs when we know more about staffing structures we will plan recruitment strategies with each school.

Q 17. What does the academisation and academy transfer process look like?

We will produce separate documents to outline the processes. The processes will be centralised and supported by the MAT Development Group and by our legal team.

Q 18. What legal support do we get?

The legal support has been procured as a single contract to cover the academisation, academy transfer and setting up of the CMATs. This is cost effective and means that the legal processes will be co-ordinated centrally by the MAT Development Group. Schools and academies will be provided with template documents for consultation and for governing body resolutions. This is to reduce burdens on schools and academies. Schools and academies will not be using separate legal advice and will not be charged for conversion or transfer to the new CMATs.

Q 19. Will the transfer to the new CMATs involve restructuring of support staff teams?

No – there is no intention to carry out a support staff restructure prior to the setting up of the new CMATs or as a direct consequence of setting up the CMATs. The intention is to base the central structure and services on skills and expertise already available within our schools and academies. Where central services are to be provided, for example finance (and we should emphasise that central services are yet to be decided), then expertise from within schools will be utilised to support the functions rather than making redundancies. The CMAT project aims to minimise redundancies through natural wastage and through aligning roles to the new structure.

Q 20. If our school is forecasting a deficit and we need to restructure should we do this now?

Yes – definitely. Reviewing staffing structures is an ongoing responsibility for Headteachers and Governing Bodies and regardless of the set-up of the new CMATs this process must continue. For example, if a school has falling roles and/or budgets then the expectation is that staffing needs will be adjusted accordingly and necessary action taken. Also, if staff have been employed on the basis of separate project funding which is coming to an end then action needs to be taken to address this. The new CMATs should not be expected to take on staff who would have been surplus had the CMAT not existed. The MAT Development Group will support schools with this work.

Q 21. How will staff contracts be protected?

Employees are protected when their business transfers to another employer under TUPE. This means that employees of schools and academies will transfer to their new employer (one of the new CMATs) on their current contracts of employment. There will be more information available on TUPE as part of the academisation process and transfer of academies to CMATs.

Q 22. I currently work part-time. Will I still be able to work part-time in the new CMAT?

Yes, your current working pattern will not be changed by the transfer to the new CMAT.

Q 23. Will there be new pay scales in the new CMATs?



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The new CMATs may at some point introduce new terms and conditions which would then apply to new staff joining (not those transferred under TUPE) or staff applying for promotion or other change of role. Any change of contract for a member of staff who transferred under TUPE must be negotiated. The new CMATs will be committed to following the Teachers Pay and Conditions document for Teaching Staff and the Green Book for support staff.

Q 24. I will be on maternity leave when the new CMATs are set up – will I lose my job?

No – you will not lose your job. You will return to your school following your maternity leave.

Q 25. If I go on maternity leave just when the new CMATs start do I lose qualifying service?

No – the new CMATs recognise continuous service and qualifying service for maternity/paternity/adoption.

Q 26. Will my job change in the new CMAT?

There will be new systems and processes as the CMAT grows, for example a single finance system across the CMAT. This will inevitably mean that day to day management of school finances will look different and will involve new ways of working. Full training will be available to ensure that staff currently working in these areas will understand the new roles and systems. It will be business as usual for classroom-based staff.

Q 27. What decisions will schools be allowed to make regarding recruitment?

This area will be reviewed as part of developing the Scheme of Delegation. This document will set out how the CMAT will devolve all decision making to each tier of the structure and to individuals.

Q 28. What is the new finance system and when will I be trained?

The new finance system has not been selected yet. We will be involving business managers to make recommendations about the new system and then all users will receive training when the new system is available.

Q 29. Will there be opportunities for me to work across the CMAT and develop my career?

Yes – definitely. One of the many benefits for staff of working within a CMAT is the opportunity for career development. This could be in the form of a secondment, a temporary role or by supporting another school. Staff will be encouraged to use their skills and expertise for the benefit of all.

Q 30. I am employed by one school and work across a number of schools – will I still be able to do this?

Yes – your contract will transfer. Working across schools is one of the many benefits of CMATs and the new CMATs will be looking to build on this model. If you already work across a number of schools as part of a Federation arrangement then this will continue on transfer to the new CMAT.

Q 31. Will I be forced to move to another school in the CMAT?

No – employees will not be forced to work at another school.

Q 32. Can I apply for vacancies at another school in the CMAT?

Yes – vacancies will be notified and open to all schools within the CMAT.

Q 33. My role includes clerking governing body meetings – will I still do this in the new MAT?

Yes – if that is part of your current contract then that will transfer through TUPE to the new MAT.

Q 34. I work in the breakfast club and after school club which my school runs – will this continue?



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Yes – if you are employed by the school in a breakfast club or after school club run by the school then your job will continue after the transfer to the new CMAT.

- Q 35. We have good working relationships with our local trade unions – will this continue?

Yes – we will be meeting with the regional trade union reps after Easter to discuss the proposals and will be working with the TU side going forward during the transfer process. We welcome constructive dialogue with the TU side and will be encouraging wide representation during TUPE consultation.

- Q 36. I work in the school kitchen – will my job still exist in the new CMAT?

Yes – if you are employed by the school prior to transfer then you will transfer under TUPE when your school transfers to the new CMAT.

- Q 37. I currently arrange maintenance and repairs at my school - how do schools in the CMAT carry out maintenance, repairs, and capital works?

There are no set proposals for routine maintenance and repairs which are usually funded from Devolved Formula Capital. These will be under discussion as the project evolves. However, for capital works each CMAT in time will receive an annual sum from the DfE's Schools Condition Allocation which will be held at Diocesan level. Projects will be allocated funding on the basis of latest condition data and through prioritisation against CMAT criteria.

- Q 38. Will school term dates change?

There are no plans to harmonise term dates initially. CMATs may look to hold common inset days to facilitate CMAT wide training or celebration days.

- Q 39. I support the PTA in my role – will I still be allowed to do that?

Yes. PTAs are separate from schools and their funds are not managed as part of the CMAT budgets. PTAs are a vital part of school life and we encourage all schools to work with their PTAs to strengthen those links and increase potential for fund raising.