

Head of Programming

Information
pack



**Confederation
of School Trusts**

The voice of school trusts

Welcome to the Confederation of School Trusts

Introduction from our chief executive

Thank you for your interest in joining our team.

We are privileged to support schools in their mission to provide high quality inclusive education. As a membership organisation, our role is to ensure colleagues at academy school trusts across England can honour the trust they hold on behalf of children and young people.

We advocate for trusts, working with government, policy makers, and sector experts. Our constructive approach on policy is respected and influential.

We connect trusts to each other through our network of professional communities and our in-person conferences and events and connect them to leading voices and suppliers through regular briefings and our strategic and commercial partnerships.

We support trusts through published guidance and advice, topical webinars, and a range of bespoke development services.

We are a charity, funded by membership fees and by our wholly owned trading company, CST Professional Development, whose profits support our charitable work.

As an organisation we strive to follow the Seven Principles of Public Life, aiming to follow the same good practice we expect of our members. We aim to have an open and inclusive culture, encouraging colleagues to support each other within and across our teams.

We have colleagues working across the country, but we come together regularly using technology and in-person to ensure we can continue to build the personal relationships that are so rewarding.

I hope you enjoy finding out about CST and this job role and thank you again for taking the time to consider supporting us as we help trusts deliver on their promise to the next generation.

Leora Cruddas CBE
Chief Executive



About the role

Key information at a glance

Job title: Head of Programming

Reporting to: Managing Director, CST Professional Development Limited

Line Manager Responsibility for: Lead Conference Producer, Conference Producer.

Location: Home-based, with occasional travel for meetings and events. We provide equipment to support you working from home and pay reasonable expenses when you need to travel for work.

Salary: £51,344 - £56,689

Pension: We offer a workplace pension and life assurance scheme. CST makes contributions equivalent to 10% of your gross salary.

Annual leave: Initially 25 days annual leave plus bank holidays, with an additional two days leave after three years' service.

Working hours: Full-time 37.5 hours. There is a degree of flexibility surrounding the working hours which will be determined by the demands of the role.

Application Closing Date: Monday 15th June, 9am

Interview Date: 1st stage: Monday 22nd June 2026 (online)

2nd stage Friday 26th June 2026 (in person, London).

Start Date: October 2026 (or sooner if available)

Job overview

The Head of Programming will set the creative direction for CST's conference and events portfolio, shaping ideas, themes and experiences that resonate with school trust leaders. This role is responsible for turning complex issues — in education, public service and wider society — into compelling, well-crafted programmes that feel distinctive, relevant and worth attending.

The Head of Programming combines strategic oversight with hands-on creative leadership: curating speakers, designing formats and building narratives that challenge thinking and spark new connections. The role will lead and develop CST's conference producers, building a high-performing team with the capability to design and deliver consistently strong programmes that are intellectually sharp, well-paced and grounded in what the sector needs now to deliver the best outcomes for children.



Key responsibilities

- Set the overall programming strategy for CST's conference portfolio, aligned with organisational priorities and audience needs
- Lead the development of conference themes, narratives and session architecture
- Ensure programmes are coherent, purposeful and drive engagement and learning
- Ensure programmes are completed to time and budget
- Design and test innovative formats that build engagement and connection
- Keep abreast of event trends in the wider sector to ensure that CST's offer continues to be compelling and unique

Speaker curation and content development

- Identify, secure and brief high-calibre speakers from across education and related sectors
- Collaborate closely with CST's Professional Community Chairs and CST's system, commercial and charity partners to design insightful and enjoyable conference experiences for delegates
- Shape session content with speakers to ensure relevance, clarity and practical value for CST's audiences
- Ensure diversity of perspectives, backgrounds and voices across programmes

Audience insight and quality assurance

- Maintain a clear understanding of the current challenges facing school trusts and audience needs
- Use insight from members, partners and previous events to inform programme design
- Set and uphold quality standards for all conference content and delivery
- Evaluate programme effectiveness and use insights for continuous improvement.

Cross team collaboration

- Work closely with colleagues in events, marketing, partnerships and policy to ensure that programmes are deliverable, well communicated and commercially successful
- Align conference content with CST's wider community and professional development offers
- Support sponsorship and partnership conversations by shaping compelling programme opportunities

Leadership and delivery

- Lead the end-to-end programming process from concept to delivery



- Manage timelines, decision points and speaker processes to ensure that programmes are delivered on schedule and effectively marketed
- Provide on the day support for speakers, ensuring smooth delivery and strong audience experience.

Personal Specification

- Strong track record in designing and delivering high-quality conference or large-scale event programmes
- Experience of leading and managing teams, including the line management and development of conference producers
- Ability to shape compelling narratives from complex policy, practice and leadership issues
- Strong editorial judgement – able to prioritise what matters and avoid unnecessary complexity
- Experience of working with senior leaders and high-profile speakers
- Highly organised with the ability to balance multiple workstreams and deadlines
- Comfortable balancing strategic thinking with hands on delivery
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to build trust with speakers and work effectively across internal teams and external partners.
- Pragmatic problem-solving ability, able to respond calmly and effectively to new situations, including last minute and on the day programme changes.



Personal Outlook

- Intellectually curious with a habit of seeking out new ideas, perspectives and challenges
- Strong interest in education, with an understanding of the current pressures facing school trusts
- Broad awareness of the public sector, including policy, leadership and system reform beyond education.
- Active interest in the wider social and cultural landscape – able to draw connections between education and developments in society, business, technology and culture.
- Reads widely and keeps up to date with emerging debates, trends and thinkers
- Able to identify what will resonate with trust leaders now, not just what has worked before.



More about working for CST

A flexible organisation

Our staff are spread across the country, with most working from home. Most staff work common core hours, but with the flexibility to fit around home life – several colleagues work part time or compressed hours. We use technology to meet regularly in teams and as an entire organisation and get together in person at our events and at team and all-stay away days.

Workplace pension and life assurance

We offer a workplace pension and life assurance cover worth three times your gross salary. CST's contribution is equivalent to 10% of your gross salary. Your contribution, should you choose to join the scheme, is a minimum of 5% of your salary.

Annual leave entitlement

You are initially entitled to 25 days annual leave plus bank holidays, with an additional two days after three years. We have additional arrangements for carers leave, leave for new parents, and special leave. Pro-rata for part time employees.

Staff engagement listening forum

Our staff forum helps provide feedback on working at CST, helping us reflect as an organisation and to make changes to make it a better place to work. The work of the forum has led to changes to things like training and leave arrangements, based on employee suggestions.



How to apply

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to recruitment@cstuk.org.uk by Monday 15th June 2026, 9am.

Education is universal, and we believe it is important that our staff reflect the diversity of our members' schools and the children that they serve. We welcome applications from every background. Several of our staff work part time or compressed hours to help ensure a good balance between work and home life.

If you need any help applying or have any questions about the role, please just let us know.



cstuk.org.uk

Steve, our Deputy Chief Executive



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