

Benchmarking staff knowledge and planning your knowledge transfer calendar

School INSET days: preparing staff for the 24/25 academic year

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September's INSETs are just around the corner, and many of you will already have at least one eye on topics, content, objectives, and outcomes for the training to be delivered.

With that in mind, I thought I'd give you a few tips on how to get the most out of the day and how to use it to gain insight into the training and updating your staff need throughout the year.

Topics and content

One of the biggest challenges of the September INSET is choosing what to cover and what to miss out.

Looking at it from a legal/compliance perspective, I'd always include two topics: safeguarding and data protection. If you have space, I'd also want to give a bit of airtime to cyber risk, a growing concern in schools and trusts, sensibly so given education establishments are a favourite target of cyber criminals.

Safeguarding and Data Protection training for schools

Once the agenda is sorted, think about impact. Impactful training usually comes down to three things:

1. The right speaker/trainer
2. A focused session
3. Impactful outcomes.

The speaker/trainer plays a pivotal role, so make sure you have the right person. Remember, it doesn't necessarily follow that a topic expert is a great trainer, so make sure your trainer is engaging to ensure best outcomes.

Finally, try to keep each session as brief as possible. Attention spans are shrinking and distractions easier to come by, so short, sharp impactful sessions that get the key learning points across quickly and effectively are best.

Measuring outcomes

Once the sessions are planned and delivered, we then need to focus on measuring outcomes. I recommend you measure outcomes annually, preferably as part of the September INSET so that you can then plan your Knowledge Transfer Calendar (see below).

When doing it, make sure it is **outcomes** you are measuring. Attendance at the INSET is not an outcome; an email from staff confirming they understood the session is not an outcome.

Compliance training outcomes for schools

What is an outcome? An outcome is evidence of knowledge. What do your staff know and what do they not know? You can do this through a simple quiz on the usual platforms – SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, Microsoft Forms – or through a good quality online learning platform.

If you're creating the questions yourself, make sure they are short, clear and multiple choice, as it makes reviewing answers and reporting trends much easier.

Training apps for school compliance

There are plenty of online platforms out there that can also help. If you're using one, do your due diligence to make sure you know what it does and does not provide, especially when it comes to reporting outcomes.

Our platform, [EduCompli](#), has five courses - all written by our expert lawyers and HR Consultants - and the platform gives you access to various reports, including one on knowledge outcomes. You can even review the learning outcomes for each staff member to see which questions they got right and which ones they got wrong. When sourcing your online platform, make sure it has the functionality you need.

Reviewing and analysing knowledge gaps

Once you've got your quiz results (or your EduCompli report), you then need to analyse them to understand strengths and weaknesses. In other words, where are your staff knowledge gaps?

To use a recent example, I was consulted on one trust's EduCompli report, which identified that the topic of child-on-child abuse was a clear staff knowledge gap, with four out of 10 questions being answered incorrectly by at least 40% of staff. One of those questions was incorrectly answered by over 80% of staff.

Using data analytics for school staff compliance training

Getting a good grip on this data is critical to understanding the extent of staff knowledge and the gaps they have on specific topics and then drilling down to the specific issues within that topic to inform a targeted response to maximise efficiency.

Once you know your knowledge gaps you can then plan to plug them. This is where your Knowledge Transfer Calendar comes in.

Developing your Knowledge Transfer Calendar

I know you'll be reading this and thinking '*why doesn't he just call it training?*'. I promise it's not me simply trying to make it sound more grandiose, it's a bit more fundamental than that!

When we talk about staff 'training' many of us will think about a relatively small range of experiences, often involving PowerPoint and/or a speaker who might be a bit dull (or worse, far too bouncy and excited!).

School staff training

The reality is that we train and update our staff in many different ways and formats – workshops, two-minute guides, roleplay, keynote, FAQs, staff meetings, and so on. The more adventurous among you will have made an audio or video clip or two as well.

So, we need to think more broadly than 'training' when we think about the opportunities we have and media we can use to upskill our staff, hence 'Knowledge Transfer'.

Planning your calendar

Let's create a calendar to plan our year. Don't overthink it, simply map out the 10 months from September to June and plot where you will provide content and in what format.

You might add in a handful of staff meetings, a few videos, some FAQs, a January INSET, and so on. You don't need to add in any of the content at this stage, just get some placeholders in place. We can be nimble and consider the best content nearer the time.

Next steps

Once we've analysed our INSET training outcomes on topics like Child Protection, Data, Protection, Cyber Risk or Staff Code of Conduct, we can then plot what steps we need to take to plug the knowledge gaps those outcomes reports identified. Simple!

INSETs are hugely valuable days and by following these tips (or if you like, picking the ones you like and ignoring the rest) you'll get the best from them.

EduCompli can help, too. Get in touch with me if you'd like to know more about how it can help you understand staff knowledge gaps and offer staff a great learning experience.

Key contact



Dai Durbridge

Partner

dai.durbridge@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)330 045 2105

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