

Cross-sector collaboration and civic leadership: Round table insight

24 November 2023

This week we had the privilege of hosting a cross-sector roundtable with the theme of 'If not us, then who? How cross-sector collaboration can support system improvement' involving influential leaders from [school](#) and [NHS trusts](#).

This event was run in conjunction with our partners, the [Confederation of School Trusts \(CST\)](#) which has long promoted the role of the school trust as a civic institution. We've supported them from the outset on this issue, recognising the importance and impact this can have for school pupils and the organisations working so hard to educate them in an increasingly challenging social and political environment.

Civic leadership

Discussions focused on civic leadership and collaboration, particularly what school trusts can learn from NHS trusts and vice-versa. Cross-sector collaboration was integral to all the key themes drawn from these discussions.

Drawing on lessons from other sectors - particularly healthcare with NHS and public health representation - the roundtable explored existing innovative models of collaboration, and opportunities to upscale, for school trusts of all sizes and levels of maturity to benefit from these opportunities.

Discussions were structured into three key themes:

- Acting together
- Public health and mental health
- Workforce strategy

It was far from a standing start, as discussions were kicked-off with provocations sharing real-world experience of how cross-sector collaboration between [education](#) and [health](#) sectors can yield exceptional results.

Provocations

Provocations from [Michael Wood](#), Head of Health Economic Partnerships for the NHS Confederation, [Dawn Haywood](#), CEO of the Windsor Academy Trust and [Leora Cruddas CBE](#), Chief Executive of CST helped to inspire ideas and spark debate.

The opportunities that emerged from the discussions revolved around NHS and school trusts playing the role of 'anchor institutions' for their local communities. There was a sense that we cannot depend on government to deliver what is needed; we need to take the lead and empower staff – and pupils – to address some of the key challenges we're facing.

Tip of the iceberg

These discussions were just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. There's a lot to learn and share from this event, including developing a compelling narrative as to why we need to do this. As one participant put it:

“There’s no cavalry coming over the hill. We don’t need permission to do this and we can’t wait for the government. This challenge requires collective leadership.”

These two short, but invaluable, hours generated so much ‘brain food’ it justifies further reflection before sharing where we go next. This we hope to cover in a joint publication with the CST and [NHS Confederation](#).

In the meantime, you may be interested in:

[EdInfluence podcast: in conversation with Sir Julian Hartley, CEO of NHS Directors](#)

[Dawn Haywood’s blog on the CST website](#)

Key contacts

Nick MacKenzie

Partner

nick.mackenzie@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)121 237 4564

Carly Caton

Partner

carly.caton@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)7890423367

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