

## Middle and senior leader interview semi-structured script

This script was used for interviews of middle and senior leaders based in London or around London who weren't currently interested in becoming a headteacher or who were unsure. The aim of these interviews was to find out:

- **Did they have any desire to become a headteacher and why/ why not? What influenced their decision?**
- **Were there any factors that would make the role of headteacher more appealing to them?**
- **If there were a London-wide initiative, would that encourage them to become a headteacher?**

The script was used as a prompt and the interviewers differentiated the questions to suit the experience and aspirations of the interviewee.

### **What impression do they have of the role of headteacher and do they have any desire to become one? Are there any barriers that have prevented them considering the role?**

1. What perception do you have of what it's like to be a headteacher?
  - a. Probe: What impression have you got from the headteachers you've worked with?
2. Is the role of headteacher something you would ever want to do?
3. What are the things that appeal to you about the role?
4. What are the things that don't appeal to you?
5. Are there any barriers that currently make you less likely to apply to become a headteacher?
  - a. Probe: Are there any factors related to your school that prevent you from considering the role?
  - b. Are there any factors related to the system that prevent you from considering the role?
6. Can you identify any strategies that might help overcome these barriers?

### **Are there any factors that would make the role of headteacher more appealing to them?**

7. Are there any factors that would make the role more appealing to you?
8. Is there any training or support that would make the role more appealing to you?
  - a. Probe: For example, would mentoring from a headteacher/ shadowing a headteacher/ the chance to sit on governing bodies be helpful?

### **If there were to be a London-wide initiative, would that encourage them to become a headteacher?**

9. If there was a London-wide initiative to develop headteachers what would be your suggestion as to what it should involve?
10. If it involved some of the things you have just suggested, would you be interested in taking part?

## Headteacher interview script

This script was used for interviews of headteachers based in London who weren't currently interested in becoming a system leader or who are unsure. The aim of these interviews was to find out:

- **How did they become a head and what can we learn from that for how we develop the next generation of heads?**
- **What is their understanding of what a system leader is and do they want to become one?**
- **What are the things that prevent them becoming a system leader and what support do they feel they would need to overcome these?**
- **Are there any unique challenges that come from being a London head? Do they feel that there is a specific skillset required to be a headteacher in London?**

The script was used as a prompt and the interviewers differentiated the questions to suit the experience and aspirations of the interviewee.

### **How did they become a head and what can we learn from that for how we develop the next generation of heads?**

1. Talk me through the process of how you became a head
2. What support did you find particularly useful?
3. What support was not so useful?
4. Were there any particular gaps in how prepared you felt?

### **What is their understanding of what a system leader is and do they want to become one?**

5. What do you understand by the term system leader?
  - a. Probe: Where has that understanding come from?
6. For the purposes of the next question, by system leader I mean someone who-actively supports the improvement of other schools as well as their own. So, with that in mind, is the role of a system leader something you would ever want to do?
7. What are the things that appeal to you about the role?
8. What are the things that don't appeal to you?

### **What are the things that prevent them becoming a system leader and what support do they feel they would need to overcome these?**

9. Are there any barriers that currently prevent you from becoming a system leader?
  - a. Probe: Are there any issues in your school that prevent you from considering the role?
  - b. Are there any issues in the system that prevent you from considering the role?
10. Can you identify any strategies that might help overcome these barriers?
11. Is there any training or support that would make the role more appealing to you?

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- a. Probe: For example, would mentoring from a system leader/ shadowing a system leader/ the chance to sit on regional boards be helpful?

12. If there was a London-wide initiative to develop system leaders what would be your suggestion as to what it should involve?

13. If it involved some of the things you have just suggested, would you be interested in taking part?

**Are there any unique challenges that come from being a London head? Do they feel that there is a specific skillset required to be a headteacher in London?**

14. Are there any particular challenges or positives that come from being a headteacher in a London school?

15. Do you think there is a particular skillset that is required from London heads?

## Key Opinion Leader Interviews

This semi-structured script was used to interview of key opinion leaders. The aim of these interviews was to find out:

- **How is talent identified and developed at a school and system-wide level?**
- **What further support might London schools need to help develop their pool of leaders?**

As the experiences of key opinion leaders varied widely, these questions were used as a guide.

**How is talent identified and developed at a school and system-wide level? (by talent, I mean aspiring heads and aspiring system leaders – those that take an interest in improving education beyond their school)**

1. In your experience, what approaches do schools use to develop potential heads?
  - a. How do you know?
  - b. Have you got any examples?
2. What are the good things about these approaches?
3. What are the problems with these approaches?
4. Do you feel there are issues in how potential headteachers are identified and developed at a system-wide level?
  - a. How do you know?
  - b. Have you got any examples?
5. In your experience, what do you know about how potential system leaders are developed?
6. What are the good things about this model?
7. What are the problems with this model?
8. Are there any things specific to London in the approaches to developing headteachers and system leaders that you've seen?

**What further support might London schools need to help develop their pool of leaders?**

9. Do you think there is enough support available to support London schools develop their pool of headteachers? Why do you think that?
  - a. Probe: Does there need to be extra support at a system level?
  - b. What would it look like?
  - c. Who would need to be behind it to make it work?
10. Can you suggest any options for how that might be resourced?
  - a. How could it be funded?
  - b. Who would need to buy into additional support?
11. Do you think there is enough support available to support London schools to develop their pool of system leaders? Why do you think that?
  - a. Probe: Does there need to be extra support at a system level?

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- b. What would it look like?
  - c. Who would need to be behind it to make it work?
12. Is there – or do you anticipate – a problem in recruiting good heads and other system leadership roles (like exec heads) for London Schools?
  13. What do you think are some of the reasons for this?
  14. What are we currently doing well to address these issues?
  15. What are we currently doing badly to address these issues?
  16. What further practical and sustainable interventions should London consider?
  17. Who should be responsible for making them happen?